

## **Black Plain 1971**

### Chapter 1971 Time to Return to Seclusion

At the end of the event, hours after the arrival of the many groups, they slowly left the camp set up by the elves.

Having agreed upon the main rules that would be in effect from this day forward but which would have a greater impact during the ice age, everyone prepared to return to where they had come from. It was time to take the decisions and agreements made at this meeting back to their respective organizations.

All groups had to quickly choose their representatives and send them to Elves Island to decide on the rest of the rules. Since time was short, they would have to hurry to settle it.

On the other hand, they would have to start planning now to give up some of their specialists who would have to leave their posts in 20 years to serve the World Coalition.

Amidst all this, Minos and his group were slowly with Julian, as Emperor Stuart had many things on his mind.

He had many things to take care of!

'I must send communiqués to the Dry City immediately. My government needs to start building food reserves as soon as possible.' He thought as his eyes narrowed. 'I will use the communication network of the Pantheon of Honor to send these orders to the Dry City.'

'I'll take the opportunity to communicate with the staff of the marine expansion and the Bank of the Black Plain. We need to increase the amount of funds set aside for farming in the submerged areas. That will be very important if we are to keep our promises and the food situation of my empire.'

He looked at Julian and said. "Elder, I need to communicate with my people in the central continent. I need to send some orders to fulfill the agreements made today."

"Do not worry. When I get to the temple, I'll help you deliver your messages to your people on the Central Continent." Julian commented as the group left the area of the elven camp undisturbed.

When they reached the area where they had been before, Julian immediately took the lead, distorting space to create a wormhole that would lead them back to the Pantheon of Honor's headquarters city.

Following the path of this tunnel through space, it would only take a few moments for them to disappear from the forest in the central part of the Divine Continent and reach the area where Minos' crew was.

Once back in the city, Julian would soon lead Minos to the part of the Pantheon of Honor where he could send his message.

Meanwhile, Minos' companions and Julian's family separated from them and went to different parts of the city.

...

After sending his messages to the Pantheon Of Honor contacts in the Black Plain Empire, Minos said goodbye to Julian to return to his wives at their faction headquarters.

As he walked towards where he felt their spiritual fluctuations, Minos planned other things he had to deal with.

'I won't be able to deal with the Gorgons as I wanted to, but I can try to resolve my situation with them...' He thought about resolving his revenge within the rules recently set by the world experts.

He couldn't wipe out his enemies, but that didn't mean he couldn't kill important members of that race!

Since he knew they wouldn't stop chasing him and his revenge on the dead Gorgons, he would be justified in taking action against them and eliminating one or two high-ranking members of the tribe.

'In the short term, I'll use the strength of my allies and business partners to protect my interests, and then, when I advance to the 10th stage, I'll give them back everything I've suffered.' He clenched his fists, determined to solve this problem.

When he arrived where his wives were, Minos put these thoughts aside and watched them cultivate in a high-level room.

"Back already? I thought you'd be longer." Isabella opened her eyes and smiled at Minos.

He smiled back at her. "Traveling with experts is really fast. I was there and back in the blink of an eye. As for the meeting of the world leaders, we quickly decided what needed to be decided.

Fortunately, everyone agreed on most of the issues discussed."

"You seem to have gotten something out of it..." She commented, seeing that Minos seemed more pleased than worried after participating in such an important event.

"Yes, I didn't expect to gain anything other than information. But in the end, I got important business deals, but also support." He commented cheerfully. "Now we don't have to worry about too many past problems. As long as we continue with our current plans and are successful, we'll get all the support we need to deal with our biggest concerns."

"Fantastic," Abby commented as she awoke from her meditation state to hear her husband's positive words.

Gloria also ended her meditation to greet her husband. "So what will this change about our plans?"

"Not much in the short term. We'll still have to travel around the continent looking for new companions for our crew. But after that, we'll just have to do our seclusion before we go to the North Sea. Everything else is in place. Everything will be settled with the results of this journey to the north." Minos answered and then sighed.

Countless situations could arise after the journey north. Depending on what they discovered, they might not have to worry about it at all or even give the ice age less importance and concentrate on that.

But until they returned from that journey, there wouldn't be much more for Minos and his people to do. Now it was time to finish gathering their traveling party and cultivate.

In about two years, they would leave the Divine Continent and stay in the Black Plain Empire until the fateful day of their journey.

"Good!" Ruth commented when she woke up. "We'll be able to stay with our children longer from now on. We haven't seen them in a while."

On this journey, they stopped from time to time to "cultivate" as Minos used his fusion techniques to create space for him and his wives to travel to the Spatial Kingdom.

But even with such an opportunity, they would go months without seeing their young children, which was difficult for the mothers of the newest members of the Stuart family.

But with the change in the group's situation, they could spend more time with their family in the Spatial Kingdom before making the most dangerous journey of their lives to the North Sea.

Soon, Minos' wives would spend some time with him discussing what had been decided at the council of elders of the Pantheon of Honor regarding the situation with the Gorgons.

"Minos, come with me..." Aarav appeared where he and his wives were and quickly called him to his side.

...

## Chapter 1972 Promises

Following Aarav, Minos soon found himself in the most important part of the Pantheon of Honor's temple, the place where he had been tested years ago.

Arriving there, he first saw Julian talking to Wren, this white-haired, young-looking woman who had already lived for over 10,000 years.

When he got there, the three remaining council elders arrived almost simultaneously, all of them looking at him when they saw this young man.

Merritt, the most powerful elder there, looked at Minos with a gentle smile, pleased with the addition they had made years ago.

"Young Minos, you are growing up fast. You'll be on our stage in no time." He said as he came to Minos' side and greeted him with a few light pats on the shoulder.

"Yes, he's exceeded all our expectations," Wren said with a smile on her beautiful face. "He led us to believe that he would be a high-level Sage until the Continental Tournament, but it seems that he wanted to surprise us. That's not going to happen."

"The elders have already figured out my plans. Now, I can't surprise you anymore." Minos laughed as the old people looked at him.

"That's not bad. But now that you're here, it will be hard to surprise us anymore." Julian commented with a smile. "But that was enough to prove your worth to the temple, Minos. Now, you're no longer in danger of losing your rights here just because you're a Sage. I think everyone here understands your value."

Minos was now a de facto member of the Pantheon of Honor, with rights and responsibilities like any other. However, he still had to prove himself, at least until he reached the 10th stage. Until then, he could be kicked out of the temple at any time.

