EMPEROR 1961

Chapter 1961 - Fiery Transfer

Ellia didn't give a damn about what other people thought about her as she spoke to Davis using the Glorious Pill Palace's disciple. After displaying her prowess and saying something like that, people merely thought she was eloquent in saying that she didn't want to harm the Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple and that he could use his full prowess to attack her.

The Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple also inferred the same thing after racking his brain as he was not skilled in the arts of eloquence. All he knew was alchemy, and alchemy was all in his mind. He was so indulged in alchemy in order to climb to the very top, only to be suppressed by Faus Lanate, so now that his chance had come, he naturally wanted to display his prowess and gain more recognition.

However, it seemed like he was going to meet a miserable defeat at this rate. His eyes roamed left and right before an idea suddenly popped into his mind.

Whoosh!~

Many people were shocked as they saw the Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple go on the offensive instead of retreating. They couldn't help but commend his bravery.

When he neared Myria, a ring of fire enveloped him, causing some people to gasp. The ring was an alchemy refining technique. What was he bringing that out for? To refine or roast Myria?

Techniques used for refining pills were tame and controlled, so if it was used in fights, it would generally display a lower prowess. For the Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple to use it at this moment, they thought that he must have some idea, and indeed, the next moment, they saw him bring out a wide three-meter tall cauldron.

There were tortoise images and possessed dragon-shaped handles on four sides, while there was the image of a roc sealing the skies on the lid. Intense undulations emerged from it, making people understand that it was a Mid-Level Emperor Grade.

The Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple raised his hand, enveloping the intense heat of the flames in his cauldron as he smashed it down on Myria, thinking that even if he could not harm her, he should at least be able to make her retreat a few steps with the blazing flames and the immense weight of the cauldron attacking in force.

At this moment, everyone saw Myria raise her hand and hold her index finger with her thumb finger, causing their expressions to change.

And as expected, with a flick of her finger, Myria unleashed a colossal yet concentrated wave of pure force at the cauldron.

It was like an arrow that had left from its bow, unleashed by an elongated string with immense might.

Bang!~

The cauldron simply exploded, shattering into many pieces, revealing a stunned Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple. He looked at his shattered cauldron with wide eyes, unable to comprehend what had just happened.

Although it couldn't be used as a sharp weapon, it could be used as a blunt weapon like a smashing hammer. Its offensive prowess was not much, but due to its hardness and density, it made up for a good defensive object, making it even able to block attacks of average Mid-Level Ninth Stage Powerhouses, but for it to break under a single flick of a finger, his expression became more than ugly.

For good or bad, it was the cauldron he accompanied for most of his years until he had become more powerful, becoming able to refine Ninth Stage Pills. Looking at its spirit fading and the connection he had with it disappear, his eyes turned red.

"I'll fight it out with you!"

Fiery crimson flames soared into the skies.

Ellia still had her hands stretched out, and she suddenly clenched her hands, causing the Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple's expression to change as he took two steps back in retreat.

"Who told you to bring out a low-level artifact like that? Aren't you asking for it to be killed?"

Ellia's amused voice echoed out, causing the Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple to gnash his teeth in anger as he almost coughed out blood.

Wasn't she the one who said to use his full prowess against him? He could only take out that cauldron to increase his chances to display his skills, but before he could display any, it was destroyed.

And even though he said something like fighting out with her, he lacked the courage to battle her. If she could flick his Mid-Level Emperor Grade Cauldron, whose defensive prowess was no lesser to High-Level Emperor Grade Artifacts to death, then she could do it to him as well. Besides, the sight of her defeating her four opponents with four flicks of her finger was still fresh in his mind.

He sensed the threat of death from her, making him think that she wasn't far off from the Yin Lotus Fairy in terms of prowess. Perhaps, if he took a step forward and unleashed a move, he really would have no path to retreat. But, he didn't feel like admitting defeat either after he spoke something like that.

Caught between a rock and a hard place, he didn't know what to do when he suddenly saw Myria open her clenched fists, a faint fiery wisp floating above her frail, jade-white palm.

It was enveloped in a sphere, making him blink as he felt a faint familiarity to it.

"What are you looking at?" Ellia spoke indifferently, "Quickly absorb the artifact spirit into your soul sea and find a similar yet new cauldron without consciousness to imbue it. It can still be saved."

"Wha-!" The Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple jumped, "Are you speaking the tru-"

"Hurry up. Otherwise, it would die sooner or later."

"Yes!"

Hearing Myria's words, he no longer hesitated. He quickly appeared in front of her when she sent it flying towards him. Instantly, he caught it with both his hands, feeling the artifact's spirit which instantly made him smile. He pushed it towards his forehead without doubt as though he had no doubt that Myria would poison him.

However, the others weren't so trusting as him.

"Stop!"

"Hold it!"

The two Venerate Pill Emperors bellowed with their might, but the spatial formation wasn't shaken at all, nor did their sounds pass through it. Their expressions became ugly, thinking that their chosen candidate for the Palace Master positions was going to be killed.

Was kind of scheme was this? How could their candidate be so gullible enough to trust that mysterious Myria? Who was scheming against them?

They couldn't help but furiously turn towards a direction.

"Mystic Ice Sect...! My Glorious Pill Palace demands an explanation!"

One of the Venerate Pill Emperors bellowed, his anger visible on his face. However, the three Ancestors and Sect Master Bing Luli completely ignored him. Instead, their gaze was full of pride as they watched the happenings inside the spatial formation.

The people were shocked and confused. What was going on?

In the fiery skies of the battle stage, the Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple took out a similar-looking cauldron. It just so happened he had used his wealth to create a new cauldron to concoct Ninth Stage Pills, as his previous cauldron would more or less shatter if he kept refining Ninth Stage Pills with it.

For alchemists, their cauldrons would sometimes be their lifeblood. Some would even take care of them as they were their own wives. Although he hadn't reached such a level of closeness, he relished his cauldron spirit as it had helped him so many times in his journey that he no longer looked at it like it was some tool.

Even after it became useless, he didn't sell it, considering alchemists needed a huge capital as their spending was great as their gains.

After all, how could they obtain ingredients by themselves when they only had little prowess and little world knowledge? Although they knew the wilderness and its dangers, bandits would be more likely to kill them and take their treasures. That's why they had bodyguards, but bodyguards need to be paid as well.

Everything required money, but he had still kept that cauldron and even made his new cauldron in a similar design, so it could be seen how he relished it. That's why he became mad at Myria when she shattered it but hearing her words; he didn't hesitate.

King Grade Armaments could instantly birth a spirit, but it was not the same for Emperor Grade Armaments. Spirituality comes first, and only after they strengthen themselves would the spirit be born.

In King Grade Armaments and Artifacts, spirituality and spirit awaken simultaneously as long as the forging process wasn't a failure because of equilibrium between life and power. Since the balance becomes tipped towards Emperor Grade when it comes to power, it becomes harder for the spirituality to form a spirit.

Under the heavens, the greater the power of a being, the harder it is to form consciousness. That's why it is also harder for Ninth Stage Powerhouses to have progenies that it would take them many tries. It is in accordance with the laws of the heavens.

The Glorious Pill Palace's top disciple took a deep breath as he looked at the cauldron he had taken out.

The new cauldron had spirituality but had yet to awaken an artifact spirit. Only after hundreds or thousands of pill refinement would the spirituality give birth to an artifact spirit. It also depended on the pills that it was used to concoct. Nonetheless, hearing Myria's instructions that came through soul transmission, he hurriedly cast the spirit unto the cauldron, binding it according to Myria's instructions.

It took some time, but finally, a resplendent light shone around the cauldron, enveloping him in its blinding light.

"You're back..."

As he felt the emotions the artifact spirit exuded, he almost shed a tear. It was unable to speak but knew that it was just revived from a near-death situation, so even expecting a form of response was asking more of it. As expected, it instantly went into slumber to recover, the blinding light dying down.

Patting the cauldron, he took into it his spatial ring and cupped hands towards Myria.

"I, Krynt Skyridge, thank Fairy Myria from the bottom of my heart.. I admit that it was my mistake that led to this situation, and neither am I able to defeat you, so I admit defeat.

Chapter 1962 - Arbitration?

Witnessing the scene of the cauldron spirit coming back to life, Davis's eyes shot wide before he couldn't help but smile.

It seemed that Ellia knew many strange techniques, one even capable of saving an artifact spirit.

After all, once a weapon got destroyed, its spirit would naturally die. What she did was essentially heaven-flipping to these people, even to him. She used her soul force at this moment to capture the artifact's spirit and delay its death. Such a technique left everyone gasping for breath, but Davis didn't believe that she was at Peak-Level King Soul Stage. He knew that she was intentionally hiding it for whatever reason he couldn't understand.

'Looks like Yama and Lancelot would finally be able to keep up with me...'

Davis almost grinned from ear to ear as he recalled his Grieving Emerald Scythe and Golden Sheen Obsidian Spear that literally went through trials and tribulations along with him.

He had feared abandoning them as he couldn't easily upgrade them as the chances of failure was high as advised by Sophie, but with Ellia's strange technique, he felt that as long as he found similar ores as the ones they currently dwelled in, it should be possible to transplant the armament spirit.

However, he didn't know the consequences of using that technique and quickly suppressed the feeling of hope as he didn't want to be disappointed.

