

Demonic 1999

Chapter 1999. Barrier

Noah had never seen similar creatures. Those magical beasts clearly resembled dragons. They had a pair of wings, long scaled bodies, and four legs, but they appeared too skinny for their own good. The experts struggled to understand whether they had muscles at all.

Moreover, their heads and necks were odd. Their upper part was normal, with scales and two pairs of curved horns, but their lower side basically didn't exist. Long spikes grew to create a long and strange mouth that didn't seem able to remain closed.

Noah, King Elbas, and Sepunia couldn't help but focus on the long tongues coming out of those hideous mouths. They resembled thick whips ready to crack in the air, but whether they used them as weapons was unclear. They didn't have a single element either. Identical specimens could feature completely different types of "Breath".

The strange shape and the surprising detail about their "Breath" made Noah unable to connect that species to the creatures in his knowledge... His instincts told him that those magical beasts weren't natural beings, and he couldn't help but agree with them.

Noah could justify the matter about the element. The Immortal Lands were so vast that such peculiar beings could potentially be born every once in a while. However, their environment hinted at something far different. The island was in the middle of the void, so someone had to refill its energy manually.

The dragons didn't notice the three experts hovering right outside the island's edges. There seemed to be a barrier that divided those lands from the void, and even the rank 9 magical beasts inside them couldn't pierce it with their senses.

Noah's knowledge about space told him how the island didn't exactly float in the void. The barrier stretched under its base and allowed it to lay on its invisible fabric. Someone had decided to protect and preserve that environment, and he could only think about one possible culprit.

'What are Heaven and Earth doing here?' Noah wondered while flying around the barrier to inspect its fabric and its protected environment from different perspectives.

Everything reeked of Heaven and Earth. The barrier carried their power, but their aura intensified on the actual island. Entering that isolated area wasn't an issue either since Noah could send his mental waves forward freely, but he could sense how that defense tried to trick his thoughts into remaining inside the environment.

'The effects are weaker since I'm only sending mental waves forward,' Noah thought before raising his hand to touch the barrier.

That invisible layer didn't stop Noah, but he pulled his hand back as soon as the tip of his middle finger went on the other side. Pain spread from his hand, but he barely cared about that. His entire attention went on a big specimen that shot toward his position.

Noah didn't move. The dragon that was flying toward him was a mere rank 8 specimen in the upper tier, and its attention wasn't on him. The barrier had managed to cut the tip of his middle finger, and the creature couldn't wait to eat it.

The dragon flew toward the falling fingertip, and Noah descended to inspect it properly. He remained on the other side of the barrier as the creature used its long tongue to seize the body part and stuff it at the bottom of its neck. The beast's actual mouth started on its torso, but it was hard to see with the spikes covering it.

Less than ten meters divided Noah from the dragon, but the latter appeared unable to sense him. The creature didn't even try to move a bit forward. It seemed to know exactly where the barrier began.

King Elbas and Sepunia quickly reached Noah due to his closeness to the dragon. The two experts joined his inspection, and they soon realized that the creature radiated the same odd energy found in the dead zone.

"We found the source!" Sepunia exclaimed, but Noah promptly pulled her arm since she was trying to cross the barrier.

"They aren't the source," Noah explained. "They have only been affected deeply by it. Though I don't understand why Heaven and Earth would leave this environment in the open instead of hiding it."

"It's literally in the void," Sepunia stated while turning to show a blank face to Noah. "How many experts do you think would jump into a crack without hesitation? I wonder how many would even consider looking inside the void."

Noah and King Elbas exchanged a gaze before glancing back at the barrier. Sepunia's words had been on point, and she didn't even need to mention the fact that the higher plane had seen its population shrinking after the apocalypse.

"The barrier is stronger on the other side," King Elbas explained. "It doesn't only hurt what tries to leave it. It even isolates these creatures through something similar to illusions."

"What do you mean?" Noah asked.

