

Nano Machine |

Chapter: 11

Yeowun got out of the bath and looked at his body through the mirror as he dried himself off. His body was originally scrawny and weak, but now it was muscular and well-toned.

'Nano Machine. How is this possible?'

[I have reconstructed your body, Master.]

'Reconstruct?'

[Creating something from nothing is hard, but reshaping your body and muscles is not as hard.]

'Your speaking is so complicated.'

He had not learned martial arts yet, but he did not slack off in his studies. However, whatever words the Nano Machine used were those that he had not learned from any of his education sessions. Yeowun put his clothes back on and went to his office.

'Your name is too long. Is there any other name I can call you with?'

[You can set any name you'd like, Master.]

'...Hm. I can't think of any, so I'll just call you Nano.'

[Registering -Nano-]

'I just gave you a name. How about you say thank you?'

Yeowun joked about it, but there was no way a machine could understand a joke.

[Thank you, Master.]

'...Yeah.'

The Nano Machine was a machine and Yeowun was now getting used to it.

His office did not have many books. Most of them were related to his studies, and there weren't any books about martial arts. All he had were basic books about gaining internal energy and that helped him very little.

'Bastards.'

This was the work of all the ladies from the six clans.

It was those ladies who secretly poisoned his mother and made Yeowun swear an oath that he would not learn any martial arts until he joined the academy in front of his dying mother.

That's why Yeowun could only study this basic internal energy book. Even this was only possible because the Lord himself had sent it to him secretly.

If he didn't even learn this, his muscle and veins would have hardened, making it impossible to learn any martial arts even after joining the academy. The six clans knew that the training would not make any differences so they did not care.

'Let's try it.'

Yeowun took out a book from the shelves. It was a book about blood flow.

'What do I need to do?'

[Look right into the book and go through each page until you reach the last one.]

'Just flip through the pages?'

[Yes. Please start.]

Yeowun was not convinced, but he started flipping through pages. He then quickly reached the last page. He did not realize it, but his focus was shaking rapidly.

'I did it.'

Chapter: 12

[Scanned the book 'Blood Passage.' Attempting to send the information to the user's brain. Will you accept?]

'Scan? Oh, you mean you copied what it means?'

[Yes, Master. Will you accept?]

'I accept.'

And the feeling that he felt when he received the Nano Machine's manual came back to him. His head felt as if a jolt of lightning had struck him and the information swept into his brain. Yeowun felt slightly dizzy and he held onto the bookshelf. It was much better than before, but he still felt like everything was spinning around him.

[Transfer complete.]

"Ha... ha..."

[You will get used to it, Master.]

'Are you worried about me?'

[I am just stating the fact.]

And as Nano said, the dizziness quickly disappeared.

'Is this over?'

[Yes, Master. As you did with the manual, you can think about the related information to bring it up.]

Yeowun then thought about blood flow, and information about the book that he hadn't even read came up to him naturally.

'What... wow.'

It was hard to believe, but he had just crammed the entire book into his head without even reading it. He fully understood what it meant.

[There was an error in the book that was corrected before it was transferred.]

'Error? What error?'

[Information about the blood points were wrong, so it was amended.]

The Nano Machine that was created in the distant future had embedded more precise information while scanning the book.

“This is crazy!”

Yeowun thought this was amazing. He had to study and memorize books until now, but with this method, he didn't need to spend time on that anymore.

‘I can just cram everything in!’

Yeowun smiled excitedly. He didn't have that many books in his office, but it was going to be different once he entered the academy.

‘Let's quickly grow stronger than everyone else and survive after joining the academy. That's the goal.’

He couldn't fight the war for the throne just yet. He needed to focus on surviving for now.

Little did Chun Yeowun know that the power of the Nano Machine was not only limited to its information transfer.

Yeowun's mother died when he was ten years old. The Lord sent Doctor Baek to look after his mother, but it was too late. He later learned that his mother died due to poisoning. It was a type that was hidden inside food, and one could not detect the poison until it killed the target that consumed it, thus assassinating them.

Yeowun was also poisoned, but he did not have as much food and he was able to survive by taking Doctor Baek's medicine. After this incident, Jang always prepared his food.

