

Chapter 501: 501

Magical beasts had bodies that were leagues above those of the humans, their only weakness was that their owners didn't know how to express their full potential .

Noah had obtained an even stronger power by fusing himself with a beast, his martial arts would become far more powerful since they were performed with such a monstrous strength, the only drawback was the higher consumption of "Breath" since it had to be tuned around the physical strength of the body .

However, using a martial art while wielding the strength of a beast wasn't the best that Noah could do .

During his seclusion, Noah had thought deeply about his situation and evaluated the possibilities that his centers of power could offer, he was about to enter a world filled with monsters that had lived for centuries after all, he had to have something that could match such enormous experience .

He found the answer he was looking for in the secret arts .

Secret arts could push a center of power to its limits to give the cultivator performing it a temporary wave of power, allowing it to surpass what its rank made possible .

Such power wasn't free though, the center of power would be heavily injured after withstanding that stressful procedure, the fairness of Heaven and Earth required that drawback .

Yet, Noah was different .

The "Breath" inside Noah's dantian boiled as it tried to reach a higher stage, there was only so much of it that he could use during the Tribulation .

However, to fuel his martial art while using a secret art, Noah needed large amounts of "Breath", his calculations told him that his dantian would be emptied if he was to use the energy that it contained .

Completely emptying his dantian while facing the Heaven Tribulation though would endanger his future prospects since his organ would lack part of the nourishments given by the impurities that were released, Noah simply couldn't use it .

That's why he decided to rely on the ring around his dantian that worked as a rank 3 cultivation technique .

"Breath" of the darkness element was continuously gathered by his inscribed item and was redirected to his arm, cracks began to appear on the ring around his dantian as the process continued, even a peak rank 3 item couldn't sustain the energy needed for that attack .

Noah's left arm resembled an insatiable beast that continuously devoured "Breath" to perform that simple gesture, Noah barely had the time to imbue part of his will in it before it was consumed .

Noah made a basic slash with his saber but the amount of energy contained inside it was so high that even his peak rank 3 weapon began to crack under such pressure!

The air on the trail of the Demonic sword shattered, cracks spread like a spider web from the horizontal line that Noah had traced .

Then, toward the end of the slash, the black saber completely shattered, leaving only a small shard inside Noah's palm .

The fissure in the sky quickly closed itself, leaving a weaponless Noah flying in the air under the black clouds, it seemed as if his attack didn't have any effect .

However, the eyes of the elders watching the scene had widened during the process and their gazes immediately went on the clouds after the black saber broke .

A massive lightning bolt was about to be released before Noah's attack but its thick orange body seemed to have stopped moving after the slash was performed .

Even the black clouds had stopped their motion, the sparks on their surface had frozen, it was as if time had stopped in the area of the sky that they occupied .

Then, a chasm appeared along their bodies which divided the immense Heaven Tribulation in two .

Also, black smoke began to corrode the dark clouds, further enlarging the fissure that Noah had created with his martial art .

"Breath" was released by the clouds and was redirected toward Noah, he felt his dantian being nourished by an external force as the boiling rank 3 "Breath" inside it slowly became a shining black gas .

The ring around his organ couldn't withstand the pressure anymore and shattered, the minute black shards fell inside his body which quickly absorbed them to turn them into nourishment .

The Heaver Tribulation had been defeated with only one attack!

'This rank 4 "Breath" still contains Heaven and Earth's will, I don't need it . '

Noah thought as he analyzed his dantian, the "Breath" in the fourth rank that had just formed after the entirety of his solid "Breath" had boiled was cast out and dispersed in the air .

Then, Noah opened his right hand, an even smaller black ring was in his palm which had a dense black whirlpool rotating in its center .

Noah pointed the remaining shard of his Demonic sword toward his low-waist and pierced it, stopping only when the shard stabbed his dantian, creating a small hole in it .

Noah retracted the shard and inserted the minute ring inside his body, he placed it inside the wound of his dantian, creating something similar to a tunnel that connected the outside world with the insides his center of power .

The whirlpool at the center of the ring immediately began to send rank 4 "Breath" of the darkness element in the insides of his dantian, the area around him seemed to become brighter as the "Breath" carrying the laws of the darkness element contained inside the matter was absorbed .

The will of Heaven and Earth contained in that "Breath" was destroyed as Noah's new cultivation technique absorbed it, the greed radiated by the inscribed item didn't leave any trace of it .

Noah felt a wave of energy filling him, a power beyond anything that he had ever felt seemed contained in those few strands of shining gas that were slowly enlarging his dantian .

Yet, as the pressure inside that organ increased, part of the gaseous "Breath" was about to come out from the opening where his cultivation technique had been placed .

It was at that point that a half-transparent Noah sat cross-legged in front of the opening, Noah had created a will to stop his "Breath" from leaking out!

The black clouds in the air dispersed under the amazed gaze of the elders, the Tribulation had been passed, signing Noah's entrance in the heroic ranks .

Chapter 502

Those four years of seclusion had given Noah incredible gains .

First of all, his sea of consciousness had continued to enlarge, the fifth Kesier rune, the "Breath" inside it, and the relentless activation of the Divine deduction technique had pushed that center of power deeper inside the fourth rank .

His body had also improved, Noah had often eaten pieces of rank 4 magical beasts during his seclusion to placate his hunger and raise his rank, his body had almost reached the peak of the middle tier by then .

Yet, the biggest breakthroughs concerned his Elemental forging method and his martial art .

While his rank 3 cultivation technique autonomously raised the level of his dantian, Noah had focused on creating the cultivation technique that he would use once reached the fourth rank and the offensive martial art that he lacked since he had become a hybrid .

The Divine deduction technique and his expertise with the sabers made the task concerning the offensive martial art rather easy, it wasn't the first one that he created after all .

The only issue that he had had during the testing phase was that his "Breath" would be always depleted after only one execution of his forms, his liquid "Breath" simply couldn't fuel a martial art performed with his powerful body .

Things changed once he entered the solid stage though, Noah became able to test his forms more often, quickening the creation of his martial art .

In the end, he created only one simple form, the most common of the attacks of the sword wielders, a slash .

