

Bloodline 491

Chapter 491 Then who?

Glacia's expression froze for the first time, and her astonishment was beyond words as she stared at the Queen. The 'Gladiator Arena' was a famous battleground located within the 'Sacred Divine Land' that opened its gates only once every hundred years.

This extraordinary event attracted millions of skilled and strong fighters from all races across the universe, each risking their lives with the sole aim of winning, so they could enter the 'Lost Treasure Tomb'.

The 'Lost Treasure Tomb' was only accessible once every hundred years, and its door always opened in the 'Sacred Divine Land'. However, the number of people who could enter the Tomb was limited. That's why the Gladiator Arena was established to provide every individual with an equal chance to enter the tomb.

Countless powerful and influential individuals from various races would willingly come to oversee the numerous battles taking place in the 'Gladiator Arena' to ensure the smooth operation of the event that lasted for months.

Those influential figures also aimed to prevent anyone above the transcendent rank from entering the 'Gladiator Arena' or the 'Lost Treasure Tomb' because it would be a huge disaster for each race if that person started slaughtering their people who could potentially become the strong pillars of their race in the future.

Amidst all this, it was a well-known fact that the battles that happened in the 'Gladiator Arena' were brutal and bloody because the 'Lost Treasure Tomb' offered resources that could help those who went inside reach the transcendent rank or maybe even a higher rank if they were fortunate enough to find something extraordinary.

Just who would pass up such an opportunity?

Also, killing was a norm in the Arena if the fighters are not stopped in time! That's why all those who stepped inside the Arena knew they were risking their lives.

Glacia rubbed her forehead. She wasn't concerned about Yue, but she could not believe the Queen suggested such a thing, even though the Queen knew that this time the Gladiator Arena would be even more chaotic than before as half of the 'Sacred Divine Land' had been taken over by the dark and demon races after the first shadow general destroyed a part of it.

But before Glacia opened her mouth to speak, the Queen spoke up again.

"Just let her go. It's not like your master asked you to keep that girl on this planet. She only asked to bring her here once. Besides, we can't take care of her for long. Maybe I'm being greedy, but I don't like that the tree of fate is showing interest in her."

"I don't want the tree to bestow the fruit of fate upon her because if it did, neither you nor I would be able to intervene. I want to protect my race. So, instead of giving the fruit to a young person who is still weak and untrustworthy, it's better if the tree chose someone more deserving."

Glacia released a deep breath and gave the Queen a quick nod before, unexpectedly, she uttered something that she herself thought would be impossible.

"What if Yue cleared the Gladiator Arena and earned a place in the Lost Treasure Tomb? She would definitely come back here... I know she hates me, but then she would also resent the elven race for throwing her into the bloody battles."

The Queen let out a faint smile.

"I never knew you thought so highly of her... that girl hadn't even reached the divine-rank. Do you really believe she could? But even if she did, she wouldn't hate the elven race. I saw it in her eyes; she isn't someone who can despise her own."

"Also... I heard she wanted to become stronger, so we are doing this to give her the opportunity to become stronger. We will also protect the people she brought with her in her absence. Her mother and her friend. This way, she would become a strong pillar of our race."

Glacia started laughing at the Queen's words. She covered her face to hide her smirk and shook her head.

"You are a good person, but I suppose even good people can turn a bit ruthless to safeguard what they hold dear."

"Also, you said she would become a strong pillar of our race. If she comes back, do you plan to send her to the war happening at the other end of the universe?"

The Queen looked at the middle-aged woman, who returned her gaze with a grin.

"We will see... it's something the future will determine. For now, just focus on what I asked you to do."

Glacia raised her hand to show an okay sign and quickly left the room to find the person they had talked about for so long. The Queen stared at her fading figure and placed her hand on her heart.

"It's strange... but even though I am sending that girl away, I have a feeling my race won't get the fruit of fate this time."

"My Queen..."

A faint voice echoed behind her, and another old figure materialized behind her. It was a white-haired old elven woman who had pledged to stay as the Queen's shadow to protect her from harm since the moment the King passed away. The white-

haired woman let out a hum.

"The tree of fate. I can sense it vividly... it has started to grow happier since that girl arrived on this planet."

The Queen started walking toward the room exit, and the white-haired woman vanished behind her after she hid her presence.

"Me too... that's why I am worried the tree wants to give Yue the fruit of fate."

She stopped in the doorway when the white-haired woman fell silent at her comment.

"What's the matter? Do you think I'm being greedy too? Should I let her have the fruit?"

She waited for a few seconds just to hear a response from the white-haired woman, which came after a long silence.

"No, it's fine to be a bit greedy sometimes. But you know I have a deep connection with the tree as I have lived the longest on this planet, and... I have a feeling that it's not Yue the tree wants to give the fruit to."

The Queen's expression turned solemn.

"Then who? Someone from our race... or could it be the people who came with Yue?"

The hiding woman let out a silent sigh.

"I'm not sure myself as I can't foresee the time that is yet to come. Maybe it's someone from our race, maybe it's someone related to that girl..."

She paused for a second.

"Or maybe it's someone who has yet to arrive on this planet."

Chapter 492 Yue will train under me I

Underneath one of the countless large, expansive branches of the Tree of Fate, many wooden houses were lined up in a haphazard manner, surrounded by lush plants and vibrant flowers.

The atmosphere in the quaint town was bustling and spirited, despite its small size compared to the numerous grand cities of the elven race that thrived under the vast canopy of the Tree of Fate.

In the middle of that very town, a small circular arena with sand covering the ground was set up. Inside that arena, a beautiful young elven woman with amber eyes and honey-colored hair, along with a man of a similar age with green hair and brown pupils, were engaged in combat.

Many groups of people, old and young, wearing robes, elegant attire, or expensive embroidered dresses had gathered around the arena to witness the fight. As the elven woman with amber eyes gracefully moved inside the arena with a bow in her hand and attacked the man across from her with a sharp icicle that she formed with lightning fast speed, the gathered crowd laughed at the man who was getting beaten up after another rejection he received from the same woman who was overpowering him so that he would leave her alone.

The crowd grew louder and taunted the man in the arena even more when he tried to dodge the icicle but ended up freezing in place as the elven woman across from him took out an arrow from her storage ring and pointed the sharp tip directly at one of the man's eyes.

The man's brown pupils narrowed at the sharp tip that was just an inch away from one of his eyes, before he raised his hands in defeat with a loud grumble.

