

Chapter 411 - 411. Pair

"Give me the book containing the copying technique."

Noah ordered when he finished inspecting all the darkness related books and scrolls.

The spirit automaton didn't hesitate, a big and old book rose from the pile of goods next to Noah and landed in his hands.

Noah carefully swept through its pages, the copying technique created by Divine Demon defied common reason, it was able to create an endless stream of rank 4 creatures by restraining just a few of them, it was normal to be interested in such a power.

However, he soon understood that he couldn't even make out the meaning of the initial lines that described the technique.

'This can be considered a peak rank 6 technique, maybe even a quasi-rank 7 one. It doesn't even match my areas of expertise.'

Noah sighed as he looked at its contents.

There were written descriptions that he could read, they instructed about the restrictions and procedures to follow to place the many formations down before the technique could be activated.

It was clear that the wealth of a single cultivator, no matter how rich it was, wasn't enough to set it up.

'Heaven and Earth don't allow me to pursue the Attunement method and I have no knowledge whatsoever about formations. Also, there are specific materials needed for the restriction of the magical beasts inside the formation, I don't even know what some of these names mean.'

Noah didn't want to give up on such a strong technique so soon but he knew that he wouldn't be ever able to use it.

The requirements for the usage of the technique were harsh, one needed to be experienced in the Attunement method, able to understand formations, able to capture and restrain magical beasts, and also have many exotic materials.

Only a divine being could meet those standards, even cultivators in the heroic ranks would need the backing of an organization to perform the technique.

'I guess I can only give it to the sect along with everything that I don't need. There is one problem though, what can I even ask in exchange?'

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During the days in which Noah was secluded inside his cave, a shocking piece of information was spread throughout the Coral archipelago.

The information came from a team that had survived the trials inside the Inheritance ground, those cultivators came from an organization belonging to the Utra nation.

The information spoke about a known criminal of the Utra nation whose identity was most likely linked to the outsider that had unleashed chaos on the battlefield of the Odrea nation.

The criminal identified in that report was, of course, Noah Balvan.

The cultivators of the Utra nation were the only one that had access to the drawing featuring his facial features so, when they met the copy of David's team, they were able to identify Noah when his hood came off during the battle.

Also, the spells used by his copy matched the reports about the Hooded devil in the Odra country, that last piece of information was the confirmation needed to link the two identities.

Noah would curse his bad luck if he was to know that his copy had appeared right in front of cultivators of the Utra nation, learning that the copy of David's group had managed to kill most of them wouldn't console him much.

The information soon became renown, the social environment of the archipelago was different from that of the continent, keeping something hidden to the other organizations wasn't possible.

The Hive learnt about it and the Chasing demon sect wasn't an exception.

Many disciples and captains could be seen walking in front of Noah's cave, curious about the real identity of the honorary disciple that they called Zach.

Yet, there was something that prevented them from investigating further.

Two figures sat on the purple ground in front of Noah's cave.

One was the renown Roy, the only cultivator in the human ranks that held the title of elder.

The other was a woman with white hair whose cultivation level was hidden to the others.

The rank 2 cultivators weren't aware of her identity but all the captains trembled and bowed when they saw her.

That was because the woman waiting for Noah to exit his cave was Elder Iris, Roy's mother, and the manager of the human assets of the entire Chasing demon sect!

The news about Noah obtaining the Inheritance contained in the separate dimension had been kept a secret from the sect but the presence of a heroic cultivator in the residential area for rank 2 cultivators raised many suspects.

After all, cultivators weren't stupid, especially considering that they were aware that Noah had survived the exploration of the dimension with David's team.

Also, according to David's reports, his team had approached the last trial that many had escaped.

In fact, there was something that his team had completely missed: The escape tokens could be used to forfeit the matches against the copies!

It couldn't be helped, David and the others were confident in their power, they had no reason to test again the tokens after they had failed to work in the ninth trial.

Yet, that didn't apply to all the teams in the dimension: Many cultivators relied on them when death was nearing in the tenth and eleventh trial and, to their surprise, the tokens had worked!

They didn't bring them outside the dimension though but only at the beginning of the mountain chain.

Also, the tokens broke after that activation.

That was one of the reasons why the legal organizations ended up with more survivors, they were used to be on the losing side in the archipelago, the careful attitude developed due to that helped them discover the detail that many cultivators belonging to the underground organizations had missed.

Noah was unaware of all that stream of information that had enveloped the organizations of the archipelago and focused on sorting his space-ring.

He wasn't in a hurry, he could calmly memorize the new spells as he thought about what to ask in return for the items useless to him.

It took him a month and a half to exit his cave and he was quite surprised to find the pair of mother and son waiting for him right in front of the entrance.

Chapter 412 - 412. Everything

"You might want to listen to the recent developments in the archipelago before saying your conditions."

Roy spoke before Noah could say anything, the latter gestured for the two elders to enter his cave.

A few seconds later, the three of them were sitting on the ground at the center of the cave, the entrance was closed, sealing away any noise and the curious gazes of the onlookers.

"What developments?"

Noah went straight to the point, he had only learnt the spells that he knew he could find useful but there was far more to do.

He wanted to study the many diagrams in his possession, he wanted to isolate the effects that he wanted to reproduce, he wanted to test the Divine deduction technique, and he wanted to take anything that he found useful from the inventory of the sect.

Each one of those tasks would keep him busy for long periods, he simply wanted to solve all the immediate issues before slowly absorbing the Inheritance.

"Your identity has been revealed, your copy appeared in front of cultivators of the Ultra nation. Here, this is a summary that I've prepared for this meeting."

Roy answered as he handed him a pile of sheets, Elder Iris silently sat on her knees with her eyes closed during that conversation.

The sheets described the events in the archipelago that followed the disappearance of the separate dimension.

They covered the discovery of Noah's identity, its connection with the Hooded devil, the matter about the escape tokens, and even some final consideration personally added by Roy.

'No one is aware of who obtained the Inheritance and, even though my identity was revealed, the legal organizations only know that I belong to the Hive, they don't know to which branch I belong.'

The situation was far better than what Roy had hinted, the Hive controlled the archipelago after all, Noah barely felt the need to hide for the time being.

As someone who had remained hidden and had escaped for all his life, Noah could remain perfectly calm when he learnt that information.