"Look at this specimen," King Elbas pointed at the dragon that had eaten Noah's fingertip. "It doesn't even try to fly forward. Something compels it to remain inside the barrier and never attempt to leave. I bet it doesn't even know that an outside world exists."

"Hey, you!" Sepunia suddenly shouted and claimed her companions' attention. "Try to come out of there!"

Noah and King Elbas shook their heads when they saw that Sepunia wanted to call the dragon, but their expression froze when they turned toward the creature. Sepunia had created a copy of what was happening in the outside world next to the magical beast. It could see and hear the three experts through those illusions.

Noah and King Elbas wanted to put an end to Sepunia's actions, but the dragon's behavior changed before they could do anything. The creature voiced a guttural roar before losing its equilibrium and falling toward the ground.

The fall couldn't hurt the dragon, but it didn't stop roaring. It didn't try to shout human words, but Noah could understand it. The cry was a desperate expression of its feelings. It seemed that it had finally recalled the nature of its situation.

The desperate roars attracted the other dragons on the island and made them reach that position. A few rank 9 specimens also appeared to gather around the creature that was trying to express its desperation with its cries.

The roars eventually started to affect the other dragons. Loud and desperate cries filled the area and made the barrier tremble. The three experts could see that the invisible membrane shook due to the deep feelings that those creatures were putting into their voices.

The tremors revealed the existence of the barrier to the dragons, and those creatures immediately focused on it. They didn't hesitate to charge together toward that invisible membrane, but a white light suddenly fell from the crack above them and filled the island in an instant.

The light engulfed the dragons, but the three experts retreated anyway since those creatures had almost reached the barrier. Still, they inspected the island from afar as they waited for that annoying radiance to disperse.

Noah, King Elbas, and Sepunia expected a loud impact to resound in the area, but nothing arrived. The light retreated and revealed that the dragons had returned to their previous behavior. They had completely forgotten about the barrier.

Chapter 2000. Clouds

"Did Heaven and Earth reset their minds?" Noah wondered, and his companions shared those doubts.

The light had stopped the violent uproar that Sepunia had caused. It was clear that Heaven and Earth wanted the dragon to remain on the island, but the three experts couldn't understand the reason behind that desire.

Noah's mind immediately began to generate ideas. The dragons obviously were a unique species, and Heaven and Earth's careful approach to those creatures highlighted that feature. The rulers wouldn't hesitate to wipe out entire packs if they didn't respect their fairness, but the fauna on the island seemed to have a specific purpose.

"Do you think Heaven and Earth will try to kill us if we cause a mess on the island?" King Elbas asked.

"They have tried to kill us since our first Tribulation," Noah commented. "Nothing would change."

"You know what I meant," King Elbas continued...

"They'll probably try to stop us from uncovering what the island is hiding," Noah stated before turning toward Sepunia. "Maybe our troublemaker will have deeper insights on this topic."

"Right," King Elbas said while also turning toward Sepunia. "I would also like to know why you tried to claim the dragon's attention before we even understood what was going on."

Sepunia's eyes moved between Noah and King Elbas, and an awkward smile slowly appeared on her face. Her reason was quite silly, but she tried to justify herself anyway. "I wanted to see what the dragon

had to say about its situation. At least we got to see that the island is a special prison that Heaven and Earth control and refill with energy."

"That doesn't justify such a reckless action," King Elbas declared.

"You have some of the most reckless experts in history as your companions!" Sepunia pouted.

"They weren't possible spies," King Elbas replied.

"Why did you even bother to accept my request if you intended to treat me as a prisoner?" Sepunia complained. "I know that you want to be careful, but stick to an approach. Don't bring up my past only when it helps you!"

"She has a point," Noah laughed.

King Elbas glared at Noah before expressing his surprise. "Are you really siding with her?"

"Either she is our companion, or she isn't," Noah shrugged his shoulders. "We might still have doubts about her, but we shouldn't question her methods. We made her like that, at least partially."

