

Demonic 1961

Chapter 1961 1961. Insults

"Are you even taking this seriously?" The woman asked as a tinge of anger seeped into her voice and made the golden protection flash multiple times. "I've earned more titles than you can count, but my name has remained unchanged throughout history. I'm Jane, the rulers' voice, and I won't let a puny cultivator insult me."

The shield covering King Elbas' consciousness began to shatter, but all the orbs that still surrounded his figure fused with that golden halo to empower it. Jane's voice failed to affect his thoughts even during her angry outburst, but the sheer power revealed in that situation stated how strong she was.

"A true inscription master has to test every theory!" King Elbas proudly announced before focusing on the expert. "So, what about Divine Architect? Did Heaven and Earth deceive her as soon as she ascended in the Immortal Lands?"

King Elbas ended up being correct again, but that didn't feel too surprising for Jane. Divine Architect had ascended only some millennia before the expert. That time wasn't enough to make her disappear from the historical records, especially when Heaven and Earth had acknowledged her power.

Something else had to happen, and King Elbas guessed that the rulers had recruited her right away. His knowledge about Divine Architect mostly involved her fame as an inscription master. He couldn't learn much about her history even after seizing the historical records of the previous Royal Families.

Moreover, Divine Architect was a recluse, an outcast. She only cared about her creations, but the entire world still looked for her to commission specific inscribed items. King Elbas saw her as a unique artist while he was more practical in his approach to the inscription methods.

"She didn't hesitate to choose the whole truth of the world," Jane explained. "Her love for the inscription method is purer than your dedication, but that's also her limit. Heaven and Earth believed that you could have surpassed her peak with the right guidance, but alas."

"Why don't you bring her down here to test me?" King Elbas snorted. "Now that I think about it, why didn't you invite me right away?"

"Heaven and Earth wanted to test a different approach with you," Jane responded. "Needless to say, it failed."

"You are strangely secretive for someone willing to give so many answers," King Elbas commented. "What is it? Did the rulers hide some big secret in Divine Architect's existence?"

"I think it's time to put an end to the questions," Jane stated while placing a hand at the center of her chest. "You have learnt what you needed to learn."

"Did you hope to clean my existence through words?" King Elbas laughed, but he felt forced to concentrate when Jane shouted.

A high-pitched cry with the power to seep into the fabric of space and make the whole world tremble came out of Jane's mouth and crashed on King Elbas' consciousness. The latter had to retract his

thoughts as soon as part of his golden shield started to shatter, and his inscribed items shot forward to defend him from the incoming soundwave.

The power carried by Jane's cry was immense. She would have shattered the very sky if her existence weren't part of Heaven and Earth's system. Still, that same connection allowed her attack to converge on King Elbas without losing energy.

A golden radiance filled the sky as countless inscribed items detonated once they touched the invisible soundwave. They couldn't do anything against an attack with power in the liquid stage. Everything crumbled before converging toward King Elbas to create a new shield.

King Elbas relied on the same technique deployed against the swarm of flying cockroaches. He used the power released by his destroyed inscribed items to create something stronger capable of defending him from the incoming threat.

The shield lasted long enough to make King Elba's teleport away from the zone affected by the soundwave. He reappeared high in the sky, among the storms, and he didn't hesitate to take out a golden vortex that sucked the chaotic laws in a large area.

Jane laughed when she saw her opponent running away, and her voice created multiple soundwaves that took the shape of currents. King Elbas found twenty different torrents of power converging toward his position, and he promptly threw the vortex toward them before detonating it.

Another golden halo filled the sky and gave time to King Elbas to escape. Jane seemed to have the upper hand in the battle, but the golden glow in her opponent's eyes began to worry her after he dealt with another soundwave. She had yet to touch him, and he wasn't even relying on his new power.

"Are you planning to run away forever?" Jane asked, and her angry remark created an invisible wall that seeped into the whiteness and flew toward King Elbas.

The wall was too vast to dodge, but King Elbas was done running away. He had gathered enough data about Jane's world. The jelly-like sphere appeared in his palm, and a small knife came out of its fabric.

The weapon appeared as the densest item in the world. King Elbas didn't hesitate to wield it before pointing it toward the incoming wall of sound.

The soundwave reached his position, but a hole appeared in its structure when it touched the knife's tip. King Elbas could pass inside it easily and gather even more data. His weapon shattered, but a new one came out from his jelly-like sphere.

King Elbas drew a short sword that carried dark-golden shades and slashed it toward Jane. The gesture didn't seem to generate any effect, but the cultivator suddenly saw a long wound opening on her torso.

The cut wasn't deep, and no blood came out of it, but Jane's eyes still widened in surprise. The attack didn't try to affect her flesh. King Elbas was aiming at her world, and he had almost succeeded in hurting it.

"I thought I asked for someone who wasn't a brute," King Elbas mocked. "You can use nice words, but your behavior isn't any different from my companions. I wonder why Heaven and Earth have even decided to add you to their collection."

Jane knew that King Elbas was taunting her. He needed to discover more of her power to improve his creations and build something capable of affecting her world, and she wasn't stupid enough to give him what he desired.

Jane resumed her offensive based on simple soundwaves, and King Elbas could only perform multiple escape maneuvers to dodge the incoming attacks. He had defenses that could stop those attacks, but they would consume too much power and a lot of his stash. He preferred to continue his studies and develop something that could kill her once and for all.

His opponent had long since understood his plan. Jane limited herself to increase the power of her voice and faint a few attacks in the hope of catching King Elbas unprepared, but she soon accepted that she had lost her chance to obtain those results. Her opponent now knew how to recognize her energy, so tricks wouldn't work.

Of course, Jane could still aim to exhaust King Elbas since his higher energy couldn't compare to her liquid stage "Breath", but the approach would require a long time, and her opponent could develop something capable of hurting her in that period.

Jane didn't change her battle tactic even if she knew about the drawbacks that it could cause, and King Elbas ended up acting before her. He seized a piece of the jelly-like sphere and threw it into the sky, where it expanded to give birth to a separate dimension illuminated by his golden light. His opponent didn't stop her offensive at that sight, but she soon noticed that no word could escape her mouth there.

Chapter 1962 1962. Summon

The separate dimensions created by King Elbas didn't only block sounds. Something so simple couldn't work against existences who had elevated their laws into the shape of worlds, even if that power came from Heaven and Earth. He had to go deeper and build something meant specifically for Jane to make that ability effective against her existence.

Jane tried to speak a few more times before bringing her hands to her throat. She then checked her chest but only confirmed that everything was working perfectly. The issue was with the world, but that discovery didn't bring any happiness. It only proved how King Elbas could create promising prototypes of her counters in a matter of a few exchanges.

Jane instinctively opened her mouth to compliment King Elbas, but she limited herself to smile when she recalled that no sound could come out of her. The expert had locked out her power.

King Elbas didn't believe that defeating a liquid stage cultivator could be so easy, but he didn't waste that chance either. He raised his hand and created a mass of flames that took the shape of a giant reptilian head that he didn't hesitate to throw toward his opponent.

The reptilian head gave birth to fiery scales as it flew across that quiet area. The creature transformed into a massive serpent that slammed on Jane's figure and made the entirety of its flames flow on her. It didn't explode. Instead, it contained its power so that more of it could hit the cultivator.

