

DEMONIC 921

Chapter 921 921. Beam

Noah's level was too low back then to understand the rank of the Albino Snake. He had needed William to confirm that the creature was a rank 5 magical beasts.

Yet, he could understand its exact level of power now that he looked at it from his position in the sky.

The Albino Snake had recreated the same environment of Twilboia Cliff. A swarm of snake-type magical beasts in the human ranks surrounded its huge body and took bites of each other whenever their hunger became unbearable.

As for the leader of that pack, it was a magical beast at the peak of the fifth rank.

'I just have to dodge its beam,' Noah thought as he let memories resurface in his mind.

Albino Snakes had the strong bodies usually seen in any snake-type creature, but their most threatening feature was their ability to condense light in their scales and release it in the form of a beam from their mouth.

As their innate ability suggested, they were magical beasts with a light aptitude. The records that Noah had reviewed before going into that mission even specified that simple protections wouldn't work against that attack.

Still, those same records described that species as a peculiar kind of magical beasts.

Albino Snakes didn't always exist in nature. Their species was the result of a mutation that happened in an extinct type of snakes called Dark-scaled Snakes.

The Dark-scaled Snakes were said to have an innate flaw since they shared some blood with the dragons. Their hunger and aggression would often go out of control due to the instability hidden inside their bloodlines.

That eventually forced the cultivators of the past to create massive hunting parties meant to exterminate the threat of Dark-scaled Snakes. They managed to do that without leaving even one of them alive, but they didn't predict that some specimens would develop a natural mutation to ensure their survival.

In the face of extinction, some of the Dark-scaled Snakes gave up on their connection with the dragons and evolved into the current Albino Snakes, which had a more peaceful behavior.

The new nature of the species allowed some of them to escape the extinction and thrive in danger zones that the humans rarely visited.

Of course, Noah knew that most of that story had probably a lie. It seemed more reasonable that the hunting groups had missed the mutation and ignored the new species because it had white scales instead of black.

It was only a few centuries after that clearing operation that a few experts had managed to find a connection with the now-extinct Dark-scaled Snakes species.

Noah now knew why such a powerful beast could conceive that training system. It was like the Albino Snakes to be less violent than other creatures and sleep for most of their time.

Yet, the fact that it was a relatively intelligent species didn't mean that the specimen in front of him wasn't unique. It would be impossible for another beast to feed only on newly advanced rank 4 creatures for who knew how long.

Noah's target was patient and could control its hunger, which was something that even he couldn't do.

Noah remembered how he didn't even have a dantian when he first met the Albino Snake. Its simple breathing had almost killed him, and he had managed to survive only thanks to the Body-inscription spell.

It felt only fated that the same creature would be the one allowing him to use that spell again.

'Hope you still remember how to snore,' Noah thought as black smoke started to come out of his figure to create a scaled armor. Four copies of the divided Demonic Sword appeared around him too, and four fuming arms quickly wielded them.

The white mountain on the ground began to move at that point. The Albino Snake's senses couldn't fail to notice the appearance of such a potent threat, and they awakened it from its slumber.

The ground and the surface of the mountains next to that valley began to tremble as the Snake moved, but Noah's attack landed before it could even show its face.

A deep red mark appeared on the massive body of the creature, and blood soon started to fall from that injury.

Noah had intended to cut the Snake directly in half, but it seemed that even his most powerful ability wasn't enough to inflict a deadly injury. His slash had been able to leave deep wounds on multiple spires, but it didn't reach the internal organs.

He wasn't surprised about that. The Snake was a creature at the peak of the fifth rank. Just one step forward would have made it enter the realm of the sixth rank, making it impossible for him to hunt the specimen.

However, Noah could still hurt it in that state, and the wounds weren't light either. He could kill it if he just invested some time on that hunt.

A loud hiss resounded in the area, and Noah felt the will of the Snake trying to affect his mental sphere. It was using the innate ability given by its higher level to take control of all the beasts nearby.

However, Noah's mind was strong enough to suppress the urges given by the pack leader, and the beasts belonging to different species felt the need to retreat rather than obeying it.

Noah knew the reason for that. The Albino Snake was asking to protect it with their bodies while it prepared a counter-attack. It wasn't a surprise that they left.

Also, they belonged to different species. The orders of a snake couldn't affect a dog, even if they came from a creature in the fifth rank.

Noah didn't wait for the Albino Snake to prepare a battle strategy and pressed on with his offensive.

A series of powerful inscribed items fell from Noah's position toward the white mountain that was finally starting to show its face. They were mostly Instabilities, but there were some Hidden Threats along with other disposable weapons that Noah had created while he was experimenting with the higher energy.

There was a significant problem in that hunt. The only ability that Noah could use to really hurt the Snake was the second form of his martial art. The others were powerful, especially after he had reached the liquid stage, but they still couldn't compare to the fusion of martial arts and spells wielded by a hybrid.

His physical strength was useless too since the Albino Snake was more potent than him. Being at the peak of the fifth rank put it on a completely different level.

Still, Noah had no intention to get close to the creature. Albino Snakes couldn't fly, which meant that Noah could stay in the sky and keep attacking it until it died.

Nevertheless, the Snake wouldn't go down without a fight. Its scales started to shine, and a white beam came out of its mouth when it opened its maw to aim at the fiendish figure in the sky.

Chapter 922 922. Leap

Noah's world suddenly became white as the noise of the detonation of his disposable weapons spread in the area. He didn't remain still though and quickly used the Merging spell to sprint away from the Albino Snake's attack.

The beast's attack was quick, but Noah had his fuming armor and had acted in time to dodge most of the destructive power of the white beam. Only the left side of his protection got destroyed as he escaped from the area of effect of the light.

A series of hisses of pain followed that attack, and Noah heard even the Albino Snake's cry among those sounds.

The detonation of his inscribed weapons had spread chaos in the pack. Almost all the creatures in the human ranks had died in the explosions. The few of them that had survived had suffered grave injuries too since the disposable weapons were items in the fifth rank.

The shockwaves that they had created were enough to kill anything in the human ranks.

The Albino Snake had suffered only some minor injury, but the explosion had forced it to stop its light beam and focus on protecting its body. Noah had predicted such an outcome, and he had already prepared himself to launch another series of attacks.

Noah executed the second form of his martial art again as soon as he came out of the beam. A fissure appeared among the light still lingering in the environment, and more deep wounds formed on the curled body of the Albino Snake.

Then, Noah attacked again and again, taking advantage of every second that the Snake was giving him to inflict as much damage as possible.