"The sect is willing to offer you protection from the continent in exchange for the contents of the Inheritance. You can keep anything that you find useful for your cultivation of course."

Roy said with a smile but Noah's next words made his expression freeze.

"I believe that the sect is bad at telling jokes."

Noah had always been overbearing, he simply rarely had the chance to be in a position of power.

"Don't think that the oath can keep you safe. We might not be able to take your life since you are a member of the sect but there are many ways to seize the Inheritance without causing a backlash from our horned faces. Remember your position and let's have a peaceful transaction."

Elder Iris spoke without opening her eyes, Noah felt some that some sort of pressure accompanied her words but he had been prepared for a similar situation.

In the month and a half in which he had isolated himself, he didn't just sort the contents inside the ring and learnt some spells.

He had also thoroughly questioned the spirit automaton to learn about the many features that the space-ring offered.

The ring was a rank 6 inscribed item after all, its functions weren't limited only to a large space and a vast knowledge!

Noah's "Breath" entered the black ring on his finger and an ethereal figure slowly materialized next to him.

The figure had the aspect of a young boy with long black hair, he was the spirit automaton of the ring!

"Tell them what I can do in case the sect becomes hostile."

Noah ordered as he filled a cup with the wine contained in his space-ring and coldly observed the reaction on his two guests' faces.

"Yes, Master!"

The automaton answered before his eyes shone and he explained in a robotic voice.

"Master can freely decide to destroy all the items inside the ring, he can also just destroy one item at the time to show his leverage."

Elder Iris opened her eyes at those words, she inspected the spirit automaton with interest, she wanted to understand if he was speaking the truth.

"As a last resort, Master can decide to use the Credits inside the ring to activate the self-destruction mechanism. The power behind the blast generated in this way will match the attack of a rank 6 cultivator since the ring is a peak rank 6 inscribed item. According to my calculations, the entirety of the Chasing demon sect would be wiped out in the explosion."

Roy almost puked blood when he heard those words and began to stare at Noah's ring in fear.

Elder Iris furrowed her brows, she had a better idea of the power held by rank 6 cultivators and was quite doubtful about the automaton words.

However, she was only a rank 4 cultivator, she would die even if the self-destruction of the ring matched only cultivators in the fifth rank.

"Would you rather die than accept unfavorable terms?"

She spoke, her brows relaxed when she realized that the blast would take Noah's life too.

Noah shrugged his shoulders and emptied his cup before explaining.

"The Chasing demon sect treated me well but humans tend to lose their reason when wealth is involved. Also, I'm dealing with entities about the Inheritance of a God, I need to put my life as a mortal on the line if I want to negotiate on equal ground."

Noah's uncaring attitude stuck Roy's deeply, he had never seen someone using its own life as a bargaining chip.

"What do you want?"

Elder Iris spoke.

She had far more experience, she could instantly understand that Noah wasn't playing around.

Truth to be told, she was ready to give away as many resources as needed to obtain the Inheritance, she had just tried to exploit Noah's peculiar situation to her advantage.

Needless to say, that approach only worsened the atmosphere in the cave.

Noah smirked before revealing the price that, in his opinion, matched the contents of the Inheritance.

"Simple, I want everything."

Chapter 413 - 413. Meeting

An unsightly expression appeared on Elder Iris' face, she wasn't clear about Noah's intentions so she simply waited for him to explain further.

"What do I mean by everything is simple: I'll be granted the ability to purchase anything I want from the inventory for free, to freely use any training facility of the sect, and, if needed, to request for the help of heroic ranks cultivator when I'm in peril. Of course, my requests can only be applied for matters and resources up to the fifth rank, just like the items in the Inheritance."

Noah exposed one piece of information about his wealth to show how valuable the Inheritance was, it was clear from Elder Iris' struggling expression that his words were effective.

Roy had long since lost any will to speak, Noah was negotiating with resources that even his privileged position couldn't grant him, it was better to leave the matter to his mother.

Yet, he couldn't help but feel some tinges of admiration when looking at the young man uncaringly sitting in front of him.

The will of most cultivators in the human ranks would just break when dealing with an entity in the heroic ranks but Noah wasn't even sweating under his mother's gaze.

'Such a cold-blooded attitude, to think that he could have ended up in a legal organization.'

Roy heaved a sigh of relief as he thought of that, he felt glad that such a spectacular cultivator was on his side.

On the other hand, Elder Iris felt conflicted.

She knew that she had no leverage on Noah.

The man in front of her had no relationships to exploit and his position didn't have any weaknesses.

You either accept my conditions or I make everything blow up!

There wasn't much room for negotiation after that ultimatum.

"I don't have the authority to accept your requests."

In the end, Elder Iris sighed as she revealed the truth.

She was just a rank 4 cultivator after all.

She was an unparalleled existence in the eyes of the human cultivators but her power didn't allow her to have much influence on the heroic matters.

"I kind of expected that."

Noah revealed too, he knew that he couldn't ask for the complete support of the heroic assets to a single elder.

It was with a bit of hesitation that he decided to give voice to his next words.

"Please, bring me to the Chasing Demon, Divine Demon has also left a message for him."

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If a cultivator in the human ranks was ever to ask for a meeting with the patriarch of the Chasing demon sect, it would become the biggest joke in the entire sect, it might even be punished due to its lack of respect.

The Chasing Demon was a legendary figure after all, one of the pillars of the defeated unorthodox sects of the Papral nation.

Yet, when the legacy of a God was involved, exceptional measures had to be taken.

It took a few hours for the higher-ups of the sect to be notified of Noah's requests, the news that he had obtained the Inheritance had been hidden from the human assets but all the elders had been informed about it.

Also, most elders had interrupted their cultivation due to the closure of the separate dimension, like Elder Iris, they saw war looming over the archipelago.

The elders had a long discussion through their inscribed communication items, some of them wanted to directly punish Noah for asking something so disrespectful but they soon calmed down when they heard that Divine Demon had left a message for their patriarch.

Moreover, that message was detained by Noah, they didn't want to indirectly hurt the Chasing Demon by preventing the meeting from happening.

After the matter had been decided, Noah was brought by Elder Iris in the center of the sect, where the patriarch's personal training ground was.

