

'Dragons!'

One word was able to create shock and amazement.

Noah's interest in magical beasts had begun with a dragon, it could be said that even his cultivation journey had started because of it.

That's why, during his studies, he had focused on that kind for a long time.

Dragons were considered as the strongest magical beast, they had powerful bodies and their scales were able to provide one of the best natural defenses.

Also, their innate ability could match some of the weaker spells of the humans, dragons were able to empower and manipulate their fire easily, Noah clearly remembered how the dragon in his childhood created a spear made of flames after its attack was launched.

Yet, since they were the strongest magical beast, they had some natural restriction.

They weren't able to reproduce as fast as the other magical beasts nor could they affect the environment to favor the birth of more dragons, it took centuries for a pack of dragons to be created.

"They came from below the passage, thirty magical beasts in the fourth rank, we had nowhere to go, I saw how my team was slowly destroyed by their assault."

Sarah continued her story, sorrow and regret could be seen on her face when she reached that point.

"I endured as much as I could, I tried to break through their blockage but it was pointless. I used my secret art to breach the walls of the separate

dimension and went for the nearest matrix after the last member of my team died, I wasn't able to save them."

Tears fell from her face when her report ended, Bruce did his best to console her but the gravity of the situation could be understood by his expression.

Sarah was a rank 3 cultivator after all!

Rank 4 magical beasts could only run away in front of her.

Yet, when faced with dozens of dragons, even someone as strong as her was forced to escape.

"Which kind of dragons?"

Roy asked, he wanted to give a complete report to his mother.

"I don't know. They had blue scales and large bodies, our attacks seemed to slide over their scales when they reached them."

Sarah's description was quite shallow but Noah was able to pick those clues and transform them into a deduction.

"Sea dragons, they have a great defense and their innate ability renders them almost immune to any type of attack. Were you attacked by sound waves?"

Noah spoke, his words made Sarah widen her eyes.

"Y-yes, how did you know?"

Noah only nodded at her answer, his mind sorted all the information he knew about that particular kind of dragons.

'About ten meters large on average, extremely good defense due to the protective layer over their scales. They can accumulate the power of the attacks that land on their bodies in a strong roar which can instantly kill cultivators in the second rank. No wonder Sarah's team was defeated, thirty Sea dragons can't be matched by rank 2 cultivators.'

Noah had his head lowered as he thought but the other cultivators couldn't help but move their gazes on him after his answer.

"Are you an expert in the magical beasts' field?"

Seth asked, he was the first to accept the situation.

"It is my subject of specialization."

Noah answered quickly, his knowledge about magical beasts wasn't exactly a secret after all.

"What do you think about it?"

Roy's question followed, he wanted to know Noah's opinion before reporting to his mother.

"They are among the strongest creatures when it comes to defense. The best approach would be to kill them in one blow but it is impossible with thirty of them. A team of rank 2 cultivators can't break through unless you send a small army to fight them."

Noah's deduction was accurate.

Rank 2 cultivators would only empower their roars with their attacks, the only method to avoid that outcome was to kill all of them in a short time.

Yet, due to their defense, it was hard for rank 2 cultivators to kill them in one blow, only a team in the third rank would be able to vanquish them without suffering losses.

'This matter is out of my reach, I'm too weak.'

Noah could judge that he wouldn't be able to affect the outcome of the battle with his cultivation level.

He knew that he could kill a couple of them if he went all out but he had no hope of succeeding against thirty of them.

"Did you manage to kill some of them?"

Roy asked Sarah, his question was on point, entering the structure at the end of the bridge would be easier if there were fewer dragons to defend it.

"Of course, but more dragons would come after a few parts of incense to replace the dead, it seemed quite orderly now that I think about it."

Sarah spoke, her words carried a deeper meaning but she wasn't able to realize it due to her situation.

'A separate dimension, dragons that protect the entrance of a structure, dead being replaced after a few minutes... This sounds too methodical to be a wild environment.'

Everyone in the room had the same thoughts as Noah, their minds reached a similar conclusion after that last piece of information.

'Inheritance ground!'

"What?"

Sarah couldn't understand their silence, they had fallen deep in thought all of sudden and their expressions only showed excitement.

"If the dead dragons are exchanged with new ones, then they were placed there for a reason. If there is a reason, then there is a creator. You have probably discovered an inheritance ground."

Bruce explained the situation and Sarah's eyes widened when she realized that.

She had been too focused on surviving, that was the first moment of peace after the events in the whirlpool so she still didn't think about that.

"I will inform Elder Iris, this matter is too important for it to be handled by cultivators in the human ranks. This Inheritance must belong to the sect!"

Roy announced as he went toward the exit of the cave, Bruce immediately opened the entrance at that sight.

#### Chapter 372 - 372. Secret arts

The Chasing demon sect was swept by a huge commotion after that day.

Sarah's team had been killed after they discovered a separate dimension in the depth of the Great whirlpool, rumors filled the sect, they spoke about dragons and the possible rewards behind that trial.

Yet, they didn't act.

No mission concerned that place and the higher-ups of the sect were strangely silent about that matter.

Noah had returned to his cave, no matter how interested he was about the separate dimension, his cultivation level was too low for its exploration.

A whole team of rank 2 cultivators had been killed even though a rank 3 cultivator was with them, Noah simply had no chances of surviving in the passage.

However, there was something unrelated to the separate dimension that had interested him.

'Sarah has spoken about a secret art, what is that?'

That detail didn't escape Noah's ears.

'She managed to breach the walls of the separate dimension with her secret art but I've never heard of something like that.'

Noah thought as he sat in his cave.

The academy had given him a top-tier instruction about the cultivation field but its teachings covered the orthodox methods for the most part, the unorthodox and old practices weren't taught to its students.

A notebook appeared in Noah's hand, he sent a message to Roy to question him about that matter.

'Secret arts are special forms that push the centers of power of a cultivator over their limits, they usually cause grave injuries when executed but they are reliable in deadly situations.'

Roy's answer arrived quickly, his always-honest attitude solved Noah's question in a few hours.

'Something to use when everything else fails then, I should learn one of them.'

Noah thought as he reviewed that information.

