

THUD!

A loud thud resounded in the reinforced room as Noah fell from the ceiling and landed on the floor.

"Are you ok?"

Nina was still speechless in a corner, she had long abandoned the idea of understanding his behavior.

'My will is finally able to push my martial art into the realm of the heroic ranks!'

Noah, however, was completely ignoring her.

The breakthrough of his mind had opened him countless possibilities, he just had to understand the limits of his will.

'This is amazing! My mental energy is not limited to the spells, infusing it in the forging process will increase the effects of my creations by a large margin!'

Every superior rank would increase the power of the center of power by a lot, it was needless to say how much the power of his creations would increase if Noah was to forge with his improved will.

A stronger will would produce stronger effects, the "Breath" infused by his own meaning was able to push a rank 3 martial art to the fourth rank, it was obvious that the same would apply to his creations.

Then, he felt two hands blocking his shoulders.

Noah found a pissed Nina watching him closely and holding him still, she was using her real strength, Noah wasn't able to escape from her grasp.

"Stop ignoring me!"

She pouted as she pushed Noah toward the wall.

"If this is some form of injury, you need to calm down before the damage spreads."

Her words were sincere, Noah could see her concern from her expression.

He smiled at that sight and unconsciously caressed her cheek, his pale hand made a stark contrast with her dark smooth skin as he reassured her.

"Don't worry, I've simply become a rank 3 mage and got too excited, I'm fine."

His words though had the opposite effect.

"Ra-rank 3 mage?"

Nina muttered those words with an astonished expression and Noah nodded to answer.

"B-but, you are not even thirty!"

He shrugged his shoulders as a reply.

Nina released her grasp and raised her hand to hold the one caressing her face.

"What kind of monster are you..."

She then laid her body on his and together they sat on the floor with Noah caringly holding her between his arms.

"Does this mean that you'll leave?"

She asked in a soft voice while snuggling her head right below his jaw, Noah could feel her words reverberating through his throat.

"It won't be now but, yes, I'll leave soon."

Noah didn't lie to her, he had been clear about his intentions since the beginning of their relationship.

"I'll miss you."

She said, adjusting her position in his embrace.

Noah looked at the beautiful woman in his arms and he couldn't help but smile at her sight.

They have been together for more than one year, even if their relationship had started as a simple method to relieve their stress, they unavoidably began to feel some affection toward each other.

"You could come with me."

Noah said those words even if he knew that they were wrong.

He had managed to escape from his many pursuers because he was always alone, he could easily warp away to make them lose his tracks.

Being with someone, however, would slow his march and hinder his journey, Noah knew that being alone was for the best.

Yet, he felt some unwillingness in abandoning the peaceful feelings that Nina gave him, that's why he spoke those words.

"You could remain here."

Nina replied to him using a similar proposal.

She was a soldier, she had defended her country for years and endured the battles against the Empire since the moment she became a rank 2 cultivator.

Her country was everything to her, she was willing to die for it even if that meant delaying the inevitable, that was her pride.

Noah had his ambition but so did she, their goals simply required for them to separate.

Noah didn't answer her, he limited himself to caressing her curly hair.

She did the same, her hand found its way inside his robe where it could caress Noah's chest.

They stood in silence, their eyes were shut as they enjoyed each other's warmth, a sensation that they were so used to feel but that now seemed ready to vanish forever as soon as they released themselves.

"Noah."

Nina broke the silence, calling Noah with his real name and raising her head to stare at the young man capable of wonders.

"Yes?"

He turned his head toward her, her sensual figure was covered by the brightness of her brown eyes.

"Let's just make the best out of the time that we have left, let's leave the sorrow for when you are gone."

She was smiling as she spoke, Noah couldn't help but lower his head to kiss her in response.

She accepted his kiss and replied with one of her own, the two of them then laid themselves on the floor, uncaring of the fact that there was no mat, to continue with their soft effusions.

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A couple of days had to pass before they managed to release each other, they didn't leave the room at all during that time.

Then, Noah was seen exiting the reinforced room with a determined expression, the aura around him seemed to exude a dense seriousness.

Noah went directly for the central building of the city where a cultivator in the third rank blocked the entrance.

"Call Lisa, I need a meeting."

Noah didn't waste time and directly went to the point, the soldier nodded at his words and entered the building to convey his words.

Noah's status had become far loftier in the past months.

All the soldiers looked at him with gratitude and respect, he was sharing their same fate after all and his creations helped them in the monthly battles, they considered him as some sort of benefactor.

That's why the rank 3 guard didn't ask any question, he simply contacted Lisa through his methods.

Just a few minutes had to pass before Noah was brought in the main hall of the building where Lisa, Leo, Luke, and Logan were waiting for him.

"What is it? We were planning the next battle tactic."

Lisa explained as soon as he entered the hall.

Noah crossed his arms over his chest before speaking in a stern tone.

"I'm here to talk about my last battle."

Chapter 312 - 312. Parting gifts

"Last battle?"

Noah's words made the four cultivators raise their heads in his direction.

"What do you mean by that?"

Lisa asked.

She had kept track of his battle records and knew that his kill count had still to reach half of the agreed number so she was surprised by his statement.

Lisa and Logan couldn't find anything different when they watched him but Leo and Luke had surprised expression as they inspected him.

Noah's cultivation level was completely exposed to their sight when he first arrived in the country but now it was cloudy, they couldn't make out the limits of his power.

The reason for that was that he had enveloped himself with a layer of mental energy, which could somewhat block the protectors' probing now that his mind had reached the third rank.

"You... What has happened to you?"

Leo couldn't hold his curiosity back and directly gave voice to what he had in mind.

Lisa and Logan turned toward him but they realized that something was wrong when they saw that even Luke seemed interested in Noah's answer.

"I've become a rank 3 mage."

Noah nonchalantly said.

The eyes of the four cultivators widened at that statement, even Leo and Luke with their usual demeanor as elders couldn't suppress their surprise.

