

## **Demonic 2271**

Chapter 2271: 2271. Trap

The statement was beyond arrogant, but none of the privileged cultivators felt able to contradict it.

A final battle would have happened even if Noah didn't affect the higher plane. Yet, Heaven and Earth would have only faced the dragons in their previous form, the hybrids, and the cultivators who had remained hidden in that case.

There wouldn't have been any organization, army, or actual joint front against Heaven and Earth. The rulers would have won without needing to unleash the entirety of their assets. Their sole presence would have been enough to win that final battle.

The privileged cultivars couldn't help but compare that version of the final battle with what was standing right before their eyes.

Heaven and Earth couldn't join the battlefield due to the seals. The sky could only watch as its army fought and the landmass sent attacks toward its powerless surface.

The many underlings, weaker avatars, and countless creations had significantly shrunk due to all the defenses that they had to face. Their numbers now matched their opponents, and Heaven and Earth couldn't do anything about that issue.

The leaders of Heaven and Earth's army couldn't show their power either. Noah's forces were keeping them locked in battles that prevented them from affecting the battlefield.

The major battles were still in Heaven and Earth's favor, but the privileged cultivators never expected the situation to reach that point. Divine Architect, Decumia, Marcella, the Rulers' Resolve, and the old man were facing relatively strong opponents. That alone was astonishing.

The other privileged cultivators in the solid stage couldn't affect the battlefield either. Noah, Alexander, the time dragon, and Divine Demon were simply too strong and required their full attention.

It felt simply incredible that such a small organization had managed to force Heaven and Earth into that state, but the reality of the battlefield was undeniable. Noah's forces had given birth to something worthy of its name, and things were far from over.

The eight experts watched as the many creations slowly approached their position. Noah wasn't flying with his army, but that didn't make the scene less threatening.

The dragons, the avatars, and the swords released faint high-pitched noises that revealed their ability to summon the Cursed Sword's power. Still, it was safe to assume that they could also generate the parasite's seeds.

The eight experts didn't fear those abilities, but their sum could be troublesome. Snore was also showing the results of Noah's recent improvement, so the privileged cultivators knew that they couldn't treat those creations like mere disposable weapons.

"Let's not play by his rules," The old man eventually ordered while pointing his arms forward.

His seven companions understood the meaning of that order and raised their hands to summon their energy. A series of abilities quickly shot forward and flew toward the incoming army to stop its advance.

The high-pitched noises grew louder as the army split to avoid the incoming attacks. Multiple teams formed and accelerated to reach their opponents faster, but the latter had predicted a similar event.

The privileged cultivators had sent simple energy beams, but those attacks transformed once the army split. Some turned into walls that aimed to seal every path, while others gave birth to different abilities that targeted specific teams.

One of the attacks transformed into a grey gas that expanded at unfathomable speed. Even Noah struggled to keep track of its movements. The technique only took an instant to reach the nearest team, but the entire army disappeared at that point.

The privileged cultivators expanded their consciousness while their techniques exploded or dispersed into the void. They even activated all the abilities meant to counter the Shadow Domain, but they didn't get the chance to show their power since the army reappeared above the platoon.

The unfolded mental waves warned the eight experts and allowed them to unleash abilities above them, but the army disappeared again. Still, the swords materialized around the platoon and launched themselves forward in a reckless assault.

The privileged cultivators didn't let the swords take them by surprise. They immediately launched more attacks at the incoming weapons and overwhelmed them with energy that they couldn't hope to overcome.

However, the swords gathered into small groups before the waves of energy could hit them. High-pitched noises also filled the area before a series of figures materialized before the flying blades.

The dragons and the avatars reappeared, but the swords in their hands had already gathered enough energy to launch attacks. Sharp waves of power shot out of them as soon as their figures became completely clear, and silence followed as soon as those techniques hit the incoming abilities.

The multicolored waves of energy released by the experts saw black lines invading their fabric even before they touched the incoming attacks. The clash made all of them unleash their destruction, and massive holes inevitably appeared in the offensive.

The swords shot forward at that point. They used the holes created by their companions to sever the destabilized fabric of their opponents' attacks and dig a path where the army could pass.

The privileged cultivators didn't hesitate to launch more attacks, but the army disappeared again. Still, a rain of black slashes fell on their techniques and surroundings, destroying every trace of their power.

The experts couldn't help but glance in the distance. Their expression became ugly when they saw Noah with his swords on his forehead. His mocking smirk was more than enough to explain what had happened.

The army had allowed Noah to prepare an attack without getting noticed by the privileged cultivators, but he couldn't simply unleash it on his opponents. They would have seen and reacted to it.

Still, the situation was different when it came to the attacks. Noah could destroy them without alerting the experts' survival instincts.

The army could safely materialize around the privileged cultivators and resume their offensive. The experts found their battle formation shattered with the swords, dragons, and avatars flying everywhere around them.

The swords began to fill the entire area with black lines as high-pitched noises continued to leave their structures. Instead, the avatars voiced cruel laughs as they waved their arms and sent countless slashes in every direction.

As for the dragons, they launched slashes, but they also released black flames that burnt every lingering trace of energy and used them to add power to their attacks.

The privileged cultivators couldn't avoid suffering injuries in that chaos, but they soon discovered that their opponents were too frail to stand a chance against them.

The first counterattacks from the privileged cultivators' side shattered many creatures, but that destruction only released seeds and even more slashes. Those attacks came directly from Noah, so the experts couldn't prevent the birth of roots and more branches of the parasite.

The situation was still manageable. After all, there were eight privileged cultivators on the scene. Destroying the roots and a few upper tier creatures was challenging but doable.

Yet, multiple pulling forces suddenly came out of the dragons and drained the cultivators of their energy. That effect only lasted for an instant, but the parasite used it to expand the roots and create a spherical cage.

The privileged cultivators could only accept that they had fallen into a second trap. They found themselves surrounded by disposable creatures and isolated from the rest of the battlefield. Getting out would take time, and they couldn't imagine what Noah would do in that period.

Chapter 2272: 2272. Vortex

Noah could move his attention on the battlefield now that the two platoons were trapped inside his techniques. Killing those privileged cultivators would help his side, but he wanted to see if he could do more than just that.

His eyes inevitably went on the six leaders among Heaven and Earth's army, but he felt forced to exclude some of them right away, especially Caesar. The latter wasn't a problem for now.

The old man couldn't be a potential target either. Sword Saint was having a hard time dealing with him, but Noah didn't believe that his companion could lose.

Divine Architect was also out of reach. It was probably better to kill her right away, but Noah couldn't butt in when King Elbas was handling her. He had to leave that fight to his companion to allow him to improve.

The Rulers' Resolve was troublesome, but he now had Supreme Thief and Great Builder to worry about. Noah didn't know if they could win, but giving even more attention to a single privileged cultivator would only make it harder for his side.

Only Decumia and Marcella remained as potential targets in Noah's mind. June didn't want interferences in her battle, but Noah believed he could help a little, especially since she wasn't fighting alone anyway.

Still, Decumia seemed far more problematic. Steven was literally dying to fight her, and the Foolery had yet to join those exchanges. They needed help, and Noah didn't mind flying there to send a slash or two.

Nevertheless, a surge of power suddenly appeared in the range of Noah's consciousness and forced him to turn toward the spherical cage made of roots. A wave of energy had pierced the parasite's branches, and a figure had used it to escape that trap.

Noah didn't feel any surprise when he saw the old man coming out of the violet energy. The latter was the only cultivator in the platoon who could pierce the roots so quickly, but Noah didn't let the other experts use that hole to escape.

The ethereal blackness sent potential to all the assets involved in the cage, which exploded with power and forced the experts to interrupt their movement techniques. That delay allowed the roots to grow and seal the hole created by the old man.

"Things won't be as easy as you think," The old man announced as he crossed his arms and hid his hands inside his sleeves.

