

'It's over.'

Noah heaved a sigh and looked around him.

The signs of the battle were clearly shown on the terrain.

Large red puddles covered the ground and corpses filled the environment.

The mountain path had been ruined, holes and marks were everywhere on the terrain, normal carriages could not cross that road anymore.

'I should first gather all the valuable things and then rest. Even with a rank 2 dantian, I'm almost out of "Breath".'

Noah went to every corpse on the ground and searched for storage devices or valuable items.

The soldiers of the Muwlos family had no space-rings and their weapons could only be sold for pieces of gold so he simply ignored them.

By selling one Obsidian Credit, one could obtain a large amount of gold, that currency had completely lost any value in Noah's eyes.

The only exceptions in that group were Abel and Samuel from whom Noah obtained three space-rings.

As for the cultivators recruited by the Royal family, their situations were poor.

Most of them had been detained till they were needed for that mission while the others lived a simple life, spending every Credit they managed to gain as soon as it entered their pockets.

After all, their situation was different from Noah's.

He was enrolled in the academy and his strength was needed in the Royal inheritance, most of his wealth came from those two factors.

"Hey, could you see my face before I die?"

A voice sounded from an area on the battlefield.

Noah turned in its direction only to see Jean with a large bloody hole on her waist.

The bandages on her face had turned from yellow to red due to the blood that came out of her mouth.

Yet, she was still able to speak.

Noah neared her and inspected her body.

The wound was too deep, she was still losing blood from it and the internal injury seemed impossible to repair.

"Show me."

He said.

One of the reasons why he could fight against Abel while maintaining most of his strength was due to her poison, he wouldn't mind wasting a few seconds to fulfill her last wish.

Also, if she had seen his battle, he had to make sure that she died.

Jean slowly raised her hands and removed the bandages from her face.

Little by little, the scorched flesh behind them was revealed.

She had almost no flesh left on her face, her facial muscles were clearly visible but they were green and they constantly released some yellow pus.

That image was the complete opposite of her sensual body.

"Do you like it?"

She asked, trying to perform a smile with her ruined mouth.

"It's just a face."

Noah answered calmly, inspecting her heartbeat with his mental energy.

"I see."

She said closing her eyes and exhaling her last breath.

Noah sighed, that encounter left a bitter taste in his mouth.

'I could have ended in the same situation if things were just a bit different.'

In the end, Noah managed to retrieve a total of thirty thousand Credits from all the corpses, even though most of that sum came from the space-ring of the representative of the Royal family.

Also, some of them had inscribed weapons that he could sell which Noah gladly took with him.

Only Abel and Samuel's devices had still to be completely sorted out.

Noah sat in on the ground and began to inspect them.

Abel's ring only had a few thousand Credits in it and some potions of good quality which Noah took without hesitation.

The interiors of Samuel's personal storage device, instead, were quite surprising.

Not only its volume was of one hundred cubic meters, but it was also filled with all sorts of potions and cultivation resources.

Most importantly though, it contained fifty thousand Credits!

'Most of these items are useless to me, my cultivation level is too high. It seems that I will have a lot of things to sell once I go back to the Royal city.'

He had way more situational potions than he needed and a majority of them were of poor quality.

He would rather gain some extra Credit to purchase rank 4 materials than keeping items that he would never use.

In the end, he sorted everything out except for the ring containing spells and techniques.

'Eighty-three thousand Credits, nineteen inscribed weapons in the first rank, and more than one hundred situational potions. There is also this reagent to sell with all the storage devices that I found.'

He had taken Samuel's ring for himself but decided to sell his smaller one.

'Two hundred and fifty cubic meters of space is more than enough for my needs, I should just transform the other rings in Credits.'

According to his calculations, his total gains from that mission would surpass one hundred thousand Credits!

'Another inscribed weapon that I can't sell, I feel like I'm keeping trophies of my crimes.'

Noah thought, putting Samuel's weapon together with those of the heirs of the Balvan family.

'Now, it's time for the last ring.'

His eyes shone in excitement as he held the device containing the techniques and spells of the academy.

"Young man, I believe that one belongs to me."

A voice interrupted his line of thought and Noah raised his head to look in the direction where it came from.

A middle-aged man stood in the air with his hands behind his back.

He had short golden hair and wore a loose golden robe.

Even if Noah was staring right at him, he couldn't sense his presence with his mental energy.

'How strong is he?'

Noah guessed that the man came from the Royal family, who could arrive as soon as the battle was over after all?

He immediately put a shameful smile on his face and stood up, performing a deep bow to the cultivator hovering in the air.

"My lord, do you mind if I take a look at the scrolls inside this ring? You know, the battle has been extremely hard and most of my resources have been expended..."

The man snorted and opened his mouth to speak.

"Why do you think I've let you plunder the battlefield? Also, my son had already given you quite a sum for your services. If that big boulder of "Breath" blessing hadn't been personally retrieved by you, I would have never allowed for it to be divided."

Chapter 202 - 202. Game

'My son? Is he Thaddeus' father?'

Realization dawned upon Noah after he heard those words.

He hastily performed another bow in excuse.

"I'm sorry Your Majesty for not recognizing you!"

Thaddeus' father just waved his hand and scoffed softly.

The space-ring in Noah's hands moved by itself and floated toward the cultivator in the air.

Noah stared at it with wide eyes, he had never seen a mental energy so powerful!

'His sea of consciousness must be in the heroic ranks!'

The man inspected the ring and nodded before turning to leave.

"Your Majesty, please wait. I wonder if you could solve some of my doubts about this mission."

The cultivator stopped his tracks and turned to stare at the young man on the wasted mountain path.

"I guess you deserve some clarification to improve our future cooperation. Go ahead, ask me what you want."

Noah had a lot of doubts in his mind, everything about that mission didn't feel right.

"Why was the force of the Muwlos family so weak? As a large-size noble family, they should have rank 3 cultivators to use. And why was our force so weak? I bet that there are stronger criminals in your prisons."

Noah couldn't help but think that this mission was way less important than what Thaddeus made it seem.

