

Affinity 281

Chapter 281 - It's Been Long

Lunar City, the Mayor's office.

"My Lord, I have something to report." A guard's voice could be heard from outside the office.

The new Mayor was currently seated on his seat, accompanied by two men. He had a slim build and short grey hair with a mustache. He looked to be around his late thirties.

"Come in." He said calmly.

The guard entered the office and bowed with a knee to the ground.

"Speak."

"My Lord, a young man was sighted entering the City with a black cat on his shoulder, we believe he's the one you have been looking for." The guard reported.

"Where is he?" The Mayor stood up instantly on hearing this.

"He headed to the southern part of the city but disappeared soon after." The guard reported with his head still bowed.

"Fools! How can a brat in the Origin Plane disappear just like that? Search the city, he's still inside. Block the gates, no one goes in or out." The Mayor ordered.

The guard bowed before leaving hastily to give out the Mayor's orders.

After the guard left, the two men who were seated by the side looked at the Mayor curiously, one of them couldn't refrain from asking anymore, "What did the boy do to His Majesty?"

The Mayor sat down before looking at the two men, just like him, they were both from Capital City as well, "He has something the Emperor d.e.s.i.r.es."

"Huh! Something the Emperor d.e.s.i.r.es? What could that possibly be?" The second man asked.

"I don't know, but the Emperor said the boy brought it out of that place."

At Hugh's house, Grey was oblivious to what was currently going on in the city, they had just entered the secret room, and he was thinking of ways to hide the wood in his spatial ring without Hugh finding out. But he knew it was impossible. With no other choice in mind, he decided to hide it after getting to the alley, just like the time he came with Klaus.

While Grey was thinking about how to leave, a weird scene was currently playing out, Hugh was actually apologizing to the tree before cutting it. He was even holding the tree tightly, making Void who was watching feel uncomfortable.

'This guy is just plain weird. It's a f.u.c.k.i.n.g tree, just cut it and be done with it.' said Void.

'Let him be. As long as I'll get what I came for, he can do whatever he wants with the trees. It's none of our business.' Grey said nonchalantly.

After Hugh was done, he cut out a branch that was double the size of the one he previously gave to Grey. Grey gladly thanked him before taking it. With what he came for, he soon left his house with the big wood branch on his shoulder. The guards who were stationed outside the house instantly lost interest in him when they saw that he came out with a piece of wood, they took him for someone who was just as weird as Hugh, a wood loving moron.

When Grey got to the alley, he checked if he was still being monitored, but after seeing that no spiritual sense was locked on him, he heaved a sigh before keeping the wood in his spatial ring.

'With this, I wouldn't need to leave the valley until I'm done.' Grey clenched his fist before walking in the direction of the gate.

This time, he not only kept his disguise on, but Void was nowhere to be seen. After he heard what Hugh said, he knew he messed up when he entered the city. But what kept bugging him was that he didn't know why the new Mayor was so adamant on getting him, what did he have or know that brought so much interest to him?

When he got close to the city gate, he knew his conjecture was right, the guards definitely recognized him when he entered the city previously.

'Hey, can't you just jump over the wall? The other side is very free.' Void who was nowhere to be seen advised.

'No, this isn't a small city like Zivia City, there's a huge detection array around the walls. The guards would instantly be aware once I do that.' replied Grey.

He was only able to know this because he was friends with the son of the previous Mayor. Klaus, being a good friend, told him a lot of the city, especially after his father stepped down, he even told him where the city treasury was located in the Mayor's compound, in case he planned on robbing the new Mayor.

'What do we do now?' asked Void.

'Wait it out, it's not like I'm in a hurry anyway. I'm going to a tavern,' said Grey.

'It's been a long time since I tried comprehending the elements. I've been so focused on the space element that I forgot I have a technique for the darkness element.' He thought.

There's no way the Mayor would keep the city closed for the entire day, even if he does, it's none of his business. He could even keep it closed for a month, it was none of his business.

Grey went to a tavern that was close to the Mayor's compound, with his disguise on, he didn't have a problem with taking a room. When he entered his room, Void appeared, but Grey didn't bother with him.

He sat crossed leg and entered a semi-conscious state, his spiritual self appeared in the Chaos Space.

"Other than my fire element, the rest are either blue or purple grades. Instead of increasing the ones on purple, I should find a way to get a new element. It's been so long I had a new element." Grey muttered out.

While in this spiritual state, he couldn't take the things in his spatial ring here. Since he planned to comprehend the darkness element, he came out of the Chaos Space and brought out the darkness element techniques he got from Quinn. He had a lot of time in his hands, so he started slowly studying it.

Chapter 282 - New Plan

Grey stayed in his room for the rest of the day without taking a single step outside, he didn't even check if the city gate was still blocked or not. He focused fully on his learning.

'Hey, create a small darkness ball, I need to observe it.' Grey turned to Void after not getting a result from the scroll.

He never really expected to make any progress immediately, so he wasn't disappointed by his lack of results.

'Okay.' Void nodded before making a small mass appear in the shape of a ball. He had been idle since they got here, so doing this was better than nothing.

Grey watched as the ball of black mass floated mid-air, he carefully observed its properties. After watching it for a while, he picked a cup from the table and gradually placed it in the ball of black mass. He wanted to watch how it's able to corrode the cup, maybe he might be able to understand it more if he could understand its destructive ability.

Corrosion was the most notable ability of the darkness element, it could even be said to be its main ability. Grey felt if he understood this, then comprehending the darkness element would happen sooner than he expected. Having Void with him also made things better.

As soon as the cup came in contact with the darkness ball, it started being shrouded by a black color, it started from the bottom of the cup to the top. This was even before the cup completely entered the black mass. After the darkness spread to the top of the cup, Grey quickly let go and used the wind element to support it mid-air, but the darkness soon started creeping into the wind he was using and it was soon destroyed.

