

## **Demonic 2141**

### Chapter 2141 - 2141. Mercy

Countless eels started to jump out of the swamp by releasing torrents of poisonous water, but nothing managed to reach Noah. Such weak specimens couldn't get past his rain of slashes, and even those in the middle tier died when they faced precise attacks.

The eels weren't strong individually. They were magical beasts with low requirements in terms of energy, which allowed them to grow immense packs. Their power came from the poisonous waters that they released, and Noah eventually began to suffer because of them.

A single attack couldn't go past Noah's fiendish armor. Even hundreds of them couldn't break through his defenses, especially since nothing ever got too close to his position. However, the fumes intensified as the battle continued, and the modifications made to the dark world slowly became ineffective.

Noah could feel his mind growing heavy. He knew what the enemy leaders were doing. The sacrifice of so many underlings aimed to weaken him so that the upper tier specimens could inflict the final blow.

Truth be told, the approach was working. The Cursed Labyrinth was a perfect environment for certain types of magical beasts, especially those that focused on building immense packs. The eels could reproduce quickly and easily, so the swamp was filled with creatures capable of producing more poison.

The eels could also continue to release poison even after dying. Their internal organs and thin layers of flesh became the fuel that their skin used to expand. A single lower tier specimen could create an entire lake after its death, and Noah killed hundreds of them every time he waved his swords.

The eels' assault was relentless. It soon became hard to see the sky due to the dense fumes that had risen from the surface. Noah couldn't unfold his mental waves since they crumbled as soon as they touched that poisonous gas, so the torrents converging toward him slowly grew closer.

The pack was gaining ground, but Noah waited to unleash his full power. His destruction was seeping into the very fabric of the dimension. Black lines spread on the space-time array of the area. He felt almost able to create a hole in the environment, but he didn't act yet.

Everything around Noah was dark. His black crystal released dark matter non-stop to replace the infected higher energy in his fiendish armor, but dark-green patches began to appear on his skin anyway.

Entire parts of his body wanted to shut down, but the black crystal kept the infection away from the most important organs. The unstable substance allowed Noah to retain his peak physical strength, so the eels couldn't experience the results of their offensive.

Still, injuries continued to accumulate, but Noah waited. His slashes destroyed everything on their path, including entire chunks of the swamp. The parasite even devoured part of the environment, but the rest of his companions remained inside his figure. Duanlong had also gone back to prepare.

The wait felt endless. Noah slaughtered everything coming in his way. The eels were getting closer, and some torrents landed on his figure, but the leaders remained hidden.

Then, Noah's survival instincts began to scream louder than before. Something big was about to arrive, and a cold smile inevitably appeared on his face. His opportunity had come.

The Cursed Sword went silent while the Demonic Sword launched a roar that accompanied the release of dark matter. Night cut through the fumes and triggered the destruction that had accumulated in the environment until now.

A giant hole opened in the fabric of space. The swamp found itself split into two halves as the massive gorge spread in its very middle. The dimension under the area was empty, so the toxic waters and muddy ground began to fall inside it.

The fumes experienced the same fate. The gorge expanded, which enlarged the overall area that the poisonous gas could fill. Noah became able to expand his consciousness now that everything flowed into the new space, and he could immediately see four massive torrents converging toward his position.

The torrents contained upper tier specimens, the very leaders of the pack. The poisonous water they released was dense, and Noah believed it could tear through his body. However, he had no intention to face it head-on.

Duanlong came out and spread its mouth. The bottom of its throat became the center of a powerful pulling force that made the four torrents change their direction.

The eels found themselves in the open after a mere second. The poison around them had disappeared, and they didn't know where it had gone.

Noah's trap didn't end there. A giant figure began to leave his body and take its place in the sky. Shafu appeared and revealed its immense size. The dragon was so big that the area seemed to shrink even after Noah had enlarged it by making the layer between dimensions crumble.

Shafu opened its mouth and sucked the entire swamp inside its separate dimension. The dragon's ability allowed it to divide the poisonous waters and muddy ground from the eels, which ended in two different areas of its belly.

Noah also entered Shafu's separate dimension. Countless eels expanded in his view when he reached their location. They were already trying to recreate the swamp by releasing their poison, but the process couldn't be fast since Shafu had placed them into an environment that countered them.

Snore came out of Noah's figure and unfolded its wings. The eels screamed, but that didn't stop the snake from unleashing the entirety of its feathers.

A storm took control of the area. Destructive dark matter raged and forced Noah to divert more potential to Shafu. Snore's attack was too powerful, and even Shafu's separate dimension risked crumbling under the weight of those black currents.

Noah studied the storms with his cold reptilian eyes. The destructive dark matter prevented him from using his consciousness to inspect the area, but he knew what was happening. Snore's power was incredible. He expected most of the pack to die.

The storms raged for a long time, but they eventually started to disperse. The dark matter didn't leave anything behind. Even the corpses had disappeared among that destructive force, but something had managed to survive.

A solid dark-green sphere appeared after the storms dispersed. The poisonous properties of that figure were so threatening that ripples appeared in the fabric of space of Shafu's separate dimension.

The sphere was at the very peak of the upper tier, but it had completed its role. Cracks began to open on its surface, and shards started to fall. That solid poison transformed into gas that dispersed inside the separate dimension, leaving behind only four upper tier eels and a few specimens in the middle tier.

"Mercy!" One of the upper tier eels screamed.

"You won!" Another upper tier eel continued. "We'll hear you out now."

"I don't care about words anymore," Noah growled as he raised his swords.

The eels begged and cursed, but nothing reached Noah. His swords descended, and a giant slash fell on the last specimens in the pack.

Those creatures could be useful, but Noah didn't care. The turtles were disrespectful, but they weren't dumb. They had acknowledged Noah's power in no time. Instead, the eels had decided to surrender only after losing almost all their pack.. They weren't the type of allies that he wanted.

Chapter 2142 - 2142. Table

The slash destroyed everything left of the pack of eels. Only puddles of poisonous water remained after the attack dispersed, but they also shattered once Noah's influence spread forward.

The environment in Noah's eyes quickly changed. Shafu spat him out of its body to make him return in the separate dimension of the eighth floor. The area was empty now that the dragon had taken care of the swamp, but the Labyrinth still found the energy to trigger a massive event.

The sky grew clearer. Its dark color turned grey before becoming almost white. The area's ceiling, walls, and floor released energy during the process, and that fuel gathered at the center of the empty environment to give birth to a green shard.

Noah only needed to stretch his arm to call the shard. The item flew directly into his palm and allowed him to sense the same properties that enveloped his group during the teleports. However, it was easy to understand that the device wasn't complete. It lacked power and part of the coordinates of the ninth floor.

'I can't fill these gaps with my dark matter or understanding of the space-time array,' Noah sighed before inspecting the green shard a second time.

Noah couldn't find anything special about the item. It clearly carried the aura of an incomplete dimensional portal, which proved Vesuvia's words right. He needed to find another shard to unlock the path to the next floor, and he had only one area left to explore.

'June should be okay among the lightning bolts,' Noah thought as he threw the shard in his separate space. 'She must be okay, or she won't be able to follow me.'

A sense of weakness filled Noah's mind and flesh. The drawbacks of his ambition had started to descend, and he also had to deal with his infections. Dark-green patches filled his skin due to the poison that had landed on him, and his body would need time to heal them.

'Not yet,' Noah sighed as his ethereal blackness expanded due to the violent desire inside his mind. 'I'm almost there, but I still need another step. I can feel it. I'll become able to match solid stage cultivators once I reach the liquid stage.'

Those thoughts carried no arrogance. They were the result of a calm analysis of Noah's power and past achievements. He knew that he was strong, incredibly strong. He would reach insane levels once he advanced, and he was almost there. He could practically feel that his breakthrough would arrive once he got out of the Cursed Labyrinth.

The insatiable drive wasn't enough to keep Noah combat-ready. The battle had left him wounded and dried up. He needed to rest and let his potential refill his world.

