

DEMONIC 531

Chapter 531

The Utra nation had been forced to allow the heroic cultivators from the noble families in the new continent to match the exploration speed of the Shandal Empire .

Of course, that permission didn't extend to all the noble families .

With the Cause threatening to start a civil war, the Elbas family tried to appease the strongest families that wanted to dethrone it, while also giving benefits to those loyal to the Royals .

It was needless to say that only large-size noble families had been allowed on the piece of Immortal Lands .

It wasn't only a matter of benefits and loyalty, medium and small-size noble families simply didn't have the power to send heroic cultivators away from their territories .

Also, large-size families were more influential, having the loyalty on one of them meant having control over all the weaker families under it .

"I understand that this land is full of riches, but I've lost my son, nothing can replace him . "

A middle-aged man with long golden hair spoke as he flew over the snowy plain .

"Lord Muwlos, your son died by the hands of criminals, there is nothing that links the Vondhur's incident with my family . "

A woman flew next to him and replied to his assumption .

"Hmph, the Elbas family has many branches, you might be guilty without even knowing it . "

Lord Muwlos answered the woman's words .

The two heroic cultivators flying over the white plain were Fred Muwlos and Lois Elbas, with the noble being in the liquid stage and the Royal in the gaseous one .

"Fred, we have been friends for over three decades . The Elbas family has already given your family free access to the academy for the next century, and you are here, exploring part of the Immortal Lands . Today's attack will even bring us many goods... Just let go of this grudge, Samuel carried your blood, but he was only a human cultivator . "

Lois spoke, and Fred heaved a helpless sigh when he heard those words .

"Almost twenty years have passed, but I still can't forget him . I guess it might be time to make another heir, any chances that our families can become one?"

Fred asked, shooting a warm gaze toward Lois .

She understood the meaning behind his words, a marriage between the two of them would unite the Muwlos family with the Royals, increasing the power of the rulers of the Utra nation .

Lois placed a hand over Fred's forearm and slightly pulled his robe before answering in a soft voice .

"We must wait for my father's approval, he is still mad at you for collaborating with the Udye family . "

Fred revealed a smile and took Lois in his embrace before lowering his head to kiss her .

It was at that point though that a shadow crashed on Lois' head, activating the defensive layer of her robe that was soon shattered by the power behind that attack .

Fred immediately understood that something was wrong, that attack was completely hidden, he hadn't been able to sense it at all .

Also, the blow that shattered the defenses of Lois' robe had released a small cloud made by a threatening black smoke, which was slowly consuming Lois' head .

Fred acted quickly, his hands took fire and neared the black cloud, burning the corrosive smoke while leaving Lois unharmed .

The cloud was soon destroyed, and an injured Lois was revealed .

The attack had taken her by surprise, but her robe had prevented the worst outcome, the skin on her head had been torn apart in some spots, but she was okay .

"Who!?"

Fred released an angry cry as he raised his gaze to the sky, looking for the assailants .

What he saw though were hundreds of wind blades falling toward him at high speed .

Fred didn't hesitate, he pushed Lois away and covered his body in flames to protect himself from the attack .

Meanwhile, a black trail fell from the clouds in the sky and reached for Lois, but she was ready at that time .

She raised her arm toward the black trail, and a lightning bolt shot out of her hand, aiming for the tip of the trail .

The lightning bolt was extremely fast, but, apparently, the being creating the black mark in the sky was even faster .

The trail curved and dodged Lois' spell, its speed increased even more as it reached for her .

Lois didn't have time to cast another spell and could only take an item from her space-ring and place it in the trajectory of the attack coming for her .

A large inscribed shield appeared in the air above her, and cracks formed on its surface when the trail crashed on it .

Lois was about to prepare another attack when she saw that a fiery blade was reaching for her from under her .

Black smoke spread above her from where the trail had been blocked, and a sword was under her, she felt entirely trapped by those two attacks .

Another item came out from her space-ring, it was a talisman that immediately created a defensive sphere around her figure and that repelled Jason's sword, pushing him back for a dozen meters .

A notebook appeared in Lois' hands, but she immediately stored it when she saw that her mental message was stopped and destroyed by the joint work of two consciousness, it was clear that her assailants were trying to isolate her .

"I wonder who is the fool that dares to attack the Royal family!"

Lois shouted as sparks gathered on the surface of her body before gathering at the center of her chest, her veins bulged, and white smoke came out of her skin when that technique was activated .

Elder Jason saw the figure of the fuming woman slowly walking toward him .

Her steps released threatening sparks in the air under her feet and the defensive sphere was still around her, Jason couldn't help but feel fear when he looked at her but his mood improved when he saw that a dark figure appeared behind the Royal .

Chapter 532

Noah appeared behind Lois Elbas, his cold reptilian eyes were fixed on her neck as he slashed with both his Demonic swords .

His skin caved in as his sabers shattered the air in their trajectory, a dense, dangerous feeling filled Lois when she felt the power behind that attack .

At once, she knew that not even her most potent defensive spell would be able to block Noah's slashes .

Seven talismans appeared in the air in front of her, they created defensive spheres that surrounded her figure and fused with that already around her .

Then, a small orange orb came out of her chest and fused with the defenses around her, sparks appeared on the surface of the spheres right before the air cracked by Noah's weapons reformed .

What followed that clash was a loud explosion .

Lois had emptied her reserves of defensive talismans to block Noah's attack and even empowered them with her technique, but the sphere around her still shattered under the incredible power behind Noah's martial art .

The shards of the sphere released sparks in the air, creating loud explosions as the "Breath" and mental energy that they contained dispersed in the sky .

Noah saw the sparks nearing him and stretched his arm in front of him .

A giant tortoise shell appeared in front of him, and a series of black layers formed in front of it .

The layers broke when they crashed with the sparks, but more of them immediately took their place, the shards of the defensive sphere weren't even able to touch the shell .

Lois' pale figure was revealed when the explosions ended, she seemed exhausted, it took all her concentration to activate so many talismans at the same time .

Also, there was a wound at the center of her chest, she had forcefully expelled the orange orb from her body after all, that act had left some injuries .

