

## **Demonic 1871**

### **Chapter 1871 - 1871. Anger**

Night severed the tentacles from the ground, but those structures detonated instead of dispersing their energy in the area. The fabric carried an ethereal fuel that seemed able to affect the experts' sight, but the formations lit up before Noah and the others could suffer from its effects.

A pale-golden aura that targeted ethereal forms of energy fell in the valley and blocked the dark power spreading toward the mountains. The formations slowly pushed the fuel back into the ground until the entire area returned to normality.

The first exchange between the experts and the ghosts ended quickly. Night and King Elbas' formations had taken care of the enemy attacks in mere seconds.

'Did the old rulers exaggerate?' Noah wondered when he saw how easily his team had suppressed the first attack, but a strange sensation suddenly filled his mental connection and made him search for Night with his eyes.

The Pterodactyl had remained near the center of the valley after severing the laws contained in the tentacle-like structures. Noah could feel that the creature was experiencing intense confusion, but he couldn't understand the source of that emotion. Still, Night didn't answer his mental messages even after he started to shout.

Noah knew how much the mission could mean for his group and his existence in general. Gaining enough time to complete the cultivation journey was mandatory to have a chance to defeat Heaven and Earth. Yet, he didn't hesitate to abandon his position when he saw Night in that state.

Noah teleported next to the Pterodactyl, and his consciousness didn't hesitate to cover the creature. The formations in the area tried to stop his mental waves, but they couldn't do much when Noah was right next to his companion.

His mental waves seeped inside Night's strange fabric and studied its functioning. Noah had created that body and had kept track of every improvement even after it fused with the red crystals. He quickly confirmed that everything was working perfectly, but that only increased his worry.

"Light!" Night suddenly cried while Noah was busy with his inspection.

The Pterodactyl turned toward Noah before transforming into a sharp dot that shot inside his c.h.e.s.t and fused with it. His instincts started to scream in fear at that point, but his reaction arrived even before the black hole could understand what was happening.

Noah had been with Night too long not to recognize its iconic offensive. The Pterodactyl had fused with his fabric to sever it, and he didn't hesitate to stab his fingers in the left side of his c.h.e.s.t and tear apart a large chunk of his flesh.

Night reappeared in the outside world when the gory piece of flesh landed on the ground. The creature promptly pointed its unique head toward Noah again, but hesitation suddenly spread through its mind and made it stop its offensive.

"What?" Night roared. "What does this mean?"

"What did you see?" Noah asked as dark matter filled the hole in his c.h.e.s.t and stopped the blood loss.

"I saw the light," Night replied before pointing its attention to Noah's injury. "Did I-?"

"It doesn't matter," Noah promptly interrupted the Pterodactyl. "Retreat inside the separate space. I might need all of you to understand if I'm under the effect of an illusion."

Noah and Night didn't need to add anything else to understand what they were both thinking. They had shared sensations and thoughts for millennia already. They could basically read each other's minds.

Night had only needed to feel Noah's anger to understand his plan. On the other hand, Noah had comprehended the ghosts' innate abilities after that short exchange, and he had already developed a reckless tactic that would make him face them directly.

The ghosts' energy could tamper with the seas of consciousness, but the experts had already understood that from the old rulers' vague descriptions and study of their current state. Yet, Noah didn't believe that Night could suffer so much after a single attack. The creature had barely touched that dark power, but the event had affected it enough to make it attack Noah.

It was unclear whether his mental sphere could resist that influence better than Night. The best course of action would be to avoid touching the ghosts' dark energy completely in that situation, but Noah felt unable to suppress his instincts.

The mental connection allowed Noah to sense Night's regret. The Pterodactyl had the resolve to die for its Master if the situation required it, but the ghosts had actually made it turn its offensive toward him. It was impossible to describe how angry, disappointed, and depressed it was about the matter.

Noah experienced all of that, and anger inevitably spread from his figure. His bloodl.u.s.t intensified and created a dark-red aura that covered his skin and made his reptilian eyes release a scarlet light.

"That wasn't the plan, Noah!" King Elbas shouted when he understood what Noah had in mind. "You can't face them on your own!"

"I'm not trying to," Noah growled as a cold smile appeared on his face. "I'm just venting here."

"But our formation-," King Elbas started to complain, but Noah quickly cut his speech short.

"I know," Noah continued to growl. "Use me as bait and launch attacks over my body if you need."

King Elbas and the others remained speechless at that statement, but they know Noah well enough to understand that he felt confident in his abilities. Moreover, his flesh was one of the most resilient aspects of his power, so he could endure a few direct attacks as long as they hurt the ghosts.

Noah's emotions appeared on fire, and he didn't hesitate to draw the demonic sword from his c.h.e.s.t. It had been a long time since he had felt so angry, but that time didn't make him forget how to vent it. He only needed the other ghosts to come out so that they could play with him.

Humanoid heads eventually came out of the surface to inspect the area, but blackness immediately covered the valley. Noah launched an attack that leveled the entire region and left only the mountains intact.

The heads shattered in a wave of dense energy since they couldn't survive the attack. The cursed sword had finally reached the upper tier, so its slashes were deadly blows that could kill in one exchange even creatures in the ninth rank.

The valley caved in as the surface shattered and vanished under Noah's offensive. Some of the modified golden patches of ground transformed into black metal as his influence spread, but those effects were only the last of one of the surprising details that appeared in the area.

The shattered ground revealed the countless ghosts hidden under the surface. Noah didn't hesitate to point his swords at them at that point, but his companions suddenly cried and roared inside his mental sphere to confirm that he was committing a mistake.

The black hole quickly filled his mind with dark matter and covered the insides of the mental walls to bring him back to his senses. The scenery suddenly changed, and Noah found himself pointing his weapons toward Wilfred in the distance. He had almost attacked him.

### **Chapter 1872 - 1872. Reckless**

'This is annoying,' Noah thought as the black hole poured even more dark matter inside his mind.

The higher energy didn't stop there. It flowed inside Noah's eyes and ears to enhance his perception as much as possible. It was clear that his other fuels couldn't keep up with the ghosts' abilities. Only his black hole could give him a chance to avoid hurting his friends.

"Do you mind stop pointing them at me?" Wilfred asked while raising an eyebrow and punching the air.

An explosion quickly resounded behind Noah and flung one of the ghosts that had come out of the cracked surface back. It seemed that only half of the scene had been an illusion. Noah had really destroyed the ground and turned part of the environment into products of his ambition. The effects of those creatures had started to affect him only during his last move.

The ghosts didn't have any unique features. They resembled dark shadows that could launch dark energy and give it different shapes. The tentacle-like flares from before were only one of the countless forms that their strange fuel could gain.

Noah's c\_h\_e\_s\_t featured another injury now due to the previous attack with the cursed sword. A cut had opened on its right side, but the blood loss had already stopped. Even the drawbacks caused by a weapon that could achieve power in the ninth rank weren't enough to affect his body anymore.

His base level had become so high that the simple empowerment with the unstable substance was enough to bring his body close to the ninth rank. Noah was a true monster, and he was livid now.

His bloodl\_u\_s\_t filled the shattered valley and made his destruction seep inside the ghosts that were coming out of the broken surface. Multiple black lines appeared on those ethereal dark creatures and marked the flaws in their structure. They seemed pretty unstable as living beings, and Noah could only rejoice to learn that.

"You are with me because you can match my power, right?" Noah asked, and a chill suddenly ran down his companions' spines.

