

DEMONIC 891

Chapter 891 891. Choices

The news that Flying Demon would inherit part of Shandal's individuality was incredible. Even if he had ended up in that cursed situation, the god of the Empire was still an entity that had managed to reach the divine ranks!

The process wouldn't be quick, and Flying Demon had to be careful not to ruin himself. After all, individualities were unique, and cultivators couldn't exchange them as if they were techniques or diagrams.

Also, it was risky to imitate someone else's path.

Existences grew in power because they enhanced themselves as they strived for the higher ranks. Still, that made them specialize on a specific path and absorb only the laws connected with their individualities.

That was the reason why cultivators that had reached a certain level of power couldn't change paths anymore. Their entire existence would have become something too specific to go back to a general form.

However, the offer came from the god of the Empire, a divine entity that was waging war against Heaven and Earth. He was bound to have countless methods in his possession due to his long life.

Dreaming Demon had listened to his explanation too. The fact that Flying Demon had ultimately accepted Shandal's offer meant that she didn't find anything suspicious.

After the two Demons returned, Shandal's will reappeared too and addressed the issue that the cultivators were facing. "Walk with me through the castle. I'll help you with your choice."

Noah and the others stood up, and even the Ghostly Snakes slithered toward the will that had begun to stroll toward one of the corridors.

The group saw the vast collection of powerful and peculiar items that Shandal had seized and stored over the years again. Yet, short descriptions about their nature and effects appeared under them when Noah and the others walked near them.

The invisible barriers that had prevented the group from seizing everything during the first exploration were materializing words to read. There would be even exotic symbols at times that the cultivators could only scan with their mental energy to understand the purpose of certain items.

A few of those treasures didn't have any description but only notes signed by Shandal himself.

"Most of these come from the Immortal Lands," Shandal explained when the group walked past an item without a description. "I didn't manage to discover what they do even after millennia spent studying them. I believe my power is too low or my individuality too different to uncover their effects."

Silence often reined as the group kept on walking in an orderly way through the many halls and corridors of the castle. The rewards were the only thought in the cultivators' minds, and they wouldn't care about anything else until they found something that suited them.

Noah held June's hand as they walked side by side through that massive collection.

The recent fight had brought them even closer to each other, and they were enjoying that relaxing moment. It felt as if June and Noah were a couple that had gone out shopping, with the only difference that they intended to buy powerful relics that could benefit their cultivation.

The two of them exchanged opinions on certain promising items, and the Demons would join their conversations when they knew more about specific topics.

Faith and Daniel remained mostly silent instead, but they would ask for Shandal or the Demon's opinion when they found something interesting.

The browsing took almost half a day, and the group returned in the throne room after Shandal declared that there was nothing else to see in his castle. It was time for them to decide, but that choice wouldn't be an easy one.

It wasn't a matter concerning the variety of those items. Shandal had collected the most powerful and bizarre things through his long life, so the rewards covered most fields of the cultivation journey.

The main issue was that they wouldn't be able to use most of those rewards until they reached the later stages of the sixth rank.

Rank 5 cultivators couldn't just wield a divine inscribed weapon. The sole might of such an item could destroy them.

That made choosing harder since they would pick something that they could only use after they experienced multiple breakthroughs. Such a decision required them to have a clear idea of what they would need far in the future, which wasn't something that they could have right now.

Faith and Daniel were still growing when it came to their individualities. They had just learnt how to adjust their path to escape Heaven and Earth's system, so they didn't have many certainties when it came to their future.

Dreaming Demon needed time to rethink her individuality too, but she was a bit better off compared to her companions. She had already restricted her choice over two items, with both of them beneficial to her peculiar mental energy.

Flying Demon's reward was Shandal's individuality, and the snakes didn't get the chance to choose something. As for June and Noah, they had their issues too.

Differently from her companions, June had a pretty clear idea of what she would become along her paths. Everything in her individuality focused on constants and long battles, so she meant to pick something that could enhance that aspect of her fighting style.

Yet, most of the items there had battle purposes, at least for those in the sixth or divine ranks.

June found it hard to decide something that she could find useful in the future, be she was already skimming all the possible choices in her mind so that she could pick something very close to perfect.

Noah's issue, instead, came from the fact that his higher energy was an important variable that he couldn't ignore.

His existence, battle style, and even attacks would change after he managed to create higher energy. His body was bound to adapt too to that achievement and change form after every breakthrough.

That uncertainty kept him unsure about three items that had different purposes, but that would be useful even when he reached their level of power.

After a day spent meditating and exchanging ideas, all the cultivators had decided what they wanted, except for Noah.

Dreaming Demon had chosen a strange pink liquid with power in the divine ranks. The liquid was also smelly, but it had empowering effects on the mental energy of the cultivators.

Daniel chose an emblem that worked on light, and that could protect him if something unexpected happened. It was a divine item too, which made it a lifesaver in any situation.

Faith used a similar approach to Daniel and just picked something battle-related. She chose a bracelet that would work as a defensive measure but also as a temporary enhancer of her mental faculties.

As for June, she picked a hefty and old tome that described the formation field thoroughly and had even notes of the entities that had invented the methods recorded in it.

On the other hand, Noah was still struggling to choose.

Chapter 892 892. Factions

Noah didn't want to pick a defensive item nor a weapon.

He was a maker. He created what he needed, and that ability would increase once he succeeded in his project with the higher energy.

Also, he didn't want to use that chance for something meant to help him survive future threats.

It didn't often happen that he could choose from such a large variety of items, and he didn't want to pick something that was only meant to keep him alive until he reached the divine ranks.

His body already offered him insane survivability, and he would risk relying too much on the divine item. After all, he would use it to take by surprise and kill strong enemies so that he could seize their dantians.

In his mind, it was better to pick something that could improve his growth since that would give him long-term benefits.

Yet, his interest still lingered on three items even after he had cut away many promising weapons and defensive methods from his possible choices. Of the three, two of them were divine items, while the other was something with power in the heroic ranks.

The first one was one of the items that lacked a complete description. It was a complex diagram that seemed capable of producing different effects depending on unclear factors.

Through the years, Shandal had discovered that it needed "Breath" of the darkness element to work, but he had never managed to activate it. The few features that he had recognized came from his knowledge of spells and formations.

According to the will's description, the diagram didn't have an upper limit in its power, but human cultivators would lose their minds if they happened to look at its lines. It was what appeared to be a spell that only heroic cultivators and above could hope to activate.

