

## **Affinity 101**

Chapter 101 - I'm Your Teacher

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Two months ago, the day the trial land opened..

Deep in the trial lands, in a hidden chamber.

An old man could be seen sitting in a meditative state, his heart rate was moving at an extremely slower rate compared to normal with one beat every ten minutes.

If one didn't observe properly, they would think he was just a life-like statue. His skin was white like he was frozen in this state, which also gave the feeling of the body being a corpse.

Suddenly, his heart rate slowly started beating faster. The pale white skin of the old man slowly started regaining some color, his outer appearance also experienced a change. At first, he looked like someone around the age of one hundred who was also at death's door, but now, he looked thirty years younger with a sage appearance.

His closed eyes slowly started opening. If one stared at his eyes for too long, one would get the feeling as if they were staring at the boundless universe.

"Hmm, why do I sense him?", the old man said while looking at the walls.

The old man suddenly disappeared from where he was sitting and appeared on top of a mountain peak. Standing with both hands behind his back, he looked ethereal. He gave off the feeling like he was there, yet, he also wasn't.

The man gazed in the direction of the formation Grey and the others passed through in getting here. Looking closer, he focused his attention on Grey, particularly.

"Why do I sense his aura on him? Could they be related in some way?"

The old man placed his hands on his chin trying to think of something.

"I don't remember him having any offsprings before he died", he shook his head.

He sent out his spiritual sense to study Grey closely, while still in doubt.

One has to know, the distance between both parties was immense. If Grey was told to head to where the old man was, even at his greatest speed, and without stopping. It would take him at least, one month to get there.

Grey who was with his friends at that time didn't have any idea he was currently being studied.

"They are two different people, but why does he give off the same aura as him?"

"\*Sigh\* I really miss that rascal", the old man said with a sad look.

Shifting his attention from Grey, he looked outside the formation and stared straight into the Magical Beasts Forest. It was like he left his previous position and went there personally given how well he was seeing the forest.

Deep in the forest, a huge seal could be seen under a temple. None of the inhabitants of the Azure Continent would ever think something like this existed in the depths of the Magical Beasts Forest. Inside the temple was the statue of a refined-looking young man, with a bright smile on his face.

The old man stared at the young man for some time before looking at the seal.

"The seal is slowly being damaged from the other side. \*Sigh\* Guess the war will start sooner than expected, these old bones of mine haven't had any action for a long time, hehehe", the old man laughed lightly.

While the man was laughing, another figure appeared by his side silently.

"I see you sensed it too", said the old man.

"Yes", the figure nodded.

"Could it really be brother?", the figure asked in a low hopeful voice.

"No, I've inspected the young man, and other than having the same aura, there's nothing else", said the old man.

After saying this, he looked at the young lady by his side.

"I know it's selfish of me saying this, but did he really have to go to that extent? We would have still been able to hang on even till this day", said the young lady.

"How many lives would have been lost?", the old man asked while staring deeply at the young lady.

Hearing his question, the young lady averted his gaze while staring at the ground.

"Had your brother not did what he did, even if we didn't lose, the world would have almost been destroyed", said the old man calmly.

"You're not the only one who hated his decision, but he did what he thought was right. He didn't want to continue seeing people dying, families crying because of the loss of a loved one", the old man continued.

"Then what about his family then? What about me?", the young lady asked with tears-filled eyes.

"It's already been so long, there's nothing we can do about it. Now, what we need to focus on is the seal", the old man sighed before telling her the matter at hand.

"What happened to the seal?", the young lady asked confusedly.

"According to my current estimations, it shouldn't last up to fifteen years, it might even be shorter", the old man said.

"Then we should start preparing. I'll go wake the others", the young lady said urgently.

"No, it's still too early. Had I not sensed my student's aura from that kid, I wouldn't have woken up this early", the old man said.

"Okay teacher", the young lady nodded.

"So what do we do now?", she asked.

"You should go back to sleeping, I'll watch the seal more closely. I'll wake everyone a year before the seal is completely destroyed", the old man stared in the direction of the seal once again.

"Understood, teacher", the young lady bowed, before disappearing.

The old man was left alone standing in the mountain peak.

"How come there's no one who seems to have a good elemental grade among these youths", the old man suddenly said while observing all the youths who entered the trial land.

"At their age, most of the kids in the faction were already at the Overlord Plane at the very least", the old man shook his head in disappointment when he realized the Plane all the kids were.

"Ah! I remember now, student cut off this part from the rest of the world so he could isolate the seal hence the smaller essence the people here have and also, this gave birth to lower grades", the old man said with a hint of realization.

"It's been so long that I even forgot it was the reason I opened this place to them in the first place"

"Let me check how far this part of the world has grown"

The old man sat down in a meditative position and sent out his spiritual sense to inspect the Azure continent.

If the people of the Azure continent knew a single person cut off the entire continent from the rest of the world, they would be dumbstruck.

Although there were some records about 'the war of gods' as they claimed, there wasn't any about there being another part in the world.

During the first time they were cut off, they thought the battle destroyed the other parts of the world, and only they were left. Soon, information about the other parts of the world started slowly disappearing, until, it got to the state they were now, where they do not know of the existence of a larger continent.

While the spiritual sense of the man was studying the continent, he paused and studied someone in particular closely.

"That rascal! When it was his time to close the formation, he had an offspring! I'll break his legs when he wakes up", the old man fumed on seeing Chris.

"Hmm, this kid is quite special. He even has the light element. I'll take him in as a student once this place is opened officially. For now, I'll just take him away and train him here"

The old man stood up from the mountain peak and disappeared.

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At the valley close to the Lunar Academy.

Chris who was sitting leisurely outside his house suddenly saw a man appear in front of him.

"Who are you?", he asked lazily.

He didn't even bother to stand. The man who appeared in front of him was stronger than him, so even if he wanted to run away, he couldn't escape. So why bother?

"I'm your teacher", the old man replied with a smile.

"I think you have the wrong person", replied Chris.

"No, you're the one", said the old man.

"I'm not. You can leave now", Chris closed his eyes once again.

'They're so alike, guess I'll also have to use the same method on him', thought the old man with a smile.

"Get your hands off me you old man!", Chris yelled

"Shut up and come with me", the old man disappeared along with Chris.

And so, Chris was dragged to an unknown place.

"At least take Brown along!", Chris yelled from the void.

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Present day...

"Where is this?"

Grey looked at the unfamiliar scene in front of him.

Chapter 102 - You Shall Not Pass!

"Where is this?"

Grey looked at the unfamiliar scene in front of him.

Ahead of him was a vast expanse of water. He turned around to see what was located in the land he was currently standing on, and to his surprise, he was currently standing on an island, in the middle of the ocean.

There were no trees on the island, and the only thing visible was the huge volcano which was situated at the center of the island.

'Is this place connected to that door?', he thought.

He still had some doubts about everything that happened though, for example, why was he the only one who felt the weirdness of the rock? Or could it be others who felt it but didn't think it was anything special?

But if others felt it also, at least one of his friends should have also felt it too. The entire event seemed strange.

"Hopefully my disappearance doesn't disturb their search for treasures"

Grey felt a little worried about how his friends might react to his sudden disappearance. He didn't want to be the cause of them delaying in their search for treasures.

'Guess I'll have to head to the top of the volcano to see what this place has in store for me', he thought.

Since there was nothing else to do, he started walking towards the volcano. He had looked around and didn't see any strange rock that might be able to send him back to where he came from.

Other than the volcano, there was only the water he could enter. And there was no way he was going to enter the water.

When he got to the foot of the volcano, he didn't delay and immediately started ascending it. Given the height of the volcano, it might take up to at least two hours if he walked, but if he decided to use his movement techniques, it would take him twenty minutes tops.

But being in a strange place, he had to be cautious since he didn't know what he might encounter. It would be strange if he got to the top of the volcano without encountering anything, given how weird this place was.

And just as he predicted, within five minutes of the climb, he saw what looked like a golem with lava running on the cracks of its body. Its eyes were made of lava, and it stood at a height of three meters.

"Well, this was expected", Grey smiled lightly.

Since he was already prepared mentally for anything that might happen, he wasn't too shocked seeing this golem.

Without further delay, he charged at it. The golem was already coming his way when it caught sight of him.

Boom! Bang!

A lightning spear hit the golem on its upper body, and contrary to Grey's expectations, it exploded.

"Uh! That weak?", the surprised Grey asked.

He initially thought the golem would be able to give him a tough time, but who knew it would explode on the first attack.

"Well, that's unexpected"

Although the first golem he faced was weak, it didn't mean he'll drop his guard, it even made him increase it. Given the mysteriousness of the trial land, he was sure there was a catch to this.

He could already guess this place was a trial of some sort also, so he had to ensure he was ready for whatever might come his way.

When he had climbed to about ten percent of the volcano, the strength of the golem started increasing. And unlike the first ten percent of the volcano, now, he would usually see the golems in groups of at least two.