"I am Lois Elbas, name a price, and I'll be sure to pay it if you let me go . "

Lois spoke as she turned toward Noah, she felt more threatened by him, which made her think that he was the leader of the assailants .

'She is a Royal! That explains why she has so many protective items . '

Noah thought when he heard her words, but he didn't stop his offensive .

The turtle returned inside his body, and he deactivated his martial art before waving his hand toward her .

Lois didn't understand what was happening, but then she felt a piercing pain on her chest, blood came out of her mouth as she lowered her head to stare at that spot .

She saw how a hole as large as two fists had appeared where her heart was, her eyes widened while she used her remaining forces to raise her gaze once again to stare at the man donning a black robe .

She saw the black trail once again, it reached Noah's forearm before halting the release of black smoke from its tip, she was only able to see a winged form entering Noah's robe before her vision went dark .

Lois Elbas died, the Hive had just killed a member of the Royal family!

Noah quickly reached for Lois corpse and stored it after cutting away the finger wearing the space-ring, it would be up to Elder Austin and Elder Julia to decide what to do with that storage item .

"Did we really kill a Royal?"

Elder Jason asked as he neared Noah with a worried expression .

Noah stared at Jason for a brief moment before he understood what he was feeling .

Jason was a heroic cultivator who had lived in the Coral archipelago for most of his life .

As a member of a dominant organization, he had never had to fear stronger powers, he could act freely without caring about the consequences of his actions .

Instead, Noah had lived an opposite life, he had always been a mere ant in a world filled by monsters that tried to control and exploit him .

He didn't hesitate for even a second before inflicting the final blow to Lois, he was so used to have stronger powers after him that he didn't even consider the possibility of letting her live .

A tinge of admiration appeared inside Jason when he saw how calm Noah was, he couldn't help but accept the fact that he had earned the title of Demon Prince .

"LOIS!!"

A rough cry sounded in the area a few instants after the Royal died, Jason and Noah turned in its direction only to see Fred Muwlos staring at them .

Fred's condition was poor, most of his robe had been burned, and many deep wounds filled his body, it seemed that Elder Hope's ambush was going well .

Fred briefly looked at Jason before fixing his gaze on Noah, his eyes widened, and he released another loud cry when he understood who he was .

"NOAH BALVAN!"

Fred shouted, and large flames enveloped his body, pushing the three elders around him back for a few meters .

Then, he shot in Noah's direction at an incredible speed, Noah was sure that he wouldn't be able to match that acceleration even while using his Shadow sprint!

Noah's eyes sharpened when he saw the figure reaching for him, the threatening flames around the noble's figure surpassed the power of the liquid stage and entered that of the solid stage!

'He used a secret art!'

Noah immediately realized that when he felt the power behind Fred's flames, it seemed that the noble was so desperate that he had decided to waste his dantian only to launch an incredible offensive against him .

Noah kicked the air as he activated his secret art once again, his figure disappeared right before Fred could reach him .

Yet, to Noah's surprise, Fred's eyes were able to follow his movements even when he used the Shadow sprint coupled with the secret art!

Fred gathered the flames around his body on his right palm before throwing them toward Noah, a shining red orb flew at high speed toward him .

'I can't escape!'

Noah thought when he saw that the orb was even faster than Fred, his martial art wouldn't be able to shake it off, and he didn't have enough time to use the Warp spell .

He could only defend .

A Black turtle appeared out in the open and enveloped Noah with its vast body, its shell pointed toward the incoming orb as countless defensive layers appeared over it .

A black sphere formed in front of the layers, Noah activated the Black hole spell to deplete part of the power contained in Fred's attack .

At last, Noah became ethereal, even his Ethereal form spell was activated as he tried to survive that powerful spell .

Then, the orb clashed with Noah's defensive methods, and the sky became red in that area .

Chapter 533 - 533. Wounds

An explosion filled the air where Noah had deployed his defenses with flames, making the sky become red due to the width of the blast.

Noah felt a surge of power filling his body before he started to be affected by the heat radiated by Fred's attack.

The Black hole spell absorbed part of the "Breath" contained in the attack before being overwhelmed by the heat, the defensive layers in front of the tortoise shell broke as the flames advanced.

More layers were created under Noah's control, but they weren't able to keep up with the advance of the heat, the flames soon reached the black shell and filled its surface with cracks.

Noah's Blood companion screamed in pain as its shell was broken, the flames burned its body, and cracks appeared over its half-transparent figure in Noah's sea of consciousness as the creature endured the attack.

Then, Fred's attack reached Noah's ethereal form hidden inside the Blood companion.

Noah felt a burning sensation filling his body and injuring him through his Ethereal form spell.

The power behind Fred's attack even surpassed that of the flames of the rank 5 Cursed dragon in the Granite Abyss, Noah felt his internal organs boil under the incredible heat radiated by that attack.

Yet, after a few seconds, the flames dispersed, the sky returned to its natural azure color, and Noah's figure appeared out in the open.

White smoke came out of Noah's body, burned patches of skin could be seen everywhere under his tattered robe, and smoke even came out from his mouth as he breathed, it was as if something inside him was still burning.

'That bastard!'

Noah cursed in his mind as he directed the energy absorbed by the Black hole spell toward his injuries, he also ate a piece of a magical beast's corpse from his space-ring to increase the healing speed.

The power behind Fred's attack was similar to a spell cast by a solid stage cultivator, it was far more potent than the casual attack of a weakened rank 5 magical beasts.

Yet, Noah had improved too much since his trip to the Granite abyss, especially for what concerned his body.

'Zac absorbed a lot of damage and my spells did a lot of work too. Yet, my body endured a lot of power and survived with just these injuries, great!'

Noah happily thought when he evaluated his injuries.

His condition wasn't optimal, but only the wounds on his internal organs would take a few weeks to heal, the charred skin would be completely fixed in a matter of hours.

What left him satisfied was that his spells, together with Zac and his powerful body, made him able to endure the attack of a solid stage cultivator!

As for Zac, that was the name that he had given to the peak rank 4 Dark turtle that he had transformed in his Blood companion.

"How?"

Fred spoke in a soft voice when he realized that Noah had survived.