The second one was another divine item. It was a mirror capable of predicting the outcome of experiments or similar procedures. Noah only needed to place the materials in front of the mirror as he watched his reflection to know if a process would succeed.

The mirror even gave a detailed description of its prediction. That would help a cultivator to point out the mistakes in the procedure and fix them without wasting materials in countless trials.

Noah's ability to create would rise even further if he used the mirror together with the Divine Deduction technique. Still, that item had its limits, especially when it came to atypical inscription methods.

The Elemental Forging was one of the atypical methods, and the mirror couldn't understand it in its entirety. Its results would be slightly imprecise when it came to similar practices, and Noah wasn't sure if using such a miraculous item suited him, especially since his creation would assume different forms once he gained the higher energy.

As for the last one, it was a whiff of dense dark gas that seemed to contain many laws in its fabric.

Shandal had already studied it and confirmed that it was a rare material capable of expressing many different shapes of the "Breath" of the darkness element.

The item would be quite useful to Noah since it could expand his knowledge of the darkness element and give him ideas on how to proceed in his journey. Also, it would be beneficial in his meditations.

All three items were good tools to have in the heroic ranks. Noah could find a worthy usage for each of those resources and gain benefits from all of them.

However, he had to make a choice.

The cultivators had already talked about the division of the resources. The Ghostly Snakes gave them access to two free items, which meant that they had to decide who would get more than one reward.

The group had decided to award Noah and the Hive with the items initially meant for the hybrids.

"Come," Shandal said as he neared Noah, who was still struggling to decide. "Let's talk."

Noah inspected the will for a few seconds before deciding to stand up and follow him the hall where he had discussed the individualities with his companions.

That hall was smaller than the others, and it didn't have any unique item. There were only a bed and a table with a peculiar chessboard that had six sides instead of four.

There were also a series of chess pieces lain on top of it that were divided into three different colors. There was black, white, and gray, but there didn't seem to be anything special about them since they weren't inscribed items.

"There are three major factions in the Immortal Lands," Shandal said as he sat on one of the three chairs around the table and began to reorder the pieces on the odd chessboard.

"You can find the ever-hungry beasts, whose population can't be controlled," Shandal said as he placed the black chess pieces on the board.

"The scattered humans," The will continued as he moved his attention to the white pieces.

"And the lonely hybrids," Shandal began to deploy the grey pieces at that point.

"As far as I know," Shandal continued to speak as he watched the chessboard with a satisfied expression. "Not all humans decide to go against Heaven and Earth. There are a few organizations, but the population up there is too thin to affect the higher plane."

"Who are They?" Noah asked to remind him of the questions that he had dodged earlier.

Shandal shook his head at that question and started to move the pieces in a seemingly random way. Then, he decided to address the matter that he had revealed just a few days ago. "Your existence is even more unique than the others. I couldn't believe it when you used a magical beast to become a hybrid. I didn't even know that something like that was possible."

"Did you keep track of me?" Noah asked with a tinge of surprise in his tone.

"Yes," Shandal replied, "I've been keeping track of you since you appeared in this world."

"Did you ever influence anything?" Noah felt the need to ask since he had to make sure that all his achievements were his.

"No," Shandal said as he resumed moving the pawns. "You needed to find your path. Spoiled cultivators are useless against Heaven and Earth. I must say that you surprised me multiple times, but I had to expect it from someone that has lived two lives."

Noah ignored his words. His previous life didn't influence his current one, and he didn't carry any meaningful information anyway.

"Why did you call me here?" Noah questioned the will after that initial conversation.

"I've learnt to understand the individualities of those surrounding me after spending countless years seeing cultivators rise and all," Shandal. "Yours is vast, incredibly vast. I don't think I've ever seen someone else so driven and ambitious. However, are you sure that you can elevate it to the divine ranks?"

Chapter 893 893. Black firmamen

Noah had heard similar words before. Chasing Demon had already explained the difficulties connected to a broader individuality in the banquet held to honor the return of the Demons.

Heroic cultivators generally specialized in the aspects of their individualities as they grew. Their existence would then become able to affect the laws linked with them until they finally turned into something unique that didn't exist in the world.

Of course, the process would take more time if the individuality was vast and expanded in many fields.

It was a simple matter of quantity of laws. Wider individualities needed to learn how to wield more of them to become something unique.

However, cultivators had limits. Worlds could contain as many laws as they needed to work, but heroic existences were far below that level.

It was normal for someone like Shandal to worry about Noah's path. The latter was the most promising cultivator that those Mortal Lands had ever seen, and the god's mission was to defeat Heaven and Earth.

Also, Noah was the living proof of Heaven and Earth's mistakes. He was too important in that mission to risk losing him due to his insatiable ambition.

Noah didn't feel surprised when he heard the will's words. He had pondered about that matter too during his meditations. Yet, he had concluded that he was pursuing what he was. His approach was completely natural, and that was the individuality that reflected his entire existence.

He was a sword capable of destroying and creating. His sole presence could turn the "Breath" in the environment in primary energy, and his darkness could give birth to living beings.

Noah picked one of the chess pieces and inspected it before placing it down on its previous spot. He repeated that gesture for the pawns with different colors, and Shandal just studied him with a curious gaze.

As a god who had lived for millennia in a lower plane, Shandal had learnt a lot about individualities. He had seen human and heroic cultivators grow and fall as they strived for the same level that he had reached many years ago.

After so much time, he could obtain a general understanding of someone's individuality in a matter of seconds, and discern the rest from their gestures of personalities. It could be said that the god of the Empire was the maximum expert in the lower planes when it came to individualities.

Nevertheless, he couldn't understand anything when he analyzed Noah playing around with the chess pieces.

His connection with Heaven and Earth prevented him from understanding Noah's in his entirety, but he felt surprised that he couldn't even get an idea of the reason behind his action. After all, the chess pieces weren't inscribed items. He used that odd chessboard to remind him of the fauna of the Immortal Lands.

'A lot of black pieces,' Noah thought as he placed a gray pawn back in its place. 'A few white, and even fewer gray.'

The number of pieces of each color was a representation of the number of entities in each faction. From the chessboard, it was evident that magical beasts dominated the higher plane.

Noah could understand now that such an arrangement was just another challenge placed by Heaven and Earth to find what they had missed. Still, he didn't inspect the pieces for that reason.

He was trying to understand if he belonged to one of those factions.

'None of them reflect my existence,' Noah concluded in his mind after he put the grey piece back on the chessboard.

He had never felt close to the humans, and fusing with a Cursed Dragon worsened that aspect of him. His success in turning himself into a hybrid had put him into a completely different species, especially after his breakthroughs modified his centers of power further.

