

DEMONIC 861

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Noah kept on training as he reviewed the events that had happened in the world during his hibernation, as well as the details behind Elder Julia's offer.

The various forces had left the old continent untouched, but its constant decline was inevitable. The Portal in the Utra nation fed continuously on the "Breath" and nutrients of those territories, and the wasteland that it created kept on expanding as the passage remained open.

The central areas had never been famous for their rich density of "Breath" due to the massive number of cultivators in the Empire. The retreat from the new continent had worsened that already dire environment, which was slowly following the destructive trend of the regions in the Utra nation.

The only areas that still met adequate standards in terms of density of "Breath" were those inside the domain of the Council. The Papral nation was relatively abundant in terms of resources and regions where to raise cultivators, even if it was far emptier now.

The new gains in the new continent had pushed the Council to resume a slow but constant relocation of its assets. Yet, it didn't intend to move away from the old continent.

Differently from the Elbas family, the Council was a form of government that represented all the major sects in the nation. Its rule didn't set its foundation on the fear of a more potent force, but on a collaboration that would eventually provide shared benefits.

The Hive didn't have those sorts of problems. The Coral archipelago had become a testing area for the cultivators recruited through the Lutren nation and other channels, and its defenses were incredible.

So, the Hive could focus all its efforts on its expansion in the new continent. Its priority now was to turn those still barren central regions in sources of income and to recover from the losses suffered during the war against the Empire.

After all, it had lost countless human cultivators and hybrids in those clashes, and dozens of heroic cultivators had died too. The Hive had come out of the war with no more than thirty-five Elders in the fourth rank left as assets.

Yet, even if its losses had been immense, they were nothing compared to the other forces since they had seen casualties happening among the cultivators in the fifth rank.

The Hive wasn't famous for its high number of heroic troops but its elites. Monsters like Noah and talents like many of the Elders were existences that excelled among their peers. Also, the rest of the world was still unaware of the presence of the two Demons inside its ranks. The two of them were old monsters that had learnt to survive through unthinkable struggles and had been personally trained by a divine cultivator!

That feature didn't apply only to the heroic assets. In those eight years, more rank 3 cultivators had managed to survive their Tribulations and had taken their place among the other elders.

Most of those cultivators had fought in the war against the Empire and were experienced warriors, other than rare talents among the human ranks. It was only natural for them to experience their breakthroughs to the heroic ranks as soon as a period of peace arrived.

The Hive didn't focus only on its expansion and the grooming of those young talents in those years. The territories around the Divine Stele had required most of its attention since it had to decide which kind of restrictions to apply to the political system there.

The three invading factions were on peaceful terms, but they were still enemies in the end. Each one of them could receive the same treatment of the Empire if they allowed themselves to become weak. So, the meetings to decide how to build and divide the city next to the Stele had taken time.

They had concluded eventually and had started to build the city. Upon its completion, though, there were seats of power to fill before it could work as a trading center and as a training area specific for cultivators with a water aptitude.

According to what Elder Julia said in her messages, the troops of the Hive were already there, but they lacked a leader. The other rank 5 Elders were mostly busy with their tasks, and the Hive couldn't reveal the Demons just because it needed to show its power to the allied forces.

The Hive would rather slow down its expansion than revealing such powerful assets.

Noah was the perfect candidate for that role since he had never cared too much about the political environment of the various domains that he explored. After all, a rank 5 cultivator would be there just a deterrent against eventual revolts.

'They need a scarecrow,' Noah thought as he reviewed the description of the ambassador's role conveyed by Elder Julia. All it required was for him to be there permanently, but it didn't involve any task relative to the management of the city.

He just had to be there as a reminder to the other factions that they couldn't bully the Hive away from the Stele.

Of course, part of Noah had already accepted that offer when he heard about June. Still, his reasonable side decided to gather as many pieces of information as he could before making a decision. The outcome of that investigation led him to believe that becoming an ambassador would suit him.

He would have large training areas, specific quarters ideated only to make the static lifestyle of the existences in the higher ranks more comfortable and direct access to all the resources traded in the city.

That and the presence of the enemy forces right next to him would put him in a constant state of wariness, which could only sharpen his progress.

His underground quarters were too safe, and he had already cleaned the rank 5 beasts from the areas nearby. He needed a new home, one where he could go all out with his experiments and feel the pressure radiated by the enemy forces.

Noah contacted Thirty-seven before setting off, and the automaton decided to enlarge the separate dimension to continue working with him in the creation of living weapons. His interaction with Thirty-seven didn't stop there. Noah asked for more information about the Kesier runes too.

It didn't take him much to set off from his dome and fly in a straight line toward the opposite coast. New experiences were always well accepted in his mind, and he even needed larger training areas, as well as researches that were available only among the larger forces.

When he reached the region with the Divine Stele, he could immediately notice how the new city had been divided among the three nations. There were banners placed everywhere, with entire buildings relying on a flag or symbol to signal their loyalty toward a specific force.

As for the actual share of buildings and territories there, the three factions had divided them equally.

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The structure of the city was simple. It had its best buildings around the Stele and a series of quarters and markets in the more peripheral areas.

As a neutral territory, the city was the perfect place where to exchange the resources generated by the new continent. After all, some rather independent cultivators traveled through the various habitable areas to trade goods or make a living.

The grip of the three ruling forces over their assets wasn't as strict as before. Many cultivators needed some independence even if they were bound to powerful oaths. The new continent was slowly obtaining the social environment that had been popular in the old one for centuries.

Of course, it would never reach the point where the leading forces only ruled one nation and considered the regions on their borders as mere territories in their area of influence. The fact that only heroic cultivators could travel freely through the majority of the continent placed too much power on the various organization that controlled those areas.

The weaker forces would lack the means to expand their power without the authorization and help of their leaders.

Noah went directly for the central buildings as he flew over the city.

As a rank 5 cultivator, he knew that the resources exchanged in that market couldn't possibly interest him. Materials that were useful to experts at his level couldn't appear in the open so easily. They didn't have techniques and spells above the fourth rank either since the various leaders would keep those teachings for themselves.

It was possible to find something valuable from time to time, but he didn't have time to waste looking for items that didn't influence his cultivation. He could send someone in his place to keep track of the market anyway.

It wasn't hard to find the buildings that belonged to the Hive. Long banners depicting an octopus enveloping a series of islands with its tentacles hung everywhere on the structures on the southeastern side of the Divine Stele.