Noah managed to launch only three attacks before the Snake reacted. Angry hisses sounded in the area as the beast lifted its head again and threw another light beam.

Noah couldn't face the beam head-on. The Albino Snake was at the peak of the fifth rank, and its attacks could injure him gravely if he were to let it hit him directly.

The difference between the strength of their bodies was enormous even if they were both in the upper tier of the fifth rank, and Noah was a hybrid. He couldn't compare with a magical beast that had almost stepped into the last part of the heroic ranks.

However, Noah didn't need to get close to the creature, and the fact that it couldn't fly allowed him to take complete control of the flow of the battle.

Noah would dodge whenever the Albino Snake launched one of its beams and throw disposable weapons to force it to stop its offensive and give him time to attack.

The Demonic Form prevented him from suffering any injury, and the Snake saw wounds piling on its body as the fight kept going.

That was the difference in power between a cultivator and a magical beast. The Albino Snake was far stronger than Noah when it came to basic abilities, but he had the wits to choose the battle style that gave him more advantages.

The fact that it couldn't fly also helped a lot in the matter. The Snake was unable to face Noah as long as he stayed in the air.

Still, the peaceful behavior of that species was just a natural consequence of their calculative minds. Albino Snakes weren't on the level of intelligent beasts when it came to their thinking ability, but they came quite close to them.

Also, Noah's target was unique, so it wasn't a surprise that it could resort to simple tactics.

The Albino Snake's body was a mess of blood and cuts after it exchanged multiple attacks with Noah. Still, it could keep fighting at full strength since the stamina of a beast at that level was nigh-endless.

Yet, it began to escape toward the area of influence of the Empire, breaking every small hill that it found along its path.

Noah chased after it and felt forced to shorten the distance between them to keep pressing it with his offensive.

The Snake was slower than Noah since it didn't have spells, and there were many hindrances on its path. However, it could reach the central territories alive if Noah didn't continue to attack it at that pace.

Nevertheless, the Albino Snake suddenly leaped, and its massive body twisted mid-air so that its head could reach Noah in an instant.

The action of the Snake had been too sudden and quick for Noah to react in time. Less than a second before, he was chasing after the creature and launching as many black lines as he could. The instant after that, he was inside its throat, being pushed down by the contracting muscles of the beast.

It became evident in his mind that the escape had been just a trap, and Noah had fallen for it.

Noah had no idea that the Snake could jump so far up in the sky. After all, he had been at a few kilometers from the ground during the chase.

Yet, the massive physical strength of the beast allowed it to shoot relatively high if it managed to coordinate its body.

Noah didn't panic though. He was shocked that a magical beast could prepare such a trap, but he saw that as an opportunity to affect its internal organs.

The muscles kept on pushing him along its body, but Noah released a wave of flames and waved his Demonic Sword like crazy to launch as many black lines as possible.

His flames didn't manage to hurt the creature, but they weakened the layers of muscles and gave a chance to the black lines to seep through them and reach for its internal organs.

The Albino Snake hissed in pain at that point. Its scales began to shine again, and white light accumulated where Noah was.

Noah continued to attack even as the light surrounded him. He knew what was coming, but the only thing that he could do to stop it was killing the Snake before it completed the ability.

The Snake hissed at the sky and released another beam of light while Noah was still inside its body. The light running through its throat destroyed the Demonic Form and exposed Noah to its destructive force.

Nevertheless, Noah ignored the pain and focused on reforming the four additional arms with his corrosive smoke.

The situation wasn't ideal, but Noah managed to materialize two of them right in the middle of the storm of light and launched a weaker version of the second form of his martial art.

The attack cut the beast's throat and opened a path toward the internal organs, and Noah didn't hesitate to keep his offense going.

The battle had become a matter of attrition now. The first body to give up would become the other's prey.

Noah's slashes eventually managed to pierce through the Snake's body, creating an opening where he could escape. Still, he continued to attack the creature from the inside until he cut away an entire section of its body.

When that happened, Noah's bloody figure reappeared in the open.

Chapter 923 923. Unfair

A torrent of blood fell from the severed parts of the Albino Snake's body.

Noah let the red cascades submerge him as he remained in the air to stare at the falling creature. He had ended up severing its body into two parts when he was inside its throat, but that didn't seem enough to kill the beast.

The headless part of the Snake convulsed and moved even after it crashed on the ground, but Noah's attention was on the other piece of the body since he felt a pair of reptilian eyes fixed on his figure.

The hatred contained in those eyes was so intense that Noah could almost understand what the Snake was feeling at that moment. He could imagine how suffering that kind of injury now that it was so close to the sixth rank had ruined its plans.

Of course, the Snake couldn't create proper thoughts. Its anger was an instinctive reaction to the fact that Noah had severed most of its body. As for what concerned the depths of that feeling, Noah could only imagine it.

The Albino snake straightened up what remained of its body as its scales lit up again. It seemed that it had given up on escaping and wanted to vent its anger on the human figure floating at some meters above its head.

However, the activation of its innate ability only made it lose more blood. Also, the light beam that came out of its mouth was far weaker than before since there were fewer scales gathering light now.

Noah didn't even bother to dodge the incoming attack. His skin was already a mess due to the prolonged period inside the Snake's throat, and uncovered muscles were visible in certain spots.

He had already tasted the best that the Albino Snake could do. That weakened attack didn't even trigger his instincts.

Trails of black smoke appeared on the sides of his torso and condensed to form four additional arms. The light that was submerging him couldn't stop them from wielding the four copies of the divided Demonic Sword.

Noah executed the second form of his martial art and created an empty area between him and the Snake, making the light in that trajectory disappear without leaving any trace.

A large cut appeared on the Snake's mouth, which stopped its offensive only for an instant before it relaunched its light beam.

Noah didn't move. He let the white light submerge him again before performing his most potent attack once more.

The empty areas created by his slashes resembled the death zone that the Albino Snake used to have at the bottom of Twilboia Cliff. They represented an unsurmountable barrier that destroyed any hope.

Only then did Noah realize how much he had grown. He had reached the point where he could play around with a dying creature at the peak of the fifth rank without risking anything.

Pride, ambition, and hunger filled his body as he repeated that exchange of attacks until the Snake stopped launching light beams. His instincts were almost going crazy at that scene due to the relationship that he had with that creature.

However, Noah's mind was calm, and his face was expressionless.

'The joy of a beast can't satisfy me,' Noah thought as he started to descend toward the tired beast.