The cup turned to ash from a touch from the darkness ball.

'Hmm, it's like a venomous substance, all it needs is but a touch.' Grey thought while observing the ash that was on the floor.

He decided to try another experiment, given how corrosive the darkness element was, he wanted to see if his powerful blue fire would be able to withstand it.

With a wave of his hand, a blue fireball appeared and slowly started going closer to the ball of darkness. Void watched curiously as Grey's blue flame gradually got to his mass of darkness.

When the fireball touched the black floating mass, a tug of war started. At first, the darkness started to corrode the fireball, but the fireball soon fought back, it grew brighter before pushing away the darkness around it. Both elements went to a standstill with none giving the other an upper hand. After a while, Grey saw both balls had started to shrink, so he extinguished the flame.

'Hmm, the flame is too strong. I'll use the earth element to see how it feels as the darkness element corrodes it.' Grey thought.

'Why are you doing this?' Void was forced to ask. He didn't understand why Grey was trying different experiments with the darkness element, he was even more confused when he saw Grey studying the scroll that was about the darkness element.

'I'm trying to understand how it works. If I can, then I'd be able to use the darkness element sooner than I thought.' explained Grey.

'Wait, you have the darkness element?' asked a confused Void.

'Technically, not yet,' said Grey.

'You can have it? But, how's that possible?' Void asked wide-eyed.

'Oh, you were still asleep when I told the others...' Grey told Void about his ability to comprehend new elements, leaving the small cat lost for words.

Void had never heard of anyone or anything that has been able to learn new elements. Well, he hadn't been in the world for a long time now, he knew from the others that one couldn't have an element they were not attuned with.

'Doesn't that mean you can learn the space element as well?' asked Void.

'Yup, every single element out there.' Grey said with a grin.

'Damn! That's amazing.' exclaimed Void.

'Yeah, it's just that, comprehending each element isn't easy.' Grey sighed before creating a knife with the earth element.

Void became even more curious after finding out what Grey was trying to do. Grey continued with his experiments till it was evening, he went out to get some food for them and was surprised to see that the city was still on lockdown.

'What did I do?' He asked himself in annoyance.

If he knew why they were looking for him, he would be less worried, but now, he had no idea why they were searching for him. All he knew was that it was not anything good, given how the Mayor's making it look like he was a fugitive.

When he got home, he ate with Void before sending him to infiltrate the Mayor's house. He needed to know why they were looking for him, and the Mayor was the only one he could find out from. Luckily, he had Void who could go into a place guarded by Overlord Plane experts unnoticed.

While Void was spying on the Mayor to see if he could find out why they were searching for Grey, Grey was busy trying to comprehend the darkness element. For some reason, he felt he would be able to easily comprehend it. This feeling made him strive harder, he was slowly starting to understand the corrosiveness of the darkness element, and once he's able to, it would greatly boost his chances at comprehending the element.

Void returned two days later with good news, the city was no longer on lockdown. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to find out why they were searching for Grey. The Mayor never spoke of it when he was there, not even once!

Grey felt burdened by his lack of not knowing why they were looking for him.

'I'll have to abduct one of those Origin Plane Instructors who are stationed around the forest, they should at least know why they are searching for me.' Grey came up with a plan.

Grey and Void could easily overpower any of the Instructors that are still in the Origin Plane, but just to be safe, he would find one who is still in the Mid-stages of the Origin Plane, like him.

'Haha! Yes! I love this plan!' Void said excitedly.

It was finally time to beat up someone!

'We're not beating anyone Void, we only want to ask him some questions.' Grey clarified.

Chapter 283 - Fix Him

Grey kept his disguise on as they left the city. The guards at the gate were more than when they came in, rigorously checking every individual that was entering or leaving the city.

Void was already outside by the time Grey came out, but it was only after going almost one kilometer away from the city did he appear close to him.

'I'm pumped! Who do I have to beat?' Void asked as soon as he appeared.

'I have no idea, we'll have to get there first.' replied Grey.

He was going to take the same path he took when he was leaving the forest. Once he gets in, he would send Void out to bring an Instructor, seeing how energetic Void was, he is already starting to pity the unlucky Instructor he would choose.

After they got to the forest, Grey realized the number of Instructors increased.

'It's probably because they found out I left the valley. Hmph! Such pests.' He snorted coldly.

He was chased almost throughout his time in the trial land, as soon as he left the place, he was attacked and Void was injured, now it hadn't even been up to two weeks since leaving, yet he has to go into hiding. It was starting to get on his nerves!

He sent Void ahead of him to scout the area like he did when he wanted to leave, after Void returned, he was able to navigate through the forest easily, without being found out. Without wasting any time, he quickly entered the valley, before sending Void out to abduct an Instructor. He made sure to warn him to handle it as quietly as possible, not to alert the others.

Two hours later.

In Chris' valley.

Splash!

A ball of water splashed on the face of a man who was tied to an earthen chair. He had claw marks on his face, although small, it was very distinct. His eyes were swollen, his hair was a mess, his clothes were torn on different parts. From how he looked, it was easy to discern that he must have been through a lot of hardship.

When the ball of water was splashed on his face, he opened his eyes, but everything looked blurry. Seeing the unfamiliar scenery, he hastily looked around, but he still wasn't able to see properly. He tried standing, but failed. It was at that time that he noticed he was bound by ropes.

He quickly tried to use his element, but his expression changed when he realized he couldn't.

'Do you think he can see us?' Void asked when he saw the panicking Instructor.

They were standing right in front of the Instructor, yet he hadn't even taken notice of them.

'Given how he looks, I'm surprised he's still alive.' Grey sneered.

'I'm sorry, I got carried away.' Void apologized.

Grey looked at him speechless. When Void brought the man some minutes ago, he almost couldn't believe that the man was still alive.