Of course, that form wasn't as simple as it looked .

Noah had taken inspiration from the Nails of the Kamaitachi and from the Three Forms of the Ashura to create his personal attack, something simple but that suited every situation .

The power of that slash could be found in his incredible physical strength and in the sharpness that the "Breath" consumed during its execution carried, Noah was obviously using the "Breath" that he refined inside his mind to activate it, just like with his Shadow sprint martial art .

The real power of that attack though could only be seen when its execution was coupled with a secret art .

Noah hadn't chosen that simple form casually, that slash was the result of countless tests performed while he activated his secret art .

The secret art that Noah had chosen forcibly quickened his metabolism, consuming the nourishments that his body contained to surpass its limits for a few seconds .

It was needless to say that such an increased physical strength had to be matched with a similar amount of "Breath" when performing a martial art, which forced Noah to create a simple form rather than an intricate one .

He knew that, once his expertise with his martial art increased, he would create new forms but he was happy to have at least that for the time being .

The creation of a rank 4 cultivation technique took longer instead .

During his last weeks of seclusion, Noah had to stop all his other training and experiments to focus on forging his first rank 4 item and to finally bring his expertise in the Elemental forging method in the heroic ranks .

Noah had to dig deep inside his dragon's instincts to thoroughly understand the hunger of the magical beasts and create a meaning that suited his needs .

What came out from the fusion between his ambition and the endless hunger of the beasts was an insatiable greed .

There was something that he had neglected as he forged though, he didn't remove the ring around his dantian even after he had reached the peak of the solid stage .

As it turned out, the suction force of his rank 3 cultivation technique was so strong that the solid "Breath" inside his dantian began to boil without the need for a reagent, suddenly causing the Heaven Tribulation .

Noah had been ending his forging at that moment, he had even resolved himself to stop the first lightning bolts with his body if the situation needed it .

Luckily for him, he had managed to finish his first rank 4 item before the first lightning bolt struck, allowing him to use his martial art to defend against it .

Noah had closed his eyes after the Tribulation ended, he immersed himself in the feeling of having all his centers of power in the heroic ranks as he checked that his rank 4 cultivation technique worked as intended .

"Breath" of the darkness element continuously entered his dantian through the opening where the black ring was, the whirlpool at its center made the "Breath" converge in the insides of his center of power, the process slightly enlarged his dantian as it continued .

His half-transparent figure floated in front of the opening, his will had been specifically made to prevent any leaks and to quickly imbue a meaning that Noah needed in the "Breath", Noah could even stop storing "Breath" inside his mental sphere now if he wanted .

'The Black hole cultivation technique is working perfectly, I've even solved the issue about the limited usages of the Shadow sprint martial art with it . All my centers of power don't have a slight trace of Heaven and Earth's will now . '

Noah thought as he opened his eyes and took a deep breath, the area around him darkened as he did that .

'I feel different . '

He felt lighter after all the traces of Heaven and Earth's will had left his body but he also felt that something deeper about him had changed completely .

'I am my own entity now . "

Noah felt the need to roar at the sky after he thought that but he restrained himself from doing so since he felt three presences nearing him .

Noah turned only to see Elder Iris, Roy, and Bruce flying toward him, they were wearing concerned expressions as they analyzed his body .

"It will go back to normal in a few hours, this is just a temporary drawback . "

Noah explained when he understood that they were worried about the state in which his body was after the usage of his secret art .

The truth was that he only needed to eat something for it to return to its peak, Noah didn't even consider it a drawback in his mind .

"This is good, I thought you had hurt yourself to improve your cultivation speed . "

Roy spoke as he breathed a sigh of relief, he was really worried that he had suffered some injury .

"It seems that even the matter concerning your cultivation technique is set, I believe the Hive can stop providing you "Breath" blessings . "

Elder Iris spoke as she moved her gaze on Noah's bloodied low-waist, she was curious about Noah's creation but she knew that every cultivator had its secrets, some matters simply couldn't be probed .

"What was that attack? Did you learn a rank 5 martial art? What is it called?"

Bruce asked, he had mistakenly taken Noah's attack for a rank 5 martial art .

Noah didn't correct him and thought for a few seconds about a name for his martial art before answering him .

"Dragon's claw . "

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The three elders didn't probe Noah's powers any further, they simply accepted the fact that he had safely entered the world of the heroic cultivators .

The Hive had gained another elder, its heroic assets were slowly increasing in number as its foundation became sturdier .

"How is the situation in the piece of Immortal Lands? What about the continent?"

Noah asked, he had to completely focus on himself during his seclusion which forced him to neglect any information concerning the outside world .

Yet, now that he had reached the heroic ranks, he needed a detailed picture of the current political situation to decide his next move and which preparations he needed to make .

Elder Iris had expected that question and quickly threw a small shining orb to Noah who directly scanned it with his mental energy .

Countless reports entered Noah's mind as he scanned the orb, he soon learnt how the situation on the continent and the new land had evolved while he was in seclusion .

'The Coral archipelago has grown well, this was somewhat expected considering its geographical position . The areas of influence of the Utra nation and Papral nation have been successfully infiltrated in the past years, most of our new manpower comes from there . Even the Empire has given up many territories to focus on the new land, we could directly build the fourth big nation if we had more heroic assets . '

Noah thought as he read through the information that concerned the continent .

Since the Hive had only focused on the old land, the details that concerned the forces of the three big nations were quite specific and, in some cases, they even listed the power behind the defensive measures of some richer areas .

'The Elbas family didn't let go of its claims over the Nerere country, even the limitless prospects on the piece of Immortal Lands aren't enough to make it lower its defenses around the Royal Inheritance . They are asking for the help

of the noble families rather than letting go of the legacy of the previous Royals...'

Of course, Noah immediately looked for the information concerning the Royal Inheritance only to remain disappointed by it .

During those four years, the Elbas family had felt forced to ask for the help of the heroic assets of the noble families in its country to match the Empire in its exploration of the new continent and to maintain control over their most richer areas at the same time .

The Council did the same, heroic cultivators from the sects of the Papral nation had been sent to the new land to help in its exploration .