He had had always liked to increase his battle prowess but the lack of spells for his element was a factor that became more influential as his power grew.

After all, Noah had only three spells that could accompany him through the entirety of his cultivation journey and one of them was a movement-type spell.

Cultivators with a different aptitude had a larger variety of spells at their disposal while Noah only had four of them that were useful at his level.

'Being of the darkness element is a blessing but also a curse, the advantage that my mental sphere gives me will eventually become useless, I need more fighting methods.'

Noah knew that he was extremely strong for his age and level, no rank 2 cultivator could match him.

Yet, those in the heroic ranks had usually lived for a long time, even centuries, their accumulation was enough to make Noah's advantage pale.

He had relied on the Demonic form spell till that moment after all but he knew that he would eventually face strong foes that had many spells at their disposal.

The rarer the aptitude, the harder it was to create techniques and spells, darkness and light element cultivators could maintain their superiority only if they had enough spells to counter the other elements.

That's why he was so interested in the so-called secret arts, Noah could only benefit from adding another attack to his arsenal.

'I can't interfere with the separate dimension for now, I'm too weak. Yet, I can't only cultivate for the time being, I need to expand my combat style in order to be ready for any unexpected situation.'

Noah knew that he couldn't help with the matters that concerned the Great whirlpool, being a rank 3 cultivator seemed the minimum requirement to survive there.

Yet, that didn't mean that he was giving up on it.

The exploration of a separate dimension could take decades, Eccentric Thunder's inheritance ground had stayed in its place for hundreds of years after all.

The same went for the Royal Inheritance, Noah didn't know how deep it was but he was sure that the Elbas family would have some trouble reaching its end because of the restrictions applied to it.

'Cultivate, gather information, increase my attack methods, I need to be ready.'

Noah set a plan in his mind, a black saber appeared in his hands, he was going to perform another Dantian's opening.

Meanwhile, at some distance from the Coral archipelago.

A hooded figure hovered in the air, it seemed to walk on the air as it neared the large vortex in the middle of the sea.

The vortex was more than two kilometers large, its suction force was able to attract and bind even beings with a rank 4 body.

The figure looked at the whirlpool for a while before diving right at its center.

The water of the sea seemed to willingly avoid the figure, an invisible membrane made of mental energy created a cover for the cultivator's body.

The hood of the cultivator flapped, the speed at which it was descending was too high, the hood ultimately slid, revealing the face that it was hiding.

The hooded figure exploring the depth of the whirlpool was, in fact, Elder Iris!

The currents of the vortex reached even the depths of the sea, Elder Iris had to immerse herself for many kilometers before escaping them.

She was now in the place where Sarah said to have found the warm current.

Her gaze swept the area, the water seemed to freeze under the pressure of her mental energy.

However, she couldn't find any trace of the current nor of the separate dimension.

She immediately thought that Sarah had lied to her son but she quickly suppressed that suspicion, Sarah had been a captain in the sect for many years, she had no reason to lie.

'It's either an event happening only at a specific time or...'

Elder Iris began to ponder about the situation, she investigated the area with even more attention.

'Or it's something limited to those in the human ranks.'

Those two possibilities lingered in her mind, she didn't know which one was true.



Nevertheless, she had come there as soon as Roy reported Sarah's story, she needed to discover as much information as she could before the separate dimension was found by the other organizations in the archipelago.

#### Chapter 373 - 373. Exploration

Elder Iris' eyes sharpened, tens of blades made of compressed air were shot from her body in every direction.

The depths of the sea shook, raging currents were created due to her attack.

As the water around her trembled, Elder Iris carefully observed the changes in the environment.

Everything seemed perfectly normal except for a small area that flickered softly, radiating the colors of the rainbow as the wind blades crossed it.

Elder Iris didn't miss that detail, she moved near the area, using the full power of her mind to inspect it.

Yet, she found nothing strange, the colors had disappeared as soon as the blades had vanished.

Another attack was launched, she focused on that area at that time.

The colors of the rainbow reappeared, Elder Iris seemed able to see some sort of passage among those soft lights.

Her hand went on the passage but nothing happened, the hand just crossed the lights as if nothing was there at all.

'This should be the warm current that Sarah found. It seems to be some kind of passage between two dimensions.'

Elder Iris was experienced and knowledgeable like the majority of the cultivators in the heroic ranks, she was immediately able to deduce the proprieties of that invisible warm current.

'Why is it invisible though? Are there conditions to meet?'

Inheritance grounds usually had strict rules according to their creator's intentions, the reason behind their creation would usually concern the passing down of a legacy of some sort.

Cultivators had long lives but they also died, most of them didn't want to disappear or be forgotten due to the passage of time, they wanted for their hard work and techniques to be picked up by the future generations.

Yet, they would be picky about their potential heirs.

Inheritance grounds usually targeted cultivators in the human ranks, not only were they those that needed powerful techniques the most, but they were also easier to shape.

Cultivators in the heroic ranks were already pursuing their individuality, becoming separate existences that had their own training methods.

Those in the human ranks, instead, were still humans, they could still change the training methods to better adapt to those contained in the legacy of an Inheritance ground.

That's why most legacies left behind by powerful cultivators had the restriction that only those in the human ranks could have access to the trials inside the separate dimension.

Nevertheless, just because a door was sealed by conditions didn't imply that there was no other way to open it.

Elder Iris focused, she stretched her hands in the direction of the invisible current.

The water in front of her began to rotate, a small vortex appeared between her hands.

Then, the vortex increased in power, it enlarged and begun to affect more water.

The same radiance reappeared, the warm current wasn't able to conceal itself under the assault of a cultivator in the heroic ranks.

The currents above her head were affected too, Iris' vortex was so powerful that everything in a five hundred meters radius was attracted by it.

Raging waves were created on the surface, the shape of the Great whirlpool was affected due to the powerful spell that was cast in its depths.

The form of the warm current was completely revealed under her attack, its radiance couldn't cover its shape anymore.

Yet, that was all Elder Iris could obtain.

No matter how powerful her spell was, the warm current wouldn't become real, she could only make it visible.

