

Chapter 81 - 81. Drained

Noah retreated hastily sending Assea in front of him to block the beasts' assault.

By then, he was used to fighting while withstanding the pain that Assea suffered.

His blood companion's body was shredded but recomposed instantly and locked one of the enemies in a fierce fight.

Noah could defeat a peak rank 3 beast alone so he just chose to divide the attention of the two Rabid moles between him and Assea.

Assea's body continued to be injured and broken, there was no way to compare its strength to that of the beast.

However, one of the strong points of the companion was its recovery.

Assea continued to lose every clash with the mole but it never let its opponent attack Noah.

On the other side, Noah was releasing torrents of wind blades on his enemy.

The pain he felt due to his companion was nothing he couldn't endure.

The battle protracted for more than twenty minutes.

Even though Noah had the advantage the whole time, his opponent was still a king among rank 3 beasts.

Its resilience was immense and endured wound after wound that he managed to inflict.

Noah didn't let it rest for even an instant as he continued to strike trying to deliver a fatal blow.

Inevitably, that moment arrived.

The mole was covered with tens of cuts, no blood came out of its wounds but the effects of the injuries were still shown on it.

Its paws were one second too late and Noah's blade passed through its defenses.

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The soft sound of its body turning into smoke reached Noah's ears and he didn't hesitate to turn himself and charge toward the remaining beast.

Assea was just acting as a punching dummy while it kept on charging selflessly at the mole.

When Noah gave the command, it coiled around the beast uncaring of its body being broken continuously.

Noah took advantage of the restrained beast and severed its body in half with a double strike from his sabers.

The round was over and Noah sat on the ground to meditate.

Even if he managed to be uninjured, a large quantity of his "Breath" had been depleted.

During the previous battle, he had to fuel Assea's body with liquid "Breath" because the gaseous one in his body could not keep up with the intensity of its fight.

'For how long will this keep going? I'm quite sure that even Lena could have won the last round only thanks to her potions.'

The standards of this trial had to be set considering the ages of the candidates.

Noah knew that his biggest advantage in the test was that he could divert some enemies' attention to his blood companion, the numerical difficulty of the trial was halved for him.

Hadn't it been for Assea's presence, the previous battle would have most likely been his last.

'I can't continue for much longer, what kind of requirements did this cultivator had when he set up the dimension?'

When the ten minutes were over, he had less than one hundred and fifty attacks available.

He felt something charging at him and he opened his eyes while jumping in retreat.

'This will be my last round.'

He could not help to think of that seeing four peak rank 3 Rabid moles.

Noah took a deep breath, his figure in the sea of consciousness held the rune tightly, ready to break it at any moment.

The magical beasts advanced at high speed and as soon as they reached him, they stretched their nails to deliver a powerful strike.

Thirty-two gray blades pierced the air toward his position, one for every finger of the beasts.

Noah waited until the tips of the fangs were a few centimeters from his head to call Assea.

Then, the huge body of a snake appeared in his position.

Its body was pierced and cut in many points by the attacks until it could not support itself anymore and shattered, yet there was no one in the now empty area where Assea previously was.

He instead appeared below one of the moles, ready to swing his weapons. The beasts reacted and tilted their fangs to reduce into pieces the human below them.

Deep marks were left on the floor as the moles didn't have time to retract their nails but before they could hit the young man, the body of the snake reappeared slowing the blows.

Assea's body shattered again but from its disappearing figure, two shadows flew out.

One of them was Noah that was retreating with a light wound on his back.

The other one was a wind slash that hit one of the moles' fingers and directly severed it!

'Thirty-one to go.'

Mole-types beasts were generally weaker than snake-types ones, their bodies were not as strong and their only method of attack was through their extensible fangs.

Noah could not win in a frontal battle so he decided to destroy their weapons in order to decrease their dangerousness.

However, to achieve that feat he had to continuously sacrifice Assea's body fueled with liquid "Breath" and he still could not avoid getting stricken from time to time.

Noah smiled unconsciously, a cold aura radiated from him as his concentration reached its peak.

'One mistake and I lose. If I run out of "Breath" I lose. This is how a real battle should be!'

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Almost an hour passed.

In the underground room, one young man and four moles were staring at each other.

The four moles had all their fingers chopped off from their paws and they assumed a four-legged stance to charge at the human in front of them.

On the other side, Noah was breathing heavily, his complexion was paler than it had ever been and countless wounds were on his body dripping blood on the ground.

Inside his sea of consciousness, Assea's figure was cracked and in need of recovery, that day its body has been destroyed so many times that the damages had extended to Noah's mental sphere.

The beasts didn't have their fangs anymore so they chose to assault him with their bare bodies.

Their charge began and they opened their mouths ready to bite the small human.

Noah was still smiling and looked at the incoming beasts with a calm gaze.

As the moles jumped on him, his sabers moved and released the last eight attacks that his dantian was capable of providing.

The four were hit by two strikes each while still mid-air and their bodies were cut from head to toe by Noah's final blows.

What hit Noah was just the smoke of the dissolving beasts.

He fell on his knees completely drained of every bit of energy, he didn't see that the halo generated by the runes was becoming more intense.

Chapter 82 - 82. Bad luck

Noah gasped for air, his acupoints were already refilling the "Breath" in his body but his dantian was completely empty, he had expended every drop of "Breath" he had in it.

'That is the best I can do, I even injured Assea to pass the round.'

He turned to look at the runes and saw that the halo was becoming more intense.

'Don't tell me that there is more? What is it going to be now? Six peak rank 3? One rank 4?'

The scenes from the Twilboia Cliff reappeared in his mind and he trembled a bit remembering the newly advanced rank 4 snake.

'I can't win against that thing even if there were three of me fighting it.'

He sat in the cross-legged position to refill his dantian, he didn't want to go back to the first stage totally exhausted.

'I'll just see what comes out and then break the rune in my sphere.'

The vitality of his body was already healing his wounds as the acupoints rotated, in the ten minutes break he could at least stabilize his most serious injuries.

However, ten minutes passed and nothing happened, the light continued to illuminate the room without creating any other magical beast.

Thirty minutes passed and there were still no changes in the halo.