"I admit defeat! Yue, please spare me this time. I know you are disappointed as I am so weak... but you know I like you so-!"

He bit his tongue as the arrow edged closer to his eye, so much so that he almost thought it grazed his iris.

However, he sighed with relief when the elven woman across from him retracted the arrow after the old town's head concluded the fight with a chuckle.

The old town's head slapped the shoulder of the man with brown pupils, causing the latter to groan in pain. Then he looked at Yue with soft eyes as his white robe billowed in the wind.

"Yue won again, and Sebastian, our blockhead bird who's been getting on everyone's nerves lately, lost!"

The crowd burst into laughter at the young man, who kept his sad brown eyes fixed on Yue's back, as if he was contemplating to make another attempt at proposing.

As the sun filters through the leaves above the area, casting dappled shadows on the crowds, Yue flew out from the arena and landed gracefully on the ground. The grey robe, cinched with a ribbon at her waist, swirled gently as she started walking towards the black-haired elven woman sitting in the distance, waving at her.

It's been a year since she arrived on this planet, and she has to say that the people here treated her well.

They also gave her, her mother, and her friend everything one would need to live a pleasant life but, she just was not grateful and felt like she was trapped because she was not allowed to leave this place.

Not to mention... she had no idea what happened after she vanished so suddenly into thin air. Did Kyle try to find where she went? Did he resent her, thinking she could at least tell him?

It's been a year since she saw him. She knew he would have gotten stronger as he always did, but she was still just a pseudo divine rank individual who was trapped in a small town, unable to leave.

In that moment, a familiar pair of green eyes flashed through her mind before she remembered the last moment they were together under the same sky. It was a beautiful memory.

Yue let out a sigh and shook her head to disperse the countless thoughts that would always emerge in her head every night as she stared at the night sky that always twinkled with many stars.

She gazed at Elli, the black-haired elven woman who had been by her side for the past year and let out a faint smile that only stayed on her face for a brief moment before Elli began to speak.

"That jerk Sebastian! Who does he think he is? Just because he's the town head's son, it doesn't give him the right to bother you! It's the sixth time already, but it's good you gave him a good beating this time!"

Yue shook her head at the elven woman who got angry on her behalf.

She sat down beside Elli on one of the many tree trunks sticking out from the ground. Suddenly, she raised her hand to shield her eyes from the sunlight filtering through the leaves, but she stopped when the many leaves of the tree of fate moved on their own to block the sunlight as if sensing her discomfort.

It had become a normal occurrence, but Yue was still fascinated whenever the tree of fate did something like that. Just like her, many other people nearby also noticed how the leaves' moved to block the sunlight for her, and they all started whispering among themselves, but she ignored them.

Yue gazed at Sebastian, the man with brown eyes whom she had just fought. He was being reprimanded by the town head, who happened to be his father, for losing so badly in front of a large crowd.

She furrowed her brows slightly because, no matter how much she tried to stay calm in his presence, he was just annoying. He was a year younger than her and was also one of the youngest pseudo-divine rank individuals on the planet, just like her.

However, since she arrived on this planet, he had been pestering her, saying he liked her and that it was love at first sight. Yue snapped out of her thoughts when the small lynx jumped on her shoulder.

"What happened, Nox?"

Nox rubbed his horns on her shoulder as iridescent scales shimmered on her body before gazing sharply across with his blue pupils that turned sharp and alert, almost as if he was looking at a big enemy.

Yue followed his gaze with furrowed brows, and she froze in her position when she saw Glacia, who had just landed from the sky on the land across from them.

Chapter 493 Yue will train under me II

Elli also froze in her spot when she followed Yue's sharp gaze and saw Glacia stepping toward them. The old town's head pushed Sebastian away and quickly left the arena, joined by a few others, to greet Glacia, who had halted in front of Yue. But the woman with bronze eyes waved her hand at the town's head and gave a faint smile.

"It's alright, old man. No need to be so formal. I am just here to see the people I left in your care."

The old town's head gazed at Yue and Elli before gesturing for the others around him to leave them alone. However, to everyone's surprise, his one and only foolish son boldly went and stood in front of Glacia with his still swollen face before asking what business she had with Yue.

Glacia chuckled at the young man standing before her. She remembered him. The last time she visited the town, he was the only one who didn't greet her.

"Sebastian, right? You have quite an attitude, young man. If you want to listen, then listen from a distance, or else I can simply bury you underground."

Sebastian's stance faltered, but instead of leaving the area, he crept behind his father to hide. The old town's head facepalmed at his son's antics and just wanted to bury the young man himself.

Yue stood up, and Nox jumped away from her shoulder to climb a nearby branch that extended toward him on its own. Glacia's narrowed eyes followed the lynx's every movement before she gazed at the branches of the Tree of Fate.

'Indeed, the rumors are true. The Tree of Fate is favoring her...'

Glacia snapped out of her thoughts when Yue and Elli both stared at her with cold eyes before Yue stepped forward and started speaking.

"You are here to see us, right? Now that you have done it, please leave."

Glacia shook her head.

"No, no, I am not just here to see you all. I have something to tell you as well. So let's sit down for a while."

She waved her hand to take out a few wooden chairs from her mind space before taking a seat on one of them and gesturing for Yue and Elli to sit opposite her. Yue's eyes showed her displeasure, but she and Elli sat down across from the woman to bring it to an end, as they had no intention of looking at the face of someone they disliked so much. But when they heard Glacia's next words, they were both stunned.

"Yue will train under me from now on because I want her to enter the Gladiator Arena that will open in the Sacred Divine Land three years later. As for Elli, she is too weak and still has a long way to go before she could even clear the Ascendant state, so she will stay here and train with the townspeople."

Elli's eyes widened at the woman's words, but before she could speak up to ask why the heck Yue would practice under her when Glacia is the very person who is forcing them to stay here, Yue held her shoulder to stop her.

After Elli stopped, Yue clasped her hands together tightly and stared at the woman to understand what the heck she was talking about. What Gladiator Arena and what Sacred Divine land? It's been a year since Yue arrived on this planet, but she had never heard of these terms before.

However, the one who answered her questions wasn't Glacia but the old town's head who stared at Glacia with a solemn expression and explained everything about the Sacred Divine land and the Gladiator Arena to Yue and Elli. The old town's head had been to that place before once, that's why he knew everything about the bloody fights that took place in that event.