His mood was further worsened by the fact that Noah seemed mostly fine, the attack that had cost him his dantian wasn't even able to leave a lasting injury.

A sharp pain spread from his back, Fred lowered his head only to see that a wind blade had created a large fissure on his chest.

He felt his mind growing dark as he raised his gaze once again toward Noah, he could only have one last thought before life abandoned his body.

'He was just a bit stronger than Samuel back then.'

Then, his lifeless body began to fall from the sky, but Elder Laurel quickly grabbed it, she knew that Noah stored the corpses of the heroic cultivators that they killed.

"Are you ok?"

Elder Hope appeared in the air next to Noah and asked, she seemed really concerned about his condition.

"Yes, let me see his corpse."

Noah plainly answered as he neared Elder Laurel, a disappointed expression appeared on his face when his consciousness analyzed Fred's low waist.

'His dantian is wasted, there is nothing left in there, and even its tissues have been drained. Damned nobles.'

Noah cursed in his mind as he gestured to Laurel to keep the corpse, he had no use for it.

"How did you survive that attack? I'm quite sure that its power had reached the solid stage."

Elder Jason asked as he flew toward him, the rest of the group gathered around Noah too, their expressions showed how amazed they were after witnessing that accomplishment.

"My defense is good."

Noah casually answered before adding something else.

"And my element is darkness."

Noah's words reminded the other cultivators of his aptitude.

He was supposedly the weaker of the group due to his inexperience, but he still had one of the rarest aptitudes, his spells and attacks would naturally be more powerful compared to those of the other elements.

Of course, that answer alone didn't solve the doubts of the cultivators, not all of them at least.

They were experienced heroic cultivators who had lived for far longer than Noah and had accumulated way more experience, they knew that aptitude alone couldn't fill the gaps between the gaseous and solid stage.

They were sure that Noah hid some sort of secret, but they decided not to probe further, every cultivator had its secrets after all, it wasn't polite to investigate them.

"Can you continue the mission?"

Elder Hope asked when she saw that everyone had given up on probing Noah's power.

"Yes, but it would be better if I rested for a bit."

Hope's nodded to reply to Noah's answer, she gestured to the group to surveil the area while she accompanied Noah to the snowy ground.

"I'll contact the elders and make them handle the space-rings of the cultivators, they should have been sentries placed at the borders of the territories controlled by the Ultra nation. Recover as much as you can while I reorganize the group."

Elder Hope spoke those words before flying back in the sky, Noah stared at her figure for a while before taking Lois' dantian and quickly eating it.

Chapter 534 - 534. Primordial ice

'Zac's defense is good, it will take a bit to heal completely, but I should be already able to use it in a day or so.'

Noah analyzed the previous battle as he rested on the snowy ground.

The Dark turtle's ethereal figure had been gravely injured to defend against Fred's attack but, since it was a Blood companion, Noah's mental energy could quickly heal it.

'Havok was useful too, its speed is incredible, and it's lethal when it attacks unprotected areas. It can also merge with my robe since its black, and hide inside the partial Demonic form as it flies.'

Noah's attention went on the other half-transparent figure inside his sea of consciousness as he thought that.

Havok lazily floated over the sea inside his sphere, it was the peak rank 4 Night falcon that Noah had turned into a Blood companion.

Havok was also the cause behind the black trail, Noah needed to use the partial Demonic form to make it fly freely outside his body, but that only made its attacks incredibly dangerous!

Night falcons could merge with the darkness to increase their speed, the black smoke radiated by its body when Noah activated his spell was the perfect conduit for that ability.

Also, due to the peculiar capabilities of that species, Havok could directly merge with his robe since he always wore black, it didn't need to tear it to appear in the open.

The same went for Zac, Noah could just make it come out from his hands if he wasn't in a hurry, he had to keep his sleeves folded up to his elbow to keep his robe intact though.

'Yet, reaching the upper tier just before approaching this mission has been crucial, I would be in a far worse shape right now otherwise.'

Noah thought as the nourishments coming from Lois' dantian reached his internal organs and mended them.

Noah knew that he would have been forced to abandon the mission if his body was still in the middle tier, he would have simply suffered too many injuries in that situation.

'This endurance, this resilience, I can almost fight at my full power if I stop the healing process. I should refrain from using the secret art though, the injuries on my internal organs might worsen otherwise.'

Noah couldn't express how satisfied he was about his hybrid body, there were simply too many advantages to his status, and he only had to endure the dragon's instincts as a drawback!

It must be said though that, as his body improved, those instincts became more intense.

It wasn't only his hunger that increased, even his aggression and pride became stronger as his body grew.

Noah was able to act in his usual way because his mental sphere continued to improve alongside his body, he managed to control himself and remain calm under any situation because of that.

Yet, those instincts were part of him, he was partially a dragon after all, he had just to make sure that his human side was always stronger.

In time, everything about him would harmonize, Noah strongly believed that the process would continue as he chased after his individuality inside the heroic ranks.

'I wonder what I'll become.'

Noah let his mind wander as his mental energy healed Zac's half-transparent figure, and the "Breath" inside his body stabilized the injuries on his internal organs and skin.

Almost a day passed, Noah didn't move from his position for the entirety of that period.

Snow accumulated on his body, but the coldness radiated by the snowflakes wasn't able to affect it.

Instead, it seemed that that coldness somewhat weakened the heat that still scorched his insides, Noah felt as if his injuries healed at a faster pace in that environment.

"Prince, it's time."

At some point, a voice resounded next to him.

Noah opened his eyes and saw that Elder Hope was standing in the air right above him, he sighed as he stood up and followed her where the rest of the group was.

"You are quite lucky. This type of snow is called Primordial Ice, it is a material rarely found in the old continent, and it is useful for the training of certain body-nourishing methods of the water element. I believe it is also beneficial for your injuries since they come from a fire attack."

Elder Hope explained as they flew, Noah slightly nodded as he changed into another black robe, throwing his burned one inside his space-ring.

"What do the elders say?"

Noah asked when he reached the rest of the group.

"The Elbas family has yet to realize Lois' death, it would immediately interrupt the attack on the Shandal Empire otherwise. We can advance freely for now."

Noah nodded when he heard Elder Hope's answer before continuing with his questions.

