

Mystical 731

Chapter 731: Post-Battle 1

Word of this battle between the Holy Fist and the Death Apostles spread like wildfire. There were people who claimed they had felt the ripples of shockwaves from the battle from afar. Certain countries' military satellite monitoring system also picked up strong signals from the area of the battle. Of course, all of these details were confidential and sealed away.

Only the highest ranked personnel had the security clearance to access this information.

Garen started pursuing Tu Lan Wellington from the Holy Fist Palace. On the way, Tu Lan had managed to evolve into a death apostle and successfully surrounded Garen with the help of the head of the Wellington household, but the two were easily defeated. If it weren't for the interference of the Number One Apostle, the two would have been utterly annihilated by Garen.

This piece of information was obtained from the internal messages of the Blood Breeds.

Ashen had managed to escape. This was a truth admitted by the Number One Apostle himself. As the strongest Death Apostle, if he hadn't personally interfered in this, the results of this battle would have been unpredictable.

As the message spread, it caused tremors throughout the world.

This shook up the entire Blood Breed civilization, both the Light Party and the Secret Party. Various investigations on the Holy Fist Palace immediately started, with countless resources and manpower all siphoned towards the tasks of finding the truth behind how a group could manage to become so strong in just a short timespan.

Various technological or even secret means were used in attempts to investigate deeper.

Word of the top tier martial arts from the Holy Fist Palace started to leak out, spreading throughout the world. Rumor has it that if you managed to complete the martial arts training at the Holy Fist Palace, you would attain a monstrous combat prowess similar to the Blood Breeds.

These rumors and legends started spreading more and more, painting an even more concrete image.

Since the Secret Party had failed to repress Ashen, after the former strongest Number One Apostle had escaped, the two factions were once again forced to return to the negotiating table, with the resources of both sides drastically diminished. Due to the immense pressure from the Holy Fist Palace and the witches, they were finally willing to talk.

Although there's still a sense of hostility and rivalry between the two factions, it was now far less intense.

On the other hand, Garen and his men had escorted Tu Lan to the Bailey Group headquarters, only to find the building completely abandoned. Just as they were prepared to move to the headquarters of the Primary Colours, they received an invitation, stating that the people who targeted the Holy Fist Palace had been removed and that they would send the appropriate reparations to the Combat Club soon.

Facing the Holy Fist Palace that was strong enough to suppress the Blood Breeds, even a group like the Primary Colours had to be cautious not to step on their tail.

At this moment, the Combat Club's networking circle has also been rapidly increasing. After the second batch of students left, this network started to spread throughout the globe, connecting them with influential people all over the world.

After the battle with the Death Apostle, as the representative of the Holy Fist Palace, Garen's fame seemed to have been raised to unparalleled heights.

Although most people only knew about the most minute of details, to be able to defeat two allied death apostles and almost being forced to retreat with Ashen's presence showcased Garen's ridiculous strength.

Holy Fist Palace

A thick layer of snow blanketed the entire palace.

It was late at night, and in the empty meeting hall, the smooth black marble flooring could almost reflect a person's appearance.

Garen sat at the highest point of the hall, while his captive, Tu Lan, stood behind him.

On both sides stood the top-ranked members in the Combat Club and the Nighthawks, in two orderly lines.

Dahm, Hochman, Quentin, Xander, Ninox, Baldy of the Nighthawks, and Caesar from the second batch.

These people all stood there giving off an imposing air, giving out their reports when instructed by their master.

The one speaking now was Xander.

"We've recently captured 423 people who attempted to acquire intel about our Holy Fist Style, most of them were from the intelligence and recon agencies from various countries. Most likely, under the orders of the Blood Breed or overambitious parties. After your battle with the Death Apostles, our name has been solidified in this world. Although our numbers are nowhere near the witches or the Blood Breed, from the standpoint of high-level combat, we have master sitting here. There's no way anyone would dare to take us lightly. Under this condition, everything is progressing rapidly as part of the plan."

Xander bowed and moved back in line.

Quentin, who was on his left, stood out to give her report.

“Regarding the internal movements of the Blood Breed. According to the spies we’ve manipulated and planted within the ranks of the Blood Breed, the situation between the two factions is slowly dying down. Although there were still a few violent clashes and confrontations, the number of casualties have drastically decreased. This is most likely the effect of our threat. On the witches’ side, AG has just declared Mount Enredour to be closed. However, on the same day, a witch from the Dark Colours was ambushed, severing 3 of her limbs. This is likely an attack by the extremists from the Blood Breeds as a revenge from the battle of Wellington. I suggest that we also set up some defenses in case they decide to attack.”

“That’s natural,” Garen said. “Dahm, have you finished arranging the schedule to get the Sleepless Face Mask I want?”

Dahm hastily stood out.

“Everything is set, we will be heading to Memphis Forest tomorrow. I’ve already sent my men to scout out the Moon River over there, preliminary investigations have narrowed it down to a few possible locations.”

“Update me with the good news then.”

“Understood.”

“Oh, I also heard that you joined the National Security Agency and got a new position,” Garen usually didn’t care much about the affairs of the nation, but Dahm was from one of the most influential households in politics, hence becoming a civil servant or government official was only natural.

“It’s a special forces department, newly founded specifically for Spec-Ops. Officially, I am the director general of this department,” Dahm politely answered. As he dived deeper into the realm of the martial arts, he and Hochman had started to feel even more deeply that their absurd growth rate was completely abnormal. It wasn’t just him, everyone who had trained with Garen had the same amazing progress.

Obviously, that was the only explanation for it. The source always led back to Garen. He must have used some method to allow them to grow alongside him.

After learning about this and undergoing various investigations and experimentation, he and Hochman came to the understanding that their growth was based on Garen's strength. Most of it wasn't due to their own hard work.

After learning about this, any thoughts of malice towards the Holy Fist Palace were completely abandoned by the two.

Of course, that was also the reason why Garen completely did not care about the actions of those under him and gave complete control to the people under him. Except during his personal training sessions and the occasional confrontations, he completely relinquished his control on them, not caring about the internal disputes between his students.

This led to the two shifting their focus back towards each other. Their mutual fighting styles were similar to Yin and Yang; they were the two polar extremes of the Waterbird Fist so naturally, they weren't on friendly terms.

Recently Hochman had finally managed to capture his beloved cousin once again. After he found out that it was all Dahm's doing, he was even more pissed.

The two's confrontations once again escalated to a new height.

"What about the 7th mask? Hochman, have you found any leads?" Garen turned his head towards Hochman.

"We've already found some clues on it," Hochman nodded. "According to our sources, the 7th mask is most likely in the hands of the Bailey Group Chairman. I've already sent out a command, ordering my forces to pour all their resources towards hunting Kabb and his accomplice Medis. However, even before this, the two seemed to have disappeared off our radar. They might've heard about our movements and went into hiding."

"You can ask the witches from the Dark Colours for some assistance if needed. Their representative they sent to request aid should almost be here," Garen answered. "As for the amount of aid from both sides, I'll leave the negotiations to you."

“Alright,” Hochman was now one of the heads of the largest conglomerates in the world. Unlike Dahm, he’d chose to take the path of economics and finance, but he had also achieved a similar level of influence in the world.

For these Monthly meetings at the Holy Fist Palace, he had no choice but to squeeze out some time from his regularly packed schedule.

Next, Caesar headed up to report on the progress of the Combat Club and its connections, some of their requests and the corresponding advantages it granted the Holy Fist Palace.

As for the progress of the Combat Club, they now own 3 of the biggest hotel chains throughout various countries, 5 private banks, and 1 media corporation. These were only the direct affiliations. Other intermediaries include various influences the members have throughout over 30 countries, with enough influence to affect the domestic economy and politics of numerous small and medium-sized nations. However, their influences on major countries are severely limited, as those are within the control of the blood breed and the witches.”

However, with this, the effective direct income of the Holy Fist Palace was more than 30 billion per annum, and this was only the first year of their growth.

The assets recorded under Garen’s name was valued at more than 100 billion, an unimaginable amount.

Even Garen himself was shocked when he heard this amount. He’d never expected his wealth to increase at such a rapid rate. Only after the detailed explanation by Caesar did he understand what was going on. A large amount of these assets were mainly from the gifts or discounts given by other forces in the world, trying to get on the good side of the Combat Club. In addition, with the support of the connections of the members themselves, the growth was boosted even further.

It had almost been a month since the battle with the apostles.

In actuality, it hadn’t even been a year since this palace had finished its construction. However, within such a short time, this place managed to become such an influential monster.

Tu Lan, who was standing behind Garen this whole time, was completely shell-shocked

Listening to the reports from below her, even she could not hide her shock.

These people giving reports all had supernatural abilities, and even the weakest amongst the bunch was at the level of a Middle-level Blood Breed. There were even 3 who have reached the level of Upper-level Blood Breeds. This level of strength has already far surpassed the old Blood Breed households. They had reached the level of a household of death apostles.

This was only the growth of a few years.

Garen was completely unworried about her leaking out the reports she heard, as he had no intention of hiding anything from her. He just allowed her to listen in freely on this entire session.

Was it because he could confidently suppress her completely?

Tu Lan started to bite her lip in frustration.

“Lord, Ms. Vivian has a message for you. She says that Mr. Emmer and Mrs. Trish wish to see you,” suddenly, a subject was brought up from below.

Suddenly the entire hall fell silent.

Garen, still sitting on his throne, paused briefly.

“Reply to her that I’ll return tomorrow.”

“Understood,” the subordinate below him bowed and swiftly departed.

“That’s all for today’s meeting. Cece, please stay back for a moment,” Garen calmly said.

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Immediately, the people at the bottom bowed and silently left the hall, and only Ninox remained. She had the same style as back in her student days; she was in a pair of white skinny jeans and a knotted white T-shirt that flaunted her curves. However, her face was a bit pale, as she was still recovering from her injuries.

She looked over at Tu Lan who was standing behind Garen. Recognizing her, she had a displeased expression. However, since Garen was there, she didn't say anything and quietly stood there awaiting her orders.

She was the most loyal person to Garen out of all the members of the Combat Club. Regarding the manipulation via the Soul Seed, she didn't mind at all. On the contrary, she was extremely grateful for what Garen did for her, as it turned her life around.

Although she would have to face a lot of dark and gory predicaments, the Fantasy Fist wasn't as bloody as Waterbird Fist. By using Waterbird Fist as a support for Fantasy Fist, she could easily render the opponent helpless. This also meant that she had also killed a lot of people, but most of the time blood wouldn't be spilled.

Garen had never forced her to do anything though. Just like Dahm and Hochman, she'd started off merely as a martial arts hobbyist who had some basic training in the East. If not for her gratitude towards Garen and the influence of the soul seed primer, there was no way Ninox could've adapted to her current job and lifestyle at the Holy Fist Palace.

Garen stood up from his throne. After everyone else had exited the hall, he finally walked down, with Cece and Tu Lan following closely behind him. The trio headed to the palace, towards the common resting facilities used by Garen and the members of the palace.

Ninox had the utmost admiration towards Garen, and so she eagerly followed behind him. Tu Lan hesitated for a brief moment but reluctantly followed the two.

"How is the training going for your Fantasy Fist?" Garen asked while he continued to walk.

Cece politely answered.

"I'm only one more level away from reaching the maximum level."

"Oh?" Garen was somewhat surprised. "That's fast progress. Looks like your innate abilities are great after all."

The three walked to a darker corner. Garen suddenly stopped and turned around.

"I have a task for you."

"I await your orders, master," Ninox immediately lowered her head.

"I want you to protect someone in secret back in my hometown of Grano," Garen calmly said. He opened up his mouth, a name immediately rang in Cece's ears.

She was stunned for a moment, and her eyes held a hint of disappointment. However, she quickly composed herself once more.

"I will complete your orders."