King Elbas and the others didn't even try to complain. They activated defensive techniques as soon as those words reached their ears and prepared themselves to endure the incoming blow.

Everyone in the group had grown used to Noah's reckless character by then. They could understand what was going through his crazy mind after a single glance at his angry expression. They only had to think about the most reckless but most effective approach in a situation to learn what he would do.

Noah felt relatively sure that the scene in his view wasn't an illusion, but he had experienced the same confidence before. He didn't know if the higher number of ghosts had managed to affect him past the shield of dark matter, and he had no way to confirm it. Yet, he trusted his companions enough to know that they would be able to block one of his best attacks after a warning.

Noah was still holding back two of his best attacks because he didn't want Heaven and Earth to develop counters so soon. He would gladly waste them to inflict massive losses on the rulers, but that didn't feel like the right situation.

Still, his normal attacks were enough, especially after the breakthrough of the cursed sword. He could hurt the ghosts, and that was enough for him.

The Demonic Sword and the cursed sword reached Noah's forehead before a pillar of dark matter covered his figure. Faces of his previous stronger opponents filled that wave of higher energy and spread a threatening aura in the shattered land, and a dark halo further enhanced that structure.

Noah's ambition didn't need to enhance much in that situation. He didn't know the actual power of the ghosts, so improving his senses remained a gamble. Yet, those creatures didn't seem to have attacks powerful enough to threaten him, so improving his body felt useless. The same went for his other centers of power since he didn't need a massive discharge of energy. Focusing everything on one attack was everything the battle required from him.

King Elbas voiced countless curses as his hands moved non-stop to protect all the formations in the area. The group had chosen to exclude Divine Demon from the main offensive due to his unreliability, but Noah had ended up taking his place after the ghosts made Night attack him.

It was up to King Elbas to preserve the initial plan from those emotional brutes, but he didn't hold back from expressing his annoyance. He even started to insult his other companions from time to time since he was the only one who could do something about the sudden situation.

His annoyance only increased when he saw that azure energy covered the mountains and fused perfectly with his formations to apply many defensive layers. That azure power also seemed to counter the destructive aura seeping out of Noah's pillars. It was a perfect shield, but that didn't improve King Elbas' mood.

"Don't be so shy about asking for help!" Divine Demon appeared behind King Elbas and started patting his shoulder as the azure energy continued to empower the formations. "Pride is useless when we have a common enemy."

"I swear," King Elbas whispered, "I'm starting to think that feeding you to Heaven and Earth might solve everything in no time. The higher plane won't last a single day with you as part of their existence."

"I've always known that you had great respect for me!" Divine Demon laughed. "No wonder you ended up following my disciple!"

"It wasn't a compliment," King Elbas cursed.

"Of course it was!" Divine Demon continued to laugh, but a sudden detonation of the power accumulated under them forced that conversation to an end.

Noah launched his attack without bothering to focus on the ghosts. His consciousness couldn't sense much in that situation, so he limited himself to attack everything. He didn't care if mountains or friends stood in his way. Everything inside the region had to fall prey to his destruction.

The attack manifested itself as a dense black sea that expanded as the pillar shortened. All the empowered dark matter in that structure fell and spread throughout the area, destroying everything on its path.

A black spot was filling the region and destroying every hindrance it found. It also pierced the bases of the two mountains and came out of their other side. The dark matter even tried to expand over their surface, but the azure and golden glow coming out of Divine Demon and King Elbas' protection made that energy change direction on its own.

Blocking Noah's attacks was impossible. However, the two experts could convince them to change direction. The dark matter basically chased after fabric to destroy, so they only had to make it believe that everything on the mountains was already in pieces.

The black sea of destructive power devoured everything before transforming into dark gales that flowed back toward Noah and sent the absorbed energy toward the black hole. The gains were disappointing, but he didn't care about that aspect of the battle right now.

A strange spectacle unfolded in his senses when he inspected the area. The uneven and shining plain had transformed into a large hole that featured a smooth landmass made of black metal at its bottom.

Only the two mountains covered in the azure and golden halo were standing on that black landmass. The ghosts were nowhere to be seen.

### **Chapter 1873 - 1873. Formation**

'Did we win?' Noah wondered as injuries opened on his torso before the energy absorbed during the last attack healed them in an instant.

The smooth black surface of the metal landmass at the bottom of the hole didn't feature any ghosts, and it even lacked their strange energy. The same went for the entire cavity and the areas past its edges.

Sensing those creatures was hard, but they were out of hiding spots. Noah wouldn't even know where to look for them with the region in that state.

Of course, a counter capable of keeping the old rulers busy for a long time couldn't die after a simple discharge of energy. Actually, it could crumble and fall apart, but it had so many specimens carrying its power that losing a platoon barely affected its army.

Noah's consciousness couldn't sense much, but his instincts warned him about the arrival of a new threat while he continued to inspect the area. His eyes promptly rose toward the sky, where he saw countless ghosts seeping out of the spots that featured the intense storms.

King Elbas and the others had also sensed the arrival of that threat, and their faces couldn't help but darken at the sight of the massive army slowly descending from the sky. The valley had featured less than a hundred ghosts, but thousands of them came out of the storms now.

King Elbas forgot about his bickering and started giving orders. It didn't matter that Divine Demon could surpass his methods with his unreasonable law. He remained the only one to know what the formations in the area did, so he was in charge of changing the layout of the battlefield.

Everyone had abandoned their position after Noah's reckless discharge of power, but they were still close enough to hear and execute King Elbas' orders. They didn't hesitate to take new spots in the area and prepare specific abilities as the battle formation deployed by the group adapted to the new threat.

King Elbas took care of moving the orange brim of energy that radiated the old Heaven and Earth's aura. The expert moved it to the ground and quickly created a series of inscriptions that spread its aura throughout the transformed region.

It was essential to control the direction of the enemy offensive in that situation due to the enormous difference in number and power. The ghosts were peculiar creatures that didn't even seem to have a cultivation level, but their influence depended on the quantity of dark energy they carried, and the army had a lot of it.

The formations prepared beforehand were still in place thanks to Divine Demon's help, but they couldn't cover such a large area. The group had to find a way to draw as many ghosts as possible between the mountains without losing the core of their offensive, but the situation seemed quite dire. The army seemed able to overwhelm them with a simple charge.

Noah, Alexander, Sword Saint, and Divine Demon didn't need orders. They had one role there, and King Elbas could only ask them to benefit the general strategy with their reckless approach.

Meanwhile, Wilfred and Steven had to take care to move the battlefield in the groups' favor. Their pure destructive power was great, but it couldn't match the other four experts. It was better if they focused on manipulating the energy in the area.

Robert had yet to unleash his attacks against the ghosts, but he didn't remain still during the battle. His law could study their targets and improve its corrosive abilities, so King Elbas had created a formation that inspected the dark creatures and sent what it learnt to Robert. That inscription had never stopped working since the beginning of the fight, so the expert's toxic power had reached insane levels.

The expert felt already confident enough to kill many ghosts in a single attack, but he didn't want to waste time sending attacks on an immense army. It was better for him to fuel the formations connected to his power before limiting his offensive to his own power.

The army of ghosts didn't show any emotion as they descended toward the massive hole, attracted by the old rulers' influence. They didn't care about the experts on their path. In fact, they would even ignore them if they simply left.