"What about their space-rings?"

"Lois Elbas' space-ring can't be touched, it seems to be protected by a power that neither Elder Austin nor Elder Julia can affect. The noble's one is in their hands though, they already said that we would be rewarded according to the wealth inside it."

Elder Hope said as she pointed toward the north.

They had reached the end of the southern coast, the only path forward was alongside the eastern coastline.

From that point onward, they would actively travel across the lands conquered by the Elbas family, there were bound to be encampments and similar on their way.

There was a high chance though that they wouldn't meet other heroic cultivators too soon, the Elbas family was attacking the Empire after all, it could only leave so many sentinels on their borders.

Considering that two of them had already been killed, it was likely that they would only meet human cultivators for a while.

"Oh, right. Why did the noble resort to a secret art just to attempt to kill you? He had a chance to escape with that burst of power."

Elder Jason asked, he had clearly seen that Fred had decided to give his everything to kill Noah.

Fred's face appeared inside Noah's mind, but he wasn't able to recognize him, even his robe had been burned so he couldn't understand from which family he came from.

'I guess I have too many enemies in the Utra nation.'

"I don't know."

Noah plainly answered as he thought that.

The group began to fly, and a land filled with Spiked roots appeared in the distance after the snowy plain.

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The group flew past the snowy plain and entered a land filled with rank 4 Spiked roots .

Elder Laurel seemed fascinated by those magical plants, but she forced herself to remain focused on the mission, that wasn't the time to study the flora of the piece of Immortal Lands .

The Spiked roots though began to diminish as they advanced, large patches of burned terrain could be seen from time to time as they went deeper into the eastern coast .

Then, a tall obelisk appeared in their field of view .

The group stopped when it saw the colossal structure, that sharp change in the environment surprised the cultivators who immediately halted their flight to analyze the area .

The obelisk seemed to absorb the "Breath" in the air, Noah and the others were immediately able to notice that particular feature due to the lower density of "Breath" around them .

Their consciousnesses expanded to inspect the environment at the bottom of the structure, some gasps resounded in the group of elders when they saw that a small city had been built around the base of the huge pillar .

"They found a way to colonize these territories in less than five years, the Hive pales in comparison to the three big nations . "

Elder Hope couldn't help but give voice to those words when she saw the city .

What was even more surprising was that its inhabitants were human cultivators!

'There are even cultivators in the second rank, the Elbas family has created the perfect cultivation ground for its human assets . '

Noah thought while his consciousness probed the city .

The obelisk reduced the density of "Breath", making the area around its base an ideal environment where human cultivators could train .

'The traces left by divine beings for the heroic assets and the cities for the human ones, Elder Hope is right, the Hive is still far behind . '

Noah agreed with Hope's evaluation, but he had always known that the three big nations were simply too powerful .

He couldn't be sure about the Papral nation and the Empire, but he had gained a clear understanding of the heroic assets of the Utra nation .

'The Elbas family alone is stronger than the entirety of the Hive . Then, there are all the heroic cultivators of each noble family... I would say that there are around two hundred heroic cultivators in the ranks of the Utra nation . I wonder how many of them are on Chasing Demon's level . '

Noah knew that the real power of every organization could be found in its strongest members .

The number of ants at your disposal didn't matter if the enemy had a dragon, the cultivation world gave more importance to single but unmatched entities rather than to many pawns .

Of course, rank 4 cultivators weren't ants, but the power held by a single rank 6 existence was too great, which was one of the reasons why the Coral archipelago managed to become independent as soon as it obtained a chance .

"What do we do?"

Elder Pansy asked when she saw that the group continued to remain still, she didn't like to remain out in the open for such a long period .

"Can't we just destroy the city? Losing these humans won't affect the Utra nation too much, but this obelisk seems expensive, it should be a harsh blow to endure even for a big nation . "

Elder Jason suggested, but the others hesitated to pursue that approach .

"Destroying the obelisk will force to a stop the attack of the Elbas family on the Empire . We want to inflict as many losses as possible while also exploring their territories and remaining anonymous . These humans might become a threat only in the distant future, but our focus must stay on the present now . "

Noah expressed his opinion on the situation .

Taking down the structure would be the right approach if the Hive wanted to conquer that area, but that wasn't possible with its current strength .

On the contrary, reducing the heroic assets of the Utra nation would give more room to the forces of the archipelago, allowing them to maintain control over the lands on the other side of the southern coast and the western coast .

"We don't even know if there are defenses around it . I don't think the Elbas family expected an attack, but building something so important without protections it's simply reckless . "

Elder Hope added, expressing her agreement with Noah's vision .

Silence enveloped the group for a while before everyone agreed to avoid the city and keep ambushing the heroic cultivators on their path .

Noah and the others flew around the area occupied by the obelisk, and Spiked roots reappeared as soon as they left the range of the city, it seemed that the Royals had decided to clean only that zone .

They lowered their flying speed since they had officially entered the territories controlled by a big nation, it wouldn't be surprising to meet heroic cultivators plundering and studying the materials there .

Then, Noah felt his instincts tremble when a dark gorge appeared on the ground at a few kilometers in front of him .

The gorge didn't escape the eyes of his companions, the terrain around it had been cleaned after Lord Delbert discovered that place, the Spiked roots hiding the canyon had been eradicated in the years that had passed .

"Such an ancient aura!"

Elder Jason gave voice to his thoughts as he stared at the gorge, his companions thought something similar when their eyes fell on that place .

Only Noah had something different in mind .

Low growls resounded from the bottom of the gorge, their roars carried anger, pain, and even some helplessness .

'They are trapped . Mighty beings trapped in the darkness by the hands of a higher power . '

His mind began to wander as he used his dragon side to understand the meaning behind those growls .

'A hunger that has lasted for centuries, and only the screams echoed in the darkness as their companion . A yearning for the light that knows no limits, a desire for freedom that will never be suppressed . '

Chapter 536

The growls of the magical beasts inside the gorge made Noah experience their feelings, he stopped his flight as he immersed himself in those sensations .

He knew them too well .

The yearning for freedom, something that he had fought so much to obtain, but that was still threatened by the many enemies that he had made along his path .

