

## **Demonic 2251**

Chapter 2251: 2251. Determination

The Rulers' Resolve diverted his attention even before his grey energy dispersed. His eyes went to the sky as he searched for forests made of roots to destroy.

The parasite's branches had continued to expand while Great Builder kept the privileged expert busy. The roots had become a real problem since they had never stopped feeding off weaker experts. Yet, none of the other leaders on Heaven and Earth's side had moved to contain them since the Rulers' Resolve had already decided to take care of the issue.

The Rulers' Resolve had every intention to go back to his task, but a familiar aura appeared in his consciousness' range and forced him to turn. The expert almost couldn't believe his eyes when he saw Great Builder hovering where the grey pillar had dispersed.

"You have finally shown some emotions," Great Builder commented as he patted his sleeves to remove the fumes caused by the grey energy.

The Rulers' Resolve kicked away his amazement to retrieve his aloof face, but his eyes flickered again when he saw that Great Builder didn't suffer any injury. He was completely fine. His level had actually slightly improved.

"What is it?" Great Builder mocked. "You can't understand what happened, can you?"

The Rulers' Resolve didn't answer. He launched another giant pillar that engulfed Great Builder before flying to the other side of the battlefield. Still, the privileged cultivator didn't turn at that time, and his eyes flickered once more when his opponent reappeared without carrying a single injury.

"I've warned you about inscription masters," Great Builder announced. "How many times do you think your attacks will work against me? I won't die against such a lack of creativity."

The Rulers' Resolve teleported before Great Builder and pointed both arms at his chest. The array of spheres didn't appear at that time. Instead, his fingers lit up before unleashing an oval wave of energy that made that chunk of the void twist and shake.

"I have to admit that your power was hard to counter," Great Builder's voice seeped out of the grey energy as that fuel dispersed inside the void. "Your title gave out your energy source, but I still had to go all-out to resist it."

The oval mass of grey energy dispersed and revealed Great Builder. The expert didn't suffer any injury again, and his right arm rose to grab one of the privileged cultivator's hands.

Great Builder's hand shone with a yellow light that seeped inside the privileged cultivator's limb and opened cracks in its structure. The radiance started to come out of the expert's arm until it directly shattered.

The Rulers' Resolve didn't show any surprise now. He saw his arm's fabric dispersing in the void, but he felt nothing. Yet, he decided to teleport away.

Great Builder couldn't help but show a smirk. The Rulers' Resolve's missing arm regrew instantly, but the atmosphere on the battlefield changed. It was clear that Great Builder had found a way to hurt the privileged cultivator.

"I figured you out," Great Builder exclaimed. "Well, partially. Your title doesn't come from achievements. It's a real description of your world."

"Indeed," The Rulers' Resolve responded.

"How does it feel to have a world that doesn't belong to you?" Great Builder mocked in an attempt to cause a reaction in his opponent.

"Your words won't create flaws in my existence," The Rulers' Resolve stated. "I have honed myself under Heaven and Earth's light for entire eras. You can't win against me."

"That's what everyone says before dying," Great Builder laughed. "Do you know how many times my companions heard similar lines?"

"I do," The Rulers' Resolve replied.

"Really not the talkative type," Great Builder sighed.

"Words won't benefit me," The Rulers' Resolve declared. "Though they do help you."

The Rulers' Resolve teleported forward again and unleashed a barrage of grey rays as soon as he reappeared above Great Builder. The latter flew through the attacks without suffering any damage, and his hand soon stabbed his opponent's abdomen.

A wave of yellow energy shot out of Great Builder's palm and destroyed part of the privileged cultivator's stomach, but the latter fixed his injury in no time.

Great Builder found his arm stuck in the Rulers' Resolve's belly while a grey shockwave exploded in his face. The attack didn't hurt him, but the privileged cultivator had far more in store for him.

The Rulers' Resolve placed his hands on Great Builder's shoulders and closed his eyes. His figure shone with grey light as his short black hair fluttered violently.

The darkness of the void vanished as a massive explosion unfolded. Some of the battles nearby ended up being pushed away, and their fighters also suffered due to the power that reached them.

The various experts instinctively migrated toward the other side of the higher plane since Great Builder's battle had become too dangerous for them. The Rulers' Resolve's power wasn't something that weaker cultivators could handle. Even regular rank 9 beings would die if they were too close to the clash.

Great Builder's light shone among that greyness while his figure became visible among the storm caused by the explosion. He was fine, but his body released thick waves of smoke. Moreover, his expression had lost the confident smirk from before.

The Rulers' Resolve lit up again to launch another massive explosion, but Great Builder promptly unleashed two piercing beams from his eyes. The attack broke the privileged cultivator's abdomen and allowed him to retrieve his arm.

The exchange ended with Great Builder's retreat. The Rulers' Resolve exploded with power, but Great Builder teleported away. Part of that violent grey energy hit him anyway, and his figure flickered during the impact.

The Rulers' Resolve found Great Builder in no time and teleported before him. The expert wanted to grab his opponent again, but Great Builder suddenly turned into a giant that slapped the privileged cultivator away.

The Rulers' Resolve stopped mid-air after a couple of seconds and resumed his offensive. Great Builder shrunk to a normal size to side-step the giant grey pillar flying in his direction, but the gesture prevented him from dodging the detonation of that attack.

Great Builder's fuming figure flew away, but the Rulers' Resolve didn't let him go. The privileged cultivator reappeared above Great Builder to unleash another grey pillar, but the latter shot through it easily to reach his opponent.

The Rulers' Resolve saw a hole opening on his chest, but his expression remained aloof. He didn't care about the injuries that his body suffered as long as he could get his hands on his opponent.

Great Builder's hands turned into blades that severed the Rulers' Resolve's arms. The privileged cultivator tried to grab his opponent with his legs, but two additional limbs came out of Great Builder's torso and allowed him to cut them too.

A shockwave came out of Great Builder's body at that point, and he even ripped off his additional arms to throw them at his opponent. The Rulers' Resolve was still trying to stabilize his stance when the two limbs reached him and detonated to unleash their energy.

A yellow light filled the void, but the Rulers' Resolve soon walked through it to step inside the blackness. The exchange didn't hurt him, and his power had remained steady throughout the entire battle. Still, his gaze seemed to have gained piercing properties due to how attentively he inspected Great Builder.

"What a troublesome power," Great Builder commented while looking at the incoming opponent. "This is no different from fighting Heaven and Earth."

"No," The Rulers' Resolve corrected. "Heaven and Earth are far stronger than this. You are only facing their determination."

Chapter 2252: 2252. Fun

"That guy is getting talkative," One of the major experts on Heaven and Earth's side exclaimed while playing with her long brown hair and inspecting Great Builder's battle.

Two figures teleported to her sides, a middle-aged woman and an old-looking man. The two were the remaining major experts on Heaven and Earth's side, and they didn't say anything while inspecting Great Builder's battle from that new position.

"You don't talk much either," The first woman sighed. "Spending so long inside the sky made you silent."

"You can always switch sides," The middle-aged woman teased. "Our opponents like to waste time talking."

"They didn't live as long as us," The old man commented. "Some of our last training sessions have lasted more than their lives."

"You don't have to be so wise all the time," The first woman scolded. "We finally have the chance to have some fun. We should seize it."

"You can go first," The middle-aged woman chuckled.

"The Rulers' Resolve has taken that spot," The first woman complained. "Divine Architect is also busy with her boyfriend. Most of the fun is already gone."

"We still have many valuable opponents," The middle-aged woman stated. "Look at Noah Balvan. He is causing his usual mess."

"Caesar wants us to leave Defying Demon on his own," The first woman whined.

"Did he?" The middle-aged woman asked. "He didn't tell me anything."

"What?" The first woman gasped. "What about you, old man?"

