

DEMONIC 1371

Chapter 1371 1371. Hole

Noah quickly dealt with his hunger by eating some of his reserves of magical beasts' corpses. He even crushed a few Soul Stones to absorb their energy.

Using the Soul Stones for his body was a waste, but he wanted to bring his condition to its peak before facing the inheritance. Noah was also quite wealthy for his level, so he didn't mind relying on that resource.

The lightning bolts ran through the cave more often as he marched deeper into the inheritance. Noah seized those that his level could withstand and absorbed their energy to improve his body. Yet, he had to dodge those too powerful for him.

His body cheered every time the black hole sent energy to its cells. Noah was still feeling the fatigue accumulated after his battle with Lady Lena, but his fourth center of power was taking care of that.

The energy that the black hole released dispersed his fatigue and strengthened his tissues. The fourth center of power had become able to understand the flaws in his condition and rearranged the nutrients to solve them.

It was like having a personal doctor that continuously pushed his condition back to its peak. The process wasn't even slow. The black hole's power had entered a superior league after it studied the expert's individuality.

'I'm really curious about the final reward of this inheritance,' Noah couldn't help but think as he inspected his black hole.

The benefits that the lightning bolts had brought to his fourth center of power and overall existence were substantial. Noah couldn't wait to see if the lower layers of the inheritance hid something even better.

'An individuality that forces the matter to evolve,' Noah thought as a cold smile appeared on his face. 'This is perfect for my true meaning.'

A large corridor followed the large hall. Noah descended through the mountain's insides until he reached another vast room that shone with a bright orange color.

The insides of the room were different from the previous ones. Sparse sparks filled the area and floated mid-air even if their bodies carried intense violence.

Noah only needed one glance to understand that someone had already cleared that area. The sparks didn't even care about his presence since they had already completed their task.

The sparks contained energy, so Noah took his time to absorb them. He had to avoid those radiating power in the upper tier, but his improved body could withstand even those near the middle tier's peak.

Noah pressed on after clearing that room. The lack of active trials and rewards left him unsatisfied, but the energy that flowed inside his body alleviated that feeling.

A corridor that led to another large hall followed the room with the floating sparks. Noah saw a series of destroyed puppets made of lightning bolts in the new area, and he arrived at the same conclusion as before.

The level of the broken puppets gave him a vague idea of the difficulty of that trial. Most lightning bolts still carried power in the lower tier, so he didn't feel worried about the next rooms.

Noah continued his absorption of energy and exploration of the underground area. The inheritance led him toward the bottom of the mountain, at the very core that most beings never had the chance to see.

He didn't find any active trial. Someone had cleared all the rooms along the way, so he limited himself to absorb the lightning bolts on his path.

The progression of the lightning bolts' power began to worry him during the last halls. Noah had mostly found sparks in the upper tier in the previous rooms, so he felt quite sure that he couldn't overcome any test from that point onward.

However, he decided to continue his march anyway. He wouldn't give up on the free energy contained inside that long underground structure, and he wanted to see how an active trial looked like before going away.

The true meaning carried by those lightning bolts had made him interested in that expert's power. He wanted to see if an active trial could inspire him.

Noah had to cross a few more halls to find an active trial. The room that unfolded in his vision was immense and seemed to stretch until the Rumbling Region's bottom. Its width even covered half of the mountain's base.

That area resembled a huge underground hole that led toward the deepest part of the landmass. Noah could vaguely guess that reaching the bottom of that area would bring him to the last reward of the inheritance, but he had no chance to succeed in the task.

Shining lightning bolts that radiated a blinding orange light filled the hole. They flew from wall to wall to create a tight crackling net that left only a few paths open.

Those paths would change every second since the lightning bolts never stopped flying through the holes. That seemed a trial meant to test the endurance or the speed of a cultivator, but Noah knew that he couldn't overcome it.

The lightning bolts radiated the suffocating aura of the eighth rank. They were the embodiment of the expert's true meaning, and no material in the area could escape from their effects.

The dark-red terrain of the Rumbling Region had transformed as those lightning bolts kept ricocheting through the hole. Countless shining red crystals made the walls and ceiling of that area.

The ground had evolved into a completely different material, and Noah could sense its value when he inspected it with his mental waves. The crystals carried an intense sense of evolution capable of affecting their surroundings.

'These must be the best filling materials available,' Noah evaluated as he studied the area from the exit of the last corridor. 'I wish I could use them for my companions.'

Noah sat on the exit and watched the lightning bolts fly through the hole as he let his mind wander. He had already accepted that he couldn't seize those materials. Still, he wanted to experience the might of the eighth rank.

Those lightning bolts didn't only affect the environment. They actively searched for anything impure in the area to apply the evolution that they carried.

They also resonated with the environment. The walls didn't make the lightning bolts deplete part of their power when they crashed. They didn't even damage the crystals as they bounced back.

Everything in the area belonged to that peculiar true meaning. It resembled a physical domain, with matter that was part of that law.

'A small world,' Noah concluded in his mind at some point.

The hints and clues gathered during his adventures through the Immortal Lands created a clear idea of his path ahead. Noah could finally claim to have some knowledge of the cultivation journey in the divine ranks.

'I guess I will find similar scenes in all the other inheritances,' Noah thought as he stood up.

He was about to leave, but an idea had formed in his mind in front of that magnificent scene. The Hellish Landscape was full of valuable resources and inheritances, but he was only a cultivator in the liquid stage.

It had been the same during his exploration of the Pyramid. Noah was strong and unmatched among his peers, but his cultivation level made him unable to obtain the most valuable rewards of those inheritances.

'Maybe I should find Divine Demon before investing time in these places,' Noah thought as he began to leave, but a sudden dangerous sensation made him freeze.

The lightning bolts ricocheting inside the hole had ignored him while he was on the exit, but one of them separated from the main array to crash on his back right after he went back inside the tunnel.

Chapter 1372 1372. Names

Noah's mind went black for an instant. When he recovered his awareness, he found himself lying on the dark-red ground of the corridor.

Smoke came out of his back, and a tingling sensation filled his skin. Still, he couldn't see any injury. Even his robe was fine and without a scratch.

'What exactly has happened?' Noah wondered as he rechecked his body.

His black hole was rotating faster than usual, but he couldn't find anything strange inside him. He didn't even feel sore. Everything was fine, and even his fourth center of power soon started to work at its regular pace.

Noah didn't exactly recall what had happened. He remembered a flash of orange light before darkness filled his memories. Those clues could only lead to one conclusion, but that idea was unreasonable.

'That is impossible, right?' Noah thought as he turned toward the hole.

The lightning bolts ricocheting inside the hole were the only element that could cause that orange flash, but Noah couldn't believe that he had survived one of them.

Each lightning bolt was an attack in the eighth rank. Noah had become stronger after the black hole purified his centers of power, but he was still far away from being an existence who could survive those blows.

'The true meaning of evolution,' Noah began to think about a possible explanation. 'Something like that shouldn't aim to destroy matter.'

Noah soon understood that he couldn't find an answer if he relied only on his reasoning. He had to perform a few tests and observe how the lightning bolts reacted before deciding how to proceed.

A piece of flesh from one of the corpses inside his separate space appeared in his hand. Noah neared the hole again and threw the material among the lightning bolts before activating the Divine Deduction technique.