The more Yue and Elli heard about that place, the more serious their expressions became. Elli stood up to argue with Glacia, even though she was weak, there's no way she would let Yue go to such a dangerous place. But Glacia smirked and spoke up while staring directly at Yue.

"You want to become stronger, right? That's why you've been putting your body under so much pressure to train day and night since you arrived on this planet, and I know the motivation... you want to go back to your home planet, or more specifically, you want to meet that silver-haired man, right?"

Yue's facial expressions stiffened when she heard Glacia talk about Kyle. Not only Yue but Elli's eyes also widened. However, Glacia wasn't done yet.

"The very man who I am not even sure if is alive or not because I made sure to break his body when he stared at me with those arrogant green eyes."

Yue's expression chilled as she stared at the woman. She almost attacked Glacia if not for Elli, who grabbed her arm and made her look at her. Yue blinked and saw her reflection in Elli's eyes. The rims of her eyes had completely turned red.

She took a deep breath.

'No, Kyle is fine.'

She repeated those words in her head to calm her nerves, and after a long minute, she made a decision. She needs to return to her planet. But to leave, she needs to become stronger... strong enough so no one could stop her.

Also, she needs to make sure both her mother and Elli are safe before she does something impulsive, or else they would be put in danger because of her. Yue glared at Glacia with icy eyes as she brushed Elli's hand away from her arm.

"I will train under you and participate in the Gladiator Arena as well. Just tell me if he is alive or not?"

Glacia smirked.

"He is... probably because he was breathing when I left. Your training will commence tomorrow. So, be prepared."

Elli gazed at Yue's firm expression and realized she couldn't stop her now. She was already upset that Nine had disappeared after leaving her here, and now even Yue would leave.

At that moment, Sebastian also spoke up with a grave expression.

"I want to follow Yue-!"

But before he could finish his sentence, his father smacked him and dragged him back home to beat him up so he knows what he is allowed to speak and when he is not.

Chapter 494 Planet Eadmire I

Inside a massive planet completely shrouded in a crimson hue, an eerie atmosphere engulfed every corner of the planet that was bustling with laughter and countless noises.

The very essence of malevolence seemed to seep from the very core of this forsaken planet, where twisted spires pierced the sky like jagged teeth, and a sense of foreboding hung heavy in the air. The ground below was filled with a dark and sinister energy, giving the impression that the planet itself was alive with only dark energy.

Countless individuals, each with four wide and large dark-colored wings behind their backs and white slit pupils, soar across the sky or engage in conversations within the numerous huge structures on the planet.

These towering structures house vast arenas where slaves from different races battle each other just to get another day to live while spectators place bets, enjoying alcoholic beverages and various other delicacies, restaurants where people indulge in debauchery, and various shops that sell someone else's body parts to make someone else stronger.

A feeling of dread filled every corner of the vast planet known as Eadmire, the largest planet in the universe, which also happened to be the one and only planet belonging to the demon race. It was a place where the very concept of light and hope felt like a distant memory, where nightmares took form, and where the line between reality and nightmare blurred into a twisted tapestry of fear and despair.

In that very planet, within one of the countless huge structures, a young man in his twenties donning a black cloak that concealed his entire body from head to toe, nibbled on his nails as he peered from behind a wall to observe the numerous individuals with white pupils and expansive wings who were cheering and showering gold on a chained beautiful demi-human woman singing in the center of the hall.

The whole hall was adorned with soft pillows and lavish carpets, all occupied by members of the demon race.

The young man's body tensed, and he turned around to walk away from the place when suddenly one of the demons snapped his head toward him. But who could have thought that the moment he moved around, he would crash into a stunning woman with similar white pupils, wearing tight clothes, causing his cloak to slightly slip off his head, unveiling a pair of golden pupils that shimmer in the dimly lit hall due to the threads swirling within them.

'Damn it! Damn it!'

Nine clenched the fabric of the cloak around his head tightly, ready to flee if the woman in front of him noticed the fact that his presence was quite out of place compared to all the other people in the hall... but he breathed a sigh of relief as the demoness paid him no attention.

'I really need to start trusting this thing!'

He caressed the insignia shaped like a white flower with two leaves, hidden within his cloak, and thanked his past self who risked his life to obtain it before he set foot on this dangerous planet.

The insignia was only given to the strongest demons in the demon race. It made sure to envelop his body in a veil of dark energy, even if he had not tapped into dark energy and did not have a dark flower engraved on his body. Also, whenever a high rank demon gazed at him, they would politely greet him because, unlike the low-rank ones, they could sense the insignia's presence.

'No, I should thank the future Kyle who provided me with enough knowledge about everything. Otherwise, I would have never made it this far in just a year. Dang, I might have perished when I stole the insignia right under the nose of a transcendent rank demon...'

Nine dashed towards the exit of the place and hurriedly left the hall because, once again, he found no clue about the 'Dark Chamber of Secrets'.

The chamber held numerous ancient scrolls and books filled with extensive knowledge about the demon race and its two subsidiary branches, nightkin and dark race. However, his aim wasn't to gain that knowledge but to find a specific room within that chamber. That room held many dark contracts that the shadow generals and several other powerful individuals under them forced others to sign. Through these contracts, they enslaved the people they took an interest in, even if it went against the person's will.

These contracts were made from dark energy and a special teleportation material only found on the demons' planet. That's why after they were used, they were all kept in a single place. This way, if someone who signed those contracts ever grew strong enough to break free from them, they would be teleported straight to the demon planet.

Nine shuddered when he thought about the poor souls who might have tried to break free from the contract, only to be met by hordes of demons in the next moment.

'I feel the urge to teach those fools a lesson who signed these contracts... oh, but one of them happens to be my friend, haha? I will definitely give him a good smack on the head when we meet again to knock some sense into him that he clearly lacked when he agreed to sign that contract.'

He stepped out of the grand structure and found himself in an open area filled with many people from the demon race. Nine looked up at the swirling maelstrom of crimson clouds above him and let out a bitter smile.

'I have a long way to go! I possess all the knowledge. I just need to find the dark chamber of secrets exact location! The moment I get my hands on the contract I'm searching for, I will run away with the help of the teleportation artifact I stole from Glacia...'

He smirked.

'I wonder if she has found out yet? Haha, the expression on her face will be quite something when she realizes that her life-

saving artifact is missing.