"I think Caesar decided to talk with you due to your peculiar character," The old man guessed.

"Does he think that I'm troublesome?" The first woman questioned.

"You are," The middle-aged woman sighed. "You are the most troublesome and annoying expert in the sky."

"I agree," The old man added.

"What?!" The first woman gasped again. "You are so mean."

"You wanted us to talk," The middle-aged woman giggled. "You can always go against Divine Demon."

"But he is so boring to fight," The first woman complained again. "I don't want to remain stuck in a pointless fight."

"Talking with us won't solve your boredom," The old man stated. "Besides, I know you have already made your decision."

"You are as knowledgeable as always," The first woman sighed. "So, I believe I'm free to do as I wish while the rulers are restrained."

"We never had limits in the first place," The middle-aged woman responded.

"You didn't have Caesar as a nanny," The first woman snorted before glancing at the battlefield. "Still, we might really lose if things stay like this."

King Elbas' actions had kicked out the entirety of the experts hidden inside the sky. Those forces could theoretically keep the landmass' leaders busy for multiple rounds, but the battlefield didn't reflect that feature.

The weaker assets on the landmass' side were suffering greatly due to the numerical disadvantage, but their leaders were quickly turning the tables of the battle. Alexander and Noah had unleashed a slaughter that no one wanted or seemed able to stop, which was only part of the issue.

Emperor, Queen, and the other leaders who didn't suffer any injury during the first round were turning the battlefield in their favor. Their power was more than impressive, especially when it came to experts already in the solid stage, and Heaven and Earth's side struggled to keep up.

That didn't only come from the higher quality of the landmass' side. The now-golden city, the dragons, and the various improved magical beasts were simply too much for the mindless assets that Heaven and Earth had kept stored inside the sky.

The avatars made of higher energy were troublesome, but they remained assets that the two upper tier dragons could face easily. The same went for Noah and Alexander since they were focusing on the weaker experts on the battlefield.

Moreover, Divine Demon, Emperor, and a few other solid stage experts were keeping multiple privileged cultivators busy. Their power was too overwhelming for assets that couldn't be classified as leaders, which forced the existences from the sky to use their numerical advantage to contain them.

That made it easier for the weaker experts from the landmass. Their leaders were forcing most of their major opponents to focus on them, which left them with assets they had already learnt how to counter.

Of course, the dragons were doing most of the hard work. The two upper tier dragons were unstoppable, and they instinctively avoided any fight that could hinder their incredible advance.

The various buildings spread across the battlefield were equally important. They supported countless battles with their influence, and they even allowed the experts on their side to take breaks or heal quickly.

The landmass was also on the move. The giant structure was turning on itself as Sword Saint continued to oversee its awakening. It wouldn't take long before it showed its true power.

The landmass was by no means the favorite on the battlefield, but it was clear that its army had a chance to win. That outcome obviously depended on the result of the fights among the various leaders. Yet, when it came to mere weaker experts, Noah's organization had a path to victory.

The first woman wasn't talking about the overall battle. Her attention mostly was on the clash among the weaker troops. She could see that the landmass' forces had a chance to win, and she couldn't accept that.

"Fine," The first woman eventually sighed. "I'll have some fun until someone tries to stop me."

Her two companions didn't bother to answer. The first woman didn't wait for their reply as she shot forward to appear in the void between the landmass and the sky.

Her appearance caused a massive shift in the various battles. All the experts fighting among the void knew that the privileged cultivator was too strong for them, so they flew away to avoid getting caught in her power.

Nevertheless, the first woman had no intention to target specific experts. Her eyes closed as her faint consciousness unfolded and spread to every corner of the higher plane. She could fill the entirety of the world inside the sky with her mental waves, and the event naturally attracted everyone's attention.

The privileged cultivator remained still as her consciousness seeped into the very fabric that filled the higher plane. She could see every battle, victory, or death, but her attention slowly moved to the experts on her side.

"Assets nurtured by Heaven and Earth for so long shouldn't fight so poorly," The first woman exclaimed as her mental waves shook to unleash purple energy.

The whole higher plane turned purple for an instant before retrieving its darkness and lights caused by the many battles. Still, the purple color didn't vanish. It remained in the form of countless tendrils that attached themselves to Heaven and Earth's assets.

The experts touched by those purple tendrils remained stunned for a second. Their opponents exploited that chance and killed many of them, but the matter didn't end there.

The cultivators and assets that survived the offensive saw their worlds and laws exploding with power. Their eyes also turned purple as the first woman's energy took control of their existence and forced them to radiate her influence.

Chapter 2253: 2253. Changes

The first woman's power didn't increase the cultivation level of her underlings, but it gave them the chance to explore the true depths of their power.

The privileged cultivator was basically forcing the various experts to get their hands on the true potential of their worlds and laws. She was sharing part of her energy and insights on the cultivation path, and the outcome of her technique ended up being beyond shocking.

A large chunk of Heaven and Earth's army had died during the second spent stunned, but the surviving assets saw their existences exploding with power.

That change didn't only affect the amount of energy that those experts could draw out of their worlds and laws. Their mindsets also improved and saw them gain new resolve.

The first woman had been clear. She didn't want to see beings belonging to Heaven and Earth's side in such a pitiful state, and their power was only part of the issue. Their weak minds and poor determination weren't worthy of the rulers, so she had to improve them.

The landmass' forces experienced losses due to qualitative differences for the first time since the beginning of the final battle. Their only advantage had always been their superior power, but the first woman had changed that.

The various experts from Heaven and Earth's army managed to fight back without relying on their numerical advantage. Each of their attacks also intensified the purple influence radiated by their figures. They transformed into humanoid cores of the privileged cultivator's technique, which improved its effects as they kept fighting.

As the first woman's influence intensified, the various underlings managed to gain access to deeper parts of their power. Their mindsets also continued to improve, which slowly brought them closer to their opponents in that field.

One of the greatest weaknesses of Heaven and Earth's army came from its lack of experience and dedication to the cause. The various cultivators didn't want to give up on their lives to achieve major victories, but that quickly changed.

Explosions and reckless attacks began to happen everywhere on the battlefield. Heaven and Earth's forces abandoned their defensive stance and stopped retreating to launch powerful techniques that often led to their death.

The landmass' side could only respond with a similar approach. The various forces in Noah's organization shot forward to unleash their best attacks, and many decided to sacrifice themselves to prevent losses too great to bear.

The changes in the battles among weak assets couldn't claim the leaders' attention, but the situation was different when it came to the stronger existences.

The two upper tier dragons, Divine Demon, Emperor, and other experts who were forcing many opponents to gang up on them saw the number of their enemies increase. The first woman was filling her side with bravery, which allowed her underlings to make decisions based purely on what could benefit Heaven and Earth.

The number of enemies around the most troublesome leaders from the landmass became so high that the battlefield finally achieved balance. Both sides became equally matched, and that situation benefitted Heaven and Earth's army.

"More, more," The first woman chuckled. "Show more of your power. Fight for Heaven and Earth. Win for Heaven and Earth. Die for Heaven and Earth."

The sky's army voiced battle cries that filled the entirety of the higher plane. The landmass' forces lost ground and ended up pushing back toward the center of the world.

The number of casualties on both sides was unfathomable. Death filled the higher plane as experts self-destructed or burnt the entirety of their cultivation level to achieve temporary bursts of power. The overall chaos intensified, and nothing seemed able to stop that trend.

"Finally," The first woman eventually exclaimed when a lump of dark light crashed before her. "I was getting bored of waiting."

"Can you stop this?" Steven asked as his body materialized in front of the privileged cultivator. "Our respective underlings should have the chance to prove themselves without getting influenced by beings at the peak of the cultivation journey."

"You should tell that to your companions," The first woman announced while glancing at Alexander and Noah. The two were still avoiding fighting the other leaders to spread chaos on the battlefield.