Only the Shandal Empire had complete control over its heroic assets, the other two nations had central powers with great authority but they couldn't control the heroic cultivators of the organizations under them that freely .

They needed to give up part of their gains if they wanted their help but that was the only method at their disposal to match the Empire .

Noah would have rather had the Elbas family and the Council withstanding the expenses of the exploration all by themselves so that some of their richer areas would have been left unprotected but they had chosen to divide their gains rather than exposing their resources .

After all, giving up part of their rebels had already greatly benefitted the Hive, Noah was just disappointed that he couldn't personally take something that could further benefit his situation .

'There is only the new continent then . '

Noah thought as he started reading the information concerning the new land .

He knew that, now that he was a complete heroic cultivator, his cultivation journey would be harsher .

Heroic cultivators directly affected the "Breath" inside the matter, their training was something that interfered with the world itself, it wasn't the simple absorption process happening in the human ranks .

Noah could feel it, he felt the deeper meaning contained in the "Breath" absorbed by his rank 4 cultivation technique entering his dantian and dissolving as Heaven and Earth's will was removed .

He knew that there was something else to that energy but that feeling was still too vague for him to understand exactly what it was, he could only wait to go deeper into the fourth rank before he could have a clearer picture .

'The information about the new land is quite vague . The Hive is aware that all three big nations have found traces of divine beings but it doesn't know anything specific . The entirety of the eastern shore and a large part of the northern one are slowly being colonized but it appears that the center of the continent is still unexplored... I wonder if my beast's instincts could help there .

Noah realized how little the Hive knew about the piece of Immortal Lands after scanning the orb .

The Hive had completely disregarded any claim on it to focus on the old continent after all, Noah knew that it was the right move considering its situation .

"We can prepare a training area soon if you want, there are dark areas at the bottom of the sea where you should find plenty of "Breath" of your element . "

Roy spoke as he saw that Noah had finished reading the information inside the orb .

However, Noah shook his head at his words and handed the orb back to Elder Iris as he asked something .

"When will the Hive reach for the new continent?"

The three elders were silenced by his words but Bruce soon released a laugh and Elder Iris' mouth curved into a smile .

"We have studied a safe route for the southwestern shore, we should be able to send a few elders without any of the three big nations noticing them . Also, the elders would be on the opposite side of the forces of the continent, meaning that they would land on completely unexplored areas . The only problem is that they might be stuck there due to the distance with that area, you would have to wait for the creation of a teleportation matrix to have an escape route . "

Elder Iris spoke as she continued to smile, Noah shrugged his shoulders as he spoke a few words before turning to fly back to the remains of his mansion .

"I want in . "

Chapter 504

Noah returned to his ruined mansion to prepare for his next move .

There were no paths that would make him gain any profit on the continent, only the piece of Immortal Lands could bring benefits to his personal power .

'I need to stabilize my position inside the fourth rank, it should take a few weeks before my dantian becomes ready for a battle . '

Noah thought as he sat in one of the intact training areas .

He knew that Elder Iris would contact him once the Hive decided that it was time to explore the new continent, he didn't know exactly when that would happen but he guessed it wouldn't take more than half a year .

The three big nations had freely explored the new continent for four years already, their heroic assets had made incredible gains in that period, the Hive could just settle for human cultivators while that happened .

Noah's attention went on his will floating in front of his dantian .

Mental energy entered his half-transparent figure, giving it enough power to affect the black ring inside his wounded center of power .

The rotation whirlpool inside the ring slowed down, its absorption speed was lowered thanks to the will placed in front of it before returning to a normal speed as soon as Noah willed it .

'All the tests have been made, the rank 4 Black hole cultivation technique should function until the peak of the solid stage of the fourth rank, I just need to constantly refill the mental energy needed to fuel my will to control it . Now, I only lack a proper weapon . '

His last peak rank 3 Demonic sword had broken to perform the Dragon's claw while he was using the secret art, it was safe to assume that normal rank 3 inscribed items wouldn't be able to withstand its power either .

'I need to forge another item in the heroic ranks, I guess it's time I match Ivor's achievements . '

Noah had never forgotten the first time he had seen Ivor's knife and he had always known that his ability in the Elemental forging method was inferior to his .

Ivor had been able to forge a rank 4 item while he was still in the human ranks while Noah had needed to reach the absolute peak of the third rank and be a rank 4 mage to do the same, their wills were simply on two different levels .

Ivor was ready to sacrifice his life to complete the forging while Noah couldn't want something like that, their intentions couldn't carry the same power .

Noah sighed as he stared at his right arm before requesting for a series of materials from the Hive .

'There can only be one core material...'

Noah thought as he undressed his upper body and Heilong came out in the open .

Then, he inserted his right arm inside his companion's mouth and he ordered it to bite his limb off .

Heilong's fangs weren't enough to sever his arm right away and Noah didn't have any other weapon at his disposal, he could only pull back his shoulder with all his strength to help his Blood companion .

It took a while but, in the end, Noah managed to cut the entirety of his right arm away .

Blood fell from his maimed shoulder but Noah suppressed the pain as he sorted the drugs contained inside his space-ring, a pill radiating a powerful energy quickly appeared in his remaining palm which he didn't hesitate to eat .

A surge of energy filled his body as the drug melted, the energy seemed alive as it searched for wounds inside Noah .

Noah controlled the energy to stay away from his dantian, he didn't want for the medicine to mistakenly close the opening needed for his cultivation technique, and redirected its focus on his right shoulder .

Warmth filled his maimed shoulder, his severed limb slowly showed signs of growing back!

'I need more energy . '

Noah thought as he inspected the effects of the drug .

He had used one of the best rank 4 curative pills that he had but its effects were intended to work on humans, drugs like that weren't created for hybrids .

The corpse of a rank 4 dragon in the middle tier appeared in the open and Noah began to take small bites out of it, the "Breath" contained in the magical beast entered his body and was turned into nourishment that it freely absorbed .

Part of that nourishment healed the after-effects of the secret art, Noah's muscles began to bulge and return to their normal state, Noah quickly returned to his normal aspect thanks to that meal .

The rest of the nourishment was redirected to his right shoulder, the healing capabilities of his body and the powerful drug that he had just used would make his entire arm regrow in a day according to his calculation .