Noah coldly eyed the expert without giving any answer. The Demonic Sword growled, and the Cursed Sword voiced a single high-pitched noise before going silent. They were both preparing themselves for the imminent battle.

"Your weapons are restless," The old man commented. "I bet you share that feeling."

Noah remained silent while the space-time array replaced the world in his vision. He still struggled to affect the void with his understanding, but his destruction had reached new depths, which allowed him to alter the environment to improve the effects of his movement technique.

Small spots on the lines of space shattered before Noah shot forward. Those gaps in the space-time array allowed him to skip entire areas of the void, transforming his sprint into a series of teleports that shortened the overall time required to reach his opponent.

Noah reached the old man in less than a second, and his sword darted forward before the latter could summon his energy. The space-time array bent due to the massive power generated by the two blades, and the privileged cultivator found himself unable to react to the offensive.

A black and dark-red explosions enveloped the old man before flinging him in the distance. His right arm had disappeared, while a huge hole had opened on the left side of his chest. Black lines had also filled his figure, and his expression showed nothing but surprise while he flew through the void.

Noah resorted to his movement technique again to reach his opponent, but the latter was ready at that time. The old man had predicted that Noah would come again, so he had summoned his power even before sensing the incoming attack.

A violet shade filled Noah's vision, but he roared to spit a wave of black flames. The fire shot forward while condensing to transform into a rain of black swords that pierced the incoming energy, but the old man didn't let his attack crumble so easily.

The violet energy began to spin and condense to send the fiery swords at its center. The old man gave birth to a vortex that destroyed Noah's attacks and used it to increase its power.

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Noah wanted to wave his swords, but the pressure coming from the vortex became so intense that his body struggled to move properly. Even his incredible physical strength seemed unable to get him out of those restraints.

The old man used that chance to jump upward and enter his vortex. The missing pieces in his figure reappeared, and the black lines shrunk back under the effects of the pulling force, but he didn't stop there.

Violet trails of energy left the old man to fuse with the vortex and alter its properties. Two series of gales came out of the raging structure and started to rotate to create arm-like limbs that converged toward Noah.

The pulling force became far stronger now that Noah ended up at the center of those two arms. He could feel the technique attracting him from three different sides, but he remained calm.

Something was off there. The old man had been part of the team that had chased Noah throughout the higher plane. Yet, he had never used that powerful pulling force to alter Noah's movements.

Noah could only find one explanation for that odd situation. The old man didn't use his technique before simply because he couldn't, so there had to be a trick behind it.

'He absorbed my energy,' Noah thought before closing his eyes and filling his mind with potential to search for remnants of his energy.

The whole higher plane had traces of Noah's influence, but faintly familiar sensations also came from inside the vortex. Noah had to push his mind beyond its limits to find the nature of that familiarity. Still, a smirk appeared on his face at that point.

The old man had used Noah's energy to create a technique that could suppress him, but he had to keep that power alive during the process. That feature made sense due to the overall strength and efficiency of the ability, but it turned out to be a fatal weakness against Noah.

The ethereal blackness sent even more potential to Noah's mind and forced it to redirect that power toward everything connected to him. Sooner, the roots, and his influence grew stronger, and the same happened to the energy inside the vortex.

That empowerment alone couldn't change Noah's situation, but it allowed him to gain a better grasp of the connection between him and the vortex. Once Noah found it, he sent potential directly through those channels, forcing the energy inside the vortex to express power far beyond its limits.

The old man's eyes widened in surprise when he saw black spots appearing in the middle of his vortex. That darkness gave birth to black lines that stretched through the whole technique before releasing their destruction.

The vortex crumbled once the destruction became too much to bear. The old man enveloped his figure with violet energy and started to retreat, but a black flash filled his vision before he could leave Noah's range.

Noah reappeared behind the old man, and his swords didn't hesitate to announce their anger. Meanwhile, the privileged cultivator exploded with violet power to hide the fact that his body had split into two halves.

### **Chapter 2273: 2273. Confidence**

The old man used his energy to bring his halves back together, but Noah didn't hesitate to turn and wave his swords. A thin, horizontal slash came out of his weapons and pierced the violet aura to sever the privileged cultivator's chest from its lower part.

The privileged cultivator released even more energy in a desperate attempt to gain enough time to heal, but Noah was relentless. A slight tremor ran through his wrists, and slashes rained out of his swords to crash on his opponent.

The violet halo crumbled into a wave of bright shards as soon as black lines spread through its structure. The privileged cultivator saw his figure vanishing and leaving his world exposed, but that didn't stop him from releasing more energy.

Noah didn't let the surge of power scare him. The privileged cultivator was clearly struggling to defend against his attacks, and he didn't miss the chance to double down on his offensive.

Only a second had to pass before countless slashes took control of the privileged cultivator's surroundings. The ability created multiple layers of attacks ready to fall on the old man, but Noah didn't unleash them right away.

The privileged cultivator couldn't heal in that situation. His surroundings were under Noah's control, and destruction filled every inch of that area. Black lines expanded on their own even if Noah didn't send any energy to his offensive, and any trace of power that tried to touch those slashes crumbled before it could turn into an attack.

The old man felt trapped, but he didn't give up. His world was in the open, but no energy could leave its edges since the destruction in the area would instantly shatter it.

Fighting back was impossible, so the privileged cultivator employed the opposite approach. He made the energy inside his world spin to generate a pulling force that attracted part of the destruction in the area.

A cold smirk appeared on Noah's face when he understood the privileged cultivator's plan. It wasn't hard to predict what the expert had in mind after facing his previous attack. The old man wanted to use even more of Noah's energy to summon an offensive that he couldn't theoretically overcome.

Noah could interrupt that procedure by unleashing all the slashes hovering in the area, but he decided to wait. His initial plan was to end the battle with one last attack, and he wanted to stick with it. That new development would only force him to overcome the old man's technique.

Snore voiced an excited hiss from inside its dark world when it sensed Noah's intentions. The snake was beyond happy to know that Noah was resorting to its ability to deal with his opponent.

Noah closed his eyes and raised his swords as he focused on the energy contained inside the countless slashes. The power behind their destructive nature skyrocketed and forced them to collapse to create dense black waves.

Those waves resembled Snore's destructive energy, but they didn't abandon Noah's iconic sharpness. Moreover, growls and roars seemed to come out of their fabric whenever they clashed with each other. A spherical lake had appeared around the privileged cultivators, and the transformations had only begun.

The old man absorbed as much of Noah's destruction as possible, but the transformation of the lake made him interrupt the process. The scenery filled his mind with disbelief and helplessness.

The waves of energy churned and condensed until they gave birth to a thick array of sharp feathers that shared a stark resemblance with Snore's old wings. That shape and the power they carried revealed the nature of the imminent attack, which made the privileged cultivator experience true despair.

Knowledge was a powerful weapon, but it only destroyed the privileged cultivator's hopes in that situation. He had studied Noah's power long enough to know what was about to fall on him, and he knew that nothing in his world could oppose it.

Tremors ran through the feathers and made them release even louder roars. Their blackness intensified until any other trace of light disappeared from the area.

The privileged cultivator saw the purple shades inside his world vanishing now that Noah's attack had forbidden the existence of other colors. Everything in the area had to belong to his destruction, and the old man could only succumb to the order.

The feathers eventually reached the peak of their power and began to descend toward the exposed world. The privileged cultivator instinctively summoned a defensive technique, but his energy crumbled even before reaching the incoming attacks.

The first clash triggered a chain reaction that made all the feathers shoot forward to unleash their energy on their target. A storm unfolded, and Noah forced himself to remain still while flares of energy flew past him.

The pressure generated by the explosions was immense. It matched and even slightly surpassed Snore's peak power. Noah had adapted his companion's attack to his abilities, turning his slashes into a deadly storm that he struggled to endure.