"Well, trying to reason with them is pointless," Steven exclaimed. "You should know that."

"Indeed," The first woman laughed. "They are a fun bunch. That's why I'm quite disappointed. Why did you decide to face me? You are the most boring expert in your army."

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"Boredom isn't something that I take into consideration," Steven revealed as his figure shone with dark light. "I only want to annihilate Heaven and Earth and their assets."

"I know," The privileged cultivator answered. "You are still clinging to that petty revenge. Your previous organization and your companion died because they were too weak. Just deal with it."

"Robert was a monster far worthier than me," Steven declared. "As for my old organization, Heaven and Earth made it dirty. My underlings would have loved to join this battle."

"So, you took it upon yourself to fight for them," The first woman continued. "I must admit that I envy those feelings. My side barely cares about life and death. We only play along in Heaven and Earth's game."

"That's why we will win," Steven stated as his dark light expanded to take control of part of the void.

"I wasn't trying to praise you," The privileged cultivator explained. "You are fun. That's a fact. Still, you lack the power to achieve victory, especially in your case."

"We'll see about that," Steven exclaimed as he unleashed his power.

The dark aura that had taken control of the void revealed its effects and forced Heaven and Earth's influence to disappear. That power converged on the privileged cultivator and seeped into her figure to remove the improvements she had seized inside the sky. Still, nothing seemed to happen to the expert's cultivation level.

"What is it?" The first woman teased. "You can try again if you want."

"That would be pointless," Steven uttered. "You are shielding your power from my influence. I can't pierce it yet."

"That's wrong," The first woman laughed. "Did you ever consider that some of us are simply too strong for you? Take a look at the battlefield. You would have to burn yourself to counter my technique."

"I know," Steven agreed. "It seems that I have no other option."

A crack suddenly opened on Steven's forehead as his figure exploded with power. Dense waves of his dark aura shot in every direction and expanded past their natural limits.

Steven's cultivation level seemed to go through a qualitative change as it rose to reach the very peak of the liquid stage. Meanwhile, his dense aura continued to expand and used Heaven and Earth's influence to spread even further.

It didn't take long before the whole higher plane darkened, but Steven didn't stop there. He activated the effects of his aura and targeted the countless purple tendrils created by the privileged cultivator.

The first woman's technique lost power under the effects of Steven's actions. Her underlings snapped out of their improved mental state and experienced fear once again.



That change led to hesitation that their opponents exploited right away. The landmass' forces finally put an end to their losing trend and began to gain ground. Even the dragons and the leaders achieved some major victory during that event.

"Interesting," The privileged cultivator stated while inspecting the changes on the battlefield. "Your resolve is incredible. Yet, I can see your life vanishing. How long can you even keep this up?"

"As long as it takes," Steven declared as the crack on his forehead expanded, and an even darker aura left his figure.

Chapter 2254: 2254. Chaos

Steven was imitating King Elbas. He was burning his world to achieve power that went beyond his limits. Obviously, his actions didn't lead to a personal level, but they still got the job done.

The dark aura that filled the higher plane countered the privileged cultivator's technique, but Steven had far more in store. As the crack on his forehead expanded, a new, darker light left his figure and invaded the area occupied by his opponent.

The privileged cultivator didn't care about the incoming aura. She seemed amused by Steven's efforts, and she even enjoyed watching her technique being suppressed.

The fact that Heaven and Earth's army suffered heavy losses after Steven's actions didn't affect the privileged cultivator at all. She shook her head after seeing how her underlings couldn't achieve much without her power, but that was it.

"Those dragons of yours are quite incredible," The first woman eventually spoke. "The sky lacks assets willing to go to such lengths. There are a few exceptions, but that seems to be the norm in your organization."

"We believe in our cause," Steven announced. "You only wanted to be safe."

"Most of us," The first woman corrected. "As I said, even the sky has a few exceptions."

"They won't be enough to defeat us," Steven claimed.

"What makes you think that?" The first woman laughed. "Let's say that you can destroy most of our army. Let's even imagine an outcome where all the major players from the sky have died at your hands. You'd still have to defeat Heaven and Earth at that point."

"We will defeat your underlings," Steven declared. "We will defeat all of you, and we will defeat Heaven and Earth. The sky will crumble, and we'll bathe in the unbound darkness of the universe."

"That sounds like a great plan," The privileged cultivator stated. "Now, I wonder how you'll fulfill it."

"Killing you is the first step," Steven uttered, and his darker aura suddenly grew violent.

Steven's aura didn't have a clear shape. It had expanded from his figure to create a black lake that managed to stand out even among the void, but its form transformed when he decided to attack.

The lake shrunk as currents came out of it to lash out at the privileged cultivator. The latter covered herself in a purple aura, but the incoming attacks seeped right through it without meeting the slightest hindrance.

The privileged cultivator saw Steven's energy entering her body and searching for her core. The new attack could go past the woman's innate defenses and reach her world. Yet, Steven found nothing to remove after his power arrived at its destination.

"Do you understand now?" The woman asked while the dark energy flew through her body. "You forced your world to turn into a counter of Heaven and Earth's power, but you forgot one important detail. Some of us merely used the peace of the sky to perfect their existence."

The dark energy inside the privileged cultivator's world gained purple shades as the expert turned it into her own power. Steven couldn't interrupt the event, and he soon lost control of those black waves.

"I can still take away the results of that peace," Steven shouted as the crack on his forehead expanded even further.

More dark energy came out of his figure to add power to the black lake. No currents appeared at that time. The blackness condensed to create an area that suppressed part of the privileged cultivator's power.

The woman saw her cultivation level falling, but the process ended before the changes became significant. Steven couldn't help but frown at that sight. He was burning his world to affect his opponent, but the latter had remained a peak solid stage cultivator nonetheless.

"Did I surprise you again?" The woman asked as she inspected her arms. "I must admit that this state feels nostalgic. I can't even remember what I gained from studying the paths past the sky."

Steven tried to increase the effectiveness of the lake, but the process didn't change the outcome of his technique. The woman's cultivation level didn't fall any further. She remained firmly at the peak of the ninth rank.

"I must admit that your power is interesting," The privileged cultivator announced. "Limited, sad, but interesting. You ruined your potential to achieve all of this, but I'm the wrong target. You should probably go help Great Builder instead of fighting me."

"I can't leave you alone," Steven uttered. "You are too troublesome."

"I am," The woman laughed. "I'm Decumia, and I spread chaos. Nice to meet you."

Decumia performed a half bow while wearing a bright smile that highlighted her young facial features. Her eyes even flickered with purple light during the gesture. She barely looked like a rank 9 expert with that expression on her.

"Spreading chaos?" Steven repeated before sighing. "It doesn't matter. I only have to stop you."

Decumia took a step forward to appear in front of Steven. Her move was so quick that Steven never had a chance to react. He could only unleash his dark aura when he noticed what had happened, but Decumia was faster once again.

The privileged cultivator lightly tapped Steven's chest. Her fingers released a purple flash when they touched his figure, and the power generated by the event flung him far away in the distance.

Steven mustered the entirety of his concentration to keep his influence over the higher plane stable. The purple tendrils would start adding power to Heaven and Earth's army again if his dark aura crumbled, and he couldn't allow that.

Of course, enduring the blows of a solid stage cultivator like Decumia was no easy feat. Steven couldn't focus on his defenses since most of his attention was on his technique, so his figure ended up suffering.

Steven was so focused on the higher plane that he didn't even stop his flight. He let Decumia's blow send him to the other side of the world, but she had no intention of stopping her offensive so early.

"What are you even doing?" Decumia asked while materializing next to Steven and following him on his flight. "That was a mere touch, but your chest is already a mess. Just interrupt your technique and run away."