King Elbas stared emotionlessly at the scene. He sensed his flames burning flesh and energy, but the event didn't make him happy. He wouldn't let emotions affect his judgment before actual data reached his mind.

The flames unleashed their power and dispersed, revealing the charred figure under them. Jane had transformed into a gory corpse, but she was still alive. Her world remained unaffected because King Elbas' energy didn't manage to affect her existence.

The charred figure revealed a gory smile as new flesh replaced the burnt skin, muscles, and organs. Jane soon regained her enchanting aspect, but her smile remained ugly, at least in King Elbas' vision.

King Elbas might have isolated her in an environment where she couldn't use her power, but that didn't make him able to kill her. His attacks lacked the depths necessary to affect her world, which was everything when it came to a battle at that level.

King Elbas' eyes glowed with a golden light as countless thoughts filled his mind. His normal abilities appeared useless in that situation, and the same applied to most of the inscribed items in his stash. Attacking was pointless if he couldn't hurt his opponent, and his consciousness struggled to find something that could work there.

His only idea remained the jelly-like material, but he had already used it multiple times in his battles against Heaven and Earth's followers. They would eventually find ways to counter it as long as it remained in its imperfect form, and King Elbas didn't want to end up without his trump card.

King Elbas had already proven that his attacks could reach the middle tier in terms of power. The liquid stage was basically at that level, so he knew that he could hurt Jane. The issue in that approach was with the amount of material required with each ability. He would almost need to go broke a few exchanges.

His space-rings and other storage devices had entire factories built inside them. King Elbas would never run out of inscribed items as long as he had enough materials to feed to those techniques, but the problem was exactly with that matter. He was facing Noah's issues. The Immortal Lands weren't able to offer him a satisfying number of resources to fuel all his creations.

Jane's smile broadened when she noticed that King Elbas hesitated to come up with a decision. She eventually shook her head and began to fly toward the edges of that unique separate dimension to leave those restrictions.

The event forced King Elbas to disregard his plans and tactics. He had always felt proud of his ability to be prepared for everything that the world dared to throw at him, but it seemed that the cultivation journey was forcing him to forsake that feature.

Golden light shone inside the separate dimension as King Elbas took out the entirety of his inscribed items. Some had almost reached the middle tier on their own, but they exploded into waves of flames anyway.

The sea of flames quickly condensed to give birth to a nine-headed hydra that entangled its long necks around Jane. The expert felt the need to escape those flames, but the creature radiated multiple pulling forces that made her unable to run away.

That power was odd. The different pulling forces and the various destructive properties contained inside the flames clearly belonged to multiple items. They even seemed to fight each other to prevail, but the lingering aura of the hydra forced them to cooperate by the time they expressed their power into the outside world.

Jane found herself burning, and that sensation reached far deeper than her simple skin. Her existence was on fire. Those flames were threatening her very world, and a mere rank 8 cultivator was the reason behind that damage.

The woman tried to gaze at King Elbas while the nine reptilian heads opened their mouths and pointed them at her. She wanted to see his victorious face and compare it to her memories of Divine Architect, but she remained stunned when she caught a glance of her arrogant opponent.

King Elbas wasn't smiling. He didn't even feel proud about the power he had generated with his inscribed items. Nothing mattered for him unless he saw actual results.

Jane sighed in front of that scene. She felt a deep respect for Divine Architect, so she loathed King Elbas for ruining his chance to reach the same state. Still, the battle could only have one outcome if it continued like that.

Jane acknowledged how her existence had a deep flaw that King Elbas could exploit in the creation of counters. She was part of Heaven and Earth's system, which gave her similar features to every other follower.

Her world obviously was completely different, but King Elbas could use the similarities with the other experts to quicken his inspection and develop counters in no time. He could even work faster than Heaven and Earth for that exact reason.

Ways around that power existed. Some involved exhausting King Elbas' resources. Others saw him against multiple experts who had complicated worlds. However, Jane believed that even those tactics had a chance to fail, especially after she had witnessed the events connected to Sword Saint's breakthrough.

Jane could only think of a path that had to ensure King Elbas' death and resolve quickly filled her eyes. Her existence intensified until it reached a critical point that the flames consuming her didn't hesitate to worsen.

The massive power gathered inside her figure hurt her world but gave her a small opportunity that she didn't hesitate to seize. Jane managed to perform a short shout, and the soundwaves that she released destroyed the hydra around her and the separate dimension at the same time.

The attack didn't hurt King Elbas at all since he had put enough distance from his opponent. He prepared his jelly-like sphere to unfold the unique separate dimension again as he waited for his consciousness to inspect Jane's state. Still, he stored it when he realized how deeply the recent attack had hurt her.

Jana appeared pale, and her throat was in pieces. The damage spread to her lungs and world, which affected the amount of power she could muster in that situation. She would normally need millennia of seclusion or Heaven and Earth's help to recover completely, but her priorities didn't involve either plan.

"Divine Architect," Jana whispered as blood came out of her injuries. "I summon you to deal with this arrogant challenger."

Chapter 1963 1963. Be

King Elbas couldn't help but feel excited. He knew that the new danger shouldn't make him happy, but his existence shook in ecstasy at the sole thought to have a face-off with the inscription master that Heaven and Earth had personally recruited due to her talent.

The expert even forgot about his initial goal. The ninth rank was important, but satisfying his curiosity came first. Those two features obviously shared a deep connection, but King Elbas wasn't in the right mental state to consider that point. He only wanted to see where his expertise stood in front of the seemingly best inscription master in the Immortal Lands.

The whiteness radiated by the sky intensified after Jane's announcement. King Elbas saw how the chaotic laws fused with the light to establish a mental connection capable of linking those areas with the depths of the white layer.

A vague but heavy aura seeped out of the mental connection and spread throughout the sky and made King Elbas shake in surprise. That power belonged to the very peak of the cultivation journey. It carried the pressure that only a solid stage cultivator could wield.

"Why did you contact me, Rulers' Voice?" A deep female voice resounded in the sky.

King Elbas memorized every detail of that voice, and his study was so accurate that he even managed to sense the vague annoyance felt by the powerful expert. Divine Architect didn't like to be interrupted.

"I'm fighting the expert that Heaven and Earth had initially appointed as your replacement," Jane explained while performing a bow toward the sky. "I must admit that his power is too troublesome for my simple law."

"Laws don't need to be vast to grant you access to the inscription methods," The voice stated. "You are simply brutes looking for immediate gains. Don't blame your opponent's power when you can't defeat his techniques."

King Elbas' eyebrows arched in surprise when he heard the exact words he usually used to describe his companions. He didn't see anything about Divine Architect, but he felt already confident in the fact that the two of them were similar. That conclusion felt even noticeable when he considered that Heaven and Earth had wanted to recruit them both.

"Your disciple is ashamed," Jane exclaimed while performing another bow.

"You have never been my disciple," Divine Architect corrected. "Why should I waste time teaching others when I have yet to gaze at the full potential of my talent?"

"I would be the first in line for your teachings once you achieve the true peak," Jane responded.

"There is no true peak," Divine Architect snorted. "You follow Heaven and Earth, but your gaze stops at the peak of the ninth rank. You must strive further to reach the levels under that."

"Is it wise to talk about this with our opponent here?" Jane asked while glancing at King Elbas in the distance.