But because they were still only at the First stage of the Arcane Plane, it didn't take much of an effort for him to destroy them.

After climbing to about twenty percent of the volcano, the strength of the golems saw a rise as it went to the Second stage of the Arcane Plane.

Although the strength of the golems increased, to Grey, they were still a bunch of assembled rocks waiting to be scattered by an attack. He waltzed through this part of the volcano without much difficulty.

The strength of the golem also increased a single stage every ten percent he ascended. By the time he climbed to fifty percent of the volcano, an unexpected change occurred.

According to the previous order of things, the golems were supposed to be in the fifth stage, but, they unexpectedly skipped a stage and were at the Sixth stage of the Arcane Plane.

Grey couldn't complain much since they were still not a threat to him, the golems were always in groups of fours and fives.

'I can still handle this, somewhat'

Without any other choice, he started his battle while ascending the volcano. Now unlike before, each battle was not as swift as it previously was, and he had to expend a little energy.

Given his strength, he should be able to easily deal with these golems. But the golems were unexpectedly, not blockheads, meaning, they always attacked him in groups and some even performed sneak attacks. Luckily, he was always vigilant.

'This is starting to get complicated', Grey thought after defeating this batch of golems.

He once again started ascending the volcano, luckily, the order went back to the previous format, and each ten percent he ascended gave an increase in one stage for the golems.

When he was ninety percent up the volcano, the golems were all in the First stage of the Origin Plane.

The only good thing he could take out of this was that at least they were only three in a group. But he couldn't celebrate since this was the first group he met. What if they increased as he continued further?

He had currently spent almost four hours ascending the volcano.

When he started the battle with the first group of the golem, he was quickly put on the defensive. These things were faster, stronger, and smarter than the ones in the Arcane Plane.

It took Grey almost thirty minutes to completely destroy all of them, but it was not without some slight injuries.

Grey decided it was best to rest and heal up before he continued on the journey. The battles could be said to be exhausting since he had been battling for a long time now with little rest.

After resting for thirty minutes, he once again started climbing. He would usually meet a group every two and a half percent he ascended according to the previous order.

But after facing one more group, he didn't encounter any other. He was currently in the last five percent of the volcano.

'I should rest here', Grey thought as he stared ahead of him.

He didn't know what he might face during this last five percent of the volcano, maybe something stronger? Or maybe, he might not even face anything at all. But he wouldn't head forward without preparing himself for what might come his way.

Sitting in a cross-legged position, he entered into a semi-conscious state.

Two hours later...

He was feeling energetic and pumped up. There was a chance he might face his strongest opponent to date. He had never fought against an opponent above the First stage of the Origin Plane.

He vigilantly headed into the last five percent of the volcano.

"Huh! How come there's no golem?", asked the confused Grey.

He had already prepared himself for the battle he would have with the golems, but surprisingly, there was none.

He continued to ascend, ninety-six percent, nothing yet, ninety-seven percent, still nothing, ninety-nine and a half percent, still nothing.

'Seems like there's no other challenge'

Since he hadn't encountered any golem yet, he guessed maybe he wouldn't see any, but he didn't drop his guard though. In a place like this, if he dropped his guard even for a second, then he might die without knowing what killed him.

Just as he was about to get to the top, he paused and stared ahead of him with a serious expression.

"Third stage", he said slowly.

Ahead of him, was a single golem. It was in the Third stage of the Origin Plane.

Compared to the other golems, this one was smaller, standing at a height of two meters. The surprising thing about this one was that it wielded a weapon, a mace to be precise.

Unlike the other ones, when it saw Grey, it didn't charge towards him. It just stood at its spot, waiting.

Seeing the golem wasn't making any movements, he didn't charge at it recklessly, nor did he send out an attack.

Since the golem was being so kind, then he would make an inscription first before attacking.

Two minutes later, a silver symbol became visible above Grey's head.

The golem silently watched all this without making any movements. It also raised its head and stared at the symbol in the air.

"Okay, I'm ready"

Grey sent out a lightning attack with the symbol, then he followed up with ice arrows as well.

But what Grey saw next stunned him, the golem casually raised its hand and an earth wall blocked the ice arrows, while it swung its mace at the lightning attack which destroyed it.

He never expected the golem was also an Elementalist.

"This just keeps getting harder and harder"

Grey complained before charging at it. If he didn't defeat this thing, then there was no way he would be able to get off this place.

Ten minutes later...

Boom! Bang!

The sound of attacks clashing against each other and something, or someone, hitting the ground heavily sounded out.

And just as expected, it wasn't the golem who hit the ground, rather, it was Grey who was already bleeding on different parts of his body.

He hastily stood up in case the golem followed up with another attack. But luckily, after it repelled Grey, it stood at its previous location once again.

Its message was clear, 'You Shall Not Pass'.

Chapter 103 - I'll See How It Survives

Seeing the golem wasn't making any other movements, Grey spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Damn! This thing is stronger than expected", he complained.

From the battle he just had with the golem, he was confident it was stronger than someone at the Third stage of the Origin Plane.

Even though he knew his chances against someone in the Third stage of the Origin Plane wasn't high, there was no way he would've been beaten this badly.

"I'll recover first then think of what to do"

With this thought, he quickly sat crossed leg. But just as he sat down, he stood up again.

'What if it suddenly decides to leave that spot and attack me while I'm trying to recover? I'll move further'.

Although he was injured, his healing ability is quite higher than others. And he still had some healing tonic left with him.

After moving a considerable distance he felt was safe enough, he sat cross-legged and immediately used the tonic, before entering into a semi-conscious state to heal himself properly.

While Grey was bleeding, the egg was absorbing his blood silently, and it even went on to secretly absorb his blood essence, but since Grey was already very weak, he didn't notice it.

Two hours thirty minutes later...

"Whew"

A white gas came out of Grey's mouth as he breathed out heavily.

"Just a little more and I'll break through to the Origin Plane", he said excitedly.

The battles he had fought today had squeezed out his potential which in turn increased his cultivation. Although it was by a little, if he had decided to cultivate for an entire day or two, then he would definitely break through to the Origin Plane.

But the fight still isn't over, he still had to defeat that last golem, or else he wouldn't be able to get to the peak.

"Charging at it is completely stupid since all I'll get is being pummeled once again. It doesn't seem like something that has exhausted its energy, so its strength will most likely be the same"

"But what if it isn't? If its strength drops then I'll have a chance of defeating it. Well, there's only one way to find out"

One minute later...

"No. Its strength is basically still the same"

Grey gently massaged his shoulder which was slightly hit by the golem during the exchange.

When he just started the battle, he noticed there wasn't any difference in its strength, so he quickly escaped. He had been beaten once, he didn't want to get beaten to that stage once again.

This time he didn't retreat far and just stood at a distance where the golem was still visible to him. The golem had once again stood in its spot.

"That's it!", Grey exclaimed excitedly.

"Hehehe, I'll see how it will survive this. Thankfully, as long as I don't get twenty meters close to it, it doesn't attack"

He had studied the distance he gets to before the golem attacks, and noticed it was only after he gets within twenty meters of it does it attack. Once he was out of that range, it wouldn't attack but just stare at him.

When he first noticed this, the thought of going around crossed his mind, and he executed it. It was just that, after walking fifty meters from where that golem was located, he found another one standing there. And behind him was a group in the First stage of the Origin Plane.

The first golem followed him till he got to a particular spot, then it stopped.

From this, he was able to deduce that the golems were all placed in a particular territory away from each other, and they only attack once someone drifts into their territory.

He didn't bother to fight it out with those golems and just retreated back to where he came from.

Now he was struck with a great idea, elemental fusion.

After the first time he tried it back at the Lunar Academy, he had only tried it once during his time here. But he didn't allow the orb to form fully since he noticed he still wasn't able to control it.

Now, he's about to try it once more. His cultivation is stronger, the grade of some of his elements has seen an increase, and he also got a new element.

He was quite expectant towards the outcome of the explosion, would the strength be stronger than what he expected, or would it be lower. He couldn't wait to find out.

Staring at the motionless golem, he walked to the edge of the twenty meters mark. He slowly stretched out his right hand, and his lips curved upwards to reveal a smirk.

"This thing is in for the surprise of its life. Wait! Is it even alive? Who cares, I'm going to blow it up anyway", he shrugged.

The golem looked at him with its listless eyes, it didn't care what the human was doing, but if it tried to get within twenty meters of it, then it would attack without mercy.

Grey's expression turned into one of seriousness as he slowly started sensing the elemental particles in the air with his spiritual sense.

Now, unlike the previous time, he had to guide four different elements to make the orb, so the process will require more concentration from him, and also more effort.

But he didn't forget to take a peek at the golem once in a while to confirm if it was still in the same spot.