Steven didn't use defensive techniques, so his chest now featured a fist-sized hole that leaked blood and a dark aura. Decumia's simple attack had damaged his world, which was losing energy from that opening.

Steven revealed a smirk when he heard Decumia's words, and the latter responded by touching his abdomen. Purple light flashed again, and Steven's flight changed direction while another injury appeared on his figure.

Decumia followed Steven closely. She was far faster than him, but he wasn't even trying to escape. Steven was willing to let Decumia have fun as long as he could keep his technique active.

"I'll really kill you if you don't fight back," Decumia stated while flying next to Steven. "Come on. Don't you have a big attack or something? You have set your world on fire. You must have been quite confident about stopping me."

"I am stopping you," Steven laughed without opening his eyes.

The dark aura that Steven had spread all over the higher plane was keeping him updated about the outcomes of the various battles. His side would win as long as he suppressed Decumia's influence, and that was enough for him. He didn't care if the expert killed him in the meantime.

Chapter 2255: 2255. Purple

Decumia wasn't taking her fight seriously. She didn't know if she could kill Steven in one blow, but she wasn't even trying to hurt him deeply. Her attacks were simply too powerful for her opponent, so they reached his world.

Steven's intentions also became clear in Decumia's mind quite soon. She had studied the experts in Noah's organization as deeply as everyone else in the sky, so she knew Steven's character.

The expert was part of Noah's core team, but he was unique. He had met Noah and the others relatively late in his cultivation journey, and his improvements had never stopped him from being one of the group's weaker links.

Strength was obviously relative. King Elbas excelled in many fields, but he lacked Divine Demon's ability to perform miracles. Noah and the others also shared similar peculiarities, and Steven wasn't an exception.

In theory, Steven was the best when it came to fighting experts who had benefitted from Heaven and Earth's influence. However, he had to hurt his foundation and limit his potential to achieve that power.

Steven's ability to counter Heaven and Earth's assets wasn't innate or natural. He had developed that power due to anger and necessity. The change had also happened during his breakthrough to the ninth rank, which was far from ideal.

The breakthrough to the ninth rank always brought changes, but they usually remained inside the range of the experts' laws. Yet, Steven had experienced a proper transformation. His determination had turned into anger that had further evolved into power only meant to target Heaven and Earth.

That alone couldn't make Steven strong, not as strong as his companions at least. Still, the nature of the final battle allowed him to perform important tasks anyway. He was actually more helpful than many others at the same level, but Decumia seemed able to exploit his flaws.

Decumia wasn't even doing that on purpose. Her world was simply complete even after removing Heaven and Earth's influence. She had obviously lost some power, but she remained incredibly strong, too strong for Steven.

"So, you want to make a noble sacrifice," Decumia sighed while grabbing Steven and forcing him to stop. "I guess that's not a bad way to go. You must have also planned countermeasures that will activate after your death."

"Wills are powerful tools," Steven stated as a smirk appeared on his face. "You can kill me, but you can't destroy my will, not if I put my whole life into it."

"Tricky," Decumia exclaimed. "Well, I suppose this is the end of our battle. I'll see how long your dying wish can keep your dear underlings alive."

Decumia closed her hand into a punch before throwing it toward Steven's face. Still, her eyes flickered when she sensed energy leaving her arm and turning her attack into nothing more than a harmless bump.

Steven was as surprised as Decumia. The punch landed on his cracked forehead without inflicting any damage, but his consciousness eventually sensed something. A massive boulder was flying at high speed toward his position.

"What is it-?!" Decumia asked, but the boulder suddenly accelerated and slammed on Steven and her.

Steven flew away again, but his back eventually slammed on a firm surface. That wasn't the sky or the landmass, and a squeal reached his ears before his mental waves could reveal the nature of the situation. He didn't need to inspect his surroundings anymore after hearing that cry.

"What are you doing here?" Steven asked as he straightened his position and made his way out of the fumes that had surrounded him.

"I'm saving your life!" The Foolery announced while lifting its head.

Steven knew that the pig had performed its usual gesture, but he couldn't see it through his eyes. The Foolery was surrounded by smoke that came out of its very skin. It seemed that every inch of its body had recently been on fire.

"Shouldn't you focus on recovering from your injuries?" Steven gasped.

"What injuries?" The Foolery asked.

"Your whole body is fuming!" Steven responded.

"The smoke makes me go faster," The Foolery claimed without lowering its head.

Steven spared some mental waves to check the grey smoke, but he didn't see anything connected to techniques or energy in its fabric. It was simply gas released by the pig's charred flesh.

"No, these are injuries," Steven tried to correct.

"I did take you by surprise, didn't I?" The Foolery exclaimed. "That's because the smoke makes me faster."

Steven opened his mouth to speak, but only a sigh left it. He knew that reasoning with the Foolery was impossible, so he limited himself to a brief scolding. "You shouldn't have come here."

"Why is that?" The Foolery questioned. "You were dying. I saved you. Wait, you are still dying."

The Foolery finally lowered its head to sniff Steven. The latter's world was still burning to keep his influence active. The injuries on his chest, abdomen, and forehead only worsened his overall poor complexion.

"I need to keep this up," Steven declared. "Our army will die otherwise."

"I don't get it," The Foolery exclaimed. "You are hurting yourself, right? Just stop."

Steven didn't know how to explain the situation better than that, so he heaved another sigh before adding something that even the pig could understand. "I've already made my decision. I ask you to respect it."

"I refuse," The Foolery promptly replied.

"What?" Steven shouted. "You can't do that."

"I just did," The Foolery responded.

"I decided what to do with my world!" Steven uttered.

"I don't care!" The Foolery squealed. "Wait! Oh, no!"

"What is happening?" Steven gasped as he tried to understand if something was off on the higher plane.

"My smoke is going away," The Foolery revealed while glancing at a spot on its left side. "I'll get slow now."

Steven found no words to address the situation. He could sense most of the battlefield due to his dark aura. The entire higher plane was raging, but he was using his limited time to listen to that idiocy.

"Just leave," Steven eventually sighed. "I've always known the price for my current power. I'm doing the best I can to give it some meaning."

"But that's wrong," The Foolery announced. "You won't play your role like this."

"What role?" Steven questioned.

"You need to hinder Heaven and Earth's influence," The Foolery stated. "Solving troublesome problems is Xavier's job."

A golden light lit up on the Foolery's belly and released a soft shockwave that dispersed all the smoke flowing out of its flesh. King Elbas' influence spread in the area, and his voice eventually resounded. "I've adjusted some buildings for the issue. Steven, withdraw your energy. You are in the way."

"I told you!" The Foolery proudly exclaimed while lifting its head before lowering it right away to stare at its belly. "Hey, why did Xavier's voice come out from there? Did I eat him?"

"I planted a communication device on you," King Elbas answered.

"Does everyone have it?" The Foolery asked.

"No," King Elbas snorted. "You are the only idiot who wouldn't notice something like that."

"It makes sense," The Foolery nodded. "Well, you heard him. Your energy is in the way."

Steven would have never trusted the Foolery, but hearing King Elbas' voice forced him to accept the reality of the situation. He calmed down and stopped setting his world aflame to retrieve the dark energy and stabilize his condition.

The purple tendrils immediately regained power and tried to affect Heaven and Earth's army. The sudden power-up stunned those assets for an instant and made them suffer heavy losses, but those who survived failed to experience Decumia's influence.

A series of huge golden buildings materialized in different spots on the battlefield and began to radiate their influence. Their radiance was faint and soft, but it countered the purple tendrils and forced them to crumble.

The Foolery's words sounded perfectly on point in Steven's mind while he inspected that scene. King Elbas had performed the same task more efficiently and without hurting himself. He was the problem-solver of the team.

"I guess that leaves us with a different task," Steven whispered while glancing at the privileged cultivator who had waited for the conversation to end.