Noah, Alexander, Divine Demon, and Sword Saint didn't even consider stepping out of that battlefield. The four experts flew higher in the sky until they stood above the two mountain peaks. All the ghosts would converge there. It was up to them to kill as many of them as possible.

"How will they avoid the illusions?" Steven asked when he looked at the four in the sky.

"They won't," Wilfred snorted. "The madmen will go all-out and trust their power. Prepare for the first wave."

"The ghosts are still far away," Steven commented.

"The ghosts won't take part in the first wave," Wilfred explained before glancing at King Elbas on the other mountain when the expert did the same.

Noah and the others higher in the sky couldn't allow themselves to hold back their blows. They didn't know the actual resilience of the ghosts, but they couldn't risk going easy on them.

"Better to die by your hands than theirs," Alexander laughed.

"Don't you have seven different abilities to come back to life?" Noah mocked.

"I really have one," Alexander laughed again before explaining himself better when the three experts turned toward him. "It requires many preparations, and it's worth it only if I'm suffering from a curse that I can't fix. If I die, I die."

"I guess we'll find out who is the strongest among us," Sword Saint smirked.

"Overconfidence is a curse, young one," Divine Demon announced in a deep voice.

"I would need the energy of the world to say that in his situation," Alexander announced before spreading his arms and cracking a joke. "World, give me the power to say such nonsense!"

The three experts next to Alexander laughed, but they all showed cold expressions once the ghosts entered their range. Their dark energy even shot out of their figures to fly toward the group.

The four's auras shot outward as their abilities activated. They all knew that they had to deploy both offensive and defensive techniques at the same time to make sure that their companions didn't kill them in one blow.

Noah wore his usual demonic armor and let corrosive roots cover his figure. Trails of dark matter that depicted faces came out of the two swords in his hands and accumulated power for the next attack.

Azure energy gathered around Divine Demon before flowing inside his body. The expert transformed into a monster-like giant humanoid figure with long nails and sharp fangs. His muscles even bulged to the point when they resembled boulders.

A silver aura covered Sword Saint and surrounded him in a sharp membrane that seemed able to cut every material in the world. A blade even materialized in his grasp, and he wielded it with both hands before pointing it forward.

Alexander glanced at the sky before closing his eyes. The whiteness contained in the environment condensed before shooting toward his figure and filling him with raging energy. A blinding radiance came out of his gaze when he lifted his eyelids.

The four monsters were ready to fight.

### **Chapter 1874 - 1874. Injuries**

Sword Saint was the first to release his attack. The expert swung his silver blade and gave birth to a horizontal slash that clashed with the incoming waves of dark energy and pierced right through them.

The attack didn't exhaust its energy after the clash. It continued to fly forward and explode into a wave of sharpness once it reached the first line of ghosts. The detonation destroyed many creatures, but their dark influence spread through the area anyway.

Noah followed with two diagonal slashes that flew toward the army. The fabric of space shattered and gave energy to the attacks to increase their size. Large cracks that connected the area to the void appeared in the sky before a wave of dark matter engulfed everything above them.

Alexander bent forward before giving voice to a monstrous roar and spreading his mouth to launch a white beam. The attack pierced Noah's blackness and Sword Saint's sharpness to end on the surviving ghosts behind them. His ability was able to reach the army's backlines, and the expert made sure to move his head to disintegrate multiple enemies.

Divine Demon glanced at Alexander and decided to imitate him. His mouth opened and spread until it went beyond human limits. The expert gained facial features similar to Duanlong as azure energy gathered in his throat before shooting forward in the shape of a wide beam.

The four attacks destroyed most of the army's frontlines and even affected its insides, but the ghosts showed no fear. They crossed the sharpness that cut their figures, the blackness that devoured their darkness, and the beams that disintegrated their bodies without showing the slightest hesitation.

Moreover, the energy released by the dead ghosts spread through the environment as it continued to converge toward the ground. That power seemed able to expand toward the orange glow on the surface even in its raw form. It was clear that Heaven and Earth had been thorough when creating those creatures.

Noah and the others couldn't do much to stop that energy. Deploying their abilities to create a shield that could slow it down would leave them open against the incoming ghosts. Also, they didn't know if that power had already affected them, so their eventual protection would put them at risk for nothing.

King Elbas snorted and stomped his foot on the mountain peak to activate a formation at the arrival of the dark energy. A dark-purple halo spread from under him while radiating a specific aspect of Robert's law.

Everyone in the area became able to sense the expert's hatred toward Heaven and Earth at that point. Robert's feelings didn't feature any d\_e\_s\_i\_r\_e for childish revenge or a simple deep grudge connected to important losses. He had served under Heaven and Earth's rule for too long to consider intense emotions enough to express his mental state.



Robert's hatred came from his initial failure. He had tried to avoid falling prey to Heaven and Earth's system with his previous law, but the rulers had eventually suppressed him and forced him to serve as a mere pawn who wielded a fake existence.

Noah had saved Robert from his predicament and had given him a new law that had gone beyond his previous peaks. Noah had even given him a power that naturally opposed Heaven and Earth's fixed system, and his gratitude for that act had fused with his real feelings.

His hatred didn't come from pure negative feelings toward the rulers. His d\_e\_s\_i\_r\_e to pay his debt with Noah back gave him a profound resolve that even Steven, with his law, couldn't reach. Robert would help take down Heaven and Earth but not only because of his hatred. He had to do it to serve his leader.

The fusion of those emotions gave birth to a m\_a\_t\_u\_r\_e form of hatred that enhanced his toxic abilities and made them quite effective against Heaven and Earth even if they had started to develop counters.

The purple halo burnt the dark energy stretching toward the orange glow of the old rulers' aura in no time. That strange fuel couldn't do anything against Robert's law and vanished before it could affect anyone.

Wilfred and Steven took care of sending as much energy as possible toward the dark-purple halo. Wilfred punched the air and delivered palm strikes that exploded far in the distance and pushed the dark fuel toward King Elbas' formation. Steven did something similar, and the two invisible energies worked toward reducing the ghosts' influence.

Robert limited himself to study the entire situation and use the information given by the formations and his understanding to improve the properties of his toxic laws. He was basically honing his true meaning to turn it into the perfect weapon against the ghosts, and the defenses that used his power benefitted from that.

The dark energy didn't manage to reach the mountains and the metal surface due to the joint efforts of the group, but Noah and the others couldn't stop it from engulfing them. Their defensive techniques fended it off, but nothing was clear against that power. As far as they knew, the illusion could have started before their first wave of attacks.

That uncertainty didn't make the four hesitate. Their minds were ready to receive allied attacks in that situation, so they launched another wave of attacks that landed on the army and killed countless ghosts at that same time.

The dark energy tried to spread again toward the surface, but King Elbas had a formation ready for the task. Wilfred and Steven helped, and nothing managed to reach the surface again.

Noah and the others continued to launch attacks without bothering about the potential consequences of their offensive. The army shrunk quickly, and victory even appeared in sight after multiple exchanges.

The ghosts never managed to reach their position. Their attacks were too strong, and their companions always succeeded in fending off the dark aura. That battle had been completely one-sided.

Noah truly believed in what he was seeing, but cries and roars suddenly filled his mind and made the whole world around him shake. The fabric of space started to shatter, but that didn't create cracks that led to the void. Instead, the event opened passages that showed a different version of the battlefield, and Noah felt s\_u\_c\_k\_e\_d inside it when he flew to peek inside it.