'The materials that I've requested should arrive soon and my arm should be enough to create a pair of sabers . I should treat them better this time though, I can't waste useful pills every time a Demonic sword breaks . '

Noah thought as he closed his eyes to focus on his dantian and, specifically, to the "Breath" that it was storing .

He immersed himself in the study of that "Breath", his dragon's instinct saw it only as food but he knew that it hid some kind of deeper meaning .

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Time passed in the Coral archipelago .

The news of Noah's breakthrough and his request to join the team meant to explore the piece of Immortal Lands quickly spread through the heroic ranks of the Hive .

It must be said that there weren't many elders willing to embark in such a dangerous mission, many of them would rather take the safe approach and try to openly create some sort of city on the continent, they didn't feel there was any reason to mess with the colonization of the three big nations .

However, the Hive had never intended to interfere with the three factions on the new continent, its plans concerned the opposite shore that they were exploring .

The only problem with that approach was the distance with the archipelago but that issue could be solved once a teleportation matrix was set, it would be only a matter of protecting such formation at that point .

It took four months after Noah's Tribulation to create an explorative team made of five elders, they were all complete heroic cultivators in the fourth rank and, of course, Noah was one of them .

Chapter 505 - 505. Meaning

Five heroic cultivators set off from the Coral archipelago and began to fly west.

They flew high in the air, far away from the azure sea, and they didn't speak, they were doing their best to be as silent as possible.

Even their mental waves were retracted, they only used their eyes to analyze their surroundings, they didn't want to risk being discovered by enemy forces as they tried to reach the new continent.

Noah ran in the air, dense layers of dark "Breath" formed under his feet as he stepped on them, he didn't need to use Heilong's wings to fly anymore and he was faster that way since his body was stronger than his Blood companion.

Three elders ran next to him while a fourth one was in the lead, they were the team that the Hive had sent to explore the new land and, of course, each one of them had different areas of specialization that suited the task.

Elder Hope was the leader of the group and was the only rank 4 cultivator in the liquid stage among them, she had a wind aptitude and most of her abilities were focused on movement and espionage, she was the scout of the team who was also tasked to create an escape route in dangerous situations.

Elder Duke was an old rank 4 cultivator in the gaseous stage, he was bald but a long white beard grew from his jaw.

He had a water aptitude and was specialized in defensive measures which even included some simple formations.

Elder Laurel was the expert in magical plants and vegetation even though she had a fire aptitude that generally conflicted with that field.

She was also in possession of abilities with a large area of effect that could help the group when it was surrounded, making her presence quite important in the team.

Elder Morgan was the expert in formation, her role was to create the teleportation matrix that could allow them to safely return to the archipelago but she also had good defensive measures due to her water aptitude, she and Elder Duke would take care of the defense of the team together once reached the new land.

It was needless to say that the expert in the magical beasts' field was Noah.

'They are all quite old, it seems that they are desperate to find something that makes their cultivation level improve.'

Noah thought as he gazed at his companions.

They all had gray and white hair, either short or long, their power was only reflected by their shining eyes as they focused on their surroundings.

The lifespan of a cultivator would eventually be depleted unless they continuously raised their level but that matter wasn't that simple once one reached the heroic ranks.

Noah guessed that the elders that had volunteered for the task were cultivators that needed to find some kind of inspiration or guide that the old continent couldn't offer to continue cultivating in the heroic ranks, there weren't many cultivators who had been able to create their personal training methods like him.

Actually, to be precise, it could be said that an existence like him was a first in that world.

After all, Noah had become a complete heroic cultivator at the age of thirty-seven and even by creating his personal techniques and methods, that feat was something that even his companions found hard to believe!

"Five months in the fourth rank and you are already at this level, the difference between our cultivation techniques is really vast."

Elder Laurel whispered to Noah as she flew next to him.

Those were the first words that had been spoken after the group had set off, they had been flying in a straight line for a month already.

"I was just lucky, anyone would achieve the same if it was to obtain the inheritance of a God."

Noah answered in a soft voice while shrugging his shoulders, he didn't really want to speak too much before they reached a safe area.

"No one becomes a heroic cultivator before turning forty thanks to its luck, you should have more confidence in yourself. I heard that you have created your cultivation technique as soon as you entered the fourth rank, did you gain some insights about the darkness element already?"

Elder Laurel spoke again and her question made Noah interested in her words.

"Insights of the darkness element?"

Noah asked.

He had realized that there was a deeper meaning hidden in the "Breath" that he absorbed but he had yet to figure out what it was and if it was useful to his cultivation.

Hearing a cultivator that had been in the heroic ranks for far longer than him speaking about it claimed a large part of his attention.

Elder Laurel slightly smiled at his question and released a short sigh before making a short explanation.

"Heroic cultivators pursue their individuality but through energies that don't belong to them. These energies carry general meanings depending on the element they belong but a cultivator must understand the meanings that match its individuality if it doesn't want to see its improvements slowing down. You are already a step ahead of most cultivators since you shouldn't find any hindrances in the fourth rank thanks to your cultivation technique."

Noah carefully memorized her words and replayed them in his head.

The records concerning heroic cultivators were scarce, especially those concerning their insights before the creation of techniques and methods.

'I was right in guessing that the heroic ranks won't be just a matter of absorbing "Breath" anymore... Yet, looking for the meaning carried by the darkness element seems a bit too philosophical for my tastes.'

Noah thought as he continued to fly, only the clouds could be seen around him but his reptilian eyes could clearly see the sea at some kilometers below him.

"Could you be more specific?"

In the end, Noah simply asked her for a more detailed explanation.

Elder Laurel put a pensive expression before shaking her head while revealing a helpless smile.

"If I knew something more specific, I would have already advanced to the liquid stage."

Her eyes went on Elder Hope who was in the lead, she winked at Noah as she gestured him to ask her.

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Elder Hope began to slow down after she felt the two pairs of gazes fixed on her, she then turned only to say one word before continuing to fly at full speed .

"Later . "

Elder Laurel wore an excited gaze when she understood that she was about to receive an explanation from their leader and even the other two elders nodded at her while wearing smiles .

