

Mystical 511

Chapter 511: Return 1

Garen got the black lion to fly towards the foot of the mountain in the Kingdom directly, while the group on wolf-back were following slowly behind him.

The herd of giant wolves were one of the several monster tribes that Demon Phoenix and the others had taken over during the sealing period, their leader was a huge wolf with golden fur, it had fought the Crescent Marks for thousands of years, and was considered an old enemy.

Sitting on the black lion's back, Garen looked down.

There were some normal people and members of the procession looking up from below, their expressions full of awe and surprise. Others didn't notice him at all, their heads lowered as they did their own thing.

The farmers were still working their crops in the field, the medicine-gatherers carried their baskets on their backs as they wove through the rocks at the bottoms and sides of the mountains, while occasionally there were several flying creatures carrying riders as they crossed underneath him, some flying towards the outskirts of the Kingdom, others flying from outside towards the Kingdom.

When they were several hundred meters from the Kingdom, at the foot of the mountain on the road going around the mountain, there was already a large crowd of figures dressed in black, looking towards Garen's direction from afar. The surroundings had also been cleared out temporarily, and those who wanted to go up the mountain had their path temporarily blocked. There were already some people gathering outside the team cordoning off the area, as though there out of curiosity.

Out of the black-robed people waiting at the foot of the mountain, two of them were leading the group, and most of the rest were young people, there were a few guards in black armor around them as well, their faces unclear under the helmet.

As soon as they saw the huge black lion's body falling slowly, the leaders of these people instantly raised their hands. With a whoosh, they released a white carpet that shot out flying. It landed precisely underneath the black lion's paws.

The white carpet, up to a hundred meters long, was unnaturally eye-catching in mid-air, as was the huge attention-catching black lion. More and more people began watching out of curiosity, and some of the people flying in mid-air also stayed behind to see what the commotion was.

"It's been a long time, Elder Blizzard." Garen instantly recognized the two people in the lead, one was Blizzard, and the other Wukang. It was just that Wukang wore a face veil, blocking half of his face, and the part of his face hidden under the veil looked rather green in the nose and swollen in the face.

"Palace Master, you have finally returned." Blizzard greeted him, laughing heartily.

Bam!

The black lion landed heavily on the white carpet.

His black-clothed disciples all bent their backs in a bow, yelling in unison,

"Welcome back, Palace Master!"

Their voices were deafening, their aura powerful.

More than a hundred people yelling at once, greeting someone in a line, such a scene instantly created whispers among the onlookers. In just that short while, there were already several hundred people gathered and blocking the road up the mountain, many of them were merchant groups entering and leaving the Kingdom to do their peddling and delivering their wares, there were also noble processions coming and going, as well as members from the other powers, but the majority of them were still normal civilians.

Most of them were farmers going to the Kingdom market to sell ingredients, meat and vegetables in the morning, as well as bull carts sending daily necessities.

There were four entrances into the Kingdom, and this was only one of them, but there was a surprising amount of traffic here, it had been less than ten minutes, but there were already several hundred people stuck here, and there seemed to be more traffic coming from behind.

Compared to the hundred thousand people coming and leaving every day, a congregation of a hundred like this was like a small wave in the ocean.

After receiving Garen, the black-robed people hurriedly led the wolf steeds onto the road, and all the passersby opened a path of their own accord, there were two civilians who rushed up to try and lodge their complaints, but they were blocked by the black-armored guards outside.

The appearance and leaving of this group was only a small ripple in the huge crowd of the Kingdom.

Among the crowd, the scouts from each of the three other giants powers also quickly spread the news of Garen's return back to the other higher-ups in the Kingdom.

There were more and more people gathered in the Kingdom, the changes in the outside world once causing a large influx of regular civilians into the area of Ultimate Protection.

Blizzard and Wukang accompanied Garen back to the Palace District, and then they bid him farewell, leaving to handle other matters, while Lala, who had already been waiting at the palace doors, was in charge of receiving him and other trivial matters.

Ivycius, who had been sealed away with his training, also came out to greet him, followed by the whole host of the Palace's higher-ups and Elders, the Elders Angel, Skyharp, and Spellmaster were all there, followed by many of the Palace's core researchers. The three Master-level disciples Garen had recruited were there too, as well as a young man in white lined next to them, the four of them were followed by the Four Directions Sky Warriors and the black-armored guards, and then there were the many other researchers and disciples, as well as the teams from the Technique Hall.

It was a huge procession of several hundred people, surrounding Garen as he returned to the Palace District's Black Swamp Grand Hall.

Sitting in the Black Swamp Grand Hall's main throne, Garen glanced at the two rows of elders on either side of him.

The two rows of elders were all there, sitting at his two sides, their own disciples and students standing behind them, the seats after that were the four core disciples, the Four Directions Sky Warriors, and there were no more seats after that, just the next-rate disciples standing in two lines. All this was according to rank, and not carelessly ordered.

All of them wore pitch-black clothes, but their insignias were different, they all had silver Nine-Headed Dragon badges, those who could come to the Grand Hall were at least Five Dragon Heads and above. The elders each had Eight Dragon Heads, but only Garen himself was at the Nine Dragon Heads level.

Garen sat in the top seat, Demon Phoenix and his three subordinates standing behind him. This was the arrangement he had settled himself, Demon Phoenix and the others had basically been utterly psychologically traumatized by his defeating them, so out of everyone in the whole Palace, only he could make them submit, so they became something of an independent third faction. Other than the two powers led by Ivycius and Blizzard respectively, now he had a more convenient third party for balance.

"When I was at Daniela, did anything strange and serious happen in the Palace?" Garen glanced at the whole area, he was now Form Five, and didn't have the huge presence he did before, now he seemed like a completely normal person, peaceful and calm, so that no one could tell that he had a high position and tremendous power.

The Seven Night Tower Elders exchanged hidden glances, and didn't say anything. During this time, they had begun to enjoy the benefits, with the power of the Black Swamp Palace's ever-increasing power, if they wanted anything, they just needed to say the word, and countless powers would stretch out and help them find it, it was that much more convenient than when they had to look for it themselves. Although they had to fulfill their duties while they enjoyed the benefits, those duties only included easily showing off a bit when needed to scare off outsiders, the time and energy needed were basically negligible.

Especially Angel of the Night, she was basically indulging in hedonism every night, having purchased a large mansion with a garden in the Kingdom, she kept more than ten beautiful men dogs and pretty boy slaves by the dozens, mixing together with the other women of higher society and messing around all day, lost in their pleasures and rampaging in their nights.

Blizzard, on the other hand, would run off to Grand Duke Benoc's side every so often to exchange experiences with the expert fighters there, recently that side had also recruited several powerful totem users, add that to the peak-level totem users Benoc already had, and that meant Blizzard managed to find some rare opponents, so now he rarely stayed at the Black Swamp Palace.

As for Spellmaster Anjiad, he was obsessed with discussing things with the Technique Hall's technical members and forgers, he had an unnatural interest in creature modification, before this he didn't have the time and energy, but after joining the Black Swamp Palace, he wasn't lacking in anything, and instead he had plenty of time to research his interest and hobbies. He had even chosen some disciples from among the many researchers who had similar passions in modification to become his assistants.

Ivycius was still fusing his totem, so he meditated slightly with his eyes closed as he sat on his seat, still holding that long white sword to his chest, but his aura was slowly approaching that feeling of Form Five fusion power. Garen could tell with a glance, as long as he could go past this fusion doorstep, the White Rose Sword Sage would be able to enter Form Five.

It was just that totem users took different amounts of time to overcome this doorstep, and there were several reasons Garen himself could overcome it so easily.

One was that the Nine-Headed Dragon didn't have much potential, so it was much easier to level up and fuse.

Secondly, his own condition had coincidentally improved by one level, achieving something similar to Phiros. He called it the Dragon Mirror level, taken half from the Nine-Headed Dragon and half from a clear mirror.

After levelling up, the Flash Screen became rather less useful, in his battle with the Cthulhu King, he had activated the Flash Screen, but it only lasted an instant, and then it was destroyed by the violent red light, if he had not pulled it back so quickly, the Heirloom would probably have been utterly destroyed by now.

Although the thing looked like it had no upper limit, but it was still only at the Form Five middle level, back when he had first gotten it he had thought it was very suitable for self-defense during the fusion period, but now that that was over, it was no longer very useful.

"The other three sides of the Parliament had all made drastic moves, should we the Black Swamp Palace also...?" Skyharp glanced at the rest, but since nobody spoke, she began first.

"Drastic moves?" Garen laughed, now that he had achieved Form Five, he was already standing at the peak of the whole East Continent. He was no longer that concerned with the actions of the other three giants. "Forget about them, we do what we need to. How many people are there in the Palace now?"

"Other than the guards and miscellaneous workers, there are 2315 people in total in the Black Swamp Palace, these are the newest surveyed numbers. Of these, about 2000 of them are scholars. Most of them were recruited in extra batches after you left, Palace Master, and also, the most recent researcher rankings are..." Lala stood behind Garen, reporting softly.

Garen nodded slowly as he listened, and had more or less gotten a new understanding of the happenings within the Palace since he had left.

The governance plans in the Kingdom had seen many successes and achievements, developing the agriculture and production industries, encouraging birth rates, treating the people well, increasing trade and diplomacy. The whole Kingdom had also spawned many hunting teams, setting out to hunt edible Aberrated creatures for meat, while others were studying ways to tame the Aberrated creatures as livestock. Without the destruction brought on by wars and monsters, the development of the Kingdom seemed to be heading up and up.

A few days ago, the First Princess had gathered some strong totem users from among the civilians and the refugee nobles, creating an organization called the Pearl Party. The party's mission was to create a truly borderless world where men and women were equal. It was very successful in attracting many female totem users and forgers.

And the Fourth Prince decisively reacted by starting the National Development Society, taking on the responsibility to develop Kovitan and make it prosper, pulling in many wandering totem users.

The two sides fought like fire and oil, each starting their own activities to duke it out. Stuff like hunting strong Aberrated monsters, gathering precious plants and minerals, organizing mock battles and other such activities.

The third party, the Alliance of the many Guilds kept swaying between the two sides, earning benefits from both the monarchs-in-waiting who wanted to control Kovitan's true inheritance rights.

While they were wreaking havoc over there with their battles, the Black Swamp Palace's side only made one small move in the very beginning when they went out to catch the Poison Hag, and after that they made no more drastic moves, either resting and conserving their energy, or training their researchers and disciples. The maintenance of the entire Black Swamp Palace depended on the profits from the auction business and the many shops, their main commodity for sale being the results of the Technique Hall's creations and the things their scholars brought back from their outside excursions and trainings.

"By that you mean, that the system I wanted has been successfully created?" Garen asked in a deep voice.

"That is right." The person-in-charge of the Technique Hall, Master Calingan, replied, "I named it the Nine Snakes System, and completed the Palace Master's previous requests with extreme precision, after testing it many times, it has no problem whatsoever, and is now under partial trial."

"Nine Snakes? Not bad. We here at the Palace encourage our researchers and disciples to go out and gain experiences, and also we can accept hiring requests from outside powers, if the Palace's Elders have any troublesome needs, they can also set up a quest on the system, providing their own rewards. This platform system can be used as an optimal tool for communicate and distribute resources." Gare nodded.

After more and less understanding their recent developments, Garen's gaze moved to the scholars and disciples.

"The top three of the previous ranking competition, show yourselves."

Chapter 512: Return 2

Instantly, the atmosphere in the hall seemed to have changed somewhat, the various Elders all looked rather interested, and even Ivycius, who had his eyes closed before, opened them now, looking at the three disciples who stepped out of the line.

The first two were the two masters that Garen had recruited as his disciples before, and the other was a young guy of about fifteen or sixteen. Unlike the polite respect of the other two, this young fellow

respected him but tried hard to keep his head up, meeting Garen's gaze head-on, even if this determination made his whole body tremble, and slightly more than ten seconds was enough to cover his head with a cold sweat. But he still clenched his teeth and held in there.

"Who's Ansapello?" Garen asked calmly, but his gaze was already fixed on the young man whose face was growing paler and paler.

"It's that little idiot who just refuses to bend his head." Amidst the Elders, Wukang couldn't help but laugh. Instantly, the whole hall burst into fond laughter.

"I heard that you meditated under my statue, and said you would surpass me?" Garen was not laughing in the slightest, though. His tone instantly affected the atmosphere in the whole Grand Hall, and the other Elders' laughter also slowly quieted down.

The pale young man still held his head stubbornly high, his originally short brown hair soaked with sweat and plastered onto his forehead, while there were visible sweat stains on his clothes, but he still had no intention of lowering his head.

"Yes...!" He forced the word out of clenched teeth, under the pressure of Garen's gaze, even though Garen did not mean to pressure him at all, he was born with an innate and acute sensitivity towards danger, this was a talent, and this talent allowed him to travel thousands of miles, escaping death countless times, finally arriving at Kovitan and entering the Black Swamp Palace.

Right now, this talent had instead become his biggest burden, this sensitivity towards danger was making him shake like a leaf, his body and heart on the brink of collapse, as though he was at the bottom of the water, trying to float upwards to obtain oxygen, but there were seaweed and whirlpools holding his feet down.

This unbelievably overwhelming sense of suffocation made him almost want to lower his head and give in.

Whoosh...

The young man seemed to hear the sound of the tide retreating, the pressure all over him suddenly disappearing, his whole body shook slightly and he just nearly fell to the ground. His senior brother beside him held him up secretly, finally helping him steady his footing.