The route didn't follow the usual passages, Elder Iris needed to unlock many secret and underground tunnels with her authority to reach the place where they were standing.

Noah stood still as he tried to contain his amazement at the sight that had unfolded in front of him.

The last underground passage ended in a vast underground area.

The area was so large that it could match the width of the entire sect with its size.

Noah was at the entrance of a shining purple environment, it would resemble one of the plains near Balvan mansion if it wasn't for the fact that the ground was made of barren crystals.

Also, a short mountain stood at its center, its peak seemed to have been cut off since a perfectly horizontal space could be seen at its summit.

"The patriarch has accepted to see you but I can't go further, you must walk to the summit alone."

Elder Iris spoke, her eyes looked at the summit of the mountain contained in the large underground area with reverence, her complete devotion could be seen in her expression.

On the other hand, Noah was interested in the environment: That was the training area of an entity in the sixth rank, he wanted to learn as many secrets as he could!

However, he soon discovered that he couldn't feel anything, there didn't seem to be even the slight trace of "Breath" in the plain.

"Go, don't let the patriarch wait."

Elder Iris gave those last words and retreated, leaving Noah alone at the end of the passage.

'I hope I didn't bite more than I can chew this time.'

Noah thought as he carefully stepped on the purple plain.

He had the vague suspicion that only the Chasing Demon could grant his requests but he still felt anxious at the thought of meeting him.

Part of his mental energy was ready inside the space-ring, he maintained his connection with the item to be ready to threaten any existence that wanted to exploit him.

However, he wasn't completely sure that his methods would work against a rank 6 existence.

The path toward the mountain was barren, nothing but the purple light of the exoskeleton was in sight.

It took him only about half an hour to reach the base of the mountain where he finally felt something different from the complete desolation of the plain.

The mental sphere of a cultivator was extremely sensitive to dangers and Noah had also absorbed the Bloodline Inheritance, further improving that ability.

When he looked at the plain summit, there was only one sensation that he felt: Powerlessness.

A feeling that, no matter what he did or what schemes he tried, gave him the certainty that they would fail.

It was while enduring that pressure that Noah gulped and began to climb the mountain.

Chapter 414 - 414. Chasing Demon

Noah climbed the side of the mountain quite quickly, its steepness was easily overcome by his rank 4 body.

Another quarter of an hour went by before he could reach the summit, Noah ended his climb with a jump, softly landing on the plain peak.

A series of inscriptions entered his field of view, lines covered the surface of the summit, forming an intricate formation that seemed to have peculiar runes in its core spots.

The surface of the plain on the summit of the mountain had the width of almost a kilometer, a formation that could cover its entire surface was surely the work of an expert!

A human figure sat at the center of the formation, his back was turned toward Noah and he could see the many scars that filled his bulging muscles from his position.

Noah didn't dare to take a step forward, he performed a polite bow and remained in that position, waiting for the patriarch's permission to enter his training area.

Minutes passed but nothing happened, the human figure sat silently, it didn't even seem to be breathing.

All of sudden, shining lines began to cover the ceiling of the underground area, they resembled white veins that expanded over the purple mineral as they converged toward the mountain.

Then, when the lines reached the area above the mountain, shining drops began to fall from the ceiling.

The drops contained small crystals and they precisely landed on the runes laid around on the formation.

The runes began to shine, some sort of mechanism was activated which made the entirety of the formation take life, illuminating the surface of the summit.

Noah watched everything with wide eyes, he still couldn't feel anything but he recognized the material that made the drops: It was "Breath"!

Yet, it also seemed different from the "Breath" that he usually absorbed, it wasn't just a matter of purity, it was as if its composition had been altered, bringing it to a higher state.

The lines of the formation slowly illuminated as drops continued to fall on the runes, they reached for Chasing Demon as the light spread.

When they reached his body, Chasing Demon forcefully inhaled.

All the light on the formation was sucked as he inhaled, it entered his body in less than an instant, leaving only the purple halo as a form of illumination.

Then, Chasing Demon exhaled, a shining gas came out of his mouth which then was absorbed by the ground, disappearing almost instantly.

Noah observed everything with great interest, he hadn't been able to understand the absorption process of the rank 4 cultivation technique in the Inheritance but what had witnessed was slowly solving his doubts.

'The "Breath" in the heroic rank isn't only purer, it has a completely different composition!'

Yet, even if he had understood that, he was still unaware of the method to extract and absorb it.

"Did you gain some enlightenment?"

An aged voice spoke, those words seemed to weight as they reached Noah's ears.

"Yes, but I still don't understand how to gain access to such "Breath". Does it have a different source? Or is the cultivation technique that alters its composition?"

Noah answered, his eagerness to expand his knowledge about the heroic ranks had made him abandon any pretense of politeness.

"Both."

Chasing Demon spoke again as he stretched his hand to point at the formation and then at the ceiling.

"The veins on the ceiling attract "Breath" of extreme purity from the sea, making it fall on the runes of the formation which carry my will. They then subdue the "Breath", condense it, and direct it to my body. This is the cultivation technique that I created to reach the sixth rank."

Noah took a glance at the formation before raising his head to stare at the ceiling.

Chasing Demon didn't explain why the "Breath" absorbed by the veins was different but they were invisible now, only the purple mineral could be seen by Noah's eyes.

"It seems that you are smart, lone cultivators usually are quick learner after all."

The patriarch stood up as he gave those praises, he turned to face Noah and slowly walked toward him.

Noah could see his face now, he had short brown hair, piercing red eyes, sharp features, and slim eyebrows.

His upper body was covered in scars but his skin seemed to glow, giving an otherworldly appearance to his figure.

"What heroic cultivators absorb isn't the "Breath" commonly found in the air but that inside the matter of the world. In other words, we steal the "Breath" contained inside the matter."

Noah's mind rumbled, many ideas popped inside it as he analyzed the patriarch's words.

He first thought about the atoms, particles that were common knowledge in his previous world seemed to be unknown on this one.

Yet, it seemed that the "Breath" the patriarch was referring to was contained in an atomic environment.

'Maybe, the physic of my previous world can't be applied in this case. This world has been modified by the "Breath", this energy is too miraculous, it doesn't seem to match with anything I've seen in my first life.'

Since science couldn't solve his doubts, Noah decided to ask the entity in front of him.