Noah could think like a human and understand their mindsets, but he wasn't one of them, not entirely at least. He felt much closer to the magical beasts because he liked living in the wilderness.

The lack of political restrictions and the absence of any rule suited him much. Also, power was the foundation of the world of the beasts, which was entirely in line with his existence.

However, they were limited too. Creatures driven only by instincts couldn't reflect him. They couldn't even begin to represent his complex mind.

As for the hybrids, they were part of his same species in theory. Still, even them failed to express the entirety of his existence.

After all, Noah was a fake. He had created his hybrid status through an inscription method, which was a tool used by cultivators.

Also, his path deviated from the type of hybrids of the ancestors of the natives. They would give away their individualities to obtain the power to devour laws and become the enemy of Heaven and Earth.

Truth to be told, Noah didn't know if there were other types of hybrids out there. His knowledge was limited to two Mortal Lands, and one of them had produced only him as a member of that species.

However, he still felt different from them since his hybrid status was the product of an inscription method.

"I respect you," Noah said, breaking the silence in the room and surprising Shandal, who was still confused about his previous actions.

"Still," Noah continued after a brief pause, "I don't care about any of this."

The will's ethereal eyes widened when he heard his words, but Noah was not finished yet.

"I will go against Heaven and Earth," Noah said as he laid a finger on an empty spot of the chessboard. "But this isn't my main goal. I don't care about the grudges, about your noble mission, and about their plan to use divine entities as guinea pigs. All of this is meaningless to me."

Cracks started to appear on the odd chessboard as Noah decided to put a bit of pressure on it. A large fissure eventually appeared and divided the entire item in two, making all the pieces on it fall on the table and floor.

Shandal still didn't act. He wouldn't bother about a single item when such a peculiar cultivator was showing his nature right in front of him.

"What do you care about then?" Shandal asked, failing to hide his curiosity on the matter. For someone who had lived more than fifty thousand years, seeing something so out of the schemes was refreshing other than enjoyable.

Noah increased the pressure on the broken chessboard as he replied. "I'll die if my individuality turns out to be too much to handle. I don't care. I've already died once too."

The rest of the chessboard fell apart at that point, and even the table under it shattered as Noah continued to put pressure and speak. "Yet, I won't cut away parts of me to make my path easier. I understand that you have been mesmerized by the white sky, but my eyes have never once stopped at it. I can only see the blinding stars in the black firmament."

Chapter 894 894. Mark

Shandal's will could only remain silent when he heard Noah's words. It was his first time hearing about such a peculiar individuality.

Noah appeared as a madman who had gone crazy over his thirst for power in his eyes. After all, who could disregard the entire world to chase after the distant stars in the sky?

Yet, Noah had been calm during his speech, and his entire figure brimmed with cold confidence that the will couldn't help but notice.

Part of Shandal now understood how Noah's existence was able to spread Heaven and Earth's mistake in the world. His gestures, his words, and his attitude were able to affect those around him and leave a mark in their existence.

Shandal could feel his ambition rise after hearing him. The peace that he had reached after so many years spent stuck in those Mortal Lands faltered for a second as he bathed in Noah's individuality.

Of course, his mind was firm and could restore the calmness that Noah had disrupted. Still, the fact that such a young cultivator could almost leave a mark on him was amazing.

Shandal could now comprehend why Noah wouldn't limit his individuality too. He couldn't hold back that boundless ambition that accompanied his every action. It was a drive that even a god would find it hard to suppress.

Also, if Noah managed to push that feeling to the divine ranks, he would become a real threat for Heaven and Earth's rule.

Shandal knew that it would be hard, but the confidence that he had felt in his words was enough to make him believe that maybe Noah had a shot at succeeding.

"Transmigration or not," Shandal said, "You would have been a monster anyway. Don't make me wait for your Tribulation. I can't wait to see what kind of lightning Heaven comes up with."

Noah didn't answer him. His mind was already wandering in the memories of the test of his attitude in the Royal Academy.

He would never forget the feelings that he had experienced in his dream, and visualizing those images again could help him choose which item he had to pick. It was clear that each of his three choices would benefit him in some ways, but he couldn't decide on which one would be the best for him.

So, he would let his ambition decide.

Noah didn't lack resources or techniques in the end. Most of his projects were on hold because he was prioritizing his higher energy, but he was far from being without ideas on how to improve.

He would have an easier time choosing something if there was an item that improved his training, but the things related to the darkness element were fewer, and he didn't want to pick weapons or defensive methods.

Shandal could understand what was going on in his mind. After all, he had summoned him mainly to help him choose something that suited him.

"You seem to be doing well already," Shandal said while Noah was in the middle of reminiscing his dream. "You don't need a perfect item. Just pick the most interesting one."

Noah turned toward the will at that point and replied with a nod. Shandal was right. He was overthinking the matter because he wanted to optimize his journey to the higher ranks in the best way possible.

Yet, he had failed to realize that he had already done that. Anything else would be something that enhanced qualities that were nearing perfection.

Noah was about to perform a slight bow to thank him when he thought about the invading forces raiding the remaining territories of the Empire. Also, thoughts about the Odrea nation and that separate dimension joined that wave of information too.

"You know that the Empire won't last long, right?" Noah asked in a plain tone.

Shandal was still a god. If his mood changed, most of the current organizations would fall apart under his power. Even his will would be enough to unleash enough destruction with all the divine weapons stored inside the castle.

Noah was trying to see if the will was even slightly emotional about his country and belongings before joining the next war. He would avoid fighting an organization that had such deep reserves otherwise.

Shandal though shook his head before reassuring him. "You are meant to take it. The battle will be bloody, but it will give birth to a stronger generation of cultivators."

Then, he pointed at the ceiling and continued. "Take the cultivators in the Odrea nation too. I am in the Immortal Lands now, stealing as much as I can before Heaven and Earth notice me. I don't need any other motivation to keep cultivating."

In the end, he drew a circle with his index and continued. "No one else will find this land. I will take everything away before anyone comes near the Mausoleum. I will leave only a few pieces of the sky as a reward. Who knows? There might be another talent hidden somewhere."

Shandal's words made Noah understand that the god had allowed them to gain access to the castle even before they learnt about the central storm. It seemed that his commitment to nurturing talents was enough to make him give up part of his collection.

Noah left a few minutes after those words. The two of them didn't have anything else to talk about, and Shandal was very secretive for what concerned the Immortal Lands.