Jang always woke up early in the morning to train before preparing Yeowun's breakfast. It wasn't sure since when, but Yeowun always woke up early too and watched Jang go through his training. According to Wulin standards, it was rude to peek at another's training, but Jang felt sorry for Yeowun who couldn't learn martial arts and he didn't say much about it.

And today, Jang was up early to train his dagger skills.

‘It's today.’

Yeowun stayed up late that night and now it was time for him to join the academy. Once he entered the academy's doors, he'd lose Jang's protection. He drew a long face as he looked at Jang's training.

'Would it have been better if I learned some of his arts at least?'

He always thought of this, but members of clans were always watching them so he couldn't learn. That's when the Nano Machine spoke to him.

[Would you like to scan Guard Jang's movements?]

'What?'

Yeowun opened his eyes in shock.

'Can you scan a person's movements too?'

[It is possible.]

'Then you mean you can scan Jang's martial art movements and transfer them to my head?'

[Yes, Master. And there is data of multiple martial arts techniques that I can transfer over to you at this moment.]

Yeowun did not know, but the Nano Machine was created with advanced technology from the future. He did not gain approval from Jang, but he was going to the academy in the afternoon. He had to make a choice.

'Okay. Scan it.'

[Activating the scan.]

Yeowun's focus began to shake rapidly and then started to scan Jang's movements. After staring at his movements for about thirty minutes, Nano's voice filled his head.

[Movement scan completed. Beginning transfer.]

And with the jolt, the movement began to play back in Yeowun's head. And soon, it was complete.

[Transfer complete.]

With the slight dizziness, it was done. Yeowun's eye shined with astonishment. This was beyond amazement.

'Nano... I can't believe this. I think I can use Jang's dagger skill!'

Yeowun closed the window so Jang could not see him and readied himself. It was the basic stance that Jang did before unleashing his skill. Yeowun then swung his arm to unleash his dagger.

He did not learn, nor was he taught, but his movements now matched Jang's movements outside. Jang had trained his actions for twenty years, but Yeowun could mimic his movements perfectly. Nano's voice rang in his ears again.

[Muscle analysis complete for training the movements. Will you accept the transfer to your muscles?]

'I need the muscle transfer too?' Yeowun asked curiously.

[If you don't have the proper developed muscles for your movement, you will...]

"Ugh!"

Before Nano could finish, Yeowun felt pain tearing through his entire muscle. It was so intense that he couldn't even move.

[There is muscle damage as it is not yet suitable for the movement.]

'Okay... now I get it. Can you please make it easier for me to understand?'

Yeowun thought as he barely got up and sat down on the bed.

[Changing language to fit the user's level.]

'Level?'

Yeowun frowned as it didn't feel too good, but he couldn't understand fully either.

[Translation complete. You did not train like Jang for a long time, so your body is not yet accustomed to the movements that your brain has learned. Only

after simulating the movements and analyzing the muscle development requirements can you use it fully.]

‘Okay... I think I understand better now. It’s still hard.’

Most terms that Nano used were not used in people of current times, which was hard to understand.

[Would you like to lower the language level to the lowest level?]

‘...No, that won’t be necessary. So, if I transfer the muscle development, I won’t have this bad pain?’

[That is correct. Will you begin the transfer?]

‘How long does it take?’

[Reshaping muscles will require every Nano Machine inside the body, which will take loading time.]

‘Loading time? So how long will it take?’

[Approximately two hours.]

It was still early in the morning, so two hours was okay. Yeowun nodded and agreed with the transfer.

[Activating muscle transfer. It will come with strong pain, so you will be put under anesthesia.]

‘Does it hurt?’

[It comes with severe pain. There have been millions of cases of fainting from the pain.]

‘Should I try it without anesthesia?’

Yeowun wondered curiously.

[Will you proceed without anesthesia?]

‘...If I can’t bear it, can you put me to sleep?’ Yeowun added.

He soon realized he was not wrong in adding that last part.

[Beginning the process.]

As millions of nanomachines began moving toward his muscles, he felt ticklish.

'This doesn't seem...'

And the muscle change began at once.

"UGH!" he gasped. The muscles twisted and his eyes rolled backward at the intense pain. He couldn't scream, but he couldn't hold back either.

"Nnnnnngghhhhaaaaaah..."

