

Demonic 1997

Chapter 1997. Metal

"What do you remember of the sky?" Noah asked Sepunia.

"I lost a lot there," Sepunia revealed while curiously pinching her arm. "I know everything I told you, and I recall part of my city, but everything else is dark. I remember being in a trance for a long time, but I can't describe much. It's a bit of a mess."

"That's within our expectations," King Elbas announced. "Heaven and Earth have probably placed heavy restrictions on that part of your mind. We salvaged what we could, but I think that the rulers have hidden important parts to make sure that they shattered."

Noah and King Elbas had performed a complete checkup of Sepunia as soon as she woke up. The expert had developed the three standard centers of power and a simple world after the process, and everything worked perfectly, but her mind had yet to adapt to her new state.

Every sensation felt different for Sepunia... Her body, power, and consciousness had changed in ways that involved profound aspects of her existence. She had transformed when she had abandoned her previous world, so even her personality started to change as her new structure reevaluated what her mind contained.

The results of the tests left the two experts completely satisfied. Sepunia didn't only gain a new world that had no connection with Heaven and Earth. She had also retained some important memories of the sky, and her existence had even turned into something quite peculiar.

Sepunia's current world was simple. It was a pure expression of her captivating abilities, which didn't rely on her beauty. Her power seemed able to change the world's appearance, but the experts guessed that it went far deeper than that.

Still, both Noah and King Elbas could sense a familiar power inside Sepunia's new existence. She carried a deep desire to expand. The world itself didn't want to remain in its current state.

"That ends it then," King Elbas exclaimed after the interrogation ended. "We have created a world capable of evolving in the middle of the ninth rank. You got your second chance."

Sepunia partially ignored King Elbas' words. The three experts were sitting on the ground, with Heaven and Earth's light shining above their heads, but Sepunia seemed unable to focus on her surroundings. She continued to check her body, and she giggled whenever an unfamiliar sensation spread inside her mind.

"She is a kid," King Elbas sighed helplessly.

"Cut me some slack," Sepunia complained before pinching her body in a different spot. "I never thought that my sensations could have such features. They are almost identical to what I had before, but they feel different, almost free even."

"Did Heaven and Earth restrain your ability to feel?" Noah asked since she had brought up the topic.

"I wouldn't put it like that," Sepunia said, but her voice turned high-pitched when the sensations of her pinch spread throughout her body. "I remember having something similar to a barrier between my body and my centers of power. I experienced the same sensations, but everything was dull and restrained."

"That's only normal when your world doesn't belong to you," Noah explained. "Focus on getting used to what you have now. We aren't exactly in a hurry, but we should leave quickly anyway."

Sepunia's revelations had added important details to Noah and King Elbas' knowledge of the sky. They now knew that Heaven and Earth had a group of elite cultivators in their system. They would probably be their last enemies before the final battle against the rulers.

The presence of cultivators that even Heaven and Earth had to respect forced Noah and King Elbas to consider how to accelerate their plans. There was a high chance that those privileged experts were like them. It would be impossible for ordinary existences to survive the rulers' absorption for entire eras. That elite group might have monsters.

Noah and King Elbas had met Caesar, and they had heard his position, but they expected some of the other privileged cultivators to have different opinions. They didn't believe that all of them had decided to use Noah's group as a stepping stone capable of improving Heaven and Earth's chances to reach the tenth rank.

Some of those privileged cultivators would eventually come out of the sky and try to stop the experts in Noah's group. He guessed that Caesar and his current level were the reason behind that delayed meeting, but he didn't think too much about the issue. He had time to get strong, and that was enough for now.

"Do we have a new target?" King Elbas asked. "I'd rather keep our conversations with the old rulers to the minimum."

"I actually came up with an idea," Noah revealed, "But I'll need Sepunia to think hard about it."

Sepunia interrupted her pinching and showed a surprised expression before questioning his new companions. "How can I help?"

"Heaven and Earth are approaching their victory, so the entire world is giving birth to the children of their flaws," Noah stated. "We know that the same flaws can affect the matter of the world. I guess something capable of countering the sky must have appeared."

"Aren't we part of that?" King Elbas asked.

"I was thinking about something more specific," Noah explained. "Maybe a mineral capable of piercing the sky has appeared somewhere, or part of the chaotic laws have gone crazy in a random spot of the stormy regions. I don't know, but it doesn't sound too impossible when you think about it."

"We are indeed vague as counters," King Elbas commented.

"Exactly!" Noah exclaimed. "We benefit from being flaws in Heaven and Earth's system, but we aren't born to destroy them. That's just a goal that we have set in our minds due to the structure of the world, but we would have considered ignoring the rulers altogether if they didn't pose a threat to our cultivation journey."

King Elbas nodded a few times before moving his eyes on Sepunia. Noah also gazed at her, and the two experts waited as the woman tilted her head and fell deep into her thoughts.

"I do recall something about that," Sepunia declared. "There was a metal that Heaven and Earth wanted to destroy at all costs, but I think they succeeded. They shattered the area with their punishments."

The revelation made the two experts curse in their minds. Noah and King Elbas exchanged a meaningful glance, but they couldn't think of any valid plan. Part of them even gave up on finding something better than the targets marked by the old rulers during their expansion.

"There must be something left of that metal," Sepunia suddenly continued to speak while she ruffled her long hair in a desperate attempt to find memories that didn't exist inside her mind. "I recall that Heaven and Earth had to leave part of that material in the world due to their fairness, but I can't remember where they put it. I know that it's still in that area, but I can't give you more details."

"That's already good!" King Elbas shouted as evident curiosity filled his face. "Do you happen to remember where this area is?"