'Sure, there were cultivators with rank 4 bodies, yet those should still be simple pawns if I consider the powers where they came from.'

The cultivator in the air thought for a bit after hearing Noah's words and then answered in a calm tone.

"You can think of this mission as a probe."

Noah listened attentively.

"Since the creation of our dynasty, the noble families have always tried to gain more power. Well, it's in the human nature to strive for greatness, if the chance presented itself, everyone would aim for the position of King."

"However, the conditions for our rule were fair and the nation developed under our domain. That's why there have never been that many revolts in the last two thousand years. There weren't many willing to risk their positions for the Cause."

"Yet, a cultivator of the light element appeared and many nobles loyal to the Cause felt that their time to rise had come. You might not know it but a rebellion is likely to happen in the next decades."

'So, it's still about Daniel. The nobles are betting on him for dethroning the Elbas family. He still has to explain everything though.'

"As for your questions, you are right, both us and the Muwlos family have stronger soldiers. Yet, a cultivator in the third rank is extremely valuable, only one step away from becoming an entity in the heroic ranks, powerful families are unwilling to use them as disposable soldiers. Also, our system is quite strict so to obtain a rank 3 cultivation technique you must have shown loyalty toward your organization. Sending them in battle would raise the importance of the mission."

Noah lowered his head.

He understood that rank 3 cultivators were at the peak of the human ranks.

'Thaddeus told me that I had to join them if I wanted a rank 3 cultivation technique too, I guess they really value those soldiers.'

Nevertheless, that still didn't completely explain the situation.

"Your Majesty, are you saying that an heir of a large-size noble family is less valuable than a soldier with a rank 3 dantian?"

Thaddeus' father sighed and shook his head.

"Young man, you must understand that the bigger one organization is, the more there will be internal fights. The Muwlos family didn't completely trust the

Cause so their patriarch had limited resources. The same goes for my branch of the Royal family. There is a tacit agreement between the powerful forces not to use strong cultivators for these missions because the moment rank 3 cultivators fight, even those in the heroic ranks would be dragged in the battle. The last thing we want is a war through all the country."

"So, the Muvwos family sent their heir as a representative for the nobles while our family's branch was appointed to handle the situation. My son and I work at close contact with peculiar individuals and want to create a hidden army with them, yet we can't hire every single criminal."

There was silence for an instant.

"We need to test them. We need to skim them. We need to be sure that, once that army is created, they won't turn against us."

Noah finally understood the meaning of his words.

"Your Majesty, are you saying that the noble families were just probing your reaction while you were just testing your new force?"

The man nodded and replied calmly.

"Exactly. The Muvwos family attempted to gain some advantage out of their Cause and failed. The Royal family was testing its new army and obtained some results. In any case, the nobles can still create a new academy, even without our techniques, they were just unsure of our reaction."

'Basically, it was just a casual matter in his eyes.'

"Do we have that little value in your eyes?"

Noah couldn't help but ask.

He felt like his actions didn't matter at all, as if he had fought for a small political game between the Royals and the nobles.



"Well, there is a genius in every generation. Your situation is peculiar because of your element but, until you reach the heroic ranks, you will always be just one human."

The cultivator in the air turned to leave but then stopped as if remembering something.

"Oh, you might be happy to know that we are willing to make you the captain of our new force. Keep working for us like you did till now and your future will be ensured."

Noah showed a bright smile and bowed, excitedly thanking him for his words.

Yet, Noah's eyes under the hood were dark and cold, the position of the captain didn't appeal to him in the slightest.

He raised his head and saw that the man had disappeared, leaving him alone on the battlefield.

Anger filled him as he went back to the cave on the side of the mountain.

#### Chapter 203 - 203. Birthright

On one side, there were the nobles that wanted more power and wanted to dethrone the Elbas family.

They tried to probe a reaction from the Royals to understand their line of rule and sent one of the heirs of a large-size noble family for the mission.

On the other one, there were the Royals that wanted to maintain control over their subjects.

They could not personally attack Samuel's group because doing that would lead to a public uproar but they also wanted to limit the growth of the other noble families.

That's why they used the criminals that they were gathering for the creation of a hidden army.

In a world where birthright decided most of your future, there was an overabundance of individuals that broke the rules in order to become stronger.

Those individuals were under the control of Thaddeus' branch of the Royal family.

Noah clearly understood why the Royals needed to create such an army.

'There are too many noble families. No matter how strong they are or for how long they have accumulated resources, one family can't match hundreds of them. Yet, if the Royal dynasty manages to create soldiers out of criminals, they would obtain the perfect expendable army and would fix the issue of the numerical disadvantage.'

He thought after going back to the cave to rest.

Noah didn't want to stay in that place for long but he needed at least a few hours to recover from the battle.

His sea of consciousness and dantian were almost empty, he needed time to refill them.

Luckily, he had enough potions to use which largely quickened his rate of recovery.

'I was used as a pawn in their political games. The Royals wanted to test the strength of their new force while the nobles wanted to see what kind of reaction the Elbas would have. Even the heir of a large-size family is nothing in the eyes of cultivators in the heroic ranks.'

He clearly remembered the cultivator's words.

"You are just one human". I hate to admit it but he is right, with my little strength I can't avoid being involved in these matters. Refusing them would just aggravate our relationship and my anonymity depends on their goodwill. If I want to keep my freedom, I have to leave.'

Inevitably, Noah began to think about abandoning the Utra nation and escaping where the Elbas family and the Balvan family could not reach him.

'I still have things to do here though, especially the matter about the forging.'

He still couldn't leave.

He needed a safe environment where to experiment with his creations and he also needed the resources of the capital, the Royal city offered too many opportunities.

'No wonder cultivators don't want to leave it and ultimately accept being on the Royals paybook. Sacrificing freedom for a smooth cultivation journey seems the smartest thing to do.'

If Noah didn't have his wild ambitions, he would also think of joining the ranks of the Royal family.

'However, for how long will they support me? Will they allow me to become a rank 4 cultivator? Will they allow me to attempt in the breakthroughs for the divine ranks? I don't think so.'