The interest in King Elbas' eyes was evident. He had even planned to make copies of everything he was hearing and seeing. Jane had given him the chance to witness a proper inscription master in the solid

stage. That alone was enough to arouse his interest. The fact that the expert was a legend in his Mortal Lands was only another detail that intensified those feelings.

"You must tread on unwise paths to uncover what no one else has uncovered," Divine Architect commented. "Isn't that right, Xavier Elbas?"

"Did you just check Heaven and Earth's records to learn my name?" King Elbas asked in a vague mocking tone.

"Of course," Divine Architect revealed. "Existences like me can't bother to keep track of every promising cultivator that appears in the higher plane. Though I acknowledge your talent. I'm not surprised the rulers wanted to replace me with you."

"Doesn't that make you mad?" King Elbas questioned as real curiosity seeped into his voice.

"Why?" Divine Architect asked. "All I ever wanted was to create freely, and Heaven and Earth have given me that. They can replace me as far as I care. I will just go back to continue my experiments elsewhere."

"They won't let you go away so easily if I were to replace you," King Elbas announced.

"I'm the best inscription master that has ever stepped into the Immortal Lands," Divine Architect sneered. "I have created countermeasures that are as deep as Heaven and Earth's existence."

"How do you know that they will work?" King Elbas asked.

"Because I alone stand at the peak," Divine Architect declared, and a humming noise came out of the sky as if to confirm her statement.

"That's a lot coming from a slave who sold herself to gain resources," King Elbas tried to taunt the mighty expert.

"You founded your knowledge of the sky on hypotheses born from brutes with vague intuition," Divine Architect uttered. "Jane has told the truth. You had lost your chance to overcome my current peak when you decided to let Noah Balvan taint your existence."

"Or maybe I am striving to touch a realm that your mind can't even comprehend," King Elbas smirked.

"Are you talking about the final energy of this system?" Divine Architect asked. "That's a flawed path. I've also walked it in the past only to confirm how impossible it was."

"Your words are empty when spoken from among Heaven and Earth's light," King Elbas laughed.

"You are right," Divine Architect responded before more chaotic laws fused with the intensifying light. "I have no time for you. I would even need to break many regulations concerning fairness and my position here if I were to teleport there. Still, I have perfect opponents for you."

King Elbas showed a curious expression as he waited for the new opponents to fly past the connection. Three humanoid figures eventually materialized out of nowhere next to Jane and unfolded their unique auras.

King Elbas' eyes didn't linger on their slightly tall shapes, clawed hands, and featureless faces. Their different shades also didn't interest him. His consciousness immediately inspected the nature of their fabric, and what he discovered left him speechless.

The three puppets were mere inscribed items in the middle tier, but they carried different versions of the energy that King Elbas had used to create the hydra that had fought against the flying cockroaches. Those golems were the result of experiments that strived to reach the final energy.

"I stopped there," Divine Architect explained. "I found no point moving forward since it's not possible to create energy capable of containing every form of power. It's unreal, to say the least."

"What if I were to surpass your previous peak in the field now?" King Elbas asked. "Shall we make a bet?"

"Do you need materials so desperately?" Divine Architect asked, and King Elbas limited himself to fall silent as he tried to maintain a cold expression.

"It's not a secret for me," Divine Architect reassured King Elbas. "I've glanced at countless inscription masters, promising and non, but they all incur in the lack of materials eventually. Of course, I didn't have to go through that."

"I am desperate for materials," King Elbas admitted in a desperate attempt to bring the situation into his favor. "Let's make a bet."

"What can you even offer me?" Divine Architect asked. "A bet must be fair."

"You can have my existence if I lose," King Elbas announced. "I believe you know how valuable it can be to you."

Chapter 1964 1964. Desperation

Jane didn't fail to notice how Divine Architect actually considered that offer. She didn't expect her to be interested in the law of a mere rank 8 cultivator. Her attention converged on King Elbas' calm and resolute figure, and respect inevitably appeared in her eyes.

King Elbas didn't only talk with a peak rank 9 cultivator as if it were a regular occurrence. He had also led the conversation toward topics that interested him.

The lack of materials was a curse that most existences with vast laws were bound to experience. King Elbas wanted to use Divine Architect to fix that issue, but he didn't have much to offer in exchange. His most valuable asset was the same feature that Heaven and Earth had acknowledged. He was willing to separate from the law that the rulers had considered more promising than their best inscription master.

King Elbas liked to be prepared for everything, but the ninth rank wasn't something he could approach safely. His existence didn't allow that. He had seen what his companions had to accomplish to succeed in the breakthrough, so he knew that the process would be even harsher for him.

Alexander had to overcome millennia spend with a flawed existence to find his real self, and Sword Saint had to resort to powers that lived outside the sky. King Elbas considered his potential above those two, so his breakthrough would have to involve even more dangers. He didn't know if the three puppets would be enough, but the threat of losing his existence would definitely help.

"Why are you so determined to fight Heaven and Earth?" Divine Architect asked. "Is that the reason behind your apparent superiority? Is your rebellious character increasing your potential?"

"You live to create," King Elbas explained. "I am alive because I learnt to create."

Silence fell again. Those simple words carried the entirety of King Elbas' existence, but they sounded like an exaggeration to Jane and Divine Architect.

Heaven and Earth's followers could study everyone's life due to the historical records of their leaders. Jane and Divine Architect could gain access to the story of King Elbas' journey with a simple thought, so they had learnt about his suppression and achievements.

King Elbas had to overcome the previous Royal Family before reaching the peak of the Utra nation. He had to step on the sixth rank in secret and use his expertise in the inscription field to overcome the previous rulers.

His efforts didn't end there. His world had monsters, a god, and countless threats, but he had still succeeded in reaching its peak. The worldwide effort against King Elbas didn't work either. He had proven himself to be the best in the Mortal Lands, but he wanted to do the same in the higher plane now.

However, his personality had changed during his stay in the Immortal Lands. King Elbas had acknowledged that other incredible existences lived right next to him.

Divine Demon, Sword Saint, Noah, and Alexander were unreasonable monsters who could shatter the limits of specific fields to create new paths that King Elbas couldn't even consider. It had eventually become apparent to the expert that his expertise included many areas, but not all of them. He could be the best in one of the broadest paths of the cultivation journey, but not in all of them.

That acceptance didn't scale back his expectations. It had actually increased them. King Elbas knew to be the best, so his personal path had to be incredible and far vaster than the others. It felt almost normal to reach those conclusions after living for millennia among monsters who kept breaking limits.

However, those who could inspect his existence from the outside saw something very different. Divine Architect's inspection even went deeper than what other experts could understand due to the similar path that she had trodden.

King Elbas wasn't the best. He had forced himself to be exceptional in some fields through sheer determination and hard work. He didn't innately understand inscription methods. He had to learn all of them and perform countless tests to reach a decent level of expertise.

Divine Architect could understand that King Elbas' power didn't come from his curiosity alone. The source of his exceptional power wasn't even the striking arrogance that forced him to stand above others. King Elbas was a deeply desperate existence who kept pushing his whole being into unreasonable fields just to match the monsters that surrounded him.

His desperation had eventually brought him to approach an impossible field. King Elbas wanted to succeed in creating the final energy, a substance so powerful that it could become the perfect source of energy, material, and fuel at that the same time. That description alone explained how unreasonable something like that was.

"I finally understand what Heaven and Earth see in you," Divine Architect exclaimed after reviewing King Elbas' life countless times in the span of a single second. "Your potential is above mine, but only for the rulers' requirements. Your desperation makes you easier to control."