Everything suddenly changed, and pain even spread from multiple spots of his body. Noah quickly noticed that his fiendish armor and roots had disappeared, and the same went for his right arm. The Demonic Sword was still inside him, but he didn't have enough free hands to wield it.

Claw marks covered his n\_a\_k\_e\_d waist, and a long burn had appeared on his left shoulder. None of those injuries was too severe for his incredible body, but his expression still darkened when he inspected the rest of the battlefield.

Alexander was floating through the air. His body didn't feature injuries, but he was unconscious. Sword Saint was farther away, and the sharpness that made his law flowed out of the deep wound on his c\_h\_e\_s\_t to fight against the corrosive power that filled its edges.

The ground featured King Elbas sitting on top of a golden cage that contained the monstrous Divine Demon. The expert slammed his head on the shining bars, and cracks opened on their surface, but King Elbas threw a fireball inside it that made his prisoner burn in pain and healed his cage.

Wilfred was sitting on the ground, with his hand on the deep hole at the center of his torso. The injury seemed severe, but Steven was attending him. The expert had multiple claw marks on his n\_a\_k\_e\_d torso, but his wounds appeared relatively stable.

Robert was on the metal surface, at the center of the battlefield. His dark-purple aura shone from his missing leg, but he didn't show any pain. His regret came from the small hole next to him. The formations that contained the old rulers' small brim of energy had vanished.

### **Chapter 1875 - 1875. Reality**

The battlefield was a mess of cracks and destroyed areas. The ghosts had disappeared, but their aura continued to fill the region. Noah felt almost able to smell its peculiar scent while his companions confirmed that he was back into the real world.

'It has been a while since we lost so badly,' Noah thought as the black hole covered the injuries with dark matter.

Noah's first instinct was to laugh. He didn't really care about the old rulers, and all his companions were alive. He had no reason to feel sad over a mere defeat. Part of him even felt glad that the world could still put him in front of challenges.

Those who had fainted slowly awakened as their minds became aware of the situation and activated their centers of power. Everyone learnt about the outcome of the fight at that point, and their attention instinctively converged on Noah.

Almost everyone in the group had suffered deep injuries. They had even lost the piece of the old rulers. The mission had been a complete failure, and the path ahead appeared unclear. The experts usually relied on Noah to develop a brazen plan that could force their power to increase, but he shared his confusion at that time.

The group couldn't bait the ghosts out without the piece of the old rulers' existence. Noah felt sure that the old Heaven and Earth would happily give part of their law again, but he didn't know whether fighting those dangerous creatures so soon was the right move.

The issue was with the lack of solutions to their innate ability. That power felt too troublesome to deal with, and the ghosts were even unsatisfying opponents to defeat. Noah and the others had destroyed many of them, but that feat didn't seem to lead anywhere. It almost appeared pointless.

Noah flew toward King Elbas, and the experts imitated him. The group soon gathered around the expert, and their attention couldn't help but fall on Divine Demon, who was still inside the golden prison.

"Do I really have to break it to get out?" Divine Demon asked while looking at the expert sitting on the golden bars above him.

The expert had regained his normal appearance after his body dispersed the azure energy accumulated inside it. That power had tried to flow back into the world, but the gold bars had burnt it before it could seep past them.

"I want to," King Elbas revealed, "But my hands won't move. Can't you stay inside it for a little while? I think I've never been happier in my entire life."

The azure energy eventually took the shape of ice that spread through the golden prison and froze one of its sides. Divine Demon punched the frozen bars at that point, and they crumbled without opposing any resistance.

"You all are in pretty bad shape," Divine Demon commented after King Elbas stored his cage.

"You are to blame for most of our injuries," Steven snorted before turning toward the four experts who had dealt with the army's frontlines. "Thought you all helped him."

"Did you manage to see the entirety of the fight?" Noah asked.

"Not everything," Steven admitted. "My thoughts become messy after the dark aura filled the surface."

"Same here," King Elbas announced while taking a circular golden disc from his pace ring.

The disc lit up and depicted the previous battle. Noah, Divine Demon, Sword Saint, and Alexander could quickly notice that some parts didn't match their memories. That didn't only involve the images where they could clearly divide the real events from the illusions. Those different scenes started before the first time the dark aura touched them.

The recording continued to show how the four of them had started launching attacks toward each other while they believed to be fighting the ghosts. Everything turned out for the worst after the experts on the ground also fell prey to their effects, but the scenes went through a sudden change once they reached the last part of the battle.

The experts went from attacking each other back to the illusion. The recording played everyone's memories before the images changed again and showed the scenes that had welcomed Noah when he went back to reality.

That recording revealed two scary features of the ghosts' power. It became obvious that the dark aura could affect minds without directly touching them. It was enough to be in its range to risk suffering from its effects.

The second feature was even scarier. It seemed that the ghosts' power didn't only affect experts with mental spheres. It could also influence inscribed items.

That seemingly simple but powerful ability turned out to be far worse now. Some in the group even felt worried about their current situation. They didn't know if they were in the middle of another illusion, and they felt unable to solve their doubts with their abilities.

"How can they affect your recording?" Noah loudly asked. "What's the explanation there?"

His vast knowledge in many fields felt useless in that situation, especially since he didn't know much about King Elbas' item. Its functioning was a mystery, so only the expert could correctly evaluate the type of influence that the ghosts had to carry to affect the golden disk.

"I have a few," King Elbas replied as a conflicting expression appeared on his face.

King Elbas also felt worried about the ghosts' power after seeing what it did to his inscribed item. He had already imagined what it would take to affect the golden disc, and the answer sounded completely unreasonable.

"Does he want to create tension on purpose?" Sword Saint asked since King Elbas remained silent.

"He likes to be dramatic," Divine Demon commented.

"Brutes," King Elbas shook his head while heaving a helpless sigh. "I'm trying to sort my thoughts. We might be able to be in front of something stronger than Divine Demon's law here."

"I like how you use me to measure power," Divine Demon smirked.

"This inscribed item doesn't have a mind," King Elbas explained while ignoring Divine Demon's words. "It simply records what happens around it, which can only mean that the illusions aren't only illusions."

Everyone's eyes lit up before surprised gasps resounded among the group. Some experts directly saw to accept that explanation. The situation was worse than they had initially thought.

"I know for a fact that the ghosts didn't tinker with the disc," King Elbas continued. "I'd be surprised if they knew how to surpass its innate defenses and changed the images in its insides. The issue is with the actual recorded scenes. It's as if the real version of the battle didn't exist at all."

"But our injuries are real," Alexander contradicted. "They must have come from somewhere."

"I think that reality and illusions happen at the same time," King Elbas responded. "Both versions exist until one of them wins and takes roots into reality. The existences affected during the process would obviously maintain their changes, but things like inscribed items would forget about the losing side."

### **Chapter 1876 - 1876. Source**

"Are you talking about actual bending of reality?" Noah asked while suppressing the surprise that was filling his mind. "How sure are you about this?"

"Pretty sure," King Elbas announced. "Our power works against us in this situation. I believe the illusions use the intensity of our influence to solidify in reality. The stronger we are, the more the world will recognize the illusions are the truth."

The concept sounded quite hard to understand. The experts often inspected the battlefield before playing what they recalled in their minds. They wanted to know when the illusions had turned into reality to gain something to study, but that also felt quite hard.

They were trying to find clues in something that didn't exist in their minds and the recording. The injuries suffered after everyone fell prey to the illusion were the only proof of the alternative version of the events, but studying them only gave information about their companions' power.