But that was no longer the case!

Wren agreed with Julian and commented. "Yes, you don't need to worry about surprising us any more than you already have. Everything you've done has been enough for us to understand your true value to the temple."

Everyone agreed, showing Minos he would no longer have to fulfill any requirements regarding his cultivation.

However, Merritt was curious about Minos' strength. "Young man, you said earlier that you would have 5 level 90 Demigods in your forces during the Continental Tournament. How many do you have now?"

"I can't say for sure, since I've been away from my state for a few years, elder. But I'm sure of at least 2. One is in the Black Plain Empire, and the other is with my group.

But considering the opportunities I've left for my men and the number of soldiers I have at peak level 89, I wouldn't be surprised if there are already 3 or even 5 new Demigods in my state." He said, looking into the eyes of the old white-haired man.

"Impressive." Two level 99 elders commented, seeing that Minos had fulfilled his promises regarding the experts under his command about 20 years before the end of his term.

Some of them looked at each other, with Wren looking at Julian and seeing how right that man's move had been years ago to bring Minos to the temple and then give the young man all the support he could to become a member of their organization.

Even though they had accepted Minos into their group, all the credit went to Julian!

Merritt then said. "Good. Keep working hard. When the ice age begins, it will be harder for you and your state to continue on this upward path of strength. So enjoy the good time before you.

But don't worry about the Gorgons. We can't wipe them out, given the laws that were agreed upon by the world leaders at the meeting you just returned from. Still, we will prevent them from entering the Divine Continent."

Everyone there already knew everything that had been decided at the meeting that had ended a few tens of minutes ago. But even without the decision of the world leaders, they would never exterminate the Gorgons for Minos.

That would be too much trouble for them to make a level 84 Sage happy.

Minos had a lot of potential, but they wouldn't go so far as to do such an atrocity to him now.

The situation would be different if he were a level 93 or 94. But since that wasn't the case, there was no way they would get involved in the extermination of a race for his sake, even before the world leaders had decided.

Minos had expected an answer like that and wasn't surprised.

"Just wait in our city for a week. That's all the time we need to talk to the powers on the continent and put the ban on Gorgon entry into effect." Merritt added.

Wren nodded and said. "You won't have to worry about them on our continent after this week. If any of them come after you, we'll take personal action and even visit their tribe to punish them."

"Thank you for your support, elders. I am very grateful to see how the temple values me and treats me well." Minos made a gesture of gratitude.

Julian smiled and added. "As for your condition, I already have men traveling to the Black Plain Empire. We can't guarantee your state's safety there, given the current war on the continent and our local partners with many problems to solve. Still, you will have our support there as well.

In any case, once the Gorgons realize that you're not alone, they'll probably stop pursuing your group. So rest assured, everything should work out fine."

After hearing the elders' decision and their promises, Minos thanked them once more before returning to his wives.

Now that everything was settled, they had to wait before returning to their exploration in search of new crew members.

Minos had recently lost four companions, so he intended to gather more than that number of new crew members before leaving the Divine Continent.

He had about two years to do this, enough to travel around the three major states of the richest continent in the Spiritual World!

And so days and weeks would soon pass, and a year and a half would pass in the blink of an eye!

This time, the journey of Minos and his group would be much more peaceful than the one on the Continent of Beasts, and the results would naturally be impressive!

Chapter 1973 Level 85

After a year and a half, a lot had happened to Minos' party. However, their time on the Divine Continent had been particularly enjoyable!

With his status as a member of the Pantheon of Honor, an ally of Emperor Crora, and with the Gorgons banned from these lands, Minos had practically lived a year and a half without getting into trouble.

At that time, he hadn't even had to fight for his life!

That was something that hardly ever happened when he wasn't in his capital or in the Spatial Kingdom, so Minos' entire group was naturally amazed by this period.

Some wanted adventure and challenge, but after suffering so many deadly and dangerous problems related to the Gorgons, even the most daring had seen no problems in the peace of the last few months.

Amid peace, they had traveled the Divine Continent from north to south and east to west, visiting the three states, meeting with local tribes and organizations, and making new allies and crewmates.

After 18 months on the Divine Continent, Minos had recovered the maximum number of his party and overcome the four deaths that had befallen his crew.

With 5 new companions, 3 of them hybrids and the rest humans, the group had become stronger again with the addition of level 91 and 92 beings.

In addition to these personnel additions, several members of the group, especially the Sages and level 90 Demigods, had made breakthroughs during this time.

The second woman from the Longus family who was with the group and had not yet reached the 10th stage had finally reached level 90, making her the third in the Stuart family to reach that age. At least, that's what Minos and his wives thought.

But apart from her, the last level 89 beings in the group had advanced to level 90, while one of the Sea Folk, one of the Krakens, a mermaid, and a merman had managed to advance one level each, reaching level 91 or 92.

But the most important advancement in the group was definitely that of the leader, Minos, who had reached level 85 about two months ago.

None of his wives had improved then, but Gloria and Abby were approaching level 84 and might reach that level before they reached the Dry City.

With only a few months left until the Pantheon of Honor members' meeting, the group was already preparing to return to the Central Continent!

With that, their journey to the North Sea was getting closer and closer!

...

Now, Minos, his wives, and some of his party were camping in a large forest in the Grinia Empire, the westernmost state of the Divine Continent, where he had arrived on his first passage through these lands.

There, the strongest of the group gathered around a campfire while a region without light rotated on itself nearby.

While Minos' black hole covered his journey to the Spatial Kingdom with his wives, his companions in the Grinia Empire were waiting for him along with two envoys of the local imperial family.

The Crown Prince of Grinia and his bodyguard were waiting for Minos and his wives to return.

"How long will it take for them to return?" Asked the prince of that state, a blond man of level 94, who had been waiting for Minos there for more than a day along with the companions of Emperor Stuart.

"We don't know. We can't communicate with him if he's cultivating in this region of space." The level 93 dragon said as he looked at the thing, which gave him a bad feeling as if his soul could be sucked out by it at any moment.

"But it shouldn't take long. He doesn't usually stay like this for more than a month. And it's been 19 days since he and his wives began this seclusion." The level 92 woman of the Sea Folk commented.

Minos had been traveling with his group, taking short breaks occasionally to cultivate in seclusion. During these times, the group would stop in places like the one they were in now, and the crew members would have the opportunity to cultivate on their own or have a few days to explore the surroundings.