Yeowun twisted in agony and almost screamed as Nano's voice rang in his head.

[Injecting anesthesia.]

"Gg....r...."

And Yeowun fell asleep.

After completing his morning training, Jang prepared breakfast. He was not a good cook, but five years ago, after Lady Hwa's death, he had to start cooking for the young prince and now he was very skilled at it.

Most of the time he prepared a simple breakfast, but today he prepared red pig meat that he got yesterday with an egg. It was to congratulate Yeowun's admission to the academy.

It was maybe the last time he could enjoy a meal without worry, so Jang paid extra attention to prepare it.

'I hope he survives to enjoy my cooking again...'

That's when Jang heard some screaming.

"Nnnnnngghhhhaaaaaa..."

Yeowun's room was close to the kitchen, so Jang was able to hear it easily. He grabbed the sword and ran toward Yeowun's room. As he burst into the room, Yeowun was sprawled out with only his upper body on the bed and bubbles foaming from his mouth. He was unconscious.

"Prince!"

He quickly ran over and checked the Prince's pulse. It didn't seem weird as it was just like when he found him on the mountain two years ago.

'He's fine. What was he... huh?'

Jang then saw the faint trace of footsteps on the floor of the room. He placed Yeowun on top of the bed and checked the footprints carefully.

'Is it...?'

He wasn't sure, so he placed his foot over the footprint and moved along with it. He was shocked. The footsteps represented the traces of his own dagger skills. A mere footstep would not leave a trace like this on a wooden floor, but martial arts movements sometimes left deep traces after pushing the feet down with hard stomps.

'What? Did he learn it on his own?'

It was unbelievable. Jang had trained for twenty years to achieve his skill, but this prince had taken the perfect steps. It would require at least years of basic training to accomplish this.

'He watched my training for two years at most...'

This made Jang dumbfounded.

'He watched my training for just two years and caught up to my twenty years of experience...?'

It was unbelievable, but also it made his eyes turn red with tears. To him, Yeowun was always a person in need of protection and the son of the woman he thought of dearly. Realizing Yeowun's talent made him feel grateful. He then placed his hand on Yeowun's wrist and checked his internal energy.

'No energy... he just knows the movements.'

Maybe it was for the better. If it was revealed that he had learned to how use internal energy, it was going to enrage the six clans. Jang looked at Yeowun for a while and then walked out. Two hours then passed by.

[Muscle transfer complete. Deactivating anesthesia.]

With a jolt in his head, Yeowun woke up from his sleep.

“Ugh!”

Yeowun got up, panting. He remembered the extreme pain right before he was put to sleep. He did not want to feel that kind of pain anymore.

“Ha... I will never try it again.’

[I warned you, Master.]

“...Yeah.”

It was Yeowun’s choice to try it out. He then got up from the bed and walked to the center of the room to prepare himself to use the dagger skill.

‘Now it won’t hurt, right?’

[Through the simulation, you now have the same muscles as the ones that practiced the movements for twenty years.]

‘Good!’

Yeowun prepared his stance and swung his dagger. The power seemed to be very different from a while ago as his movements were more precise and accurate. As he stomped to move onto his next step, the wooden floor rumbled loudly.

“No!”

Yeowun was surprised and stopped immediately. The floor now had marks of his footsteps.

“This is bad.”

He became worried that Jang might see this.

‘It leaves footprints even without internal energy.’

While he was thinking about it, that’s when someone knocked on the door.

“Prince. Your breakfast is ready.”

It was Jang. Yeowun pressed down on the area that had the footprint to remove it, but it didn’t work. That’s when the door opened and Jang walked in.

“Prince?”

“OH! Haha, I’m so hungry!”

Yeowun quickly got up and brought the table near the window to the center of the room. Jang asked curiously, “Don’t you always eat by the window?”

“Y-yeah, but I won’t be returning for a while so I wanted to eat in the center.”

It was suspicious enough but Jang silently placed down breakfast on the table. Yeowun sighed and sat down on the chair.

“Oh!”

Breakfast was baked pig meat, fried vegetables, and the eggs that he loved. It was not a feast that the six clans enjoyed, but this was still lavish enough for Yeowun. He became silent as he knew that it was Jang’s act of kindness for Yeowun who might not return from the academy.