The Albino Snake was a mess. It gasped for air as a natural reaction to its exhaustion, but it failed to realize that there were no lungs on that part of its body.

A large red puddle had formed under it. The beast had lost so much blood from the injury inflicted by Noah that it could barely rely on its high-intelligent mind.

There were other deep cuts on the rest of its body too, especially on the skin around its mouth. Noah's last offensive had turned that body part into a broken mess.

Yet, its reptilian eyes were still focused on Noah. They followed him as he descended and reached to touch it.

The Albino Snake felt outraged, but it was too tired to react. So, it let Noah touch its skin.

Noah sensed how sturdy the white scales were and sighed. He could tell how much energy those tissues contained, and he could understand that the creature had lived for more than a millennium at least.

The life of such an old and powerful being was in his hands now, and he had no intention to preserve it.

"The world has given you a good bloodline and an amazing mind," Noah said as roars backed his words. "Today, you didn't lose because I have trained more, or due to a bad battle plan. You lost because you are only a beast, while I am much more."

The Snake hissed, but it didn't move. Noah didn't know how much it had understood, but it almost appeared as if it agreed with his words.

"I will give you a chance," Noah continued, and his aura suddenly turned sharp and colder before he decided to add something. "Don't make me regret it."

The Albino Snake understood the threat and lowered its head. It was as if it was surrendering on its own. Still, Noah didn't need a subordinate. He required a will capable of learning and using the body that he had created with his dark matter.

He meant those words though. A magical beast at the peak of the fifth rank had managed to hurt him using a trap, which meant that a hybrid or a cultivator could do much more in that situation.

Noah didn't even know his battle prowess when it came to facing cultivators in the liquid stage, but he knew that it wouldn't be a one-sided fight.

That unfairness for such a patient being was something that Noah wanted to fix, even if that meant talking with a dying creature to increase the chances of success of the procedure that he was going to execute.

The Albino Snake died a few moments after he finished speaking. The injuries had become too much to endure, and it had lost way too much blood. Noah had sealed its fate since he neared it.

Noah didn't hesitate anymore after the Albino Snake died. He quickly went to store the other part of its body while taking out the piece of leather that contained a series of inscriptions.

Noah placed the item on the ground and its contents spread on the terrain around it, creating a formation that stopped enlarging when it became more than ten meters large. Then, he picked the other part of the Snake and placed it on the formation.

The shining lines lit up as soon as the massive reptilian head entered in their form, and the skin of the body piece began to burn to force the will of the creature to come out in the open.

Noah just needed to defeat it before he could complete the creation of his Blood Companion.

Chapter 924 924. Ritual

A huge, ethereal snake formed at the center of the formation, and it began to struggle as soon as it realized that it could move.

Invisible boundaries kept the Snake's will confined inside the lines of the formation, but they wouldn't hold for long if Noah let it act freely.

Thirty-seven had taken inspiration from the work with the living weapons to create that version of the Body-inscription spell. Still, he couldn't focus on the sturdiness of the formation since it had multiple features that were absent in the original ability.

After all, there was no Beast Core at that time. Noah would need to link that will with the body made of higher energy directly inside the formation if he wanted to meet the requirements necessary for the creation of a tattoo.

That was an essential procedure to create a connection between the Blood Companion and Noah's mind. Thirty-seven had to sacrifice the sturdiness of his formation to add those features.

Noah looked at the struggling will and summoned a series of ethereal swords that pierced the Snake multiple times and forced it to calm down. However, he could still see an intense hatred in its eyes.

Thirty-seven's version of the spell didn't require a complete subjugation to work. The main issue was that Noah wouldn't use the blood of the creature during the ritual, so there had to be some collaboration in the procedure.

Of course, Noah could keep attacking the will until almost nothing of the Snake was left, but that would only hurt the final product. The will would have lost most of its instincts by that point, making it unsuitable for controlling the new body.

Noah spread his consciousness inside the formation and tried to use his pride to make the will comply with his needs. Yet, the Albino Snake had been a creature at the peak of the fifth rank. Noah's dignity as a beast wasn't enough to make it kneel.

The will soon started to struggle to break free again, and Noah felt forced to unleash another series of ethereal swords to calm it down.

It soon became evident that a normal display of power wouldn't work since the Snake began to throw itself at the invisible barriers after a few instants.

With his pride and experience in mental battles being useless, Noah felt that he had only one approach that could convince the Snake to follow through the ritual without turning it into nothing more than dense mental energy.

Noah focused on his ambition and released a roar at the sky that expressed all his desire to cultivate.

The air became tense after his roar, but the Snake became interested in the intense emotion that Noah had shown. All of a sudden, Noah had become interesting in the eyes of the will.

"I will reach the stars," Noah said with words mixed with roars when he saw that the will was looking at him. "You can decide whether to disperse or follow me."

There was a limit to how much the will understood of his words. Its focus was on the meaning carried by the roars and on the captivating ambition that Noah was capable of releasing.

Magical beasts didn't ponder about their existence in their lives. They just followed their instincts and grew more potent as a natural consequence of their hunger.

They had never felt the ambition to reach higher stages. They had never dreamt about the higher ranks in the same way as the cultivators.

The Snake could only wander in the intense ambition that Noah's consciousness carried. It was an addicting feeling. It was as if the will had finally found a meaning behind the countless hunts to appease its hunger.

It must be said that the Snake could only relate to Noah's consciousness because he was a hybrid. His thoughts and emotions carried aspects that magical beasts could understand.

There was no explicit agreement. At some point, the formation sensed the Snake's willingness to follow Noah, and its lines shone with a brighter light.

That was a signal for Noah. It meant that the ritual was ready to enter the last phase.

Noah stepped inside the formation and took out the condensed body that he had built in the separate dimension. The black orb started to float inside the light, and a gentle pressure pushed both the dark matter and the will toward Noah.

The orb and the will fused while they converged toward Noah's chest. The ghostly figure of the Snake disappeared when it entered the mass of dark matter, but even that vanished once it reached his skin.

Noah suddenly felt pressure coming from the inside of his mental sphere. His focus immediately went over the sea, where he saw that the ghostly figure of the Albino Snake was slowly forming next to the Kesier Runes.

A connection formed too. It wasn't a link as intense as that with the Demonic Sword, but he could feel part of the Snake's instincts and feelings through it.

After all, the Snake was technically alive. Its will had only suffered some slight damage. Its new body lived too, even if it belonged to a new species made by unique materials.

Noah could sense its confusion now, but that was a normal reaction to its new body. The Snake used to have a light aptitude too, so the contrast that it felt was even more significant than expected.