King Elbas frowned. His entire life had proven the exact opposite. He couldn't understand how Divine Architect could reach those conclusions.

"They would have promised you the chance to gain access to the final energy," Divine Architect explained, "And you would have worked for them endlessly since that path has no conclusion. A perfect fuel doesn't exist, so you would have sold yourself for a lie."

"The inscription field can't always follow existing rules," King Elbas responded as his expression turned serious. "I've seen it happening with my own eyes. The limits of the inscription fields exist only for those who can't go beyond them."

"You have mistaken the power of some existences for the potential of the inscription path," Divine Architect sighed. "It's pointless to speak with such a deluded man. These puppets will show you how flawed your understanding is. I will improve your existence once it falls into my hands."

Jane's body lit up as the mental connection forced her to teleport into the sky before closing. King Elbas remained alone with the three humanoid puppets unleashing their intense aura into the world. They didn't move, but they were ready to charge at him.

King Elbas also remained still. He knew that his opponents would charge ahead as soon as he moved. He could use that time to study his opponents safely, and he wouldn't throw that chance away.

The three creatures felt familiar. King Elbas actually felt excited to see how their imperfect versions of final energy shared similarities with his jelly-like sphere.

That proved partially proved his theory. Two different existences that had used very diverse materials had managed to create fuels that shared a few identical features. That would be almost impossible in other projects since slight differences would always appear due to multiple factors.

The path to the final energy enveloped everything, so even its imperfect prototypes could show some of its incredible features. The similarities were one of them.

Resolve eventually filled King Elbas' face. He raised his palm and let his jelly-like golden sphere shine on the three puppets. A storm of information flowed inside his mind during that short inspection, but the three golems started to move at that point.

The puppets didn't immediately charge at King Elbas. They studied the golden radiance and used it to adapt to its power. Pale-yellow shades took over their natural colors and made it unable for the expert's energy to inspect them further.

Chapter 1965 1965. Tactics

A battle of inspections unfolded. The three puppets studied the golden glow to counter King Elbas' jelly-like energy, and the latter transformed to do the same.

The shades of both prototypes changed multiple times as the process continued, but the three puppets seemed to be faster than King Elbas' energy. Their higher power gave them the chance to reach

conclusions before the jelly-like sphere. The expert had to take out multiple items to enhance his thinking speed and help his creation, but he eventually fell behind.

That temporary inferiority made the three puppets unleash their attack. A bright yellow light shone out of their figures as they shot ahead and destroyed the golden halo with their sheer influence. Their speed was incredible and made them appear in front of King Elbas in less than a second.

The golden sphere in King Elbas' palm shrunk as the puppets destroyed its golden halo. The three creatures' aura had transformed into a poison that naturally consumed the jelly-like item's power and slowed down its transformations. He saw his inspection falling behind even more, but he couldn't address the issue since his three opponents materialized around him and prepared themselves to launch attacks.

King Elbas had to place the sphere inside his chest before exploding into a sea of flames. The three puppets waved their claws in his previous position, and the bright yellow light they released created a hole in that golden array.

King Elbas managed to dodge the attack and reform higher in the sky, but a huge hole had appeared on the right side of his chest. Flames came out of his injury and kept his shoulder in place, but his expression revealed how dangerous the attack had been. The three puppets had managed to deal a massive blow to his reserves of energy.

The puppets didn't halt their offensive. They immediately turned toward King Elbas and charged ahead to reach his new position in no time, but he raised his palm to show the latest version of his jelly-like sphere.

The dark-golden halo radiated by the prototype of his final energy shone on the three puppets and forced their offensive to stop. They had already raised their claws, but that darker aura hindered their functions and put an end to their attack.

King Elbas used that chance to sever part of the jelly-like substance and throw it toward one of the puppets. His prototype of final energy fused with the creature and dispersed inside its fabric. It imitated its structure perfectly and transformed into a tumor.

The puppets adapted to the dark halo in that short second. Their light grew brighter and allowed them to complete their attacks, but King Elbas resorted to his golden sea to escape again. He reformed even higher in the sky, but he revealed how another hole had appeared on his torso.

King Elbas had the chance to dodge the puppets perfectly every once in a while. However, that approach couldn't lead to victory. He had to sacrifice his fuel to seize the few chances when his final energy surpassed his opponents to have a chance to win.

The three puppets weren't mere masses of flawed final energy. They didn't initially carry intelligence, but they developed it since King Elbas kept dodging their attacks.

That new feature allowed them to understand King Elbas' tactics and develop countermeasures. The three puppets stopped attacking at the same time and alternated their offensive to make sure that one of them would always continue to study their opponent.

King Elbas saw his rare openings vanishing. He had previously used the time when the three puppets were busy attacking to get ahead of their transformation and create something that could hurt them. However, his plan had failed after infecting only one of them.

King Elbas didn't give up. He severed his figure to create multiple copies that used the final energy to replicate his existence. The puppets couldn't find the expert's true self in those conditions, but they quickly destroyed every replica before finding their opponent. The expert had managed to infect another golem during the process, but he went back to his initial condition afterward.

Golden flames and multicolored lights filled the sky as the three golems and King Elbas chased each other in the sky. Their battle merely involved the nature of their energy, but it appeared spectacular nonetheless.

The puppet grew used to King Elbas' battle style as they continued to exchange blows, but the latter's experience allowed him to resort to new tactics that always managed to take his opponents by surprise.

Yet, the puppets had understood King Elbas' goal by then, so they never let him infect the third. They didn't need to resort to reckless plans to win, so they focused on cornering their opponent while destroying chunks of the golden flames that made his existence without showing openings in their defense.

King Elbas reached his limits in no time. His storage devices had used every material inside them to refill his energy, but the three puppets consumed it in the span of a few exchanges.

The last puppet continued to escape his reach, but his existence would crumble if he continued to fight like that. King Elbas didn't take long to resort to a reckless plan that would even involve his storage items due to his lack of materials.

The three golems made their claws converge on his body, but King Elbas used his sea of flames to save the important parts of his existence. However, the golden fiery array was small at that time. It barely managed to reach safe areas.

The puppets had prepared for that event. They interrupted their offensive and made a dark radiance seep out of their figures. The halo consumed the golden flames and acted as a shield against eventual attacks reliant on that energy, but King Elbas had also been ready for that.

A series of dense flames seeped out of the area that the three puppets had encircled. The event forced them to adapt to the new energy and made them ignore that the previous technique had hidden a series of cracks that led to the void.

A torrent of spears came out of the cracks, pierced the sea of flames, and engulfed the puppets. Each of those items carried rank 9 power in the lower tier. King Elbas had to use everything he had to create that attack, but it wasn't even the core aspect of his offensive.

One of the spears had final energy hidden inside it. The rest of the array acted as a diversion that allowed King Elbas to infect the last puppet.

King Elbas reformed near the puppets. His body was nothing more than a few strands of lames connected to his head and right arm. His existence seemed on the verge of falling apart, but that didn't stop him from snapping his fingers and activate the tumors inside his opponents.

Bulging masses that radiated a golden halo started to grow on the three puppets. Their size increased until they exploded to release their final energy. The tumors weren't only destabilizing their structures. They were also weakening them.