That division had been purely geographical. The Elbas family had built its structures on the northeastern side, while the Council had its palaces on the northwestern part.

Those buildings encircled the Stele and acted as a line of protection for the most important resource in the area. Also, they skimmed the cultivators and envoys that sought to train near that trace left by divine beings.

There weren't only core members of the three forces there. Many members of the sects and noble families went there daily, hoping that the troops handling the entrance to that incredible training area would just let them pass.

That system had already given birth to an intricate array of bribes and favors that the forces in place gathered to increase their influence.

Just as it happened in the Coral Archipelago, the population there would eventually discard their ties to a specific organization as new generations took over. So, there was a need for a supreme authority there, something that would suppress any thought about rebellions just by existing.

That was the reason why the three factions had decided to send a series of rank 5 cultivators to live and train there. The sole rumor about their presence there made the cultivators living there behave and increase their offers to the heroic cultivators of the three organizations.

Those were just casual bribes that didn't affect the overall accumulation of resources of those forces, but it was a good source of income that could potentially last forever.

A series of heroic cultivation welcomed Noah when he neared the designated buildings of the Hive. He could recognize Morgan, Roy, and Duke among the ten experts that had organized the celebration for his arrival.

However, there weren't only cultivators of the Hive waiting for him.

Noah could recognize June, Faith, Elder Estelle, and Elder Clara from the assets of the other forces. It seemed that the political environment had reached a level of serenity that welcoming an influential expert of an allied nation wasn't so unusual anymore.

The celebration was extremely formal. The heroic cultivators on the scene exchanged only a few toasts and a series of short conversations concerning the management of the city before returning to their buildings.

The only meaningful discussion concerned the choice of a name for the city, but the rank 5 assets on the scene quickly settled for Divine Market.

The Elders accompanied Noah inside the buildings belonging to the Hive and described in detail all the features that those structures had.

There were a series of training areas with multiple quarters containing formations for various purposes. There were large halls open to the public, where both human and heroic cultivators worked on skimming through the insane number of requests to take a look at the Stele.

In the end, the Elders escorted him to his quarters, which turned out to be a large underground structure that had a better version of all the services offered in the buildings above.

Noah felt satisfied with his new quarters. It wasn't easy to build something so intricate in just eight years, but he could imagine how the Hive had given priority to the Stele rather than to the barren central regions.

'There is only me as a rank 5 cultivator in the Hive,' Noah thought as he dismissed the Elders, 'But there are Faith and June here. Life sure it's funny at times.'

Noah couldn't help but feel strange as he walked under the azure walls of his underground quarters. After all, he was now at the head of an organization that handled a neutral city.

The similarities with the political system in the Coral Archipelago were stunning. The only difference was that he was on the other side of that environment now.

Also, some of the cultivators there were real allies, which made the situation even funnier in his eyes.

However, he didn't want to waste too much time remembering how far he had gone since he first set foot on the Coral Archipelago. There were too many projects in line, waiting for him to start one of them.

As his memories started to reach the Odrea nation though, he senses a series of steps resounded in that underground world. Noah didn't even need to turn to understand who was behind that sound. Those steps followed a rhythm that he knew far too well to forget.

"I thought we would have used Faith like the last time," Noah said as he turned to face his lover.

"Noah, we are rank 5 cultivators managing one of the best resources in the entire new continent," June said as she stepped on the ground. "We can do whatever we want."

Noah revealed a smile, but June spoke before he could say anything. "I've already spread the rumor that I would have requested for a battle. Don't hold back."

At those words, black sparks began to run through June's body, and her aura began to radiate a thick battle intent.

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Noah looked at his lover radiating a pure battle intent and sighed. He only wanted to train and dive into one of his projects now, but he had underestimated how serious June was about fighting.

He could understand her feelings. She had fought a war without having the chance to reveal her real power, and holding back for so long made her reach her limit eventually. She had to vent and test what her higher energy was capable of.

"Come then," Noah said after a few seconds of silence.

He wasn't going to refuse her. After all, he had always been aware of June's character, and he didn't dislike it at all. Only someone with a drive as intense as his could accompany him through his life, and if June needed an opponent, he would provide him.

June's smile widened at his words, and she took out her typical golden spear. More sparks began to run through her body as she pointed her weapon at Noah, and an orange halo started to envelop her as her black higher energy gathered on the arm wielding it.

Noah couldn't help but admire the beauty of that scene.

June was breathtaking as she gathered her power to cast a spell. Her robe and hair fluttered due to the pressure released by her peculiar sparks, and her whole figure began to shine with an orange light that spread in the environment.

Her sparks were black, but they shone with an orange color. The product of her friction had created something that carried features belonging even to Noah's darkness.

Of course, it didn't carry his individuality, nor the properties of his "Breath". Only its appearance was similar to his darkness since Noah had helped in making one of the materials needed for its creation.

Noah stretched his palm and held it still, waiting for the attack to arrive. He knew June too well not to understand the kind of spell that she was preparing.

June's battle intent increased even more when she saw that gesture. She felt challenged to express all her power, and that was what she intended to do. A black lightning bolt suddenly came out of her spear and shot toward Noah's palm.

An explosion resounded in the underground quarters, and the inscriptions on the azure walls of that area flickered as they fend off the shockwaves that reached them.

Noah found himself in the middle of a trail of gray smoke, but his attention was on his hand. The center of his palm felt slightly sore, but there wasn't any mark on it. June's spell didn't even manage to make him bleed.

However, his arm had shaken when the lightning bolt landed.

It wasn't anything extreme, just a slight tremor that had lasted for less than a fraction of instant. Still, the fact that a cultivator in the gaseous stage had managed to make his body flinch after he had reached the upper tier was incredible, almost unbelievable!

"How much can your centers of power handle?" Noah asked as he walked outside of the trail of smoke, but June had long lost interest in words.

Another lightning bolt flew in his direction, but Noah deflected it with a mere wave of his hand. His innate awareness though made him notice that the power of that same spell had increased by a little.

'I guess we'll find out,' Noah thought as he focused on June again.

She still had her spear raised, but some cracks had appeared on its body. Even an inscribed weapon in the fifth rank wasn't able to handle the higher energy that she released.

Truth to be told, June didn't need an inscribed weapon. She had abandoned the martial arts just like the rest of the heroic cultivators on her level.

