

DEMONIC 1431

Chapter 1431 1431. Scales

"On your left!" Don shouted as a massive tail swung under him.

Noah turned toward the tail and shot upward. His body transformed into a black blade that released a trail of chaotic dark matter as it flew high in the sky and dodged the attack by a mere meter.

"Don't make me ruin your scales!" King Elbas shouted as he threw a fiery spear on the giant body of their opponent. "Can't we all pay attention to its skin?"

"I swear," Jordan growled as she kept the creature's mouth shut with the raw power contained in her limbs. "I will kill him if he keeps ordering me around."

Noah returned to his normal appearance when he stopped above the massive crocodile-like creature. He held his Demonic Sword above his head, and flares of dark matter shot out of the blade as it accumulated power.

The blade descended, and a thick slash flew out of it. The attack fell on the creature's body, and scales shot everywhere on the battlefield. However, only a long mark appeared on the beast's back.

"You damn brute!" King Elbas cursed loudly at the sight of the shattered back. "I was going to study them! I will deduct them from your share!"

"Shut up!" Noah replied as Snore and Night came out of his fiendish armor. "We are in this mess because you couldn't suppress your damned curiosity!"

"The eggs were hatching!" King Elbas replied as dense flames came out of his palms and created a warm halo on the reptile's back. Its scales began to reform under the healing properties of the Royal's spell.

"You maniac!" Don shouted as sharp gibbers accompanied his human voice. "Stop healing our opponent."

Pieces of the ground rose in the air and gathered around Don's arm to create a massive hand that he swept toward the beast. The golden halo that was healing its back vanished after the attack, and more scales fell from its skin.

The group had continued exploring the magical beasts' domain after the events in the Void Zone. Still, their travel had been quite chaotic due to King Elbas' unstoppable curiosity.

Noah, Don, and Jordan were hybrids. They knew the rules of the magical beasts' world and had an innate understanding of those creatures. They could easily exploit their flaws and adapt to any environment.

King Elbas was different. He was a human that would rather change the environment than adapt to it. His individuality also prevented him from holding back whenever he found something interesting, so he often caused a mess in lairs that the group had yet to explore fully.

Since the beginning of their travel, King Elbas had thrown himself into four different packs of magical beasts that featured one or more upper tier specimens.

Noah and the others could handle threats on that level since Jordan was with them. The trio in the liquid stage had even defeated one upper tier creature by themselves once. Yet, the crocodile-like beast that had attacked them at that time was far tougher than they had predicted.

For once, Noah knew the species of that creature. It was a Mountain Lizard that had grown far beyond his expectations. The beast was three hundred meters long, and its size didn't affect its agility.

Moreover, the Lizard had an incredible defense due to its tough skin. The fact that it was beyond the half-way mark of the upper tier made its scales almost impossible to pierce for the trio in the liquid stage.

The Lizard also had an annoying innate ability. It could spit a sticky substance that would force even Jordan on the ground for almost a minute.

The creature could kill anyone as long as it hit them with its spit. Its great defense made it capable of enduring any attack while it ran toward its restrained prey and ate it in a single bite.

Jordan had the most dangerous role in that battle. She was the only one strong enough to keep the Lizard's mouth shut, so she didn't hesitate to follow Noah's instructions when King Elbas suddenly awakened the creature.

Destroying the scales was up to the trio in the liquid stage, but their offensive proceeded slowly since the Lizard's skin was too tough to crumble after only a series of attacks.

'I want to try the cursed sword so badly,' Noah thought before launching another massive slash and ordering his companions to start their offensive.

Noah didn't want to reveal his cards with King Elbas among the group. He kept most of his strongest techniques hidden since the Royal could become a potential enemy in the future.

Still, his personal arts were performing well. His movement technique had become fast enough to dodge the creature's fast tail, and his slashes could destroy a few shards with each attack.

That outcome was already great since his opponent was a creature close to the last part of the upper tier. His martial arts fused with the Demonic Form, the dark matter, and his innate ability to create attacks that a cultivator at his level couldn't normally launch.

Even Don felt surprised when he watched Noah. Their attacks seemed to be at the same level, but there was a large gap between their cultivation level. Noah had just left the bottom of the liquid stage while Don was approaching the breakthrough to the solid stage.

'The Shadow Domain would also do great here,' Noah cursed in his mind when he thought about the techniques that he didn't allow himself to use.

Noah bent forward and transformed into a blade as he flew toward the Lizard. Dark matter accumulated in his sword as he built up enough momentum to pierce the creature's skin.

Night flew with him, and Snore wrapped its lower body around the creature's head while it launched its dark beam on the beast's back. The gesture relieved Jordan of some pressure and allowed her to keep the Lizard still.

Sharpness exploded in the area when Noah landed on the Lizard's head. Cuts formed in the sky whenever his aura managed to affect the environment.

Noah found himself on the Lizard's head after the impact. The Demonic Sword had managed to make a small cut on the creature, and he didn't hesitate to fill the wound with corrosive smoke and flames.

Night followed right after. It dived into the wound and cut anything it could before the Lizard's innate defenses forced it to retreat. Noah launched another wave of corrosive smoke and flames at that point, but the creature soon forced him to leave its body.

King Elbas eventually gave up on saving those materials and began to attack seriously. He filled the entire area with fiery spears that rained on the creature's back. His assault was relentless, and he also modified the nature of his flames to be more effective in the fight.

Don created massive limbs that he wore as if they were pieces of armor before throwing his attacks. He didn't limit himself to the ground. Giant metallic hands or arms would cover his figure and release shockwaves whenever he swung them.

Jordan helped in the offensive by spitting scarlet flames. She never allowed the Lizard to open its mouth, and her fire damaged its skin often.

The four were making full use of their numerical advantage. They dragged the fight long enough to make the Lizard fall under their relentless assault.

Chapter 1432 1432. White lake

"I thought you joined us to benefit from our troubles," Don said to a not interest King Elbas, "But you are the only one causing a mess every time!"

"You have the superior awareness of three hybrids at your disposal," Jordan added as she massaged her temples, "But you continue to disregard our evaluations to pursue your interests. I won't forgive you if your behavior ends up killing one of my kind."

King Elbas ignored the two hybrids. A few lenses floated in front of him as he studied the massive Mountain Lizard. His curiosity was so intense that even Don and Jordan gave up on their complaints that began to dissect the corpse.

Noah didn't join that conversation. King Elbas' behavior irritated him, but the benefits that he brought to the group were undeniable. Also, those problems were a normal drawback in that situation. Things could unfold as he wished only when he was completely alone.

King Elbas' knowledge was immense. His expertise covered every field of the cultivation journey, and he often owned methods that surpassed what masters at his level could perform.

He had also stayed true to his role in the group. King Elbas provided habitations that aided the absorption of energy from the environment. He treated the flesh of their opponents in ways that could improve their nutritional value. He even relied on sensors that went beyond what the hybrids' innate awareness could reach.

King Elbas often caused trouble, but he was also the one who gave the most to the group. Noah and the others usually limited themselves to offer their battle prowess to the needs of their team.

Jordan dissected the beast and divided its bodies into four parts. King Elbas received the largest share, but he used his methods to improve the body's quality as a whole.

