

The Nameless 2171

Chapter 2171: Waking?

Compared to Reaper, Chibi was lacking by several levels. After all, she was just a Lower Venerable treasure while Reaper had entered the Lower Empyrean Realms. Honestly, Dyon's alchemy skill was already at the point where Chibi actually limited him a bit, but Dyon had never cared about such things, so he never thought of replacing Chibi.

Dyon had spent much of his alchemy career without a cauldron, so he was already used to concocting with a handicap. But, that didn't mean he was adverse to the idea of having a powerful aid by his side.

"You sense something you want, Little Chibi?"

"Yes, yes. This Grand Aunt senses her slave calling for her." Chibi said with a cheeky grin.

Dyon nodded.

He tapped his finger in empty space, causing a ripple of his soul qi to spread outward. After comprehending the fundamental runes of the red star, he had an impossibly high understanding of this lava world he stood in now. Not only could he effectively act as a God in this place, but due to him also fully comprehending the blue star, he could do so outside of Mount Volaire as well.

As a result, Dyon's battle prowess in this world was incredibly high, even higher than it would normally be. This was the power of fundamental runes.

So, something like parting these treacherous lavas with a thought and exposing the hidden vein below was as easy as breathing.

In the blink of an eye, the vein was exposed. It looked no different from a hidden mine of gem stones, snaking through with a striking ruby color. The irregular cuts that made up the veins were both striking and beautiful.

Dyon could see the places Skull and Roe managed to dig up, but he almost felt bad for them when he did.

Their divine sense was too frail to poke around the lava, so they had thought that they were already targeting the main core of the vein. But, the reality was that they were barely scratching a small branch vein in the outskirts.

"Do you need help Chibi?"

"Nope!"

Maybe the most impressive part about treasures with spirits is that no one knew more than them about how to fix, repair and upgrade themselves. If the only measuring factor was how well it could build itself, Chibi and Reaper would be considered God level Weapon's Smiths.

Of course, they had to rely on Dyon's soul qi to accomplish what they wanted. After all, they couldn't produce their own strength and could only do so in connection with Dyon. But when had Dyon ever been lacking in this regard?

Chibi's spirit and physical flew down with a youthful excitement. She entirely ignored the branch veins and even the main vein. She crushed her way through the center, eventually pulling out a powerful pulsing ruby with her tiny little hands.

Watching her lug around a rock tens of times her body size made Dyon chuckle. He couldn't help but miss his daughter.

Chibi's physical body expanded in size until it was large enough to contain what Dyon believed must have been the core of the volcanic vein. She happily, and more gently than Dyon had ever seen her act, lowered it into the opening.

Dyon smiled. 'Since these are so helpful to her, let's see if I can find anymore...'

Encompassing the core of Mount Volaire wasn't a problem for Dyon. He instantly found not only four more volcanic veins of this quality, but also found five mist glass ores as well.

After giving Chibi her fourth vein core, she shut down, seemingly having reached her limit. She didn't open up to accept the fifth core even after he got it.

But that was when something Dyon hadn't expected to happen happened. Little Rain, after almost two centuries of dormancy, sent out his energy and swallowed the core whole.

For a moment, Dyon thought that Little Rain was finally waking up. Ever since the little guy swallowed the Fire Sprite, he had been sleeping within Dyon's inner world. The only time Dyon remembered him stirring slightly was when Clara awakened to her true Fire Spirit Constitution.

Back then, Dyon also thought he might awaken soon. But once again, he fell dormant without a single stir.

In truth, Dyon had given up on Little Rain maybe ever awakening within his lifetime. The sort of timeline Sprites worked on was inconceivable. Dyon saw Little Rain as a child, but the truth was that it had taken the little guy billions to trillions of years just to finally form a consciousness. If he was going through a similar process again, who was to tell whether or not it would take just as long again?

If Dyon thought about it, the volcanic ore core really was the perfect treasure for Little Rain. It encompassed both the minerals that he loved as a mineral sprite, and the aspects of fire that came from his new fire sprite identity.

Unfortunately, even after a few seconds of anticipation, there were no more stirrings from the little sprite. Dyon could only sigh.

The strength of sprites not only came from their age, but the strength of the elements around them. The Sprite Race was one of the strongest Hegemons on the Immortal Plane for a good reason. And unlike the half sprites of the mortal plane, they were true, full sprites. Their power wasn't even comparable.