"It's no big deal, with the Mausoleum strengthening my mental sphere and my mass production of inscribed items, I'm surprised it has even taken this long."

Noah uncaringly replied to those gazes and neared the table that they encircled, a map depicting the valley at the border of the country was placed there, he could make out the formation of the army from the disposition of the pawns over it.

"I have an offer to make and, in my opinion, it would be far more beneficial than simply killing one hundred red soldiers. Do I have your attention?"

His words were somewhat able to bring them back from their stupor but they still eyed Noah with strange gazes.

It couldn't be helped, Noah had the aspect of a young man, that image didn't match the one of a mage at the peak of the human ranks at all!

"Speak."

Lisa was the first to react.

Her cultivation level was too low, she didn't know the hardships that a cultivator had to go through to reach the third rank of the sea of consciousness so she simply labeled Noah as a genius in her mind.

Noah sighed before beginning his speech.

"Our first meeting was quite traumatic, I entered your country and was captured. Initially, I was pissed about that but now I understand that you are just doing everything in your power to survive."

He still remembered his first meeting with Logan, when his centers of power had been threatened.

The truth was that Noah had overreacted: The Odra country didn't have any ill intention, they just wanted his intel about the outside world and his battle prowess.

Other than that, there wasn't much to expect from a random outsider.

"Your situation is tragic but you were still willing to pay me for my services on the battlefield. Then, you saw that I could perform inscriptions and you gave me access to your inventory, allowing me to keep some of my creations. All in all, I can say that I've been treated quite well."

The Odra country had simply treated him like one of its soldiers, it has just forced him to share the fate of its citizens.

Differently from the Balvan mansion and the Royal dynasty, the Odra country was a prison where everyone was a prisoner, Noah could relate with its soldiers since he had experienced their lives for more than one year.

"That's why, instead of limiting myself to the killing of one hundred cultivators in the solid stage, I've decided to make a new deal."

Noah sighed again, he had thought about this plan as he searched for an escape route and that was the best option.

"This deal comprises two gifts on my part and one on yours, I'd like to start with your part."

"You want us to help you with your escape. The Empire is on our borders and you can't safely leave without our help. This can be done, what do you offer?"

Lisa interrupted him, she could clearly understand Noah's difficulties, they were the same that forced her citizens inside the formation.

Noah sighed for the third time, Lisa was inexperienced when it came to cultivation but her political skills had already surpassed Noah's, he wasn't her match in that field.

"My first parting gift will be turning all your materials in the inventory into weapons for future usage. I should be able to create a few thousand Instabilities and Hidden blasts with the remaining beasts that fit their structure which would give your nation a few years of stability. Mind you, the power of these new weapons would be higher since my mind is in the third rank now."

Lisa listened to his words and nodded, she liked that idea.

She turned toward Leo and saw that he also nodded after a loud sigh.

He handled the inventory after all, losing so many materials over disposable weapon was a heavy blow on the reserves of the country.

However, they didn't have a better use for them, exchanging them for years of overwhelming victories was a good trade due to their unique situation.



"So, you want to avoid the battlefield to concentrate on your inscriptions, I understand, I believe that you already have an idea of how many months you will need. What about your second parting gift?"

Lisa pressed Noah to continue.

His improved mind had an increased thinking speed and could perform some tasks of the Elemental forging method in far less time, Noah had already a vague idea of the time needed to use all the materials that fit his criteria.

Noah wore a stern expression as he pointed toward the map depicting the valley.

"I will give you a battle where all the soldiers of the Empire, except those in the third rank, will die."

#### Chapter 313 - 313. Preparations

Noah exited the main building of the city to return to his room, an agreement had been reached, now it was time to prepare.

'The capabilities of my mind have been vastly improved, forging that many items is not a problem. I even have more free time.'

The third Kesier rune had formed in his mind, he didn't have the fourth one so his afternoons were now free.

That didn't mean that he would stop training his mental sphere though, the Kesier runes were the safest and fastest method that the humans had developed but it wasn't the only one.

Noah had already decided to store even larger quantities of "Breath" in his sea of consciousness to make up for the lack of Kesier runes, his two blood companions radiated virtually no pressure but the "Breath" was still able to affect his sphere.

'Once I find a rank 4 magical beast of the darkness element, the expansion of my sphere should pick up some speed. Well, at least I have a way to continue training.'

Noah couldn't bear slowing the growth of his mind.

Since he was reborn, his sea of consciousness had been his biggest advantage, he didn't want to let go of the center of power that made him a "monster".

The training of the mind consisted in enlarging its sphere, all he had to do was to find ways to increase the internal pressure to obtain a similar effect.

The "Breath" could cover for part of it but Noah still felt that it was too slow, that's why he had finally made up his mind about having a blood companion in the heroic ranks.

The problem was that the Odra country didn't have any danger zone, he had to wait for his escape before searching for a rank 4 beast of the darkness element.

As for how he was going to spend his remaining time inside the nation, he had already made a schedule.

His nights would continue in the Mausoleum, his dantian was still in the liquid stage, such unbalance between his centers of power was not a good thing, his "Breath" wouldn't be able to keep up with the power of his spells.

The Demonic form spell was part of his plan, he needed to increase his reserves of "Breath" or he would deplete them with one simple activation.

Spells required two types of energy, "Breath" and mental energy.

Since Noah was now a rank 3 mage, his Demonic form would reflect that rank.

However, his dantian was still in the liquid stage, the "Breath" inside it was barely enough to fuel such a powerful spell.

The solid stage was still out of his reach so he could only focus on increasing his reserves of liquid "Breath" before his last battle.

When he returned to his room, Nina welcomed him with a warm hug.

"How did it go?"

"Lisa agreed, I will focus on transforming all the suitable beasts' corpses into weapons before my last battle. I should start immediately, I'm quite eager to test the limits of this new power."

Noah had many things to test with his new sea of consciousness.

He had to tune his martial art to his needs, he had verified its strength but he still needed to integrate it with his battle style which required some time.

Also, he still had to see how his breakthrough affected his forging!