"Was this a plan of some sort?"

Noah asked when he realized that all the elders were paying attention to his conversation, he couldn't help but feel that he had been used in some way .

"Sorry, Prince, you are the most promising cultivator of the Hive, no one in our organization will ever deny you an explanation that could benefit your power . We just thought that it would be better if such an explanation happened where we can listen . "

Elder Laurel spoke and Noah understood that the three elders had planned to use him to obtain pointers from a heroic cultivator in the liquid stage .

'Well, that was unexpected . '

Noah thought as he put the matter in the back of his mind, he didn't really care how the others used him as long as he gained something out of it, he just forced himself to remember that the people around him weren't only more experienced but had also lived for far longer than him, his first life didn't give him any advantage over the wisdom of his companions .

The group moved for a few more days until Elder Hope stopped again and did a quick inspection of their surroundings before speaking to the rest of them .

"We have surpassed the northern shore, we need to go south for another month before we can safely reach our destination . "

The Hive's target was the southwestern shore, the territories on the opposite side of the three big nations' encampments .

To put it simply, they were flying over the sea around the piece of Immortal Lands, moving around the new continent to avoid the territories already under the control of the forces of the continent .

"Now, I'll try to solve some of your doubts about the heroic ranks but remember that I'm only one step ahead of you, it's more than likely that the Prince will surpass me in no time since he has already created his cultivation technique . "

Elder Hope spoke again and a series of heated gazes went on her after her words, the elders almost stopped breathing as they waited for her explanation .

Noah wasn't an exception, his eyes focused on the leader of his group, he was interested in what she had to say .

"In the human ranks, a cultivator simply absorbs "Breath" to elevate its power, ultimately reaching the heroic ranks when it is considered an independent entity, a sort of unique being . "

Elder Hope began her explanation from the beginning of the cultivation journey, Elder Laurel nodded at her words, she seemed the most interested of the group .

"Once becoming an entity, the cultivator must enhance its individuality . To put it simply, it has to pave its personal path toward the higher ranks or it won't

have the power to absorb the "Breath" that carries the laws of Heaven and Earth . "

Noah nodded in his mind at those words, Chasing Demon had given him a similar explanation during their first encounter and even Divine Demon had hinted that .

"This can be achieved in two different ways in the early stages of the heroic ranks but, toward the more advanced ranks, succeeding in both of those ways will be required to improve . You can either understand the laws of your element that suit you or create a cultivation technique . "

'So, I can't only improve the Black hole cultivation technique, I will even need some sort of understanding of the darkness element as my rank grows . '

Noah quickly sorted that information in his mind and looked at his companions, disappointed looks could be seen on their faces .

"Prince, I must say that you are exceptional . "

Elder Hope interrupted Noah's thoughts with her words and continued to speak .

"Most heroic cultivators rely on techniques created by others to improve but cultivating in that way will eventually taint your individuality and endanger your future prospects, this is the main reason why many elders have chosen to remain in the gaseous stage rather than taking the easy path . Yet, you are already walking on your personal path, I believe you won't require any kind of insight about your element to reach the fifth rank . Of course, I advise you to start studying your element as soon as possible . "

Elder Hope then pointed at herself before revealing something about her cultivation .

"I have yet to create a cultivation technique but my understanding of the wind element allowed me to reach the liquid stage rather quickly even though I'm using a technique created by someone else . I can only say that my individuality matches the laws of the wind element that concern the sound . "

Silence fell on the group of cultivators standing in the air, Noah quickly analyzed the leader's words before asking his question .

"Your understanding of the element improves your cultivation speed but your individuality will eventually be tainted if you keep using a technique created by someone else . I guess the same goes for the opposite approach, am I right?"

Elder Hope smiled before nodding and asking a rhetorical question .

"How can you bend the laws to your will if you don't know their meaning?"

Mental energy entered the inscriptions on the walls of Noah's mental sphere and fueled the Divine deduction technique, Noah was trying to ask the questions that would give him the best understanding of the matter .

Then, he asked a question that had bothered him since he first spoke with a citizen of the Empire .

"What is a God?"

The elders around him were surprised by that question but Elder Hope revealed a surprised expression as her gaze went to the sky above the clouds .

"I've pondered a lot about this too . A peak heroic cultivator should express its individuality through the laws that suit it and express their power through its cultivation technique, meaning that a God must be a being made of its own laws . "

Noah raised his eyes at the sky too after her words, the reflection of the stars that he had seen in the academy reappeared in his eyes as his mind wandered .

"What is there after godhood?"

Noah asked again, even the other elders raised their gazes on the sky above the clouds at that moment .

Elder Hope thought for a while before expressing her opinion .

"I guess Heaven and Earth . "

Chapter 507

Noah and the elders stared at the sky above the clouds in silence for a while before returning to reality and lowering their faces, their minds had wandered enough, they were only halfway through their journey after all .

"There isn't much that can be taught at this point, every cultivator is different and the path toward the higher ranks can only be paved by yourself . This is the miraculous yet solitary life that every being looking for power must walk . Let's resume our journey now . "

Elder Hope spoke those last words before flying south, Noah and the elders quickly followed behind her, no one spoke after that .

Another month passed, the group sent by the Hive continuously flew through the clouds as it reached for the southwestern coast of the piece of Immortal Lands .

The endless sea was below them for the whole time, they were making sure to never go too close to the new land even though they had long crossed the areas where the encampments of the three big nations were .

Then, at some point, Elder Hope stopped herself and signaled to the elders behind her to do the same .

Noah and the others waited for their leader to use her methods to scan the surroundings, Elder Hope made a hand-gesture next to her ears and closed her eyes as her consciousness expanded .

It didn't take much before Elder Hope nodded and retracted her consciousness before pointing toward the east and flying in that direction .

Noah and the others followed, the group flew for a few more days before it could finally spot land .

Noah saw the endless layer of ice that held the azure land in its embrace, his consciousness sensed the density of the "Breath" in the environment above the land and was amazed by it, he now knew that the reports were right when they said that the piece of Immortal Lands could be barely inhabited by human cultivators .