He had also thought about using the Bloodbirth Ore after plundering them the Blood Pledge Villa, but it seems the ore was of blood attribute and would not be compatible with other laws, even end up crippling itself if other laws were poured, making him sigh in disappointment. However, he could understand. If the Bloodbirth Ore was heaven-defying in being able to support many laws while self-evolving, countless powers would be after it that the Blood Pledge Villa would be destroyed long ago.

Therefore, he could only wait to clash with Myria before milking the method of transferring armaments spirits from one treasure to another from her.

Nonetheless, witnessing Myria cast a strange technique to save the spirit while also revealing her Peak-Level King Soul Stage Cultivation, the people were both amazed yet terrified. The prowess of her soul seemed to have no bounds that they could feel that it could suppress them. Even the Four Great Righteous Sect Leaders felt their hearts shake.

She also seemed to be a tri-cultivator who almost reached the Ninth Stage in all three cultivation systems in terms of prowess, invoking the question of whether she was another supreme genius sprout.

Were they truly witnessing the birth of another Emperor of Death?

"We must protect her no matter what."

The Vast Sky Emperor uttered at this moment, causing the three of their expressions to change.

"Naturally, she will be protected."

The Mandate Emperor uttered with a grave voice. However, the Karmic Guardian Emperor and Starnova Emperor could understand that their protection wasn't for the Vast Sky Emperor's schemes. They thought of protecting her from him as well.

The only problem was, how were they going to protect her from the Emperor of Death?

They couldn't allow supreme geniuses like them to fall even if their fate was to reign supreme while killing the other. This was a time of calamity, and as the supreme elders protecting the human race, they somehow had to reconcile all the powers and unify them under one banner. The more powerful they were, the more chances they stood against the calamity.

The result of the battle was announced.

Ellia ended up as the winner after Krynt Skyridge admitted defeat. She shot a bright look at Davis once the spatial formation receded before she turned and left towards her Mystic Ice Sect.

The crowd was still in an uproar over her strange techniques and also her three cultivations. Not only did she dominate the Seventh Stage Segment, but she was also dominating in the Eighth Stage Segment. Regretfully, she had given up after injuring and crippling so many competitors, so they couldn't see her true prowess when compared with Clara Alstreim but still, they were eagerly awaiting to see what would happen if Myria clashed with the Emperor of Death or even the Yin Lotus Fairy in this Eighth Stage Segment.

The New Era Battle Arena was full of gossip and excitement even after the next battle had commenced.

At this moment, the Mandate Emperor and the Karmic Guardian Emperor all approached the Alstreim Family's seating area, flying over together.

Davis had been speaking with his women, who had all come out halfway through Ellia's battle to watch her defeat the Pill Refining Sect's opponent. He was just saying that Ellia was still herself, even going as far as to help her opponent restore his armament spirit to life and a few of the intricacies of the technique she used, although he couldn't understand much.

Moreover, he also faintly sensed her martial energy and was shocked to find that it was attributeless. Increasing one's cultivation required resources, and many resources were elemental in nature, so how could she increase her Body Tempering Cultivation with little to no attribute like her Essence Gathering Cultivation?

They discussed it through soul transmission and arrived at the conclusion that she had better manuals and was extremely knowledgeable about resources to be able to attain that kind of cultivation state.

They were convinced that her knowledge definitely compares to an immortal, perhaps even above that.

At this moment, his eyes caught a glance of the sudden visit of the entourage, causing him to smile faintly. However, before he could go, Ancestor Dian Alstreim and Ancestor Tirea Snow greeted them.

Despite their status, authority, and power, the Mandate Emperor and the Karmic Guardian Emperor didn't even dare to slight them a bit as the two Ancestors knew that Davis respected them. After exchanging pleasantries, they floated over to him while his women all took two steps back, with only Evelynn remaining by his side.

"Greetings, Emperor of Death."

They cupped their hands, causing him to greet them.

"Is there anything worthy of you two carrying your esteemed selves all the way over here to this humble area of mine?"

"How can it be?" The Mandate Emperor lightly chuckled, "You are likely more powerful than us. If you are not, it won't take much time for you to surpass us. How can we maintain superior air in front of you? That's like asking for a beating."

"Ahaha. The Mandate Emperor is indeed amusing."

Davis also laughed along with them. However...

Amusing? The people who heard that felt like their hearts exploded but beating too fast while his women were full of praise for him that he could talk with a person who was touted as the supreme powerhouse of the human race a few years ago like that.

Davis and the two Emperors began exchanging some words for starters before he couldn't help but ask.

"In any case, my little sister Clara has returned to train more, but what about my little aunt Tia?" Davis turned to face the Karmic Guardian Emperor, "Are you intentionally restricting her?"

The Karmic Guardian Emperor didn't get panicked nor offended. Instead, he smiled as he shook his head.

"Sigh, that child says that she doesn't want to leave until she could become useful to you."

Davis felt complex. His gaze would fall at the Heaven Gazing Sect's seating area sometimes, but she wouldn't be there. Even in this competition, he came to understand that she was bitterly training from the start. Just as he thought he should go see her, the Karmic Guardian Emperor spoke.

"There are millions of people who have gathered here, and the amount of karma intertwining and shattering is also great. This is a good opportunity for all our Heaven Gazing Sect's disciples to have a significant breakthrough in their comprehension over Karmic Laws."

Davis blinked.

"So you have karmic gathering formations set up in your resting rooms?"

"Indeed. It is constructed in a way that it is connected to the entire New Era Battle Arena, allowing it to gather an invisible yet faint amount of karmic energy from the surroundings. Even with so many people, you could not see a hint of the true form of karma, so that's depressing in its own way, but to have this kind of opportunity where even the heavenly geniuses with extreme karmic fate are gathered, my disciples are blessed. On the other hand, I have no use for it as my level is already high."

"I see."

Davis nodded. If she had that kind of determination, he felt moved as well. In that case, he could only wait for Tia to show up by herself.

Sensing the atmosphere was amicable, the Mandate Emperor decided to get to the point.

"Emperor of Death, if you have some kind of feud with Myria, I suggest talking about it instead of reacting with violence. You are both supreme geniuses, and we need you two to face the calamity. As long as we could please both parties, please state whatever requirements you have for her and us. We would try to do our best to fulfill it."

Facing the Emperor of Death, he didn't hide anything. Instead, he knew that being straightforward was the best approach with Davis's character.

Davis's brows raised.

"Oh, you can settle our feud?"

The two Emperors both solemnly nodded, their expressions sincere.

Davis stared at them for a few seconds, causing them to feel some pressure before he lowered his head.

"Sigh, where can I go tell my grievances? From a young age, I was meticulous yet daring when it came to certain things. Even then, I was unable to stop it from happening. Sigh, it is a black mark in my history..."

Hearing the regret in Davis's tone, the Mandate Emperor quickly placated.

"Emperor of Death. Please don't worry. To receive a setback is beneficial for all cultivators. Only with a loss would one know the true taste of victory. As your elders, we will listen and help you as much as we can."

"Then I can only rely on you elders."

Davis cupped his fists, causing them to smile amicably before Davis turned to look at Myria, who also matched gazes with him. His brows were narrowed while he brought his hands up, gesturing at her figure using the palm of his hands.

"So, I had this one thing that I cared about the most during my childhood but didn't know how to treasure it. However, before I could even realize its specialty like I could at this moment, this crazy Myria appeared from nowhere and stole it from me. Do you elders think you can get it back for me?"

"..."

The Mandate Emperor and Karmic Guardian Emperor stared at Davis's face.

Was he serious?

Chapter 1963 - Vast Skys Move

Davis's voice was not loud, but it could be heard by those who possessed a wide range of senses.

Ellia's heart almost skipped a beat as she heard him describe her as though she was a precious treasure. She heard him say that she was special and that alone caused her to feel like she was living in a dream. However, a melodious voice resounded in her soul sea.

"Pfft! Hahaha~"

Myria laughed heavily, causing Ellia to become embarrassed.

"What's so funny?"

"I stole you, it seems."

"Don't be such a tease." Ellia pouted, "He doesn't know yet."

"He doesn't need to." Myria disagreed, "However, he is indeed amusing to put it that way. To even steal myself, I would have to be crazy as he describes."

This time, Ellia couldn't help but silently giggle. For Davis to have amused Myria, it could definitely be considered a win in her mind.

On the other hand, the Mandate Emperor and Karmic Guardian Emperor were quite dumbfounded and a bit hesitant. It seemed like Davis was serious.

However, to ask for the treasure's characteristics was the only way they could proceed with reconciling the two of them, but after hearing that the Emperor of Death mentioned that it was special, it would be incredibly rude for them to ask of its details.

For all they know, it might have the secrets to why Myria had gotten this strong.

Nonetheless, Myria's origins were basically confirmed at this moment that they could tell that she had come from the same place as the Emperor of Death from hearing his words. So they could more or less form theories as to what it might be.

They were just about to speak something when their expressions changed as they turned to look towards Myria, only to see that the Vast Sky Emperor had reached her location.

'That vile fellow... what is he planning on doing?'

They both thought before their expressions changed. Could it be that he was going to wrest that treasure away from Myria?

Considering his plight, he really might dare to do it!

"Starnova, quick! Stop him!"

They both sent their soul transmissions to Starnova Emperor, who followed the Vast Sky Emperor after he saw him heading towards the Vast Sky Emperor.

Starnova Emperor's expression had just changed when he was just about to rush when he stopped, looking at the scene before him.

The Mystic Ice Sect's Ancestors and Sect Master tried to block him, but Myria waved her hand, causing the Vast Sky Emperor to walk freely amidst the maidens of the Mystic Ice Sect as he neared her.