The lightning bolts immediately converged on the piece of flesh. They were too fast for Noah to follow them. Still, his superior awareness boosted by the Divine Deduction technique allowed him to see how they affected the laws in that material.

The piece of flesh had many flaws in its structure. Countless impurities filled its fabric, and the lightning bolts enhanced them when they crashed on it.

Impurities burst out of the flesh, destroying the material during the process. The lightning bolts forced blood and pus to exit the item until it transformed into a small crystal.

The crystal then fell toward the bottom of the hole, passing through every lightning bolt that it met. Noah even heard the sound of the item hitting the ground after a few seconds.

A cold light shone from Noah's eyes. A strange idea had formed inside his mind after that test, and he didn't hesitate to throw more materials at the lightning bolts to see if he had understood correctly.

The lightning bolts forced every material that touched them to evolve. They destroyed the impurities and transformed the items into flawless crystals that fell undisturbed at the bottom of the hole.

'Don't tell me,' Noah thought as shock filled his mind, 'The lightning bolts can't damage something that already lacks flaws.'

That discovery left him speechless, but a lightning bolt suddenly separated from the main array and interrupted his reasoning. The attack crashed on Noah's chest, but he managed to maintain his awareness at that time.

The lightning bolt dispersed inside his body without causing any effect. It didn't even leave any lingering energy in his tissues. It disappeared as soon as it completed an inspection of his existence.

Noah could only reveal a wide smile after witnessing that scene. He stretched his hand toward the crackling net, but nothing happened even after the lightning bolts converged on him.

'Amazing,' Noah thought as he stared at the lightning bolts flowing freely through his hand.

Those attacks didn't seem to notice him. He appeared immune to their might since his body had already reached a flawless state. His black hole had taken care of that process before, so the lightning bolts couldn't get rid of any impurity.

'Most cultivators have probably died during the purifications,' Noah concluded as he stepped outside the hole's edge and began a slow descent.

More lightning bolts converged on him, but they did not affect his tissues. Noah could continue his descent toward the bottom of the hole without encountering any problem. He didn't even feel any resistance.

Noah kept the Divine Deduction technique active in case he found lightning bolts that could destroy him even in his flawless state. Yet, he didn't meet anything that could hurt him during his descent. He reached the bottom of the hole without trouble.

The environment was different there. A shining crystal-like red floor made the bottom of the hole, and part of the walls carried similar features. A single space-ring laid at the center of the area. The ground was empty of any item and resource.

Noah began to walk toward the space-ring, but the lightning bolts above him morphed to take a humanoid shape at that point. The figure landed on the floor between him and the item, and it raised a hand to gesture to Noah to stop.

'Is this a will?' Noah asked himself when he saw the humanoid crackling figure.

The crackling noise radiated by the lightning bolts became more intense after the figure appeared. Noah remained still as he waited for something to happen, and a thunderous male voice soon resounded in the area.

"Do not take it," The voice said, "You don't need it."

Noah inspected the area to search for the source of that voice. Finding it ended up being easy. Every lightning bolt in the hole radiated that sound at the same time.

"What do you mean by that?" Noah asked. "Explain yourself."

The crackling noise intensified once more before the answer arrived. "You already have the tools to evolve yourself. The ring only contains the instructions to recreate this Evolution Pit. Leave it for another heir."

"Can't I take it to sell it?" Noah asked, but a lightning bolt fell in front of him and opened a crack into the crystal floor.

The lightning bolts could hurt even flawless items if the will wanted. Noah wouldn't risk enraging the owner of that inheritance after he discovered that feature.

"You are free to disclose the secret behind this trial," The voice continued. "My only desire is to make the human side stronger."

Noah remained silent for a while before turning to the wall. He patted the crystals on its surface and inspected their structure before nodding multiple times.

"Can't I have these at least?" Noah asked. "I have used your individuality to improve, so I'm technically your heir already."

As soon as his line ended, lightning bolts fell on the wall, and red crystals rained around him. They were all materials in the middle tier that carried the iconic evolution of that expert.

"Leave now," The voice said. "Let me return to my eternal slumber."

"What was your name?" Noah asked as he began to leave.

The expert's individuality had helped him maintaining the empowerments of his ambition. Asking for his name was the only form of respect that Noah could show him.

"Dead don't need names," The voice said before the crackling figure crumbled into a series of sparks that fused with the net above.

Chapter 1373 1373. Legion

Noah stored the crystals and left the pit after giving one last glance at the array of lightning bolts. He had gained something out of that inheritance, so he didn't mind spending a few seconds to appreciate the scene.

'He didn't give me anything above my current level,' Noah thought as he walked back toward the entrance of the inheritance. 'What a stingy will.'

A sigh escaped his mouth, but Noah soon suppressed it. The hole contained crystals in the eighth rank, but the will had limited itself to give only items in the middle tier. Still, Noah couldn't complain since his gains were substantial.

'I guess there is no point in searching for other inheritances,' Noah thought. 'I have been lucky this time, but I will only find dangers that I can't face in the next ones. A few valuable items can't compare to the experience gained by exploring the world.'

Noah's thoughts confirmed his previous reasoning. It was pointless to explore the Hellish Landscape and the Land of the Fallen as a whole at his current level. Most of the inheritance there required a cultivation level in the solid stage at least.

He preferred to look for Divine Demon with Chief Ash and her underlings. His feelings about that legendary existence were still unclear, but Noah felt that he would make up his mind once he met the Demon.

Noah already saw Divine Demon as a natural ally, but he didn't want to rely on events that had happened in the lower plane to decide that. The Demon wouldn't even be aware of who had seized his inheritance since he had been in the Immortal Lands for more than nine thousand years.

'I wonder what he is up to,' Noah thought.

According to Chief Ash, Divine Demon resembled a mercenary willing to use his expertise for money. That position would allow him to accumulate many resources, especially in an environment with few inscription masters.

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The members of the Crystal City and Chief Ash's group weren't the only team that had entered the Hellish Landscape. The Crystal City had contacted multiple smaller forces to hunt Noah, and some of them had remained near the Rumbling Region while he was busy exploring the inheritance.

Those who had gone to the Fiery Lake were mostly mercenaries and assassins. They differed from Chief Ash and Lady Lena's teams since they lacked any form of backing.

Chief Ash and her team had gone to the Fiery Lake to talk with the other groups after sealing a deal with Noah. She was the only one who could force the other guilds to back away, and most of those cultivators listened to her words, especially after she mentioned Noah's liquid stage level.

However, one of them secretly remained behind and marched toward the Rumbling Region after everyone had left the area. The cultivator then settled on the landmass and waited for Noah to reappear.

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Noah left the inheritance quickly. He had already seized all the lightning bolts that he could absorb, so that place had become utterly useless to him.

He planned to tell the method to seize the inheritance to June once they managed to meet in the higher plane, but it was pointless to him to even think about that now.

When he left the cave at the peak of the mountain, his superior awareness sensed that an enemy presence was among the few trees that had survived his battle with Lady Lena.

Noah initially thought that some of the stronger beasts had become addicted to his ambition and was waiting for him to reappear, but he quickly suppressed that idea.

A magical beast hungry for his ambition would directly follow him inside the cave. The presence of Chief Ash wouldn't be enough to make it abandon a decent meal.

His enemy was somewhere on the landmass, but even his senses couldn't pinpoint its exact location.