"Out of my apprentices, I'm most worried about you," Garen let out a sigh, "Relax your whole body."

Ninox was once again stunned, not understanding what her master meant.

In an instant, she saw Garen's palm fly towards her chest. Her face immediately flushed red, and she forcefully suppressing her urge to dodge his hand, closing her eyes.

Poke!

Almost as if numerous sounds merged together, it created a loud sound.

Garen's index finger lightly poked a pressure point in between Cece's breasts. He then slowly pulled back his hand.

At that moment, Ninox's chest started to boil up, almost as if her entire body was being entirely enveloped by the warmth of a hot spring. This feeling only lasted for a brief moment and it faded away almost immediately.

"I left something inside your body that in the case of emergencies, such as when you face a life-or-death situation, it will automatically activate," Garen's calm voice could be heard once again.

"Apprentice..." Ninox suddenly realized that it was all her dirty imagination, and she immediately blushed. She slightly lowered her head, her heart beating rapidly.

"Alright, I'm counting on you!" he patted her shoulders, "Don't let me down."

"Yes!" Cece frantically nodded and turned around to escape from this situation. With a few huge leaps, she even used her secret techniques to escape this embarrassing situation.

"She likes you," Tu Lan said in a soft voice.

"Is that so?" Garen didn't seem surprised; Cece's reactions were easy to read even for a normal person.

Tu Lan could also understand Garen. After all, his existence was on a whole new level.

An unparalleled position, monstrous strength, a handsome appearance comparable to Apollo, the God of Sun himself, he had every masculine trait that one could ever want. It would be even weirder if someone didn't like him.

Garen also understood how Cece felt, but a young girl's emotions were constantly changing. She was still young and might not understand what she was feeling yet, might not know what she actually liked yet. She would only find out more when she matured, and it was still too early to tell.

This mission he gave was also a form of training for Ninox. In the end, she still didn't have much experience in killing and so she was still very naive.

What Garen left inside her was the aura to unlock the first star of his Seven Star Life's Secret Point Secret Method. That small amount of aura could allow Ninox to obtain the burst potential of the first star in emergencies. That would allow her to double all of her stats, at the cost of collapsing in exhaustion for one entire day after.

This was his protection for her. Out of all his apprentices, Ninox had the purest intentions towards the Holy Fist Palace.

"You can go back and rest," Garen looked Tu Lan in the eye. "Remember, you are not allowed to leave the Holy Fist Palace."

"Yeah yeah," Tu Lan made a dejected face. "It's not like I could leave even if I wanted to, right?"

Her body was planted with Garen's soul seed primer, as she'd given in to the temptation and started learning the Fantasy Fist. Even if it was the Blood Breed, after learning Garen's secret techniques and demonic techniques, they would expectedly start to get engrossed in it. It wasn't because the training brought them pleasure, but it was mostly because they had to find Garen every so often for him to personally refill the energy of the soul seed primer.

Without Garen's soul primer to suppress the effects of learning the Fantasy Fist, even if she was a death apostle, there would still be numerous side effects of migraines and even memory loss.

However, with the pleasure getting stronger from learning the Fantasy Fist, Tu Lan, who had been bored for thousands of years, couldn't help but delve deeper and deeper. She started taking the initiative in her training even without the orders of Garen.

Garen also found it strange, as the Fantasy Fist didn't always have this type of effect. Ever since it had been written into the Demonic Book, it started to have the same effects of the Waterbird Fist, a weird pleasure in learning the technique and soul resistance. Similar to the other secret techniques, it became a demonic technique with rapid progression rates.

He guessed that this had something to do with the Demonic Book.

After Tu Lan left, he headed towards his reading room alone.

After closing the door, he saw the boiling hot glass of green tea freshly made from the kitchen. Inside the glass wasn't just normal green tea leaves, there were also countless valuable herbs, all for the purpose of replenishing one's vitality, qi and blood. The water had turned a bright shade of green due to an excessive amount of a certain ingredient used. However, if a normal person were to ingest this, it would undoubtedly have the same effects of drinking a poisonous tonic. Its frightening concentration could easily be made out from the intense aroma slowly enveloping the entire room. If a normal person were to drink this, they would definitely collapse immediately.

However, Garen was completely used to this, he just grabbed the glass and chugged its contents down.

"Is there any way for my right eye to recover?" Garen asked as if talking to another person.

At that moment, Black Sethe's voice softly rang in his ears.

'I've checked, the wounds left by Nadia has a special ability to cause permanent damage. To put it simply, after you get wounded and certain parts of your body completely stop functioning, there will be no chance of recovery. In other words, I can't do anything else to help your eye.'

Garen lightly touched his right eye.

"As a Void Pursuer, can't I use the core of void creatures to repair my wounds?"

'That is the case, but those only apply to average wounds from normal void creatures. This ability of Nadia is something more like gene erasing. It looked as if she only attacked your right eye, but in reality,

she attacked your body's cells, removing all genes linked to your right eye in the cells, making it seem as if you never had a right eye in the first place. Naturally, there is no way of recovering from that,' Black Sethe explained.

'A better plan would be to get a transplant, attaching another creature's eyes to your body, using it on your own. However, that requires major alterations in the brain, making it risky and troublesome.'

"Speaking of which, Nadia hasn't appeared for a while now. Has she given up?" Garen frowned.

'Impossible. After being silent for such a long time, there's a high chance she has developed a strong attack tactic. You'd better prepare yourself,' Black Sethe flatly denied Garen's hypothesis. 'As for your right eye, if you plan on hiding it from your parents, your best bet is to use your Fantasy Fist.'

Garen also understood that. He just sighed and moved on.

He shifted his sights to his own attribute pane.

'Garen Thomas.

Strength 7. Agility 7. Vitality 10. Intelligence 11. Potential 7989%. Soul Limit 30.'

The attributes with more than 10 points now required more than 100 potential points just to increase them by one point. This frightening point requirement made Garen give up on raising the other attributes. He thought it would be better to save up his points to get to 12 points of Intelligence, gaining the double hit ability.

On the other hand, he had not met his family in a very long time, which was very weird for a child. Since his right eye couldn't be repaired, he had no choice but to use his Fantasy Fist.

The information on the Fantasy Fist flashed in his mind.

His vision swiftly shifted towards his skill pane, in the panel filled with different abilities and skills, he found the Fantasy Fist.

‘Fantasy Fist: Level 1 — Memory Loss (Total of 4 levels)’

‘A mysterious and scary ancient form of martial arts. Uses sound and air flow to damage or vibrate the opponents’ brains, creating a confusion effect on the opponents. Once hailed as the most feared secret martial arts.’

The Fantasy Fist, as a top-tier martial arts technique, naturally required quite a lot of potential points to level. The system behind learning this technique was absurdly complex. Every level was as tedious as decrypting a code, and it wasn’t something a normal person could achieve.

However, Garen was different; even his lowest attributes were at 7 points and as his Intelligence was at 11 points, his memory and comprehension level had reached an inhuman level. Furthermore, he was once a researcher back in the Totem World and had a good understanding of advanced neurology. Naturally, this made learning Fantasy Fist a simple task for him. A lot of the theories and principles behind it were nothing but just a refresher course for him.

For a top tier martial arts technique, the first level should require 5 points...

Garen’s vision was focussed on the icon. After 3 seconds, the icon flashed, then once again turning clear, the text displayed also changed.

‘Fantasy Fist: Level 2– Delirium (Total of 4 levels)’

‘An increased effect duration, causing confusion on all 5 senses.’

Glancing at his potential points, he’d used up 5 points. That didn’t faze Garen, and he continued to focus on the Fantasy Fist.

Except for his Flight of the Waterbird’s Profound, there weren’t any moves from the Waterbird’s Profound that required his full potential. Even Flight of the Phoenix was the result of combining Flight

with West Phoenix Fist, or else it would merely be a third-rate secret technique. It could never reach that level on its own.

If he leveled Fantasy Fist now, he would be able to widen his arsenal. After all, Fantasy Fist was a top-class technique.

Chapter 733: Fusion and Masks 1

Shortly after, he reached the 3rd level.

‘Level 3 –Memory Alter.’

‘Changes memories, creates illusions and disrupts the opponents’ senses of their surroundings. At this level, one will obtain the prerequisite to learn the first Profound for this technique — Radiant World.’

This was the exact move that Ninox used against Tu Lan last time, forcing her opponent into an illusory world. However, because she didn’t have enough energy, she was countered by Tu Lan’s Blood Breed ability Illusive Counter, who then managed to break out of her world.

If it managed to succeed, Tu Lan would be stuck in an illusory world fighting against an undying Ninox. No matter how many times she killed her, Ninox would just revive again at full strength.

This would continue until Tu Lan exhausted all her energy. However, even though the Ninox in that world was just an illusion, if she got hit, it would still damage her physical body. This was the textbook case of how one’s mental state could affect one’s physical condition.

Lastly, there was the 4th level.

Garen once again focused for 3 seconds. The icon for Fantasy Fist blurred briefly once again, then immediately cleared up. There seemed to be slight changes to the icon as well.

‘Fantasy Fist: Level 4 –Vanish.’

‘All enemies being suppressed by this aura will momentarily lose their consciousness, falling under the control of the user. This effect will be automatically applied. Any opponent that comes into physical contact with the user lose partial control over parts of their body. Against weak-willed opponents, it may cause them to enter an eternal slumber, causing brain damage, and more.’

‘Final Profound –Reincarnate (Eternal control over a weak-willed opponent, forcing them to unconsciously obey your commands) – Not Learned. The user requires 1 or more Pearl Flowers.’

Looking at the effects of the final Profound, even Garen was in utter shock.

The strength of Fantasy Fist had already reached such a frightening degree. However, the last material required was a Pearl Flower. Garen knew about this flower, but unfortunately, it did not seem to exist in this world; he’d read about it in a botany book back in the Totem World under the category ‘Special Plants’.

At this moment, he suddenly realized that all the moves he usually used worked with the Waterbird Fist as their base. This third-rate fist technique, when combined with the West Phoenix Fist, could achieve a whole new height. Adding to the effects of the Demonic Book, its progress rate was drastically increased, its final strength largely increased and training period shortened, making it an advanced-level technique.

He also understood that the things he learned at this point were getting more and more diverse. The four big killer moves he created in the Secret Technique World were no longer enough to meet the requirements of the current level of combat, causing him to be unable to activate the full potential of the fifth star of the skills.

Having an excessively diverse arsenal was a troublesome thing for normal people. However, for Garen, he sorted out every single ability and technique he had, and only had to care about which secret technique he should select.

Now that Fantasy Fist had reached level 4, its strength could also be considered to be a level higher, and so his choices have also increased.

Reincarnate was undoubtedly strong, being able to forever alter a person's consciousness. However, to Garen, this skill could not reach its full potential in a battle scenario. Furthermore, it even required a rare material.

His fighting style was largely based on brute force, fitting his strong and fearless personality. However, the combat style that best utilized Fantasy Fists was a more stealthy style. Unlike his other secret techniques, it did not enhance the user's physical abilities and was purely a control technique used to gain an advantage over opponents. It was the polar opposite of his brute force style.

"Well... I still need to fuse the Fantasy Fist into my fighting style somehow," Garen started to brainstorm. He went back to the table he usually used to write the Demonic Book and pulled out a pen, slowly twirling it between his fingers.

'The Fantasy Fist's effectivity relies on the mental and spiritual strength of the user. Except for Nadia and other void creatures, who do you think has a stronger mental and spiritual strength than you?' Black Sethe said.

"That's true," Garen nodded, "but the two are still different secret techniques. One can only use one secret technique at any point in time because of the multiple overlapping variables within the meridian system. When I use Waterbird Fist, I won't be able to use Fantasy Fist. Being able to learn both Secret Techniques was only because of my current strength, and because the parts of the meridian system for Fantasy Fist and Waterbird Fist don't overlap too much. If it was an average person, they would've already suffered internal damage when they started to train."