King Elbas didn't like hearing those words, but they made sense. It was hypocritical to connect Sepunia's reckless behavior to a possible betrayal. Divine Demon and Noah had done far worse during important moments, and she was far away from the standard that they had set.

"She took these parts of her character from you," King Elbas snorted before moving his attention back to the island.

"So, do you remember anything about this place?" Noah asked.

"I think I've never known anything about it," Sepunia revealed. "I remember almost everything about the shattered land, and I don't have significant blank spots about the events connected to the area either. I think Heaven and Earth have kept the dragons hidden even from their followers."

"That already helps," Noah stated.

The state of Sepunia's memories added information to the island, at least when it came to Heaven and Earth approach to that topic. The rulers probably couldn't destroy those lands due to their fairness, but Noah developed different ideas when he thought about what his companion had revealed.

Heaven and Earth could have created a prison before marking that knowledge as important. Sepunia would have forgotten about it in that case, which would leave a blank spot in her memory and reveal the rulers' intentions to Noah and King Elbas.

Instead, Sepunia claimed not to know about the island at all. She had never learnt about it, which led Noah to believe that Heaven and Earth had some important projects going on there. He couldn't find any other reason to explain why the rulers would ever keep it a secret from their followers.

The matter became even more interesting at that point. Noah couldn't wait to discover what Heaven and Earth were up to, and the issue wasn't even entering the island. The mission required an escape route, and his eyes inevitably fell on King Elbas.

"The light came out from that crack," King Elbas uttered while pointing at the fissure right above the island. "I think Heaven and Earth have set defenses there since they needed a safe path for their light."

"Maybe it leads to a specific part of the sky," Noah guessed. "I don't remember that crack on the other side. Heaven and Earth might use it as a special passage for their light."

"I don't know about the actual sky," Sepunia commented. "Heaven and Earth don't leave those passages open for a long time. I guess that there are white clouds on the other side."

"Clouds?" Noah and King Elbas asked at the same time.

"You have been there when you returned from the other side of the Immortal Lands," Sepunia explained. "Heaven and Earth cover the surface of the sky with chaotic laws that have obtained specific meanings from time to time. We call them clouds."

Noah and King Elbas couldn't forget the trap that Heaven and Earth had set for them after the mission with the Devils. Noah had to summon Sword Saint to solve that situation, and the latter had ended up remaining with his group until his breakthrough.

The idea of ending up in a similar area was interesting and worrying at the same time. The light discharged on the island had the power to affect the minds of an entire pack of dragons that featured multiple rank 9 specimens. The white clouds on the other side had to contain a lot of energy, but they could also have defenses ready for those who dared to invade them.

The possibility that Heaven and Earth had deployed defenses there was relatively high. The rulers didn't tell their followers about the island to make sure that no memories of the place existed in their minds. They had taken precautions to keep the area hidden, so it was safe to assume the same for the white clouds on the other side of the passage.

"Doesn't this feel familiar?" King Elbas wondered after the trio had remained silent for a few minutes.

"It does indeed," Noah confirmed.

"What are you two saying?" Sepunia asked.

"Heaven and Earth are definitely studying these dragons," Noah explained.

"Or experimenting on them," King Elbas added. "This isolated environment in the void is perfect to avoid external influences. However, I have to admit that the mind-wiping light is a good idea. I should take and improve it."

"Do you think Divine Architect has something to do with it?" Noah asked.

Noah knew Divine Architect due to the inheritance found in the separate dimension with the recurring Heaven Tribulation, but only King Elbas had interacted with her. He had higher chances of sensing her presence on the island in front of them.

"I don't think so," King Elbas evaluated. "I praised the light, but this still feels sloppy. Why would Heaven and Earth hide it in the void in the first place when they have the sky at their disposal?"

"Because it contains something directly opposite to the fabric of the sky," Sepunia stated and confirmed what Noah and King Elbas had hesitated to mention since they wanted to gather more data.