She kept the vortex active for half an hour before she gave up on forcing the entrance of the separate dimension and dispersing her spell.

"Iris, what is happening here?"

A hooded figure appeared behind her, the water around him wasn't able to suppress his words.

Elder Iris had created quite a mess after all, her spell couldn't go unnoticed by the other powerful entities in the archipelago.

"Marcus."

Elder Iris greeted him but her eyes were still fixed on the area where the invisible current was.

"Do you see anything here?"

She pointed toward the area, Marcus followed the direction of her hand but he was only able to see the dark waters of the depths of the sea.

"I need to call a meeting with the higher-ups of all the organizations of the Hive, there is an Inheritance ground here."

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Days passed in the archipelago, the atmosphere inside the Chasing demon sect was tense due to the recent events.

Noah did his best to gather as much information as he could, he sent many messages to Roy but he had only managed to learn that a meeting between the higher-ups of the Hive was being held.

"Why do they even involve the Hive? We could have kept the separate dimension all for ourselves!"

Those words were heard often in the training area where the thieves' faction was, even disciples of the other faction would come there to investigate the matters about the dimension.

Sarah was the one that had discovered it after all, it was normal for the others to think that her faction was the most informed one.

"Thirty dragons in the fourth rank and that right at the entrance of the dimension. We might be able to take down the dimension by ourselves but the strength of the sect will be greatly affected in the process."

Noah answered the disciple, he was calmly waiting for the meeting to end, he had never left the training area in those days.

"He is right. We have the power to explore it by ourselves but that would mean that we will endure all the losses during the process. Let all the Hive join, we might lose some resource this way but we will also suffer less."

David added weight to Noah's words.

The disciple was still dubious after Noah had spoken but he was immediately convinced when David agreed with him.

He was one of the captains after all, his words had great importance in the sect.

Then, a buzz sounded in Noah's mind and he picked the notebook from his space-ring, the captains in the area did the same, they had been contacted too.

'The dimension is restricted to the human ranks, even the joint power of the higher-ups of the Hive wasn't able to force its entrance. Elder Iris requests for rank 3 cultivators to form teams and begin the exploration, missions will be affixed on the second floor of the missions' building starting tomorrow.'

Roy's voice resounded in Noah and the captains' heads, the exploration of the separate dimension had officially started!

#### Chapter 374 - 374. Rewards

'The first trial of the separate dimension was surpassed, the reward was thirty intact rank 4 dragon corpses.'

'The labyrinth at the end of the bridge leads to different trials, the reports from the survivors of the other organizations speak of peak rank 4 dragons in each of them.'

'A team managed to break through the labyrinth, the sole survivor has gained five dragon's eggs as a reward.'

'The third trial is still inside the labyrinth, reports speak about an endurance test.'

'The third test is inflicting heavy losses to every organization, the exploration will be halted momentarily for the teams to reorganize.'

'The third test was completed today, four rank 3 cultivation techniques and six rank 4 martial arts were rewarded to those that had completed it.'

Reports arrived endlessly in the Chasing demon sect, the disciples read them with vivid interest while they went on with their lives.

The underground organizations were managing to hide the information about the separate dimension from the legal ones but the representatives from the continent soon understood that something was going on.

It couldn't be helped, the Hive had always strictly controlled the archipelago but its grip on the islands was weakening.

That was caused by the large number of powerful cultivators employed in the exploration of the Inheritance ground, some matters on the surface were neglected to focus on the dimension.

Yet, instead of being happy about that, the legal organizations became suspicious.

Soon, they used their methods to make a deal with the Hive, joining the exploration of the dimension.

A truce was made, the rewards of the Inheritance ground were too appealing to lose them over the control of the archipelago, the greed of the legal factions won against the orders of the continent.

As a matter of fact, the continent was unaware of the dimension, the legal factions were stalling on providing that information to make the most out of it.

After all, if the continent was involved, they would lose all the rights over the resources contained in the dimension, they would rather gain as much as they could before the information was spread.

That intention was shared by the Hive which used all its methods to contain the information in the archipelago.

A long period of peace followed, the powerful cultivators in the organizations were too busy with the Inheritance ground to handle the petty matters of the surface, only the weaker rank 3 cultivators were left to oversee them.

The leadership for the matters of the surface was also appointed to some cultivators in the second rank, with most rank 3 cultivators in the dimension, they became the most powerful asset in the human ranks.

There were some exceptions though.

Bruce and Seth had avoided joining the exploration of the Inheritance ground, Bruce cared too much about Sarah's condition, he didn't want to leave her alone while she was injured, and Seth was too busy managing the matters on the surface with the lack of manpower.

Roy was the same as Seth, he had to make sure that the manpower sent in the Inheritance ground didn't affect the position of the sect in the archipelago, losing its grip on the islands was too easy now that their most powerful human assets were away.

As for Noah, even though he couldn't join the exploration of the separate dimension because his cultivation level was too low, he still greatly benefitted from that situation.

The lack of manpower forced the sect to be more generous with the rewards to its missions, the disciples would complete more and more missions with each passing day, attracted by the huge sum of merit points rewarded with each one of them.

Noah, as the strongest cultivator in the second rank, was considered of equal importance with the weak rank 3 cultivators left behind.

He had access to the most important and rewarding missions, he could even lead a team at some point.

"Captain, will you join the exploration of the dimension once you reach the third rank?"

One disciple asked as soon as Noah and his team appeared on the matrixes inside the sect.

"That's the plan."

Noah answered, he lowered his hood and undressed his bloodied robe as he jumped off the matrix.

The last mission required for him to stop the sailing of a ship belonging to the Shandal Empire.

Those loyal to the continent in that organization wanted to smuggle some of the resources gained in the Inheritance ground to gain favor in the eyes of the Empire so Noah was tasked to stop it and steal its contents.

Of course, a huge battle occurred but Noah's team was more numerous and he was in the first line, the soldiers on the ship had no chance to survive.

"How I envy you. When the separate dimension was discovered more than two years ago, I thought I had found my chance to improve quickly. It was disappointing to know that only those in the third rank had a chance to survive."

The disciple spoke again as he too undressed.