Imbuing his will inside the "Breath" had taken him less than a minute and that was just the refining part!

Manipulating the structure of the materials was a hard task but he was now far stronger than before, he could easily inscribe at a higher speed.

"I know you, once you start training, there is nothing that can stop you. Just be sure to leave some time for me."

Nina said with a pissed expression.

Noah smiled, Nina wanted to make the best out of their remaining time but he needed time to prepare, what he had in mind required a lot of preparation.

That's why he made sure to satisfy her first before starting with his session of forging.

The material had yet to arrive after all, he could spend time caring about the woman that relieved his nights for more than a year.

The materials arrived in a few hours, Nina left him alone as soon as a soldier delivered the goods.

Noah began to work immediately, he was eager to test his new power.

"Breath" was imbued with his will as he held the materials for the Instabilities in his hands, a black membrane was created in a few seconds, Noah was already able to perform those two tasks at the same time.

The materials began to fuse as soon as the "Breath" invaded their structure, their form slowly changed under Noah's control, a blue sphere was created and the gray spikes were carefully layered around its shape.

In less than an hour, an Instability was created.

Noah smiled at its sight, the power that it held far surpassed his previous creations, it was a disposable weapon with the power of the solid stage!

'This is amazing! At this pace, I will be able to create more than ten weapons per day!'

He was amazed by his forging speed, the benefits of a rank 3 sea of consciousness were already showing themselves.

Then, he began to forge a Hidden blast.

Its creation took even less time, its form was simpler after all, he didn't even need to focus during the forging.

A needle with a threatening amount of "Breath" concentrated in its little shape was created, Noah could already see that its power had surpassed each of its previous Hidden blasts.

Less than an hour had passed but two items had been forged, that speed left Noah speechless!

'This will take even less than I thought! Forging, training, I only need three months to be ready for my plan.'

It was with those thoughts that he resumed his forging, he seemed possessed by the new power that he held!

#### Chapter 314 - 314. Last charge

Four months passed before Noah returned to the battlefield.

During that time, he had become used to his new power and carefully explored its limits.

As it turned out, he could store far more "Breath" than he had initially thought before his headache returned, his mind firmly opposed any internal pressure before Noah could force it to enlarge.

The third rank was the peak of the human ranks after all, Noah was basically one step away from becoming an inhuman entity.

His forging speed continued to rise in that period, Leo had seen how the magical beast's corpses in the inventory quickly transformed into weapons for the army.

Also, Noah trained his martial art in the meantime.

Nina was the perfect sparring partner, she was stronger than him in a fight without spells, Noah could accurately tell how effective his form was in a real battle thanks to that.

His dantian was nearing the limits of the liquid stage, the weapons had been forged, and his martial art had been implemented in his fighting style, he had no reason to delay his departure.

The Empire strictly guarded the borders of the Odrea country so he couldn't just leave, he had to resort to a scheme to continue in his journey.

That's why, after three months of absence, the Hooded devil reappeared in the valley at the borders of the formation.

The army of the Empire didn't have it easy during his absence, the soldiers of the Odrea country had used the weapons previously created by Noah to maintain their supremacy on the battlefield, the Empire was barely able to contain its losses.

The Instabilities and the Hidden blasts provided too much support to their fights, the Empire couldn't come up with any cheap countermeasure.

The Odrea country was, after all, a training ground, there was a limit to how much the Empire was willing to invest to skim its soldiers.

That's why blue cultivators continued to die in high number, they could only improve their defensive methods as they fought.

Yet, the sight of the blue figure with its face covered by a black hood gave them an ominous feeling, they could already predict that something would be different that time.

"Remember the plan, don't get near me when my part starts."

Noah gave the last warning to Logan before joining the ranks of the blue soldiers.

Even with his rank 3 sea of consciousness, he was still in the liquid stage of the second rank, he wasn't breaking any rule in wearing that color.

Logan sighed at that sight.

He knew all the specifics of the plan, Noah was ready to take a big risk to ensure his escape, his mind replayed the scenes of his capture as he stared at the hooded figure disappearing in the sea of blue robes.

'Not even love could stop him, there was no way to make it stay since the beginning.'

He was aware of his relationship with Nina.

He had initially been happy to learn that Noah was slowly integrating himself with the nation but he had misjudged his determination.

'He can only see the path to power.'

That realization was the last thought that he had about Noah before redirecting his attention to the red troops around him, they had a vital role in the incoming battle.

"Is everyone ready?"

He asked in a soft voice to the man next to him.

"Yes, fifty soldiers are armed with the new Instabilities and Hidden blasts, we had never carried this much firepower in a single battle."

Logan nodded at his reply.

"Good, let's give them a taste of our new strength."

The soldiers around him smiled at his words.

The years spent fighting had rooted the seeds of hate deep into their very essence, there was nothing that they enjoyed more than slaughtering the pawns of the Empire.

"I can't wait."

The soldier next to Logan gave voice to those words before joining the battle formation.

Then, the sun reached its highest point in the sky, signaling the beginning of the battle.

Spells and Instabilities were launched as soon as the two armies began to move.

The soldiers of the Empire were used by then at that sight, the red cultivators in their ranks used their strongest defensive spells to stop most of the power of that offensive, they were doing their best to limit the losses between the blue soldiers.

However, some of them still died.

It couldn't be helped, those two waves of attack were too much to handle with just their spells, only the help of the black cultivators could prevent those losses.

Yet, they were focused on the opponents with a power similar to theirs, they couldn't waste their energy to protect the weaklings in the army.

The armies then clashed, the vanguards of both sides merged together to form a messy line of battle where the cultivators in the liquid stage could obtain some fast kills, blood began to sprout in every direction.

Then, a scene that the soldiers of Empire had not seen in a while played itself right under their gazes.

Noah, the Hooded devil that had brought chaos in the valley many times, was forcing his way in the enemy army again!

His black sabers took the lives of many surprised soldiers, most of them had only heard stories about his weapons after all, they didn't manage to move away like their training ordered.