A sharp pain began to spread from his chest as the will became used to the new body. Black lines started to form on his skin and take the shape of a snake as the two completed their fusion.

The drawing didn't stop there though. A pair of large and feathered wings soon appeared on its back, and two claws formed on its sides.

Even someone with only basic knowledge in the magical beasts' field would notice that something was off about that drawing. The snake depicted on Noah's chest seemed to have features that belonged to multiple magical creatures rather than on a single species.

A couple of curved horns appeared on the sides of its head too before the light of the formation vanished.

Noah couldn't help but smile when he felt a familiar pressure inside his mind. It had been a long time since he last had a Blood Companion, and sensing its presence was reassuring.

The lines of the formation retracted inside the piece of leather, and Noah stored it before standing up and analyzing his new tattoo.

His body wasn't bleeding, but it still needed some care. However, Noah could only think about testing his new Blood Companion now.

'Let's see,' Noah thought as he focused on his connection with the Snake. 'I guess I'll go with Snore. It's a fitting name.'

A deep hiss resounded in the area when Noah thought that, and dense black smoke came out of his chest to take the form of a massive figure.

A more than one hundred meters long, winged snake formed right in front of him and turned to give an annoyed glance at its Master.

Chapter 925 925. Fire

Ravaging Demon had his eyes closed as his mind wandered in the forced enlightenment caused by the oily water of the pool. The laws of the fire element connected with his individuality became faint instincts that he learnt how to control as he remained immersed in that miraculous item.

He felt the intrusion of a foreign substance inside his dantian though. He did not doubt that he was sacrificing part of his potential to obtain the breakthrough that he had waited for years.

Still, that was what he wanted. After all, he had always considered himself a true demon. He would do anything to improve his power.

The entrance of the restricted area opened, and six powerful cultivators walked through it.

The cultivator in the lead of that group was one of the silver-haired members of the Elbas family, First Prince, who limited himself to point in a polite way toward Ravaging Demon.

The cultivators behind him performed quick bows toward the Royal before hurrying themselves in front of the pool to kowtow. The scene was quite peculiar since those five experts were cultivators in the fifth rank!

"Master!" The five cultivators shouted at the same time, and Ravaging Demon could only nod seeing that his disciples had arrived safely in the Royal Academy.

"I hope there were no issues during the transport," Ravaging Demon said as he glanced at the Royal still in the back of the restricted area.

"Of course," First Prince replied. "We have common borders right now. What can even go wrong?"

Ravaging Demon limited himself to nod at that answer and gestured to his disciples to rise. Then, he invited them inside the pool, and they didn't hesitate to undress to join him inside that murky water.

First Prince remained at the back of the area, but there was a pensive expression on his face. It was as if something was bothering him.

Ravaging Demon didn't fail to notice that expression, and he spoke to the Royal without turning. "Are you still worried about the plan?"

"It's not that," First Prince said while shaking his head. "We are sure to succeed. The Hive and the Council will never expect a betrayal right after the end of the war."

"But?" Ravaging Demon asked again, expecting that the Royal had something to say about their strategy.

"But there is a reason why cultivators in the sixth rank tend to avoid going after those on a lower level," First Prince said as his expression turned grim. "If all the powerhouses start to act as they wish, there won't be any habitable land anymore."

First Prince's point was reasonable. The power held by rank 6 cultivators was too great, and unleashing it freely on the landmasses would give birth to barren territories.

It was enough to see what had happened in the central areas of the new continent to understand how destructive their power could be.

Also, there were always variables when "Breath" was involved. The joint front against the leader of the winged beasts had given birth to a harmless species of flowers at that time, but there could be far harsher outcomes if they were unlucky.

What if the next species of magical plants were carnivorous? What if unleashing so much power caused mutations in the creatures nearby? What if the lands involved never recovered from the battles?

Causing a war that would involve the powerhouses could only lead to more destruction.

That would render void the purpose of that battle. After all, there was no point in fighting if the winning forces couldn't seize suitable benefits.

There were more reasons behind First Prince's worries. The Royal was sure that King Elbas would be the next powerhouse to ascend, which meant that the Elbas family would face a period of weakness.

Creating grudges right before that could endanger the position of the Royals in the political environment of those Mortal Lands. There was even the chance that eventual enemy forces would aim to their destruction at that point.

So, breaking unwritten rules worried him, especially since the only allied organization of his family would have someone as untrustworthy as Ravaging Demon as its leader.

Of course, First Prince didn't mention those reasons. The way he saw it, Ravaging Demon was just a tool meant to benefit his family, so he had to keep him on his side.

"Mountains break, and skies fall," Ravaging Demon said after remaining silent for a while. "Do not worry about your resources. I'll compensate the Elbas family if I happen to destroy too many territories."

That answer didn't satisfy First Prince, but it was enough to ensure that the Royals would gain something from giving that cultivator access to the pool.

Still, he felt the need to remind him that his allies were a force that he couldn't ignore.

"I hope you will," First Prince said as he started to cross the entrance to exit that restricted area.

"Otherwise, we will make sure that you understand how advanced our inscription masters are. Demons might be flashy and dangerous, but it's in the silent and dark labs that monsters are born."

After that reminder, First Prince exited the restricted area and sealed the entrance, leaving the six cultivators from the Papral nation alone.

A moment of silence followed the Royal's departure, but Ravaging Demon's disciples quickly broke it to express their disagreement.

"Hmph, what can a member of the Elbas family even know about monsters."

"Indeed, they can only hide behind the power of their Patriarch. Anyone can be strong with a pile of inscribed items."

Those complaints continued while the six of them remained immersed in the pool, but Ravaging Demon eventually silenced them.

"Enough!" Ravaging Demon shouted, and his disciples quickly shut their mouths. "The Elbas family is strong, stronger than us. That's the whole reason why I have to take the initiative in the betrayal. The hatred of the world will converge once again on the Ravaging Demon Sect."

The disciples gulped when they heard that. They knew about the plan but imagining both the Hive and the Council coming after them was a dreadful sight.

After all, that wouldn't be the same as the war against the Shandal Empire. The invading forces were far stronger than that organization once they created a united front, while the situation would be far different once they betrayed the alliance.

The Ravaging Demon Sect and the Elbas family would be on an equal ground with the Hive and the Council, which meant that the losses inflicted at the moment of the betrayal would determine their advantage.

Also, that was the reason why they were waiting for the end of the war to act. They wanted to establish pacts with the Empire so that it would be forced to remain outside of that conflict.