Instantly, everyone saw that this Myria had a bigger say than the Mystic Ice Sect Ancestors. Or perhaps, because the Vast Sky Emperor appeared, they didn't dare to act too rashly.

In any case, the authority Myria held in the Mystic Ice Sect became plain to be seen.

The Vast Sky Emperor stood in front of Myria as he smiled and clasped his hands.

"Fairy Myria, it is your ability that got you to this level. You have no need to return what you obtained. I, the Vast Sky Emperor, can promise you that the Four Great Righteous Sects will help you retain all your resources as long as you swear that you won't betray the righteous path unlike someone else."

Myria blinked. The fluttering of her eyelids was like the flapping of the wings of the butterfly, extremely enchanting to look at. The Vast Sky Emperor was momentarily stunned by her mesmerizing beauty before he saw Myria's hand raise but appeared hesitant as though she wanted to reach out to him and touch his face, but in the end, she retracted her hand.

"Now that I look closely, I find that you are quite handsome."

The Vast Sky Emperor grinned on receiving this praise from Myria that he cupped his hands again.

"Many than-"

Paah!~

Suddenly, a loud slap resounded in the New Era Battle Arena, causing the Vast Sky Emperor to fly like a kite that its strings cut. It was as though time had slowed down, allowing everyone to witness his body spinning in mid-air as he kept spraying a mouthful of blood.

It was a terrific yet comical sight that millions of jaws continued to drop one after another that the current battle that was occurring above the battle stage was seen by no one, not even by the competitors' own relatives.

Myria had her hand still stretched, her tempting figure standing in a graceful slapping posture.

"So handsomely ugly that you're more irritating than him to look at~"

Her expression was scrunched into one of disgust, but no one could see that as the veil blocked it. However, people could hear the disgust in her voice.

The Vast Sky Emperor spun like an idiot before he managed to regain his balance somehow before he could hit the ground. For a moment, he didn't know what had happened. When he moved his tongue and felt half of his teeth missing, his expression became furious as he comprehended that he had been slapped into having half of his face caved in!

He was not infuriated but enraged to be slapped in front of the entire world. Killing intent appeared in his eyes as he turned to look around at Myria, only to see her flick her sleeve.

"Never show your face in front of me again. Now, scram~"

"You...!" The Vast Sky Emperor pointed his hand at Myria in rage, "Bit-!"

Boom!~

Soul force converged into a concentrated mote of dark illumination and struck him.

The Vast Sky Emperor was sent tumbling into the air again as he sprayed blood like a fountain.

Myria blinked before she turned to look at Davis. She was not the one who attacked the Vast Sky Emperor just now.

"My business with Myria is mine alone. Anyone trying to interfere with it will be met with my full might."

The other three Emperors shuddered ever so lightly, realizing that this warning from Davis was also for them.

At this moment, the Vast Sky Emperor had also regained his balance again, turning to look at Davis. Even though there was rage visible on his face, his eyes were filled with terror. Just now, he found that he absolutely couldn't resist that attack. It could've killed him, but it chose not to; the Emperor of Death chose not to.

"Vast Sky, you just obediently wait for your death." Davis sneered, "As a humane person, I'll advise you to prepare your tomb. You can leave your inheritance for your future descendants as long as you kill yourself."

" ... "

The world was too shocked to say anything, much less blink, as they didn't want to miss anything.

The Vast Sky Emperor didn't say anything as blood leaked out of his mouth. He looked into the distance. A spatial vortex appeared before he stepped into it and vanished, crossing tens and thousands of kilometers in an instant.

"..."

People were shocked as they witnessed this spectacle.

The Vast Sky Emperor actually left, not even daring to say anything back. No... he ran for his life?

Davis looked at the spatial vortex close, but he didn't give chase. Instead, he looked at Myria, inwardly giving her a thumbs up for that savory slap as he found Vast Sky Emperor displeasing to his eyes for a long time already. He considered waiting until the competition, but with Myria making a move, he didn't bother to hide his hostility either.

In the Mystic Ice Sect's seating area, Myria couldn't help but inwardly nod at Davis.

"Not bad... not bad..."

Ellia's soul couldn't help but glow in happiness. It seemed that Davis managed to impress Myria. Feeling that this was the chance, she spoke.

"See? Even while confused about our situation, he still cares about us."

"Cares about you." Myria corrected, causing Ellia's soul to shudder playfully in being caught.

"I have a few qualms leaving you with him once our souls could be separated, but the impression he gave me just now was not bad. A man must be decisive and ruthless when it comes to protecting their woman. The only other thing to check is if he is worthy of you. After all, no matter how different you may be because of your life experiences, you're still another me. Our karmic burden is not something anyone could bear. Perhaps, that's what caused him to almost fall."

"..."

Ellia fell silent as she thought of the life she shared with him in her childhood. Did she implicate him?

"No buts." Before Ellia could say anything, Myria spoke, "If his potential isn't up to par, he's just that. Or, do you want to cause his death so badly when he's already happy with his life?"

"No!"

"Then listen to me." Myria spoke with solemnity, "As long as you two are under my wings, I can protect you two, but only if I could obtain my revenge first before they could kill us."

There was silence again for some time.

"Sigh... alright. I'll stop being willful." Ellia sounded defeated.

"Good. I won't make it hard for you too."

'Hehe, I'll stop being willful only after this competition, though...'

"I can still hear your thoughts, Ellia."

"Hey, no peeking!"

"Hehehe~"

The two of them seemed to descend into laughter.

On the other side, Evelynn held Davis's sleeve and opened her mouth.

"Davis, we should kill the Vast Sky Emperor. He should be attempting to break through to the Immortal Stage now that he has seen and became convinced that he's going to die."

"No, I deeply injured his soul." Davis shook his head, "As long as he's not a fool, he won't try anything for the week even if he could heal himself, much less attempt to breakthrough in these three days. Otherwise, forget me; even the heavenly tribulation wouldn't let him live."

To be attracting a heavenly tribulation while gravely injured was courting death. He knew that the Vast Sky Emperor would try to ascend, but before he could, Davis more or less had the confidence to ruin him.

'Besides, it's very likely that Myria's slap wasn't simple either...'

Davis touched his chin.

When his soul force struck the Vast Sky Emperor and entered his soul sea as it broke his defenses and attacked his soul, he felt like he sensed something strange. Perhaps, it could be something belonging to the Vast Sky Emperor for all he knew, but he wasn't too sure as he felt that it was also foreign.

Chapter 1964 - Dealing With The Remnants

The spectators of the New Era Battle Arena were horrified after the Vast Sky Emperor scrammed for his life.

The Vast Sky Palace's disciples seemed to all stand as veins erupted on their foreheads. They appeared enraged, but they didn't dare show their anger through their voices as they seemed to be afraid, leaving without saying a word.

Even their Emperor left, so what about them? They're asking to die by remaining here.

The people were also dumbfounded as they witnessed the chaos.

What was going to happen to this competition?

"Everyone, calm down."

At this moment, the Mandate Emperor's authoritative voice echoed. His voice was filled with the power of Mandate Laws, forcefully calming the people that their chaotic minds began to become clear in a few seconds.

Everyone became shocked to experience this kind of power controlling them that they felt that they couldn't even resist. Was this the power of a hegemonic leader, and yet, the Emperor of Death sent him running for life?

However, the Mandate Emperor then turned to look at the leaving people.

"The disciples of the Vast Sky Palace, you do not need to worry. The feud between the Emperor of Death and the Vast Sky Emperor is personal. As long as you don't interfere, the Emperor of Death will not make things hard for you. Wouldn't that be enough, Emperor of Death?"

Everyone's gaze fell on Davis. Even the leaving Vast Sky Palace's people stopped to look at him, their hearts shuddering.

Davis stared at the Mandate Emperor. Even after displaying his prowess and defeating the Vast Sky Emperor, it seemed like the Mandate Emperor still believed that he could make things right and not chaotic.

Inwardly, he couldn't help but sigh and feel a bit shameful. From the time he arrived, he had been causing trouble. He had been relying on his fists to do the speaking in order to show his prowess, so others won't make trouble for him, so he felt like bullying the weak.

It was because he thought attacking Vast Sky Emperor would end in this result that he didn't attack. If he had killed that trash, more chaos would ensue.

As far as he considered, he came here to this competition for fun and experience, not to mention to save Ellia, with the latter being vague as ever. Until the competition ended, he didn't want to kill the Vast Sky Emperor as that would ruin the good atmosphere for him, giving him a headache.

However, with Vast Sky Emperor choosing to target Ellia one way or another, he could no longer hold back.

Now things ended up in utter chaos because of his unrestrained actions even though Myria was the person who slapped the Vast Sky Emperor, not that he knew if he was Myria or Ellia who slapped, but still, he had no choice but to forget about the overall situation and do what he had to do. However, from the Mandate Emperor's words, it seems that the situation could still be salvaged?

"Hmph!"

Davis snorted, "Other than that trash's personal disciples, women, and descendants, I will spare everyone else."

In the Vast Sky Palace's seating area, the ones who were pointed out had their expressions turn pale. The wives and concubines of the Vast Sky Emperor were seated in closed-curtain palanquins like Shirley and Isabella. They had been brought by their Vast Sky Emperor here and had slept with him during these days, some even having injuries from abuse, but that bastard finally abandoned them and ran for his life.

They felt aggrieved, wanting to die but still didn't want to die in this manner.

Wayn Skycloud also felt his heart turn cold.