The black energy raged for a few seconds until imploding at the center of the storm. The event generated a shockwave that expanded for more than half of the higher plane, but Noah still forced himself to remain still. He couldn't divert his eyes from his own destruction.

The black energy finally dispersed at that point. The void regained control of the area, and its space-time array stabilized. Noah couldn't find any trace of the old man, but his eyes remained in the now-empty spot.

Noah's expression remained firm, but his ethereal blackness raged with power as it generated more potential. He had become strong enough to kill solid stage cultivators in a few attacks. His world couldn't remain silent in front of that feat.

Power ran through the very core of Noah's existence. He could feel his world striving to reach the peak of the cultivation journey, but a single solid stage cultivator wasn't enough to fill the gap that separated him from the breakthrough.

Noah was close to the solid stage, extremely close. However, that short gap felt immensely deep. There was a chance that no number of average privileged cultivators could fill it.

'So, that's how it is,' Noah calmly concluded in his mind. 'I can't advance like this.'

Noah moved his attention to focus on a spot near the sky. He found a smiling face waiting for him there. Caesar seemed to know what was going through his mind, and he showed nothing but excitement at that sight.

'He knows that I need to kill one of them to advance,' Noah thought.

Noah's cultivation level had reached the point that he had always predicted and feared. Affecting the entirety of the higher plane and becoming able to defeat peak rank 9 experts couldn't bring him to the solid stage. He needed a bit more than that.

'Does he expect me to ignore the other privileged cultivators to focus on the leaders?' Noah wondered as his cold smirk widened. 'As if I cared.'

Noah roared and exploded with power. The new potential running through his ethereal blackness flowed toward the cage of roots and Snore's dark world to further enhance their attacks.

Caesar's smile also widened when he inspected the scene. He expressed complete confidence, and he diverted his gaze only to force Noah to follow it.

Noah glanced in the direction of Caesar's gaze only to find an exhausted Steven hovering above Decumia. His black figure featured countless holes, but his opponent's cultivation level had also fallen a bit. Yet, he couldn't keep fighting anymore. His battle was over.

#### **Chapter 2274: 2274. Sacrifice**

Steven inspected the injuries on Decumia's figure. He had managed to hurt her world, but the damage was far from significant. Yet, it was enough to dethrone her from the very peak of the cultivation journey.

A privileged cultivator at the peak of the solid stage was a formidable opponent, but many inside Noah's organization could face such a threat. The leaders were the issue, and Steven had removed one of them from that position.



Of course, the damage wasn't permanent. Steven had gone overboard and burnt everything he had to accomplish that incredible feat, but Decumia would regain her original power as long as she had some time to heal.

The healing process would also be faster once Steven died. The dispersion of his power would remove the barriers hindering Decumia's recovery. His death could render his efforts pointless.

"Don't look so disappointed," Decumia chuckled as she patted the sky behind her. "You have almost cornered me. Take pride in your power."

Steven was using the faint remains of his power to keep his figure in one piece. He was in no condition to reply. Talking could break his concentration and shatter what was left of his world.

"You never fail to surprise me," Decumia praised, "And I'm talking about all of you. Your organization is incredible. I couldn't have asked for a better opponent."

Steven wanted to breathe roughly, but he suppressed that urge. He was on the verge of falling apart. He had to remain as still as possible to prevent the expansion of his injuries.

"You were nothing more than a liquid stage expert," Decumia continued. "Average cultivators would have never managed to achieve so much even if they sacrificed the entirety of their existence. Only a monster could have inflicted so much damage to me."

The praises couldn't snap Steven out of his condition. He was exhausted. Anyone could see that death was looming over him.

"That being said," Decumia sighed, "Your fight is over. You have accomplished your task. You can die now."

Decumia didn't launch any final attack. She limited herself to watching Steven struggling to remain alive. She didn't see any reason to waste her energy on destroying a floating corpse.

'Prolonging my life in this condition will only give her time to recover,' Steven thought as helplessness took control of his mind. 'It's time.'

"Pig," Steven whispered, and the efforts made cracks expand from the holes that filled his body.

The whisper was so faint that many would fail to hear it on that messy battlefield. However, the Foolery had never diverted its attention from Steven. The order reached its senses and made it shoot forward to help its companion.

"My time has come!" The Foolery squealed when it reached Steven's side, but the pressure radiated by its voice ended up expanding its companion's injuries.

"Sorry!" The Foolery promptly said in a quieter tone, but Steven's injuries expanded anyway. It seemed that the softest gale could make his body shatter and disappear.

The Foolery shut its mouth, but its cheeks inflated since it tried to speak. The pig knew that it couldn't control its instincts, so it forced itself to remain silent.

Steven ended up smiling at that sight. His companion was really an idiot, but he had to put his hopes on it anyway. There was no other option to defeat Decumia.

The smile created cracks at the corners of Steven's mouth. Small shards of his flesh also separated from his body and fell into the void, where they turned into powerless dust.

The Foolery wanted to ask Steven to remain still, but its sealed mouth helped keep it silent. Yet, its efforts didn't change the nature of the situation.

"Your potential is above mine," Steven whispered to the Foolery. "Maybe your idiocy makes your approach to the cultivation journey purer. I don't really know, but that's not important."

Decumia's gaze flickered with interest. She had already guessed that Steven's plan stretched past his death, but she didn't know what it involved. Still, the answers were about to arrive.

"Neither of us can defeat her in our current state," Steven continued. "You might even end up switching sides if I leave you like this. I can't let our organization lose two major experts against the same opponent."

The Foolery remained confused. It couldn't understand where Steven was going, but it agreed with the core of his speech. They had to kill Decumia no matter what.

"My current power is the result of a sacrifice," Steven explained. "It can't last forever. It's already fading even, but its core is authentic. It expresses the peak of my existence."

Steven turned toward the Foolery, and his neck almost shattered during the gesture. Steven had turned into a mere shadow of his former self after speaking so much. He had more holes and cracks than flesh now.

"Take it," Steven ordered. "Seize the core of my world and turn into something that Heaven and Earth can't corrupt."

A chilling and deep meaning accompanied Steven's lines. The Foolery's cheeks deflated as it finally opened its mouth to speak. Yet, no words came out of its throat. The pig was speechless.

"I told you already," Steven reminded. "Don't hesitate. Eat me and seize my power. I've already prepared it for the fusion."

The Foolery wasn't stupid. It liked to act like an idiot since that behavior was in line with its nature, but it was capable of intelligent and deep thoughts.

Still, that idiocy added a troublesome feature to the Foolery's personality. The pig was a bit naïve, especially when it came to its allies. It didn't want to see its close friends sacrificing themselves or dying.

"I get it!" Decumia spoke before the Foolery could find its resolve. "You never had any intention of leaving me injured. You were only testing your new power to prepare it for your companion."

Steven revealed a weak smile while keeping his attention on the Foolery. Acknowledging his weakness had allowed him to come up with that ploy. He only needed his companion to complete that plan.

"That's quite boring," Decumia declared. "I've already defeated your power. I don't want to fight it again. Besides, I like the pig."

Decumia spread her arms, and an array of purple tendrils came out of her back. Her influence expanded in the area, which forced Steven to speak again. "Quick. Eat me before she creates a flaw in my plan."

The Foolery didn't like what was happening. It hesitated for a mere second before summoning the resolve to follow Steven's plan. However, that delay allowed Decumia to affect its actions and restrain its body.

The pig felt unable to move as the purple halo expanded past its figure. Desperation took control of its mind when it saw the feeling of defeat filling Steven's expression. The Foolery suddenly understood that it had failed to fulfill Steven's dying wish.

Nevertheless, darkness abruptly expanded between the Foolery and Decumia. Violent anger destroyed every trace of the purple halo and removed Decumia's influence. Black lines also appeared in the area and enveloped that chunk of the void.

"Noah," Steven sighed as dark matter covered his body and prevented it from crumbling even further.