Noah could rely on his physical strength to put his martial arts on the same level of the spells, but ordinary cultivators saw them only as a weaker type of offensive.

Yet, June liked to wield a weapon when she fought. She had a special relationship with spears because of her harsh childhood, so he had never pressed her into changing her battle style. Still, it was clear that her inscribed item wasn't able to keep up with her power anymore.

The Demonic Sword roared after that second lightning bolt. It felt confused when it saw the two of them fighting, but Noah quickly patted it on its hilt and spoke a few reassuring words. "Don't worry. We are just playing."

The living weapon didn't fully understand what he meant by "playing", but its connection with Noah made it aware that they weren't trying to kill each other. It would have been too confused otherwise. After all, the sword had learnt to like June, especially since Noah's emotions influenced some of its thoughts.

June snorted when she heard that, and she started to rotate her spear to resort to a different attack. A series of dark crackling dark spheres formed in front of the rotating weapon and sparks spread from their edges to connect them into an intricate array.

A lightning storm took life at that point. Small lightning bolts shot from that array and flew toward Noah in a straight line.

June's lightning reflected her individuality. All her attacks were powerful and direct.

Noah kept on walking forward as he punched all the sparks coming at him. Flashes of a dark orange light shone in his vision every time his knuckles connected with one of the lightning bolts. Their power kept on increasing, but they were still unable to slow down his advance.

'I would have felt that if I was still in the middle tier,' Noah thought at some point. June's attacks had just reached a level of power that even hybrids in the middle tier would have trouble handling.

However, he wasn't worried about his safety. Rather, he wasn't sure if June's centers of power were able to handle all that might.

It was still okay as long as they didn't cross the limits of the gaseous stage, but she could hurt herself if she pushed her boundaries too much.

Nevertheless, Noah knew his lover. Asking her to stop or control herself was pointless. He would have to put an end to the fight with his own hands if the situation became too dangerous.

June released a series of sparks when Noah became too close, and she shot in the air, where she prepared a long-distance lunge.

All the sparks that had affected the environment gathered in her position. Then, June shot downward, leaving an orange trail as she dove toward Noah.

Noah saw cracks appearing on the tip of the golden spear as it reached for his head. There was so much energy inside its structure that even its sturdiest part was on the verge of falling apart.

Yet, Noah didn't move. He waited for June to enter his range and delivered an uppercut aimed at her weapon.

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The golden spear exploded into countless pieces, and some of them even cut June's skin as they flew in every direction. The higher energy that she had accumulated inside her weapon also went wild, and a thick lightning storm formed in the point where Noah's fist had collided.

The lightning storm expanded and flung June backward, making her slam in the azure wall of the underground quarters. As for Noah, he remained still as the sparks landed on his body and destroyed his robe.

June's higher energy already put her on par with cultivators at near the peak of the gaseous stage, and her centers of power kept on producing more of it as she kept on fighting. The attack that had enveloped Noah matched some of Icy Stare's spells, and June was still creating more of it!

Her next attack was bound to be slightly stronger too since Noah knew that his last punch would only fuel June's battle intent more.

As if answering to his understanding of her character, June's aura exploded outward and filled the air around her with black sparks that radiated an orange halo. Crackling sounds began to echo inside the underground quarters at that point, and the nature of the atmosphere began to change as the amount of "Breath" of the lightning element increased.

The wall where June had slammed didn't crack due to the inscriptions filling its surface, but that didn't mean that the impact was soft. June had hurt her back in the clash, and she had to rely on her higher energy to keep walking normally.

Her aura though was more intense than ever, and black sparks started to separate from her body since her centers of power were producing far more energy than her Perfect Circuit could handle.

It was the first time that June had to push her limits so much, especially with her new energy. Her body was overflowing with power, and even the formations meant for that purpose weren't able to contain it.

"I can still go!" June shouted as she waved her hands to take control of all the "Breath" of the lightning element in the underground area. Her higher energy then spread in the environment and fused with the "Breath" before shooting to the walls, ceiling, and ground of Noah's quarters.

Orange layers formed on top of the inscriptions, and dark sparks ran freely through them. It seemed that June was trying to turn the entire area in a personal domain where her energy could fly without any obstructions.

Noah knew that spell. Its name was Prison of Lightning, and it was one of the diagrams retrieved from the other world.

June had obtained it as a prize for her mission in the wilderness and had shown it to Noah during their cohabitation. Still, that was his first time seeing it with the higher energy as its core.

"Are you sure?" Noah asked as he looked at the trembling orange layers. They seemed ready to unleash the massive amount of energy contained inside them, but he knew that they would remain still until June triggered them.

"You aren't only the man that I love, Noah," June said in a calm tone. "You are also the perfect opponent for my individuality."

Noah could understand the meaning of her words. As a hybrid, his resilience was incredible, which gave June enough time to push her centers of power over their limits.

A regular battle would have ended long ago. June would have either won with her last attack or lost because her opponent was far more potent than her.

However, since Noah wasn't going to stop her, she could fight until the output of energy produced by her Perfect Circuit far surpassed her usual standards. He was the only one in the world that could give her an endless battle.

"Go ahead then," Noah said as a smirk appeared on his face too. "I want to see if my darkness is enough to match higher energy."

Noah's aura exploded outward too, and his "Breath" began to spread in the environment. The destruction carried by his darkness started to fight with the violent power contained in the orange layers for the control of the situation. Still, it was impossible to decide a winner before those energies turned into spells.

Black smoke began to come out of Noah's body, and a scaled armor soon formed around his figure. A black sphere appeared above his head too, and a series of saber-shaped runes came out of his palm to surround him.

Noah wasn't going to use his martial art. That battle was a pure conflict of energies to see how distant they were from each other in terms of power.

On one side, there was Noah's darkness, something that he had created using his individuality and the enlightenment obtained during the transformation as its foundation. On the other, there was June's higher energy, which she had built through King Elbas' research.

June didn't speak anymore at that point and triggered her spell. The orange layers started to release thick lightning bolt that encircled Noah in a spherical lightning storm.

Noah saw his runes cracking and falling apart as they clashed with the various attacks, but the corrosive smoke around him offered enough protection for the time being.

The cloud created through the Demonic Form eventually gave in to the barrage of lightning bolts that became stronger with each passing second. June was still fueling her spell, so the amount of energy that she produced kept on increasing.

The Black Hole spell became the next target of the lightning storm. Its size had initially started to increase as it reduced the attacks into primary energy to absorb, but its structure began to fall apart as June pushed more power in her spell.