'I never thought Kyle could be so vengeful. Well, she did kidnap his girlfriend and me, his best friend. But I wonder why the knowledge the future Kyle has given me mentioned that Glacia died...'

Nine covered his face and smoothly blended into the crowd to gather as much information as possible about the dark chamber of secrets.

'I have a feeling that Kyle is going to kill her, which is why he knew about the life-saving artifact. I really wanted to witness the fight but I can't... not until I am done here.'

Chapter 495 Planet Eadmire II

After spending a challenging month traveling through one huge structure to another on the demons' planet to find information about the Dark Chamber of Secrets, Nine finally arrived in front of a massive building encircled by three towering pillars reaching skyward.

Perched atop each pillar was a majestic statue of a winged demon. The massive building stood amidst a bustling array of other structures, starkly contrasting the desolate and abandoned appearance it bore, as if forgotten by time itself.

He coughed due to the thick, dark smoke surrounding the building, then raised the edge of his cloak that covered his eyes to peer at the abandoned building covered in dust and spiderwebs.

"....."

Nine couldn't believe the Dark Chamber of Secrets had been right in front of him all along, yet he had ignored such a massive building simply because there was not a single guard stationed around it.

If it weren't for him kidnapping a drunken (S)-rank demon, who looked like a wealthy old man, and slapping the hell out of that bastard to extract information about the Dark Chamber of Secrets, he would have overlooked this building again, just like he did when he first landed on this planet.

Now he understood why he hadn't been able to pinpoint the exact location of the Dark Chamber of Secrets upon his arrival on this planet.

After using the hidden teleportation array that transported him to the demon planet, he had actually arrived directly in front of this very building, but he ignored it as it looked old and abandoned. He just never thought the demon race would be so idiotic as to not even station a single guard in front of such an important place.

"Do they not care about this place? Or are they overly confident, thinking that no one would dare to come to their land to steal something under their nose?"

Nine muttered under his breath and rubbed his aching forehead. He had the urge to go back and smack his past self who suffered on this planet for an entire month.

Just two weeks ago, he was nearly sold into a betrothal due to a cunning demon who had offered him and many others a room to stay in his hotel, only to secretly mix something in their drinks at night to auction them off.

It was fortunate that he did not consume the beverages provided in the hotel since he disliked the food available on this planet due to the dark energy radiating from almost everything here. Also, Nine did not feel hungry mostly due to his high rank, but even if he did, he simply took out the food he had stored in his storage ring to eat.

Otherwise, he might have ended up being sold like all the others.

"That bastard... he didn't even spare his own kind. It's good I ran off in time before they noticed something was off."

He covered his face and, after a cautious survey of his surroundings to ensure no one was watching, quickly slipped through the partially open massive steel door before sprinting towards the building.

Only after a few seconds, he arrived at the building's entrance and softly pushed the dark door open. He then effortlessly slid inside the door without any trouble and let out a sigh of relief.

"Damn, that was easy-!"

Nine almost bit his tongue when he saw an old pair of white slit pupils staring at him. It was an old demon who appeared to be sweeping the floor with a broom.

The old demon scrutinized him from head to toe as he froze in place, almost ready to sprint backward. But he blinked when the latter paid no attention to him and went back to sweeping the floor.

'Did... that oldie just ignore me?? Wait, he saw me but he's just going to ignore me? Really? Is it because of the insignia?'

Nine hurriedly reached for the insignia inside his cloak. After calming his nerves, he briskly walked away from the old demon towards the grand stairway leading upward. However, as soon as he stepped on the first stair, he heard an old voice behind him.

"Don't enter the third layer. He has just returned from the war, so it would be unwise to disturb his rest. You are only permitted to wander in the first two layers, even if you possess the demon's badge."

Nine held his breath and, after stiffly nodding his head, he began climbing the stairs. He only released his breath when he had climbed far enough to no longer see the old demon.

'That was a close one. My heart almost leaped out of my chest!'

This time, he took the insignia out from under his cloak and displayed it openly on the dark cloak so that everyone could see it since it had just saved him. But he furrowed his brows when he remembered the old demon's words.

'Who just returned? And from what war? Whoever it is, I should not take any risks and should quickly grab what I need from this place and leave. It's already bad that the old demon knows I'm here.'

He scanned the dimly lit first floor in front of him, illuminated by light emitting from a few round orbs embedded in the wall, and quickly ascended to the second floor.

Nine didn't even glance toward the third floor and started walking through the second floor. He glanced at the numerous doors lined in the hallway he was walking. Some were dark, some wooden, and there were even some sealed with old chains.

After a few minutes, he came to a stop in front of a wooden door that had a large horn drawn on it.

After taking a deep breath, he slowly grabbed the door handle and opened it. In an instant, a creaking sound echoed in the eerily silent space, sending shivers down Nine's spine as he entered the room.

However, no one could describe his shock when he saw many mountains of papers of various sizes haphazardly strewn across the room, stretching to occupy a vast space encircled by countless empty, dusty shelves draped in spiderwebs.

Chapter 496 Planet Eadmire III

Nine's eyebrow twitched as he surveyed the mountains of papers before him. The sheer number of them made him wonder how he would ever manage to go through each one to find the right contract.

On top of that, he had no clue how the contract Alec signed differed from the rest spread out before him!

He let out a frustrated groan at the mere thought of the time it would take to find the contract he needs as he approached the papers, and the slightly open door shut behind him.

He crouched down and without hesitation grabbed the paper closest to him before brushing off the dust and studying the unfamiliar symbols scrawled on it.

Nine's eyes paused on the dark inked signature at the paper's bottom half. The signature form appeared unsteady, as if the hands of the person who signed the paper were shaking as they held the pen and wrote the name.

In the quiet room, a deep sigh slipped from his lips as he read the unfamiliar name on the paper that was definitely not written in Alec's handwriting and tossed it away. He grabbed a few more papers to scan them, but in that instant, his eyes lit up, and he threw all the papers in his hands aside.

"Ah... I can just take them all! If I can take one, then why not take them all! Haha, why didn't I think of this sooner!"

Nine clutched his knees and rose to his feet. He gazed at the storage rings on his fingers, and a broad grin spread across his face as he emptied the contents of one of his storage rings into another and began filling it with the papers before him.