Garen frowned.

'Then, how about you try fusing them?' Black Sethe hinted.

"Fusion?" Garen suddenly remembered the days back when he'd first arrived in the Secret Technique World, where he kept trying to combined different martial arts. Those fusions created terrifyingly strong results. "That's worth a shot."

His vision returned to his Skill Pane.

Waterbird Fist had already reached Level 4, and there weren't any requirements displayed for its Profounds.

Garen's vision moved repeatedly from the two secret techniques with the intent of fusing the two. Suddenly, the two icons started to slightly vibrate, creating a miraculous result.

The two icons started glowing red and started to beat like a heart, one stronger than the other. This seemed to insinuate which technique would become the main and which the sub. After a while, contrary to Garen's expectations, the far superior Fantasy Fist's red glow started to fade, whilst the third rate Waterbird Fist started to glow even brighter.

The icon for Fantasy Fist slowly started to blur out. Together with the text detailing the technique, it slowly disappeared. On the other hand, the icon for Waterbird Fist started glowing even brighter. The icon almost looked like it was stained with bright red blood.

Pak! A soft sound could be heard, something like a steel wire being cut in half. Garen could now see that Fantasy Fist had completely disappeared.

Waterbird Fist also had some new changes.

'Mirage Waterbird Fist: Level 4 (Total 4 levels)

A top class technique created by fusing the Fantasy Fist into the Waterbird Fist. The user can affect an opponent's state of mind through his movements. It has 4 Profounds. The final Profound –Joyous Reincarnate.'

This new secret technique wasn't like his previous results, where the fusion had led to the strengthening of one of the techniques. This time, it merged the effects of both techniques.

As Fantasy Fist and Waterbird Fist didn't have too many overlapping variables in the Meridian system, this allowed them to support each other. The two secret techniques managed to merge and become a completely new technique.

However, when Garen attempted to follow the blood and qi circulation of the new technique, he felt that the blood flow used by this technique was similar to what both Fantasy Fist and Waterbird Fist used. There was one trouble that he noticed.

The areas with overlapping blood flows.

Even though there was very little overlapping, two of the overlapped areas have already started to hurt.

The first area was at the center of his left inner wrist, while the other was right in the middle of his lower back.

These two areas were coincidentally the areas that require the most blood flow for this new technique.

Hypothetically, if both the original techniques will require blood flow in a certain area, by merging the two techniques it will require blood flow to the same areas twice. This indirectly doubled the burden on the user's body.

"If even a body like mine would feel discomfort, looks like this new technique can't be taught to others, I have to train it myself..." Garen frowned.

'Can you tweak it in any way?' Black Sethe suggested.

"Sadly I can't..." Garen shook his head, "These two overlapping areas are key areas, they can't be replaced."

'Well you win some you lose some,' Garen lightly chuckled, comforting him. 'Let's find a place to test out its strength.'

Garen nodded and walked out of the reading room. He walked down the corridor slowly but swiftly, he moved more than 10 meters just with a couple of steps.

Passing through the student training hall, he saw a few silhouettes engrossed in their training. Upon closer inspection, it was the students who had slower progress, and the sight made Garen happy and satisfied.

After the 2nd batch of students, this 3rd batch of new students was no longer directly under his control as he felt no need to control this batch of students. He left it up to his 3 best pupils, Hochman, Dahm, and Cece to choose who to guide. The remaining would then be left to Quentin, Xander, and the others to deal with.

All of his students from the 1st batch of students in the Combat Club now had the ability to release their own soul seed primer, as they have all reached a certain level of proficiency in their Secret Techniques. Although it was much weaker than Garen's, it still managed to establish control to a certain extent.

This also helped further develop their own strengths.

Silently passing through the training hall, Garen walked past a few more areas to finally arrive at the pet feeding area of the palace.

This was a circular empty atrium area, with cages of different sizes placed all around. Some of the cages had an animal, and some were empty. Occasionally, you could hear the sounds of dogs and cats.

The air conditioner was set to a higher temperature here, unlike other areas where the temperature was lowered to train the students.

Garen looked through the cages one by one. He stopped at a cage with white cats with an unknown owner. Inside the cage was a nest of 3 kittens, all of them pure white. They looked like 3 cute little furballs from afar. As Garen went closer, the 3 palm-sized kittens all started meowing softly and snuggled close to each other, as if they were cowering in fear.

Garen reached his finger out with a smile, lightly poking the cage.

Ting...

A shapeless wave started rippling from the part of the steel cage that Garen touched.

The wave rapidly covered the three kittens, then quickly disappeared.

The steel cage cracked; the Waterbird Fist's monstrous power had somehow managed to break through the steel bar, creating a small gap just enough for the kittens to wriggle out. However, the three kittens completely did not notice the newly created gap and remained motionless in the cage.

Garen stood up with a satisfied smile on his face.

"Mirage Waterbird Fist seems to be able to affect animals, though it's not very strong," he looked at the gaze of the kittens, they completely did not notice that the cage was broken, almost like they felt that they were still locked in the cage.

"What's sad about this is that the effects weren't completely intentional. As the illusions induced were natural, this cannot be used against void creatures."

'You can take the initiative and try it out on Nadia, it's also a good opportunity to go check on her movements,' Black Sethe suggested.

"Good idea."

Garen agreed. Nadia hadn't made any moves for such a long time that it almost felt like the calm before a storm.

He stood up and left the pet area, heading straight to the secret room in the palace.

After he left, the three kittens still did not move. In the reflection in their eyes, the cage was still completely intact...

In the same empty hall, a silhouette was stuck to the center of the wall, tightly bound by countless strands of green webbing, unable to escape. He seemed to be struggling in pain.

On both sides of the hall were rows of tall white statues, all depicting a humanoid being holding a huge sword up high, creating a solemn atmosphere.

Garen once again stood in this hall, before the wall shrouded in green webbing. He reached his arm out to touch the green webs, but there was a sturdy glass layer preventing him from touching it. He had attempted to break it in the past, but his efforts were futile; this glass was far stronger than any material he could've imagined.

Garen scanned the surroundings, the floor, and the walls, they were all covered in a layer of dust. It seemed that no one had been here for a long time.

"Nadia?" Garen called in a low voice.

There was no reply.

His voice only continuously echoed through the hall.

Garen frowned, as this was not his first time coming to this dream realm. This was his eighth time entering this place. In the past, he would come every so often to have a lethal duel with Nadia.

Similarly, every time he entered this place, Nadia would immediately appear.

However, this time Nadia didn't appear.

'She didn't show up? That's impossible,' Black Sethe's voice rang.

“Maybe she got wrapped up with some other stuff?” Garen guessed.

‘Maybe.’

Garen frowned even more. He had a bad feeling about this.

Bottom of the Holy Fist Palace Mountain

In a small town

A white car slowly stopped in front of a small building. It was Garen’s house. In the warm sunshine, the car door opened, and out from the driver’s seat came a handsome young man, with hair as bright as gold.

The man was in a white suit, and his lean figure gave off a fully balanced impression. He gently smiled at the cute young girl running out of the building.

“Lil’ Vivien...”

“Brother, welcome home!”

The young girl’s slim youthful body dived straight into Garen’s embrace. He swung her around in a circle.

“Mom and Dad are waiting for you inside!” Vivien seemed extremely happy.

Garen raised his head and saw his father Emmer looking down with a strict expression from the 2nd-floor window.

He smiled, then walked into the building.

Behind him, more and more cars slowly stopped near the same building. A few men emerged from the cars and patrolled its vicinity.

Walking through the doorway, Garen saw a big table at the center of the room, with something covered by a black cloth.

Bang!!

A frightening explosion sound rang from behind him. Just as he had let his guard down, his body was covered with countless party streamers.

His younger sister Vivien, his older brother Jason, Alicia, and even his mother Trish had blasted party poppers at Garen.

With the chaotic party poppers, Garen was completely covered with streamers, looking like a weird rainbow-colored creature.

“Happy Birthday!!”

They shouted in unison, their voices echoing in the room.

The black cloth was pulled away, revealing a giant birthday cake at a shocking half-meter height. On it, “Happy 21st Birthday Garen” was written in pastel buttercream.

Garen’s expression couldn’t be seen as he was covered completely by streamers, however, his eyes gave off an indescribable feeling. He always had birthday celebrations even back in the secret technique world and the totem world, but this was the first time he had such a grand and amazing celebration...

“You guys shouldn’t have...” he softly said, but his voice was overshadowed by their giggling. In the midst of this chaotic and joyous celebration, everyone was just popping party poppers left and right.

Garen helplessly shook his head, then walked over to the sofa at the side while brushing off the streamers draped all over him.

When everyone had their fun and started to feel tired, the room had already become a mess. Luckily, the cake had a huge glass lid covering it, otherwise it would've already been completely covered by streamers.

"Today is Garen's birthday! Let's sing him a celebratory song. Not just the normal birthday song, let's sing this song I've written!" at this point, Trish didn't even look like a mother, but more like a kid cheerfully shouting.

In their eyes, Garen's eyes were fine, he wasn't wearing a mask and he had his same old face.

Snap!

The sound of a camera shutter was heard.

Garen's sight immediately shifted before he stood up and walked over to his little sister.

"I thought this camera was broken?"

Pointing at the camera, the internal components started to vibrate ever so slightly, causing some sort of change. On the surface it looked perfectly fine, though in actuality, the memory card had been damaged by his vibrations.

"Is it broken? Then I'll use my phone to take a photo!" Vivien asked skeptically.

"There's no need for the trouble," Garen picked his sister up and tossed her onto the sofa as she screamed and giggled in a high-pitched voice.

At that moment everyone started to play around again.

No one had noticed that on the reflection of the black television screen, Garen was wearing that strange and mysterious mask.

Memphis Forest — Moon River

As the largest tropical forest in the world, Memphis Forest had countless unexplored and unmapped areas.

Even the best research and exploration teams have not managed to completely unravel all the secrets of the various flora and fauna, swamps, crevices, unique natural terrain, strong geomagnetic disruptions, and even the existence of prehistoric beasts in this area.

Some authorities from the Blood Breeds once brought a team over here, boasting that they would fully explore the entire Memphis Forest and share the findings of his expedition to the world. However, expectedly, after losing more than half of his team, he was forced to retreat.

In addition to that, he himself had almost lost his own life in that expedition. Despite having sacrificed so much, he barely gained any reward.

He only managed to successfully explore barely one-third of Memphis Forest.

At this moment, Dahm, with his own team of elites that he'd personally chosen and trained, was trotting down the same path that that exact expedition team had used last time.

They were surrounded by dense tropical plant life and flying venomous insects. They could see a scourge of bloodthirsty mosquitoes buzzing about, circling above the team. Furthermore, every so often, there would be some sort of red insect that resembles a leech dropping down from above, trying to burrow into their necks.

Among the tall grass by their feet, there were countless spiderwebs tangled all over. Every few moments, there would be a team member accidentally stepping in a spiderweb, getting it stuck all over his legs.

Suddenly, the loud chaotic chirps of a flock of startled birds came from above; there was no doubt that there were ferocious beasts ahead.

“Be careful.”

One of the team members raised his arm up and grabbed something. Out of nowhere, he pulled out a green rope-like object.

It was a small green snake with dark green spots all over its body. Looking at the triangular shape of its head, it was definitely a venomous snake.

With a crack, he snapped the snake in half at the location of its heart [1]. The member who had been the targeted prey of the snake immediately thanked his teammate for saving his life.

In the 9 hours they had been in the forest, these types of occurrences had become commonplace. Hence, everyone was constantly on high alert, ready to counter against anything from their surroundings.