The group had become used to that procedure by then, so they didn't mind waiting a few months before collecting their share. The benefits given by the process were substantial. Giving up on those free improvements would be idiotic.

Noah dived deeper into the Lizard lair while his companions were busy with the corpse. His knowledge of the magical beasts' field and his superior awareness made him the perfect scout in those lands, and he always performed his task flawlessly.

'Why were you so big?' Noah wondered as he entered a large cave at the center of the mountain that almost covered the entire region.

Mountain Lizards were big, but their opponent's size had been off the scale. Noah guessed that the reason behind that feature had to be in its layer, and he soon found the answers that he needed.

The cave ended with a large white lake that radiated an eerie aura. Noah almost didn't believe what he sensed. Chaotic laws leaked out of the water and created a slimy liquid on that area's rocky ceiling.

The energy carried by the chaotic laws was immense, and the magical beasts could absorb them without worrying about their drawbacks. Those creatures didn't have individualities, so they didn't have to fear that power.

It was harder for cultivators to seize proper benefits from that resource. Chaotic laws broadened individualities, which for divine experts meant an increase in their potential.

Cultivators could lose their way if they kept broadening their true meaning. The raw laws were safer in that aspect since they instantly replicated the existence of the expert who absorbed them.

Everyone would cultivate in the windy regions of the Outer Lands if the chaotic laws were so easy to handle. Still, finding that lake now was something that Noah and the others would definitely exploit.

Noah told his companions what he found before diving into the white lake. His mind instantly entered a peculiar mindset that made him explore all the possible branches where his individuality could expand.

His greed, pride, sharpness, destruction, and creation resonated with those laws and expanded. Countless ideas surged in his mind as that chaotic energy flowed inside him.

When Noah felt that he was about to lose himself, he leaped out of the lake. He then landed on the ground, where his companions were waiting for him.

"You are no different," Don said as a sigh escaped his mouth. "I'm starting to believe that you like to be the scout because it allows you to seize more resources."

"Why do you think I'm doing it?" Noah replied before performing a short laugh.

His situation was the same as King Elbas'. He brought fewer benefits than him to the group, but he was willing to risk his life to explore regions before his companions.

The dangerousness of his task made him untouchable in the eyes of his companions. Even if he happened to take more resources than them, they wouldn't complain.

"I guess it's time to settle for a while then," Jordan concluded as she threw her robe on the side and bathed naked in the white lake.

She didn't glance at anyone, but Noah could sense that her attention was on him. She wanted to see his reaction, but Noah could only think about his recent gains at that time.

The same didn't apply to Don, who quickly imitated Jordan and threw his robe away before diving into the lake. The gesture didn't seem to irritate Jordan since she released an honest laugh before focusing on the chaotic laws.

King Elbas' approach to the white lake was different. He took a series of containers from his space-ring and filled them with chaotic laws before exiting the cave. Once he returned to the bottom of the mountain, he took out two portable habitations and entered the most luxurious.

Noah had become used to that behavior. He entered the second habitation without even thanking King Elbas and quickly started to cultivate.

The walls of the dimension adapted to the type of energy that Noah was absorbing and improved the process by creating pulling forces that targeted any form of "Breath".

Those habitations were far better than the outside world in terms of cultivation speed. They could help anyone training faster, and that was a great feature for someone like Noah.

However, even if his cultivation was going smoothly, his body improved far faster than the other centers of power. Its growth had been rapid in the last period since Noah had managed to get his hands on flew in the upper tier.

That speed was still inside the range of talented divine hybrids, but Noah knew that it was already quite remarkable for him. His body was as perfect as it could get, so growing according to normal standards was incredible.

The group settled at the base of the mountain for years. It was a waste to leave the white lake behind, so they decided to remain there until they exhausted the chaotic laws that it had to offer.

The process took a while since they had to take long breaks from the lake to stabilize their individualities. It wasn't easy to control the broadening of their existence with such an appealing resource near them. It was better to take the training slowly.

Once they drained the lake, Noah and the others resumed their travel. The magical beasts' domain was far bigger than the human side, so they had yet to explore countless lands.

Chapter 1433 1433. Floating island

It was hard to keep track of the passage of time in the Immortal Lands. The white sky never went dark, and each training session could last for decades. Noah and the others were even fighting powerful creatures that could take weeks to kill, so they never bothered to calculate how many years they had spent together.

The travel went smoothly. With Noah as a scout, the group always avoided areas that were too dangerous for their power. Also, most magical beasts were moving toward the regions on the borders, so they rarely met lands occupied by rank 8 creatures.

The number of resources accumulated in that period was immense. Each successful hunt provided many corpses and the materials hidden in their lair. King Elbas' knowledge also allowed them to recognize valuable things that the hybrids would have otherwise missed.

Noah had so many resources that he resumed his mass-production of Instabilities during his breaks. He even started to invent new disposable weapons that could fit better with the Shadow Domain.

His progress in that period was consistent. His body and dantian improved steadily, and he continuously increased the amount of dark matter stored inside his spherical rune to keep the expansion of his mind going. The journey was fruitful, with the only flaw that Noah had to hide his most powerful techniques.

That period also gave him the time to perfect some of his projects. His martial arts and spells needed constant attention, but he grasped the use of the Shadow Domain quite well as he kept training.

Even his experiments with the "embodiment of power" began to show real progress after he spent centuries testing various combinations of energies. Only the matter concerning his new Blood Companion was still at the starting point.

Noah had high standards when it came to his Blood Companions. No magical beast met his requirements since Snore and Night created an almost impossible minimum to overcome.

Even if Noah didn't limit his search to creatures with a darkness aptitude, his research was inconclusive. He couldn't find anything worthy of his existence, but his desire to test the red crystals was slowly taking over his need for another strong asset.

Noah didn't want to create a second Snore. The innate abilities of certain species could go beyond what his expertise could make from scratch. Night was proof of that. Noah had only improved its skill and removed its biggest flaw, but its power came from its species.

The consciousness that the Blood Companion had to have was also an issue. Noah had picked the Albino Snake when it came to Snore because he had confirmed that the creature would be a suitable mind for his creation.

However, Noah now needed a magical beast in the divine ranks, and the creatures at that level could be tricky to submit. They could also try to deceive or betray him since they didn't rely only on their instincts.

Their intelligence went against Noah in that project. It was something that he couldn't avoid when dealing with magical beasts in the divine ranks. It was in their nature to seek freedom, and their level gave them more chances to seize it.

The abilities that his creation would carry were another problem. Snore already featured the best that the dark matter could offer, so Noah wouldn't know what to give to a second Blood Companion made entirely of higher energy.

Noah eventually decided to suppress his curiosity for some more time. After all, he was exploring the magical beasts' domain. His chances to find a good specimen were high, and he had too few red crystals to waste them in pointless experiments.

As they were now, Noah, Don, Jordan, and King Elbas were running away from a pack of Silver Rhinos that featured fifteen specimens in the upper tier.

King Elbas had caused another mess when he saw their silver horns. He had incurred in the pack's wrath after using a peculiar slim thread to sever multiple horns from weaker specimens.