He had claimed glorious victory in his battle and moved to the third round, but with his imperial father leaving, he felt that he should leave to save his life, but it seemed like the Emperor of Death did not want them to leave with their lives?

The personal disciples and other descendants all felt a similar chill in their hearts.

They felt mortified and helpless as the humiliation and despair also sunk into their very soul.

Their Vast Sky Emperor was defeated and forced to run like a dog. If the Emperor of Death wanted to kill them, it could be done so with a single flick of his finger. Even their spatial arts wouldn't help at this point as he could get to their souls before they escaped.

The Mandate Emperor inwardly panicked and was just about to advise when Davis continued.

"However, if that trash creates a tomb and buries himself like I said while his personal disciples, wives, and descendants sign a Blood Soul Contract to not seek revenge and not let others seek revenge in their stead, I can let them go. Otherwise, don't blame me for being ruthless, as it is not in my way to leave seeds of hatred lying around like dirt. I don't want my people to step on it and stain themselves."

Hearing the Emperor of Death's words, they rejoiced. However, once they thought if the Vast Sky Emperor would obediently bury himself or not, their expression once again turned pale. They knew how tyrannical he was and for him to kill himself was unlikely. They were essentially being thrust into the path of death if it continued like this.

"Emperor of Death! I can swear none of us will interfere in your personal grudge and not seek revenge for this matter by collectively signing the Blood Soul Contract."

Everyone turned to look at that person and saw that it was Wayn Skycloud.

"However, the decisions of the Vast Sky Emperor are not in our hands. Please show mercy!"

People became shocked again to hear this heartfelt cry.

Wasn't he the Vast Sky Emperor's most talented son? Even he was forced to lower his head in front of the Emperor of Death?

It must be known that young geniuses possessed arrogance as high as the heavens. For them to lower their head meant that they were completely defeated. However, considering that even his own father was beaten black and blue without possessing the slightest ability to resist, they could understand.

Davis inwardly sneered.

They knew that they couldn't defeat him, so they quickly resorted to begging but with the high-handed methods of the Vast Sky Palace, would they not be trying to kill him if he was weak?

To not kill them right now was already displaying a ton of mercy from his side.

He wasn't afraid of their retaliation if he was alone. Heck, even his own family would be more than powerful to kill them all, but he had the Alstreim Family to look after. He didn't want to implicate them if he ascended, so he had shown mercy, but now, they were actually begging him to show more mercy?

Without certain conditions, how could he let them go?

Just as he opened his mouth, another voice resounded.

"Emperor of Death, master has agreed to kill himself and be buried in his tomb, leaving behind his inheritance for the future generations. The construction seemed to have already begun!"

Deathly silence enveloped the New Era Battle Arena. For a moment, it was like the millions of people present in this place had completely disappeared. However, that wasn't the case as they could only react with silence, possessing a stupefied look on their faces as they heard one of Vast Sky Emperor's personal disciples convey this ridiculous notion.

No matter how they tried to wrap their heads around, they couldn't.

The Vast Sky Emperor decided to commit suicide?

"Master also asked your magnificence to spare his people as he admits defeat! They have committed no wrongs and are innocent!" That personal disciple continued, causing everyone to feel strange.

Most of them even had their impressions of the Vast Sky Emperor change.

He was actually caring about his people. At least, that made their hearts turn warm.

However, the Mandate Emperor blinked, having an odd expression on his face. He was contemplating when his scalp turned numb as he saw Davis's dark expression.

It was as though he was going to slaughter them all at this moment.

"Emperor of Death, don't be hasty!"

The Mandate Emperor hurriedly sent a soul transmission, causing Davis to smile icily.

"No matter whether I spare them or kill them, that trash is going to receive a good name for having his people in mind even though he really didn't mean it. Otherwise, he would be begging here instead of having escaped and sending a message through a messaging talisman. Moreover, I bet the construction of the tomb is going to stretch for weeks and months, perhaps even years, if I'm gullible. Even at this moment, he's still scheming and stalling for time. Good, very good."

Davis knew that he cornered a snake into desperate straits, but that snake seemed to think that it could still turn the tables on him.. He couldn't help but feel both amused and angered.

Chapter 1965 - Is There A Third Round?

The Mandate Emperor also thought the same as Davis as he came to understand Vast Sky Emperor's deeply hidden character after being pushed into dire straits. However, he was astonished to see Davis arrive at this conclusion as he was still a youth in his eyes. Nonetheless, he quickly responded.

"Don't kill them. It is precisely what that vile person wants as he's provoking you to kill them. He wants to tarnish your name, and the righteous powers would be forced to act- don't look at me like that. I know I can't stop you, but we will have no choice. It's not a matter of if we can, but we have to. We just can't sit by and watch you slaughter them. You two at the top could scheme all you like, but it's the people who have nothing to do with the feud who truly suffer. Don't bring the slaughter to those children. It is not the bearing of a true expert."

Davis was staring at the Mandate Emperor with murderous rage in his eyes. However, the latter didn't cower and tried to convince him, causing him to calm that he couldn't help but recall the past.

The Mandate Emperor had also tried to stop him when he went to slaughter the Zlatan Family.

He didn't blame the Mandate Emperor for it because he could tell that he was not a hypocrite like many others he had seen and wanted to truly save them to the best of his ability.

He did what he had to when times called and didn't go back on his words. That alone was worthy of respect when he sat in a high-enough position to rule the world. That kind of aloofness and magnanimity was not something he could achieve that he could tell that if he and Nadia didn't have the infamy of death in their powers, the Mandate Emperor would've defended them from the Dragon Families as well.

Moreover, the reason why he spared the three Emperors and only targeted Vast Sky Emperor was that Isabella told him that only the Vast Sky Emperor was sickening and annoying while the others didn't even bother other than maintaining a cordial relationship that sought to pull her into the righteous path and obtain the key to the Forsaken Phoenix Realm which was understandable considering the Calamity Light's threat.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have let them off for either reason.

"Heh, I'm no true expert." Davis sneered, "I like plundering like a bandit, but even some bandits have their own morals. However, that trash doesn't have any and manages to make me mad again and again that I don't care if killing his people is going to give me an infamous name."

The Mandate Emperor's heart fell. Was there really no other choice?

"However, I'll give you face."

Davis snorted before turning to look at the other Emperor.

"Karmic Guardian Emperor, prepare a Peak-Level Emperor Grade Blood Soul Contract and bind them with the words we agreed upon. Then, I'll spare them as you all wish."

"Alright."

The Karmic Guardian Emperor left and got to work while the Mandate Emperor heaved a sigh of relief.

Fortunately, he could only thank Davis for understanding as he really didn't expect a hot-blooded youth to understand. His respect for Davis only grew more and more. Nonetheless, he stayed for a while, disallowing any kind of mishap to occur.

The matter ended just like that, but the way the two Great Righteous Leaders placated the Emperor of Death had the hearts of people clenching with a profound sense of terror.

Was the Emperor of Death already above them all...? Is that why he wasn't punished even after he made so much trouble? Then, if someone really offended him, would they have to say goodbye to their lives without being able to state their own reasons in defense?

However, they didn't think so.

They recalled the Golden Dragon Queen's words and understood that they were the ones making him out to be a calamity. It was the Vast Sky Emperor who invited that calamity at this moment that they could only hope the rage in the Emperor of Death's heart would quell.

If the matter of Emperor of Death belonging to the righteous path wasn't made clear, they would be fearing for their lives right now.

With the matter coming to an end, the competition was not disbanded. The Vast Sky Palace's people also stayed. Although they were utterly humiliated with their Vast Sky Emperor deciding to flee, it could be said that they gained some face back with the Vast Sky Emperor sending word like that. The naive ones fell while the sharp and cunning ones merely sneered, knowing what was happening after a short time.

People weren't fools. Some could see the intentions of the Vast Sky Emperor. However, a hegemonic leader was still a hegemonic leader. No one took sides, not daring to open their mouths, supporting or denouncing either party. Even the other hegemons stayed silent. They knew that they would be screwed if their words were to fall on the wrong ears as opportunists were as vast as the stars in the skies.

With none making a ruckus, the competition smoothly continued despite the gloomy atmosphere. Soon, the second round was over after a few more battles ended.

Davis and the other victors' rankings were moved to the top sixteen. In contrast, the ones who were defeated were ranked according to the size of the sea they condensed, meaning that Ivy Aries became seventeenth and Bylai became eighteenth.

The first rank was temporarily occupied by the Emperor of Death, with the second being Natalya. The third was Myria, and the fourth was none other than the dark horse. This ranking was according to the power they displayed and would move as they battled as they moved before.

However, many people felt that there was no longer any meaning in the Eighth Stage Segment. They all collectively felt that they should just hand over the first rank to the Emperor of Death and move on to the Ninth Stage Segment, only to give that first rank to him again.

After all, the Emperor of Death sent the Vast Sky Emperor running. Was there any more reason to continue on with this competition other than to decide the ranks other than the first?

Since they could see the ending, the excitement was less. However, they still wanted to see the Emperor of Death battle and use his full prowess against the other geniuses. Surely, it would be awe-inspiring to witness a battle of such scale.

"Cough..."

Honorable Elder Julian Kruse stood in front of the sixteen youths whom he had summoned on the battle stage. However, in the presence of the Emperor of Death, he couldn't help but maintain a humble posture.

He still didn't know why he was still an arbitrator along with Honorable Elder Mihangel Evans standing by his side as even if chaos broke out between these geniuses, they were powerless to stop it. Nonetheless, he stuck to the task he was given and opened his mouth, coughing to grab their attention first.