He knew what it meant to be the best of your kind but still unable to escape the grasp of beings far stronger than you, he had felt that helplessness often in his life .

To put it simply, he empathized with the beasts trapped inside that place .

'Yet, I don't yearn for the light, my path can only lead me deeper in the darkness . '

Noah thought as he closed his eyes, the only thing that his mind could perceive were the growls of the beasts .

'You were just following your nature, someone or something else has forced you to suffer because of its needs . '

A tinge of anger formed inside Noah, both his human and dragon side could sympathize with that situation .

The Cursed dragon species had been deprived of its reproductive capacity and wings, confined in a cage that it couldn't escape, forced to see its heritage dwindle over time .

Noah had been treated as a prisoner for most of his life, his efforts had always been seen as a feature to exploit rather than as something to nourish .

'They made a mistake too . '

Noah realized when his reasoning reached that point .

The Balvan family, the Elbas family, Daniel, the soldiers of the Empire, even the orthodox organizations in the Coral archipelago, they all made the mistake of underestimating him .

They all thought to be in control of the small human cultivator that was Noah Balvan .

'It's as if my essence spreads to whatever comes in contact with me, a mistake that generates mistakes wherever it goes . '

The others in Noah's group managed to notice that something was wrong with him when they raised their gazes from the gorge, some of them were about to speak, but Elder Hope promptly stopped them with a gesture .

'When something that shouldn't exist affects the world, chaos is born . '

Traces of a smile appeared on Noah's face, he couldn't help but feel a sense of satisfaction when he reviewed the positive influence that he had through his life .

The guard without a future found a worthy disciple to nurture;

The solitary girl who had lost faith in her family was entrusted of a power that even middle-size noble families didn't have;

The ruined cultivator who spent his days fighting his endless pain obtained an heir that could fulfill his dreams;

A nation on the verge of collapse left a grain of hope in his hands;

An organization that hid under the surface was finally able to rise to power and claim its independence;

An almost extinct species flew once again in the sky and shouted its anger toward Heaven and Earth .

'I am the first one, the human destined to be a commoner, but that ended up as a monster to defy his fate . Why would I despair if darkness surrounds me?'

His aptitude had caused most of Noah's problems, his element was his curse but also the reason why he managed to shine so brightly among his peers .

'If darkness surrounds me, I will just turn it into my darkness! My essence is devoid of Heaven and Earth's will, I don't have to abide by their laws!'

Noah's aura changed slightly right under his companion's gazes, the coldness and savagery that he exuded diminished in intensity, it was as if a dark veil began to cover his existence .

'Chaos spreads whenever I take a step, what I touch leaves the predetermined fate chosen by Heaven and Earth . My darkness won't bind nor hide, it will create paths where there is only void instead! Because a mistake can live and void can exist, and it will affect the world around it . '

Something inside Noah changed when he reached that point in his thoughts .

'Spending so much time taking lives makes you forget about those that you give . In the same way, focusing too much on destruction makes you forget that you can create, even if you have been creating things all along . '

Noah opened his eyes after those thoughts, he felt the eyes of the elders fixed on him, but he didn't care, he had to give another look at the dark gorge .

Growls resounded unceasingly from the depths of the canyon, Noah could almost see himself being forever trapped in a similar place by the hands of a power that he couldn't match .

He knew that he could have ended in the same way and that such a chance still existed, but that was the very reason why he had managed to gain some understanding from their situation .

'I'll trail the paths that have been taken from you . If darkness has been made to blind and destroy, I'll be a darkness that illuminates and creates . Your desperation won't be wasted .'

Noah felt a bit of gratitude toward those beasts even if he knew that they were just following their instincts, their growls were never meant for the enlightenment of a cultivator .

Yet, Noah wasn't a simple cultivator, he was a hybrid who could relate with their situation .

The understanding that he had just obtained didn't only concern the laws of the darkness element, it even explored the depths of his individuality .

He had always thought to be only a destroyer, someone that kept on severing what appeared in front of him to advance .

He had always neglected what remained intact after his passage, he had never managed to see what he created, the paths that he forged .

"Prince?"

Elder Hope probed when she saw that Noah heaved a sigh and moved his gaze away from the gorge .

"What is it?"

Noah asked, his voice was calm as his eyes crossed Hope's, it was as if he was unaware that he had just stopped flying in the enemy territory for a while .

She felt as if she was staring at an abyss, his mental energy concealed the proprieties of his aura, but everything about him was visible .

'Darkness that doesn't act like darkness .'

Elder Hope thought before shaking her head and resuming her flight, the other elders shot a quick look at Noah before following her .

Noah didn't have anything else to do in that place and followed her too .

His mind though wasn't on the environment under him, but it studied the basis behind the creation of spells instead .

Chapter 537

Spells needed mental energy and "Breath" as their fuel .

The "Breath" was the power source, while the mental energy had to trace the diagrams needed for the activation of a spell .

A complex system of lines made a diagram, each line carried a specific meaning that produced the desired effect once they were linked together .

To put it simply, a spell was a set of lines that carried different meanings, and that was fueled by mental energy and "Breath" .

Noah had been able to understand those meanings in the past and reproduce those that interested him through his body, creating a martial art which produced similar effects .

Yet, he had never been able to create a spell, he didn't know where to start on that field .

His Elemental forging methods needed materials and wills while the diagrams needed to copy the natural language of the "Breath" in the world, something that he couldn't hear nor read .

He had always thought that he couldn't create spells since he didn't know how to forge a diagram, but the new enlightenment proved him wrong .

'Diagrams are just conduits that force the "Breath" to work in specific ways, they act as laws, they just set a meaning . '

Noah thought as he followed his group past the dark gorge, their slow flight gave him all the time that he needed to ponder about that issue .

'Of course, they aren't just one meaning but a set of them that can create amazing effects once combined . They are even more complex than the will that handles my cultivation technique . '

Noah's attention briefly went on his low-waist, where his small half-transparent figure floated in front of dantian .

Noah had to continually refill the reserves of mental energy of his will to keep it active .

Still, its role was relatively simple, it just regulated the absorption speed of his rank 4 cultivation technique .