Noah didn't bother to think much about it and welcomed the extra time given to him to recover as he continued to cultivate.

Healing Assea would take too much time so he focused on accumulating liquid "Breath".

When one hour had passed, the halo dispersed and a peculiar figure was shown to Noah.

He had a loose orange robe with golden thunders sewed on it.

He was levitating in a cross-legged position with his eyes closed and he had a long combed white beard.

The thing that attracted Noah's attention the most though was his incredibly large pointy hat.

It seemed one of those hats that warlocks or witches wore in the games of his previous world but that one was almost three meters of diameter and was made of some metallic material.

Noah was so surprised that he stopped meditating and just stared at the elderly man in the air.

Then the man opened his eyes and looked around him in a confused manner.

The runes at his side exploded and released a powder that flowed into his body.

As the powder was absorbed, his eyes regained clarity and he began to nod.

"Mh, mh, I understand."

Only then his gaze went on Noah that was still looking at him and after nodding a few more times he spoke.

"You are of the darkness element am I right?"

Noah's eyes widened and he gulped sonorously while nodding.

The elderly cultivator saw his answer and shook his head.

"What a pity, what a pity."

Noah wanted to understand more and struggled to stand up to perform a respectful bow before speaking.

"S-senior wh-"

The man didn't let him finish the phrase and waved his hand sending orange powder in Noah's direction.

The powder was too fast and entered his body under Noah's incredulous gaze.

He began to retreat instinctively but an orange halo was already surrounding him.

Noah started to panic but then he noticed that his dantian was being refilled on its own!

The wounds on his body healed in an instant and even the mental energy in his sea of consciousness was restored to its maximum capacity.

Assea's cracked figure recomposed completely and was filled by so much energy that the blood companion came out from Noah's body autonomously and hissed at the ceiling!

"That is indeed a good spell. Never would I have expected that spells regarding puppets would have reached such a level in the future."

Noah was still examining his body that had returned to his peak form.

When the man spoke, Noah's gaze moved to him, only reverence was shown by his eyes.

"Thank you very much, Senior!"

Noah said repeating his bow.

The elderly man placed his feet to the ground and stretched one of his arms assuming an imposing posture.

"The world knows me as Eccentric Thunder, I've accumulated wealth for hundreds of years and set this inheritance ground to find an heir worthy to be called my disciple."

He stared at Noah, a bit of disappointment was exuded from his eyes.

"I am already dead but my will resides in the runes of my dimension. Young one, you are indeed worthy of being my disciple, sadly it appears that the luck both of us is bad."

Eccentric Thunder sighed before continuing his speech.

"There are two conditions to become my heir. The first one is to have the necessary strength and you clearly fulfilled that or I won't be here. The second one is for him or her to be of the thunder element."

Noah felt dejected, he had fought so hard only to be punished by his bad luck.

Eccentric Thunder continued seeing his expression.

"I am but a will, I need to obey the rules set by my true self when he created the dimension. Since you passed the test you have the right to obtain my most valuable asset of the darkness element. Rejoice, it's a top tier spell that will accompany you through all your cultivation journey."

Noah's eyes lit up hearing his words and a bit of eagerness invaded him.

"I'm really sorry, young one. The rules that I set up clearly state that anyone that doesn't fulfill the two conditions has the right to receive only one reward. I could not risk that my accumulations might have been expended before I had found a successor. One test one reward, that's the rule. The dimension is now preparing to transfer the diagram directly into your sea of consciousness, you will be sent out soon."

Noah fell deep in thought.

'One spell doesn't help me that much to escape, there are still the elite guards waiting on the entrance to the first stage and I can't possibly defeat them.'

He bowed again.

"Senior, is there another exit from the separate dimension to the outer world?"

Eccentric Thunder snorted and sent another ray of orange powder toward Noah.

"Hmph, who do you think I am? Here, this is the complete map of the inheritance ground. Take it as an apology for the single reward."

Many pieces of information were injected in Noah's mind and he rejoiced to see that there was hope to escape from the Balvan group.

He was about to bow again when a strange idea formed in his mind.

A shameless smile appeared on his face as he neared the elderly cultivator.

Chapter 83 - 83. Deal

Eccentric Thunder's words made Noah realize something.

'The map of the inheritance ground can be considered as a reward, right? Giving it to me should have been impossible if the rules had to be followed strictly.'

Noah came from a different world so he had two points of view on everything.

'If the separate dimension can be considered as a program that would mean that there are ways to cheat it.'

He thought of the potential loopholes that there could be in the dimension's rules and the cultivator's words gave him some ideas.

He arrived in front of him and asked in the most persuasive voice that he could muster.

"Grandpa Thunder, if you could, would you be willing to give me more prizes?"

Eccentric Thunder was a bit shocked.

The runes had shown him Noah's battle and the expression that he was making at that time was the complete opposite of the cold smiling one he had when he was fighting.

"Hm, well, yes, but as I told you: rules are rules, I can't help you with that."

He crossed his arms on his chest and looked away from Noah.

Noah continued his persuasion.

"What if you gave me more tests before I return to the first stage? Passing them wouldn't mean obtaining more rewards?"

Eccentric Thunder thought for a moment and then slowly nodded.

"Yes, that might work. But the diagram for your spell will be ready in the time it takes an incense stick to burn, you will never be able to clear one of the tests in that little time."

'Five minutes so.'

Noah thought for a little and could only find one solution.

"Mh, what if you set a new test that consists of simple questions? I believe that a mighty Senior like you could do that without much effort."

The old man snorted.

"Of course I can do that, but that would be giving you things for free. It is immoral! A cultivator has to earn his power!"

He raised his head to the ceiling to appear pure and virtuous but his enormous hat made the scene look a bit ridiculous.

However, Noah's next words made him turn abruptly with his eyes widened.

"What if I find you a worthy descendant?"

Eccentric Thunder stared at the young man and gulped, Noah could not help but remark the realism of the dimension.

"Do you know of someone that fulfills the conditions?"

Noah moved his gaze to the ground and shook his head.

"Well, not currently. But you must know that I'm planning to join a famous organization full of young talents even stronger than me."