'You call that being carried away? Look at him, do you think he can see us properly?' Grey pointed at the man who seems to be having difficulty seeing his surroundings, much less Grey and Void.

Void looked at the man before shaking his head, even he didn't think the man would be able to see them.

"Hey, can you hear me?" Grey snapped his finger in front of the man to draw his attention to him.

The Instructor looked ahead of him, although he couldn't see properly, he was able to easily figure out where the sound was coming from.

"Who is that? How dare you kidnap me?!" The Instructor yelled out arrogantly, stunning Grey in the process.

'Are we the ones tied to a chair, or is he?' the dumbfounded Grey asked Void who was on his shoulder.

Void didn't have a reply, and raised both shoulders as if saying 'I don't know'.

Grey looked around just to be sure they were alone before sending another ball of water at the Instructor. He felt the Instructor wasn't awake yet, he's probably semi-conscious.

"Are you mad?! Didn't hear me the first time? I'm an Instructor of the Lunar Academy, if you know you aren't tired of living, you'll let me go now!" The Instructor continued yelling.

'F.u.c.k! Void, where did you get such a psychopath?' Grey cursed out irritatedly.

'I didn't know he was like this. It's not like they write 'I'm a psychopath' on their heads.' replied a dejected Void.

'Fine, since he's like this because of your beating, fix him.' Grey said before taking a seat on the wooden chair Chris had outside.

Since the Instructor was being stupid, he would leave him with Void, given Void's character, it would be a miracle if he didn't kill him.

Some minutes later, the valley was filled with the screams of the helpless Instructor. At first, he was ordering them, but it soon got to the point when he started cursing at them, but a few minutes later, he started begging. Void continued beating him and a few minutes later, other than the sobs of the Instructor, Grey couldn't hear any other thing.

"It's enough, I think he's ready to talk," Grey said while standing up from Chris' chair.

The crying Instructor continued crying even after Void had stopped beating him. His previous swollen eyes had turned double their previous size, now there is definitely no way he would be able to see.

"Hey, can you hear me?" Grey repeated the same action as before and unlike the last response, the Instructor nodded.

"Good. I have some questions for you, I believe you can talk, right?" asked Grey.

"Y...e...s"

'A little slow, but it'll do.' thought Grey.

He made an earthen chair close to the Instructor and started questioning him. He first asked when he became an Instructor in the Academy. And it was just as he suspected, the Instructor was part of the new people assigned. After a little about his background, he asked the important question that had been bugging him.

"Why is the new Principal searching for me?"

Chapter 284 - Just Barely

"Why is the new Principal searching for me?" Grey asked.

"I... I don't know." The Instructor hesitated before replying.

"Hmm, looks like you're still not ready to speak. Void, fix him one more time." Grey said nonchalantly.

He was not so kind-hearted or free to play games with the Instructor, if the Instructor had no plans of speaking, he'd just kill him and get Void to bring another one.

Void was more than happy to give him more beatings. Unfortunately, the Instructor had no plans of cooperating with him, because he quickly agreed to say what he knew.

'*Sigh* Such a shame.' Void shook his head after Grey told him to leave the Instructor alone.

"What do you know?" Grey asked as he came closer to the Instructor.

"Water, please..." The Instructor begged as soon as he noticed Grey was coming close to him.

Grey looked at the stream behind him, but still gave him the water he created with his water element.

The Instructor spat out the water as soon as it got into his mouth.

There's a difference between normal water, and water made by an Elementalist. The water made by an Elementalist had a sour and metallic taste that didn't taste good for drinking. Although, in extreme times, some Elementalists have been known to drink it, but it rarely happens.

"Speak," Grey said, not caring about the Instructor's reaction. He had already tagged most of the Instructors as an enemy, and guessing that this one was one of the new ones, he had almost zero sympathies for him.

"But... but..." The Instructor wanted to speak of the running water he was hearing, but remembering how Void beat him up, he shut his mouth.

"I don't know about anything, I don't even know who you..." He paused midway, thinking why someone he didn't know would kidnap him.

Initially, he didn't know who he was speaking to, but hearing the mention of the word 'New Principal', he was able to figure out who he was talking to.

"It's you!" The Instructor yelled in shock. Never in this world would he expect that the young man they were searching for would kidnap him.

"Instructor, my patience is very slim," Grey said slowly.

"This has nothing to do with me, I'm only following orders." The Instructor begged.

"I guess you're not needed." Grey stood up from his seat, planning to let Void kill him.

"Wait..." The Instructor called out, "All I know is that you have something the Emperor wants."

"The Emperor? So, you mean this has nothing to do with my Teacher?" Grey sat down, not too surprised about being the one they were looking for. What truly shocked him was that he had something the Emperor wanted.

He didn't recall ever meeting the Emperor, nor did his Teacher leave anything important with him that others would covet, except for his teachings, that is.

"Yes, yes, the Emperor. He ordered that you should be captured, alive." The Instructor nodded continuously.

"And?"

"Nothing, that's all I know."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I swear on my life, I don't know anything else."

"Void,"

"Wait, wait, he also didn't want us to make this known to the public, and... and he only asked about you after the trial had closed."

"Anything else you want me to know?"

"No, that's all I know."

Grey looked at the Instructor for a while, he couldn't say he fully believed him, but he felt worried about the involvement of the Emperor.

'Hmm, the Emperor. How does a mere Instructor know that the Emperor is the one who wants me?' He asked himself.

It's totally impractical for someone who is only in the Origin Plane to know about this.

'Void, bring in another Instructor.' Grey said, he wanted to confirm something.

'Yes!' Void exclaimed happily.

'Alive, please.'

'Wasn't this one alive?'

'Just barely.'

'Fine.'

Void went out again, and this time, it took him only thirty minutes to come back with an Instructor. Fortunately, this one was able to see clearly. Grey asked him the same question he asked the previous one who was currently unconscious on another chair, and he got a different answer. This one apparently only knew that the new Principal wanted him, and nothing else.