In this way, they could improve their strength while exploring the Divine Continent in search of new teammates.

"All that?" The prince sighed, feeling that he would have to wait for days to get a chance to talk to Minos.

Minos had traveled through the Pantheon Of Honor headquarters state for about 6 months and then another 7 months through the Crora Empire, where he had many meetings with local organizations. After that, he came to the Grinia Empire, where he spent more time in the Spatial Kingdom than exploring the area.

But with about six months to go until the Pantheon of Honor members' meeting, he wasn't worried and had spent a little more time in his Spatial Kingdom during his first few months there.

Knowing they would be there for another six months, none of Minos' companions saw any problem with him taking two breaks to cultivate during that time since he had recently advanced and was consolidating his strength.

"Yes... But after he leaves cultivation, he will probably be available for two or three months to care for local affairs. So Your Highness can relax. He should return to meet you in no more than 10 days." One of the two women from the Longus family said to the prince.

"What should we do, Your Highness?" A level 97 Demigod asked.

"Sigh... Let's wait. This is an important meeting for me." The blond young man picked up his cultivation pillow and sat down to cultivate by himself.

Since he had to wait, he would do it by cultivating, just like Minos!

No one there saw a problem with this, and they continued to sit around the fire on this cold night, knowing that Minos would not return now.

...

Meanwhile, on the border of the Black Plain Empire with Albano, a group of high-level beings stood in a large forest in that area and looked in the direction of an area that even they felt shiver at the sight of.

If Minos had been there, he would have seen that this group was very close to a place he had already entered, where the place of the God of Death's inheritance was.

"It seems that even this weakened area of the Central Continent has its dangers..." A female voice came out of the mouth of one of those individuals, each of them dressed in hoods that covered a large part of their bodies.

"Hmm, we cannot underestimate this area. Our enemy also has important allies, so we must be careful in our mission." Another commented, aware of the setbacks her tribe had suffered over the past two years due to their new great enemy.

"Anyway, in no more than six months, we'll be able to complete our mission and avenge the deaths of our sisters!" One of them, a level 96, said as something moved in her head, causing the hood above her to move strangely.

Chapter 1974 No forgiveness, No Matter What

Meanwhile, in Dry City...

It had been about five years since Minos and his wives had left the capital of the Black Plain Empire, and a lot had changed locally, with the local power increasing significantly in the meantime.

Minos didn't know it yet, but in those five years, four level 89 Sages from his forces had advanced and reached level 90!

In addition to them, practically all of the Sages in the empire had improved by at least one level during that time, while the Saints had improved by 2 to 3 levels.

Even without access to the Spatial Kingdom, the people of Minos had cultivated easily in Dry City and other important places in the state, taking advantage of the peace around them to improve their strength.

For example, Sarah Stuart, the princess who had stayed in that city, was not far from reaching level 73 and was expected to break through before her parents returned from their current trip.

With the strengthening of the imperial family, the state and the northern region became more attractive to the continental community, especially to those who had left their home states due to the war in the south.

In short, the state of Minos has been doing very well in recent years. A few months ago, groups of low-level Demigods had arrived in the capital to wait for the emperor.

If one were to arrive in Dry City right now, one could feel the soul fluctuations of several levels 90, 91, and 92 Demigods, mostly sea creatures.

Where did these beings come from? From the tribes Minos visited at the beginning of his journey outside the continent, where he had invited beings to join his crew heading to the North Sea.

Not everyone he had invited could join his party at that time, but some of those interested had promised to do their best to join him later.

Among those who had promised, ten Demigods were already in Dry City, awaiting Minos' return, which the local forces expected to happen in 12 to 18 months.

However, these were not the only Demigods in the city at the moment. Following Minos' agreements on the Divine Continent a year and a half ago, as well as his requests to the Pantheon of Honor, several mid-level Demigods from that organization had reached this state.

Among the strongest was a level 95 hybrid, someone sent by the elder Aarav to help Minos protect these lands from the Gorgons.

But in addition to this individual, there were several Demigods between levels 92 and 94, all at the disposal of the people of Minos to protect these northernmost lands of the Central Continent!

With the presence of these experts, the citizens enjoyed peace to go about their lives and grow with the state.

But as another day dawned over the great Dry City, one of the experts observing the capital's perimeter noticed something strange approaching them.

'There is a spatial distortion near the south side of the great dome of Dry City.' A level 94 Demigod said into the mental communication of his companions, drawing the attention of several experts in the direction of that piece of space.

Looking in that direction, the dozen or so 10th-stage experts who were available soon saw the arrival of a group of beings of the same stage as themselves, individuals between levels 92 and 96.

Seeing it, the strongest of them, a level 95, narrowed his eyes and immediately recognized the newcomers.

"Gorgons!" He immediately realized and warned everyone in his group to get ready.

Distorting space, he headed toward the newly arrived creatures, who were staring with ugly expressions at the dome of the Dry City, something even they would not be able to cross.

The dome of the city could evolve as it was fed. As years and years had passed since its creation, this place could no longer be invaded by mid-level Demigods. Only the strongest experts in the world could challenge it!

However, they didn't have much time to worry about the dome that would protect Minos' people from them. Soon after arriving there and seeing Dry City's dome, these Gorgons noticed several spatial distortions of Demigods appearing around them.

"I had no idea that the influence of the damned Emperor Minos Stuart was so great!" One of them commented when she saw the number of Demigods there.

There were five mid-level Demigods!

That was impressive, considering Minos was only at level 85, and the Black Plain Empire had no 10th-stage cultivators until about six years ago.

However, there were several Demigods who were obviously there to prevent them from starting their mission.

"Gorgons, you are not welcome in the Black Plain Empire. If you don't want to be visited by some of our superiors, leave immediately." The level-95 hybrid shouted, while the forces inside the dome were already aware of what was happening outside the city.

"You think that's enough to stop us?" The leader of that group, level 96, said in a rude tone, not caring about the man's words.

"Don't be so confident, Gorgon. We won't wipe you out, but our elders will kill your leader if you go too far. Minos is very important to us and the elves, dragons, and various states in the Spiritual World. If you do anything against him, we'll punish you ten times worse!"

"Tsk!"

"You bastards! This is just revenge! Why are you involved in this?" A level 95 Gorgon felt irritated by the oppression against them.

They had suffered a lot over the past few years, being unable to enter the Divine Continent to go after Minos, being restricted by the dragons on the Continent of Beasts, and still suffering from their losses to Emperor Stuart's group.