Soon, he started slowly guiding the elements towards himself, lights made of brownish, silver, greenish and blueish color could be seen slowly concealing at the top of his outstretched hand. Slowly, an orb started taking shape. It was made of four different colors intertwining perfectly in it.

As time went on, the orb started to grow bigger. First, it was the size of a table tennis ball, then it slowly grew to the size of a fist.

The golem looked at the orb taking shape in Grey's hand and a hint of danger flashed across its previously listless eyes. It could tell the thing the human was creating had the capability of killing him.

Compared to the other golems, the ones which are situated at the peak of the volcano have a sliver of consciousness, so its senses were telling it to escape as far as he could, but its order was telling it to stay put.

Its order was to stop anyone who tried to reach the peak through its territory. It didn't care what happened in the other territories, but it was supposed to stop whoever or whatever came its way.

The orb soon started trembling, this was a sign of Grey losing control.

Looking at the orb, he couldn't complain because at least he was able to keep it stable for almost five seconds. Besides, he didn't create it with the purpose of controlling it anyway.

"Here's a gift for your hard work", Grey said before throwing the orb at the golem.

The orb was already close to exploding and any other contact would make it explode faster.

The second the orb left his hand, he immediately dashed as fast as he could in the other direction. He didn't want to experience the strength of the orb in any way.

The golem seeing the orb coming its way instinctively wanted to run, but because it couldn't defy its orders, it stood still and swung its mace at the orb coming its way.

The fleeing Grey already expected the explosion. When he snuck a view over his shoulder, his pupils dilated, the explosion was catching up at a faster pace.

Had the golem not swung its mace at it, it wouldn't have exploded this early and might have given Grey an added precious one or two seconds.

At the sense of danger, his speed increased to a new level. And he dashed towards the foot of the volcano as fast as he could. Since he was descending, his speed was also given a major boost.

He managed to escape from the blast range by a hair's breadth.

Ten minutes later...

"Wow! This place is really sturdy", Grey exclaimed at the sight of where the blast took place.

After the blast died down, he came back to the site of the explosion. The golem was nowhere to be seen, obviously. But what amazed him was that the ground of the volcano didn't even have a single scratch on it.

Grey estimated the strength of the explosion was at least at the power of someone in the Fifth stage of the Origin Plane.

No one would believe someone in the Arcane Plane was able to dish out such a strong attack.

"Fated one, if you're reading this then it means you have passed the first stage of the trial..."

Grey read the words carefully before he walked into the entrance.

According to the words, an expert kept his greatest treasure inside the depths of this volcano. The golems he fought were all adjusted according to his stage, so if someone with a higher stage came here, the strength of the golem would also see an increase. The stage of the last golem was created to be three stages ahead of the person entering the trial.

And unsurprisingly, he would also battle a creature inside the volcano. It was an Elemental Warrior, and it will be a stage ahead of the last golem he fought.

"At least I was given a heads-up"

With this, he disappeared into the volcano.

#### Chapter 104 - Life and Death

After walking through the entrance, Grey saw a flight of stairs that led further down the volcano.

Observing carefully, he slowly stepped on the stairs and started his descent. Although the text said the last challenge would appear close to the treasure, he didn't want to recklessly charge straight down. What if the text was wrong? Or maybe it wanted to test how prudent he was?

He slowly started going downwards, the stairs were carved out of the side of the volcano, given how hard it was, Grey couldn't even start to imagine the strength of the expert. Although the light entering the volcano wasn't much, he could still unexpectedly see properly.

The inside of the volcano wasn't as wide as he expected, given how big the volcano was outside, he expected to see a huge space inside. At the entrance, the wideness was about ten meters, it only started increasing as he went deeper.

Thirty minutes later...

Grey stared downwards from where he was standing, and he still couldn't see where he was headed. All he saw was unending darkness.

Without any options, he continued on his way.

From all the points, the only way he could get out of here is by reaching where the so-called treasure was. He still didn't know what to expect, also, he was thinking about the Elemental Warrior he would have to face.

This wasn't the first time he was hearing about Elemental Warriors, he knew they were a higher grade of summons.

But he still wasn't aware of Reynolds being able to summon an Elemental Warrior yet, because the time he met up with them, they were about to walk towards the door and Klaus was talking about his tales.

'I wonder how they are doing', he thought.

One hour later...

Grey stood in front of a passage. After getting to the ground, he was faced with a single passage that was opened through the volcano walls. He couldn't see the inside of the cave as it was dark.

He warily walked towards the passage, this was his only ticket back to where he came from, there was no way he could miss it.

"What a strange stone", Grey muttered under his breath as he walked closer to inspect it.

Even after inspecting for almost a minute, he couldn't figure out why the stones lit up only after he entered the passage. With no other choice, he brought out his trusted blades and tried removing one.

"This is something precious, I'm not going to leave without acquiring any", he chuckled lightly.

Although he still didn't know what it was, he was not leaving without acquiring some.

The path was long, and he couldn't see the end of it. So he once again started walking cautiously, after removing some stones, that is.

He was told he would face one more opponent, so he had to be ready in case of a sneak attack. The Elemental Warrior is stronger than the last golem he fought, well, the last golem that beat him up.

If he were to be attacked unaware by this opponent, he might die.

Five minutes later, he walked out of the passage and was greeted by a huge room that spanned over three hundred meters wide and over five hundred meters long.

At the center of the room was a pool of lava, and at the middle of the lava pool was a floating blue lotus. The lotus was closed.

"Well, there's the treasure", Grey looked at the floating lotus curiously.

"Now, where's the guardian?", he asked as he stared around.

He stood at the passage for some time, he looked around if he might find what might likely take him back to the valley. If he could find it, then he knew he had the opportunity of escaping with his life even if he didn't acquire the treasure.

Although he wanted this treasure, his life mattered more to him. He wouldn't risk his life for a treasure, unless, maybe it was a life-saving treasure that someone very close to him needed.

As Grey was looking around, all his hairs suddenly stood on end.

'An attack', his heart raced.

He quickly moved to the side and set up an earth wall.

Bang!

The earth wall exploded and a fire arrow shot towards Grey.

Seeing his defensive wall was destroyed, he quickly retreated to the side.

The arrow struck the ground and exploded, sending bits of fire in all directions.

Grey used his water element to stop the fire coming towards him.

Staring in the direction of the arrow, he saw a Fire Elemental Warrior floating twenty meters above the ground.

"Well, there it is", Grey's face turned sour.

He looked back at the passage he used in coming here, and just as he was about to retreat towards him.

Bam!

A wall dropped from the top of it and closed it.

He was stuck, there was no way he could destroy the wall since it was made from the volcano itself. He remembered how his elemental fusion blast didn't even damage it outside.

"This is bad"

But now, his plan was totally ruined. Due to not spotting the Elemental Warrior sooner, he is caught in a tough predicament.

He couldn't even beat the golem that was in the Third stage of the Origin Plane. Even if he broke through to the First stage of the Origin Plane right now, his chances of victory were still very low, thirty percent max.

All his hopes were previously placed on elemental fusion, now that opportunity was gone.

He tried thinking of what to do, while also creating an inscription.

Even if he couldn't beat the warrior, it didn't mean he'll not attempt to fight back. Only cowards wait for death. Even though the Elemental Warrior was stronger, he will not be intimidated!

The Elemental Warrior didn't give him much time to think, it shot out three fire arrows towards Grey.

With no other option, Grey started battling the warrior.

Three minutes later...

Bang!

Fresh blood could be seen dripping from the side of his mouth, his clothes were in tatters, and for the first time in a while, his bag was on the floor, one of his blades was damaged, and he wasn't sure if it could be fixed. Now, he was left with only one.

The Elemental Warrior only gave him a few seconds, before it once again attacked him.

He wiped the blood off the side of his mouth and once again started battling with the Elemental Warrior.

The Elemental Warrior switches between close-range combat and long-range combat perfectly. Since it was equipped with a sword, it didn't have any problems with fighting against Grey who was using his blades, if Grey retreated, it would use its bow and send out multiple arrows.

Another two minutes went by and Grey was currently on his knees, supporting his body with his bloodstained hands.

Drip! Drip!

The blood dripping from his mouth slammed the ground and the sound echoed out. There was a long slash that ran through his back which was also gushing out blood. He was struggling for breaths, panting heavily.

He managed to raise his head and looked at the Elemental Warrior, and for the first time in his life, he felt true despair.

This thing had only one thing in its mind, and that was to kill any intruders.

He couldn't escape, there was no hope in beating his opponent, no one was going to appear and save him.

'I can't die here'.

He clenched his aching fists, the blood flowing from his head had already gotten into his eyes, and it was currently dampening his vision.

Given his current defenseless state, another attack from the Elemental Warrior would be fatal.

Swoosh!

An arrow shot towards Grey at a breakneck speed, he wanted to crawl out of the way, but his body didn't allow him. He tried using his inscription to send out an attack to block the attack, but his consciousness was almost at the brink of fading, and he missed it.