Grey woke up the unconscious Instructor, and after asking again, he found out the Instructor eavesdropped on the higher-ups during one of their meetings.

He currently had two possibilities in his head, first, the Principal was only searching for him because of his Teacher. Second, the Principal was searching for him because the Emperor ordered it. And to be honest, he believed the first possibility more than the second one.

What could he possibly bring out of the trial land that the Emperor would want? It was when he was thinking about this he recalled something.

'The Great Essence Liquid.' thought Grey.

That was the only thing he could think of that would make even an Emperor search for him, and from how the Emperor wanted to hide it from the public, it's like he wasn't the only one who knew about it. There's also the chance that he was overthinking, and maybe the Emperor wanted him for a different reason entirely. But whatever it was, he didn't want to find out, especially given how they were searching for him like a criminal, and what the Instructor said.

After what happened in the Capital the last time, going there wasn't part of his agenda.

"Void, take care of them," Grey stood up and walked in the direction of his shack. Well, almost a shack.

The shack had been destroyed from different explosions, and after using the earth element to make a shack multiple times, he gave up and just stayed in his roofless wooden shack. It wasn't so bad after he got used to it.

Before he got in, he could already hear the screams of the Instructors, but it quickly came to an end. There was no way he was going to let the Instructors leave, doing that would mean putting himself in danger, that wasn't something he would deliberately do.

Chapter 285 - Appearance Of A Sixth Element

Grey once again focused on completing the wooden object, since the Emperor didn't want to make it known to the public that he was searching for him, then he wanted to quickly make the device and escape from this place.

Two weeks went by in this manner and the search for Grey did not decrease, but rather it intensified. Not just that, but small skirmishes have been happening more frequently between the Qilin and Azure empires that everyone felt the war wasn't too far away from starting.

In Chris' valley.

"Haha! Finally!" Grey's excited laughter rang out from his shack.

Void was previously lying outside leisurely, but after hearing Grey's laughter, he hurriedly went in.

'What, what? Did you finally make it?' He asked as soon as he went in.

'Haha! Of course! I knew I would be able to make it.' Grey said excitedly before taking out a wooden item.

Compared to the previously square-like ones, this one was circular, and almost five times the size of the previous ones. Although it was circular, it looked very crude.

'What is that?' Void asked when he saw the crude-looking circular object.

'What do you... you know what? I'm not going to answer that.' Grey said before tapping on the middle of the circular object with his index finger.

"Huh! Why are there five sources instead of four?" Grey muttered under his breath.

'This must be me, those belong to Klaus, Alice, and Reynolds, so who does the last one belong to?' Grey first pointed at the light with the second highest number of lights before pointing at the three which had one light each.

The three lights obviously represented his friends, and the reason he was able to guess his light was the one with the second highest number was because of the proximity of them. The source with the highest number was quite some distance away from them.

'If this is you, then who is this?' Void asked curiously.

'It should belong to the people who originally created this thing. Since I linked mine with the other ones, it's also connected to theirs.' Grey speculated.

This was the only reason he could think of.

'Well, can't you just remodify your own so you don't see them? You know they might also be able to locate you with this.' suggested Void.

'It's not entirely possible for them to be able to do that, you see...!' Grey explained how he made this wooden object.

Unlike the previous ones which were all connected in some way, this one was different from the others. First, it didn't have a distance limitation, secondly, the arrays he drew on this one made it almost impossible for any other wooden object to be able to locate it. Lastly, he only linked the others to it, and not the other way around.

He used the identical array in the previous ones to create some sort of a connection with the one he made, he could locate them, but they couldn't locate him.

'You mean to say only you can find them, but they can't find you?' asked Void.

'Exactly,' replied Grey.

While he was making it, he thought of the possibility of this and realized since these ones were made and given to Quinn in such high numbers, it meant the people who made them had more. But neither they nor the people have had any reactions from their respective wooden objects. This means that

there's a limitation to the distance. If not, the people would've searched for him when he was crushing the wooden objects during his research.

'When are we leaving?' Void asked. Since Grey was already done with what he wanted to do, then it was time to leave.

'Not yet, I'm already very close to comprehending the darkness element. It would be a shame if I leave without it.' Grey said before keeping the device.

During the past two weeks, Grey had not only focused on the device, but he also tried comprehending the darkness element. Had it not been for the near success he could feel from his comprehension, he would leave as soon as he completed his device.

Void looked at him a little frustrated before going outside once again, 'I'm going hunting.'

He disappeared from the valley after saying this. This had been the only thing he had been doing for the past two weeks while Grey was cooked up with his project. Other than hunting, he had also been venturing into the Academy as well as the city in search of shiny things.

Grey knew what he was up to, but knowing how hard it would be for anyone to catch him, he let him be. And Void had been very careful with the things he had been taking, well, that's according to him. The real reason he let Void go into the city and the Academy compound was so that he could bring the latest news to him.

Initially, he only had the Lightning, Earth, Wind, Water, and Fire elements present in his Chaos Space, but now, a small dark place had started forming. This represented the darkness element.

When he first entered the Chaos Space, the initial five elements were present. He had always felt puzzled as to why he couldn't find any other element in it, now he understood it, they would slowly appear as he comes in contact with them.

He had always been in contact with the four elements, which were fire, water, wind, and earth. The reason why lightning was added to the fray was that it was his original element.

'So that's it, huh?' thought Grey.

Once he starts comprehending a new element that was not in the Chaos Space, it would appear in the Chaos Space, making comprehension easier. This gave him more hope in being able to comprehend the space element soon.

Chapter 286 - Appearance Of A Sixth Element II

Grey stood in the Chaos Space and looked at the budding darkness in it. He still didn't understand how this place truly worked, other than when he came here to comprehend the elements or to check his elemental grades, he knew nothing else about it.