Noah felt eager to test his new power, but the situation was too unclear for him to act freely. He returned inside the cave and activated the ability of his robe to hide his presence.

Then, he came out of the cave again and set off toward the sea of flames above the Rumbling Region. Noah would be able to return to the surface in no time if he took the right tunnels.

However, a hooded figure suddenly appeared on his path. That existence radiated power in the gaseous stage, but it stood among those flames as if they didn't affect its body.

Noah found that scene peculiar. He didn't understand why a gaseous stage cultivator would block his path. His consciousness quickly unfolded to search for other potential dangers and ambushes, but it didn't find anything.

"I'm alone," A female voice came out of the hooded cultivator.

Noah felt even more confused at that point, but he didn't let that strange event make him waste more time than needed.

"Can I help you?" Noah asked. "I'm in a hurry."

A snort resounded from the hooded figure before it turned into a shadow. Coldness came out of Noah's eyes when he saw the cultivator shooting toward him and preparing a punch that aimed at his head.

Noah raised a hand, and the punch landed on his palm. An immense force ran through his arm at that point, and his feet slid through the air as he resisted the power carried by that physical attack.

'She didn't use any spell nor technique,' Noah thought as he lowered his fingers to keep the woman stuck in his grasp.

Noah arched the fingers of his free hand before slashing at his opponent. That attack could kill any creature in the gaseous stage at that distance, but the woman threw a kick at his arm before he could complete the movement.

Her free hand then darted to throw another punch, but Noah promptly shot toward the ground without releasing his grasp on her hand. The woman could only crash on the dark-red terrain and endure the series of kicks that fell on her waist.

The woman was in a tough spot, but her robe suddenly wrapped itself around Noah's fingers and created an opportunity for her to leave his grasp. Noah couldn't stop her from escaping at a few hundred meters from him, but he didn't follow her just yet.

An aura in the liquid stage expanded in the area when the enemy took off her hooded robe. A woman with long red hair and dark eyes appeared in front of Noah, and he could inspect her real level when she stopped running.

She was a liquid stage expert with a body in the middle tier. Yet, her body featured a few details that made Noah confirm what he had guessed during that short battle.

The woman had a series of sharp teeth coming out of the sides of her mouth, and her hair resembled the fur of a certain magical beast. Her fingers also were oddly long and pointy, as if they were claws made of meat.

She was a hybrid, but that alone didn't explain why she had hidden her cultivation level and had joined the hunting group.

"It's been a long time since I've eaten a hybrid," Noah said as he walked toward the woman.

"Wait!" The woman exclaimed when she understood his intentions. "I acknowledge your strength. The Legion will open its doors for you."

Chapter 1374 1374. Sky

'What is it now?' Noah thought as he inspected the hybrid. 'Another organization?'

Noah couldn't help but feel surprised at how hungry every organization in the Immortal Lands was for new members. He had interacted with the human side for no more than a few decades, but he had already received multiple invitations. Almost every force that he met had tried to rope him in.

"You don't belong to the human side," The woman said. "They only want to exploit your strength, but you will never manage to obtain any valuable position with them. They will try their everything to suppress you."

"You can't live with the beasts either," The woman continued. "Those creatures don't have what you need to improve as a cultivator. You can be a king there, but I suspect that you have far more ambitious plans."

Noah listened to her words without revealing any emotion. The woman was right, but she didn't know what Noah's mindset was. He liked his current freedom, so joining an organization was out of the question for now.

Still, Noah recognized the value of having powerful allies. Even if they didn't actually help him during battles or challenging situations, he needed them to trade, sell, and purchase items. They could also provide information that he wouldn't be able to obtain otherwise.

"I guess the Legion is where I belong, right?" Noah said while maintaining an expressionless face.

The woman smiled when she heard that question. She didn't mind the vague sarcasm hidden in Noah's voice. She expected him to have a similar reaction.

"You will never have to hide your true nature in the Legion," The hybrid said. "We live in the Outer Lands, where intense tempests of laws shake the sky. Look for us when you grow tired of listening to beings that can't understand you."

The woman then threw a token that Noah grabbed easily. The item was a small piece of wood that had three deep cuts carved on its surface.

"My name is Grace," The hybrid said as she turned to leave. "See you soon."

Grace left without adding any explanation to her invitation. She didn't even describe the Legion, but Noah could understand its most striking feature.

The Legion had to be a force made only of hybrids. Noah had long since guessed that something like that existed, but he didn't expect to meet it so soon.

'The Outer Lands should be outside of the two domains,' Noah thought as he recalled some maps of the Immortal Lands. 'Tempests of laws capable of shaking the sky sounds interesting.'

Noah had learnt about the storms of laws in Shandal's separate dimension. He knew that they existed in the Immortal Lands, but he had yet to meet them.

'Maybe those storms appear where the higher plane has yet to stabilize,' Noah concluded before moving his attention to the token.

The rectangular piece of yellowish wood appeared utterly ordinary, but the marks on its surface gave the item a peculiar aura. Intense aggression came out of those cuts, but a peaceful feeling also lingered under their violent features.

The aura radiated the power of the eighth rank, and it hinted to a being whose existence carried an evident duality. Noah felt sure that humans and magical beasts couldn't create those effects with their attacks. Only a hybrid could wield that type of power.

'Interesting indeed,' Noah thought as he stored the token and sat on the dark-red ground.

His gaze went on the sky and looked past the sea of flames above to land on the white layer that covered the entirety of the Immortal Lands. His black hole rotated faster as countless emotions surged inside his mind.

The Immortal Lands were immense, and Noah had only explored a small fraction of their regions. There was far more to see and study, and the same went for the many organizations that filled those territories.

The secret organization, the Legion, and the various families met in those years were only a part of the Immortal Lands' political environment. Noah had just begun to learn about those forces, but he felt already overwhelmed with information.

When he paired those forces to the vastity of the higher plane, Noah felt eager to explore. He desired to throw himself into every territory and uncover their secrets. It didn't matter if their owners were humans or magical beasts.

He had a lot to explore, but his current level only allowed him to scratch the surface of the higher plane. He could almost go anywhere he wanted, but he couldn't study everything about those lands.

'I want to reach the eighth rank already,' Noah thought as he lay down to stare at the sky for a bit longer.

Noah knew what his next move was. He had to leave the Hellish Landscape and return to Silkpost city to meet Chief Ash. He wanted to look for Divine Demon, and her group was his best chance at finding him.

Yet, he couldn't meet her unprepared, especially after his recent breakthrough. Chief Ash didn't give him a time limit, and Noah planned to assimilate what he had obtained before joining her group.

Noah had reached the liquid stage, but his new level didn't cause any change in the black hole. The dark matter in its insides was slightly denser, but that was it. His fourth center of power and his dantian could only improve through standard methods.

His mind was sturdier than before, and it had benefitted from the growth of his existence. Still, it didn't show any substantial improvement other than its ability to create blueprints for the workshop.

Noah planned to train and polish that process before joining Chief Ash's group. He had tested how useful the workshop was against Lady Lena, so he wanted to bring the technique to its peak.

His body was better off than his other centers of power due to the many valuable nutrients in the Immortal Lands. Anything around Noah contained divine "Breath", so he could quicken its growth steadily.