It was as if those spells had a completely different structure even if they were theoretically on the same level. If Noah had to describe that difference using types of swords, he would say that his attacks were wooden words, while June's were made of steel.

They were in different leagues.

The lightning storm began to land on the scaled armor after it broke apart the Black Hole spell. It didn't take much before Noah felt the various lightning bolts crashing on his body and threatening to suppress him on the ground.

'This would have been able to kill me if I was still in the middle tier,' Noah thought before moving his vertical pupils in June's direction.

She was sweating profusely, and her complexion had turned pale. A trail of blood had even begun to fall from a corner of her mouth.

Her energy was stronger than his, but she had long reached the limit of her Perfect Circuit. Even at that point though, her power wasn't enough to hurt Noah's body.

Noah shot forward and released a roar when he reached her. June's mind froze when she sensed the innate danger caused by him. Her instincts told her that she could only escape in front of that creature.

In that moment of unavoidable fear, June's mind surrendered on its own, and her spell vanished into thin air.

[Chapter 865 865. Personal world](#)

Making June surrender due to an instinctive reaction was the only way to stop the spell without hurting her. Noah just had to make her sea of consciousness aware of the power of his body to shut down her will to fight.

The helplessness felt in front of a being on a higher level didn't depend on the individualities. It was the result of the survival instinct that any creature had.

June fell on her knees after her centers of power stopped producing that massive quantity of energy. The sudden return of her Perfect Circuit to an average pace made her feel dizzy, and the exhaustion that enveloped her body made her legs lose strength.

Noah crouched and lifted her face as he caressed her. June was pale and appeared utterly drained, but she wore a satisfied smile as she examined her lover's body.

The last spell had managed to leave white marks on his chest and shoulders. It didn't hurt him, but it had reached the point where even a hybrid in the upper tier had to start respecting her strength.

That achievement was incredible for a rank 5 cultivator in the gaseous stage. After all, only beings on higher stages could face such powerful existences.

The spells of cultivators at the peak of the gaseous stage were able to hurt Noah when he was in the middle tier, but now only existences on a higher level could pierce his natural defenses. Even then, they would have a hard time killing him due to his incredible resilience.

Noah shook his head when he saw the satisfied expression of his lover, and he stuck out his tongue to lick one of the trails of blood that had fallen from a cut on her cheek.

"Are you going to eat me now that I'm at my weakest?" June asked as she laid on his chest and immersed her hand in his hair.

Noah showed an ugly expression when the taste of her blood filled his mouth. The flavor of the Heaven's Spark that she had absorbed during her Tribulation was something that his body naturally rejected and found awful to eat.

"It seems that you can't be my food," Noah said as a warm smile appeared on his face. "What do I even do with you now?"

June pulled Noah closer, and the two of them exchanged a long kiss before she replied to her joke. "You can let me sleep for a while here."

Noah nodded at her words, and June's eyes closed as she lost herself in his caresses.

The underground area was a mess due to their recent battle, but Noah couldn't care less about the furniture. June was sleeping in his arms, and his mind was consuming mental energy to fuel the Divine Deduction technique as he went through his ideas concerning the higher power. It was as if he had returned to his happy life inside the separate dimension.

The battle had shown him how superior a higher energy was compared to normal "Breath". His darkness didn't even come close to the power of June's sparks.

The creation of higher energy had been a priority in his mind, but now it had become a necessity. Noah couldn't suppress his eagerness to get his hands on that power after seeing how strong it was.

He didn't have any instructions though. Even King Elbas had to give up on identifying a method for the light and darkness element since they didn't have specific features.

Those rare aptitudes enveloped almost all the behaviors that the "Breath" could have. They were generic in the sense that they could assume any form without giving up on their natural properties.

That was the reason behind their superiority over the other elements, but it was also a hindrance to Noah's project since there weren't guidelines in King Elbas' research. He only knew that it was possible to create something structurally more significant to the "Breath".

If other heroic cultivators were to inspect him now, they would notice that his consciousness disappeared at times only to return after a few seconds.

Noah's mind had already interacted with the world of the laws, and he was able to reach that mental state for short instants as he meditated. It wasn't something that he could control, but those moments had begun to happen more often as his level rose.

His existence was slowly striving for the next step in the cultivation journey. Noah was making his ways toward the laws as the intensity of his individuality increased. His existence was becoming too strong to remain limited to the rules of the "Breath".

'A fuel, density, motion, a foundation, and friction are the methods for the other elements,' Noah thought as he kept caressing the sleeping June. 'Theoretically, I can build higher energy with my darkness using any of those approaches, but I can't settle for just any power. I need to create the best version that I can, while also respecting the features of my individuality.'

Noah already had a general idea of how he wanted to proceed in that project. After all, he had spent years knowing the contents of King Elbas' research, and he had often found himself thinking about it during his meditations.

The way he saw it, his higher energy had to be the maximum expression of his creation, so that he could have something specific for each aspect of his individuality.

The primary energy was the product of his destruction and expressed his beast side. His darkness represented the entirety of his individuality and carried features belonging to both destruction and creation.

Following that reasoning, his higher energy would have to be something strictly connected with his creation and human side. It would have to be the definitive tool for that aspect of his individuality.

'It needs to be a core material capable of creating a world.' Noah concluded in his mind.

He had set the features that he wanted his higher energy to carry. The only issue was the absence of a method that could turn his idea into real success.

'Countless tests again,' Noah sighed when he thought that.

He felt lost in that project. The situation was even worse compared to when he had to create his darkness since he lacked an example of what he should strive to create.

He only had the material required for the task, but he had no idea how he could make it reach a superior form. So, he could only immerse himself in a series of tests that would eventually give him a general direction to follow.

'I need to deploy my darkness in an orderly and harmonious array,' Noah thought as a whiff of his "Breath" appeared in the center of his palm. 'My higher energy needs to be a pliable material capable of assuming any form. It must be a dark matter through which I can create my personal world.'

[Chapter 866 866. Rumors](#)

June eventually woke up, but she remained lain on Noah's chest as she observed him working. Tiredness still filled her entire body, and she found the focused expression of her lover a captivating sight.

Noah continued to experiment as if he didn't notice that June had awakened. There were too many thoughts concerning the higher energy in his mind to give her some attention.