Dahm, while looking at the map in his hands, walked to the middle of the team. There was a large number of geomagnetic disruptions coming from this location, visibly affecting everything that was made of metal or used electricity.

“The second Moon River is right ahead. Everyone, be on your guard,” Dahm loudly ordered.

“Oh!”

Everyone loudly replied.

Overlooking the environmental disruptions, back when they'd first approached the first Moon River, they had encountered a spotted scorpion with venom that was extremely potent. This scorpion was only palm-sized, but it was extremely fast and darted around as fast as lightning. By the time one saw it, one would already have been stung by it.

Even Dahm could barely keep up with the frightening speed of this scorpion.

As someone who had top-class skills, for him to barely be able to keep up with a creature like this, he felt slightly ashamed, but he had also fully understood the fearsomeness of this forest.

After going around a few large trees that looked to be centuries old, they were suddenly greeted by a long flowing river that resembled a silver silk ribbon.

The river had a bit of curvature, was easily several hundred meters in length and almost 30 meters in width, forming a shape of a crescent moon. Sunlight glowing from above reflected in the flowing water, making the river glimmer with a tinge of gold. It was truly a mesmerizing scene.

"The second Moon River," Garen let out a sigh of relief and raised his hand. "Proceed with caution! Everyone spread out and pay attention to gaps and crevices."

The group started spreading out according to his orders, stationing themselves by the riverside.

"Something feels off?" Dahm's instincts were telling him that there was something wrong with the current situation at the Moon River, but he just couldn't think of what it was.

He continued to observe his men searching around by the riverside. The magnetic fields here were a lot weaker, allowing them to use their tools and apparatus. They were using plastic detectors, rapidly searching all around.

"M-Mr Dahm, you should tell them to be more careful. There... might be a lot of ferocious beasts over here, since there aren't any animals drinking by the river..." the female guide he'd forcefully dragged along voiced out with a tremor in her voice. Along the way, she had borne witness to Dahm's fearsome abilities.

“No animals drinking?” Dahm plainly said. “What’s there to be afraid of? It’s most likely just because the water is infested with alligators or something.”

He glanced over at the Moon River, still frowning; he felt that this wasn’t the source of his unease.

Judging by their pace, they were already quite deep within Memphis Forest, and they have already reached the area where the previous expedition had last reached. However, he still could not sense a hostile intent strong enough to threaten the someone from the Blood Breeds.

“Wait!! Threaten the Blood Breeds!?” Dahm suddenly realized something. If they didn’t encounter anything on their way here, then the only other possibility was a one-time-encounter of frightful levels!?

Splloosh!!

Emerging rapidly from the water, a gigantic creature appeared. Looking like a dark shadow, it attacked the members at the riverside with lightning fast speed.

“Careful!!” Dahm was facing another of the same terrifying creature, and the tremendous pressure coming from it was almost suffocating even for him.

Ahh!!!

In a flurry of screams, he saw his men all getting injured one by one. Even the female guide was swept into the river by the monster’s tail, immediately dyeing the water around her body red. There was undoubtedly no chance of her surviving that.

“Fucking lowlife!!” still hearing the screams of anguish from around him, Dahm’s face flushed with rage and ferocity, as his right hand morphed into a knife that he slashed furiously at the beast.

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Shing! Shing! Shing!

With three bloody flashes, three of the monsters were slashed open, causing a blood mist to spurt everywhere.

Dahm wiped off the blood on his face and dashed swiftly to his team. Only the elites of the team were left fending against the monsters; the rest had either been swept into the water or were heavily injured.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!

With a chain of continuous explosions, the monsters were destroyed one by one, leaving behind only bloody mist.

As Dahm was attempting to save the guide and one of his team members who had just been dragged into the water, the sound of machine gunshots filled the air.

They finally managed to see what the huge beast lurking in the water looked like.

The black monster looked like a hippopotamus with two horns on their heads, resembling those of a buffalo. At a size of almost 3 meters in height, it seemed to be a species of the giant hippopotamus.

Additionally, on its back was a huge tail that resembled that of a crocodile's, muscled and scaly. It was a terrifying sight.

However, under Dahm's flurry of attacks, these monsters were like sitting ducks. With every strike, another one would be killed. In just a short moment, he killed more than 20 of them.

Roar!!!

Suddenly, the ground behind him split open as a 5 meter tall humongous black beast dug out furiously from the ground and lunged towards Dahm's back. It was speeding in like a black wave, flinging black mud, wilted leaves, and branches into the air, rousing a thick rotting smell.

Dahm immediately turned around, facing the lunging beast. His vision was completely filled with the monster's size.

His pupils started to contract. He saw that there was a strange mask embedded in the monster's abdomen. That mask seemed so familiar!!

Whoosh!!

With a gust of wind, Garen appeared at the top of the guest hall's throne. He slowly sat down.

In the bottom right seat, an androgynous-looking Caucasian with a white veil was seated. There was a cinnabar gem embedded in the center of his brow, giving off an Indian vibe.

On the left seats were 2 of the underlings sent by AG. They were both young witches wearing tight skirts.

The mask Garen was wearing all this time had, for some unknown reason, turned completely silver. The eyes all over the head also started to seem much more active.

Through the eyeholes of the mask, he peered down at his guests.

"How is AG's progress? It looks like it's quite successful, right?" Garen asked softly.

"Lord Holy Fist, Lord AG's progress have been successfully progressing. The motive for our visit was for us Dark Color witches to seek aid from the Holy Fist Palace," the leading witch spoke earnestly.

"Regarding the aid, taking my friendship with AG into consideration, I will accept the proposition. I'll leave the negotiation between you and Hochman. In exchange, we also require your help regarding some issues," Garen nodded. He wasn't actually on good terms with the Dark Colors leader Nasira, so naturally, he wouldn't help her without any compensation.

“We are at a standstill against the Blood Breeds, and if we break the stalemate it may lead to unpredictable results,” Garen’s vision moved to the other party, the Caucasian representative from the witches’ main force.

“So, the self-proclaimed representative from the Witches Association, what is your motive for coming here?”

The veiled Caucasian smiled as he stood up, calmly bowing down before Garen, his hands in a praying hands pose.

“I bring forth a declaration of friendship from Lion Mother. Maybe Lord Holy Fist would want help from my master?”

“Oh?” Garen’s curiosity was piqued. “Tell me, what exactly would I need help in?”

The Caucasian did not reply, but he just lightly touched his own right eye.

Garen glared down.

“You have a way to recover my eyes?”

“I do not, but my master might be able to,” the Caucasian politely answered.

Garen paused for a moment as if he was thinking about some things.

“Is there any way for you to prove this?” he asked after pondering for a short moment.

If even Black Sethe was helpless, to the Lion Mother who was from this world, this kind of injury should be incomprehensible to her.

A wound from the Nine-Headed Dragon Queen Nadia was not so easily cured.

However, most importantly, for them to voluntarily offer to help repair his eyes, they must have done a lot of preparation. Thus, as compensation, they definitely desired something great.

In this world, Garen's one and only fear was the First Apostle Ashen, and everyone else was merely ants in his eyes. Only Ashen stood as a threat to him. However, this was only on the Blood Breed forces side, and he had not pried into the witches side of things. He lacked an understanding of the types of tricks they used.

Listening to Garen's doubt, the Caucasian smiled. He pulled out a pure white lily and tossed it into the air. It then naturally flew towards Garen.

Catching the incoming lily, Garen took a deep breath, he felt overwhelmed by the strong aroma, slightly mesmerized by it. More importantly, his right eye started to ache slightly, causing him to shiver.

"My lord wishes that if we manage to heal your wound, the Holy Fist Palace and the Blood Breeds will be able to coexist peacefully. This way, there would no longer be any bloodshed in this world..."

The Caucasian had a solemn look on his face, Garen could see that this was not an act, but rather a true desire to achieve peace.

"Ceasefire? I am not against it, but I fear the Blood Breed side would be against it," Garen calmly said.

His overall strength was far weaker than the Blood Breeds and a ceasefire would definitely benefit him, so he definitely wouldn't reject such a proposal.

"For the Blood Breed side, naturally, my master will try to change their minds," the Caucasian nodded. "However, we have one more request before we can heal your eye."

"Oh? What request is that? Tell me," Garen remained calm. The Lion Mother was the only one from the witches side who had an existence at a Death Apostle level. For her to be able to influence and suppress

the Blood Breed, she was definitely no random person. What's more, her abilities could have some effect against a wound from Nadia, which largely exceeded his expectations.

"My master wishes that you would stop collecting the Sleepless Faces." The Caucasian said with his head lowered.

The atmosphere suddenly sunk, as Garen's body emitted a suppressing aura. This aura was so strong that the people below would feel as if their hearts were sealed behind a lock, and that they were suffocating.

The Caucasian continued on impassively with his head down, "The Sleepless Faces are the cause of all these troubles and will bring disaster to the world. My master hopes that Lord Holy Fist can give up on collecting them."

With the atmosphere in the room getting more and more serious, Garen was still seated motionlessly on top of his throne, calmly glaring at this Caucasian. Despite clearly suppressing the aura at his heart, making it difficult for him to even breathe, the Caucasian was still standing motionlessly in the room, almost as if dismissing the effects of the suppression.

This seemed to be supported by the willpower of his belief.

"We'll talk about this once you actually manage to repair my eye," Garen finally answered. The strong suppressing pressure started to fade away as he started speaking.

"I will send your message to my master," the Caucasian politely bowed.

After the representative from the Witches Association and Lion Mother left, the Holy Fist Palace guest hall was once again in silence.

Hochman and Quentin appeared from the corner.

"Master, the witch organization that the Lion Mother represents are the self-proclaimed protectors of world peace, and it's filled with sad people. They have also come to warn me before. What an annoying

bunch. This time I think it's not just something as simple as trying to ask for a ceasefire," Quentin frowned. She was in charge of recon and information collection, and she definitely had a certain amount of understanding of the strength of Lion Mother's group.

"These people are using world peace as a pretense, but we don't know what their true motives are. We shouldn't trust them so easily," Hochman chimed in.

Garen lightly tapped on the armrests of his throne, signaling that he was thinking.

"I know."

The collection of the Sleepless Faces was not something that could be stopped. These masks were one of his main sources of potential points, and they could also block Nadia's movement. No matter how you look at it, it was a precious treasure that he needed to have.

However, the Lion Mother's mysterious abilities which could even affect the wound on his eye, this made Garen wary. He twirled the lily in his hands; the hint of aura it had had already dispersed, and this was now just a normal water lily.

The slight feeling in his right eye had also disappeared.

"Lion Mother..." Garen sniffed the lily once again, showing an amused expression on his face.

Outside the Holy Fist Palace

The Caucasian was slowly moving down the mountain path. Passing through the main gate of the Holy Fist Palace, he smiled at the two guards stationed over there. With light footsteps, he sped up his pace as he continued down.

After walking a short distance, he turned back, looking at the Holy Fist Palace.

The white palace was sitting on top of the peak of the snowy mountain, looking like a place from a legend. Outside the Palace, groups of cloaked figures kept entering the gate, showing their identification tags. These people were selected from all over the world to come over to the Holy Fist Palace for training. They were either chosen by the Combat Club or the Nighthawks, and all of them had stable blood and qi and light footsteps despite the freezing weather.

What the Caucasian found to be weirder was that on the way back from the Holy Fist Palace, he'd met with groups of Blood Breed and Vampires who had come to this place. The auras they were emitting seemed to have been altered, appearing stronger than before but also slightly weird.

"Master was right, Holy Fist Palace... It's the source of all this..." the Caucasian raised his head, looking at the grey sky. That unimaginable feeling of pressure and the roaring thunder, all of this managed to accentuate the strong force that this place was!

No matter if it was humans or the Blood Breed, the Holy Fist Palace's arms were slowly spreading to every corner of the world. Furthermore, this force was expanding at a rapid pace.