"How do I see it? How do I manage to absorb it? Why would it need to be subdued?"

Noah stormed the patriarch with questions, he had completely disregarded his situation when a chance to better understand the road in front of him appeared.

"Seeing it's hard, only rank 4 mages or above can look at the essence contained in the matter. Absorbing it's easy, you just need a cultivation technique with a suction force strong enough to affect the internal composition of the matter of this world. As for the subduing part..."

Chasing Demon freely explained, he didn't seem to mind Noah's curiosity as he neared him.

"The "Breath" contained inside the matter carries a purer will, it carries the laws imposed by Heaven and Earth, only a stronger will can force it to stay in a dantian and be used for a different purpose. This is also the reason why cultivation techniques personally created have better effects: They reflect more of your will, preventing from less "Breath" to escape your clutches."

Chapter 415 - 415. Agreed

The world that only heroic mages could see, the laws of Heaven and Earth, the will that the cultivation techniques must carry.

All those pieces of information entered Noah's mind, adding fragments to the puzzle that was the heroic ranks for him.

"Stealing the "Breath" that carries the laws, won't it interfere with the matter?"

Chasing Demon was freely explaining those subjects to Noah and he even wore a faint smile as he did so, Noah didn't want to let go of that opportunity.

Knowledge was what he lacked the most at the moment, the academy had given him a solid foundation but the matters of the heroic ranks had always been too vague, there wasn't much that he could learn about them.

That's why the pointers of a rank 6 experts outclassed any other priority he had before going to that meeting.

"Of course, that's the reason why all the divine beings eventually leave for the Immortal lands, this world would become a wasteland or worse if Gods started to cultivate here."

Noah fell deep in thought, it was as if a door leading to a bigger and more amazing world had been opened by the patriarch's words.

"Now, let me hear my Master's voice again."

Chasing Demon asked as he stepped outside the formation and sat in front of Noah, a childish smile appeared on his face when he mentioned Divine Demon.

"Patriarch, I would like to hear my requests fir-"

"I agree to all of them."

"..."

Noah had returned to reality when the message of Divine Demon was mentioned and wanted to set the matter concerning his conditions first but the patriarch immediately agreed, leaving him momentarily speechless.

"But, you don't even know what I'm asking!"

Noah complained, the patriarch's attitude didn't match with his idea of a cultivator in charge of a sect.

"All the resources and techniques up to the fifth rank inside the inventory will be yours to take freely. I also authorize you to use all the training facilities of

the sect without the need for merit points and the sect will provide help whenever a danger that surpasses the human ranks befalls on you. Now, the message."

Noah was once again speechless, all his requests had been accepted so easily!

"Come on, these are just resources, they are there to nurture promising cultivators anyway and you have already met those standards by obtaining my Master's approval. Don't make me repeat my orders a third time."

After those words, Noah gave up on trying to understand his patriarch and simply sat in front of him while using his mental energy to summon the automaton.

The ethereal boy was already informed about his orders and his eyes lit up as soon as he appeared in the open.

"Rufus."

Divine Demon's voice came out from the open mouth of the automaton, Chasing Demon's eyes widened when he heard that name.

"I know that you've chosen to train a rank 5 cultivation technique to kill that traitor, mining your path to godhood for the sake of vengeance wasn't your smartest choice."

Chasing Demon snorted when he heard those words but a bitter smile appeared on his face, his eyes seemed to wander between the memories contained in his mind.

"Well, you have always been the most short-sighted and emotional of my disciples after all, you are being true to your nature at least."

Noah shifted his gaze when he heard that, he didn't want to look at his patriarch when he was rebuked.

"You've reached the sixth rank though, it means that you've finally managed to fuse your runes with my formations, maybe you still have hopes in becoming a God... Anyway, what I'm concerned about is how you handle your sect!"

"Back in my days, I would throw all those useless disciples that entered my dimension into a pack of dragons and allowed them to live only if they brought enough heads back! What kind of lofty life are they having here? Luckily for you, my dimension has killed all the useless ones, you can nurture better demons now."

Noah's expression froze, hearing the more than seventy rank 3 cultivators died in the dimension being labeled as useless was something that he hadn't expected.

He began to see his patriarch under a new light, his status as a disciple of the Divine Demon meant that he had to be extraordinary even among his peers!

"I think war is always the best way to forge the character of the young ones. Just use the conquest of the archipelago as mean to nurture better human assets while you go around gathering the materials needed for my technique, you should have obtained it by now."

Chasing Demon shot an inquisitor look toward Noah and he didn't hesitate to take out the book containing the copying technique and hand it to him.

The patriarch's eyes widened when he saw the book and he held it with great care as he began to inspect its contents.

"Oh, right. The kid is promising, use him in the war, I don't want him to isolate himself to cultivate like those orthodox bunch, battle prowess must come before the cultivation level in the mind of a demon. Anyway, I hope to see you in the Immortal lands, I still need to punish you for your recklessness. Luckily, there are dragons here too."

The recorded voice ended and the spirit automaton closed his eyes before Noah made him return inside the ring.

Chasing Demon had an awkward smile on his face, his Master seemed to have given birth to conflicting emotions inside him.

Then, he simply focused on the book in his hands, his fingers traced the lines of the formations described on the pages as if he was trying to understand their meaning.

"He is really a genius, this technique would be considered a masterpiece even if it was limited to the human ranks."

The patriarch spoke without raising his gaze from the book, he seemed completely immersed in its pages.

"Ehm, what should I do now?"

Noah asked, he didn't give much weight on Divine Demon's words, he had just obtained unlimited access to the inventory and wanted to take anything darkness related before going in seclusion, there was still a lot that he needed to test.

"Well, you heard him, didn't you? You are going to war."

Chapter 416 - 416. Demon Prince

Noah returned to the underground corridor where Elder Iris had left him.

He had discussed with the patriarch for some time but, in the end, he was forced to accept his orders.

'I must lead the human assets to war while he prepares the copying spell, he wants to take complete control over the archipelago. However, how am I even supposed to command the other captains? I'm still in the gaseous stage.'

Elder Iris entered his field of view as he evaluated that issue.

Noah knew that he was strong, he had defeated a rank 3 cultivator in the liquid stage after all.