A straight line of corpses and maimed bodies was created, Noah didn't seem like he was going to stop any time soon.

Yet, even though most of the blue soldiers were new recruits, the red ones weren't.



They were generally more experienced than the blue ones and most of them had seen Noah's feats in the past, they reacted immediately at the sight of his actions.

Ten red robes left their ranks and ran toward the hooded figure that was unleashing precise attacks right in the middle of their army.

They soon reached him, encircling him and blocking his escape route.

They were set on killing that nuisance once for all!

'Just as planned.'

However, Noah had expected a similar situation and smiled under his hood seeing that his prediction was accurate.

He didn't wait for them to make the first move, his figure immediately began to emit black smoke that quickly transformed him into a horned fiend.

#### Chapter 315 - 315. Sprint

A black cloud was quickly formed around Noah, his fiendish appearance had changed again after the roots in his sea of consciousness entangled themselves on the third Kesier rune.

The horns and the tail of the Demonic form had grown and Noah's fingers had become sharp pointy fangs, the spell now made him look like a real demon rather than a human figure with a gaseous armor.

The "Breath" in his dantian depleted quickly, the liquid "Breath" wasn't enough to sustain a spell with the power of the third rank so Noah's reserves diminished at a fast pace, hurrying him to end the battle as fast as he could.

The ten red cultivators stopped their tracks at the sight of the black smoke, the amount of danger that they felt coming from it surpassed that of his black sabers, they had no confidence in safely crossing it.

That's why, after a brief pause, they all began to cast their spells.

The soldiers of the Empire had created a large empty area around Noah, they didn't want to get caught in his battle with the red troops.

That's why the cultivators in the solid stage didn't hesitate to launch spells, the area was empty after all, they wouldn't hurt their allies with those destructive attacks.

Ice shards, fireballs, and beasts of various elements shot toward Noah at high speed, he watched how those spells cut the air, aiming to crash on his exposed figure.

'Even if my Demonic form is in the third rank now, defending from so many spells will just deplete more of my "Breath", it's not worth it.'

The spells seemed to slow their pace as soon as he began to think, the thinking speed of a rank 3 sea of consciousness gave him the feeling that the world around him was slowing down as he pondered on his next step.

'It's time to use my martial art.'

Noah concluded in his mind and pressed twice on the terrain while bending his body in a half crouched position.

A shock-wave resounded on the battlefield, the ground under Noah's foot cracked and a deep mark was dug in it.

As for Noah, his leap surpassed the maximum speed that his body was able to reach, making him dodge all the spells at once!

**BOOOM!**

The spells of the red cultivators converged in his previous position, creating a loud explosion that sent destructive shockwaves in every direction.

Those were the most powerful attacks of cultivators in the solid stage of the second rank after all, their power couldn't be underestimated.

Yet, Noah dodged them quite easily, the effectiveness of a martial art that focused on movement could be already seen!

'I have only thirty more of these sprints, I need to use them well.'

Noah thought as he redirected his gaze toward one of the red soldiers around him.

His martial art used refined "Breath" to function, Noah had used the same procedure of the Elemental forging method to surpass the limits that the diagram of a rank 0 spell had.

That meant that Noah had to store some "Breath" already imbued with his will in his sea of consciousness to perform his martial art in battle.

His mental sphere had enlarged after the breakthrough but it still couldn't even get close to the storage capabilities of a dantian, the amount of refined "Breath" that Noah could keep with him all the time was limited.

Of course, before this battle, he had refined all the "Breath" inside his mind to be ready to use his martial art as much as he could.

The result was that he was able to perform thirty-one sprints that surpassed the maximum speed of his body, they weren't many but it was the best that Noah could accomplish with his current level.

He would need for his dantian to have some breakthroughs before he could further upgrade his martial art.

A mental beam shot from Noah's eyes toward the head of one of the red soldiers.

Noah felt an intense burning sensation on his eyes, the power of the Mental tremor spell had increased due to his breakthrough, meaning that the aftereffects on his body would be greater.

His veins bulged and turned black under the armor of smoke, the liquid "Breath" inside the membrane around his heart was injected in his circulatory system to aid the recovery of his body, the burning sensation on his eyes stopped almost immediately.

As for the unlucky red cultivator, he bore the full power of the mental beam.

His mental sphere tried to oppose the shockwave that made its way into his mind but its defenses were broken as soon as the beam touched the sphere.

A deep crack formed where the beam landed, a hole was dug inside the soldier's mind as he still stared in surprise at the shining blue eyes that were fixed on him.

Then, the beam invaded his mind and crashed on the other side of the sphere, dispersing its power as soon as it touched the internal border of the sphere.

A tremor reverberated throughout the mind of the soldier which deepened the cracks that the beam had created.

In a few instants, his mental sphere completely crumbled, dispersing the soldier's thoughts in the material world.

A cultivator in the solid stage died in one attack!

'The Mental tremor fits my current level more, it basically only uses mental energy, allowing me to avoid the issue with my weak "Breath".'

Noah judged while he moved his gaze toward the other soldiers.

They looked in fear at the fiend that had killed one of their companions with one simple look but they still launched another wave of spells.

Noah performed again his martial art, shooting toward two red soldiers close to each other.

A trail of black smoke was left in the air as Noah neared the cultivators, the corrosive cloud was slowly filling all the empty area in the Empire's army and was threatening to reach the blue soldiers.

A spear and a hammer appeared in Noah's path, the weapons of the two red soldiers were inscribed items, Noah could see that their power wasn't low.

Yet, he didn't stop.

Six arms converged into two to perform two horizontal swings, the black sabers bent the air as they cut toward the soldiers.

Everyone on the scene could see how the attacks of the fiendish figure cut the inscribed weapons in a half before severing the heads of both soldiers.

Chapter 316 - 316. Bait

A spell powered by the power of a rank 3 sea of consciousness;

Inscribed weapons with the power at the peak of the second rank;

The Second Form of the Ashura performed after the sudden acceleration of another rank 4 martial art.