Great Builder's inheritance and the Evolution Pit had provided him with materials that he wanted to use. His first idea was to improve his companions, but he planned to create new ones since his mind seemed able to handle them.

Another important technique that he wanted to improve was the workshop. Noah had managed to create shadows of spider-like creatures, but the workshop's true power didn't come from the innate strength carried by the blueprint.

Great Builder had used the oval core to improve the feathered puppet inside the pyramid. That process showed the real use of the workshop. A creature fueled by "Breath" wouldn't have the same frailty as those that only had dark matter.

The frailty of the spiders came from that. They were only a mass of dark matter arrayed together in the shape of a magical beast. They lacked a fuel that could reinforce their bodies and strengthen their overall state.

Noah also had to fix the matter concerning martial arts and spells. He needed to update a few attacks and restore his movement technique to improve his chances to survive.

'I'm looking at fifty years of seclusion,' Noah thought before sending a message to Chief Ash.

He would remain inside the Hellish Landscape to train for a while. Noah wanted to prepare for his meeting with Divine Demon.

Chapter 1375 1375. Gathering

Noah didn't remain in the Rumbling Region. The guilds that Chief Ash had sent away knew that he was there, and the Crystal City didn't withdraw the bounty.

More mercenaries and assassins would come for him, so he couldn't remain in the same place to train. It was better to find a different spot far away from the Rumbling Region where he could spend peaceful years and focus on his prowess.

Noah had maps and Soul Stones to spend in case he ran out of ideas. Finding a safe spot inside the Hellish Landscape wasn't a problem with so many forces occupying its territories.

Noah eventually opted to avoid any interaction with the human forces and travel through the vast sea of flames until he found a spot far away from any recorded inheritance. Fire in the middle tier couldn't hurt him anymore, so he had many options at his disposal.

Once he found a decent spot, Noah deployed his dark world and began to cultivate. He had a lot to do, but he couldn't risk enraging Chief Ash since she was his only lead toward Divine Demon. He had to focus on the abilities that could quickly improve his battle prowess.

Years went peacefully inside the Hellish Landscape. No one could find Noah while he cultivated in a random spot among the sea of flames. The tracking abilities didn't work either since his dark world made sure to erase every track that he had left during his travel.

After a bit more than fifty years, Noah decided to leave the separate dimension and meet with Chief Ash. His robe and dark world kept him hidden from unwanted gazes, and he quickly managed to disperse any pursuer once he returned to the wilderness.

Noah couldn't go back to Silkpost city. The Crystal City was one of the overlords of that settlement, so he couldn't appear publicly. Chief Ash had also advised against that since their cooperation would be exposed if someone recognized him.

Chief Ash and her group reached Noah in a forest near Silkpost city after exchanging a few mental messages. They didn't seem bothered by the fact that they had to wait more than half a century to begin their mission. Decades went by as if they were seconds for divine cultivators, so they didn't mind waiting until he completed his exploration of the Hellish Landscape.

"The Land of the Fallen had far more territories back then," Chief Ash said after she performed few formal greetings with Noah. "The magical beasts have taken most of them due to their constant expansion. In my opinion, the humans can't win against that enemy."

Noah could only nod at her explanation. She wanted to console him since he had left the Hellish Landscape quite soon, but he didn't care about her words. He only wanted to know what she knew about Divine Demon.

"You lead the way," Noah said as he straightened his position. "I hope this force is enough to take him down."

Chief Ash's group consisted of twelve gaseous stage cultivators and her. They weren't a weak force, but Noah had the vague feeling that they weren't enough against Divine Demon.

"It's not," Chief Ash replied bluntly. "That arrogant bastard is in the solid stage. Our role is to support the main group during the battle. Our leader will fight Divine Demon directly."

Noah revealed a surprised expression at those words. He had always thought that Chief Ash was the leader of her guild. He didn't expect her to be a simple underling.

"Right, they don't record these in the libraries," Chief Ash said. "Every guild needs a cultivator in the solid stage to obtain the acknowledgment of the stronger forces. You can even set up an entire organization once you have a cultivator in the eighth rank. Mercenaries and assassins can have only leaders in the liquid stage, but they aren't real groups."

Noah limited himself to nod again, but he felt happy inside. His cooperation with Chief Ash had just begun, but he had already gained valuable information that the libraries couldn't offer.

'We have to join a solid stage cultivator then,' Noah thought as he suppressed his emotions. 'I wonder how strong experts at that level are.'

Noah also felt lucky that he had spent many years improving his prowess. He wouldn't be unprepared even in front of a solid stage cultivator. He wouldn't win if a battle were to happen, but he felt confident in his ability to escape.

'I only have to decide what to do once we find Divine Demon,' Noah thought.

It was still unclear whether Divine Demon could be an ally. The behavior of that expert would decide Noah's actions. Noah didn't want to fight him, but he wouldn't hesitate to draw his blade if the situation required it.

"Does this mean that Divine Demon has a guild?" Noah asked as he continued to investigate.

"No, quite the opposite," Chief Ash replied. "He doesn't want to join any organization, and he even kills whoever tries to find him. Those like him aren't rare when it comes to ascended cultivators, but they usually understand the limits of traveling without the backing of an organization sooner. He is an exception."

"What about his contacts and alliances?" Noah continued. "Doesn't he have customers? I don't believe that he has no help after spending so long in the Immortal Lands."

"We have confirmed a few names through the secret organization," Chief Ash said. "They shouldn't be a problem. Their relationships are strictly professional, so we might find troubles only if Divine Demon has some specific resource coming from other forces."

Noah nodded a third time before following the weaker troops that had already begun to move toward their destination. Ordinary cultivators couldn't cross the wilderness like him. They needed safe paths that they could travel without meeting many magical beasts.

The group moved quickly. Chief Ash didn't tell Noah their destination, but he could guess where they were going since he knew the Immortal Lands' general layout. They were returning to the area of influence of Vagona city.

Noah and the others traveled for months through the wilderness. Chief Ash's group knew all the safe paths through the forests, mountains, and lakes that appeared in their view, and Noah could only adapt to their approach to those lands.

The group didn't aim to return to Vagona city. Chief Ash and the others were going in one of the peripheral territories inside the mountain chain.

More cultivators appeared in that region. A few groups converged toward the peak of the mountain and brought presents that they exposed to the other cultivators to brag.

Noah didn't understand why they would do something like that, but Chief Ash gladly began to explain again.

"The boss is on the summit," Chief Ash said. "My guild doesn't have many restrictions, but our leader wants to see the results of our missions before assigning some rewards."

"Why aren't you taking out any present then?" Noah asked, but something told him that he already knew the answer.

"I have completed a few tasks already," Chief Ash said, "Those experts mostly are weaker cultivators who can't even go past the initial phases of the divine ranks. Asking for help is their only hope."

Chapter 1376 1376. March

Noah observed the trails of cultivators climbing the mountain. They were a proper platoon of experts at the bottom of the gaseous stage, and he could count at least forty of them from his position.

"The boss will use the entire power of our guild for this mission," Chief Ash continued to explain. "Divine Demon isn't an opponent that we can take lightly, and we really care about joining the secret organization."

Noah nodded, but his thoughts lingered on other topics. The fact that Chief Ash's boss wanted to use the entire guild for Divine Demon confirmed the expert's strength and made Noah even more curious to meet him.