After ten long minutes, Nine let out a chuckle and sat down on his heels in the center of the room, still surrounded by numerous empty, dusty shelves veiled in spiderwebs. But the mountains of papers that once cluttered the room were now safely stored in his storage ring.

He quickly wore the ring and scanned the dimly lit room one last time to ensure he hadn't missed any papers. After a moment, he rummaged through his cloak and took out a small pulsating crystal.

"Haha, I should leave now. It's a shame I won't be able to see the expressions of those who would find this room empty-!"

He shut his mouth when suddenly a deep and tired voice resonated from outside the room where he stood.

"Who's there?"

Nine's eyes dilated, and without a second thought, he crushed the crystal in his hand that would teleport him far away from this planet. In a flash, a brilliant light burst from the crystal and enveloped his body. But just a moment before he disappeared entirely, the room door swung open with a resounding bang.

A handsome youth, who appeared to be fifteen years old, clad in grey silk clothes, entered the room and peered at his fading body with a confused expression. Nine's breath hitched when the youth gazed into his eyes with a pair of golden eyes that were eerily similar to his.

The youth's long peach-colored hair, tied in a high ponytail, cascaded down his back as he blinked and reached out his pale hand towards Nine's fading body enveloped in light, as if to catch him.

Nine's heart nearly jumped out from his chest when the slender fingers phased through the light, almost grasping his body, but his body scattered into countless particles before the youth's fingers could grab onto something.

The shimmering particles danced in the room for a fleeting moment and then also vanished into the air. The youth's surprised expression was accompanied by a soft 'oh' as he gazed at his empty hand.

"I missed him... He had the demon's badge, but his soul and body were too pure for him to be a part of us."

He rubbed his fingers and surveyed the vacant room with a smirk.

"It's been a while since I encountered someone from my race... and he dared to steal right under my nose."

"Haha... truly remarkable."

He turned his gaze back to the old demon who had ascended the stairs to reach the second floor, likely drawn by the sound of the forcefully opened door moments ago.

"Master? Why did you come down-!"

The old demon's words were abruptly halted as he glanced at the empty room.

"Wait... is not this the room where the dark contracts are kept?"

He quickly hurried outside the room and inspected the door of the room, where a large horn was drawn, and let out a shuddering breath.

"Oh no!"

The old demon's eyes widened as he remembered the cloaked man who had climbed the stairs just a while ago. He thought it was another human who had willingly allied with one of the demons or

shadow generals to obtain strength and a demon's badge, but it turned out he was completely mistaken!

He glanced at the youth standing in the room's center and lowered his head. This same youth held the title of the second shadow general, named Ceano.

Ceano looked young, but he was the oldest among all the shadow generals. The man just liked his young appearance. He was also the strongest among all the shadow generals, even more than the first shadow general who belonged to the dragon race. However, unlike the other shadow generals working under Azazeal, he had only one goal — to become the strongest.

The man did participate in the war happening in the other end of the universe because it was important if he wanted the dark side to win, but he always ignored what he thought was not useful to him in achieving strength.

"I am sorry, master. I made a grave mistake..."

The old demon stopped speaking when the youth across from him raised his hand and staggered toward the room exit.

"It doesn't matter. It's not my duty to take care of every single thing. Besides, this building has been deserted for a while now after the demon king's death, and the other demons were too arrogant to put some guards here, thinking that no one would ever dare to step on their planet."

"Let's not stress over it too much and chill. The one who took the contracts is already gone, who knows where, and I don't give a damn. I am not gonna waste my energy hunting down some unknown person just for some useless contracts."

Ceano stretched his neck and began ascending the stairs to head to the third floor to rest. The old demon stared at his back and let out a sigh before he decided to contact a few powerful demons to discuss the matter of the contracts. The demons would then secretly search for the person who stole the contracts.

After all, if the countless enslaved individuals bound by the contracts crafted by the shadow generals and other powerful figures were to discover this, it would be a calamity. Those individuals would go all out to locate the thief who took the contracts before the demon race, aiming to break free from the darkness that compelled them to obey the contract owner's command.

At the same time, in another place surrounded by lush green trees reaching up towards the sky filled with dark clouds and numerous twinkling stars.

The serene atmosphere on the planet was disturbed when a bright light flashed in the dark sky, and Nine's body appeared in the light that scattered into particles.

He immediately lost his balance mid-air because his body had just traveled such a vast distance at a speed even greater than light, making his head spin violently. Nine shook his head to clear his vision as his body edged closer to the trees, but just before he could crash, he managed to regain his balance mid-

air.

Nine's eyes were still a bit hazy as he gripped his chest and glanced around to figure out where on earth he was. After spotting no signs of life, he landed among the trees and settled on the uneven

ground before leaning against a tree to calm his still-thundering heart, partly due to the crystal he used to leave the demon's planet but mostly because of the golden pairs of eyes that he saw before escaping.

"Who was that person...? Damn, he looked so young, but I felt a chill running down my spine when he held out his fingers to grab my body."

After a minute, Nine looked at one of the storage rings on his finger that held the contracts and burst into laughter.

"But I did it! Haha, after a year and a month of struggle, I finally got it!"

He checked the contracts to make sure he wasn't dreaming and he actually wandered around the demon's planet for more than a whole freakin' year and stole the contacts right under their nose.

"Done... now my the next destination is the Sacred Divine Land."

Nine's smile stiffened when he glanced around to take in his surroundings.

"Well, I guess it would take me some time to figure out where I am and how should I reach the Sacred Divine Land when I don't even know its location."

"Haha... nice one.

He fiddled with the storage ring that held the contracts and let out a dry smile.

"I also have to find the contract I need among all these. I can't even destroy them as it would affect the bodies of the people who had signed them."

"I hope Kyle has a way to completely erase the darkness within the contracts..."

Chapter 497 Did I do something wrong?

Six months later, after Nine stole the contracts from the demon's planet, within a vast, freely floating horizontal land that extended far enough to encompass a massive area within the universe.

The land had been enveloped in a thick layer of divine and spiritual energy from the moment it came into existence. That is why it exuded a sense of divinity and carried the scent of numerous ancient tombs filled with treasures hidden beneath its surface. Despite all this, there is a lack of mana in and around the sacred divine land.

It was also renowned as the land of spirituality because it housed countless mystical spirits. These ethereal beings were small winged creatures without physical bodies, existing solely as souls. The spirits emitted a tremendous amount of spiritual energy, which is why the divine land excluded a lot of spiritual energy. However, unfortunately, only those who are close to nature or can communicate with these small winged beings can sense and harness the spiritual energy.