Noah's offensive was making use of his most powerful abilities to produce incredible results!

The two red soldiers were astonished seeing that their weapons were cut without even being able to slow Noah's offensive, they watched as the black sabers reached their necks to sever their heads in one powerful slash!

Just a few seconds had passed since the Empire tried to encircle Noah but three cultivators in the solid stage had already died!

'My martial art is somewhat able to fix the issue with the Second Form, sparring with Nina was indeed useful.'

Noah was satisfied with his performance, his ample preparations were paying off in the battlefield.

The sight of three red soldiers dying so easily made the surviving ones reach one simple conclusion.

'We can't stop him!'

That realization shook their minds.

Ten red cultivators weren't able to restrain a single blue one, that scene didn't seem real, events like that happened only in legends and were performed by widely known geniuses.

Yet, their eyes weren't lying to them.

In the valley at the borders of the Odrea country, in one of the training grounds of the Empire, a hooded cultivator, seemingly appeared out of nowhere, was defying their deep-rooted beliefs about the hierarchy of power.

Though, being unable to kill him didn't mean that Noah couldn't be defeated.

The soldiers of the Empire were quick in their decision to retreat, they knew that they had to change their battle tactic.

Noah saw the seven red figures returning to the ranks of the red soldiers and cast another Mental tremor.

The mental beam chased one soldier and crashed on his mental sphere, killing him on the spot.

Then, he dispersed his Demonic form and hastily ate one pill from his space-ring, he needed to refill his reserves of "Breath", that short battle had depleted far too much of the energy contained in his dantian.

'I need to reach the solid stage as soon as I can. Damn, being too powerful can also be an issue.'

Noah cursed in his mind as he chewed another pill, his dantian was slowly refilled by the generic "Breath" contained in those drugs.

Pills and potion couldn't replace the actual energies of the centers of power, they were only a temporary solution to a shortage of "Breath" and mental energy.

'Now, I should create some more chaos before the second wave of red cultivators arrives.'

Noah smiled under his hood and resumed his killing inside the army of the Empire.

The blue soldiers were scared, they had seen how not even the joint effort of the red robes was able to stop Noah, they began to retreat as soon as he focused on them.

A black cloud created a dead zone and a black hood was working hard to do the same, the blue cultivators could only focus on defending, hoping to clash with the ethereal sabers of the First Form rather than with the two real ones.

Meanwhile, the army of the Odrea country was greatly profiting from Noah's performance.

The ranks of the Empire were a mess due to the threat inside its army so the Odrea nation could exploit that situation to their advantage.

The vanguard of the Empire had long since fallen and the second line of battle had never fully formed: The joint efforts of the Odrea army and Noah disrupted their battle formation, giving them an easy battle.

Soldiers with blue robes continuously fell on the ground, the casualties were uncountable that day and not even an hour had passed!

Then, the second wave of red cultivators reached Noah.

More than thirty red figures surrounded Noah from every direction, they seemed ready to die only to kill him.

'Here they are.'

Noah's eyes shone with a cold light as he probed the surrounding area with his mental energy, a smile appeared on his face seeing that everyone was in position.

The red soldiers didn't speak, they directly cast spells that created wonders in the air as their mental energy mixed with their "Breath" to launch those destructive abilities.

The spells were almost ready, that time there was no way out for Noah, the red soldiers had carefully covered all the area around him.

Yet, right when the spells were about to be launched, more than twenty Instabilities arrived in the air over Noah's battle.

The red soldiers were surprised, they were inside their army after all, only Noah was supposed to be there.

What they didn't realize was that a few red cultivators of the Odra army had taken advantage of the chaos in the battlefield to sneak inside the enemy army to support Noah!

The Instabilities exploded, they were the new weapons created after Noah became a rank 3 mage, their blasts were far stronger than their previous version.

Spikes shot in every direction, the red soldiers of the Empire were defenseless, they could only watch the hooded figure being enveloped by black flames and disappearing before the spikes reached him.

In their dying moments, they realized that Noah was only the bait for this trap.

A big cloud of gray smoke was created on that part of the battlefield while black flames appeared in another one, Noah came out of them unscathed and ready to unleash another wave of destruction.



The army of the Empire had already lost too much, casualties in the blue ranks were a common sight, they could be refilled easily.

Yet, the red ones were elites at the peak of the second rank, they were far more important than those pawns.

Due to Noah's trap, thirty red soldiers had died, coupled with the four that he had killed to create that situation, Noah's achievements had surpassed all his previous battles.

There were only two hundred red soldiers in each army after all, Noah had basically removed one quarter of their power.

'The easy part is done, they will focus on defense now. It's time to use the new Hidden blasts.'

Noah thought as he continued to slaughter blue soldiers, he knew that the battle was still far from over.

#### Chapter 317 - 317. Assassination

The soldiers of the Empire retreated in a defensive formation, their ranks tightened at the sight of the advancing Odra army.

Noah's ploy had caused too many casualties in just a short amount of time, the sun was still high in the sky, the prospect of a prolonged battle couldn't help but worry the army of the Empire.

Defending was the best tactic in that type of situation, the monthly battles had a time limit after all, the Empire had to simply focus on defending till night if the situation became too one-sided.

Yet, at that time, the soldiers of the Empire found themselves outnumbered in just an hour, they already knew that most of them won't be able to survive.

The Odrea army didn't waste time, it launched another wave of spells and Instabilities before clashing on their enemies, Noah's weapon further diminished their numbers, creating openings where his allies could strike.

Noah, on the other hand, was simply using his First Form to pressure some blue cultivator.

He wanted to preserve as much "Breath" as he could, his plan protracted far after that battle.

Explosions rang out, the soldiers of the Odrea country were armed with the Hidden blasts and they didn't hesitate to use them, their enemies would often defend against an attack only to discover that a needle had slipped between them.

That was the battle tactic that the Odrea country had used in the past battles, the Hidden blasts were too small and sneaky, they could easily pierce the defenses of the Empire and cause great damage in its formation.