A small amount of his darkness moved in his palm and changed form as Noah controlled its structure with his mental energy. The changes were methodical and accurate, but they didn't seem to lead to anything since the "Breath" returned to its original shape every time.

Noah was trying to find out what composition suited his energy before moving forward in his experiments. He needed to know what form his darkness didn't reject before starting to test on larger quantities of "Breath".

It soon became apparent that his darkness didn't like a static form. It wanted to remain free to move even if Noah forced it into a fixed shape.

He expected something like that to happen since his individuality reflected his character, but he still felt disappointed when he confirmed that.

It would be easier for him to proceed with a static form since it would have more evident rules. Shapeless higher energy would be far more complex to build, especially when it came to the harmony of its structure.

However, he had always known that it wouldn't be easy to reach a satisfying result. After all, he aimed to create something that could work as an essential matter for his personal world.

Noah's experiments continued for hours, and he stopped only when his sea of consciousness was almost empty. Only then did he turn toward June, who had observed him in silence for the whole duration of that testing session.

"It won't be easy," Noah said as he laid on the ground while keeping June over him.

Her presence there was benefitting his creation since she was core part of that aspect of his individuality. Yet, they weren't in the separate dimension now, so he couldn't know for how long she could remain there.

Also, she still needed to rest, so they couldn't indulge in more intimate behaviors until she recovered.

Nevertheless, she quickly reassured him before he could even question her about that topic. "I can come here often. We are the highest powers in the Divine Market city, and the Elbas family will believe that I visit you to have sparring sessions. I can ask for Faith's help if they start to suspect something."

June's words made sense. The neutral city only had a handful of rank 5 cultivators from the three factions, and their meetings were somewhat allowed now that the allied forces had a peaceful political relationship.

Of course, she couldn't just live with him, but they wouldn't have to be separated for decades again as long as they remained there. Also, June's state would confirm her version of the story. After all, she had really fought Noah.

"Are you saying that we have to fight every time you come here?" Noah asked, and June's eyes lit up at that question. That idea was appealing for a battle maniac like her.

Yet, it would be pointless to fight Noah again unless she improved her current power. She didn't have a way to hurt him unless her Perfect Circuit became able to sustain an output of energy that could match rank 5 cultivators in the liquid stage.

"We'll come up with something," June said as she closed her eyes again. "The other expert from the Elbas family rarely comes out of his training area, and he wouldn't dare to question the behavior of another rank 5 cultivator anyway."

Having reached that level of power provided many benefits in terms of freedom, even inside strict organizations. After all, no one could judge such existences and decide if their approach to the cultivation journey was wrong.

Only the powerhouses had that kind of influence, but they wouldn't bother with matters so futile. Their interest was in the lands above the sky, not in what some of their most potent underlings did in their free time.

The fact that they were in a neutral city also helped their situation. The main forces actually expected the envoys there to collaborate to prevent another Hive from happening.

Noah limited himself to nod before sending a series of mental messages while June slept. He knew that she was right, but he would still ask the two Demons to create a few escape routes in case something happened.

The truth was that Thirty-seven had already contacted them for the same task, even if his reasons were completely different. The automaton only wanted the possibility to reach Noah to continue their work on living weapons.

Noah though had no intention to resume that project now. The automaton would have to wait for him to create his higher energy.

Also, making the other forces wait while the Hive maintained its monopoly over the living weapons could only make their value increase. Both the Council and the Elbas family would be willing to pay a fortune to get their hands on one of them when they hit the market.

June woke up a few hours later and decided to leave. During her way back to the buildings of the Royals, she made sure that many heroic assets saw her injured state just to spread the information that she and Noah were sparring in her visits.

The news quickly reached all the heroic assets in the city, and their reactions surprised both June and Noah when they learnt about them.

The Royals and the Elders began to admire June for her determination in pursuing her path. She was even willing to request for Noah as a sparring partner to obtain the help of the most talented cultivator of her generation.

Of course, many rumors concerning what price she had paid for that service spread too, and Noah found himself receiving messages that inquired about that topic. However, he mostly ignored them since his mind could barely move away from his tests on higher energy.

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Peaceful years passed, and the neutral city never stopped expanding in that period.

Cultivators moved there because they didn't like to be too close to the leading powers, even if they were members of their organizations. Still, most of the newcomers were powerful families or sects that had an interest in the Divine Stele.

The markets in the city improved as more resources ended up inside them, but the gains of the Hive were inferior to those of the other forces since it had deployed fewer heroic assets compared to them. It was only natural that it could seize fewer resources with that lack of manpower.

Yet, Daniel returned from the other world at some point, and he offered himself as an ambassador when Amos Udy updated him about that situation.

In a matter of months after his return, Daniel moved to Divine Market city.

[Chapter 867 867. Scene](#)

Daniel's arrival balanced the power among the three factions ruling the neutral city. All of them now had two rank 5 cultivators each deployed there. Hence, their influence on the population became similar even if there was a still huge disparity in their number of heroic assets.

The Hive still had less manpower on that level, but it wasn't considered weaker than the other factions anymore.

Daniel had followed Noah's suggestion after the war and had gone to the other world to hone his abilities as an alchemist. He had even joined the hunting groups of the Hive there to help to gather of hybrids and ordinary beasts.

Those years spent in the wilderness had helped him clear his mind after his conversation with Faith. He now understood what was wrong with his initial idea. He couldn't become a law if he forsook even what made him unique.

One couldn't become stronger by willpower alone. There had to be features that individualities had to carry.

Noah and June had their steadfast determination, but their paths were completely different. In the same way, Daniel had to push what made him unique forward and underline the features of his character.

Even the purest light had a specific behavior. Daniel's challenge was in making his individuality shine when his path put him in an endless refinement cycle.

It often happened that heroic cultivators switched paths as their level increased. The greater understanding obtained once reached higher ranks could make them realize that they had been wrong about certain aspects of their individualities.

Even Noah had become aware of his creation only during the exploration of the new continent. It was unlikely for newly advanced heroic cultivators to find the right path as soon as they surpassed the Tribulations.

The matters concerning the individualities were deep and complex. They would even assume different features after the cultivators came in contact with the laws, or change entirely due to some real-life struggles.

Generally speaking, it was never too late for heroic cultivators to switch paths as long as they didn't reach the last stages of the heroic ranks. Their accumulation would be faulty at that point, which would prevent them from crossing the last obstacle before the divine ranks.