'I should be able to handle them if Divine Demon takes care of the boss,' Noah thought as he planned a possible betrayal.

His excitement rose as the experts climbed and descended from the mountain. That platoon was slowly getting ready to move. It was almost time to meet the ancestor of the Demon Sects.

"You did find him in the end!" A male voice suddenly resounded from one side of the mountain chain and broke the peaceful scene.

Chief Ash's aura became tense when that voice reached her ears, and Noah miss that detail. He turned in the direction of that sound and saw that another small platoon had arrived at the mountain.

That team had a liquid stage expert in its lead. He was a tall and burly man who wore a ragged robe. His face and short black hair were full of dirt, but his shining red eyes created a sharp contrast in his appearance.

"Chief Barret from Baycross city!" Chief Ash announced. "Late as usual."

"I didn't think you would take so long," Chief Barret replied. "The Crystal City rarely fails."

Chief Barret's gaze moved on Noah after that line. The expert tried to inspect him, but his consciousness destroyed those mental waves before they could even land on his skin.

"He seems strong," Chief Barret concluded as a smile appeared on his face.

Chief Ash turned toward Noah, but he ignored her inquisitive gaze. He wouldn't reveal anything to those experts since there was a high chance that he would end up betraying them.

A few more platoons led by liquid stage cultivators arrived afterward. Chief Ash's guild had six experts in the liquid stage, a few hundred in the gaseous stage, and one leader in the solid stage. It was an immense force in Noah's eyes, but it didn't matter too much in the higher plane's political environment.

The six Chiefs held a private meeting before instructing their respective troops and the various gaseous stage cultivators that had descended from the mountain. They were preparing everyone for the mission, and they soon completed their tasks.

Noah sat cross-legged on the rocky ground without interacting with the other experts. Mental waves and curious gazes flew in his direction, but his consciousness protected him from the unwanted analysis.

Grace's words resounded in his mind when he sensed the more fearful and worried gazes. Those experts appeared concerned about his species, and the most anxious of them even began to discuss the hybrids' weaknesses loudly.

Noah didn't react to any taunt. He knew how things worked among those troops. The weaker cultivators only wanted to feel powerful while their leader protected them.

Then, after everyone had completed their preparations, a heavy aura descended from the mountain. All the experts in the area stopped chatting and straightened their position to bow toward the figure that had appeared above them.

Noah didn't bow, and his instincts screamed when he laid his eyes on the man that was descending from the mountain. He was a short man with a kid-like appearance. He had long golden hair and golden eyes, and he wore a black robe that suppressed his bright colors.

The kid's gaze ran through his troops before landing on Noah. His dense mental waves flew toward him and began to pierce his consciousness, but a layer of dark matter promptly spread inside Noah's body and hid every detail about his existence.

The solid stage expert didn't feel scared about the dark matter, but a series of roars filled his mental waves as soon as they touched Noah's higher energy. Hisses also entered his thoughts and forced him to stop his analysis.

"What a peculiar being," The kid said in an ancient voice that didn't match his appearance. "Did he really kill Lady Lena from the Crystal City?"

"Yes, sir," Chief Ash said after raising her head. "I've seen it with my own eyes. He smashed her head and ate her underlings' dantians."

Noah didn't reveal any emotion, but coldness began to fill his mind. His instincts told him that something was wrong with that situation. It was as if the guild was ready to betray him at any moment.

"Defying Demon, right?" The kid continued, and Noah limited himself to nod at his question.

"I am Boss Van," The kid said. "Help my guild, and I will reward you with Soul Stones and teachings about the higher stage. Do you think you can handle this mission?"

"Of course," Noah replied as strategies began to amass in his mind.

Countless plans surged as he inspected the solid stage cultivator. Noah couldn't understand much from the Boss Van's aura, but his instincts could give him a vague idea of the expert's might.

Needless to say, Noah felt almost crushed by Boss Van's pressure. That expert was too strong. The solid stage seemed to be a realm of its own.

"Good," Boss Van said. "Let's march then. Divine Demon lives near the border with the Outer Lands. It's a lawless zone, so don't hold anything back. I know he won't."

The troops under him gave voice to a short battle cry before turning toward their destination and begin their march. They ran toward the safe path right after that mountain, and only Boss Van remained in the air to inspect the situation.

Noah didn't join the troops in the safe path. He marched through the danger zones near that army while he continued to check his power. He even used his Divine Deduction technique to begin other projects.

Boss Van never lost track of him. The solid stage expert's consciousness could cover entire regions, and Noah made sure to remain inside its range. He didn't want to make them lose trust in him already.

Noah had never explored the regions between Vagona city and the Outer Lands. They were in the opposite direction of Silkpost city, but they stretched for far longer.

The guild was actively marching toward the edges of the Immortal Lands. The higher plane never stopped expanding, so Noah couldn't predict how long the journey would be.

The group marched past big and small human settlements. Noah even saw a few solitary palaces that ruled over entire regions.

The human domain was the home of many forces, and most of them had to settle in those peripheral regions since the central ones already featured powerful organizations.

Those lands didn't even have the restrictions of the other cities. They could feature battles among cultivators who wanted control over those regions. Only the big settlements with multiple rank 8 existences could live in apparent peace.

"We are almost there," Boss Van eventually conveyed through his consciousness.

The troops slowed down their advance at that point and prepared for the battle. They took out various inscribed items and created a battle formation as they waited for their leader's orders.

Noah didn't know what they expected him to do in that situation, but Boss Van promptly descended from the sky to solve his doubts.

"Divine Demon is somewhere in the next region," Boss Van said. "Go and bait him out."

Chapter 1377 1377. Divine Demon

'So that's their plan,' Noah thought after Boss Van's words reached his ears.

Using Noah as bait wasn't a bad strategy in theory. Chief Ash and Boss Van were unaware of the actual nature of his relationship with Divine Demon. They didn't mind testing him in that mission.

Even if Noah were to betray them in the middle of the mission, they would gain an idea of Divine Demon's position. That was already good for their plan. The entire guild could encircle him at that point.

The guild wouldn't lose anything even if Noah were to run away without searching for Divine Demon. Boss Van would only change tactics at that point.

Still, they didn't suspect the worst-case scenario. Noah wasn't a simple cultivator who had learnt legends about Divine Demon during his stay in the lower plane. He was his heir, and leaving him alone with the expert could lead to unexpected outcomes.

Noah didn't answer. He didn't need to reply to Boss Van to express his decision to play the bait. The situation benefitted him, and he couldn't escape those orders anyway.

"Will you handle the rest?" Noah asked.

"Focus on baiting him out," Boss Van said after snorting. "He can't defeat my entire guild if he fights in the open."

Noah thought about the Copying Technique and wondered if Divine Demon had managed to improve it during his stay in the Immortal Lands. Yet, he quickly focused on his mission and turned to fly in the next region.

The gazes of Boss Van and the rest of the guild landed on Noah's back as he set off from the azure terrain and flew toward the next region. His departure signaled the beginning of the mission, and a tense aura filled the environment as those experts began to feel the pressure of the imminent battle.

It was unusual for weaker cultivators to fight stronger ones. The guild's opponent was a solid stage expert, and only Boss Van matched that power.

Chief Ash and the others could join the battle head-on. Boss Van's underlings used cloaking devices to hide among the tall magical plants that filled those regions and prepared for their opponent to arrive.