His take on the matter was just another method meant to force cultivators to grow on their own and develop laws that Heaven and Earth couldn't take. Kindling their curiosity could help in their journey.

When Noah returned to the throne room, he found his companions cultivating in silence and inspecting their new items with eager eyes.

They couldn't store them inside their space-rings because something on that level would crack the formations used for the creation of their devices. Only June could save hers since the inscriptions on her tome only preserved its integrity.

June interrupted her meditation when she sensed his aura and revealed a smile toward him. Noah sat next to her and heaved a sigh. The talk with Shandal had been brief, but it had helped him discover something about the Immortal Lands, other than solving his doubts for what concerned his reward.

"What will you choose?" June asked when she saw that Noah's doubts had disappeared from his expression.

"The will made me realize that I'm not doing bad for my age," Noah replied.

"You are breaking a record with every breakthrough," June said. "I don't know if there is a way to train faster."

"I know," Noah agreed with her. "It would be different if there were Kesier runes here. Still, I'll take the diagram since it seems to contain an interesting spell. We have to pick something for Chasing Demon, and we are done here."

Chapter 895 895. Life

The dense dark gas capable of expressing different shapes of the "Breath" of the darkness element could be useful. Still, it wasn't a divine item, and Noah had already created his darkness.

His goal now was to build something stronger that didn't follow the laws of the world. The core item would also be his darkness, which was already outside Heaven and Earth's system.

So, the gas could only help him in his meditation.

As for the mirror, it was a divine item, but it didn't suit Noah's main inscription method.

It would still help him during his experiments, and using it with the Divine Deduction technique would reduce the time needed to complete his tests. Yet, it wasn't something crucial to his cultivation journey.

Also, the time spent in the experiments wasn't exactly wasted. Noah's expertise would increase as it did his understanding of a specific topic.

Reaching results more quickly was generally better. However, Noah would grow more slowly as an inscription master if he faced fewer failures.

All in all, both items were useful and could improve his current situation, but their effects would be minimal since his foundation was already sturdy. They weren't necessary.

On the other hand, Noah found the diagram interesting, even if it didn't provide any evident benefit.

The fact that Shandal didn't manage to discover its effects after millennia of research was a clear sign of its value. Also, it involved the darkness element, which meant that it required a cultivator with the same aptitude to work.

Human cultivators couldn't look at it either, and Noah could only think that its power had to be incredible to produce such effects just in its diagram form. Hence his decision to pick it.

There were even his instincts involved in the matter. Noah felt as if those intricate lines hid an incredible power that he wasn't able to put into words due to his poor understanding of the laws.

Noah and the Demons excluded most of the group when it came to deciding the last item. They still had a spot available, and they thought that it would be better to choose something that could benefit the Hive as a whole or their Patriarch.

Yet, that matter was too private to include June and Faith, and the three of them eventually choose to exclude even Daniel since they would have to discuss Chasing Demon's individuality to pick a suitable item.

"It's life, Noah," Dreaming Demon said as the three of them walked through the corridors of the castle. "Rufus' individuality is about life."

Noah nodded at her words but didn't probe further. He could vaguely guess that Charming Demon's death had influenced the Patriarch's individuality, but that would be a private matter that only his friends could know.

Noah was the Demon Prince and the possible heir to the seat of Patriarch of the Hive. Still, he wasn't as close to Chasing Demon as those with whom he had shared most of his life.

It was mostly a matter of cultivation level. The two Demons had learnt to know Rufus when they were in similar or close ranks, while Noah was just a human cultivator when he first met him.

Even with his incredible growth, there was still some distance between Noah and Chasing Demon. Their relationship couldn't help but be a bit complex since Divine Demon was involved in their meeting.

Chasing Demon worshipped his Master, and he had acted according to that feeling when Noah claimed his inheritance. The two of them had then begun to know each other better through the years, but the duties of a Patriarch and Noah's adventures always left little time available.

They didn't have the chance to become close yet, and things could only change when Noah reached his level.

So, the Demon's judgment was above his in the decision of the item. It would be up to them to pick something that suited the Patriarch or the Hive in general if they didn't find anything suitable.

Noah was there mostly because of his instincts, expertise in particular fields, and because his status made him eligible to know such information.

It didn't take much to find the perfect reward for the Patriarch. The three of them had already explored the castle twice and knew what could go along with his individuality.

Noah and the Demons found themselves in front of a small humanoid puppet made of a brown-red clay. It was only the size of a man's fist, but an oppressing aura came out of its figure.

The puppet was something capable of unleashing power at the bottom of the divine ranks, and it involved the earth element, which matched Chasing Demon's aptitude. Also, it was useful both to attack and defend, which even benefitted the Hive as a whole.

"None of us has found such a perfect match, and he didn't even need to come here!" Flying Demon exclaimed before exploding into a loud laugh.

His words were on point. All the members of the group had to settle for items that only neared perfect suitability. Instead, Chasing Demon would obtain something that matched both his individuality and his role as Patriarch of the Hive.

However, there was no malice in Flying Demon's words. He felt truly happy for his friend, and his companions thought in the same way.

"Can we even carry it outside of the dimension?" Noah asked as he inspected the puppet. Its size made it appear harmless, but his instincts told him not to come near it.

"It says here that we only need to keep it away from the ground," Dreaming Demon pointed out as she read the description under it.

"Do you want to do the honors?" Noah asked while taking a step back.

Flying Demon couldn't help but reveal a smirk at his action, and he spoke through his teeth as he turned toward his lover. "Let's make your snake touch it first."

"Indeed," Noah quickly agreed with him. "You told us that she wouldn't remember anything anyway once your mental energy leaves her mind."

Dreaming Demon nodded at their suggestion before focusing on her connection with Raphaelle to summon her in that hall.

Once the group settled the matter of the rewards, they only had one last decision to make.

The eight of them wouldn't have problems carrying outside those items since they had chosen them considering that issue. Yet, some of them would have to bring them in their hands since the rewards were too powerful to enter their space-rings.

Noah was an exception due to his rank 6 storage device, but even he had to make some room to accommodate the stuffed winged beast.

As for the diagram, its lines were intricate and exuded a strange aura, but they were still just part of a diagram. It wasn't an issue storing it inside his ring.

The problem that they had to discuss now concerned their return to the outside world, and, more specifically, how long they would spend inside that separate dimension.

Chapter 896 896. Strength

The sky of Shandal's separate dimension was beneficial for the seas of consciousness, and the territories of that landmass contained various fauna filled by many powerful creatures.