The dark matter came out of his body on its own. It felt Noah's needs and created a spherical chrysalis where he could rest properly. The higher energy even began to affect his infected flesh by removing the poison or replacing spots that were too far gone.

Noah let the black crystal handle his centers of power while he let his mind wander into the unique environment that the Cursed Labyrinth had created. His focus wasn't on his surroundings. His consciousness and eyes dived deeper into the fabric of the separate reality to admire the different space-time array built by the creators.

The Labyrinth as a whole and the idea behind it were incredible. Some floors were easier than others to overcome, but Noah could appreciate their individual magnificence. Each different environment could be an expression of an aspect of the creators' worlds, and that made them incredible.

His marvel only intensified when he considered that the structure was far older than him. Cultivators belonging to different eras had been trapped inside it for ages. Some magical beasts had even built entire packs due to the favorable environments. However, the Cursed Labyrinth was as strong as ever.

Even King Elbas couldn't make something so durable and resilient. The weight of the countless years spent hidden from Heaven and Earth's gaze could break almost everything in the world, but some structures were made to last. Supreme Thief's inheritance was nothing compared to the Labyrinth, and that made Noah's blood boil.

Noah could sense his desire to add the creators to his arsenal increase every time he found an interesting floor. He still recalled when he refused his position as a leader, but everything was different now. He didn't care what others thought. He didn't care what they wanted. Noah would build an army worthy of stepping into the final battlefields.

Of course, Noah didn't forget the most important aspect of his position as a leader. He had to be stronger than his underlings, which meant surpassing solid stage cultivators.

Only power could unite those eccentric and mighty figures under a single banner. Only power could make them decide to join the final battle against Heaven and Earth, and Noah had to seize it.

Noah's consciousness wasn't entirely stable during the healing process. He was trying to use the Cursed Labyrinth's magnificence to expand his understanding of the superior ranks, and the path ahead appeared strangely clear. He was complete. He only had to push his current journey at the last level to achieve what no other existence in the world could.

'I wonder how many powers like the Cursed Labyrinth exist in the higher plane,' Noah thought as his consciousness focused on his surroundings.

Strength and firmness returned in his mind and flesh. The chrysalis transformed into trails of dark gas that flew back inside his figure. Noah awakened entirely now that he felt to have returned at his peak. He had almost reached the last floor. His next level was waiting for him.

Noah left the area and reappeared in the region with the four tornados. He couldn't find any sign of June, and the same went for his companions. He had spent a long time inside the separate dimension, but Fiery Mountain and the others had yet to return from the fourth portal.

The event was rather interesting. Old Tyrant, Fiery Mountain, and Gabrielle were weak compared to Noah, but their prowess wasn't bad. They were still growing and evolving through Noah's ambition, but they could hold their ground against stronger opponents.

Moreover, the three cultivators had the pack of turtles on their side. The upper tier specimens usually acted rashly, but it wasn't weak. Its physical strength and resilience were incredible, and its underlings could work together to eliminate eventual weaknesses.

In theory, even an upper tier threat shouldn't be able to stop the group. They were strong enough to deal with almost everything, but they were still away, and that ignited Noah's interest.

The reason behind that interesting event became clear as soon as Noah crossed the fourth dimensional passage. An immense and bright environment unfolded in his eyes. The grey sky and green plain seemed to radiate their own light, but the detail that claimed the entirety of Noah's attention was a giant table that appeared to expand endlessly.

Moreover, the creatures at the table weren't easy to ignore either.. Noah saw the turtles, Old Tyrant, the rest of his group, and a series of winged pigs that made him smile and sigh at the same time.

Chapter 2143 - 2143. Idiocy

The table was full of delicacies. Noah almost salivated when the scent coming from the countless plates reached his nostrils. Everything felt powerful enough to ignite his hunger, but his potential immediately flowed inside his mind to keep it stable.

Noah could focus on the various seats. Old Tyrant and the others didn't surprise him, but the creatures showed evident oddities. The turtles were too big to have proper chairs, so they dug holes in the green plain to make their heads stand at the same level as everyone else.

The table also had many cultivators and magical beasts that Noah had never seen. Each creature too big for the chairs had dug holes to eat with everyone else, but Noah couldn't keep his attention on them for too long. He couldn't prioritize his inspection of the area after seeing some familiar faces.

"I thought you left the landmass to grow stronger," Noah roared, and everyone finally noticed his presence.

Old Tyrant, Gabrielle, and Fiery Mountain gasped as they moved their gazes toward the dimensional portal. The turtles voiced welcoming hisses, and the other existences on the table also turned their attention toward Noah. However, every sound disappeared when the winged pigs began to squeal.

"Noah!"

"Defying Demon!"

"Defying Demon!"

"Defying Demon!"

A figure left the table and shot toward Noah while the squeals filled the area. Noah had to stretch his arm forward to avoid a direct impact with his face, and an immense force soon slammed on his open palm.

"Hug me!" The Foolery shouted.

"Why don't you explain what you are doing here first?" Noah laughed.

"Friends hug each other after a long separation!" The Foolery continued.

"I'll let you hug King Elbas if you drop this now," Noah teased.

"Can I hug him anyway?" The Foolery asked.

"What's the problem?" Noah questioned.

"I don't actually remember how we got here," The Foolery admitted.

"What do you mean?" Noah asked.

"We were simply eating the sky," The Foolery explained. "Then, we got hungrier than usual, and something teleported us here."

"That's the explanation I was looking for," Noah sighed.

"I guess I can explain things even when they aren't in my memories," The Foolery proudly announced while lifting its face to the sky.

"That-!" Noah was about to scold the pig, but he held back at the last second. It was pointless to argue with it.

Noah felt a bit proud when he saw the Foolery current level. The pig had reached the ninth rank, but it was still halfway through the gaseous stage. Its world had something to do with its hunger, but it appeared weaker than its body.

"How could you create an unbalance in your centers of power?" Noah asked after noticing that feature.

"Because I'm amazing!" The Foolery announced as it lifted its head even higher.

"Do you realize that the lack of harmony is a bad thing?" Noah sighed.

"It won't be with me," The Foolery proudly exclaimed. "After all, my path is mine alone."

Noah wanted to contradict the pig, but he held back once again. He couldn't understand how the Foolery had managed to push its body past the limits of its world. Its idiocy could be the only explanation, so Noah didn't want to understand the process.

"What are you doing here then?" Noah asked.

"We are eating!" The pig explained.

"I can see that," Noah replied.

"Why did you ask then?" The Foolery questioned. "Do you like the sound of my voice? I know. It improved after reaching the ninth rank."

"I thought you couldn't improve perfection," Noah joked.

The Foolery's eyes widened as it lowered its head. Noah had revealed a deep flaw in its reasoning. The pig felt defeated beyond reason, and a desperate squeal left its mouth.

The winged pigs on the table echoed the squeal before chanting Noah's name. They were acclaiming him, but he couldn't feel happy about the event since he knew the reason behind it.

"No wonder you are the leader," The Foolery sighed. "I have a long way to go."

"I won't tell anyone about today," Noah promised. "Cheer up now and explain how this place works."

"You sit and eat," The Foolery summarized. "More food appears on your spot after you finish, so you should eat quickly."

"Where does the food come from?" Noah asked.

"How should I know?" The Foolery questioned. "I find food. I eat it."

"Did you explore the area a bit?" Noah asked.

"I can tell you the different types of food in the area," The Foolery exclaimed.

"Can you?" Noah questioned.

"It's easy to see through my lies," The Foolery sighed. "My pure and shining existence doesn't allow me to get good at them."

"So, you don't know anything," Noah continued, trying to bring the pig back to the topic.

"About what?" The Foolery asked.

"Leave it," Noah growled as his attention went back on the area.

There was clearly something compelling the cultivators and magical beasts to take seats and avoid turning the table into a mess. It would have been impossible for the turtles to eat next to Old Tyrant and the others otherwise. Yet, Noah noticed something else after his interaction with the Foolery.

Everyone at the table seemed to have forgotten about Noah's arrival. They had gone back to the delicacies, and the Foolery began to salivate when its eyes fell on the food. It tried to fly back on the banquet, but Noah grabbed one of its wings before it could leave.