Those creatures could manipulate the ground with their innate ability, and they could perform it at the same time to increase its effects. The group had to run for an entire region before the sky stopped being a mess of large boulders and sharp rocks.

Don and Jordan didn't complain after the escape because their group had never stood a chance against that pack. King Elbas had managed to seize some valuable horns even in that situation, so the others couldn't scold him.

Since they didn't fight, the group soon resumed their journey, but a peculiar sight forced them to stop again. The four saw a massive island floating through the sky and moving in the direction of the border between the two domains.

"Oh!" Jordan exclaimed at that sight. "Come, come. You have to meet him."

Her words were for Noah and Don. She didn't even consider King Elbas in her phrase.

As the group flew toward the bottom of the floating island, a figure slowly became visible. There was a man under the big region. He was carrying the whole structure on his right shoulder.

"Greetings, Lord Wilfred!" Jordan shouted before flying under the floating island to meet the man.

Noah trusted Jordan enough to follow her even if his instincts were beginning him to run away. The man under the landmass radiated a rank 8 aura. He clearly was one of the leaders of the Legion.

"Three hybrids and a human," Lord Wilfred said. "What a strange group."

Noah could study the man properly once he reached him. Wilfred was quite fat, but his arms were as large as a man's torso. He had blue eyes and dark hair, and a short beard grew from his chin.

"The two of us are with the Legion," Jordan explained, "He will join us soon. The human is only an acquaintance."

"Were you trying to reach Eenaln?" Wilfred asked before releasing a proud laugh. "We have already evacuated the city to move closer to the new border. The others should be already searching for a new place while I carry our homes there."

Yellnbel was a city made of buildings that anyone could easily transport, but Eenaln moved together with its region. No one needed to move the buildings since Wilfred was strong enough to handle the job himself.

"We are simply exploring the magical beasts' domain now that the two sides are at war," Jordan continued. "Any news worth keeping in mind from these lands?"

Wilfred fell silent and scratched his beard as he pondered over Jordan's question. Noah's eyes darted between his right shoulder and the island above him. He was afraid that the whole landmass would fall on him if the rank 8 hybrid lost his balance.

"There might be something," Wilfred said. "The Land of the Fallen hidden in the magical beasts' domain has changed rulers after the invasion. The old rank 8 beast wanted human meat, so they only left the weakest in their packs behind. You might find something good there."

Noah's eyes lit up at that point. That was one of his planned destinations, and the political situation in the Immortal Lands seemed to favor its exploration now.

"The new ruler is a creature in the eighth rank, a rat-type magical beast," Wilfred said. "You can't defeat it, but you should be able to handle the peripheral areas of its lair."

Chapter 1434 1434. Respec

The invasion of the magical beasts forced the entire human domain to retreat, but some organizations remained almost unaffected by the event.

Those occupying regions far away from the border didn't need to move. The same applied to the forces that could seal pacts with some of the leaders in the army of magical beasts.

The Crystal City had worked in close contact with many different powerful creatures during its reign on the border. Its location was past the edge of the human domain, in a secret place among areas ruled by magical beasts.

The members of the Crystal City had benefitted for a long time from their unique political position. They were the first line of defense in the endless war against the magical beasts, so the other organizations would often turn a blind eye whenever they engaged in nefarious behaviors.

The other organizations didn't even question their behavior. The Crystal City could basically act as it wished since it performed the most dangerous role in the entirety of the human domain.

That unique position had allowed the Crystal City to avoid losses during the invasion. It had only invested troops on the borders, but the rest of its members had remained in its headquarters, ready to complete other missions that would solidify their status once the two domains stabilized.

The missions mainly involved political meetings with rank 8 magical beasts living near the border or specific regions. The Crystal City needed a network to remain informed about the movements of those creatures.

The best informants were the magical beasts themselves. Only those creatures could truly understand the changes in their domain. Even if those missions went against their belief, the members of the Crystal City needed them.

Apart from the various political missions, the Crystal City also had to handle matters that concerned its reputation. Rebels and enemies had to pay the price for their offense, and Noah had created enough chaos to become one of their most prized targets.

A rank 8 cultivator sat on a throne made of purple crystals. She was beautiful, but her cold expression ruined the grace radiated by her figure. Long brown hair fell on her white robe, and her dark eyes shone on the experts kneeled in front of her.

"My Lord only wants to help, Madame Canson," The cultivator closer to the throne said. "Defying Demon has offended his honor and tainted the great name of the Sailbird family. Lord Ethan knows that he has done the same with the Crystal City. Our visit today is a simple expression of his goodwill."

Madame Canson's expression didn't change. Her eyes didn't even fall on the kneeled cultivator. Still, a figure promptly came from behind the throne and addressed the matter.

"Does Lord Ethan think that the Crystal City can't handle a single hybrid?" Miss Canson said as she stopped at her mother's side.

"Quite the opposite. Lord Ethan has a deep respect for the power that your force wields," The kneeled cultivator replied. "However, you must acknowledge that this Defying Demon isn't a simple hybrid. Boss Van's entire guild lost to him and his powerful friend."

Miss Canson didn't immediately answer that reply. She recalled Noah's cold gaze, and the memory was still able to make a chill run down her spine. The news that he had defeated Boss Van's guild only intensified her fear.

An intense aura filled the hall at that point. The crystals that made the entirety of the room began to shine and reflect a white color. Even Miss Canson lowered her head in front of that pressure. She could only show her utmost respect when her mother was about to speak.

"The Crystal City has learnt about Boss Van's guild long ago," Madame Canson said. "We even know that your Lord only wants to make him pay for a futile loss of face. Don't you dare to compare our hatred to such a petty matter."

The kneeled cultivator didn't answer. He lowered his head even more in the hope that Madame Canson wouldn't kill him in a flare of rage. Part of him even cursed Ethan for the role that he had forced him to play in that matter.

"The hybrid must have returned to the Legion by now," Madame Canson continued. "Finding him is impossible, especially with the border in this state. Even our experts are waiting for him to appear again in the political scene."

"I must contradict you, Madame Canson," The kneeled man said as he mustered all the courage that he was capable of. "Lord Ethan is almost certain that Defying Demon has crossed the border and is currently exploring the magical beasts' domain. Many witnesses have seen his group leaving Silkpost city in the direction of the battlefields."

Madame Canson didn't answer. The Crystal City had an immense influence, but it couldn't gather information about Noah during the auctions since most of its members in that area were fighting on the border. On the other hand, Ethan was free to pay off half of the city to find those clues since he wasn't involved in the battlefields.

"What are you asking the Crystal City to do?" Madame Canson eventually asked.

"Lord Ethan wishes to remind you that he is making this request with the utmost respect," The kneeled man said. "He wants you to use your connections in the magical beasts' domain to find Defying Demon and encircle him. We are simple messengers that he has sent to deliver this request and aid you in every matter that you see fit."

Madame Canson's aura became more intense, and the light radiated by the white crystal became brighter. The rank 8 expert seemed angry, but her expression continued to show no emotions.

"Do you want the Crystal City to use those filthy beasts?" Madame Canson asked.