The appearance of the darkness element gave him a little understanding, but it's not really much. Compared to the darkness element, he had been in more contact with the space element, yet he hadn't seen anything concerning it in the Chaos Space.

"*Phew* Here goes nothing," Grey sighed before walking into the darkness.

When he stepped into the darkness, he could sense a ravaging destructive energy that wanted to destroy everything in its part. Other than that, there was really nothing else. He looked around, but he couldn't get a glimpse of light, the only source of light was from the place he used in entering the darkness.

He walked about a hundred meters into the darkness, but as soon as he took another step past the one hundred meters mark, he suddenly felt a sense of danger and quickly retreated.

'The energy there is at least five times greater than it is here. I can't go any further, or I might hurt myself. Guess this is the first limit for this element huh?' He thought.

Each element in the Chaos Space has a separate space, there's always a limit when he first enters. After his elemental grade for that element increases, the distance he could go in without hurting himself increases. There's a different distance in each element, like for his wind element, before comprehending it, he could go as deep as three hundred meters, but for his fire, it was only two hundred meters. The darkness element has been the shortest so far.

With that, Grey sat crossed leg in the darkness and closed his eyes. There's no better way to understand something than to personally feel it. The destructive and corrosive energy of the darkness element started ravaging his spiritual body, giving him a better understanding of it.

This was his first time entering the darkness space in the Chaos Space, and it was a strange feeling. He had experienced the feeling of the fire, water, lightning, wind, and earth element, but this was the time he was experiencing the darkness element on his body, well, spiritual body.

Twenty minutes later.

'Crap! So soon?' Grey opened his eyes before standing up and dashing straight for the only source of light in the darkness space. Parts of his spiritual body was starting to slowly become black.

He managed to come out from the darkness space within a few seconds, but his left hand was almost completely black, and even though he was currently in a spiritual state, it was very painful.

The darkness which was previously moving upwards had stopped in its track. Grey stared at his left hand in fear, this was only the second time he had been hurt in the Chaos Space. The first time he was hurt was when he entered the lightning space for the first time, and it was because he didn't understand the rules of the place at that time.

Even though he knew that the time he could spend in the darkness space was short due to the short distance he could travel, he expected it to at least get to an hour, not twenty minutes.

The color of his hand slowly started reverting to its normal color after thirty minutes of pain.

'Shit! I hate this element!' Grey complained.

But as soon as the pain stopped, he ran back into the darkness space. He couldn't stop himself, how could he give up on the darkness element just because of a few minutes of pain?

This time, he sensibly timed himself. He stayed in the darkness space for only about fifteen minutes. After the fifteen minutes time, he would go out of the darkness space. He repeated the same routine another three times before he noticed he couldn't go in anymore.

'Well, that's it for today.'

By the time he came out of the Chaos Space, it was already late, but Void was not in the shack. He didn't sense Void in the valley as well, but he knew he wasn't far away.

'Where are you?' He asked Void through their mind link.

'On my way.' replied Void.

Grey sat down close to the stream and placed his legs inside it, enjoying the coolness of it.

Bam!

A dog-like beast with antlers was dumped on the ground before Void appeared above it.

'I brought dinner.'

'I'm out of ingredients,' Grey replied with a shrug.

'I know, that's why I got you some.' Void said before making some small containers to appear close to Grey.

Grey picked up one of the containers, opened the lid, and sniffed it. 'This isn't used for cooking, it's what ladies use for make-up.'

Grey burst out laughing when he realized what Void brought back thinking it was ingredients used for cooking. Although there were two among the five items he brought which were ingredients, he couldn't use them on this meat.

He decided to roast the meat without any ingredients, it wasn't like it wouldn't taste good without the ingredients anyway. The next day, Grey gave Void a detailed description of the ingredients he wanted before going into the Chaos Space.

Three weeks passed in this manner, Grey stayed in the darkness space most of the time, with Void having free reign to go out as much as he pleased. Now, Grey could stay in the darkness space for almost one hour without getting hurt by the darkness element.

'Just a little more, and I'll finally be able to leave this place,' Grey thought.

The only good news he got so far was that he could freely come out of the forest now since the Instructors weren't searching for him in the forest anymore. During the next week, he would occasionally head to the city, with his disguise on of course, and a large cloak.

One week later.

Grey was currently sitting in a crossed leg position in the darkness space, he looked like a statue that was completely covered by a black cocoon.

A crack ran across the cocoon, after the first crack, more lines started spreading across the cocoon.

Boom!

The cocoon exploded out, spreading in all directions, and Grey who was seated opened his eyes, but his eyes were pitch-black.

Chapter 287 - The Darkness Element

Grey's looked around, and the darkness seemed perfectly lit. He was currently seated close to the one hundred meters mark, with a casual step, he walked past it into the other side.

'Hmm, even after awakening my darkness element, it's still difficult to freely enter this place.' He thought before walking back.

Just as he was about to walk out of the darkness space, he sensed a strange occurrence in his body that was outside the Chaos Space.

'Huh?' He wore a confused face, a little taken aback by what he was sensing.

It was only after a few seconds he realized what was happening, he was starting to form the elemental bead for his darkness element. His previous five elements were attained before he broke through to the Origin Plane, so he forgot about this.

Without wasting any time, he sat down crossed leg while still in the darkness space and focused on forming his elemental bead. What better place to form an elemental bead than the place where the element is abundant?

He was currently in a spiritual state, but he could perfectly form it in his body that was outside the Chaos Space.

He was already very familiar with the technique after already creating five, with a calm mind, he used his spiritual energy to form a sphere around the darkness element which was still in a chaotic state. After forming the sphere, he slowly started compressing it. He made sure to compress it to its limit, while also making sure not to overdo it.

