

Mystical 681

Chapter 681: Obtain 1

"How strong is an army level individual?"

Garen asked as he walked out of the secret chamber.

'You were close to an army level when you activated your fifth star...' Black Sethe pondered for a moment before responding.

"Then why is there the need to learn the Peacock Technique?" Garen casually put on the shirt on the hanger by the door.

It was already night time outside.

The silver moonlight shone through the window and settled on his face.

'Secret Technique isn't just strength,' Black Sethe muttered.

"That's because that strength isn't powerful enough," Garen rebutted.

Black Sethe went silent. Recently she'd been reacting strangely and would keep quiet instead of speaking up.

However, Garen understood that the illusion created by his overwhelming increment in strength, the feeling of being able to force everything to go his way was nothing but an illusion of the strength that overflowed from his body.

His current limit was still thirty points. This wasn't just because of the genetic limitation, it was his soul limit as well.

A weak and fragile soul would not be able to handle a powerful body. Similarly, a weak body would not be able to contain a powerful soul.

A weak soul would be easily affected by the status of the physical body. One would most likely lose oneself and become a beast. On the other hand, a weak physical body would not be able to contain a powerful soul. If one were to fully utilize the strength of the soul, one would die as due to the overexertion of one's body.

"I can only reach the limit of a human by purely increasing the strength of my physical body. I still sleep, need oxygen to breathe and these are all my disadvantages. By practicing Secret Techniques, I can mimic other advanced beings and obtain their advantages so that I could completely eliminate any weaknesses that I have."

Garen had finally woken up from his obsession with strength and he suddenly felt that his body had become taller and stronger. After activating the fifth star, his body was affected by the potential points once more and had become even stronger. Perhaps this was the aftermath of achieving ten points in Vitality as well.

Just as he'd upgraded himself, a battle arrived at his doorstep. Under these circumstances, Nadia was easily defeated by him.

Perhaps this was due to the masks' suppression on Nadia, which prevented her strength from reaching the limit of thirty points of strength. For her to go against Garen who had thirty points, she was completely oppressed and Garen managed to win the fight with a decisive punch.

He gently touched his forehead where he'd been struck by Nadia's Ominous Space Path. The Ominous Space Path's unique feature was that she would counter the attack without fail if he were to attack her.

Garen was blocking the opponent's huge sword but his forehead had been slashed by it. However, as he was in the fifth-star state which allowed him to possess the upper limit of strength, his whole body was as tough as an alloy or even better.

It was because of this that he was able to withstand that slash.

"How can I defend against such an attack...?" Garen stood under the moonlight as he pondered.

"There are three ways. Firstly, I should not let her have the opportunity or time to draw her sword at all, then this technique would be useless against me. However, that's impossible. Traitors are a subset of Void Creatures and they can appear at any moment. No one would be able to predict when they will appear or disappear."

Garen walked towards the window and opened it to allow the cold night air to enter the stuffy room.

"The second approach is to decrypt the mystery of this technique and find a way to counter it. There is no perfect technique in every world but this is something I'm not able to do at the moment." Garen shook his head as the Ominous Space Path was the strongest technique he'd ever seen. To be able to counter-attack while being attacked and attack through spacetime. All the mystery was packed in that instant and his five senses weren't able to process everything in that instant. Hence he wasn't able to understand its mystery.

"Then the third approach would be distraction..." Garen reached out his hand and looked at his ashen palm.

Fantasy Fist was a horrifying fist technique that would misguide the opponent's target. If he could use it against all living beings...

This fist technique could be used on humans as its principle was to affect and oppress the nerves in the brain. If he could find a way to extend this effect to the soul, perhaps he could lift the original limit to beyond living beings.

However, he didn't possess the knowledge to modify the technique at the moment, as he was too unfamiliar with the nature of the Void Creatures.

If this were to be completed, he would be able to distract Nadia's power and misguide her to attack other places or even other targets. This was distraction.

After thinking of ways to counter her technique and not achieving anything, Garen looked back at his Attribute Pane.

He had 234 potential points remaining and it would have very little effects if he were to use it on his attributes as he couldn't exceed that thirty points limit no matter what. He should use it for other stuff.

He had a few options. He could add them to the Secret Technique but he was unable to increase the core of the Hellfrost Peacock Technique and he would most likely encounter the same situation if he were to change to another Living Secret Technique.

He could use it for what he had been doing all these while, which was to recover his injuries to prevent any incidents.

Another option was to focus on one attribute point. When it reached a certain height, a unique feature would appear.

For example, when his intelligence reached twelve points in the Totem World, it had the effect of Double Critical Attack. It wasn't a strength that could be achieved by using the Seven Star Life's Secret Point. He would need to possess such characteristics in order to achieve it.

With the Double Critical Attack, he would produce twice the amount of strength with his fists. What seemed to be a single fist would have the strength of two fists superimposed onto each other. It was the effect of disrupting the nervous system at a high level.

That was the first time he'd obtained an ability from his attribute. Even when other attributes had reached twenty points, he didn't obtain anything at all. Up until now, he knew that twelve points of intelligence would give him an ability.

After pondering for awhile, he chose to increase his Intelligence.

He focused his gaze on Intelligence and it immediately jumped from seven points.

It reached eight points at the cost of 20 potential points. Sixty potential points to reach 9 points and another sixty potential points to reach 10 points.

Once the Intelligence had reached 10 points, he had spent 140 potential points, leaving behind 94 points. Once the attribute had reached ten points, it would require a hundred potential point to increase it, but he currently had only 94 points.

"I need more potential points," Garen had completely absorbed the potential points from all four masks that he had obtained and he wasn't sure how long it would take for him to slowly recover. However, he could immediately obtain a mask from Halo and it might be able to push his Intelligence to 12 points, which would give him the Double Critical Attack effect.

With that, his strength would be improved greatly.

After a few days. It was a sunny day.

The water of a fountain kept flowing down like a multi-layered cake. It was like a three-tiered mini waterfall.

There were two small metal birds playing around on top of the fountain. It was very life-like.

"The item is underneath there and we can't get any closer than this." Allen Hill's face was pale as he stood in front of Garen and Rod, pointing at a huge tree in the forest.

The tree was black, had no leaves and there were countless thin vines coming down to the ground around it like a banyan tree. The tree was slanted slightly to the left as if it was about to topple over.

Three of them stood inside Halo's secret garden, looking at the mysterious cannibal tree in front of them.

"The cannibal tree possesses a strong attack and it is very poisonous. Our people will be attacked by the vines if they get close to it and none of us are capable of resisting the poison," Allen Hill explained.

"How about your protective suit?" Rod frowned.

"It's no use. Except for killing the tree from afar to obtain the mask, we've tried everything and failed. Unless it is a very thick protective suit made out of a unique material, it would be eroded within a very short amount of time," Allen Hill glanced at Garen, waiting for him to suggest something.

"I've promised you before that we will obtain the mask without killing the cannibal tree..." Rod smiled wryly as he looked at Garen eagerly. Frankly speaking, it was Garen who agreed to it instead of him. In order to save time, avoid any unnecessary trouble and create more enemies, Garen chose a conservative solution which both parties agreed: To obtain the mask without killing the cannibal tree.

Allen had agreed to bring them to where the cannibal tree was after Rod's vouch. Deep down, he knew that even if he were to reject him, he wouldn't be able to stop Garen anyway, so he agreed in order to look like the bigger person.

"You guys can think of the way. We're helpless from this point on," He retreated to one side and looked at them. He had already prepared himself that the cannibal tree would be killed. He wouldn't dare to push this issue onto Garen so naturally, Rod would be blamed for this. You could say that he had already hated Rod.

"I'll go for it," Garen was in a black stretch vest and exquisite black leather jeans, contouring his streamlined legs.

He glanced at Allen Hill as he grabbed and cracked both of his hands and exercised his shoulders before walking towards the cannibal tree which was a distance away.

It was morning and the weather wasn't that hot yet as the sun was only half the way up. Only a small ray shone onto the garden, landing onto Garen's right side and the ground, which made the grass greener than usual.

What made is strange was that with the cannibal tree as the epicenter, there were no other green plants within tens of meters in diameter. Only black dirt and white bones were present.

As the breeze blew, it couldn't be confirmed if it was the breeze that had made the cannibal tree's vines moved or it had started to move on its own.

Suddenly, it was as if the tree felt threatened that it had started to vibrate.

'Wait!' Black Sethe's voice suddenly appeared.

Garen stopped and stood still. "What's wrong?" He frowned slightly. No matter if it was a cannibal tree, it was just a big tree.

'This tree feels very strange after being affected by the mask,' Black Sethe didn't know what exactly was happening as well, 'Be careful.'

The few people behind Garen was staring tightly at him. Although they didn't understand why he stopped moving, Rod and Allen Hill had their own thoughts as they stared at Garen, waiting for him to get near to the cannibal tree.

Garen, who had stopped moving, started to move once more.

Suddenly, his vision went blurry and the sky turned dim all of the sudden. The guards nearby had disappeared as well.

Garen frowned as he felt an intense headache.

He turned his head around and realized that Rod and Allen Hill had disappeared. He was the only one left in the garden.

He turned back and he could faintly see a girl in white dress peeking at him around the big tree.

The girl's face couldn't be seen clearly as most of her face was blocked by the vines. Only one of her eyes and long black hair could be seen. Her eye was huge and didn't blink at all.

Unknowingly, the sky was filled with dark clouds and it was now incredibly cloudy.

"It's the Dream World," Garen was very familiar with the sensation as he often entered into this realm. This allowed him to detect the abnormalities around him. He believed that he had been hypnotized by the cannibal tree and had entered the dream world. It seemed that the mask's effect had made this tree rather strange.

He looked at the girl by the tree as he took a few steps to the left, trying to see the woman's face clearly.

However, the girl kept revealing only half of his face. As he moved, the girl moved as well.

"What a boring game," Garen smiled coldly as he walked towards the cannibal tree.

The distance was getting shorter and shorter. Ten meters, nine meters, eight, seven, six, five...

Immediately, Garen stopped.

Chapter 682: Obtain 2

He raised his arm and to his surprise, he saw lines of worms crawling beneath his skin.

The lines were squirming slowly between his skin and muscle, like fishes swimming in water. It seemed like some sort of a worm.

"Is this an illusion?" Garen closed his eyes and opened them once more and saw that the lines in his hands had disappeared.

He continued walking towards the cannibal tree and the vines nearby started to move. They were so dense it looked like a person's hair.

Sizzle...

Countless vines gathered together and swiftly knitted many black butterflies which spanned several meters wide.

The butterflies fluttered their wings gently as they pulled at the black vines and floated before Garen.

Cling!

Suddenly, thin gaps were opened in the middle of the butterflies' bodies, as if they had opened hidden mouths.

Slash!!

Garen shoved his hands deep into the mouth of a butterfly and tore it into halves with his hands.

"Don't you have anything that's more powerful? Bring it on," Garen smiled coldly as he prowled towards the Cannibal Tree.

That girl appeared once more and stared at Garen from the left side of the tree with one of her eyes.

Garen reached out his hand and tried to grab the woman's face but to no avail. He was stunned, as he didn't expect to fail at capturing her with his speed.

"It's time to end this game," he raised up his right hand. His hand started to swell and his skin immediately turned black green, giving off a metal like sheen; he had activated the first star.

He aimed at the cannibal tree and grabbed it with all his might.

Ahh!!!

A loud cry could be heard.

Garen's vision turned blurry as he pierced through the cannibal tree's trunk with his right hand under the neutral scream.

When he regained consciousness, he was already standing in front of the big tree. The sky was bright and he could hear the voice of Rod, Allen Hill and the guards behind him.

His right hand was pierced deep into the tree trunk. Fresh blood was slowly flowing out of the tree trunk.

Plop...

Garen took out his hand, lowered his head and looked beneath his foot.

The soil opened up automatically, revealing a part of the black mask.

He crouched down and tugged the mask out with all of his strength. The familiar cool aura immediately flowed into his hands. It was the Potential Points.