"The Sailbrird family knows how it works," The man said. "We already have enough food to satisfy ten packs and an extra for the Crystal City. My team is also part of my Lord's gift. He wants nothing more than seeing this matter end quickly."

Madame Canson fell silent, but she soon nodded toward her daughter. Miss Canson stepped forward at that point, and she gestured at the kneeled experts to stand up.

"You will be guests of the Crystal City from now on," Miss Canson said. "We can't reach the deeper regions of the magical beasts' domain, but we will spread the word among our informants. If Defying Demon shows his face, we will deploy our hunting team. You will be free to join it when the time comes."

"We have no words to express our gratitude," The man said before standing up and performing a deep bow toward Madame Canson. "Lord Ethan and the Sailbrird family won't forget this favor."

The troops soon left, and Miss Canson escorted them toward quarters reserved to the most esteemed guests. That treatment was also part of the Crystal City's political approach. Miss Canson had to ensure that the Sailbrird family would remain an ally even after the human domain stabilized.

"Charles," Madame Canson said, and a slender rank 7 cultivator in the solid stage with long blonde hair appeared inside the hall.

"Yes, Madame Canson," Charles replied as he placed a knee on the ground to perform a polite greeting.

"How are our connections with the magical beasts' domain?" Madame Canson asked.

Charles immediately listed what his leader had requested. "We have successfully befriended the giant Crab living in the pond, the hordes of Tigers filling the southern side of the border, and the Rat King, the new ruler of the Land of the Fallen. Who do I need to hunt?"

Chapter 1435 1435. Pond

Noah was aware that the Crystal City was looking for him, but he didn't predict that it had informants among the prideful magical beasts. He felt safe among those creatures since they rarely listened to humans in his experience.

Wilford soon left and carried the giant land away from their sight. Jordan only wanted Noah to see the power of the Legion in that meeting. After all, that leader was one of the strongest hybrids in its ranks.

The group didn't take much time to decide their new destination. A few centuries had already passed since the beginning of the invasion, and they would spend more time traveling. They felt almost sure that visiting the Land of the Fallen was better than continuing their random exploration of those regions.

Noah and the others turned back. They had flown away from the human domain until that point, but their new destination was near the old border. There was still much to explore of the magical beasts' territory, but those lands would have to wait.

The group didn't follow their previous route. They flew in a straight line toward the Land of the Fallen, through lands that they had never explored, and they didn't hold back from visiting each one of them.

Their misadventures soon resumed. Don and Jordan had become so used to King Elbas' behavior that they didn't even complain anymore. They decided to shrink his share of the gains every time he caused a mess.

Noah also learnt to hold back information from the Royal whenever he saw something that could trigger his curiosity. He had started to understand King Elbas' individuality quite well in that period, so he changed his reports according to what he found during his solitary explorations.

The travel back to the Land of the Fallen continued to provide valuable gains. The battle experience accumulated in that period allowed Noah and the others to polish their arts, and King Elbas' methods gave them the chance to grow quickly.

Fruitful years passed as the group continued their long adventure. Their teamwork even improved after a while, but they could show its actual value only when King Elbas agreed to cooperate.

As the border became closer, the group started to sense the violence of the battles in the distance again. Someone was still fighting, even if the invasion was almost over. Still, Noah and the others ignored that battlefield to focus on reaching their destination.

An immense pond unfolded in their vision when they were a few regions away from the Land of the Fallen. Murky waters reflected the white light of the sky and hid the dangers hidden in their depths.

A series of magical plants that featured long roots filled the pond's edges and different magical beasts inhabited the areas around it. Those smaller packs had upper tier creatures as their leaders, and they always avoided the pond during their daily life.

Noah could immediately see that the true leader of the area was inside the pond. His senses also gave him an idea of its power. Only a creature in the eighth rank could make so many upper tier magical beasts scared of some water.

The group quickly decided that they would also avoid the pond, but those murky waters captured their attention when they flew above them. The four of them could sense that the mere hid something valuable. Their minds seemed almost attracted by the faint red light that created small spots on the surface.

Needless to say, King Elbas was the first to approach the pond. He didn't rely on his reckless behavior since he feared the rank 8 creature hidden underwater, but those feelings didn't stop his curiosity.

Eight lenses came out of his space-ring as he floated above the pond and inspected its depths. Murmurs flew out of his mouth as various theories formed inside his mind.

To the group's surprise, King Elbas rejoined his companions instead of launching himself into another reckless battle. It seemed that the presence of the rank 8 beast scared him enough to keep him in survival mode.

The truth behind his behavior ended up being something else. King Elbas did fear the rank 8 creature, but he had also seen something valuable that he couldn't seize on his own.

"I think the bottom of the pond contains many Bloodline Inheritances," King Elbas announced once he rejoined the others. "They seem to be part of the leader's lair. They might even be a crucial feature behind the power of its species."

"Did you manage to understand the species of the leader?" Noah asked as his vertical pupils shrunk.

His greed had skyrocketed as soon as he heard the words "Bloodline Inheritances". Noah couldn't help but desire that resource with the entirety of his existence.

"No," King Elbas admitted. "Those waters carry the aura of the rank 8 leader. They are part of its existence, and my lenses can't pierce it. You need to take a look. I might have a plan to seize the Bloodline Inheritances without alerting the beast."

"How can you have something like that?" Jordan asked. "This isn't a matter that your expertise can affect. Rank 8 creatures are worlds apart from those in the seventh rank."

Don nodded at her words, and Noah also showed a doubtful expression. He trusted King Elbas' expertise and judgment, but he was talking about stealing from a rank 8 creature. It was only normal to second guess the Royal's proposal.

"You hybrids think that your superior senses are unbeatable," King Elbas said before heaving a loud sigh. "Your mental energy carries specific waves that reflect your existence. The same happens with the magical beasts and their auras, but tricking those creatures is quite easy."

Countless ideas surged in Noah's mind, but he couldn't imagine what King Elbas' plan was. There was a limit to how much one's expertise could do, especially when the difference in power was so significant.

"You have cloaking robes capable of hiding your presence," King Elbas said, "But hiding is different from blending. I can create ropes that can blend with the environment and appear as part of the very matter of this area. The only problem is that I don't know the exact nature of the leader's aura."

"Are you sure that you can do this?" Noah asked again.

Noah liked the idea of obtaining Bloodlines Inheritances, but he wouldn't gather information unless King Elbas felt sure about the mission. One mistake could alert the leader and put them in a fight against a rank 8 creature. That couldn't happen.

"Positive," King Elbas replied. "Still, everything will depend on how detailed your description is. The more features you can find, the more accurate my ropes will be."

Noah could only accept the mission at that point. He couldn't give up on a resource that could improve his mind quickly. The Bloodline Inheritances were so valuable and rare that every cultivator would pay any sum to get their hands on them.

Don, Jordan, and King Elbas remained behind as Noah activated his robe and flew above the pond. The Royal even lent him his senses after Noah completed his first round of exploration.

Through the lenses, Noah could inspect the red marks on the surface better. They came from tiny crystals laying at the bottom of the pond, and his mind could almost sense the different wills contained in their insides.

Part of him had almost wished that King Elbas was mistaken, but he had to admit that his evaluation was on point. The pond contained many Bloodline Inheritances, and the group had to find a way to steal them now.