A ruler, in order to govern, had to be stronger than its subjects, it couldn't allow for individuals to surpass its level.

Noah was sure that if he joined some organizations, he would soon be suppressed like it had happened in the inner circle of Balvan mansion.

He sighed thinking about that.

His energies had still to recover so he had time to sort his thoughts.

'Is this world all about birthright?'

Noah ultimately had that doubt.

'Birth defines your social status, the number of techniques that you can obtain, the spells, and so on. Sadly, I'm not an exception as most of my battle prowess derives from my element.'

Noah wasn't underestimating himself.

He knew that, even if he considered only his martial art, he was one of the best warriors of his generation.

He had trained nonstop since the age of eight after all, his determination and diligence were unmatched.

However, most of his overwhelming strength came from the Demonic form which expressed the full power of the darkness element.

'Does my value strictly depend on my element? If I had a common aptitude, would I still be this powerful?'

Noah lingered on those questions for a while before determination filled his eyes.

'I obtained the Demonic form spell because I was the best of my generation. I surpassed nobles and nurtured soldiers to obtain it. Everything I have, I took it with my own hands.'

There was no reason to overthink issues over which he had no control.

'I might have been lucky to be born with this aptitude but I've also had to risk my life for each of my improvements. I would have been a great cultivator even if I was of the fire element.'

He stood up as soon as he resolved his doubts, moving toward the exit of the cave.

Noah didn't want to stay too much in that place.

Even if the Muwlos family had a tacit agreement to not use powerful cultivators, that wouldn't prevent Samuel's father from arriving on the battlefield and kill the criminal that took his son's life.

'To prove it, I will create with my own hands something that surpasses every birthright.'

His resolve was steeled, he knew exactly what he had to do.

'I need to buy new weapons, preferably inscribed items in the second rank. I need to sell all the items that I don't need and stash rank 4 materials to be always ready to escape. I need to forge using the Demonic form as a material. I need to bring my body in the heroic ranks. In the end, I need to create my own techniques.'

Noah still had some of Abel's blood to absorb but his priority was returning to the Royal city at that moment.

'Time to go back!'

#### Chapter 204 - 204. Explosions

Weeks passed after the battle near Vonduhr.

The official report was that the soldiers from the Muwlos family had been assaulted by bandits and the young heir, Samuel, lost his life in the process.

However, among the large-size families, the truth was clearly known.

The families loyal to the Cause thought that by using a noble heir that was also a former student in the academy, the reaction of the Royals wouldn't have been so harsh.

Yet, their expectations weren't met and they suffered quite a loss.

The soldiers in their mansion were more valuable than the criminals that they faced.

The Royals could refill those numbers at ease while the nobles had to slowly nurture worthy guards, it was clear who had been the winner in that event.

That's why their plans were delayed and an apparent peace returned since there hadn't been consequences after that battle.

Noah vaguely guessed much but he simply didn't care.

He had been busy selling all his useless items and buying new weapons and materials.

He also absorbed Abel's remaining blood, slightly boosting the strength of his body.

Ultimately, he gained the piece of "Breath" blessing, one hundred and ten thousand Credits, two new inscribed sabers, new rank 4 materials, and a large number of potions from the mission.

Even though he was still angry about how he had been used by the Royals, he had to admit that his gains when he worked with them were always extremely satisfactory.

**BOOOM!**

An explosion rang out from the reinforced room of his accommodation that made the whole building tremble.

Noah had resumed his experiments in the Elemental forging method but he still couldn't obtain some good results.

The bones of the Undead chameleon had successfully mimicked the properties of his blood but the toxic smoke would always corrode the material, even if at a slower pace than before.

Yet, at that pace, Noah was somewhat able to mix the two materials.

Though, as the corrosion began, the equilibrium between the two substances would break, creating a chain reaction that ultimately led to an explosion.

"Do you want to destroy the whole house?"

Ivor shouted, appearing from the other room of the habitation.

"Why is it so hard! And why do they always explode!"

Noah's curse resounded from the center of the reinforced room.

The inscriptions on the wall were starting to lose their light, it seemed that they had been through a lot in order to reach that state.

"It's already the tenth time and the power of the explosions has gradually grown! Usually, that means that you are getting closer to forge something stable but I'm worried that the building won't hold till that point."

Ivor commented, adding something else.

"Maybe it's an issue with the material."

"Of course, it's the materials!"

Noah answered loudly before laying on the floor.

'Since my body is still on the third rank, its blood can't completely affect the chameleon bones, it simply doesn't have the power to do so. Should I wait for the breakthrough?'

It wasn't even half a year since he became eighteen, even if Abel's blood had boosted his strength quite a bit, the peak of the third rank was still at some distance away from his grasp.

'No, that would take too much. I should just hope that the other nine bones will benefit from the prolonged refinement.'

He still had nine sealed buckets containing the magical beast's material immersed in his blood.

Apparently, due to his blood being too weak, one month of refinement was far from enough.

Noah sighed and stood up, two white sabers appeared in his hands as he did that.

Those weapons were the new inscribed items that he had bought.

The inscription on them vastly increased their durability, allowing Noah to feel at ease in case he was forced to use the Demonic form again.

He found out that the inscribed items that could fix themselves were rare and extremely valuable, that's why he had to settle for the increased durability.

'At least they are in the second rank even if only in the low tier. They should be able to keep up for a few battles.'

As his mental sphere enlarged, his Demonic form would become stronger, hastening the consumption of his weapons.

'I really need to forge a weapon with the smoke of my spell otherwise I would have to stockpile inscribed weapons forever.'

He had returned to his usual training routine.

Yin body and Dark vortex during the night while Kesier rune, Elemental forging, and martial art during the day.

However, the improvements of his body and dantian were not as slow as before due to the big piece of "Breath" blessing placed on the ground.

He had still more than one month of paid rent so he simply focused on his cultivation.

Like that, days passed.

Explosions would ring out every day, threatening the integrity of the reinforced room.



Ivor began to exit the habitation as soon as he felt that his student's creations were about to explode in order to avoid an increase in his headache.

However, one day, there were no explosions.

Noah was overseeing the forging of his eighteenth bone.