King Elbas didn't dare to feel satisfied in front of that scene. Everything was working perfectly, but he wouldn't let satisfaction reach his mind until he confirmed that his attack had been a success.

The three puppets transformed into masses of hideous golden pimples that exploded to consume their final energy. Their level quickly fell in the lower tier and made them approach the bottom of the ninth rank.

Everything seemed to work perfectly until the three puppets joined their clawed hands and fused their different final energy to remove the tumors. Almost three-quarters of their bodies exploded and filled the area with the infected power.

Only a tiny ounce of final energy remained in their previous position, but it transformed to give birth to a single clawed puppet that didn't hesitate to fill the area with its dark-golden light. The creature studied the infected power in no time and fixed it before absorbing it inside its body again.

Everything had happened so quickly that King Elbas didn't have the time to think about a countermeasure. A single puppet at the peak of the middle tier formed in front of him and made him feel out of options.

Chapter 1966 1966. Disgus

The puppet appeared stronger than before, at least from King Elbas' perspective. The creature was the result of a long study of his existence and fusion of the final energy that fueled three golems previously. It was born to defeat its opponent.

King Elbas was out of everything. His body was on the verge of falling apart, even if higher energy made its fabric. He didn't have anything anymore. He had to use all his remaining materials and storage devices to hide his last attack in the void and gain the chance to infect the last puppet.

The failure in his tactic put him in a corner. King Elbas was out of plans and resources. He could buy himself some seconds for the last time, but that tactic appeared pointless since he didn't know what to do in that period.

His eyes remained fixed on the puppet as countless thoughts surged and fell apart inside his mind. King Elbas couldn't come up with anything decent. Everything was bound to fail even before starting since this current opponent had learnt everything there was to know about his existence.

The impending doom didn't make King Elbas despair. His companions had to reach that same state to learn how to step into the ninth rank. Enlightenment would descend once their situation turned desperate, so he had firmly believed that something similar would happen to him.

However, nothing happened even after seconds passed. King Elbas saw his hopes crumbling in the short instant that the puppet took to stabilize its new form and fix its attention on him.

The puppet raised its clawed hand and mustered its energy to launch an attack. Everything happened in slow-motion in King Elbas' vision. He didn't even need to think to know that the next exchange would kill him unless he relied on his last brim of final energy.

King Elbas dared to divert his attention from his opponent to stare at his palm. His jelly-like sphere had transformed into a golden bean after the recent exchanges. He had almost depleted the entirety of the final energy obtained during his enlightenment. What remained of it was too little to do anything.

King Elbas could use it to block the next attack, but he found no reason to do that. The short seconds that the final energy could buy him wouldn't lead to anything. He was out of everything.

A mocking smile appeared on his face when he thought about Noah. He had appeared when Sword Saint was about to die, and his words had managed to trigger the expert's breakthrough. King Elbas wondered if the same would happen to him, but that thought made him feel ashamed of himself.

King Elbas didn't need others to save his life. He was the one who did the saving. His team of brutes would have long since died if it weren't for his creations.

The power of his existence also came from the fact that he had never relied on anyone to improve. King Elbas had learnt from many experts, but he had always approached that understanding through personal methods. He never used mere imitations since he knew that his versions would be better.

'This is the lowest point of my existence,' King Elbas found himself thinking while the puppet's claws descended to launch a series of slashes. 'I have actually hoped that Noah could save me.'

King Elbas felt the desire to die after that realization. His existence wasn't worthy of the ninth rank if he had to rely on his friend to keep it alive. His arrogance would crumble after the event anyway, so he felt pure disgust toward that faint hope.

His mind crushed that feeling with all the anger that it could muster. King Elbas felt disgusted about himself. He used to be so strong that the joint power of the entire world had failed to kill him, but he was nothing more than a talented rebel now.

The brutes were advancing without showing any hesitation toward the path ahead, while King Elbas was still creating countermeasures for the many difficulties that the world could place in front of him. He had never seen a problem with that approach since his existence demanded it, but he could only see a lack of confidence now.

His foundation almost shattered during that reasoning. King Elbas felt unable to trust himself anymore. He didn't recognize what he had become even if he had never disrespected his existence. It simply seemed that his path was wrong.

'Fine then,' King Elbas sighed before closing his hand into a fist.

Truth be told, King Elbas had another option. It was the same method that he had been forced to use in the past. He had to replace his "Breath" with higher energy to face Noah's group and take control of the world, so he could do the same with his final energy.

King Elbas would have never resorted to that method unless his situation was so grim. His higher energy had been perfect, and he had already studied the possibility of turning it into his foundation before

transforming. Instead, the final energy wasn't even close to being perfect, and King Elbas even struggled to guess what changes it would bring to his centers of power.

Moreover, King Elbas had founded his law on his higher energy. A change in the foundation would force his existence to crumble before allowing its reconstruction. He wouldn't completely die, but the process didn't sound any different from that in his mind.

The final energy fused with the flames that made his palm and infected his existence. A burning sensation spread from his very existence. King Elbas felt as if his curiosity and arrogance were on fire.

His consciousness darkened during the process. King Elbas couldn't control his thoughts anymore, and what remained of his body also expanded or shrunk on its own. It seemed unclear about the shape it wanted to take, but the incoming slashes didn't give it time to decide.

The slashes engulfed what remained of King Elbas and infected him with power meant to destroy him. The changes happening in his existence due to his final energy actually slowed down the effects of the foreign power, but it couldn't defend him from its might anyway. After all, he wasn't even trying to protect himself.

King Elbas wasn't completely aware of what was happening. He only saw flashes of his existence falling apart and transforming as two different versions of final energy tried to burn or destroy him.

Part of that fuel wanted to destroy everything King Elbas had been before, while the other tried to absorb his existence to transform it in ways that even he ignored. The process didn't even hurt. He barely could feel anything anyway.

The two different final energies even transformed to overcome their opponent. The fuel coming from the puppet was in the middle tier, but King Elbas' power had a deeper connection with his existence, so their influence was almost at the same level during the process.

The two versions of final energy couldn't decide a winner, so they decided to seal a deal. They would fuse and reach a conclusion after they transformed into a single fuel.

Chapter 1967 1967. Expectations

Two almost opposite forms of final energy fused inside King Elbas and affected his existence. One of those fuels countered everything he was and wanted to destroy him. The other had to mix with his higher energy to create something different.

The two purposes sounded unable to mix. One required the destruction of King Elbas' law, while the other needed it to exist to perform the fusion. The two final energies would even destroy each other if it weren't for their different goals. They had nothing against their counterpart, so it felt easier for them to resort to compromise.

The fusion appeared as the only solution. The two final energies couldn't come up with a decision as separated fuels, so they hoped that conclusions would appear on their path once they obtained a joint perspective of the issue.

The fusion was far from silent. The two fuels had very different levels of power other than meanings. Those differences made the process messy and violent in certain spots, which inevitably hurt King Elbas.

Still, King Elbas was ready to die, and pain didn't scare him. Also, his consciousness wasn't completely awake, so the waves of pain that spread inside him didn't trigger any reaction.

The two fuels soon transformed into a single form of final energy that was better than its two initial materials. The power in its fabric appeared complete even if its level had fallen in the lower tier.

The process resembled what had happened to Noah's potential. His absorption of Isaac's ability had improved that incredible fuel, but that had affected its overall amount. Of course, having less energy didn't mean being weaker when that substance had transformed into something stronger and more effective.