They were at their limit!

Come to think of it, they weren't going to give up so easily!

"If you stand in our way today, we'll deal with you while we destroy this place!" One of them threatened.

"If that's how you want it, we'll send you to build the local defenses!" One of the level 94 Demigods pointed to the great dome of Dry City, seeing that these women would not listen to the voice of reason.

"If you want to meet your own end, we'll have no choice but to eliminate you. Where do you think that will lead? Your tribe will only become weaker. Considering the catastrophe about to befall our world, by the end of the ice age, you will probably be gone because of your stupidity!"

"Tsk! Shut up and fight!" One shouted, preferring to die there rather than fail and return to the Continent of Beasts.

With that woman's move, another devastating battle would occur near Dry City!

Chapter 1975 Different Situations

Days later...

Minos finally ended his seclusion and left the black hole where he and his wives had hidden their journey to his Spatial Kingdom.

After the group had finished cultivating or staying with their children in the Spatial Kingdom, they returned to the Divine Continent, where they promptly met the heir to the Grinia Empire, who was waiting for them in their group's camp.

Upon meeting him, Minos readily agreed to follow him to the empire's capital, where the first prince of that state wanted to take him to do business and strengthen relations between their states.

The Black Plain Empire was a major food producer, something that could not be ignored in this day and age. This local heir wanted to do business with Minos and become his friend to ensure his continuity and growth during the ice age.

Thus, Minos and his party were now in the capital of Grinia, home to many high-ranking Demigods, but where a young Sage of level 85 was treated as a renowned expert.

...

"Your Majesty..." A mid-level Demigod gestured with his hand, showing Minos the way around the estate where he had spent the last hour talking to the Crown Prince of Grinia.

Having heard what the blond man wanted, Minos made his way back to the women's side, keeping in mind what he had just discussed with the crown prince.

The first prince of this state obviously wanted to get close to Minos for the food production capacity of the Black Plain Empire. However, he also wanted access to Emperor Stuart's influence.

Because of his potential and current state characteristics, Minos had become very influential and had contacts on his side that were worth a lot to anyone.

The heir of Grinia wanted to be able to count on Minos' network of power as long as he did food business with this emperor!

Although his family was already very influential, his Grinia family also had a lot of history, with rivalries, disagreements, and stories that could make things difficult for its members in the present.

For someone in the position of Grinia's heir, having other means of gaining high power besides his family was a must. Therefore, an agreement with Minos would be highly beneficial to him.

On the other hand, Minos had much to gain from his alliances since he was, strangely enough, the one with the upper hand in these talks.

With a food crisis looming, those with fertile farmland naturally had an advantage over those with little or no farmland.

One might think Minos was weak and couldn't keep that up. Why do business with him when one could invade his state and take his things? But the support he had was already too great, even before he made deals at the earlier meeting of world leaders.

Now, it would be foolish to think of taking what was his or even threatening him in order to get better deals.

If even Dragons, Sea Folk, and high-ranking imperial families were willing to accept Minos' terms, how could other powers of equal or lesser rank dare to oppose him?

It would be like challenging all the powers behind his business!

Hence, Minos' influence and his current ability to make good deals were more favorable to his side than to those who sought him out.

With that, Minos considered the amounts promised by the prince of Grinia and imagined he could do many things in his state with that amount of money until the peak of the world crisis.

'Prince Kane Grinia will support me with high-ranking techniques from the spiritual professions and also with military support, with mineral resources, men, and weapons. With that, I'll be able to ease the burden on my reserves and raise the level of the state more easily.' He thought as he walked through the luxurious corridors of the imperial palace.

He would stay here for a few more days to negotiate with Kane and even talk to the emperor. But after a first conversation, he returned to the side of his group to better plan his next actions as his situation progressed.

"Your Majesty, please feel free to call on me if necessary." The butler finally said as he stopped at the front door of the chieftain's residence, where continental leaders usually stayed when visiting the Grinia family.

Minos thanked the butler of the local imperial family and was soon with his group.

"So?"

He smiled as he saw the curious look on his wives' faces. "I'm going to get us a new good deal here in Grinia."

These words didn't surprise anyone, but they brought a smile to the faces of many of Minos' companions.

Something similar had happened several times in the last 18 months, and the group had become somewhat accustomed to Minos' deals.

"We'll stay in the capital for a few days to formalize my dealings with the imperial family and take part in some official ceremonies, and then we'll continue our journey through this state."

...

Meanwhile, in the capital of the Black Plain Empire...

The interior of Dry City was business as usual, with hundreds of thousands of people going about their usual business, living their lives as if nothing had happened there recently.

After so many problems over the years, this population has learned to live in crisis. Even with the clash of the Demigods a few days ago, most of the locals had gone about their lives as usual, forgetting what had happened.

However, the local forces were not like that!

As used as some of them were to having enemies at their doorstep, many of the state's strongest were a bit scared. For the first time, a group of mid-level Demigods had attacked them!

Before that day, only the leader of the Blood Triangle Pirates, a level 90 Demigod, had dared to perform in this city.

However, even with their local growth, great worldwide influence, and Maximilian's protection, an organization had dared to act locally, causing disaster outside the Dry City dome.

Some of the sea beasts who had previously been in the city to join Minos had died or been seriously injured in the fight against the Gorgons, and even some of the men of the Pantheon of Honor had perished in the battle.

They had won the confrontation, but the cost had been high, and tens of thousands of crops had been lost to the remaining blows of those involved in the battle that day.

Because of that, Sarah Stuart, the current chairperson of the empire, was giving orders to her people to deal with the problem.

"Send people to the Evergreen Empire. We'll tell Maximillian Flamen's group what happened here recently!" She said, knowing that her group had already informed the Pantheon of Honor, and that was all they had left to do against the damned Gorgons.

...

#### Chapter 1976 Local Concern

After everything that had happened in Dry City recently, Sarah was taking all possible measures to deal with the Gorgon problem.

Having already sent messages to the Divine Continent, where her father was, and to the organization that had lost subordinates of its members, she now wanted to deal with the matter within the Central Continent.

Maximilian had made a promise to the Black Plain Empire, threatening anyone who dared to act against Minos' lands in the Central Continent. So she wanted to bring this incident to him and seek positive answers for her people.

Until now, the Black Plain Empire had stayed out of the war in the southern region, neither supporting nor turning away people from either side.