It took him about ten minutes to completely form it. As soon as he finished it, he sensed the increase in his strength. Unfortunately, he was unable to get to the Sixth stage of the Origin Plane. He expected this since it hadn't been long he broke through to the Fifth stage, and after he broke through to the Fifth stage, he had not made any attempts to even cultivate. Not just that, but he knew with every increase in strength, the harder it would be for him to breakthrough.

When he was done with forming the elemental bead, he stood up and left the darkness space heading in the direction of the mountain peak in the Chaos Space, although he could already guess the elemental grade of his new element, he still wanted to see it for himself. Who knows, maybe it might go higher than the pink grade.

After walking to the stone, he placed his hand on it, and after the usual routine, the stone lit up with six different colors. The fire element took up most of the stone, while the lightning and wind elements which were blue grades each covered the same area, the earth and water element were purple each, while the darkness element was pink.

'Hmm, none of my elements have seen any increment for a while now. I guess I've been too focused on getting a new one.' Grey thought before leaving the Chaos Space.

His previously motionless body twitched before he opened his eyes, a dark aura spread out from where he was seated, and its corrosiveness slightly affected the things around him. The wooden shack slowly started decaying, while the grass around the house also showed signs of decaying. Luckily, nothing important was close to him, by important, he meant his Teacher's chair which was some meters away from his shack.

Void who was outside sensed the aura and quickly stood up, he could already guess that Grey had awakened the darkness element. This excited him because they would be leaving this boring place soon.

'Hey, you've done it?' He still asked even after knowing the answer.

Grey nodded before opening his hand, and the black mass appeared above it. It gave off a deadly eerie aura which gave Void a fright. He smiled before sending it in Void's direction.

Void quickly escaped with the space element, 'Hmph! Even though you have this now, I still have the space element, which gives me the edge.'

'I'll get it soon, that's when you really need to worry.' Grey smirked when he saw how easily Void escaped his attack.

'When will we be leaving?' Void asked the question that was important to him.

'In a week's time or so. I still need to prepare the devices for the others, I'm already done with two, all I need is one more.' said Grey.

During the time he was trying to comprehend the darkness element, whenever he couldn't enter the darkness space, he would focus on making the devices. He hadn't been able to figure out how to add a communication array, so he left that out for now.

The devices he was making for the others weren't like his own, they would only be able to sense each other, but not the fourth group, the people who originally made the wooden object. He was scared that maybe if it was linked to it, they might curiously head there, or maybe those people might be able to sense them.

Void nodded without asking any more questions, this was the reason they stayed here for so long anyway, so it would be a waste if they didn't prepare the other devices for the other three.

Grey wasn't too bothered with the device, since he already knew how to make it, it was no longer an issue, what really bothered him was another issue.

'I still have four with me, one of them belongs to Klaus' dad, which leaves me with only three. If I use one now I'll be left with two.' He thought.

He was currently contemplating if he should use the Great Earth Essence to improve the elemental grade of his darkness element, but it didn't take him long to come to a decision. He originally thought of giving one to each of his parents, then one to his Teacher, and then Klaus' father, but it looks like his dad won't be getting any since he was about to use it.

After coming to a decision, he immediately brought out one of the drops of the Great Essence Liquid and started refining it.

Chapter 288 - Borrowing Some Books

The last time he absorbed the Great Earth Essence Liquid, it took him around six hours or so, this time, he did it within four hours. His absorption speed when it came to cultivating had increased significantly with the increase in his strength, as well as elements.

'At this rate, if I were to enter the trial land again and focus fully on cultivating, I shouldn't have a problem with getting to the Overlord Plane within six months.' Grey thought while rubbing his chin, '*Sigh* Unfortunately, that's impossible.'

He entered the Chaos Space to see what grade his darkness element got to, he expected it to be around the purple grade at least, and he wasn't disappointed. Now of his six elements, the fire element was cyan, the lightning and wind elements were blue, the earth, water, and darkness elements were purple.

The only disappointing thing about the increase in his darkness elemental grade was that he still didn't break through to the Sixth stage of the Origin Plane, but he could sense he wasn't far from it.

Three days later.

Grey walked out of the decayed-looking shack while stretching his body, it was finally time for them to leave this place, and he couldn't be happier. He brought out three disk-like wooden objects, and lightly tapped on the middle of each of them. A hologram appeared above them, and four lights could be seen, all very close to each other.

It was just as Grey planned, they were all only linked to each other, so they couldn't track the ones he got from Quinn, only his own could do that. He kept them in his storage ring, before taking out his crude-looking own, after tapping on the middle, a hologram appeared.

"This should be either Alice or Reynolds, Klaus is most likely the one who is farther away," Grey muttered as he looked at the hologram.

Two were not that far from his location, and two were quite far. It wasn't hard to differentiate between which one belonged to Klaus and the people who made it, one had a single light source, and the other had multiple light sources around the same area.

The one Grey felt belonged to Klaus had moved a significant distance compared to the last time he saw it, and since Klaus was the only one he knew who was on the move amongst the three, he felt his guess was right.

'Where are you?' Grey asked Void through their mind links.

'Academy, why?' asked Void.

'Did you take the books I told you about?' Grey asked.

'Yes, I took them, I took them all...' Void said in a dramatic manner, making Grey chuckle lightly.

Before he went back into his seclusion-like training, he gave Void a task. He told Void to go to the Academy's library, and get him books that he could find that touched on forgemastery, he didn't tell him an exact number, so hearing that he took all of them amused him.

'Well, it's not like I have any goodwill towards the current Academy anyway, but taking all the books on forgemastery seems a little too overboard,' Grey said.

'So... should I return some?' asked Void.

'No, there's no need. Come let's get going before they notice the books are gone.' Grey said with a grin.

He would return them after he was done studying them, he wasn't stealing them anyway, just borrowing.

'Great! We're finally leaving!' Void exclaimed excitedly before hurrying back to the forest.