The black smoke slowly seeped into the reddish piece of magical beast.

After more than two months of refinement, its color had changed and even its internal composition was heavily modified.

The two substances mixed and their shapes changed according to Noah's control.

Its circumference diminished, increasing the density and the sturdiness of the item.

Its edges became sharper and a pointy tip began to form on one of its sides.

Then, the corrosion began.

Noah was prepared, he had seen that same reaction happen seventeen times already!

He hastily removed the incubating membrane, letting the leftovers of the process disperse in the room.

Smoke and broken dark-red shards fell everywhere as the item between Noah's hands diminished in size.

From eighty centimeters to fifty.

From fifty centimeters to twenty.

Noah was cutting off every part that was nearing the explosion point, controlling the chain reaction that would lead to a complete waste of the rank 4 material!

Eliminating the unstable parts would reduce the effective power of the item but it made possible for the forging to continue.

Noah's attention was completely on the internal composition of his creation.

Every time he saw signs of instability, he would manipulate that specific part to separate from the core.

Little by little, the item in his hands reached the length of a Moon needle.

Yet, the forging was not complete.

The toxic smoke continued to corrode the bone, forcing Noah to cut even more pieces from it.

From the size of a needle to the one of a small shard.

From a shard to a fingernail.

From a fingernail to nothing.

The item completely turned into dust, the forging had failed.

However, Noah was excited.

'Finally, it didn't explode! This is the right method to forge with my current materials, I just have to accept that I can't create a complete weapon while I have a rank 3 body.'

What he was aiming for with those processes was to gather experience toward what would eventually be his main weapon.

Yet, his body needed to match the rank of the other material and only the chameleon's bone was not enough to create something sturdy.

The Elemental forging method required patience and incessant experimentation, one could not obtain results in just a few months, especially once the materials' level rose.

'I have one last refined bone, I need to at least have some slight success with that one. As for the other materials, I should just wait for my body to reach the heroic ranks.'

With the wealth obtained in his last mission, Noah had bought more rank 4 materials, mainly Undead chameleon's bones.

"No explosions today?"

Ivor appeared on the edge of the door, warily watching the reinforced room.

"I've tried Annette's stabilization method and it had some results."

Noah answered.

The idea of cutting off the unstable parts was not his, it came from the accumulated knowledge in the inscription method that Ivor had passed him.

It would be stupid for Noah not to use the previous experiences of the inscription masters of the Elemental forging method, he had access to all their notes after all.

"Oh, that one. It surely works nicely but it inevitably lowers the power of the finished product. Yet, it's the first step toward a complete creation."

Noah's interest was piqued.

"What do you mean by that?"

He asked, those moments were the only occasions where Ivor could actually help him so he didn't hold back any of his questions.

"Well, even if you waste most of the materials, the remaining stable part would still be an inscribed item, a complete product. Annette worked with dangerous and wild substances, her solution was to create many small complete products and then forging them again in a bigger item. There are many problems involved with that method though, she could only attempt in it

because she was quite wealthy and she had no problems refilling the wasted materials."

Ivor explained, making Noah nod in understanding.

'Even if I don't consider the enormous number of materials needed to successfully apply that method, there is the problem of doing another round of forging on an already inscribed item. Also, there is more expenditure of absorbed "Breath" and if the second forging is to fail, one would lose everything. It does manage to maintain the initial power though and maybe even increase it.'

Seeing that Noah was sorting his options, Ivor left the room and returned to his jars.

He knew that in order to be successful in the Elemental forging method, a lot of solitary experimentation was required.

Ivor sighed, taking out his knife and softly caressing it.

'For such a young man to have the will to forge, it means that he had gone through many hardships already. Is it wrong to feel blessed for having found such a cursed student?'

Meanwhile, Noah went to rest.

His mind was fixed on not wasting his last refined bone, he wanted to make sure that his attempt was perfect!

That day he didn't train, all he did was reviewing the process in every little detail.

At dawn, he opened the last sealed bucket and took out the dark-red material.

His sea of consciousness was used by then in storing gaseous "Breath" in the second rank, the amount that remained in his mental sphere wasn't enough to create the usual headache.

The "Breath" was consumed, the small saber over his mental energy diminished in size until only a tiny amount of it remained to hover there.

A small sphere made of toxic smoke appeared in his left hand while his right one held steadily the beast's bone.

'Begin!'

The incubating membrane enveloped the two materials and the smoke gathered around the bone.

He had been through that process nineteen times already, his manipulation was smooth and rapid.

Yet, as the two materials fused, the usual traces of instability appeared.

Noah didn't waste time and directly cut away every unstable part.

The incubating membrane was mainly used to keep the inscription masters safe from dangers relative to the forging.

However, Noah immediately removed it, laying the item on the floor and stretching one of his hands over it to better control the toxic smoke.

The instabilities accumulated and Noah was forced to remove more and more pieces of the item.

Dark-red pebbles shot out in every part of the room and black smoke came out from the severed areas, making the inscriptions in the room flicker.

Since there was less material to forge, Noah chose to diminish the quantity of toxic smoke in the forced fusion!

Smoke continued to come out of the bone and small solid parts shot out everywhere, sometimes even scratching Noah's skin in the process.

Yet, the item on the floor became darker and darker, the two substances were successfully mixing!

'Just a little bit more!'

Noah shouted in his mind as he removed even more unstable pieces.

In the end, the forging ended and a small black shard remained on the ground.

It was only the size of a pinkie and extremely thin, it seemed frail beyond reason but it was solid!

Noah picked it up and inspected it, a sense of danger was exuded from that little shard.

'Second rank, middle tier. To think that with just one rank 4 material it can already reach such power, the Demonic form spell is incredible! Pity, it's only a one-use item.'

His creation was too thin, it couldn't withstand the power that it could unleash.

'Nevertheless, this is only an initial prototype and I can now confirm that my spell can become the core of my weapons! Let's see, I should call it Demonic Saber.'

At that moment though he remembered his conversation with Ivor when he had passed down his legacy.

A slight smile appeared on Noah's face as he decided in his mind.