He shrugged his shoulders and took out one of his sabers while sighing sonorously.

"However, the journey will be long and hard. There are guards waiting for me on the first stage from whom I have to escape. Then, I would have to travel alone for many months and all of this will be useless if I don't pass their entrance test."

He laid the saber on his hands and showed it to the cultivator.

"Look, my sabers are full of dents from all the battles I went through. My cultivation technique is a weak rank 1 technique that has no elemental requirements and my blood companion doesn't even fit me! I guess I will have to give up on escaping after all, I don't think I can manage in my mission with only a new spell."

Eccentric Thunder was about to respond but Noah continued.

"I hope you the best luck Grandpa Thunder. Even if your inheritance ground is occupied by the Shosti family and the entrance is under their control, I believe that a worthy heir will appear in this remote countryside sooner or later. Heaven and Earth can't be so unfair to you."

Noah seemed really disheartened when he spoke about the situation on the outside world making the worries of the elderly man increase.

Many years had passed, Eccentric Thunder had no knowledge of the environment outside his dimension.

He had set many entrances but until now only one had been discovered and the Shosti family had made it their biggest form of income.

However, what if they restricted the ingress?

What if his fated heir was among those that could not have access to the inheritance ground?

Eccentric Thunder didn't have much time to think about it since Noah was about to be sent out to the first stage.

A few seconds passed before the man spoke resolutely.

"Scoundrel, give me your hand, you have a deal."

Noah immediately raised his right hand toward him, he expected his approval since his conditions were good.

Eccentric Thunder held his arm and orange light began to shine on their handshake.

"Swear upon your dantian that you will do anything in your power to send a worthy young cultivator of the thunder element in one of the entrances that are on the map that I gave you."

Noah's smile disappeared replaced by his usual cold expression as he set a condition.

"A cultivator that I'm sure will not harm me in the future."

Eccentric Thunder looked for a moment deep into the young man's eyes and nodded internally.

'He sure has the attitude needed to reach a high level.'

"Fine."

Noah then smiled again.

"I swear!"

The orange light condensed and inscribed a rune on Noah's arm that was then absorbed under his skin.

Information on the specifics of the agreement and on how to fulfill it entered his mind and he felt satisfied with them.

Eccentric Thunder let his hand go and thought for a moment before a rune appeared in front of him.

He was about to speak when Noah spoke again.

"Really simple questions, my knowledge is lacking."

The old man nodded and pressed his hand on the rune.

"Which one is the best element?"

'EH!?!'

Noah was a bit surprised.

He answered with a hesitant voice.

"Thunder?"

Eccentric Thunder smiled and the rune shined briefly.

"Good, good, since you were able to answer this difficult question you deserve this rank 2 cultivation technique of your element."

A scroll appeared in front of Noah and he hastily put it in his space-ring.

Chapter 84 - 84. Ready

In the underground room of the second stage.

Noah and Eccentric Thunder were smiling at each other while the rune between them shined shortly from time to time.

"Which color is the most good looking?"

"Orange!"

"Ohh, I see that you are an expert. Take this reagent, it will help you breaking through ranks."

"What about hats?"

"The larger they are the more awesome they appear!"

"Correct! I think this pair of sabers will suit you. They have an inscription that repairs them through "Breath"."

"Who do you think is the most awesome character in the history of cultivators?"

"Senior Eccentric Thunder is the best of course!"

"You think so? I will humbly accept this compliment and give you an Earth pill then."

Noah was taking everything that the rune made appear in his space-ring without even looking at it, he wanted to make the best usage of the little time he had.

"As for beards, mh? Which ones are the best in their kind?"

"Long and combed like yours Senior!"

"Ohoh, you are such a smart kid. Here, take this new space-ring, it has more than fifty cubic meters of space inside."

Noah wore the newly appeared ring on one of his free fingers and looked at the old man with eagerness.

Eccentric Thunder seemed to like having someone that approved his appearance and would smile every time Noah answered one of his questions.

Noah began to understand why he was called "Eccentric".

However, after he asked the fifth question, he stayed silent for a moment and closed his eyes while knitting his brows.

When he opened his eyes he shook his head in Noah's direction.

"I'm sorry, it appears that I can't stretch the rules more than this, I'm beginning to feel a backlash from the dimension."

Noah's enthusiasm was crushed but then he accepted the outcome.

'I have obtained a cultivation technique, new weapons, a new space-ring, and the means to reach the second rank of the dantian, this is already incredibly good. And there is the top tier spell that he spoke about earlier.'

Noah sorted the rewards in his mind.

"How long till I'm sent out?"

Eccentric Thunder answered.

"Two parts of incense."

'Two minutes so, I have to hurry.'

He put his old sabers in the space-ring and took out the new ones.

They were silver with some green symbols inscribed on them.

Noah swung them a couple of times and then nodded in satisfaction.

He donned again the red upper armor and tied the sheaths of his new weapons on his back.

The sabers were held tightly in his hands while in his mind he reviewed the path that he had to take to escape.

He was ready to abandon the Balvan family!

Eccentric Thunder smiled a bit seeing again the cold expression of the young man.

"When the diagram will be inscribed in your sea of consciousness it will hurt a bit. However, all the specifics about the spell will be passed too, so you won't have to train in its activation."

Noah looked at the elderly man and made a bow in gratitude.

"I promise I will bring you a good disciple."

Eccentric Thunder snorted but smiled happily.

"Of course you will, a deal with me can't be broken that easily!"

They smiled looking at each other.

Noah then felt the pressure of the teleportation and disappeared from the second stage.

Eccentric Thunder shook his head while mumbling softly.

"Kids these days have become too cunning."

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A few hours before, on the first stage.

Soldiers from the Balvan family appeared one by one and began to discuss the contents of the trial.

They were exhausted and rested on the ground making bets on who would be able to last more in the test.

Neil and Fabian arrived almost at the same time, creating silence between the guards.

Their complexion was a bit pale but they were uninjured, the soldiers understood that they had retreated before the situation became too difficult.

Time passed and in the second stage remained only Trevor, Lena, and Noah.

Then, Trevor appeared, he had a large wound on his chest and his armor was broken but his arms were tightly holding a spear with some inscriptions on it.