Although the local government was more inclined to side with the Spiritual Church in the war, they were not supporters of Maximilian, nor had they acted in the light of day to show themselves as such during these years of conflict.

However, with Sarah's action, this situation could change very soon!

"Your Highness, if we send people from our state to the headquarters of the Spiritual Church in the Evergreen Empire, we can attract the attention of the western region." Dillian, currently level 80, commented as he stood to Sarah's right.

As much as the western states had sided with Vico in the war against Maximilian, they were not as hostile to Minos and his state as Emperor Travisani. However, that could change if the Black Plain Empire started acting too close to Maximilian.

"We have no choice. We must seek help from as many people as possible. We can't sit on the fence and wait for our problems to solve themselves. It is better to choose a side now than to choose neither and suffer for lack of support." She said, with no intention of going back on her words.

Sarah already knew about the agreements her father had made on the Divine Continent and how much support they would have just before the ice age began and during that time. However, this aid would arrive in the Black Plain Empire in 10 to 15 years.

In the short term, only a few specialists would reach them. However, in a year or two, the Gorgons could wreak havoc if they wanted to!

Not knowing what was in the Gorgon leader's mind or how Minos' allies on the Divine Continent would react to the latest incident, Sarah preferred not to stand idly by.

Dillian knew their difficult situation and how important it was for them to have peace now.

'If we can't manage our plantations in peace, we won't be able to create the food reserve His Majesty promised our new allies.' He considered what the Gorgons might do if they decided to attack his plantations. 'We need all the help we can get, or we're finished!' He clenched his fists in fear.

The position of the Black Plain Empire was currently comfortable, given the agreements made over the years. However, the state was not unshakable!

An enemy who wanted to destroy the empire might be able to do a lot in a short time if they attacked the right points!

"I understand. Our situation is very complicated. But how should we approach Maximilian? He's currently in seclusion. So if we want the support of his subordinates, we'll have to please them somehow." Dillian raised this point.

He believed that if they managed to contact Maximilian, they wouldn't have to do much to get his support. After all, he had told the entire continent that anyone who acted against the state of Minos in these lands would be in trouble with him.

As a matter of honor, he had to protect the empire.

But he was in seclusion, and his men wouldn't do the same things he would!

Sarah then looked at her maternal grandmother and said. "I will rely on you and my grandfather for help, grandmother. Please bargain on my behalf."

Margot, currently level 81, immediately accepted and promised to help her only granddaughter.

"I will do my best." She said.

"I'll go with you, Margot." Oswald, Emperor Stuart's grandfather, currently level 83, said. "I know about Minos' plans, so I'll be able to negotiate alongside you to reach an agreement that won't harm the empire."

"Things will go better that way. But get support as soon as possible. We can't remain vulnerable." Sarah agreed to have her great-grandfather accompany her maternal grandmother and grandfather on this trip to the Evergreen Empire.

With that, this meeting in the imperial throne hall would soon end. Oswald and Margot would make their way to the Flaming Empire, where they would meet up with Joseph Frost, Gloria's father. Together, they would make their way to the Evergreen Empire.

Meanwhile, Dillian would return to his activities in government administration, and Sarah would take a break from her activities to get some rest.

She had stayed behind to enjoy herself, but due to the restrictions her father had left her and her responsibilities, she had been solving many problems lately.

However, Sarah did not regret asking her 'old man' to stay behind. As much as she had been dealing with problems lately, most of the five-plus years that had passed since her parents left had been very good for her.

Leaving the imperial palace, she soon arrived at her favorite spot in the city, a shop owned by a painter who had fled the war to the south, someone she had seen practically every week for the past five years.

Arriving at the private room at the back of the shop, she met a relatively young man with blond hair and level 87 cultivation.

Seeing him, she smiled, then hugged him and followed her lips to his.

"Mmmm~"

After a long, intense kiss, she pulled her lips away from his as she looked into his eyes. "George, everything is so stressful... Now I've made a decision that could hurt us."

The blond man smiled at her and said. "Don't worry about me. Whatever you decide, I'll stand by you. You know I love you no matter what."

"Yes, but what about your family? That is going to cause us problems." She worried.

"We'll sort it out. When the time comes, I'll try to intervene on behalf of your people. Your current decisions are out of self-defense. How can anyone blame you?"

"I hope you're right..."

...

A few weeks after Sarah's decision, news of what had happened in the Black Plain Empire had already reached the Divine Continent.

Meanwhile, Margot's group, Oswald and Joseph, arrived in the Evergreen Empire, where they would try to drum up high-level support within the continent for their state!

#### Chapter 1977 Negotiating in the Spiritual Church

Upon arriving in the capital of the Evergreen Empire, Joseph, who already knew the area, quickly led his group to the temple of the Spiritual Church.

Since he was currently a low-level Cardinal who served in the Flaming Empire, he didn't encounter much difficulty on his way, and it didn't take him long to gain access to his group.

He had previously served the Flaming Empire. But when he became a Spiritual Sage a few years ago, he was called back to the headquarters to receive a new post.

Since the Flaming Empire was considered a mid-level power compared to the high-level powers of the continent, it wasn't considered appropriate for such strong Church members to stay there.

However, two years ago, the Spiritual Church changed the permissions for the Flaming Empire because the Edwardstone family state, like the Black Plain Empire, was becoming stronger and stronger.

With closer ties between the state of Harold and Minos, Isabella's family empire benefited greatly.

As the richest of Minos' old allies, the state had invested heavily in its top specialists for several years, sending them to Dry City and enabling them to make important advances.

To give you an idea of what they had achieved with their friendly relationship with Dry City, 20 years ago, they practically only had Harold as a Spiritual Sage in their state. However, there were now more than 60 native Sages in the area, not counting those who had come to the state because of the war in the southern region.

These native Sages in the area were between levels 80 and 84, with Harold still being the strongest locally, even though there were some Sages from the ancient Grey Clouds Sect in his state.

In any case, the current Flaming Empire could afford to have low-level Cardinals of the Spiritual Church at their post in the capital, which is why Joseph returned to Payton, where he and Margot continued to live and pursue their careers within the Church.

But even as someone who worked in the Flaming Empire, Joseph was already known at Church headquarters, for he was one of the fathers-in-law of Minos Stuart, grandfather of one of the princesses of the Black Plain Empire!

Accompanied by his wife and Minos' grandfather, he quickly made his way to the deepest part of the temple, where high-ranking Cardinals were active.