Pu-Chi

The arrow pierced right through Grey's back and came out just below his c.h.e.s.t.

Splat!

He coughed up a mouthful of blood once again.

His vision was starting to fade, the only thing keeping him awake was his willpower. He didn't want to die here.

Thinking back to everything he went through, from not being able to awaken his element, his three years of loneliness, his mother, his father, his friends. He still wanted to see them.

Swoosh!

Another arrow was sent towards him.

It was able to once again able easily pierce through the defenseless Grey.

The hands he was using to support himself couldn't hold him up anymore and gave way.

Thud!

He fell head first, and the side of his face slammed into the ground before the rest of his body followed along. His inscription which was still in the air slowly started flickering before it finally faded away.

The Elemental Warrior which was about to send out another attack paused on seeing the motionless Grey.

Grey was currently lying on the ground without any movements, his consciousness was slowly fading away.

'I can't give up', he thought.

Just as this thought flashed through his head, an unfamiliar technique appeared in his mind.

Chapter 105 - Fusion State

'Fusion State'

This was the name of the technique that appeared in Grey's mind.

Just like when he got the technique for elemental fusion, this technique also appeared in his mind. He was sure this had something to do with the pearl he absorbed and the Chaos Element.

When he got the technique for elemental fusion, he just broke through to the Arcane Plane. From the details of the technique, it seemed like he was supposed to acquire it when he broke through to the Origin Plane.

But he unexpectedly acquired it sooner because of his current predicament.

The technique was similar to elemental fusion in some ways since it also involved fusing the elements. Only, this time, he had to fuse them inside him.

Unlike elemental fusion, the Fusion State required him to fuse each of his elemental beads into one.

According to the technique, for every element, his cultivation stage will increase by a single stage. This means, since he currently has four elements, he could increase his stage by four.

After entering the state, he could use elemental fusion instantly since all the elements were already fused inside him, and he could also use each element separately. It was just that, he couldn't keep the state for long.

After entering the Fusion State, all his injuries will start healing automatically just like the time he accidentally entered against the mercenaries. Only, at that time, he had no control over the state. But now, he will be fully conscious of everything, and can also exit the state whenever he wants to.

He wouldn't need to pay any price for using the technique nor will he enter a weakened state after using it. Once he enters the state, all his injuries will heal up almost instantly. What more could he ask for?

But unfortunately, his body was still too weak to maintain the state for long. Given his current body strength, after one minute, his body will start cracking up from excess energy. If he still doesn't exit the stage after two minutes, there is a high chance his body might blow up.

With a renewed hope, he used his willpower to keep himself awake and study the technique properly. Now he was faced with a major issue, the technique explained the process of fusing his elemental beads, but because he was still in the Arcane Plane, he still hasn't formed his elemental beads yet.

Now he had to come up with a way to use the technique on his chaotic essence orb. The essence orb was currently divided into four parts.

He tried using the same method for the elemental beads on it, but it failed.

After two minutes, there was a slight change. The elements in his essence orb trembled slightly, but then they stopped after some seconds.

Seeing this, Grey's heart was filled with joy, and his previously motionless body twitched.

Swoosh!

Bam!

Another arrow was shot towards Grey's body.

When the Elemental Warrior noticed the movement from the previously motionless body, it didn't hesitate to shoot out another arrow.

The arrow pierced Grey's leg and pinned it to the ground. What was worse about all this was that since the Elemental Warrior was of the fire element, each of its weapons was made from fire. So, whenever the weapons came in contact with Grey's body, the fire burns his flesh.

Grey steeled his mind and endured the pain, he didn't try to make any more movements hence he will be on the receiving end of more arrows.

The fire arrow extinguished after thirty seconds, to the relief of Grey.

The technique he was using to fuse the elements in his essence orb was almost exactly the type for the elemental fusion, and that was by slowly guiding the elements into one.

This process is more tiresome and was longer, he had to be extra careful, so there wouldn't be any mistakes. Compared to when he was fusing the elements outside his body, this one was almost three times harder.

He managed to get the elements to start fusing after three minutes, but the attempt failed. He didn't give up, it wasn't like he was going anywhere. The only thing that gave him a sense of urgency was the loss of blood which was already starting to take effect.

Another five minutes went by, and this time, he was already halfway through fusing the elements. He had failed in two other attempts, before this one.

As the seconds slowly ticked on, the elements merged bit by bit. After another minute, it was already eighty percent fused. In one more minute, he will be able to fuse it completely and then heal.

The fact that after entering the Fusion State, he could heal almost instantaneously excited him. This was like having an instant healing ability, and in his opinion, it was nothing less of an overpowered ability.

With this, he wouldn't need to fear any injuries, as long as he wasn't dead, he could heal up. But that didn't give him the idea of just standing still and not protecting himself though, or tanking attacks, so he could use the opportunity to hurt his opponent.

This was because before he could heal up, he would have to first feel the pain of being hurt, which isn't something anyone would want to feel.

After a minute went by.

With Grey's body at the center, a force shot out in all directions. The Elemental Warrior was pushed back by the force.

The previously motionless Grey slowly started standing up, the injuries on his body were healing at an unbelievably fast rate.

Standing up, Grey looked at the Elemental Warrior calmly.

Boom!

Another force spread out in all directions with Grey at the center once again. His stage was increasing by the second. The First stage, Second stage, Third stage, and lastly Fourth stage of the Origin Plane.

In five seconds, Grey went from a Ninth stage Arcane Plane Elementalist to the Fourth stage Origin Plane Elementalist. This was unheard of!

Now he was in the same stage as the Elemental Warrior.

Grey gently floated upwards and stopped at the same height as the Elemental Warrior. Unlike other Origin Plane Elementarists, he could fly.

Looking in the face of the Elemental Warrior, he attacked without hesitation. The time he could stay in this state was limited, he had already spent almost ten seconds already, so time was not on his side.

The Elemental Warrior blocked the attack but was pushed back by it. The strength of Grey's attack was almost in the Sixth stage of the Origin Plane since he was using Elemental Fusion in his attacks.

Boom! Bam! Bang!

Grey and the Elemental Warrior started fighting mid-air with Grey obtaining the upper hand.

Within thirty seconds, he had slammed the Elemental Warrior into the ground a total of four times. Its fire wasn't as bright as it was previously, and it couldn't fly properly anymore.

Grey stretched out his hands, and ten inscriptions instantly manifested in the air.

When he used the Fusion State, his stage wasn't the only thing that saw an increase, his spiritual energy also saw an increase which in turn boosted the time he would spend in making inscriptions.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

All ten inscriptions sent out ice spears which shot towards the Elemental Warrior.

The Elemental Warrior raised its flaming sword and the size of the sword increased, from thirty-five inches in length and a width of three inches, it went to over eighty inches in length and over thirty inches in width.

After managing to fend off three of the spears, the Elemental Warrior was first pushed back from the force of the attacks, before the other seven came at it.

One of the spears exploded at a close range because the Elemental Warrior sent a fist towards it, the effect of the explosion sent the Elemental Warrior towards the ground.

Bang!

It slammed heavily into the ground, and for the first time since Grey came here, a pit formed on the ground of the volcano.

The other six spears, like they had eyes of their shot straight into the pit.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

All six made contact with the Elemental Warrior.

The Elemental Warrior slowly started dissipating.

Grey heaved a sigh before calmly floating down and exiting the Fusion State before the one minute time was up.

'Hmm, seems like I can't use this state as frequently as I thought', thought Grey.

After exiting the stage, he noticed some energy was still left in his body. This meant that, if he were to use the state in a short period of time, the energy in his body will be too much.

'Although, it can't be said to be a side effect since it wouldn't affect me if I don't use the state anytime soon. I guess it's more of a limitation, so I won't depend on it in every battle, or use it for its healing purposes without reservations', he sighed at the thought of not being able to heal whenever he was injured.

He couldn't really say he felt bad about the limitation though, besides, he rarely got in this sort of situation where he would need a massive increase in strength.

Now, he had a major trump card. With this, he wouldn't need to fear anyone in this place, well, till he could use it again, that is.

After settling his thoughts, he looked around but still didn't see any way to exit this place appearing.

'Maybe I'll acquire the treasure first before the exit will appear'

Thinking up to this stage, he first walked towards his bag. He wanted to get his bag before going towards the floating lotus. Picking it up, he froze.

"Huh! Why is it lighter?", he asked with a confused expression.

There were no items on the ground, so there was no way the items in the bag fell out of the bag.

Gently opening the bag, his expression changed.

'What the hell!'

Chapter 106 - An Eighth Element?!

'What the hell!'

Grey stared at his bag in total astonishment.

More than eighty percent of the plants left that he acquired from the garden were gone, there was a time he accidentally acquired two essence stones, those were also gone. The only thing he still found complete was the stones he dug from the passage wall when he was coming here.