Although the Academy had stopped searching for him in the valley, Grey wouldn't carelessly come out without Void first telling him if the area was safe. Void soon got to the valley, and after going around the place, he gave Grey the go-ahead to leave the place.

Grey wore a long black hooded robe that covered parts of his face, while also putting a disguise on. He didn't want to make any mistakes, getting caught wasn't something he wanted to happen.

'So where are we headed?' asked Void.

'Well, I don't really know the exact location, all I know is that it's in that direction.' Grey pointed in the direction of the south while staring at the wooden object in his hands.

He didn't know which of his friends was there, but he didn't really bother about it since he would find out when he got there.

Grey and Void towards their destination, they didn't know where they were going, so Grey planned to get a map once they got to the next city, that way he would be able to at least guess their destination. That would also give him a rough idea of who he was going to see.

One month ago.

Two days after the trial land closed.

In Quinn's family compound. In his father's office, a man could currently be seen kneeling with his head bowed, afraid to look at the enraged eyes of Quinn's father.

"You're saying none of them made it out alive?" Quinn's father asked with an infuriated and sad look.

"Yes my lord, the arrays had already disappeared, but there were no signs of them." The man kneeling replied with his head still bowed in fear.

Boom!

The table in the office was smashed into smithereens by Quinn's enraged father, his son whom he had high hopes for was dead, of course, he would be annoyed.

"My... my lord," The kneeling man called out, trying to calm Quinn's father.

"What?!" roared Quinn's father.

"According to reports, they seemed to have found the treasure," The kneeling man said.

"What?! Where is it?" Quinn's father asked agitatedly.

If Quinn was able to find it before his death, that means that his death was worth it, the only thing now is that he was not able to personally bring it home.

"The treasure is actually the Great Earth Essence Liquid, I believe my lord has heard of it," The man said, only managing to raise his head now.

"The Great Earth Essence Liquid? Where... where is it?" Quinn's father asked, stuttering.

"They found it, but couldn't take it, rather, it was stolen by a group."

Chapter 289 - The Crowned Prince's Plan

"They found it, but couldn't take it, rather, it was stolen by a group." The man said in a serious tone.

Quinn's father looked at the man, indicating for him to continue speaking.

"When the young lord and his group found the Great Earth Essence Liquid, it was being protected by elemental warriors..." The man told Quinn's father what happened in the trial land, it was almost like he was present there when everything unfolded.

He told Quinn's father about how Quinn's group fought against Grey's group before he was later killed by Grey.

"How do you know all this?" Quinn's father couldn't help but ask.

The man's story was so detailed that it looked like he was there at the time it was happening, he had a hard time not believing it.

"While I was waiting for the young lord to come out, a youth from the Stellar empire came out. I happened to overhear him when he was speaking to the leader in his empire's camp, not just me, even the other empires are aware of this fact." The man said.

"Hmm, where's the boy who took it now?" asked Quinn's father.

"The Qilin empire, I've sent people to retrieve him, but none of them have been successful." The man said with a serious expression, before adding, "Neither has any of them returned."

"What? You mean that they've all been killed?" Quinn's father was left dumbfounded by this discovery.

"I'm not sure, but it seems to be the case." The man answered with uncertainty.

After finding out about Grey, he did a little research about him and found out he was from a small city. This was why he sent people to search for him, who would've thought that they would all be killed?

"We must retrieve the treasure at all cost, send word to the Crowned Prince, he would know what to do." Quinn's father said.

"Yes, my lord." The man bowed before leaving the office.

Quinn's father stood up from his seat, and a tear unconsciously dropped down his face, "It's a sacrifice worth paying for the future of the family,"

He walked towards the bookshelf in the office, after pushing a book, a secret passage opened behind it. He wanted to report this to the elders of the family, as well as his father. The loss of Quinn was a great loss, given how talented he was, but the appearance of the treasure outweighed it since it involved years of planning.

The next day.

Qilin empire, the Royal Palace.

The Emperor and the Crowned Prince were currently walking in a garden in the palace discussing.

"You mean to say that a young man from my empire brought out such a treasure?" The Emperor asked in surprise.

"Yes father, I believe you'll hear of this soon from those stationed at the exit." replied the Crowned Prince.

"How did you find out so early?" The Emperor couldn't help but ask.

"I'm the Crowned Prince, it's only normal for me to have my own people who bring me information at the fastest speed." The Crowned Prince answered in a cool and collected manner.

"Hmm, that's understandable. So who's the boy? Summon him to the palace this instant," The Emperor ordered.

"That's where the problem lies, he's a student in the Lunar Academy." The Crowned Prince said.

"Since when has the Lunar Academy been a problem? Have you forgotten I'll be taking over in a few days' time?" The Emperor asked.

"The fact that he's a student of the Lunar Academy isn't the problem, the problem is that his personal Teacher is Chris. You should know who I'm talking about."

"You mean that..."

"Yes, it's him. The young man was the reason Chris killed an Instructor from the Starlight Academy during the time of the competition."

"Hmm, what do you suggest we do then?"

"The other empires have gotten wind of this as well, so we need to act quickly. It's still unknown if Chris is in the Academy or not. Oliver and Blake have been very cautious when talking about him. But I have a plan, and given Chris' personality, he would appear if it works."

"Okay good... Do you know if your brother made it?"

"He's dead."

The last batch of people who left the trial land still hadn't gotten to their destinations, but Neil had already returned, and the Crowned Prince questioned him, when he found out about the Twelfth Prince's stupidity, he gave up on him making it out alive. Who in their right minds would go and attack a dragon?

"Okay, act according to your plan, I'll wait for your good news. If we can't have it, then no one should, especially someone related to that unruly bastard."

"What if he has already used them?"

"Then kill him,"

"And his friends?"

"What about them?"

"It is said he took nine drops of the Great Earth Essence Liquid, I think he might share it with them."

"Get the boy first, kill the others later."

"Okay, father."