Becoming a divine entity was a slow and cruel procedure. Even the most subtle mistake could prevent a heroic cultivator from obtaining enough power to face the Tribulation.

The best way to spot those mistakes was to overcome struggles. Still, there were political systems that took care of most of the problems of talented cultivators, and Daniel had experienced that first-hand.

His recent experiences though had forced him to grow, and his interaction with Noah and Faith had polished his understanding further. His decision to help with the neutral city hadn't been casual either. He had chosen to go there to interact more with the talents of his generation.

When Daniel reached the buildings of the Hive, he found himself in front of a scene that he would find it hard to forget for the rest of his life.

He had gone directly for the underground quarters meant for rank 5 cultivators, but a dark lightning bolt fell right in front of him as soon as he crossed their entrance.

A dangerous feeling quickly enveloped him, but he didn't deploy his defensive measures when he understood what was happening inside that structure.

Daniel saw June and Faith hovering in the air and exchanging a series of powerful attacks that shattered the air and forced the inscriptions on the walls to lit up. June was filling the entirety of the underground area with unstable spheres that released crackling sounds and lightning bolts, while Faith used her aura to suppress the violent features of her opponent's energy.

Ethereal rivers surrounded Faith's figure and enveloped both June and her spells to spread her calming abilities on them. It was as if she was trying to shut down her opponent's offensive while also defending against the constant attacks of the crackling spheres.

Faith wasn't having much success. June's spells only became more violent under that suppression, and her battle intent kept on intensifying even if peaceful feelings hindered the functioning of her Perfect Circuit.

What surprised Daniel the most was that both women appeared extremely serious about that battle. It seemed that they were really trying to kill each other!

It was at that point that Daniel noticed someone else in the underground quarters.

Toward the end of the structure, Daniel noticed a wide cloud made of dark gas and a cultivator with long black hair managing it. The cultivator had his upper body uncovered and performed fast movements with his hands as he tried to affect the nature of the energy in front of him.

Daniel had already understood who that cultivator was even before noticing the few scales on his naked back. Only Noah Balvan could remain so focused on his projects while two rank 5 experts fought right behind his back.

No one seemed to notice Daniel's arrival. The three cultivators in the underground quarters were too focused on their business to care about that foreign presence.

Of course, they didn't really fail to notice him, but they were too immersed in their projects to give him any form of attention.

Noah's hands continued to shoot in seemingly random directions, and the cloud of "Breath" in front of him changed form according to those gestures. Four years had passed since he moved into the neutral city, but he still was in the initial parts of the testing phase.

He had yet to find a higher form that his darkness accepted, and the failures that had filled the past years had eventually forced him to change approach on the matter.

According to his ideas, using only small quantities of his darkness in his experiments would never lead to anything. So little energy couldn't reach a higher state even if he knew the right method to use for that procedure.

Only a large amount of "Breath" could give birth to higher energy. That was merely a matter of materials needed to create something stronger than the single items used in the procedure.

So, Noah believed that he needed to use more darkness if he wanted to obtain some results.

As soon as he moved the testing phase in that direction, the outcome of his experiments improved, even if that wasn't enough to make him move to the next stage of his project. Also, risks accompanied that new approach, and they would force him to stop and reconsider his understanding at times.

A sudden dangerous sensation filled the minds of Faith, June, and Daniel at some point, and the two women interrupted their battle to shoot toward the entrance of the quarters. Faith even grabbed Daniel his collar and pulled him into the corridor that led to the buildings on the surface.

Then, a loud explosion resounded in the underground quarters, and a series of tremors even reached the corridor where the three rank 5 cultivators stood in silence.

[Chapter 868 868. Astonishmen](#)

The explosion didn't damage the structure of the buildings and underground quarters, but the protective inscriptions couldn't prevent the tremors from spreading. They preserved the integrity of the constructions, but the detonation still affected the entire area.

However, no one came to check the situation, and even the heroic cultivators living right above that underground area didn't bother to leave their positions.

Daniel was astonished. He knew that the experiments of a rank 5 cultivator could end up poorly, but the fact that none of the underlings of the Hive had come to help them was quite unnatural!

After all, that matter concerned the quarters of their leader. Noah's safety should be the main priority of the weaker heroic assets.

Of course, Daniel couldn't possibly know that the other Elders had already checked on him once when the first explosion resounded right under their feet. Yet, they had only found an annoyed Noah who ordered them to never check on his status anymore back then.

Daniel soon started to understand that such explosions were a common sight in the neutral city.

The two women next to him had reacted too fast, and they didn't even appear bothered by that situation. Their expressions were more a mixture of helplessness and annoyance toward the interruption of their battle.

"This one goes on me," June said at some point, and she started to walk back in the underground as if nothing unusual had happened.

"They all go to you if I can't shut down your battle intent soon enough." Faith replied as she followed her along the corridor.

Daniel could only follow after the two of them while wearing a confused expression. In his mind, he was already reevaluating his expectations toward the task of an ambassador of the neutral city.

When the three of them returned inside Noah's quarters, they found him staring at the wall where the black cloud was hovering just a few minutes before. Yet, there was no gas now, and only a few marks on the azure rocks carried traces of its detonation.

The Demonic Sword flew casually above him, but it didn't seem interested in what he was doing. It had merely reacted to the sudden danger, but even the living weapon appeared used to that kind of commotion.

Faith and June sat in a corner and took out a few cups that they quickly filled with strong wine, but they acted so naturally the Daniel felt forced to stare at them to be sure that he didn't see things.

Daniel knew that Noah and June were in a relationship, but he had yet to become used to her behavior. After all, he didn't know her too well. The only pieces of information in his possession came from the reports that his family had gathered when it was still planning a revolution.

June didn't appear as a battle maniac at all while she drank and conversed with Faith. She seemed even able to go along with Faith's playful character.

The image of the talent of the Ballor family that Daniel had in his mind fell apart in a few seconds when he saw how she acted there.

"I told you that she was cute!" Faith exclaimed when she noticed his stare. "And you have yet to see how they are together. I actually feel jealous at times."

"Hmph," June snorted as she kept Faith still to prevent her from hugging her. "The most beautiful woman of the Mortal Lands can't be jealous. Just leave Noah and me alone and get yourself a partner."

"But men are so easy to take," Faith complained as she gave up on jumping in June. "Except for your man, I guess."

Daniel stared at the two of them having that casual discussion with wide eyes. They were mighty rank 5 cultivators and the best talents of their generation, but they also appeared to be close friends that could relax together.