"Can you counter it?" Noah asked after he felt unable to find a solution to the issue.

Those matters involved the actual flow of reality. They went beyond space and time as far as Noah understood. The fact that they needed external powers to establish themselves as the exact version of the events even vaguely explained that insane ability.

Doubts remained in his mind since strong effects would require a hefty price to pay for their activation. Noah knew that his group had enough power to transform multiple regions at the same time, so it made sense for the ghosts' illusion to become real after affecting them. Yet, it left him confused about the old rulers' situation since they didn't have enough power to offer for the solidification of the new reality.

Nevertheless, his d\_e\_s\_i\_r\_e to understand the functioning of that ability didn't make him forget his goal. Killing the ghosts had the priority. His knowledge could wait for his level to increase.

"I might be able to come up with a counter for myself," King Elbas explained. "However, these illusions can affect different existences on multiple levels. They probably transform themselves to adapt to each target, which makes creating a general counter almost impossible. I would need to know every detail of the entirety of your laws to build something that suits you, and we all know how unreal that is."

A simple description wouldn't work. King Elbas would need to understand the different laws of his companions to make something that could work. However, that would require him to make those true meanings part of his existence. Even thinking about it felt impossible.

"In theory," Noah suggested, "You would lower the effects of the ghosts by becoming immune to their ability, right? You would remove one of their sources of energy."

"I don't know what good that would be," King Elbas sighed. "Two or three of us are enough to make entire regions transform with mere thoughts. Maybe even a single one is enough, and I don't think that you'll come up with counters in the imminent period. We might need to consider abandoning this plan."

Leaving was always an option since the group didn't need that victory. The ghosts were the old rulers' problems. Noah wanted to help to make things harder for Heaven and Earth and justify gaining benefits from the city, but he didn't strictly require that.

The group had only two priorities right now. They had to get stronger and slow down Heaven and Earth's conquest of the world. Everything else was situational, even when it came to tasks that could indirectly benefit their priorities.

"Is there anything we can do?" Wilfred asked. "I don't get the reality talk, but I understand that their illusions need our energy, which means that they don't have much fuel in their bodies. Did anyone find centers of power inside them?"

"I was too busy cutting," Sword Saint replied.

"I didn't sense anything," Robert announced. "They feel like masses of energy."

Noah's eyes lit up at those words, and other experts experienced the same feelings. Some understood that they had failed to notice a simple detail. The ghosts didn't have centers of power, but they continued to appear in the world. Moreover, it was clear that Heaven and Earth had created them that way since their innate ability allowed them to ignore that flaw.

Those details led to an obvious conclusion. The ghosts were peculiar existences, but they still had to respect some general rules about living beings. Their power had to come from somewhere, which probably involved a breeding ground or a special spot inside the chaotic laws.

The experts didn't have to defeat the ghosts. The small amount of energy contained in their figures wouldn't keep them alive for long, so succeeding in taking out the source of those creatures could inflict more damages. Heaven and Earth could easily recreate the eventual breeding ground, but that was fine as long as they wasted energy.

"Can you track them down?" Noah asked while glancing at King Elbas.

"Impossible," King Elbas revealed while shaking his head. "I did use multiple trackers, but they have fallen prey to the illusions. They can't sense the traces of their passage through the chaotic laws."

"We must go back to the city then," Noah concluded. "We can win if we create another trap and focus on putting trackers on them. We only have to make sure not to make the illusions affect the items and were good."

"We don't need to go back," Alexander suddenly exclaimed while covering his right eye. "It's lucky that the effects on my existence remain. You have no idea how many tracking abilities I can use. Some even border proper divination if I pay the right price."

A white aura started to come out of Alexander, but Noah suddenly placed his hand on his shoulder and interrupted the technique. The hybrid shot a confused glance toward him, and Noah didn't hesitate to point at the injuries that the group had suffered during the battle.

"It's pointless to find them now," Noah explained. "Let's rest, recover, and learn from this battle. We can get them after we are back at our peak."

Alexander's resilience was so off the charts that he didn't even consider resting as an option. He could express his peak power even after that defeat, but the same didn't go for his companions, especially the simple cultivators.

The black bottom of the hole was already an area that Heaven and Earth couldn't see, so the experts didn't need to complete many preparations to create suitable training areas. King Elbas even took a few portable ones for those who required special treatment.

Noah preferred to cultivate on the surface and use his flames to heal his body. Taking care of a missing limb was a bother at this current level due to the immense energy required to rebuild his flesh. He had to devour large lands and flatten entire regions just to gather enough power. Still, his condition eventually returned to his peak, and the same happened to his companions.

A few decades spent cultivating preceded the group's decision to leave. None of them could gain a massive increase of power in that period, and Alexander's abilities were starting to lose track of the ghosts. The situation forced them to move, but none of them was against that. Actually, they all wanted payback for their previous defeat.

### **Chapter 1877 - 1877. Relentless**

Alexander had to rely on multiple tracking abilities since the trip forced the group to fly across the raging storms that filled almost the entirety of those regions. The chaotic laws kept interfering with the faint trace of the ghosts that the hybrid was using to lead his friends, so he had to use different techniques depending on what the environment favored.

King Elbas helped Alexander choosing the best tracking ability since his understanding of the environment was unmatched. The two experts had to work together to get the best out of their knowledge and techniques.

Flying through the dense storms never stopped being a strange experience. The raging chaotic laws suppressed the mental waves and made distant areas impossible to see. The experts could see countless true meanings moving around them, but they couldn't feel the progress in their advance. Their surroundings only had winds that blew endlessly.

The years passed slowly in that situation, but Noah's group had grown used to that unique environment by then. King Elbas and Alexander had it harder than their companions since they had to focus on the tracking abilities and the study of the area. Instead, the others could spend their time cultivating. Noah even started giving his everything on the four spheres since the journey appeared endless.

Noah's understanding of the four fundamental aspects of the world continued to increase. Life and death remained the quickest to study, and space followed closely, but time didn't stop being that complicated subject he didn't know how to approach.

Still, Noah didn't feel too disappointed or in a hurry. His study already improved his base abilities. It even gave him new ideas on how to improve, which he desperately needed due to Heaven and Earth's counters. He had yet to reveal two abilities to the world, but they weren't enough against the rulers.

The situation felt even worse when Noah considered his peculiar relationship with Heaven and Earth. The rulers would definitely focus on him once he became strong enough to force their hands. He didn't believe for even a second that they would ignore him to concentrate on other existences.

However, an existence, even one as broad as Noah's, had limits. It expanded and deepened specific fields, but it couldn't endlessly generate new abilities.

Noah's laws had many aspects, but he already expressed them at their best. He had even fused some of them to create threatening abilities, but he didn't know how to expand further.

Part of him believed that his battle prowess had reached the extreme limit of the eighth rank. His law would need to hit the next realm to gain access to meanings that could expand the variety of his attacks or show him new ways in which he could deploy his already incredible techniques.

That belief felt quite reasonable when Noah considered his many achievements. He had been incredible in many fields of the cultivation journey, but only the battles managed to make him express his entire greatness. His battle prowess had been the main aspect that had sealed his position as a monster among monsters.

The journey through the sky eventually led to another area where the storms grew thinner. That spot resembled a dead zone, but it didn't feature the natural absence of winds iconic of those unique regions. The space didn't have lands. The chaotic laws there flowed toward a massive dark structure that floated mid-air and monopolized the energy in its surroundings.