Yeowun took the chopsticks and began eating with teary eyes.

[Strong emotions contributing to acid coming up the throat. Increasing saliva level. Please swallow the food with saliva to calm down the acid.]

‘Stop saying weird shit and shut up!’

[Going into silent mode.]

Nano became silent and Yeowun swallowed his food. He couldn’t leave any food behind. After a quiet breakfast, Jang began asking, “When did you st...”

He couldn’t say the word ‘steal’ to his prince.

“Learn my dagger skill?”

“Huh? Uh- w-what are you talking about?”

Yeowun was surprised by the sudden question. Jang pushed the table to the side and pointed at the floor. There was a clear footprint on the floor.

‘I wasn’t wrong.’

The clear print was certainly from the stomp made by moving onto the second formation of the dagger skill. Yeowun did not learn any martial arts, but he was still from Wulin and he knew what the laws were like. Stealing other people’s martial arts techniques was strictly forbidden and looked down upon.

“I.. I...”

He did steal it through Nano, so he had nothing to say about it. He couldn’t even look into Jang’s probably disappointed look. Jang then knelt down and spoke with a soft voice.

“You did a good job.”

“Uh...”

“I am your guard, Prince. If it wasn’t for the oath, I would have taught you my skills already.”

“Jang...”

Yeowun’s eyes filled up with tears. Jang was more of a father figure to him than his real father. Jang took out a paper filled with writing and gave it to Yeowun.

“What’s this?”

“It’s an energy flow method for the internal energy of the dagger skill.”

“Why are you giving this to me?”

“I would love to give you a method on how to train the internal energy itself, but you will find a better one at the academy. Learn it.”

Yeowun was now shedding tears. He swore that he would never cry after his mother’s death, but he was still a young boy. Jang got up and took the empty plates before he began walking out. He then stopped to speak.

“You can cry today, but you will need to be stronger from now on.”

“...Thank you.”

Yeowun wiped the tears off his face. He now had no fear or hesitation. Even without his mother, he still had a place to return to.

In the afternoon, the street near the Demonic Cult’s castle was bustling with people. The opening ceremony was going to begin soon. Every boy, ranging from fourteen to nineteen years of age in every family and clan of the Demonic Cult was now gathering at the Demonic Academy.

The Demonic Cult had the six clans, three guardians, and hundreds of small clans and groups. The Demonic Academy was opened once every ten years to train a new elite individual. This current one had candidates that were the heirs to the Lord, so everyone labeled the academy as an Heirship competition. And this was a wonderful opportunity for many small clans to side with the future heir to the Lord.

Thousands of boys and girls all gathered to join the academy. The Great Training Ground located right past the entrance of the academy was large enough to fit all the students inside. All of them looked excited and nervous about what’s to come. It was because this was a chance to see the Lord himself who would join the opening ceremony.

“Look! It’s the Left Guardian!”

“If he’s here, the Lord will be here soon.”

“I’ll get to see his face for the first time in my life!”

There was a middle-aged man with long red hair walking out from the left side of the giant stage, scoffing at children down at the ground.

‘Fools. We only have fools this time. Or it may be the last time.’

The middle-aged man was the Left Guardian, Fire King Lee Hameng, or the closest advisor to the Lord. The Lord had three guardians with him. The Great Guardian, Left Guardian, and Right Guardian only acted on the Lord’s orders. They ranked within the top ten of fighting prowess within the Demonic Cult.

‘Hmm. Are those the heirs from the six clans?’

Hameng glanced at the boys standing in front of all children. All students who entered the academy were given a round name tag with numbers. They were given the numbers based on the order they entered, but these princes were exceptions.

‘They are quite something as kids.’

The other children were all lined up neatly, but these six princes arrogantly stood at the front as if they were telling everyone that they were on top of them all. Unlike others who had a white tag with black numbers on them, these princes had black tags with red numbers according to their rank to the succession.

1. Wise Clan – Chun Muyeon.
2. Sword Clan – Chun Kungwun.
3. Loyal Clan – Chun Mukeum.
4. Poison Clan – Chun Jongsum.
5. Blade Clan – Chun Yuchan.
6. Lust Clan – Chun Wonryou.