More than two years had passed since the exploration of the Inheritance ground began, the reports about the many trials had never stopped reaching the sect.

'Just a month ago, a rank 4 cultivation technique was rewarded to those that had surpassed the seventh trial... Dammit, I hope they don't exhaust all the rewards before I enter it.'



Noah thought as he reviewed the last report about the separate dimension in his mind.

The rewards for each trial had always been resources, techniques, or spells in the third rank but the appearance of a rank 4 cultivation technique had rekindled the greed of the various organizations.

"Go to rest, I'll call you if I need your help in another mission."

Noah dismissed disciples under him and moved toward the missions' building, ignoring the bows that the disciples were politely performing.

When Noah reached the building, he went directly to the second floor.

The room was almost empty, all the rank 3 cultivators were either in the separate dimension or handling the most relevant matters in the islands, the missions on that floor piled up since there weren't enough cultivators that could complete them.

Noah went for the desk, his tattoo interacted with the formation and an egg the size of a man's head was placed there.

The egg was the item that the legal organization was trying to smuggle, it was one of the dragon's eggs rewarded in the second trial of the separate dimension.

The egg disappeared from the desk and a huge number of merit points were given to Noah, that number though saw a sharp decrease once he made his purchase.

A small scroll appeared on the desk, Noah opened it only to see that an intricate rune was depicted on it, his mind immediately began to enlarge at that sight.

'Finally, now I can fully focus on reaching the peak of the solid stage!'

The Chasing demon sect had constantly been provided with reports about the Inheritance ground, its rewards to each trial were like a magnet that attracted all the ambitious cultivators that were nearing the third rank of the dantian.

There were many like Noah who were in the solid stage of the second rank, the previous strongest rank 2 cultivator, Perry, was an example of that.

Yet, they would rather take the slow but steady approach when it came to the breakthrough to the third rank, an injury during that process could be fatal to the cultivation journey of a cultivator and it could even take its life away.

However, that approach changed when more and more rumors about the possible gains behind the trials of the separate dimension became public.

A high number of disciples that were in the solid stage begun to isolate themselves in their caves, trying to concentrate solely on reaching the peak of the second rank.

In the more than two years that had passed since the separate dimension was discovered, many rank 2 cultivators had successfully stepped on the peak of the human ranks.

Of course, there was a high number of casualties due to that reckless approach but the sect couldn't care less about it, rank 2 cultivators could be nurtured easily while one in the third rank was a powerful asset, almost any number of casualties was worth increasing their numbers.

Noah was aiming for the same thing but his approach was quite different.

The Dantian's opening gave him a lot of free time, only three days each week were used for that practice if the procedures and the resting time were summed.

That's why he could focus on the accumulation of merit points in those years, the generous rewards of the sect and the lack of manpower allowed him to

reach the needed sum for the fourth Kesier rune even if he only did missions suited for rank 2 cultivators.

As for the secret arts, he had momentarily put their study in the back of his mind.

After all, the level of his centers of power had the priority and the Inheritance ground had items and techniques that vastly surpassed the value of a secret art, the right choice was to hasten his entrance in the dimension.

With the fourth Kesier rune in his possession, Noah could finally seclude himself inside his cave with the intention of coming out of it as a rank 3 cultivator.

That breakthrough arrived even earlier than Noah had expected.

Noah didn't have clear methods of comparison, rank 3 cultivators always appeared like middle-aged people between their thirties or forties so he couldn't really know how fast he was improving.

Yet, he knew that it generally took three years to reach the peak of each stage of the second rank, and a bit more when it came to the solid stage.

Noah had entered the second rank when he was eighteen, a feat possible only thanks to the early formation of his dantian which gave him a head start.

Now, after a bit more than eight years of methodic training and constant battles, he was finally stepping in the apex of the human ranks!

It didn't take much for his dantian to reach the peak of the solid stage, he was using an unorthodox technique paired with an extremely good potion that could remove its aftereffects and the "Breath" blessing that created an ideal training environment.

Also, his body had been at the peak of the lower tier of the fourth rank for such a long time and his mind had been in the third rank for three years

already, the superior level of his centers of power pushed the improvement speed of his dantian at an even higher level!

He was still a few months away from being twenty-seven but his dantian was already unable to enlarge anymore.

'The Sea snake's tears is indeed a good potion, I didn't even need to rest to relieve the stress of my dantian.'

Noah thought as he inspected his low waist.

His dantian had reached its maximum expansion and capacity, shining black crystals were amassed in its insides.

A bottle containing a shining dense liquid appeared in his hand, that was the reagent needed for the breakthrough in the third rank, Noah had prepared a few bottles of it already.

The contents of the bottle were quickly drunk by Noah, he was virtually at his peak form, there was no reason to hesitate.

The temperature of his low waist rose immediately as the "Breath" inside his dantian began to heat up.

The black crystals liquefied and then evaporated as the impurities in them were expelled from their composition.

The impurities shot at high speed toward the walls of the dantian, they seemed to be unobstructed and ready to return to the outside world.

Yet, there was a wall around the dantian.

The wall was impenetrable, no matter how fast or dense the impurities were, they couldn't even dent that invisible and cold wall.

The impurities could only slowly fuse with the walls of the dantian, giving it a shining and metallic appearance, it seemed far sturdier than before.

Noah carefully overviewed the process as he used his mental energy to create the blockage that contained the impurities, he had to admit that he had overestimated the difficulty of the process.

It couldn't be helped, his mind was far stronger than his dantian, the pressure that it was capable of was enough to force the impurities to fuse with the latter.

'I wonder if I can avoid the reagents the next time, I should be able to purify the "Breath" without any external help.'

Noah had that thought as he watched how the situation in his low waist stabilized, his dantian was smaller than before but it was far sturdier.

Inside, a strand of a brilliant black gas was easily contained by his improved center of power, Noah couldn't help but marvel when he sensed the amount of power contained in that little quantity of "Breath".

'Rank 3 cultivator, gaseous stage.'

A smile appeared on his face when he had that thought, his centers of power were now a match of William, the man that had introduced him to the cultivation world!

#### Chapter 376 - 376. Choice

Some emotions couldn't be expressed with simple words.