Instead, Boss Van remained in the open. He stood in the middle of the sky with his consciousness unfolded. Nothing escaped his mental waves. He could sense every creature in the forest that filled those regions.

Noah studied the environment as he flew above those lands. An immense forest expanded in his vision, and a few mountains disrupted that green scenery. Those trees also hid a few deep cracks that connected the surface to an unknown underground world.

'Divine Demon doesn't seem the type to hide underground,' Noah thought as his instincts guided his movements, 'But I can't sense anything from up here.'

Noah studied the forest, flew around the mountains, and inspected the lairs that radiated a powerful aura, but he didn't find Divine Demon. That left him with the underground world, which he didn't hesitate to explore.

Noah dived inside one of the largest cracks and found something strange as soon as he reached a certain depth. He didn't sense anything at all from that point onward. The ground didn't even radiate its usual aura.

Something was covering the area. It resembled a barrier meant to hide any aura or prevent it from spreading in the environment. Noah couldn't identify its true nature, but his instincts confirmed that it was harmless, so he continued his descent.

His feet eventually reached an invisible membrane. That slight touch created waves across the barrier that showed Noah how far that protection stretched. It covered the entirety of the crack and most of its walls, but it didn't prevent anyone from crossing it.

Noah could directly enter if he desired it, but he preferred to test something else first. His consciousness spread to make sure that Boss Van's mental waves could reach that place, and a soft voice came out of his mouth after he confirmed that detail.

"I'm Defying Demon, heir of Divine Demon's inheritance, and leader of the Demon Sects," Noah said. "I request a meeting with Divine Demon."

His words dispersed through the crack, but nothing happened on the other side of the barrier. Noah could only sigh and cross that membrane, hoping that Divine Demon didn't build any defense that could deceive his senses.

The membrane didn't carry any peculiar aura. It didn't show anything that could reveal details about Divine Demon's individuality, and Noah didn't even bother to inspect it after discovering that feature.

Once he crossed the barrier, Noah could sense the auras coming from that underground aura. He immediately felt the presence of a few magical beasts together with an intense emotion that filled every material in the area.

The crack ended in a valley that split into many tunnels. A vast underground world seemed to unfold from that spot, and Noah even guessed that some of those paths would lead to the other fissures. Still, his main focus remained on that peculiar emotion.

'Is this battle intent?' Noah wondered as he breathed the air filled with that emotion.

Being with June for entire centuries had taught Noah the different shades that a battle intent could take. June radiated violent happiness when she fought, while Noah leaked cold aggression in those situations.

Instead, the battle intent that filled the valley seemed greedy. It desired something that Noah couldn't guess without any clue. It wasn't even violent, but it appeared ready to explode.

The magical beasts sensed during the descent were inside the tunnels. Those paths were quite deep, so Noah couldn't understand where exactly those creatures were. The same went for Divine Demon. Noah couldn't find him from his position in the valley.

He needed to enter the tunnels and explore that underground world to find his target, and his superior awareness helped him in the task. Noah only needed to walk in front of every entrance and list in his mind those that made his instincts scream louder.

If Divine Demon occupied the area, he would be the strongest being in the entire underground world. That expert was only a human, so it was unlikely that he had learnt to live in peace with those magical beasts. It was more probable that he had submitted them.

Noah activated his robe and entered the tunnel that hid the greatest dangers. His dark matter also spread under his tissues to prepare a first defensive layer in case some fast trap activated.

The exploration went smoothly until the tunnel opened into a large underground hall that split into even more caves. Noah could count more than sixteen paths from his position, but his attention soon went on a figure laid on one of the entrances above him.

The figure belonged to a middle-aged man with long white hair and no beard. A dense aura surrounded his body, and his red eyes illuminated the bottle that he brought to his mouth.

Noah had seen a similar figure in the past. He was at the bottom of an inheritance hidden under the Great Whirlpool near the Coral Archipelago. He could instantly recognize Divine Demon when he saw him.

"We finally meet," Noah said as he performed a bow.

He felt pure gratitude toward Divine Demon. His gesture expressed how deeply the expert's inheritance and his disciples had improved Noah's life.

"I'm thinking," Divine Demon said without turning his head. "I don't talk when I'm thinking. Talk with the dragons."

"Dragons?" Noah asked before a series of draconic heads came out of the various tunnels connected to that large hall.

Chapter 1378 1378. Heir

"Food!"

"Some food!"

"Eat it before the bastard stops us again!"

Noah translated the dragons' roars in his mind as he inspected those creatures. Black scales became visible after those creatures peeked out of their tunnels to fix their reptilian eyes on him.

The same flicker that Noah had seen when he crossed the barrier spread through the walls of the underground hall. A dense membrane covered the entire area, and its properties had kept the dragons hidden from Noah's consciousness while they were inside the tunnels.

'He didn't lose his old habits,' Noah thought as he watched those creatures coming out of the tunnels and revealing their huge bodies.

They were all Fire Dragons, the most common species of dragon-like creatures. They were more than twenty meters long and could morph the flames spewed by their pointy mouths.

The Fire Dragons weren't weak, but they lacked special features that could make them shine among the other species of dragons. They were powerful creatures that didn't have any evident weakness.

'Should I show off?' Noah wondered as those eighteen dragons opened their mouths and spewed scarlet flames that filled the entire underground hall.

The flames raged through the area but didn't cross the membrane that covered the various tunnels. The barrier stopped them from reaching the valley or paths that led to the surface and kept them confined inside that vast hall.

When the flames dispersed, the dragons saw Noah in the same position as before. No damage had appeared on his body, and even his robe was completely intact. He had endured the attack without deploying a single technique.

There wasn't any dragon in the upper tier among that group. A few of them were in the middle tier, but most of those creatures were in the lower tier.

Some of the middle tier dragons were stronger than Noah in terms of progress through the seventh rank, but their flames couldn't even scratch his skin. Noah's body was too strong from those creatures. They would need to use their innate ability and coordinate an offensive if they wanted to injure him.

"The fire does nothing!"

"Attack directly!"

"Tear it apart with your fangs!"

The dragons roared orders that Noah could understand, but listening to them didn't change his approach to the situation. If Divine Demon wanted to test him, he would show him the real power of his heir.

The creatures flapped their wings to increase their momentum as they charged toward Noah. Hungry roars filled the underground hall as that pack converged on him from every direction, but he didn't move even in front at such a display of power.

Noah limited himself to open his mouth and give voice to a deep roar that made the membrane on the walls tremble. The dragons instantly halted their advance by digging their claws on the rocking terrain, and soft tremors ran through their scales as that cry filled their ears.

The roar carried a simple meaning. Noah had ordered the dragons to bow while his pride flowed into his voice. Those creatures couldn't believe their ears when they sensed the aura of a Light-Devouring Dragon filling that cry.

Noah's pride didn't only carry the might of the Light-Devouring Dragons. He had improved his species multiple times already, so those creatures saw in him the ultimate specimen among dragon-like beasts. They had never sensed something so strong through their long lives.

Their instincts acted before they could decide what to do. The dragons lowered their heads, and their tremors intensified when Noah unfolded his consciousness to cover them in his pride. One roar had been enough to tame those creatures.

Divine Demon finally moved his gaze toward the bottom of the hall at that point. Noah sensed that and raised his eyes to exchange a glance with the expert.