But... at this moment, a portion of the sacred divine land's surface was releasing a dense miasma of dark energy that was slowly but surely eroding the divine and spiritual essence in the air. The darkness was also corrupting the many mystical spirits who were trying their best to find safety in the ancient tombs to get away from the repulsive energy.

Inside the sacred land, far from the darkness, where the air was still filled with a soothing melody and the atmosphere was clean, calm, and serene. Surrounded by many lush green trees atop a boulder in the middle of a lake, a beautiful woman with long dark blue hair cascading down her back was sitting on her heels.

The white robe enveloping her figure was cinched at the waist with a lovely sash intricately embroidered with flowers.

She extended her hands with a radiant smile as she glanced at the small winged creature wholly made of light, hovering just a short distance away from her above the calm surface of the lake.

"Come here..."

Then she opened her mouth and said in a sweet voice that echoed in the silent space. The spirit hesitated but slowly flapped its wings to edge closer to the beautiful woman with sea-blue eyes.

In the meantime, a bit farther from the lake, nestled among the trees, behind a few large boulders that seemed out of place, almost as if they were deliberately positioned there to conceal the group of individuals secretly observing the woman who was trying her best to rope a mystical spirit.

A white-haired old man seated among the group placed his finger on his lips to hush the excited individuals around him with a solemn expression.

"Shhh! The spirit will run away if there's even a little noise, so be quiet."

Almost everyone obediently nodded their heads at Susan and silently moved further back away from the boulders. They all hoped for Mia to be successful.

In that way, she would finally become the first person in their group who would be able to converse with a spirit.

This would benefit all of them as well because with a mystical spirit by their side, they would easily be able to locate another ancient tomb filled with treasures hidden beneath the sacred land.

Carcel tousled his golden hair and offered a subtle smile as he looked at the blue-haired woman in the distance who was trying her best to connect with the spirit.

"She's doing great."

He turned to the dark-haired dwarf next to him and posed a question that lingered in everyone's mind.

"Will she be able to sense spiritual energy once she befriends the spirit?"

Yon chuckled softly when he noticed the many pairs of eyes gazing at him with curiosity. It had been over a year and a half since they all arrived in the Sacred Divine Land. He and Susan followed the kids, Susan because the old man wanted to find Kyle, and he because, unlike the other guardians of the Tower of Opportunity who had chosen to pursue their own paths by remaining on the blue planet or leaving to enhance their strength elsewhere, he had nothing planned for his future.

However, the dwarf did desire to achieve the transcendent rank one day. That's why the sacred divine land was also the ideal place for him, just like it was for the youngsters.

"Well, befriending spirits to gain an advantage in locating the ancient tombs is quite different from sensing spiritual energy. So, I'm certain it would depend on Mia's ability to comprehend. After all, except Regius and Alec, none of you can sense spiritual energy yet, not even me."

Carcel nodded and glanced at the blue-haired man seated behind him before looking at the green-haired man. He clicked his tongue when he noticed a smug expression on Regius's face.

Sinon held onto his wings tightly and released a dejected sigh. His wings and horns had started to turn completely silver the more his strength increased, adorned with golden patterns that now stretched across their entire surface.

"I wonder... when will I be able to sense spiritual energy? I thought demi-humans are closer to nature compared to others, but it seems nature doesn't favor me as I am not handsome enough-!"

He hissed when Regius smacked his head and hushed him to stay quiet because the spirit was just an inch away from Mia's hands. Sinon glared at the green-haired elven man and closed his mouth.

Lara chuckled softly at their actions. She was wearing a robe similar to Mia's, but her orange hair was tied in a high ponytail, with a few strands cascading to frame her face.

All of a sudden, the whole group cried out when a loud, elderly voice echoed behind them, and the spirit's form scattered into numerous particles that floated in the air within Mia's grasp.

"What are you all doing?"

Susan and Yon whipped their heads around with deadly serious expressions to gaze at the floating old dwarf, who had disappeared who knows where a week ago, only to disrupt such an important moment.

Zron scratched his chin in confusion when he noticed everyone glaring at him.

"Hmm, did I do something wrong?"

Chapter 498 I want all of you to reach Divine-rank

Alec sighed along with everyone else and gestured back towards the lake with a dejected expression.

"Master, Mia almost got the spirit, but your sudden voice frightened it away!"

Zron blinked and let out an apologetic 'Oh' as he glanced at the group of youngsters. Besides Susan and Yon, all the young ones present here were his students.

The old dwarf had only tagged along with the youngsters out of boredom because he had nothing else to do on the blue planet. Also, he believed that stealing from a place abundant with treasures was a far more enticing prospect than stealing from a small planet he had already thoroughly explored every nook and cranny of.

That's why he could never have imagined that so many talented youngsters would end up becoming his disciples, especially since he didn't have much to offer in terms of teaching. Initially, the youngsters asked him to become their master because they lacked knowledge about the Sacred Divine Land and required a strong individual to protect them in this dangerous place.

However, the old dwarf was delighted to have so many talented individuals as his students, so he intentionally brought back numerous treasures for them whenever he went off alone for a few weeks. This is why they still referred him as their master.

Susan rubbed his forehead and rose to his feet as he saw Mia coming toward them.

"We were so close! Just one more second, and we would have gotten a mystical spirit who could have become our personal guide to locate treasure-filled ancient tombs!"

Yon patted his shoulder.

"It's alright. I'm sure we will be able to find another spirit soon because it seems they like Mia's presence. It's already the third time she encountered a spirit."

Susan and all the people around Yon nodded in agreement.

They were confident that another spirit would soon appear before Mia.

In that moment, Zron saw that the atmosphere was calming down, so he cleared his throat to attract everyone's attention towards himself.

"I found an underground tunnel close by and saw a massive ancient gate within. That's why I returned, as I'm certain it leads to an ancient tomb where you all can discover valuable treasures."

Instantly, everyone's faces lit up. But Zron wasn't finished speaking yet, so he waved his hand to calm them down and continued.

"Also, I want all of you to achieve divine rank as soon as possible."

He paused for a second to think.

"Right, within two and a half years. I can sense Alec and Carcel are on the verge of a breakthrough, and they will reach the true divine rank in a month, especially if they consume a divine treasure."