The structure resembled a cauldron with large openings at its sides, above, and below its massive form. Those four holes generated a pulling force that attracted the laws in the area and forced them to condense in its insides as multiple inscriptions lit up on its surface.

The inscriptions created complicated drawings that the group struggled to memorize. Moreover, they didn't seem to stay still. The various lines dug the thick metal surface of the peculiar cauldron, but they ran through its surface as if they were snakes slithering freely on the item.

King Elbas forgot about his mission as he deployed an army of sensors to study the item. Those inscriptions matched the studies that the old rulers had given him, but they appeared improved. He could also sense that they tried to express a specific meaning, but he couldn't understand those details during that short inspection.

Noah didn't let the eerie aura of the massive cauldron distract him from the goal. His senses had noticed something disheartening. His mental waves could reach the structure and understand its level. The group was in front of an inscribed item in the middle tier of the ninth rank.

"Well," Noah sighed while scratching the side of his head, "It's not in the upper tier. It could have been worse."

"It doesn't make this good," Wilfred snorted. "How do you plan to destroy it?"

"Are we even sure that this is the source of the ghosts?" Steven asked.

"It should be," Alexander revealed while uncovering his right eye and revealing its poor condition. "I can't see anything else past this. They must be inside."

"We have found our target then," Noah exclaimed before turning toward Sword Saint. "Do you think you can cut it?"

"Eventually," Sword Saint replied while wearing a faint smile. "How many millennia can it even survive my slashes?"

"I'm glad that we are on the same page," Noah showed a broad smile, and Divine Demon stepped forward to express his d\_e\_s\_i\_r\_e to join that offensive.



"Elbas?" Noah asked while activating the empowerments of his abilities and focusing everything on his attacks.

"Go ahead," King Elbas replied while wearing a frenzied expression. "I'll see how it reacts to a few attacks before stepping in."

Wilfred, Robert, and Steven stepped forward without waiting for Noah to call them. Alexander healed his red eyes and returned it to a normal condition before joining the experts.

Everyone except for King Elbas prepared their best abilities and launched them toward the cauldron. The item didn't seem to have defenses or dangerous barriers, so they didn't hesitate to do their best to destroy its incredible structure.

The attacks illuminated the area and generated intense shockwaves when they exploded on the cauldron. A deep clanging noise spread through the sky and made the fabric of space tremble. The world couldn't endure that clash. The sky began to shatter, but the chaotic laws couldn't fix it since the pulling forces monopolized that energy.

Noah's expression darkened after the mess of energy dispersed and allowed him to see the outcome of the attacks. The cauldron didn't show any mark on its surface. Its inscriptions had continued to move normally, and the structure didn't even tremble after that powerful offensive.

"Again!" Noah ordered, and the experts attacked.

The second wave of attacks didn't do anything, and the same happened with the third, fourth, and fifth offensive. The item didn't budge, but Noah expected as much. The ninth rank wouldn't be so spectacular if a group of rank 8 experts could overcome the difference in power by grouping up.

Understanding flowed inside Noah as the waves of attacks continued to land on the cauldron. His destruction did its best to find flaws in that seemingly seamless item. He felt like staring at perfection, but he knew that something had to appear sooner or later. His group only had to assault it with a relentless offensive.

King Elbas eventually joined the offensive, but his attacks didn't carry the entirety of his power. He was still testing the different reactions of the item, so he made his golden flames gain various features to see how that dark metal behaved.

The experts had enough energy to keep attacking for months. They had an endless number of chaotic laws behind them, so refilling their centers of power wasn't an issue. Noah had to deactivate his ambition from time to time, but he didn't feel overwhelmed by the constant use of his law.

A blinding white light suddenly appeared after the experts completed their first year of a relentless offensive toward the cauldron. A male figure with long white hair descended through the storms and revealed his cultivation level in the gaseous stage. His deep words even resounded in the area as an army of ghosts came out of the cauldron's four openings. "You are really annoying."

**Chapter 1878 1878. Tactics**

The rank 9 cultivator in the gaseous stage filed the area with heavy pressure. Long white hair combed into a simple ponytail fluttered in the winds generated by the chaotic laws. His young face didn't have any beard, and his eyes shone with a green light that seemed to carry white shades.

The cultivator's robe was completely white and radiated Heaven and Earth's iconic aura. The storms seemed unable to make his long sleeves flutter and revealed the presence of inscriptions hidden in their fabric. Moreover, the thousands of ghosts that came out of the cauldron flew toward him and created a dark army ready to obey his commands.

Needless to say, the sudden appearance of the expert left the expert speechless. They expected Heaven and Earth to do something about their interference, but that had happened after only one year of relentless offensive.

The rulers' decision to send reinforcements so soon could lead to two conclusions. The first saw Heaven and Earth willing to invest enough energy to teleport a cultivator on the battlefield to handle the matter because Noah and the others were high-value targets. Instead, the second hinted at the fact that the cauldron was already reaching its limits.

'Did we come close to destroying it?' Noah wondered as the tragic scene unfolded in his eyes.

Fighting the ghosts with the item that could produce them right behind the army felt quite pointless, especially since the cauldron didn't stop absorbing the winds after those creatures came out. Noah's group could end up in an endless battle if they didn't take care of the source of that problem.

Of course, that could only provide part of a solution to the issue, but Noah found no point in falling prey to desperation. He was only thinking of plans that could get him out of that dangerous situation.

Noah had never deluded himself. He knew exactly how strong he was, and he felt able to give a proper evaluation of his friends' power too. His entire group was close to the ninth rank, and all its members had enough energy to launch attacks at that level.

Only a battle against an actual rank 9 existence could prove that their battle prowess had reached the ninth rank, but the experts didn't have the chance to meet opponents at that level so often. Noah had managed to fight Lord Lewis on his own, but that was a mere exception. Still, he believed that they had enough power to succeed in the task, which meant that they could potentially threaten the cauldron.

The experts couldn't do much against a single rank 9 item in the middle tier on their own. Even Noah would struggle to make his destruction understand the flaws in the cauldron's structure. Yet, the situation changed when those eight experts worked together. They could very likely reach the peak of the gaseous stage in terms of pure destructive power.

The cauldron carried another aspect that Noah didn't dare to ignore. The slithering inscriptions were on its surface, on its most exposed part even. He had initially thought that Heaven and Earth didn't bother to build defenses due to the sheer power of the item, but he had started to consider a different possibility now.

Those inscriptions had been so interesting that King Elbas had continued to refuse using his real power for an entire year. Those lines had caused an intense reaction in his curiosity, leaving him unable to stop studying them even after that period.

It was clear that the inscriptions were incredible. The sole fact that they could generate creatures capable of rewriting reality explained their power. Still, that feature didn't speak for their resilience or requirements in terms of the smoothness of their material.

There was a high chance that the inscriptions required a perfectly kept cauldron with a completely smooth surface to generate ghosts. Noah could understand how a small dent could ruin the overall harmony that the item needed to achieve to allow that process.

That would explain why Heaven and Earth had intervened so soon. The rulers had to prevent even the slightest damage from appearing on the cauldron's surface, and Noah's group had probably come close to that result.

'We can put an end to the ghosts,' Noah eventually concluded, but his problems didn't end there.