Noah materialized between his companion and Decumia. His reptilian eyes expressed nothing but killing intent as he stared at the privileged cultivator, but the latter showed no fear. She even smiled when sensing such intense destruction.

"I might have to ignore Caesar's orders," Decumia uttered. "I can't ignore such an interesting opponent."

"Noah," Steven called again, and Noah turned to face his companion. The scene turned Noah's killing intent into sadness, but he tried his best not to show those feelings.

"Noah," Steven said a third time, "I'm useless in this condition. Let me do this."

Countless ideas ran through Noah's mind. He came up with many ways to keep Steven alive and even restore part of his power. Yet, he knew that his role in the battle was over.

"Are you sure?" Noah eventually asked. "We can manage even if you don't do this."

"My existence wants me to fight Heaven and Earth," Steven stated. "Stopping me is worse than letting me die."

Noah already knew that, but he had still felt the need to ask. Yet, the situation was undeniable, so he voiced a simple order. "Pig, you heard him."

Chapter 2275: 2275. Honor

"Quite merciless," Decumia chuckled. "Though, can you really afford to lose such an important companion? The balance of the battlefield has yet to fall completely in your favor."

Noah could sense a faint force making its way through his mental waves and trying to invade his mind. Decumia's words expressed her chaos and attempted to disturb Noah's thoughts to create doubts and hesitation.

The ethereal blackness sent potential to Noah's mind to empower his violent thoughts. A clash that no one could see happened among faint but powerful influences while the two experts remained still.

Decumia's chaos fought the violent thoughts but failed to advance. Noah's destruction was too intense since he was actively defending himself against that influence.

Instead, Decumia was merely expressing the innate nature of her world. She wasn't sending any energy to that process. That depleted Noah's reserves quickly, but he didn't care since he wouldn't be the one to face Decumia.

Noah's presence allowed the Foolery and Steven to remain protected from Decumia's influence, but that didn't help the situation. The Foolery hesitated even after hearing Noah's orders, and nothing seemed able to make it move.

"What are you doing?" Noah asked.

"Noah," The Foolery squealed in a pleading tone.

"I know," Noah sighed. "Do it anyway."

"But," The Foolery continued.

"You are wasting Steven's precious time," Noah scolded. "Do it already!"

A low growl accompanied the end of Noah's line. Forcing the Foolery to accept that power wasn't ideal, but he couldn't find quicker ways to fulfill Steven's wishes.

"Pig," Steven called in a louder voice since Noah's dark matter was bringing temporary stability to his figure, "I know you understand what it means to be part of this organization. It's time to accept your role, just like I accepted mine."

"Things won't be fun anymore if I do this," The Foolery complained.

"Look at the battlefield," Steven uttered. "How many members of your species have died already? How many companions did we lose against Heaven and Earth's forces? The time to laugh will arrive, but now you have to fight."

"A true demon can always find the time to laugh," Noah joined the conversation. "Once the battle ends and the sky falls, we'll laugh, cry, and tell stories to honor the fallen."

The Foolery wanted to find alternative paths to victory, but it couldn't deny Steven and Noah's words. The battlefield needed its power, even if that meant sacrificing some of its companions.

Countless deaths filled the Foolery's vision and forced it to accept its companions' orders. A sigh left its mouth before it lifted its head. That gesture usually tried to convey pride, but Noah and Steven could see that there were far different emotions contained in it now.

The Foolery tried to convey its sadness and respect for Steven. It wanted to tell him how much it pained him to follow through with those orders, and the scene made Steven reveal an honest smile. He even patted the pig's back to reassure it.

Noah retracted the dark matter at that point, and the Foolery knew that the time had come. Steven's body shattered as soon as it lost its temporary stability, leaving only a dark sphere of power behind.

The Foolery opened its mouth and unfolded its aura. Hunger filled the void while the pig applied a pulling force on Steven's world. The process made his existence transform into a faint dark gale that flowed toward his companion and began to fuse with its body.

Generally speaking, the Foolery couldn't gain abilities from the existences it ate. That wasn't part of its skillset. However, Steven had altered his world to suit the pig and become part of its power.

Noah could sense Steven's existence vanishing while he hindered the advance of Decumia's chaos. The process felt too quick, but more potential flowed toward his mind to make him experience all the transformations of his friend.

Steven was barely awake. He was using the last trace of his concentration to focus on the fusion. He wanted the process to be flawless so that the pig could go back to the battle right away, and its final phases arrived faster than he expected.

The event marked the irreversibility of the process. Steven could see how his world had already become part of the Foolery's existence. He didn't even need to help the fusion anymore. The pig's hunger would do the rest.

That allowed Steven to take a break and use what remained of his concentration to inspect his surroundings. The battlefield featured screams, battle cries, and death, but its immensity made it marvelous.

Steven had gone from being one of the leaders of the secret organizations to playing an essential role on the final battlefield. His reach had stretched far past his expectations. His existence had affected the entire higher plane.

'Noah,' Steven said through his mental waves while the Foolery was immersed in the fusion.

Noah was keeping track of the procedure, so Steven's thoughts reached his mind in no time. Still, he limited himself to turning toward his companion. He simply had no words in that situation.

'It was an incredible journey,' Steven conveyed.

'The journey is not over,' Noah replied through his mental waves. 'You'll keep on living through the Foolery. You will see the sky fall.'

'You don't need to reassure me,' Steven laughed. 'My mind is at peace. I know that you will defeat Heaven and Earth.'

'Yes,' Noah stated. 'I'll destroy them.'

'I'm sorry for my weakness,' Steven continued.

'You stood your ground against one of the enemy leaders,' Noah snorted. 'That alone shows strength.'

'I guess you are right,' Steven responded. 'Maybe it's in our nature to keep striving for greater heights. I can feel the cultivation journey calling me even now.'

'That's how monsters are,' Noah said. 'We desire power even when our end is near.'

Steven didn't answer right away. It bathed in the beauty of the battlefield for a few seconds before voicing a simple request. 'Make them pay. Show them that they never had the right to stand above us, above you.'

'I told you already,' Noah sneered. 'They will fall.'

'No wonder I ended up following you,' Steven laughed. 'Fighting at your side was an incredible honor. Thank you.'

Noah didn't say anything, and Steven also fell silent. What remained of his existence shattered and split into multiple waves of energy that fused with the Foolery and started altering its body.

Steven was no more, but Noah still watched the spot where his world had disappeared. The shards of his body had long since dispersed into the void, but his mark remained. Noah could see how the universe had changed due to his companion's life.

'You couldn't become one of the distant stars,' Noah thought as his eyes finally left the spot where Steven had died to focus on the Foolery. 'You have chosen to turn yourself into fuel for a different star.'

Noah turned to glance at Decumia, but his gaze soon ignored her to focus on the sky behind her. That white layer was impenetrable, but Noah felt able to imagine the forces living past it. There was far more to explore and kill. His journey had barely begun.

"Don't let your mind strive for unreachable goals," Decumia joked since she understood the meaning behind Noah's expression. "You have a lot to overcome to see that path."

"You aren't one of those hindrances," Noah declared. "Someone else will take care of you."

A deafening squeal followed Noah's words. The cry made the destruction and chaos in the area disappear before darkening the patch of the sky right behind Decumia.

Chapter 2276: 2276. Pity

Decumia couldn't contain her smile. A single squeal had managed to get rid of the destruction and chaos before affecting the sky behind her. The cry's power was undeniable, and she couldn't wait to face it.

Noah had a far calmer approach. His reptilian eyes darted across the area before falling on the expanding dark patch in the sky. Heaven and Earth couldn't express their real power due to the old rulers' net, but that feat remained incredible.

'Hunger and anger,' Noah thought as he turned. 'That should create something worthy of this battlefield.'

The Foolery's figure appeared in Noah's vision and revealed its changes. The pig was still transforming, but it was already possible to notice a few key features.