Yet, the sect had many solid stage cultivators, it was pointless to mention the leaders of each faction at that point.

Elder Iris had an old notebook in her hands, her furrowed brows showed her disappointment toward the message that she had received.

"What is it?"

Noah asked when he saw that her gaze went on him and remained still, he felt uncomfortable under the inspection of an elder.

"Nothing, Lord Prince."

"Wha-"

Noah wanted to ask about the title she used when the walls of the exoskeleton trembled and the patriarch's voice resounded through the entirety of the sect.

"Orders for all the cultivators in the human ranks: The Chasing Demon sect is going to war! We are taking over the entire archipelago. You have six months to prepare, the battle will start after that."

Some cheers could be heard coming from the residential areas, the sect had always been one of the strongest organizations of the Hive but its members were forced to hide to give the appearance that the legal organizations were in control.

Those restraints weighed on the minds of the disciples, what was the point of being strong if they were then forced underground?

Also, most of them were extremely loyal to the sect and could relate with its history, they had longed for the moment when they could take over all the islands and rule out in the open.

"All the cultivators in the second and third rank will be forced to take part in the war, any deserted will be considered useless and disposed of."

The eyes of the weak and secluded cultivators widened when they heard those words, the patriarch didn't give them any choice on the matter.

"Though, every war needs a general. I hereby give the title of Demon Prince to Noah Balvan, the cultivator that has successfully retrieved the Inheritance of our ancestor. He will lead you to battle, follow his orders as if they were mine."

That was the moment when Noah's eyes widened too, not only did the patriarch use his real name, but he had also given him a title!

The walls of the exoskeleton stopped trembling and Noah's horned face shone for a few seconds, he realized that some permissions had been granted to his oath.

"What does my title do?"

However, Noah had always been a lone cultivator, he knew almost nothing concerning the titles in a sect.

Elder Iris was still looking at him, she didn't seem surprised by the news, it seemed that she had been informed before the patriarch's speech.

"Being the Demon Prince means that you'll most likely become the next Chasing Demon, it's needless to say that this title isn't given easily."

"I meant its applications."

Noah couldn't be bothered by the meaning behind his new status, he only wanted to know what it implied.

"You have now the authority to punish or restrain your fellow disciples, as well as injuring them. You are still forbidden to kill them however, such decisions can only be ordered by us elders."

Elder Iris' words echoed in his mind.

'It gives me some leverage on the other captains at least, it should be enough to make them follow my orders.'

"Let's go to the inventory, I need to empty my ring and retrieve some items."

Elder Iris nodded at that order, she led Noah outside the patriarch's habitation and through the passages connected to where all the wealth of the sect was stored.

Marcia was waiting for their arrival on an area where the light radiated by the exoskeleton was less powerful, that sight was quite unusual for the environment of the sect.

"Elder, Prince."

Marcia bowed to both of them, she was the captain in charge of the faction handling the inventory but she still performed that polite gesture to Noah.

"Open it."

Elder Iris ordered, Marcia touched the wall behind her in specific spots before a formation lit up and the purple minerals moved, revealing a descending dark path.

The three of them went in the passage, many inscriptions could be seen on its walls which illuminated that dark path.

A large basin was at the end of the corridor, items of a various kind could be seen orderly stored there and surrounded by an intricate formation.

"You can leave the items here, I'll take care of putting them inside the formation according to the order needed."

Marcia spoke and Noah didn't waste time.

All the items that he had decided to give to the sect were taken out in an orderly way with the help of the spirit automaton, the Credits, the precious drugs, the dragon' corpses, a few weapons, all the scrolls related to the darkness element, and a copy of the fifth Kesier rune remained inside the ring.

Noah inspected its contents, the wealth inside the ring remained incredible even after taking out all the useless items.

'If I was an ordinary cultivator or even one without lofty ambitions, the road to the fifth rank would be extremely simple with even a fraction of these items.'

Resources formed a pile in front of him while he was deep in thought, even Elder Iris was surprised when she became aware of the quality of some of those items.

There were rank 5 weapons, drugs, and techniques after all!

Elder Iris was still in the fourth rank, she couldn't help but be attracted by some of them.

Marcia, on the other hand, was completely amazed, her jaw hanged open as her eyes darted between the items of the Inheritance.

However, Noah couldn't be bothered to wait for their stupor to fade and directly asked for the things he needed.

"I need all the darkness spells, cultivation techniques, and arts of the inventory. I will probably give them back soon but I would still like to inspect them."

Chapter 417 - 417. Conflict

Noah quickly obtained what he had requested, Marcia didn't avert her eyes from the pile of goods even when he left.

He had finally obtained all he needed to go in seclusion and properly absorb the Inheritance, it was a pity that he had to start a war in six months.

'This timing is probably what Chasing Demon needs to learn the copying spell. Well, maybe he has increased it a little to give me more time to prepare.'

Noah explored the possibility that the patriarch had been somewhat kind to him as he walked alone through the corridors of the sect.

He wasn't going to return to his cave in the residential area for rank 2 cultivators nor was he going in the residential area for those in the third rank.

He wasn't even going to the training ground where his faction was, Noah needed a quiet place where to study his many spells, the disciples in the thieves' faction were simply too noisy.

Where he was heading to was another training ground.

The Chasing Demon sect was large, it had many facilities that could help the cultivation of its disciples.

Yet, they were accessible only to those willing to use merit points, Noah had saved for the fourth Kesier rune back then, he couldn't afford those places.

That was, of course, different now.

Noah could freely use all the facilities of the sect, it took him just a few questions sent through his inscribed notebook to Roy to choose the area that suited him the most.

The path to the training area forced him to cross some of the crowded areas of the sect, Noah felt many gazes on him as he uncaringly walked on the purple ground.

Not many disciples knew Noah, he was quite famous among those in the second rank due to his battle with Perry but most of the captains had never seen him.

Yet, the whispers that followed his passage soon informed everyone about his features, he was supposed to lead the human assets to war after all, recognizing him was somewhat required.

"You are just a newly advanced rank 3 cultivator, don't act so haughty."

Of course, the matter of him being appointed as Demon Prince by the patriarch wasn't something that had been happily accepted by everyone.

Noah turned his head toward the cultivator that had spoken.

He recognized Joel, the only survivor of the team sent by the defense faction.