"Joseph, what are you doing here? I thought you were in Payton these days." A low-level Demigod saw his fellow faction member and smiled as he walked over to the three of them, who had just entered a large waiting hall.

"Cardinal Seth, I need help contacting Senior Maximilian Flamen's representatives. I'm here to deal with a matter concerning the Black Plain Empire and the old promise of the current Supreme Pontiff." Joseph said seriously.

After the beginning of Forrest's master's seclusion, Maximilian had been appointed by the high-level Cardinals of the Church as the new Supreme Pontiff, which was supposed to happen when the occupant of that position became incapacitated.

As such, Maximilian was currently the leader of the Spiritual Church, which was why he had so much power to even start a war.

"Oh?" The low-level Demigod looked at Oswald, recognized the figure of Minos' grandfather, and saw that this was an opportunity.

After the meeting of world experts on the Divine Continent, the people of the Spiritual Church already knew Minos could no longer be compared to a low-level junior with great potential for the future. He was already performing feats that could influence great experts, so he should be treated as such.

His status in the Spiritual World had suddenly increased after the encounter on the Divine Continent. The fact that Oswald was there now, looking for some kind of deal or conversation, was a good sign for the faction Joseph belonged to, the Church itself, and even the Evergreen Empire.

Even though Minos was only a Spiritual Sage and had many problems around him, dealing with him was very positive, and anyone in this force today would be interested to hear what his emissaries had to say.

"What exactly do you need? I can help you solve everything." The man smiled.

Oswald replied. "The Supreme Pontiff is in seclusion, so we would like to speak with those of his confidence who can make decisions while he's away."

"If that's the case, come with me. I'll try to arrange a meeting between you and his representatives." The man said, then led the group through the corridors of the Church temple, talking to Joseph and Margot until they reached an area where auras of levels 97, 98, and even 99 could be felt.

There was only one level 99 aura around, that of an acquaintance of Minos, the only one at that level in the Evergreen Empire besides Maximilian himself.

Feeling a spiritual fluctuation similar to Minos', the sea beast that had almost killed him once turned his attention to Oswald, understanding who was there to talk to them.

"Don't stand on ceremony, envoys of the Black Plain Empire. Let's negotiate what you want." Said the beast in his humanoid form as he looked through the door of the place where he stood next to some high-ranking Cardinals in the Church.

As they were told, Margot, Joseph, and Oswald soon found themselves face to face with the high-ranking Demigods there, in this situation for the first time.

But since he was there to negotiate, Oswald wasn't overly modest. After greeting everyone there with respect, he got right to the point.

"Cardinals, we are here because of the problems that have recently befallen the Black Plain Empire..."  
He began to explain what had happened and why the Gorgons had ignored Maximilian's warning.

That would only be the beginning of a long negotiation, something that would not end this day and would take days to reach a conclusion on what would happen.

...

Meanwhile, a few more weeks passed, and the Minos group on the Divine Continent was already aware of everything that had recently happened in the Black Plain Empire, including Sarah's decision.

After discovering the Gorgon's disturbing attempt, Minos' group was naturally more angry with that tribe and longed to return to the Central Continent to help their state.

But they weren't so rash as to plan to return without first completing their plans on the Divine Continent.

Minos knew that despite the Gorgon attack and the loss of allies, his state was functioning normally, and Sarah was protected within Dry City's defensive dome.

So he prepared for the meeting of the members of the Pantheon of Honor, and only after that day, which was not far off, would he leave for his state.

As for the Gorgons, the Pantheon of Honor was already taking action against them, and Minos himself would visit them in the future to repay them for what they had done to his state!

Chapter 1978 No Mercy

A few weeks later...

At that very moment, a group of three Demigods passed through the end of a wormhole and arrived at the southernmost central part of the Continent of Beasts.

Upon arrival, the three armored men, two of them level 97 and one level 98, wasted no time in observing the beautiful area they had arrived in. Since they had a mission to accomplish, they headed straight for their destination, which was only five minutes away.

Looking at an area of this Phoenix-influenced area, they soon saw a patch of land where there were many strangely shaped rocks.

There were rocks shaped like trees, rocks shaped like giant beasts, and rocks shaped like smaller creatures that were still large enough to be seen from a distance.

In the middle of this area, where there were many such rocks, was the home of a local tribe, where about a thousand of them were standing around at this very moment.

Seeing the infamous Gorgons of the Continent of Beasts, these three people from the Divine Continent felt nothing special toward them, as they were there to punish them for their recent actions.

After the attack on the Black Plain Empire and the deaths of the subordinates of the members of the Pantheon of Honor, the leaders of that world organization decided to punish the tribe of Gorgons.

Not only had this tribe attacked the territory of an important member of the Pantheon of Honor, but its members had also killed powerful demigods subordinate to the most important members of the organization.

How could they accept everything that had happened around Dry City without giving an answer?

Minos hadn't even had to pressure anyone to convince the council elders to agree to such a mission. They had convinced themselves that the Gorgons' lack of respect and boldness needed to be answered.

On Merritt's orders, this mighty group was there to solve the tribe's latest crime!

Without delay, the three high-ranking men arrived above the Gorgon tribe's headquarters, where the strongest one there, level 97, sensed their arrival and moved immediately.

"Humans..." The tribe leader looked at the three of them, while the few levels 94, 95, and 96 elders who had remained in the tribe after the confrontations with Minos' people also moved around, imagining that they were there to cause trouble.

"Gorgons, we're here on behalf of the Pantheon of Honor." The strongest of the Demigods said aloud, not looking the creatures in the eye, not for fear of turning to stone, but out of sheer contempt for these hideous creatures. "You have committed a terrible crime in the Black Plain Empire!"

"Tsk!" The tribe leader's face immediately turned ugly when she saw that Minos' friends were there to solve his problems for him once again. "That bastard really is a coward. He creates problems for himself but always has friends to help him. First, it was the Phoenixes, then the Dragons, and now you... Who will be next to act against us? The elves?" She said angrily.

"That's right! We've lost several members of our tribe, and there's nothing we can do about Minos Stuart's cowardly actions!"

"We are the right ones here!"

"We only want revenge! Those who fell to our members risked themselves by siding with our enemy, but we never intended to overthrow beings from other races or groups!"

"Minos is our target!"

Several of the strongest in the area voiced their opinions, while the weakest of the tribe on the surface looked up in awe as they saw their elders surrounding the three newcomers.