His reptilian pupils met those red eyes, and a soft radiance shone from them as their Divine Deduction techniques activated on their own. The inscriptions on Noah's mental walls didn't consume any mental energy. They only lit up when they sensed similar lines inside the expert's mind.

A series of memories came out of Noah's mental sea and shot toward Divine Demon as that stare continued. Those thoughts featured all the events related to Divine Demon, the Demon Sects, and Noah's identity as an heir.

Divine Demon absorbed those memories and closed his eyes to process them. Noah's Divine Deduction technique deactivated at that point, and no adverse effect spread through his mind after that peculiar event.

The expert nodded a few times as he inspected those memories. Various emotions appeared on his face as he studied the events that had followed his ascension.

Noah remained silent out of respect for the expert. Those memories told him about Ravaging Demon's betrayal and all the hardships suffered by his other disciples. Noah didn't dare to disturb him in that situation.

After a while, Divine Demon opened his eyes and revealed a long sigh. His bottle reached his mouth once again, and drinking noises followed that gesture.

The bottle then ended, and Divine Demon threw it at his side before turning his attention back on Noah. The noise caused by the shattering of the bottle echoed through the underground hall as the two began to stare at each other again.

"Noah Balvan, Demon Prince of the Hive, Defying Demon," Divine Demon said slowly, "My disciples have caused you many problems. As their Master, I am ashamed."

"They have been valuable allies for most of my cultivation journey," Noah replied. "Normal cultivators couldn't match the might of the Demons. Your legacy is safe in their hands."

Divine Demon snorted before jumping out of the tunnel. He landed on one dragon and shook his head toward those creatures. The beasts were still bowing toward Noah, and the arrival of their warden made them shake even more intensely.

"They have died because they were weak!" Divine Demon announced. "I can justify only Chasing Demon. The others weren't worthy of their titles if a single betrayal has led to their death."

Noah didn't know what to answer at those lines. Ravaging Demon's betrayal had been so effective because the orthodox sects had access to Divine Elder Tabitha's inheritance. Divine Demon had left his legacy in the archipelago, so the Demon Sects couldn't win that battle.

"I can't read your mind anymore," Divine Demon said, "But I can understand your thoughts. My disciples have no excuses. A defeat is a defeat. I hope that Flying Demon and Dreaming Demon ascend soon so that I can start training them again."

A wide smile appeared on Divine Demon's face at that point. He patted one of the wings of the dragon under him as thoughts on how to punish the surviving Demons filled his mind.

"So, you are a hybrid," Divine Demon said when he focused on Noah again. "Your species might come in handy in the Outer Lands. The Legion is hiding something valuable, but its members won't tell me anything. I wonder what they will say when I show them that my heir is a hybrid."

Noah felt immediately curious about that, but he suddenly recalled the dangerous situation around the region. Boss Van's guild was still ready to ambush Divine Demon as soon as he came out of his lair.

Chapter 1379 1379. Whistle

"Boss Van and his guild are outside, waiting to ambush you," Noah explained when he saw that Divine Demon intended to leave right away. "Does this place have a secret exit?"

"Yes," Divine Demon exclaimed, "But we won't use it. Our enemies have come for us. It's only normal to show them our gratitude."

An intense aura seeped out of Divine Demon's figure after he said those words. Excitement, battle intent, and a tinge of defiance filled the violent mental waves that spread in the underground hall.

The membrane crumbled when it touched Divine Demon's consciousness. He had prepared himself to leave without asking Noah more about the army waiting for him on the surface.

"I will take care of Boss Van," Divine Demon said. "You will handle the others."

The guild had six cultivators in the liquid stage and a few hundred gaseous stage experts. They weren't a force that Noah could take lightly, especially since he lacked experience in battles at that level. He had only fought against Lady Lena since he had reached the liquid stage.

"Can't we plan something?" Noah asked. "We can easily take them by surprise if we use the membrane and some technique."

"We can," Divine Demon replied, "But we won't do it. We will face our opponents head-on and defeat them with our superiority. Stop wasting time unless you want to see the dragons in the upper tier."

Noah's eyes lit up at those words. Divine Demon had access to magical beasts in the upper tier, and that made his hunger awaken.

"Don't even think about it," Divine Demon said after he noticed the changes in Noah's expressions. "I value my dragons. If you want food, you have enemies waiting outside."

Noah felt quite startled at how quickly the situation had evolved. He had come there with Chief Ash and Boss Van less than a day ago, but he was now cooperating with Divine Demon.

"Can you handle Boss Van?" Noah eventually asked when he saw Divine Demon jumping toward the corridors.

"Of course!" Divine Demon exclaimed. "I wish I could face more of him at the same time. These experts who have never experienced the lower plane can't compare themselves to monsters who had overcome every obstacle on their path."

Noah felt speechless once again. Divine Demon appeared confident, and no trace of fear tainted his expression. The expert had decided that he would fight, so he had already prepared his mind for the imminent clash.

"They told me that you deal with multiple organizations," Noah said as he began to follow Divine Demon, who had left to enter a tunnel.

"Many organizations indeed," Divine Demon replied. "The inscription masters in the higher plane are laughable, and the various forces are also quite poorly handled. Most of their members believe that having a rank 8 cultivator in their ranks will save their lives. Pathetic."

Divine Demon felt angry to see that those cultivators weren't doing their best to improve. That went against every fiber of his body. He couldn't forgive cultivators that didn't make use of their natural gifts.

His aura was a mess. Noah could sense an intense desire toward something that he couldn't understand. Divine Demon's individuality appeared quite complicated, but it was completely obscure to Noah's eyes.

"Stop staring," Divine Demon said at some point. "My individuality is the law of the challenge. It allows me to overcome obstacles even when a situation appears doomed. I get stronger by winning basically."

"Why are you telling me everything?" Noah asked, concerned that Divine Demon had already revealed his individuality to certain forces.

"I am the ancestor of the Demon Sects," Divine Demon said. "I have divided the Papral region into two sides, and my disciples have ended up ruling the whole world. I know how to handle these secrets. Still, reaching the top after the whole world has learnt about your abilities sounds like a good challenge."

The flaws of his individuality had already become visible to Noah's eyes. Divine Demon needed challenges to advance, and he made his situation harsher on purpose before a fight.

Noah did something similar when he wanted to quicken his growth, but he would never take his challenges lightly, especially when they could kill him. Divine Demon didn't seem to apply the same carefulness. He charged directly at his enemies once he assessed their power.

"Does your individuality apply only to your battles?" Noah asked. He wouldn't hold back his questions since Divine Demon appeared willing to speak about that topic.

"It applies to everything," Divine Demon replies. "I can overcome challenges even in the inscription field. How do you think I came up with the Copying Technique and Divine Deduction technique? I had to overcome the difficulties of that task."

'He is a maniac,' Noah concluded in his mind. 'Even more of a maniac than June.'

The duo moved through the underground structure and climbed a tunnel that brought them to the surface. Noah inspected his surroundings before peeking out of the terrain, but Divine Demon directly shot in the sky to search for his opponent.

"Van! I know you are here!" Divine Demon shouted after he rose in the sky and found no opponent waiting for him.

Noah ignored Divine Demon's behavior and used his robe to hide among the trees. The expert needed a challenge to improve, but he couldn't force Noah to take the hard path on purpose.