"However, the rest of you are still quite far from the divine rank. It's important, so I want all of you to reach the divine rank and if possible, try to increase your strength even beyond the divine rank."

A confused expression appeared on everyone's faces as they stared at Zron. Sinon flapped his wings and closed them behind his back before glancing at the old dwarf across from him.

"Why? We are in the sacred land, and we will eventually reach the divine rank with the amount of treasure we are finding and due to the abundant divine energy in the air."

"So, why in two and a half years? Also... even after spending so much time in this land, we still haven't found a single clue about Kyle, Bia, and Jian..."

Sinon's voice quivered slightly, and a somber atmosphere enveloped everyone upon hearing the names of the people they had been searching for.

"Did the trio even make it to this land after being pulled into the ethereal tunnel? If so, why haven't we even caught a glimpse of them? Knowing Jian's nature, he would have already started making a name for himself here."

"And as for Kyle... we are all aware that even if he remained hidden and kept a low profile, his flames and his ability to uncover and amass treasures with his luck stat alone would have already made him famous in this land."

Sinon let out a wry smile.

"Let's not forget Bia. Being a divine phoenix, how could she have remained hidden for so long... did she never use her true form after coming to this land?"

Carcel grabbed his shoulder.

"Don't worry. They are not weak... besides, the sacred divine land is vast. Perhaps we overlooked them. I believe wherever they are, like us, they are getting stronger."

Sinon shook his head.

"How can I not worry? I know you all are concerned too. Nine, Elli, and Yue are also missing, yet we have no idea where to search for them... We can only hope they are alive and safe."

The tension in the air grew heavier with each passing second after Sinon fell silent. They all shared Sinon's concern about Kyle and the others, but, as Sinon mentioned, they had no clue where to begin searching for them. Moreover, even after reaching the sacred divine land, they had not heard a single rumor about them.

Doesn't that suggest Kyle, Nine, and the others might not be here? They could be out there, somewhere in the vast universe, facing unknown dangers.

Zron let out a sigh as he gazed at the people in front of him, all wearing solemn expressions. His heart ached every time he saw the youngsters getting dejected.

"That is also one of the reasons I want all of you to achieve the divine rank within two and a half years! At least hear me out before getting emotional!"

He raised his hand and flicked Sinon's forehead with a low grumble. After the old dwarf stopped speaking, everyone stared at him to understand what he meant. All of a sudden, Zron's ears twitched when he heard a noise in the distance.

"I can hear many footsteps. A few people are approaching this place. Let's go to another area to talk."

"This land is unsafe, especially because of the treasure it holds. It's best for us to avoid any conflicts because if we engage in any kind of fight, many others might join just for the sake of fun."

Chapter 499 All of us are going to train like crazy

Zron began floating, and everyone immediately followed him, and together they all left the area. After a while, they arrived at the base of a mountain.

Instantly, they extended their senses to survey the surroundings. Only after confirming no one was nearby did they settle on the ground to ignite a fire.

The bright day was gradually darkening, even though there was no sun in the sacred divine land. If there was light in the sky, it meant it was day, and if dark clouds gathered, it meant it was night.

After everyone settled down, all eyes shifted to the old dwarf, as if urging him to continue his unfinished words.

Zron motioned for them to gather around him with a serious expression. The fire grew brighter as he exhaled and looked at the people seated across from him.

"I want all of you to join the Gladiator Arena. Its gates will open in two and a half years, and anyone below the supreme rank can participate, regardless of their age."

He then turned to Yon and Susan.

"You two as well. Susan is already at the divine rank, and Yon achieved divine rank just a month ago. I want both of you to join in. I can also participate since I haven't surpassed the transcendent rank yet but, well, I am too old, and my bones start to ache if I move too much."

"So... I will keep an eye on all of you from the audience seats as a guardian who will always be there to protect you if something goes wrong in the Gladiator Arena."

Right away, confusion flickered in everyone's eyes because it was the first time they heard about the Gladiator Arena. They all had numerous questions in their heads after hearing the old dwarf's words, but before any of them could voice their questions, Zron himself began to explain about the Gladiator Arena.

He went into the specifics of the powerful ancient tomb named the 'Lost Treasure Tomb', which could only be accessed once every hundred years, with its entrance situated in the Sacred Divine Land. But because the number of people who could enter the tomb at a time was limited, the Gladiator Arena was set up to provide every individual a fair chance to compete for an opportunity to enter the tomb.

After Zron finished explaining, he paused for a few minutes so everyone opposite him could digest the information.

Surprisingly, he had no prior knowledge of the Gladiator Arena, despite being familiar with the sacred divine land. Perhaps his memory had faded over time.

He only heard the details about the Gladiator Arena a few days ago when he overheard some elves discussing it and their plans to participate.

He was immediately interested, and after noticing that the elves were weaker than him, he made them sit in front of him and politely asked them to tell him everything about the Gladiator Arena.

Of course, after he obtained all the necessary knowledge about the Gladiator Arena and discreetly removed their storage rings, he allowed the elves to leave.

Zron tossed a storage ring toward Susan and told the old man that later he should share the treasures with the youngsters. Then he ended his words with a few more sentences that immediately made everyone's eyes light up.

"All across the universe, everyone who wants to become stronger will surely come and participate in the Gladiator Arena so they can secure a place and gain entry into the Lost Treasure Tomb."

"I'm sure that if the silver-haired lad you all are searching for is on the sacred divine land, he will definitely participate."

"After all, entering the Lost Treasure Tomb means he will get a chance to reach the transcendent or maybe even the supreme rank if he encounters an otherworldly opportunity inside the tomb."

Zron took a brief pause and observed everyone's expressions. From their bright eyes alone, he could sense all of them were ready to participate in the Gladiator Arena right this instant simply because there was a chance Kyle would also join the Arena.

"Nevertheless, even if Kyle and the others are not here on this land, I am confident that wherever they may be, they would hear about the Gladiator Arena because currently, nearly everyone in the universe is getting ready to send their people to join the battles that will begin soon."

There was a moment of silence before a heated discussion erupted as Alec, Sinon, and Regius bombarded Zron with many questions about the Gladiator Arena and the Lost Treasure Tomb.

Carcel, Lara, and Mia also had some questions, but unlike the enthusiastic trio, they stayed mostly quiet and simply listened to what else Zron shared. As the youngsters got busy with the old dwarf, Yon and Susan exchanged glances before Yon sighed and placed his arm on Susan's shoulder.