The Foolery's skin had darkened, but that process was far from over. Steven's blackness was taking over the pig's colors, replacing them with shades that reflected a power meant to oppose Heaven and Earth.

The wings didn't escape that transformation, and they also grew to remove the last traces of their funny size. The remaining chunks of fat on the pig's body also vanished and retracted to show the massive muscles hidden underneath.

The Foolery never stopped squealing during the transformation. Something inside its existence forced it to express the raging feelings running through its mind.

Its world expanded and condensed to give birth to new energy. The Foolery had always been lacking in that field due to its naivety and short time spent as a hybrid, but Steven's existence was fixing those issues.

Noah could see a new world coming to life. The Foolery's innate features fused with Steven's experience as a cultivator and gave birth to something entirely different without abandoning the unique powers of the two experts.

The Foolery mostly expressed hunger, but its power was relatively young. Instead, Steven's world had initially carried pure determination, which had transformed into intense anger that targeted Heaven and Earth.

Steven had also empowered his world during his last moments, turning his anger into something focused on Decumia. That was a flaw in the grand scope of the final battlefield, but the pig's existence fixed the issue by adding new aspects.

The fusion of those aspects created a hunger that was incredibly effective against those belonging to Heaven and Earth's side, but that wasn't the end of it. Something powerful but faint had appeared in the depths of the Foolery's existence, and Noah couldn't understand its nature even when he focused on that feature.

"That's interesting!" Decumia exclaimed when she sensed that faint power.

Noah instinctively glared at Decumia, but she paid no attention to him. Her new opponent had captivated her so much that she refrained from releasing her aura.

The intense hunger still filled the area, but Noah could release his energy after getting used to that new environment. The Foolery wasn't focusing on anyone, so a higher density of power was enough to make other fuels survive under its influence.

Decumia learnt about that feature through Noah, but she still held back from unleashing her chaos. She wanted the Foolery to complete the transformation and give her the battle she had long yearned for.

Noah remained in his position even if he felt no danger coming from Decumia. Snore and the roots were handling his pursuers, so he could take his time to help a friend.

Nevertheless, the wait forced Noah to become more aware of the state of the battlefield. The chaos, the deaths, and the cries seemed endless, and the sourness of Steven's departure added different urges to his mind.

'Playing with the weaklings is my task for now,' Noah reminded himself. 'My efforts are bringing us closer to victory.'

Noah's attempts to calm himself down didn't lead anywhere. His world grew restless as he waited for his chance to dive back into the battlefield. He wanted to do more for his organization. His very existence pushed him toward reckless actions.

The void darkened while Noah remained focused on his mental state. Holding himself back had never been his forte, and the change in the environment soon attracted Decumia's attention.

The privileged cultivator began to have doubts. Decumia could feel the danger that Noah radiated, but she couldn't decide between the Foolery and him.

Both experts seemed worthy opponents, and Decumia was ready to abandon Caesar's plan to seek the entertainment that the final battle had yet to provide. However, the squeal suddenly stopped and prevented her from making that choice.

The hunger dispersed before a heavier aura spread in the area. The new influence still carried the Foolery's initial power, but it also expressed something different. Moreover, it didn't destroy random waves of energy anymore.

Noah and Decumia noticed that they didn't have to use any special method to release their energy now. However, the sky behind Decumia remained dark, which showed how the Foolery's passive influence still affected Heaven and Earth.

"Noah," The Foolery called in a deep voice.

The seriousness expressed by the Foolery surprised both Noah and Decumia. They didn't expect the pig to turn so stern after that transformation, but the change sounded reasonable. After all, the Foolery had to pay the steepest price for Steven's death.

Noah couldn't help but nod when he gazed at the Foolery and saw its cold gaze. That was a face befitting of a demon. Noah could almost sense the pig's chilling killing intent by merely looking at its expression.

'Steven would be proud,' Noah sighed before voicing a question. "Can I leave her to you?"

"Of course," The Foolery replied in its new tone. "It's my responsibility to take her down."

"I'll leave then," Noah stated.

"Do not worry!" The Foolery shouted before raising its head. "I will prove myself worthy of Steven's inheritance. Decumia, watch in fear as my power reaches the next level."

Noah couldn't believe that the Foolery recalled Decumia's name, but the intense aura that followed its announcement distracted him from his surprise. The pig's cultivation level increased rapidly and pushed it toward the limits of the liquid stage.

The Foolery seemed about to face its breakthrough, but a loud and long fart suddenly came out of its rear. The skyrocketing power began to fall, and its cultivation level returned to its previous height by the end of that smelly gesture.

Noah and Decumia had no words to describe the event. Their expression froze, but their eyes flickered when the Foolery began to accumulate power again. Its cultivation level rose, but the process ended when another fart came out of its butt.



"Is it for real?" Decumia asked.

"You won't get the fun you were seeking," Noah shook his head. "Even your chaos will go crazy."

"What do you mean?" Decumia questioned.

"You are confident in taking her down, right?" Noah repeated.

"I can't possibly lose," The Foolery replied without lowering its head. "I only have to accumulate enough power to advance. This battle will mark my rebirth!"

"Show no mercy," Noah casually said while shrugging his shoulders.

Decumia frowned when she saw Noah leaving the area to fly toward the spherical cage made of roots. She could see that she had missed something, but Noah had no intention of wasting more time there.

As for Noah, he didn't feel too happy with the Foolery's breakthrough, but its power was undeniable. The nature of that influence was the only issue. He had finally understood what Steven had created with his world, and the answer almost led to headaches.

'Hunger, anger, and idiocy,' Noah cursed in his mind. 'I'd pity her if she didn't cause Steven's death.'

Chapter 2277: 2277. Rules

Decumia followed Noah with her eyes, but a new surge of power forced her to bring her attention to the pig. The Foolery's cultivation level was striving toward the solid stage again, but a fart interrupted the process and brought it back to its previous heights.

"What are you trying to accomplish?" Decumia asked before her usual smile reappeared on her face.

"You have my interest, but you need to do far more to defeat me."

"Ignorants shouldn't speak!" The Foolery announced. "Steven has given me the power to overcome my limits. Even Xavier would have to acknowledge my value now."

King Elbas and Divine Architect obviously heard that conversation. Their battle had already begun, even if they weren't actually fighting.

Their clash had started when their assets first met on the battlefield. The help they could provide to their respective sides was an extension of their power, so they could decide a winner without falling into a series of exchanges.

Keeping attention on the entirety of the battlefield was mandatory for those two experts due to their essential role. King Elbas and Decumia had noticed Steven's death, but their seemingly tense balance shook when they heard the Foolery.

Divine Architect's crystal eyes flickered with white light when she noticed that King Elbas' complete concentration wavered for a second. That event didn't lead to a proper distraction, but it was enough to attract Divine Architect's attention.

Of course, Divine Architect knew that the Foolery had a significant influence on King Elbas' sanity, but his dark expression now carried something deeper than a simple annoyance. He seemed to resent the curiosity trying to take over his mind.

"It's unbecoming of your role to experience such strong feelings," Divine Architect commented. "All the members of your organization share this flaw, but I didn't expect you to be afflicted so deeply by it."

"Are you worried about me now?" King Elbas mocked as he kept his attention on the Foolery. His curiosity was reacting on its own, but he despised what he was learning.

"Nonsense," Divine Architect sighed. "I was only pointing out another field where I'm superior."

"Superior," King Elbas repeated. "Shall we make a bet?"

"Do you really think that pig can defeat Decumia?" Divine Architect asked.

"Would you be interested in it?" King Elbas wondered.

"No," Divine Architect firmly replied. "Bets are pointless when the higher plane has reached this state."

"That stoic attitude is a flaw," King Elbas stated.

"Only an ignorant would say that," Divine Architect replied.