"Everyone, the third round is extremely simple but also up to your luck."

When the competitors heard that, some of their hearts clenched.

They wouldn't be meeting with the Emperor of Death at the first clash, right? If so, they could only give up or act like they want to experience his might, which probably going to end up humiliating themselves as both times the Emperor of Death attacked, he only used a single finger, which also suddenly reminded them of Fairy Myria.

There were also Natalya and the dark horse. All four of them could be called monsters, but the Emperor of Death was in his own realm.

The next moment, sixteen motes of light shot out from the arbitrator's hands, appearing in front of them. They reached out to take it, only to find a tile plate that had numbers inscribed on it.

"The tile represents your number. I will take a lot from the box in front of me while sealing off my senses, so it is really up to luck what kind of number I would pick. The number chosen gets to challenge any participant they want, giving them a vast advantage to move through the rankings."

Hearing Honorable Elder Julian Kruse's words, the weaker competitors became relaxed. If their number showed up, they wouldn't choose the stronger ones to be their opponents, and if the initiative went to the stronger ones, they wouldn't choose them out of pride. Therefore, it could be said that they wouldn't suffer a humiliating defeat, allowing them to heave a secret sigh of relief.

Honorable Elder Julian Kruse saw that they understood the rules before he reached out his hand into a box that had been summoned before. He sealed off all his senses and picked out a lot after rummaging through the box. He displayed the tile to the participants, causing some of their hearts to clench.

[8]

Eight? Who was it?

"Eh? It's me?"

Natalya looked at the tile in her hands, blinking adorably. She then smiled, turning to look at Davis, who was by her side before her gaze fell on Myria, a desire to challenge appearing in her eyes.

Chapter 1966 - Challenging Someone

Natalya fiercely matched her gaze with Myria's, wanting to see how strong she was, although...

Bonk

Davis lightly pat Natalya on her head, causing her to turn to look at him and pout, although that cute reaction was hidden behind her veil.

"Don't be so arrogant enough to think that you can defeat Myria just because you can use yin fusion. Even I'm not confident enough to defeat her."

Davis sent a soul transmission to Natalya. After all, he was only confident of killing her with Fallen Heaven.

Natalya narrowed her brows.

Was Myria really that strong for him to have such a high opinion of her? Although they already mused that she might have knowledge from the immortal world, would that make her stronger than her in the

Eighth Stage Segment? After all, Davis said that Myria's strong point was her soul, and as long as Myria suppressed her cultivation base to Peak-Level Eighth Stage, she was confident in giving an awe-inspiring battle.

At the very least, she wouldn't lose in one strike.

Nonetheless, looking at Natalya's eyes, Davis saw that she was unconvinced.

"My Natalya. I didn't mean that you are not a match for her. You are just temporarily at a disadvantage because she had more time to cultivate properly than you and most possibly knows more tricks than me. I don't want you to come in contact with her. After all, if she takes you as a hostage with her soul techniques, I'd be forced into a passive position."

Davis still recalled how Myria slapped the Vast Sky Emperor and found something strange. If Myria also does something to Natalya, even if it was just for a backup plan that could be used against him, then he had no qualms about killing her. He knew that his wives were his reverse scale, and no one should even think of using them to threaten him.

At this time, where he and Myria were just a few meters apart, he could feel immense pressure. Most likely, that pressure was solely falling on him, letting him know the control he possessed over her soul that he couldn't help but admire.

'Ah, so that's what it is...!'

Natalya nodded as her eyes brightened.

The whole time, she didn't send soul transmissions as Myria was near. She assumed that Myria could probably peek at soul transmissions just as easily as Davis could since Myria's experience in using soul techniques was vaster than his, even if she didn't have his seamless quality.

On the other hand, Davis was even more careful, echoing the soul transmission through his hand that was in contact with her head. This way, Myria wouldn't be able to listen to anything. If she did, she would have to go through their physical bodies. Their exchange didn't even last two whole seconds before he took his hands off of her head.

But since Natalya didn't know about this way of communication, she didn't reply. She didn't bother with Myria anymore and roamed her gaze over the participants.

There were eleven more participants besides Davis, Zestria, Schleya, and Myria.

The prominent ones were the dark horse, the Vast Sky Emperor's talented son: Wayn Skycloud, Wind Dragon Queen: Zura Ike, Water Dragon Queen: Giselle Orcha, Emperor Sword Sect's most talented disciple, Rayn Shard.

She glanced at each one of them before her gaze fell on the dark horse. However, she inwardly shook her head.

If the dark horse wasn't allied with them, she would've certainly challenged them. Otherwise, she risked breaking their amicable relationship. Reluctantly, she could only search for other opponents, but she wasn't too disappointed since she wasn't a battle freak.

In the end, her eyes glowed, and a teasing smile appeared behind her hidden veil as she raised her hand and pointed.

"I challenge you to a battle, Giselle Orcha."

The Water Dragon Queen became stunned at being chosen before her anger flared, "What? You're bullying me!?"

"Of course not. In the yin nature of the myriad of laws, only you're the one with a similar attribute and the strongest amongst other opponents, so I want to test my strength against you or if I might say the mighty Water Dragon."

Natalya's voice possessed a teasing tone, causing Giselle Orcha to clench her fists and look at Honorable Elder Julian Kruse.

"Is this allowed?"

"I did say as long as one's number showed up in the lot, they do have a big advantage in choosing their opponents. It doesn't matter if they're stronger or they're weaker. You're all here to fight for the rankings. If you win against Yin Lotus Fairy, you'll naturally move to the second place and gain a brief reprieve until all the other opponents have finished challenging their opponents." He nodded.

'So one can only challenge a person a single time until all have at least battled once...'

Everyone understood. However, Zura Ike raised her hand, causing Honorable Elder Julian Kruse to nod towards her.

"What if the lot choose Yin Lotus Fairy or Water Dragon Queen again?"

"Then they can choose to skip or challenge someone who hasn't been challenged yet."

"Thanks for the explanation." Zura Ike cupped her hands.

Natalya could see the nervousness in Giselle Orcha's eyes when everyone was listening to Honorable Elder Julian Kruse, causing her to laugh almost.

"What? You don't dare accept the challenge?"

Giselle Orcha ground her teeth. Her sapphire eyes were full of rancor before she spat out a few words.

"Fine! I accept your challenge!"

"Everyone else, please move away from the battle stage. If you want, you can return to your powers as well. The lot will be chosen again, and you can choose someone from the rankings."

The geniuses nodded and left, leaving Natalya and Giselle Orcha glaring at each other.

Davis saw them finish setting up a new defensive formation at this moment as he flew away, feeling reluctant.

The Seven Sky Transformation Spatial Formation was already taken away by them. He had wanted it but didn't know how to acquire it.

Plunder the Astral Light Sect and Vast Sky Palace? For the latter, it was quite possible, but for the former, he didn't know about it. Then he thought about trading with them, but it was possible that they wouldn't let go of such an ancient formation. He could only sigh, watching it as it was taken away at that time.

However, the Four Great Righteous Sects were quite smart. They knew that the formations might shatter if he and Myria fought, so they didn't use the Seven Sky Transformation Spatial Formation or a new special formation for the third round. Instead, they placed a defensive formation, one that also extended and stabilized the space, allowing Ninth Stage Powerhouses to battle freely without having to worry about space cracking.

Or perhaps, the third round was just really meant to be simple, and he was over-thinking about their smartness.

Soon, everyone left, and the formation activated, sealing the space.

Natalya and Giselle Orcha stood at a distance of thirty kilometers, separating them. They looked like mere dots in the distance, but in their eyes, they could clearly see each other's facial expressions with focus. Just when Natalya was about to open her mouth to say something, a commanding voice echoed out.

"Let the battle begin!"

Chapter 1967 - Sending Regards

With Honorable Elder Julian Kruse's words, battle intent radiated out of Giselle Orcha, her eyes becoming fueled with bitter rage, but despite her anger, serene undulations grew around her, turning into waves of deep blue water. They exuded an immense might and a kind of heaviness that suffocated one's will.

However, Natalya merely stood there, not even raising her guard.

A vein almost erupted on Giselle Orcha's head as she knew that Natalya was mocking her. She had already entered a defensive state, but the other party stayed there, looking at her as though she was a clown. Unable to endure, she opened her mouth and screamed.

"Don't underestimate my Water Dragon's might! If I were the same level as you, I would be able to easily defeat you."

"I heard that you were not stronger than the other Dragon Queens, though?" Natalya raised her brows.

"That's...! That's because my bloodline purity isn't high." Giselle Orcha's voice possessed a hint of fury and shame, "Moreover, I'm not the same old Water Dragon Queen. I have become powerful in my own right!"

'This woman... the amount of envy echoing in her voice is truly frightening.'

Natalya now understood why Zestria and Bylai would have such an opinion about Giselle Orcha.

However, she could vaguely sympathize with her. Back then, Fiora was also stronger and more talented than her, making her feel inferior. However, she didn't lash out or act on that jealousy like Giselle Orcha, so she also couldn't help but look down on her.

Originally, Giselle Orcha was truly happy that Bylai lost. Now even if she lost in this round, she could still say that she was stronger, but being investigated like this, her old wounds were popping into her heart, disallowing her to remain calm.

Abruptly, she took a step forward, rushing through kilometers of space in a second.