"That I know," Sepunia exclaimed. "Though I must warn you. The area in my memories is unique. I don't know if Heaven and Earth have fixed it in the end, but it wasn't in a good state the last time I saw it."

Chapter 1998. Island

A dead zone unfolded in the trio's eyes after following Sepunia across the storms for many years. Sparse cracks that led to the void tainted the area, and various patches of ground floated among the whiteness without falling prey to the pulling force that those fissures naturally generated.

The patches of ground had different sizes, shapes, and environments. Noah saw a solitary upside-down mountain floating next to a small tree that barely had enough terrain to spread its roots and a relatively large plain filled with lakes. Similar odd scenes that featured various settings occupied the other parts of the dead zones and actively avoided the storms in the distance.

All the pieces of the region that had survived the past destruction had developed an innate survival instinct. The trio could see floating lands changing direction all of a sudden, and the same happened even with the smaller areas. Noah could barely contain his curiosity when he saw that the dirt floating in the dead zone also stuck to that behavior.

"How can they have a survival instinct without being alive?" Noah wondered.

"It must be a consequence of Heaven and Earth's actions," King Elbas suggested. "Maybe they spread the flaw instead of destroying it. The world needs to put something against them, so they never succeeded in vanquishing the meanings lingering in this area."

"I can't help you anymore from this point onward," Sepunia announced. "My memories end here."

"We should start with the bigger lands," Noah said, and the trio quickly went to the solitary mountain seen right after reaching the area.

A strange atmosphere fell on Noah, King Elbas, and Sepunia when they went deeper into the area. They initially found it hard to explain what they felt, but enlightenment eventually dawned upon their minds. The sky's constant pressure waned there. Something was weakening Heaven and Earth's power.

"How long has it even been?" Noah chuckled while looking at the sky.

Noah had stopped using protections against the white radiance countless years ago. He had grown so used to that constant pressure that it felt strange to be relatively free from it. Even the journey in the void couldn't generate the same sensations.

"Do you really want to count?" King Elbas asked while following his gaze. "I can give you an answer quickly."

King Elbas still protected his mind from the white radiance, but he didn't waste that power. He gathered the pressure falling on him and made it flow into a technique meant to expand his mind. That was how he had improved his mental sphere until now.

"I don't care enough to hear that," Noah laughed.

"Time will only continue to lose meaning for you," Sepunia stated. "You two are incredibly young compared to other existences at your level. Your perception has yet to move to replace millennia with eras."

"I plan to break the sky before that," Noah revealed.

"That sounds impossible," Sepunia giggled.

"Please, don't use that word," King Elbas sighed. "It will only make him do crazier stuff."

The trio fell silent after reaching the mountain. Noah, King Elbas, and Sepunia studied the rocky surface of the structure to search for the source of those strange effects, but they didn't find anything worthy of consideration.

The matter there had an odd aura. The rocks of the mountains felt slightly different, even if their fabric was as normal as it could be. They carried special effects that the trio had to inspect for a while before understanding their nature. Those materials weren't actually radiating that strange power. They had transformed because of it.

The aura that filled the dead zone seemed to have the same effects as the Devils' influence. It could taint the matter and force it to express its influence, but everything was fainter there. Those rocks couldn't repeat the process on their own. They merely echoed a minute part of the source's power.

'Where is the source?' Noah wondered, but none of the lands floating in the dead zone seemed to meet those requirements.

King Elbas and Sepunia soon reached the same conclusion. The source wasn't there, so they could only perform a thorough search. The trio returned inside the storms and completed the long exploration past the edges of the dead zone. The experts hoped that one of the nearby areas could have traces of that power, but that feeling eventually crumbled.

Noah, King Elbas, and Sepunia returned inside the dead zone after confirming that the nearby lands and storms didn't have anything. The answer had to be among that odd aura, but they didn't believe the source of that power to be among those weak floating lands. They would inspect all of them if the situation required it, but a better answer eventually appeared.

Noah and King Elbas only had to exchange a glance before approaching one of the cracks. The dark world expanded as a series of golden lines filled the edges of the fissure. The two experts prepared themselves to peek into the void, and Sepunia didn't hesitate to join them with excitement brimming out of her figure.

"Don't you need to create something in case the travel into the void turns bad?" King Elbas asked.

"I'm with the pioneers in that field," Sepunia smirked. "Why would I even need to do anything?"

"Another brute to save," King Elbas sighed.

A rope made of dark matter materialized among the dark world and wrapped itself around Sepunia's waist. The dark matter almost fused with the robe she had concocted with her power right after waking up.

Noah fixed part of the dark world to the whiteness and secured a rope around him before jumping into the crack. Diving into fissures that stood in the middle of the world could be more dangerous than exiting the sky due to the change of dimension, but that was nothing for an expert of space.

Sepunia jumped after Noah, and King Elbas soon followed. The two found Noah right under the whiteness, with his eyes fixed on a massive island that floated among the void. He was wearing a frown, and the reason behind that gesture became obvious immediately.

The island contained living beings. Multiple auras came out of that vast structure, and some of them were in the ninth rank. However, no energy reached that land, so the experts couldn't explain how those creatures could have survived without destroying the environment.

"Elbas?" Noah asked, but his friend shook his head even after inspecting the island with some of his sensors.

"I sense obstructions," King Elbas revealed. "It's clear that someone is trying to isolate that area. They didn't go as far as creating a separate space, but they did a decent job nonetheless."

"Isn't that the time when you charge ahead?" Sepunia asked while shooting an expectant gaze at Noah.

"I'm not that reckless," Noah complained.

"You definitely are," King Elbas sneered, but he still took the first step toward the island.