The Caucasian started to feel a fear arise in his heart.

He thought back to the people he met on his way down here. Whether human or Blood Breed, all of these people had a sort of a passion as if they held absolute admiration and loyalty towards the Holy Fist Palace.

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He didn't know how this ideal had spread out so quickly within such a short period of time. However, he knew that if this were to be left untouched, it could be very troublesome.

He wasn't sure if his instincts were accurate though.

One of the main characteristics of the Holy Fist Palace was something that everyone would experience while practicing, the strange excitement induced by the Demonic Book.

Not only they could experience an excitement that was far superior to sex while practicing, they could become stronger as well. This path was so perfect that everyone would definitely choose it! It was the perfect choice for the modern people who wanted success within a short amount of time without any hardship.

They were able to enjoy this sensation while strengthening their bodies. Frankly, a lot of people completely didn't care whether they had become stronger at all, as they were addicted to the adrenaline rush created during their practices.

This was the terrifying part of the Holy Fist Palace.

Everyone was very well informed about this as the models and practice methods were advertised during the International Combat Competition held by Dahm and Hochman.

The two major Marshalls of the Holy Fist Palace, who had created their own individual branches of fist styles. In addition to the three Secret Techniques from the Holy Fist Palace, there was a total of five fist techniques. These fist techniques were nicknamed the Five Major Fists by hobbyists.

It meant that these fist techniques ruled everything else and couldn't be compared with other fist techniques!

An extreme sensation could be felt as one practiced one of these five fist techniques. Under Garen's guidance, Dahm and Hochman were able to simplify their fist techniques even further and create a completed lower-tier fist technique structure.

There were at least ten middle-tier fist techniques from the Five Major Fists. Most of these fist techniques were able to achieve a certain overall effect, their practicing requirements were very simple and one could definitely feel the sensation of excitement as well. However, the downside was that they were not powerful enough.

With these middle and lower-tier fist techniques as a means to spread out to the beginners, those hobbyists who had experienced the addictive sensation would definitely turn into fanatics and spread praise of the Holy Fist Palace through word of mouth.

They could obtain happiness, a stronger body, and aura while training. Once they reached a certain level, they could obtain a tremendous amount of financial support from the Holy Fist Palace and get a well-paid salary.

The most important thing was that once one reached a certain height and showed some results, there was a possibility one would be noticed by a General Level. They then would be invited into the inner circle of the combat club and become an official member of the Holy Fist Palace. After that, they would qualify to learn a stronger and more advanced fist technique.

With this rewarding leveling system, it had attracted countless elites and talented people.

After learning the beginner lower tier fist techniques, some of the elites who had battle experience were able to understand the unreasonable power behind these fist techniques. With the influence of their own teachings, the Holy Fist Palace became even more powerful than before.

In a blink of an eye, a few months had passed.

The Holy Fist Palace's influence snowballed as it expanded rapidly throughout America, where the simplified Five Major Fists had dominated the whole region.

There even were martial artist hobbyists from other countries that came to learn in America. After learning the fist technique for some time, the technique and skills had started a new trend of martial arts.

The world was into martial arts all of a sudden.

Within this period, the Secret Party of the Blood Breeds was in a temporary truce with the Light Party. After the major battle which had occurred recently, both parties had finally settled down and talk under the mediation of Lion Mother.

Both parties had put their grudges aside in the face of the threat from the Holy Fist Palace.

Within this period, Garen had isolated himself from the society and the Holy Fist Palace was practically managed by the two main Marshalls, Hochman and Dahm. Both of them had obtained their strength directly from Garen and they had no hope of getting out of Garen's grasp, especially after they'd acknowledged that fact. On the contrary, they didn't feel too conflicted being under control by him, as Garen didn't really control them at all.

The Holy Fist Palace became stronger over time as both of them had gathered a lot of power under them. Under similar logic, the four people below them had expanded their authorities and influenced as well and had been stationed at different locations in America as representatives of the Holy Fist Palace. At the same time, Dahm had extended his influence to the military as he handed down the simplified version of Death Waterbird King's Fist Technique to the military.

If not for the highly focused attacks from the heavy machine guns or the machine guns that had no blind spot, Dahm's elite underling would be unstoppable.

Naturally, it would be impossible to defend against wide-scale bombing. However, practicing the fist technique would not only increase the battle power of every individual soldier, it would also improve their five senses together with the Shooting Shadow Secret Technique.

The simplified Shooting Shadow Secret Technique was considered a flawless technique to learn for the soldiers stationed on the outskirts, as they would be able to cover most distances.

Naturally, the will and aura of a normal civilian was no match for soldiers'. The most important thing was the mentality of war, which every soldier should have so that remote operations would not be inconsistent.

This had solved the issue of not having enough people for the Holy Fist Palace when they fought against the Witch and Blood Breeds.

After all, Garen's Soul Primer could only control a very small amount of people. Similarly, Hochman and Dahm's Soul Primer couldn't be used on many people as well. Hence, the only people who were willing to fight to their deaths were the Nighthawks and the fugitives under the two Marshals. Even though the

number of people who had died in the Wellington's war was terrible, the supplements to replace them from the military had greatly lessened the Holy Fist Palace's recklessness.

This was especially true when many young and energetic officers joined them, resulting in a massive expansion of the Holy Fist Palace's power and influence.

Garen had already taken countermeasures against hypnosis from the Blood Breeds. By using the Fantasy Fist as its foundation, he had invented a way to suppress this hypnosis. After the experiment was a success, one would be immune to the effect of a lower-tier hypnosis. Those who had a very strong and firm will could directly ignore the hypnosis at such a level.

Under these circumstances, the humans who had been suppressed and enslaved by the Blood Breeds had finally found a way to retaliate and joined the Holy Fist Palace. As they had been suppressed for a long time, these people vented their frustration and the Holy Fist Palace started to fight against the Blood Breeds. As the two parties had suffered severe casualties through the war, the middle-level and lower-level blood breeds were defenseless against these former slaves.

Throughout this oppression period, excluding the two parties, a lot of secluded Blood Breeds who did not wish to be involved had suffered as well.

"Run!!!"

Multiple human figures were running swiftly while panting in a bamboo forest in the dark, with at least ten pursuers hot on their heels. These pursuers were very agile and their breathing was long and rhythmic. They were holding clear black assault rifles with sharp knives attached at the muzzle of the guns, which could be detached as melee weapons.

On a small hill nearby, there was a group of soldiers in black special ops uniform guarding two young military officers. These two officers were observing the situation inside the bamboo forest with their night-vision binoculars.

“These damn mixed blood bastards! How dare they reject Colonel Raven’s goodwill during the previous reception. It was very fortunate for her that the Colonel had taken a liking to her!”

A white officer scolded softly with a chilling gaze.

“Blood Breeds will always act like one. Although she is but a Lower-Level Blood Breed, she is still one of the beings with long lifespans so it’s normal for her to reject him,” the other man replied calmly.

“However, Colonel Raven is one of the elites in my combat club who was able to obtain the teachings of an advanced level fist technique and become the direct disciple of General Crusoe. If everything goes well, the General himself may even pass down the Fist King to him, and he’ll become the third generation of the Fist King. She would be ignorant if she still rejects him then.”

The former officer went along with him and smiled.

The truth was that he knew the Blood Breed girl who was being pursued. He once tried to chase after her as well but had been rejected by her. This made him bitter, and he had been nursing this hatred within him all this while. It was mostly him who had manipulated the Colonel to chase after her and get rejected too.

He found a tremendous amount of sadistic pleasure in managing to pull down a princess from the very top and crushing her beneath his feet.

Suddenly, a guttural scream could be heard from the bamboo forest.

It sounded like the voice of one of the pursuing soldiers.

Two officer’s expressions changed all of the sudden.

They gestured with their hands and the special ops around them gathered and entered into the bamboo forest in a blink of an eye.

These people had undergone the simplified fist technique training at the Holy Fist Palace and each and every one of them possessed excellent physical characteristics. Soon, cursing and angry shouts could be heard ahead.

“Damned Monsters!!”

“Kill him!”

“Tom has been beaten! Quick, bring in the blood cleanser!!”

“Quick, quick!!”

Torchlight soon lit up in the darkness up front and a special ops soldier returned to report the situation to the two officers.

“Sir, we have discovered a hidden camp of the Blood Breeds about one hundred and fifty yards up front. There is a total of twenty-three Blood Breeds and Vampires hiding there.”

“That many?” the cold looking officer was slightly surprised.

“The target seems to be a pedigree member of this small household,” the soldier replied softly. “Sir, please give us a command!”

The officer hesitated for a moment as he looked at his partner by his side, who looked back at him as well as he waited for his suggestion.

He gritted his teeth and as he was about to order them to retreat when the image of the cold and arrogant girl flashed through his mind.

“Ah!!”

Another scream could be heard from the soldiers up front.

“Open fire! Open Fire!!” everyone started screaming as gunshots echoed through the bamboo forest.

“All members engage in battle! Kill every single one of them!!” the officer had made his decision. If they were not careful, all of them would die at the hands of twenty plus Lower-Level Blood Breeds even though they were the practitioners of the Fist Technique.

“Someone called the Wittsburg nearby for support!”

On that night in the west of America, a war between the military and Blood Breeds had emerged.

Boom!!

A powerful punch by a pale fist was sent into the vampire’s chin and the vampire was sent flying away, crashing into a shop’s display window at the side of the road. The window was shattered and millions of shards scattered in all directions.

“You guys are the worst parasites!” the white muscular man stared down at the beaten black vampire with hatred and cursed as he spat on his opponent’s face.

He was the fifth generation practitioner of the White Cloud Secret Technique. He was in a rage as he’d found out that his cousin’s child had shown signs that his blood had been sucked by a vampire. In the past, he had not known much about the Blood Breeds, but after entering the combat club he’d obtained this information and managed to link everything up with the situations he’d encountered in his life.

When he asked the child of his situation, he instantly realized that it was the doing of a vampire. Without any hesitation, he brought a group of his friends and rushed over.

To fight against the vampires, those who practiced fist techniques derived from the King's Fist would learn some tricks to counter the vampire's skills in controlling humans.

"I've warned you before!" the muscular man walked forward. His muscles were moving about like little mice. He then held up the vampire single-handedly by his hair.

"But you turned a deaf ear to me. Now you'll pay!!"

Boom!!

He punched once more. The punch was so strong, it shook the poor vampire's brain so hard that he lost his sight temporarily.

Through trial and error by cooperating with Tu Lan, Garen had managed to simplify the White Cloud Secret Technique, which was highly effective against the Blood Breeds. Together with the white muscular man's natural physical attributes, he was now like a beast with armor, undefeatable and overwhelmingly powerful.

Crowds started to gather as they looked upon the white muscular man punching the defenseless black man.

Occasionally, the black man would counter back with all of his might. Although his speed was fast, his knife wasn't even able to pierce through the white man's skin. In return, his leg was grabbed and slammed onto the ground like a hammer.

This made the crowd scream.

This kind of situation was very common on the street and could be seen everywhere.

Most of them were fist technique practitioners torturing the Blood Breeds and there were very few cases of Blood Breeds torturing the fist technique practitioners.

However, as there were much more people who practiced the Holy Fist... Compared to the minority of Blood Breeds, the fist technique practitioners would often come in pairs or groups. Hence most of the Blood Breeds would be beaten up and flee.

This world that they knew was getting chaotic...

Chapter 737

Holy Fist Palace

"There is a wide scale conflict with the Blood Breeds in the western area. I've already sent people to handle the situation, but the situation is getting more severe by the second and we may not make it in time."

Xander reported softly before Garen.

He wasn't just reporting to Garen; Quentin was there as well. Both of them looked like they were having a dilemma as they frowned.