"Don't you want to eat?" The Foolery asked.

"It's not that," Noah responded before voicing a roar that made the whole area shake.

The roar carried his intense pride and a simple order. Noah wanted his underlings and the existences affected by his pride to reach him in the sky, but no one left their seats. They turned toward him, but they soon went back on their food.

"How did you leave the table?" Noah asked.

"What do you mean?" The Foolery exclaimed. "I flapped by magnificent wings and flew toward you."

"Didn't you experience a force trying to keep you at the table?" Noah asked.

"Nothing can restrain me!" The Foolery replied while raising its head toward the sky.

"I'm holding you still right now," Noah commented.

"I can't go against my leader's orders," The Foolery declared. "I accepted you as my leader, so I'm restraining myself."

Noah opened his mouth before forcing it to close. The Foolery was getting to his nerves, which was odd after all the time spent getting used to its idiocy. He could only guess that the pig's ability to irritate others had grown strong after reaching the ninth rank.

Noah wouldn't find the situation too strange if the upper tier turtle and some middle tier specimens in its pack had left the table with the Foolery. Yet, the event hinted at the presence of a complicated force, something that went beyond sheer power.

The Foolery carried the answers to those doubts. Noah knew its body inside out since he had rebuilt its species, and the breakthrough in the ninth rank didn't prevent him from noticing the minor differences born after the separation.

Noah felt sure that the Foolery's species or body weren't the reason behind its ability to leave the table. He couldn't explain the situation even in terms of hunger since the pig knew no limits there.

The relationship between Noah and the Foolery was the only possible answer to the odd event. Old Tyrant, Gabrielle, Fiery Mountain, and the turtles couldn't make use of that feature since they didn't spend much time with Noah, and the same went for almost everyone else on the table.

"Pellio!" Noah eventually shouted. "Can you stop pretending to be under the influence of the banquet?"

Pellio was serving tea happily, but Noah's voice forced him to interrupt his actions. The expert's mat had folded to leave enough room to the existences around him, but it unfolded again as he began to fly toward Noah.

"I had finally found a place that accepted my tea," Pellio complained.



"What is happening here?" Noah went straight to the point.

"There is a banquet," Pellio explained. "Everyone is eating."

Noah cleared his throat, and Pellio understood that he wasn't in the mood for games. The expert poured more tea in the cup in front of him before opening his strange eyes and glancing at the table.

"The food seems able to interfere with their various paths," Pellio revealed. "I can see these effects clearly through my dreams."

"I thought dreams were unclear," Noah responded.

"They usually are," Pellio stated, "Except when something tries to fight them."

"Is this food able to affect your existence?" Noah asked in surprise. "You are barely something in this current form."

"I'm afraid this area can touch me," Pellio revealed.

"That's perfect," Noah exclaimed. "Dream the location of the owner of this area."

Pellio appeared surprised by that request, but his hand moved on its own when he closed his eyes. The fact that the area could affect him meant that he could use a weaker form of his real power inside it.. After his gesture, a large palace appeared in the distance, and Noah became able to sense multiple presences there.

Chapter 2144 - 2144. Peace

The castle wasn't nearly as crowded as Vesuvia's city, but it had multiple powerful cultivators inside it. Noah also sensed the presence of an expert at the peak of the liquid stage.

That detail would usually reassure Noah. Yet, something told him that the expert was an elite like him and his group. It was someone capable of surpassing the normal limits of the ranks.

'Another creator?' Noah wondered as he let go of the pig and began to fly toward the castle.

Pellio followed Noah, and the Foolery also decided to come along after glancing at the table a few times. The pig wanted to be with its leader, but the expert on the mat also interested it.

The Foolery ended up on the mat during the flight to the castle. It sniffed Pellio from head to toe and inspected the table where he was serving tea. Pellio found himself surprised to be in that situation, but Noah had already predicted the imminent catastrophe.

"Do you want some tea?" Pellio eventually asked.

"I shall have your tea!" The Foolery exclaimed before eating the whole cup that Pellio placed on the other side of the table.

"Good!" The Foolery squealed.

"Do you want more?" Pellio asked.

"Of course," The Foolery promptly replied.

The two began to serve and drink tea quickly. The number of cups that came and went during that interaction surpassed the hundred in less than a minute. Pellio and the Foolery even stopped speaking since mere glances became enough to express their respective intentions.

"One second," The Foolery suddenly voiced to interrupt that exchange of cups.

The pig shot toward the surface to take a dump, and azure bushes immediately grew from that spot. The green plain didn't seem to care about the presence of that foreign plant, but the ground soon absorbed it to restore the environment's harmony.

"Hey," Noah called when the Foolery returned on Pellio's mat, "Did the plain always take care of your dumps?"

"I don't really know," The Foolery revealed. "I was too busy eating to notice."

"No one in your pack is using their innate ability," Noah commented.

"So?" The Foolery questioned. "Maybe they don't want to ruin the banquet."

"When did that ever stop you?" Noah sighed as he noticed another odd aspect of the area.

The food on the table didn't trigger the Foolery's innate ability. Noah could even believe that those pigs had learnt how to contain themselves in their period among the weak sky. However, the recent consequence of drinking Pellio's tea proved that thought wrong.

Mere tea in the human ranks could trigger the Foolery's innate ability, so the delicacies on the table had to do the same. Of course, that could be true only if the food in the area was real. Still, Noah could confirm its existence through its smell, which inevitably confused him.

'Is this an illusion?' Noah wondered. 'No, it can't be. The food must have some unique features.'

The castle's main door opened when Noah, Pellio, and the Foolery landed at its base. Noah didn't even need to check for the presence of traps or defensive formations. His instincts immediately confirmed that the owner of the place had deactivated everything before their arrival.

"They aren't scared of us," The Foolery commented as the trio stepped inside the castle and began to inspect its vast spaces.

The beauty shown by the castle was impeccable. Everything was beyond clean, perfect, and bright. Its grey insides shone on their own, and multiple chandeliers added white shades to the immense corridors and halls.

A series of servants in the eighth rank moved among the corridors and the various rooms connected to them. They never bothered to address Noah and his companions, but they always bowed to perform respectful greetings before going on their way.

Noah never thought about questioning them since the liquid stage expert standing at the top of the castle wasn't trying to hinder his path. The leader of the area wanted that meeting to happen, so Noah played by the rules.

Noah didn't hold back from trying to find clues about the leader's power, but he didn't need to look too hard for them. The walls, floor, ceiling, furniture, and even the cultivators reeked with that mighty existence's aura.

That detail would usually put Noah and the others in a tense mood. After all, the amount of influence that the leader could push into the world was immense. However, they only experienced peace. Nothing in that power wanted to hurt them.

It was hard to find experts with such peculiar worlds. Almost every existence had to fight to reach the last stage of the cultivation journey, so developing a path focused on peace was unnatural.

Even experts like Faith radiated clear danger. There didn't seem to be alternatives to that rule, but Noah felt to have found it inside that separate dimension of the Cursed Labyrinth.

"Quite the peculiar existence you are," Noah commented when tall doors on the last floor opened and revealed a middle-aged man sitting at the center of a vast circular hall.

The expert radiated dense liquid stage aura, but Noah experienced no pressure even if he was in the middle of its waves. That power was gentle, good, and light.

The middle-aged man wore a warm smile and interrupted his cultivation to turn his azure eyes on the trio. His long grey hair fluttered during the gesture, and they slowly fell back on his shoulders afterward.

The unnatural movements of his hair reflected the nature of his power. The expert's world didn't allow abrupt movements even when it came to his own body. He had turned slowly, and his eyelids closed and opened at the same pace.

"Did you enjoy the food?" The middle-aged man asked through a voice that seemed able to fill the trio's stomachs.

"It was incredible!" The Foolery shouted, uncaring of Noah's glare.

"I didn't have the chance to taste it," Pellio commented.

"Because you aren't really here," The middle-aged man responded. "Isn't that true, Dream Lord Pellio?"