The new enlightenment had improved his growth once again, more laws of the darkness element fused with his dantian, favoring the absorption of "Breath" .

That forced Noah to slow down his cultivation through his will .

His dantian enlarged continuously, Noah had to limit his cultivation technique if he wanted to preserve the health of its center of power .

Yet, even if he forcefully slowed down the absorption of "Breath", the speed at which his dantian enlarged continued to grow .

It couldn't be helped, the nourishment of the laws of the darkness element improved the status of his center of power, increasing what it was able to endure .

Because of that, Noah's cultivation speed continued to increase even though he restricted his cultivation technique .

'I need to create a complex will if I want to create a spell . Such a will should express the effects that I wish for once I fill it with my "Breath" . It is doable . '

Noah had finally understood why he couldn't forge a spell through his inscription method: Because it was the wrong approach!

The Elemental forging method imbued meanings in items, transforming them in the process .

Instead, spells needed understanding, cultivators could either copy the work of Heaven and Earth or invent something equally complicated .

Of course, that wasn't something that Noah could do right now, he needed time and a safe environment where to test those ideas, and the enemy territory didn't meet those requirements at all .

Days passed without encountering any heroic cultivator, even the elders would take weeks to cross those territories at that speed .

Then, two huge shapes took form on the horizon .

The first one was another obelisk identical to the one in the middle of the plain filled with Spiked roots, a city had been built at its base too, it seemed that the Royals had invested a lot in the colonization of the piece of Immortal lands .

The other one was a giant tree with a thick silver trunk and a vast yellow crown .

The tree stood at some distance from the obelisk, and a forest made of smaller trees of its same species expanded from its base .

The sight was quite peculiar, humans and magical plants had created two similar environments so close to each other .

"These are Silver-yellow woods, and that one is a rank 5 specimen! Careful, they are a carnivorous species of magical plants . "

Elder Laurel spoke as soon as she recognized those trees .

'The obelisk must scare the rank 5 plant, I don't see why it didn't expand the forest otherwise . '

Noah thought while he analyzed the scenery, the city and the forest were quite close, but there wasn't any sign of battle on the terrain between them .

"What should we do? This is already the second city, and the assault on the Empire must be almost over by now, I think we should just destroy an obelisk and retreat . "

Elder Jason expressed the same idea as before .

The group was deep in the enemy territory, and weeks had passed since the mission started, something was bound to happen at that point .

Yet, Elder Austin didn't contact them, it seemed that even the Papral nation wasn't sending information to him .

'Killing human cultivators feels so useless, but advancing even more can only cut our path to retreat, we must be halfway through the eastern coast after all.'

Noah analyzed in his mind.

He felt conflicted about the current situation, the lack of reports from the Papral nation didn't make the situation clear, he couldn't decide which one was the best approach.

Then, as if answering their doubts, a blue light shone in the distant north, far away from their position.

The light was so bright that the group from the Hive could clearly see it, it was as if a pillar of light had enveloped the territories in the distance.

The sound of an explosion followed, and a shockwave chased after the sound.

The ground trembled, and the air shattered, even the robes of the cultivators in Noah's group fluttered when the shockwave reached the air around them.

The pillar of light released so much power that even Noah and the others could feel part of its effects.

"Don't tell me, the light comes from the territories of the Empire!"

Elder Hope shouted as her mouth opened in surprise, she couldn't imagine how a shockwave could travel for almost half of the eastern coast!

The group was so shocked that it didn't notice that runes lit up on top of the obelisk.

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The shockwave continued to spread through the sky of the eastern coast, Noah's group could only feel its weakened effects.

Yet, that made them able to imagine the insanely powerful force that had caused that phenomenon.

"What is happening?"

Elder Pansy asked in a loud voice, her words struggled to reach her companions through the trembling air.

No one answered her question, the rest of the group was in the same situation after all, the only clue they had was the blue pillar that still shone in the distance.

Elder Hope picked her inscribed notebook and tried to contact Elder Austin and Elder Julia.

Yet, the obelisk in front of them began to shine at that point, runes spread from its tip, and created a brilliant halo that attracted the gazes of her group.

It was evident to everyone that the halo resembled that of a teleportation matrix.

"Run!"

Noah shouted through his consciousness, his dragon instincts sensed the imminent danger before his mind could, he was sure that something powerful was coming.

Yet, just as he turned to escape, a barrage of brown runes appeared in front of him and spread to surround even his companions .

'Fuck!'

Noah cursed in his mind as a pair of black sabers appeared in his hands, and his skin began to cave in .

The injuries on his internal organs had healed during his flight, there was no danger in activating the secret art .

The air shattered as he slashed with his sabers, two fuming black lines appeared on the barrage of runes and tried to force the blockade .

However, the runes simply endured the attack, not even a crack appeared on their surface .

A series of wind blades crashed on the area attacked by Noah, Elder Hope followed Noah's example and tried to force the blockade with her attacks .

The rest of the group did the same, a huge fireball, a fiery slash, and a torrent of flames focused the spot already attacked by Noah .

Nevertheless, even the joint attacks of four heroic cultivators were unable to pierce the encirclement of the brown runes .

"Who would you be?"

A female voice resounded above them, the halo radiated by the obelisk dispersed, revealing a dozen figures that were staring at them .

'Rank 5 cultivator!'

Noah realized when he sensed the power of the woman in the lead .

She had golden hair and green eyes, and she wore a charred golden robe that was barely able to cover her body .

The torn parts of her robe revealed patches of burned skin and a series of deep wounds, it seemed that she had just come out of a battle .

The rest of her group was in a similar situation, wounds filled the bodies of the cultivators, some of them even missed a limb or two .

'They must have teleported back here after the blue pillar appeared, this obelisk was their escape route .'

Noah quickly understood what was happening .

The cultivators above him were the forces sent by the Utra nation to attack the Empire who had just returned from the battlefield .

'This is bad, there is nothing we can do against her runes .'

Noah evaluated as he searched for an item inside his space-ring .

He had two methods to destroy the blockade of a rank 5 cultivator .

The first one was the detonation of his rank 6 storage item, but the blast would surely kill him so he could only use its power as a threat .

The second one was the talisman that Chasing Demon had given him before his journey to the Granite abyss .