"Well, I don't need you to accept to win," King Elbas declared. "I made you experience defeat once already. The pig's battle will remind you of that feeling."

"You use "victory" too casually," Divine Architect uttered. "The bigger plan still escapes your vision."

"Remember those words when the feeling returns," King Elbas snorted.

His curiosity had brought answers that gave birth to intense annoyance inside his mind. King Elbas knew what kind of power the Foolery had achieved.

King Elbas had his personal classification of powers, abilities, and worlds. He stood alone in his own category, but his organization had many experts worthy of unique labels.

Noah, Sword Saint, and Alexander were obviously among them, but King Elbas had come up with an even more unique category. Still, only Pellio and Divine Demon had fallen under that label, at least until now. The Foolery had just joined them.

Decumia and the Foolery didn't do much while King Elbas and Divine Architect argued. The Decumia limited herself to watching the pig accumulating and losing energy without ever leading anywhere.

The process had been interesting at first, but Decumia grew bored of it after hearing the seventh fart. It was clear that the Foolery couldn't achieve the breakthrough in its current state.

"Stop it already," Decumia announced as she unfolded her aura and applied her chaos to her surroundings.

The sky behind Decumia regained its white shades now that her chaos shielded it from the waves of hunger that flowed through the area. The Foolery had already failed to influence its main target, but that issue didn't bother it.

"I need more power," The Foolery exclaimed before pointing its dark eyes toward Decumia. "You will push me to the peak."

"Ooh?" Decumia murmured in a curious tone. "And how would I do that?"

"By feeding me your chaos," The Foolery declared before releasing another fart and shooting forward.

Decumia couldn't help but notice how the pig's speed had significantly increased. The Foolery wasn't as fast as Noah, but it remained an opponent that average solid stage cultivators would struggle to follow.

Of course, Decumia wasn't one of those average cultivators. Part of the damage that Steven had inflicted on her world still afflicted her power, but she remained one of the greatest experts among Heaven and Earth's army. She didn't even have to take the battle seriously to follow the Foolery.

The pig charged ahead while folding its wings to create a straightforward charge that had every intention of squashing Decumia. However, the latter easily sidestepped the attack and smiled at the sight of the Foolery crashing into the sky.

The white layer didn't suffer any damage, but its white shades disappeared again now that the Foolery was touching its surface. The chaos that had floated right above the sky vanished due to the pig's aura, leaving Heaven and Earth relatively powerless in that part of the battlefield.

Decumia shook her head without retracting her smile. The sheer power radiated during the impact had caused a slight reaction in her survival instincts, but that was still too little to worry her. She even opened her mouth to voice a few mocking words that suited her world, but the Foolery didn't let her speak.

Another fart came out of the Foolery, but Decumia's eyes widened in surprise when she saw that the smelly gas had shot out of its right wing. That limb had no real orifices, but she couldn't deny what had happened.

What followed the fart shocked Decumia even more. The pushing force generated by the release of the smelly gas made the Foolery shoot toward its left and sprint toward Decumia again.

The sprint was far faster than before, but it still fell short in Decumia's eyes. The delay caused by her surprise didn't prevent her from dodging the incoming charge with another precise sidestep.

The Foolery crossed Decumia's position without even coming close to hitting her. Its figure started flying deeper into the void and threatened to leave the battlefield altogether, but its head performed a sharp turn upward, and the gesture gave birth to another fart.

The gas allowed the Foolery to reverse its momentum completely. The pig shot toward Decumia again, and the latter remained speechless in front of that movement technique. The farts were odd but okay. The issue came from how easily the Foolery ignored basic regulation of the space-time array.

A powerful and quick sprint would typically take a while to disperse its momentum. The cultivators and other experts changed direction by applying an even stronger force, which led to short seconds of complete stasis.

The Foolery was ignoring those rules. Its farts made it change direction instantaneously, without even having to disperse the momentum accumulated until then. Actually, it seemed that the pig was sorting that energy to collect it inside its world.

Chapter 2278: 2278. Assault

Noah and his companions had become quite famous for ignoring the rules of the cultivation journey. Some experts in his organization even affected deeper meanings with their worlds, and a few were also able to rewrite entire innate behaviors of the laws.

However, the Foolery had never been one of those experts. Its power had always been relatively straightforward since it had deep connections to the magical beasts' field. Still, that had greatly changed after the fusion with Steven's world.

The Foolery wasn't only ignoring the laws of the world. It was also affecting fields that its power didn't usually touch. The space-time array of the void was even too deep for its current level, but its movement technique didn't seem to care about it.

The pig didn't realize how amazing its sprints were. It simply focused on charging at Decumia with everything it had without worrying about the unique properties of its technique.

Meanwhile, Decumia's amazement intensified. She could easily dodge that offensive, but the pig's power remained surprising. Even her chaos appeared unable to affect it due to its inconsistent foundation and abilities.

"Stay still for a moment," Decumia eventually ordered after successfully dodging another reckless charge.

The Foolery had just begun to reverse its momentum. Its body made a U-shaped turn without slowing down or wasting time, and that energy remained around its figure even when it decided to stop itself to listen to Decumia.

"Why are you using farts to move?" Decumia directly asked. "They aren't a core part of your power, so there must be better ways to use your abilities."

"What abilities?" The Foolery wondered.

"Your movement technique," Decumia replied while pointing at the energy around the Foolery. "Can't you see your body retaining momentum even after stopping completely?"

The Foolery glanced at the smelly dark energy that surrounded its body and frowned before mustering a confident tone. "I have always known that this energy was here!"

Decumia's expression froze. The Foolery's unconvincing tone had revealed that it had no knowledge about its current power. It didn't even realize that its farts were making it accomplish something incredible.

"Do you even realize what you are doing?" Decumia asked. "You are rewriting the rules involving movement and flight. You are sprinting in a straight line even if your body performs turns."

"Praising me won't save your life," The Foolery announced while lifting its head. "Your fate is sealed!"

Decumia didn't know how to approach the Foolery. A smile appeared on her face, but she also wore a deep frown. Confusion and excitement mixed in her head while she tried to figure the pig out.

"You have wings," Decumia continued. "Why do you use them to accelerate? They must deplete less energy, right?"

The Foolery lowered its head to focus on Decumia for a few seconds. Its eyes then went on its wings. The pig flapped them a few times before releasing short farts from their base to study how much energy the two gestures depleted.

The pig soon brought its attention back to Decumia before showing a proud smile. Decumia didn't know what that expression meant, but the Foolery didn't hesitate to explain it. "I knew you would have pushed me to the peak."

"What?" Decumia asked before raising her arms due to the scream that her survival instincts voiced.

Everything happened in the span of an instant. The Foolery flapped its wings and released farts from their base at the same time to perform a sprint that even Decumia couldn't trace properly.

The movement technique made the Foolery crash on Decumia before she could summon any trace of energy. The impact flung her in the distance and made her slam on the white layer again.

Part of the Foolery's energy had attached itself to Decumia and had empowered the impact. That power ended up dispersing after she slammed on the sky, and the whiteness carried by that solid layer vanished due to its influence.

Decumia wasn't hurt. Her energy flowed through her body, so her figure could withstand that simple offensive. However, she soon became aware of something far worse than a physical injury.

Decumia had to study her world to notice what had changed. Her existence had remained intact, but part of the energy inside it had vanished.

The privileged cultivator didn't take long to find her missing energy. A connection between her world and that power still existed. She could feel how the pig's belly was slowly digesting that fuel to turn it into nutrients.

The Foolery's cultivation level rose as it lifted its head. Its power tried to cross the limits of the liquid stage again, but a fart ended up coming out of its butt and dispersing those improvements.

Nevertheless, Decumia noticed how the process didn't waste her energy. That power still existed inside the Foolery even if the fart should have dispersed it.

"How do you even work?" Decumia couldn't help but wonder.