She entered Giselle Orcha's Water Dragon Water Barrier as though she was barefooted because she still didn't have her defenses up. Witnessing this scene, Giselle Orcha couldn't help but sneer as her essence energy and martial energy surged with full force.

"Fool! My Water Dragon's defense isn't easily breakable, much less when you have no ener-"

Paah!~

The resounding sound of a slap echoed, causing Giselle Orcha to fly like the Vast Sky Emperor, almost making people think that she was imitating him for some reason before they became stupefied.

Despite practicing Water Laws, the Water Dragon Queen somehow failed to consider the power of gentle and soothing yin. For Natalya to traverse in her water was like a fish released into the ocean. She easily maneuvered inside the heavy deep blue water, endured the pressure with yin energy, and struck Giselle Orcha's face with a resounding slap, causing everyone to be shocked while the Orcha Family's faces went ugly.

How could Giselle Orcha make a novice mistake like this?

"You!"

Giselle Orcha's veil came off at this moment as she regained her balance, revealing her seductive beauty but her face that was twisted with rage and the imprint of a slap ruined that attractive face of hers. She pointed her hand at Natalya, wanting to say something, but no matter how she tried, her voice wouldn't come out as though there was an invisible pressure of death weighing on her, making her instinctively know that she might be killed if she were to curse.

"I have no personal enmity against you, so you only have your mouth to blame. Also, Zestria and Bylai sent their regards."

Natalya's voice echoed like the calm wind as she tapped her cheek.

Giselle Orcha almost flew into a rage again, feeling that Natalya was humiliating her by indicating that slap. However, she suddenly noticed something strange through the corner of her eyes.

She glanced at the icy-blue lotus that appeared on her cheek, and her blood chilled, metaphorically and literally. Frost appeared from her head to toe, encasing her in ice. Even the water she summoned out for defense, filled with Water Dragon's aura, was unable to do anything against the icy-blue lotus, freezing as it became completely encased her in ice.

Giselle Orcha's gaze became full of fear, feeling that she was going to die as she felt powerless.

However, before it could completely swallow her, Natalya snapped her fingers, causing the ice to shatter, but it sent Giselle Orcha flying once again as she spat a mouthful of blood in the air. Her eyes that were seemingly trying to stay awake rolled back as she hit the ground.

The slap wasn't injurious but painful and humiliating. However, this attack caused her to faint directly.

People were not particularly shocked, but to give the beautiful Water Dragon Queen such a blow, they felt mortified in her stead, especially the women with rude mouths.

"Sweet, that was refreshing!" Zestria cheered while standing together with Davis and the others.

They knew that she was used Forsaken Draining Lotus on Giselle Orcha to give the dealing blow.

On the other hand, Bylai shook her head, thinking that Natalya wouldn't have one-shot Giselle Orcha if she had kept her mouth shut. Giselle Orcha would always be the one to provoke others and mock if they weren't up to par, but she just had to call Natalya foolish, making her receive a slap to her face instead of just an icy-blue lotus.

"The winner of this battle, Natalya Alstreim!"

Honorable Elder Julian Kruse announced as the barrier came down. At that moment, Giselle Orcha's ranking became sixteenth, the last in the third round. Many felt that she wouldn't even compare to the Golden Dragon Queen at the eighteenth, much less Ivy Aries, who was at the seventeenth rank.

But according to the Heaving Gazing Sect and Heaven Mandate Temple, this was according to their own karmic luck. So they could only shake their heads.

Giselle Orcha's husband appeared to take her away from the battle stage while Natalya also left.

Natalya arrived before them with splendor, possessing a bright smile on her face. Zestria ran towards her and grasped her hands.

"Second sister, well done. That slap was truly excellent."

Zestria was truly delighted. After all, the chance for her number to appear was very less. Since Natalya picked out Giselle Orcha from the much stronger participants she could battle and increase her experience, she naturally assumed that Natalya did it for her.

This favor, she wouldn't forget.

However, Natalya's brows twitched even though she smiled. Why did it sound like Zestria was the big sister?

She raised her hand and patted Zestria's head, "There, there. Your big sister Natalya will take care of you."

Zestria became dumbfounded for a moment before she felt strange. Age-wise, there was a vast difference between them, but she came low in terms of seniority and prowess. Pursing her lips, she deflated.

"Yes~"

"Hehe~ As long as you become stronger than me, I'll call you Fire Dragon Queen, little sister."

"I'm in!"

Zestria's crimson eyes almost burst with flames, thinking that she must regain the respect she once enjoyed.

'So easy to read...'

Zestria practically had her emotions on her face, making the others silently laugh.

Natalya was just about to move when Honorable Elder Julian Kruse's voice echoed out.

"Next, number ten."

He displayed the lot's number, causing countless people to search for number ten. Who was it? Some participants didn't bother to display their numbers to others, thinking that it would disadvantage them.

"Adlet Rayburn, I challenge you to a battle."

Suddenly, a melodious yet cold voice echoed amidst the silent New Era Battle Arena, attracting many people's attention.

Davis blinked before turning to his side, looking at Schleya, pointing her finger towards a man with golden hair to the opposite side, accompanied by two women.

"...!"

The people became shocked to witness Schleya challenge the dark horse. Was she truly number ten?

Chapter 1968: Adlet Rayburn

Schleya locked gazes with Adlet Rayburn, her battle intent blazing towards him as she closely measured him.

Adlet Rayburn wore a white robe. His long golden hair flowed till the waist like a waterfall, while his facial features possessed a fatal attraction to women as he looked sophisticated other than his slanted eyes, which made him appear a bit cunning. Moreover, his bearing was such that he radiated the air of an expert, although it was unknown if he was just making it up.

Behind him were a red-haired woman and a blue-haired woman. They wore black robes as though wanting to accentuate his radiance, although they also possessed a Peak-Level Law Sea Stage Cultivation.

"Excuse me, but can you display your tile for us?"

Schleya simply took out her tile and displayed the number ten on it, causing Honorable Elder Julian Kruse, who spoke from the battle stage, to look at Adlet Rayburn.

"One could not avoid the challenge unless the challenger retracted it by themselves."

Adlet Rayburn raised his brows.

The meaning was clear. If someone didn't want to be challenged, then they could only convince the challenger.

Davis frowned as he turned to look at the Young Blood Demoness, sending her a soul transmission.

"Schleya, you-"

"I'm not going to retract my challenge." Schleya remained stubborn, unwilling to look away.

Davis thought for a moment before he opened his mouth.

"Alright, you two don't fight to the death."

"I will battle to the death." Schleya obstinately uttered.

The other women couldn't help but find this funny while Natalya's brows twitched. She had considered not challenging Adlet Rayburn out of courtesy, but to a woman like Schleya, it seemed that she only wanted to challenge her very limit.

Davis had the urge to facepalm on hearing Schleya's words before he turned to look towards Adlet Rayburn as he sent a soul transmission.

"Just don't take her life."

Adlet Rayburn turned his gaze towards Davis, wondering what he meant by that before he slightly nodded. Then, taking a step forward, he flew towards the battle stage, followed by Schleya.

They both arrived at their positions, waiting for the formation to activate.

Once the formation activated, a voice echoed out, signaling the start of the battle.

Schleya took out her two blades, Crescentblood, imbuing them with immense power before throwing one of them into the ground. Her brows quivered ever so lightly as she rushed out with one blade in her hand, her battle intent transforming into killing intent, causing Adlet Rayburn to narrow his eyes.

"I suggest you don't look at me that way. I am easily disturbed by such provoking stare."

"Then you need to temper your will."

Schleya merely uttered, causing Adlet Rayburn's lips to twitch, making him think that's not what he meant, but he didn't bother to explain.

He could only shake his head. After all, to attack him with one blade that was looking down on him.

At the same time, he raised his hand. White light tinged with a bit of silver erupted from his palm as it transformed into a winged entity. It was a skylark, flapping its wings with a refreshing stretch of its wings, chirping in a musical tone before it transformed into a light sword.

Adlet Rayburn caught the sword's hilt that appeared to have the wings of the skylark on the bottom of the blade. The sword's blade stemmed long and possessed a sharp edge, like a katana, appearing elegant yet deadly.

The moment he caught the hilt of the light sword, Schleya was already in front of him, slashing down her crimson blade with a savage momentum.

Clang!~

However, Adlet Rayburn was fast enough to quickly defend against her blade

'How heavy...'

Adlet Rayburn didn't expect Schleya to possess a vast might but then came to assume that it was the blade itself that was powerful. After all, it didn't even break when the Young Master of the Orcha Family attacked it.

"...!"

Abruptly, from the corner of his eyes, he noticed a strand of blood appear behind her, traveling in an arc before it tried to strike from his side. He instantly abandoned the notion of parrying her next attack and striking her in a counterattack to defend against that strand of blood.

Bang!~

Adlet Rayburn parried the blade of blood with his light sword, but it sent him retreating two steps back, making him feel astonished.

Her blood essence energy was also heavy? How could she coagulate and condense it to the point that it felt like it was metal instead?

At the same time, Schleya appeared above him once again, slashing down her crimson blade in a tyrannical arc. Despite it heading towards his head, he calmly took a step to the side and parried her tyrannical strike, letting her crimson blade slide on his light sword before he turned behind and sliced horizontally.

Bang!~

The second strand of blood blade made out of essence energy tried to kill him from behind.

His strike ended up deflecting it, but instantly, he became surrounded by Schleya and three blood blades, swinging around him like spinning blades, seeking to cut him into pieces.