"Exactly!" The Foolery shouted as it pointed its eyes on Decumia. "We have to eat purple!"

Chapter 2256: 2256. Gas

"Why did you wait for us?" Steven asked as his dark energy condensed inside his figure to close and put patches on all the injuries caused by his recent actions.

"It seemed that a decent fight was about to arrive," Decumia announced. "Why would I ever prevent it?"

"Do you have no loyalty toward your leaders?" Steven wondered.

"We all have different paths," Decumia laughed. "Even the assets living through Heaven and Earth's light must strive for their personal journeys to achieve power. I'm just one of them."

"Having fun among so many deaths," Steven sighed. "You sure have a despicable character."

"I can name a few experts on your side with my same inclinations," Decumia chuckled while glancing at Noah and Alexander still going crazy on the battlefield.

"They aren't disregarding the deaths on their side," Steven explained. "They would help if they could, but that would hinder the path to victory. As my companion said, they have a different role."

"I can understand yours," Decumia exclaimed before pointing her curious gaze toward the Foolery, "But the pig remains an interesting variable."

"Even Heaven and Earth's experts tremble before my might," The Foolery squealed as it wore its usual proud stance.

Steven had no intention to fall prey to the Foolery's idiocy again. He would use it to his advantage if the situation required it, but it seemed that Decumia didn't want to waste time anymore. She was waiting only to improve her imminent fight.

Steven glanced at the Foolery before bringing his focus back on his opponent. The situation didn't drastically change. The two of them remained on the losing end of that battle.

Decumia was simply strong, too strong for two liquid stage beings. Defeating her would require more than tactics, but Steven had to try anyway. Even if he couldn't beat Decumia, his efforts would still make things easier for his stronger companions.

"How many times can you use that speed from before?" Steven whispered while inspecting his opponent.

"I can't fly that fast without my smoke," The Foolery sighed in disappointment.

"Please, be serious," Steven requested. "We must work together against her. I need your power."

"I can eat what she throws at me," The Foolery suggested.

"I need you to do a bit more than that," Steven stated. "I'll burn my world again to contain her power. You'll have to kill her during that window."

"Why would you burn your world?" The Foolery asked. "Doesn't that hurt?"

"We must go past our limits against her," Steven declared. "That's the only method I have."

"But that's bad," The Foolery complained.

"I don't have a better plan," Steven uttered.

"I do!" The Foolery announced.

"Do you?" Steven asked without hiding his surprise.

"Of course!" The Foolery squealed. "Follow me!"

Steven didn't have the chance to talk anymore since the Foolery abruptly shot forward. Steven followed the pig and unleashed his usual dark aura, but Decumia's power didn't experience any suppression as she waited for her opponents to reach her.

"You have really gotten slower," Decumia said in an amused tone as the Foolery approached her.

The Foolery tried to headbutt Decumia, but she easily side-stepped the attack before tapping on the creature's left side. That simple touch unleashed a purple shockwave that flung the pig away.

Steven tried to exploit that opportunity. His dark aura condensed in the shape of a giant arrow that he threw at Decumia while she was busy dealing with the Foolery.

Yet, Decumia didn't bother to dodge the attack. She let the arrow fall on her figure and enter her world to apply its effects. Her level dropped, but she remained at the very peak of the ninth rank.

"What are you trying to achieve with this little power?" Decumia asked. "You both need to surpass your limits to force me to fight seriously."

Steven revealed a cold expression at that statement. He knew that Decumia was right, but that approach also featured problems. The Foolery was the main issue since it was impossible to reason with it.

The Foolery had to crash into the sky to stop the momentum accumulated after the attack. The landing was violent, but it recovered quickly and set off again. Its side featured a big bruise, but it seemed fine otherwise.

"Let me taste your purple!" The Foolery cried as it shot toward Decumia, but she saw no danger in that incoming attack.

Steven snorted while he inspected his companion's offensive. He couldn't tell the Foolery what to do, but he could do his best to support it. It didn't matter if his efforts ended up being pointless.

Steven set his world aflame again to get his hands on his darker aura. Cracks opened on his figure as his old injuries and new ones fused to affect his condition, but his actions finally forced Decumia to pay attention to him.

The dark aura expanded quickly and trapped Decumia in a cubical area that suppressed her power. Steven was going all-out. His attack targeted Decumia's very foundation to affect her ability to react to the incoming offensive.

That suppression failed to give the Foolery a chance to hurt Decumia. The latter performed the same evasive maneuver as before and lightly tapped on the pig side to fling it away.

Steven launched another massive arrow during that exchange, but Decumia disregarded it. Her world welcomed the offensive and let it apply its effects, which turned out to be relatively meager compared to her overall power.

"I've had enough!" The Foolery shouted after crashing into another spot of the sky. "I will show you my secret technique!"



"Oh, I'm waiting," Decumia teased.

Steven didn't know how serious the Foolery was, but he unleashed even more of his power to limit Decumia's movements. He needed to create a chance to hurt her, even if he had to sacrifice his life during the process.

Decumia showed an amused smile toward Steven before moving her attention to the incoming Foolery. Steven knew that his efforts weren't doing much, but he didn't let that reaction affect his power.

"It's coming!" The Foolery shouted during its flight. "If the smoke isn't around me, I'll just discharge it!"

"Discharge it?" Decumia repeated before spreading her arms. "Come then."

The Foolery voiced a low squeal as its aura intensified. Its hunger spread in its surroundings and forced its body to accelerate. Its world was making it stronger to hunt down its prey.

"Good, good," Decumia commented as the Foolery accelerated. The pig was nowhere fast enough to hurt Decumia, but she liked seeing the battle growing more interesting.

Nevertheless, the Foolery suddenly released a loud fart that unleashed a wave of blue gas from its butt. An awful smell filled the void as its figure accelerated even more and almost teleported in front of Decumia.

Decumia's mind almost froze while watching the event, and Steven also experienced similar effects. The fart didn't do anything. It only filled a chunk of the void with smelly blue gas, but the Foolery became incredibly faster anyway.

The Foolery slammed on Decumia and flung her away. The impact even forced Decumia to release part of her purple energy, and the pig didn't hesitate to devour it. Of course, it proudly lifted its head once the meal was over.

Chapter 2257: 2257. Funny

The amazement caused by the Foolery's strange technique didn't last long. Steven quickly stopped burning himself to save power and patch up what he could fix, but his mind never stopped coming up with plans and tactics connected to the battle.

As for the Foolery, it stood proudly in the middle of the void uncaring that it could use that chance to attack Decumia. Its aura even intensified during its motionless stance, but that only made its fart smellier.

Decumia didn't oppose the attack. She had let the blow hit her, and she even allowed its momentum to push her near the sky. Still, the impact with that white surface didn't cause any damage.

The privileged cultivator was perfectly fine even after avoiding summoning defenses. It almost seemed that Decumia was mocking her opponents' power, but Steven guessed that the situation was far different. She only wanted to make the battle more interesting.

The black roots had continued to expand while everyone was busy fighting, and some of them stretched toward Decumia as soon as they felt her presence.

The privileged cultivator didn't even glance at the incoming roots. A laugh left her mouth as her figure exploded with purple energy that destroyed everything in her surroundings.

The roots crumbled under the might of the purple energy, but the same went for the unlucky assets that happened to be in the range of Decumia's ability. Many white puppets, avatars, and inscribed weapons shattered as the privileged cultivator expressed her ecstasy.

"She is a battle maniac," Steven commented while teleporting next to the Foolery and patting its side. "We can use this to our advantage."

"Indeed," The Foolery exclaimed. "We can fight harder than her!"

"That's not what I meant," Steven scolded, but the Foolery didn't hear reasons.

"Charge!" The Foolery squealed before unleashing another smelly fart and charging forward.