Also, even if some soldiers noticed them and tried to stop their course, they would just explode, giving an opportunity to their opponents to strike.

Little by little, the army of the Empire was being reduced to a small troop.

It couldn't be helped, the defending side usually held the advantage but Noah had caused too many deaths, they were too outnumbered to effectively defend against the relentless offensive.

Noah's new weapons had some role too in that outcome.

The new Hidden blasts caused more violent explosions, the red soldiers were usually able to survive the blasts of their previous version but the new ones could kill them on the spot!

A Mental tremor shot from Noah's eyes which was followed by a precisely timed wind slash.

A red cultivator in front of Noah lost his mental capabilities for one instant, allowing the slash to hit his neck.

The slash wasn't able to completely sever the head but it was enough to kill the soldier, Noah watched with cold eyes as the man unsuccessfully tried to stop the bleeding with his hands before life abandoned him.

'Eighteen... Damn, even by reducing the power of the Mental tremor, my mental energy is still depleting at high speed.'

Noah was doing his best to preserve some energy for after the battle, he knew that the next days would be crucial for his plan.

His gaze swept the battlefield, the Odra nation was still pressing the remaining soldiers of the Empire, Noah could see one hundred red cultivators and a few dozen blue ones being assaulted by more than nine hundred cultivators, he knew that the Empire wouldn't be able to hold much longer.

'This should be their worst defeat... Refilling the ranks of the red soldiers will take a while and this training ground will become scarier, the Odra nation should have it easy for a few months.'

He sighed at the sight of the countless corpses that filled the valley.

'I could have been one of them, being a pawn of a powerful force is too dangerous.'

Noah knew that he had had some chances to join powerful organizations during his life.

Yet, joining them would limit his actions and, most important, would put a limit to his growth.

No ruler would want a pawn stronger than him, in a society founded on power, the head of an organization had to be revered.

Noah knew that he couldn't put a hold to his ambition.

He needed the power to kill his father but that desire was just dictated by his anger and guilt, it wasn't what fueled his determination.

His gaze went on the black troops standing at some distance from the battle, they had solemn expressions but they didn't seem to be that interested in the outcome.

'Are they that detached from the mortal world? I guess I'm also like them.'

Noah found that, as his power grew, he couldn't look at those weaker than him in the same way.

He had tasted the power of his new mental sphere, just one thought could unleash a spell capable of killing any blue cultivator on the battlefield.

'Weaklings die too easily, it's becoming harder to see them as persons...'

Noah knew that his mindset had never been completely normal.

His innate detachment had accompanied him since his previous life and the difference in power that was created through his hard work only empowered that quality, taking lives had become part of his natural responses to difficult situations.

If someone blocks your way, kill him; if someone hurts you, kill him; if someone tries to control you, kill him.

'I wonder how many lives they have taken to reach that level...'

His gaze still lingered on the black troops when he noticed that something was amiss.

'Wait, there are forty-nine of them, where is the last one?'

Then, his mind sent him a warning, Noah felt a dangerous sensation coming from above him.

"You have caused enough trouble."

An aged voice resounded in his ears, the cultivator had spoken in a calm but resolute manner.

'Shit!'

Noah didn't even raise his head, he deployed the Demonic form spell and contracted the membrane around his heart to inject liquid "Breath" into his body.

His figure quickly changed, it morphed into a fiendish form that launched an upward vertical slash in the direction of the voice.

He was directly using the Second Form of the Ashura in the Demonic form and with his two black sabers, that was the strongest attack that he was capable of!

As soon as the attack was launched, it met with a spear made of compressed air.

#### Chapter 318 - 318. Brutal

The spear made of air was already above him, if Noah hadn't reacted that quickly, he would have been hit by it already.

Yet, he had managed to react just in time, using his most powerful attack to stop the incoming spell.

A shockwave occurred over his head, the clash of those two attacks sent him flying, Noah was able to recover his balance only after he rolled on the ground for a dozen meters.

Only then he could raise his head to stare at the elderly black cultivator that had tried to assassinate him.

He had white hair and a short black beard, thick black eyebrows and shining green eyes, Noah could clearly feel that he was far stronger than him.

'Rank 3 mage, rank 3 dantian in the gaseous stage, he is too strong for me!'

His mind was able to identify the power of the assassin, he internally heaved a sigh of relief seeing that he had been barely able to block his spell.

The shockwave had pierced his attack and destroyed the armor of black smoke, a long wound could be seen on Noah torso which poured blood over his blue robe.

His Demonic form spell had the power of the third rank but it was still fueled by liquid "Breath" in the second one, it couldn't express its full power.

The man in the air, however, was a rank 3 cultivator, his centers of power allowed him to express the true strength of his level.

'Wind element, he is probably using a spell to fly.'

Noah judged quickly, he could see that the man was standing mid-air on a seemingly invisible platform.

"So you really are a rank 3 mage, what a sight."

The man spoke, his voice resounded in the battlefield, suppressing all the soldiers around him.

Yet, Noah had already stopped listening to him.

His Demonic form was restored and the liquid "Breath" in his circulatory system worked at full speed to heal the wound on his torso, only a few seconds had passed but the blood had already stopped flowing from it.

The black smoke radiated by his spell inevitably reached the soldiers of the Odrea country around him, some of them died on the spot at the touch of the corrosive smoke.

Nevertheless, Noah didn't dare to face a rank 3 cultivator without using his strongest spell.

His life was more important after all, he didn't care if he was blamed for the friendly fire afterward.

The black cultivator raised a hand to prepare another spell but Noah had already acted!

Dozens Hidden blasts shot toward the black soldier as Noah stomped twice on the terrain to activate his martial art.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Explosions rang out one after another, enveloping the assassin in a gray cloud.

Noah didn't dare to stop his offensive, he retreated, launching fuming wind slashes toward the cloud, the gray smoke was slowly devoured by the black one as his attacks piled up.