Inside the study room, Garen was busy reading the latest intel report. He was the only one in the room making noise as he flipped through the confidential report.

After a while, Garen closed the document, raised his head and looked at both of them.

"How far has the conflict with the Blood Breed spread in the region?"

"California. It is still expanding and through word of mouth, more and more citizens have acknowledged the existence of Blood Breeds. The notion of their world being controlled by the Blood Breeds have incited the majority's dissatisfaction. There were people in some of the cities, who practiced the fist technique, that captured the vampires and paraded on the streets as they protested the Blood Breeds holding the upper hand," Quentin explained.

"The spread of violence wouldn't be this fast without people from the Witches Association and AG fanning the fire, right?" Garen said coldly.

“Yes,” Quentin confirmed, “their main objective is to incite fear and hatred normal citizens towards the Blood Breeds.”

“Then we will flow with the current for now. Conflicts are unavoidable and what we can do now is wait,” Garen decided calmly.

“Wait? Shouldn’t we send some people out?” Quentin questioned.

“There’s no point in doing so. If we can’t find the Death Apostle’s actual bodies, we cannot truly kill them. Take Tu Lan as an example,” Garen shook his head.

Speaking of Tu Lan, that person had truly fallen in love with the Holy Fist Palace. It was as if she was an addict as she hid in her room while she continuously trained the Fantasy Fist given to her. She had the Soul Primer transferred directly from Garen. She possessed the physical attributes of a Death Apostle, which could be the reason for her ridiculously fast progress.

This made Garen very relieved. If not for the restriction of the Soul Primer’s aura, resulting in the Blood Breeds being unable to learn the King’s Fist Technique, the Blood Breed would easily surpass the humans.

She was barely under Garen’s control as of now. She was considered as one of the Holy Fist Palace’s strongest members, and below her was Dahm, Hochman, the Four Major Generals. They were no match for this Blood Breed.

However, all of them were still considered very powerful.

“We will leave this issue for now. We will talk about this later on when the conflict between the humans and Blood Breeds has reached a certain level. We’ll go to the meeting first,” Garen stood up.

Both disciples slightly nodded respectfully.

Three of them exited the room, walked across a corridor and entered a magnificent silver hall.

The hall was rectangular and there was a ten-meter-long black rectangular stone table placed in the middle of the room. Both sides of the table had been fully filled up.

The head of Rexott and other representatives from all sorts of major fist sects were there. Furthermore, a few General Level officers from the military and politicians from multiple nations were there as well. Within such a short timespan, the Holy Fist Palace had attracted many powerhouses due to their unique and mysterious fist techniques.

The authority they possessed in America was so powerful that no one could ignore them at all.

These connections were made possible by Dahm and Hochman, and one of the politicians was even a member of theirs.

The crowd had already lost their patience. This crowd had many big shots with political or finance backgrounds and they were all waiting for a youngster who was in his twenties. This notion itself made them very unhappy.

If not for the mysterious authorities of the Holy Fist Palace that had huge influences, and the fact that they were the only strength that could fight against the Blood Breeds, these people wouldn't even bother attending this meeting.

Then, the main entrance of the hall was pushed open.

Three people walked into the hall slowly. The one leading at the front was Garen who was in white Taoist clothes and a black mysterious mask. One could faintly see that one of his eyes seemed blind as there was no expression in it. His golden hair flowed freely by his shoulders and would wave around behind as he walked.

As Garen entered the scene, the big shots by the table started discussing among themselves softly. Some of them even scoffed loudly to express their dissatisfaction, and there were some staring at Garen coldly in an attempt to mess with this youngster with tricks to gain control of the meeting.

This meeting was filled with individuals with great authority. If anyone were able to control this power, it would not influence just America, but even Europe and other regions. After all, the big shots could penetrate anywhere with their economic power.

Everyone started to feel greedy.

Garen brought Quentin and Xander pass the table as they walked towards the main seats and sat down.

“Alright, let’s commence the inner meeting of the Holy Fist Palace,” he said softly.

“Lord Holy Fist, the reason we requested this inner meeting is with regard to the increasing aggressiveness of the Blood Breeds towards the humans. We have to come up with a regulation and solution to this issue immediately. At the very least, emergency countermeasures are a must.”

A senator petitioned calmly.

“I believe that the main objective of this meeting was to select an individual as a conference leader who is able to oversee the whole operation and make the necessary decisions,” he proposed naturally. “Although Lord Garen has overwhelming power that could rival the Death Apostles, this individual requires more than just overall strength. He needs to oversee the situation and coordinate strategically.”

“When the Blood Breeds are cornered, they may ambush our weaknesses such as lord Garen’s family members or best friends. It would be very troublesome if they were to do so,” another senator nodded in agreement. “We definitely need a leader who is able to plan far ahead and oversee the situation.”

“No one has to worry about this. I’ve already placed my underling’s Blood Breed members all over the country to ensure the safety of the regions. Furthermore, we have also deployed the latest technology from the Rexott Group to survey the areas all day long,” Garen answered calmly.

He understood the feeling of these people who have been oppressed by the Blood Breeds. He didn’t care in the least about overseeing the situation and such, as these could be passed down to the experts to handle it. After all, these people hated the Blood Breeds more than he did, and the only way they could obtain authority as a human being was to destroy anything that threatened them.

"I have no comment regarding a personnel to oversee the operation. The Holy Fist Palace is a huge base and no Blood Breed outsiders can infiltrate this place, so everyone can discuss anything related to the Blood Breeds with ease," Garen said calmly.

"Thank you, Lord Garen, for this is rather important. The powers of the Blood Breed know no bounds, and the only thing that is keeping us safe as of now is the Holy Fist Palace. It's funny that Jackson thought that he was safe because they'd placed down safety measures around them, right?" an officer shook his head. The officer that he spoke off, Jackson, had been assassinated by a Blood Breed the previous night at two o'clock in the morning. It wasn't just him; there were other reputable, racist senior officers of the resistance that had been killed or captured by the Blood Breeds as well. This shocked the world and was the reason why so many high ranking officers had gathered at the Holy Fist Palace today.

"We need to strike back with all our might!! We must show those Old Generation Blood Breeds what we're capable of!"

"However, we first need to know how deeply the Old Generation Blood Breeds have infiltrated into our place."

"The most important thing right now is to be able to differentiate between a Blood Breed and a normal being. Our Group has developed a unique device that is able to differentiate between us and the Blood Breeds by analyzing heartbeats. We should be able to deploy this soon."

"If the department of cardiology of the Holy Fist Palace is willing to cooperate with us, we can definitely make huge progress."

Garen beckoned and Tu Lan immediately appeared behind him. After understanding Garen's intention, she soon participated in the discussion. The Blood Breeds that were controlled by the Holy Fist Palace were called the New Generation Blood Breeds and they were all under the order of Tu Lan, and they formed their own branch of power. Their Soul Primer had been removed personally by Garen so that Tu Lan could inject the Soul Primer that she had created with her Secret Technique's aura. This way, they would be directly under her.

With a hand to his head, Garen listened to the never-ending discussion of the crowd and soon a simple countermeasure against the Blood Breed had been formed.

Then the orders were transferred and spread out across America via wireless transmission, and everyone started moving.

Garen observed these people getting worked up while he remained unfazed.

Rexott Group and two other economic groups' representatives kept giving out recommendations that were all adopted. It was no surprise, as they were the powerhouses that had been researching the Blood Breeds in the dark for countless of years. They finally had the opportunity to shine at this time.

This was especially true for Rod's brother. Although he looked like a cool and handsome young man, his underling had developed a special virus that could be used against the Blood Breeds. It was a biological weapon that could weaken the Blood Breeds to the point where they couldn't muster up any power. Their limbs would tremble and they would even lose their consciousness if it was serious.

The humans had been oppressed for far too long...

Garen sighed in his mind.

The moment he'd given them an opportunity, the power of their determination to resist had stunned even Garen.

A biological weapon, spirit explosive grenade, infrasonic wave oscillator, blood nucleus detector, et cetera. All sorts of countermeasures had been proposed one by one. At first, the group had felt that they had limited strength, but once everyone gathered their knowledge together, they realized that their strength was more powerful than they previously thought.

This hadn't accounted for the senator's super soldier programme. The super soldiers that they had trained were as strong as a Lower-Level Blood Breed. On the other hand, the Turing Group's representative had revealed their latest research — high-speed neuro battle suits.

It was a suit that could enhance the human's nervous system, running at fifty times faster than normal. A normal human would have the same reaction time as a Middle-Level or Lower-Level Blood Breed with

this reaction speed. While this speed would harm the joints and muscles of the user, it was quickly resolved under the collective research from everyone.

With the high-speed battle suit, super soldiers and the elites of every fist sects gathered together, even Tu Lan was shocked by this development. They were able to gather an army that had the strength of Lower-Level Blood Breeds in such a short amount of time!

With these people gathered together, the strength that they were able to gather made even Garen rather surprised.

“This is the starting point where the humans will fight back!” a person stood up and shouted passionately.

“Today’s meeting will be engraved in history!!” there were people who started to pump their fists up in the air.

Garen had a hunch that the battle with the Blood Breeds would soon arrive after observing this passionate bunch.

Chapter 738: Clue 2

The meeting lasted until nighttime before everyone was dismissed and went to their arranged rooms to rest. However, so much passion lingered in them that they couldn’t sleep due to the excitement.

After a series of instrumental experiments, it was shown that becoming a Blood Breed would lengthen their lifespan and practicing Secret Techniques possessed the same effect as well, though its effect was inferior as compared to the Blood Breed’s lifespan. A few of the group representatives were excited, as they were able to make contact with their respective chief scientists through long distance communication. After some inquiry, they’d found a clue on merging the Blood Breed’s gene in hopes of lengthening their own respective lifespans.

This was one of the very few topics that caught Garen's interest.

After a more detailed discussion with the representative, he represented the Holy Fist Palace to purchase the high-speed neuro battle suits and its related research results, especially the Blood Breed's genetic implantation which had piqued Garen's interest the most.

About two hours later after the meeting ended.

Garen finally brought Tu Lan back to the hall in the inner region of the palace.

The moonlight shone through the glass window at their side and bathed the ground and their shoes.

"That meeting was an eye-opener," Tu Lan was still in disbelief. "The humans' accumulated oppression is about to explode."

"Yeah, and I only gave them the chance to release everything at once," Garen nodded.

"I wouldn't have believed it if I didn't witness it with my own eyes. I can't believe that humans would ever be such a threat towards the Blood Breeds," Tu Lan shook her head. "Luckily, I'm on your side."

"Even you don't believe that the Blood Breeds will win?" Garen frowned slightly.

"No. It's not that. It's just that there are too many humans and on the other hand... there're too few Blood Breeds," Tu Lan shook her head. "Laser weapons and high explosives are enough to threaten the Blood Breeds. The humans are no longer the same as compared to a few centuries ago. Even if you didn't exist, this strength would accumulate and would explode sooner or later."

"You're right," Garen nodded.

"Report!!" a black figure suddenly appeared behind Garen and Tu Lan. "Marshall Dahm has successfully obtained a mask and is currently waiting in the golden hall." a Shooting Shadow Secret Technique practitioner reported loudly at the inner zone of the palace.

“Oh?” Garen revealed a smile. “Finally, he hasn’t disappointed me. Do you want to go and see it together with me?” he turned to Tu Lan.

“Of course.”

Tu Lan was very curious, as she didn’t know why this mask was so important to Garen.

Both of them turned around and walked into a corridor on their right. After passing through a few more corridors and a small garden, they entered a silver meeting room which was almost the same size as the golden hall.

The hall was empty inside and Dahm, who was in a black attire, was the only one standing inside with his head down. He was in a thick grey cloak which covered from his head to toe. He also had a white mask with red paint over the eyes, and one could only tell he was Dahm based on his aura.