'I guess I'll call it Demonic Sword, that scrounger needs some recognition after all.'

Chapter 206 - 206. Excited

'It's a pity that I can't really test it, it would be such a waste.'

Noah thought, placing the shard on the floor.

As soon as he did that though, the inscriptions on the wall of the room began to flicker in a similar way to when the explosion occurred.

'What?'

Noah was confused and inspected his creation.

A faint corrosion was happening on the wooden floor where the shard was placed, it seemed that just by being in contact with the inscribed item the effects of the toxic smoke would activate.

Yet, the shard was losing its black color and some gray tones began to appear.

Noah hastily took the shard back in his hands and heaved a sigh of relief seeing that the room returned to its normal state.

'That's a bit more powerful than I expected.'

Noah thought, noticing the faint mark on the floor.

'I guess I can't completely judge the amount of danger it exudes since the spell from which it was created is harmless to me. I believe this is my strongest attack now.'

In his Demonic form, he could match the attacks of a rank 2 cultivator in the liquid stage.

However, that was quite common.

Spells were stronger than martial arts, it was no wonder that he could fight on even ground with Abel.

Yet, the shard had the power of the liquid stage without being powered by "Breath", Noah was rather optimistic about its strength.

'If I manage to make two sabers with the same process and use my martial art while wielding them, my normal attacks will hold the same power as a spell! Right, I should test that thing first.'

His mental energy was expended and the hand holding the shard began to emit black smoke.

The inscriptions in the room flickered again to withstand the partial Demonic form but there was no reaction coming from the shard, it stood among the smoke without undergoing the slight corrosion.

'I knew it! If I create my weapons in this way, I would solve the issue with the Demonic form! I would have normal attacks that match spells in power and that can be further empowered with the spells themselves, I'm getting excited just by thinking about that.'

His current sabers were inscribed items in the second rank but they were focused on durability.

However, the Demonic sword was completely offensive, just a little shard could create a reaction in the reinforced room, Noah found it impossible to imagine the full power of the complete weapon.

Like Manuel could cast way more spells than he was capable of due to his weapon, Noah would eventually wield weapons able to mimic his strongest spell in power!

'Wait, can I keep it in the space-ring? I'm technically wearing it so the corrosion should not apply.'

Noah put the shard in his first ring and carefully inspected its interiors.

The shard laid in the separate space without causing any reaction from it.

Noah looked at it for a while before heaving another sigh of relief.

'If I was to create a sword that could not be kept in a space-ring, then I would have to create a sheath capable of holding it.'

Noah didn't even want to think about that, just having some initial success in creating something with his toxic smoke had proven itself quite a challenge.



If he had to further forge where to put it, he couldn't imagine the amount of experimentation that he had to go through.

'I guess that all I can do now is hasten the breakthrough of my body as much as I can, yet there aren't many methods available for that.'

He had become tolerant to the Beast's quintessence and the other drugs in that same field were either weaker or of a similar principle, simply cultivating would profit him more.

'Maybe if I was to use the Blood drain spell with the "Breath" blessing in my possession, I might be able to reduce the time needed to reach the peak of the third rank.'

The Forging of the Seven Hells had left him with seven acupoints capable of absorbing "Breath", his fast improvements were mostly due to that.

Yet, even with such training speed, reaching the limits of the human ranks was not easy.

The body required a lot of time to accumulate the "Breath" needed for the breakthrough and, since Noah's nourishment method had special abilities attached to it, it required even more time.

'Cultivation requires time, there's nothing I can do about that. I'll just use my remaining time in this habitation to cultivate and then resort to the Blood drain to further speed my improvements.'

He set his schedule and immediately acted.

Noah had still more than one month of paid rent which he exploited as much as he could.

His growth in that place was stable due to the increased density of "Breath" and the "Breath" blessing.

However, that came at the price of four thousand Credits per month, he didn't have enough money to stay for two years in that place.

Also, he had understood by then that purely relying on the high density of "Breath" was not the smartest choice.

The centers of power of the humans needed time to adapt to their new strength and stressing them too much would ultimately lead to injuries.

That's why he didn't focus only on the Yin body but diligently trained all his centers of power.

In the end, his four months of rent expired and he was forced to leave the habitation.

Of his centers of power, his sea of consciousness was the one that had improved the most.

It couldn't be helped though, he didn't have limits linked to his age and his many ordeals had only reinforced his mental sphere.

Also, he had two blood companions that constantly pressured the expansion of the sphere as well as the "Breath" that he had refilled since his last forging.

His dantian had also enlarged but it was clear that a lot of time was needed for it to reach the liquid stage.

His body was the same: its power had increased but there was still a long time before it could not be nourished anymore.

Nevertheless, Noah still left the habitation and went toward the Hunter's guild.

#### Chapter 207 - 207. Complaints

Noah's biggest issue in using the Blood drain spell to boost his body's strength was that he could only use rank 3 magical beasts in the process.

Rank 4 creatures gave more nourishment but he simply didn't have the power to fight them.

What happened with Abel was a fluke, his physical strength was in the third rank and he was also injured, making him the perfect target for Noah's spells.

However, magical beasts had a far stronger body than cultivators, Noah didn't have the confidence to beat the latter let alone the beasts.

'I guess, I'll be forced to strive for quantity over quality.'

Noah thought.

He was inspecting the various boards listing the hunting zones in the Hunter's guild.

'They are quite crowded, as expected.'

He sighed internally as he inspected the low-danger areas featuring large numbers of rank 3 beasts.

'Basically, all the hunters that can't join parties hunting rank 4 creatures are here.'

There were a lot of names next to those zones, Noah guessed that all the cultivators having only a rank 3 body were there.

There were only a few willing to enter areas inhabited by rank 4 creatures, life had way more value than money after all.

'Should I go again in a danger zone? I don't see anything with the same favorable conditions though.'

What he meant for favorable conditions was that he could escape from the powerful beasts living there.

'I need a rank 4 body as soon as possible, I feel like most of the best resources are hidden behind that hurdle.'

A powerful body wasn't only needed to match the powerful beasts' might.