"Do you know me?" Pellio questioned as his eyes opened completely. "I don't have any memory about you."

"That's because we never met," The middle-aged man revealed. "I'm Artamo, peace's expression."

"How did you know about Pellio then?" Noah joined the conversation.

"The creators of the Labyrinths told me about him when they placed me here," Artamo explained.

Pellio shut his eyes as he tried to dream about the matter, and Noah maintained his cold smirk even if confusion had seeped into his mind. According to Artamo's words, the creators had handpicked him for that area of the Labyrinth.

"He is telling the truth," Pellio eventually whispered. "I can dream about his recruitment and his long conversations outside the fabric of this structure."

"Why did they pick you?" Noah asked. "I thought the Labyrinth attracted experts for different reasons."

"Picking someone is a different reason, right?" Artamo softly laughed. "My situation was peculiar, so the creators approached me with an offer. They wanted to study my growth, and I agreed to fill this place with my peace."

"What peculiar situation?" Noah questioned, knowing that Artamo wouldn't try to hide anything.

"I was the only rank 9 existence that Heaven and Earth didn't try to suppress," Artamo voiced. "My breakthrough to the divine ranks didn't even trigger a Tribulation. I am an existence that the rulers have no interest in defeating or absorbing."

The revelation was astonishing. Artamo was probably extremely old, so he had experienced the period when Heaven and Earth only wanted to add laws to their existence. Noah could understand why organizations and other forces would find Artamo's power complicated to exploit, but he couldn't imagine the rulers missing out on such a unique world.

Nevertheless, Artamo's words seemed to carry no lies, and Pellio soon nodded to confirm them. Heaven and Earth had really chosen not to pursue or destroy that unique existence.

"Did your peace fend them off?" Noah asked. "Did your world affect Heaven and Earth's system?"

"Maybe," Artamo stated, "Maybe not. I never asked. I only lived."

"Such an honorable way of living!" The Foolery exclaimed. "I shall take you as my disciple!"

"I won't refuse," Artamo's laughed. "However, I'm afraid I have to fulfill my end of the deal with the creators first."

"Which is?" Noah asked while suppressing the desire to keep the pig's mouth closed.

"I need to complete my path," Artamo explained. "As you can see, my world is still in the liquid stage. The creators won't let me go until I bring it to the peak of the cultivation journey."

"You will soar past the limits of the cultivation journey with my teachings," The Foolery squealed while lifting its head to wear its proud expression.

"How long have you been stuck at this level?" Noah continued, ignoring the pig at his side.

"I don't know," Artamo chuckled. "I was at the peak of the gaseous stage when I got here, but I didn't improve after my breakthrough."

'Countless years stuck at the same level then,' Noah commented in his mind. 'Why does he even sound so happy?'

## **Chapter 2145 - 2145. Demons**

In Noah's mind, Artamo was more than off. The expert sounded like a cultivator with no ambition. His path was so unique that Noah couldn't understand how he had even reached the liquid stage of the ninth rank.

The problem wasn't with Artamo's current level. Rank 9 cultivators only had to expand their influence and become heavy enough to affect the universe. That was doable even without the many battles that could fill someone's life.

However, the previous ranks were different. The sole absorption of energy was an act of defiance against Heaven and Earth and the world as a one. Cultivators grew stronger at the expense of their surroundings, but Artamo was different.

Noah could use Vesuvia's perspective to place Artamo among the humans. The latter's world worked in harmony with his surroundings and the higher plane as a whole. He didn't devour like hybrids and magical beasts.

Still, Artamo seemed to have brought that approach to a superior level. Noah could even accept the lack of ambition, but the expert lacked something that felt necessary to the beings on the cultivation journey. He didn't care about reaching the peak.

"How weak are you?" Noah eventually asked.

"Watch your words!" The Foolery squealed while lifting its head to the ceiling. "That's my disciple."

Noah didn't even hear the Foolery. His eyes, ears, and senses were on Artamo. He had initially evaluated the expert as someone who could ignore the limits of regular labels, but everything had changed now. Noah could only see weakness in that path.

"Strength has different forms," Artamo gently chuckled. "The cultivation journey has countless paths, so there is no absolute truth in the world. What you see as a weakness is the strength that has brought me so far."

"But this is your limit," Noah commented before correcting himself. "You might still have what it takes to reach the peak, but you don't want to."

"I need to complete my path," Artamo repeated.

"Needing isn't the same as wanting," Noah shook his head. "You cultivate out of habit, but you lack determination."

"I'm still a rank 9 cultivator," Artamo laughed.

"That's the problem, isn't it?" Noah sighed. "You are satisfied. You didn't lose your determination to advance until the peak. You only stopped feeling it."

"That might be true," Artamo guessed. "However, my path is mine alone. I am happy."

Artamo didn't see his state as a problem. Noah couldn't understand that perspective, but he accepted it. He knew some experts who had decided to stop cultivating to pursue other goals. He couldn't be like them, but he acknowledged those paths.

A whiff of Noah's potential left the ethereal blackness and gathered in his hand in the form of a half-transparent dark gas. He threw it toward Artamo, but nothing happened.

The potential fused with Artamo's aura and tried to apply its effects, but the latter's world experienced no reactions. Noah had found something that even his ambition couldn't affect.

"I see," Artamo voiced his gentle laugh. "We might have opposite worlds. Your power makes everything around you strive toward the peak, while mine allows magical beasts, cultivators, and hybrids to accept peace."

"You make them trade the cultivation journey for some food," Noah stated.

"Is it wrong?" Artamo asked. "The cultivation journey isn't mandatory, especially when you find something you enjoy more. I don't force anyone to remain at my table. They can leave whenever they want, but I know that some will remain."

Noah didn't know what to say. He could argue with Artamo, but he found no reason to do that. The two simply had opposite perspectives and approaches.

"Your world won't do," The Foolery exclaimed once the conversation between Noah and Artamo ended. "Change it."

"I'll see what I can do," Artamo chuckled.

"This is pointless," Noah sighed as he turned to leave.

"Don't you want to try my food?" Artamo called.

"You are lucky I don't need to turn you into food," Noah commented as he stormed out of the castle.

Pellio and the Foolery followed Noah, but the latter didn't stop flying even after crossing the banquet. He was heading directly for the dimensional passage.

"Noah, I shall remain here to guard the area!" The Foolery exclaimed when the dimensional passage was right before the trio.

Noah glanced at the banquet before moving his eyes back on the dimensional portal and waving his hand. He knew that the Foolery only wanted to eat, and he didn't care enough to stop it.

Pellio didn't say anything and flew toward the long table with the Foolery while Noah crossed the dimensional portal. The windy area with the four tornados reappeared in his vision, but he barely looked at it. Heavy thoughts afflicted Noah's mind now that the eighth floor had placed him in front of a choice.

Someone had to die. The rules of the eighth floor forced Noah to choose two separate dimensions to destroy to create the key. He had already gotten the first from the eels, and Vesuvia was a valuable potential ally, so he only had to pick his next target.

Artamo might have his uses. His power could probably influence the final battle, at least when it came to Heaven and Earth's weaker assets. His world might be a game-changer on the battlefield.

Moreover, Artamo's power had shown how some of Noah's underlings might not have the mentality to strive for the peak. That was relatively fine since the apex of the cultivation journey wasn't for everyone, but it still put Noah in a pickle.

Heaven and Earth's Cancer was an organization built around ambition. Noah was the greatest trigger for that feeling. Still, every member of his force strived to reach the peak or had tried to do so.

Noah didn't care about talent. He didn't mind if some of his underlings required more time to reach the peak or decided to remain behind. They were still warriors ready to give their lives in the battle against Heaven and Earth. They were still beings that couldn't stand the heavy regulations imposed by the rulers.

Still, that determination was relatively easy to obtain in Noah's presence. His ambition was too perfect for that approach, but Artamo managed to do something similar. The expert could trigger the desire for peace hidden in every existence.