The new final energy was weaker than its previous versions in terms of cultivation level, but it carried a far purer power. It knew exactly what to do with King Elbas' law, and it didn't hesitate to start affecting it.

The fusion couldn't happen before the destruction because the latter would lose its purpose in that approach. King Elbas' existence would be different after fusing with the final energy, so the destructive intents of the puppet's fuel would lose its target.

The destruction had to happen first, but it couldn't be an annihilation. It had to shatter King Elbas' existence and let the fusion happen with the shards released during the process.

The final energy started to affect King Elbas' existence. It didn't take much to shatter it into countless pieces due to its specific features. The law built throughout millennia of struggles, sacrifices, and pain crumbled, but its features and aspect remained intact as they started to disperse in the world. Only the useless and unstable parts turned into dust that instantly disappeared among the whiteness.

King Elbas technically died. Many important pieces of his existence were still intact, but they weren't together. His law transformed into a series of aspects trying to disperse into the world, but the final energy didn't let that happen.

The fuel could finally handle its second purpose. It had to fuse with those many pieces of King Elbas' existence and let them transform its fabric. Even he didn't plan anything specific when he activated that process, so he had no idea what it would become of his law after everything ended.

Generally speaking, that imperfect and reckless action already went against King Elbas' existence. He was using himself as a guinea pig in an experiment that had no conclusive data. The process was far away from his standard of perfection.

Still, that was part of his plan. Everything that King Elbas had ever planned until now had failed, so he had to step into the reckless field. Part of him had even started to loathe his previous existence due to the failure that it had turned out to be, so he didn't mind that temporary destruction.

The final energy absorbed the shards of King Elbas' existence and made them disperse inside its incredible fabric. The fusion was flawless since most of that fuel had come out from his higher energy, but no one could predict the transformations that followed.

King Elbas didn't manage to develop a plan that involved the final energy because that fuel had erratic behavior. It could lead to unforeseen conclusions even after giving it a precise meaning, so it was impossible to predict what it would cause when it didn't have an exact purpose.

The fuel didn't need to use much of its power to shatter King Elbas' existence. It remained a substance in the ninth rank when it started fusing with the intact shards, but a second empowerment of its fabric began as the absorption continued.

The final energy didn't have a precise meaning after the fusion, so it innately strived to create a stable product. Yet, every piece of King Elbas' existence carried his deep desires and knowledge. His law was willing to shatter and step on an impossible path due to a mere glance to a form of power that went beyond everything he had ever managed to wield.

King Elbas' determination was already in the realm of monsters. His resolve, knowledge, and desires could also match what drove Noah, Sword Saint, and his other companions. He was the only one who couldn't see and appreciate those features of his existence because he wanted more.

Seeking perfection had made King Elbas blind to his real power. His toxic and desperate need to match his peers without ruining his existence and remaining at the peak of his fields had tainted his incredible achievements.

King Elbas could create habitations inside the void and prepare armies of items meant for those missions. He could ignore the limits of his existence and built tools that suited other laws perfectly. He could invent formations that the world had never seen by simply fusing all the random stuff that his storage devices used to contain.

King Elbas had secretly felt inferior to Divine Demon since the latter could surpass him in his best fields without knowing anything about inscription methods. However, his companions had never seen the issue in those terms. Divine Demon's existence allowed him to win, but it didn't make him superior.

Even Noah had admitted countless times how King Elbas was a monster. His group often teased him due to his iconic seriousness, but no one dared to underestimate his power.

Noah and the others would go to King Elbas when they had come up with a crazy plan that required a second opinion. Everyone would take him as the last judge and helper in every situation. King Elbas was the only one who had ignored all those details because he wanted more.

Those mistakes became clear after everything that remained of his existence fused with the final energy. King Elbas regained a vague sense of awareness, but his mind felt incredibly clear after the frail parts of his laws had dispersed into the world.

King Elbas had never been weaker than others. He had only desired to be so strong that even his unreasonable power appeared below average in his vision.

King Elbas had never been ignorant about the inscription field. He had only considered perfection as acceptable, which turned everything under that as flawed or weak.

That moment of clarity allowed King Elbas to express one desire, a single order that almost sounded like a plead to the final energy. The world didn't hear it either since it was happening in the insides of his fuel. He asked that imperfect fuel to turn in who he had always been before his expectations became suffocating.

Chapter 1968 1968. Threa

The peak middle tier puppet had remained still after its attack. The final energy sent against King Elbas had to destroy his existence, and it succeeded in its task reasonably easily. He had desired to shatter too at some point, which helped the whole procedure after the two fuels fused.

The puppet waited until it confirmed that King Elbas' existence was no more before starting its dispersion. Its task was over, so it didn't need to live anymore. The final energy dispersed in the sky would return to Divine Architect through special channels set by Heaven and Earth.

However, King Elbas' transformation lasted mere seconds, so the puppet stopped its dispersion to inspect the bean-sized golden energy that had replaced the expert. That fuel was about to disperse, but it suddenly started to shine with a new light.

The new aura that flowed out of the golden bean was intense, but it felt vaguely weak. The puppet recalled King Elbas' previous cultivation level, but the energy released by its target barely reached the peak of the eighth rank.

That didn't make any sense, especially after the puppet understood what had happened. King Elbas' existence had access to final energy in the middle tier. Its power might have fallen after destroying his law, but it remained in the ninth rank. Seeing it shine with power that barely touched the peak of the previous realm hinted at a significant loss of fuel, but that didn't seem to be the case.

The golden light expanded until it took King Elbas' previous shape. The expert returned to shine among the storms, and some of his iconic weapons reappeared on him.

The golden crown, the fiery spear, and the many runes that covered his skin shone as King Elbas adjusted them. He ignored his opponent completely as he tinkered with the fabric of those three items to adapt them to his new mental clarity.

"I've wasted so long inspecting others," King Elbas sighed as he waved his free hand to modify the fabric of those abilities.

The puppet felt conflicted. Its programming confirmed that it had reached its goal. It had killed King Elbas, but the expert had reappeared with the same existence that the final energy had shattered just a few seconds ago.

Moreover, King Elbas' current state felt strange. His cultivation level had slightly fallen, but he had never appeared stronger. That didn't even come from the new energy that made the entirety of his body and techniques. He only seemed like a more authentic version of himself.

That conclusion overrode the programming and gave it a new purpose. The puppet decided that its previous success had been a false positive since it could see a purer version of King Elbas right in front of its senses.

The puppet didn't hesitate to expand its artificial consciousness to inspect its opponent and come up with a counter that could destroy him once and for all. The process didn't take long since it had already developed something that could work during the previous exchange. The creature only needed to intensify its effects to be thorough.

King Elbas didn't even turn when the puppet waved its claws to launch another wave of final energy. The attack carried immense power, but the fabric of the Immortal Lands appeared immune to its pressure.

The creature had built something that would only hurt its opponent, so everything else remained outside of its destruction.

Nevertheless, all the calculations made in those seconds crumbled when King Elbas waved his hand and destroyed that torrent of final energy. The attack directly shattered and transformed into fuel that fused inside his body without triggering any empowerment.

The puppet remained stunned. Its programming was simple, but it could grow along with its opponent. Its structure had flaws that even Divine Architect couldn't fix, but it remained something so strong that even solid stage cultivators would struggle to face.