"Fine then," Divine Demon said before bringing his hand to his mouth and whistling.

The air began to tremble after that gesture. Faint soundwaves spread through the sky and fell on the ground as that noise made the fabric of the world shake.

Noah started to run at that sight. He didn't want to end in the middle of an attack cast by a solid stage cultivator. He was strong, but he couldn't survive something at that level.

Craters opened on the ground as that soundwave spread. Divine Demon's dragons came out of the terrain and rose in the sky to inspect the area. They even launched flames to destroy pieces of the forest that enemies were using as a cover.

The flames landed on the terrain right after Noah escaped from the range of the soundwave. Pillars of fire filled his figure and tried to burn him, but his body was too strong for those attacks to have any

effect. Only the two dragons in the upper tier that had appeared behind Divine Demon could hope to damage him.

The dragons transformed the whole forest into an inferno of scorching flames, and most trees burned under those attacks. Those beasts even coordinated to take down the stronger magical plants on the ground.

The flames uncovered large patches of the ground. A dark-blue charred ground replaced the forest as the dragons' offensive continued. Those trees were simply between Divine Demon and his challenge.

A shadow eventually shot out of the forest. Boss Van revealed himself and approached Divine Demon without daring to get too close to him. He remained at some distance as he began to converse.

"I have finally found you," Boss Van said. "Today is the day you die."

"You only needed to send me a message if you wanted to fight," Divine Demon replied. "Petty tactics won't open the path for the eighth rank."

Divine Demon's aura became a bit more intense after those words. He had won that exchange of lines, so his power had increased.

Chapter 1380 1380. Three attacks

Boss Van showed an unsightly expression at Divine Demon's sudden increase of power. He was aware of the expert's individuality since that wasn't their first meeting, but he couldn't avoid triggering its effects.

Divine Demon smiled before bringing his hand to his mouth. Another whistle came out of his figure, and the dragons turned their mouths toward Boss Van at that order.

A series of scarlet flames filled the sky as the dragons attacked. Even the two creatures in the upper tier behind Divine Demon helped in that offensive by releasing fire that merged with their companion's ability.

Boss Van didn't dodge the flames. A soft wind blew out of his figure and fended off the incoming attacks, creating a safe aura around him. Not even the fire in the upper tier could pierce that spell.

Divine Demon whistled again at that point. Dense energy came out of the dragons at that order, and their flames morphed under its effects. The fire that had filled the sky transformed into two massive clawed legs that slashed at Boss Van.

The guild's leader couldn't ignore the dragon's offensive anymore after those creatures activated their innate ability. They were simple magical beasts, but their power wasn't something that he could underestimate when they worked together.

"One month," Boss Van said, and a wave of condensed air blew out of his figure.

Those gales destroyed the fiery legs and continued to fly until they reached the creatures behind them. Most of the lower tier dragons died after that attack, and those in the middle tier suffered severe injuries after the condensed air ripped their scales off.

Divine Demon shook his head as he released a loud sigh. The death of his dragons didn't seem to bother him. Instead, he appeared tired when he saw that scene.

"Do you know how hard is it to find dragons of the same species in the higher plane?" Divine Demon said in a low voice. "I had to explore the Outer Lands for centuries to find these specimens!"

"Why don't you fight me with your power then?" Boss Van asked.

"This battle would be too easy to win if I use my spells," Divine Demon said before sighing again. "I wouldn't improve at all like that. You don't even have the guts to fight me on your own!"

Boss Van's eyes sharpened when he heard those words. Only Noah knew that his guild was there, so Divine Demon's remarks led to a single conclusion.

"I have it!" Divine Demon exclaimed as the redness radiated by his eyes intensified. "Let's make a bet. I will only use three spells. You can have my life if you survive them."

"What makes you think that I will play this game?" Boss Van said, but Divine Demon had already brought his hand to his mouth by the end of his line.

Another whistle resounded in the area, and the remaining dragons dived back into the ground after that order. Only Divine Demon and Boss Van remained in the sky at that point, but the atmosphere became tenser after that event.

Boss Van wanted to add something, but Divine Demon ignored him as he gathered his energy. He turned his palm upward and closed his eyes as his aura spread through the sky.

Divine Demon's aura was intense. It carried his desire to win, and the environment morphed under its effects. The "Breath" in the area gathered around him while its nature changed. That energy featured multiple elements and true meaning before, but it transformed into "Breath" of the water element after it entered Divine Demon's range.

Boss Van's eyes widened. A dangerous sensation had invaded his mind, but it was too late for him. He couldn't dodge the incoming attack anymore. He could only activate another defensive spell.

"One year!" Boss Van shouted as Divine Demon began to raise his palm.

A dense defensive layer made of condensed air seeped out of Boss Van's skin and gave birth to multiple storms. Wild winds shot in every direction due to the power generated by his spell.

Divine Demon completed his gesture while his opponent was busy activating a defensive spell. The ground and the air under Boss Van rose and transformed into a multicolored torrent that crashed on the expert and pushed him high in the sky.

"One year!" Boss Van shouted again while the torrent dragged along its trajectory.

The defensive spell that had formed over his skin became thicker and exploded outward, releasing even more storms in the sky. The dense water of the torrent managed to piece those winds, but Boss Van's technique eventually managed to stop the attack.

Boss Van stopped himself high in the sky. Chunks of his skin had disappeared after the attack, and his appearance had also changed. The faint trace of a beard had grown under his chin, and height had increased after that exchange.

Energy amassed around Divine Demon again. The world's matter seemed to obey him, but that connection wasn't as simple as it looked. He didn't manipulate the "Breath" in the environment. That energy helped him on its own.

It was as if the world wanted him to win and transformed the matter in energy that he could use. Divine Demon didn't use much "Breath" during his previous attack, but the environment had fueled it to increase its power.

Those effects were similar to the dark world. Noah could use his dark matter to boost the power of his attacks and companions. As for Divine Demon, he appeared able to use everything in the world for that task.

"What are you doing?!" Boss Van shouted as he spat a mouthful of blood. "Begin the offensive on this monster!"

The members of Boss Van's guild launched their spells at that order. They had remained hidden inside the forest until now, but their attacks didn't take their opponent by surprise.

The "Breath" of the water element around Divine Demon moved on its own and created a series of whirlpools that protected him from the massive array of spells that had flown toward him. The world didn't want him to lose, so it acted to stop that offensive.

"This doesn't count!" Divine Demon shouted as he glanced at the troops hidden inside the forest.

The intense aura that accompanied his gaze forced those weaker cultivators to stop their offensive. They felt as if they were suffocating when Divine Demon's individuality fell on them and applied its pressure.

"I won't be your opponent," Divine Demon said after he studied what he could perceive of those troops. "My heir will take care of you."

"Heir?" Boss Van asked as winds blew out of his injuries to heal them.

His appearance continued to age as he used his "Breath". His individuality appeared connected with his lifespan, and his body grew after he consumed part of it.

"Him," Divine Demon said as he pointed toward a seemingly random spot in the forest.

Boss Van focused on that spot and saw a hooded Noah trying to sneak closer to his underlings. The attention of the other members of his guild also went there. They didn't fail to notice a figure moving at high speed through the trees.

Noah sensed that the battlefield's attention had moved on him, and a helpless expression appeared on his face as he shot an annoyed glance toward Divine Demon.