'You killed an invisible creature,' Black Sethe finally spoke, 'However, this invisible creature doesn't seem to possess any strength. Other than the cannibal tree's corrosive and poisonous characteristics, it only possesses a little bit of illusive capability. To you, it may be nothing, but for others, it is an incredibly threatening being.'

Garen finally understood what had happened. The invisible creature existed in a world that no humans could see. Hence he had a hard time understanding their existence.

He then quickly returned to where Rod and the others were. Both of them stared at him as if they'd seen a ghost.

"I've got the mask," Garen waved the mask in his hand, "Why are you guys staring me like that?"

Rod pointed at Garen's shoulder. His finger was slightly trembling as if he had seen something horrifying.

Garen lowered his head and saw a worm-like thin line squirming in his shoulder's skin. It looked like a living being that kept squirming in his left shoulder.

'It's the curse of the invisible creature,' Black Sethe explained at the right time, 'Some of the invisible creatures will cast a curse upon those who offended them. However, in your case, you just need to purify it with the Void Core and you'll be fine. Even so, it's something terrifying for commoners. These thin lines are called Gluttony. They will first keep eating your muscles and then drill into your organs until you die.'

Understanding the whole situation, Garen took out a small piece of black Void Core and gently pressed it onto the thin line.

Green smoke started to appear.

Sizzle...

The thin line gave off some smoke and soon the pieces disappeared as if it had been absorbed into his body.

"This item looks very strange. It looks like some sort of parasite!" Rod finally gave a sigh of relief.

"Let's go," Garen held onto the mask as he walked out of the garden.

Rod followed behind closely.

Allen Hill, who was behind him, stared at him with a complicated gaze. Garen had done it. He had obtained the mask without killing the cannibal tree. It seemed that he didn't actually dig it out but that the cannibal tree had given it to him on itself.

He turned around and looked at the cannibal tree. It looked spiritless and seemed to be heavily injured, but it was much better than being toppled over.

"What's the status on Kenna and Cole?" he whispered to Mole, who had just approached him.

"We haven't captured them yet, but I fear that they're still looking for opportunities. It's definitely them who leaked out the news for the Nighthawk King to come here all of the sudden." Mole whispered. They were quite lucky this time. If not for Rod who acted as a connection, the Nighthawk King might have forced things to go his way and Halo's losses would have been great.

"Are you sure Kenna and Cole are not related to the Nighthawk King in any way?" Allen Hill whispered.

"I've done my research. Kenna was almost killed by the Nighthawk King once in Africa. For unknown reasons, he'd decided to let him live," Mole replied confidently as intel and tracking were his forte.

"Then we will kill them! I'll lead the way!" Allen Hill had decided to divert his vengeance onto them. Not only had he sustained internal injuries from Garen, his precious cannibal tree was injured as well. Furthermore, the mask underneath it had been taken away by force. To add insult to injury, he had to cooperate throughout the process instead of fighting back. This angered him to his limit.

Garen who had walked far away then shifted away his focus as he smirked.

He didn't care about Kenna's objective of using him. As long as he'd achieved his own objective, it was enough for him. It didn't concern him in the least whether Kenna was alive or not.

Time flew and one month had passed by in a blink of an eye. Germany's weather had gotten colder as it entered winter in November.

White snow blanketed the Berlin suburbs. The mask Garen obtained from the cannibal tree only possessed eighty plus points, which wasn't a lot. It seemed that the cannibal tree was absorbing this energy as well and had used up most of the potential points, hence it didn't have much left.

Eighty-two points had been added to the ninety-four points that he had and in total, he now had 176 points. This was enough for him to add one point to Intelligence, achieving 11 points.

After reaching ten points, each attribute would require an astronomical amount of potential points to increase it. One attribute point would require one hundred potential points. It would be easy if it was in the Totem world but in this world, it was extremely tedious.

Garen had no choice but to start searching for the location of the next mask after he used up the potential points. Fortunately, the fifth mask that he had obtained from the cannibal tree had a rather good suppression effect on the dragon-shaped coin after its magnetic waves were superimposed onto it along with the other masks. The frequency of Nadia's attacks had been greatly reduced and her strength was temporarily weakened. However, Nadia soon started to use a different method and was closing in on Garen once more. Her strength had improved and this forced Garen to search for the location of the new mask.

According to the intel provided by Rod, the sixth mask was located in the Global Forest Belt - Memphis Forest.

The Memphis Forest was an area unique to this world. It was like a green belt encircling the planet, spreading into the endless horizon. Rumor had it that the mask was located at the edge of a moon river. A moon river was a river which was shaped like a crescent moon and there were at least ten of them in the Memphis Forest.

As he was about to move out to Memphis Forest, news regarding the Lotus Pearl had arrived.

Rod had negotiated with the Primary Colors and they'd decided to give up on Lotus Pearl, and with Seasnake and Seal's help, they'd finally killed their target in one of New Zealand's ports.

Squeak... Squeak...

At the outskirts of Berlin on a small road, the thick white snow was trampled upon, creating a crisp crunch.

A man in a grey coat was walking on a road that had yet to be plowed as he puffed out small clouds of breath through his mouth.

On his right, there were tall grey villas and on his left was a densely packed snowy pine forest. Traces of black dirt could be seen underneath the white snow. The snowy road in front of him led to an unknown location and behind him was a road and a small entrance connecting to it. By the entrance, one could see a black jeep parked there.

This man was holding a black bag. He walked forth, turned left and entered the stairs of one of the villas, before pressing the doorbell lightly.

Ring~~~

The doorbell kept ringing.

After a while, the door opened with a click. A middle-aged female servant who looked rather sincere and honest opened the door. She nodded her head, gestured him to enter and didn't say a word at all.

The guy seemed to know who this female servant was.

"Thank you, Marquilli," he carried his bag in before taking off his coat and hood, revealing his shiny bald head as he passed the coat to the servant.

With one hand holding onto the bulging bag, he changed his shoes and headed directly to the second floor.

As he stepped onto the black wooden flooring upstairs, he walked straight towards the room on the right and gently knocked on its door.

"Please enter," a man's voice could be heard from the inside.

The man opened the door and saw a handsome golden haired man sitting inside. He had been about to put down his phone and glanced at him sideways. From his angle, he could faintly see the information on the phone's screen.

It seemed like a conversation between him and his family.

The seated golden-haired man was still smiling gently.

"I've brought the items," he immediately diverted his gaze as he didn't dare to peek further.

"Alright, it's the deal with Seasnake's subordinate, right?" the golden-haired man was Garen, who had been stationed in Berlin for quite a while. He'd practically stopped going to university and had invested his full attention in obtaining the masks. His explanation to his family was that he had opened a company on his own and university was of little use to him. He just needed it to obtain the certificate.

Garen had looked through the course of Gullivier University and he had already submitted his thesis and research reports. As long as he passed, the university didn't care what he was doing with his life.

Baldy placed the black bag on the table in front of Garen.

He opened the zip and took out a black plastic from it. He then unwrapped the plastic as he placed it on the table.

A faint musky odor slowly diffused around the room.

Within the bag was a human head.

"This is Lotus Pearl, representing Mr. Rod's sincerity," Baldy stuttered as he spoke softly.

Chapter 683: Search 1

"Lotus Pearl..." Garen put down his phone, staring at the forehead of the girl's head that had been placed on the table with her eyes wide open.

This girl's appearance was extremely hideous, with a huge sarcoma growing on her right cheekbone, and due to the lack of blood circulation, her face was excessively pale. Her eyes were very small, and there was still a hint of the ruthlessness from when she was still alive.

Stretching out his hand, Garen lightly caressed Lotus Pearl's cheeks. They were soft, almost indistinguishable from a real human's.

"Bury it in front of Jay's grave."

"Understood," the baldy nodded, then wrapped the head back up before leaving.

Garen rested his chin with one hand and knocked on the table with the other.

Knock knock knock.

Almost immediately a bell could be heard from outside the door, and the mute maid Marquilli opened the door, pushing in a white service cart. The cart was covered with a white piece of cloth and was emitting a mouthwatering aroma. All the dishes had been recreated from Garen's memory, made by the gourmet chefs handpicked by Garen himself and the dishes were specially made just for Garen in his favorite oriental style.

Following behind the service cart, a black-haired girl walked in. The girl was wearing a black latex bodysuit, had smooth and silky shoulder-length hair, and a pretty face. She was the female leader of the Primary Colours team, who had led the way for Garen from before.

Underneath her disguise, she was actually a young girl who was not even 20 years old.

After she'd brought Garen to the White Phoenix base, allowing Garen to destroy it, the Primary Colours put a bounty on her head. Hence, she didn't dare to go anywhere else and had no other choice but to stay with Garen. Ironically, the most dangerous location had now become the safest for her.

The hostility between the Primary Colours and the Nighthawks was mainly due to the conflict between Gremlin and Garen. However, after the merger between Garen and the Rexott Group, the Nighthawks have become a monstrous force on the same level with the Primary Colors, which put a lot of pressure on them, especially since Rod's brother was an influential member in the top ranks of the Rexott Group.

The Primary Colours had internal factionalism, as Gremlin's strength was growing increasingly isolated, it became much safer to stay by Garen's side.

"Simone, how's it going?" Garen smiled at this young chief. Although she was only 19 years old, she had been one of the Primary Colour's top elite reserve members.

"What do you mean 'How's it going'?" Simone sat in the chair placed in front of Garen's table, "Those kids you have to train have already arrived outside, when are you going to go and meet them?"

"There's no rush," Garen shook his head, "So, what are your plans?" Simone was one of the elites picked out by the Primary Colours, meaning that her talent and foundation was not something other average humans could replicate. Luring this kind of talent to his side, it was perfect for an assistant and a successor. Since Jay's death, Garen had started to feel the void of not having an assistant.

"My plans?" Simone was taken by surprise with that question. She didn't have parents and had been raised by her aunt since she was young, and her step-brother was a drug lord so their relationship wasn't close. In the Primary Colours, everyone suppressed their emotions so there weren't many friendships, and she only had a friend in London. After considering all of this, she didn't have any good locations to take shelter in and therefore had chosen to stay by Garen's side.

"If you don't have any plans, why not just stay here and train with me?" Garen raised his arms into a fighting stance while smiling at her, "Your innate talent is great. As long as you manage to control it, you'll gain access to that hidden strength."

Simone stared at Garen, almost as if his two hands were glowing, giving off a warm, mesmerizing halo that held her full attention.

"You're trying to manipulate me again!!!" she tried her hardest to look away, but she couldn't take her eyes off of him.

"This isn't manipulation," Garen murmured tenderly, "I'm only trying to help you make a decision."

Simone started losing all strength in her body and her mind was getting a bit hazy. After a while, she passed out.

The maid at the side was looking on with a weird look, though she still continued to place the dishes on the table. She could not understand the language and the accent the two were conversing in.

Garen had a habit of eating in the reading room, one that he'd had for a long time.

"Carry Ms. Simone out for some rest," Garen ordered.

Marquilli nodded, then propped Simone on her shoulder and walked out of the room.

Garen was once again alone in the room.

Everything was going according to plan. Most importantly, the suppression of the Nine-Headed King Nadia was starting to have an effect; the masks were proven to have a suppressing effect on his coordinates. Unfortunately, either the coin's strength was too great or the mask mimics' strength was too weak; after Nadia started to get used to it, her strength had slowly been returning and she was slowly becoming stronger again. These days, the continuous confrontations with her and her suppression had put him in an unfavorable position.

'You need to find the remaining masks,' Black Sethe's voice started ringing, 'At the same time, you need to finish the Demonic Book as soon as possible as it may be able to construct your second soul seed. Once your second soul seed has been constructed, you might be able to break through your current strength limit, reaching an even higher level. Remember, no matter what, your soul is your foundation.'

"This I understand, the two must be done at the same time," Garen answered softly while starting on his meal. Beef strips with gravy, steamed minced meat, stir-fried potato floss, braised eggplants...

All these dishes made Garen feel as if he was back on Earth. Every time he has meals like this, he would always get this strange mixture of familiarity and unfamiliarity.

Outside the window, it seemed that it has started to snow again, although it was almost completely silent, Garen could make out the sounds of the snow landing on the pavement on the road outside.

He looked out the window at the white, bubble-like snow was slowly drifting down towards the earth.