Then, a gale swept the area, dispersing the dark cloud and revealing the unharmed black soldier.

His expression though had changed from a relaxed one to a stern one.

He had been tasked with the assassination of the hooded cultivator but his sneak attack had failed, his position was noticed by his target just as he had launched his attack.

Then, he watched as Noah unleashed that firepower without hesitation, the sight of his allies dying didn't even slow his retreat.

'What a brutal opponent.'

He couldn't help but have that thought.

Noah could easily deactivate the Demonic form and stop endangering his allies but he prioritized his safety, uncaringly causing casualties among the army of the Odrea nation.

"Stop running!"

The black soldier cursed loudly and created another spear which he aimed toward the escaping Noah.

Yet, as he was about to launch it, another aged voice resounded in the battlefield.

"Do you have no shame? A mighty rank 3 cultivator sent to assassinate a blue one, the Empire has really fell to its lowest."

One of the black cultivators of the Odra country appeared in front of the assassin.

It was an elderly woman with gray hair and a hunched back, she also stood on an invisible platform in order to float in the air.

Noah heaved a sigh of relief and dispersed his Demonic form, the Odra nation had finally reacted to that threat.

His gaze went on the trail of death that he had left as he escaped, bodies and corroded limbs could be seen on the path that he had taken.

'A bit more than thirty casualties, this spell is really uncontrollable...'

The sight of his dead allies didn't stop him, Noah waved his hand toward the black cultivators in the air as he returned toward the battle between the two armies.

"You little rascal!"

The black cultivator from the Empire was angered by that gesture and wanted to pounce him but was blocked by the elderly woman that forced him in a one versus one fight.

The attempted assassination of the Empire was a signal for the black soldiers, they joined the battle even if there was still some time before the sunset.



The black cultivators from both sides engaged in a spectacular battle but Noah wasn't in the mood to watch them.

He had luckily survived the assassination but that dangerous feeling was still lingering on his mind, he had to vent it somewhere.

The soldiers of the Odra nation opened a way for him to join the vanguard, they shot reverent gazes as he passed through their ranks and some of them even bowed.

It couldn't be helped, a blue cultivator had survived the sneak attack of a black one, that feat was something that even legends struggled to tell.

As for the allies that he had killed, they didn't seem to blame him.

Noah had warned them many times to stay away from him when he went all out and the number of lives that had been saved thanks to his weapons far surpassed the deaths that he had caused.

It was with a suffocating killing intent that he rejoined the battle, his sabers bent the air as he jumped toward the remaining soldiers of the Empire.

#### Chapter 319 - 319. Hope

Attacks and explosions resounded in the valley at the border of the formation.

The now less than one hundred soldiers of the Empire did their best to survive the wave made of more than nine hundred soldiers, the Odra nation was giving its all to annihilate what remained of the enemy.

Behind them, the black cultivators from both sides were facing each other in a violent battle.

Since there was still some time before the sunset, their battle was causing some injury on both sides, those mighty rank 3 cultivators weren't just buying time that day.

Like that, the last minutes passed and the night took over the day.

It was with a bitter expression that Seth watched below him only to see that less than sixty soldiers had survived and that fifty of them were those in the third rank!

Seven red soldiers and one blue one were heaving sighs of relief seeing that the army of the Odrea country, their gazes would often linger on a hooded cultivator that radiated a cold killing intent.

Noah had been spectacular in that battle.

First, he had set up a trap to kill the many red cultivators that had tried to surround him, tilting the scales of the battle in favor of the Odrea nation from the beginning of the fight.

That had allowed his allies to make use of the numerical advantage to pressure the defensive formation created after the first clash.

Then, he had been ambushed by a cultivator in the third rank, a being at the peak of the human ranks, but he survived in a spectacular way and even mocked him as he rejoined the battle.

Then, he had waved his sabers like a madman, killing as many soldiers as he could, only to reach that situation.

The casualties that the Empire suffered that day were too many, more than nine hundred soldiers had died and those deaths weren't limited to the blue robes.

Seth felt a headache rising from the bottom of his mind, he really didn't know how he would explain his superiors that almost all the red cultivators had died due to a ploy of what was considered a training ground.

"I don't think we'll see each other anytime soon."

Seth sighed and turned his head toward the young girl on the other side of the formation.

Lisa was sitting with her two protectors, Leo and Luke, at the top of the mountain.

After hearing Seth's words, her mood turned sour, there was another person that she wasn't going to see for a long time, maybe forever.

'Why do you have to leave? Just when you gave us hope...'

Seth saw that Lisa wasn't paying attention to his behavior and crossed his arms over his chest as he continued to talk.

"That outsider, the hooded devil, are you willing to sell him to the Empire? I believe that, after today's performance, the Empire would stop at nothing to recruit him."

That offer wasn't surprising.

Seth was the man handling the training ground called Odrea country, his job was to skim the new recruits so that the Empire could maintain a high standard when it came to its soldiers.

However, Noah happened, which he obviously reported to his superiors.

The Empire was aware of his battle prowess and was also almost sure that he could inscribe items, even if all they did was explode.

Such a person had created a lot of troubles in the last two years, so many that the Empire had ultimately decided to assassinate him.

Yet, he survived the assassination attempt, showing that the Empire had greatly underestimated his actual strength.

Seth knew that surviving the surprise attack of a rank 3 cultivator while being in the liquid stage of the second rank was an incredible feat, something that could only happen once every thousand years.

'If we can't kill him, we will simply buy him.'

That thought summarized the behavior of the Empire.

It was the strongest nation in the entire continent, their whole country was founded on war and on the slaves that it produced.

It would try to suppress any enemy before trying to make deals with them, that was how domineering a country with a God could be!

However, Lisa only chuckled at his offer.

"You stripped us of our future, of our freedom, and now you want to strip us of our hope? What could you even offer anyway?"

Traces of anger could be heard in her tone, the hatred that she had toward the Empire couldn't be expressed by simple words.

"We could set up a peace treaty. What do you think of three years without battles? We would simply come in the valley and drink wine or tea in that period."