They only had numbers on their tags, but Hameng knew their names. There were two girl candidates last time, and although there was only one girl this time around from the Lust Clan, he didn’t really care.

‘Everyone else is here, but I don’t see him.’

Hameng swept his glance across everyone, but he couldn’t find the one he was looking for. There was one boy who was getting all the attention from the higher ranks of the Demonic Cult.

‘Oh, there he is.’

Hameng finally found the boy. He would not have found him if he didn’t have a black tag. At the entrance, at the very end of the line, Chun Yeowun stood there alone.

‘The heir candidate not from the six clans.’

He was still a son of the Lord, but he couldn't come up to the front. And it also seemed like the other kids around him were shunning him. Therefore, he stood there alone.

'He's receiving attention in an interesting way.'

That was the end of the interest. Hameng knew that the boy did not train in martial arts, so he was going to fail the entrance test.

'There are so many.'

Chun Yeowun was able to see the thousand children standing in front of him. He wasn't late, but he was told that his tag was missing and had to wait until the end. So even with the black tag, he couldn't go up to the front. It was certain that it was the work of someone from the six clans, but it didn't matter to him.

'It's best I avoid trouble with them from the beginning anyway.'

Chun Yeowun liked that. They wanted to kill him even before joining academy, so it was better to not see them at all.

The horn sound blared across the field, and people began to mumble. It was due to the person who had just entered. Thousand boys and girls began to chant with shouts. A man with the character 'Sky' on his black silk clothes got up and sat down on the throne up on the stage. It was the Lord, and one of the Five Strongs of Wulin, Chun Yujong. Even without his title, his presence was overwhelming even in front of a thousand people.

"I can't even look at him directly."

The boys had lost the courage to even look up to him. Next to the Lord was the lead guardian, Great Guardian King Marakim. He had a special mask on his face so that no one knew what he really looked like.

"Oops."

And to the right of the throne was a ragged clothed man who seemed to be having a hard time standing up as if he were drunk. He was the Right Guardian, Submeng, the Crazy Blade. He acted silly, but he was still ranked within the top ten strong men in the Demonic Cult.

“Hah.”

“What’re you lookin’ at?”

Submeng spat at Hameng who looked at him with a disgusted look and took a sip from his bottle of liquor. Marakim then walked onto the stage and shouted,

“SILENCE!”

It was a voice laced with internal energy that spread through to everyone. The training ground went silent at once.

“The most honorable one, it is ready.”

Marakim turned back and spoke quietly, and Lord Chun Yujong got up from his throne.

“To all who have entered the academy, you will be the future of our cult.”

And unlike Marakim who shouted, the Lord spoke softly. However, his voice was crystal clear in the ears of the thousand boys and girls. It was proof of Chun Yujong’s sheer power.

“I welcome you in joining the academy. I hope you train and play your part in our cult.”

And that was it. Chun Yujong turned and Great Guardian Marakim spoke to him.

“That was a wonderful speech.”

The Lord then walked off the stage with Marakim guiding him. It was so short that it made the students fall silent, but soon they shouted and chanted.

“FOR THE DEMONIC CULT!”

Chun Yeowun wasn’t sure how he felt. He had never seen his father for fifteen years, but he met his eyes with him for the first time. The Lord had found Chun Yeowun standing in the farthest part of the training ground as soon as he got up on the stage, but his gaze was so cold.

‘I don’t care anyway.’

He didn't appear when his mother, Lady Hwa, died. There was no disappointment when he didn't care in the first place. That's when people fell silent as Fire King Hameng stood up on the stage.

"With his speech, we will begin now."

-Mumble mumble...

"Stand straight!"

Hameng's voice pierced through the air and the students shut up.

"I'll keep it simple. Listen up."

Hameng began to explain the system of the Demonic Academy.

"The academy will last for four years and six stages."

Everyone knew the academy lasted for four years. But there were some who had teachers or parents who did not attend academy, so they began to focus on the tests on each of the six stages.

"You can take the six stages in steps, and you can take it only once."

Students began to mumble about only getting one shot at each stage. One failure meant that they would be cast out.

"You seem to get it pretty quickly. If you do not pass, you will be expelled right away."

There was only one chance to rise up. That's when a handsome boy standing in the front row raised his hand.

"I have a question."