In the blink of an eye, more than 20 years have passed while living in this world, a world where Blood Breeds, Witches, and technology could coexist. The threat of void creatures was slowly approaching, complicating the overall situation of this world.

After silently finishing his meal, Garen had the maid clean up. He sat in the room for a bit more before slowly getting up and walking out of the room, up to a pure white wall on the same floor. He then lightly tapped it a few times.

Bam!

The wall started to move to the left, creating a doorway into a dark, hidden room.

Closing the room door, Garen turned on the light, illuminating his surroundings.

He walked up to the wall at the other end of the room and lightly pressed his palm on the wall, which started to vibrate.

Abruptly, a hidden drawer compartment sprung out from the wall.

Inside the compartment lay the Demonic Book and the dragon-shaped coin placed under the mask.

The Demonic Book was placed on top, and while the paper quality was obviously average material, it seemed to have been corrupted by his soul's aura when he was writing. The entire Demonic Book now appeared to have the texture of human skin, almost as if it was made from human skin itself.

Grabbing the pen sandwiched between the pages of the book, Garen walked back to his reading room and closed the door. He started to flip through all the things he had written down up till now.

Two-Faced Waterbird Fist, Shooting Shadow Secret Technique, Fantasy Fist, Slaughtering Hand...

He'd only just started writing on Slaughtering Hand; after all, this was a demonic technique from Black Sethe that even he had not fully mastered. When he was writing, he only wrote down the parts which he had a mastery of, something like a categorization of his self-understanding and knowledge system.

'Write down the secret techniques from your dark side, and by combining them and creating one true core, that will be the demonic technique seed, one that is most appropriate for you. Once you manage to master this created demonic technique, you'll most likely be able to construct your second soul seed,' Black Sethe uttered in a low tone. Recently, he sounded more and more silent, didn't talk much and would constantly cut straight to the point.

"This is a process for removing all impurities," Garen nodded.

He picked up his pen and started jotting down his knowledge on the Slaughtering Hand.

As the clock continued to tick, two hours passed quickly and Garen's notes were more or less completed; he'd finished recording down the way to train and develop the Slaughtering Hand and his own understanding on the technique.

Just as he finished writing his last statement, he felt as if the entire Demonic Book has transformed into a beating heart.

Lub-dub!

It was almost as though the entire room was beating along with it, making even Garen feel like his heartbeat was being affected by it. He felt as if at that moment, his heartbeat has synchronized with the Demonic Book.

He closed his eyes, and the Demonic Book within his mind seemed to have done the same. As the remaining vibrations slowly dispersed, the two covers of the Two Demonic Books started to emit a dark aura.

Garen decided to record all of his secret techniques from his dark side as well.

He started to cautiously count the amount of dark side secret techniques he had trained before in the past.

One of the most invincible evil techniques from his past life suddenly popped up in his mind.

"Northern Trident Frost-Fire True Water Evil Technique..."

Picking up his pen once more, Garen wrote the name of this technique into it. As soon as he finished writing, the Demonic Book seemed to start glowing blue, the blue of glacial ice.

Crash!

A vase was shattered on the floor.

Gremlin's face was lined with veins. As he gulped in deep breaths, his throat was quivering constantly, and he looked so furious that he almost looked deranged.

In a golden room illuminated by numerous lantern lights, two of his underlings were standing right in front of him. Despite being suavely dressed in suits, the two were sweating bullets; their foreheads were completely soaked in sweat as they both bowed down, not moving a muscle.

"Lotus Pearl died?! I just had a call with her less than half a day ago and now you guys are telling me she died?" Gremlin did not suppress a single iota of his rage.

Lotus Pearl was one of his best soldiers, and despite weird personality, her talents as an assassin were one of the best. Even when compared to others, her skills would be considered unparalleled.

But now, she'd died...

It felt like a fire was scorching his heart.

"Garen... Thomas!!" he roared in fury.

"Team leader... The top has sent down a notice, do not clash with the Nighthawks anymore..." one of the underlings stated, cautiously choosing his words.

"Scram!!"

Gremlin lashed out in a fit of rage.

With a loud slap, this underling was knocked to the floor, and he scrambled out of the room while holding his cheek in pain.

"Do you think I'm out of ideas just because you kissed up to Rexott?" Gremlin chuckled with a manic expression.

Chapter 684: Search 2

Lotus Pearl's death had dealt a large blow to him. She'd been one of the spec-ops soldiers on him and his father's side, and she could even be considered the top-ranked in terms of strength in the group. She had been so easily defeated by the enemy. Even if the assailant were Rexott's Seasnake and Seal, it was obvious that Rexott was helping the Nighthawks. The brother of Rod, Garen's friend, was a member of the most feared groups in Rexott, the Big Four, more commonly known as the Four Shadows. Rod's

brother was the head of the Four Shadows, and if they were compared to Titan in the Primary Colours, the two were at the same level. They've clashed numerous times in the past, but both were always on par with each other. Against this kind of monstrous existence, Gremlin had no way of countering against it. Unless his father personally joined the fray, there would not be anyone from the group willing to clash with them just for the sake of his family's influence.

Looking at the last underling.

Gremlin forcefully suppressed his rage.

"What is the Nighthawk King doing now?"

"According to our reports, his and Rod's side are currently searching for the Mask of Sleepless Faces from the legends. On the surface, it is said to be because Garen likes to collect these types of antiques, but we think he may have other hidden intentions," the underling answered quickly.

"The Mask of the Sleepless Faces?" Gremlin repeated softly, "According to the legends, there are certain types of mysterious antiques that were said to have some sort of special power, and that kind of power can allow one to achieve superhuman abilities. Is that true?"

"According to our investigation, they most likely have some sort of use for them, but this information was mainly leaked from the Men in Black that recently left after seeing the Nighthawks' new high ranks and it hasn't been proven yet. We also have not developed a fundamental concrete judgment standard for these antiques and relics as of yet," the underling answered, seeing as his boss' mood was slightly improved, he added one more line, "Should we initiate a more practical investigation? If the Nighthawk King is so passionate about this, there must be some correlation."

"Do it, also try to investigate the secrets under Nighthawks' control, whatever they call secret techniques or secret methods. It would become valuable information if we manage to get it in our hands. We cannot let this leak to the public." as Gremlin thought about all the mysterious methods used by the Nighthawks, he started to feel furious again. A way to allow normal humans to achieve the ultimate level of martial arts, it was undoubtedly something he had to get his hands on. Once he acquired the method of doing this, he might be able to rise up even higher within the ranks of the Primary Colors.

Bailey Estate, Germany

Kabb was gently cradling her baby, intimately pinching his cheeks.

Sitting on the white semicircular balcony, she could hear familiar footsteps coming from behind her. Kabb looked back, seeing a familiar silhouette.

"Medis, are there any updates?"

"According to the latest reports, Garen goes into a secret room in his villa for a period of time every day, though we have no information on what he does inside."

Medis walked up behind Kabb. This young man was sly and cunning, had a pretty face, and in terms of reconnaissance, he had many tricks up his sleeves. He was even able to gather so much information on the Nighthawk King.

He looked at his boss' son, whose chubby face was looking around in amusement. He then continued to speak.

"We attempted to investigate the internal members of the Nighthawks. According to the results we've gotten, the whole Nighthawks group and the Combat Club should all be under Garen's control alone. These methods seem to be as you hypothesized, boss, it should be the work of the special strength from the masks."

"I heard that Garen is planning to go to Memphis?" Kabb smiled while she continued to play with her son. "Where did you obtain the information about the secret room?"

"Yes, it was said that they were going to search for the masks, and this was also deduced from the movements of Rod's men. This kind of large action operation can't be that easily hidden. They made no effort to hide it as well," Medis nodded, "Regarding the Secret Room, I've used an unconscious investigation method, scheduling my people to observe the movements villa from the corner of their

eyes. I told them not to observe Garen himself, but rather to focus the mute maid. As a maid in charge of serving Garen, there are a lot of things she would not be able to hide about the villa."

"Great work. Pay extra attention to Garen's schedules next," Kabb replied softly, "Primary Colour's Gremlin has been suppressed but he will definitely seek revenge, especially since he lost one of his strongest soldiers when Rod started to side with Garen. With the addition of Seasnake and Seal, two experts, alongside Garen himself, this is no longer a force that we can reckon with. We need to remain on Garen's good side if possible. Use the safest methods to continue your investigations of the secret room."

"Understood," Medis nodded slightly to show her acknowledgment.

Kabb pinched her son's face.

Poot!

The chubby kid spat a bit on her face.

"Hahaha, this kid's got guts! I like it!" Kabb started laughing out loud. Medis couldn't resist but to laugh along with her.

Writing the Demonic Book proved to be more of a challenge that Garen had originally thought.

Under careful scrutiny and analysis of his memories, these secret techniques he'd once thought he had completely mastered and understood now seemed to have a plethora of minor difficulties and problems. All of these were things that he'd missed in the past, and a lot of the steps that he thought he completely understood had multiple difficulties hidden within them.

When writing about the Northern Trident Frost-Fire True Water Evil Technique, he kept running into problems one after the other, accumulating a total of more than 10 issues.

As he was thinking about how to resolve these problems, the changes in the Demonic Book became more and more obvious.

Now that Garen had already written down around half of his secret techniques, the Demonic Book seemed to have synchronized; almost as if it was a living plant, it started to grow along with whatever Garen wrote.

Maybe once he finished writing this Demonic Book, it would be the most suitable time for him to develop his demonic technique. Then, through his own understanding of the demonic technique, he would be able to master the demonic technique even faster and achieve the creation of the soul seed that would allow him to exceed his limits, which was his ultimate goal.

This was happening abnormally smoothly, unlike his progress on the other side.

Regarding the training, all the volunteer pupils that were recommended by the Nighthawks were all spoiled brats. They were all crying to go home or wanting to give up before the first session of training even ended.

However, they were answered with a slap from Garen, knocking them out.

What a joke, these people were all hand picked by Garen, and most of them had decent innate talent and backgrounds. If he just let them go back, wouldn't that be a waste of his time?

Garen just directly used violence and brute force. He had the aid of the Nighthawks and the Combat Club in the background anyway, and with Rod's Rexott Group backing him as well, he had nothing to worry about.

Bam! Bam! Bam!!

A coordinated and rhythmic sound of strikes echoed through the gymnasium.

A group of students, clad in full black training gis, formed an orderly circle. In the middle of that circular formation stood Garen and a female student, Simone.

Simone repeatedly dragged her body back up, persevering despite her cheeks already looking as swollen as two red steamed buns. Trickle of blood was dribbling from the corners of her lips.

Under the bright yellow light, Simone once again lunged towards Garen.

Yaaa!!!

She let out a deafening roar, almost as if trying to boost her strength. In reality, nothing out of the ordinary happened and in a flash, everything was flipped around and the muffled thump signaled that once again, she was down on the ground.

Simone was again flung to the left by Garen with a single slap. As she tried to stand up once more, she stumbled a few steps before collapsing onto the floor. Her legs could no longer support her own body weight.

"Was this the Close Quarters Combat that you were so proud of?" Garen's top half was nude, and he was wearing only a pair of black trousers secured with a shiny black belt. His pale white skin starkly contrasted his aesthetic, sculpture-like muscular build, and his muscles flowed with every move.

"During these 4 days, I had you guys go through some basic training, it wasn't simply to torture you guys," Garen surveyed his surroundings. These people all had backgrounds in top-ranked families and firms from America and various other countries. They were candidates to become seeds like Dahm and Hochman, but since they were from different locations all over the world, they would bloom into different flowers.

"You guys will have 3 choices: the Two-Faced Waterbird Gate, the Shooting Shadow Gate, and the White Cloud Gate..."

He decided he would once again impart the White Cloud Gate's Mammoth Secret Technique, planting its seed in this world. In reality, the Mammoth Secret Technique should no longer be called the Mammoth Secret Technique, but the Divine Statue Technique instead. It used the Divine Statue Technique as the

core and combined it with the essence of the Black Water True Technique to create a shockingly powerful skill. It was a top-class secret technique that he relied on to become the king of the Secret Technique World.