He looked deeper and noticed pieces of the black egg he stole from the prince's group previously.

'Huh! Did it hatch? But why are there no movements inside the bag then, or could it be that it left?'

Thinking of what might be inside the egg, his attention changed from why the plants were gone, to where the creature might be. One has to remember that this was a creature that had been inside an egg in this place for at least one thousand years, so he was quite expectant towards what it was. If he knew the egg had been absorbing his blood for some time now, he would be dumbfounded.

Because the inside of the bag was black, he failed to quickly notice the little sleeping furry creature at the end of it that is most likely the culprit of his missing items.

Just as he was about to retract his gaze from the bag and start searching around for any strange creatures, he noticed a slight movement at the end of the bag.

'This is?'

With a confused look, he stretched his hand towards the creature.

The moment his hand came in contact with the creature, he felt a sudden connection with it, and also a sense of familiarity. He was confident he had never seen this creature before.

Due to the sense of familiarity, his curiosity towards the creature increased, and he picked it up.

"A cat?!", He unconsciously exclaimed.

In his hand was a cat that was seven inches long. Its pitch-black color is unique due to how dark it was.

Grey had seen cats that were black before, but none could compare to this one.

Feeling the movement from when Grey picked it up, the cat opened its eyes and stared straight at Grey.

Looking at the eyes of the cat, Grey felt stunned. Just like its body the eyes were also pitch black, and for the first few seconds Grey made eye contact with it, it felt like he was looking at the boundless space.

'Wait! Why is there a cat?', thought the confused Grey.

This was not in his bag previously, he didn't recall seeing it here when he entered, else the Elemental Warrior would have killed it also. And looking at its little bulging stomach, Grey was certain it just finished eating.

But, how can something so small eat so much? And, where the hell was the thing that hatched out of the egg? Or, could it be that the cat ate it? But, the cat wasn't here previously, and there are no signs or smell of blood inside the bag.

Grey's head suddenly ached at the thought of so many questions.

"Don't tell me this cat was what hatched out of it. But how can a cat hatch out of an egg? It doesn't make sense", Grey started scrutinizing the cat.

He looked at the side, back, head, tail, almost every possible thing he could. He even shook it at one time. Looking closely, he could tell that the cat seemed like it had just been born.

'Hey! Hey! Can you stop doing that, please! It feels creepy', a small voice suddenly rang in Grey's head.

"Huh! Who said that?", Grey looked around but found no one, then his gaze came back to the cat.

'I must be hearing things, how can this small cat speak? Even if it can speak, there's no way it will be inside my head'.

Grey felt maybe the beating he received from the Elemental Warrior was starting to affect his mind.

'Put me down!', the small voice once again exclaimed.

'No, this is definitely not me hearing things', this thought flashed through Grey's head.

"You can speak?", he asked while still holding the cat.

'Of course', the cat nodded while the small voice rang inside Grey's head once again.

"How come I'm only hearing it in my head?", Grey asked again.

'Because we're connected. Don't tell me you don't feel the connection?', the cat looked at Grey strangely.

"This is so strange, how are we connected? And how can a cat hatch out of an egg?", asked Grey.

He found the entire experience strange, first, a cat came out of an egg, which was something unheard of, then, he suddenly felt a connection with the unknown cat, then, he could hear the cat in his head. Could things get any weirder?!

Just as these thoughts were running through his head, his expression changed, because, things got weirder .

The cat which he was previously holding firmly had somehow disappeared into thin air.

"O...kay. I think I'm going crazy. \*Sigh\* Looks like the hit I received to my head is affecting me, I need to rest to help alleviate the stress I went through", said Grey after not being able to see the cat anywhere.

He sat down crossed leg and tried to calm his mind.

'You're not crazy, I think', the small voice once again spoke in Grey's mind as the cat appeared on his shoulder.

"How did you do that?", asked Grey.

'What? This?', the cat asked before disappearing once again and appearing on his l.a.p.

Grey nodded after the cat reappeared.

'It's easy. One of my elements is the Space Element, although for now, I can't go far', the cat explained.

"Space Element? There's a Space Element?", asked Grey.

This was the first time he was hearing about the Space Element, he only knew of seven, but now, according to this cat, it seems like there's also a Space Element, this made it eight.

'Of course there is', the cat looked at Grey like he was weird.

He had decided to ask his teacher when he went back. But he was quite curious about it after seeing the cat use it, one has to know this was different from moving fast. The cat literally disappeared from one spot and appeared in another within a second, and it seems it could also regulate the time before it appears.

'Doesn't that mean I could have it also?', Grey thought excitedly.

But he quickly calmed down and focused his attention back on the cat.

"Okay. But you still haven't answered my previous questions", said Grey.

'Oh that, well, we're connected because only after absorbing your blood and part of your blood essence was I able to be born', explained the cat.

"My blood, and blood essence. When did you do that?", an expression of shock appeared on Grey's face.

'I think when you were fighting and injured previously' the cat said.

'Just so you know, I didn't do it on purpose', it said again after seeing the change in Grey's expression.

"But that doesn't explain why a cat would hatch from an egg. Cats are mammals, they are normally given birth to", said Grey.

'I don't really know why or how that happened either', the cat said truthfully.

Grey looked at the cat, he didn't know if everything the cat said was true, but he knew the cat was right about the connection part.

"Okay, we'll put that aside for now. How did you eat almost everything inside the bag?", he looked at the cat curiously.

'There wasn't much in the first place, besides, they don't even contain that much essence. Since I'm just born, I need a lot of energy to sustain myself', the cat spoke as if eating so much on its little body was natural.

Grey looked at the cat stunned, today would most likely be at the top of the weirdest days he had experienced.

'Not that much? Has it seen its size?', thought Grey.

There was a particular fruit he had in his bag that he was certain one of them weighed more than the entire body mass of the cat, and the fruit was three in total, and all three were currently gone as well.

If he only used those fruits, it meant the cat ate more than three times its body weight, just from those three fruits alone. Yet it said there wasn't much.

Grey rubbed his head to try to calm down, today has been an unforgettable day for him, first, he nearly died, then, he survived, now, he was talking to a cat that hatched out of an egg.

He looked around and realized he still didn't know how to leave this place. He picked the cat from his leg and dropped it on the ground, before heading in the direction of the lotus.

Shaking his head disappointedly he walked towards the lotus. The cat hurriedly followed Grey towards the lava pool.

At the center of the lava pool was a small piece of earth that spanned a radius of five meters with the lotus floating at the center.

The distance from where he stood to the land at the center of the lava pool was almost fifteen meters long. But it wasn't a challenge to him as he was able to easily jump to the land.

The cat though, arrived before him. With its curious eyes, it stared at the lotus greedily while l.i.c.k.i.n.g its lips. It could sense an immense amount of energy radiating off of it.

But it wisely stopped itself from moving towards the lotus as it knew this was what Grey came here for. It had already eaten most of Grey's items, if it dared to eat this as well, then it might truly offend him.

Grey felt the cat wanted the lotus because of the energy inside it. He didn't know how he was able to feel it, maybe it was because of the connection. He nodded when he noticed the cat didn't try to snatch the lotus or else he might have had to toss it in the lava, well, if he could catch it first though.

He slowly walked towards the lotus, when he was one meter away from the lotus, an ancient stone slab appeared in front of him, and some words appeared on it.

"Fated one....."

The text spoke about the lotus and what was inside it. Inside the lotus was a rare heaven and earth flame that only forms after tens of thousands of years, the lotus was one of the few rare natural fire treasures that could hold the flame without burning. According to the expert, he was only able to acquire a very small amount of the flame. If a Fire Elementalist refines the flame, they would not only see an increase in their cultivation and elemental grade, but there's also a chance they might acquire the unique blue flames.

The lotus could also be refined as well since it was a rare natural fire treasure.

The expert said these were his greatest treasures, and after acquiring this treasure, an ancient path would open that led to his other treasures, as well as his legacy.

## Chapter 107 - The Call

When Grey was done reading the text, he changed his attention back to the floating lotus and walked towards it.

'Seems like I can finally awaken my fire element', he thought.

With the awakening of his fire element, he would have five elements. Had it been previously, he would have thought he would only need to comprehend the Light and Darkness element to have all elements, but now, he didn't know how many elements there were.

"I remembered you said the Space element was one of your innate elements, which other one do you have?", asked Grey who stood a few inches away from the lotus.

'I have four in total, Space, Darkness, Lightning, and Fire', the cat replied.

"Oh, four! That's quite a lot", Grey replied.

Although the fact that the cat had four elements was quite shocking, he didn't brood too much over it. After all, he was about to acquire his fifth element.

'Actually, I think there might still be one more. But it seems like I'm not strong enough to awaken it yet', the cat said while placing its little paws on its face like a human does when thinking.

"Oh! How strong are you currently", asked Grey curiously.