A gust of torrential wind picked up as their blades danced with a blood illumination. It was like a domain of blood surrounded Adlet Rayburn, his white light being sunk into a crimson abyss.

Clang!~ *Clang!~* *Clang!~*

They exchanged a flurry of attacks, the sound of metal continually striking out, amazing countless people as their jaws dropped. Even though Adlet Rayburn was faster, Schleya possessed the upper hand by forcing heavy attacks and using multiple blood blades to attack him.

He could not keep up, each time almost having a close call but somehow didn't even receive a single scratch.

That alone told the people about his abilities.

"Is that all you got for wanting to battle me to the death?"

Adlet Rayburn smirked when his essence energy surged, causing Schleya's eyes to go wide. His figure that was trapped within the crimson fury of blades appeared outside as he transformed into a streak of light, turning into the flying image of skylark before appearing behind Schleya as he pierced his sword.

Schleya turned around to face him, but instead of defending, she attacked with Crescentblood.

However, before Crescentblood could appear, the three blood blades surrounding her combined into one big blade and struck Adlet Rayburn's light sword, causing him to take a step back but using that momentum, he swung his light sword back at her again, his speed phenomenal.

However, his scalp turned numb at this moment.

Behind him, the second blade of Crescentblood that was left abandoned sliced through the air as it rushed towards him, no, to Schleya. If he parried Schleya's crimson blade, the blade shooting towards him would stab him!

Bang!~

Adlet Rayburn struck Schleya's crimson blade. The blade behind almost touched his robe when he turned into a phantom white skylark and zoomed across the space, appearing kilometers away from Schleya.

Schleya used one of her hands to capture the other crimson blade of Crescentblood. She looked at her two blades, her eyes becoming gentle as though consoling them that it wasn't their fault that they let him escape.

"Woahh!!!!~"

Cheers erupted from the crowd. They stood and screamed at this extremely fast battle that their eyes couldn't follow if it weren't for the projections placed around. Not only was their exchange exciting, but it was also hair-raising where the two of them could've been injured anytime.

Meanwhile, Adlet Rayburn watched her from afar, appearing awkward as his face alternated between laughing and crying. But what could he do?

He glanced slightly at the Emperor of Death through the corner of his eyes and recalled what he said after being recruited.

[Adlet Rayburn, I know you are wary of me. I might be a bit heavy-handed in my methods, but as long as you don't turn your claws on me, I don't care about your treasures either, even if it is a full-fledged Immortal Inheritance. As a person, I have my own set of morals. As for whether something vague like morals is going to keep you alive or not, that's entirely dependent on your own actions.]

Adlet Rayburn's expression appeared complex.

'Sigh, what the hell? How am I supposed to hold back against her ruthless attacks? Isn't this like basically a death sentence?'

He imagined that if he held back against Schleya, he might be caught in one of her ruthless moves like now and be forced to use his full prowess, and if he did use his full prowess, he would end up killing her. If he ended up killing her, he would incur the Emperor of Death's wrath.

No matter how he saw, wasn't this basically playing him to death?

Chapter 1969: Feeling Constricted

Adlet Rayburn's eyes were full of helplessness as he thought about his unsure fate, especially his two wives, who were like hostages at this moment.

Originally, he had kept the two of them well-hidden in the crowd that consisted of millions of people, but the Emperor of Death saw through it like a hawk hunting down its prey. He really felt like he couldn't hide anything before that man, and ever since he was discovered, he felt that his occasional palpitations hadn't stopped.

In order to counter the Emperor of Death, he directly took his two wives and appeared in the Alstreim Family's seating area, grabbing a corner so that the Emperor of Death wouldn't kill him and his women, taking all their treasures.

After all, they would directly be in the public's eyes.

However, he came to understand that he was wrong. The Emperor of Death directly blasted the Vast Sky Emperor and suffered no repercussions for it. It meant that even in public, the Emperor of Death could totally plunder his treasures, and almost no one would come to help him, making him feel laughable for even thinking for a moment that he could scheme a bit against the Emperor of Death to protect himself and his two wives.

Even if he wanted to kill Schleya, he couldn't. He could only let her play him like that, and that's how restricted and vexed he felt at this moment.

Davis smirked on sensing Adlet Rayburn's glance.

As for how he spotted Adlet Rayburn's two wives, he invoked Fallen Heaven's karmic laws and noticed two red threads connected to Adlet Rayburn from an inconspicuous corner of the New Era Battle Arena. With just a look at them, he made Adlet Rayburn aware that he had found his weakness, causing Adlet Rayburn to sweat buckets and obediently come over to his side once he invited him to represent the Alstreim Family in the Eighth Stage Segment.

Although it was psychological warfare, Davis had no hostile intentions. He just wanted to let Adlet Rayburn know that he could not hide anything from him. He also mentioned that he could leave if he had wanted to, but that may have sounded like a threat instead.

Davis couldn't do anything about this matter because the more he tried to explain himself, the more he sounded suspicious. In any case, he enjoyed the exchange just now, wondering if he should learn some blade skills from Schleya as it appeared cool and deadly.

So far, he only knew how to use weapons like swords, spears, and scythes. He was more proficient in the latter two due to his experience, but that's all. To gain an intent out of them would require fanatic level

dedication and talent, which he didn't have the time to spend. It was the same with Isabella. She wasn't able to concentrate on the sword even though she used them a lot.

That's why Tanya Frostblight, Hayou Azureclaw, and those other people who have weapon intents were treated a bit special.

Davis could sense the essence of Blade Laws from Schleya, and that's why her strikes are cunning and savage. In his opinion, her Blade Laws have reached Level Four or Level Five Intent, although it didn't seem to make a difference in this battle. If it did, she would have two law seas.

Meanwhile, people couldn't help but sigh at Adlet Rayburn, especially since they reached the third stage and no dark horses were found anymore.

As expected, the hidden geniuses were unearthed during the Seventh Stage Segment, like Jambei and Hayou Azureclaw. Heavenly geniuses couldn't remain unknown even after entering the Law Sea Stage as it was difficult for them to remain low-key from scrutiny, but it looks like this dark horse certainly managed to do that.

They figured that Adlet Rayburn was the last dark horse they could find as it was unlikely they could find one in the Ninth Stage Segment. If they did, then they would have to kowtow to them for remaining unknown all these years. After all, trials and tribulations were needed to get stronger, and it came in the form of greedy people.

Those dark horses wouldn't be able to remain unknown that they felt respect for Adlet Rayburn to be able to remain unknown until this competition.

On the other side of the battle stage, Schleya pursed her lips, having finished consoling Crescentblood. However, a hint of helplessness like Adlet Rayburn also remained in her eyes as she basically confirmed that she had no chance to win against him like she initially speculated.

With that exchange, she basically confirmed her defeat. Perhaps, if she went too far, Crescentblood might shatter.

'Should I have learned more techniques...?'

She couldn't help but think if it would've made a difference.

The Blood Pledge Villa had split from the Blood Reaper Underworld long ago. When it split, it was weak and only possessed Blood Pledge Worldheart Manual, a particular manual that did not receive much attention due to its disability to be sharp, but their founder had nearly perfected the manual, allowing it to become almost equal to the Blood Reaper Underworld's main manual.

At the moment, she possessed that manual and many other techniques from the Blood Reaper Underworld because Davis had given it to her. However, she has yet to learn it because those techniques were mostly evil, requiring to use of the corpses and sacrifices of other humans. She even possessed a way to make corpse puppets with blood corpse refinement techniques. However, they were too distasteful for her as she didn't like walking among corpses.

As a practitioner of blood, she liked life, different from her fellow disciples who liked to shed blood. Because of the Blood Pledge Villa's teachings, she knew her mindset was twisted, only coming to understand her heart after being together with Mo Mingzhi and the others for this long.

However, she didn't feel like giving up this easily.

'Time to go all out...'

Schleya turned to look at Adlet Rayburn as she sucked in a deep breath.

"It's my turn to attack."

But Adlet Rayburn denied her, causing her to stop in her tracks. She quickly began to cast a defensive technique as she witnessed a bright, illuminating twenty-meter tall skylark appear behind him. It had a beautiful silver crown of feathers on its head while possessing a sharp and short beak. Its wings that were stretched also appeared beautiful and elegant.

It radiated a powerful aura, capable of striking her to death.

"As I thought, that's..."

The Mandate Emperor sighed as he witnessed the shape of the magical beast image behind Adlet Rayburn for the first time.

"... the Silver Radiant Skylark."

Davis couldn't help but smile as it was as he expected.

Adlet Rayburn was an inheritor of the Silver Radiant Skylark Immortal.

The Silver Radiant Skylark was other than a supreme existence like the Fire Phoenix, Ice Phoenix, Water Dragon, Emerald Gale Roc, and other immortal magical beasts of similar rank. The Silver Radiant Skylark belonged to the Four Grand Light Supreme Beasts, one of which he had already encountered but was a descendant of mixed blood.

It was other than Everlight of the Magical Beast Sanctuary.

She was a Light Sky Wolf, a mixed-blood descendant of the Starlight Jade Wolf that belonged to the Four Grand Light Supreme Beasts.

Davis only recalled a bit before he shook his head at Adlet Rayburn.

Comparing his law sea to Isabella and Shirley's, Davis felt that he should be nothing more than someone who found a remnant tomb, acquiring a few blood essences. Otherwise, his prowess would be greater than Natalya's.

Or, was he still of the mind of concealing his prowess?

Chapter 1970: Bloody Mist

Adlet Rayburn unleashed a technique that caused people to become aware of his bloodline.