How many members of Heaven and Earth's Cancer would stop to walk on the cultivation journey if they met Artamo? Only the Foolery had managed to leave the banquet after tasting his food, which probably meant that the others were flawed in ways that Noah couldn't fix.

Of course, those features were flaws only from Noah's perspective. Other experts could see them as positive aspects. There was no right or wrong, and Noah knew that. Yet, the final battle was approaching, and he needed a force worthy of the event.

Noah remained immersed in his thoughts as he hovered among the four tornados. Part of him had already made a decision, but he waited for the last piece of the puzzle to join him.

Time passed until a familiar presence eventually appeared in the windy plain. June left the dimensional passage and flew toward Noah as soon as she noticed his aura. Noah also interrupted his thoughts to focus on his lover, and a smile inevitably appeared on his face when he inspected her state.

June was covered in blood. Her skin had almost disappeared due to the many burned patches that filled her body. Her state was beyond poor, but her aura was stronger than ever.

Injuries filled her face and made it impossible to see her expression, but Noah knew that she was smiling. June was in ecstasy after her long battle, but a trace of disappointment still managed to infect her aura. She didn't like that the fight had ended.

"You had fun," Noah laughed as June took her place on his crossed legs.

"It will take me a while to heal," June explained in a rough voice. "Those worms are strong. They eventually adapted to my aura and sent lightning bolts that my body couldn't absorb."

"Worms?" Noah asked.

"That's what they are," June revealed. "They seem parasitic lifeforms, but you are the expert in magical beasts. You can take a look at them once I feel like leaving your lap."

"I bet that won't happen soon," Noah chuckled.

"As if you minded that," June responded before changing the topic. "What happened to you? You seem down, which is beyond rare."

"The force in the last separate dimension isn't bad," Noah declared. "Their leader is one of the good guys. Those are even rarer than my current mood."

"Can he help us in the final battle?" June asked.

"Maybe," Noah replied. "Maybe he will turn my force into a mass of peaceful assets."

"You have never been one to avoid risks," June exclaimed.

"This is different," Noah admitted. "His peace is strong."

"The world naturally seeks balance," June commented. "Experts like him must appear in a world filled with warriors. It's strange that we didn't meet similar existences sooner."

"True," Noah agreed. "Still, this balance goes against our goals."

"Did you make up your mind then?" June asked.

"Of course," Noah said as his dark matter began to help June's healing process. "We are Demons.. We'll destroy peace if it goes against us."

Chapter 2146 - 2146. Environment

Noah and June remained among the four tornados for a while. She needed time to heal the many injuries that the worms had left on her body, and no one disturbed them during those years.

The fragile environment of the eighth floor didn't allow the two to express their passion after June healed. They risked destroying everything if they let their power run freely, so they went back to business.

Noah had made up his mind about his final target, but he had another step to complete before clearing the eighth floor. June had defeated the worms, but she had left some of them alive because she knew that Heaven and Earth's Cancer might need them.

Noah and June found a small group of clouds when they entered the worms' separate dimension. The Labyrinth had yet to rebuild the materials that those creatures required to thrive, so the danger in the area was barely noticeable.

The relatively empty environment gave Noah the chance to study the worms thoroughly. They required crystals or metals that imitated the sky's properties to reproduce. They fed off Heaven and Earth's world to emulate their power. In theory, they were natural enemies of the rulers.

The worms were small grey creatures with many pores on their bodies. They were far from strong on their own, and they could express their true power only if they had the chance to create black clouds. Noah could crush them with the sheer pressure of his aura, but their abilities were too interesting to kill them on the spot.

Noah didn't care about the imitation of Heaven and Earth's lightning bolts. He even believed that the worms' black clouds would be relatively useless during the final battle. However, their ability to reproduce quickly inside the rulers' world was interesting, to say the least.

The worms could be a valuable distraction or a threat for the rulers as long as Noah used them wisely. Moreover, their relatively simple bodies were easy to modify. They could evolve after only a few years spent among his ambition.



The worms' nature was their only problem. They were parasites that the higher plane had created to balance Heaven and Earth's power. They were the living version of the dark metal, but that didn't make them smart.

Talking with the worms was impossible. They barely understood the feelings that Noah sent toward them. Their life cycle was a mere relentless consumption of everything that belonged to Heaven and Earth. They would let themselves die in the absence of the sky or similar material.

Noah wished to stop finding dumb allies, but he didn't complain. The worms had the chance to get smarter after bathing in his ambition, and their current state made them easier to control. He didn't need to convince them to join his fight. He only had to capture them.

According to what Noah had seen in the eels' dimension, he believed that taking away the worms wouldn't count as a victory for the eighth floor. He probably had to exterminate those creatures to meet the conditions behind the creation of the key, so he could take his time to build a new environment.

His knowledge of magical beasts was incredible, but he didn't hold back from using June's understanding of formations and Heaven and Earth's lightning bolts. Noah had to move the worms away from the dimension into an environment he could contain, so her help felt necessary.

The two worked for a while. They used Noah's dark matter as the core material while studying how the dimension generated material similar to the sky. The process couldn't be short since they had to wait for the Labyrinth to send power, but the lack of other options forced them to accept that pace.

The new environment slowly took life. Noah and June built a spherical structure containing multiple layers of dark matter with different natures. The higher energy on the surface was a simple barrier, while the crystals inside the item tried their best to imitate Heaven and Earth's power.

Of course, Noah found it hard to imitate Heaven and Earth, but the same didn't apply to June. Her flesh had absorbed the rulers' power, so she could use it with the dark matter to create something that the worms loved.

The space-time array inside the spherical structure was a mess since Noah had stretched and condensed it according to his needs. The environment could become as big as a bean even if it contained multiple regions worth of materials that imitated Heaven and Earth's power. The worms would be free to thrive there, and they would also bathe in Noah's ambition during the process.

Noah didn't know what the worms would become, but he planned to let them grow until the final battle. The environment would require modifications as the pack grew, but that was an issue for the future. He had something very different to handle now.

Noah moved the worms inside the spherical structure and stored it inside the black crystal before waiting inside the now empty dimension. He and June let the years pass as they inspected the area, but they decided to leave when they saw that the Labyrinth had stopped sending energy.

The worms seemed to be the trigger behind the creation of new environments, but that couldn't happen now that Noah had seized all of them. He and June could return to the area with the four tornados without looking back, and their permanence there didn't last long since they flew for the fourth dimensional passage right away.

The green plain with the long table appeared in Noah and June's vision. The banquet was still ongoing, and almost everyone focused on their food. Only the Foolery raised its head to welcome the two with a squeal before moving on the various plates again.

"Do you think they all prefer peace over ambition?" June asked while inspecting the scene.

"I think Artamo's influence is strong enough to cloud their judgment," Noah stated. "I don't care what he says. He is a liquid stage cultivator, so his power affects others even if he has the best intentions."

"He sounds boring to fight," June commented.

"I don't think he will fight," Noah revealed. "Well, we'll see once we get there."

The castle had disappeared after Noah's departure, but he knew its location, and Artamo didn't hide it when he felt his presence. June could inspect the structure during the flight, but she let Noah continue on his own once they got too close.

June liked to fight, so an expert like Artamo was the embodiment of boredom for her. She had no interest in attempting to force his hand, so she chose to remain behind and take care of those who tried to interfere with the event.

"Did you come back to try my food?" Artamo's voice resounded in the area when Noah reached a spot right above my castle.

"No, I've come to kill you," Noah declared as his blades appeared in his hands.

"Why would you decide to kill me?" Artamo asked. "I believe I didn't do anything to incur your wrath."

"It's not a matter of wrath," Noah explained. "You are useless and in the way. I'm just opening a path."

"Is that how you justify your bloodthirsty actions?" Artamo wondered.

"I don't try to justify them," Noah stated. "A Demon doesn't care about that."

"Your endless search for battles is toxic," Artamo gently chuckled. "You decide to raise your blade even against innocent beings. You will never find peace like this."

"I don't care about peace," Noah exclaimed as he raised his swords.. "There is only ambition."