Evidently Garen had discovered the reason why he was shaking, and had taken the initiative to pull back the aura and energy emitting from his body, which finally let the young fellow return to normal.

"Good... very good!!" Everyone could see the smile on Garen's face clearly. His eyes showed his appreciation of the young man without hesitation. "The fourth level of the Black Water True Technique, you'll need to trade for it using quest badges, the Black Swamp Palace won't teach it to you for free, the first three levels are the most basic benefits for disciples and scholars, but after enjoying the privileges, you would naturally have duties you need to fulfill. For the fourth level, you'll need to complete a certain number of quests to obtain quest points yourselves, only then will you obtain it, and you are not allowed to teach it to each other privately. There's no problem, is there?"

"Of course!" The young man replied loudly, and panted once. "If we want to get something, we need to give something equal in return, that's what you're trying to tell us!"

"Go down and rest." Garen waved his hand, and there were instantly maids coming up to help the young man stand, bringing him down.

Garen's attitude had affected the attitudes of all the Black Swamp Palace higher-ups to some extent, and most of the Elders still looked friendly, only the Seven Night Tower's Angel looked slightly displeased, though she did not say anything, that young fellow had probably offended her at some point.

Garen did not bother with her, the Palace was not one fixed entity, there would be some slight conflicts between members, and he would ignore those, as long as they did not cross a certain line, everything could be considered the obstacles and trainings between Palace members.

After that, it was the Four Directions Sky Warriors in charge of various matters who came up to report on their respective areas, although these conditions had already been summarized and given to Lala for organization, now they reported to him again in detail, in a way to fill up the details.

The Four Directions Sky Warriors were peak-level fighting geniuses chosen from outside, after testing their qualifications and endurance, in the two short months since Garen left, two of these four positions had been challenged by outsiders, and the people in the positions changed. The challengers were from the prodigy training camps, these camps included the cream of the crop from among the competition of many normal scholars, and these elite members were once more divided into the possible candidates for the Four Directions Sky Generals as well the core scholars and disciples.

The whole Black Swamp Palace had formed a complete system, albeit one in the early stages.

The whole Black Swamp Palace was divided into five levels.

The first level was the Palace Master.

The second level included three powers: the Elders, the head manager Lala, and the Technique Hall, each of these was equal in power.

The third level had the core scholars, the Four Directions Sky Warriors, the prodigy training camp's instructor totem users, and the managers of the outside businesses.

The fourth level had the prodigy scholars.

The fifth level was the lowest level, and included the normal scholars, they were just one level higher than the regular maids and servants, or the domestic help.

Of these five levels, just in the fourth level itself, the Black Swamp Palace's prodigy scholars already had countless connections to the outside world, the higher-ranked scholars had already become future investment targets from many of the large and small factions outside, and these scholars had gathered many powers, some more and some less, big and small, behind them.

The power of the entire Black Swamp Palace was like a giant spider web, covering the whole Kingdom, and rapidly spreading to cover the entire Protection area.

This had already become a huge economic group with the Black Swamp Palace in the middle, and Garen at the very top.

The Four Directions Sky Generals came up to report on their different missions, the black-armored guards had been renamed from the Black Fire Guards from before to the Black Swamp Guards now, these Black Swamp Guards were more powerful than before, and the Four Directions Sky Warriors' powers combined, added to the power they had under their control, was more than capable of matching four peak-level Form Four totem users. Although this was the effect of using all sorts of methods, and disregarding all costs, but from here the terrifying power of the Green Vine Sphere was made evident, it was enough to make a normal person achieve the level of a peak-level fighter, as expected of the Green Vine Sphere, the heights of Vanderman's achievements throughout his lifetime.

Garen listened carefully from above, the Four Directions Sky Warriors were in charge of their relations with outside martial powers, they had two hundred members, and added to the totem users they had recruited from outside, they were now approaching eight hundred people, and were the Black Swamp Palace's most populated division.

These people were also in charge of the safety of the Black Swamp Palace's property, going out to hunt and gather all sorts of ingredients and Aberrated monsters, patrolling the perimeter, punishing intruders, performing troublesome tasks and the like, they were basically the whole Black Swamp Palace's cornerstone.

This power was also the one Garen had the most faith in, because the Green Vine Sphere only recognized him alone, all the power of these Black Swamp Guards came from the Green Vine Sphere, so this was also the largest inheritance left for him by Vanderman.

One by one, the Four Directions Sky Warriors reported their situations, and soon enough, the third West Sky General came up.

"Regarding that Poison Hag totem user from the Secret Service that we had apprehended, may we know how we should deal with her?" The West Sky General's voice was clear and crisp, it was actually a young woman, and she was also a prodigy scholar who had just successfully challenged the seat.

"The Poison Hag?" Garen touched his chin, he had also remembered that poison expert from the Secret Service who had messed around and tried to poison him to death, back at the headquarters, she sure was cocky, but now that the Black Swamp Guard had caught her, even she couldn't do anything. This was especially because the innate ability to resist poison increased as one's level of training in the Black

Water True Technique increased, after all, this was based on the veins and blood transport pathways inside the Nine-Headed Dragon's body, although it had been adjusted to suit human use, that still did not mean that it had lost all of its initial usefulness.

Although it would not grant near immunity to poison like Garen had, it was still enough to attain an extremely high resistance to poison. To a poison-element totem user like the Poison Hag, this was basically a natural breeding ground for nightmares.

"Is there any news from the Secret Service's side?" Garen still cared more about the attitude of his previous boss who had protected him before.

"The department's vice president sent someone to enquire about the reason for her capture, and then they didn't send anyone else." The West Sky General replied respectfully.

"Then kill her. It'd be best if you can get the totem legacy from her before you do it. Any problems?" Garen nodded.

"I understand." The West Sky General retreated respectfully.

The North Sky General came up next to report.

"I am in charge of the supplies and defense, recently some of our mining veins have shown small-scale depletion, some veins that should still be rich in resources mysteriously went dry, we do not know the reason behind it. I have investigated it before secretly, but came up with nothing."

"Depleting veins?" Garen frowned, "Has anyone else investigated this?"

"There was Elder Skyharp." The North Sky General replied with respect.

Garen looked at Skyharp, who nodded lightly, indicating that she had a certain hold of the situation.

"The Technique Hall will also investigate this, Elder Skyharp, I'll be bothering you with this."

"I should be happy to help. The Nine Snakes System has been up and running for some time now, I'd like to earn some merit points as well." Skyharp smiled.

Garen nodded, the fact that this matter could reach all the way up to him meant that the people underneath had tried many times, and could still make no headway, only then did they present it to him.

"I'll stay in the Palace for some time, all matters will be arranged and handled by Lala, large matters can be decided by Elders Ivycius and Blizzard after discussion, alright, everyone go back to your respective jobs now. Master Calingan, please bring me to see the Nine Snakes System."

"It is my honor." Calingan hurriedly stood up.

Garen got up and left first, Calingan following with two of his apprentices, only then did the rest leave in turn.

The Nine Snakes System was a new generation management system Calingan had created by upgrading and incorporating the previous Palace totem system. It created a new mechanism, with some virtual units called merits as the core to everything.

Anybody who contributes to the Black Swamp Palace would have their contributions recorded down as the corresponding number of merit points, these merit points could be used to exchange anything, be it totems, knowledge, supplies, or information, equipment, techniques, even hiring muscle or buying people.

Of course, there were only things that could be traded in theory, in reality there were not many things that could be traded right now, they were mostly from that huge haul Garen had gotten from the Royal Treasury previously, these items were used as the start-up capital, to attract disciples, scholars, the Elders and the Sky Warriors to constantly contribute to the Palace, any supplies, legacy information or treasures they had gotten from the outside world and was not suitable for their own use could be handed to the Palace to trade for merit points, and then these could be used to exchange for things the Palace did have, things they needed.

This was the optimized organization of supplies, Master Calingan had the people from the Technique Hall organize all the complete totem legacies, and came up with thirteen high-level legacy systems, these being one of the Black Swamp Palace's bases.

"Thirteen types of totem legacies?" Garen was thoughtful. "That's good too, after activating their totem user qualifications by achieving the fourth level of the Black Water True Technique, the scholars need to choose the legacies suited to them and continue training, organizing the systems like this won't only increase our knowledge about totems, there will also be information about the supplies needed for all sorts of evolutions, while also increasing the detailed technical experiences. As expected of Master Calingan, you really have set the strongest foundations for the entire Black Swamp Palace."

Calingan hastily waved his hand.

"You flatter, Palace Master, if it weren't for your generosity, bringing out all of the legacies in your personal treasury to become the start-up capital, the Nine Snakes System might not be able to move so smoothly. I'm just doing what I should."

"Let's go, let's see the Nine Snakes' core." Garen nodded.

Chapter 513: Trace 1

Going through the black stone palace halls, surrounded by the others, Garen quickly arrived at an isolated side hall.

There was an empty cemetery-like space between the side hall and the main hall, with several gravestones scattered around, there were no bricks laid out here, only yellow-black mud.

There was the occasional chirping of tunneling insects in the earth.

When Garen and the others walked onto this piece of ground, the earth on the ground instantly began moving, countless black-yellow earthworm-like insects breaking out of the ground, they had bodies like earthworms, but their mouths were jagged saws as they poked their heads out of the earth, as though smelling some delicious delicacies, they crawled towards Garen and his procession, rushing to surround them at high speeds.

"Close!" Master Calingan quickly drew a tactic gesture with one hand, the gesture was extremely complicated, and disappeared from the air after a flash.

All the earthworm insects on the surrounding ground paused in unison, their bodies stiffening, and then they all burrowed back into the earth, vanishing.

"These are the special aphids I raised here as a defense system, they might seem weak individually, but their largest advantage lies in their numbers, when they encounter a totem user's invasion, they will fly up, and cover the surface of any Totem Light completely, tearing, biting, and absorbing the Totem Light, and only purely physical attacks can clear away these critters." Master Calingan explained as he walked.

Garen nodded, seeing the fear and apprehension on the others' faces, he bet these people had all suffered the wrath of these insects before.

The group of five or six people went across the empty land and walked into the side hall, it was completely dark inside the hall, and utterly empty.

Psst...

All of a sudden, countless black air currents gathered in the center of the hall, these currents flew around in a circle, and then gathered rapidly gathered, forming a human shape with blurred facial features.

The silhouette was completely black, and bowed slightly at the group.

"Nine Snakes System, at your service." The voice was that of the sweetest, gentlest lady.

Garen walked up, and went around this blurred human shape as he looked at it carefully.

The silhouette seemed to be made of countless clouds of vapor, it had no material substance, and it did not move or act embarrassed under Garen's scrutiny. It just stood there, quietly.

Garen observed it from a closer distance, reaching out his hand to touch its face lightly. It was cold and icy to the touch, without any real substance, as though putting his hand into a cloud of moist and cold air.

"This is just an outer appearance materialized by the Nine Snakes System, it has no use other than to communicate." Master Calingan explained from behind him. He walked up to a wall on one side of the hall, and patted the wall lightly.

"Are all the preparations complete?" Prepare to transfer the core control rights."

"All preparations complete." Nine Snakes replied softly.

After a moment, Garen walked out of the side hall, went across the empty land, and headed towards his own bedchambers.

After eating dinner, he did not bother with any other Palace matters either, he had already handed the fourth and fifth levels of the Black Water True Technique to the Nine Snakes System, as the barter item for merit points, it was just that more points were required.

After dinner, he found Demon Phoenix, who had already opened up completely to Island Master Skyharp, after making simple arrangements for Demon Phoenix and company to be visiting Elders in the Palace, Garen took Lala directly and walked out of the Palace.

Outside the Palace, a six-horse carriage had already been prepared, the drivers and guard teams all decorated rather extravagantly, they were basically magnificent carriages made of black crystal and sapphires.

Pulling the carriage were six handsome black Aberrated horses that looked like unicorns, they were powerful, capable of flight, and when necessary, could even dive into water.

Garen and Lala got onto the carriage, and flew from the Palace District, headed straight out of the Kingdom.

In the South East of the Kingdom, within the confines of the Ultimate Protection area, there was a mountain there that Garen had won over and handed over to the Tasura Academy led by his teacher Emin. This excursion of his was also to check on the Tasura Academy's condition.

The carriage's six unihorn horses grew black wings, and after several flaps, they easily carried the carriage up into the air with tremendous power.

There were also more than ten Black Swamp Guards escorting them on all sides, also riding black unihorn horses.

The entire group was extremely eye-catching in the middle of the sky, all the flying animals and beasts had to avoid them and make way.

Garen sat inside the carriage, resting with his eyes closed, when suddenly there was a man's voice from outside.

"When did Palace Master Garen return? Why didn't you inform everyone so we can have a welcoming party?"

The voice was very familiar, it was Grand Duke Cody, that old guy at the same level as Grand Duke Benoc, back then he had surrounded God Cloud, but was slightly injured due to the Distorted Beads, to think he had recovered so quickly.

Pulling open the carriage curtains, he saw another golden carriage cabin pulled by a three-headed green bird, also floating in mid-air just opposite Garen's carriage. Grand Duke Cody's cherubic face appeared at the entrance to the carriage, and he smiled as he looked this way.

"So it's Grand Duke Cody, may I know if there is some urgent reason that you're blocking my way?" Garen asked calmly.

"The Kingdom has been split into four, now that Your Excellency Garen has returned this time, you should govern your disobedient subordinates this time, otherwise a careless mistake might lead to disastrous consequences."