'How do they even plan on fixing this issue? The three big nations are strong but even they can't modify this environment that much . '

Noah thought as he neared the new continent with his group, his eyes and mind analyzed everything that entered in their range .

A wide desert expanded over the azure land in the area that they were nearing, the azure halo of the continent was almost completely blocked by the thickness of the yellow sand that filled the surface .

The area seemed deserted, no trace of life could be seen or sensed by the cultivators of the Hive .

Yet, Noah's instincts told him that something had noticed their arrival and was keeping its attention on them .

"What do you think?"

Elder Hope asked as she turned toward Noah and Elder Laurel, they were the experts in the magical beasts and plants' fields of the group after all .

"The temperature and this environment aren't suitable for most magical plants but the sand is too thick and the "Breath" released by the land below it interferes with my mental waves . "

Elder Laurel spoke while keeping her gaze on the ground, she couldn't find any trace of life but that didn't mean that there weren't any threats .

"There is something beneath the surface . "

Noah warned his companions and their gazes went on the yellow sand where he was watching .

However, they couldn't see anything at all, they even started to doubt Noah since nothing happened as time passed .

On the other hand, Noah was one hundred percent sure that something was lying in wait for them .

'You leave me no choice . '

Noah snorted in his mind as he flew downward, toward the ground .

A low growl was released from his mouth, Noah was using his dragon's side to challenge whatever was hiding under the surface .

The others in his team didn't understand what was happening nor why the Demon Prince was making such lifelike beast's cries but they still followed him .

Faint tremors began to fill the desert and screeching noises started to come out of the yellow sand, it seemed that Noah had managed to cause some sort of reaction with his growl .

"They are coming . "

Noah warned in a soft voice and kicked the air to fly higher in the sky and retreat, the elders quickly followed his example and retreated .

Holes formed in the sand as soon as Noah escaped, thirty meters long yellow worms came out them and tried to pounce the air where the heroic cultivators were previously .

"Armored sandworms, all in the fourth rank . They have thick skins but they can't do much except for jumping at us, we can slowly kill them and seize their corpses, they are somewhat valuable . "

Noah explained as he pointed at the more than twenty rank 4 magical beasts that had come out of the sand, respectful gazes were shot in his direction before the elders focused on the creatures .

The elders had initially doubted his abilities when they saw that nothing was happening but the recent event had completely confirmed Noah's capabilities .

"I wasn't aware that a cultivator could imitate the cries of a magical beast to incite a reaction in them . "

Elder Duke spoke from his safe position in the air, they weren't in a hurry to take care of the sandworms after all .

"It's just an unorthodox technique that I've learnt in the Royal academy, it's not that reliable though . "

Noah lied to the elder as he wielded a pair of white sabers .

Those weren't his new Demonic swords but only a pair of peak rank 3 inscribed weapons that had enhanced sturdiness and sharpness .

Noah wouldn't dare to reveal his full strength right away, he was in an unexplored continent filled with threats, it was better to keep most of his abilities hidden .

Also, he didn't really need to use most of his power to handle those beasts .

"The academy sure seems an amazing place . "

Elder Duke commented as he wielded a whip, that answer was enough for him .

Even the other elders wielded their weapons and prepared to fight against the pack of sandworms before Elder Hope gave the order and they dove again toward the ground .

Chapter 508

The Armored sandworms weren't a strong species of magical beasts .

They surely were one of the strongest kinds of worm-type creatures but their enemies were heroic cultivators, there was nothing they could do against them .

Noah casually swung his sabers as he flew between the pouncing sandworms, sharp black lines appeared in the air whenever he performed a slash, his attacks seemed able to cut through anything that stood on their trajectory .

Elder Hope swung a small knife that had holes on its surface, a threatening aura was radiated by that weapon, Noah immediately noticed that it was a rank 4 inscribed item .

The knife released strange sharp sounds as it moved through the air, small wind blades took form every time one of those sounds echoed and reached for the weakest parts of the sandworms .

Elder Duke controlled an azure sphere that floated in front of his chest and that fueled most of his attacks, water bullets and torrents shot from his spell toward the creatures next to him .

Elder Laurel nimbly avoided the beasts and circled them until enough of them had gathered in one spot before creating a huge fireball above her figure and launching it toward the sandworms, a huge explosion occurred every time she cast her spell .

Elder Morgan wielded an inscribed spear that tainted the creatures with the lines of a formation every time she stabbed their skin, that weapon also was an inscribed item in the fourth rank and the shining lines that infected the sandworms spread on their bodies as if fueled by their vitality .

'Her martial art is so interesting . '

Noah couldn't help but feel interested in Elder Morgan attacks, inflicting one wound seemed the only requirement to infect the beasts with those spreading inscriptions which continuously weakened their bodies, it was as if the inscribed spear carried a poison of some sort .

The pack of Armored sandworms had no chance against the power of five heroic cultivators, most of those beasts were only in the lower tier of the fourth rank and could barely survive a few attacks before falling lifelessly on the yellow sand .

"Seize the corpses quickly, the rulers of this area will come soon . "

Noah warned his companions as he stored the corpses next to him inside his space-ring, the spirit automaton autonomously put them inside the formation with the other dragon's corpses .

He knew that, in such an amazing environment, finding only twenty or so rank 4 magical beasts was impossible, there had to be more creatures in the surrounding areas .

Also, the sandworms had to be at the bottom of the food chain there since their power mostly was in the lower tier, meaning that the rulers of the desert wouldn't be happy to discover that someone was stealing their food .

Part of that knowledge came from his studies but Noah was aware that the fusion had enlarged his point of view, he could now think like a magical beast

and even communicate with them in a sort of primal way, he simply understood them far better now .

That was the reason why he was sure that more powerful creatures would arrive in their position .

The confirmation to his hypothesis came almost immediately, dunes formed in the sand below them as if something was crawling under the surface and searching for something .

The heads of huge sandworms came out in the open but stood still, they didn't pounce the cultivators from the Hive, they limited themselves to spread their circular mouths where a series of sharp fangs could be seen coming out of their internal skin .

Then, they released a sharp cry that echoed through the vast desert .