The Divine Statue Technique was a legitimate secret technique with absurd power, but what was strange was that when Garen was writing the Demonic Book, he accidentally wrote in the Divine Statue Technique. Unexpectedly, this technique had some qualities of a demonic technique, and once he used his soul aura as a primer to set the foundation, it would allow the subject to experience rapid growth and reach a very high level of strength. However, it would have very strong side effects, hence its resemblance to a demonic technique.

Garen renamed this technique as the Demonic Statue Technique. This reminded him of the Behemoth Gate.

Everything started from the White Cloud Gate; that was where he started, and that place also had a soft spot in his heart.

"We already know what are the Two-Faced Waterbird Gate and the Shooting Shadow Gate, but what is the White Cloud Gate?" one of the students asked loudly, who had a heroic appearance. His name was Caesar, and he was the second-in-line to inherit his household name, which was one of the oldest and most respected households in Europe. As compared to the stunning achievements of the first-in-line, he seemed to be overshadowed in every aspect. He was one of the few students out of this batch who actually took an initiative in learning.

Recently, word of Garen's Combat Club had sent tremors throughout America. Dahm went all over the place organizing combat-based tournaments. Just a short while ago, he'd even worked together with Hochman to organize the World Fighting Tournament with a 50 million euro grand prize. Participants could even claim their traveling expenses from them. This attracted various experts from all over the world to participate.

Henceforth, the names "Waterbird Fist" and "Shooting Shadow Secret Technique" spread throughout the world.

Suddenly masters of all sorts of various fighting styles from all over the world were coming out of isolation and heading to America to participate in this tournament. There were adverts everywhere advertising this tournament and also the origins of Dahm and Hochman's fighting styles.

The name of the duo's teachers was not openly revealed. He was referred to by the two companies solely by the name "Holy Fist". The only information revealed about him was that he lived up in the mountains at a place called Holy Fist Palace, and was said to be a saint who had exceeded the limitations of Fist Techniques.

No one knew what "Holy Fist" looked like or who he or she was, and only a few core members of the Combat Club knew the true identity behind their master.

Dahm and Hochman were the embodiments of the Waterbird Fist in the rumors.

Some of the students, who had some insider information, understood that this man in the mask was the "Holy Fist" of the legends. Naturally, they would understand how great an opportunity this was. If all went well, they might have a chance to become the next Dahm or Hochman, attaining countless assets and authority.

Garen looked Caesar in the eye. He was a boy who was only 19 years old and looked as if he was filled with heroic spirit as the personification of vigor.

"White Cloud Gate is a sect that uses the Demonic Statue Technique as a foundation. This gate of secret techniques originated from an ancient form of fist style, completely different from the styles of the Waterbird Fist and the Shooting Shadow Fist. It has more of an upfront fighting style."

Chapter 685: Teach 1

"An upfront fighting style?"

Caesar couldn't understand what this meant.

"Isn't Waterbird Fist also an upfront fighting style?"

"That's different," Garen raised his right hand and his arm started rapidly expanding.

Bam!!!

With just one punch, he hit the ground underneath his feet, creating a blast of dust and rubble. A huge half-meter crater appeared under his feet. The dust around him was the cement that was completely pulverized by his strike.

The crater looked almost as if it was a hole that someone had dug out; it was nearly 10 cm deep. With the amount of the dust in the air, multiple students who unintentionally inhaled at the wrong moment started coughing uncontrollably.

However, some of them were not even choking on the dust but were coughing because their throats had started itching from the strength of the shockwave created.

Gulp.

Some of the students gulped in shock.

"This is an upfront fighting style," Garen pulled back his fist. His arm had no signs of damage at all.

The group of students was staring at his arm, trying to find any signs of damage. Yet, they couldn't even find a blemish on the arm.

At that moment, the students were starting to get excited.

If only I was that strong...

That was their desire within their hearts; every man would have a natural desire to become stronger. This type of monstrous fist style seemed to have won over their attention.

Garen was quite satisfied with the effects of his performance. He relaxed his arm and it started to return to its normal size, almost as if nothing had happened, except for the huge crater below him...

"Demonic Statue Technique, the principle is enhancing your body, making it stronger and harder and pushing your strength and recovery ability to the limit in order to achieve a deity-like state at the highest level. Those who want to learn this, please stand to my right."

Garen called loudly.

In an instant, out of the 15 students, 8 of them, all boys, stood to the right. All of them were in high spirits, feeling very excited. Amusingly, all of these boys were all on the skinnier side, and that included Caesar.

Out of the remaining 7 students, 5 were girls, and the other 2 boys were quite muscular. Although it seemed that they were very tempted to choose the White Cloud Gate, they all obviously had their own goals that they were very resolute on, and so they resisted the temptations offered to them.

"The remaining can go back for today. Those who are interested in the Shooting Shadow Secret Technique, gather here at 5 am sharp tomorrow," Garen raised his index finger, "Remember, all of you can only learn 1 fist style. If you start learning another fist style before you master the first one you learned, your progress will be extremely slow and it might even take years for you to even progress to the first level. Be wary, do not be fall for the temptations of greed."

"Yes." "Understood."

The remaining 7 students acknowledged his statement. After witnessing Garen's monstrous strength, none of them dared to treat him disrespectfully anymore. At the same time, all of them had completely acknowledged Garen's teaching methods.

The 5 girls and 2 boys left the gymnasium and walked past the Nighthawk members special defense line. They then drove back to the accommodation area nearby.

One of the girls tried to sneak back to peep on the training, but she was promptly ushered away by the Nighthawks.

Garen waited for the confirmation that everyone else had left, then turned to face the 8 boys before him.

Out of the 8 boys, some of them looked well-mannered, some looked creepy, and one looked sly, but all of them, at this moment, were filled with excitement, looking excitedly at Garen.

"Starting from now, I'll be explaining this technique. Please give me your undivided attention, as I will not repeat myself," Garen sternly observed the students, "This lesson may completely change your lives. I do not know whether you will regret this in the future, but since you're all already here, you can no longer turn back."

"Master! We won't regret it!!!" Caesar stood out and answered loudly.

"What we want is the strength to be able to control our own fate!!" a student who looked sickly and weak also stood out. This lad's name was Lumard, and due to doing excessive drugs, he'd become an addict, weakening his body steadily. Almost everyone in his family has given up hope for him, and he had been sent here as a last resort.

Garen looked into the eyes of these two who'd taken the initiative to declare their intentions and made a mental note to remember who they were.

"Alright! Now, let's start with the 1st part!"

The Demonic Statue Technique had 4 parts to it, the Divine Statue Technique, the Golden Statue Technique, the Metallic Statue Technique, and Bronze Statue Technique. This group of people's bodies were in such a frail state, they had to start training from the most basic Bronze Statue Technique.

This time, Garen did not have enough life force to support all of them; after what happened with his Slaughtering Hand, although he could still accumulate some life force, the amount has drastically decreased. This measly amount could only achieve the effect of extending life.

Hence, he had to be much stricter in their training as compared to his training with Hochman and Dahm.

Garen's true motive was to cultivate his own team of people, as in this world, it was difficult to work alone. He needed even more forces to be able to live an easy and relaxed life.

He was too focused on himself in the Secret Technique World, so when he fought with Cayduran in the end, he had been taken by surprise by a nuclear bomb, which led to him losing his first physical body. If he had a strong enough force and networking, this kind of issue wouldn't have happened. He would have gotten the news long before these things could happen, so he wouldn't have been taken by surprise.

This group of students were the seeds that he'd picked out, all of them blessed with certain conditions and requirements. With the right guidance, they would eventually bloom into beautiful flowers.

The training lasted for 4 hours. The Bronze Statue Technique was one of the most basic and fundamental "training secret techniques", combining the Mammoth Secret Technique and an adapted Breathing Secret Method. This made the students scream out in agony; all of them finally understood the true meaning of pain, and it felt as though their hearts were cramping terribly. They were lucky that they had undergone preliminary training by Garen, as the pain they endured from that managed to toughen their physiques, otherwise, they would have all passed out from the excruciating pain.

Garen used High-Velocity Oscillations as a core method to directly stimulate the students' blood and qi, forcing them to abide by the Breathing Secret Method and combine it with the Mammoth Secret Technique. This had great effects, as in the process, he could slowly merge the soul aura primer, making them latch on to Garen's Soul Seed while doing their own training.

He recently found out that ever since the soul seed aura has been planted into Hochman and company, as Hochman, Dahm, and the other Combat Club members continued to train, his own soul seed had started to have interesting changes as well, as if it had become stronger in tandem.

After completing the session with this group of students, he had his men bring them back to their accommodations. He even had professional masseuses and nutritionists to take care of their bodies for them.

As Garen left the gymnasium and started to drive off, he made his query to Black Sethe.

'Simple, even soul seeds have different levels,' Black Sethe answered in a carefree tone, 'After years of research by the warlocks, we have found out all the different types of realms a soul can exist in. Although we could have researched even deeper, even with this amount of information was sufficient for us to utilize for a long time.'

"A soul's realm? What do you mean?" Garen asked while still driving.

'The average soul is at the first level, it's very normal, and its strength is differentiated by its color. There's nothing much more I can say about this, and you've originally started from this level so you should be even more knowledgeable in this area.'

Garen nodded.

'The second level is the soul seed level, which is your current level. The reason it's called a seed is that it is highly concentrated and condensed into one single spot. Of course, it also implies that there's a possibility of it sprouting in the future. This level starts to have various different special effects, such as the ability to be able to change your body's vitality, improving it to adapt to the world's rules. This is the second level.'

'The third level is the true soul level, which is what I and the other warlocks once achieved. At this level, one can be considered a higher being, and your lifespan and even time itself will be greatly extended. With a true soul, you could survive in the Mother Stream, and even if you have died, if there's an opportunity in the future, you would have a small possibility of reviving yourself. At the true soul level, the soul's core cannot be put out or destroyed, hence the name true soul. It cannot be disintegrated by the Mother Stream, and even if you do reborn through the Mother Stream, you'll be able to flawlessly remember everything from your past life. Your soul has its space-time attributes so it is somewhat similar to a true soul, but it is far less powerful.'

Black Sethe gave a very detailed explanation.

'There are supposedly even higher levels of souls, but I have never attained them myself. There might be a few top-level warlocks that might have had a chance to reach it, but even the 3rd level is already impossibly difficult. We further separated each level to even smaller phases according to the bottlenecks in progress, creating tens of new phases in between each level in order to keep track of our growth and progress. You are currently at the basic of the soul seed level, so it's still too early to think about all of this.'

Garen nodded; as he had predicted, since the soul seed was called a seed, there was a possibility of it sprouting.

'When you've reached the true soul level, you will gain a true name for yourself, which is the written pronunciation of the name of your soul and must never be leaked. It has unimaginable power, in other words, the longer your true name, the stronger your soul is. Well, it's still too early to be talking about this.' Black Sethe brought it up, then decided that it wasn't the correct time for this talk.

"Soul, soul seed, true soul, 3 levels..." as Garen mumbled this repeatedly, his heart starting to yearn for it.

"How many more phases does my soul seed require for it to progress further?" he asked.

'It's still too early to tell. What's more, the progress of a soul cannot be that easily predicted, We've only managed to research one of the paths to it and there are still numerous unknown possibilities, so you shouldn't think too much about it now. Beings with true souls can effortlessly destroy even someone of the demon lord class, the strongest level among us Warlocks. There are a lot of Endor true souls hidden in the Mother Stream, but those are the ones who could not revive and are stuck in an unconscious state. They're just the remnants of our civilization from the movement of the Mother Stream, largely different from real beings with true souls.'

He paused, 'Actually, according to our theory, everyone has a true soul. In the Mother Stream, all souls will start to disintegrate until it becomes extremely small until it cannot continue to disintegrate. Then it will become a soul that cannot be disintegrated, which is what we call a true soul. If a living thing's intelligence and senses cannot permeate the deepest part of the soul, the innermost core, once exposed to the Mother Stream, that intelligence and senses will be completely wiped out and used as materials to create a new soul. However, if you can reach the true soul level, you can retain all your memories and continuously repeat the cycle of life unless your true soul is destroyed by someone.'