"Don't fret though," Ravaging Demon said when he saw that he the hesitation in the eyes of his disciples. "My fire will eventually envelop the entirety of these Mortal Lands and create a path toward the higher planes. Then, I'll destroy them too."

Chapter 926 926. Arguing

Noah was unaware of the ploy brewing under the surface of that peaceful political situation. He knew that Ravaging Demon was up to something due to the recent ambush, but he couldn't imagine the scale of that event.

Also, both Faith and June were part of the organizations probably involved in the ambush. They had better chances to uncover something due to their position.

Noah was still in the mountain chain between the two areas of influence, but the environment had changed after he created the Blood Companion.

Most of the mountains around him had disappeared, replaced by piles of rubble and large boulders. The ground featured many cracks too, and every lifeform had escaped from that territory in the last hours.

The most evident change though was in the amount of primary energy that filled the air.

The environment had so much primary energy that it even failed to disperse. It was as if that lighter form of energy had replaced all the "Breath" in the area.

Noah had tested the abilities of the Blood Companion as soon as he completed it, and the results were in line with his expectations.

Snore was a lifeform at the bottom of the upper tier of the fifth rank. However, Noah had built its body with higher energy. That made its abilities stronger than those of the creatures on the same level.

Also, Noah fueled them with his darkness, which further increased the might that they were capable of.

Snore's abilities caused the release of primary energy too, which could work together with some of Noah's spells.

Blood Companions had always been a powerful addition to his arsenal, but Snore was far above Noah's previous ones in terms of utility, sheer power, and future usage.

Noah had kept in his mind one of the major weaknesses of the Body-inscription spell when he had created the body made of dark matter. He couldn't just waste time building a new body every time the old Blood Companion became too weak for his current level.

Snore was a lifeform capable of growth. It was independent, but connected to Noah and submitted to him in certain aspects. The only problem was its food.

As an existence made of higher energy, only Noah's dark matter was a suitable food. After all, that was the only form of energy capable of empowering and nourishing Snore's body.

That meant that Noah had added another expensive asset to his collection. The Demonic Sword needed magical beasts' corpses, while his Blood Companion required his higher energy, which meant large quantities of his darkness.

The trade though was worth the price, especially when he considered that those special lifeforms were beings that could potentially accompany him through the entirety of his cultivation journey.

The situation with the dark matter wasn't dire right now. Noah had reached the liquid stage, and that made the creation of higher energy easier since he would need to condense less "Breath".

Yet, he didn't expect his burning heart to remain at that level. His new center of power was bound to improve and harmonize with his existence as his body grew in power.

That would set new limits to what it could contain, and there was even a chance that the changes in his darkness would produce different dark stars in the future.

That didn't happen when his "Breath" reached the liquid stage. Still, Noah knew that it would be only natural for the dark stars to have different natures once he started to use even heavier elements.

As for what concerned the Demonic Sword, there wasn't a real solution to its hunger. Its situation had also worsened since it had experienced a breakthrough while Noah was testing Snore's abilities.

The Demonic Sword was unique, even among Noah's creations. Its entire structure worked as body, dantian, and sea of consciousness.

Yet, Noah had learnt that he couldn't consider it according to the regular schools. The Demonic Sword was too unique to fit specific labels.

Noah understood its level and knew that its growth was similar to that of the magical beasts. It would evolve once it had eaten enough to reach the breakthrough.

The living weapon's connection with Noah's individuality though worked as a second hurdle to cross to reach the breakthrough, which was why it had remained in the lower tier of the fifth rank for all those years.

Nevertheless, it had started to advance again after Noah had reached the liquid stage. That culminated in the sword progressing in the middle tier while he was busy testing Snore's abilities.

Of course, that was a good thing. Noah would be able to express even more power after the improvement of one of his core weapons.

However, he couldn't help but worry about the consumption of powerful magical beasts' corpses now that his sword had advanced.

Also, he was slightly annoyed that the Demonic Sword didn't advance before the battle with the Albino Snake. He would have avoided suffering injuries if he had access to that sort of power since the beginning of the fight.

Noah knew why the sword had advanced only at that moment.

Snore was different from the sword both in terms of type of living being and purpose in battle. Yet, it was also similar to the living weapon since it was one of the assets that Noah considered special.

The Demonic Sword had forced itself to advance when it sensed the appearance of a strong rival for Noah's affection. After all, he was a father for it.

The fact that both of them shared a connection with him also annoyed the sword. That almost caused him a headache due to the various emotions sent to his mind.

The sword worried that Noah could neglect it now that it had a more powerful asset at hand. Still, it was also proud to be the first of his living creation.

On the other hand, Snore only felt annoyed by that interaction. Its will belonged to a creature that had lived for more than a millennium, and it couldn't be bothered to deal with those petty things.

Also, it was far more potent than the sword at the moment, so he didn't feel the need to mind the emotions radiated by the Demonic Sword.

Snore would rather worry about its Master instead. Now that it had established a connection with Noah's mind, its vision had broadened, and it could understand the reason behind its name.

The fact that Noah still cared about that time when the Albino Snake had almost killed him in his sleep made Snore worried that it would have to face further punishments to relieve its Master's stress.

Of course, Noah wouldn't do that. Snore was his asset now and even an important one. He would do everything in his power to make it grow since that benefitted him in the end.

Just like that, Noah spent his time meditating in that destroyed and shattered territory, pondering about his next move while the two living beings argued in his mind.

Chapter 927 927. Options

Noah didn't leave the mountain chain immediately. His stash of magical beasts' corpses had grown thin in the last period, and that danger zone was the best place where to refill it.

Also, Snore was still becoming used to its body. Coupling its training with his hunts would settle both issues faster.

The Demonic Sword had advanced too, which meant that Noah had to test his battle prowess once again.

Noah spent weeks hunting in the mountain chain to tune his battle style to his new assets. Still, his mind was elsewhere most of the time since he had yet to decide what he would do next.

There were many projects available in front of him. He had yet to create a training method for his sea of consciousness, and he didn't even begin to fuse spells and martial arts.

There was a lot to research with the dark matter too. Noah had only started to use his higher energy as a material, but it contained too much power to be limited in that single field.

The most exciting aspect of the dark matter was how easily it imitated the world. It wasn't just something that could improve Noah's success rate and ability as an inscription master.

Yet, knowing that it had the potential for more incredible things wasn't enough. Noah would have to put years of research in that energy to learn about all its properties and limits.