The winds made of laws were the real treasure though. Cultivators could improve their understanding of the later stages of the heroic ranks thanks to those gales. They were what made the Mausoleum an incredible training area for experts at that level.

It was needless to say that all the members of Noah's group didn't want to leave that place. Only the snakes were an exception because they had been stuck there since the fall of their Mortal Lands.

However, there were pressing political matters in the outside world that required those cultivators' presence.

June had to inform the Elbas family about the contents of the Odra nation. Noah had to take back his place in Divine Market city to reestablish the influence of the Hive on that neutral territory. The same went for Daniel, who was another valuable asset in the ranks of the Hive.

They couldn't remain there since the outside world needed to know that they were available and not in some mission.

Of course, time was relative when it came to rank 5 existences since they could spend decades in their caves or habitation to complete experiments. Being missing for a year or two was entirely understandable for experts on their level, especially since their mission involved divine entities.

Faith had a little better than her companions. The Council was powerful even without her, and the higher-ups wanted to regain her trust.

The Elders of the Papral nation would look for her only if she had been missing for decades, and that wasn't in the group's plan.

Yet, even if they couldn't stay there for decades, they could still spend a few years seizing as benefits as they could. After all, anyone could exit the separate dimension and contact the organizations behind them to keep them updated about their status.

Making up a story for their organizations wasn't an issue since Shandal was open about his behavior. The will would just run away with most of his belongings as soon as a significant raid arrived, leaving no proof of his imitation of the Immortal Lands.

Noah's group could say that they had found an inheritance ground and that only the members of the Hive had obtained some rewards.

There was a risk with that approach. Flying Demon had to inherit Shandal's individuality, which was a slow and dangerous process.

Exposing the existence of a divine inheritance ground could make the invading troops start another war to seize it. That would take away precious time from Flying Demon, and Noah wanted the inheriting process to be as smooth as possible.

Also, the invading forces weren't ready for an all-war again. They were still recovering from the previous battles, and exploiting the benefits of the new continent was the perfect way to put more distance between them and the Empire.

They had to find a justification that didn't trigger a mass invasion. Something that would buy enough time not to ruin both Flying Demon's gains and the war that they were waging.

In the end, they decided to remain in the separate dimension for three more years.

The six of them mostly trained and made use of the incredible features of those lands in that period. With Shandal's cooperation, they didn't need to return near the void to escape from the central storm and could make use of the teleportation matrices inside the castle.

They would go out and search for the winds or isolate inside the structure to focus on their power.

Of course, Noah went out often since he needed to appease his hunger, but June always followed him and kept herself busy fighting other powerful creatures to express her individuality.

Flying Demon spent most of his time in a separate hall with Shandal, and his companions didn't fail to notice how his aura slowly changed as the months passed. Still, they weren't worried about his well-being since Dreaming Demon would often observe his training session to make sure that the will didn't try anything funny.

Noah even resumed experimenting with higher energy.

Shandal didn't want to give him a private training area at the beginning because he felt that he was spoiling the group too much. Yet, he soon provided Noah with what he needed once his experiments started to explode and spread their destructive effects through the castle.

Noah's failures couldn't create structural damages to that structure, but Shandal felt worried that the shockwaves released in the explosions could affect some of the weaker items in his collections. So, he appointed him to a reinforced room that didn't even bulge when his experiments detonated.

Nevertheless, the group eventually left the castle through a teleportation matrix and reappeared near the formation that led to the third layer of the Mausoleum.

The two Demons weren't there, but Noah had managed to submit another hybrid during his hunts. It was a rank 5 River Beaver whose intelligence was still childlike since it had evolved from an Elite beast when the compound activated.

Noah would leave the matter to educate it to Danielle once he returned to the outside world. Still, for now, he just kept it sealed, just like he did with the other two snakes.

The group didn't hesitate to activate the teleportation matrix, and the seven of them soon saw the walls of the Mausoleum again.

A small commotion happened inside the third layer when the rank 3 cultivators saw the appearance of the three powerful hybrids. However, Noah quickly suppressed it with the words that they had been waiting for their entire lives. "Gather everyone. It's time to take you out of this wasted nation."

Chaos swept the entirety of the Odra nation after his declaration. Still, the citizens of that country didn't take much to gather everything they had and reach the edge of the defensive formation that isolated them from the outside world.

A crowd made of thousands of human cultivators gathered in a spot that Noah had pointed. He then activated the door that the Demons had previously created to bring that crowd to the separate dimension of the Hive.

"Where should they go?" Thirty-seven asked when he saw Noah and the others following the crowd through the door.

"Send them to the Coral Archipelago," Noah answered. "I've already warned the others of their arrival."

Noah noticed Lisa looking for him through the crowd, but he ignored her. He had far more pressing matters to handle.

Faith neared him and handed him her divine bracelet. For their story to work, only the members of the Hive could reveal their gains from the separate dimension, and Faith couldn't hide her reward.

So, the Hive would store it and wait for her to pick it up after the political situation calmed down.

After all, someone could be waiting for them outside of the separate dimension, and that encounter could require a show of strength.

Chapter 897 897. Expected

Noah and the others had created an excellent story to justify their divine items while preventing the other organizations from sending other teams in the Odra country. They had revealed the existence of a separate dimension under the Mausoleum, and they had described it as an inheritance ground that tried to imitate the Immortal Lands.

Their story fit what the world knew about the god of the Empire and even explained why they had gained access to divine items when they were only rank 5 cultivators.

According to that lie, the group would have slowly explored that foreign land filled with dangers in the last five years. Yet, when they reached the rewards, they triggered a reaction in the separate dimension.

The inheritance ground detonated, and the void enveloped its entire space. It was only due to the group's careful approach that the cultivators had managed to return to the outside world in time while also seizing the divine items.

Of course, Noah and the others could invent that story only because Shandal's will was cooperating. They knew what would have been his reaction in the occasion of a raid, and they could use that information to fabricate a believable lie.

Even if the Elbas family and the Council were to explore the separate dimension in the future anyway, they would only confirm their story.

However, there were bound to be doubts, especially when it came to an inheritance ground storing divine items.

There didn't need to be glaring pieces of evidence about the group's lie to cause a reaction in the forces that didn't manage to obtain anything. One small discrepancy or ambiguous detail in their story was enough to make at least part of those organizations take action.

Greed could lead humans to destruction, but it was also one of their most intense urges in life, and Noah knew that far too well.

June and Faith had given vague reports to their organizations during their stay inside the separate dimension, and they had only revealed the entirety of their lie when they left it.