When Noah realized that he had stepped in the last rank of the human ranks, the memories of his journey reemerged in his mind like an unstoppable tide.

The life as a bastard of the Balvan family, William's training, the near-dead experiences in Twilboia Cliff, the death of his loving mother, the escape from Eccentric Thunder's dimension, the academy, the escape from the control of the Royal family, his journey alone in the continent, the Odra nation, and, ultimately, the Coral archipelago.

Nineteen years ago, he was only a transmigrated kid trying to scam soldiers to learn what seemed superpowers in his eyes.

Now, he was a dreaded cultivator who had just stepped on the peak of the human ranks, all his pain, all his hard work, all his suffering, the powerful feeling that his dantian radiated made it seem completely worth it.

'This is just the beginning.'

Noah thought as he drank a bottle containing the nurturing Sea snake's tears.

Now, he could be considered a king among the cultivators in the human rank, a true elite.

Yet, he knew far too well that he was just an ant when it came to the entirety of the cultivation world.

Powerful entities could be found everywhere, being an elite among tens of thousands of ants was nowhere near his true objective.

He unconsciously raised his head, the purple ceiling of his cave filled his view but Noah's eyes seemed to pierce that material to gaze at the starry sky.

He felt the light of the stars shining on his face, there was nothing but the ceiling of his cave above him but Noah's eyes reflected the stars that he had once seen in the attitude test of the academy.

'One day.'

It was with that last thought that he lowered his gaze and returned to reality.

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Noah spent the next month stabilizing his cultivation level, he had just entered the third rank after all, his reserves of "Breath" were still lacking.

Luckily for him, the training area where his faction gathered featured many spots where the density of "Breath" suited his new level.

The disciples in his faction stared with wide eyes at Noah placing his "Breath" blessing near Bruce's cave and cultivating completely in the open.

At once they knew, another disciple had become a captain!

That sight wasn't uncommon during the last few years, many disciples had unexpectedly reached the third rank to join the exploration of the separate dimension.

One day, Bruce came out of his cave and caught Noah performing the Dantian's opening right next to the entrance of his habitation.

Bruce calmly waited for a few hours for Noah to finish the procedure before he dared to speak, he didn't want to risk interrupting him during that dangerous practice.

"Why don't you get a cave of your own?"

Noah opened his eyes, the liquid "Breath" in his body entered his circulatory system to heal his injuries and a couple of bottles of Sea snake's tears were gulped in an instant by him, his dantian was of a higher quality now, it needed better potions.

Yet, he didn't have time to accumulate more merit points, he could only use more bottles of the potion that he already had.

"The residential area of the rank 3 cultivators is crowded nowadays and the environment here is top tier."

Noah answered in his usual plain tone, he couldn't care at all if the other disciples saw him hurting himself.

"Will you enter the separate dimension?"

Bruce asked, he reached that conclusion after he confirmed Noah's level with his mental energy.

"Yes. Also, I would like for you to form a team that I can join."

Noah's words surprised Bruce, he had never seen him asking for something similar before.

Yet, it made sense.

Bruce was the leader of the thieves' faction, his sheer power made him unable to live near rank 2 cultivators, his actual battle prowess had to be incredible.

However, a bitter expression appeared on his face and his gaze went on the bed inside his cave where a woman was resting.

A warm smile replaced the previous expression as he shook his head.

"I'm sorry, I have more important matters to attend."

Bruce refused Noah's proposal with a few words and was about to return to his cave when Noah spoke again.

"Will you give up to the heroic ranks?"

Bruce's eyes widened, his gaze went back on the young-looking man sitting on the blue mineral.

He understood his determination, that's why he tried to teach him something.

"There will come a day when you will have to choose between love and power. Living for hundreds of years alone isn't something that everyone wants."

Bruce's words came from his experience, he was basically saying that he was going to accompany Sarah through the entirety of her journey.

Yet, when Noah's opened his eyes, the image of Lily appeared in his view.



Her loving smile, her worry for him, her life spent only to give him more time to cultivate, and, in the end, her last selfless act to prevent Rhys from using her to hurt him.

His eyes became cold as he answered Bruce.

"I've already chosen."

Silence reigned in the area, Bruce stared at Noah and, even if he found it hard to believe in his words, his aura seemed to convince him a little.

"Good luck in there, be sure to be fully prepared."

After that, he went back inside his cave and sealed its entrance, leaving Noah alone on the outside.

A notebook appeared in his hands and two messages were sent, it was time to make the necessary preparations.

'The reports about the Inheritance ground are open to the public but why would you request for so many rank 4 materials?'

'David's team is getting ready to enter the separate dimension again, you can join them if you want.'

Roy and Seth's voices resounded in his head as they replied to his requests, Noah quickly sent other messages to justify his demands and organize the next days.

Two weeks later, he entered the separate dimension under the Great whirlpool.

#### Chapter 377 - 377. Tokens

A group of twenty cultivators dove into the depths of the Great whirlpool.

Their auras were suppressed but their fiery battle intent couldn't be covered by layers of mental energy or by the clothes covering their faces.

"A token is given each three trials, we can use it to escape the dimension and it can't be accumulated. We used ours in the eighth trial so we have to start the exploration from the beginning."

The hooded man in the vanguard position spoke to the figure next to him.

The man speaking was David, he was reviewing the known information about the separate dimension with the cultivator that had just joined his team.

Of course, that cultivator was Noah.

He had gathered a huge amount of information in the two weeks before this day, he wanted to be prepared for the exploration after all.

Also, his preparations didn't stop to the simple knowledge of the separate dimension, Roy had lent him a large number of rank 4 materials which were immediately turned into weapons by him.

Indebting himself with the sect wasn't an issue, a quick pact and the promise that he will repay them were enough for Noah to obtain those needed materials.

'The separate dimension gives a chance to leave only after three trials have been completed but it's weaker in its first area, Sarah's full power was barely enough to make her leave.'

Noah reviewed that information in his mind, he had known about it for quite some time now, reports about the Inheritance ground could be found everywhere in the sect.

'Whenever you leave, you are forced to start the exploration from the beginning and surpass the trials again even though you won't receive any reward.'