His reasoning had lasted for less than a second. The cultivator had yet to give orders. His annoyed voice had yet to disperse even. Noah had the time to think about the situation as a whole, but everything appeared quite hopeless even after his recent conclusion.

Noah didn't fear the rank 9 cultivator, but the ghosts behind him were too strange to deal with. A defeat would arrive as soon as the illusions replaced the reality, and Noah had no counter for that.

"Do we run?" Wilfred asked after he completed his inspection of the area.

The hybrid had reached the same inevitable conclusions. The group had already lost against the ghosts, and they had a rank 9 cultivator on their side now. The battle only had one conclusion that Noah and the others didn't seem able to avoid.

"How long can you remain immune to the ghosts?" Noah asked, and everyone knew the target of his words.

"In theory?" King Elbas pondered. "Endlessly. The problem is their aura. It will affect you at some point, and everything will fall apart."

"What if I gave you a place where to keep them busy?" Noah continued.

"Like a separate dimension?" King Elbas asked before a faint smile appeared on his face. "That might work, but the cauldron will create more of them in the meantime."

"So we destroy it before it's too late," Noah announced. "We have a plan then."

Noah and the others had obviously shielded their words with their mental waves to prevent the cultivator from understanding their conversation. However, their intentions were quite clear. Heaven and Earth's follower could see how determination appeared on their faces as they prepared themselves to attack.

"Thank you for not escaping," The cultivator snorted. "I didn't want to chase you through the storms. It would have been too annoying."

"I bet you'll take care of him," Alexander smirked.

"Someone has to keep him busy," Noah confirmed, "And I need to have a complete view of the battlefield to keep the ghosts away. I can't focus only on the item."

"Someone might complain about your greed sooner or later," Robert laughed.

"I'm sorry if a rank 9 inscribed item in the middle tier isn't a worthy opponent," Noah mocked. "I'll see if Heaven and Earth are available next time."

"Tell them to send more of them next time!" Sword Saint shouted as his sharpness exploded outward and pierced the barrier of mental energy before condensing in a silver blade.

"Maybe a spear is better for this task," Divine Demon wondered while scratching the side of his head and closing his eyes to focus on his law.

Part of the storms changed color before converging toward his figure and creating a tall trident that radiated an ominous aura. The experts next to Divine Demon couldn't help but shot curious glances at him. It was surprising to see the cultivator activating the full power of his law without challenging anyone.

The other experts also deployed and prepared their techniques, but the cultivator didn't let them complete everything after the overall power that they generated made him worry. His hand pointed at the group, and the ghosts moved toward them.

The dark army resembled a tainted sea expanding through the white area, but an even darker figure suddenly appeared on their path. The cultivator tried to make them dodge the attack, but ghosts had nowhere to run. Shafu's mouth had materialized around them, and it was blocking every escape route.

### **Chapter 1879 1879. Counters**

Shafu was a living being, so the ghosts could affect it. However, Noah didn't have to worry about separating reality and illusions when it came to his companions since the mental connection would tell him when something was off.

The rank 9 cultivator's eyes widened in surprise when he saw Shafu's massive mouth closing on the entire army of ghosts and bringing them into the separate space inside its body. He didn't sense the arrival of the dragon at all. Noah had relied on the Shadow Domain to make it appear in the area.

Shafu made sure not to destroy the creatures during the process to limit the spreading of their dark energy, and Noah kept the mental connection in check to confirm that everything worked as planned. The ghosts ended up at the center of his companion's separate space without affecting its mental state, but they immediately tried to spread their influence.

The separate space was immense, but it had clear limits, and the ghosts were quite fast. They immediately started roaming through the incomplete lands made of the dark matter inside Shafu's body, and they came dangerously close to their edges. Their peculiar nature even made them able to affect the very higher energy around them, and Noah soon sensed a force trying to take control of his companion's mind.

Noah didn't hesitate. His hand stretched to reach King Elbas, but the expert's shoulder transformed into golden flames when Noah tried to touch him.

The two exchanged meaningful glances at that point. Noah scolded him with his eyes, and King Elbas didn't hide his intense annoyance. Yet, the latter still solidified and gave Noah the chance to grab him.

"Don't hurt my dragon," Noah warned before throwing King Elbas toward Shafu.

The dragon made his figure disappear as soon as he touched the dark matter that made his scales. It was up to King Elbas to handle the ghosts' situation inside Shafu now. Everyone else could focus on the events unfolding in the outside world.

"You never learn, do you?" The cultivator sighed when Shafu's figure returned inside the Shadow Domain.

The cultivator took a white thorn from inside his large sleeves and stabbed it in the fabric of the world. Cracks in space appeared around the spot where the weapon had pierced the sky, and they spread until they covered the entire area. They were so fast that they crossed Noah and the others before they could do anything to dodge them.

Still, the cracks didn't seem to aim for them. They were looking for a specific type of space, and they found it all around Noah and through most of the area that separated him from the cauldron.

The cracks spread until they became large enough to make enough pieces of the sky crumble at the same time. A dark world unfolded in everyone's vision as the whiteness fell, but those fissures didn't end up leading to the void. Instead, they uncovered a separate dimension that contained Shafu and a few hundreds of Instabilities that Noah had put inside the Shadow Domain before attacking the ghosts.

The sky remained stable in the spots that didn't have the Shadow Domain under them. It seemed that the white thorn was one of the counters made for Noah's techniques, and its effects ended up being exceptional.

"Heaven and Earth know your techniques," The cultivator announced while storing the thorn and picking something else from his sleeves. "They even believe that you are holding something back. Why don't you do all of us a favor and reveal what you have developed in these years?"

The cultivator took a flask filled with a shining white liquid and unsealed its lid before tilting its edge. The fluid started falling toward Shafu, and the dragon instinctively roared at that substance.

Noah reacted differently at that sight. He could sense his black hole shake in fear when his focus converged on the white liquid. It seemed that Heaven and Earth had created something meant to counter his higher energy.

"You can't fight the world," The cultivator laughed. "We will always be one step ahead of you. You can devel-."

The cultivator stopped speaking when he saw that Shafu vanished all of a sudden. He didn't sense any energy running through the area, but that immense dragon had disappeared without leaving any trace.

"Your understanding of space has increased," The cultivator eventually announced as he turned to show a smile toward Noah. "It's how we feared. You might be a suitable successor to those annoying dragons. How is the study of time going? I bet it must be your worst subject."

Noah didn't say anything at those comments. He limited himself to show a cold expression as his attention moved from the spot of the uncovered Shadow Domain where the liquid had fallen and his separate space.

Shafu was safe inside his separate space. Noah had managed to teleport the creature directly into his storage technique since it was still connected to the Shadow Domain. Still, the cultivator had been correct. He couldn't have teleported something so big and at such distance so quickly before his study of the dragons' spheres.

Noah had even left a brim of dark matter in the spot of the Shadow Domain targeted by the white liquid. The fluid's effect turned out to be as he feared. His higher energy simply fell apart and transformed into primary energy when the first white drops fell on it.

Alexander and the others turned toward the cauldron at that point, but the cultivator didn't like that. His hand rose toward the group and started amassing white flames, but two black slashes suddenly filled his vision.

However, his robe lit up before the slashes could land on their target. Noah saw the sharpness contained in his attacks vanishing right before the impact. His techniques crashed on the cultivator in the form of clouds made of dark matter and darkness that didn't have any specific meaning.