Those two mighty forces wouldn't have time to prepare much with such short notice, but they were still leading organizations in those Mortal Lands. They could come up with something fairly quickly, especially if they had begun to suspect something in those years.

As for why they would even start to suspect them, Noah knew that it was because of him.

There was a nation where only Noah could enter, and Elder Julia had prevented the other forces from matching the cultivators deployed by the Hive. The situation was already strange, and Noah's fame wasn't good to begin with.

His missions usually led to significant consequences in the political environment in the world, and his enemies knew that he didn't act unless he had a valuable reason.

Of course, they didn't think that June and Faith were involved in that possible ploy. The Council and the Elbas family knew that their relationship wasn't bad after the events in the neutral city, but it would take decades of friendship to convince them to try to trick their organizations.

Unluckily for them, Noah and June had spent a lot of time together, and Faith had become attached to them reasonably quickly. Also, there were oaths in place between the women and the Hive, which preserved their credibility.

Noah, June, Faith, Daniel, the two Ghostly Snakes, and the River Beaver came out of the underwater cave where they had first used the separate dimension to cross the formation around Odra country.

Nothing had changed in those years, and the cave still had the curtain that blocked the investigation of eventual cultivators there. Yet, Noah didn't feel safe to see that no one had entered that place. That could be a strategy meant to make him lower his guard.

Noah's instincts as a lone cultivator made him consider every eventuality. There was a chance that he was being paranoid, but he was too used to the methods of the Elbas family not to expect something.

After all, the Royals and the Council knew that they would come out from that spot since June and Faith had warned them. Also, Noah couldn't request the help of the Hive because that would be suspicious.

No innocent man would ask for reinforcement when he didn't expect a battle.

Noah was trying to appear entirely in the right in that situation so that the Hive wouldn't endure the consequences of his actions.

The group came out of the cave slowly and with their consciousnesses wholly unfolded. The lack of any evident danger made them advance and exit the bottom of the old continent so that they could return to the surface.

As they tried to resurface though, spells materialized in the water around them and shot in their direction.

Noah felt surprised at that sight, but not because he didn't expect an ambush. What startled him was the trajectory of the attacks.

Generally speaking, his enemies would try to focus him because his power had always been unclear.

He usually became stronger after every mission, which made it hard to estimate his actual strength. That left the eventual assailants no choice but to take care of him first to make sure that their plan would work.

Yet, those spells were aiming for Daniel, and they were even trying to ignore June and Faith.

'Aiming for the weakest link?' Noah wondered as he released a roar. His pride spread from his figure and reached the three hybrids who felt compelled to execute his orders.

The two Snakes became immaterial, and the Beaver started to swim around the group to create a series of dense currents to protect them. The Demonic Sword also came out of Noah's robe and launched black slashes against the incoming attacks.

The ambush appeared quite threatening. Noah could recognize five spells with power in the gaseous stage of the fifth rank and one that matched the offensive of liquid stage cultivators!

There was a real expert among the attackers, but Noah hadn't been able to sense the incoming danger even with his innate awareness. It was needless to say that his mental waves weren't able to find the enemies either.

Two sharks made of water, a snakelike whip made of sand, two fiery spears, and a barrage of ice shards ran through the dark water to reach for the cultivators.

The world turned dark for a few instants as a wave of flames followed Noah's roar. His targets were the ice shards since they had the power in the liquid stage.

Nevertheless, he wasn't the only one who had reacted in time.

June was already creating crackling orange spheres that were spreading a barrier between them and the spells. Faith had taken control of the water around them, making it so dense that it separated from the rest of the sea. Daniel's light had followed the brief moment of darkness caused by Noah, and a white halo formed another layer of defense around the group.

All of them were ready to fight that foreseen threat.

Chapter 898 898. Formation

Noah's flames landed on the incoming spells and depleted part of their power. His focus was on the dangerous ice shards, but his attack was wide enough to hit the other abilities too.

The slashes of the Demonic Sword landed on the water sharks and spread a cloud of corrosive black smoke in their spot. The gas reached for the other spells too, but there was little that it could do.

The Ghostly Snakes then appeared in the trajectory of the spells and used their vast bodies to block most of them.

As beings with a body in the upper tier, the Snakes could face the spells in the gaseous stage without any problem. Yet, the shards pierced their skin, and some of them created injuries that reached for their muscles.

A few shards and the whip managed to cross the blockage, but the various defensive measures deployed by Noah's companions held their ground against that offensive and blocked the spells.

The first clash ended with the Snakes suffering a series of wounds, but they were mostly superficial injuries and didn't affect their battle prowess.

'Still nothing,' Noah thought since his consciousness failed to sense the attackers. It was as if the spells had appeared out of thin air, without anyone fueling them.

That was impossible unless there was an existence powerful enough to cover their presence. Still, Noah felt quite sure that the leader of that operation was the rank 5 cultivator in the liquid stage hidden somewhere in the sea. It wouldn't make sense for someone more potent than that to remain hidden during an ambush.

'There are inscriptions involved,' Noah concluded in his mind when he couldn't find another explanation for that event. Only formations and other similar methods could hide cultivators on that level while also allowing them to attack.

That discovery surprised him. It hadn't even been a day since June and Faith had warned their organizations about their arrival.

However, Noah was almost sure that the Elbas family was involved, which made his knowledge in the inscription field unsuitable to judge what was possible.

The Royals were unbeatable in that field, and the situation would be even worse if they had obtained the help of the Council. Breaking that siege had suddenly become incredibly hard in Noah's mind.

"Formations that deal with illusions and space have limited width and a command center nearby," June said as she prepared more defensive spells. "We can try to sprint, but I don't think that they didn't do anything to prevent that."

June specialized in certain types of formations, but she had a general understanding of that inscription method. Her words helped Noah decide what to do next to escape from that situation.

The same spells reappeared in the distance and shot once again toward the group. However, their defenses were already in place at that time. The cultivators only had to put some power in them to restore their structure after the previous clash, but they had enough time to attack before the spells arrived.

Noah roared and slashed with his living weapon. A series of flames and black lines shot from his figure and aimed for the incoming attacks.

Also, his cry contained specific orders for the Ghostly Snakes, who became ethereal and disappeared from the battlefield.

Daniel spread his white halo even more, and the water that his spell touched began to boil due to the properties of his individuality. June launched a series of lightning bolts while creating more orange spheres.

As for Faith, she limited herself to help the River Beaver in the deployment of defensive measures.

With two members of their team holding back, they couldn't express their full power. Noah wasn't using his Demonic Form because it would affect his companions, and June was sticking to the "Breath" of the lightning element since they didn't know the identity of the assailers.