The brown runes affected his consciousness, Noah couldn't use the Warp spell, the talisman was his only way out of that situation unless the elders intervened .

"You must be Lady Edna, the reports don't do justice to your beauty . "

Elder Austin's voice resounded in the area, and a series of fireball descended from the sky and fell on the barrage of brown runes .

The fireballs seemed to have liquid capabilities since they clashed with the runes and began to drip over the surface of the blockade .

The runes quickly melted under those flames, Noah and the rest of his group were soon freed from the encirclement .

However, they didn't immediately escape, they waited for Elder Austin's instructions before deciding their next move .

After all, they couldn't escape from a rank 5 cultivator even if they wanted .

"I've never heard of you though, it seems that the Elbas family must improve its investigations on the rats that plunder empty homes . "

Lady Edna answered as she raised her gaze to the sky, her eyes sharpened when she realized that she couldn't pinpoint the elder's location .

Meanwhile, the cultivators behind her began to shot stares at Noah's group, whispers resounded between them when their eyes fell on Noah .

Then, one of them neared Lady Edna and politely whispered something in her ear .

Lady Edna's brows knitted together when she heard those words, her gaze went on Noah for an instant before returning to the sky .

"What is the Hive doing here? Are you working together with the Council?"

Lady Edna asked .

She had immediately linked the presence of the Hive with the betrayal of the Papral nation, the latter was the only force that could have leaked the information about the attack on the Empire after all .

"Questions, questions . Why don't we test each other for a bit? I've always wanted to see for myself what a Royal can really do . "

Elder Austin's voice sounded again, and his figure appeared from the clouds in the sky .

Tongues of flames floated around his figure, they resembled red rivers ready to explode outward .

His shining green eyes radiated pure confidence, the morale of Noah's group rose as soon as they sensed his aura .

"Hold on as much as you can, Elder Julia is preparing a way back to the southern coast . "

Elder Austin's voice resounded in the mental spheres of the cultivators of the Hive, he sent a mental message through his methods before shooting toward Lady Edna .

Lady Edna snorted when she saw his figure reaching for her, countless runes appeared in the air next to her as she prepared herself for the imminent clash, two rank 5 cultivators were about to fight!

Chapter 539

The tongues of flames surrounding Elder Austin shot forward, clashing with the flying brown runes that Lady Edna used as her protection .

The impact between the two attacks created a shockwave that flung away the cultivators of both nations, rank 4 entities couldn't even remain near that battle!

Noah was flung back too, but he managed to keep his eyes on the fight as he tried to stop himself, he saw how the runes melted as soon as they came in contact with the elder's flames .

'They resemble rivers of lava . '

Noah couldn't help but think that when he saw Elder Austin's attack, he was almost sure that part of that battle prowess came from the enlightenment obtained next to the lava lake .

More clashes happened mid-air, the two rank 5 cultivators exchanged attacks at an incredible speed, creating shockwaves with their every move .

The sky around them shattered, large cracks formed in the air only to close shortly after, it seemed that the "Breath" in that area struggled to keep up with the destructive force behind those two beings .

Even the obelisk in the distance began to tremble, the buildings in the city at its base started to crumble when the shockwaves swept them, and panic spread among the human cultivators living there .

It was pure chaos .

The battle between such powerful cultivators had instantly altered the environment, it was as if a danger zone had appeared out of nowhere .

Only the heroic cultivators on the scene could somewhat endure the sight of the battle, but those of the Ultra nation saw their injuries worsening under that pressure .

"Go after them!"

Lady Edna shouted while she redirected her complete focus on her battle .

More runes formed around her and the ethereal image of a tall tree appeared behind her back .

The ethereal tree resembled the rank 5 Silver-yellow wood, its sharp half-transparent branches linked themselves to the runes, which began to shine with a brighter light .

That spell was effective since Lady Edna's runes stopped melting under Elder Austin's flames and began to push him back in the sky, it seemed that she wanted to drag him away from the obelisk .

Meanwhile, the remaining eleven cultivators of the Utra nation shot after the elders of the Hive .

There were two rank 4 cultivators in the liquid stage and nine in the gaseous stage in the group of the Utra nation .

However, they were all wounded, some of them even badly .

The cultivators of the Hive saw multiple figures approaching them, it didn't take much before each one of them was surrounded .

Elder Hope found the two liquid stage cultivators at her sides, and even the other elders found themselves with two opponents on their level .

Yet, Noah discovered that a special treatment had been reserved for him .

'So, this is how they want to play it . '

Noah thought as his consciousness retracted and focused on the enemies around him .

Three cultivators in the gaseous stage had encircled him, it seemed that he was some kind of important target in their mind .

"I remember you as a young kid with a deep interest in magical beasts, I can barely believe my eyes when I see you flying on my same level . "

One of the cultivators around him spoke, he was a short man with curly hair and a long beard .

Noah recognized him, he was Professor Roy, the man who held the magical beasts' course in the academy .

Noah didn't answer him, his reptilian eyes analyzed his three opponents, and his consciousness entirely focused on the imminent battle, he knew that words were useless at that point .

'They have yet to mend their injuries, they can't express their full power in their condition . '

Noah thought as he took note of the wounds of his enemies, he saw a glimpse of hope when he realized that their conditions were quite poor .

Professor Roy was missing an arm and blood flowed from his right leg, it seemed that a grave injury was still healing on that spot;

The old man on Noah's side had more than half of his body burned, and crusts fell from his body as new skin formed to replace the damaged one:

The woman on his other side was covered in cuts, her robe had long since turned red due to all the blood that had flowed out of her wounds .

'I might win if I go all out, I won't be able to hide any of my abilities though.'

Noah thought as he stopped limiting his cultivation technique and lifted a hand to his side.

A torrent of "Breath" entered his dantian as soon as his will stopped hindering its absorption, but part of that energy was immediately depleted to fuel the activation of a spell.

Mental energy was also depleted as a diagram formed over the sea inside his mind, an uneven black sphere formed at the center of his palm and enlarged as more energies were poured inside it.

Noah directly used the Dark blast spell at the beginning of the fight!