Noah knew about that and could also understand what it implied.

The first notable thing was that the highest number of casualties would be found in the first three trials, the cultivators of each group would just use their token to escape a difficult situation after that point.

The second one was that the dragons in the dimension were not real life-forms, it was impossible to provide the thousands of dragons needed for so many trials, especially considering the scarce fertility of that kind of magical beasts.

The third one was that the Inheritance was meant to be extremely difficult to obtain.

'Completing previous trials without obtaining any rewards, forced to stay in the dimension for a long amount of time to recover from each battle, the entity that set all of this up was quite ruthless.'

Eccentric Thunder's Inheritance targeted cultivators under twenty years old and the Royal Inheritance had a gradual increase in its difficulty, they were easier to approach.

This one, instead, seemed made only for cultivators at the peak of the human ranks and the many casualties that had happened in the more than two years since it was discovered clearly showed its difficulty.

"The maximum number of cultivators allowed for each team is twenty. One of us didn't activate its token in time and died in the eighth trial last time, that's how your spot came to be."

David continued to explain, it was clear that he wanted to warn Noah about the dangers of the dimension.

It couldn't be helped, Noah was just a newly advanced rank 3 cultivator in his eyes, he didn't completely trust his strength.

Yet, in the years since the start of the exploration, every organization of the archipelago had suffered heavy losses, their assets in the human ranks saw a sharp decrease in their numbers.

The exploration teams were forced to recruit the newly advanced rank 3 cultivators due to a lack of manpower.

It was a good thing that every organization was taking part in the exploration, the balance in the archipelago would have been long broken otherwise.

"I'll be fine, I can just stay in the back and provide information about the type of magical beast that we are fighting if the trials become too hard. Speaking of which, do you know how many real magical beasts are in there?"

Noah asked about what really interested him.

Dragons were an excellent material, he could use their scales if he was to find some kind of the darkness element to create Demonic swords in the third rank.

Also, he wanted to create another Blood companion, he couldn't think about any other magical beast that suited that role more than dragons.

'Finding some darkness-type dragon would be perfect but I can accept even those of a different element. I won't be able to use its ability and its power would be at the bottom of the fourth rank but it's still better than having a spell that I can't use.'

Noah was already planning to replace his Blood companions in the separate dimension, it was hard to find such strong magical beasts after all.

Also, he had a powerful spell that he couldn't use due to its current power, upgrading his Blood companions would boost his battle prowess by a large margin.

"I don't know, they are really lifelike."

David ended their conversation with that plain answer.

The group followed the direction of the marine currents, they easily arrived at the bottom of the Great whirlpool where the warm current was.

Any cultivator could use its "Breath" to repel the water around it, underwater explorations were extremely easy when it came to rank 3 cultivators.

'To think that such a thing is invisible to those in the heroic ranks... I wonder how strong the creator of this dimension was.'

Noah's mind wandered as his team entered the current, in a few minutes, the environment around them changed and a large bridge connected with a labyrinthic structure appeared in their eyes.

'No trace of the purple halo of the exoskeleton here, this dimension can even fend off that color.'

The Great whirlpool was at some distance from the archipelago but the purple halo still reached its borders.

Yet, inside the dimension, there was no trace of that.

The bridge seemed suspended on the void, only the dark waters of the depths of the sea could be discerned after an attentive investigation to the walls of the dimension.

David led the way across the bridge, reaching the gate of the labyrinth in about ten minutes.

Then, Noah could see with his own eyes the thirty blue dragons ten meters long charging at him from below the bridge.

Chapter 378 - 378. First trial

The Sea dragons had four huge legs and a pair of large wings, their bodies were huge and had a large belly, they almost seemed fat to an inexperienced eye.

Yet, Noah knew, that feature was only a sign of their great defense.

'Extremely lifelike, they could almost fool me.'

Noah stared at the incoming dragons with interest, they weren't like the magical beasts in Eccentric Thunder's inheritance, they seemed made of flesh and bones as if they were real.

However, Noah's instinct told him that they were a creation of the dimension.

After he absorbed the Bloodline Inheritance, Noah's instincts regarding the field of the magical beasts had become extremely keen, it was as if part of the thoughts of the Excavating worm had fused with his mind.

David's team was ready for the battle, they had long instructed Noah about the battle formation that he needed to execute.

Ten cultivators stepped in the vanguard position, "Breath" and mental energy were expended as many defensive spells were launched.

Water walls, vortexes, huge golems, those protections were laid between David's team and the dragons.

The cultivators there were familiar with the separate dimension, they didn't deploy any defensive spell that could hurt the dragons, their innate ability was troublesome to deal with.

Sea dragons could accumulate the attacks that landed on their bodies into sound waves extremely hard to defend against, it was better to kill each one of them in one strike to avoid their innate ability.

The dragons clashed with the cultivators' defenses, their huge bodies bent the spells but they weren't able to break through them.

They were only rank 4 creatures after all, it didn't matter that they were considered as the strongest magical beast, they were still against rank 3 cultivators.

The remaining ten cultivators jumped as soon as the dragons' assault was blocked, Noah was among them.

They were the cultivators that had to kill the dragons, Noah might have been a newly advanced rank 3 cultivator but his status as a rank 3 mage made him perfect for that role.

After all, not every rank 3 cultivator had a rank 3 mental sphere, someone in David's group was still a rank 2 mage.

Noah shot in the air with David at his side, the plan dictated that groups made of two cultivators had to instantly kill one dragon and continue like that until all the dragons were killed.

Noah was paired with David, David wanted to make sure of his power since he was the new member.

Of course, Noah didn't disappoint him.

Noah's arms multiplied as he shot in the air, he resembled a humanoid creature wielding three pair of sabers as he prepared his attack.

The sabers curved the air as they fused into one and lunged right at the nearest dragon.

The dragon was still in the process of stopping itself during the clash with the soft water wall when a dark saber pierced its left eye, diving deep into its skull.

On the other side, David swung his greatsword with great dexterity, severing the dragon's head in half.