“What happened to you?” Garen immediately frowned the moment he entered as he saw Dahm’s excessive coverage.

“Forgive me, teacher,” Dahm’s voice sounded from the cloak. “When I was searching for the mask near the Moon River, I encountered an unknown black monster that I’d never seen before. After pursuing it for more than a month, I finally took care of this beast’s leader on top of the cliff and obtained the mask. However, I was injured by the beast leader’s acid.”

“Take off the cloak and let me have a look,” Garen sat on the main seat of the living hall as he ordered impassively.

Without hesitation, Dahm took off the cloak.

He revealed the skin hidden under the cloak, and even though only the skin from his wrist to his neck could be seen, his skin was scarred and it looked like he had recovered from very bad blisters. His skin resembled a person aged between eight to ninety years old, and this made both Garen and Tu Lan grimace.

“A beast that can injure even you to this extent...” Garen stood up and a black streak was seen as he instantly appeared before Dahm.

Boom!!

He punched Dahm’s chest.

Although this punch wasn’t strong, it possessed a strange power, which was Garen’s own aura.

The aura circled Dahm’s body and immediately returned.

Ah!

Dahm immediately vomited out a mouthful of black water. It was very foul-smelling, and he vomited onto the ground between their legs. The cement on the ground started to sizzle, and white vapors formed upon contact with this black acidic water.

“The remaining poisonous water has been pushed out and with your current regenerative capability, it shouldn’t be difficult for you to heal your skin. Where’s the mask?” Garen asked coldly.

Dahm immediately took out the mask under his cloak. What made this mask different from others was that while it looked identical to the one Garen was wearing, there were some pieces of meat at the edge of the mask. It was as if it were alive as the meat bits wriggled about freely.

After receiving the mask, Garen suddenly felt a huge amount of potential aura entering into his body from the mask. At the same time, Tu Lan and Dahm who were at the scene could faintly hear a cry from the mask, as if it was afraid of Garen. The shredded meat at the edge of the mask wriggled wildly all of the sudden as if they were trying to escape from Garen’s grasp but to no avail. Soon the cry of the mask gradually became weaker and weaker, to the point where it could no longer be heard.

The shredded meat at the edge fell to the ground and formed into a pool of black ash or some sort of black powder. It was very strange indeed.

Garen stashed the mask and could still feel the huge amount of potential points flowing into his body.

“Thank you for the hard work. As a reward, I’ll give you this,” Garen extended his index finger and gently tapped Dahm on the shoulder.

Boom!

It was as if Dahm had been struck by lightning as he stood still and didn’t move at all. It was as though he was a device that had been put on idle mode.

Garen then turned around and left the hall with Tu Lan, the latter being very confused as she didn’t know what had just happened. This was applicable to both the strange mask and Dahm’s change in behavior.

That tap from Garen was the remaining level of Slaughtering Hand that had been retained. With that life force, Dahm would be able to help to strengthen his inert life force and increase his physical attributes. For Garen, whose physical attribute was so strong, this was naturally negligible.

However, this was not the case for Dahm. He had become this powerful due to his fist techniques, and his body’s physical attributes had not reached their limits yet. This life force would help Dahm master his Secret Technique at a faster rate and bring his own technique to a higher level. He could also quickly recover from a serious wound so that it wouldn’t be detrimental to his vitality.

For Dahm, the greatest effect of this life force was an opportunity to surpass Hochman.

“Continue searching until you’ve found all twelve masks. Only then I will pass down the strongest secret method that will greatly improve your latent ability,” Garen told Dahm before he left.

The latter lowered his head down.

Garen believed that Dahm possessed quite a number of secret methods, and based on his understanding, it shouldn't be hard for him to develop his own secret method, one similar to the Shooting Shadow Secret Method.

As he left the golden hall, Garen sent Tu Lan back to her room to rest and he went to his specially made secret chamber alone.

The secret chamber was completely dark. There was no light inside but Garen could see everything inside as if it was daytime.

He walked into the isolated round safe and grabbed onto a thick cylinder placed at the center of the safe. He picked it up and revealed a half-meter-thick cylindrical pillar.

The center of the cylinder was hollow, and there were masks stacked on top of one another, all on top of the Dragon Head Coin Nadia had left behind. What was strange was that the dragon-shaped aura that had always appeared on the coin had stopped flowing. There was nothing coming out of it.

Garen frowned as the cylindrical pillar weighed about a ton. With such a heavy item, the pillar itself was a countermeasure for the safe. If no one could lift it up, it meant that no one could even move the round safe that was placed on the floor as it was even heavier than the pillar.

'Be careful, I have a bad feeling about this...' Black Sethe, who had been quiet for such a long time, finally spoke up.

"I understand," Garen nodded. He felt a sense of crisis that wrapped around him like a spider web.

Garen stopped thinking about other stuff as he sat on his knees, preparing himself to absorb the potential points from the sixth mask.

Inside a deep cave near the north pole.

Inside a pitch black cave. ()

An ashen beautiful girl in a white sweater was sitting just beside the stone wall. Her hair was very long and it was as white as snow. Her hair was so long that it flowed and spread about on the ground.

Her white hair was at least ten meters long and was glowing faintly in white inside the cave, giving off a pure and clean vibe.

Her long hair had completely covered her body in such a manner that no one would know whether she was sitting beside the stone wall or merely leaning against it.

“Lion Mother, why have you invited us here?” suddenly, a red blood orb appeared beside the girl in mid-air. What came out from it was a clear male voice.

Soon two more blood orbs slowly appeared at two other spots in the air.

“Scarlet Moon, you’re still alive!” a girl’s voice came from another orb. She was the last one to speak among the blood orbs.

The white-haired girl’s face looked extremely sad.

“I even invited Lord Ashen, but it looks like he’s not joining.”

“The two parties have reconciled and it is his wish whether he wants to attend or not. You can voice out if you have any concern.” a deep male tone rang from the final blood orb.

The Lion Mother nodded her head.

“Have you guys heard of the legend of the Sleepless Faces?”

"The legendary mysterious mask that the mortals spread? I understood a little bit." the first blood orb responded.

"I've heard of it as well." the girl spoke through her orb.

"Realistically speaking, the Sleepless Faces is related to a secret known to very little being. It is related to the secret of immortality..."

Chapter 739: Clue 3

"We Blood Breeds are immortal, to begin with. Why do we still need that mask?" a female Death Apostle grumbled through the blood orb impatiently.

"Naturally, as this is not noteworthy towards us Blood Breeds at all, no one goes out to collect these masks," the Lion Mother said impassively. "However to the humans, obtaining immortality is definitely one of their greatest desires."

"Are you suggesting that the Holy Fist Palace is currently collecting these masks?" the Death Apostle Scarlet Moon asked softly.

"The Holy Fist Palace...!" the sound of grinding teeth accompanied the first blood orb's speech. Wellington was one of the victims that had suffered a defeat at Garen's hands, which was why he had a very strong impression of him. If Ashen hadn't arrived in the nick of time, he would have been killed repeatedly to the point where he would have to respawn on one of his bloodlines. The pain and torture that he experienced, the sensation and incredible pain each time he had been pulverized into minced meat by a single punch from this human had completely traumatized him.

"Are you saying that the legend of this mask is real?" Scarlet Moon asked.

"It's real," the Lion Mother nodded. "According to what I know, the Holy Fist Palace has already collected six masks. When they collect all twelve masks, they will be able to activate the last mask. Once

Garen wears the Primal Mask, he will most likely turn into the Original Blood Breed that once roamed this world.”

“The Original Blood Breed?” a few Death Apostles didn’t really understand what it was.

“Legend has it that the Sleepless Faces masks are actually one mask that gave life to the Original Blood Breed. However, a legend is just a legend. I’ve done my research back in the days and it’s true that the mask does possess a mysterious power. The Sleepless Faces are able to allow people to be immune to all sorts of illusions and supernatural interference from the dream world. This is the origin of how it had gotten its name, the Sleepless Faces.”

“This means that once Garen has obtained this mask, his body may become that of a Blood Breed and also possesses the immunity to all of our dream interference and illusions. Does that mean we can only handle him in the normal material world!?” the female Death Apostle’s tone turned sharp.

“Damn it!! Fight him in the material world? Do you guys know how ridiculously strong that guy is in the material world?” Wellington shouted.

“Patience is a virtue. Actually, I still have another important thing to announce,” the Lion Mother shook her head.

“I believe that once Garen has become the Original Blood Breed, he will have the ability to track down the locations of the Death Apostle’s dreams.”

The moment it was announced, the whole cave was thrown into quietness.

No one spoke as these Death Apostles had realized that they were in grave danger.

After a while, Scarlet Moon started speaking once more.

“If it really has this capability, why had nobody attempted to search for it before?”

“Because I’m the only one left who knows of this secret...” the Lion Mother replied calmly. “I’ve been alive for so long and I’ve already forgotten where I’d learned this secret. Do you really think no one attempted to search for it before?”

“In 1871, a countess from Europe managed to collect five masks but passed away while she was on a search for the sixth mask. In 1544, the king of Greece Melsa once sent a huge army to search for the mask and managed to find six masks as well. I’ve been keeping an eye out for this mask and these are just examples.”

She said calmly as the history was just a small part of her life.

“Everyone who tried to collect the mask would usually halt their progress when they collected six masks. There are no exceptions. However...”

“What?” one of the Death Apostle raised a question but no one seemed to care as they poured all their attention onto the Lion Mother.

“However, the Holy Fist Palace may very well be the first one to exceed this amount.” the Lion Mother continued softly. “The seventh mask was in the hands of the moon river’s protector, which has been killed by someone.”

“According to what I know, Garen should have six masks including the one from the moon river, which does not exceed the amount you mentioned yet,” Scarlet Moon said calmly.

“Another mask is in the hand of someone else,” Lion Mother’s words made everyone quiet down.

“Are you really sure the Sleepless Faces is able to turn someone into the Original Blood Breed? Furthermore, that person will be able to locate where our dream worlds are?” the Death Apostle asked once more.

“The Blood Breed’s bloodline originates from one ancestor, which was created from a miracle of life via dark magic when the humans were in search of immortality. Perhaps I should say that it was an alteration, as I’ve done a detailed research regarding the origin. The Original Bloodline should be able to

sense every descendants' location. Perhaps there is an area of effect, but by no means, it is very small scale." the Lion Mother responded.

"I need to go and read up the old database," Scarlet Moon's blood orb dispersed and he had left the area.

"I need to head back and do my research as well," the female Death Apostle said softly. "My household's Holy Weapon, the Original Eye has stored information that spanned several millennia back. I should be able to find some hints."

"I'll go with you," Wellington voiced out.

"Sure."

Two of the blood orbs dispersed as well.

The cave became quiet once more.

A flicker of unease could be seen in the Lion Mother's eyes.

"The world is turning more chaotic... The Holy Fist Palace... the source of all chaos," she muttered as her face was filled with sadness.

Garen was sitting on his knees inside the secret chamber.

He looked at his attribute pane.

His potential point had increased from 64 points to 174 points. This mask had provided him a decent amount of hundred plus potential points. Although it wasn't considered much among the other masks, it was enough for him to increase his last Intelligence point.

Without any hesitation, Garen focused his gaze on Intelligence in the pane.

Since his Intelligence already had eleven points, he would require just another point to revert back to his strength when he was at the Totem world. After achieving twelve points, he would be able to obtain the unique effects from his physical attribute, Doublecast.

In an instant, his potential points dropped by a hundred, leaving behind 74 points. His Intelligence then increased from eleven points to twelve points.

Garen, who was sitting on his knees, jolted his body suddenly. He could feel a very agile and light feeling swelling inside him. He felt that his body had given him the illusion of an agile body by merely increasing one Intelligence point.

He reached out his hand and punched straight with all his might.

Pew pew!!