'Around Late Rank three, I think', said the cat.

"Rank three? Magical beasts have ranks?", Grey asked.

He had never heard of beasts having ranks, they had always used the same system as humans, well, according to the books he had read and also from how everyone in the empire calls their system.

'Of course. Are you from a small town or village?', the cat suddenly asked.

It felt Grey knew lesser compared to it that had just been born. Since Grey had been in the world for a while now, it was unexpected he knew nothing about the Space element, and now, he didn't know how Magical beasts were ranked.

Grey almost tripped when the cat asked him this question, he also felt like someone from a backwater place due to what was happening. It was quite embarrassing that he had to learn about these things from a cat that had just been born.

But he couldn't be blamed, this was the first time he was hearing about them, and he couldn't pretend he knew about them just so he wouldn't embarrass himself. As long as it was something new, he always wanted to learn, even if it meant learning from a newborn cat!

"How are beasts ranked?", he averted the cat's question and asked his own.

'It's just like the human cultivation system, only, unlike you humans, we have ranks instead of planes', explained the cat.

"There isn't much difference in the cultivation system then. It's just a change of name. This means, according to your rank, you're at the Late stages of the Arcane Plane", said Grey.

'Arcane Plane, is that the third plane for humans?', asked the cat.

Grey nodded.

'Yeah, you could say that', the cat said.

"So do you have a name?", asked Grey.

Other than what the cat told him, the only thing he knew about it was that it was male. And he only found out when he was studying it the first time.

'Void', said the cat.

"Void? Who would name himself Void?", Grey chuckled.

'That's a great name, it fits my magnificent features perfectly', Void said proudly while sticking out his little c.h.e.s.t.

Grey laughed seeing how the little guy stuck out his c.h.e.s.t trying to show his 'features'.

'What's your name?', Void asked after some time.

"Grey", replied Grey.

'Grey? Who names himself after a color. And to think you had the guts to laugh at my name' Void laughed on hearing Grey's name.

Grey looked at Void speechless, shaking his head, he once again placed his full attention on the lotus.

"Time for an upgrade", he laughed lightly.

He was quite expectant towards acquiring a new element, his strength will not only increase but his plane also. And there was a chance he might acquire the rare blue flame the expert spoke about.

This wasn't the first time he was hearing of blue flames, compared to normal red flames, it was almost two times stronger. It was just like the black lightning the crocodile he fought had, it was stronger than the normal silver lightning he had.

Grey was shocked by how small it was, but he could also feel how strong its energy was. Compared to the lotus, it was almost four times stronger.

'I don't think I'll be able to fully absorb the energy in one cultivation session. I'll just refine it now, and not only awaken my fire element, but also breakthrough. I'll slowly absorb the rest of the energy later', he thought before reaching for it.

When he made contact with the flame, its warmth spread across his hand, before moving to the other parts of his body.

He took it and sat cross-legged, looking at Void who was staring at him with pleading eyes, he sighed before waving for him to take the lotus.

Although if he were to be the one to refine the lotus his strength will increase further, it didn't hurt to allow the little guy to take it, besides, he had already taken the best treasure which was the flame. Also, from the looks of it, the little guy will be staying with him from now on.

Getting the go-ahead, Void happily leaped towards the lotus, opened his mouth, and swallowed it instantly, like he was afraid Grey might change his mind.

He laid down close to Grey, snuck a glance at him, and spat out a single petal which he slowly started absorbing.

Grey who was still staring at him was surprised when he saw Void spit out one of the nine petals. He thought Void swallowed it completely.

'Seems like this guy has somewhere he stores things, but where? I'll ask him after I break through', thought Grey.

And so, one human and one cat started cultivating.

.....

While Grey and Void were cultivating, things had started heating up at the ancient paths. The paths intersected with each other, so the people were starting to meet up as time slowly went on.

They had all been on this path for almost five hours now but still hadn't reached the end. Some of them had gotten great treasures, such as rare plants, essence stones, elemental weapons, and even techniques, but most of the techniques were of the fire element.

At one of the paths, a youth could be seen running quickly towards what looked like a castle.

'It's stronger here', the youth thought while staring at the castle.

The youth was none other than Jonas. Since he entered into the ancient paths, he had not stopped for one minute and had been following a 'call'.

From the time he saw the light, he suddenly felt a sense of calling from it. This was why he hurried towards it as fast as he could. Even after the light had died down for some time, he could still feel the call.

After entering the ancient paths, he didn't bother about any other thing and just focused on where the call was coming from. Now he had finally found it, it was from this castle.

'Why is it calling me?', Jonas asked himself.

This was a question he had asked himself over and over again, but he still couldn't come up with an answer. He didn't know what he might find in this place, but he knew it wasn't something that would harm him.

Steeling his mind, he slowly disappeared into the castle.

.....

"Uh! People are fighting up ahead", a soft voice said.

The owner of the voice slowly walked towards where the sounds of battles were coming from. It was ahead anyway, so there was no way the figure wouldn't see who was fighting unless the figure decided to turn around.

Boom! Bang!

A figure slammed into the wall by the side.

"So this is his full strength", the soft voice said.

The owner of the voice was Alice, ahead of her was the Darkness Elementalist, and he was facing off against two youths. One in the Third stage, and another in the Second.

The fact that he could fight against two people of this caliber and not only gain the upper hand but was about to kill them, was nothing less of a testament to how strong he was.

Alice initially had no plans of stepping in but looking closer, she recognized both youths, they were from the Lunar Academy.

Although she was still in the Second stage of the Origin Plane, her true strength was no weaker than those at the Third stage, and she is even stronger than some of them.

Sensing someone else walking into the battle scene, the Darkness Elementalist turned and looked in her direction.

"I'll advise you don't interfere with this, little lady", he said coldly.

"I don't meddle in other people's affairs. But you see, they're my friends", Alice smiled lightly as she walked towards both youths.

Now it was three against one, although one of the youths was injured, it didn't mean he still couldn't fight.

The Darkness Elementalist looked at them with an icy gaze.

And the path fell into silence.

Alice was waiting patiently for his decision, if he wanted to fight, then, she had no problem with that. She hadn't fought someone this strong anyway, so it will be a test for her.

Both parties faced off without anyone showing any signs of backing down.

Chapter 108 - To Think You Would Dare

"Do you really think even if you join them you can defeat me?", the Darkness Elementalist asked.

Alice shrugged but didn't give a reply, she wouldn't bother answering him. She was just as confident in her strength, as he was. Even if she couldn't defeat him alone, there was no way he could kill her.

"They have something I want", the Darkness Elementalist said again.

Alice looked at both youths by her side, they then recounted what happened.

According to them, they found a fire elemental weapon, and just after obtaining it, the Darkness Elementalist came in and asked for it. Even though they knew he was strong, there was no way they were going to give it to him.

They had to go through a tough battle just to acquire the weapon in the first place, and they felt they were strong enough to fight him together. But the reality was far from what they thought. The Darkness Elementalist not only completely overpowered them, but it also seemed he had the ability to kill them. Luckily, Alice came.

"You can't have it", Alice said lightly.

She had never backed down from a fight, and she probably never will in a situation like this. The only time she'll ever back down is when the power difference between both parties has gotten to the stage where numbers have no meaning, or if she was outnumbered.

"Hmph!", the Darkness Elementalist snorted coldly and attacked.

If not for the fact that he felt Alice in addition to the other two youths was going to take too much of his time, he wouldn't have spoken to them and would've attacked immediately. But now, since they were not coming to an agreement, it was best he dealt with them instead of wasting his time talking.

The path wasn't that wide, it had a width of fifteen meters max.

Seeing the Darkness Elementalist attack, Alice's expression turned serious, and she also immediately attacked with her lightning element.

Boom!

With both attacks clashing against each other, both parties retreated a couple of steps backward from the impact with Alice retreating five steps more.

'Hmm, she's stronger than even the youth in the Third stage. This is going to be harder than I thought', the Darkness Elementalist reevaluated Alice.

Just from this first exchange, he was able to estimate Alice's strength. Although he had only used one of his elements, which was his trademark darkness element, the difference in strength wasn't that much. Had Alice been in the same stage as he was, then the difference would be almost negligible.

'He's strong', Alice squinted her eyes.

"Attack together", she said to the others.

"Hmm", both youths nodded.

Bang!

All four people got into a heated battle in the path. Due to the width of the path, it limited some of their attacks, especially for the trio because they couldn't use any large area of effect attacks, but the Darkness Elementalist had no such limitations and was attacking without restraints.

Five minutes later...

"Huff! Huff!"

All four fighters were panting heavily, with sweat dripping from their faces.

'She's a Dual Elementalist, if I want to acquire the weapon, then I'll have to eliminate her first. If not, then I'll have to leave and focus on reaching the end of the paths. I can't waste my time here', the Darkness Elementalist thought while once again reevaluating Alice.