#### Chapter 2147 - 2147. Mountains

Noah's statement said everything there was to say. Artamo didn't mind discussing the nature of his world or the cultivation journey, but arguing with Noah was beyond his interests. He couldn't bring peace to that conversation.

On the other hand, Noah had already made up his mind. He had to destroy another separate dimension to generate the key needed to reach the ninth floor. Artamo's ideals went against what Noah was trying to achieve, and his world was impossible to corrupt with ambition. The expert had to die so that those interested in the final battle could advance.

Noah activated his techniques without restraining the flow of potential. Artamo was a powerful liquid stage cultivator. His world didn't reach the same heights as Caesar, but it remained strong enough to require Noah's full power.

Night, Snore, and the parasite left his figure and began to radiate ambition. Shafu and Duanlong imitated them even if they remained inside the black crystal, and the two swords didn't refrain from joining the process.

Noah took his time to reach his peak. He didn't need to complete the process quickly or place defensive techniques between the castle and him. He knew that fighting Artamo wouldn't involve an actual battle, so he could prepare thoroughly.

The clash between two rank 9 experts would usually make weaker cultivators run away, but the existences inside the castles didn't move. Noah could sense their faith in Artamo's world fusing with his power and deepening his peace. Still, black lines began to spread in the sky anyway as Noah's aura continued to expand.

Noah knew how the battle would unfold. There wouldn't be any exchange of techniques or a grand spectacle of lights. His power would fall on the castle, and the structure would crumble if he managed to create a dent in Artamo's world.

Dark matter came out of Noah's chest and the Demonic Sword as roars, high-pitched noises, and cries echoed around his figure. His weapons and companions mustered their auras and let their ambition run freely as they prepared their offensive.

Then, a smooth movement from Noah's side started everything. He lowered his blades, and a series of attacks flew downward. Even Night and the others took that as the signal to launch their offensive.

The slashes, lines, waves of destructive energy, dark-red shades, and dark-purple liquid created a proper waterfall that obscured a vast chunk of the separate dimension. Blackness poured out of Noah's figure and tried to engulf the castle, but the structure remained unaffected by the event.

Spiderwebs of black lines made of Noah's destruction filled the sky, but none of them managed to touch the castle. They all stopped right over the structure as the immense amount of energy released during the attack seeped into the ground and vanished.

The offensive had been a failure, but Noah expected as much. He had already accepted that Artamo was strong, but he couldn't lose against such a passive opponent, especially after deciding to fight him. His whole path was at risk there.

Noah immediately launched a new series of attacks, and his companions followed suit. The separate dimension saw a sixth of its vast area grow dark as the powerful offensive engulfed the castle and crashed on the ground.

The castle came out intact of the wave of dense energy, and the ground absorbed everything that had fallen on its surface. Artamo's world was enforcing peace, so destruction couldn't unfold.

However, the black lines containing Noah's destruction had taken a step forward after his second wave of attacks. They had grown closer to the castle, and some even threatened to infect the ground.

Noah didn't care about the technical state of the battlefield. Plans and strategies were superfluous in that situation. He would attack until his energy ran out. A winner would appear by then.

Dark glows flashed inside the separate dimension multiple times. A sixth of the plain was in the middle of a deadly struggle, but everything appeared oddly silent.

The intensity and amount of destructive energy that Noah released with each attack were incredible. He was expressing the very peak of his power, but he never expected the event to be so quiet.

There was beauty in that silence. Noah had never claimed Artamo's path to be wrong or flawed. Everyone was different, so each journey had value, especially if it could reach the ninth rank.

Yet, events that many could simply view as unlucky could still happen. Advancing through the ranks only gave more control over the cultivation journey, but the other aspects of that arduous path remained, and luck was one of them.

Noah had known that since his first meeting with a dragon. The world was full of powerful beings, and the universe shared that feature. At times, luck led experts on the path of someone far stronger than them. In Artamo's case, he had just found himself before someone willing to destroy him to advance.

The black lines containing destruction never stopped expanding as the offensive continued. The plain eventually became unable to absorb them, and the castle also saw those ominous structures stretching over its smooth surfaces.

A series of attacks pushed those lines inside the castle. They expanded throughout the many corridors and halls without releasing their power. Noah didn't want to trigger them so soon. He found no reason to do that.

The weaker cultivators inside the structure didn't run away even when black lines expanded on their bodies. They knew that they were already dead, but they still did their best to add more power to Artamo's world. However, the outcome appeared inevitable.

"Your path is sad," Artamo exclaimed when he saw black lines reach his room. "You might go past me, but you'll always stand on mountains of corpses. The stench will be impossible to avoid."

"You see the cultivation journey as a choice," Noah decided to answer without halting his offensive. "All of us are different kinds of monsters, some more than others. We follow inhuman and unstoppable drives to force ourselves on the universe. I have accepted the nature of the cultivation journey. If my ambition leads to rivers of blood and mountains of corpses, I welcome them wholeheartedly."

"I have accepted its nature too," Artamo exclaimed while black lines spread on his figure. "My resolve matches yours. Why did I lose?"

"My world is heavier," Noah responded. "It might be due to the corpses."

"I was about to say that," Artamo laughed.

Noah continued to attack until his black lines had spread over everything under him. A mere snap of his fingers would be enough to trigger them, but Artamo managed to voice a question before that. "Will you hear my last request?"

"No," Noah exclaimed before waving his hand.

A slash left his fingers and triggered the destruction accumulated in the environment. Everything directly crumbled and fell apart. It only took an instant for the castle and all the experts inside it to turn into dust.

The event triggered significant changes in the whole dimension. The table suddenly disappeared, and the same went for the many delicacies. All the seated experts found themselves lost, but they didn't take long to identify the culprit behind the event.

Many cultivators, magical beasts, and hybrids flew toward Noah while voicing angry complaints. Some of the turtles were among them, but that didn't make any difference to Noah.

Noah placed his swords on his forehead, and precise slashes suddenly materialized on the various complainers.. Their figures split in half before they could retreat or summon techniques.

Chapter 2148 - 2148. World

Noah's slaughter wasn't random. Artamo had created a conflict of ideologies, and some of the potential members of Heaven and Earth's Cancer had been infected by his world in ways that Noah couldn't override.

The issue was simple. Some turtles, magical beasts, cultivators, and hybrids seated at the table had lost their desire to reach the peak through battles. They wanted peace, so they had become useless to Noah. There was even a chance that they could go against him in their current state.

The slaughter was a declaration that the other beings understood. Everything had reached the point of no return. The final battle was upon them, and they had to pick a side.

The reaction after Artamo's death told Noah what his potential underlings had chosen. Those that had remained confused about the sudden disappearance of the banquet could leave. Instead, those that had been angry enough to attack Noah had to die.

The Foolery and the upper tier turtle were among the strongest beings at the table. The slaughter had surprised them, but they understood Noah's reasons, so they didn't complain.

The upper tier turtle actually began to see Noah under a new light. His power had always been undeniable, but the recent event established his position as a leader. No one else could stand above him, which was fine for the leader.

June appeared annoyed. She had prepared for the imminent battle, but Noah had taken care of everything before she could attack. Still, Noah was going through his drawbacks now, so she used that chance to reach the rest of the group and inspect everyone coldly.

Artamo had gathered many powerful experts during his ruling over the separate dimension. The various magical beasts, cultivators, and hybrids that had spent too long at the banquet were still too confused about the sudden change in the environment, but June's pressure forced them to focus.

The dimension had a new king, and everyone had to acknowledge him. Old Tyrant made it easy for the rest of the group since he promptly shot toward Noah and knelt in the sky. Gabrielle and Fiery Mountain imitated him, and the rest of the beings soon followed suit.

Only the upper tier turtle and the rank 9 Foolery flew behind Noah and watched over the army kneeling in the sky. The sheer power of the group and their general resolve created an imposing scene that resonated with Noah's ambition.

"Stand up," Noah growled. "Those who follow me do not kneel. You won't be able to look Heaven and Earth in the eyes otherwise."

Noah's aura accompanied his growl and forced all the experts to stand. He could inspect them properly now. They weren't powerful, but they had managed to ignore Artamo's influence after the banquet had disappeared, so their potential couldn't be low.