"Disastrous consequences? What disasters could happen in the Kingdom?" Garen was still looking at the other party calmly, "Or could it be, that the Grand Duke is warning me?"

"It's up to you to interpret it however you want, I'll just leave it at that." Cody let down the curtain, his carriage making a turn and flying towards the Grand Duke's mansion.

Garen's expression was sardonic, and then he suddenly blew out a breath of black air.

The black air shot away, growing larger and larger, fainter and fainter, and in an instant it had become a black wind, whistling towards Grand Duke Cody's carriage.

The three-headed green bird pulling the carriage instantly fell into a panic, screeching, while inside the cabin, Cody snorted coldly, and a layer of faint golden light emanated from the cabin, blocking the black wind and keeping it outside.

"What do you mean by that, Palace Master Garen?!!" he howled from inside the cabin.

"Nothing in particular, I just thought your pet seemed rather cute, so I wanted to greet it."

Garen chuckled lightly, his carriage going past Cody's from the side, and soon disappearing into the distant sky.

Just then, the three-headed green bird pulling Cody's carriage gave a piercing shriek, and at the same time began to melt away, in just that instant, it melted into three mounds of black liquid, just like a candle, and began to rapidly evaporate, turning into clouds of black air that rose and vanished.

Only Cody maintained his golden light, forcefully keeping the carriage steady and floating in mid-air.

Inside the cabin, Cody's round face was dark.

"Form Five...! I never thought..."

He murmured, while that little red girl in her red dress sat on his right, her fair legs swinging back and forth underneath the carriage seat.

"You can't beat him now." The little girl's childish voice rang out in the carriage cabin.

"It's gotten slightly troublesome, do you want to hide out for a bit?" Cody looked at the little girl, his tone strangely as though he was talking to an equal with power as strong as his.

"It's okay." The little girl shook her head, "You just be careful."

Cody nodded, and didn't say anything else.

"The people from the Black Swamp Palace are growing more and more arrogant, it is true that the subordinates follow the Palace Master's behavior. Looks like I have no choice but to join forces with the people on that side?"

"Join forces? Do you want to open up the Ultimate Protection?" The little girl asked curiously from the side.

Cody did not reply, but his expression darkened.

At night, on a somewhat shorter mountain near the Kingdom, amidst the long line of fortresses covering the mountain peaks, there were many clear and bright lights, illuminating the peaks into a bright white land.

The highest of these was a newly-built white mansion.

In the wide and large hall, the milk-white stone walls were printed with many carvings of Great White Bear, Black Panthers and Sabertooth Tigers, these three different creatures were seen in many different images and carvings, representing the three creature totems that formed the three largest branches at

the very core of the Tasura Academy, and the drawings on the walls showed many different types of development directions, there were Great White Bears with wings, some had a long and thick tentacle instead of a right arm, some had four eyes, and the same went for the Black Panthers and Sabertooth Tigers, each showing a different area of development.

The hall was brightly lit inside, a piano band slowly playing by the wall, the slow and comforting music emanating gently through the hall, and even wafting into the darkness outside the window past the fluttering curtains.

There was also a long rectangular table by the right side of the hall, with platters of fruits and other dishes on it, provided for the guests' consumption.

The guests participating in the gathering were all dressed extravagantly, the men in fancy collars and the women in swaying skirts, but no matter what status these guests had, the key reason for their attending this banquet was either to see the Black Swamp Palace Master, whose reputation had skyrocketed recently, or to meet and talk to one another, building a sufficiently large web of connections.

Just then, Garen was standing with several white-haired old men, playing with an intricate crystal glass in his hand as he listened to the old men's low conversations carefully. He wore a black-red suit, his figure long and slender, his golden hair falling over his shoulders, his jade-perfect skin the secret object of envy for all the women present.

This world only had tuxedos previously, but Garen had decisively chopped the tails off the tuxedos, adjusting it slightly to become an Earth-like suit, and he instantly felt a lot more at home in it.

He listened to what his teacher Emin was saying carefully, his face the picture of concentration. All around him were the highest-level elders of the Tasura Academy, the leaders of some smaller academies that were friendly with Tasura, as well as some grassroots leaders and upper-level nobles who had come to the Kingdom to join this banquet. Other than a very select few, the most of them were fairly old, at the very least in their forties.

Garen was especially eye-catching amidst such a crowd. The higher-ups all stood together here, while the people in most of the other places were mainly the elite scholars of these academies and the higher-level nobles from the Kingdom.

The important characters stood in one place, the younger generations and less important people stood in one circle, the division was obvious, and there was only the occasional moment when the important figures called some of their young ones over to be introduced to their peers.

Although the younger ones all formed their own little circles, they would still steal envious glances at the upper-level circle, with Garen at the center.

"In the blink of an eye, three years have passed, thinking back on everything that had happened these past few years, it still feels like a dream." Emin drank the fragrant wine, his gaze a mix of complicated sadness.

"Teacher, you always like sighing about things, the Academy has been rebuilt and completely unified, wasn't that your biggest wish?" Garen said softly.

"People are greedy by nature, or maybe it's precisely because my biggest wish and goals have been fulfilled, that's why I'm feeling rather empty inside." Emin shook his head, and said self-deprecatingly, "You're the hottest topic right now, even in the East Continent you are among the best of the best, to have taught you back then, truly was my biggest pride and joy."

"You exaggerate." Garen laughed, "There are still many things that I don't know, and I need you to teach me."

"Don't say such modest things, you have surpassed me long ago, to be frank, I was only slightly useful to you when setting the foundations, the rest of it was all your own hard work." Emin waved his hand.

"I bet that back then, when the Palace Master was learning the foundations, he had already demonstrated his immense talent, right?" One of the elderly members of the Academy asked with a laugh.

"Speaking of which, as for how the Palace Master used to be, perhaps only Big Brother Emin knows best."

Some of the elders started asking as well.

Emin just chose some of Garen's stories from back then, he still felt vaguely awed until now.

Back then, Garen had only shown extraordinary talent in tactics, but unfortunately, even though he had the talent, he did not want to walk the path of tactics, and insisted on specializing in totem evolution. As for using tactics to fight, that method did not suit Garen at all.

Emin had felt quite sorry about that for some time. Mentioning that, he began to discuss some trivial matters from back then with the few elders enthusiastically.

Garen just stood at the side and listened quietly, smiling occasionally.

After listening for some time, he excused himself by saying he needed the washroom, leaving alone to go to the nighttime balcony outside the hall. Standing in front of the semicircular banister, he looked down into the distance, the little smattering of lights from the villages at the bottom of the mountain were like the many stars in the night sky, bunching together in constellations. The night breeze blew on his face, coolly, and with a hint of fragrance.

Garen sniffed lightly, the fragrance seemed to come from an extreme distance, barely there and sometimes not, but even he could not tell what flowering plant it was.

Chapter 514: Trace 2

Holding the banister with his hand, the smooth and cool wooden handrail was soft, and soon began to grow warmer under his fingers. It was rare for him to find time to relax, Garen stood there on the balcony, and fell into a slight silence.

After some time.

"Lucian, why did you run all the way here?" The balcony one floor beneath him just happened to face the second floor, and a young man's crisp and clear voice came from below.

"I just wanted to calm down a bit by myself." Another calm and cool man's voice spoke, his tone was not particularly icy, but it gave one a feeling of cool distance.

"Bales and the others are here, as are Violet and Corin, aren't you going out to meet them?" The clear young man's voice asked softly.

The other person did not reply.

"Don't be so shy, won't ya?"

"..."

"It's so rare to see so much good food, normally it's hard to get even a bite, if it weren't for you bringing us in here, we probably still wouldn't be able to touch such goods stuff, come on, join us." The clear young man seemed to be yanking him now.

"Good food? You guys won't really let yourselves go and eat..." This time the cold young man finally seemed to express some emotion. "Did you think I worked so hard to get four invitations just so you could come in here and eat?"

"Don't be so petty, we're all partners through thick and thin." The clear young man patted the other person's shoulder, "We can't match the important guys on the second floor, in that case, wouldn't the good food on the table be more practical?"

"Lucian, your old man's asking you to go to the second floor." Suddenly there was a clear voice cutting through the hustle and bustle of the first-floor hall, it was a sweet young girl's voice.

And then on the first floor, Lucian covered his face with his hand. The people on the first floor fell silent for a second, and then burst into laughter. Those who could make it here were either well-bred nobles or merchants with a considerable background, or eminent scholars, but under the presence of Garen and the Black Swamp Palace, everyone acted completely proper, so in such a high-level noble banquet, Lucian instantly became famous.

His old man was also an upper-level noble, with considerable power, and Lucian had been a model among the original Kovitan nobles of his age, he was handsome and dashing, with extraordinary powers, and his snow-white skin earned him the nickname 'Snow Prince'. When he was escaping to the Kingdom

from his territory, he had made friends with some common folk from the villages, and this story had been the popular gossip among the nobles for some time now.

To think he even dared to bring some village bumpkins to such an upper-class banquet, and his father allowed him to mess around like that.

Listening to the commotion from the hall downstairs, Garen could not keep his lips from curving upwards. These people reminded him of his life back then in Vanderman's estate, although that life was short, it was unprecedentedly peaceful, just like the Secret Technique World.

"Why are you here alone?" A mild young girl's voice came from behind him.

Garen did not reply, he merely continued to look at the distant scene of the mountains at night, enjoying his rare bit of peace.

The girl behind him walked up to his side of her own accord, and also put her hands on the banister.

"Could it be that even someone as powerful as Lord Garen has troubles that he cannot solve?" The girl stood on Garen's right, wearing a long white dress that showed off her small waist, full breasts, long and slender legs, her soft body fragrance, and her fiery-red waist-length hair cascading behind her, tied with a white hairband in the middle.

This was a very pretty and confident young girl, no more than seventeen or eighteen years in age, in the middle of her most glorious age.

"I'm human too, I will also have common worries and troubles, is that very strange?" Garen said calmly.

He turned his head to glance at the girl.

"Your heart is beating very fast."

The girl's face stiffened slightly, and she tried her best to smile naturally.

"I'm just slightly excited to see my idol."

She was confident that she had the purest appearance out of everyone in the banquet, she had investigated before, Garen should be fondest of this type, pure, cute, and understanding.

This was her chance to make it big, as long as she caught hold of this opportunity, her ailing family would instantly be resurrected from the dead, she was an ambitious woman, as long as she could make it with the Black Swamp Palace Master, no matter what price she had to pay, she was mentally prepared for it.

But seeing Garen's clear gaze and mild attitude, she was beginning to suspect if something had gone wrong with her attractiveness.

"You're still young, there are many paths in life, don't bet everything you have before you can see everything clearly." Garen looked at the girl in front of him, for some reason he suddenly thought of his younger sister from the Secret Technique World, Ying Er, abruptly he noticed that other than their hair color and their personalities, the two of them were eerily similar in their appearances and their auras.

I will go back there.

He decided in his heart, it had only been three years since he transmigrated to this world, he still had a chance. He just needed to discover the secret of the Black Smoke Pot.

If he could settle the threat posed by Hellgate, after that, he could truly start investigating the mysteries of the Black Smoke Pot.

Garen reached out his hand and patted the girl's hair.

"Go back."

A gentle power pushed the girl away lightly, rendering her speechless.

The girl's face was slightly pale, after looking at Garen's back, she eventually decided to turn around and return to the hall.

Not long later, a familiar figure walked onto the balcony. She wore a black evening gown with a corset, it was a clean and pretty long-legged woman, with legs unnaturally long, especially when compared to a normal woman's proportions, her long brown hair tied into a ponytail that gave her a handsome look.

"Master." The woman stood behind Garen, and spoke softly."

"Sylvia, how are things on Sofea's side? Is Jenny(1) still okay?" Garen turned around and asked softly.

Since Sylvia was given to Garen by the First Princess, and the parasite in her body was removed, Garen arranged her to stay by his cousin Hathaway's side, returning to her previous life, it was just that her job changed from the Palace District to Garen's subordinate. She constantly updated Garen about his cousin's safety on that side.

"Everything is okay on Miss Sofea's side, and Miss Jenny has entered the White Phoenix Forest Academy, and is a lot more reserved now." Sylvia was staying next door to Hathaway now, so they were more or less neighbors.

"That's good, about the First Princess..."

"The First Princess has cut all connections with me." Sylvia had been sold to the First Princess as a slave back then, and now that she had been passed on to Garen, she had become Garen's female slave, but thankfully Garen did not make any terrible requests of her. After some time without seeing him, if Manager Lala had not suddenly summoned her, she would have more or less forgotten that she was a slave after all.

"Alright, that's all." Garen nodded his head to show he understood. "Oh, yeah, call Lala in here."

Sylvia bowed and retreated. Soon enough, Lala walked onto the balcony, dressed in a long white dress with silver trimmings.

"Have you found the person I asked you to find?"

"Not yet..." Lala frowned and lowered her head, "Sorry, milord, but according to the way Lord Leila acted when he left, it didn't seem like he was returning to Obscuro."

Garen mused, "Continue putting people to it, inform me immediately once you find him."

"Understood."

"Also, get Kid to come here."

"Kid?" Lala was slightly confused, but she quickly realized what he meant, and smiled bitterly.

"Understood." Kid was always mysterious in his appearances and disappearances, and it would not be easy to find him in such a short time, but since the boss had already asked for him, the people underneath would naturally have to work harder.

