



146 The weight of being a shadow of a genius [BONUS]

"How many of you know what a path is?" That was Kayden's first question and he received some doubtful looks. Sighing, the boy told everyone what it was and what it meant to have a path as a wizard. "My path is Mana Monarch, which allows me to have absolute control over mana."

Kayden was revealing too many secrets at once and it didn't even make him blink. The contract satisfied any insecurity about betrayal that he might have.

"The mana heart requires you to abandon the ancient method of cultivation, so it was more of a test of will than anything else. Before I teach you how to make the mana heart, I will demonstrate a mana manipulation method similar to my way."





This was something Kayden discovered in one of his numerous attempts to manipulate his path and test the different nuances of it. This method was limited to removing all the will in the world, but leaving something so minimal that it wouldn't make a difference and at the same time wouldn't provoke the fury of the two golden eyes.

Kayden began to manipulate the mana around her and take the world's will from it. Quickly, he reached the level he wanted and left the mana in the environment.

"Feel her will. This is the maximum level you can reach without dying. I forbid you from going beyond that point." For them to break this ban would instantly result in their death from the contract, so Kayden wasn't worried about that. "Once you master this point, you will have access to a minor path called the Prince of Mana, and at that point, you can begin cultivating the mana heart."

Then everyone started trying to manipulate mana in this way. Since they only had minimal control, it was difficult. Virtually no results were observed in the next few minutes.

"You have to impose your will to take away the will of the world." Kayden started giving tips and they showed slight improvements. "It will probably take you a few months to get the hang of it."

"Months?" One of the boys spoke in surprise and expressed what everyone was thinking. "But what about the gym?"

"Only at the end of the year will the tests begin, so don't worry about that. The best thing is going to be a little mockery." Kayden knew it would be much more than just mockery. "At the first rank, you will have the body of a second-rank knight and the same amount of

mana as someone in the middle of the second rank." Kayden's sweet words visibly eased their nervousness.

"You just need to go to theoretical classes. The practical teacher, at most, will bother you, but there's not much he can do. Right now, your goal is to learn this secondary path as quickly as possible."

"Kayden, why are you revealing your secrets so easily? Even though you have the contract, aren't you afraid that we will become stronger than you?" The one who asked was Locke.

"Have you ever reflected on the true meaning of mastery? Does being a master come down to having a technique superior to everyone or being superior to everyone with a common technique?" Kayden's sentence left everyone thinking for a few seconds and, in the end, everyone agreed with the boy.

"I don't mind selling all my secrets. I'm the best using them, no matter how much time passes." Kayden's degree of confidence in himself was beyond ordinary. 2

"You can choose any room in the east wing. For now, you have no name for me. Only those who can form the heart will be formally accepted."

With his last sentence, the boy dismissed everyone.

"Locke, stay back for a second." After everyone left, Kayden turned to Locke and his faithful squire Luan.

"Why are you here? Don't make up stories." Kayden's tone made it clear that he was utilizing the power of the contract in his question. Locke's gaze hardened before he began to



speaking.

"You know my brother Apolo, you know the level of genius he has, so you must know the weight I carry as his shadow. I'm doomed to live behind him, but I don't accept that."

The boy seemed trapped in memories and took a few seconds before continuing his sentence.

"Four years ago, I abdicated the right to the throne. My brother was willing to give the kingdom to me, but I understood that this would be useless, because, in the end, I would have achieved nothing but a fake throne."

Kayden could understand, this was a classic case in every royal family of all the stories that have ever been written, the difference is that this time the prince didn't try to usurp the throne in any way.

"I spent the last few years looking for something that could set me apart from the common level

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of genius and my best bet at this point was you,
which also proved correct when I saw the
secondary path and the benefits of the heart"

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