A few days later, the Crowned Prince heard of Oliver officially stepping down from his position as the Principal and Mayor of Lunar Academy and City respectively. He sent people to spread the rumor of them being scared of joining the war and tagging them cowards. Oliver would not be bothered with the rumor, Chris on the other hand would not only bother about it, but he would also want to kill people.

After a day of peace, the Crowned Prince speculated that their guess for the past months has been true, Chris was not in the Academy. This meant they could technically do whatever they wanted with the Academy, unfortunately, Oliver had stepped down, as well as the major powers in the Academy.

This gave the Emperor a headache, but the Crowned Prince wasn't too concerned about it. Now with Chris and even Oliver out of the picture, he could take care of Grey without any problems. The only issue now was how he could get Klaus since he would be with his father.

Chapter 290 - Eternal City

The moment Oliver, Blake, and Klaus left the Academy, the Crowned Prince gave the order for Grey to be found. The Instructors started to search for him, but after he hid in Chris' valley, it was impossible to locate him. They wasted weeks searching for Grey, but they didn't get any result.

The Crowned Prince wasn't sure if Grey gave his friends a drop of the Great Earth Essence Liquid, but he couldn't let it go without investigating. With Grey and Klaus currently impossible to find, he set his eyes on the other two, Alice and Reynolds.

Alice was the daughter of a prestigious and powerful family, it wouldn't be easy to get her, Reynolds on the other hand, was a piece of cake.

One week before Grey left Chris' valley.

Eternal City.

Reynolds could be seen walking leisurely in the busy city with his hands behind his head, a young boy could be seen walking behind him, they had a striking resemblance, with the younger one having blue hair, while Reynolds had brown short hair.

"Big bro, where are we going?" Carl asked tugging on Reynolds' shirt.

"Huh?" Reynolds stopped and looked at Carl before smiling, "I have no idea, I just wanted to take a stroll."

"Oh!" Carl replied before looking at the ground with a sad face.

"What? You want to do something else?" Reynolds asked while squatting to the height of Carl.

"Uhhh... uhhh..." Carl fidgeted while looking at his fingers which he was rotating around each other.

"Come on, tell big bro, you know I will do whatever you want," Reynolds said while ruffling Carl's hair.

"Really?!" Carl asked with shining eyes.

"Well, not everything, but I'll try my best," Reynolds said, scratching his head awkwardly.

He had to tell Carl he couldn't do everything. It would be awkward if he asked him to do something he couldn't do.

"Okay. I want to watch big bro train." Carl said with sparkling eyes.

"Just that?"

Carl nodded enthusiastically, waiting for Reynolds' reply with a little hint of nervousness.

"I can't practice in the city," Reynolds said with his hand on his chin which caused a look of disappointment to appear on the face of Carl. He smiled before continuing, "But, I'm totally free to practice outside the city."

A smile crept into Carl's face when he heard this.

"Come, little man, let big bro show you how powerful he is," Reynolds said proudly before lifting Carl up and placing him on his shoulder.

Reynolds was genuinely happy, this was the longest he had stayed with his family since joining the Academy. His younger brother was only two years old when he joined the Academy, and now he was already very close to eight years old. His parents were beside themselves when they learned he would be staying for an extended period this time.

Reynolds took Carl out of the city and headed for the open field that was not too far from the city. It was a hidden place where he could perform most of his moves freely without fear of destroying anything.

He placed Carl on a boulder before saying, "Sit here and watch how awesome your big bro is,"

Carl nodded excitedly, waiting for Reynolds to begin his performance, it was almost like he was waiting for a performer in a show.

Reynolds turned around and breathed out heavily, a serious expression appeared on his face, and just as he was about to make lightning appear, he paused and looked at the south. He could sense some people coming in his direction, and the strongest amongst them was in the Fifth stage of the Origin Plane.

'Huh? People in the Origin Plane,' He thought to himself, a little taken aback.

Eternal City was not a big city, if the cities in the empires were ranked, it would be a mid-ranked city at most. The Mayor was an Origin Plane expert, and the number of Origin Plane Elementals in the city could be counted on just one hand.

He quickly turned to Carl, "Hey little man, we might have to go home sooner than expected,"

Carl wanted to refute, but on seeing Reynolds' serious expression, he shut his mouth. He knew since Reynolds brought him here, it meant that he wanted to show him what he asked for.

Reynolds smiled before grabbing hold of Carl and heading towards the city. He didn't know what those people wanted, and even if they wanted to cause trouble, he wasn't scared. But with Carl here, he didn't want any accidents to occur.

He suddenly noticed that as soon as they started walking to the city, one of the people from the group hurried towards him. He didn't lose his cool, walking at the same pace, he held onto Carl's and tightly. If things were to go wrong, he would prioritize the safety of his younger brother above everything else.

It didn't take the person who was running after him two minutes before he caught up.

"Hello, you must be Reynolds," The young man called out from behind them.

The young man was putting on a blue fitted shirt and trousers, with a golden eagle-like insignia imprinted on the c.h.e.s.t of the shirt. The young man looked to be around his mid-twenties but had already reached the Third stage of the Origin Plane. From how he was able to quickly catch up, and the wind element rotating around him, it wasn't hard for Reynolds to guess that he was a Wind Elementalist.

Reynolds stopped and turned to look at the young man coolly, there wasn't a change in his expression. If Klaus saw him in this current state, he would definitely curse at him for trying to act like a cool guy.

After studying the young man carefully, he asked calmly, "Yes, how may I help you?"

"We're from the empire's forces. You were recommended by an expert who met you some time ago, the Crowned Prince sent us here to come to ask if you would like to join us since you haven't given a reply yet." The young man explained the purpose of his coming to Reynolds.

"Oh, the Crowned Prince," Reynolds said with a surprised and excited look appearing on his face.

The young man nodded with a smile, waiting for Reynolds to continue.