Chapter 1436 1436. Fishing

Noah's knowledge of the magical beasts' field fused with his superior awareness as he studied the bottom of the pond through King Elbas' lenses. The faint red light radiated by the Bloodline Inheritances distracted him, but he didn't forget about his task.

His studies and instincts allowed him to create a few valuable theories about that environment. The environment didn't carry traces of battles, so the Bloodline Inheritances had to be an inborn feature of that mysterious species.

Those creatures had to be very smart and feel intense emotions to give birth to such a spectacle. They also had to die often and control their hunger to preserve the lair.

Many names appeared in Noah's mind. Details of species that he had only heard in legends and old reports came out of his mental sea and created a list of possible creatures that could inhabit that environment.

The Kesier Apes were the most intelligent species he knew, but those creatures wouldn't live underwater. The answer was somewhere else, inside knowledge that his lower plane had never managed to offer.

The faint lights didn't manage to illuminate the pond's bottom, and its murky waters also hindered Noah's inspection. However, the countless clues that he found as he explored that environment eventually led him toward a specific type of creature.

'Can they be crabs?' Noah wondered as the pond filled his vision.

Crab-type creatures were the only magical beasts that fit those criteria. They were relatively easy to kill, and innate weaker power prevented the appearance of restrictions on their fertility.

The only variable that he couldn't confirm was their intelligence. Noah had eliminated other impossible candidates when he created his hypothesis. Crab-type creatures were quite clever among the marine species. They lacked the innate stupidity that often afflicted other stronger beasts.

Once Noah set his mind on a conclusion, he began to memorize the aura radiated by the murky waters. His mind became a vortex that absorbed every sensation released by the pond.

King Elbas needed to adapt his ropes to those creatures' aura, so Noah had to obtain a perfect image to grant him a chance to succeed in the mission. Stealing from rank 8 creatures was something that any rank 7 cultivator would deem as idiotic, but the duo was willing to risk their lives to seize those resources.

An intense joy filled Noah's mind. He felt almost high as those feelings fused with his mental sea and went through a thorough series of examinations.

Noah had interacted with Bloodline Inheritances in the past, and he had even felt the strong emotions carried by the magical beasts. They had always been negative sensations. It was simply easier for them to mark the flesh and blood of their specimens.

That was his first time seeing Bloodline Inheritances created from positive emotions, but that discovery fit his hypothesis. It explained how those creatures had created that environment without having been in dire situations for a long time.

'It feels like a drug,' Noah thought. 'This aura makes me tired but active at the same time. It's an addicting feeling that fills the entire pond. I wish I could taste its waters to understand its true effects.'

Noah and the others didn't dare to touch the pond. The creatures inhabiting its bottom were giving the group the chance to leave the area, and even the rank 8 leader didn't seem interested in them.

However, the pond was their home, so they would probably attack the group if something happened to its waters. Those creatures would protect their lair.

Noah remained above the pond until he felt that he couldn't learn anything else. It would soon be up to King Elbas whether he could seize the crystals hidden at its bottom.

Noah returned to his companions and took out a strand of dark-brown mental waves that he handed to King Elbas. Words were useless in that situation. The Royal needed to feel what Noah had sensed during his inspection.

The Royal took out his portable habitation after he received Noah's conclusions. King Elbas needed his labs to create an item that could help them in that task. Any other place wouldn't give him the same success rate.

Noah, Don, and Jordan flew toward the other side of the pond while King Elbas was busy with his inscriptions. They needed to prepare for the worst, which involved creating a series of traps that could slow down an eventual outbreak of the pack leader.

The trio didn't even think about killing it. The leader was a rank 8 creature. Their attacks would probably not affect it at all. Creating traps was the only possible plan in that situation.

Noah's expertise allowed the trio to create traps that targeted the common flaws of crab-type creatures. They had poor senses, and their legs were easy targets. It was only a matter of exploiting those weaknesses without enraging the leader enough to make it pursue the group to the other side of the Immortal Lands.

Months of preparations went by. Noah and the others dug countless holes in their escape route and filled them with different traps.

The holes near the pond featured the sticky saliva of the Mountain Lizard. Instead, those deeper in lands featured proper disposable weapons that Noah didn't hesitate to place there.

The group even eradicated trees to create natural hindrances. They would use everything they could to slow down the possible outbreak of the leader. Even the shortest delay could help them survive.

King Elbas eventually came out of his habitation and joined the rest of the group. He added many layers of inscriptions on top of the traps, and he gave his companions his creations so that they could inspect them.

Noah found a long golden rope in his hands. The item didn't seem to have anything peculiar. It didn't even appear as an inscribed item, but he could sense that its toughness was off the scale.

Noah placed the rope on the ground, and its color changed. It became azure, like the terrain of the Immortal Lands. Then, he tested in a green spot in one of the nearby areas, and its color changed again.

The ropes did what King Elbas had promised they would do. They fused with the environment and radiated little to no aura. Only a second inspection would reveal their fundamental nature as inscribed items.

After the group completed their defenses, they dug an underground structure to have more chances to escape. Once everything was ready, the four took one rope each and took cover.

"The ropes will naturally attract the Bloodline Inheritances," King Elbas explained. "The longer they remain inside the pond, the more crystals we will get. Still, I don't know for how long they can trick the leader. I simply can't evaluate the power wielded by rank 8 creatures."

"Are we really going to do this?" Don asked.

"I have the best chance to survive anyway," Jordan replied.

"It was about time we messed with rank 8 creatures," Noah added. "I was getting tired of fighting against weak beasts."

After the four exchanged a glance, they threw their ropes toward the pond and ducked. The items didn't even cause ripples on the water. They directly fused with the pond when they touched it.

Chapter 1437 1437. Escape

The ropes didn't make any sound when they fell into the pond. They fused with the water and reached the lake's bottom, where the various red crystals rested.

King Elbas' items released an almost untraceable aura when they touched the azure bottom of the pond. That energy affected the Bloodline Inheritances near the ropes and created a pulling force that attracted them.

Noah and the others could sense what was happening on the other end of their items. They could fill the ropes with their mental energy and gain a vague understanding of the events unfolding at the bottom of the pond.

The crystals moved toward the ropes and fused with their golden fabric. The four could already pull them out to seize some resources, but they left them there to attract more Bloodline Inheritances. They would continue as long as no one noticed what was happening.

Something eventually happened inside the pond. Vague figures swam to inspect the strange event that was unfolding in that area of their lair.

That was the signal that the group was waiting for. Noah and the others didn't even need to talk to decide to retract their ropes before the inhabitants of the pond discovered them.

The ropes left the waters silently and without creating any ripple. Their wet ends returned in the group's grasp in an instant.

Noah could barely contain his excitement. Four different crystals had fused with his rope. They were nothing more than thumb-sized red minerals, but he knew how valuable they were.

'They seem different from normal Bloodline Inheritances,' Noah thought when he inspected the crystals.

It wasn't a surprise that the aura radiated by those Bloodline Inheritances differed from what he had obtained in the Bare Dungeon. Different emotions would give birth to diverse shapes and structures when it came to those resources.