The air in front of him boomed as two white puffs of air appeared out of thin air as his fist thrust forth, landing on the secret chamber's wall. This resulted in two deep blade marks on the wall. ()

"When I release my basic strength, the Doublecast will be activated and it will make me stronger."

It was a weird sensation similar to one releasing all of their strength, only to realize that one still had enough strength to release it once more after that.

He stood up and took the mask off his face. He then changed into a new one as the former mask had been slightly damaged while he fought against Ashen.

“I’ve finally obtained the Doublecast. I should focus on obtaining the remaining masks next,” Garen’s goal was clear as day. “No matter what trick Nadia has up her sleeves, I will be able to isolate her trace as long as I am able to collect all the masks, evading all dangers from her.”

At the headquarter of the Bailey Group.

On the nineteenth floor of the Merlot building.

Boom!

The floor’s entrance was kicked open and a team of black-shirted police entered the place swiftly. A ‘safe’ secret signal was then broadcasted immediately from their communication device.

The nineteenth floor of this building was filled with office tables and chairs that have not been used for a long time. The leftover documents spread about everywhere and there were a few documents on the ground looked like they had been wetted before they opened the window.

The entire nineteenth floor, which was able to fit hundreds of people, was completely empty.

At least ten special police members positioned themselves strategically while they remained on full alert.

Xander, who was in a black cloak, entered the room with two of his best subordinates, a woman and a man, following behind.

He had an unlit cigarette hanging from his mouth as he scanned the whole floor.

“Looks like it’s been abandoned as well. The Bailey Group sure is something,” he took out his cigarette and said calmly.

“Boss, we will definitely be able to track the core members of the Bailey Group if we go to the airport’s train station,” the woman behind him spoke calmly.

“I’ve already told someone to do so and I believe I should be receiving the news any moment...” before Xander finished his sentence, he immediately aimed at the window with a silver gun that no one saw him take out.

Bam!

Bam Bam!!

Three gunshots were fired in a manner as if they had all been fired instantaneously.

Suddenly, two gunshots could be heard from the opposite building and two bullets were flying towards him.

The wall and the windows were shot through, leaving two clear holes. Two bullets went towards Xander at lightning speed from two different angles. He was under the impression that he couldn’t avoid it at all.

He then raised up his gun and shot as well. His aim was so amazingly accurate that he managed to hit one of the incoming bullets slightly on the right. This shifted the bullet’s projectile path and it ricocheted into the wall and vending machine beside him.

Xander moaned as he quickly held onto his left shoulder tightly. He didn’t manage to evade the other bullet and had taken a hit. His shoulder was immediately dripping with red blood.

His face turned pale instantly as the opponent had fired an armor-piercing bullet from an anti-material sniper rifle! With that shot, a hole instantly appeared on his shoulder and he was completely defenseless against it.

“Take cover!!” Xander shouted at the top of his lungs, and two of his subordinates immediately moved; they rolled on the ground and hid behind a pillar to avoid being shot.

Although he was a very powerful Martial Adept, he was a non-defense martial adept type as he practiced the Waterbird Fist Technique. Hence it was only natural that he was defenseless against the threat of human weaponry.

On the other hand, it was completely different to those who practiced the White Cloud Secret Technique. Although they were not as fast, they were the best meat shield in this situation. There was a practitioner that practiced the White Cloud Secret Technique who, other than having natural talent, had a strange bodily characteristic as well. After reaching the second tier, he had a much higher defense than others in the same level.

They had once tried an experiment where they used a rather weak handgun and shot his stomach at point-blank range. The result was surprising as he barely even bled. If he were the one who had been shot by the anti-equipment rifle which had pierced through a layer of obstacles, the power of it hitting onto him would be almost the same as him being shot by a handgun at point-blank range.

The special police officers took cover but they didn’t know where the bullet was shot from.

Soon the special forces stationed just below the building started to surround the suspected buildings nearby.

With the support of the military and government, America was basically under the representation of the Holy Fist Palace. The majority of the Blood Breed’s strength had either moved out of America or were directly under the Holy Fist Palace. As the conflict between the Blood Breeds and normal humans kept increasing, both Blood Breeds and the neutral standing hidden Blood Breeds were all forced into the light. The majority of the neutral standing Blood Breeds joined the Holy Fist Palace and became a part of them in order to continue living their peaceful life.

Soon, the gunners sent by the Bailey Group had been captured by the Holy Fist Palace’s Blood Breeds and was sent directly to Xander for interrogation.

With the Blood Breed's hypnosis on humans, the killer soon revealed his mission's objective.

Never in Kabb's mind would he have expected that the Blood Breeds would enter the Holy Fist Palace, as his killers had revealed everything under hypnosis.

Two hours later...

Kabb and Medis, who were hidden in a certain basement in Los Angeles, were personally captured by Hochman himself and soon on their way to the Holy Fist Palace for their impending punishment.

"Tell me, where's the mask?" Garen stared calmly at the already kneeling Kabb and Medis. Both of them looked very drained and exhausted as if they'd experienced a lot of pain on their way there.

"I have a lot of ways to make you guys speak but I'll be merciful since I've interacted with you people in the past."

Garen said with a very straight face.

"The mask is indeed in my possession. Furthermore, I know where the remaining masks are too," Kabb answered calmly. "However, I have a condition."

"You do not have the right to negotiate any condition."

Garen closed his eyes, stood up and walked to the small door on his right.

"Kill him."

Hochman's pupil immediately shrunk as he didn't even notice that a blue figure had appeared beside Kabb and Medis, who were literally just beside him.

It was Tu Lan in a blue dress. Her hair was as red as blood as they flowed around her shoulders. Her eyes were giving off a rather mysterious and seducing beauty.

Kabb and Medis, who were half kneeling, had expected that Garen would try to make concessions in order to gain advantages for future negotiations. However, they only realized that he didn't even care when Garen had left the room!

With the sudden appearance of a blue-dressed woman, both of them had started to panic for real.

His actions were completely illogical!

Didn't negotiation mean that both parties should take a step back and reach a point of agreement? Why did he just flip everything right at the very beginning?

"Tell me everything you know about the Sleepless Faces," it was as if Tu Lan's eyes were filled with a lethal spell as she easily absorbed both of their consciousnesses.

In an instant, both of them immediately turned limp.

No matter how much times Hochman witnessed it, the admiration kept lingering in him. Tu Lan's hypnosis far surpassed any typical Blood Breeds. He felt that this power was too much even though he wasn't the target.

A few minutes later...

With a relieved look on her face, Tu Lan walked towards Garen, who was watering the plants in the greenhouse.

She then reported everything she had extracted from Kabb and Medis to Garen.

"The Sleepless Faces is able to grant immortality? It can create the Original Blood Breed?" Garen was stunned.

"This is what I found out according to Kabb. It is also the reason why he had been secretly trying to obtain the Sleepless Faces. Unfortunately, he doesn't have the strength and confidence. It is very impressive that he, as a commoner, is able to get his hand on one mask," Tu Lan sighed.

Garen pondered for a moment as he reached out his hand and gently picked a newly bloomed white rose. He then gently placed it under his nose as he admired the fragrance.

He glanced at Tu Lan and realized that she seemed hesitant, as though she wanted to ask something.

"You can speak what's on your mind."

Tu Lan hesitated for a moment but she eventually opened her mouth.

"Since you don't know the purpose of this mask, why are you collecting them?"

"I have my own reason. You don't need to know about this," Garen smiled.

"Is it because of the mysterious energy it contains?" Tu Lan asked softly.

"Oh? You know about it?" Garen was surprised to hear that.

Only the founders of the Black Uniforms knew that antiques contained mysterious powers. As the higher-ups of the Black Uniforms had dispersed, it was no longer a secret and it wasn't strange that Tu Lan knew about this.

Garen didn't care if people knew about it, as his natural ability was something no one can replicate.

He was able to absorb this energy and channel it into himself to increase his abilities. This was indeed a very powerful skill. However, he wasn't the only one who possessed this glitch-like ability, regardless of whether it was the Secret Technique world or the Totem world. For example, there was White Bird Holy Fist Palosa and his ridiculous 99 Acute Airholes. However, these were all unimportant, as what determined the victor of the battle was perseverance during the battle itself.

It didn't matter if it was him, Sylphalan or Pasola. They represented the peak of their generations and was the representative of generation after generation.

They weren't people who could be simply described as having natural talent.

Without the will to focus and achieve their goals, it would've been impossible for them to reach that far.

As Tu Lan stared at Garen from the side, she suddenly felt that this man was very mysterious, even more than a Death Apostle.

A mere human who lived for about twenty years had reached such height in terms of power. It was as if he knew everything since young and could master everything without any guidance. Furthermore, his gaze didn't fit a twenty-year-old youngster at all but resembled that of a very experienced old man.

"If the Original Blood Breed story is real, the other Death Apostles will not allow you to live."

The Death Apostles who were used to standing at the top would never allow Garen, who resembled dark clouds that would engulf all high ranking Blood Breeds and was a person who stood above everyone else just like Ashen, to live.

"The conflict between us and the Old Generations Blood Breed cannot be avoided," Garen laughed as if he wasn't worried at all. "But what about it? No one can stop me, including Ashen."

He kept recalling the life he'd lived in this world. He wasn't sure why, but he had been recollecting the days he had here.

However, he wasn't rejecting his memories of being born and the life he had with Raffaele in a small town when he was young.

"I may be out for a few days. You'll be in charge of the Holy Fist Palace until then," Garen said all of the sudden.

"Aren't you afraid of the Death Apostles ambushing you?" Garen was stunned. "I won't be able to stop them. Wellington probably hates you to the core and would strike at any given opportunity."

"It's not in Ashen's personality to act like that, but you should take caution against the other two Death Apostles," Garen started frowning as well. This was indeed a problem since the masks might force the Old Generation Blood Breed to stand against him. Excluding Ashen, the remaining two Death Apostles might team up and it would be very troublesome once they do. Tu Lan alone would be helpless against them as she had just become a Death Apostle not long ago.

The Holy Fist Palace had now become the mental icon of humans fighting against the Old Generation Blood Breeds. Hence, they couldn't afford to be embroiled in trouble as a lot of important big shots from America had gathered in this place. Its influence was immense and strong. It would be unimaginable if the Old Generation Blood Breeds successfully attacked this place.

"Do you have any news from AG?" Garen changed the topic.

"No. However I heard that there was a rare glacier earthquake at the south pole where AG had locked himself away from the world. AG's location is unknown after the large-scale glacier collapse, and we could only determine AG is still alive by using a weak positioning communication device," Tu Lan was very determined in following Garen permanently. With her lazy personality, she didn't want to leave at all as she got to learn Secret Techniques and become stronger.

Garen only planned to visit Raffaele. If possible, he wished to take her and her family members in so that the Blood Breeds would not take her in as a hostage after discovering their relationship.

However now that he looked at it, he was completely chained at the Holy Fist Palace.

In the small Grano town.

Inside a black villa at the center of the small town.

The main hall was completely dark. There was no light but rows of lit candles had been placed on the ground in circles all around the whole main hall.

The yellow candlelight wobbled about as it lit up the situation inside the main hall.

There were three beautiful girls dressed in white dresses and had white wreaths upon their heads. Under the witness of a huge group of black-shirted witches, the three ladies carried triangular silver accessories as they quietly walked towards the grey sculpture in front of them.

The golden-haired woman who walked at the front was Grano's youngest and most talented witch — Raffaele.

As she walked at the front, her expression was strict while she approached the female figure sculpture. She then stabbed her left index finger with the silver triangular accessories.

Pop!

Drops of fresh blood started to drip into the black basin in front of the sculpture. /

"Great Lion Mother, please accept Grano's most attractive corolla as the purest gift to you," Raffaele's grandmother started singing loudly as she raised her wooden crutches high.