The three high-ranking Demigods didn't care one bit about what was behind the Dry City incident.

"Gorgons, don't be foolish. It doesn't matter whether you're right or wrong. Against those with power and influence, you have to know when to put your head down and give up.

"Strong are those who can swallow their grudges against those who can destroy them." Said a level 97 Demigod, showing them the reality of this cruel world.

But they should have known better. After all, the Gorgon race was known to use their high-level experts against juniors who dared to act against them.

If a Saint did something against an 8th-stage Gorgon, a Sage from that tribe would appear to punish them. If a Sage did such a thing, a Demigod would be the one to go and resolve the situation. That had been the case for hundreds of thousands of years, and the Gorgons used their terrifying power to oppress their opponents, whether they were innocent or guilty.

Now, in this situation, they had to understand that the tables had turned. Now they were the weaker side being persecuted by the stronger!

After Minos had shown them all his support, they just had to give up their revenge and be strong like the Demigod had just done. That was what they would tell their victims in other situations.

However, they had made the mistake of constantly attacking Minos!

"Today, you will pay for what you have done. Leader of the Gorgons, we are here to obtain your head to Emperor Minos Stuart!" The strongest of them said as he no longer held back his powerful level 98 aura, causing everyone around him to break into a cold sweat as they directed their power into his eyes.

The punishment decided by the Pantheon of Honor for this tribe's latest act was very severe!

In order to pay for their mistakes and not suffer anymore for what had already happened, the leader of the Gorgons would be sacrificed!

"Huh! If you want my head, come on! But it won't be easy!" This level 97 woman said as her eyes glowed a white-red color, and the atmosphere of tension around her reached its maximum.

"Stupid Gorgon!" The strongest man there looked into her eyes as the space behind that creature cracked open as he pointed a hand in that direction.

As the space crack opened, a golden glow shot out as something extremely dense and metallic slowly descended from the crack toward the creature's back.

Divine Guillotine!

He poured a large amount of his spiritual energy into this supreme weapon, using his own creation, his most powerful tool, without giving the Gorgon any room to try the same.

The moment she felt the suppression of a supreme weapon by someone even stronger than her, the leader of the Gorgon tribe immediately paled.

This was a weapon that even she, using her main weapon, would have difficulty facing.

But while she missed the opportunity to strike first, the other two high-ranking Demigods sent by the Pantheon of Honor quickly fused their own techniques to create supreme weapons.

They weren't there to chat or play a friendly game. They were there to carry out the order to assassinate the tribe's leader, and they would use all the power at their disposal to eliminate those who stood in their way!

Giant Hands!

Granite Rain!

And so the battle began, with the Gorgons at a huge disadvantage!

Chapter 1979 Meeting Time!

A few weeks later...

At this moment, Minos and his crew, now finally ready to leave the Divine Continent with a total of 40 members, were in the headquarters city of the Pantheon of Honor for the upcoming members' meeting.

With only two months to go before the big meeting, Minos had decided to return to this city after completing his journey through the Grinia Empire, gathering the last members of his group, and seeing some of his companions level up.

Already anxious to return to the Central Continent, he had decided to spend the last few weeks he would have on this continent in seclusion in the city where the meeting of the Pantheon of Honor members would take place.

Aware of what the organization had decided to do about the Gorgons, as well as the recent agreements Sarah and her people had made on the Central Continent, he was at once calm and hasty.

His peace of mind came from the fact that there was unlikely to be anything against him in the coming months, either on the Central Continent or even at sea once he began his journey back to those lands.

But he was also in a hurry, as he had many promises to keep, revenge on his mind, a very dangerous journey ahead of him, and changes of plan to make.

He wanted his journey across the Divine Continent to end soon so that he could leave these lands and return to his home state, where he planned to spend about three years before finally leaving for the North Sea.

He hoped that neither Maxmillian nor Vico would fail in their attempts to advance during these years but also that they wouldn't succeed.

The ideal for him would be that one of them would leave their seclusion with a failure or a victory, and then they would go to the North Sea.

However, since it had been years since they had gone into seclusion to try to reach level 100, their success or defeat could happen at any time.

Worried about this, Minos had this mixed and contradictory feeling in his heart.

...

That afternoon, while training in a special high-level cultivation room of Julian's faction, Minos received a message from the Pantheon of Honor asking him to go to the organization's temple.

Thinking it must be important, he quickly left his wives alone to train and went to the temple, where Wren was standing by.

"Elder, I was called here." He said when he saw the beautiful white-haired woman.

"Minos, Merritt is waiting for you. Go where he is." She gestured to him.

Following the old white-haired man, Minos soon entered a room that seemed to have no boundaries, where he seemed to be in heaven, surrounded by clouds on all sides.

There, he saw the old Merritt sitting in a lotus position with a black bag containing something in front of him.

"Minos, it's good to see you well. I have something for you." He said, pointing to the bag.

Looking at it, Minos felt what was under the bag and understood what it was just before Merritt took the bag away and revealed the head of a woman who had snakes instead of hair.

"This was the leader of the Gorgons. I'm giving you this head to complete justice for what happened in your state recently."

Minos heard this and clenched his fists, then made a gesture of thanks to Merritt.

"Thank you for your assistance, elder. Without your help, my people would still be in danger." He said in a solemn tone.

"Hmm, don't thank me. It was fair. I'd do the same for any member of your caliber." He said as he pulled the black bag back over his head.

"This is a weapon for low-level people. If you want to give it to someone you trust, that person can turn those below level 90 to stone by opening and closing these eyes." He commented.

Gorgons had extreme powers, and the strongest of them could leave behind features like the one described even after their death.

Minos knew how valuable the head of a high-level Gorgon was and didn't refuse the gift.

"Thank you, elder. I'll do my best to repay you in the future."

"Hmm, anyway, Minos, how are you? Your departure from the Divine Continent is imminent. What will you do next? Any change of plans?" Merritt asked him curiously.

"I will return to my state, and as soon as I reach level 87, I will leave for the North Sea. But I don't intend to do anything other than what I've already told the elders of the council. That is, of course, if nothing else happens until then."

"Okay. That's good." Merritt closed his eyes after handing the Gorgon's head to Minos. "Now go. I'll see you again in two months, so I won't get in your way."

"I will. Thank you again, elder."

Minos soon made his way back to where his wives were, feeling one less weight on his shoulders.