He was smiling since he managed to obtain some rewards but his expression froze when he saw who was missing.

'I killed one of the two peak rank 3 magical beasts but I had to suffer a severe injury to do that. I understand that Lady Lena can do better than me but how is it possible that Noah is still not here?'

He sat on the ground to threat his body but his gaze would often fall on the ingress of the stage.

Another person arrived and when the light of the teleportation disappeared, Lena's almost naked figure was shown to the group.

Trevor hastily stood up and jumped toward her, tearing off some of his clothes in order to cover the descendant.

She didn't care much and just sat on the ground swallowing pills and potions to heal the harsh damages on her body.

When her injuries stabilized, she smiled toward Trevor and showed him a small scroll.

"I did it, I obtained a spell. Sadly I couldn't clear the successive round but this should be enough. Once I've recovered, we can move."

Trevor's expression became complex and lowered his head to speak in a soft voice.

"My lady about that, ehm, Noah is still inside the test."

Lena's eyes widened and her gaze ran through the group but she couldn't find her bastard cousin.

She looked again at Trevor.

"How is that possible? The next round had four peak rank 3 beasts while he doesn't even have a spell! I bet that he is running around against the single peak rank 3 waiting for us to think that he died down there. Hmph, if he thinks that I'll let him go that easily he is wrong."

Trevor nodded at her theory but was a bit doubtful inside his mind.

'He can definitely kill a peak rank 3 alone, is he really stalling for time? To what point though, there is only one entrance.'

He sat beside Lena and calmly waited for Noah to appear.

A bit more than an hour passed and the light of the teleportation flashed again.

Noah appeared, he was holding two silver sabers in his hands.

His eyes were closed and some sweat ran down his forehead.

He seemed in pain.

Chapter 85 - 85. Insubordination

Inside Noah's sea of consciousness.

Black roots tangled themselves on the figure of the first Kesier rune.

A complex diagram appeared with the roots as its lines.

The roots then tried to extend on the faint form of the second Kesier rune but its image was too ethereal and they retreated after they failed on grasping it.

The process sent waves of pain on Noah's mind.

However, with it came also the knowledge about the spell.

Its effects, the usage, the strong points, and the weak ones, everything became known by Noah in an instant.

'He wasn't bragging when he said that it was a top tier spell.'

This was his first thought when his mind was freed from the pain and he opened his eyes.

The group from the Balvan family was staring at him with wide eyes.

They could not understand how he stayed in the second stage for so much time and came out unharmed!

He had remained in the test for about one hour more than Lena and she was supposed to be the stronger of their group.

Noah released a cold aura seeing that the attention was focused on him, he laid the sabers on his shoulders and gazed at Trevor and Lena.

He was waiting for their move.

Lena stood up and Trevor did the same, the others behind them didn't quite understand the reason for such tension.

Lena spoke.

"Did you obtain a reward?"

Noah answered briefly.

"Yes."

"What have you got?"

"Why should I tell you?"

Lena's eyes sharpened and the soldiers behind her stood up, insubordination wasn't allowed in the slightest among the guards of a noble family.

Lena continued.

"Because I'm your superior, you serve me."

Noah looked at the fake sky, only an orange color filled his sight.

He spoke.

"I believe that you can't ask about the secrets of a cultivator. My Master once told me that this is an unspoken rule in the cultivation world."

Lena snorted.

"But you are not a cultivator, you are simply a bastard that had the chance to learn some tricks because his mother opened her legs to a noble."

Noah smiled faintly at her remark and moved his gaze back at her.

"And that would make me less of a cultivator? I believed that there was only one way to judge that."

Lena smiled too.

"What would that be?"

Noah's face became stern.

"Strength."

Lena laughed and pointed her hand at him.

"You are so naive! Strength means nothing! So what if someone is powerful? He can always be overwhelmed by numbers! And numbers come with wealth! Hurry and give me your reward, your punishment will be a light one if you stop here."

Noah shook his head.

"That is not happening."

Lena began to lose her cool.

"What, do you think that back at the mansion they will let you keep it for yourself? The Patriarch will personally open your sea of consciousness to retrieve what you learnt and give it to the Shosti family."

She was about to speak more when Trevor stepped in front of her.

"He is not coming back."

As a guard, Trevor too had desired to escape.

He was privileged but he was still the dog of his masters.

No matter how well he was treated, his position remained one of servitude so he could understand Noah's thoughts better than Lena.

In her mind, soldiers could never think about rebellion or escape due to the might of her noble family.

As her eyes widened in understanding, Noah jumped ahead.

Twenty black slashes were sent toward Trevor and Lena.

Except for Lena that had mostly recovered thanks to her resources, the group was tired and wounded while Noah was at the peak of his strength.

Lena created a wall of water and Trevor raised his sword to take on him some of the force of the slashes.

There was no need to do so as Lena's spell absorbed that attacks completely.

However, Noah had disappeared from their vision.

They turned when they heard a scream from one of the soldiers in their group.

Noah was freely swinging his sabers on the exhausted soldiers.

They had given their outmost in the test and even if they had time to restore some of their "Breath" and to stabilize their body, their battle prowess didn't reach half of what they were capable of.

Heads flew in the air and blood poured on the ground as the guards fell lifelessly one by one.

Trevor prioritized securing the descendants and ran toward Neil and Fabian taking them where Lena was standing with her arm raised.

She was trying to aim for Noah with her water bullets but he was always behind some soldier and she never had a clear shot.

In the end, they could only watch as the twenty guards were killed.

Lena didn't hesitate, as the last guard fell on the ground and Noah's figure appeared in the open, she shot five bullets directly at him.

Noah swung his blades and ten slashes shot out to meet the spell.

The bullets pierced the technique but they were slowed enough to give Noah time to dodge.

He rapidly charged toward the remaining four members of the Balvan group.

Trevor put himself between him and the descendants, ready to take the first impact.

Noah clashed with him, two sabers met a sword, their physical strength was equal.

Lena smiled and raised her arm to aim for Noah but then a drop of a warm red liquid fell on her cheek.

Her eyes widened when she noticed that a big black figure had appeared on her side.