The main issue was that he had just come out from two long experiments and only the last one managed to improve his battle prowess. Creating the higher energy had opened many paths for him, but that alone wasn't enough.

Cultivators would often lose themselves in their projects. It was normal to ignore the world and its political matter for centuries to complete a technique or an experiment that was vital to their journey.

Noah had done that too when he had to create his darkness. Failing at making his own "Breath" would have stopped him from growing.

Noah knew that he had it easier than most cultivators. The Divine Deduction technique shortened the time required by all his experiments and allowed him to continue focusing on his actual power even if he was secluded to research something.

Of course, he had never felt once that he didn't earn his current strength. He had started to create even before the events in the Coral Archipelago, and that was the very reason why he had managed to seize Divine Demon's inheritance.

His growth would have been slower without the Divine Deduction technique, but Noah was sure that he would have reached his current state anyway. It would have just taken more time.

The core issue in his indecisiveness was that he didn't know what he needed to prioritize right now. Noah had always gone after what gave him power faster, leaving the projects that would provide benefits in the long run as last.

However, each one of his experiments could take decades now that he was a rank 5 cultivator. His choice was among projects that he could complete in ten years and others that could even take a century!

Anything involving the dark matter as energy would even take more time since there didn't seem to be a limit to what it could do.

Nevertheless, a war was coming, and improving his power as much as he could appeared to be the right choice in his mind.

On the other hand, he wasn't sure that he could complete even his easiest projects before the war resumed. After all, it was about to start again anytime by then.

His choice ultimately fell on creating a training method for his mental sphere.

Inventing a new type of technique in that short time was impossible, and improving his centers of power as fast as he could help in that matter. A stronger mind meant faster reasoning, which would give him an easier time when dealing with the issues connected to his many experiments.

As for his higher energy, Noah wasn't even sure that he could understand the entirety of its potential before his body harmonized his burning heart with the other centers of power.

Also, he would need to remain in seclusion for decades performing tests based on hunches. It was better to focus on his mind and deal with those time-consuming problems after his foundation had grown again.

Noah decided to return to the new continent at some point, but he didn't spend much time in the neutral city anymore. He still executed his tasks as ambassador, but he would often go in the wilderness to hunt.

June had also started to being summoned more often in that period, so he wouldn't gain anything from remaining there.

Noah didn't need a training method for his mental sphere. The devouring abilities of his mental energy could provide him with all the improvements that he needed.

Yet, the drawback of that ability was quite annoying and forced him to spend long periods focusing on recovering the usual sturdiness that the walls of his mind had.

That was the reason why Kesier runes were so unique. They improved the power of the sea of consciousness without weakening its stability. They even enhanced its sturdiness.

Any other training method felt underwhelming when compared to the Kesier runes. Still, that was only normal, and most experts in the fifth rank or above had eventually learnt to accept it.

Noah had accepted that too, but he didn't give up on finding a better alternative training method.

It soon became clear to him that his spherical runes were the best tool for his intentions. They were still helping him modifying the nature of the walls of his mind, and they generated internal pressure, which was good when it came to a lack of sturdiness.

They were similar to the Kesier runes in that sense. Yet, they couldn't match the Kesier runes when it came to their efficiency.

'A pure expression of power,' Noah repeated Thirty-seven's words in his mind as he wandered in the sky above the central territories of the new continent.

He had already asked to the automaton information about the inscription method used to copy the Kesier runes. However, he had only obtained a series of inconclusive answers and a pile of books that described all the procedures involved in that field.

It turned out that copying a Kesier rune required multiple inscription methods which had been partially lost through time. There were formations, a school of runes called Copying Runes, and a vague talent for the Attunement method.

Noah could see himself spending time to learn another inscription method, but creating a copy of the Kesier runes might not be worth the effort.

There was a high chance that he could he would obtain the same results if he spent that time training his mind instead of researching for a method that did that.

So, he had begun to focus only on the core of the Kesier rune. If he couldn't copy them, he would create an item with similar purposes or build something that would focus on the sturdiness of his mind.

Chapter 928 928. Volunteers

Noah had created the spherical rune because he was experimenting on controlling the primary energy back then. Yet, the natives' inscription method had solved that issue before he could find another solution.

His spherical runes had become tools meant to enlarge his mental sphere at that point, and the primary energy inside them was necessary to avoid the discordant aptitude during the experiments with the living weapons.

The arrival of the higher energy had changed how Noah valued his assets. He didn't need to use the primary energy to create anymore, and even the runes that made use of it had become obsolete.

However, that was exactly how everything was supposed to work. The current state of his energies was in line with his individuality.

The primary energy was connected to his destruction. Creating wasn't its purpose, and it didn't suit its nature. After all, it was lighter than his other energies, which made it more fitting as a fuel rather than as a material.

Still, Noah's achievements with the Will-consuming runes weren't worthless. Instead, they opened the path for more spells and creations that would improve his battle prowess further.

Noah could generate more primary energy now that he had added Snore to his arsenal, and that would make the spells that depended on it more potent in battle. It was a cycle that made use of his creations to fuel abilities meant only to destroy.

Of course, they would require modifications to work with the new amount of energy, but Noah had improved both in cultivation level and experience with his creation. Upgrading the saber-shaped runes was easy, especially since he had added them to Snore's body too.

As for his spherical rune, Noah could only think of a way to turn it into a training method for the sea of consciousness. He needed to replace the primary energy inside them with dark matter and modify them so that the effects on the walls of his mind would be softer.

The higher energy was his heaviest energy and created an intense internal pressure once inserted in his mind. That was generally a good thing since it benefited the mind's width and sturdiness at the same time, but it also stressed the center of power a lot.

Even as a rank 5 mage, Noah's mind needed breaks. Only his dantian had become more resilient due to his hybrid status. His mental sphere was still frail.

Nevertheless, the matters that involved the mind were dangerous and could cause deadly repercussions. One error in the calculations could lead to injuries, and they were tricky to heal when they concerned the mental spheres.

Also, he had to be mindful of the long-term effects that putting such a powerful rune in his mind could cause. After all, he knew what constant influence could do on its walls.

Luckily for Noah, he had volunteers that wanted nothing more other than becoming able to control their instincts.

Noah started to spend most of his time in the central territories of the new continent after he set his mind on his latest projects. The Hive had released most of its hybrids there after the invading forces kicked the Shandal Empire away.

Most of those hybrids were unable to control themselves, and the minds of some of them had switched to a full beast mindset already. They couldn't live in the Hive's domes with that behavior. They needed a place where their aggression couldn't cause any damage.