"We had also improved our counters," The cultivator revealed as the pressure radiated by his flames dispersed the dark cloud that had enveloped him. "You always fight with experts stronger than you, so it's enough to remove one aspect of your law from your attack to render you harmless."

The white flames shot forward after the line ended. They crossed the sky in an instant and almost landed on Robert, but a figure appeared in front of him and shielded him from the dense bullet.

Robert's eyes widened when he saw Noah's fuming figure standing in front of him. Anger filled his mind, and his aura expanded in the environment, but Noah raised a hand to stop him.

"What are you doing?" Noah asked in a chilling voice. "He has attacked you because he knows that your law can counter the ghosts. You can't join this battle."

"We can help," Alexander responded.

"Elbas can't keep the ghosts at bay for long," Noah explained as a layer of dark matter covered his front and filled the injuries caused by the flames and the previous slashes. "My mind will be at risk once they manage to leave Shafu, so we have to make sure to destroy this item before that. Leave the cultivator to me and focus on your task."

### **Chapter 1880 1880. Tricks**

Noah didn't use an overbearing tone when giving his orders, but his companions could only focus on the pride that leaked out of his figure during the scene and add intensity to his words anyway.

The experts could barely help themselves in that situation. They couldn't see Noah's front, but he had just endured the attack of a rank 9 cultivator with his bare chest. The two swords in his hands covered his figure with an ominous aura, and the smoke released by his charred skin highlighted his innate pressure.

No one dared to say anything after his order. The group shot toward the cauldron and resumed their relentless offensive. They even tried their best to make their attacks converge on the same spot to maximize their destructive effects.

All of them had reached Noah's conclusions. Even those who couldn't understand much became aware of the cauldron's flaws after listening to the plan. They could connect their offensive with the sudden arrival of Heaven and Earth's follower and move their focus on damaging the item.

The cultivator couldn't help but follow the group with his eyes before gazing at Noah again. His broad smile remained on his face, but something had changed in his overall aura. It seemed that his confidence had taken a blow.

"The cauldron can last for entire millennia under such a weak offensive," The cultivator scoffed.

"Me too," Noah growled as the fiendish armor covered his figure.

"Do you plan of being my punching bag for a few millennia?" The cultivator laughed before raising his hand and creating a mass of white flames.

Meanwhile, his free hand went inside his sleeve to pick another flask containing the dangerous white liquid. The expert didn't hesitate for even a second before picking another counter.

'Do I really have to reveal something?' Noah wondered as some hesitation spread inside his mind.

Shafu was busy containing King Elbas and the ghosts, so Noah only had one trump card at his disposal. Yet, he didn't want Heaven and Earth to learn about it already. He would rather reveal his final slash once he could cause substantial losses in the rulers.

On the other hand, death was an outcome that he had to avoid. Noah didn't feel threatened enough to go all-out, but he didn't want to risk falling for traps that would make the entire mission fail.

Also, stalling didn't benefit him since the ghosts would eventually overwhelm his group. King Elbas might be able to contain them for a long time, but more of them would soon come out of the cauldron, and Noah couldn't put them inside Shafu with the cultivator's interference.

Defeating the cultivator and taking care of the battlefield without external influences was the best option, but Noah didn't know if he could succeed. Still, he had the chance to test his limits for a few exchanges before it would be too late to make up his mind about an approach.

His time spent with the four dragons' spheres deepened the features of his law connected to space, creation, and destruction. The problem was that his abilities didn't evolve with those improvements. They had only experienced slight improvements that only involved their sheer power.

'Let's see if these counters can keep up with me,' Noah thought before disappearing from his position.

The cultivator smirked before throwing the flash behind him. Noah materialized in its trajectory, and the item exploded before threatening to cover him with its dangerous fluid.

The helmet of the fiendish armor opened and allowed Noah to spat his flames without mixing them with dark matter. His fire burnt the liquid easily, but the energy that it brought back to his body damaged his

flesh instead of healing it. Moreover, it continued to carry the white fluid features, so the layer of higher energy that covered his figure opened in multiple spots.

The cultivator didn't let that chance go to waste. He threw the mass of flames that had accumulated above his figure, and the fiery attack reached Noah in an instant.

Noah was still busy dispersing the toxic energy injuring his flesh, so he couldn't dodge the attack in time. However, a wave of dark matter shot out of his figure and ignored that holes opened in its structure while it clashed toward the incoming flames.

The black hole had acted on its own, but that turned out to be a mistake. The dark matter tried to use the abilities of Noah's flames to absorb energy from the cultivator's technique. Yet, more toxic aura ended up flowing inside his body. It seemed that the entirety of the expert's existence could counter Noah.

The dark matter around Noah eventually vanished as the effects of the liquid continued to spread. He tried to restore his armor, but he discovered that the white fluid had left a trace of its aura on his skin which continued to activate its power. Noah found himself unable to keep higher energy above his skin, and even his Demonic Sword had to give up on using that power while it remained in his grasp.

'This is annoying,' Noah thought before the cultivator's sudden movements claimed his attention.

The rank 9 expert didn't shoot after Noah right away. He turned toward the cauldron and pointed his arm at the experts launching attacks relentlessly.

An annoyed expression appeared on the rank 9 cultivator's face when he launched his flames and saw them exploding before reaching their targets. Noah appeared among the dispersing white fire and made sure to let the attack go over most of his skin.

The white fire left large red patches on his figure. Some denser patches of fire even succeeded in digging through his skin and reaching his muscles, but that amount of damage was nothing for Noah.

"What are you even doing?" The cultivator asked once Noah started chasing after the dispersing flames to let them burn more parts of his skin.

The answer to his question arrived quickly. The cultivator's expression grew solemn when he saw the fiendish armor covering Noah's figure again. The latter had used his opponent's attack to remove the effects of the white liquid. He could protect his skin with dark matter again.

'This won't do,' Noah thought while making sure to irritate his opponent by making the fiendish armor wear a devilish grin. 'I can't even start attacking in this condition. What limits should I even test?'

Noah felt sure that the cultivator could counter all his other known abilities. After all, the expert could already deal with some of his best attacks. It felt only normal that his companions couldn't do anything either.

'How is it going down there?' Noah asked through the mental connection.

Shafu played his thoughts inside its separate space and filled the battlefield where King Elbas was fighting the ghosts. His eyes were bloodshot, and pieces of his body transformed into golden flames from time to time, but he seemed to be alone and without opponents.



The situation was quite different from how it appeared. King Elbas didn't have problems dealing with the ghosts since they were pretty weak without their illusions, but their auras had remained in the separate space around him.

King Elbas was slowly disposing of the aura, but the process had started to affect him. He couldn't even ask Noah to push it outside of Shafu since the battlefield had to remain clear of illusions, so he was only doing his best to endure that situation.

"You should worry about yourself!" King Elbas shouted when Noah's voice resounded inside the separate space.

'That's the issue,' Noah revealed. 'I can go all-out, but it might take a while to defeat him anyway. I need to know for how long you can survive.'

"Is he so strong?" King Elbas asked in a surprised tone.

'He is quite weak actually,' Noah explained, 'But he has items meant to counter my abilities. I need to show something new to defeat him.'

"Why bother?" King Elbas snorted. "Just throw someone else at him. Alexander should be perfect for the task."

Noah fell silent, but a curse resounded in his mind. He suddenly realized that pride had played a trick on him. It had made him believe that he would lose control of the battlefield if he didn't fight against the cultivator, but that assumption didn't reflect the truth.