Little Rain would be a powerful helper to Dyon if he could ever wake up. But Dyon simply didn't have the luxury to wait for the little guy. He had to keep pressing forward with the assumption that Little Rain would never wake up.

Dyon zipped around the core of Mount Volaire and eventually found the five cores of the mist glass ores.

Unlike Little Chibi, Reaper swallowed all five. It wasn't through a mouth of some sort, but rather through that odd projected eye.

In a single blink, Reaper had already fused its broken blade back together and looked as good as new. But, Dyon could tell that Reaper, too, had fell into a state of sleep.

Chapter 2172: Dragon King

"Alright... I guess that's it for this place... Maybe I'll come back another time to absorb the rest of the two stars... For now, my body has had enough of that kind of energy."

Dyon felt that it was important not to only gather as much energy as he could, but to also diversify said energy. How could it be possible to perfectly break away from the Heavens if his foundation was only built upon a few things? He had no choice but to become a master of all.

The only shame in this trip was that Dyon hadn't found any fundamental runes related to Laws. Dyon only now realized that despite the fact Laws were just one step above Daos, reaching them wasn't so simple... There was a reason Immortal Law experts had their name.

Such a reality was why comprehension facet Overlords were so rare.

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Outside Mount Volaire, the signs of the eruption event ending was becoming clearer and clearer.

Of the dozen or so Immortal Saints of the desert bubble world who managed to enter, many of them managed to survive, but there were two who were strikingly missing. The absence of Skull and Roe didn't matter much to Crystella and the two young men, but to the desert world Immortal Saints, it felt like an explosion in their minds.

"Miss Nightwell, there's really no need to stay here any longer. It's obvious that he overestimated himself and ended up dying. You know we can't be late for that event... Our harvests already aren't bad." Tedric tried to persuade Crystella for the umpteenth time.

The hours ticked by and Crystella's frown only deepened. Soon, the rumbling of the mountain settled down and the temperature began to slowly drop. It was obvious that the eruption event was over now.

Crystella sighed. "Let's go."

Just when Crystella wanted leave, a sharp oppressive aura caused her to freeze. In that moment, she felt as though her blood had coagulated, slowing to the point it solidified.

A shiver traveled down her spine as her grip wrapped tightly around the fan in her hand.

If she was in such a state, one could only imagine the plight of the others. Kywen and Tedric fell to their knees atop Crystella's flying treasure. As for the Immortal Saints of the bubble world who had only waited around out of respect, they were greatly regretting their actions now, falling and tumbling down the mountain side before just barely catching themselves.

The man who appeared carried a fiendish aura. The whites of his eyes were instead more appropriately called blacks, the only color in his gaze being the yellow reptilian pupils that flickered with murderous intent. His hair swept past even his feet, flying behind him more like a cape than anything else. His skin was an inhuman shade of black, darker than even the most starless and moonless night sky. The only signs that it was skin and not a sheet of formed metal were the pulsing red veins over his bare chest and heart.

He stood nude in the skies without a care, but his mere presence alone was suffocating.

It was at that point that another presence appeared. He too was bare chested, though the lower portion of his body was covered by pants made of soft fabrics, and his hair was not nearly as long while his skin was a much more natural tone.

He yawned, stretching his limbs out as though to prove he cared even less than the previous arrival did.

"Oh, old lizard. You finally made it here. Gotta say, that look is good for you. Very scary." Dyon held up his fingers in an "okay" sign.

The Dragon King's bat-like wings flapped. A fiendish grin curled his lips. Dyon wasn't very shocked to see a sharpened row of shark teeth, but he was a bit off put by the fact they were black as well.

"Never mind. That's not scary, that's just gross." Dyon grimaced and cringed.

Crystella's gaze slowly turned toward Dyon, as though scared that if she moved too quickly, the Dragon King would kill her first. She simply couldn't understand what was going on. Dyon knew this Dragon? And even dared to call him an old lizard? What was going on?

Dragons, even the weakest of them, were untouchable existences. They were a Hegemon that stood on par with Pill Sword Mountain. Crystella didn't dare to offend such a person.

On top of this, even if the Dragon King didn't have such backing, she still wouldn't dare to offend him lightly. The Dragon King's cultivation was far below hers, but lineage was far too important on the immortal plane. Suppression didn't just happen between those of the same race, but happened across all races here.