The central territories of the new continent were the perfect place for them since they were mostly uninhabited and barren. Even the wildest hybrids could act freely there and don't bother anyone.

The fauna in that place had become quite peculiar in those years. Danielle and other powerful hybrids that managed to have some control over their minds had become pact leaders that handled the creatures in those lands.

It was as if those territories had become a natural reserve for hybrids, and the arrival of the three rank 5 creatures retrieved in the Shandal's separate dimension had only divided the various packs further.

That limited the number of hybrids lost due to natural causes and created some separated government that mainly discussed how to handle the mindless creatures better.

Of course, there were many experts keeping track of the evolution of that society. The Hive didn't want to fail to notice eventual signs of rebellion and insurgency.

That wasn't a pressing worry though since there weren't enough intelligent beings there. The control of the "government" was more focused on dividing the pacts rather than on gathering them to create a joint front.

Also, the hybrids knew that they need an organization of that world to help them. If they remained in that state, they wouldn't even have a chance to seize independence.

That was why a line of volunteers formed as soon as Noah announced that he was experimenting with techniques that could improve the seas of consciousness.

Noah had said multiple times that there wasn't a real solution to the mental instabilities of the hybrids, not yet at least. The best thing that they could do was to focus on improving their minds so that they could keep their instincts in check.

His experiments went smoothly with so many available test subjects. Some missteps occurred, and there were cases of hybrids injuring their minds through the years, but that was only normal.

A few of them even died during the initial phases of that project since Noah found it hard to balance the power of his rune when it came to rank 4 hybrids.

The experiment didn't concern only giving away runes that applied internal pressure on the mental spheres. Noah would even observe how the continuous exposition to that energy affected the walls of their minds.

Still, he obtained decent results, which eased the tension that had accumulated in the air due to the nearing of the war.

"When do you think the war will start?" June asked as she played with the tattoo on Noah's chest.

"A few years at best," Noah answered as he turned to stare at June lying right next to him.

The two of them were in the training area under the neutral city. June had just come back from one of her errands with the Elbas family, so Noah had used that chance to spend some valuable time with his lover.

"Years..." June murmured as she lost herself in Noah's vertical pupil. "Did we reach the two hundred years mark already?"

"I don't know either," Noah said as his eyes lost focus. "Decades pass every time I test something."

"Do you remember when you almost injured your centers of power to gain a few weeks' worth of training?" June said as the memories from the Royal Inheritance made her smile.

"Of course," Noah replied with a smile too. "You had to teach me how to take breaks."

The two of them remained there for hours before returning to their tasks.

One year later, the invading forces decided that it was time to resume the war.

Chapter 929 929. Slaves

The decision of the invading forces to attack again didn't arrive due to a specific event. It was an inevitable choice made after they saw that the decades spent in peace had made them surpass their previous level.

After all, more than seventy years had passed since the end of the war. That time was enough to nurture promising cultivators from the human ranks to the heroic ones!

Even old monsters had managed to improve in that period thanks to the experience gained in the battles, the training areas built in the new territories, and the Divine Stele if they had a water aptitude.

The world never stood still. It always moved forward together with the powerful existences living inside it, and it wasn't unusual to see a positive trend after gaining access to so many resources.

Of course, the improvements didn't arrive immediately. The Shandal Empire had burnt and destroyed the structures that it had built in those areas, which meant that the invading forces had to invest before they could seize benefits.

Also, the positive trend didn't concern the Empire since the invaders had confined it in the old continent.

Still, the overall population of the cultivators increased, and they even surpassed their previous level in terms of power.

It wasn't hard to check which organization had improved the most during the period of peace. The Heaven Tribulations were hard to miss when all the invading forces shared borders.

That wouldn't provide a complete overview of their growth since the Tribulations only signaled cultivators approaching the heroic ranks and not those advancing through stages. Yet, they revealed the

foundation of those organizations, which could lead to almost accurate guesses about their development.

The Hive stood out thanks to the soldiers from the Odrea nation. Lightning storms continuously fell from the skies above the territories of the Hive and began to slow down only when the war drew near.

Then, there were the other cultivators who had joined the war and other promising talents that had appeared in those years.

The Council and the Elbas family did not doubt that the Hive had gained the most out of the war.

The Elbas family followed the Hive in terms of the number of Tribulations. It didn't have nearly as many, but they were still numerous.

However, everyone in those Mortal Lands had noticed that the Royals had something going on under the surface. Everything had started since the creation of the dimensional portal and had continued when they forced the nobles to join their ranks with incredible promises.

No one dared to underestimate them just because their number of Tribulations didn't match the Hive.

As for the Council, it was even more mysterious.

The sects were quite secretive, and they only sent representatives in the Council. That meant that they could have different policies inside their domains and handle their growth as they wished.

Then, there was Ravaging Demon and the underground operations that seemed allowed by the majority of the Council.

Of the three invading forces, the Papral nation saw the least number of Heaven Tribulations in that peaceful period, but no one dared to underestimate it either.

Noah didn't know who had the idea to resume the war first, but he knew that there had been meetings among the higher-ups of each organization while he was busy with his projects.

At some point, he received a mental message from Elder Julia, and he stopped his experiments to join the rest of the troops in the charge toward the old continent.

Noah sat cross-legged in the sky above the western coast of the old continent. Elder Austin, Elder Julia, and Elder Ingrid stood in the air next to him, and they looked at the human troops deployed on the ground.

There were the higher-ups of the Elbas family and Council in separate groups at some distance from them. Their attention was on the ground too.

There was a large army made of human cultivators gathering near the sea, and many of them were still in the process of getting off the ships that had filled that area of the western coast.

The peripheral territories of the area of influence of the Empire were mostly barren lands filled with slaves and without any real value. The heroic cultivators of the Empire wouldn't bother to defend them, so Noah and the other's role now was to oversee the battle.

Of course, there was a limit to how much those existences cared about battles on that level. There was even a high chance that the Empire wouldn't use precious formations to defend those lands.

Those territories were useful to the Empire only as a source of Vostum, the material that most of its citizens used in their body-nourishing methods.

Still, its population had decreased after the war, and it was about to face more casualties. Losing mining camps was the last of its problems.

The Empire deployed a series of slaves to face the massive army. The clinking noise of the chains on their necks filled the entirety of the battlefield as they moved to face their enemies.

The slaves wore blank expressions. Noah guessed that they were even unaware of the situation around them according to what he knew about the inscribed chains of the Empire.