Alice was like a thorn on his path, she was stronger than most people in the Third stage of the Origin Plane. He felt there was even a chance that she might be able to defeat Dual Elementalist in the Third stage even though she was still in the Second stage.

Other than the youth injured previously, none of the others had sustained any strong injuries.

They once again engaged in a battle.

The Darkness Elementalist was a great fighter and could easily switch between attack and defense. He knew the right time to attack, and also when to fall back. He was like a well-seasoned fighter.

This was the first time Alice was fighting someone this experienced. Although, she felt the teamwork between her and the other youths was the cause of the Darkness Elementalist still being fine.

'\*Sigh\* Had it been me and the boys, then this guy would have been dead by now if he didn't escape, well, I don't think he could have been able to escape though. Those guys are like a pack of hyenas', Alice smiled gently at the thought of her friends.

Given how well they knew each other, their teamwork was almost flawless. There's no way they would team up against someone and the person will survive.

Another two minutes went by with no one gaining the upper hand.

The Darkness Elementalist was on the defensive during these past two minutes, but other than pushing him back a few times, they hadn't been able to do anything to him.

'Now', squinting his eyes, he charged straight at the injured youth.

Seeing the Darkness Elementalist charging towards him, the youth prepared himself to welcome the attack. Although he wasn't as strong as him, it didn't mean he'll be overwhelmed by fright.

"Oh no!", Alice exclaimed and dashed towards the injured youth to help just like she had been doing during the battle.

She knew if the Darkness Elementalist got to him, the chances of him surviving was not much.

Since both of them had the lightning element, they were pretty fast.

Bang!

A figure was sent flying, before hitting the wall.

When the other youth looked closer, he was stunned on seeing Alice on the floor. Due to the speed of Alice and the Darkness Elementalist, he didn't see their movements properly.

"How?", he blurted out unconsciously.

He remembered seeing the Darkness Elementalist charging at the injured youth, so how come Alice was the one he attacked instead?

The Darkness Elementalist didn't bother with the other two and slowly walked towards Alice who was trying to stand up.

Her shoulder was already bleeding heavily from the attack, with a pale face, she struggled to stand on her feet but couldn't. It was a fatal strike. If not for her reacting quickly, then the attack would have taken her life.

Looking at the young man walking her way, she realized he tricked her. His initial target was her, but he only dashed towards the injured youth as a feint to draw her closer to him.

"Once you're out of the picture, these fries wouldn't be a problem", the Darkness Elementalist chuckled lightly.

The youth in the Third stage rushed towards the Darkness Elementalist trying to protect Alice.

"Go! I'll hold him back", He roared and attacked the Darkness Elementalist.

Compared to other Academies, the Lunar Academy ensured the relationship between each student was good. Even though they might not be close friends, but as long as they saw a fellow student in danger, they have never hesitated to rush in, even if it cost them their lives. This was also the reason Alice stepped into the battle.

Even the injured youth didn't refrain from attacking, as long as they could protect Alice successfully, they were satisfied, even if it meant death. He also felt guilt because if not for him being weak, then Alice wouldn't have been in this situation.

This was the first time they were having any exchanges with Alice, even at the Academy, they never spoke. And now, she was about to die because she helped them, they couldn't accept it.

Alice looked at the two youths rushing to what looked like their deaths with a sad look, the Darkness Elementalist was not only strong, but he was also scheming as well, these were the toughest people to deal with, smart and strong people.

Within one minute, the Darkness Elementalist was able to easily defeat both youths.

"Since you want to save her so much, I'll keep you alive, so you can watch me kill her", he said towards both injured youths.

The two youths looked at each other with despair, even after sacrificing themselves, due to how severe Alice's injury was, she couldn't escape.

"Don't worry, your death will be swift. I don't have any more time to waste", the Darkness Elementalist laughed lightly and raised his hand.

Boom!

An attack rang out.

Both youths closed their eyes because they couldn't stand and watch Alice die. Hearing the sound, they just waited quietly for their deaths. After some seconds, they heard an arrogant voice.

"To think you would dare to attack her"

Chapter 109 - Sub-Zero

"To think you would dare to attack her"

On hearing the voice, Alice smiled lightly, her friends were here.

Klaus and Reynolds walked towards her slowly. The attack that connected previously was done by Klaus who instantly attacked the Darkness Elementalist on seeing he was about to strike Alice.

He heaved a sigh on seeing they came in time, had they faced the path Reynolds chose, they would have never come here. After spending almost four hours here, he met up with Reynolds on one of the paths, they had been traveling together since.

When they got to an intersection, Reynolds said they should head to the path on the right, but he was adamant they followed the path on the left, according to him, it was his gut feeling. After they argued like usual for some time, Reynolds finally agreed to follow his lead. Who knew they would see something like this?

The Darkness Elementalist on the other hand was fuming currently, at first he wanted to kill both youths, then Alice showed up, now he wanted to kill Alice, then two others showed up as well.

Being pushed back by Klaus's attack annoyed him even more.

"Hey Rey, what do you think this guy deserves", Klaus asked while giving Alice some tonic to help with her injuries.

"Death!", Reynolds said clenching his hands.

He was angry, really angry. Not just him, even though Klaus was still showing a smiling face, beneath it was a terrifying demon waiting to explode. The life of the only girl in their group was being threatened, they will not accept it.

"\*Sigh\* If only Grey was here, then killing him wouldn't be a problem", Klaus sighed softly.

He was angry, yes, but not stupid. For someone to be on the verge of killing Alice, and two other youths who were in the Third and Second stage respectively wasn't a fluke. It meant he had the strength to suppress them, even though the fact that he was able to injure Alice to this extent was quite surprising, it also showed how strong he was.

"Rey, full power", Klaus said before turning serious.

"I know", Reynolds nodded.

"Hmph! More fries seeking death", the Darkness Elementalist snorted coldly.

Although he was pushed back by Klaus's attack, he only attributed it to the fact that he was attacked unaware and had to defend quickly. His disdain for them increased further when he noticed their stages.

'One on the Second stage, and the other on the First stage. This is going to be easier than those buffoons', he thought.

But his expression changed the next second.

"An Elemental Warrior", he said in a small voice.

His head was currently aching, how can these people be a group of friends. One was a Dual Elementalist whose strength was insane for her stage, another was a summoner who can summon an Elemental Warrior. Now, he didn't dare to look down on Klaus, for him to be part of such a group, there was definitely something terrifying about him also.

Had he known there was an even more terrifying fellow who wasn't present, he would definitely curse his bad luck for clashing with such a group. Given how vengeful Klaus and the boys were, they will definitely never let the matter rest.

The battle started off quickly.

Boom! Bam!

One minute later...

Bang!

For the first time since he was battling previously, the Darkness Elementalist slammed into the wall by the side.

The Elemental Warrior wasn't giving him any chances and was attacking him from both a close distance and far distance, added to Klaus's insane attacks, he was quickly put in a passive state.

'I can't delay any further. Although I can't defeat them, they can't keep me here if I want to leave', he quickly made up his mind to escape.

Klaus was like a terrifying monster, he attacked so ingeniously that defending his strikes means creating an opening for the Elemental Warrior most of the time. Klaus also attacks just after he had finished defending or dodging the attack of the Elemental Warrior which makes defending harder.

He hadn't acquired the Great Earth Essence Liquid yet, if he were to be injured fatally in this battle, his chances of acquiring it would reduce greatly.

That was his initial goal, if not for taking a fancy of the elemental weapon, he wouldn't have wasted so much time here.

Coming to a decision, he quickly retreated but was met by an evil grin from Klaus.

"Hehehe, I knew you would take this decision. But I won't let you leave without any injuries", Klaus laughed evilly.

After the battle started, he had guessed the Darkness Elementalist would try to escape the moment he realizes he was in a difficult position. He knew too well they shouldn't engage in a prolonged battle since

Reynolds couldn't keep the summon for too long, so he had been brainstorming on how to ensure even if the Darkness Elementalist escapes, it wouldn't be without any injuries.

And the idea came to him quickly, it was a technique he acquired in one of the ancient paths. It was a water technique but it was quite difficult to execute. He had to congeal a small ice needle while storing a terrifying amount of ice in it.

After the needle comes in contact with the human body, it dissolves before releasing a bone-chilling cold into the body causing hypothermia. If congealed to an even more terrifying state, it will freeze the target instantly from the inside-out causing death. But Klaus can't get it to that stage yet.

The name of the technique was 'Sub-Zero'.

The needle pierced through the air at a terrifying speed.

The retreating Darkness Elementalist who had just used a movement technique to escape from the barrage of attacks from the Elemental Warrior was left with no way to dodge the attack.

Pu-Chi

The Ice needle pierced into his shoulder and dissolved in his body.

The second the needle dissolved in his body, his body started going numb.

'I knew this guy wasn't simple', he thought while trying to remove the effects of the cold.