'Even among warlocks and void creatures, there are barely a handful of these kinds of existences. You should pay no attention to it. In comparison, your soul with its space-time attributes has an advantage. This kind of soul is not that strong but can adapt to the rules of time and space, and escape the fate of being wiped out, retain memories of past lives, and can withstand the power of the Mother Stream. Although it can still be damaged, it is far stronger than average souls.'

Chapter 686: Teach 2

Garen nodded.

However, in his heart, he kept looking back to when he started on this journey.

He knew that his soul's space-time attributes weren't truly natural, but something that he gained from that strange red stuff, even his innate talent had been a byproduct of that.

After listening to Black Sethe's explanation, he started to suspect that he'd been the test subject of a higher being's experimentation on creating a soul with space-time attributes or possibly a byproduct from medication stimulating an evolution in his body. Whatever it was, he had definitely been 'created' by accident. It was all luck, yet it was his fate.

As long as he didn't suffer damage that could completely destroy his soul, he could continue to live on just like someone with a true soul.

Returning to his villa, his maid Marquilli poured him a cup of freshly squeezed juice and helped him hang his coat on the coathanger.

Garen went directly to the secret room and habitually checked on the demonic book, the masks hidden in the room, and of course, the most troublesome item, the coin.

Everything was where they should be, the five masks stacked neatly in a pile on top of the coin. The magnetic fields emitted by the masks were enveloping the coin to create an egg-shaped barrier.

Just as he was going to conceal the secret compartment once more, he discovered a change that stopped him in his tracks.

"This is..." Garen held up the first mask on top.

The mask originally did not have any markings or blemishes, but this time, he found a small marking on it.

At the bottom right corner of the mask, there was a marking in the form of a small black dot. It was very sharp and clear, looking almost like a punctuation mark of some sorts.

He used his hand to gently rub the surface. There weren't any bumps, and it didn't feel like it was artificially added to the mask.

He quickly looked at the other masks, and all of them had similar markings. The markings were similar in structure yet slightly differed from one another.

'As the energy fields strengthen to a certain degree, there will definitely be more clues,' Black Sethe uttered softly.

"According to the rumors, after one gathers all 12 of the masks, they will reveal the location of the prehistoric mask... Maybe the rumors were true. We're probably the first person to gather so many masks as originally, these masks were all split up and held on to by various big organizations and antique collectors," Garen pondered.

"Sleepless Faces, it seems that there's more to this than I thought..." Garen added.

"How is your training in the dream world as a void pursuer?" Black Sethe suddenly asked.

"Why do you ask?"

'If you've reached the level where you can freely move in the dream world, that means you have reached the level of visions,' Black Sethe explained, 'Once you've entered the visions level, you will be able to see things that you couldn't before. This may be helpful for finding out more clues about the masks.'

"Vision?" Garen repeated.

'Yes, the dream world is filled with disillusionment, but at the same time, it also functions like a radio that can receive a lot of weak signals. Some signals may contain some white noise and useless clutter, but some are able to reflect actual reality. Dreams are actually another perception sense of a human other than the conventional five senses. Hence, if you can fully wield and hone these senses, you'll be able to gain a lot of valuable information.'

"The dream world as a perception sense?" this was the first time Garen had heard of something like this.

'You can start trying to observe your dream worlds. Anyways, Nadia is currently being temporarily suppressed by the masks and the date of her attack is still quite far off, so you might as well use this buffer time wisely.'

Putting down the mask, Garen slowly deliberated on what Black Sethe has said, referring back to his memories of his dream worlds. Evidently, his dream world was sometimes constructed based on his own desires and imaginations, or from external influences. However, there were times that the dream world managed to reflect reality. What an interesting discovery.

'Over the next few nights, I'll be expending my energy to guide you in your dream world, I've already had quite a bit of time to recuperate, I should have enough strength now,' Black Sethe said.

"Why have you suddenly become so kind?" Garen was suddenly suspicious.

Black Sethe paused for a long time at this question, sitting in silence for a while.

"It's fine if you don't want to tell me," Garen broke the silence.

'There's no point in hiding it,' Black Sethe laughed, 'I am about to disappear.'

Hearing this, Garen was completely stunned. As time passed, he had completely gotten used to Black Sethe's guidance, both as a teacher and as a friend. Now, he completely trusted that Black Sethe was helping him without any selfish intentions.

After a moment of silence, Garen asked.

"Is it because of the Slaughtering Hand?"

'Yes,' Black Sethe calmly answered, 'Since the Slaughtering Demon Technique was abandoned, I'm being overwritten by the new secret techniques,' He laughed bitterly, 'I live within the Slaughtering Hand

Secret Technique, I am nothing but a past memory of the Bloody King, I do not have any means of surviving independently.'

"Is there a solution?" Garen asked.

What answered him was a long silence.

Garen didn't say anything, he just placed the mask back into the hidden compartment and walked out of the secret room.

Maybe it was because of Black Sethe's company that he no longer feels lonely as he did before. To be honest, he didn't want Black Sethe to leave at all.

"If I continue to train the Slaughtering Hand would that guarantee that your existence?" Garen softly asked.

'You're willing to continue training?' Black Sethe instantly replied in a joyous tone.

"If I just maintain it at the first level, it's a simple task," Garen said calmly.

'I knew that playing the sympathy card would work! Hahaha!' Black Sethe laughed proudly.

"On second thought, continuing training seems so troublesome... I should just give up on it..." Garen playfully said.

"Don't!! Just name a price! I'll do whatever I can to fulfill it for you! When have I ever cut you short, believe me!" Black Sethe shouted in panic.

The two continued to banter, as Garen walked through the corridor, heading towards the reading room.

In a pitch black space.

Black Sethe was floating in the center of the space, his red eyes glowing. Only he knew that the moment the Slaughtering Hand was changed, it had destroyed the fundamental pillar of his existence. Even if Garen continued to train, there wouldn't be any use.

He silently stared at his increasingly transparent body, and couldn't help but let out a bitter smile.

Maybe if I just silently disappeared without a word, that would just be my fate as a memory...

To begin with, he shouldn't have asked for so much.

Maybe one day, if he calls me and I do not respond, he would remember my existence as a memory...

"Black Sethe, can you see it, they seem to be some sort of numbering system." Garen was already at his desks, drawing out the symbols he saw earlier.

Ignoring his own thoughts, Black Sethe moved behind Garen in the form of black gas and looked at the symbols on the table.

'It does look like some kind of numbering system,' He carefully observed each symbol on the table, 'We don't have enough clues yet, so it's hard for us to come up with any solution at this moment. Are there any other clues from the Men in Black?'

"If we gather even more stuff, maybe we can get even more clues," Garen frowned.

'There's another way. You can enter the dream world and learn the technique of using Visions. Maybe then you might be able to see a piece of the masks history,' Black Sethe suggested.

"History?"

'Yes. On a lot of items, there are traces that we cannot perceive normally using our five senses. Just like a painting on a piece of paper, although we can see it with our eyes, we are unable to hear it with our

ears. There may be traces of these kinds of things that require a specific sense to perceive, and it most likely exists in the dream world. Hence, we might be able to get more clues if we go to the dream world,' Black Sethe tried to explain it in simpler terms.

"So how are we going to do this?" Garen asked.

'After you enter the dream world, you need to first differentiate the illusions from the reflections and refractions of reality. This is the first step, but take it slow.'

Garen thought back to the dream world technique he'd learned so far.

Black Sethe's dream world technique undoubtedly gave him a lot of help; from being unable to move at all at the start until now, where he could move freely, it was almost as though he'd reached a higher level.

He carefully sorted out the contents of the technique once more.

Focus your mind. In the dream world, it was very easy to be disoriented or distracted. The method was to find a point to concentrate on, for example, a body part.

You could not look for something based on the surroundings of the dream world. Since a large portion of the dream world was based on illusions, many parts of the dream world were constructed from the blurry memories dredged from the human body. If you paid too much attention to the details, it would cause the dream world to be broken. If certain details weren't in your memory, if you paid too much attention to a missing detail, it would cause your attention to be forcefully shifted and the dream world would be destroyed.

After you can guarantee your complete focus, you can start to use the corner of your eyes to rapidly observe the surroundings in the dream world. You cannot stop at any point, as if you do, you will start to shift your focus, breaking the dream world.

The entire dream world is essentially a very badly made illusion, so there will be many imperfections. Once you find these imperfections, you will start to distrust the reality of everything you see in the dream world, causing you to be disillusioned, destroying the dream world.

After you are able to observe the dream world, you would need to find the entrance, or rather the starting point to your own dream world, by realizing that you are dreaming. If you are able to feel when you have entered a dream, it would be even better. That was in preparation for the next step. Due to the high level of focus, this would produce a weirdly clear consciousness, so this process would be much simpler. However, if you started directly at this step, you would have a low chance of success, as you would easily lose your focus and attention without preparation.

'Now what you need to do is the 4th step,' Black Sethe guided him in a low tone, 'From this step onwards, if you succeed, only can you truly master the art of a void pursuer.' he explained, 'The other people of Endor and I viewed dreams as a process of inserting our consciousness into our souls, slowly going deeper and exploring the soul's deepest parts. This allowed us to access our true souls, then imprint all our memories onto it. That is the soul's most microscopic particles, the same particles that cannot be destroyed or disintegrated.'

"I understood what you meant, the dream world is essentially the process of us putting our consciousness into our souls. The deeper we get, the more we find out about our soul's hidden potentials. So the dream world is, in actuality, technically a level of the soul," Garen nodded in acknowledgment.

'Yes. You need to start from the starting point of your dream world, walk around intricately observing every corresponding detail around you, strengthening the dream world in the process. This will decrease the possibility of disillusionment, allowing you to remain in the dream world for a longer time.'

Chapter 687: Dragged in 1

Practicing a technique based on dreaming was a troublesome task, as it wasn't something you could master in one try.

Garen cautiously asked about the details regarding the dream world technique, and also the methods for resolving the possible issues and problems he might face. If he managed to master the vision technique, according to Black Sethe, it would have some obvious effects on him in various aspects. After achieving Vision, he would be able to drastically increase his field of view, allowing him to see many things that normal people were unable to see.

He kept the symbols he'd drawn neatly in the desk drawer and locked them up.

'Let's try it out in the first dream world today,' Black Sethe advised.

Garen nodded as he made his way towards his bedroom. After greeting his maid, he went straight to the bathroom for a cold shower. After refreshing his body, he went straight to his bed and lay down, trying his best to relax his body.

Lying face up on the bed, he put on his noise canceling ear muffs. Staring up at the checkered black and white ceiling, he slowly closed his eyes, breathing slowly.

As his consciousness started to blur, he was also getting more and more sleepy.

The key to entering the dream world was to be in a comfortable position. You simply could not move your body or exert any strength.

After a short while, Garen started to feel his body getting lighter as if the bed itself was starting to float, and it entered a narrow black tube. It felt like he was being compressed by the strong force.

He tried looking around, but all he could see was that he was encased in a weird, brownish, gooey substance, almost as if he was completely immobilized by mud. However, there seemed to be none on his body.

This strange tube seemed to be alive, making small movements every few moments. He could vaguely hear a lot of different sounds; sounds of humans, cars, airplanes, even insects. It was a chaotic jumble of different noises.

After a long time, Garen finally saw the light at the end and his entire body suddenly flew out of the tube, entering a small dark room that looked similar to his actual bedroom.

Black wallpaper, black wall lamp, black and white checkered sofa, black and white checkered bed frame, a mini bar counter, and a giant 92-inch flat screen television on the wall.

As Garen landed in the bedroom, he turned around. What was behind him was a room door left ajar that was slowly closing. Through the shrinking gap, he saw a dark abyss.

Click.

The door was closed.

'That is the door of your heart. Since it was closed, it means that your dream world is also closed. This is a psychological defense mechanism for defending against invisible creatures, but don't rely too much on it,' Black Sethe's voice rang in Garen's ear, but it felt as if it was played through a voice changer, with the voice constantly changing like a melody. Sometimes he sounded sharp, sometimes he sounded raspy, with his pitch constantly going up and down, it sounded very surreal.