The agreement with the Empire forced both nations in a fair battle, it didn't specifically force them to fight.

That's why Seth could offer a break from the monthly struggle as part of a deal.

"You know, sometimes I wonder if we should have just died that day hundreds of years in the past instead of becoming your training dummy. What a spectacular sight our last struggle would have been..."

Lisa dreamed, she imagined a world where the Odra nation had long been destroyed and she wasn't forced to see her citizens slowly die with each passing month.

She sighed before shooting a pitiful gaze toward Seth and opening her mouth to speak.

"I can't change the decisions of our ancestors but I surely can determine what kind of people we will be as we survive. We are proud soldiers of the Odrea nation, our fate is in the hands of the random outsiders that enter our borders, selling them away would be as if we have given up on hope. Also, what makes you think that I can control him?"

Lisa concluded her speech and stood up from her chair before pointing below her, toward the end of the valley.

Both armies had still to return to their respective sides when Noah sprinted in the direction of the Empire!

Seth watched with wide eyes as Noah took a step outside of the borders of the Odrea nation!

#### Chapter 320 - 320. Pretense

The remaining soldiers of the Empire couldn't believe the scene that was unfolding in front of them.

The hooded devil who had created mayhem in the last two years in the monthly battles was running away from the valley!

That wasn't all, he was sprinting toward the center of the continent!

The formation at the border of the Odrea country didn't stop him, he simply stepped outside of it as if nothing was there at all!

"It was nice to meet you all!"

Noah shouted behind him while waving his hand in goodbye before he resumed his escape.

Seth watched the scene from above the mountain and hurriedly grabbed a token from his space-ring.

"What the hell are you doing!? Chase and capture him!"

His loud orders resounded on the mountain peak, Lisa and her two protectors couldn't help but smirk at that sight.

"You seem quite anxious, I bet that you didn't see this coming."

Lisa mocked him, further fueling his anxiety.

"Black troops hurry! The other soldiers will just die if they chase him!"

Seth was well aware of Noah's strength, that last battle had proven that he couldn't be captured by using simple red troops, rank 3 cultivators were necessary for that job.

The black cultivators were a bit stupefied by the sudden turn of events that they didn't react to Seth's orders that quickly, not all of them at least.

One black cultivator, the elderly man that had tried to assassinate Noah, shot in his direction as soon as Seth's voice resounded from his token.

He wasn't flying, he ran on the ground while using a spell to push his speed to its limits.

Winds blew from behind him, they propelled him forward toward the escaping blue robe.

'I won't let you go this time!'

Those were his thoughts, shame still lingered in his mind.

He was a mighty rank 3 cultivator, a being at the peak of the human ranks, the task of assassinating a blue robe was a shameful record in his life.

Yet, not only he had failed in it, but he had also watched how Noah mocked him while he returned to the battlefield.

Such disrespect had angered him to no end which, coupled with his shame, gave birth to hateful emotions toward Noah.

That's why he was set on reaching him.

'If I was to use too much strength and kill him, the Empire won't be able to blame me, right?'

His intentions differed from Seth's orders, his reputation had suffered too much for him to simply capture Noah, he was set on killing him!

Yet, right when he was about to reach him, Noah's figure was enveloped in black flames which made him disappear in less than a second.

The battlefield was silent, Noah was nowhere to be seen.

"Go forward! That's a teleportation spell, you idiots! He couldn't have gone that far!"

Seth's orders resounded again, they awakened the soldiers of the Empire from their astonishment.

The black soldiers didn't hesitate at that time, they went outside the formation and began their search for the hooded devil.

"Was this your plan? You purposely left the formation open because you knew that he was going to escape?"

Seth turned to look at Lisa, his expression radiated unparalleled anger, he knew that something like that couldn't have happened without Lisa's help.

"I'm simply performing my part of the agreement, I can open the formation whenever I want."

Lisa snorted and turned to leave with her two protectors, leaving an anxious Seth alone on the mountain peak.

"Fuck!"

He cursed loudly before hurrying toward the valley, he was going to search for Noah.

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A few seconds earlier, right after Noah performed the Warp spell.

Black flames appeared behind a hill near the valley, revealing a blue cultivator wearing a black hood.

"Did everything go as planned?"

A female voice sounded in that place, Nina's figure could be seen nearing the hooded man with a warm smile.

"Yes, they think that I went in the depth of the country, this pretense should buy me some time."

Noah took away his hood and undressed himself, he was doing everything as fast as he could, he knew that he couldn't fool the Empire for too long.

The truth was that Noah didn't warp forward but behind!

He went back into the Odra country!

"You look tired, are you sure that you don't want to rest first?"

Nina asked with a concerned expression.

Noah was paler than usual and traces of sweat were still on his forehead.

Large eye-bags could be seen under his eyes and his breath was a bit ragged, he didn't seem in the best condition to travel.

"They sent a black robe to assassinate me, I have depleted a bit more "Breath" than predicted to protect myself. Don't worry though, I'm used to long escapes."

Noah briefly explained the situation while smiling at the woman that was expressing her worry.



In just a few seconds, he wore a tight black robe and neared Nina, taking her in his arms.

He gave her a warm kiss, Noah could taste the salty flavor of the tears that had started to flow from her eyes.

Noah made a bitter smile as he separated from her and wiped away her tears with his thumb as he caressed her face one last time.

"Don't let your bed become cold, ok?"

Noah said.

"The same goes for you, don't push any good woman away like you tried to do with me."

Nina gave him the same advice, they smiled at each other for a few seconds before Noah sighed and turned, whispering his last words to her.

"Goodbye Nina."

His whisper was answered by soft words.

"Goodbye... Noah."

Nina used his real name as she watched the black figure running toward the western border of the nation, a cold aura enveloped it as if a switch had been turned on, which returned Noah to his previous attitude when he was alone against the world.

She stared at his figure disappearing in the distance, his short black hair fluttered in the wind as he reached for the coastline.