It was the boy with number 2 on his tag. In second place for the throne, it was Chun Kungwun of the Sword Clan. Hameng was in the middle of his speech, but Kungwun confidently interrupted him. However-

"Who said you could ask questions?"

"What?"

Chun Kungwun's handsome face grimaced. He had been treated with respect from everyone around him because he was a prince, but it was shocking to be treated with hostility.

"Oh? So you have a problem with my attitude? 'Prince'? You want to be expelled even before the competition?"

Left Guardian Lee Hameng spat angrily. Chun Kungwun was angered, but he couldn't say anything. He was reminded of what his guard warned him about the other day.

Chapter: 20

[Once you're in the academy, every privilege you had for being the son of the Lord will be removed. And whoever is appointed as the Chief of the Academy, never cross his lines.]

He didn't mind it when he heard it, but he now realized it after experiencing it. He was against one of the strongest in the Demonic Cult.

"I apologize, sir."

Chun Kungwun bowed and the other five heirs smirked.

The training ground went quiet after Chun Kungwun's embarrassing moment. Left Guardian Lee Hameng continued, "I know what your question is. You think just one chance is too harsh? There will be special privileges given to those who move forward into the next stage."

Everyone became intrigued. Those who stayed in the academy longer came out with more powerful prowess and higher titles.

"The first privilege is medicine. You will be given a medicine ball called the Black Dragon Ball. This is given each time you overcome the challenge."

This ball was created within the Demonic Cult. It wasn't as good as the one created in Sorim, but it was still good enough that made the person who consumed it would gain twenty years worth of internal energy. In simple math, passing the six tests would give the person one hundred and twenty years worth of internal energy. Of course, this was also the kind of medicine that would build immunity after continued use, but it was still a good privilege.

'Six stages, huh...?'

Chun Yeowun also seemed interested. He had no internal energy right now, but if he were to pass all six tests, he would be given the chance to increase his internal energy instantly.

"The second will be the books to the martial arts secrets. If you are martial artists, you all should know the importance of such books."

This was one of the most important privileges in the academy. There were many books within the academy, and even the books from the six clans' martial arts were stored within the academy.

'Books!'

This was what Yeowun needed the most. With the Nano Machine's power, he was able to learn the dagger skill, but he needed to get stronger.

"The library has five floors. The higher the floor, the stronger the books. You will be given access to a higher floor once you go up the stages."

The fifth floor, which was the last floor, was full of secrets to various martial arts manuals of Wulin itself.

"However, you all won't even go near the fifth floor, so give up."

Hameng spoke discouragingly, but the second privilege was still astounding. Not to mention, all of this also meant that whoever the students were, or wherever they came from, they all had equal chances to obtain greater power if they could take it. It meant that stronger the person was, the more powerful they would get.

'So, this was why...'

Yeowun realized why everyone said it would be different once they were in the academy. In the academy, no one who would be protected by privilege or their family bloodline. Everyone was under the same food chain.

"If you pass the first stage, you are low-ranked warrior. Second, middle-ranked. Third, high-ranked. I hope none of you from military clan backgrounds stay only at the second to third ranks like losers."

Hameng spoke to students with a smirk.

“Oh, but even those of you who only want to be mid to high-ranked warriors will still be given medicine balls. Don’t worry.”

As Hameng said, the academy gave privileges to even the low-ranked warriors, which was a good opportunity to warrior prospects who want to become more powerful. These ranked warriors had a huge difference in power, with the high-ranked warriors being the most powerful and fewer in numbers.

“If you pass the fourth stage, you will be given the title of Squad Leader, and you will be given the title of Clan Leader upon your fifth stage test. For the sixth stage, it won’t matter with you all so I’ll just skip it.”

Hameng said that because he had his reasons. The sixth stage test was almost impossible and less than ten people would manage to pass the test. That’s why Hameng didn’t anticipate such an event.

“And although you all start out with the same cadet rank, you will all come to have different ranks per the progress through your stages. You will then need to obey your superior.”

That was the core element of the academy. One who does not strive higher will be left to rot. Chun Yeowun looked on eagerly. If he had survived until now, it was time for him to go up in the food chain.

“Don’t be too happy. Most of you will not even go further than the third stage.”

Hameng cracked a smile as he gave his closing statement.