Upon returning this time, Garen had handed the job of exchanging the Glittering Water with the Cthulhu King for Cthulhu's Origins to the other people in the Black Swamp Palace, Lala was in charge of sending specific people, to secretly head towards the Cthulhuism Society's base to meet with them. He no longer needed to handle this matter personally. The remaining time was to be spent researching the secrets of Kid and that little girl in red next to Cody once more.

Just thinking about that strange little girl with her snake-like tongue, for some reason, Garen's heart felt mysteriously uncomfortable.

After Lala left, the hall behind him began to slowly quiet down for some reason.

The time ticked by, and after goodness knows how long, Garen suddenly frowned, and turned around slowly.

Just then, on the ground by the entrance into the hall, there was a small black cat with red eyes. It sat crouched on the floor, licking its lips occasionally, its large red eyes staring at Garen curiously.

"How did you get in here?" Garen stared at the red-eyed black cat, frowning as he asked.

Meow~~

The black cat meowed adorably.

"Stop pretending!" Garen frowned even deeper, and a black wind rose out of nowhere, blowing onto the black cat with a whoosh.

Amidst the splashing sound of water, the black cat suddenly stiffened, and its body actually started to melt within the next few seconds, like a candle baked at high heat. In an instant, it had become a puddle of black water on the floor.

"It hurts..." A clear little's girl's voice came from the black water.

Garen narrowed his eyes, and saw that before he knew it, a pair of bright red lips had formed in the black water, and that was where the voice was coming from.

From the small mouth, it was as though the black water reversed in time, going back one step at a time, to form blood, bones and flesh from the black water, finally forming a completely naked, pure white little girl.

The little girl wore nothing at all, her pale red hair falling over her shoulders, her height about half of Garen's, her slightly developed body particularly child-like and tempting. She was not embarrassed in the slightest, however, and just stared at Garen curiously with her blood-red eyes.

"Your existence makes me feel very uncomfortable." Garen grasped his right hand.

Bam!

The little girl instantly exploded into countless bits of minced meat and blood, spraying all over the floor.

Strangely, the countless minced meat gathered together again, once more forming the little girl's body, and she walked towards Garen, one step at a time.

Garen's eyes flashed vaguely with the violence and bloodlust of the Nine-Headed Dragon, a faint black mist appearing around his body.

He did not know how this little girl found him, but it was very likely to do with his meeting Cody that morning. Now it looked like she was trying to give him a warning? Or was she here to test his strength and attitude?

The surroundings around him seemed to have become an illusion, but it did not feel like an illusion at all, rather than calling it an illusion, it seemed to be a sort of separation, a spatial separation.

"Why?" The little girl looked at him curiously. "Why don't you like my body? Aren't you guys all like this?"

"Did Cody send you here?" Garen asked in a low voice. "You do look somewhat strange, but why did you come looking for me?"

"Have you seen the Door to Heaven?" The little girl did not reply to his question, and instead asked another strange one of her own.

"The Door to Heaven?"

Chapter 515: Seed 1

Wooo~~~

There seemed to be a strange howling in the air, like the siren of a faraway train, or like the roar of a certain creature.

Garen turned his head to the side, and suddenly looked at the night sky outside the balcony.

He did not know when it started, but there were many giant silver metal rings hanging in the sky, these rings as though suspended in mid-air, the top half piercing into space, hanging in the night sky without moving in the slightest.

The countless silver rings were all over the sky, scattered into many smatterings, extending all the way into the unseen distance. Each metal ring was more than ten meters in diameter, more than a meter in thickness, unnaturally clear.

The moonlight fell down evenly, reflecting a faint silver light off these silver rings.

"Did you say the Door to Heaven?" Garen turned around, once more looking at the red-eyed girl who had mysteriously appeared.

"That is the very first origin." The girl widened her blood-red eyes. "Only Listeners can see it."

Garen looked at the little girl in front of him, and suddenly felt some bone-piercing chill on the back of his right hand. He raised his hand, and saw an eye-catching red dot on the back of his right hand, just like a red mole.

He remembered, this was the Imprint of the Listener that Kid had given him back then, at the time Grand Duke Cody had even asked him a strange question, whether or not Garen could show him his Imprint, but Garen had rejected him.

"Then what is this?" He raised his hand, and waved his Imprint at the girl opposite him.

"That is your qualifications, the qualifications you earned." The little girl walked up to Garen, and also raised her head to look at the night sky outside.

"Only with these qualifications, can you truly see this world." The little girl said, somewhat dazedly.

For a moment, neither of them spoke, they just looked at the scene in the sky quietly, the countless silver round rings hanging in the sky, as though it was just a strange painting.

Garen seemed to be looking at the scene in the sky, but at the same time part of his attention was spent on staying aware of the girl's movements.

He had not been able to kill her each of those times just now, this strange phenomenon made his heart waver slightly, it would be understandable if just like him, she had a natural talent such as Nine Lives, but strangely, his five senses or his spiritual sensitivity had vaguely noticed that the girl's true body seemed to be in some unknown space, and her body out here seemed to only be the shadow she was projecting outside, no matter how many times he killed it, he would not harm the actual body at all. It was like using the light to destroy a shadow, no matter how many times you did it, there was no way you could harm somebody like that.

"Don't you want to go and see?" The girl laughed suddenly, "Entering this world for the first time, a world that only we Listeners could ever enter before."

"What is your aim?" Garen glanced at her.

"Aim? Of course." It was as though the girl only then remembered her reason for coming, "Let me think... What was my aim for coming here?" She massaged her forehead, acting troubled.

By now Garen had sort of noticed, this fella seemed to be slightly crazy, there was something wrong with her brain, her words and actions followed the changes in her emotions completely, and even her emotions were completely impossible to grasp.

"The Listeners' world, is it a real world?" he asked again.

"That's right... This place is a strange existence, me, Kid, and more, there are ten other people in total, we were all born here." The little girl's memories were awakened by Garen's words, and her attention diverted.

"Once, several thousand years ago, you humans were still fighting to the death over the Listener's Imprint, but hilariously, now barely a few people know about this world's existence..."

"What are the benefits of this place?" Garen stared at the little girl as he continued asking.

"Benefits?" The girl tapped her lips, "The things you find here, you can bring them out to the other side, but only the Imprinted can take them out. Hmm... there's also the Door to Heaven, you can find the existence of the Door to Heaven here, isn't the ring on your hand an item from this place as well?"

Her gaze fell on the Troll Grip that Garen was wearing.

"Ring?" Garen touched the Troll Grip instinctively, this ring was the gift given to him by the city troll, why would it be a product of this place?

"The City Troll, I met it before, it's really tall, and travels around everywhere, only creatures that give him enough water and food with get this ring as a present." The girl seems to know everything, suddenly she turned her head slightly, as though listening to something.

"How did you know..." Garen was interrupted before he could finish.

Shh~~

The girl held a finger to her lips, and continued posing as though she was listening to something.

"It's coming..."

"What?" Garen frowned, staring at her.

"It's that big tortoise. Come, I'll show you something cool!" The girl suddenly pulled Garen's hand, leaping lightly out the balcony.

Whoosh...

The two of them actually jumped straight out of the balcony, landing directly on the ground.

Bam!

They crashed hard onto the ground, and the girl dragged Garen into a run without any further words.

Garen did not know what she was planning either, but he did not resist, because he could not feel any ill intent from the girl. It was as though after they chatted for a while, the feeling of discomfort she gave him grew thinner and fainter.

The little girl pulled him and ran, leaving the mansion altogether, dashing straight down the mountain.

At such high speeds, Garen turned around to look at the mansion, the place was still brightly illuminated, and there were still many people gathered inside, it was just that they were all frozen on the spot, motionless, as though time had stopped at that moment.

Some people held their wine glasses and were about to sip from it, the wine inside tilting and almost about to drip out from the corners of their mouths. Some people were waving their hands with a smile, their arms suspended in mid-air. Others were turning and tilting their bodies to the music.

The band's musician had plucked one of the strings, and the silk string bent at a slight angle, but it showed no signs of straightening out again. At the main entrance, a young man had been tripped by the door frame, and was about to fall, his body slanting in mid-air, but he just did not fall.

Everything and everyone, all the people and creatures seemed to have had their bodies and wills frozen, only Garen and the little girl could move.

The two of them wove through the forest, the Nightlight Moths frozen in mid-air like insects stuck in amber, embedded into the air, without moving an inch.

As he passed by, Garen simply pulled with one hand, and with a tear, the moth's wing was torn down, the faint poison powder scattering everywhere, just like a small cloud of black dust.

"Did you see that? This world has countless times that flow at different speeds, the world you usually see is just a level that flows at a slower-than-average speed. And once the time is at extremely slow speeds or even stops completely, these creatures moving at high-speeds will all be revealed, that is when you can truly see what they look like." The girl seemed to be talking to herself, or perhaps she was explaining to Garen.

As the girl spoke, the scenes around them moved faster and faster, and grew more and more blurred.

At first he could still sort of see that they were still in the Ultimate Protection area, but by the end everything had turned into blurred shadows that could not be identified.

Garen could only be dragged by the little girl around, turning left and right as they moved at lightning speeds.

He did not know how much time had passed, when suddenly the girl stopped abruptly.

"Look..." The girl's voice came from beside his ear.

The view around him suddenly focused into vision.

This seemed to be a grey-black wasteland, they were surrounded by grey hills and dunes, with a smattering of black plants and moss growing on them.

The ground was completely bald, there was not a bit of green to be seen, occasionally there would be a few tombstones stuck in the earth, but the words on them were already utterly worn off.

Garen looked up.

There was no moon in the sky, only countless pale blue stars scattering their faint light. The faint white cloud vapor was vaguely there, but seemed not to move at all.

"See... This is the truest view of the world..." The little girl released Garen's hand, smiling brilliantly.

Bam!

There was a deep knocking sound from far away.

Bam!

And another.

Bam!

The third sound.

The sounds kept coming, one after the other, like footsteps, as though there was some heavy creature rushing towards here, one step at a time.

Garen looked at that direction from a distance.

Between the black hills, he saw a huge black tortoise crawling over to them.

There was a small piece of grassy land on the tortoise's back, several tombstones stuck on it, slantingly, forming a small arch-shaped graveyard. From a distance, this small graveyard was actually its shell.

The tortoise's limbs were four dried-out, branching tree roots, thick and grey-black, every time they were lifted and put down again, they would make a deep crashing noise on the ground.

Garen stared hard at the tortoise, his wariness raised to the highest. The whole tortoise was more than ten meters tall, and as it got closer, its huge body also became clearer.

But what surprised Garen the most was not that, it was the things behind the tortoise.

There was actually a veritable crowd of pale blue silhouettes following behind the tortoise, these humanoid shapes floated and glowed slightly, translucent like ghosts, with men and women, young and old among them, they all wore different clothing, and had no legs underneath their bodies, having instead a cloud of blue light.

"What is that?" Garen asked in a murmur, although he had already experienced many miraculous things in the Totem World, but this huge creature here and the meaning of the people behind him could not help but make Garen's heart stiffen.

"That is the Giant Tortoise." The girl replied, "Normally it only exists for an instant... Mm, according to your units of time, about a hundred-and-ninety-thousandth of a second. But in this world, we can see its actions clearly."

"And these things behind it are...?" Garen watched the giant tortoise walk past him, carrying the large crowds of pale blue figures behind it.

"These?" The girl followed Garen's gaze, and instantly understood that he was asking about that long line of pale blue figures. "They're spirits~~"

"Spirits?"

"The souls of people after they die, duh." The little girl explained casually. "Aren't you scared?" She seemed to be slightly surprised, at first she had come to see Garen out of curiosity, to find out what was so special about this young man that her host was so wary of. But the more she got to know him now, the more she felt that Garen was different from the rest.

"You just came with me like that, aren't you scared I'll hurt you?" The little girl finally couldn't help but ask.

"You can't hurt me." Garen laughed. Everything in front of him now, seemed to be slowly merging with the Ancient Endor legends from the Secret Technique World.

This world, had been mentioned before in the Ancient Endor legends.

The legendary world where everything stopped, the great hero Helra had fought here with the Serpent of Fate, and although he managed to kill the Serpent of Fate in the end, he also sacrificed an arm that stayed here forever.

Only creatures with the same Imprint can harm each other, and that was also why the Great Sages who gave the heroes their Imprints could not fight themselves, so they had to trick the hero Helra into acting.

Even the great Earth Mother admitted that she could not interfere with the matters here.

But what intrigued Garen was that the legend had evidently been passed down in the Secret Technique World, and yet there was such a scene in the Totem World. The two worlds seemed to have countless connections.

The girl was still recovering from her surprise at Garen's words, and just then, the huge graveyard tortoise had walked past them on the right, the countless blue silhouettes gathering behind it, like a blue neon-colored river, twisting and turning into oblivion.

The humanoid spirits in the river were all dazed and lost-looking, as though they had utterly lost their self-awareness, and was just floating stupidly behind the Giant Tortoise.

Garen couldn't help but think of the Underworld Carriage. In the library of the ruined city, that Underworld Carriage he had encountered seemed to have some strange connection to this Giant Tortoise.

"Back when Cody was still small, I brought him to see the Giant Tortoise, and he was scared half to the death. Why don't you have any reaction at all?" The little girl's expression was full of confusion. "Don't you want to know where the Giant Tortoise will bring all these spirits?"

Chapter 516: Seed 2

Garen smiled, but remained silent. According to the myths, this Giant Tortoise was the guide to the underworld, and the world that it was heading to was not a place living creatures could get involved with. Even merely looking would cause blindness.