On one end of the black body, there was Noah's leg.

The other extremity was behind her with the shape of a reptilian head.

Between its fangs, Neil's body was being crushed and multiple wounds appeared on his body.

An invisible membrane though was protecting him, stopping Assea's teeth from stabbing deeper on his flesh.

Lena yelled and turned to attack the snake.

Trevor's attention was diverted on the beast but when he tried to look at it, its body had already disappeared.

He felt a sharp pain in his low waist and noticed that the snake's mouth had already bitten him there.

"How-?"

He could not finish the phrase as Noah tilted his sabers and thrust them into his chest.

Chapter 86 - 86. Fiend

Trevor was already deeply injured, he had sacrificed his body to use his spell back on the second stage.

When the sabers pierced his heart and life began to leave his body, he looked deep into Noah's eyes.

They were cold and focused and had already moved toward his next targets, he didn't even deign him of one last gaze.

For some reason, he felt that Noah's escape was ensured.

'He will be Balvan family's biggest tribulation.'

The blades were pulled out of his body and he fell dead on the ground.

Lena was confused.

She had turned to help her brother but then the black snake vanished and reappeared in the opposite position.

She instinctively deployed a water shield to cover herself and the other two descendants.

A strong force hit the shield that made it bend toward the safe area behind it. Lena focused and summoned the water whip yelling orders to the two boys.

"I need your help! Use everything you have to attack him and rely on the protective items of the family to keep yourself alive. I will face him head-on, you take care of the magical beast."

Another impact resounded from the shield and shattered it!

Assea shot out from the crystalline drops of which it was made and Lena's complexion paled due to the collapse of her spell.

However, she had no time to care about her condition and she raised her whip to block the blood companion's charge.

She endured its assault and her whip tangled on its body but then a figure shot out of it.

Noah jumped toward Fabian and delivered a descending double cut.

He raised his arms in panic and a metallic sound echoed from their clash.

On Fabian left arm, a deep cut appeared while a bluish membrane covered the spot where the sabers hit.

'The fuck are those things.'

The attack should have severed the noble in two but as the damage surpassed a determined gravity the membrane showed itself to prevent it.

Neil jumped toward him wielding a rapier adorned with blue gems.

Noah deflected it but then the gems blinked and shot a ray of light following the trajectory of Neil's blade.

Noah was unprepared and was hit superficially on the shoulder.

He retreated sensing the unknown threat and water bullets shot in his direction.

Assea's body appeared and was pierced by the bullets.

There was a moment of silence after that as no attacks were launched from both sides.

Noah looked from behind Assea and saw that the three nobles were all wielding shining weapons.

Lena had taken out a black whip with inscriptions on it, Neil had his rapier, and Fabian held a short white sword with both his hands.

Lena began to speak.

"I have to admit that your strength is remarkable but you can clearly see the advantage given by numbers and wealth."

Noah didn't mind spending time speaking.

Neil and Fabian were both injured and were losing blood while his body autonomously refilled "Breath".

"What's left of your numbers are two inexperienced brats. As for wealth..."

He focused his eyes on their armaments.

"Why none of you use sabers? I really wanted a new set of them."

He shook his head to mock them.

Lena saw that he had closed his eyes and hastily took out a pill from her space ring.

She was about to eat it when a few black slashes came in her direction forcing her to throw the pill away in order to block the attacks.

Noah had charged ahead again sending Assea on Lena to keep her busy while he tried to break the defenses of the other two nobles.

Neil was easy to handle, he simply had to avoid that the rapier pointed at him.

With his battle experience, dealing with such a weapon which was also poorly handled was easy.

The ability of Fabian's sword though was a bit more annoying.

It covered its wielder with a white circular shield that absorbed most of the force behind Noah's blows.

Even when Noah managed to pierce the shield the bluish protective layer would appear, negating any damage.

Meanwhile, Lena was destroying Assea's body time after time.

Every time her whip hit, the inscriptions would light up to amplify the power of the impact.

Assea was thrashed around sending waves of pain on Noah's sea of consciousness, it was not Lena's opponent.

Seeing that Noah could not succeed in hurting them seriously in the short term, the two nobles began to lose their fear of his blades and focused only on attacking.

'This is getting troublesome.'

He was one against three so his "Breath" consumption was higher.

He didn't want to prolong the battle for more than it was necessary.

'I guess I had to try it at some point.'

Inside his mental sphere.

The diagram on his first Kesier rune illuminated and the level of the sea began to decrease at high speed.

Noah sent a black slash in Neil's direction.

The descendant was used by then on relying on the protection of the membrane so he didn't even try to block the attack.

Lena had sharper senses and felt a sense of danger from the slash.

She was about to yell something when Assea jumped on her again.

The blow hit Neil's abdomen and clashed with the invisible layer of defense.

However, black smoke sprouted from it which corroded the membrane creating an opening for the strike.

Noah's attack cut unobstructed Neil's body in two.

A noble from a medium-size noble family died.

"NEIL!!!"

Lena screamed in sorrow seeing her brother's death and turned to look in anger in Noah's direction.

What she saw though made her tremble in fear.

Noah's body was being covered in black flickering smoke.

It hovered right over his skin forming a sort of quivering armor.

The black smoke protruded on his sabers and only his icy-blue eyes remained visible of his face.

'Wha-'

Even her thoughts stopped seeing the fiendish figure.

Then, the man said something in a low rugged voice.

"Demonic form."

Chapter 87 - 87. Escape

'Demonic form, rank based on the mental level of the user, darkness element. Creates an armor of corrosive smoke that enhances the body of the user. The black smoke can envelop the attacks of the user to destroy any defense on his path. The smoke is extremely deadly and since it covers the user it will also weaken any threat coming near him.'

That was the knowledge that came with the spell along with the specifics on its activation.

The spell was extremely ductile, it could be used separately on any part of the body or in its full form creating the fiendish figure that Lena was so stupefied of.

The information made Noah think that it could be possible to extend it even to his blood companion but he still hadn't had time to experiment on that.

The only drawback was that the consumption of mental energy was enormous.

'But that it's justified by its power!'

Noah thought, examining the data that he obtained with the spell.