Entering in the fourth rank meant that a cultivator could increase the level of its dantian more freely.

Noah knew that his body was slightly holding back the improvements of his dantian.

After all, his battle prowess was that of a rank 2 cultivator in the liquid stage due to the power of his Demonic form.

Noah was sure that his full strength was enough to wound at least the weaker rank 4 beings.

Yet, the liquid stage was generally the limit of a cultivator with a rank 3 body, therefore it was obvious to think that the body itself would slow down the improvements of the dantian.

'William had to obtain a rank 4 body-nourishing method before being able to advance to the third rank of the dantian and he was way older than me. I'm incredibly strong for my age but I need to be even stronger if I want to stop being a puppet.'

Balvan family, Thaddeus, and Thaddeus' father could all use him as they wished.

The reason was that he was too weak compared to such powers.

'Running away now can't even benefit me that much. What if I escape in the wilderness and a rank 4 creature from which I can't escape appears? I need to be able to protect myself, my next escape won't be as safe as my previous one after all.'

When he had escaped from Eccentric Thunder's inheritance ground, he was traveling toward the academy.

If he was to leave the Utra nation though, he could meet unforeseen dangers.

His wild dreams could end with just one unlucky encounter and Noah had already resolved himself to never bet on his luck again.

'Quantity it is. I just hope that the other hunters won't get in my way like Doris did, there is a limit to how much I can kill without being discovered.'

He thought, signing his name under many different boards.

If hunters began to disappear everywhere he went, that would undoubtedly raise some suspect.

As for the strength of those weaker hunters, he was quite confident that he could beat any of them one versus one.

Those hunters had at best a rank 3 body after all, which meant that their level had to be below the solid stage of the second rank of the dantian.

Not only was Noah's battle prowess in the liquid stage, but he was also quite confident in escaping due to Echo's wings and the Warp spell.

'I should also drop the scrounger somewhere cheap.'

He thought, turning to exit the guild.

Time passed quickly.

Noah would return to the capital rarely since he was busy with his training.

He would travel to many hunting zones, killing as many rank 3 magical beasts as he could with the Blood drain spell and storing the most valuables corpses in his space-rings.

Since he had two hundred and fifty cubic meters of space, the number of corpses that he could carry increased, which allowed him to visit many hunting zones before he was forced to return to the Royal city.

His days were spent in solitude in each low-danger area, training every night next to the piece of "Breath" blessing and using the Blood drain spell when hunting beasts.

His body improved quickly and his finances did the same, yet rumors inevitably began to spread in the Hunter's guild.

That couldn't be helped.

In each hunting zone Noah's name appeared, the number of magical beasts would drastically decrease.

The weaker hunters in the guild were rank 2 cultivators as well but they couldn't keep up with Noah's hunting pace.

His knowledge about the magical beasts was too deep, only experienced hunters could match it, and that allowed him to always be the first to find the most populated lairs in each area.

Also, he could move freely in each environment thanks to Echo's wings which quickened his search for the creatures.

"I saw Vance's name next to the Solitary Mountain, the price of the Winged mouse will diminish soon."

"Don't even tell me that. Two weeks ago, I was in Red Lake in the East of the country to hunt Singing ducks. When I arrived there, I didn't find a single feather left. Only when I came back, I noticed Vance's name in that area."

"That kid from the academy is too daring! I had to sleep outside of the capital for an entire month because I didn't manage to hunt a single rank 3 beast! I say we should coalize and force him to slow down his killing."

The hunters in the main hall of the guild complained to each other in front of a jug of wine.

Their job became less remunerative since Noah focused on hunting.

"He is doing everything by the rules, we can't really do anything to him."

An old hunter said to those seated next to him.

"He killed five hundred rank 3 magical beasts in five months! I don't even have the strength to travel in each of those hunting zones in that period of time! He must be restricted to rank 4 creatures!"

Chapter 208 - 208. Talk

"But you can join the hunts for rank 4 creatures only after you obtain a rank 4 body. Otherwise, you will just die to one of their casual strikes."

Another hunter argued.

A rank 4 body was the minimum requirement to face a rank 4 creature.

It couldn't be helped, humans had far weaker bodies compared to magical beasts, trying to hunt them with a rank 3 body would mean seeking death.

"I'm not saying that he has to hunt them but that he must join the hunting group for them! He can just be appointed to gathering intel while the others will fight the beasts."

The cultivators on that table feel in thought after those words.

What the hunter said made sense, Noah would just be accompanying the hunting group while getting the increased pay without the need to fight.

No one would refuse free Credits, especially if they came from rank 4 beasts since their value was far higher than any rank 3 creature.

The hunters didn't know that Noah was killing that much because he wanted to exploit the strengthening of the Blood drain spell as much as he could.

Then, one of the hunters broke the silence and spoke in a soft voice.

"This can be done, but we must ask for Kurt's permission first."

Meanwhile, Noah was cultivating in a cave on Silent Mountain.

It was still day so he couldn't train in the Yin body, yet the energy accumulated by his spell was still slightly boosting his strength.

After a few minutes, he opened his eyes and exhaled a disappointed sigh.

'Even with all my killing, my improvements are not so noticeable, rank 3 beasts are simply too weak.'

In those five months, he had tried to speed the advancements of his body as much as he could but he only managed to gain a few weeks of training.

'At this pace, I will reach the peak of the third rank in a bit less than a year and a half, that's too slow.'

If normal cultivators were to hear his thought, they would feel the urge to slap him.

He was only eighteen and a half but his centers of power were at an unbelievable level!

His sea of consciousness was in the second rank and was enlarging at a way faster pace than normal cultivators.

With the Kesier rune, the "Breath" inside it, and his two blood companions, the training speed of that center of power was incredible!

His dantian was enlarging but still remained in the gaseous stage of the second rank, as it improved, there restriction that his body imposed became more obvious.

His body was in the third rank in the upper tier but it still needed some time to reach the peak of the rank.

Normal cultivators could barely match the rank of his body at that age while the rank of his dantian was an incredible feat reserved for geniuses.



As for his sea of consciousness, no one in the history of that world had ever achieved the second rank in such a short time.