With the leader of the Gorgon tribe dead, the chances of that tribe continuing to attack him would be exponentially reduced.

In any case, even if they still dared, now that Oswald had made a deal with Maximilian's men, the Gorgons in the Central Continent would have one more problem to deal with if they dared to go there again.

After Oswald's encounter with the level 99 beast that Minos already knew about, they reached a cooperation agreement between the Spiritual Church and the Black Plain Empire.

In exchange for food, more space for Church temples in the Black Plain Empire, and the support of Gloria's faction for Maximillian's group, the Church would maintain peace in the northern region against all enemies.

Such an agreement had completely committed the Black Plain Empire to the eastern side in the Central Continent conflict, but this would give the state of Minos further protection, at least until the war on that continent came to an end.

When that happened, everything could change depending on which side was victorious!

However, this was more than Minos and his people could handle at the moment, so they simply waited to see where fate would lead them as they cultivated and strengthened themselves.

And with that, time would pass quickly, and the next few weeks would fly by until the eve of the meeting of the members of the Pantheon of Honor.

After a long journey and years since he had promised to come to the Pantheon Of Honor meeting, it was finally time for Minos to join the members of the organization to decide on their next steps.

The next such event would take place just before the Continental Tournament, at the beginning of the new ice age, so the group of members of this organization had a lot to decide now!

#### Chapter 1980 Beginning of the Great Gathering

The day had finally arrived for the great gathering of the Pantheon of Honor, an event held every 20 years at the organization's headquarters on the Divine Continent.

At dawn, Minos and his group were ready to leave the Divine Continent, as the Great Gathering of the Pantheon of Honor lasted only one day.

Later that afternoon, they would make their way to the continent's west coast, where they would begin their journey to the Central Continent later that day.

With all the deals Minos had made over the past few months, the roads between this easternmost city of the continent and the west coast would be open to him. With the many wormhole ports between this vast area, his party could reach the west coast in a matter of minutes.

So the whole group was ready to leave these lands, just waiting for Minos.

Meanwhile, he had already left his group and his wives at Julian's faction headquarters, having gone to the Pantheon of Honor temple earlier in the day.

...

"Minos, you're a little early, aren't you? It'll be an hour before the members of the organization arrive." Wren said to the level 85 young man as she saw him arrive at the large hall where the event would take place.

When he saw that his seat was marked at the large oval table in the hall, which even had bleachers for the temple members' subordinates to follow their leaders' conversations, he commented to Wren. "I had nothing else to do locally, and there's no more time to cultivate. So I decided to come here once and for all."

"Really?" She smiled at him as she approached Minos and watched him sit down in his rightful place. "Are you scared?" She sat down beside him. "I was very nervous at the first meeting I attended. I was only a level 94 Demigod then, much younger and naive."

"Not much. I'm looking forward to returning to my state and going into seclusion." Minos said with a smile.

"Oh? But you should be. Do you know what this meeting is about?" She asked him, not blaming Minos for attaching little importance to this meeting.

For a young man with so many problems to solve, it was straightforward not to understand the importance of it.

"It serves to update our achievements, alliances between members, business, but also the council of elders to raise new requirements or withdraw others, as well as change policies," Minos said.

"Exactly, this can all happen at these mandatory meetings," Wren said before adding. "But you're missing something fundamental. At these meetings, we decide the distribution of the temple's resources, as well as the positions of more and less powerful members.

That's why we have factions in our organization. To discuss, at times like today, what the next 20 years will be like."

That's why this is a critical moment and could change the situation of an entire faction for better or worse.

Minos had ignored this possibility and was a little surprised to hear it from Wren.

"How is this dispute made? How exactly is it decided? By votes?" He asked her.

"On specific issues, yes. On others, it's based on merit. Whoever has made the most positive contributions to the temple, i.e., who has the highest balance, can get some special credits, including the right to cast a tie-breaking vote.

In other situations, an exclusive member of the organization like me can change their position so that they can spend the next 20 years in service or seclusion. As for a non-exclusive member like you, this could affect the level of information and resources you have access to.

All in all, today will be an essential day for all of us, Minos."

"I see." He said as he saw more members of the temple arrive, individuals he had never seen before and who soon came to his side to greet him.

As the minutes passed, more beings arrived, humans and hybrids from the Divine Continent, humans from the Central Continent, elves, as well as sea beasts and beasts from the Continent of Beasts.

In addition to the many Minos didn't know, the rest of the council elders would arrive after the members of Julian's faction arrived and take their seats.

In total, there were 76 members of the Pantheon of Honor: 40 from the Divine Continent, 8 from the Central Continent, 7 from the Beast Continent, 3 elves, and the rest were beasts from the seas, including beings from the Marine Empire.

Among the people sitting around that table, Minos was obviously the only Sage, six levels weaker than the weakest Demigod in the area.

In addition, there were 10 high-level Demigods in this organization, 5 of whom were at level 99, 2 of whom were at level 98, and 3 were at level 97. There were 23 mid-level Demigods: 11 at level 94, 8 at level 95, and 4 at level 96. Of the rest, most were between levels 91 and 92, and 7 were level 93 Demigods.

But that wasn't the actual power of this organization. Those were just the members, whether they were exclusive or not.

If one were to consider the families, sects, and clans behind these members of the Pantheon of Honor, the number of Demigods they could influence might be four, five, or even more times the said numbers.

Therefore, several high-ranking subordinates would come to this place with their leaders and then sit down on the outskirts of the area, leaving the large table in the center of the hall for only the actual temple members.

Once everyone was seated and speaking in low voices, Merritt saw that everyone was present and decided to begin the meeting.

"All right, be quiet. It's time to begin the 309,231st meeting of the members of the Pantheon of Honor to decide the future of our organization for the next 20 years, but also for the Ice Age that is about to begin."

Hearing Merritt's pause, Harvey Richards, the second oldest and most powerful person there, stood up and said. "Given the difficult times ahead, I propose a Divine Conclave to decide the next 100 years of the Pantheon of Honor."

When Harvey stopped speaking, all the members began to speak, some surprised, others already expecting the elder to make such a proposal.

Among those surprised, Julian clenched his fists, seeing Harvey's clever move to keep the power of the organization on his side during the upcoming meetings.

A Divine Conclave was a special mechanism useful in extreme times to protect the Pantheon of Honor. When it was used, the decisions made there were valid not just for 20 years but for an entire century!

...