The dragon didn't even have time to release a dying cry, it simply vanished into nothingness, some kind of inscriptions could be seen appearing on its body as it turned into invisible air.

'They are indeed different from Eccentric Thunder's one, the creator of the dimension must have used a different inscription method.'

Noah judged after the dragon vanished, he tried to understand something from the inscription but they were far too complex for his level.

David nodded at his side, he was pleased to see that Noah would be able to face the dragon even by himself.

Yet, the method that they were using was safer, that's why he quickly swept the battlefield with his mental energy and shouted an order before resuming in his assault.

"One part of incense!"

David's order signaled that they only had one minute before more dragons arrived, they had to clear the trial before that or they would be forced to start the battle from the beginning.

However, everyone was familiar with that restriction.

The cultivators in each attacking group didn't waste time, as soon as the dragon in front of them disappeared, they moved toward the next one.

David and Noah weren't an exception, they ran at full speed on the battlefield, targeting the dragons near them.

Five dragons would die with each assault while the ten cultivators not joining the attacks continued to deploy defensive methods to stop their charge.

'They would have already escaped if they were real living beings, it seems that they were programmed to recklessly attack until every cultivator is dead.'

Noah judged as another dragon vanished in front of his eyes, it was already his fourth kill, the number of dragons was reduced to ten in less than forty seconds.

'It is quite easy, rank 4 magical beasts on this level can't match this many rank 3 cultivators.'



A rank 2 cultivator, when it entered the liquid stage, became able to hurt a rank 4 magical beast.

When it entered the solid stage, it became able to gravely hurt it and even killing it alone in some cases.

When it entered the third rank, however, it became able to completely overwhelm rank 4 creatures in the lower tier.

The beasts in the separate dimension were dragons, the widely accepted strongest magical beast, and there were even thirty of them.

Yet, they had the power of the lower tier, twenty rank 3 cultivators with good teamwork could vanquish them easily.

And that was exactly what happened.

David and Noah inflicted a deadly blow to their sixth dragon, they were extremely fast in their killings so they had time to assist other groups.

After that dragon vanished, the bridge hummed, radiating a soft light that converged in the air in front of David's group.

A token appeared after the light dissipated, it had a labyrinth depicted on its front, David immediately took it as he gestured to those in his team to follow him.

The team reached the walls of the structure at the end of the bridge, only then they heaved a sigh of relief and sat on the floor to rest, the first trial had been successfully passed!

#### Chapter 379 - 379. Teams

David's team sat in front of the entrance of the labyrinth to rest.

The attackers of the team weren't that tired, they had only attacked about five times each, their cultivation level could sustain that expenditure of "Breath" easily.

Yet, those appointed to the defense were worse off.

They had to constantly activate their defensive spells against the reckless assault of thirty rank 4 dragons, even if their dantians still had some reserves, the expenditure of mental energy wasn't little.

Also, the first three trials were the most dangerous ones, teams couldn't exit the separate dimension without surpassing the third test and obtaining the token needed for their escape.

That's why it was better to recover after each trial, facing a test without being at peak form was simply too reckless.

"You did good, we might even pass the eighth trial this time."

David complimented Noah, he was completely satisfied by his performance.

'It will take a while for us to reach that point, the rewards of the eighth trial will probably be gone by that time.'

Noah thought in his mind.

The separate dimension gave rewards only to the first team that surpassed a trial, all the other groups had to fight and risk their lives for nothing unless they managed to become the first to pass the still unbeaten tests.

That meant that David's team would obtain nothing until it passed the eighth trial and only if they were the first to pass it!

However, teams of various organizations were already inside the separate dimension, it was unlikely for David's team to reach the eighth trial and pass it before the groups that were already inside.

'Our team isn't even the best that the sect could offer, there are three teams stronger than us at least.'

The Chasing demon sect had more than two hundred cultivators in the third rank, it could form many exploration teams.

Even if there had been many casualties and many cultivators had chosen to remain in the sect, there was still a large number of captains willing to attempt in the exploration.

Currently, the Chasing demon sect had five teams actively exploring the Inheritance ground.

Joel's team was considered the strongest, it featured many peak rank 3 cultivators that were attracted by the rank 4 techniques contained in the separate dimension.

Also, Joel was Edgar's right-hand man, his faction was in charge of the army of the sect, he felt that it was in his duties to secure as many resources as possible for the sect.

Alison's team came right after Joel's one when it came to battle prowess, the thieves' faction was specialized in raids, it was normal that its most powerful cultivators would group up to raid the seemingly richest place in the archipelago.

Roy's team was the third, he didn't join the exploration but the heroic cultivators in the sect had still assigned him to form a team made of the cultivators that didn't belong to any faction, the higher-ups couldn't allow for cultivators that didn't perform any service to the sect to simply watch from the sidelines.

Truth to be told, the team formed in that way wasn't weak, the cultivation level of each of its members was high, the only thing they lacked was battle experience due to the large periods of seclusion that they had spent to cultivate.

Under David's team, there was a group formed by the newly advanced rank 3 cultivators.

Many of them didn't have any affiliation to the factions but they still wanted to gather battle experience and, maybe, some glory from the exploration of the dimension, it was needless to say that they weren't performing well but their careful attitude led them to suffer no losses.

All in all, half of the most powerful assets in the human ranks of the sect were engaged with the exploration of the Inheritance ground, if the casualties were to be summed, the power that the sect had on the archipelago was more than halved.

Yet, every organization had the same behavior, more than half of their assets were deployed in the separate dimension, leaving the balance of the archipelago untouched.

The islands were only territories, the separate dimension contained resources so valuable that giving them up to focus on the archipelago didn't seem worth at all!

Another team appeared on the other side of the bridge while David's group was resting.

Noah's attention went on them, only half of them were rank 3 cultivators, the others were only in the solid stage of the second rank.

"Greed sure leads men to death."

Noah loudly thought at their sight.

"Just reckless people from some minor organization, they will regret this action."

David sighed after he commented on Noah's words, they both began to watch as the newly arrived team engaged in the first trial.

Thirty blue dragons flew from below the bridge and charged at the new group, Noah was watching them from the other side that time, he couldn't help but marvel again at their might.