"It's heading towards the underworld. Don't you want to take a look?"

"Is it?" Garen only smiled, but did not fall for her tricks at all.

The little girl's eyes darted around.

"Weren't you looking for Kid? I know where he is now."

"Oh?" Garen looked at her with a faintly shocked expression. "You heard the things I said earlier?"

"That guy Kid has constantly been hanging one at one place recently, so it would be really easy to find him." The girl had a sly look in her eyes. "He seems heartbroken."

"Heartbroken?" Garen never thought that Kid would be so grown up.

"Let's go, I'll take you there!" The little girl pulled Garen's hand again, before their surroundings became blurry suddenly, while countless images flashed around constantly amidst the blurriness.

After an unknown amount of time, their surroundings stopped moving and became clear again.

Garen stood up steadily and took in his surroundings.

He and the little girl stood in a vast farm that was filled with sporadic clusters of large yellow pumpkins.

Most of the pumpkins were hollowed out, and although they were some solid ones, only a few of them were left.

The ground below his feet was pitch-black, as if it were lifeless, scorched earth.

In the furthest and deepest end of the farm stood a wooden house. The faint sound of what sounded like Kid's voice could be heard from within, singing to a tune.

Garen glanced at the little girl, but realized that she had disappeared suddenly, leaving him by himself at their original spot.

He furrowed his eyebrows, and walked towards the house on the far end of the farm.

As the distance between them closed, and the sound of Kid's singing became clearer.

"...if you plant a girl in spring, you'll reap many girls in autumn..."

Garen's words were caught in his throat; when he came closer, he suddenly saw a small piece of empty land in front of the house, where Kid stood watering something with a kettle in his hands.

The empty piece of land was merely an area made up of black dirt, planted in the clearing was an enlarged egg; the bottom half of the egg was stuck inside the dirt, while the top half was being watered by the kettle.

As if he had heard something, Kid raised his head and turned towards Garen's position.

"Nineheads Boss?"

"What are you doing?" Garen walked towards Kid.

"I'm sowing seeds," Kid answered simply. "If I plant them in spring, I'll have a wife in autumn."

Garen patted Kid's head, unsure of what to say.

That little girl had a mysterious attitude. At first she seemed to harbor malicious intent towards Garen, but later realized that he was an interesting plaything and ended up playing with him later. Finally, her attitude changed again, and she sent him to Kid voluntarily. No one knew what she was actually thinking about.

"What is this place exactly? That little girl brought me here," Garen finally asked in a low voice.

When Kid heard him say 'little girl', his body shivered suddenly, as if he were scared somehow. "This is the True World, the real world, that we Listeners can come into contact with. All of the appearances that we are usually unaware of, they will all show up here. And since time has stopped here, even if one spends an eternity in here, only a few seconds would have passed outside."

"True World?" Garen furrowed his eyebrows.

"Yes, relatively speaking. Boss, the place where you used to be was the opposite, Normal World, a place where you were unable to see the truth directly," explained Kid elaborately. "It's rumored that the strongest Totem User can touch the borders of this world, possessing the qualifications to enter this place. In other words, things in the Normal World, they're present here, while the things that are absent in the Normal World would still be present here. The Normal World is an extension of the what appears in the True World, except that it's just a part of its outer ring. The relationship between both of them, when loosely described as a simile, can be likened to an egg; the egg white is the Normal World, while the egg yolk is the True World."

"So what does the Door to Heaven mean then?"

"The True World is a visualization of all truths and all sources, while the Door to Heaven is the door to all of the sources in this world. I'm unsure about it myself, but perhaps there are deeper layers of the True World inside, where deeper levels of truth and sources may be seen. Or maybe it's a whole different thing. No one has went in before, because no one can open it." Kid was honest as usual, answering everything that he was asked.

But Garen had been thrown into this world mysteriously, and still had some doubts in his heart. Even though he had received some explanations from Kid, these uncertainties had not disappeared yet.

"My guess is that someone wanted to open the Door to Heaven, so that girl dragged Boss here, perhaps to use Boss's powers to stop that person," Kid held the kettle and pondered. "After all, her parasitic strength isn't strong enough."

He paused. "Or maybe, she's thinking of changing parasites..."

"Whatever, just send me back first," Garen exhaled.

"Alright," Kid nodded, before pulling Garen's hand, and leaping a step forward gently.

Tch!

Their surroundings flashed in a blur once again, and a loud noise echoed beside their ears, before the sound of a band slowly filled their ears.

Garen's vision turned black and lit up again, before he realized that he was standing on the balcony as before, his hands still rested on the railing as he looked into the faraway distance. Meanwhile, Kid was standing beside him.

"You said that she may have been looking for me because she wanted to change her parasite?" Garen merely transferred his thoughts to Kid, no longer having to open his mouth to speak to him directly.

"Yes, that's very likely, the Door to Heaven exists within the True World, but there was once an Imprinted madman that used some unknown measures to merge a part of the True World with the real world. Now, many strange occurrences are the result of this mergence," answered Kid while nodding.

Garen thought of Hellgate suddenly, and using unknown measures, Obscuro caused the Great Turmoil. The black copper was also part of their doing, and after the Great Turmoil, various weird occurrences also followed. The likeliest person to be this madman, was undoubtedly and certainly Hellgate.

"Thus, since parts of both worlds have merged, the Door to Heaven will probably be revealed in reality," Kid continued to explain. "She came looking for you because she probably saw the changes that would happen afterwards. When the Door to Heaven finally appears and that Imprinted madman wants to push it open, he would definitely choose to do it in the True World where he would not be disturbed by anyone, and since time stops there, only other Imprinted individuals would be able to intervene. His threats would be very much smaller."

"So she was making preemptive damage control measures?" Garen said immediately. "Why don't you want the Door to Heaven to be pushed open?"

Kid became silent at once.

After some time, he finally opened his mouth to speak again.

"The Door to Heaven is the source of everything in the True World, but once it's pushed open... We Listeners all have bad feelings about that."

Garen had a vague feeling that it was likely the Door to Heaven had a certain link to the Black Smoke Pot that he passed through in the beginning.

When he returned this time, he truly came into contact with the mysterious world that Kid inhabited. His heart simply defined the True World as the inner world, while reality was defined as the outer world, making everything clearer.

Now he had grasped more than half of everything, and he was certain that the person who had plans with the inner world's Door to Heaven, was almost certainly Hellgate.

Hellgate got out for his own goals, and he had also integrated all of the resistance forces in an attempt to uncover the true secrets of the world. Was this the true insights and thinking after achieving the peak of Form 5?

Unfortunately, according to the original historia, he fell short in the end, and what lay behind the Door to Heaven was still something that eluded the world. However, the preparation and work underwent to open the Door to Heaven caused serious injuries, and even death to befall the people of the outer world, and although mankind's violent counter attacks that followed were enough to exceed Hellgate's limits, it eventually ended up in hatred and grief.

"What do we need to do to open the Door to Heaven?" Garen inhaled deeply, before asking in a low voice.

Kid fell silent again for a moment, but answered regardless.

"The Door to Heaven is the foundation of the sources of the world, the symbol of all of the rules of truth. In order to open it... One can only observe it continuously and investigate its shifts."

"Shifts?"

"Yes," Kid nodded. "Every time the world undergoes major shifts, shifts enough to affect the rules of changes, the Door to Heaven will undergo changes as well."

"Major changes..." Garen seemed to understand the basic reasoning for Hellgate to unleash the Great Turmoil. If it was merely the doing of a mad scientist for the sake of research...

Suddenly, he remembered that this planet was merely one of the countless planets in the universe, thus, did the inner world of this planet, exist on other planets as well?

Suddenly, he realized, that if the Secret Technique World also existed inside the inner world, then, those myths, those relics...

Except that the inner world was a wasteland, and there were too many strange occurrences inside, and most of them were derived from fixed rules which would not allow normal life forms to step in at all, but perhaps he would be able to find certain clues about Warlocks from there.

Garen could now feel that he was currently walking on the path that countless Warlocks had crossed before.

However, he was not using normal means. Besides the fact that he had crossed through the Secret Technique World, he was also carrying talents, attributes, and abilities that had no relation to Warlocks at all. Although the Black Smoke Pot's startup and pass-through was merely an accident, if the explosion of the nuclear bomb and the volcano had not happened at the same time to amplify and activate a specific power, or if the self defense necklace that Old Man had given him hadn't worked; he would have not been able to come to this world if even one of these conditions were lacking.

Garen had a feeling that he was an illegal immigrant that had accidentally arrived on the planet where Warlocks once walked. He had initially hoped to walk on the path of the Warlocks, but because of the possibilities of his attributes and talents, in a short span of time he was able to achieve the progress that

others would only reach in decades, and this terrifying rate of growth allowed him to walk in the direction of self-exploration.

However, this speed was too fast, and did not allow him to brake at all, instantly going over his head instead.

Earth's knowledge systems combined abilities and talents, and Garen had now walked onto a path that only belonged to himself.

When he thought of this, Garen became aware and squeezed the railing. At this moment, Kid's voice continued to ring out beside him.

"There was once a parasite that deduced something about the Door to Heaven, saying that it was an entrance that separated everything, that it was the door of life, and also the door of death. The inside of the entrance was chaotic, random. At the same time, it was also the source of all of the rules. Perhaps that sentence was also the reason that influence people's desires to open it."

After listening to that sentence, for unknown reasons, Garen suddenly remembered the lonely period of time that he endured while traveling to this planet.

Within the darkness, there seemed to be a large river that pushed him along, and now thinking back upon it, there were countless different powers that dragged him along at that time. When the Black Smoke Pot's surge of power broke through everything, it decided upon a determined force that instantly brought him to this planet.

When the memory began to really come back to him, the Warlock's power was not the true catalyst that brought him to the Totem World. They did not drag him here, but among the countless powers that had been pulling him along, he merely pushed one of them gently, picking the direction that was best suited to himself.

"At that time, what would happen if I had picked a different direction to fly in?" Garen could not help but consider this thought, and even though this thought flashed through his mind quickly, it was still deeply embedded in his head.

Chapter 517: War 1

After chatting with Kid on the balcony for awhile, Garen received an invitation from Tasura Academy's Old Man, before he quickly returned to the hall on the second floor. Some of the old elders had taken the opportunity to use their titles to bring their successors in front of Garen, to ensure that he would be familiar with them.

Garen dealt with them while remembering the strange incidents that happened when he came in contact with the little girl earlier.

Kid had once said that only Listeners could kill other Listeners. He used to think that this had a different meaning, but he had never expected to experience it firsthand today.

That little girl had been instantly and continuously destroyed because of the Black Water True Technique's powers many times, but was not affected by it fully and was able to heal completely. Even Garen could feel that he was unable to truly touch his opponent's body, giving him a sense of curiosity towards the characteristics of Listeners.

However, he was merely curious, as he knew that although Listeners were strange and knew many hidden secrets, it was obvious that they would not be able to affect the existence of someone of his level. In the end, Kid also said that they had no way to increase their powers as all of their strengths were inherent, and would never change. No existing training methods could upgrade them, therefore, if they were undefeatable, they would always be undefeatable. Unless, they managed to swallow other Listeners.

However, they would only receive minor upgrades from this, and even then, Form 4 was their limit; it was impossible for them to be as strong as a Form 5.

After the banquet ended, Garen rode the flying carriage back to the Kingdom's inner palace. In the duration that followed, among the scholars of the Black Swamp Palace, those who had achieved level two and above of the Black Water True Technique were allowed to train outside, and within the Nine Snakes System, some special, minor danger quests had also started to be released. These quests were released by people outside the palace with large sums of money, and although the prices were slightly lower than those of the Luminarist Guild, there were still good opportunities for the scholars that were hard pressed for funds to earn some money.

The disciples who had achieved level two of the Black Water True Technique and above already possessed a certain amount of strength and speed, and although they lacked an activated Totem Power, their extremely powerful anti-toxin abilities and their sensitivity towards liquid and water sources allowed them to quickly uncover various methods of using them.

For instance, these included detecting various valuable Aberrated Creatures with sufficient water content, memorizing special moisture smells and collecting specific valuable plants, locating precious underground water sources, and even predicting the weather in advance. Plus, they could also explore the terrain in areas that were filled with poisonous mist, among other things.

The Black Water True Technique's strong anti-toxin abilities gave the scholars immunity when they encountered low level poison. They also possessed strong resistance towards middle level poison as well, and a lot of outsiders and even hunting groups hired Black Swamp Palace disciples to use them as air breathability testers and water source detectors, and the results were extremely positive.

Through the ten percent commission that they received from the quests, after more than a month of operations, the Black Swamp Palace's Nine Snakes System finally received its first income from the quests of its scholars.

Within this month, Garen stayed inside the palace daily, only coming out occasionally to guide his three core disciples. The White Knights that he saved had gradually integrated into the environment of the inner palace, while the crybaby, the little princess from the White Wind Tribe had also systematically joined the Black Swamp Palace as well. After undergoing the tests and participating in the prodigy training camps, although her Appraisal was good, her resolve and other factors still needed to be considered.

Most of the White Knights had also passed the tests to join the groups of scholars inside the palace, and since they were already elites with excellent talent, after they participate in the Black Swamp Palace's training camps and teamed up with one another, their progress improved quickly, especially their battle training, which soon exceeded most of the normal scholars.

Time continued to pass day by day, and the operations of the entire Black Swamp Palace had also started to become more organized.