Lena was petrified.

Every sense she had was madly sending warning messages to her mind.

She was about to take a step back when Assea wrapped itself around her.

"You stay there, I'll take care of my brother first."

The low rugged voice sounded again as Noah moved toward Fabian.

With every step he took, smoke would be released on the ground, making the runes that composed it waver as if they were trying to resist the corrosion.

When he was in front of the nobleman, he simply slashed with one of his sabers.

The white shield appeared but was destroyed by the sheer strength of the blow!

Then the blade hit the bluish membrane which fluctuated repeatedly and cracked in the point where the collision happened.

However, it held on and blocked Noah's strike.

"Oh, I see that daddy really cares about you."

Noah didn't bother too much and let go of the saber while his now free hand shot out to grab Fabian's throat.

He raised his body in the air while the smoke thoroughly wrapped around the noble.

Inhumane screams resounded from the coffin of smoke until only silence reined in the area.

Noah retracted his hand and picked up his saber.

The smoke dispersed showing only emptiness in its spot.

Of Fabian's body, there was no trace.

Lena stared horrified at the events unfolding and came back to reality only when Noah turned to her.

Her aspect became even paler and some blood came out of her nose.

BOOM!

An explosion occurred and Assea's body was shattered completely, even its figure in Noah's mental sphere cracked slightly due to the blast.

Lena came out from the dust that rose and began to run madly toward the direction of the entrance of the inheritance ground.

Her right arm was in pieces and only some flesh remained attached to the shoulder.

However, she didn't seem to care.

There was only one thought in her mind.

'I have to reach the guards on the outside!'

"Remarkable, you made your whip explode in order to escape. The Balvan family sure taught well."

A devilish voice sounded from her side and she turned her head with an incredulous expression.

She only saw a blade releasing black smoke aiming for her head.

A thud echoed in the area.

Noah pressed his foot on Lena's figure.

An invisible layer of protection saved her life but still couldn't prevent her from crashing on the ground.

He pointed his weapon on her and spoke, the smoke expanded from his foot and began to corrode her protection.

"Wealth."

He turned the point of the blade toward himself.

"Strength."

Lena's eyes were bloodshot.

The protective membrane shattered and the smoke attacked her body.

She gritted her teeth and through the pain, she managed to speak one last threat.

"The Balvan family will come for you."

Noah smirked, the face made of smoke cracked where his mouth was making his image even more devilish.

He neared his head to Lena's.

"No, I will come for them."

And then the smoke devoured her figure.

Of the group from the Balvan family, only Noah remained alive.

Noah dispersed his Demonic form.

He was pale and sweat flowed from his every pore, the spell had consumed more than half his mental energy in that short time.

'I need to work hard on the second Kesier rune from now on.'

He absorbed the remains of Lena's body in his space-ring and then he went back to the ingress of the second stage to put all the other bodies in the ring.

The total space of his space-rings was more than eighty cubic meters by then.

After he was sure that he retrieved everything and nothing was left on the ground, he checked the map of the separate dimension.

He found the farthest exit from the one of the Shosti family and ran in its direction.

The green plains seemed endless and could make anyone feel disoriented.

Noah moved at full speed for one entire day without stopping for even a moment.

His acupoints continuously absorbed "Breath" so he never had to slow down his pace.

He reached the spot signed on the map in his head but there was nothing different in the environment.

He carefully inspected the ground and found that there was a rune between the grass.

Noah didn't hesitate and touched it.

An orange halo was formed and the pressure of the teleportation attacked his mind.

When he opened his eyes, he found himself in the middle of a forest.

'Evergreen forest!'

According to the route he had taken, he knew that the exit would have been in the forest but he didn't know how deep in it he was.

Noah climbed the tallest tree he found and looked around him from above it.

The sky was crystal clear and there were mostly trees in his field of view.

'Found it!'

At a distance not too far away, he discovered the peak of a tower.

'That's Mossgrove city and it's only a half a day of travel from here. It seems that even space it's stretched in the separate dimension.'

He was not in the mood to feel amazed at the accomplishment of Eccentric Thunder and he jumped off the tree and began to run again.

His route was in the opposite direction of the city.

Chapter 88 - 88. Journey

Evergreen forest was vast, it spanned for many kilometers in an uneven way.

Inside it, there were many danger zones and, in its depths, it wasn't unusual to find rank 3 magical beasts or large packs.

Humans were the overlords of the world but magical beasts had the advantage in the evolution process, their numbers increased in every place where humans were scarce.

Twilboia Cliff was one of those areas and there were many more like it in the world.

Generally speaking, the areas where humans lived had to be secured often in order to stop the developing of the magical beasts.

Most of Noah's mission back in the mansion had that purpose.

He was deep in the forest, hidden in an empty cave that he found along the way.

A week had passed since the events in the inheritance ground and all he did was running in a straight line away from the Shosti domain.

He was consulting a map at that moment, his clothes had changed to his usual black ones and his hair was combed in a simple ponytail.

'The academy's entrance test befalls four months from now. The city holding one of them that suits me the most is Ebonrest city at two months of travel from my position. It is quite far from Mossgrove city and the communications are scarce with the Shosti family due to Sheflan Mountain between them.'

Noah had prepared his escape routes long ago.

His space-ring was full of long-lasting provisions, new clothes, and all the useful means for a long trip.

His clothes were mostly plain gym suits that he managed to steal from the servants, he could not be found wearing the armors of the Balvan family.

'I can reach it in less than one month if I travel at a decent speed but that's quite useless. I'd rather use my time alone to raise my strength before the test.'

He still had to sort out the rewards from Eccentric Thunder and the bodies of the group from the Balvan family were still in his other space-ring.

He had a long process of arranging goods ahead of him and he had to destroy the bodies but he prioritized his escape in that week.

At some point, Noah nodded and put back the map in the ring.

'I will focus on traveling for another week and just spare some time for the Kesier rune in the meantime. After that, I will slow my march considerably, sort the goods, and return to a complete training schedule.'

He didn't feel safe.

Even if he left no proof of the battle in the first stage he still preferred to be as far as he could from his family's influence.