"This will be a massacre," Elder Ingrid commented as she watched the two armies nearing each other.

The other Elders didn't say anything to confute her words, and Noah knew that she was right too. It was pointless even to guess the outcome of that battle. It was clear that the Empire was only aiming to weaken the invading troops with that wave of slaves.

The battle unfolded as Elder Ingrid had predicted.

The hordes of human cultivators from the invading forces deployed effective combat formations that balanced their offense and defense. Instead, the slaves charged recklessly, uncaring that they were running toward certain death.

Their charge would continue even when some attacks bounced them back or cut away one of their limbs. It seemed that the only thought in their mind was to reach the enemy army.

That tactic eventually led to some casualty in the invader's side. The invaders endured that reckless horde for a while before deciding to switch for a more defensive battle formation.

The slaves charged anyway even when they saw that the invaders were luring them in smart traps or into empty areas that they would fill with attacks. They only cared about hurting their enemies.

Rivers of blood fell on that sandy terrain. The ground became red and turned muddy as corpses accumulated on its surface.

It was an atrocious sight, especially from Noah's position. However, he had played his part already among those human cultivators, and he had survived.

'The struggles of the ants appear pointless in the eyes of the dragon,' Noah thought as his mind wandered in the world of the laws. 'But a sword has no species, nor limits. It only knows that it has to cut to move forward.'

Chapter 930 930. Orb

The first battle on the old continent ended with a victory of the invading forces, but none of the higher-ups felt happy about it.

The Empire had managed to inflict decent losses due to the reckless charge of the slaves. Instead, the invaders had only gained territories that had been emptied of their resources already.

The Vostum was a good material, but the invading forces weren't interested in that body-nourishing technique since they had different types of societies. They didn't want every commoner to gain access to the cultivation journey.

The Council and the Elbas family had rendered cultivation techniques more accessible since the fall of the new continent, but they didn't want to imitate the Empire's approach. They wouldn't have a way to keep all those troops under their banners.

The citizens of the Empire had an unshakable faith in Shandal. There weren't oaths or deeds capable of matching such an intense feeling.

Also, having a divine entity wouldn't help the Council and the Elbas family either since those powerful beings would eventually leave the Mortal Lands. Not even Shandal wanted to remain in the lower plane. He was just forced to do so.

The human troops quickly built encampments in the new territories, and even the higher-ups decided to create a few caves. There were even rank 4 cultivators among them, and they felt the difference in the environment as soon as they started to cultivate.

For the natives of the new continent, the old one was simply a barren land. The possibility for those in the human ranks to walk freely and without the need for protection couldn't match the majestic sight of lands coming from a higher plane.

The ground didn't shine, and the air was thin. Their minds felt lighter in the old continent, but those territories lacked the breathtaking aura that filled every corner of the new landmass.

In the new continent, any habitable area was the best training zone in the world. In the old one, the "Breath" in the air was so scarce that the human cultivators found it challenging to refill their dantians now that they were all gathered in one region.

Of course, that was worse in the territories of the Empire. Still, the old continent had those issues when it came to training areas, which was the reason why Noah had valued the "Breath" blessings so much before the fall of the piece of Immortal Lands.

The ensuing battles unfolded similarly.

The Empire just threw hordes of slaves at the invading forces, and there was still no sign of a heroic cultivator on its end. It seemed that it was preparing something, but not even the Royals could guess what that was.

The problem was that the Empire had controlled those regions for millennia. There were too many secrets hidden under those exploited lands, and no external force had managed to investigate them properly before.

The threat of the god was too great, so only lone cultivators and experts with political missions had dared to venture inside the area of influence of the Empire. Even Noah had decided to avoid its core territories when he was only a rank 2 cultivator for the same reason.

However, he knew more than most since he had to explore those territories during his search for the remains of the Demon sects. He had never entered the countries meant only for the citizens of the Empire, but he had memorized the areas nearby.

In his mind, the Empire would probably keep using slaves until the invading forces reached its actual countries. In that way, it would only have to face tired troops while having access to the defensive measures in place.

That idea though didn't consider the heroic cultivators.

Noah knew that the Empire had slaves in the fourth rank, but he didn't know how willing it was to use them as cannon fodder. Even as slaves, they were still heroic assets.

Nevertheless, no clue came up in the ensuing battles either, and Noah and the others even began to consider the possibility that the powerful assets of the Empire had just left.

Yet, remaining in the old continent and using its accumulation of resources was still the most probable option, which was why the invading forces never stopped pressuring with their attacks.

All the higher-ups were waiting for heroic cultivators to appear on the other side. They knew that the victories and losses of the human armies were useful only to gain face with the other organizations. They didn't help in the overall situation of the war.

However, they failed to arrive even when the invaders were about to reach their domain.

Noah had already lost interest in those battles. He had been happy that his status had granted him a spot in the first line, but that was because he would have more chances to seize dantians in that way.

He didn't have any grudge with the Empire, and the only thing that interested him was its inventory since he was almost sure that it held techniques and spells of the darkness element.

As for the precious resources and eventual inscribed items with power in the sixth rank, Noah knew that they weren't there. Shandal would keep something so powerful in the separate dimension under the Odrea nation.

Fighting only for the sake of fighting was June's individuality. His depended on the situation, but it mostly required potential benefits to strive toward something.

So, Noah spent most of his time during a battle meditating and managing his headache.

A massive battle was raging on the ground, but Noah had his eyes closed as he sat cross-legged on the air. His focus was on a large and black orb radiating a faint pressure at the center of his sea of consciousness.

The insides of his mind had become less crowded. There weren't sphere-shaped runes on the walls anymore, and only the improved version of the saber-shaped rune remained.

There were also the Kesier runes, and Snore's ghostly figure coiled lazily next to them. Still, there was a large orb rotating right in front of them now.

The orb was the result of Noah's experiments with the training method for the mental sphere. It was a particular type of spherical rune that contained his higher energy and used his pride to alter the radiation that reached the walls of his mind.

Through his tests with the hybrids, Noah had managed to limit the intensity of the dark matter's radiations so that he could train all the time instead of taking away the orb whenever he needed a break.

However, his higher energy was incredibly heavy. His mind could endure it without taking breaks, but that left him with a constant headache that weighed on his head all the time.

Noah had tested and confirmed that his battle prowess wasn't affected by that rune, but the headache was still annoying, and it affected his mood.

A trace of hope appeared at some point. Noah sensed the arrival of a heroic cultivator on the battlefield and opened his eyes to recognize that Icy Cascade was flying behind the troops of the Empire.