The Worm in the Bare Dungeon felt an immense hatred while crystals on the rope carried an intense ecstasy. That feeling was so dense that it enveloped the group in an eerie aura.

Don almost ate one of those crystals under the effect of that aura. The Bloodline Inheritances were tempting him. They resembled the most appealing drug of the entire world.

"Let's store them for now," King Elbas promptly advised. "The leader or one of its underlings will eventually notice what we did. It's better to gather as many crystals as possible for now."

The three hybrids agreed with his proposal and suppressed their desire as they stored the Bloodline Inheritances inside their storage items. The time to enjoy their gains would arrive, but they had to continue fishing now.

Their ropes flew toward the pond again, but the group decided to change their spot at that time. They didn't move from behind their defenses, but they threw their items toward another area near the shore.

The same thing happened again. The ropes released their auras and attracted Bloodline Inheritances. When shadows began to appear in the group's senses, Noah and the others pulled back the items and inspected their gains.

That process went on for a while. The group had no reason to stop until something bad happened, so they continued to fish Bloodlines Inheritances for an entire hour. Then, ripples filled the surface of the pond, and four ropes hurriedly flew out of it.

"Run," Noah said calmly before turning to escape.

His attention remained behind him, but his body quickly transformed into a black blade that released dark matter as it flew through the region.

His companions reacted quickly. Jordan leaped backward as a pair of scaled wings came out of her back and made her cut through the entire region in less than an instant. Don dived toward the underground structure to escape, and King Elbas transformed into a sea of flames that covered most of the area.

The group didn't need to see the threat to know that it was coming. Even King Elbas' survival instincts had begun to scream when a massive figure rose from the pond and revealed its might to the region.

Noah could see how a giant azure crab came out of the pond unfolded its aura in the environment. An intense ecstasy filled the whole region, and the waters around it reacted to its influence.

The leader had eventually appeared. A rank 8 magical beast had come out of its environment to hunt Noah and the rest of his group.

The crab was almost three hundred meters long. It had four claws that were nearly as big as its body, and eight massive legs came out of the pond as it moved toward the escaping experts.

A series of rotating torrents rose from the pond and crashed on the shore. Golden light immediately filled the environment and tried to blind the creature for an instant. When the brilliance disappeared, the group could see that the first trap had failed.

The torrents had destroyed the entire shore and most of the inscriptions placed there. King Elbas had created more defenses in that area, but the mere attack of a rank 8 creature had blasted them off before they could even activate.

The crab saw the golden flames and didn't hesitate to follow them. Its legs pierced the destroyed shore as they dragged its body out of the pond. Waterfalls fell from its claws as the rank 8 creature left the waters to chase the offenders on land.

When its legs touched spots more inland, other golden inscriptions activated. The area turned golden for a second, and multiple presences that resembled Noah's group filled the environment and tried to deceive the giant leader.

The Crab didn't care about that either. King Elbas was good, but he couldn't deceive a rank 8 creature with his inscriptions. The leader simply walked through them and continued to charge toward the presence of its enemies.

The creature could reach the next region with a simple jump, but something exploded when it bent its legs. A storm of black blades engulfed the Crab and made it stop for almost a second.

The blades moved on their own and carried wills. Noah had developed another type of living weapon in the past years. Those swords had minds on their own, but Noah could control them with his mind.

When he set the trap, Noah had commanded those disposable weapons to slow down his opponents as long as possible. The blades carried wills of lower tier creatures, so they couldn't ignore his orders.

The blade assaulted the Crab recklessly and even focused its joints. Still, they couldn't even leave marks on that tough exoskeleton. Noah's creations didn't have the power to affect a rank 8 creature, but that applied to all his skills. He was too far away from that level.

Even if the blades couldn't hurt the creature, the deep holes created by the explosions made the leader lose its balance for an instant. Also, those detonations triggered a chain reaction that made all the other traps activate.

The area between the pond and the next region fell into chaos. Golden light, explosions, black clouds, swords, spikes, shining lines, and much more filled that piece of land and hindered the leader's advance.

The four soon couldn't see the giant Crab anymore, but they never slowed down. The intense ecstasy that had filled the region was still there, and they had to maintain their complete focus on their mental state to keep escaping at full speed.

Chapter 1438 1438. Noise

A deafening clanging noise came out from the mess that had filled the area near the pond. Noah, Don, Jordan, and King Elbas felt hammers slamming on their minds every time that sound echoed through the environment and reached their figures.

It didn't matter what techniques they were using. The clanging noise hurt their minds and tried to slow down their escape. However, the four mustered all the power in their consciousness to remain calm and focus on leaving the region.

Blood began to flow down Noah's nose. The clanging noise managed to suppress the screaming of his instincts and forced him to use all his focus to keep his movement technique active.

The other experts were in a similar situation. Even Jordan couldn't escape suffering injuries when her opponent was a rank 8 magical beast.

Explosions continued to resound in the chaotic area. The traps continued to detonate, and the might radiated by their power made the sky bend. The four experts had amassed so much energy in that place that even the Immortal Lands were struggling to contain it.

Still, even that might couldn't stop the giant Crab. Its massive figure eventually walked out of the messy area and revealed the source of the clanging sound that was affecting the experts.

The Crab's claws slammed on each other and released that deafening noise. They resembled small mountains as they moved left and right to create those intense soundwaves.

The azure ground began to give in as the soundwaves continued to spread through the area. Cracks opened, and weaker magical beasts died under the pressure radiated by that noise.

A rank 8 creature was a walking calamity, and the Crab expressed its power perfectly. Even if it lacked proper long-range attacks, its soundwaves were capable of inflicting immense damage.

However, the Crab had to accept the reality of the situation when it left the messy aura. Nothing tried to hinder its awareness anymore, but it couldn't sense the auras of its enemies.

The many traps had made it lose no more than three seconds, but that time had been enough for the group to escape from the range of its senses. Even if the Crab wanted to follow them, it didn't know where to go.

The Crab vented on the ground at that point. It slammed its massive claws on the azure terrain and created as much chaos as it could. Some of the weaker beasts in the nearby areas died when the shockwaves radiated by its attacks reached them. Entire packs even left their lairs to escape from the same fate.

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Noah felt weak. He had flown for four entire days, even if his head felt heavy. A faint crack had also appeared on his mental walls, so he was in deep need of rest.

Yet, he didn't dare to stop. He had lost track of the rank 8 Crab for a few days already, but he didn't know how determined to retrieve the Bloodline Inheritances that creature was.

His mind always prepared him for the worst outcome, so he continued to fly for two more weeks before deciding to stop. The crack on his mental walls had slightly enlarged due to his continued struggle, but his condition wasn't as poor as it looked.

Noah cleaned the blood that had fallen from his nose before digging a cave where to recover. His black hole had tried to do its best during the flight, but even that incredible organ couldn't start healing him until he stopped.

Resisting the soundwaves had exhausted Noah. The black hole couldn't heal him until he regained some energy, but Noah could do that only once he rested.

Moreover, the clanging noises that had injured him had carried the Crab's influence. The ecstasy radiated by that creature filled the damage on his mental walls and made him suffer far more.