'This place is your bedroom, or at least the bedroom in your dreams. Pay attention to the details in this area, we'll set this point as the rally point for today's training,' Black Sethe continued.

Garen nodded. He could clearly feel that he was in a dream, as his body wasn't as agile as it was in the real world and his consciousness was also a bit fuzzy. The surroundings in his vision were very blurry, almost as if they were constantly changing.

'Let's start by strengthening your dream world. Try to focus your sightline, start to focus on every detail of the areas nearest to you, but do not focus on something for more than two breaths. Otherwise, you'll start to lose focus, causing the dream world to change,' Black Sethe said softly.

Garen started looking around his surroundings and decided to start with the small bookcase right next to him.

The bookcase was filled with books, from books on philosophy to history, geography to science, computers to art, there's a book of almost every genre on the shelves. However, they were just put there for display purposes; in reality, Garen hadn't read any of them before.

He started from left to right, scanning through the bookcase, imprinting the rows of black leather books into his mind.

'Find the things in your dream that are illogical, those are distractions that you should remove,' Black Sethe reminded him.

Keeping that in mind, Garen continued.

History of the Earth... Andrew's Growl... Astronomy and the Sky... The Life of Edolas...

One book after another passed in and out of Garen's sightline.

Suddenly, a book's title stood out.

"Reinhardt placed an apple on..." the cover of this book was very strange. The name etched on the edge looked as if they were ripples on water, and couldn't be read clearly. The words after "on" were blurred, almost as if it was constantly changing.

Garen moved his hand over to grab the book, placing it on his palm. It turns out that it wasn't a book at all; flipping it over, it was a deviled egg plate.

What a joke! Why would a plate be placed in a bookcase? It was simply illogical.

Garen now grabbed this plate with both hands, attempting to snap it.

At that instant, the plate softened and transformed into some sort of living slime that escaped from his grasp. It somehow burrowed its way through the wall on the right and disappeared. The wall now had a crack that wasn't there at the start.

'Don't mind it. That is something from some unknown place. When in a dream world, you may encounter various creatures from other worlds or dimensions. It's very difficult to capture them, but you'll get used to them soon,' Black Sethe softly said, 'Your mission now is to remove the distraction factors from your dream world.'

Garen felt somewhat amused.

His current consciousness level was slightly blurrier than in real life, and it was also the case during his battle with Nadia. It was largely affected by external factors such as suppressed rationality and reason.

Continuing to look through the bookcase, he found nothing of interest.

He then moved on to the black cloth sofa that had a tiger-like furry texture and pattern, which seemed to be quite fluffy.

Garen attempted to sit on it, slowly pressing his weight onto it.

Hyaaaaa~~~~

The sofa let out a strange moan, almost as if it was alive.

"I don't think sofas are supposed to make sounds like that," Black Sethe said.

Garen nodded in agreement.

The shadow of the sofa suddenly lunged forward, speeding directly towards the room door. Almost like a stream of black water, it rapidly seeped through the gap at the bottom of the door, disappearing without a trace.

'That was another guest from another galaxy, these guests can also be pretty useful. If you want to go visit another galaxy or enter a world in another dimension or time, they can act as great tour guides. All you need to do is grab on to their tails.'

"We can go to other galaxies with them?" Garen started to take interest in the topic.

'Yes, though I need to mention that if you do that you'll have to live in the dream world forever. If you blindly follow these tour guides away from your original location, you will be easily lost in space-time or in a different dimension, unable to find your way back. Then, you'll have to live the rest of your life

there, or maybe in the eternal emptiness of another galaxy, or maybe some rip in space-time between galaxies, staying there forever until your soul dies out.'

"Then why are they in my dream world?" Garen sat on another sofa.

'No idea, these visitors all have their various goals, but one thing's for sure, their intentions are never good,' Black Sethe answered.

"Alright," Garen stopped asking questions.

After checking the sofas, he started exploring the smart television mounted on the wall.

He tried to turn on the television, but nothing happened. There seemed to be blue sparks flying about at the sockets.

He started touching the display of the television which looked smooth, but when he touched it, it felt strangely bumpy and uneven. Other than that, it seemed to be normal.

Garen then moved his focus over to the television frame. Eerily, the frame was actually a thin yellow snake. The snake was even still alive, flicking its red forked tongue at Garen while hissing.

Hiss!

The snake suddenly lunged towards Garen, flying towards his face.

In a state of panic, Garen reflexively reached forward to grab the snake.

'Don't touch it!!' Black Sethe shouted.

However, it was too late; Garen had already grabbed on to the snake tightly. In a blink of an eye, he started to feel that everything around him was becoming blurry as if someone had just flashed a bright white light at his eyes. He also felt like he was moving at high speeds through something.

After an unknown amount of time, he honestly did not know whether a long time has passed or if it was just a brief moment.

He suddenly noticed that in front of him was a huge, pitch-black vortex, almost like a whirlpool, slowly spinning. At the center of it was an endless abyss of darkness. He was being dragged directly towards the vortex by a strong force.

The vortex occupied almost the entirety of his field of vision, almost making it feel like it had the size of the solar system or even the Milky Way. The enormity of the vortex made him freeze in his tracks. A strange feeling of attraction was luring him towards the vortex, almost making him have the urge to just move directly into the vortex.

'Wake up!!'

A sudden sharp noise came from behind him.

Garen furiously shook his head, feeling a strong pulling force from his back, dragging him away from the vortex.

Whoosh!!!

Garen forced his eyes open. He was still lying on his bed, though his whole body was sore as if he'd just undergone an intensive exercise routine. It completely didn't feel like he had just woken from his sleep.

'You were almost dragged into an unknown universe by a creature from another dimension,' Black Sethe's voice groaned from beside his ear.

"If I really went into that vortex, what would have happened?" Garen asked as he stood up and wiped the sweat off his face.

'Vortex? You saw a vortex?' Black Sethe seemed to not know what Garen saw in the dream world, 'I have no idea, you'll probably start seeing the scenery from other dimensions or universes I guess,' Black Sethe answered after a brief pause.

'This kind of thing will happen quite often, so please be more cautious. In the dream world, some of these things can be very cunning, so you shouldn't believe everything they say, but you shouldn't completely ignore it either. You have to be able to distinguish the truth from the lies yourself. As for entering another dimension or universe, it's a very dangerous thing especially for you. Your soul with its space-time attributes is these visitors' favorite prey, so they will do whatever it takes to lure you into their universe.'

"I felt a strange sort of attraction towards that vortex just now," Garen frowned.

'That is for sure, as you enter another dimension or universe, it causes certain benefits for your soul's consciousness. A trip to another universe while being conscious is not something you can do no matter how powerful you are, though it would definitely be a precious experience. However, it is a one-way road; once you enter, it's highly likely that you'll become lost in it forever, never being able to return.'

"What would happen then?"

'To put it simply, you'll be put in a vegetative state. Your body will still be alive, but it will no longer have a consciousness.'

Chapter 688: Dragged In 2

Previously, Black Sethe's words had made Garen feel disconnected from the dream realm, but this had worsened his impression of it. He now looked at it as though it was some sort of dangerous environment.

'To normal people, the dream realm is indeed nothing dangerous because they only wander through the realm while barely conscious, and this would not be able to attract the interest of other dimensional galaxy creatures. However, if the current you were to dive deep into it, the focus and conscious effort that you put in will be much greater than any ordinary person's, and such an obvious prey will be just as distinguishable as a campfire in complete darkness.'

"I'm feeling very lethargic now."

'Indeed, that's because your consciousness has followed the snake for a very long distance. Take a rest, that will be it for today. You'll need more training after this, as the Vision technique can only be trained when you have reached the depths of the second level of the dream realm. The current you can't even reach the point of actualizing the first level,' Black Sethe's voice slowly softened, he too seemed to be very fatigued.

After half a month.

America Natiya State.

On a highway running through barren yellow plains, there was a white car that was slowing down on the left shoulder of the white highway, which then came to a halt in front of a gas station.

The door opened and was then slammed shut.

A young, beautiful lady with a tall physique exited the vehicle.

The lady was wearing sunglasses, tight purple jeans, and a white tee-shirt. She turned around and murmured to another beautiful lady in the car before she made large, purposeful strides towards the gas station.

The sun blazed down upon the road as dazzling sunbeams blinded all of its travelers. As the heat from the sweltering road radiated in waves, some people would be sweating buckets. Strangely, the lady who had exited the car was not visibly sweating at all.

"What month is it, for it to be this hot..."

The teenage girl in the car was indeed Arisa, who had left Grano with her sister. She was currently dressed in a thin shirt matched with light blue jean shorts, and her outfit accentuated her slender, long legs. One of her ears was fitted with an earpiece, which was playing some music.

"This is the southernmost region, it's normal for it to be hotter than other regions, plus the weather forecast has also predicted that tonight's temperature will dip into the negatives. The difference in temperature will only grow further apart," there were two more people in the car, and the one who had just spoken was a middle-aged man wearing summer beach-pants who was dozing off in the back seat.

The other person was a lady dressed in white office attire. She had long, blonde hair tied into a neat braid, and coupled with her cold stare, she gave off a stern, sharp vibe. Both of them didn't look like they were beyond thirty or forty years old.

The lady glanced at the man.

"My last trip to Natiya State was sixty years ago and back then, the temperature differences weren't this bad. This is probably caused by the recent pollution and vegetation issues."

Arisa spoke softly from the side, "Sixty years... Lord, you Blood Breeds really do make us envious. Despite the decades you've lived through, you don't look a day older."

The lady looked at Arisa and gave her a warm smile.

"You lot aren't bad either; your sister has already hit the top-tiered standards among humans, and she's almost comparable to those specialist mercenaries. To be able to do this as a human is already very impressive. After all, one's talents are limited."

"Of course, my sister is really strong!" Arisa stuck out her tongue and gave out a prideful grin, "Mr. Pritto, how far are we from Lars?"

The man closed his eyes as though he was sensing something, and reopened his eyes after a moment.

"There aren't any traces of him nearby, meaning that he should be more than thirty kilometers away from us. We can rest easy for now."

"It's too bad, I'm sure we would have been much safer if we'd remained in Grano," after Pritto had met with the Arisa siblings, he had been pulled into the two Blood Breed forces' war, though he always felt

that they did the sisters wrong. Hence, during the chance opportunity where he was pressured to fall out with Lars, they had to leave Grano and rush towards the Light Party's main camp in Natiya State.

As the conflict worsened, the Secret Party's advantage was strengthened, and they swarmed the Light Party strongholds en masse. Though it was unclear how they'd acquired such a tremendous number of members, the Light Party's forces in Grano's Faya State have also begun retreating diagonally towards the southernmost parts of America, giving up Central America entirely to the Blood Breeds of the Secret Party.

As for the leader of Light Party who bore high hopes, the first Death Apostle Ashen Castine, she had remained silent without any action or reaction.

Of course, in the eyes of the regular people, the two parties' conflict appeared to be a conflict of interests between the shadow forces of two large organizations. Or perhaps it was a conflict between two extremely-wealthy organizations and was not related to any civilian.

That was indeed the case, no matter if it was the Secret Party or Light Party, they both adhered to the rule of not overexposing the Blood Breeds, and thus anything that happened would be covered up with a layer of rationalization.

On the other hand, the witches relied on the strength of their many alliances and had announced their neutral stand on this matter. In fact, they were also considered to be a large-scale organization as they were led by the Death Apostle, Lion Mother, hence even the Secret Party would not offend them too recklessly.

As the Light Party retreated, Grano lost its usual security, and so the Arisa sisters also chose to leave Grano so that they wouldn't affect other civilians. Little did they know, Raffaele was the leader of the witches. Raffaele could not insist on protecting them due to pressure from the Secret Party, and as the leader, she could not disobey Lion Mother's decree or the conflict with the Blood Breed's Secret Party would result in multiple casualties among their subordinates, as clearly indicated by her grandmother and other elders.

Hence, leaving Grano has become the sisters' only choice. After consecutively killing multiple vampires and low-level Blood Breeds from Secret Party, Isaros had been permanently recorded on the Secret Party's hit list. For her sister's safety, she had no choice but to flee Grano alongside Pritto and the other Scarlet Moon Blood Breeds.