"A true expert must do what it feels," The Foolery proudly announced, "Without worrying about potential dangers and theories."

"Not really," Decumia chuckled before shaking her head and exploding with power.

Purple energy filled Decumia's surroundings and created an area brimming with her chaos. Her intense energy removed the Foolery's influence and allowed the sky to shine with its light again. Actually, it seemed that its whiteness had grown more intense.

"Your power is interesting," Decumia exclaimed. "I can't wait to make you change sides to keep you as my personal pet."

Those words seemed to trigger something inside the Foolery. The pig lowered its head to study Decumia with its cold eyes. Its expression radiated proper anger, but that reaction only widened Decumia's smile.

"I almost forgot," Decumia stated. "Your species has already been in chains once. What is it? Are you angry now? Come at me then."

"My anger fused with Steven's power," The Foolery declared. "Even I don't know what will fall on you."

"Let me guess," Decumia mocked. "You are going to fart again, aren't-?"

Decumia couldn't finish her line since a threat suddenly appeared above her. The Foolery had materialized among her chaos without giving any warning or releasing any wave of energy.

The technique resembled a teleport, but Decumia realized how different that ability had been. The Foolery didn't actually move. The space-time array didn't carry any alteration either. The universe itself believed that the pig had always been there.

The Foolery didn't let Decumia ponder about its new technique. It directly sprinted downward to crash on her and flung her away. The impact made Decumia fly in the distance, but she managed to disperse that momentum quickly.

Decumia noticed how her world had lost energy, and she felt no surprise when she found that missing power inside the Foolery. Still, the pig didn't try to approach the breakthrough at that time.

The Foolery materialized in a spot above Decumia before performing another reckless charge. Yet, Decumia transformed into a purple current that allowed her to dodge the attack and condense into a different area.

The pig didn't stop there. Its power increased and its hunger flowed out of its figure as it performed another teleport to catch Decumia by surprise. However, she had understood that attack pattern by then, so she dodged the following charge again.

"Is that it?" Decumia asked after she reached another part of the battlefield.

The Foolery didn't answer, but its silence didn't satisfy Decumia. Something was off, and she quickly realized the reason behind that feeling. Part of her hand had disappeared even if the pig didn't land its attack.

"How did you hurt me?" Decumia questioned while her energy rebuilt her hand. "Your attack failed."

"Who said that an attack has to succeed to apply its effects?" The Foolery sneered.

Chapter 2279: 2279. Turn

Noah felt a headache trying to take control of his mind while he inspected the Foolery's battle. The pig had obtained a troublesome power, and even the clearly superior Decumia was struggling to face it.

Noah soon stopped focusing on the Foolery to bring his attention back to his task. Snore was keeping its opponents busy inside its dark world, so only the spherical cage made of roots required some work from his end.

Nevertheless, the parasite was enjoying the influx of potential coming from the ethereal blackness. Noah had even killed one of the privileged cultivators from that team, which made escaping the cage quite hard.

The privileged cultivators still tried their best to defeat the disposable assets and create holes in the array of roots. Yet, Noah launched piercing slashes whenever someone came close to escaping the cage.

That approach was slow, but it allowed Noah to save energy when fighting against multiple powerful assets. None of those privileged cultivators were at his level, but they could create problems if they managed to corner him through a joint offensive.

The issue didn't involve the overall amount of power that those experts were capable of summoning when working together. Noah had to be careful about their energy reserves since even his incredible world couldn't overcome that hurdle in that situation.

Truth be told, Noah had come close to approaching his limits a few times already since the beginning of the final battle. After all, fighting a fully-fledged privileged cultivator in the solid stage required him to go all-out.

However, the nature of the ethereal blackness had allowed Noah to keep fighting. Every victory generated more potential and refilled his world with valuable energy. He couldn't approach the breakthrough with that method, but he could remain a significant threat to his opponents.

That was Noah's task. His organization had a vague plan for the final battle, and his role was quite important. Keeping so many privileged cultivators busy greatly helped his side and would eventually grant it a stark advantage during the last phases of that war.

Still, Steven's death had added sourness to that role. Noah kept diverting his attention from the trapped experts to glance at other significant battles. He didn't want to get in the way of his companions, but he felt the urge to fight against stronger cultivators.

Noah knew that the urge probably had roots stretching deep into his world. He had already confirmed that he would need to defeat one of the enemy leaders to advance. His constant desire to obtain more power naturally pushed him toward those opponents, and he had to suppress that feeling to stick to his role.

Yet, Noah had never been great at holding back. He could feel that desire fusing with his violent thoughts and the emotions caused by Steven's death to create something unstoppable.

Of course, that alone couldn't distract Noah from his role. He had responsibilities, and a mistake from his end could be fatal in the grand scope of the final battle.

The problems started at that point. Noah could suppress an urge, but proper thoughts were harder to ignore. Dealing with instincts wasn't an issue, but he found it difficult to face them once they became somewhat reasonable.

'This is our best shot at retaining energy,' Noah reminded himself. 'Heaven and Earth will free themselves at some point. We need to be ready for them.'

'I need to trust my companions,' Noah continued in his mind. 'This is only the beginning. Everything will change once Heaven and Earth arrive.'

'Why is he still staring at me?' Noah eventually thought while glancing toward Caesar.

Caesar wasn't affecting the battlefield in any way. He was also holding back his influence as he hovered in a relatively empty spot before the sky. Still, he had long since decided to keep his attention on Noah, and the latter didn't know why.

'Does he know that I'm about to snap?' Noah wondered. 'Is he doing this to make that happen quickly?'

Noah couldn't find answers, but the issue remained. Caesar's smug smile was a scene that he couldn't ignore. That gesture also influenced the sore feelings caused by Steven's death, making them stronger than ever.

Everything was going fine on the battlefield. The landmass' forces were still suffering defeats from time to time, but their momentum was set in stone. Heaven and Earth's leaders were the only exception, but Noah expected as much.

In theory, Noah could find replacements for his task. Emperor and Queen could handle more opponents, and Snore didn't need his help to deal with the experts trapped in its dark world.

Yet, Noah knew that going after Caesar right now wouldn't lead anywhere. He wasn't strong enough to affect his world. The exchange at the beginning of the final battle had already proven that.

A series of exchanges followed those thoughts. Noah focused on sending the cultivators who tried to escape his cage back to its center, but he failed to inflict deadly blows.

Noah would have to enter the cage and summon some of his strongest attacks to kill the experts, but the roots were already wearing them down. He would win as long as he kept his opponents trapped there.

The wait didn't benefit Noah's mental state. He could feel Caesar's gaze on him while he dealt with his opponents. The arrogance and challenge behind that gesture triggered instincts that he wanted to keep under control, but he still didn't let his emotions take over his mind.

A random slash eventually led to a surge of potential inside the ethereal blackness. Noah noticed how one of the cultivators inside the cage had finally fallen prey to the many threats contained by the roots. That death had partially refilled his world, but he quickly used that energy to send more power to his technique.

That trend seemed indestructible. Noah and the others were doing it. They were cornering Heaven and Earth's forces, and the final battle almost appeared on the verge of falling completely in their favor.

"Come on," Caesar eventually spoke. "I know you aren't happy with this."

Caesar's voice spread through the entirety of the higher plane, but everyone knew the target of those words. Noah ignored that challenge and continued to focus on his opponents. Snore even ended up killing one of the privileged cultivators, so he could distract himself by enjoying the new potential filling his world.



"You know that these victories don't mean anything," Caesar continued. "You must kill some of us to advance in the right direction."

Noah revealed his cold smile toward Caesar before sending more potential toward the cage. Flowers grew from the roots and gave birth to seeds, which generated more branches of the parasite.

The new branches stretched inside the cage and filled the area with corrosive energy. Only the dark world's creations could survive that new environment without using any additional power, so the privileged cultivators' situation greatly worsened.