Having the fire element as one of his elements made things easier, he quickly circulated it around his body which reduced the effect of the cold effectively while he was also retreating completely from the path. He didn't dare to stay any longer.

"It's a shame he also has the fire element, or even if he escaped, it would be hard to rid himself of the cold so quickly", Klaus shook his head in disappointment.

Reynolds on the other hand quickly dissipated his summon before it drains him completely of his elemental essence.

"Are you okay?", he asked while walking closer to Alice.

"Yeah, better than before", Alice nodded.

"You see, never doubt my gut feeling", Klaus said arrogantly while glaring at Reynolds.

"Yeah right, and we nearly died because of this so-called gut feeling of yours previously", Reynolds scoffed before replying.

"That was coincidental, who knew that beast would accidentally walk there?" Klaus retorted.

"You moron, how can a sleeping beast walk? The beast had been sleeping there before you decided to chose that path, waking it in the process because of your loud voice", Reynolds didn't back down.

The two youths from the Lunar Academy who had managed to stand up were about to thank the duo when they started arguing. They were stunned, they never expected the two guys who they felt were powerful to have such traits.

Alice on the other hand didn't even bother with them and just laughed lightly while focusing on healing herself, this wasn't her first time being around Klaus said Reynolds, so she knew their characters all too well.

After almost two minutes of cursing at each other, Reynolds finally praised Klaus's gut feeling. Because if not for it, then they might have lost Alice.

"Have you guys seen Grey?", Alice asked after feeling a little better.

"No, the chances of meeting at these paths is quite low. It's already a miracle, and thanks to my gut feeling we are able to reunite", Klaus said, not forgetting to praise his gut feeling as well.

Alice and Reynolds both rolled their eyes on hearing his answer.

"You should heal up, we can't delay any further, we need to reach the end of the paths as soon as possible", Reynolds said to Alice.

While they were still speaking, the other two youths came over.

"Thank you", they both bowed in appreciation.

They even offered to give them the elemental weapon, but they were refused by the group. After staying for some time, they left the group and continued on their journey.

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Back at the Volcano...

'I'm finally about to break through', Grey thought excitedly when he noticed the changes happening in his body.

#### Chapter 110 - Reborn From Fire

After refining the flame for almost one hour, he had refined almost forty percent of it and had finally acquired the fire element. Now, his previous chaotic essence orb was undergoing a change with the acquisition of a new element.

With the addition of the fire element, he currently had five elements, this, in turn, made his essence orb have five different colors with the fire element unexpectedly dominating it. But Grey couldn't bother about the reason for now and focused fully on breaking through.

He had currently reached the critical point of his breakthrough, that was, forming his essence beads. Although over fifty percent of the people who attempt to form their essence beads succeed, since there's a failure rate of almost fifty percent, it showed forming the beads was easier said than done.

Compared to Single Elementarists, the failure rate among Dual Elementarists was lower due to having higher spiritual energy, then for Multi Elementarists, their success rate was a whopping eighty percent. Because, forming each bead required a delicate procedure, and if Dual Elementarists succeeds in forming the first bead, given the experience from the first one, they shouldn't have any problems when forming the second one. But on some rare occasions, they fail to do so.

But for most Elementarists, their failures occur when forming the first bead. And once one fails in forming the essence beads, they would be stuck at the Arcane Plane, and only a few natural treasures could help them.

Only Dual Elementarists and Multi Elementarists have it better since even if they failed in one element, they could still succeed in the other. Although their strength wouldn't be what it was supposed to be, it was better than not advancing at all.

Being fully aware of this, Grey knew there was no room for errors. Rushing into forming any of his beads might spell disaster for him. But once he completes the process, then he would become an Origin Plane Elementarist. He was slowly getting to the pinnacle of the Azure empire.

Calming his mind, he decided to form the essence bead for his wind element first, the reason was quite simple, among the other elements in his essence orb, it occupied the smallest mass. So he would use it to get familiar with the technique of creating his beads.

Also, if one's spiritual energy isn't strong enough, they might not be able to hold the elemental essence for too long, so they will not be able to compress it properly. If these type of people even manages to break through to the Origin Plane, their overall strength will just be slightly better than an Arcane Plane Elementarist, and geniuses like Grey and Alice could beat them easily even if they were still in the Eighth Plane of the Arcane Plane.

Grey slowly used his spiritual energy to first isolate the wind element from the others before forming a sphere around it. After successfully forming the sphere, he slowly started compressing it. Given his strong spiritual energy, he had no issues with holding the element in the sphere.

It took him almost fifteen minutes to compress the sphere to more than one-fifth of the previous size of the wind element while it was still in its previous matter state. While the wind element was still in a matter state in his essence orb, it occupied a space of at least twenty-five centimeters.

'I can still compress it a little further', Grey pushed it to the limit.

Although this seemed rash, there was a reason for it. The smaller you compress your essence beads, the thicker your elemental essence. This would then increase the boost in strength, speed, and defense it gives the user.

This is also one of the reasons why, if Grey or Alice was still in the Eighth stage of the Arcane Plane, there were a few people in the Origin Plane they could defeat. But, they had not battled any of such people though. These such people are only Origin Plane Elementarists in name, and there was also a chance their beads might collapse reducing them back to the Arcane Plane.

Another three minutes went by and Grey was able to compress it to one-eighth of its previous size. But after getting to this level, it didn't budge anymore. When he tried to force it once more, he realized it was already at its maximum, and trying any further would make it unstable, so he ceased his actions immediately.

With the knowledge from the first one, he started compressing the second element. Although he had done it once, he still didn't dare to act rashly. But compared to the first time, his speed in compression was faster.

While forming the first bead, it took him almost twenty minutes, but during the second one, he didn't take up to fifteen minutes. After it got that the same size as the first one, it also stopped.

Thirty minutes later...

Boom!

An incomparably strong aura shot out of Grey's body, but he quickly retracted it when he remembered Void was still cultivating beside him.

After breaking through, another change started taking place, his body started growing stronger by the second. When he came to the trial land two months ago, the strength of his physical body could only rival a Third stage Arcane Plane Elementalist, and because he hadn't trained his body since arriving here, it only improved by a single stage.

But at the speed it was increasing, there was a chance it might get to the stage where it can rival the strength of an Eighth stage or Ninth stage Arcane Plane Elementalist.

Just as the strength of his body was increasing, an idea struck him. What if he used the rest of the flame to strengthen his body. It was a natural treasure after all, and doing this was different from honing his body with elemental essence.

There was a difference between strengthening the body with the elements when cultivating, and what he was about to do. He would literally have to use the flame to refine his muscles, tissues, and flesh thereby improving their strength.

Compared to refining with the elemental essence, this process was going to be painful.

Since he had already decided to do it, he didn't delay any further and struck the iron while it was hot.

Void who was still cultivating felt the sudden increase in temperature and quickly exited his cultivation to find out what was going on.

The scene of Grey being enveloped in blue flames nearly threw him off his little feet.

'What the hell is he doing? Even though it hasn't been long since I was born, I'm confident they don't absorb flames this way', he thought to himself.

He saw how Grey was refining it previously and knew he's absorbing the flame. But now, how did it turn out like this? Looking at Grey's face calmly, he could see it was distorted from pain. He could even feel Grey was in a tremendous amount of pain from their connection.

'Why would he put himself through this pain just to grow stronger?', he asked himself.

When studying Grey some moments ago, he realized the strength of his body was increasing at a dramatic rate. In fact, his body contained so much explosive energy that it was terrifying.

'How could the human body contain so much strength?', Void asked himself in disbelief.

Beasts are known for their tough bodies, but not humans. The body of a Magical Beast in the same Rank as a human is far stronger compared to the latter.

Grey's mind was currently a mess, the pain was stronger than he expected, it was even three times stronger than his expectations. It was like the flame was slowly eating away his flesh, tissues, and muscles, and slowly remolding them, making them stronger.

'It's almost like being reborn from fire', he thought jokingly while still in pain.

Being strong-willed, he gritted his teeth and endured the pain of feeling his body being burnt and remolded. Due to the speed at which his flesh, tissues, and muscles were remolding, Void couldn't see it.

It was only after twenty-five minutes of constant suffering did the flame slowly start to die down. Grey had cursed in his mind so many times already because of pain.

What was left of his clothes after the battle with the Elemental Warrior were burnt to nothingness, luckily he still had a spare.

'If I were to engage in another tough battle that might destroy my clothes, then I'll have to walk around looking like a beggar. That can't happen! \*Sigh\* Looks like I'll have to be careful when fighting next time', Grey shook his head wryly.

When he stood up, all his bones made cracking sounds. His skin was smooth, and one wouldn't find even a single blemish on it.,

"\*Phew\* Finally, I'm in the Origin Plane", he breathed out heavily.

Observing his body properly, his essence orb had long disappeared, in its place were five rotating beads.