Previously, they were not able to tell the origins of his powers even though they could appraise that there was something special about him, but now, they had basically confirmed it.

The crowd roared with excitement over the appearance of another immortal inheritor. Things just got even more exciting for them as they wished that he could battle against the Emperor of Death, Yin Lotus Fairy, and Fairy Myria. By then, they would be able to witness the full prowess of this inheritor.

As for Schleya, they could see that she was already shuddering ever so lightly under the pressure of Adlet Rayburn's light attributed technique.

Chirp!~

The Silver Radiant Skylark let out a chirp, flashing through the air. Its speed was extremely fast, instantly appearing before the Young Blood Demoness, its sharp yet short beak piercing through her body. However, two blades erupted with a crimson light. They almost overwhelmed the white-silvery illumination of the skylark as sparks flew.

Bang!~

Schleya was sent flying, cuts, and bruises appearing on her two arms as they severed her sleeves. However, the white-silvery skylark didn't pursue, elegantly flapping its wings as it floated in the air.

"I possess the bloodline of the Silver Radiant Skylark. Not only is my speed similar to the Wind Dragon's, but the light I conjure also has a destructive will. It is not the lenient or merciful light you see the others use."

Adlet Rayburn uttered with a prideful expression on his face.

Schleya was sent tumbling before she stabbed her two blades on the flat surface, leaving a long mark as she slid back before she managed to stop herself. She listened to his speech but didn't comment on it, standing up as blood essence energy began to revolve around her injures.

Moreover, she could see that Crescentblood had received a slight dent, causing her to clench her teeth.

In the Alstreim Family's seating area, Davis and the others were watching with apt attention when Mingzhi commented.

"Even while Adlet Rayburn is holding back, Schleya couldn't battle him."

"That's a given." Davis nodded, "Adlet Rayburn conjured an Immeasurable Sea while Schleya only conjured a perfect Vast Sea. Moreover, his bloodline comes directly from the immortal magical beast's body, making his light powerful as my fire, lightning, and earth."

He considered that three drops of immortal blood essence would be the limit if Adlet Rayburn found a remnant tomb. On the off-chance that Adlet Rayburn found a complete immortal inheritance, that would mean that he had only passed the Emperor Grade Trial or so. However, if he had been an inheritor of a complete immortal inheritance, there was no need for him to remain low because the treasures from Emperor Grade alone would allow him to walk freely in the human lands.

Isabella possessed a Peak-Level Emperor Grade Palace Construct that could block attacks that were even one level higher. However, they lacked the resources to activate such a treasure at that time, nor did

they have time to carry everyone inside, and even if they did, without the power to activate the defenses, they would sooner or later end up in a bad position. Besides, it was unknown if it could block soul attacks of that level as they hadn't used it before.

When the entire Alstreim Family was going to be wiped out along with his family when they were caught off-guard, Davis really had no choice but to sacrifice himself. That's why Isabella also thought that it was her fault that she was unable to save everyone, save him, and burdened herself.

Nonetheless, if Adlet Rayburn also possessed treasures of that level, then he would be able to roam free instead of only revealing himself at this competition. Or, it was also possible that he was saving it as a trump card, like the remnant tomb Davis refined for himself.

"However, for Schleya to not fall in that single strike, she's proving herself capable."

Still, Davis couldn't help but acknowledge her while Mingzhi also nodded. She was daring, but she was nowhere near as daring as Schleya, who chose a losing battle and had the audacity to simulate a battle of life and death.

After all, while Schleya was using every ounce of her essence energy to battle, Adlet Rayburn barely used much, but his prowess was already at Peak-Level Law Rune Stage while Schleya's prowess remained at the peak of High-Level Law Rune Stage. In that kind of difference, it was surprising for people to witness her come out almost unscathed from that attack.

Indeed, Schleya's injuries rapidly healed, her flesh rejuvenating at a rapid speed.

Watching Schleya heal, Adlet Rayburn could only wryly smile.

Although his destructive power was superior, his healing prowess using his light attribute became lacking. However, her blood energy was not like that. When it is strong, it will only cause injuries to heal faster. It seemed to be the case even after he received her heavy attacks because of blood coagulation which should in all right lower one's healing prowess, but it seemed her skill was such that she could freely move her blood to a state of liquid and solid, allowing her to have both superior strength and superior healing prowess.

'Not many would be able to accomplish that kind of comprehension. Otherwise, the enemies I fought wouldn't have died so easily...'

Adlet Rayburn grinned, watching her stride towards him with those fearless crimson eyes of hers.

"When light reigns destruction, even darkness can't stop it, so watch out."

Schleya began to near Adlet Rayburn as she ignored his warning. She was communicating with Crescentblood, and although it didn't even cry out in pain for the dent, she still consoled it.

"Next time, we will get him."

She uttered to Crescentblood before throwing its two blades into the air.

'Twin Phantom Blade Manipulation...'

Crescentblood disappeared as its body vanished first before its outline became extremely vague. The bloody light around it became fainter that it practically became invisible amidst Schleya's sea of blood that conjured around her body. Many blood blades were forming around her. Instead of using her two crimson blades, she controlled tens of blood blades that possessed a sharp gleam with her two hands.

However, she clasped the empty space as though grabbing her invisible twin blades and the surrounding blood energy abruptly formed into two big twin blades, superimposing immense energy on them.

By this time, she had neared the giant skylark, slashing it down with immense force. The skylark also clashed, its sharp beak heading towards the curved blade.

Boom!~

The bloody light directly split the skylark into two vertically before Schleya leaped out of it, nearing Adlet Rayburn more.

"...!"

The people became shocked to see her defeat the skylark. Even Adlet Rayburn blinked, not expecting her attack to be so powerful. What kind of technique was that? It wasn't merely heavy but also possessed a sharp cleaving strength, greater than his own destructive light, at least enough to overpower his current output.

Otherwise, she wouldn't have been able to cleave it into two just like that.

Schleya rushed while her hands were clenched. However, there was nothing in her hands.

Adlet Rayburn didn't underestimate those invisible blades as mere parlor tricks as they displayed ingenuity in a close-quarters battle. However, he didn't underestimate himself either.

"You seem to think you would defeat me if you got close, but let me tell you that it doesn't work that way unless you were allowed to use High-Level Emperor Grade Treasures and above!"

A silver skylark flew out of Adlet Rayburn's hand as he summoned his light sword again, but this time, it was stronger than the last.

Bang!~

Schleya's figure appeared beside Adlet Rayburn as she slashed across, the bloody image of Crescentblood superimposed with her blood energy heading towards Adlet Rayburn's head when he suddenly blocked it.

Cracks began to form on it as it shattered, revealing one of Crescentblood's blades. However, her other hand also possessed a superimposed crimson blade that was stabbing through the tiny reach between them, heading right towards his dantian.

Adlet Rayburn narrowed his brows in displeasure. She really was trying to kill him at this rate. His light sword that had just overpowered the first attack quickly moved onto her second attack, his attack speed incredibly fast that it could be seen that he was not lying when he said that his powers were fast.

It quickly stopped Schleya's blade in its track as it struck against the body of the light sword. It didn't break, allowing him to parry her blade as it moved sideways, allowing him to reach Schleya's blind spot. However, she suddenly let go of that blade and raised her hand, grabbing onto the empty air as though manifesting a third crimson blade.

'She was not holding one of her twin crimson blades...!'

Adlet Rayburn instantly saw through this maneuver of hers, able to tell that the new blade that she caught just now was the second blade that she used her mysterious arts to disappear.

It had been another deceiving move again. His judgment became clouded by one of her hands holding a real blade, making him think that the other blade in her hand was also real, but it was made up of her energy before she grasped the real crimson blade. However, he didn't lose his calm as it was still within his expectations.

He was just about to counterattack when the blade she let go of became a blood blade and struck his sword, disallowing it to defend against her stabbing blade.

"You-!"

Adlet Rayburn snapped as he saw her trying to stab his blade into his heart. He really was going to be killed if he held back any longer.

Suddenly, intense fluctuations of light energy radiated from him. His speed that was considered fast became lightning fast at an alarming rate, allowing him to parry the blade.

Bang!~

However, another blade was like a pouncing cobra from his side, the one he deflected the first, rushing past his light sword as it headed for his heart.

"...!"

Adlet Rayburn's scalp turned numb, and his anger exploded. This woman was truly courting death!

He no longer cared and stabbed his light sword towards her heart when a sudden chill emerged in his heart. He wasn't stabbed yet, but the reminder that the Emperor of Death had given him surfaced in his mind: Do not take her life.

However, his light sword was going to stab her heart that he could only slightly shift the direction. When he did, the light sword pierced right into Schleya's chest, stabbing all the way till it emerged from her back. The impact caused her attack to shift lightly, causing the blade that was almost about to pierce his heart to run into his shoulder and stab into his bones as blood splashed, causing him to clench his teeth.

However, Adlet Rayburn quickly retreated, leaving his light sword on Schleya's chest, unable to break his bones.

'Oh no...'

Adlet Rayburn's body began to tremble, not because one of the blades was still stabbed onto his shoulder but because he stabbed Schleya. His conjured light sword missed her heart but ran through her middle dantian instead!

Watching her shudder heavily, he knew that he crippled her body!

Adlet Rayburn's expression became pale, turning to look towards his two wives who were still in Alstreim Family's seating area. At the same time, he caught the Emperor of Death's expression that appeared gloomy.

Instantly, the world seemed to darken for him.

It was over.