"It's too bad.... If only..." Arisa heaved a long sigh and stared out the window. Suddenly, she seemed to have startled, as though she saw something unexpected.

"Vivien?! Why is she here!!" Arisa shouted, and immediately flung open the door and ran towards her.

In the gas station, there were two other cars that had stopped for refueling, and there was a small crowd of young teens standing by the side. They seemed to be on a trip, and some of them giggled as they chattered on. Among them, there was Little Vivien from Uncle Thomas' family!!

"Vivien?" Pritto and the young Blood Breed woman didn't react in time, but judging from Arisa's expression, it was obviously someone she knew.

Suddenly, Pritto took a closer look.

"Oh no! That's Lars' men!!"

"Such coincidence?!?" the female Blood Breed was also shocked.

"Get them back on the car!! Quick!!" Pritto closed his eyes to take a hold of the enemies' locations.

Meanwhile, in the gas station, Isaros had also noticed that Vivien was with other people by their cars, as well as her younger sister Arisa running over.

Suddenly a sharp scream was heard from the car's direction.

"Be careful!!!" it was the female Blood Breed's voice.

Isaros could see streaks of black shadows rushing towards her with a glance from the corner of her eyes, as well as a few vacant cars rushing towards the cars in the kiosk.

Bam Bam Bam!!!

Amidst loud screaming, Vivien and her classmates were stunned.

The cars collided with each other, causing a loud collision and in that instant, a few cars were mushed and tangled with one another. The deformed lump of several cars was heading straight towards their group.

Vivien stood there, trembling in terror as she stared at those cars that came straight towards them. Her head had gone completely blank, and although she was trying her best to get her body to move, an overwhelming horror had completely stunned her.

She was just a girl who'd gone on a trip with her friends after her examinations, how could such a thing happen suddenly?

"Kill the witnesses!" called a cold, cruel man.

At this time, Vivien suddenly felt pain on her body; a shadow had suddenly tackled her to the ground from the right, and she'd rolled some distance away.

The immense amount of friction between the tires and the road created a loud screech, and when coupled with the shrieks of brakes, several black tire marks were burnt into the ground. It brushed by the two people and rammed straight into a pole.

Bam!!

The strong crash sent shivers down Vivien's spine. Nothing actually crossed her mind, but she could feel that she was being enveloped by a soft body, and was slowly helped up after a while.

"Dodge it!!" a familiar voice was heard from her side, Vivien felt that she was tugged towards the right with force and began running.

She then saw Elder Sister Isaros dashing towards her with a stunning speed before engaging two black uniformed men in combat. With the loud smack of hands, the two black uniform men were deftly punched. The duo let out a dissatisfied moan and rushed towards Vivien abruptly.

"Run!" it was Arisa's voice.

Vivien's head was completely blank as she was tugged along by Arisa and ran with all her might. The two uniformed men were quickly blocked by other people and no longer chased them.

After running for some time, the two of them reached the white car, hastily clambered in and slammed the door shut loudly before a foreign-looking, beautiful lady in the driver's seat started the car.

Soon, the sounds of doors opening and closing happened behind her and two other persons entered. One of them was Elder Sister Isaros whom she was familiar with. The other man, on the other hand, was a stranger in a beach attire. Both of them had flecks of blood on them.

"Go!!"

"Tommy!! Tommy and the rest were still there!!" Vivien had finally reacted; she screamed but she was being held firmly by Arisa.

Vivien looked back, but she could only see the gas station going up in flames as a strong explosion discharged. The crimson-red flames and black smoke engulfed everything in its path, whether human or vehicle. The cars that have been approaching the gas station all immediately braked, which soon caused a traffic pileup.

The car continued forward and had sped up even more while riding on the impact of the explosion.

"This... What actually... happened?" Vivien suddenly felt like the entire world had become completely foreign to her. Beside her was Arisa who was still holding onto her hands tightly.

"It's alright, it's alright, I'm here, Elder Sister's here... things will be fine.... It will be fine..." she could hear Arisa murmuring softly.

"Why the hell did you bring her along? Dump her by the roadside somewhere!" the foreign lady screamed suddenly, but her voice sounded very soft as compared to the grumbling explosion.

"She is my friend!" Arisa screamed back.

"You are dragging her into this!!" the lady seemed to be very frustrated, bringing one non-combatant was already a hassle, now there was another one, did they not want to live anymore?!

"Lars is in pursuit of us, not only him, there are two more Blood Breeds with levels..." a deep male's voice could be heard from the passenger's seat.

"I could barely take on one," Isaros spoke softly. In fact, as of now, she was the weakest link among the combatant trio; against the pure Blood Breeds, her capabilities were obviously insufficient.

"Then what about her?" The driver looked at Vivien who was sitting in the passenger seat.

Isaros went quiet for a while.

"I will contact her brother to pick her up, she will follow us for the time being."

The driver couldn't help but grumble.

Chapter 689: Pursue and Attack 1

Ca-clack!!

The glass cup in his hand suddenly had multiple cracks in it.

Garen put down the glass in his hand and calmly lifted his head to look at his subordinates who were reporting to him.

His three subordinates were all muscular, strong and looked vicious but right now, they were all shivering and dripping with cold sweat as they bowed in front of him without the courage to stand straight.

"Vivien... was ambushed?" Garen showed a calm expression, but the calmer he looked, the more people felt that Garen was suppressing his anger internally.

One of his subordinates' scalp had gone numb. He felt as though Garen's gaze was gliding across his scalp like a sharp knife, which was painful in a sense.

"According to our intel, she was ambushed by a mysterious man at a gas station in Natiya State, and was subsequently rescued by another group of people, her current location is unknown."

He quickly yet softly reported the issue to Garen as he endured the pain.

Garen nodded

"You may leave now."

The three subordinates felt as though they obtained amnesty as they quickly turned around to leave the room. They closed the door of their car, and one could hear their sighs of relief from afar.

The room suddenly fell into silence.

Garen looked at the dishes presented before him, but even his favorite boiled snails in tomato soup were not attractive anymore.

As he pushed the plates away, he picked up the phone on the table to make a call.

The number was slightly long, and he put in a few prefix numbers before dialing the actual phone number.

Duu....

After a few ringing tones.

"Garen? Why are you free to give me a call?" an elderly, husky voice could be heard from the receiver of the phone.

"AG, how did the plan go on your side?" Garen lightly tapped the table rhythmically, producing some soft tapping sounds. These sound waves dispersed across the room, and as some of those minute soundwaves bounced back, he could ascertain and sense if there were any unwanted things listening in on him.

"I knew it," AG laughed, "Blood Breeds crossed you? You wouldn't have proactively contacted us if things didn't affect you."

"You know me quite well, it seems," Garen's face had an odd smile, "It is as you said, things revolving the Blood Breed didn't concern me previously as I stay in the northern region of America and was largely unaffected, so naturally, I didn't need to take an active stance with you. But..."

"But now things are different?"

"Indeed, things are different now," Garen confirmed.

His original plans for a trip to Memphis were also affected due to this news. After receiving the news on the internal conflict among the Blood Breeds, he needed to re-evaluate the plans again.

"What do you plan to do? We would welcome you with open arms if you decided to join us," AG chuckled.

Garen pondered.

His original main focus had been to look for the masks and settle Nadia's problems first, as those imitation masks could only provide a short-term suppression. Then, he would use this time to write his very own Demonic Book to try to form a second soul seed. With regards to Blood breeds, witches, and the likes, their actions didn't concern him as long as they did not affect him, and he would assume them to be non-existent.

"The reason why the northern region that you're in has never been invaded by any Blood Breed is that it was the holy site where the witches negotiated with the Blood Breeds, and also the place where Lion Mother rests," AG explained briefly through the phone, "But such peace is not permanent; following the need to expand, both forces may not care that much after all."

Garen understood this point, as the book AG gave him before had mentioned similar contents. Through that book, he could conduct academic discussions and communications with AG in absolute secrecy, and it had also given him a much more in-depth understanding of the Blood Breeds.

However, soon after, AG had repeatedly invited him to participate in the planning of assaults against the Blood Breeds, which were all rejected by Garen. He was already occupied with the issues revolving the Nine-Headed Dragon King Nadia, as well as the training of his own dream realm techniques.

"Now, Secret Party is in an advantageous position, if you would like to join the fray, now would still be considered a good time. We can discuss more in the book for detailed plans."

"Alright."

Garen hung up the phone and stayed silent for a while before he stood up and walked towards the bookshelf. He crouched and pulled a small black hardcover book from the lowest row of books.

As he gently flipped through the pages, there was nothing but blank tallow pages.

'Light Party Leader Ashen Castine has been bound by the Secret Party leaders, another Death Apostle-level Secret Party member is currently pursuing Scarlet Moon, we will need to pay close attention to two of the strongest people among the remaining forces,' AG's words appeared on the book's page, 'One would be the Crimson Spear, and the other would be the Radiant Pond. These two people are both the strongest Blood Breeds under the Death Apostles while being a mastermind of the Secret Party and a Light Party Sect mastermind respectively.'

'I don't want to know such useless intel,' Garen interrupted him, 'Help me find out this thing, what forces were the ones who ambushed my sister?'

'I'm afraid I can't help you with this,' AG rejected his request, 'In America, my influences aren't any stronger than yours. Plus, you should be getting more news on this soon. Believe me, very soon....'

'Is this a hint from you?' Garen distrusted this kind of superstitious prophecies.

Ding... Ding...

Suddenly, the phone on his table began ringing. The monotonous yet serene bell peals were coupled with the vibration of the phone, and the phone kept moving with every vibration.

The screen flashed and it showed an incoming call from Isaros.

Garen squinted his eyes and accepted the call with the press of a button.

"Hello?" he tried to sound as gentle as possible.

"Is this Garen? I'm Isaros."

In Natiya State, far away.

At the midsection of a road in the middle of some deserted area, a white car was stopped on the left side of the road. With the car doors flung open, Isaros was standing by the car while her hair was tousled by the wind. As the sun shone upon her face, a slight sheen was reflected off her face.

Isaros was holding her phone as she spoke to Garen.

Meanwhile, Vivien was staring blankly at her phone like a bedraggled cat, with a gaze revealing an obvious yearning for a conversation with her brother.

Arisa was still hugging her arm, as she had no clue what the best course of action would be either.

The two Blood Breeds, Pritto and the lady, were sitting in the front seats.

The two of them were observing Isaros as she made the call, and Pritto was forcing a smile while the lady blatantly looked impatient.

"Garen wants us to change directions and send his sister in the direction of Saint Francs," Isaros suddenly put down the phone, and looked towards the Blood Breed duo with a frown.

"why don't he just go and die!?" without waiting for Pritto's response, the Blood Breed lady just cussed without holding back. "What are we, her nanny? Should we even need to fucking escort his sister to Saint Francs? Has his brain rusted through?"

"Don't you dare talk about my brother like that!" Vivien couldn't help but shout back.

"Your brother is an idiot!!" the female blood breed seemed to have passed an anger threshold and was shouting in fury.

Vivien was so angry that her cheeks were ruddy and she stared at the woman with watery eyes. Her little mouth was open but yet she didn't know how to refute, so she could only shiver in anger.

"The backup that we were waiting for still hasn't arrived, perhaps this is a choice. Using people's influence to flee the Secret Party," Pritto tried to calm the situation on both sides.

"Three low-level Blood Breeds, hundreds of vampires, do you think we can rely on regular humans' powers to flee their pursuit? Stop joking!" the female Blood Breed said as though she heard a really funny joke.

Isaros was speechless, only slightly shook her head, and then continued listening to the phone.

"His people will be here within half an hour."

"For what? To die?" the apoplectic lady snorted.

"Okay, stop talking Kaya!" Pritto immediately held her shoulders to comfort her.

Isaros, on the other hand, was confident in Garen.

To be able to kill vampires and injure Lars with the Silent Killing Technique was all thanks to Garen's teaching. In her eyes, Garen was a mysterious yet strong, weird martial artist. She could say he was half her teacher.

"In any case, we needed to stay here until evening. It's okay, it's just half an hour."