Joel had a dark expression when Noah looked at him, he spat on the ground and snorted when he saw that Noah continued his cold stare.

'He is right but I can't appear weak.'

Noah sighed internally as he neared Joel, the latter was surprised to see that he had chosen to answer to his provocation.

No words came out of his mouth, a black dragon suddenly tore Noah's upper clothes and threw itself at Joel.

There was no warning nor hesitation, Noah had directly attacked!

Heilong pounced Joel but the latter was a solid stage cultivator, he snorted when he saw that the dragon only had the power of the lower tier.

A sword appeared in his hands, its tip traced lines in the air as Joel waved it, the lines then clashed on Heilong, digging deep wounds on its scales.

Generally speaking, small fights were allowed inside the sect as long as the cultivators contained themselves.

That's why Joel was surprised to discover that his tattoo burst with a menacing light and attacked his internal organs as soon as his attack hit Heilong.

A mouthful of blood came out from his mouth, destabilizing him and preventing him from further battling against the dragon that had already regenerated.

Heilong pushed Joel on the ground, its open mouth hung over his head like a guillotine ready to take his life.

The bodies of the cultivators were far weaker than those of the magical beasts, any rank 4 creature was able to inflict a deadly blow to a rank 3 cultivator.

Joel was confused, he had only reacted to Noah's attack, he was completely on the right side in that situation.

Yet, the tattoo had reacted to his actions while it didn't mind Noah's behavior, the latter stared coldly at the cultivator on the ground, no one could understand his thoughts from his expression.

The truth was that Noah's position as Demon Prince gave him special permissions and authority over the other cultivators, it didn't allow for anyone in the sect to attack him.

Heilong senses were shared with his, he suffered its same pain.

Joel's attack hurt Noah, triggering a reaction on his tattoo.

The area where they were was near the residential area for rank 3 cultivators, the commotion generated by the fight had attracted the attention of many disciples and captains.

A small crowd formed around Noah and Joel, the cultivators encircled the two of them, interested in what was happening.

Noah sensed about fifty cultivators in the third rank around him, that number amounted to a bit less than half of all the rank 3 cultivators in the entirety of the sect.

The separate dimension had hit hard the human assets of the sect, there were more than two hundred rank 3 cultivators before the dimension opened but now only a bit more than a hundred remained.

Also, many of them were newly advanced cultivators that, just like Noah, had focused on their cultivation level to enter the dimension.

'I think I should make some sort of speech.'

Noah sighed internally as he thought of that, he was completely disinterested in having a social life but the patriarch had cornered him, giving him the position of a general.

"Listen, I don't like my status more than you do, I just wanted to cultivate in peace."

Heilong returned inside his body as he spoke, even Joel paid attention to his words at that moment.

"Yet, it is true that I was the one able to obtain the Inheritance. The will of our ancestor, Divine Demon, has personally expressed his disappointment toward our power and the patriarch agrees with his view. The incoming war won't only establish our domain over the archipelago, but it will also forge your attitude, making you all more similar to the demons that should fill an unorthodox sect."

Noah spoke the truth, many of those that had survived inside the Inheritance lowered their gazes in shame, after all, Noah had succeeded where they had failed and he was only in the gaseous stage!

"Rest, analyze your battle style, improve as much as you can, a high cultivation level is useless if you can't express its power! In six months, weakness won't be tolerated!"

Noah ended his speech and sent a series of cold gazes to the cultivators around him.

Then, he simply left, the crowd created a path for him when he moved toward the training area that he had chosen.

Chapter 418 - 418. Pit

Noah sat on top of his "Breath" blessing at the bottom of a bright but narrow area.

He was at the bottom of what seemed a pit, he had to use Heilong's wings to safely reach that place and he couldn't lay down since there wasn't enough space for him to stretch.

Yet, that was the training area that he had chosen.

The pit was in one of the deepest parts of the exoskeleton, in what was supposed to be the leg of the dead beast.

Being so close to the sea and at such a depth created an environment rich of "Breath", its density surpassed that of Bruce's cave when the "Breath" blessing was out in the open.

Also, the purple light radiated by the walls was almost blinding, the mental sphere of a cultivator would be under heavy pressure in that place.

That training area was also used as a special punishment for certain cultivators, being at the bottom of a deep pit, unable to lay down, and under the constant assault of the purple light could break most cultivators' morale on the long run.

However, that place met all of Noah's requirements.

The density of "Breath" there would be amazing even for solid stage cultivators, it reached the limits of what rank 3 cultivators were able to absorb without suffering injuries.

The pressure applied by the light forced the mental sphere to oppose it, such a constant effort would increase the sturdiness of its walls, allowing for longer training sessions that used the Kesier rune.

Also, that area was completely isolated, disciples would rarely venture at the top of the pit, it was impossible to be disturbed at its bottom.

Noah opened his mouth and exhaled a mouthful of a multicolored gas.

The gas then dispersed in the air and Noah relaxed, supporting his head on the wall behind him.

'He said not to make the breakthrough in the heroic ranks with a technique created by someone else but he has never said that I can't use it before that.'

Noah wore a faint smile as he thought that, the feeling of improving his training speed had always put him in a good mood.

The reason behind that improvement was the new cultivation technique that he was using.

'As expected from a rank 4 cultivation technique, its efficiency surpasses any rank 3 technique, no matter if unorthodox or not.'

A book appeared in his hands after that conclusion, Noah swept through its pages but a disappointed expression appeared on his face when he reached a certain point.

The book in his hands contained the description of the rank 4 cultivation technique Dark convergence!

Noah had ultimately decided to use it to replace his Dantian's opening, Dark convergence was simply a better technique.

Cultivating faster and without the need to injure the dantian, Noah would be a fool if he decided to keep using the unorthodox technique.

'I should be fine if I use it till my breakthrough in the solid stage, I hope Divine Demon didn't expect me to stop cultivating until I created a technique.'

Noah decided and put the book away, he wanted to see if he managed to understand the part related to the heroic ranks after practicing it but he obtained no results.

The part related to the human ranks was quite simple, Noah had to form a rotating sphere around his dantian with his "Breath" which would attract the "Breath" in the environment.

That energy would be filtered by the sphere so that only the "Breath" of the darkness element could enter, all the leftover had to be expelled through his mouth.