Amidst the continuous rolling red mountains, a tower-like stone building pierced through the clouds, bright white light beams shot out of the top into infinity,, straight into the sky, releasing soft humming noises.

The light beam resembled white cylinders that pierced through the layers of clouds, extending into faraway, unknown places.

The afternoon sky was a light red, and gold-red rays of sunlight lingered on the horizon while a flock of white feathered birds, with lumps of flesh on their foreheads sailed past, sharp ear-piercing cries echoed from afar.

At the entrance at the bottom of the tower-shaped building, a narrow stream of people could vaguely be seen entering and leaving continuously, and all of these people seemed to be dressed in long black robes and tights. Most of them wore black veils on their faces, regardless if they were men or women.

The minaret was situated on a disc-shaped mountaintop. Other than the tower-shaped building on top of the mountain, there were also houses of various sizes that were scattered around. During the evening, the insides of the houses were lit up with dots of orange-red colored light.

Throughout the surroundings of the red mountains were long stretches of red plains, and currently on the far end of the plains, near the horizon, large, light green waves had vaguely appeared.

These waves were silent, and from afar, they resembled real flowing water that flowed slowly, but surely, towards the direction of the minaret. The entire wave was apparently made up of countless Green Armored Knights.

These knights were all clad in green vine armor from head to toe and rode on giant green snails, while the position of the rider was fitted nicely in the empty space between the snail's head and its shell.

These snails were more than five meters tall each, with fearsome faces and humanlike bodies that included two arms that held a gigantic steel pitchfork. They were also silent when they crawled, their bodies were shrouded in light green air currents, resembling continuously flowing wind.

Other than these snail riders, there were also many Red Flame Snail People who stood upright within the wave, each of them was more than ten meters tall, stood out of the crowd and had smaller red shells on their backs, extremely muscular bodies, and used their evolved legs to walk. They held gigantic bloodied axes in their hands, while their two large nostrils occasionally breathed out fiery sulfur fumes. They glanced from left to right occasionally, and their gaze was extremely fearsome, as if they were constantly looking for a fight with their opponents.

Countless snail knights charged towards the minaret slowly and silently, and even though there were bloody-eyed, surveillance birds flying around the minaret in the sky, they did not see the army below them, and continued drawing lines to mark the safe zones as usual.

Slowly, as the wave came nearer, the faint smell of sulfur filled the air, and the people inside the minaret finally realized that something was not right.

At this moment, the wave finally tore open their camouflage and began their charge towards the minaret on the mountain frantically.

Roar!! The loud roars of the Snail People echoed throughout the ground.

The Green Armored Knights roared loudly and charged forward as well, while the green snail riders leapt into the sky, flying in large herds towards the minaret with much haste. From afar, they resembled flying green meteors, forming large clouds of meteor rain.

"Obscuro!! Obscuro!! Obscuro!!!"

Angry, low sounding roars could be heard from the minaret. Both sides of the minaret were filled with tall red mountains and incomparably huge stalagmites, forming a forest of spikes shielding the assassins that were now moving out slowly.

On top of the sharp stalagmite filled mountain peak, many ten meters tall Stone Giants walked out suddenly, coming out of their rock and soil camouflage, leaving large human-shaped pits on the surface of the mountain peak.

On top of two of the tallest mountain peaks, a loud crashing noise could be heard. Four limbs grew out with a tearing noise, while the hundred meter tall mountain peaks quickly transformed into two incomparably large Stone Giants.

Their entire bodies were blood-red, and they guarded both sides of the minaret, They roared silently in the direction of the green meteor army.

"Hellgate! I'm going to break your limbs today!! Hahaha..." Maniacal, loud laughter echoed down from the faraway sky, and each noise resembled endless dull crashes of thunder.

"Phiroth's lap dog!" At the entrance of the minaret, a large group of black robed Totem Users flew upwards, following the Stone Giants while they charged at the falling green meteor army. A figure that was completely shrouded in black mist was ambushed by more than ten black robes, before they raised their hands and looked at the red clouds rolling across the sky.

The black misty figure raised a single hand, releasing shrouds of black mist, forming a pitch-black mist whirlpool in front of himself.

Suddenly, a loud cry that sounded like an elephant's trumpet echoed out of the middle of the whirlpool. A black Strange Bird the colour of ink flew out of the whirlpool instantly. With a gentle beat of its two pairs of wings, , it charged towards the sky like a rocket.

Quickly, more Strange Birds flew out of the black whirlpool endlessly. After ten seconds, more than a hundred black Strange Birds had flown out of the whirlpool.

"Black Sky's empowered Four Winged Birds? I'll experience them for myself today!" The thunderous noise echoed throughout the sky.

The black misty figure sneered before leaping upwards, and turning into a shroud of black mist that flew towards the sky.

On top of the mountain peak, a round transparent shield had vaguely formed around the surroundings of the minaret, and when the green meteors fell on top, they formed transparent circular ripples, before sliding downwards.

On the ground, countless Green Armored Knights surrounded and slaughtered the Stone Giants. The violent Snail People charged towards the incomparably large mountain Giants, but the hundred meter tall Giants merely stomped on them before they heavily injured and even killed many of the violent snails, sending a frenzy of severed limbs resembling an odd, blended tomato juice everywhere. However, every time a violent snail was stomped to death, they would burst open, forming more pits of various sizes that were each ten meters deep beside both of the mountain Giants.

The green waves and meteors surrounded the minaret closely for a seemingly endless amount of time.

A crash could be heard throughout the sky, sending green ripples spreading out in a flash,, dispersing all of the red clouds and pushing them away, exposing the clear red sky..

A long, white, snake-like beast struggled and turned in the sky, and on its head, a smaller-sized green spider monster was biting its face furiously while countless layers of spider webs were entangled around the long white snake.

The two monsters possessed terrifying body sizes of over a hundred meters, and looked abnormally scary. Once the long white snake could not persevere anymore, it struggled for a moment, before finally falling from the sky.

"The President will avenge me!!"

A sharp, maniacal voice echoed from the snake's body.

"Too weak! Too weak! Black Sky, is this your colossal Secret Technique? I'm disappointed!" The spider released the white snake and turned around, before floating in the sky, exposing a muscular, green haired man in its abdomen. The man's body had fused with the spider, and the vital parts of his body were covered with white bone armor. Both of his eyes were filled with green hellfire, making him look unusually strange.

Boom!

The large white snake fell on top of the minaret violently, smashing into and toppling it.

The white light beam flashed for a few moments, before finally breaking off completely and extinguishing.

Kovitan, Ultimate Protection

The evening sky had faintly turned blue-black. White clouds drifted past slowly while rays of golden evening sunlight cascaded downwards, making it somewhat warm.

At the back of the right side of the palace area, on a square shaped plaza.

The surroundings of the plaza were connected by brown-yellow colored Palace buildings, while a square shaped pond in the middle clearly reflected the clouds that were drifting past in the sky. The remaining ground was covered in light green grass that had been trimmed neatly.

Between the pond and the buildings was a light yellow lane that twisted and turned. It had black street lights throughout the road, faintly illuminating it with light yellow light.

A few little children chased each other around the pond noisily, holding wooden toy swords in their hands, playing a game that involved beautiful girls saving princes.

Beside the road, clusters of people engaged in their after-dinner leisure strolls. .

Garen sat on the bench beside the pond with his arms outstretched against the back of the seat, clad in a well-fitted, pitch-black outfit that showed off his well-built physique.

The button on the tight-fitted black shirt that he wore was open, exposing his muscular, pale chest, and the exquisite red crystal necklace that he wore on his neck.. His golden, shoulder-length hair had now been cut short, and his dark red eyes were now drooping lazily, as if he were watching the little children play on the side while resting sleepily.

"You ran all the way here again," said a clear, cold male voice, echoing behind Garen.

Garen tilted his head upwards, looking behind himself.

"Ivy? What's wrong?"

Chapter 518: War 2

The approaching man wore a plain white suit with a torn open collar and a white rose stuck in front of his chest, while the faint scent of alcohol lingered on his body.

"When you returned, you brought a female Demon Phoenix with you, what level is she?"

"You didn't try her?" Garen smiled.

"She gave me a really weird feeling," said Ivy while he furrowed his eyebrows. He stood behind the bench, while standing up steadily with both of his hands on the back of the seats.

"I wouldn't be able to explain it clearly even in an hour and a half, so you'll just have to touch it slowly to find out." Garen was uninterested in saying too much; this would involve a lot of trouble, and it was also difficult to explain. Plus, while having slightly hidden strengths could also be used as another trump card to stay alive.

"It's fine if you don't want to talk about it, but the latest news that traveled from Daniela is that the war between Daniela and Obscuro Society started today, and this afternoon, one of Obscuro Society's valuable Black Sky bases were completely destroyed. Black Sky is nowhere to be found, while the information and research results that Obscuro Society accumulated over the course of many years was wiped out by Phiroth," explained Ivycius, furrowing his eyebrows. "What are your plans?"

"They've finally started the war, huh?" Garen did not seem surprised. "They'll fight their own war, and it's unlikely that the winners and losers will be decided within an hour and a half. No need to rush. That's right, how are the operations inside the palace?"

"Shouldn't you be asking Lala that?" Despite saying that, Ivy reported the latest changes anyway. "The operations are fine. After the outside training was completed, although some of the scholars died from their injuries, they were others who took the opportunity to break through to level four, two of them actually, while three others broke through level three. Skyharp is already working on the preparations to activate the observation programs. Also, I'm marrying Skyharp in a month, interested in coming?"

"Wedding?" Garen was slightly taken aback, as he never expected Skyharp to take measures into her own hands so quickly, tying Ivy down in a such a short while.

"Yes," Ivy's expression remained flat, without any signs of compulsion. "After so many years, it would have been difficult for her alone..."

Garen's expression was strange. He was at a loss for words, as this woman Skyharp apparently had such an image in Ivycius's heart. He related it to the chat that he once had with Skyharp.

Apparently... A cultured female hoodlum would not be as frightening anymore.

"Speaking of which, what about you and your fiance? You're not young anymore, do you still plan on dragging it further?" Ivy changed the subject to Garen.

"There's no rush, I still have some unfinished business..." Garen exhaled. The things he pursued, his goals, should not leave deep marks in this world as these were not Hathaway's responsibilities. However, as he said, there were some things, that needed to be done regardless.

Continuing the Trejons bloodline was still a responsibility that his current body would not be able to reject, and perhaps once everything was done, assuming that he was still alive, he would go and marry Hathaway then.

"During this period of time, I'm planning to leave for a trip. If anything happens and you can't handle it, just go look for Demon Phoenix."

"Understood," nodded Ivycius. When he returned this time around, he could no longer see through Garen, and vaguely guessed that the other man had broken through already. But if he had broken through, it was strange how Garen's aura had become weaker, and more hidden. Ivycius himself had not

broken through completely, and even if he had broken through, he was unclear regarding the great difference between regular Form 5 and peak Form 5.

He relied on normal Form 5 auras to judge and measure, but judgments like these were ultimately meaningless.

Both of them began shooting the breeze, and after understanding the main situation, they resumed their conversation by talking about the problems of Secret Technique practices. While Ivy asked most of the questions, Garen would answer, and as one of Garen's Dragon Demons, Ivycius could share a part of Garen's Swallowed Lives and recovery abilities. His powers were slightly stronger than before, and since he was also progressing to fuse, the questions that he asked were much clearer and were all related to the key aspects of breaking through to Form 5.

This also allowed Garen to understand his rate of progress, and it was certain that Ivy would break through soon, within the next few days.

The sky became darker, and the glow of the streetlights gradually replaced the remaining evening light.

Garen and Ivy were discussing a key problem of Form 5 fusion, suddenly, a dull crashing noise echoed from the further end of the palace. The Nine Snakes Defense inside the palace had been disturbed while it was showering.

Red light flashed from the red crystal necklace in front of Garen's chest, shooting out a round, translucent, dim red screen, projecting it in front of Garen.

The scene of three Three Snake scholars surrounding one Four Snake scholar floated up on the round screen. Having three snakes meant that their Black Water True Technique was at least level three, as the number of these snake heads represented the level of their Secret Technique.

Three level threes ambushed a single level four. Since they were low level Secret Technique practitioners, although the difference between levels was not huge, level four was the limit of activated Totem Powers. The conclusion was obvious.

As expected, the three Three Snake scholars were knocked down on the ground, while the single Four Snake scholar was an indifferent young girl with short hair, blue eyes, white skin, and an average face, resembling a regular girl without any special traits. However, her attack move that knocked down three others made Garen's face light up faintly.

That was not a battle skill of the Black Water True Technique, but an attack move of a completely different style.

As if she were a psychic, the girl knew the attacks of the three others like the back of her hand, allowing her to evade them calmly, and regardless of the complexity of the attacks. She dodged all of them easily, before retaliating instantly with her own attack when they missed.

"This is the girl who got rid of the top prodigy, Ansapello, and the second person who entered into level four," explained Ivycius on the sidelines. "She's called Pefalia, has no surname, and was born to common people. She initially only fluctuated between level two, but after going out for training once, she broke through to level four a short while after returning, activating her Totem Power."

"Not bad, not bad, she seems to be around fifteen years old, right? Very good potential," Garen smiled.

"She returned with a brand new battle skill tactic, saying she found it from a relic that others had already flipped through, and after it went through the Nine Snakes System's assessment, it was evaluated to be of Five Snakes-level."