Such a sight wasn't common among cultivators at that level, especially when he took into consideration the different organizations behind them. It was usually impossible for experts coming from forces that used to be enemies to reach that type of trust.

Yet, Faith and June had done that, and the fact that Noah was involved only made the situation even more astonishing in Daniel's eyes.

The images of the young man that had faced the rank 4 Excavating Worm in the Bare Dungeon appeared in his mind. Too much had changed in those decades. Still, they were now under the same roof as existences that the entire world revered and praised.

Noah stood up at that point and neared the three of them while wearing an ugly expression.

Daniel's stopped staring at the two women. He didn't know how jealous Noah could be about his lover, but he wasn't going to test his chances since his mood appeared quite sour already.

"Don't worry," Noah said as he noticed his reaction. "Faith has more chances than you at that."

Then, he sat next to June and filled a cup of wine for himself.

Daniel felt a wave of amazement enveloping his mind once again as he kept on staring at that scene. He saw June casually laying her back over Noah's chest and playing with one of the scales on the side of his torso.

The most astounding aspect of that situation for Daniel was that Noah didn't seem to notice that. He let her be as he closed his eyes to immerse himself in his thoughts.

Daniel could only accept that Noah wasn't only the monster that had spread chaos through the old continent when he was only a human cultivator. There was a side of him that no one knew except for June, Faith, and now him.

"Are you going to stay there?" Faith asked at some point, and Daniel sighed before joining the three of them in that casual meeting. He even took a cup from his space-ring to drink with them.

Though, he had to try his best not to stare too much at the couple at his side.

"So," Faith said after Noah reopened his eyes, "How many more explosions should we expect? Elder Estelle is starting to think that you will blow the entire city up."

"I'm about to increase the quantity of energy," Noah replied, "The other Elders should apply the protective inscriptions even on the buildings around this one."

"Even more?" June asked with a surprised tone. "Didn't you just raise it?"

"Forcing my "Breath" into a shapeless construct is impossible," Noah answered. "I need to create a procedure that would lead it to a higher form naturally."

"Won't that make the testing phase far more dangerous?" June asked while wearing a helpless expression, but Noah limited himself to smirk.

Daniel was utterly clueless about that topic, and it appeared that even Faith didn't know much about it since she had started to ignore them. Yet, an idea suddenly popped in her mind, and she expressed it loudly. "June told me about your ex-girlfriend! Didn't she come from a place with a training area for heroic cultivators?"

[Chapter 869 869. Suggestion](#)

Noah didn't forget about the Odrea nation and its Mausoleum. Actually, he was interested in the nature of that place.

At first, he had learnt to accept it as a training area that the Empire used to skim its army. The official story was that a rival of the god of the Empire had lost the race to the divine ranks. That made the entire nation suffer from that.

Yet, that was just the knowledge passed down by human cultivators. The records retrieved in the Mortal Palace had shown some discrepancies in that story.

The Odrea nation would have been in that state for more than thirty thousand years if both stories were true, which was something that Noah found it hard to believe. An organization made only of a few thousand human cultivators couldn't have lasted so much.

There was some secret there. Still, the presence of the god of the Empire had forced the few curious experts to give up on its exploration.

However, the god had disappeared for more than ten years, and the rumors had started to spread again.

It wasn't a case that Faith had thought about the Odrea nation when she understood the struggles that Noah was facing during his experiments. There weren't many cultivators aware of the existence of the Mausoleum, but most of them could link that country with the god of the Empire.

Anything related to a divine entity would be priceless for heroic cultivators, and entire organizations would be willing to fight wars for them. Nevertheless, Faith knew about that training area because June told her almost everything about her time with Noah.

That gave her the idea that the solution to Noah's issue could be inside one of the training areas meant for heroic cultivators. After all, it was more than evident that he needed all the help that he could get in that project.

Even June had admitted that she had required Noah's help to succeed in that secret project. That alone was the proof that he would have a hard time too.

Truth to be told, Noah didn't want to return to the Mausoleum just yet. Its last layer was an area meant for rank 6 cultivators according to Lisa's story, which said that he couldn't explore the entire structure at his current level.

Also, he had just come out of a long series of improvements since the war had allowed him to express his individuality a lot. Once he completed the matter with the higher energy, he would have to dive into other projects that concerned his power as a whole.

However, four years of testing didn't lead him anywhere, and he could only find the reasons behind his failures even if he used the Divine Deduction technique. The actual procedure was still vague in his mind, and he could only test more approaches to find it in his current situation.

'The end of the fifth layer should feature laws since they are a core part of that rank,' Noah thought as he evaluated Faith's suggestion. 'Understanding more about that world can only benefit all my projects and my individuality.'

The idea that he had suppressed in his mind for so long began to take form.

Just a few minutes ago, there were only thoughts concerning the higher energy there. Still, Noah began to believe that the Mausoleum could improve the state of his experiments as he weighed all the pros and cons.

Also, the only other choice was to keep testing blindly, hoping that he would find a direction to pursue soon.

June showed an ugly expression at Faith's words.

On the one hand, she didn't like the idea of Noah going back to the country where he had his first relationship. On the other, she didn't want the two of them to separate.

Yet, she understood that Noah was facing some dangerous hindrances. After all, the explosions alone had made even Elder Estelle worry about the safety of the neutral city.

"Are you sure that this is a good idea?" Daniel asked. "We are still at war with the Empire."

Daniel had become too used to feel amazed in those short minutes that he didn't even flinch when he heard the word "ex-girlfriend". Instead, he offered an objective view of the current political situation.

"Our three forces are still recovering," Faith replied. "I've heard some of the Elders say that we need to wait at least fifty years before moving to the old continent. We aren't losing anything right now, while the Empire rots in a wasteland."

Of course, the old continent wasn't a wasteland, not yet at least. Faith was exaggerating to prove a point.

Isolating the Empire in the old continent would cripple its growth, while the three invading forces had the entire piece of Immortal Lands at their disposal. The gap in power between the two sides would slowly enlarge in that situation already. There was no point in forcing other battles.

Noah knew that well, and he even agreed with the decision of the three forces to stop the war for a few decades. Still, he was considering the idea of visiting the Mausoleum, and that was bound to give birth to other issues that were internal to the three organizations.

The Hive, the Elbas family, and the Council were at peace. None of them would dare to betray one of its allies because the weaker side could pair up with the Empire if the situation were too dire.