Noah knew that his mental sphere was his biggest advantage compared to the other cultivators of that world, even if just for what concerned cultivators in the human rank.

As his rank increased, he would face more cultivators in the heroic rank that had had all the time they needed to train the sea of consciousness.

After all, balance was needed for a smooth increase in power.

The lifespan of cultivators depended on their bodies and dantian.

Once the body reached the fourth rank, living for a couple of centuries was not a problem.

Of course, reaching the fourth rank of the dantian gave much more vitality and power, yet that was an extremely hard feat.

Not only training it was slower, but the cultivators also had to overcome the Heaven Tribulation which was considered the hardest of the three.

However, that was still far in the future so Noah didn't worry about it.

All his thoughts were focused on increasing the strength of his body as fast as he could so to finally take a peek at the power in the heroic ranks.

'Sadly, there isn't much more that I can do. I should just go back to the guild and empty my space-rings. At least my Credits are increasing with all these hunts.'

He had killed more than five hundred rank 3 magical beasts in those five months.

Since the average price of each of those creatures was around thirty Credits, he had accumulated more than fifteen thousand Credits!

Also, he wasn't spending much in rents since he was most of the time outside the capital.

'At least the rules concerning low-danger areas are laxer, I can do whatever I want and no one can complain.'

He thought, standing up to return to the Royal city, after Doris' matter, he had carefully memorized the rules.

Nevertheless, as he returned to the guild a few days later, he discovered that he was quite wrong.

Noah went through the main door of the guild uncaringly, he had become used to the stares in his direction in the last months.

Yet, that time, Kurt stood up from one of the tables and blocked his path.

'Does he want to test me again?'

Noah thought with a bit of uncertainty.

"We need to talk."

Kurt said, indicating a free seat on a table crowded with hunters.

'What did I do this time?'

"Can I sell the corpses of the magical beasts first? I don't want their value to diminish, some of them are already rotting."

Noah said in an honest tone.

The weaker hunters on the table next to him gnashed with their teeth after hearing those words, some of them directly gulped their entire jugs to suppress the irritation that they felt.

It was impossible for Noah to not notice those reactions and he looked with a confused gaze toward Kurt as if asking for some explanation.

Kurt sighed and massaged his temples before answering to that gaze.

"Go and sell the beasts but come here right after. There is something that we need to discuss."

"Did I do something wrong?"

Noah asked.

Kurt scratched the back of his head before giving a short answer.

"No, you simply hunt too much."

#### Chapter 209 - 209. Refusals

In the main hall of the Hunter's guild, a dozen cultivators were sitting around Noah.

Some of them were shouting and pointing at him, others were angrily drinking from their jugs, it didn't seem that the conversation was peaceful.

"No, I won't stop. No, I don't care if you can't gain Credits due to my behavior. If you can't match my hunting speed, you should just consider changing your profession. Is this clear enough for you?"

Noah said calmly.

He had sold the magical beasts' corpses and then joined the other hunters on their table.

Yet, as soon as the conversation started, he was asked to slow his killing of rank 3 magical beasts.

It was obvious that there had been a lot of complaints after his initial refusal for the conversation to reach that point.

"Impudent! We have families here in the capital! We have maintained ourselves for decades hunting magical beasts! I won't accept that a new hunter, that gained his entry with the help of the Royals, will ruin my job!"

Many hunters nodded in approval at the words of one of the oldest cultivators among them.

However, Noah just shrugged his shoulders and continued to speak calmly.

"The rules are with me, you can't do anything to force me to stop. Also, if a newly arrived cultivator can do better than a hunter with years of experience, then you should really consider trying out another job."

His words were sharp and inevitably increased the anger of the other hunters.

"Don't you dare speak to me like that, I'm your senior! If you don't want to do it with the nice ways, that I will just have to s-"

The cultivator's phrase was interrupted, or to say it better, he couldn't force the words out of his mouth.

As soon as the trace of a threat appeared in his words, Noah released his cold pressure and fixed his gaze on the hunter that had just spoken.

Fear was the only thing that the hunter could feel at that moment.

Noah's blue eyes were fixed on him and a cold atmosphere was created around him.

"You will what? Why do you think that I hunt faster than you all? Don't tell me that you are so stupid to actually think that you can beat me."

Gulps resounded from the throats of the weaker hunters, they had to admit that they were quite scared of the young man in front of them.

"Let's all calm down. Avery, remember that you are asking a favor not ordering someone around. Vance, please avoid threatening your fellow hunters, they are only trying to do their job after all."

Kurt spoke, joining the conversation.

He had been silent for the whole time, hoping that things could be solved between the weaker hunters but he realized that the argument would only escalate if it was left as it was.

"Vance, why don't you leave some hunting areas to your colleagues? If you continue like this, only danger zones will have rank 3 magical beasts left."

Noah shrugged his shoulders again and replied to him.

"So? That's not my problem. As a member of the guild, I can hunt in low-danger zones freely. These are the rules, if you want me to change my methods, you must first change the rules."

A wave of irritation went through Kurt after he heard those words.

Noah knew that he was in the right so he would just use the word "rules" every time he could.

He knew that he was being unreasonable but he couldn't care less.

"What if the hunters were to give you a share of their gains? That way you wouldn't suffer a loss and would have to spend less time hunting."

Kurt said, suppressing his anger to speak in a kind way to Noah.

"No, I need the beasts, I have my use for them."

Another refusal came out of Noah's mouth.

He didn't care about Credits, his behavior was only aimed to speed up the improvements of his body.

Kurt was smiling but his expression froze after hearing those words.

He thought that everything could be solved by paying him but when he understood that Noah's targets were actually the beasts, he lost any hope in convincing him to drop his behavior.

"Vance, what do you think of joining the hunts for rank 4 creatures?"

The hunters were silenced by that question.

If Noah was to join the group of the stronger cultivators, all their problems would be solved!

"No, I like to be alive."

However, Noah refused again.

There were no reasons for him to go into such dangerous missions.

Also, he needed to use the Blood drain spell on the beasts when they were still alive and preferably without anyone noticing it.