King Elbas behaved as if nothing strange had happened. He continued to modify his items while deploying the new energy that had entered his body. Still, his tools didn't become stronger either. They continued to border the peak of the eighth rank as their light intensified.

The puppet understood that something was off, so it performed another inspection. It even relied on the flexibility of its final energy to turn into something that could enhance its senses and gain a complete understanding of its opponent.

That transformation didn't bring any physical change, but it turned the creature's artificial consciousness incredibly dense. Its fake senses almost suppressed the golden light radiated by King Elbas during the inspection, but their new power didn't bring any conclusion. Actually, they came up with the same answers that the puppet had found before.

King Elbas didn't change. He had only become a truer version of himself. In theory, the previous counters to his existence had to remain effective. However, the last exchange had proven the exact opposite, and the puppet couldn't understand the reason behind that event.

"Finally!" King Elbas eventually exclaimed while raising his spear. "I don't know if I should feel surprised that my weapon reached a decent state before my crown."

A laugh escaped King Elbas' mouth as he waved the spear and performed simple techniques. The weapon didn't release any wave of energy during those moves, and the scene confused the puppet even more.

King Elbas wasn't making any sense. His power had fallen for no reason, his weapons didn't release any energy, and the counters had stopped working against him.

The scene was so surprising that a crack opened on the puppet's featureless face and created a mouth from where Divine Architect's deep voice came out. "What have you done to yourself?"

King Elbas showed a seemingly genuine surprised expression. His confusion didn't come from Divine Architect's sudden return on the scene. He felt unclear about the very nature of her question.

"What do you mean?" King Elbas asked while spreading his arms. "I'm simply me. I've never been more me, actually."

"Don't try to use words to delay my inspection," Divine Architect threatened. "I know how to exploit loopholes in the fairness. I can move enough power to put a quarter of the sky in danger. Don't hide your new understanding from me. What have you done to the final energy?"

"Nothing much," King Elbas announced. "I didn't do anything at all even. I guess you can see it as a purification of my existence."

"Fine," Divine Architect snorted before the sky above the battlefield lit up.

Multiple connections to the sky opened as dense upper tier and solid stage auras flowed out of them. The storms shattered due to the pressure carried by those powers. King Elbas couldn't understand the sources of that might, but he felt reasonably sure that Divine Architect would have to pay an immense price to unleash everything on him.

"I didn't expect your need to understand everything to be such a massive flaw in your world," King Elbas commented while moving his eyes back on the puppet. "I guess you have the power to turn it into an advantage, but still. It's pretty lame for an inscription master with your fame."

"You wouldn't speak like this if you knew only a fraction of what I've created with Heaven and Earth's help," Divine Architect chuckled. "Your pride and rebellious attitude are what stops you from developing true devotion toward the inscription field. Now, I need answers."

"It's pretty simple, really," King Elbas laughed happily, but his gaze sharpened, and an arrogant smirk appeared on his face before revealing the secret of his current power. "Primary energy, "Breath", higher energy, and final energy are fuels that come from the world. Heaven and Earth have already proven how existences have to follow a different path, so I only applied the same theory to my law."

Chapter 1969 1969. Comparison

Divine Architect was a monster who had studied countless inscription methods and every material that Heaven and Earth had to offer. She was a unique existence inside the rulers' system due to her expertise, so King Elbas' words didn't take her by surprise.

Divine Architect could immediately compare the four forms of energy to the different types of existences. She could even start crafting a vague theory, but she felt that something was off.

"I can see how you connect magical beasts to the primary energy and cultivators to the "Breath"," Divine Architect said through the puppet, "But how can you fill the other spots. Do you think hybrids stand next to the higher energy in your theory?"

"I wouldn't think anything so inaccurate," King Elbas shook his head as disappointment seeped into his voice. "Most magical beasts do stand at the same level of the primary energy, but some of them can go past that. I've actually known one that I would put next to the higher energy in this comparison."

King Elbas wanted to apply the same division of the types of energy to the existences. The former followed the path of the world, the same journey that had led to Heaven and Earth's initial defeat. Instead, the other wanted to focus on the laws that entities had to develop and nurture to reach the ninth rank and above.

Two paths existed, so they had to feature the same divisions. The path of the world had primary energy, "Breath", higher energy, and final energy as its fuels, but no labels existed for the laws. Cultivators and hybrids vaguely classified them by their broadness, but that wasn't an accurate description of their innate power. That label was barely enough to explain their potential.

King Elbas believed that similar differences existed among the laws, but they didn't depend on the species of a living being. A magical beast could match the weaker spot in the world's path, the primary energy, or stand on the second strongest, the higher energy.

"How can you even differentiate them?" Divine Architect asked. "You call me inaccurate, but your evaluations are fundamentally personal. You can't act as the sole judge of this classification that only you seem to see."

"You asked me to explain it," King Elbas replied as his arrogant smirk remained on his face. "I can destroy your puppet, take its materials, seize the rewards of our bet, and be on my way. Everything else is pure amusement."

Divine Architect fell silent. She didn't believe that King Elbas had found a system that every other expert in the world, she included, had overlooked. Yet, the mighty expert couldn't deny what was happening. Her opponent had managed to fend off an attack that perfectly countered him, and she didn't understand how something like that could happen.

The connections to the sky closed, but an item appeared in the sky and fell toward King Elbas during the event. A giant white cube radiating middle tier power descended among the whiteness and stopped right in front of the expert.

"I'll pay you for your answers," Divine Architect announced, and King Elbas happily stored the cube inside his body.

"Answers you say," King Elbas chuckled. "Everything is so simple that I'm surprised you couldn't even get the third level right."

King Elbas finished adjusting his crown, and the item released an intense golden light after the process. It remained at the peak of the eighth rank, but it appeared purer than every other material in the world.

"Normal magical beasts stand at the bottom, with the primary energy," King Elbas explained.

"Cultivators are at the same level as the "Breath", obviously. Heaven and Earth have made sure to assign them that role, so only a few can move forward. Even fewer can understand that there is a path forward."

"Are you talking about those with the potential to reach the peak?" Divine Architect asked.

"Don't interrupt me with your awful assumptions," King Elbas scoffed. "Heaven and Earth have made the ninth rank a mere choice. How can you even use that goal to evaluate existence when the sky has countless worthless cultivators who are nothing more than an insult to the journey?"

"Beware of your words," Divine Architect threatened.

"Why?" King Elbas laughed. "You paid for them."

"Then make them stick to the topic," Divine Architect responded.

"Heaven and Earth's path is flawed," King Elbas continued as his expression turned serious. "Everyone knows that, and the same applies to you. Only delusional existences can believe that the rulers will keep them around in their current form if they ever end up reaching the tenth rank."

Divine Architect didn't answer, but her silence partially confirmed her agreement to those words. Her countermeasures and preparations against Heaven and Earth proved how little she trusted the rulers.

"Those who oppose Heaven and Earth and break from their system start to approach the third level, the higher energy," King Elbas explained. "The rebellious act generates powers that go past the rules of the world. My companions are a clear expression of this superior state. It would have been impossible for them to overcome cultivators wielding power many levels above theirs otherwise."

"I can accept this," Divine Architect announced, "But the world still has another form of energy, even if unreachable. Are you implying that you can step on that stage?"

"Oh, no," King Elbas corrected. "I've already reached it. Can't you see? My existence stands at the same level as the final energy. I'm simply following the cultivation journey instead of the world's path."