"Old man, it looks like it's time for us to show our strength to the world. I want to reach the transcendent rank, so I will give it my all to secure a spot.... Haha, maybe its possible my opponent would be Kyle?"

Susan clicked his tongue at his joke and slapped his arm away.

"I might be old, but that doesn't mean I can't fight. Besides, I really want to see that kid again... So, count me in. In the end, if I find myself overwhelmed in a battle, I know when to admit defeat."

Then suddenly, the two gazed at Zron. The duo couldn't believe that the oldie, who was the strongest among them all, was backing away and planning to watch everything from the audience. A sudden realization struck them, and the duo locked eyes.

They were aware that Zron had a tendency to steal, but now that he would be seated among thousands of people in the audience, they were unsure whether to be concerned about those sitting around Zron. After all, those individuals are definitely going to lose their precious belongings if they don't have a mind space.

After some time, Alec lifted his sword towards the sky. He didn't hide the back of his hand anymore because he had learned to conceal the dark petal within his body. He raised his voice as everyone else around him also raised their fists toward the sky.

"Our next stop is the Gladiator Arena! We are not just going there to search for Kyle and Jian but also for Nine and Yue! So, all of you, prepare yourselves because for the next two and a half years, all of us are going to train like crazy!"

Zron grinned at their enthusiasm.

"Good! Very Good! I will watch and make sure all of you train like crazy... haha!"

If before hearing Alec's exclamation everyone was feeling excited, now after hearing Zron's words, they all lowered their fists and let out dry laughs, thinking the old dwarf was joking. However, Zron's pleasant expression told them that their next two and a half years are going to be filled with nothing but training.

Chapter 500 I am always a good support

Just like a gentle breeze, time quickly passed as Yue trained under Glacia on Planet Luminara beneath the Tree of Fate, day and night without much rest.

Similarly, Alec, Carcel, and the others immersed themselves in intense training within the Sacred Divine Land.

They also explored ancient tombs, searching for treasures, all to prepare for the upcoming Gladiator Arena.

Alec and his group always stayed together and trained in Zron's sight because of the dangers on the land, while Sinon made sure to leave their names on the gates of the ancient tombs they discovered. So... if Kyle and the others they are searching for ever come across these tombs later, they would know Alec's group had been there.

That was also the reason their names became famous in the Sacred Divine Land as the ones who were looting the ancient tombs and vanishing after leaving their names before anyone could see them.

Simultaneously, Nine discovered that he had arrived on a planet ruled solely by a few ancient tribes of a lizard race. It turned out to be a stroke of luck as one of these tribes was also getting ready to go to the Sacred Divine Land for the Gladiator Arena. Despite the initial unfriendliness of the lizard race towards him due to his sudden appearance, Nine managed to forge new friendships effortlessly due to his personality.

In the end, he even started training alongside the lizard race members who were getting ready for the Gladiator Arena, under the guidance of an elder of their race who was over two hundred years old and had attained the initial stage of the supreme rank.

Just like that, a year passed, and then another, with only six months left for the Gladiator Arena gates to open up for the whole universe on a distant, medium-sized planet that was once beautiful and teeming with life. However, the ongoing war for the past fifty years between the Nightkin race and the human race had transformed that lively planet into a battlefield scattered with ruins and graveyards.

In the midst of the very ruins, a loud battle cry erupted as a handsome transcendent rank human with pale hazel eyes, dressed in grey armor, clashed against a transcendent rank individual from the Nightkin race in the sky to prevent him from interfering in the battle happening on the land.

The human let out a groan and spun the white spear, bathed in blood, in his hand to push his enemy with such force that the latter was thrust back mid-air.

His hand holding the spear trembled as he calmed his breathing and glared at the man with crimson eyes and a pair of horns atop his head across from him, who balanced himself mid-air and licked the blood away from his ghostly pale hand.

After the man from the Nightkin race balanced himself mid-air, he sneered at the human opposite him with a wicked smile, as if mocking the human's struggle to save his planet that is already in ruins.

"Just admit defeat; you know you can never win. Why the struggle then, huh? Trust me, if even one of the shadow generals arrived here right now, victory would be ours-!"

His words abruptly halted when he sensed a presence behind him. In an instant, his figure turned into a mirage, and he disappeared from his spot.

The moment he disappeared, a metallic chain engulfed in red flames encircled the vacant space like a snake. The chain moved in the empty space and after a second went back to its owner.

The Nightkin race individual stared at the chain's owner with intense hatred, as if the latter had taken all his money. On the other hand, the human's hazel eyes brightened up as he caught sight of the chain's owner.

"Jian! Finally, you are done with your opponent. Now, help me a little; I want to get rid of this bastard!"

Jian chuckled, his shoulder-length red hair was flowing in the air as he wrapped the metallic chain around his arm and gazed at the human before turning his attention to the transcendent-rank individual from the Nightkin race who was glaring at him.

"Don't worry, Xavier. I may be weaker, but I'm always a good support, right?"

Xavier laughed at his words, well aware of how valuable Jian could be as a support. It had been this way since the red-haired human arrived on his planet.

He lifted his spear that glistened under the sunlight filtering through the dark and red clouds and signaled for Jian to get ready before launching another attack on the Nightkin race individual.

Their battle continued, with Jian using his skills to assist Xavier in mid-air. However, after a minute, a loud cry pierced the air.

Jian's eyes lit up upon hearing the voice. He whipped his head back to see the massive phoenix engulfed in golden flames that had just arrived to join the battlefield alongside a horde of flying and land monsters.

"Bia is also back! Now victory is ours!"

Xavier's eyes widened slightly. No matter how many times he saw the divine phoenix controlling thousands of monsters to fight alongside her, he could never grow accustomed to it.

It was truly amazing.

He knew Bia had just recently reached the divine rank, but even before that, she could handle many divine beings thanks to the golden symbols engraved on her wings. Those symbols always repelled all the divine pressure directed towards her.

Xavier wondered who had engraved those incredible symbols on the phoenix's body. He really wanted to meet that person and request them to engrave similar symbols on his body. Still, it was a matter for later. He smirked because, just like Jian said, victory was now theirs. He could see no shadow general had arrived on the planet, and from the circumstances, they weren't going to come either.

It seems the war that had been going on for so many years on his planet is finally going to end after so much struggle.