A scroll appeared in his hands after he put the book away, a bit of eagerness could be seen in his eyes when he studied its contents.

The scroll contained the diagram of the rank 0 spell Shadow steps, a spell that he had already analyzed in the past to create his martial art.

Yet, Noah wanted to see if he could learn more from it thanks to the Divine deduction technique.

As for why his first thought concerned the Shadow steps spell, it was because Noah wanted to increase his battle prowess as much as he could before the war.

To do that, he had to remove the limitations of his martial art and become able to perform it while flying.

Noah now had a rank 4 creature as a Blood companion, Heilong's wings were powerful, the speed at which he flew had surpassed his running speed thanks to them.

Magical beasts had stronger bodies compared to cultivators, the power contained in Heilong's wings far surpassed that of Noah's legs.

However, if Noah was to improve the Shadow sprint art and use it while flying, his speed in the air would skyrocket!

Noah began to trace the lines of the diagram with his eyes, last time he had only focused on isolating the propulsion effect contained in the circles that appeared under his feet, but now he wanted to completely understand the spell.

After all, he was only a rank 2 mage when he first attempted to study the diagram and he didn't have the technique of a God!

The lines of the diagram began to appear over the sea in his sea of consciousness but Noah's half-transparent figure quickly moved them toward the inscriptions on the walls.

The inscriptions sucked the lines right away and mental energy was consumed to activate its capabilities.

A stream of information entered Noah's mind, Noah felt as if he was able to understand the creator's intentions when he drew the diagram.

Also, the meaning behind those lines became clear, Noah felt the urge to start over the testing of his martial art.

However, while he was focused on that incredible state, his mental energy continued to be depleted until it eventually reached a critical quantity, awakening Noah from his deductions.

'This fairness of Heaven and Earth sure is annoying.'

Noah cursed when he saw the pitiful state of the sea inside his mind, about sixty percent of it had been expended while he analyzed the diagram.

'It takes almost all my mental energy to study the diagram of a rank 0 spell but there are no dangerous repercussions and it's an extremely quick procedure. I don't lack drugs to refill my sphere and I can always ask for more of them from the sect... Six months, I must become able to defeat solid stage cultivators in six months.'

It was with that determination that Noah took a potion from his ring and gulped its contents before resuming his training.

Chapter 419 - 419. Preparations

In the six months that followed, the political situation of the archipelago was particularly tense.

Generally speaking, retrieving an Inheritance from such a dangerous dimension would boost the power of any organization by a few levels.

After all, the Chasing Demon had recently broken through the sixth rank, it was normal to think that beings at that level weren't many in the archipelago considering that his sect was one of the strongest in the Hive.

The Inheritance contained spells and resources up to the fifth rank, the power of any organization would instantly reach the apex of the archipelago after obtaining it.

Yet, the dimension had closed and no consequences occurred.

What was even stranger was that no exotic or powerful item had appeared in the markets of the islands in that period, excluding the possibility that a weak organization had succeeded in the trials.

That calm, coupled with the fact that every organization has suffered huge losses for what concerned their human assets, led to a tense atmosphere.

Noah was still cultivating in the pit, he had climbed on the surface of the training area only when he needed to test some of his deductions.

A mental message arrived on his inscribed notebook, Noah listened to its contents before standing up and storing his "Breath" blessing.

He knew that the time to attack had come!

Heilong's wings appeared behind his back, they supported Noah as he climbed where he could completely unfold his wings and fly back to the surface.

"I hope your seclusion gave good results, Prince."

Roy greeted him with a bow when he saw the winged figure coming out in the open and landing in front of him, Noah simply nodded at that gesture before speaking.

"Did the elders already make a battle plan?"

"Yes, the information is here."

Roy handed Noah a simple-looking scroll but that caused a reaction in his horned face.

Noah controlled his tattoo and made it touch the surface of the sheet, a series of information entered his mind as the connection was maintained.

Even though Noah had been appointed to lead the human assets to war, he didn't have the authority nor the knowledge to make battle plans.

The truth was that Noah was simply following orders, human cultivators were just pawns in the eyes of those in the heroic ranks, the real battles would be fought in a realm where he couldn't interfere.

Yet, human cultivators reflected the power of an organization, winning the battle in the human ranks would show which organization had the best foundation.

As for the battle in the heroic ranks, the Chasing Demon sect had a mighty rank 6 cultivator, Noah didn't think that their heroic assets were lacking compared to the other organizations.

"Inform everyone, we will attack in three days."

Noah ordered as he stored the sheet, Roy wanted to question him about that delay but stopped himself when he realized the state Noah was in.

Pale skin, large eye bags, a seemingly ill complexion, Noah appeared completely exhausted and drained of any energy.

Even his weight had been affected, his soft facial features had become sharp due to how caved his cheeks were.

"As you order. In three days, I'll gather everyone in front of the cave that has been specifically prepared for you in the residential area for rank 3 cultivators. Do you want me to send Byron or some outer disciple to attend you? Your hair has grown quite a bit."

Roy commented when he saw Noah's aspect but the latter shook his head as he moved toward his cave before adding something.

"They already know that I'm here, there is no point in changing my aspect anymore. I'll keep my hair long, that's how I like it."

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Noah's reappearance created a wave of rumors that engulfed the sect again.

His return simply meant one thing: Battle was near!

Yet, some concern rose due to Noah's aspect, he didn't appear as someone ready to lead his troops.

Nevertheless, six months ago Noah had clearly expressed his stance.

He was following the orders of the patriarch who had been inspired by his master, no cultivator dared to defy Noah's position when they learnt that.

Three days passed quickly, Noah focused his everything in returning to his peak form, he had really gone all out in those six months.

He had cultivated and trained his mental sphere without break, using the many drugs in his ring to keep those centers of power healthy.

He had activated the Divine deduction technique at least once a day, relying on potions to make up for the consumption of mental energy.

He had also tested his deductions from time to time, that training schedule had inevitably affected his aspect, especially considering that he had barely eaten or slept during that period.

Two days were spent to return to his normal aspect, long periods of sleep and a large amount of nutrient food did the trick.

It had to be said that Byron didn't let go of that food happily but Noah's contributions to the sect had far surpassed what merit points could evaluate, he was simply forced to prepare the best meals that he was capable of.