That aura would also slow down his recovery, but Noah didn't mind spending more time healing. He had obtained what he wanted, and his injuries were only a small price to pay for that.

Noah could finally fix his condition once he sealed the cave with his dark matter. His black hole enhanced his mental sphere's properties and helped transform his mental energy into a substance that could fix the crack quickly.

No mental messages reached his inscribed notebook in that period. The other experts were also busy healing, and neither would move until they returned to their peak condition.

Long months passed, but Noah eventually recovered and began his inspection of the Bloodline Inheritances. Some of them were still on the golden rope, and he didn't hesitate to pick one of the crystals.

'I wonder what you will show me,' Noah thought before placing the crystal at the center of his forehead.

The Bloodline Inheritance melted, and its insides fell on Noah's mental sea. Vague memories and feelings filled his mind as images began to appear in his vision.

Noah saw the murky waters of the pond. They seemed the clearest liquid in the world from his new eyes, and everything appeared perfect from his point of view.

The water gave him life, and a sense of coziness enveloped him. He could feel that someone was protecting him, which made him feel more willing to start living.

The ecstasy continued to fill his mind until his external shell broke. The water fell on his face, but it felt dirty, tainted by the outside world. Yet, he couldn't live without that sensation anymore. That delight was his everything!

Noah turned to see the remains of his red shell fusing with the bottom of the pond. They belonged to the lair now.

Desperation filled his mind when he thought that he couldn't satisfy his addiction anymore, but more red shells soon appeared in his view. A wicked idea appeared in his mind at that point. His ecstasy was within claw's reach. He only needed to stretch it to reach the brothers and sisters that had yet to be born.

Still, before he could even move, a shadow covered the whiteness that seeped inside the pond and filled the bottom of the pond with the intense ecstasy that all the newborns sought.

Noah raised his claws at the sky to worship the shadow. He saw the giant Crab spitting countless red shards from its mouth, and he easily caught one of them.

When the shard entered his mouth, the ecstasy that he felt became even more intense. He was finally complete. Before he could even think about it, he had already devoted his entire life to the mighty bringer of delight.

Noah woke up from the dream at that point. A small smile appeared on his face when he saw that his arms were pointing at the sky. Something similar had happened with his first Bloodline Inheritance, and thinking about it had made him nostalgic.

'A species that reproduces through Bloodline Inheritances,' Noah thought as he laid on the ground. 'What strange creatures. Their crystals don't improve my mind by a lot, but no one would ever refuse this free boost.'

Noah noted the pond's location in his mind before straightening his position and checking his inscribed notebook. His companions had sent him mental messages where they asked him to wait until they divided the goods before using the crystals.

'Too late,' Noah thought as he told them his position and took another Bloodline Inheritance from his separate space.

Inside his mind, he was already calculating how many of them he could use before they began to suspect him.

Chapter 1439 1439. Hunting teams

Miss Canson ran through the corridors made of crystals that radiated a purple radiance when the white light of the sky fell on them. An inscribed notebook flickered in her grasp, and a happy expression rested on her face.

The expert crossed many halls until she reached a small room where a slender cultivator was meditating. The man quickly straightened his position and performed a bow when Miss Canson entered his habitation. He was stronger than her, but he had to show his respect toward the daughter of a pillar of the Crystal City.

"We found something," Miss Canson announced. "The giant Crab from the pond has reported that four humans have robbed its lair. Defying Demon might be with them."

"Was he with rank 8 cultivators?" Charles asked as a stupefied expression appeared on his face.

Robbing a rank 8 magical beast would most of the time lead to certain death. The fact that the four humans had survived meant that their power had to be at a similar level.

"No," Miss Canson replied. "According to the creature, they were no more than smart flies capable of petty tricks. The whole group must be in the seventh rank."

"I can only acknowledge this hybrid's guts," Charles admitted. "I can't wait to meet him on the battlefield. Did the Crab mention where they went?"

"Yes," Miss Canson said happily. "The creature wasn't precise with its description, but we are almost certain that they are going toward the Land of the Fallen. I have already contacted the Rat King. It will notify their precise location once they enter its domain."

"Perfect," Charles replied. "I will gather my team. I will also bring Lord Ethan's team with me. Solidifying our friendship with the Sailbird family can only benefit the Crystal City."

"Are you sure?" Miss Canson asked. "Bringing Defying Demon's head back to the palace should be enough. We should be careful with outsiders. They don't know how many compromises we have to make regarding the magical beasts' domain. They won't understand."

"The must," Charles said as a cold smile appeared on his face, "Or we will force them to accept them."

Miss Canson nodded and left the room before Charles could perform another polite bow. His cold smile vanished after she left, and an expressionless face replaced it.

Charles felt that something was off. Defying Demon had been in the Immortal Lands for less than a millennium, but he had already clashed with multiple forces. He had even found powerful and reckless companions, which usually hinted at something that could make his hunts troublesome.

"A group of rank 7 cultivators that steals from the lair of a rank 8 creature," Charles whispered to himself. "The magical beasts' domain is losing power. The Crystal City will soon have the strength to reclaim those lands."

Charles changed, wearing one of the inscribed white robes of the Crystal City, and left his room. His inscribed notebook appeared in his hands, and multiple mental messages flowed into the item as he walked toward the habitations of Madame Canson's guests.

A slightly disgusted expression appeared on his face when he saw the state of Lord Ethan's guards. The Crystal City had provided them with everything they requested, but they had spent all the time inside the palace drinking wine and indulging in despicable behaviors.

"To think that the other forces still rely on the guilds," Charles said without hiding his disgust.

The cultivators in the habitation quickly straightened their position and cleaned the area before reporting to Charles. The only solid stage expert around them neared the member of the Crystal City and performed a polite bow before waiting for him to talk.

"We have found something," Charles said. "It might be Defying Demon. You will join my team for the hunt. I hope this isn't a problem."

"Absolutely," The man in the solid stage replied, but a doubtful expression soon appeared on his face. "With all due respect, don't you think that bringing your team along is too much? Defying Demon is only a liquid stage hybrid. I have eight soldiers who are at the same level."

Charles stared deep into the man's brown eyes before heaving a sigh. He could see how lightly the organizations that rarely went to war took those situations. That approach was the main reason behind so many rebels.

"Your name?" Charles asked.

"Percival," The solid stage expert replied.

"Very well, Percival," Charles said. "Defying Demon and his group have successfully robbed a lair protected by a rank 8 magical beast. You are also aware of what he had done in the past. I believe that experts at the same level won't be enough to kill him."

"But we are stronger than him," Percival replied.

"Strength is relative in some fields," Charles said. "Defying Demon is a hybrid, so we have to consider the magical beasts around him as his allies. He has already used them to his advantage, and he has no fear in summoning rank 8 creatures because he knows that his chances of survival are higher than ours."

Percival gulped. He wouldn't summon a rank 8 magical beast even in his wildest dreams. He had seen some of those in action, and the memory would remain in his mind forever.

"He also has a strange individuality and unique techniques," Charles continued. "He was in the gaseous stage before entering the Hellish Landscape, but he came out as an expert in the liquid stage after defeating our troops that featured an expert at that level."