"You won't even speak to your professor, maybe you are the demon described in the reports spread throughout the nation."

Professor Roy sighed and nodded to his companions before waving his remaining arm, the two cultivators next to Noah did the same as they prepared their attacks.

Flames, ice spears, and columns of water shot toward Noah from three different sides, the cultivators encircling him had cast their spells without hesitation.

Zac came out in the open and surrounded Noah with its huge body, defensive layers appeared over its shell right before the spells crashed on it.

'Why would I even hide them though?'

Noah pondered as he felt the spells of the cultivators from the Ultra nation destroying the defensive layers and crashing on Zac's shell.

Noah had obviously improved the natural capabilities of his Blood companions with the elemental forging method.

Zac's defense and Havoc's speed had been enhanced past their limits, those two peak rank 4 magical beasts had turned into beings that were almost as strong as quasi-rank 5 specimens, at least for what concerned those abilities.

Zac's shell endured the attacks and gave Noah time to answer his question.

Then, a roar resounded from inside the companion's body.

Chapter 540 - 540. All out

Noah had hidden for all his life.

It didn't matter where he went, there was always something stronger than him that he had to fear and escape.

He had only been able to reveal himself inside the safety of the Chasing demon sect, and he had nothing to fear after the Coral archipelago claimed its independence, the copying spell simply defended him from any possible threat.

Yet, he couldn't remain inside the borders of the archipelago forever, he needed to gather experiences to improve.

Also, relying on the Hive for protection wasn't much different from hiding.

However, as his journey through the piece of Immortal Lands continued, Noah began to explore the depths of his individuality and find pride in his exceptional achievements.

He was the youngest rank 4 mage in the history of that world, no one could even come closer to his record;

He had reached the fourth rank of the dantian with a cultivation technique that he had personally created, only the most nourished and talented cultivators could attempt in something like that, and almost all of them would still fail;

He had fused with a magical beast, solving one of the most significant weaknesses of the cultivators and succeeding in discovering the secrets behind that race, that achievement alone was incredible.

'Why would I even hide!'

Noah screamed inside his mind, but only a roar came out of his mouth.

He wasn't a lone human cultivator without backing anymore, he was a heroic existence that strived for the realms high in the sky!

'Who cares if they find out that I reached the heroic ranks? Who cares if they discover that I can launch flames from my mouth?'

Black smoke began to come out of Zac's body, its defensive capabilities immediately increased when the Demonic form spell was activated.

The three cultivators from the Utra nation took a step back when they saw the smoke.

The power behind their spells had partially depleted to pierce Zac's defense, but the arrival of the black smoke further stalled their advance.

The roar didn't scare them, they were aware that Noah used magical beasts as puppets, but Professor Roy felt that something was off with that cry, it seemed completely different but also extremely similar to that of a dragon-type magical beast.

'Who cares if they hear me roar!'

Noah shouted in his mind before activating his secret art and kicking the air under his feet.

Zac's body broke to let Noah's out, the Blood companion was soon reabsorbed in his body, and the spells of his enemies flew in the distance now that their target was gone.

What came out of the Dark turtle though wasn't a human, it was a fiendish figure with a pair of horns and a tail!

Noah didn't hesitate to enter the complete Demonic form against three heroic cultivators!

He wielded two black sabers, and an uneven sphere floated next to him, the Dark blast spell had never stopped gathering energies while Noah was inside his Blood companion.

Noah directly threw his spell toward the three cultivators, the sphere had reached a radius of two meters by then, that width was enough for his purposes.

The cultivators from the Ultra nation retreated once again when they saw the uneven sphere coming for them, a dangerous sensation was radiated by its shape, and a threatening black smoke surrounded its surface as it reached for them.

The cultivators didn't remain passive in front of Noah's offensive, three walls made of ice, water, and flames surrounded the Dark blast spell and tried to contain its might.

Meanwhile, they also targeted Noah with their attacks.

Two huge fiery snakes and a hundred starfishes made of water appeared in the sky and shot toward Noah.

Also, countless ice shards joined the charge of the starfishes and aimed for the fuming fiend above them, Noah found himself surrounded by three different attacks once again.

Noah didn't seem to care about the incoming spells, he quickly detonated the uneven sphere before diving directly toward the three cultivators!

An explosion resounded in the area, and cracks appeared on the surfaces of the three walls when the blast and the black smoke reached them.

Yet, the joint power of three defensive spells managed to stop Noah's attack completely.

It was at that point though that the cultivators from the Ultra nation noticed that something was wrong.

Their vision and consciousness had flickered for an instant when the spell exploded but, when they focused again on the battlefield, Noah had completely disappeared.

Then, all three of them felt claws tearing through their internal organs.

Blood came out of the mouths of the cultivators, they quickly understood that Noah had smuggled hundreds of those ethereal claws inside the Dark blast spell to catch them by surprise.

Professor Roy didn't even have the time to curse since a shockwave hit his mental sphere, his mind went blank while he tried to stabilize the tremors that filled the walls of his sea of consciousness.

Noah was over him, he had used the detonation of his spell to activate the full power of the Shadow sprint martial art and make his enemies lose track of him.

Then, he had targeted the cultivator that knew him better, he had decided not to hide anymore, but giving a chance to your enemies to learn all your abilities was simply stupid.

The one who could pick some clues about his status as a hybrid was Professor Roy, so he had to be taken care of first.

Noah performed two slashes as he descended toward Professor Roy's head, the air shattered as two fuming lines vertically cut the sky.

Roy was clueless about the imminent threat, his mind was still trembling under the effects of the Mental tremor spell, his complete focus was on the walls of his mental sphere.

Yet, a barrage of ice shards and starfishes appeared in his protection, the other two cultivators had promptly redirected their spells to defend their powerless companion.

Two fuming fissures appeared on the defensive barrage, countless starfishes were destroyed, and ice fell in every direction as the spells tried to block Noah's attack.

In the end, Noah's slashes didn't reach Roy, their power was depleted at a few meters from his head, only some traces of the corrosive smoke remained in the air between them.

Roy's companions heaved a sigh of relief when they saw that he was safe, they were about to launch themselves toward Noah when they saw that a black trail dove at high speed toward the Professor.