Steven had to ignore his thoughts and sprint forward to keep up with his companion. The two flew at high speed toward Decumia to create a frontal attack that stuck to no tactic, but Steven still tried his best to avoid being completely reckless.

An array of dark arrows materialized behind Steven and shot forward. The Foolery, Steven, and the dark weapons converged on Decumia at the same time, but a purple explosion pushed everything back.

The Foolery had a tough body and could rely on the hybrid's superior endurance. The purple shockwave flung it away while destroying the superficial layers of its body.

The pig's skin and muscles became a shattered mess that released dense smoke. The attack also affected its balance and consciousness, preventing it from stabilizing its position mid-flight.

The exchange hurt Steven far more. His arrows vanished under the purple power, while his world suffered severe injuries that added themselves to his already poor condition.

Steven saw large cracks opening on his figure, and his cultivation level also wavered as he flew across the battlefield. His consciousness struggled to remain awake, and the same went for his overall control over his body.

"Let's go at it again!" The Foolery squealed, and its voice forced Steven to stabilize his mind.

Steven found himself far away from Decumia, but he mustered his strength when he saw the Foolery shooting toward her. He couldn't leave his companion alone, so he set his world aflame to perform a sprint that went beyond his limits.

Decumia waited for her opponents to reach her, but her eyes widened in surprise when the Foolery released another fart. The event made it accelerate even faster than before, which caused an immense explosion once it landed on the sky.

The explosion was so violent that even Steven ended up pushed away by the shockwave that followed the impact. The Foolery's surprising speed wasn't something that Steven and Decumia expected, but the attack didn't have significant effects.

Decumia appeared among the bluish explosion unharmed. She was smiling happily as both her hands kept the Foolery's head still. She had endured the attack without resorting to any special method, but she was clearly enjoying how her opponents were using better attacks.

As for Steven, he stopped himself after a few seconds to create another giant arrow. His darker energy flowed into the weapon until he launched it toward Decumia.

The Foolery released another fart to keep Decumia stuck on the sky, and the arrow eventually landed on it. Still, the attack seeped through its body without inflicting any damage.

Decumia saw the giant arrow coming out of the Foolery's head, but she let it crash on her. Steven could feel his energy entering Decumia's world and hurting her cultivation level, but those effects remained quite superficial.

"Did you get faster because of the smoke?" Decumia asked in an amused tone.

"That's right!" The Foolery announced as it tried to squash Decumia on the sky. "My farts and the smoke have fused to create the ultimate movement technique."

"You are so funny," Decumia laughed. "Still, your power is not even close to enough."

Decumia's purple aura came out of her hands and seeped inside the Foolery. The pig's thoughts and power grew messy as Decumia's influence released its effects.

The Foolery's eyes began to shine with a purple light as its innate violence calmed down. The pig was falling prey to Decumia, but a wall of darkness suddenly crashed on them and cleansed its centers of power.

"Get out of there!" Steven shouted while charging toward Decumia.

The Foolery instinctively followed those directives while trying to sort out its thoughts. Steven could crash on Decumia and unleash a giant sphere of dark power that carried intense anger, and the explosion that followed even dimmed the light in that part of the sky.

Steven quickly retreated to reach the Foolery. His world lost power as it stopped burning, but he still filled the pig with his energy to remove every trace of Decumia's influence.

"What happened?" The Foolery asked as its body slowly mended its injuries and put an end to the grey fumes coming out of them.

"She tried to implant herself into your centers of power," Steven explained. "Honestly, I have yet to understand the full extent of her abilities."

"We should just eat her," The Foolery snorted. "I'll tell you her taste afterward."

"Didn't you already eat some of her energy?" Steven asked.

"Yes," The Foolery admitted, "But it felt strange. It didn't have a single taste."

"I obviously don't have a single taste," Decumia's voice resounded next to Steven and the Foolery, forcing them to turn toward the purple light that began on their right.

The Foolery promptly bit on the purple light and ate what it could, but Decumia materialized in front of it anyway. Moreover, the energy that the pig had eaten began to affect its mind again, but Steven took care of removing that influence right away.

"Stop doing that!" The Foolery complained when its thoughts stabilized, but Decumia barely cared about her situation as she took its head between her hands.

"Why would I do that?" Decumia chuckled. "You are too funny. I can feel that you can spread a lot of chaos through my power."

"So, you acknowledge my power," The Foolery commented while trying to lift its head, but Decumia's grasp prevented it from moving.

"Only idiots wouldn't acknowledge your value," Decumia said.

"Hey, Steven," The Foolery called. "I'm starting to like her."

"What do you have in mind?" Steven cursed as his aura spread to prevent Decumia's influence from entering the pig.

"You have become boring," Decumia sighed while glancing at Steven. "Your time is over."

"What-?!" Steven tried to ask, but his torso exploded. Purple light took over the entire area and pushed Steven's damaged world away.

Chapter 2258: 2258. Trade

'What happened?' Steven thought as he tried his best to stabilize his messy mind.

Strands of mental waves left Steven's maimed world and sent information back to his core. He slowly understood what had happened, and his condition only brought sadness.

Decumia had destroyed Steven's torso. His limbs had turned into dark shards that had dispersed into the void, while his head had remained mostly intact. Still, it floated aimlessly through the battlefield now since Steven found himself unable to muster his power.

'I see,' Steven commented. 'I lost.'

The realization wasn't too surprising. Steven had always known that Decumia was too strong for him. He couldn't hurt her even after setting his own world aflame to release more power.

That sheer difference of power wasn't something Steven could fill with mere determination. Even his anger toward Heaven and Earth couldn't achieve that much. It was simply impossible for an expert at his level to defeat Decumia.

'What now?' Steven wondered as he struggled to keep his thoughts steady.

Recovering was possible. Steven could join the structures turned ethereal by Pellio and spend time healing. His injuries were deep, but his journey wasn't over. It was unclear whether he had the potential to surpass the ninth rank, but he definitely had the chance to reach its peak.

Nevertheless, retreating now would inevitably lead to a single conclusion. Steven wouldn't have the time to recover completely before the end of the final battle. He could preserve his life and his cultivation journey, but the price to pay was his presence in the last struggle against Heaven and Earth.

Difference existences would have taken their time to ponder over the issue. After all, retreating among the inscriptions wouldn't make them completely useless. They could still help coordinate eventual defenses or provide information.

However, Steven wasn't a common existence. He was part of Noah's core team. He had already accomplished decent feats on the battlefield, but his status asked more from him.

No doubts appeared in Steven's mind. He had been ready to die before. The arrival of the Foolery had delayed that choice, but the situation didn't change even after those reinforcements.

Decumia was an opponent that had to die to pave the path toward victory, and Steven could help there. To use the Foolery's words, that was his role on the battlefield.

The Foolery remained confused. It wanted to eat Decumia, but its head was stuck in her grasp. Moreover, the energy that she released affected its mind and enhanced aspects of its character that didn't perfectly align with Noah's group.

The Foolery was more than a simple magical beast, but its instincts remained strong. Also, its idiocy was a core part of its personality. It could ignore it at will, but Decumia could exploit it anyway.

The winged pig's eyes turned purple as Decumia continued to pour her energy inside its body. She even allowed the Foolery to eat pieces of her whenever it risked breaking out of her control. She wanted to subdue it thoroughly, but her power suddenly left the area.

Decumia didn't know what had happened. She didn't feel any change in her surroundings, but her influence had vanished. That effect didn't only affect the power inside the Foolery. Even her body lost the purple energy that ran through it.

Usually, a technique able to affect the power of a privileged cultivator in the solid stage wasn't something that could go unnoticed. Decumia was even special in that category. In theory, the sole act of suppressing her power would require a massive ability.