"Our enemy is the sky," Noah continued. "Any wimp who doesn't want to shatter it can remain here. I don't need weaklings. All my companions must be beings with the desire to go past the cultivation journey."

Noah didn't expect someone to decide to remain behind, and the army didn't disappoint him. The hundreds of different beings remained in the sky, waiting for his next order.

Noah had no more offers to roar. He waited for the Cursed Labyrinth to act, and a reaction eventually happened. The plain started to crumble and transform into waves of energy that converged at the bottom of the dimension. It didn't take long before a key appeared, and Noah seized it through his mental waves.

The army flew after Noah as soon as he shot toward the dimensional passage. June was at his left and the Foolery at his right. Instead, the others remained behind him out of respect for his authority.

The group returned to the area with the four tornados, and Noah released the two keys. A transformation immediately happened. The two items fused before shooting toward the barren plain and altering its nature.

The crystals that made the plain grew darker as they began to absorb the winds in the area. The four dimensional portals started to shatter and released their contents. Soon, Vesuvia's city appeared on the eighth floor, and she revealed a curious smile when she saw the new members of the army.

"You killed Artamo," Vesuvia commented while the plain continued to absorb the winds. "I'm not surprised."

"Are you angry that I have worsened the future of your dear humanity?" Noah joked.

"We all make choices," Vesuvia sighed. "I'm afraid I've already put humanity's future on your shoulders."

"You old monsters rely too much on others," Noah scoffed. "I'm losing my respect for you."

"Please," Vesuvia sneered as her city shrunk and disappeared in her storage technique, leaving her citizens in the open. "You have never respected us."

"She is right," June whispered to Noah's ear, "But I still don't like her."

Vesuvia didn't miss the chance to tease June by launching alluring gazes toward Noah. The various underlings didn't know how to react to that scene, but they eventually decided to ignore it since Noah was doing the same.

"I see that my teachings have worked," The Foolery obviously didn't let go of the matter. "You have become so popular in these years."

"The tea is ready," Pellio stated, and the Foolery voiced a squeal as it reached the mat.

"I was thinking about something," The Foolery exclaimed as it resumed to sniff Pellio. "You have a good smell."

"It might be the tea," Pellio chuckled.

"No, no," The Foolery squealed. "Nothing escapes my senses. I can feel it. You are a Foolery at heart."

"Am I?" Pellio asked. "That would explain many things."

"Raise your heads, my brethren!" The Foolery shouted while glancing at the floor's ceiling. "Today, we had found a new brother!"

The pack of Foolery squealed while glancing at the ceiling. Pellio laughed, but he eventually imitated them. Needless to say, the scene left the rest of the army speechless. The others didn't know what to say when they saw the pigs and Pellio remaining with their heads lifted for entire minutes.

"I miss Xavier," Noah sighed, but the Labyrinth eventually created a way out of that situation.

The plain began to open now that it had absorbed every gale in the area. A smooth gorge expanded and revealed a dimensional passage at its bottom. The structure had yet to activate, but the crystals that made the floor slowly gave it power.

"The path to the ninth floor," Vesuvia commented while flying toward Noah. "I wonder what has become of that place."

"Have you been there?" Noah asked.

"I know what it was supposed to be," Vesuvia revealed as she pursed her lips when June put herself between Noah and her. "I don't know if they managed to pull that off."

"Sounds interesting," Noah chuckled while pulling June on his lap and shooting downward.

Everyone followed Noah. Dark matter covered the entire army before the teleport activated. The Labyrinth didn't try to divide the various experts anymore, but Noah didn't remove the defenses.

The scenery changed. Noah unfolded his consciousness and retracted the dark world when he sensed that the area featured no dangers. He found himself in an immense environment that didn't seem to have clear borders.. He felt to be in a proper world.

Chapter 2149 - 2149. Emperor, Queen, Cursed Reality

The seemingly boundless environment didn't seem to have anything special except for its size. Noah saw plains, mountains, lakes, rivers, and much more, but nothing that could force him to inspect everything seriously.

The level of the materials in the area could change significantly. The ground could have patches in the fourth rank or entire chunks in the ninth rank. The same went for the water, clouds, and underground world.

The difference in their power didn't lead to any destruction because the stronger materials always had slightly weaker ones in their surroundings. It was clear that someone had created the area so that it could retain a perfect harmony that didn't give birth to any instability.

'This is a higher plane,' Noah concluded while gazing at the sky.

His conclusion was on point but also wrong. The ninth floor wanted to imitate the higher plane created by Heaven and Earth, but it featured sharp differences.

The sky was dark, and the only lights came from the many stars in the distance. No heavy pressure fell on the ground or tried to suppress Noah and the army. The surface and the various powerful material radiated strong waves of energy, but heroic cultivators would be able to survive there if they were careful.

The area was a version of the higher plane that didn't experience Heaven and Earth's rule. It was rich, vast, and free. It stood among the boundlessness of the void. It was a landmass floating in the depths of the universe without any connection to stronger beings.

'How much of this is real?' Noah immediately wondered.

The Cursed Labyrinth was a separate reality with a different space-time array. It wasn't inside the higher plane and was part of it at the same time. Its true nature was unclear, but that same vagueness allowed it to exist without alerting Heaven and Earth.

"Vesuvia?" Noah asked as his eyes wandered in the captivating environment.

"This area matches the blueprint," Vesuvia commented. "I wonder what the others had to sacrifice to create it."

"What do you mean?" Noah asked. "Why would they need to sacrifice anything?"

"You can't build a world inside someone else's world," Vesuvia explained. "This area seems outside the sky, but the higher plane has an entrance. Can you imagine hiding such a powerful teleport right under Heaven and Earth's attentive gaze?"

The answer was a clear no. Even if King Elbas, Noah, the orange city, and Divine Architect were to work together, they wouldn't be able to create something so massive without alerting Heaven and Earth.

In theory, building something outside Heaven and Earth's influence would prevent them from noticing it. However, the sole fact that the Labyrinth had one of its entrances inside the higher plane made that idea impossible.

The explanation was simple. Landmasses could exist both inside and outside the sky, but a connection between them naturally required a massive amount of energy. Activating the teleport would only cost more in terms of fuel if the area was far away from Heaven and Earth's domain.



The Labyrinth's entrance was in the higher plane, so no number of separate dimensions and realities could hide a teleport powerful enough to lead far away from the sky. The ninth floor was probably near Heaven and Earth's domain or directly inside it.

The sacrifice mentioned by Vesuvia involved the cloaking technique or the trick used by the creators to keep the Labyrinth hidden. Even she didn't know how they had pulled that off.

"Food!" The Foolery suddenly shouted when it realized the sheer number of resources contained in the environment.

The other Foolery squealed and began to dive toward the surface, but a deafening roar filled with pride reached their ears and forced their charge to a stop. The winged pigs halted themselves mid-air and slowly turned their gazes toward Noah.

"You aren't on your own anymore," Noah growled. "Behave."

"But, food," The rank 9 Foolery complained.

"No buts," Noah scolded. "Get some tea from Pellio while I understand what's going on here."

The compromise didn't sound bad, so Pellio soon found himself with a horde of flying pigs assaulting him from every side. The scene was actually scary, but he wasn't exactly there, so he could dodge the assault easily.

"You are a lively bunch," Vesuvia giggled.

"And you have yet to meet the others," Noah shook his head before moving his attention to the starry sky.

In a way, that scene was everything Noah had ever sought. However, it lacked the drawing force that had fueled his ambition in the past. He could see the stars, but they weren't what he was looking for.

'This is fake,' Noah confirmed without needing to study the floor thoroughly. His ambition had already declared that.

Instead, the plain was different. Each material existed and carried laws that carried no trace of Heaven and Earth's influence. The area was a paradise for those running away from the rulers. It was a world without their oppressing light.

Everything was extremely interesting, but Noah was looking for something else. The area appeared empty of significant auras or heavy presences, but his instincts knew that something was off.