They were still able to hold on, but they would be forced to use their full power if they didn't find a way out of that situation.

Raphaelle materialized once again in the trajectory of the spells after they had clashed with the group's attacks. Joel, instead, was nowhere to be seen.

The second clash left Raphaelle in an even worse state, and her body alone wasn't able to block all the attacks. Some of them landed on the defensive measures deployed by Noah's companions and destroyed a large part of them.

The might of a rank 5 cultivator in the liquid stage wasn't something that experts in the gaseous stage could block easily. Yet, the joint efforts of the group managed to prevent anything too bad from happening. The Ghostly Snakes were the only ones suffering injuries.

The third series of spells appeared in the same spot and shot toward the group. However, a hissing sound started to spread through the environment at that point.

Noah's eyes lit up when he heard that cry, and black smoke began to come out of his figure. One of the advantages of being with other hybrids was that they could communicate in a language that humans couldn't even begin to understand.

With his previous cry, Noah had ordered Joel to use its innate ability to swim part the boundaries of the formation and find the command center mentioned by June. The hissing that he was spreading in the environment was his sign that he had found something.

Four additional arms went to wield four copies of the Demonic Sword that had appeared as soon as the black smoke completed the scaled armor. Noah performed a quick slash, but his target wasn't the incoming spells.

He had launched his most potent attack on a seemingly random spot.

June and the others felt forced to put some distance between them and Noah. The corrosive smoke was deadly even for them, and Noah's sea of consciousness was the most advanced of the group.

Also, his darkness fueled all of his attacks. Their power was far above the average of those launched by cultivators on his level.

The very fabric of the environment around them began to shake as a fissure appeared in the sea. The tremors revealed shining lines placed in the water all around them.

Noah could see a small cave built at the bottom of the sea through the fissure created by his attack.

Now that his mental energy could inspect it, he understood that the water on that side felt different compared to that around him. Also, all the inscriptions that had appeared after Noah's attack had confirmed that they were inside a formation.

The spells eventually reached the group and clashed with the defensive measures and the Ghostly Snakes once again. The defenses held even without Noah's flames, but the Snakes were about to suffer serious injuries.

The group had to finish the battle quickly before they started to suffer real losses. Yet, only one of them had the strength to affect the control center.

It wasn't a matter of distance. The control center was too sturdy for ordinary cultivators in the gaseous stage to handle.

Chapter 899 899. Ligh

"Nothing?" Noah asked as he executed the second form of his martial art, targeting the cave seen outside of the formation. His voice came out as a guttural growl due to the Demonic Form and his beast's features.

"Nothing!" Daniel exclaimed as he stored his inscribed notebook back in his space-ring and resumed fueling his white halo. "No mental message seems able to escape the area."

The group had faced six more series of spells already by then, but their situation was about to become critical.

The Ghostly Sakes were still doing their job as meat shields, but injuries filled their bodies, and some wounds even reached for their internal organs. Also, their instincts were starting to take control of their bodies and making them ignore Noah's orders.

Noah was using his pride to force the hybrids to maintain their sanity. Yet, their survival instinct was becoming more intense as the state of their bodies worsened.

It was only a matter of time before the Snakes stopped using their reason and escaped the formation with their innate ability, leaving the rest of the group alone in the siege.

Their sacrifice though had allowed the cultivators to block all the attacks and give Noah enough room to continue targeting the control center.

The water around the group trembled again after Noah's last attack, and the same series of shining lines appeared in that part of the sea. Some of them even fell apart during the tremors, but the formation was still mostly intact.

'They did this in less than a day!' Noah cursed in his mind as he released another roar to suppress the instincts of the snakes. 'We would have already exposed some secret if it wasn't for the hybrids.'

It was clear that their assailant had come prepared. They had deployed manpower stronger than Noah's group, and they were even making use of an annoying formation.

If Noah hadn't submitted the three hybrids, they would have been forced to use all their assets to survive, which meant revealing June's higher energy and the separate dimension. However, there was hope to keep their secrets hidden thanks to the sacrifice of the Snakes.

After all, that was the whole point of their lie. Revealing the divine items would protect June and Faith's status in their organizations and make their story more believable.

The women's cover would be exposed if the Hive was to reveal their divine items in the next years, and the organizations behind them would still think about creating raiding parties if they didn't have a decoy. Instead, knowing that such precious objects were in the hands of the Hive would move their attention away from the separate dimension and give Flying Demon enough time to inherit Shandal's individuality.

Also, the other organizations would start to fear the Hive more if they knew that it owned those powerful tools.

Fame and reputation could be the end of a lone cultivator, but they were an armor when it came to organizations. The copying formation already discouraged anyone from attacking the Hive, and the knowledge that it owned divine items would only strengthen that feeling.

The only issue now was to make those items reach the safety of the Hive.

Daniel had his emblem hung on his neck, and the fact that his robe covered it didn't prevent its powerful aura from leaking in the environment. Meanwhile, Noah had both the stuffed beast and the diagram in his space-ring, which hid their presence.

That was the reason why all the spells kept on aiming for Daniel. It seemed that the assailants weren't trying to take down the entire group, but force them to give up on that divine asset before someone noticed that they were late.

Noah's eyes became cold when he saw the shining lines disappear again in the water. At that sight, it became clear in his mind that the Ghostly Snakes would die before he could destroy the entirety of the formation.

It would be up to the group to face the full power of the spells once the protection of the hybrids vanished, and targeting the control center while defending could be a problem.

Noah's mind worked at full speed as he analyzed the situation. The Divine Deduction technique consumed his mental energy to evaluate how much the formation could endure, and if the group could destroy it without revealing anything.

The answer was negative. Noah and the others would still need to use some of their hidden assets even if the Snakes gave their lives to defend them.

Noah made his mind at that point. Daniel saw the fiendish figure nodding at him, and he didn't hesitate to take the emblem in his grasp.

If they had to reveal something anyway, they might as well use the divine items before the hybrids died. After all, the world already knew about them.

Also, the effects of Daniel's emblem were straightforward. The item gathered light and unleashed it to eliminate any threat attempting at the life of its wielder.

Shandal had kept it charged, which allowed Daniel to activate it straight away and without the need of any "Breath". He only had to use a minute part of his mental energy to trigger its effects.

The tenth series of spells formed and shot toward the group, but a blinding light soon filled the entire underwater area.

The effects of the divine item were the exact opposite of Noah's flames, even if they both turned the witnesses blind for a few seconds. Noah saw his world become completely white, and he couldn't help but spread his mouth at that sight.