"We must go . "

Noah spoke as he flew high in the air, he didn't even pick the corpses that were at some distance from his position as he retreated in the sky .

The elders in his group were a bit surprised by his actions but they decided to follow him anyway, the Demon Prince of the Hive had yet to be wrong about something that concerned magical beasts .

Noah didn't stop flying even after he had reached a height of a few hundred meters, his feet continuously kicked the air as he went higher .

He stopped only when he was at more than a kilometer from the ground, his companions quickly reached him and began to stare at the ground with curious gazes .

"I think we could have picked the remaining corpses, the new sandworms are only in the middle tier after all . "

Elder Morgan complained a bit but her expression suddenly froze when she saw that an immense dune was growing at the center of the desert .

The dune continued to rise in the air, slowly reaching a height of two hundred meters until the sand began to fall back on the ground and the mighty being under it was revealed .

It was another worm-type magical beast, it was yellow and a series of small pores could be seen on its skin .

The beast was immense, it was more than three hundred meters long and almost fifty meters large, its size was simply incredible .

"Rank 5 Giant sandworm, it's hiding skills are amazing, I wouldn't have sensed it if it wasn't for the weaker beasts . This specimen seems to be in the upper tier but I can't be too sure about it . "

Noah explained to his companions as he stared at the huge sandworm .

The cries that the rank 4 Giant sandworms had released after the Armored ones had been killed were some sort of call for their leader, Noah had understood the meaning behind the cries thanks to his beast's part and had immediately decided to escape because of that .

"I guess this isn't a good area where to set the teleportation matrix . "

Noah spoke in a casual tone as he turned toward the elders next to him, their eyes had widened after the rank 5 beast appeared and Elder Morgan repeatedly nodded after she heard his words .

She couldn't help but imagine what would have happened if she had stayed for only a bit longer on the ground, the images that her mind played sent shivers down her spine .

"We will rely on your expertise to find the right location, Prince . "

Elder Hope spoke while performing a slight bow, the recent events had increased the amount of respect that she felt for Noah so much that she didn't mind bowing to him even though she was the leader of the group .

Chapter 509

The heroic cultivators of the Hive resumed the exploration of the piece of Immortal Lands after the presence of the rank 5 Giant sandworms made the desert impossible to inhabit .

The group needed to find a safe place where to set the teleportation matrix, they didn't have any way to return to the Coral archipelago at the moment, creating that connection was their priority .

They went north, along the coastline, the desert expanded for a few kilometers before being replaced with small rivers that favored the birth of some vegetation .

The group soon discovered though that the rivers were inhabited by packs of rank 4 Poisonous frogs that had tainted that environment with their toxic saliva, altering many of the magical plants there .

Elder Laurel's eagerness to study those plants was clearly shown by her expression but Elder Hope didn't stop flying, there would be plenty of time to study the lifeforms living there after the teleportation matrix was set .

A thick forest followed the area with rivers, small trees with large crowns occupied the environment, their white leaves gave an eerie atmosphere to the area .

"These are White woods, they are magical plants that release toxins in the air to kill any living beings that enter their range . They then let the corpses nourish the terrain from which they take their nourishment . This place can work!"

Elder Laurel spoke but a series of confused gazes were shot in her direction .

Even Noah felt confused, she had just said that the air around them was toxic, how could that area be suitable for the creation of a foothold?

Yet, he didn't feel any threat coming from those trees, even his dragon's instincts didn't sense anything .

"The toxins of the White woods become more powerful when the trees are starving or when they are attacked, the air is virtually clean now since the terrain is rich of nourishments . This area is perfect as long as we don't affect the vegetation . "

Elder Laurel explained .

The terrain of the piece of Immortal Lands was filled with "Breath", the amount of nourishment that it provided was more than enough for those White woods, they simply didn't need to hunt thanks to that .

"This will do then . Elder Duke, Elder Morgan, begin the preparations for the teleportation matrix . Elder Laurel will assist you to be sure that your work doesn't affect the magical plants here . I and the Prince will explore the surrounding areas . "

Elder Hope ordered and flew higher in the sky, Noah followed her while the other three elders went on the ground, immersing themselves in the white forest .

"Pick a direction . "

Elder Hope spoke to Noah when he reached her, his consciousness spread in the surrounding area and his reptilian eyes analyzed the environment far in the distance but he couldn't find anything peculiar .

"East . "

In the end, Noah simply chose the direction that would bring him deeper into the continent .

"Good, I'll go back on the desert and explore the southern coast, let's meet here in five days . "

Elder Hope ordered and began to fly south to return to the desert where they had met the rank 5 Giant sandworm .

Noah sighed internally when he saw that the leader trusted his abilities to the point of leaving him exploring alone, his knowledge about the magical beasts' field earned him that recognition .

'Feels good to be finally alone...'

Noah took a deep breath and the air around him darkened after that gesture .

His gaze went toward the depths of the continent, he knew that the three big nations had most likely found traces of divine beings on that land, the Hive couldn't confirm it but the behavior of those forces made it almost a certainty .

Also, now that he was alone, he could use his full strength .

Noah kicked the air under his feet and a shockwave resounded in the area, his figure disappeared in an instant only to reappear in the sky after the forest of White woods .

A plain expanded after the forest, azure bushes grew from the terrain .

The bushes seemed to contain an incredible amount of "Breath" so Noah did a quick inspection of the area before diving in the plain .

Roars resounded in the plain as soon as his presence was noticed, a pack of rank 4 Saber-toothed tigers exited its lair and charged toward his descending figure .

Noah felt his dragon's part rejoice when he saw that magical beasts dared to fight him while he was in the air, a smile appeared on his face and a challenging roar came out of his mouth as he continued to descend toward the azure bushes .

Noah's roar scared most of the tigers which slowed down their charge, their legs trembled when they felt the might of the creature behind that cry .

Yet, another roar resounded in the plain and a rank 4 Saber-toothed tiger in the upper tier appeared in the open and fixed its gaze on Noah who had just landed on the azure ground .

Noah heard the tiger's cry and knew that his challenge had been accepted .

The upper part of his robe was stored inside his space-ring as Noah walked on the plain, nearing what seemed the leader of the pack, the creature walked past the weaker tigers of its pack as it prepared itself to charge at Noah .