"I never thought the great Defying Demon would be happy squashing ants," Caesar announced. "The cultivator who gave you that title would be greatly disappointed."

"Why are you even trying to bait me?" Noah asked. "You know what you have to do to force my hand."

"So cold," Caesar laughed. "Did you even feel anything for your friend's death?"

"I will kill you," Noah calmly stated. "It's up to you to decide when."

"I guess I have to make the first move," Caesar shook his head while his bright smile remained on his face.

Caesar waved his hand, and Noah shot backward when he noticed changes in the void's space-time array. Faint energy was affecting that structure, and his technique suffered during the process.

The cage of roots shattered, but the power it contained returned inside the ethereal blackness. The same happened to Snore's dark world. The snake saw its destructive energy disappearing while its body teleported next to Noah.

The privileged cultivators who had been trapped inside Noah's techniques didn't hesitate to run away. They appeared exhausted and full of injuries, and their poor state reassured Noah.

"You reverted the very existence of my techniques," Noah exclaimed, "But you couldn't remove their effects. I'm getting there."

"Is this enough to make you come here?" Caesar wondered.

"You know it is," Noah replied. "The time has come then. Shafu, it's your turn."

Chapter 2280: 2280. Advance

Noah and Caesar kept their eyes on each other for different reasons. Noah wanted to see if his announcement caused some reactions in his opponent. Instead, Caesar did his best to show his usual expression.

Still, even Caesar's usually confident behavior shook at the sight of the massive figure coming out of Noah's body. At first, Caesar only saw a shadow as big as multiple regions, but that giant spot enlarged until it occupied a massive area of the higher plane.

Shafu had grown together with Noah, and its current size was incredible, to say the least. The dragon wasn't as big as the landmass, but it could occupy a whole quarter of it on its own.

Shafu's size wasn't the only surprising aspect of its existence. The dragon stood in the upper tier even without Noah's potential. It didn't need any artificial empowerment to reach the last stage of the cultivation journey.

Of course, Shafu wasn't at the very peak of the ninth rank, but that detail remained surprising. Its heavy presence, its incredible size, and its overall power made the dragon a creature that forced even Caesar to drop his confidence for an instant.

Shafu didn't scare Caesar, but his fate couldn't predict everything, so he allowed himself to be slightly surprised. Still, what followed remained inside his calculations.

A roar that forced most experts on the battlefield to summon defensive abilities came out of Shafu's mouth right after it landed on the landmass, but that wasn't the end of it.

Shafu stretched its six arms, which grew as dark matter came out of its body to alter part of its structure. The entire battlefield seemed to go silent and gasp when the dragon sealed its claws on the landmass' base and began to put strength in an attempt to lift it.

The experts from both sides watched as Shafu wielded the landmass as if it was a proper sword. Yet, merely grabbing its base wasn't enough to gain its power. That gigantic black home was more than a weapon. It was a creature with will and urges.

A deep growl came out of the landmass. The creature didn't like how Shafu had interrupted its relentless offensive toward the sky, but the event didn't lead to an immediate clash.

Shafu growled too. The dragon was smarter than the landmass in terms of pure intelligence, and its experience also had great value in that situation. Shafu tried to convey its intentions in a language that the creature could understand. After all, it sought cooperation.

Strangely enough, the landmass seemed to listen to Shafu. It didn't immediately give in, but it grew calmer as a softer growl came out of its surface.

Shafu and the landmass eventually fell into a conversation that only they could understand. Even Noah couldn't put those cries into proper words. The exchange of growls expressed complicated intentions with various depths, so it was quite impossible to find a single meaning.

Nevertheless, the scene hinted at the imminent events even if Shafu and the landmass had yet to find an agreement. The sole thought that the massive dragon could wield that giant sword filled Heaven and Earth's army with fear, and part of Noah's side also shared those worries.

Meanwhile, Noah flew toward Caesar. No one dared to stand on his path, even if he was advancing slowly. Everyone knew that the imminent battle was inevitable, and opposing Caesar's will didn't fall into their plans.

"Cursed Reality," Noah called during his flight, and his companion promptly materialized at his side.

"I can't spend too long talking," Cursed Reality announced. "I'm already going all-out to support the various buildings."

"You'll need to do far more soon," Noah exclaimed. "We can't let everyone die simply because we have started fighting."

"I have created a failsafe already," Cursed Reality pointed out. "You know that."

"Will it be enough against that?" Noah asked while glancing at Shafu and the landmass.

"Will they attack us?" Cursed Reality questioned.

"Do you really think they'll care about their allies?" Noah replied.

"This is the end then," Cursed Reality stated.

"Not quite," Noah uttered. "Though we are almost there."

"I'll try to keep everyone safe," Cursed Reality declared. "You can go all-out. Don't worry about the others."

"That's the problem," Noah sighed. "I wouldn't have worried anyway."

Cursed Reality shot a cold glance toward Noah, but his expression melted when the entirety of the battlefield returned to his senses. Only a ruthless leader could have created that situation, and their organization probably required even more brutish methods to seize victory.

Noah and Cursed Reality didn't speak anymore. Cursed Reality teleported away and reached the ethereal array of inscriptions to add defenses and separate dimensions to their structure.

King Elbas was already handling the various teleports that led directly inside the array of inscriptions. Cursed Reality only had to reinforce those defenses since Pellio's ability probably wouldn't be enough to handle what was about to come.

Most of the experts who had nothing to do with the defenses kept their attention on Shafu and the landmass. Yet, a few leaders felt that the battlefield wanted something more from them as they watched Noah approaching Caesar.

The underlings couldn't understand the meaning behind Noah's advance, but Divine Demon and other experts in a similar position knew that far too well. Noah was joining the crucial battles. The time to hold back was over.

June and her team were struggling against their opponent. Marcella's power appeared endless, and her abilities could fend off every attack converging toward her figure.

The experts had managed to free the landmass from Marcella's hindrances, but their feats had ended there. Their offensive appeared unable to hurt their opponent even with the space dragon coordinating most of the attacks.

Shafu's actions had temporarily interrupted the relentless exchange of attacks, but the experts were ready to resume their offensive. However, a dense aura suddenly fell on them, which forced everyone to glance at a spot above them.

"What are you doing here?" June snorted when a sea of dark-red light filled the void above her.

"Defying Demon has stepped forward," Divine Demon declared. "We can't play around anymore."

"We can handle this," June continued.

"I honestly don't care," Divine Demon responded. "I only know that I must end this."

Supreme Thief and Great Builder weren't doing too well against the Rulers' Resolve. They weren't losing, but they weren't winning either.

Great Builder was exhausted, so he limited himself to supporting his companion through simple but effective creations. As for Supreme Thief, he mostly cursed his own power whenever one of his techniques failed to express the intended force.

The battle was quite spectacular and tense, but the three cultivators couldn't refrain from interrupting their offensive to inspect Shafu. That reaction was quite odd for the Rulers' Resolve, but it made sense since it involved Heaven and Earth's safety.

Still, before the experts could resume their battle, a figure teleported among them and delayed the end of that break. Alexander's relatively sorry figure appeared in the middle of that fight and nodded at his companions before turning toward the Rulers' Resolve.

"Won't we have problems if we focus our main forces on these few battles?" Great Builder wondered since he was keeping track of the entirety of the battlefield.

"I believe we have capable companions," Alexander announced. "Also, only a few experts will be able to move once the landmass shows its true potential."

"Is someone coming for you too?" Decumia asked once the pig completed another charge.

"My companions know how responsible I am," The Foolery squealed. "I'm strong enough to handle this task."

"It's not a matter of strength," A third voice resounded in the area before a shockwave expanded between the Foolery and Decumia. Someone had landed in that area of the void, and both experts recognized him immediately.

"Caesar taunted Noah," Wilfred stated. "Heaven and Earth are probably about to break free from the old rulers' net. We must hurt their leaders now that we have the chance."