The new team seemed experienced but disorganized, they probably didn't study detailed reports like those of the Chasing demon sect did, the backing of a powerful organization could be seen even from those details.

They reacted quickly, the rank 2 cultivators focused on defending while those in the third rank attacked, it was a battle formation similar to that used by Noah and his team.

The formation seemed to work in the beginning, the dragons were blocked and the rank 3 cultivators managed to kill a good number of them.

Yet, the might of so many rank 4 creatures couldn't be underestimated.

The weaker between the rank 2 cultivators felt their mental energy being drained, not even thirty seconds had passed but their defensive spells broke, allowing the dragons to rampage on them.

It was a slaughter, those in the second rank could only watch as the tide of rank 4 creatures swept them, attacks were launched but they had little effect.

Instead, they only fueled the Sea dragons' innate ability.

Sound attacks began to resound on the bridge, killing even more cultivators.

Then, thirty more seconds passed and more dragons came out from below the bridge to refill the ranks of the first trial, it was with a desperate expression that the cultivators stared at the again thirty beasts charging at them.

Chapter 380 - 380. Second trial

The new team found itself cornered.

Thirty dragons were still in front of them but they had already suffered heavy losses!

Almost all the cultivators in the second rank had died after the defenses were breached and even some of those in the third rank couldn't defend from the joint sound attacks of the dragons.

'This is the real difficulty of the trial. If you aren't fast enough in the killings, the number of dragons will be refilled while you will just continue to weaken... They are doomed.'

The team didn't manage to block that dragon's assault when it had twenty members, they couldn't do so after the recent losses.

The rank 3 cultivators tried to use their spells to defend, yet, since they had no one killing the dragons, they could only desperately watch as their reserves of "Breath" and mental energy were depleted.

In about twenty minutes, all the members of the just arrived team were killed and the dragons simply flew somewhere below the bridge.

"Weaklings should just leave this dimension to the powerful organizations, they don't have a chance anyway."

David spoke while shaking his head.

'Sometimes, weaklings simply don't have a choice.'

Noah thought in his mind.

He could relate to their situation, he had been a lone cultivator for most of his life after all.

'Yet, they were unprepared, they should have bought the necessary information at least.'

He immediately knew which had been their fatal weakness.

Knowledge was power, especially in a place where the trials could be studied.

'If the rank 2 cultivators were the ones attacking, maybe, they would have survived.'

Noah concluded.

The new team found its defenses breached too soon which gave enough time for the other dragons to arrive.

"We should rest too, the path in the labyrinth is quite annoying."

David spoke again and Noah nodded at his order, he cultivated for a few minutes before laying down to sleep.

The Dantian's opening technique didn't require for the bloody procedure to be executed even when someone had to refill its dantian, the procedure was needed only when someone wanted to raise its level.

Simply speaking, Noah could just create the usual vortex and move its center toward his dantian with his mental energy, it expended a bit of mental energy but it allowed him to refill his reserves without piercing his dantian.

Of course, he couldn't enlarge his dantian in that way, the procedure was needed to raise its level.

David's team rested for a half a day before resuming its exploration, everyone was at its peak form by then, there was no reason to waste more time.

David used the token obtained in the first trial to open the entrance of the labyrinth, a heavy pressure could be immediately felt as soon as the huge door of the structure opened.

Massive white walls filled the environment inside the structure, they radiated some sort of pressure that weighed on the mental spheres of the cultivators and prevented them from using their mental energy to inspect the area, they were forced to use their senses in that environment.

Noah's gaze went on the rank 2 mages in his group, they had paled a bit when the door opened but their mental spheres seemed sturdy enough to endure the pressure.

'David has chosen well.'

He nodded internally at that sight, David had given a lot of thoughts in the creation of his team.

David went in the vanguard position and signaled to the others to follow him, the labyrinth had been explored many times by then, it was almost completely mapped.

"We will follow the same route as last time to be sure that nothing unexpected happens."

David explained to Noah as they moved across the large passages of the labyrinth.

'The second trial can be slightly easier depending on where you gain access to it. Well, it should be quite easy considering our team.'

Noah had studied all the reports that his sect was able to provide, he knew exactly what to expect in the road to the eighth trail.

After many turns and a long march, David's team reached a large square where a black monolith stood at its center.

The monolith had many inscriptions on its surface and it also featured a small hole.

David turned to look at the members of his team and they all nodded when their gazes crossed.

Then, he inserted the token of the first trial in the hole, the white walls of the passages connected with the square sealed themselves and a huge figure materialized on top of the monolith.



Noah's eyes shone at that sight, he did his best to hide the greed that he felt toward that figure.

That was because the figure on top of the monolith belonged to a peak rank 4 Bone dragon, a creature of the darkness element!

'If only it was a real magical beast...'

Noah complained in his mind as he retreated to set up the battle formation with his team.

The Bone dragon was the same as the Sea dragons in the first trial, even if it was extremely lifelike, it was only a creation of the Inheritance ground.

'The Inheritance gave completely intact corpses as a reward, I wonder how many of them there will be at the end of the dimension.'

The Bone dragon wasn't suited to become a Blood companion due to the absence of blood but its corpse would be the perfect core material for the creation of new Demonic swords!

Noah couldn't help but wonder if the Inheritance ground had corpses of that creature stored somewhere, waiting to become the reward of some trial.

The battle began.

A peak rank 4 creature was extremely powerful, its power surpassed that of the thirty dragons in the first trial.

Yet, it was alone and it was against twenty rank 3 cultivators, adding the fact that the Bone dragon could only shoot piercing bone shards other than fight using its body, the battle quickly became one-sided.

It was enough for twelve cultivators to focus all their spells on restraining the beast while the other eight relentlessly launched attacks, little by little, the Bone dragon became exhausted and the cracks on its bones became too large for it to suppress them.

'It's good that it behaves like a living being, it would have been a problem if it had an endless reserve of energy.'

Noah thought when the Bone dragon crumbled on itself, the bones that made its body fell everywhere on the battlefield before vanishing in the air.

The passages linked to the square opened and the token inside the monolith shone as it returned to David's hands, the second trial had been easily passed!