That would balance the forces of those Mortal Lands again and waste the assets sacrificed during the war.

Yet, a sudden lack of manpower would inevitably affect their growth. If Noah were to leave, the Hive would gain far less from the neutral city, and it would see its other projects slowing down to make up for the loss of one of its most powerful assets.

There wasn't a real solution to that problem either since the Hive didn't have as many rank 5 cultivators as the other forces.

Noah picked his inscribed notebook and began to send a series of mental messages to the other Elders at that point.

He had never cared about politics, nor bothered to learn how to run an organization. So, he had to rely on the Elders' judgment to see if that was the best moment when starting another mission.

Also, he didn't mind spending other years in Divine Market city. He was improving anyway. The Mausoleum was just an idea that was worth testing, but it wasn't an essential part of his training.

Elder Julia answered after a few minutes, and her words resounded in Noah's mind. "It's not an issue to replace you and Daniel in a few years. The Hive has obtained only barren territories, and the other rank 4 Elders are enough to handle them. Though, you might want to make it an official mission. It's better to involve the other nations in this particular period."

[Chapter 870 870. Hooded Devil](#)

Elder Julia's suggestion was on point. The Hive had the separate dimension and could explore the Odrea nation and its Mausoleum unnoticed. Yet, the other countries would eventually notice the absence of its heroic assets, especially if one of them was the flashy Noah.

It was better to involve the other forces in that mission. After all, the Hive could count on a series of allies that didn't mind keeping secrets from their organizations.

Faith had long lost her interest in the Council. She was more loyal toward June and Noah since they treated her fairly and didn't stop her from acting how she wanted.

The Council even trusted her and felt the need to make up for how it nurtured her. Her peace had benefitted more from breaking its rules than from isolating herself from the world in the end.

The only real issue was the Elbas family.

June wasn't a Royal, and there was a limit to how much the Elbas family trusted her. There was a high chance that it requested for an actual carrier of King Elbas' bloodline to be in a mission that concerned the secrets of the god of the Empire.

"I'll set up a few meetings and keep you updated," Elder Julia said toward the end of her mental message. "Try not to destroy Divine Market city in the meantime."

That matter ended there. It would be up to the higher-ups of the three forces to find an agreement now.

Noah knew that the Council and the Elbas family wouldn't just let the Hive go alone in the Odrea nation. Still, there was a chance that Elder Julia could create favorable conditions if she were subtle enough with her offers.

Every force was busy making up for the losses suffered during the war, and the pieces of information concerning the Odrea nation weren't wholly reliable. So, it was possible to reach an agreement that the Hive could exploit.

More years passed in the neutral city, and the gatherings in Noah's underground quarters continued right under the curiosity of the heroic assets of the other forces.

June and Faith would always return to the structures of their organizations carrying traces of battle, so most heroic cultivators believed that Noah was giving combat lessons. The tremors didn't stop either,

and they even became proper earthquakes at some point since Noah kept on increasing the amount of darkness used in his experiments.

Yet, his tests didn't cause any damage, and the other heroic assets didn't dare to complain. Most of them were scared of the fame that accompanied the Demon Prince, but others wanted to join his private circle.

That desire was quite popular. After all, Faith was often in his quarters, and any rank 4 cultivator would feel blessed if someone like Noah taught them how to fight.

Yet, the higher-ups there knew that the Hive was planning something. Elder Julia had announced her interest in exploring the mysterious Odrea nation, but the negotiations proceeded slowly since the other forces had many doubts about her actual intentions.

The offer was compelling though, and they couldn't control the behavior of rank 5 cultivators anyway. Also, the only danger appeared to be the formation around the country, but no one believed that they couldn't convince the citizens to open it when they wanted to leave.

As for what concerned the limitation of the defensive formation, Elder Julia told the other forces that Noah had obtained some key during his stay there.

The fact that the Hive could grant access inside the Odrea nation to heroic cultivators put it in an advantageous position during the meetings, and Elder Julia eventually managed to use that to obtain favorable terms.

Four years after Noah's conveyed the idea to Elder Julia, he, June, Faith, and Daniel left the neutral city to fly toward the western coast of the old continent.

The four of them didn't make any stop and reached directly for the spot where Noah had once left to fly toward the Coral Archipelago. The coastline of the old continent was too far away from the islands, so the Hive's influence was weak there. Yet, the four years of meetings had given it enough time to make the necessary preparations for the task.

Noah took out an inscribed item at the peak of the fifth rank when they reached the beginning of the formation. His mind now was powerful enough to notice it, so finding the perfect spot where to make any potential onlooker lose their traces was rather easy.

The group dived in the sea and dug the rocky seabed right next to the beginning of the formation. Then, Noah threw a soft curtain above him and the others.

The curtain was an inscribed item similar to that used to cover the door inside June's quarters. No rank 5 cultivator would be able to see past it, and their position in the depths of the sea further hindered any investigation.

Noah sent a mental message through his notebook at that point, and a formation lit up under the group's feet and led them inside the separate dimension where the two Demons were waiting for them.

"I hope something is interesting there," Flying Demon said. "I can't even take a look at that damned Stele due to all this secrecy."

Faith couldn't help but show her surprise when she saw the Demons and the separate dimension. However, she had already sworn a pact with the Hive as requested by the agreement. She was expecting to learn some secret.

Noah ignored Flying Demon's words and went directly for the formation in front of him, and Dreaming Demon smiled at her lover before following him. The rest of the group was right behind Noah in a few seconds, and the formation lit up when they stepped on it.

When the halo vanished, Noah found himself in an environment that he hadn't seen for more than a hundred years.

'To think that I'll come back here,' Noah thought as he looked around before setting off toward the sole city in the entirety of that country.

The Odra nation still lacked any species of magical beasts since the defensive formation, and Mausoleum made use of most of the "Breath" in the area, but its number of soldiers appeared to be the same.

Noah swept the area with his mental energy as he flew, followed by his companions. The various human assets on the ground couldn't escape his consciousness, and they didn't notice his presence either.

The group reached for the hidden city and landed in front of the castle built at its center. The guards patrolling there noticed their presence at that point, but they fell asleep as soon as they entered in contact with Faith's aura.

When they reached the main hall of the castle, they found an elderly woman wearing a golden crown smiling at them and greeting them with calm words. "Welcome. I'm happy that the Hooded Devil has decided to return."