The last day of rest was spent analyzing the reports of the events occurred in his six months of seclusion.

The situation in the archipelago seemed to be in a sort of stalemate, every organization was wary of the others, all the different forces seemed to be bombs ready to explode.

After all, they could only be sure that they didn't obtain the Inheritance, anyone else could just be lying.

Also, the dimension had closed, the focus of the organizations went back on the islands and, since everyone had been somewhat weakened, there seemed to be a lack of manpower everywhere.

Noah came out of his cave before the sunset of the third day, Roy wore an inscribed black robe as he stood in front of a hundred or so rank 3 cultivators.

Those cultivators were the full power of the human assets of the sect, all the captains were forced to gather there due to the orders of the elders.

The elder's battle plan was clear but Noah had to divide the captains according to their power and assign specific tasks, it was needless to say that the plan forced Noah to take care of the most valuable parts.

"Make way, form a circle! I'll give a task to each one of you. Complete it or die trying! In one week, all the peripheral islands of the Coral archipelago must carry the banner of the Chasing Demon sect!"

It was with that speech that Noah entered the crowd of captains and began to explain the battle plan.

Chapter 420 - 420. Siege

On one of the peripheral islands of the archipelago, about two hundred cultivators were sitting on the floor of a large hall inside a seemingly ruined building.

Peripheral islands were generally the poorest in the archipelago, only weak and poor cultivators inhabited them and their quality of life could be even worse than that of commoners.

Yet, that island had some luxurious buildings on its surface, it was clear that some powerful organization had set an important facility there.

To be more specific, that island was a dock used by the Shandal Empire as its main connection with the continent, it was needless to say that it was far better protected than the other peripheral islands.

Noah sat in the middle of the crowd of cultivators with a map in front of him.

There were about fifteen rank 3 cultivators around him while the others in the crowd were all in the second rank.

Between the many groups formed for the assault on the islands, that one was the strongest.

Of course, that implied that their task was more dangerous.

Noah's role was clear, he had to lead the human assets, one way to do that was to take care of the most troublesome issues.

"We will encircle the building and focus our spells on its surface, the protective formation should break after a few rounds of attacks."

Noah explained the plan to the other captains, they would lead part of the rank 2 cultivators in their respective tasks.

"The defensive formation will give enough time for the soldiers on the island to gather in our position, that's your signal."

Noah pointed at three captains.

They were tasked with the destruction of the teleportation matrixes, isolating the island was needed to prevent the arrival of reinforcements.

"We have far more rank 2 cultivators than them. Your role is to overwhelm them with your numbers and salvage as many resources as you can before they manage to destroy them. I and the other captains will take care of their rank 3 assets."

Noah finished his explanation.

The plan was rather straightforward, there was no need for complex battle formations, it was a simple full-power offensive.

Yet, that was possible only because the other teams would take care of the islands belonging to the Shandal Empire and connected with this one, the organizations on the archipelago didn't have the power to defend so many areas at the same time.

"Uncover your faces, we are done hiding underground or behind the Hive. We will take this island in the name of the Chasing Demon sect."

Noah spoke again and lowered his hood, his delicate facial features had returned to their normal state after three days of complete rest and his cold attitude was completely reflected by his icy eyes.

Black hair fell on his face, his aspect was slowly returning to the one that he used to have in the Utra nation.

The other cultivators were slightly inspired by his words, being powerful but unable to use that power had weighted on their minds for a long time.

Also, they had to always be careful when venturing on the surface, the legal organizations wouldn't let go of a member of the Hive when they found it.

Noah stood up, his gaze went on a fissure on the wall, he could see the sun slowly disappearing on the horizon.

"It's time, focus and try not to die."

The crowd stood up and followed Noah outside the building.

Three rank 3 cultivators separated from the group and went in the direction of the teleportation matrixes on the island, they would wait until the soldiers defending them left their position to help in the siege of the central buildings before destroying the formations.

Meanwhile, Noah ran toward the luxurious buildings followed by the remaining disciples.

Two rank 3 cultivators in the solid stage stood at his sides, they were the strongest warriors in his team and had the additional role of protecting Noah in case of danger.

Two hundred cultivators running in the direction of the core facilities of the island wasn't something that went unnoticed.

Shouts and alarms immediately filled the island but no soldier dared to approach the disciples of the Chasing Demon sect as they reached for the formation, there were simply too many of them!

Noah raised his hand as his targets became closer in his view, "Breath" and mental energy were expended as a black ray shot from his index and landed on the surface of the building.

The lines of a formation lit up where the ray landed, they flickered as they tried to block the piercing spell, revealing part of their form.

There were runes with a floral shape in certain areas of the formation, they radiated the energy that fueled the defensive formation.

"Focus the flowers, attack!"

Noah ordered as soon as the formation stopped shining, his Dark ray spell had been successfully blocked but a minute fuming mark had appeared on the surface of the building anyway.

The cultivators behind him didn't hesitate, they launched their most precise attacks, focusing the runes that had been revealed previously.

A torrent of shining attacks shot from the cultivators, it was as if a messy rainbow had been created due to the many colors carried by those strikes.

The runes flickered to no end, their light dimmed when the energy needed to repel the attacks was expended.

"Again!"

Noah's voice sounded a second time, another series of attacks was launched and landed on the runes.

The flowers on the formation began to lose their petals, that was the sign that the reserves of energy contained in the runes were reaching a critical state.

Also, some cracks began to appear on their surface, it didn't seem as if the formation would be able to hold much longer.

"Again!"

Another order, another series of attacks.

That time, the cultivators successfully managed to destroy five of the runes that formed the core of that side of the formation.

The shining lines that surrounded them slowly lost their light and began to fall apart, the precious materials used for their creation fell from the surface of the building and broke when they landed on the ground.

The formation had been breached!

Yet, that took some time, enough for the soldiers on the island to gather in that position and surround Noah's group.

About thirty rank 2 cultivators came out of the buildings and another thirty gathered there, leaving their position on the island.

About seven rank 3 cultivators came out in the open with only one of them in the solid stage.

"Prince, leave her to me."

One of the solid stage cultivators next to Noah said, pointing toward the woman in the solid stage.

However, Noah shook his head and took a step forward.

"No, I'll handle her."