'I'm near the peak of the middle tier while this tiger is in the upper tier... I don't feel threatened at all . '

Noah thought as he continued to walk toward the leader, he felt completely confident in fighting that beast alone .

However, Noah had no intention of using his human centers of power, he wanted to face the beast with his body alone!

The tiger charged Noah, the ground trembled every time the leader increased its speed but, to Noah, it seemed simply too slow .

He patiently waited for the tiger to reach him, the beast jumped just before arriving in his position and spread its maws as it fell toward him .

It was at that point that Noah's arms shot upward and reached for the two curved canines of the beast, his hands squeezed the fangs as he tried to stop the charge of the beast with his sheer strength!

Of course, being in the upper tier put that creature at the peak of the fourth rank, its physical strength wasn't something that could be stopped easily .

Noah held still as he felt the overwhelming power pushing him back, the terrain under his legs crumbled, creating holes in the ground as he tried to stop the charge .

Noah was pushed back for dozens of meters but his hands never left the fangs, two large trails were dug on the ground by his legs as he tried to stop himself .

It took almost one hundred meters for the power behind the charge of the beast to be depleted, Noah could finally raise his head after his foothold became stable, he revealed a smile at the angry tiger that had its fangs still stuck in his hands .

Chapter 510

The rank 4 Saber-toothed tiger in the upper tier released angry roars as it struggled to free itself from Noah's clutches .

On the other hand, Noah tried his best to break those sharp fangs but to no avail, he wasn't able to crack them even with his full strength .

The other weaker tigers neared the battle when they saw that Noah and their leader had reached a stalemate, Noah knew that he had to act soon or he would be forced to retreat in the air .

His skin caved in as the nourishments inside his body were consumed at a high speed, his muscles condensed as the secret art was activated .

Noah felt a surge of power filling his body, his fingers finally managed to stab the fangs after the activation of the secret art, countless cracks spread over curved fangs of the beast as the strength behind Noah's grip increased .

Then, the fangs fell apart and the tiger released a shriek .

The leader was furious, its fangs had just been broken, it turned its head to stare at the invader only to be swept by a wave of pale-gray flames .

The power behind Noah's flames had increased since his fusion, they had yet to reach the power of those of the rank 5 Cursed dragon in the Granite Abyss but they were a powerful attack nonetheless!

The leader of the pack endured the flames, almost all its fur was burnt along with part of its outer skin but its muscles and internal organs remained unharmed .

The tiger tried to roar in anger but a punch fell on its nose and broke part of the skull behind it, Noah had directly charged and punched the beast!

Noah jumped and landed on the back of the creature, the beast felt dizzy after the last blow and couldn't react, Noah could safely reach its back and cross his arms around its neck .

The tiger began to struggle as soon as Noah tightened his grip around his neck, cracking sounds resounded as its bones broke under the power of Noah's body .

Then, one last crack resounded and the tiger died, falling lifelessly on the ground .

A skeletal figure jumped off the huge beast, Noah felt a bit weak as the effects of the secret art dispersed and his metabolism returned to a normal speed .

'I can defeat it with my secret art but I would probably need to reach the peak of the middle tier before challenging a beast in the upper tier without it . '

Noah evaluated in his mind as he tore part of the leader's skin and put it in his mouth, munching sounds resounded in the area as Noah began to eat the defeated beast .

The stares of the weaker tigers moved between Noah and the corpse of their leader, Noah could feel the greed behind those intense gazes .

However, that was his prey .

Noah turned to look at the other tigers, he knew what they were thinking, they were trying to understand if they could defeat Noah now that he had been weakened by the fight .

A low growl came out of his mouth, Noah sat on the corpse of the tiger and tore another piece of his skin as he continued to stare at the pack .

The tigers hesitated, they had lost their leader and returned to a disorganized state, none of them wanted to be the first to charge at the human .

Noah continued to eat the tiger under him .

His body slowly returned to its normal state as the corpse was consumed, its power even rose slightly after eating that powerful creature .

Saliva fell from the fangs of the tigers, anyone would be able to understand how hungry they were .

Yet, they didn't move, they simply watched as only bones remained of the corpse of their leader .

Then, Noah stood up and walked toward the azure bushes, leaving the remains of the tiger behind him .

The tigers waited for Noah to be enough far away before charging toward the bones of their leader, a battle occurred behind Noah but he couldn't care less, his eyes were fixed on the azure bushes .

'The upper tier tiger has appeared only after I went after these plants, they must have been its personal food . '

Noah inspected those shining plants, he crouched next to them and even smelled them while his consciousness searched for any threat .

He didn't sense any danger coming from them so he simply put one leaf inside his mouth to try it .

The leaf was disgusting, Noah was almost about to spit it when the "Breath" contained inside it entered his body and he could clearly feel its quantity .

'I wondered why something that radiates so much energy has remained untouched among so many beasts!'

Noah thought as he guessed why the azure bushes hadn't already been eaten by the pack of Saber-toothed tigers .

'I bet that this awful taste is the defensive mechanism of this magical plant, the leader of the tigers could only force itself to eat a bit of it from time to time . Well, I need to wait for Elder Laurel's opinion to be completely sure . '

Noah stood up and tore many bushes before storing them inside his space-ring, he would bring samples to his group and eat the rest of them if Elder Laurel confirmed their harmlessness .

'This area can be colonized with the help of a few heroic cultivators, there doesn't seem to be any rank 5 creature here . '

Noah flew in the air as he noted that place in his mind .

He knew that the Hive would ultimately choose to create a stable foothold there just as the other three big nations were doing, there were simply too many resources and the archipelago was already four years late in the exploration, the Hive needed to act quickly if it wanted to seize as many benefits as possible .

Noah's eyes and consciousness swept the areas surrounding the azure plain: A mountain range became visible far away toward the east, part of the poisonous rivers and traces of the desert could be seen south, and nothing changed to north, the plain seemed to extend far away in that direction .

'I'll travel till the mountain range before reuniting with the others, I should find a few powerful creatures that can raise the rank of my body . '

As he thought of that, Noah flew east toward the mountains in the distance .