"We aren't alone," Noah stated.

"Obviously," Vesuvia chuckled.

"Why don't you tell us everything you know?" June snorted.

"Because she can't," A voice suddenly came out of the starry sky and resounded throughout the entire floor.

Everyone moved their eyes toward the sky. The source of the voice remained unclear, but a few humanoid figures still became vaguely visible among the lights radiated by the distant stars.

"Is there an oath involved?" Noah shouted.

"Oaths are pointless at our level," The male voice continued. "Promises among friends are stronger."

"It's been a long time, Emperor," Vesuvia said in a polite tone. "How is the Queen?"

"She is fine," A female voice responded, "Especially since I didn't have to deal with you."

"You two are as lively as always," Vesuvia joked.

"It always surprises me that a playful existence like you has managed to develop such a selfless world," A third voice resounded. "Humanity's future should have belonged to that Artamo kid. It's a pity his peace got in the way of his journey."

"And that I killed him," Noah declared in a cold tone.

"We know," The voice belonging to the expert that Vesuvia had addressed as "Emperor" echoed. "You are quite heartless."

"I beg to differ," Noah laughed. "I killed him because my heart wanted to advance."

A moment of silence followed the statement, but the expert that Vesuvia had addressed as "Queen" eventually spoke. "I kind of like him. It reminds me of your early days."

"Our early days," Emperor sighed. "I still remember that titles you earned before going by "Queen"."

"How was life with the couple?" Vesuvia mocked, clearly addressing the third expert hidden among the starry sky. "I can't understand how you survived them."

"I had fun watching over the Labyrinth," The third expert explained. "There have been boring years, but the higher plane has managed to produce an interesting force. I'm pleased to meet you, Defying Demon."

"And who would you be?" Noah asked.

"I thought you would have understood that by now?" The expert exclaimed. "I'm the maker, the creator of this place, and the reason behind its name.. I go by Cursed Reality."

Chapter 2150 - 2150. Training Area

'Emperor, Queen, and Cursed Reality,' Noah thought as he tried to see the three experts hidden among the starry sky. 'They must be in the solid stage too.'

The sole fact that Noah couldn't sense the three experts clearly stated that they were stronger than him, at least when it came to their level. Moreover, Cursed Reality had admitted that he had created the Labyrinth, so Noah's interest had inevitably converged on him.

Still, the three experts seemed to have no intention of reaching the surface. They had observed Noah's group and achievements inside the Labyrinth, but they didn't want a meeting. They just stood in the sky, waiting for someone to talk.

"Do you plan on getting down?" Noah eventually asked.

"What's the point?" Emperor responded. "I'm not going to lie. You and your bunch are interesting, but you remain too weak. All the talk about Heaven and Earth and the sky is pointless if you can't back it up with proper power."

"And what is the issue with your relationship?" Queen continued. "We can go wild at times, but your intercourses resemble deadly battles. Slow down, kid. He isn't going anywhere."

June frowned, but sparks soon started to run over her skin. Queen had spoken to her, but she didn't know how to take her words. Part of her took that statement with pride, but she also felt that Queen had insulted her.

"I'm sorry that you can't get your partner to do what mine does," June eventually mocked. "Are you sure he still feels attracted to you? You must be pretty old."

Vesuvia had to cover her mouth to suppress her laugh, and a chuckle also came from the starry sky. Cursed Reality couldn't hold back in front of that comment.

The reaction from the army wasn't as happy. The Foolery were too busy drinking Pellio's tea to care about those events, but the others remained speechless. They had understood that the experts in the sky were powerful, but Noah and June were addressing them without showing the slightest respect. June had even openly offended them.

The matter worsened when June made herself comfortable in Noah's lap and stretched her legs to reveal them. Everyone noticed how Noah's pupils shrunk at the sight of her bare skin. When it came to relationships, it was clear that the fire between the two was still intense.

"I'm starting to like seeing our relationship challenged," Noah teased.

"You will always prefer to be alone with me," June replied.

"Undoubtedly," Noah stated while pulling June closer, "But it's still nice to make other couples jealous of us."

"Only the two Demons have a chance at beating us," June exclaimed.

"Well, Demons are always the best," Noah joked.

"I know that firsthand," June giggled as the two ended up kissing without caring about the many stares on them.

Emperor had to clear his throat as soon as he saw Noah slipping a hand under June's robe. He knew what would happen if he let the two continue, so he interrupted them and claimed their attention.

"He must know you are right," Noah whispered to June's ear before moving his gaze to the sky.

June and Noah were still inside the Cursed Labyrinth, so the three experts in the starry sky heard everything they said. Of course, Emperor and Queen didn't like their words, but they didn't take them to heart.

"You can mock us all you want," Emperor announced. "It won't change the fact that you are too weak."

"And what will you do about it?" Noah asked.

"Nothing," Emperor exclaimed, "But you won't get past the ninth floor until you gain your approval."

"Which became harder to get since you like joking so much," Queen continued.

Noah remained calm under those threats. He had no intention to become another Artamo, but he didn't know enough about the ninth floor to decide how to act. The place probably didn't have conditions or requirements, but understanding its functioning might reveal a flaw that he could exploit.

"Is this the whole purpose behind the Cursed Labyrinth?" Noah asked. "Do you lock experts inside it and wait for them to become valuable assets? That's simply stupid."

"It doesn't matter if you find it stupid," Emperor declared. "We make the rules, and you can't escape it. Enjoy spending the next era under a scenery that you can't achieve with your own strength."

Silence fell in the area, and Noah felt his instincts grow quieter. They still confirmed the presence of dangerous beings in the starry sky, but it seemed that someone had left after the conversation.

"Did you turn the Cursed Labyrinth into a prison?" Vesuvia shattered the silence. "I didn't think you would have steered so far from your initial idea."

"It's not a prison," Cursed Reality explained. "You have yet to see how Heaven and Earth have evolved. The higher plane is different from how you remember it, and Defying Demon is probably to blame for the latest developments."

"So, you lock me up to avoid doing more damage?" Noah wondered.

"You misunderstood," Cursed Reality responded. "The Labyrinth is a place that Heaven and Earth can't see nor affect. It's perfect for nourishing experts with the potential to join the final battle. Remain here. Become strong. All of you will fight in the end."

"This place will only lead to stagnation," Noah contradicted.

"Rank 9 experts only need to expand their influence," Cursed Reality exclaimed. "The ninth floor gives you a direct connection to the universe. You can test your weight and its growth without Heaven and Earth shining on your head."

"What about my underlings?" Noah asked.

"Most of them are magical beasts," Cursed Reality pointed out. "They only need energy to grow, and the Labyrinth won't run out of it as long as I exist. As for the others, we can create different trials to make sure that they will continue to feel challenged."

'That's why he called it "Labyrinth",' Noah understood. 'It's possible to remain stuck inside this structure for countless years, and the trials can change depending on the experts' personality. This place is a massive and potentially endless training ground.'

"Can I help you do it?" June asked when Noah's eyes flickered.

"No, I might need to go past my limits," Noah announced, and June calmly left his lap.

Noah straightened his position as his swords appeared in his hands. He activated the unstable substance, but he held back from using his potential for now. Still, his blades unleashed their abilities and mustered power as he shot toward the sky.

The starry sky didn't have a clear limit. It was boundless, with no ceiling or edges. However, Noah felt that advancing grew harder as he kept flying toward the stars. The very laws of the ninth floor made his attempts more difficult.

Noah waved his blades when his physical strength became unable to bring him any further. A giant slash flew forward without suffering from the floor's suppression, but it disappeared after crossing a specific area.

The disappearance felt abrupt and strange. Noah didn't sense any energy attacking his slash. His blow had simply vanished without requiring any teleport, formation, or defensive array.

Noah attacked a few more times to inspect the event, and an idea slowly began to take form in his mind. His slashes created a faint reaction in the starry sky when they disappeared. There seemed to be waves hidden among that blackness, and they felt oddly familiar.

"I get it," Noah whispered after his offensive led to answers. "Pellio! Do you want to know where your world is?"