The rankings of battle skill tactics, treasures, messages, and other things were based on the degree of their values, from one to nine, separating them into nine different levels. The higher the level, the more valuable its rank. Complete legacy types like the Black Water True Technique could sometimes achieve rankings as high as Form 5 Secret Techniques, which were equivalent to the highest Nine Snakes level.

Meanwhile, Ivycius's legacy could achieve the highest ranking of peak Form 4, which was evaluated as Eight Snakes. By this understanding, the maximum legacy for middle level Form 4 was Seven Snakes.

The Five Snakes level was already an extremely high assessment level, and since it was an incomplete legacy, it was placed outside, and its value was equivalent to peak Form 3 Totem nurturing legacies. Those with less than ten thousand gold rums could not even dream of buying them.

"Besides that, when the scholars returned from their training outside, they brought back different Totem nurturing methods and battle skill attack moves, and two more even confirmed the intelligence information regarding suitable locations to practice the Black Water True Technique." As Garen's Dragon Demon, it was natural for Ivycius to help him attend to these important matters.

"

Sending them out was truly a wise decision. What about Ansapello? Where is that guy now?" Garen suddenly thought of the arrogant guy who was brimming with talent.

"Hasn't returned yet, after he broke through, he joined a hunting group and went out."

"What Totem did he choose?"

"Should be a Silver Crown Tiger, his talents are still unknown, that guy hides them very well," Ivycius shook his head. He admired this talented disciple highly, as he had great and wild ambitions, and a power that could still be strengthened. Although he was arrogant towards his teachers, he still possessed a required amount of respect.

For Garen and the others, the establishment of the Black Swamp Palace and the appearance of stronger prodigy disciples meant even better things for them. Regardless of which aspect was being looked at, from the outsider's perspective, the more talented Ansapello became and the stronger he grew, he would always be a part of the Black Swamp Palace, and by extension, a part of the Black Swamp Palace's strength as well.

As for his judgements, Garen could not think of a more suitable place to practice the Black Water True Technique than here. Leaving the Black Swamp Palace would make it harder for the disciples to progress even if they were prodigies, and from the moment he started practicing the Black Water True Technique, this path had already been decided.

"Observe him slowly," Garen instructed softly. "Besides that, list the Snowy Mountain in the Northern Region as one of the training ranges, you can discuss this with Blizzard and the others, there should be no problems."

"Alright."

Garen had already rearranged the Black Water True Technique again earlier, separating it into levels according to the Totem levels, meaning that level four would officially become equivalent to the Form 1 Totem level, level five would become Form 2, level six would become Form 3, level seven would become Form 4, level eight would become Form 5, and level nine would become peak Form 5.

The minor levels that were constantly forming because of the fusions would all be placed in level seven.

All seven levels of the Black Water True Technique were placed into the Nine Snakes System, but the Secret Techniques remained as Secret Techniques, and although the stronger Secret Techniques were only placed slightly higher, how many people could truly achieve all of them?

Countless people practiced Secret Techniques in the Secret Technique World, and there were many first rate exercises, but those who could truly become the King of the Century were limited to only two people; Cayduran, and Garen himself.

Even after placing the Black Water True Technique into the system as an achievement-based exchange item, in this manner, how many people would be able to enter Form 5?

Not even Form 5, but Form 4, how many of them were there? According to Garen's estimates, even if he managed to get one out of a hundred of these disciple scholars, that would be considerably good.

As for Form 5, no one understood it fully. Even for the most prodigious disciples with great potential, how long would it take for them to truly become strong? Changes in their state of mind, the course of nurturing Totems, and the countless risks and dangers that they would encounter, were all unknown.

Garen's plan for his household, and himself, was to leave a sort of foundation. Perhaps he would leave one day, but if he returned, all of the Totem Users that practiced the Black Water True Technique would become his greatest support. Not because of others, but because of the Black Water True Technique's natural characteristics; the higher level Secret Technique Users would be able to suppress the lower level Secret Technique Users easily.

At the same time, using liquid type battle Secret Techniques like the Black Water True Technique at high levels would allow one to suppress the lower levels completely, blocking them from using even half of their powers.

Moreover, the most important point was that even if other people managed to practice it to the peak of level nine and broke through to Form 5, the Black Water True Technique was based on the Nine-Headed Hydra's blood flow. The only person that possessed the Nine-Headed Hydra

Totem, which was Garen, would be able to suppress the peak Secret Technique Users regardless of the fact that they had broken through Form 5.

This was the only advantage, and it was the final advantage of the evolved Salamander that he had strengthened through his talents and abilities, and since there would neither be a second person with his attribute points and talents, nor a second person who would be able to fuse a dragon's heart, or activate the will of the Nine-Headed Hydra's bloodline, no one would ever be able to surpass him.

These were the conclusions that Garen had come up with over the past few days, and other than himself, the remaining practitioners of the Black Water True Technique were all modeled on the flow Nine-Headed Hydra's bloodline, while he was the only person to truly possess this bloodline. Those who possessed this bloodline, were realistically able to greatly suppress the existence of the Black Water True Technique Secret Users that belonged to a level higher than themselves, stripping their opponent of the source of their power.

Chapter 519: World 1

During the time period after that, Garen recouped his strength in the Kingdom for three whole months. During this time, while Cthulhu King left and went outside, Daniela that was currently wielded by Phiroth took the opportunity to quickly mobilize their large-scale forces to massacre Obscuro Society.

Phiroth sent out two semi-detached clone-like subordinates to defeat a few of Obscuro Society's main bases. Then, war broke out.

Meanwhile, the Secret Technique stone slabs that Cthulhu King agreed to send had all arrived as well, and five Cthulhus had escorted and sent them personally. Garen received them himself as well, and after he had memorized all of them, he sealed them inside the Black Swamp Palace's secret book cellar.

Seated inside the palace study, Garen looked at the faint, constantly changing dark light screen in front of him. While screens with information from faraway lands were displayed, some of the screens that showed scenes of war, making him Garen furrow his eyebrows slightly.

His fingers tapped against the armrest of his seat gently and rhythmically.

Inside the study, other than himself, Lala and Demon Phoenix were also present.

"Therefore, Phiroth plans to focus on the frontlines in a decisive battle with Obscuro Society?" Garen had thought of the possibility that it would quickly develop to this stage, but he never expected it to happen so soon. Clearly, both Phiroth and Obscuro Society were trying to speed up the war.

Perhaps everyone still thought that Obscuro Society's Hellgate was still the same peak Form 5 from before, and although the Terraflor Society couple had died in battle, their powers were still mysterious, and unknown to many people. Therefore, it was difficult for outsiders to know the true extent of Hellgate's powers.

Only Garen knew that Hellgate had now definitely surpassed his limits, achieving unprecedented heights.

That was the peak that no one else had ever achieved before.

He rubbed his temples, the thoughts in his head were still somewhat complicated.

"According to the analysis of the current information, both parties are proceeding with final battle preparations. Nothing is out of the ordinary, and within three days, it will erupt," Lala reported the situation calmly, and no emotional distress could be heard in her voice. Understandably, with the presence of the Ultimate Protection, perhaps all of the inhabitants of the Kovitan protected area possessed the same unfazed attitude.

Garen glanced at her, but did not say anything.

"Then, your subordinate will take her leave." When Lala saw that Garen had not opened his mouth anymore, she bowed and withdrew herself. She had been coming over to report on the situation of the war every day during these past few days.

"Get ready, I'm going to go out for a trip soon," Garen's voice echoed behind her.

"Yes," replied Lala quickly.

After the room door was closed gently, the study returned to its serene state again.

Seated on the side, Demon Phoenix yawned lazily, and since that person had been sealed for more than a thousand years, she had acquired the habit of sleeping as a method to pass time. Garen guessed that it was the primary reason why her intelligence had not developed all this while.

"Follow me out on my trip. For a few days," said Garen.

"No problem!" quickly answered the Demon Phoenix spiritedly. "Spending the whole day here is really getting boring, no tributes, no sacrifices, nothing at all..." After seeing that Garen's expression had darkened slightly, she decided not to continue.

This person's temper had been completely suppressed by Garen, and after a short period of time, she was already mentally used to listening to Garen's will. From a certain perspective, she was a useful pet and battle power.

Sniff... Hoo...

Sniff... Hoo...

Within the flying carriage in the sky, noises that sounded like the breathing of a terrifying large beast echoed throughout the sky endlessly.

Black mist and waves constantly rippled near the black carriage like living creatures, that surrounding the carriage, and dancing around it.

Within the blue sky, with the carriage as the center, a large black shadow drifted in the surrounding area, like a drop of ink that had spilled into a blue lake, drawing a thick line in the sky.

Inside the carriage, Garen sat in the center, while Demon Phoenix and Phantom guarded the sides, holding water bottle-like narrow-neck bottles in their hands, tipping them sideways occasionally, pouring out a clear sticky liquid.

This liquid dripped on the floor of the carriage, and quickly flowed towards Garen who sat in the center, gathering there.

Garen inhaled large gusts of air into his nostrils constantly, before exhaling again, forming air cyclones of different sizes, while his loud breathing noises drifted out of the carriage.

Within a radius of more than ten kilometers in the sky, all of the creatures were scared off by the terrifying breathing noises, making them too afraid to stop within that space.

On the ground below the path of the carriage, within the thick forest, many dark green Giant Lizards crouched down on the ground slowly, releasing frightened humming noises. The Aberrated Giant Hawk and Giant Python that were hunting left at the same time as well, as if they were scared rabbits that were escaping far away.

A few green-skinned humanoid monsters with large protruding bellies raised their heads towards the sky, howling in awe.

After an unknown period of time passed, the sky darkened gradually.

Demon Phoenix and Phantom poured the last drop of liquid out of their bottles, before taking a few steps back, quietly waiting for Garen to receive his power.

The loud breathing noises slowly became quieter, and softer, before disappearing completely.

Garen's eyes burst open suddenly, and his eyes were like black holes that were pure darkness.

But soon, the darkness disappeared quickly, before his pupils returned to their original light red state.

"I never thought that Skyharp would be able to mix such an effective poisonous solution. It's really quite amazing..." Garen felt a new poisonous layer forming on his body, while a faint look of satisfaction appeared on his face.

"These two bottles of Colourless Water were made by Big Sister Skyharp with the Three Colored Leaf as its core, and were mixed with nineteen different types of first-rate poisons. Twelve of those poisons came from Snowy Mountain, and the core Three Colored Leaf was a poisonous drug that one of the scholars obtained from the relics. It received a Seven Snake assessment from the system. Truly amazing."

Phantom explained softly.

Demon Phoenix and the others had adapted to the environment of the Black Swamp Palace quickly. After being sealed inside a small corner with no way to get out for more than a thousand years consecutively, they had no way of finding other fellows of the same level to have exchanges with, but now, the moment they encountered a fellow professional of the same level to converse with, their new lives were suddenly like heaven in comparison to their past.

Neither did they have to calculate risks here, nor did they have to worry about being sealed, and anything they wanted would be sent over immediately. Most importantly, once they were aware of the existence of everything else that was stronger than themselves in this world, the mentalities of Demon Phoenix and the others were gradually corrected.

"It's true that the effect is satisfactory, and it will also benefit our Black Water True Technique practitioners greatly," Garen nodded. "The Colourless Water's poison had completely fused into the effect of my previous poison, so the Black Water True Technique practitioners, from lower to higher levels, will be able to slowly use the Colourless Waters of different dilutions to train and cleanse themselves. They can use these poisons for their own benefit."

Poisons were another one of the Black Water True Technique's special killing methods, and would be able to get rid of one's enemies silently when mixed with activated poison mist, without having to worry about large-scale enemy attacks. Garen could foresee, perhaps in the near future, that these specialized poisons would become the strongest symbols Black Swamp Palace's strength.

"These poisons could trick the Totem Light's defense systems as they were originally harmless towards living creatures, but once it integrated with certain substances that grew inside the creature's body, it would form the most life-threatening and terrifying poison. This was a poison that grew inside living beings, and had no effect on inanimate objects," Phantom explained.

"Living creature poisons?" Garen nodded. "Since it's like this, my simple poisonous effects will be able to reach new heights." Originally, poisonous corrosion was only effective towards Spiritualized levels and below, but with this current poisonous mix, even Form 4's would fall victim to this if they were not on guard. Poisonous Spirit Light diffusions were no longer mere decorations.

"Demon Phoenix." Garen remembered something suddenly, and looked towards Demon Phoenix who was daydreaming.

"What?" This person came to her senses quickly.

"You can start preparing your Spirit Light. I'm thinking I'll need it in a short while." Garen instructed.

All existence that had undergone Spiritualization possessed their own special Spirit Light abilities, and Demon Phoenix's ability was demonizing puppets. Any creature that died within the range of her Spirit Light would stand up again, and after being corroded by her Demon Cloud, would become Demon Phoenix's puppet subordinates.

Unlike Garen's simple poison and corrosive Spirit Light, this Spirit Light possessed a terrifying effect that would become stronger as it was used, and this was especially apparent after the Demon Cloud Puppets were corroded, as their powers would be slightly stronger than before, therefore, although it could only corrode creatures that were Form 4 and below, it was still a frightening ability. This battle method seemed truly evil, and perhaps this was why no one knew the true reason the Great Sage sealed Demon Phoenix in the past.

"How long do you want the Spirit Light to be on standby?"

"Just keep it ready for now, since your Demon Cloud Spirit Light can be charged, wait until we reach our destination and look at the situation before making any moves. What is its longest continuous duration?" Garen asked carefully.