"That's good too, we could dump these burdens on his people and their life and death will no longer be of our concern," the lady Blood Breed Kaya conceded.

"Mind your words!" Isaros couldn't help but shout, "My sister is not a burden."

"Words? What words? You're a burden too, and you dare talk back to us?" Kaya had long been dissatisfied with Pritto's trust in them.

"You!?" Isaros couldn't stand this crazy b*tch's nonstop barking any longer.

"What? Wanna pick a fight?" Kaya was out of the car in an instant.

"Enough! Stand down!!" Pritto finally got angry and shouted. The cheerful guy had finally snapped, and both Kaya and Isaros didn't dare to retort after that instance.

Isaros didn't understand either. Kaya always seemed to be a rational person, why was she raging at everyone she saw?

In that instant, everyone was stunned by Pritto's words and were speechless.

Kaya snorted before she returned to the car.

Isaros' chest kept heaving in fury.

"Arisa, we'll head over to Brother Garen's place once he comes."

"Sure." Arisa nodded; she'd long despised being with Kaya. This lady Blood Breed was hot-tempered and completely despised her and her sister. The arguments have not happened only once or twice these days.

"Ugh..." Pritto couldn't help but sigh, and everyone didn't know what to say.

"Alright, don't be so angry, Kaya's temper is a bit more short-fused, but she's still a kind person. The people who're picking them up will be her uncle, so let's not make things too awkward."

"Did you think I was joking?" Isaros gave him an odd look, "I was seriously considering to go to Vivien's brother's place. My martial arts were partially taught by him, and he definitely has a plan."

Things have turned out this way and a joke had evolved into a fight. If they were indeed going to the Blood Breed's area of influence, even Kaya's territory, then wouldn't she become Kaya's puppet, to be played any way she desired?

"You're not joking?" Pritto finally began speaking to Isaros seriously.

"Of course."

Chapter 690: Pursue and Attack 2

Jii!!

Fresh blood spilled out from a person's neck, spraying over several meters away like a miniature geyser.

In the wide plains, a red shadow descended from the sky swiftly and landed upon the grasslands, before it elegantly flicked off the blood on the nails.

Puu!

The last person's corpse fell to the ground. On this area of the plains, there were many corpses from unknown forces, all dressed in armored attires while gripping onto weapons like firearms and daggers. The blood flowed across the soil and dyed the plains a rusted red.

Dahm was wearing a bright red cloak with red nail polish on his pointed nails, while his lips were dyed an odd blackish-purple shade. He was indulging in his great work at this moment.

"Marshal, Leader Mafa is just right ahead, our tracking signal showed that he's nearby," one baldy with a face full of scars reported while smiling, amongst a crowd of followers.

"What about the Four Hunting Generals?" Dahm licked the blood off his fingertips with some satisfaction.

"They're already heading over and should have engaged Mafa's people, but the leader Mafa is a bit hard to deal with, after all, he's from a thousand-year-old family. Some forms of retaliation power will definitely be in place," the bald giant continued answering warily.

"They are all either heavily injured or disabled, what's there to worry? Let's go too," Dahm said as he smiled and nodded.

After such a long period of preparation, their nemesis' ringleader, Mafa Organization, had finally been cornered in this rural area by a meticulous plan filled with step-by-step calculations, which had finally borne fruit. So long as he could kill off these opponents, the entire Mafa Organization would be effectively destroyed, and ready for him to take over.

Suddenly Dahm activated the smart earbud in his right ears to receive an incoming call.

"Bring all your personnel here immediately to this location," a stone-cold voice spoke over the phone without any hesitation which was transmitted over the earbud.

Dahm's smile then became a serious look.

"I'm actually conducting a very important act..."

"Do you not understand me?" that man's voice was cold and cruel, as though it was a suppressed volcano, as it abruptly interrupted him.

Dahm's face went red and he was speechless. After such a long period of planning, he could finally take down a strong rival at long last and expand his own financial empire, but now, in such a crucial moment, he wanted her to retreat?!!

"Yes....!" he was basically shivering all over as he pushed out this word from his throat.

Indeed, she dared not oppose that man, and she couldn't either. This was an absolute order filled with overwhelming power.

The waypoint has been sent to your chip, you have half an hour," clack, and the phone disconnected.

Bam!

The earbud exploded as a result of him tightly gripping it. The shattered pieces were scattered everywhere.

Everyone was frightened, and a few subordinates couldn't help but take a few steps backward, though their faces were still slashed by the shattered pieces. Even so, they did not dare to make a sound and could only endure the pain.

Dahm looked down and picked up a chip from amidst the debris and tossed it to a subordinate specializing in hacking.

"Everybody retreat, and head towards the location there."

The subordinates around her were stunned. This was such a pivotal moment, and if they could get through this, they could completely annihilate the Mafa Organization. The Four Hunting Generals have also formed an enclosure.

"But Marshal, the hunting generals are still..."

Pap!!

The person who spoke up had his skull gripped by Dahm.

Pap!!

His chest cavity was busted open in an instant and his flesh splattered all over the ground. As he screamed out loud, it slowly faded into silence.

Dahm kept his head lowered while putting down his hand. The subordinates around him were terrified to the point of shivering as they knew Dahm's violent, cruel personality had acted up again. Nobody dared to utter a word, not even exhaling loudly.

The baldy beside her already noticed that his irises had turned blood red.

" Heh... hehehe..." Dahm began laughing in a deep tone.

"Did you not hear me? Retreat, retreat!!" He shouted.

His face paled, as he had never seen Dahm ever being this angry. He didn't know who made him this angry, but the only thing he knew was that whoever stood in his path would definitely die.

The rustling plains of the Central Region seemed like a yellowish-green carpet, which seemed wooly yet oddly flat.

In the middle of the plains was a ribbon-like white road with a grey base that extended over the hills and valleys of the plains.

Aside from the long-haul vacation buses that occasionally used that road, a convoy of pitch-black cars stood out and was very attention-grabbing. The convoy's car surfaces were as smooth as mirrors, among the cars in the lead of the convoy.

Among them, one of the cars was slightly larger in size than the rest.

The car's windows were lowered halfway and the warm breeze kept blowing into the car. Laars placed one arm over the car window as he savored the warm breeze greeting him.

"Ahh... The smell of the sun..."

He took a deep breath with a euphoric look.

"The Blood Breeds in the movies are all afraid of sunlight, you'll make people feel uneasy like this, Lars," Another young man with short red hair teased Lars casually while flipping through a book, giving him a side gaze.

"But that's just a movie," Lars laughed comfortably, "The blood Breeds in the movies were all handsome men who can charm a girl effortlessly, but in reality?"

"Speaking of which, how strong are the Scarlet Moon Blood Breeds that we're pursuing?" the red-haired man asked after he'd turned back to his book for a while.

"We have you, Kurt, why would we even need to be afraid of just a few low-level Blood Breeds?" Lars said as he laughed, "You're already close to the advancement of mid-level Blood Breed. As a member of our clan, the thirteen Blood Breeds that have advanced in the recent hundred years would definitely include a seat just for you."

"You're praising me too much," Kurt laughed in embarrassment.

"This isn't a praise," Lars shook his head, "My only concern now is that we'll lose the Scarlet Moons ahead of us."

"That's okay, I can sense that they're not far ahead..." Kurt shut his eyes and sensed something.

The internal conflict among the Blood Breeds was actually coming to an end, though only these pure Blood Breeds would have these sorts of insider news.

The leader of Light Party, Ashen Castine had been imprisoned thanks to the combined effort of the Secret Party Death Apostle leaders, in order for them to create a brand new world and to wipe out the last of Light Party survivors.

What was left was the conflict raised among the non-Death Apostles; the war had slowly been shifted towards them. At this time, different war prodigies excelling in the art of killing have been showcased, catching the eye of the Party.

Kurt was one of them.

Looking at Kurt who was engrossed in his book, Lars continued speaking in a regretful tone.

"To be honest, I have once tried to increase my own level too, intending to break free from the shackles of the Low-Level Blood Breed. Unfortunately, I couldn't break through the bottleneck no matter how hard I tried."

Kurt laughed.

"Actually, you only need two requirements to advance, one is to increase your own blood purity by merging with a purer Bloodline Core. As long as this step is successful, you'll be able to get some Bloodline essence of a higher level. With this small amount of essence, you can then feed the essence with large amounts of blood to let it grow to achieve the goal of advancement."

"Even though I made it sound easy, the actual heritage of the purifying process was actually hard to come by... The Gazing Eyes coupled with the clan's commonly used Secret Technique 'Fresh Blood Cultivation' was still too low of a level," Lars said regrettably, "If I had your Fifth Holy Technique.."

"I have sworn a Blood oath that I cannot share this family's secrets," Kurt shook his head while smiling, "You know the rules set by the Clan Elders."

Holy Technique was a mysterious technique heritage that allows the Blood Breeds to purify their own blood to achieve a higher level. Each clan's strongest heritage techniques were crowned with the title of a Holy Technique but in essence, only the six largest clans had Holy Techniques within the entire Blood Breed society, the Six Major Blood Breed Clans. Among them, all four Death Apostle Clans were in the ranks, while the two top-tiered Upper-Level Blood Breeds took the remaining two seats.

The top five clans were called the Five Staves of Power. Their influence and network were intertwined with every detail of the entire Blood Breed Society's multiple facets. Among the Five Staves of Power, there were three clans supporting the Light Party, while Secret Party only had the backing of one. However, now that there was another Death Apostle clan and one of the main supporters of the Light Party had betrayed them for unknown reasons, it caused the Scarlet Moon Death Apostle to flee with heavy injuries and go into hiding. As for the final clan, they weren't considered an actual thriving clan by the Staves of Power.

On that note, Lars' clan was indeed the Secret Party supporter among the Five Staves of Power.

That was how he could gather so many vampires under his wing, as well as the reason he managed to invite Kurt to pursue the Scarlet Moon Blood Breeds.

"Within the Scarlet Moon Clan's headquarters, the elders have claimed that the legendary Scarlet Moon Holy Technique is nowhere to be found. It's said that the Scarlet Moon Holy technique is a Holy Technique with the fastest speed of blood purification and an extremely high success rate. Perhaps this is why all the major powers are this enthusiastic about searching for and destroying the Scarlet Moon Blood Breeds."

Kurt smiled while reminding Lars on the actual mission objective.

To be honest, he was here for the Holy Techniques too. After all, Scarlet Moon Holy Technique was considered to be a Death Apostle grade Holy Technique, and in this situation where all three Death Apostles were unable to make time, they may very well lose the chance to look for another Holy Technique to advance.

"I have crossed fists with the few people ahead of us a few times, and according to my deduction, the Scarlet Moon Holy Technique would most likely be in the hands of the Blood Breed called Pritto," Lars spoke softly.

"Ohh?" Kurt's interest was piqued, "A holy technique is such an important thing, why would it be with a regular low-level Blood Breed? It's a tad unrealistic, no?"

"That's why Sir Scarlet Moon would place it on a low-level Blood Breed..." Lars smiled as he hinted.

Kurt's jaw dropped but he reacted soon after.

Indeed, when everybody was thinking of such contingency, they would definitely not place such documents on a low-level Blood Breed. If they put in a little effort on this Blood Breed and gave him some means to escape, that would make it very easy for this person to escape pursuit.....

If you think of it this way, then perhaps the Scarlet Moon Holy Technique could really be with Pritto...

Kurt, who was feeling disinterested in this matter was suddenly fuelled by passion. If he had the Scarlet Moon Holy Technique, perhaps he could break through the bottleneck in one go and safely advance to Middle-Level.

"How do we split the Holy Technique once it's in our hands?" Kurt looked at Lars.

"The three of us were the best of friends. The Holy Technique will definitely be shared, but it'd only be among the three of us, how's that?" Lars had obviously thought it through.

About the other vampires that were driving, they were all their direct descendants and were under their control, so they could rest easy. Plus, if them, as a higher level Blood Breed obtained greater advancements, it would trickle to these vampires as a stronger backbone support and would allow them to develop stronger network and influences, which would benefit everyone. Naturally, they wouldn't leak this secret out.