Percival could only gulp again. Charles' tone was becoming colder, but his words were on point. Defying Demon had already survived situations when he was at a disadvantage. The best way to ensure the success of their hunt was to bring enough man-power that even the luckiest of the encounters couldn't allow him to escape.

"What do you have in mind?" Percival eventually asked.

"I will take another solid stage expert of the Crystal City with us," Charles replied. "Other liquid stage cultivators will also join. I want this mission to be a crushing success."

"It will be," Percival said. "This team will be stronger than most guilds. I don't believe that he can survive this."

"Good," Charles replied before leaving the room.

The time for words was over. It was time to put an end to the long troubles caused by Defying Demon.

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While the Crystal City activated its hunting teams, Noah and the others regrouped near the Land of the Fallen.

Their destination was on the opposite side of the Land of the Fallen in the old human domain, so they didn't have much information about the area. Still, the main topic of their conversation didn't involve those regions.

"Are you sure that you have only taken eleven crystals with your rope?" Don asked.

"Why would I even lie?" Noah replied.

"I can make a list to answer that," Jordan answered.

"I can add things on that list," King Elbas added.

"Look," Noah began to speak. "I might have used one or two Bloodlines Inheritances, but you can't blame me. We literally travel with a cultivator that can't hold back his curiosity."

"Noah," King Elbas said before heaving a sigh. "We all have more than fifty crystals, and the ropes are identical."

Noah could only show a shameless smile at that line, but his attention went elsewhere when he noticed something peculiar. On a tree near his position, he saw a large Rat writing something on a leaf as it glanced toward his group.

Chapter 1440 1440. Rats

Initially, Noah thought that his recent abuse of Bloodline Inheritances had made him hallucinate. His mind had greatly benefited from those crystals, and he had yet to become used to its new size.

However, it was almost impossible for his superior awareness to fall prey to such symptoms. Noah had a clear understanding of what was happening. His eyes weren't lying to him.

The large Rat wrote faster when it noticed Noah's gaze on it. Its tiny fingers drew lines on the big leaf in its grasp, and its eyes darted among the members of the group.

Needless to say, Noah remained speechless and confused at that sight. That was his first time seeing such behavior in a magical beast, especially since he could sense the Rat's intentions. Its weak mind couldn't hide anything from him.

"No point in dividing them," Don concluded before noticing that something was off.

Jordan and King Elbas also noticed Noah's odd behavior. They had been together long enough to understand when one of them sensed that something was happening. Their auras instantly expanded as they turned to look in the direction of Noah's gaze.

The Rat froze when it sensed the four pairs of eyes fixing on it. Its nose trembled as it pretended to be a normal animal inspecting the environment, but its leaf fell during its act.

The leaf rotated as it fell toward the ground. Its front appeared only for an instant, but the four experts didn't fail to memorize the drawing on its surface. The Rat had depicted a lifelike picture of their faces.

The four expert's gazes returned to the Rat, who froze again. It initially tried to resume its act, but the mental waves that flew in its direction forced it to give up on that approach.

A moment of silence passed before the Rat left its branch to dive toward the leaf. Loud squeals came out of its mouth as its short fingers reached for its drawing.

Noah was the first to react. His body transformed into a black blade that released dark matter when he shot toward the falling Rat. The two met when the beast touched the ground, and Noah's hand shot to seize it.

Surprisingly, Noah failed to take the Rat. The creature sprinted in the distance as soon as its feet touched the ground, leaving him nothing to catch. The beast had even managed to seize the leaf before running away and continuing to release loud squeals.

'How fast is it?!' Noah wondered as he chased the Rat.

The Rat was a simple magical beast in the middle tier. It was two meters tall and covered in brown fur. Tiny pink legs came out of its hair, and two sharp teeth stuck out of its small mouth.

The creature didn't seem special. It even appeared relatively weak due to its small size. Yet, its speed was incredible. It was even able to match Noah's movement technique when it came to raw acceleration.

Noah continued his chase as he translated the squeals in his mind. He was slowly reaching the Rat since he was faster than the creature on the long sprint. Still, its cries didn't make him feel happy about that.

The Rat was calling for help, but Noah could feel selflessness in its tone. The creature didn't want to save itself. It wanted its companions to take the leaf, and it was willing to give its life to complete that task.

It was rare to see that selflessness in the cultivation world, especially when it came to the magical beasts. Those creatures would give their life away only when a leader compelled them to sacrifice for its benefits, but the Rat seemed to have a greater purpose in its mind.

Noah eventually reached the Rat, and his hand didn't fail to seize it at that time. However, a shadow suddenly ran under the creature and took the leaf in its grasp.

'Another one?' Noah shouted in his mind.

Once the effects of the acceleration wore off, Noah could see that the shadow consisted of another large Rat. The creature had heard its companion's squeal and had come in its help to save the leaf.

'Where did it even come from?' Noah wondered as it shot toward the second Rat without letting go of the first.

Noah wanted to interrogate the creatures. Their behavior was too strange, and their species suited what Wilfred had told them about the Land of the Fallen.

Those beasts had to be part of the pack that inhabited their destination. Just like they wanted to understand who they were, Noah wanted to gather information about the Rats.

Noah quickly reached the second Rat, but the same happened. He caught the creature, but a third Rat ran under it and seized the leaf. There didn't seem to be an end to those beasts.

'Enough with this,' Noah thought as Snore's reptilian head came out of his chest and swallowed the two Rats in his hands.

The Blood Companion didn't kill them. It simply stored them inside its massive body made of dark matter for the time being. The Rats were fast, but they didn't have the power to pierce Snore's body.

Noah accelerated at that point. Dark matter flowed inside his black vessels and brought his movement technique to its peak. He reached the third Rat in an instant, and his hand squeezed its neck before it could even squeal.

No shadow appeared. Noah had been too fast. He saw something moving in the distance, but he had arrived before that creature could reach its companion.

"Start speaking," Noah said as roar fused with his human voice.

The Rat released soft squeals as Noah's pressure filled its mind. It could feel his pride and the influence of a creature that it couldn't oppose. If it remained for too long in its grasp, it would spill everything.

The creature struggled to release a last squeal, and everything began to tremble at that point. Noah didn't understand what was happening, but he soon saw the ground under him shattering to fall into a vast underground structure crowded with Rats.

Countless creatures filled the underground structure. Most of them were in the lower tier, but many middle tier specimens also ran among them. They were an army that Noah didn't manage to sense until the ground crumbled.

The underground structure expanded for kilometers. Noah understood that his group had been inside the Rat's domain for a while already. They had already invaded.

The Rats leaped out of the underground structure and swarmed Noah. He couldn't oppose that tide even if he waved his arched fingers to kill as many creatures as possible.

Blood filled his surroundings, but there was no end to the tide. Hundreds of magical beasts used each other as platforms to jump through the air and create a barrier of bodies.

Noah spat flames that incinerated that barrier. Countless Rats died as soon as his flames filled the environment, but those creatures had managed to keep him still for a whole second by now.

When the flames fused with his body and dispersed, Noah inspected the Rat in his grasp. Bite marks covered its headless body, and he found no trace of the leaf in its grip. The other surviving Rats had also escaped thanks to the sacrifice of their companions.