Yet, Decumia didn't feel anything. Also, she didn't only see her influence losing power. Her very energy had disappeared. Her world was refilling her figure quickly, but that didn't change how amazing the event had been.

"What?!" The Foolery gasped now that it could think properly. "What happened?"

"I guess he wasn't so boring in the end," Decumia sighed as she glanced at a spot on her right.

The darkness of the void seemed to condense, but Decumia knew that her eyes were lying to her. She couldn't actually see what was happening, but she could understand the nature of that event by studying what she couldn't sense.

A dense power that Decumia's mental waves couldn't touch was condensing at her side. That black power quickly took a humanoid shape, and a dark version of Steven eventually materialized.

"What have you done to yourself?" Decumia chuckled. "Do you think that achieving a temporary superior stage will be enough to defeat me?"

"Pig, I need you to promise something," Steven announced as his solid stage cultivation level exploded outward and filled the area with his dark energy. "When the moment arrives, don't hesitate."

"Wow!" The Foolery squealed. "I told you that-."

"Pig, I'm serious," Steven interrupted. "Be ready."

"What?" The Foolery repeated while tilting its head to its left. "I don't understand what you mean, but sure. I'm always ready."

Steven glanced at the confused pig before heaving a sigh. He would have normally chosen someone else, but the situation didn't allow him to be picky. Also, the Foolery strangely suited his plans, so he had to stick with it.

"Nice energy!" Decumia exclaimed as she inspected her hands and tried to summon her purple energy. "It seems that you can finally affect me properly. Still, shouldn't this go against your world? You are suppressing power that I obtained on my own even before joining Heaven and Earth."

"You are an asset of the sky," Steven declared. "I exist, so I can suppress you."

"Something so vague wouldn't have the power to suppress me," Decumia stated. "I would understand if you were at my level, but you are still far weaker than me. Reaching the solid stage didn't change that."

"Is that so?" Steven asked before pointing his hand forward.

An arrow shot out of Steven's hand, and Decumia summoned her aura to shield herself from the incoming attack. However, her energy suddenly disappeared, and the same went for the weapon.

Decumia prepared herself to explode with power and overcome the suppression of the dark aura, but the arrow suddenly reappeared inside her chest. The weapon actually created a hole that pierced her from side to side and left a mark on her world.

"Ooh," Decumia voiced before grabbing the arrow and shattering it seemingly through raw strength.

Steven didn't stop there. He teleported in front of Decumia before stabbing his hand in the hole. A shockwave followed the gesture, and Decumia soon found herself flying away with an even larger injury.

"I'm starting to get it," Decumia exclaimed as a laugh escaped her mouth.

Steven materialized in front of Decumia again to place a hand on her forehead. A dark wave of energy left his palm and seeped inside her world to cause as much damage as possible.

The attack caused an explosion that pushed Decumia on the sky. She slammed on the white layer without trying to stop her descent. Cracks opened on her figure, but her body instantly healed now that she could gain access to her purple energy.

"I get it now," Decumia laughed. "You have purified your existence to make it perform a single task. Am I so important to you?"

"You are a hindrance on the path to victory," Steven declared. "Removing you is necessary. Trading my existence for that is more than worth it."

"That only if you can defeat me," Decumia replied as multiple purple tendrils came out of her back. "Bring it on."

Chapter 2259: 2259. Evaluation

"Your power can't exist in my presence!" Steven announced while launching a wave of black energy toward Decumia.

Decumia didn't stay passive anymore. Her purple tendrils shot forward and expanded to take the shape of multiple barriers, but her efforts turned out to be pointless.

Steven's wave of energy seeped past the purple barriers as if they weren't even there. The latter vanished among the blackness, and Steven's attack crashed on his opponent before unleashing the entirety of its power.

Multiple gory injuries opened on Decumia's body, and a torrent of blood even came out of her mouth as she endured the damage. The sky behind her also darkened due to the effects of Steven's power, but the battle intent carried by her eyes never dimmed.

The sky regained its light in no time, and the same went for Decumia's injuries. She fixed her condition as soon as energy flowed inside her body. Also, a shockwave spread under her feet to fling her toward her opponent.

Decumia's dash was incredibly fast, but Steven couldn't be taken by surprise in that state. Decumia reached him in an instant and pierced his body, but his dark figure exploded in a cloud of smoke that trapped the privileged cultivator.

Decumia saw her energy abandoning her body again even if she tried to shield herself from the smoke. Her power appeared useless against Steven, but the battle intent in her gaze only intensified as she continued to lose exchanges.

Steven materialized above Decumia with a giant arrow in his grasp. The black gas converged toward him to add power to his weapon, and the process trapped Decumia inside a dense suction force.

Steven threw the arrow, and Decumia found herself pierced from head to toe. The damage expanded to her world, and she remained stuck in that position due to her lack of energy.

Black smoke left Steven's figure once again and prevented Decumia from accumulating power. She remained impaled in the giant arrow, and the gas around her quickly condensed into multiple needles that converged toward her body.

Countless holes and injuries opened on Decumia's body. She turned into an impaled and spiked mess, and Steven had no intention of letting her go just yet.

Steven appeared tired from his effort. His dark figure had lost part of its blackness and had started to regain proper colors, but he forced more energy to come out of him and take the shape of multiple weapons.

Swords, arrows, needles, bolts, and formless waves of energy crashed on the powerless Decumia to add injuries to her figure and world. She remained stuck in that relentless assault for multiple exchanges, and her aura finally started to show the effects of that offensive.

Decumia wasn't only losing power. Her influence dimmed to the point that King Elbas' buildings could save energy and divert part of their focus on other aspects of the battlefield.

Decumia's cultivation level had also started to waver. It finally abandoned the peak of the solid stage and began to fall. The process was by no means quick, but it showed how Steven's efforts were effective.

The two leaders from Heaven and Earth's army who had yet to join the battlefield inspected the scene calmly. The middle-aged woman appeared interested in the main fights, while the old man remained relatively cold.

"Should we help Decumia?" The middle-aged woman wondered from behind her smile. "She is losing ground."

"Focusing our forces on a single opponent will work against us," The old man replied. "Letting go of our numerical advantage is a tactical mistake."

"I think we already lost that," The middle-aged woman chuckled. "Our opponents are a bit too resourceful."

The battlefield appeared relatively even now. Decumia's technique had led to many casualties on her side, even if they mostly involved weaker experts.

As for the stronger existences, the roots, Alexander, Noah, and the dragons were claiming most of their attention. Heaven and Earth's side still had more assets than its opponents, but that wasn't helping in the current state of the battlefield.

"Even the Rulers' Resolve is fighting at full power," The middle-aged woman commented. "We might really need to do something at this pace."

"Don't forget our orders," The old man reminded.

"You are always so serious," The middle-aged woman sighed.

"Everything is going according to Caesar's predictions," The old man replied. "Affecting the battlefield now won't bring any benefit."

"You are right," The middle-aged woman uttered.

"Besides," The old man continued, "I don't think they would lose so soon."

"That's obvious," The middle-aged woman responded. "I guess I was getting bored. Decumia's influence must have gotten to my mind."

"It's not only Decumia's fault," The old man explained while inspecting his hands. "This battlefield is unique. I can feel its influence trying to affect my thoughts. There is a constant force attempting to draw me into pointless fights."



"Is that Noah Balvan's doing?" The middle-aged woman asked while expanding her consciousness to inspect the battlefield thoroughly. "I can't sense anything specific."

"I might have failed to explain myself properly," The old man exclaimed. "It's not a single force. Every asset on this battlefield is affecting the universe in some way. The higher plane is striving toward chaos and wants us to join it."

"I bet only you realized that," The middle-aged woman teased.

"I'm sure some of our opponents experienced similar realizations," The old man revealed. "Maybe they have happened unconsciously, but we can clearly see their effects. Limits are crumbling everywhere on the battlefield. Even ants are starting to leave their mark on the universe."