"What if you were to take care only of the gathering intelligence part? Your knowledge about magical beasts should be among the best in the guild since you have been instructed in the academy."

Noah still shook his head.

"I need the bodies and they must be alive. Also, I need to be alone when I do my stuff."

Kurt felt that a headache was coming.

The biggest problem was that Noah had not broken any rule.

His was one of the rare situations when a cultivator was too strong for rank 3 magical beasts but still not powerful enough for rank 4 ones.

When such individuals appeared, the guild would just pay their rent for a period of time and wait for them to join the hunts for rank 4 magical beasts.

Yet, Noah's situation was different.

'He is purposely searching for magical beasts, the reason should be linked to his cultivation technique.'

Kurt thought.

There were many cultivation techniques in that world, some quite straightforward while others quite peculiar.

It wasn't difficult to understand that Noah's behavior was linked to his training, after all, that was the only possible reason if they excluded money.

Kurt seated silently for a long time.

He was the one leading the hunts for rank 4 magical beasts, that's why he was considered some sort of leader by his fellow hunters.

After a few minutes of stares in his direction, he opened his mouth to ask a simple question.

"Are dying beasts good for you?"

Chapter 210 - 210. Knowledge

In a grassland near Elbas city called Mammoth Plain, seven cultivators walked at a slow pace, warily inspecting their surroundings.

Those plains were a danger zone named after the type of magical beasts that mainly inhabited it.

They were, of course, elephant-type creatures.

"Kurt, remind me why we are bringing this kid with us"

One of the cultivators asked Kurt who was walking in the vanguard position.

"Newton, stop complaining. We need to show him that we can safely kill a rank 4 beast or he won't stop hunting rank 3 creatures. I know that you don't care about the weaker hunters' situation but they have harassed me to no end because of Vance."

Newton snorted and gave a scolding gaze to the young man at the end of the group.

That man was, of course, Noah.

After the discussion in the guild, he had reached an agreement with Kurt.

Noah would join the group hunting rank 4 creatures and gather information about the beasts without the need to join their fight.

Yet, he will receive the same share of profits from the corpses of the beasts and will also inflict the finishing blow once the fight was over, also, he added two more conditions.

The first one was that no one was allowed to watch him as he killed the creature, the Blood drain spell would expose his aptitude after all.

The other one was that he had to first see with his own eyes how the hunting group worked to be sure that he could be safe even in that environment.

He would never entrust his life to someone that he didn't know so he wanted to be sure of their capabilities first.

Kurt didn't mind the conditions and accepted, ultimately leading to the situation where they were.

The Mammoth Plain was a danger zone fairly close to the capital, which meant that it had undergone many cleaning operations.

The magical beasts in the fourth rank were few and scarce, making that area one of the safest danger zones.

Also, elephant-types magical beasts usually had poor reproductive abilities which strongly limited the number of beasts in each pack.

That's why, even if they had been walking in the yellow grassland for more than a day, they didn't meet any creature with rank superior to the first.

'They all have a rank 4 body and a dantian at least in the liquid stage of the second rank.'

Noah judged.



The cultivators in front of him were among the strongest hunters in the guild. Nevertheless, with the exception of Kurt, all of them had a second profession. Some of them were city soldiers or enrolled in the Royal army, others were personal guards of wealthy nobles, they all had another job that fully valued their strength.

After all, at their level, they could become captain of the guards of some noble family, yet they chose to remain in the Royal city due to the illimited opportunities that it offered.

Their bodies were the proof that the restrictions over the techniques in the Royal city were far laxer than in any other noble mansion where someone had to accumulate years of loyal services just to obtain a rank 4 nourishing method.

As for their dantian, the liquid stage of the second rank was generally considered the minimum strength required to hurt rank 4 creatures which, coupled with their number, allowed them to successfully hunt rank 4 magical beasts.

'Kurt should be the strongest since his body is incredibly tough. Newton and the two sisters, Ada and Ella, have a common rank 4 body but their dantian should be in the solid stage of the second rank. As for Hazel and Vic, they too have a common rank 4 body but their dantian is weaker, probably in the liquid stage.'

Noah summarized in his mind.

Judging the strength of those around him had become a habit by then.

'I can fight Hazel or Vic if I use the Demonic form but I don't have the slightest confidence in winning. Maybe, if I catch them by surprise and use the Demonic sword, I might be able to severely injure them.'

He was comparing himself to the weakest of that group.

His Demonic form could increase his battle prowess by one stage.

If he was to use that form with the shard that he had created, he could unleash one attack having the power of the solid stage!

'That's too naïve though. I don't know the actual power of the shard, I'm just sure that it's in the middle tier of the second rank. Also, all of them should have some spells so their actual battle prowess is hard to predict.'

Martial arts were weaker than spells, they were generally considered as an imitation of spells after all.

That's why it wasn't rare for a cultivator to have a battle prowess superior to the level of their dantian, one simply needed a strong offensive spell to achieve that feat.

"So, you were a student at the academy, right? Let's see if listening to the explanations of some professors can beat actual experience. What have you discovered about our target from the traces on the terrain?"

Ada spoke to Noah.

She was originally the one appointed to gather clues about the beasts but, since Noah had joined their group, she felt like her position was challenged.

Noah was forced to interrupt the mental evaluation of his companions and began to sort his thoughts to answer Ada.

"We are following the tracks of a pack of Shrinking elephants with around fifteen beasts of rank varying between the second and the third. There is only one rank 4 specimen with them which also explains why Kurt chose this area to show me your strength."

The hunters stopped their tracks and stared at Noah with wide eyes.

They were quite surprised about how detailed his explanation was and could not help but look at him in a new light.

"How can you be sure of it?"

Ada continued.

She knew that there was only one magical beast in the fourth rank but that information came from a report of one of the scouts in the capital of which Noah wasn't aware!

Noah pointed to a small hole on the terrain below the yellow grass.

"Rank 4 Shrinking elephants have the habit of reducing their size as much as they can when they travel with their pack. However, they can't reduce their weight. A smaller surface with the same weight will create deeper traces on the ground."