Dense "Breath" entered his body and nourished his lungs. Still, the ability of the Curse Dragon species wasn't able to create the usual black halo around him at that time.

There was too much light, and its might even stretched outside of the formation.

Noah sensed that his Demonic Form fell apart as the light swept him. It seemed that the defensive item saw the unruly properties of the black smoke as a threat to its wielder.

However, it didn't affect any living being. Both Noah and the Demonic Sword didn't suffer at all inside that halo.

The same went for his companions, and only some of June's orange spheres vanished due to the effects of the emblem. The other defensive spells remained in place instead.

When the halo vanished, Noah and the others discovered that they could breathe again. The emblem had destroyed the entirety of the formation, creating an empty sphere right in the middle of the sea.

The water soon filled that gap, and the cultivators could sense that the sea had changed once they were submerged again. However, they didn't waste time analyzing it since they weren't safe yet.

A roar ran under the sea, and black smoke began to spread once again since Noah quickly reactivated the Demonic Form. June and the others prepared their offensive spells too at that signal, and the Snakes became immaterial to prepare for the imminent clash.

They could finally charge ahead now that the formation was gone.

Chapter 900 900. Head

Noah and the others couldn't know how effective the emblem would have been, but it did far more than its description implied.

The item had taken care of all the threats in a large area, destroying the entirety of the formation that kept the group trapped. It had even affected Noah's Demonic Form, but it seemed unable to hurt living beings since the hybrids were fine.

The Ghostly Snakes' minds were at their limits, and their instincts were about to take control of their bodies. The emblem would have targeted them if it could affect living beings.

The only drawback of that divine item was the amount of light needed to recharge it. It wouldn't be a problem for a divine cultivator with a light aptitude to keep it always ready, but Daniel was only a being in the fifth rank.

No one in the group knew how long it would take for the emblem to become operational again. Daniel's only hope was that Chasing Demon decided to relocate some of the resources of the Hive for that purpose.

Nevertheless, the state of the emblem was the last of the group's problems right now.

Noah performed the second form of the Dragon's Claw martial art as soon as the Demonic Form reactivated. A tall fissure appeared in the sea and created an empty path that connected Noah and the cave in the distance.

Without the obstruction of the formation, Noah's attack managed to reach the control center and create a deep crack in that area.

An earthquake soon filled the bottom of the sea, but no one came out of the destroyed cave. It seemed that that place was abandoned and only functioned as the core of the formation.

June and the others were ready to charge, but the outcome of Noah's attack made them stop their tracks. Their enemies weren't there.

"They have to be near!" June shouted as she unfolded her consciousness to search for the assailants.

She knew that the inscriptions didn't store the spells inside the formation. They required someone nearby to use and redirect them into specific matrices meant to teleport the attacks inside the isolated area.

Nevertheless, the fact that their enemies had yet to appear meant that they had no intention of revealing their presence. It was highly possible that they had considered the ambush a failure already and that they had started to run away.

After all, that area was near the Coral Archipelago, and Daniel had just activated a divine item. The experts in the islands couldn't miss that disturbance and would investigate the matter.

Also, Noah and Daniel were late for their appointment in the Archipelago.

The mission was over by then, and the group had to split so that everyone could return to their respective organizations. The battle didn't last much, but the Elders of the Hive hadn't been able to contact Noah and Daniel in that period.

Noah was sure that reinforcements were already on the way, especially since the rank 5 Elders knew that the group was probably walking into a trap.

However, Noah didn't want to let the assailants go. He wanted to know which organizations were involved in the ambush.

The current political situations wouldn't allow him to exploit the eventual capture of one of them. Still, Noah could at least understand who was so bold to attack them while the Empire still had a rank 6 existence.

Of course, his suspects were the Royals. Yet, there was a chance that the Council had decided to join the ambush due to its greed.

Noah's consciousness expanded to its limits, but it didn't manage to sense any living being. That area of the sea even lacked magical beasts!

Yet, his mental energy wasn't his only hunting tool.

Noah deactivated the Divine Deduction technique and let the sensations felt by his body fill his mind with countless pieces of information.

As a cultivator that had fused with a Cursed Dragon, Noah found himself at a disadvantage when hunting underwater. However, he was still superior to any cultivator in that field.

Noah sensed the faint trace of a warm current coming from the distance, and his body reacted instinctively to that input.

He roared and used the Merging spell to sprint where his instincts pointed him. According to his body, something alive was at some distance in that direction.

The Demonic Sword in his hands echoed his battle cry, and the two of them shot through the sea as they chased after that faint trace of life.

Noah understood that the trace of life was trying to escape as soon as he became close to it. Still, he was faster, and his mental energy was able to sense the existence in the distance rather quickly.

It was a rank 5 cultivator in the gaseous stage, and Noah couldn't understand more even when his eyes became able to see the escaping figure.

The assailant was wearing a black robe that hid their gender. Noah could only understand the cultivation level of his enemy without being able to gather any other clue.

More hooded figures soon showed their presence inside the range of Noah's consciousness. It seemed that they were converging in the same position from different spots.

'A teleportation matrix!' Noah shouted in his mind when he understood what they were up to. The group of assailants probably had only one escape route.

That was to be expected since they didn't have much time to prepare. Noah guessed that they had set the teleportation matrix before even knowing when he and his companions were about to come out of the separate dimension.

'They were ready for this eventuality even before the end of the mission,' Noah thought as coldness filled his body. He knew that he was flying alone toward six rank 5 cultivators, but he didn't slow down.

He would gladly endure one of their attacks just for the chance of uncovering their identities.

The assailants didn't turn back and moved at full speed toward a seemingly random spot in the sea bed.

The sandy ground lit up when the first assailant stepped on the area that featured the teleportation matrix. The halo radiated from the array started to fill the environment as the shining lines prepared themselves for their activation.

Noah understood that he wouldn't reach the group on time. Each one of them had started to fly before him, and even his superior speed couldn't make him stop them.

So, he stopped and executed the second form of his martial art.

The other five figures reached the teleportation matrix and jumped straight into its halo, but a fissure soon appeared in that spot and made part of the light disappear. However, as the lines stopped shining and the halo dispersed, Noah couldn't see anyone standing on top of the destroyed formation.

There were some traces of blood, and even a hand that belonged to a man had remained behind.

Noah sighed and dispersed the Demonic Form as he reached for the hand. Yet, he stopped when the tattoo of a horned human head suddenly appeared on its back.