"It depends on the degree of its strength, if the puppets only need to return to their normal level before they died, it can be sustained for a week or so. If you want to strengthen them by fifty percent, they can only last for two consecutive days," answered Demon Phoenix honestly.

"Two days, then." After he spoke, Garen closed his eyes again.

Outside the borders between Daniela and Ender, inside a vast, primitive forest.

Large twisted trees formed long stretches of shade. Within the forest were many tall moss-covered boulders, stacked up against each other and of various sizes, tangled with the roots of the large trees.

Somewhere inside the forest, large greenish boulders and large thick tree roots intertwined with one another, forming a large, round arch, and within the shadows of the arch was a square stone door that was filled with rough old patterns.

A slender figure dressed in a dark green cloak stood beside the stone door with both of his arms wrapped around his chest, while the corner of a dark green longbow was exposed behind his back. His entire face was covered by a green hood, and the top half of his body was hidden within the shadows of the arch, making it difficult to see his face clearly. Only the dark green veil that he wore on his face could be seen, barely exposing two falcon-like green eyes.

The figure leaned against the left side of the stone door, waiting for something.

The noontime sun shone down from the sky, shining through the leaves and falling onto the floor of the forest, occasionally moving slowly while the faint winds blew.

On both sides outside the stone door, were two ashen toad creature stone carvings, both of which had large opened mouths and bulging eyes, as if they were about to spit something out in front of them. A spot of golden light fell on top of the left toad's head coincidentally.

As time passed, this spot of light moved slowly as well.

The dark green figure's eyes glared at the spot, as if he were judging the passing of time itself.

Whoosh!

Suddenly, the part of the forest near the front of the stone door was whooshed open by the wind.

At once, the light spot on the forest floor moved continuously, in a slightly chaotic manner. It resembled a sea of golden light spots that were moving.

Soon, the wind noises stopped, and another figure appeared in the forest suddenly. This figure was instead clad in a long red robe and wore a silver mask. Both his sleeves and the hem of his robe made it impossible to see his hands or feet, and his entire body seemed to be moving in the wind. As he floated towards the stone door slowly, only the constant crunching noise of the leaves under his feet confirmed that he was, indeed, walking with his feet.

"You've arrived this early?" The red robed man looked towards the green figure beside the stone door suspiciously, his low raspy voice spoke in perfect Daniela language.

"Just slightly earlier than you," answered the green figure faintly in a low, but clear and bright male voice with tones of coldness. "There's one more left."

"He should be on the way." The red robed man walked towards the toad stone sculpture beside the stone door, unable to stand still.

Both of them stopped speaking for awhile as the sky became lighter and the forest warmed up. A few tiny flying insects constantly flew in between both of them, trying to find some skin that they could suck blood from, but every time they crawled on their bodies, they would instantly be killed by an invisible

force, causing them to fall off at once. Soon, there was a small round pile of dead flying insect bodies below their feet.

Suddenly, the male green figure turned his head slowly, looking in the direction of the right side of the forest. On the empty land there, faint black mist had formed abruptly.

The black mist became thicker and thicker, and turned darker, before the entire forest became blurry.

Within the low visibility, a figure in black clothes walked out behind a tree trunk, taking large strides towards the two people outside the stone door.

"Looks like I'm slightly late, Cthulhu King." The black-clothed figure walked out of the black mist, with a similar black mask on his face, clad in a black shirt and long pants that clearly showed his muscular and well-built body, while a round silver buckle was used to fasten his black silk cloak, concealing every trace of his breath.

Chapter 520: World 2

"Nine-headed Snake?" The green figure that was leaning against the wall this whole time was now slightly surprised.

"This is our first time meeting each other, right? Divine God Palace Master." Garen's bright gold hair reflected blinding golden light under the sun, and his vision was focused accurately on the position of the green male figure.

His opponent looked agile and tranquil, as if he had become one with the forest. At first glance he resembled a regular forest ranger, and did not fit the title of Divine God Palace Master. He was once assumed to be an impressive force, an incomparably terrifying dictator-like character, but now, there was actually a huge difference between his true image and the one that had been visualized.

"Wasn't the original plan to get Phiroth?" Divine God Palace Master raised his eyebrows slightly while looking at Cthulhu King.

"Are you saying I'm not qualified?" A cold smile appeared on Garen's face behind his mask. Suddenly, both of his eyes seemed as if they had been dyed black by ink, completely turning into two pitch-black demon's eyes. Dark red mist drifted out from his body silently.

He took long strides and walked towards Divine God Palace Master, and every time he raised his feet, fragrant black smoke wafted out of the footprints that he left behind. The stones and tree branches on his footprints would melt into sticky black liquid in less than a second.

Every step he took would leave a black smoke footprint on the ground, and poisonous fumes would waft out of it slowly, like burning smoke.

"Enough." Divine God Palace Master narrowed his eyes and waved his right hand gently, before a green seed shot out, landing beside Garen's feet accurately. The seed seemed as if it had fallen into water, as it formed green ripples on the floor where it landed, before disappearing completely.

Garen was slightly shocked and turned his head, before noticing that his own poisonous footprints had suddenly disappeared completely, while the tree branches and stones that melted earlier had returned to their original states as well.

He narrowed his eyes slightly, as his mind had started to gain more knowledge about Divine God Palace Master's power. When he voluntarily released his poisons earlier, he was merely testing the waters, and did not expect that his opponent's previously unconcerned reaction would lead to him displaying a part of his powers.

Garen glanced at Cthulhu King who stood beside the stone carvings, before both of them exchanged glances quickly.

Cthulhu King was unable to defeat Divine God Palace Master, and thus he wanted him to form an alliance with him. He even let go of his grudge against Garen that spanned over ten thousand kilometers because of this. It was clear that Divine God Palace Master had left a deep impression on him.

"Alright, prepare to enter." Divine God Palace Master stood up immediately, and turned to walk towards the front of the stone door.

He stretched his hand out and pushed gently.

Ka-ka...

The stone door was pushed inwards easily, exposing a dark passage inside, while dust and a strong moldy smell wafted out.

Divine God Palace Master walked in without any hesitation, before his figure disappeared quickly.

Cthulhu King followed behind quickly, while Garen turned his head and scanned his surroundings, as the last person to walk into the stone door.

Behind the door was a dark, black hall. It was square, and there was a deep square pit in the middle of it, with by a seven-or-eight meter tall ashen stone sculpture inside.

The stone sculpture depicted a beautiful girl in chiffon garments, with loose long hair, posing with both her hands carrying something, but the strangest part, was that an extra eye had been carved on her forehead.

White mist wafted inside the hall, mixing with the dust, and making everything blurry.

The three people entered the ruins together, before the stone door closed itself behind them slowly.

Standing in front of the large stone sculpture, Divine God Palace Master turned around to face both of the others.

"According to the previous exploration, the Living Secret Technique should be located at the bottom of the third level of the ruins. However, we weren't able to find the right method to enter the second level last time."

"Why can't we just use force to break through and enter the ruins?" Garen interrupted and asked.

"This place imprisons all forms of extraordinary force. But you can try," replied Cthulhu King simply.

Garen's expression darkened slightly, as he reached his hand out, laid his palm flat, before the Black Water True Technique's water vapor mobilization ability started flowing suddenly.

But his palm did not move at all.

"No wonder this place was well preserved..." He could not help but laugh softly, and did not question any further.

Divine God Palace Master remained indifferent, and continued speaking. "The way to enter the second level is to secure all three stone switches at the same time, not allowing any of them to close up again. The three of us will concentrate on one switch each, as the switches require sufficient amounts of fused Form 5 powers."

He stopped speaking and looked at Cthulhu King.

The latter nodded, removed a black fibrous paper scroll from his arms, opening it slowly, exposing a pitch-black sheet completely devoid of anything else. But as it was opened, white coordinate dots floated up and slowly appeared on the paper. These coordinates began to move, clearly forming multiple white lines, before a complete map was quickly drawn on the paper.

Cthulhu King waited until the coordinates had almost disappeared once they had finished drawing before passing the map to Garen, while the latter glanced across it carefully, then passing it to Divine God Palace Master.

"The terrain here changes on its own every time, but this map originated from this place, thus it is able to sense the changes and form a corresponding map automatically every time it enters. Therefore, we need to remember the new map everytime we enter," explained Cthulhu King.

"There are three roads, and because the terrain here is extremely vast, according to my estimations, the entire first level of the ruins probably has an area of over ten thousand square kilometers, moreover we can only enter the ruins through the entrance, and if we were to dig underground from the outside, it would be impossible for us to find the existence of the underground palace." Cthulhu King had obviously

done a sufficient amount of investigative work. "Therefore each of the three roads will require a certain amount of time, in order to avoid any risks."

He immediately took out three blood red button-like things, each of which had been engraved with maggot-sized red symbols.

He distributed the little things to the other two, giving one to each of them.

"Divine God Palace Master has used this before, so I won't say too much." He looked at Garen immediately. "This is the only tool that will not be imprisoned that I managed to find after searching for a long time in the outside world. Its functions are very simple, and there's only one: color changing. Once you've reached a switch point, and you've opened it, please press this button five times consecutively within two seconds, so that a green road will appear automatically. A green road will also appear from our own buttons as well. Similarly, once our switches have been activated, just like before, you will be able to see our progress through this thing."

"Within ten days, if we find the switches successfully, we should be able to enter the second level. The dangers on the first level have been cleared completely, and should not be an obstacle," Divine God Palace Master interrupted and said. "Let's go."

He was the first one to walk towards the only pitch-black passage in front of the hall.

Garen and Cthulhu King followed behind him closely, and all three of their figures completely disappeared in the darkness.

Time passed day by day...

Due to Cthulhu King's absence and the shrinking of the Cthulhuism Society's forces on all fronts, the conflict between Daniela's royal family and Obscuro Society grew fiercer. The support of the Royal Alliance of Luminarists became stronger as well.

No one anticipated Obscuro Society's fearsome tenacity that led to the formation of Totem seas, made up of many Silver Totems constantly battling against Daniela's armies, killing them.

High level individuals from both sides suffered serious injuries. These were unavoidable casualties of war, and would continue until the war was over.

On the fifth day after Garen entered the ruins.

Obscuro Society's terrifying powers finally broke out, and Hellgate attacked personally, causing two of Daniela's largest core armies to collapse immediately, while the allied forces of the three territories slaughtered countless army generals before pressing forward to the Ancestral God Grounds.

All of Daniela's strength collapsed completely at once.

The War of Destinies has begun.

On top of the tall Ancestral God Tree, Phiroth stood on the largest branch, looking at the black shadow that floated in the sky from afar. That was Hellgate's Secret Technique illusion. The large, black robed that resembled the God of Death, held a decaying red sickle in its hand that looked as if it would break any moment. It was actually a terrifying weapon of war that had destroyed countless armies, and more than ten thousand allied troops within three days.

Countless transparent bubbles flew around the Ancestral God Tree, but no one was inside anymore.

The battle between the two strongest people from each faction had already eliminated everyone else, leaving only the both of them.

The winner would live, the loser would die.

Nothing more.

The evening sky was dyed red and gold by the sunset. Countless clouds resembled waves that floated their merry way along.

Phiroth looked up at the sky.

"Really, I haven't seen a sunset like this in so long..." Traces of a smile formed at the corners of his mouth.

"How unfortunate, just give me a little more time..."

Boom!!

The sky darkened immediately, as countless dark clouds gathered over. The sky turned from golden-red to black, almost as black as the dark, nighttime sky.

The countless rolling clouds soon resembled boiling water that bubbled up continuously.

Phiroth straightened his body and waved his right hand in the empty space, before a dark green, three-pronged pitchfork appeared in his hand.

All of the Ancestral God Trees on the Ancestral God Grounds lit up, as if they were stars that were suddenly illuminated.

Boom!

Green light gathered below his feet into a pillar of light that shot upwards, piercing through the sky.

The rays of green light gathered and formed an incomparably large, green human-like figure that also held a three-pronged pitchfork in its hand. Its thousand meters tall body resembled the giants from the ancient legends.

"Only one can be the strongest!"

Phiroth could not help but laugh maniacally, even though fresh blood was constantly gushing out of his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth.

Kachak!!

A lightning bolt flashed past, before the giant human figure raised its three-pronged pitchfork suddenly, piercing it towards the sky.

Kachak!

A crunching noise could be heard, and somewhere in Daniela's deep underground area, a young man fell on the ground, choking with sobs while looking at the Life Gem that had cracked open in front of him.

Singing noises could be heard floating down from the sky occasionally.

"~~ Faraway dreams, when will you let me awaken. O' king, forget all your dreams, when will you finally awaken... There was never a time, when the sky looked so pretty. There was never a time, when your eyes looked at me with such happiness..."

Within the ruins.

Garen's body jolted suddenly. He raised his head, as if he had heard that singing noise. The senses from the Seed of the Ancestral God allowed him to see Daniela's final scene.

The Ancestral God Grounds turned into a bottomless, pitch-black abyss-like crack.

Daniela's First Concubine was holding Phiroth's corpse, her silk garments resembling the wings of a butterfly as she leapt into the abyss.

"Daniela, gone."

Garen closed his eyes.

At the same time, the two other people inside the ruins stopped in their tracks as well. The songs that transcended everything accompanied the collapse of the Ancestral God's powers, spreading out towards every corner of the entire East Continent.

Following Phiroth's death in battle, the Ancestral God Grounds' destruction was complete, and the previous Ancestral Gods ceased to exist along with it. The gloomy shadows that originated from Hellgate hung like dark clouds, covering the skies of the whole world.