'Though, it should be pretty hard to investigate in the separate dimension. I bet that things aren't that good in the mansion.'

He resumed his march at a fast pace toward Ebonrest city, he was careful to avoid any magical beasts on his road, he didn't want to leave any sign of his passage.

'There is also the fact that even if they reach the conclusion that the group is dead, they can't possibly suspect me. In their mind I'm just a talented kid with no spells, never could they imagine that I have two of them which are incredibly strong.'

The blood companion had proved its value countless times by then and it was even of an unfit element for Noah.

The Demonic form, instead, was extraordinary even for him, he couldn't really imagine that something like that existed.

Not only it was a specific spell of a rare element so inherently stronger than the others, but it was also a top tier one.

'No wonder nobles are so wary of giving spells to outsiders. My battle prowess doubled with one darkness spell.'

He was finally understanding the advantage of belonging to a rare element.

Noah spent another week traveling at high speed.

He would run during the day, train in the rune for one hour, and then sleep, he did nothing else in that period.

When he felt that he had distanced himself enough from the Shosti's domain, he decided that it was time to sort the items in his space-rings.

He found a deep uninhabited cavern and sat at its bottom.

One body after another appeared in front of him as he inspected them and then threw them away in a corner.

A nauseous smell began to fill the cavern but Noah simply continued in his process.

The guards had nothing valuable, he couldn't take their armors since they were a signature of his origins and they had no storage methods.

Only their weapons seemed somewhat good so he chose to keep them.

Trevor's weapon and his reward were one tier higher in quality, especially the spear with inscriptions on it so Noah didn't hesitate to store them.

'It's time for the nobles.'

Noah's eyes lit up as the shiny items entered his field of view.

Fabian and Neil didn't have a space-ring but their weapons seemed amazing. He tried to look for the item that created the protective membrane but there was nothing that resembled it.

Since he only had Neil's body, he inspected it carefully until he found a strange cracked pendant with runes on it.

'It should be this thing but it appears broken. Now that I think about it, Lena's ring survived my black smoke so why the protective items didn't?'

He had some theories but he knew too little to be sure.

He threw Neil's two halves and broken pendant in the corner with the other bodies and moved to Lena's space-ring.

She made her whip explode so the ring was the only valuable thing left from her.

Noah used his mental energy to inspect the space on the inside but he felt a wall blocking his probing.

Some runes illuminated on its surface.

'Is it protected? What if I destroy the inscriptions?'

His mental energy continued to assault the wall while black smoke rose from the hand that was holding the item.

The runes began to corrode until the ring was near its breaking point.

Then, the wall crumbled and his mental energy was free to inspect its interiors.

Dozens of bottles and pills were inside with a small scroll and some change of clothes.

Noah decided to transfer everything except the clothes in his space-ring and then he threw Lena's cracked ring between the corpses.

He had then one empty deposit and one with things to evaluate.

'I have to take care of these things first.'

He looked in the corner of the cave where the dead bodies were amassed.

He neared the pile and his mental energy began to deplete as he stretched his arm toward it.

Black smoke came out of his hand and engulfed the corpses.

As everything in the corner was consumed by his spell, Noah analyzed its effects.

'The corrosion is indeed stronger if the distance between me and the smoke is small. Assea.'

His blood companion came out from his other hand and Noah concentrated.

Even more mental energy was expended as the body of the snake was being covered by the black smoke.

Initially, it seemed that Assea's body was becoming stronger but then it rejected the empowerment and started to corrode.

Noah stopped the spell and retracted his blood companion while shaking his head.

'Assea can't endure the Demonic form, it should be because its core it's from a magical beast of the earth element.'

He was eager to change his companion and that's why Assea's figure in his sea of consciousness remained slightly cracked.

He wasn't prioritizing fixing it since it was still somewhat usable.

The black smoke made everything in the corner vanish and Noah decided to find another hideout to sort the rest of the items, that cavern had become too smelly.

About thirty minutes later, he was sitting on a large branch of one of the trees. As he went deeper in the forest the trees had become larger, he found trunks longer than two hundred meters along the way.

'Everything is bigger in this world, harnessing "Breath" gives every living being a limitless potential apparently. Such a miraculous power, I wonder how things really were in my previous world. Maybe the "Breath" there was so thin that it couldn't be noticed.'

From time to time he would still compare the development of humans in his two different lives.

Sure, his previous world created deadly weapons on a daily basis but could it have resisted the endless incursions of magical beasts?

'Personal power it's always superior to the collective one of societies or governments. The King of the valley could have single-handedly destroyed entire cities.'

He shook his head and focused again on the items, a small scroll appeared in his hands.

'Surging river, water spell, rank up to the fourth, creates a perpetual flow of water at high pressure that crushes the target.'

'Up to rank 4? Is it the limits of the strength of the magic spell? My education really is shallow.'

He put the scroll back in the ring and took out the silver sabers.

These weapons were new a couple of weeks before but they had already been slightly blunted in the single battle that he had fought.

Noah injected his "Breath" on them and the green inscriptions lightened up.

The dents and the corroded parts began to fix themselves and in five minutes the sabers were as good as new.

'This is almost miraculous! I guess that Eccentric Thunder gave these blades to me because he knew of the disadvantages of the Demonic form.'

He was the only one immune to the black smoke of the spell, his weapons suffered from the same corrosion that everything else it touched experienced, even if in a weaker way.

'It is because I don't want to damage them that they were degraded so scarcely. I wonder if there is a way to avoid it like it should be possible with the blood companion.'

He sheathed the sabers and took out the last item in need of inspection.

The reagent and the Earth pill were one-time-use items and didn't need any control, their usage was pretty straightforward.

The potions and pills from Lena's inventory were all sorted in an ordinate way with their explanation, their usage was essentially battle oriented, consisting of raising momentarily the healing process of a determined center of power.

However, the scroll that he took out was of vital importance to Noah at the moment.

'Dark vortex, rank 2 cultivation technique, restricted to darkness element. Cultivating at night will speed the accumulation of "Breath".'

On the scroll, there was only this explanation and the descriptions of the respiration forms.

'With this technique, the Earth pill, and the reagent, my road to the rank 2 dantian will be smooth. He really thought of everything.'