"This outcome is proper of a final battle," The middle-aged woman stated. "It wouldn't make sense for the universe to remain silent when an entire higher plane is at war."

"Heaven and Earth wouldn't have managed to cause something so profound on their own," The old man added.

"Are you praising our opponents now?" The middle-aged woman mocked.

"Their will is stronger than ours," The old man admitted. "They are worthy final opponents."

"It almost sounds as if you want them to succeed," The middle-aged woman hinted in a cold tone.

"Maybe part of me wants that," The old man responded. "How funny."

"Do I have to kill you now to avoid troubles?" The middle-aged woman asked while hiding her smile behind her hand.

"I was only giving a fair evaluation of our opponents," The old man explained. "Also, you should save your strength. Our time is about to arrive."

Steven threw everything he had at Decumia without ever taking breaks. He could feel his world getting close to running dry of energy, but he never stopped attacking.

Meanwhile, Decumia remained powerless. Her energy never had the chance to fill her body since Steven destroyed it as soon as it tried to come out of her world.

Decumia could only continue to suffer injuries, but Steven knew that she was planning something. That was the very reason behind his relentless offensive. Even if she managed to counter him at some point, she would be too weak to be a threat to his companions.

Steven believed to have enough time to damage Decumia's world thoroughly, but she ended up surpassing his expectations. Steven had launched another array of black weapons, but they suddenly left their trajectory and failed to crash on Decumia.

The event stunned Steven, but he promptly prepared another wave of attacks. However, Decumia used that chance to burst out with purple power and free herself from the many weapons stabbed in her body.

The explosion of power didn't affect Steven. He let the purple energy envelop him as he unfolded his black gas again. He wanted to suppress his opponent, but his smoke ignored his orders and flew in random directions.

Chapter 2260: 2260. Rotation

Steven didn't know why his energy had started acting on its own. He couldn't believe that Decumia had managed to affect it, but he didn't find other explanations for the event.

Purple energy exploded in every direction around Decumia, but Steven could hover among it without suffering any damage. His black smoke also protected him from that purple halo, but his expression was far from happy while he inspected the scene.

Something was forcing his energy to escape his control. Moreover, Steven couldn't even find the source of that event. In theory, his very power went against Decumia's existence, but he knew that his battle wasn't going through external influences.

"Your confused expression is nice," Decumia said in a rough voice as energy flowed into her body and closed the many injuries to restore her appearance.

Steven didn't answer. He kept his attention on the clashing attacks to study their behavior. His black cloud continued to expand randomly, and its properties partially halted the destructive power carried by the wave of purple energy.

The clash caused no explosions. The two powers blended and dispersed as they tried to affect the universe. The void didn't react to those waves of energy, so they both vanished in the blackness around Steven and Decumia.

"How did you counter my existence?" Steven directly asked since he couldn't find answers. Testing his theories with more attacks would also work against him, so he hoped that Decumia's ego would help him out.

"I already told you everything," Decumia laughed. "Also, I didn't affect your existence. Your energy simply fell prey to my chaos."

'Chaos?' Steven wondered as he reviewed everything he knew about Decumia.

Decumia had yet to use specific attacks. The tendrils that had empowered her underlings had been her most peculiar ability, but that didn't express anything unique. She had simply shared her experience and energy to broaden those experts' minds.

It was clear that Decumia's world didn't focus on supporting others. Her character gave too much away, and someone like Steven could see through that. Her ability had to involve something that she could use on her own and everywhere, even without entire armies around her.

"What?" Decumia asked. "Are you exhausted already?"

Steven snorted while pointing his hand downward. He couldn't understand what had gone wrong with his previous attack, and thinking wasn't helping. He could only resume his offensive and hope to find a solution before running dry of energy.

Steven didn't summon his usual arrow. He diversified his offensive by creating multiple weapons and shapes around him before launching them forward.

Decumia could understand Steven's plan right away. The vast offensive with different assets would give Steven the chance to study which attacks suffered from Decumia's influence. That would hopefully give him ideas on how to prevent the event.

Decumia revealed a smirk as she stretched her arms and exploded with purple power. Her offensive carried no unique traits, and Steven's weapons pierced it easily. However, some of them ended up changing their trajectory and missing their target.

Many attacks still fell on Decumia and pierced her figure. Steven didn't hesitate to follow with another offensive, but his opponent flew away before his new weapons could converge on her.

Steven had injured Decumia. Her lever wasn't at the peak of the ninth rank anymore, so he could follow her movements and launch another wave of attacks toward her escaping figure.

Decumia laughed as a purple wave came out of her body and made her figure disappear. The incoming attacks vanished among her energy, but Steven could still sense her, and he didn't hesitate to launch more weapons toward her.

That scene happened a few times. Decumia stopped moving only when Steven's surroundings had fallen prey to intense purple light. His black aura quickly shot out of his body to disperse that power, but he remained speechless when he saw his energy flowing backward.

Steven almost couldn't believe his eyes. He had turned his black energy into currents of power meant to pierce through the purple halo, but those attacks were flowing back into his body.

Steven confirmed that he could control his energy, but that only made the situation more unbelievable. His power heard his orders but seemed unable to follow them.

Dots suddenly connected in Steven's mind. Understanding dawned upon him when he took Decumia's words literally. She wasn't talking about was a proper ability or, rather, an influence impossible to escape.

"You," Steven gasped without adding anything. He couldn't find words to describe that idea.

"Did you get it?" Decumia wondered. "I admit that my power isn't easy to understand. It goes against the natural functioning of most things in the end."

"It doesn't go against anything," Steven corrected. "You simply cause chaos."

Decumia revealed a meaningful smirk at that statement. Steven didn't need to ask more questions to know that his guess had been on point, but his stupor didn't vanish.

The ability to cause chaos sounded ridiculous among experts who had spent entire millennia or eras learning to control their abilities. Yet, Decumia seemed able to do just that, and the consequences of that power felt impossible to predict.

Everything made sense when Steven thought about it. His side was slowly gaining ground, so Decumia's chaos had made her underlings grow stronger.

The Foolery wasn't too problematic, but Decumia liked its idiocy, so her chaos was turning it into her puppet.

As for Steven, his power could hurt Decumia, so her chaos was making the dark aura go out of control.

Decumia's power seemed to have no limits in terms of applications. She resembled Divine Demon in that field but with more control over her energy.

Nevertheless, that was also a weakness. Decumia didn't have access to the energy of the world. She had to rely on her existence to express those effects, which meant that she could grow tired. Injuries could even affect her performance, and Steven only needed that to explode with even more resolve.

Steven seemed to call upon the entirety of his power as he summoned an immense array of arrows. He didn't waste time testing which attacks had a higher chance of reaching his opponent now. He only wanted to launch everything he had before Decumia's chaos affected him.

"Smart move," Decumia commented. "I didn't think your existence would have resisted so long against me. Yet, I'm glad that my first opponent in this battle can offer a decent fight."

"Enough with words," Steven snorted. "You will die, Heaven and Earth will die, and the sky will crumble. I might not live to see any of that, but I'll still be a core part of that path."

"We'll see about that," Decumia laughed as she summoned her orange energy to create an exact copy of the array of arrows.

The battlefield lit up with black and purple light as Steven and Decumia sent energy to their offensive. They were almost ready to have one last exchange, but both felt forced to divert their attention and perform evasive maneuvers.

A monstrous roar filled the higher plane and killed all the weaker experts who found themselves without defenses or superiors around them. Then, countless currents of sharp black energy flew randomly and cut severed anything that dared to stand in their path.

The entire battlefield turned toward the source of that attack once the waves of energy crashed into the sky. Every asset could see that the landmass had completely rotated to point at Divine Architect's castle, and more sharp power was accumulating on its edges.