King Elbas spread his arms as if his gesture could explain his words, but Divine Architect couldn't see anything unique inside him through the puppet's senses. Her opponent appeared a regular rank 8 cultivator slightly stronger than his peers.

"I guess living with Noah Balvan and those who take pride in the title of Demons has changed your priorities," Divine Architect sighed after she failed to find anything that could prove King Elbas' words. "I don't know how you stopped the previous attack, but I won't let you steal my time any longer."

The puppet closed its mouth and charged forward. Divine Architect had understood that King Elbas had developed something capable of stopping her counters, so she would rely on the physical superiority of her creation to win.

That approach was brutish and straightforward, but it would also make it easier for Divine Architect to see what countermeasures King Elbas had invented to defend from the previous exchanges.

King Elbas sighed as the puppet crossed the sky and arrived on top of him in less than a second. Its claws descended toward his bright figure, but they released a clanging noise when they hit the shield generated by the golden runes on his skin.

"That was quite pitiful," King Elbas uttered. "I used to admire your fame as an inscription master. Part of me even hoped to find you in the Immortal Lands. Imagine my disappointment in discovering that you are no different from the brutes in my group."

King Elbas raised his hand and sealed his grasp on the puppet's wrist. The creature's fabric wasn't completely solid, but cracks appeared on its surface nonetheless.

"The existence is the very foundation of our power," King Elbas announced. "I have the best possible version of my law, so I can express far more power without wasting much fuel. Look how energy in the eighth rank overcomes what should be the best item in the middle tier of the ninth rank."

King Elbas tightened his grasp, and the wrist shattered. The puppet's hand transformed into a cloud of final energy that flowed inside its opponent.

Chapter 1970 1970. Instability

King Elbas was a cultivator. His body didn't have any physical enhancement except for the fact that final energy now made its fabric.

The puppet was the same, but its level was leagues beyond the expert. The clash should have crushed King Elbas, but the exact opposite happened, and Divine Architect couldn't even begin to explain the event.

King Elbas didn't stop there. The puppet was in his reach, so he swung his spear diagonally. The attack severed the creature's torso smoothly, without meeting any resistance.

"You are too easy to break," King Elbas sighed as his palm landed on the severed lower part of the puppet.

The golden radiance released by the crown intensified and added power to King Elbas' touch. The puppet's lower body destabilized before falling apart and transforming into multiple gales that flowed inside the expert.

"How are you doing all of this?" Divine Architect's voice came out of the puppet. "You are barely using any power. Your attacks don't respect the laws that regulate energy."

"They respect it," King Elbas corrected. "They simply are a set of rules that you have never encountered. I'm also learning them as I go."

King Elbas moved his palm on the puppet's chest, and his influence shattered its fabric on that spot. The energy released after the destruction entered inside his body again. Only the creature's head remained intact, but Divine Architect believed that King Elbas had left it there on purpose.

"Explain," Divine Architect asked. "I paid you to get answers."

"There is nothing much to explain," King Elbas announced. "I improved my existence until it matched the final energy. I can express more power at a lower cost now. It's as simple as that."

"How did you even reach that state?" Divine Architect questioned. "Your final energy was far from perfect, and the same went for mine. They shouldn't have been enough to trigger such a transformation."

"That's what you fail to understand," King Elbas explained. "It's not a matter of fuel. The final energy has been a good trigger, but the transformation happens from inside. My existence was ready to step on the last stage because I'm the best."

"This doesn't make any sense," Divine Architect scoffed. "How can an inscription master even rely on something so vague?"

"Please," King Elbas laughed while taking the head in his hands. "I fly around with a monster who adds powers to his existence randomly, an idiot who doesn't respect any regulation, and a sword addict who managed to summon powers from outside the sky. How can you even call me vague?"

"You are the inscription master of your team," Divine Architect stated. "It's your role to grow by following rules."

"My role is to reach the peak," King Elbas continued to laugh. "Don't deem me as vague only because you don't understand my field. Take it as a statement of my superiority."

Divine Architect snorted before detonating the head on her own. King Elbas' grin broadened as his golden shield stopped the power released by the explosion before adding it to his body.

The connection with the sky opened above King Elbas, and a series of materials fell from it. Divine Architect was keeping her side of the deal, and she made sure to add a faint promise to the event. "We'll see each other again."

King Elbas gathered all the resources inside his body while showing his arrogant grin toward the sky. His face turned serious only when the connection closed and storms filled the area.

His items disappeared inside his body, and only the crown remained on his head as he glanced at his hand. A small spot on his palm flashed with golden light from time to time. It appeared unstable, but King Elbas was limiting that flaw for now.

King Elbas had never lied to Divine Architect, but he had hidden part of the truth. His new power came from the clarity obtained during his near-death experience. The final energy had helped him throwing away all the impurities in his existence and reach an almost perfect state.

Nevertheless, that state was incomplete. King Elbas was facing a simple issue that he had kept hidden from Divine Architect. He was too strong for his centers of power. Even the final energy that made his body couldn't contain the insane might radiated by his existence.

King Elbas was a ticking bomb ready to explode, and only the breakthrough to the ninth rank could solve that issue. However, his requirements had become insane after improving his existence. He would need to do something crazy to advance, and a familiar face inevitably appeared in his vision during that reasoning.

'I need to ask his help,' King Elbas sighed as he looked in the distance.

King Elbas didn't like to ask favors, but the shame that would have accompanied that act before didn't appear now. His existence had cut away his toxic expectations during the transformation, so he didn't feel too bad about the idea of asking Noah to help him solve his issue.

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Wilfred and Steven had left the floating lake with the young-looking cultivator. The expert had agreed to fight them at the same time, and the two quickly discovered that his decision didn't come from simple arrogance. It had proper confidence to back it up.

Wilfred and Steven were powerful, far above the average of ordinary cultivators and hybrids. Yet, they had always fallen behind their monstrous companions.

Noah, King Elbas, Divine Demon, Alexander, and even Robert had something more, something that made their power unreasonable even in the realm of monsters. Instead, Wilfred and Steven appeared quite plain, and they even lacked broad laws to fix the issue by enhancing some of their aspects.

Steven had made use of Noah's ability to steal understanding to deepen his determination. Still, there was a limit to how much stronger he could get without new techniques or actual breakthroughs. His law didn't even have specific abilities since he could apply it to basically everything.

Wilfred was even worse off in that field. His existence was extremely simple. He was the real brute in the group since his abilities had merely added ranged properties to his great strength.

Their weaker state also had another significant issue. Their companions seemed able to surpass their own laws through mere aspects of their existence.

Noah's dark matter could replicate the power of Steven's determination and even add stronger effects. The latter's law appeared as a weaker version of the higher energy in battle.

Wilfred's incredible strength also fell short in front of Noah's body. His greatest pride couldn't compete with something that his leader treated as nothing more than a regular aspect of his power.

That inferiority inevitably affected their mindsets. Wilfred and Steven had ended up wondering whether they really suited that group of monsters multiple times, especially after Robert's death. They were keeping up because their laws were extremely simple, but they didn't know if the ninth rank could force them to abandon their companions.

Those doubts only intensified against their liquid stage opponent. Wilfred and Steven had decided to fight that cultivator together because they were aware of the inferiority of their power. Still, the expert soon proved how the numerical advantage didn't make up for their weakness.