Noah smiled a little thinking about the old man with the giant hat.

'I wonder why did he have that much stuff unfitting for his element, such a strange character.'

The sun was still up but he decided to give a try to the technique.

He crossed his legs and joined his hands to form a circle where is dantian was.

A drop of his liquid "Breath" was consumed to ignite a vortex at the center of the circle.

"Breath" began to gather inside the spinning spiral coloring it in black.

It seemed that the drop that he used attracted the "Breath" of its same kind.

Since the "Breath" had not to be filtered before entering the dantian, the accumulation process was faster and smoother.

During the meditation, the vortex abruptly enlarged and rotated at a faster speed, needless to say, even the quantity of "Breath" embodied was higher.

Noah was surprised and opened his eyes.

He noticed that the sun had set and the night had come.

'To think that there was actually such an increase in effectiveness! Cultivating during the day feels like a waste now.'

He calculated in his mind for a bit and believed that if he meditated every night during the time the sky was dark, he could reach the limits of the liquid stage in less than two years.

'I've decided. I will spend my nights cultivating and my mornings between the training on second Kesier rune and my sleep. As I wake up, I will repeat some forms and then proceed toward Ebonrest city during the afternoon.'

He had still four months before the test of the academy and he wanted to increase his strength now that he had the means and the time to train.

'I should also search for a rank 3 darkness-type beast since I'm at it.'

Chapter 90 - 90. Hunting

Days passed and Noah's journey became dull.

He spent most of his time awake training while he marched only during the afternoons.

He liked this kind of life though, his strength was increasing steadily and having escaped from the clutches of the family left him with a sense of freedom.

The only problem remained his blood companion.

Since he only traveled under the daylight his chances to encounter a rank 3 darkness beast were low.

However, that didn't mean that there was a scarcity of magical beasts.

Noah was standing on one of the branches of the trees around him.

He was slowly eating a meal while watching the battle below him.

Two peak rank 3 beasts were fighting to the death on the ground, probably they were deciding to which one that territory belonged to.

One was a black bear-type beast of which Noah didn't know the name while the other one was a Thunder wolf.

The wolf used its speed and ranged attacks to continuously hurt the opponent but the vitality of the bear was immense, it endured every lightning bolt that arrived at him.

'The bear is probably an earth element magical beast, its defenses are awesome. If it catches the wolf once, the battle will be over.'

Everything happened as Noah predicted.

The Thunder wolf went too close to the bear that abruptly jumped toward it.

Its four meters frame stomped the wolf reducing its body into a pulp of flesh and blood.

'Wolf-type magical beasts are generally stronger in packs while the bear is a solitary being. It was stupid to fight it one versus one.'

He shook his head and resumed its trip.

More days passed but of the darkness-type magical beasts, there were no traces.

The shape of a mountain became visible as he neared Ebonrest city.

'That's Shelfan Mountain, maybe I've been too paranoid in speeding for two weeks straight. Not even a month has passed but I'm already here.'

He didn't want to return to the human society so soon.

'I guess I'll slow down a bit more. I don't want to stay in the open for more than necessary.'

The more time he spent among other people the more it was possible that someone discovered him.

After all, the events in the separate dimension were still recent, it was better to hide for the time being.

'I need to explore during the night, my strength is increasing too much for Assea to continue to be useful.'

Even against Lena, the only usage that his blood companion had was to gain time to let Noah fight versus fewer people at the same time.

'In the academy, the cultivators will all be disgustingly rich or highly talented, I can't go unprepared.'

He started that night with his research.

He stopped his meditation during the darkest hour and explored his surroundings.

Many different magical beasts were hunting during the night, the environment of the forest was radically diverse.

Owl-types, snake-types, spider-types, the beasts of the night were all running around searching for a prey.

Noah joined them, his eyes shone in the darkness giving him a perfect vision and he felt that his senses were sharper.

'It seems that since the darkness element is more abundant now, even my condition has become more focused.'

However, that night of exploration was unsuccessful.

Noah didn't mind too much and just repeated his research the following night.

A week passed like this and Noah still hadn't found any clue of his target.

On the seventh night, he was jumping from branch to branch paying attention to his surroundings.

He was about to stop his hunt and find a place to rest when a figure flew at high speed near him.

Noah's hand shot rapidly and grabbed the little beast.

It was a bat-type magical beast, its strength was in the middle tier of rank 1 but when Noah inspected it he felt a familiar energy coming from it.

'Darkness element!'

The bat was struggling to escape his grip but Noah just stared at it.

Then, he opened his hand and the bat immediately flew away.

Noah followed it till the beast entered a small hole in the ground.

He neared the hole and sent his mental energy inside to have an idea of its structure.

The cavity seemed to lead to an underground cavern and he sensed the presence of many life forms coming from it.

'I finally found something.'

He chose to rest near the entrance for one day in order to gather more information.

During the day, the entrance was silent and other magical beasts simply passed over it.

However, at night, some bats would come out of it and return with little victims.

When Noah saw a rank 2 bat bringing back another rank 2 magical beast, he knew what was happening.

'They are gathering food for the leader.'

He unconsciously smiled and prepared to enter the cavern during the daylight.

He speculated that these kinds of beasts rested during that time so it was the best moment to explore the cave.

The afternoon came and he directly jumped in the entrance.

He fell for about three meters before touching the ground.

In front of him, a long corridor stretched in the distance.

Noah walked along it and noticed many other holes that led to the surface.

'The number of bats that I saw was probably just a part of the swarm. That's good, it means that there is a high chance to meet their rank 3 version.'

He advanced for a few hundred meters and the first living beings began to appear.

They were mostly bat-type magical beasts but there were also few spider-type and rodent-type.

The ranks of the latter were quite low, it was obvious that a bat pack ruled that underground area.

He then reached what seemed the central point of the cavern as a wide room expanded in front of him.

The ground was empty, but on the ceiling, there were hundreds of bat-type magical beasts sleeping hanging upside down on their lower claws.

In the middle of the pack, three big figures were visible.

They had two pairs of wings and one of them was slightly bigger than the other two.

Noah could not help but smile brightly.

'Found you.'