One shouldn't take Dyon as an example. A normal mortal could only grovel before an Immortal. It wasn't just a matter of power, but of a difference in quality.

It had to be remembered that immortals could instinctually point out a mortal by the movement of the air, qi and earth around them. This logic extended toward Immortals as well. Different qualities of Immortal Bodies received separations in the support they received from the Heavens.

Just by existing, Crystella suppressed Tedric and Kywen because she was born with a higher grade Immortal Body. By the same token, despite the fact the Dragon King received the weakest of Dragon blood Immortal Bodies due to the fact he transcended from the mortal plane, he was still several levels superior to a weaker bloodline like the Nightwell Clan.

The difference between Crystella and the Dragon King was already so large, yet Dyon had already strolled by her, in the air no less as though an Immortal Law expert, and stood a mere meter away from the Dragon completely unperturbed.

"... It took me 70 years to make it here... You've become quite famous in that time... Congratulations on your third place finish, I feel like I've watched you grow up."

Dyon wasn't very surprised by the Dragon King's casual and light demeanor despite his appearance. After all, the Dragon King was a known prankster. Why else would he keep half his spirit on the mortal plane for entertainment?

Instead, he tilted his head in confusion for another reason. "Third place?"

Chapter 2173: Dragon's Pride

"Oh? You're unaware, shame. You placed third on the certification exam leader board. Your name is already known far and wide. But unfortunately, I'm going to need you to come with me without taking advantage of that."

"Third place? What the hell?" Dyon's lip twitched.

In truth, those watching trying to breathe as softly as possible felt a bit bad for him. They believed he was lamenting how quickly his life of fame was ending. But, his next words left them speechless.

"Why didn't anyone tell me there was a leader board? You're telling me there's two people who think they're better than me? What bullshit."

The Dragon King, seemingly used to Dyon, laughed uproariously.

"Indeed, you should have put in a bit more effort instead of messing around. Unfortunately, there's only one chance to take your first certification exam."

"Tsk..." Dyon's lip curled, clearly not very happy. "... So you know what this thing is? Is that what the three means?"

Dyon pulled out the cauldron paper weight that had held the number 3 on it.

No matter what Tedric and Kywen had said before, it was only because there was still some room to doubt that Dyon was in fact who he said he was. But, after seeing this 'paperweight', their faces turned as pale as a white sheet. Even Crystella uncontrollably trembled.

That thing Dyon called a paperweight held a level of authority they couldn't fathom. In a lot of ways, maybe Dyon was lucky that he hadn't gotten first place because there was no way Pill Sword Mountain would give the number 1 cauldron to him. They'd likely find some roundabout way to make it impossible for him to lay his hands on it.

"Of course. There are only 100 of these, each one with a higher level of authority than the last. Well, 100 per leader board, that is. You're effectively an Elder of Pill Sword Mountain. Every alchemy guild beneath a certain level of power must listen to your commands without a word of dissent. You can take out as many heavenly herbs below the God grade as you please. You're entitled to receiving a God grade alchemy cauldron from Pill Sword Mountain... The list of benefits are endless.

"Don't worry, I'll allow you to use it. But, it'll just have to be toward meeting my goals."

Dyon still didn't look very happy. "There are other leader boards?"

"Of course. But there are only three more and those three are related to your battle record versus other alchemists. Only your first battle versus a given alchemist counts, and the leader board is decided by number of wins and win percentage."

"Mhm, mhm. I see. Thanks for that. It saved me a lot of time."

Dyon observed the Dragon King with a smile. "Old lizard, you've done quite a number on your body, huh? That can't be comfortable."

His gaze focused on the pulsing red veins on the Dragon King's bare chest.

"What can I say? Not everyone can be as talented as you. We lesser people have to take risks."

Crystella and the others almost choked at these words. Was this the way a mighty Dragon spoke to a mortal human?

"Then I'm sure you know the kind of risk you're taking by coming here and pissing me off, right?" Dyon's gaze narrowed.

The Dragon King's fiendish grin came back. "If I can't stand atop the world, I might as well die. All things considered, dying by your hand isn't so bad. But... I don't plan to die."

"... Good."

Dyon flashed forward before the Dragon King could react, appearing above him and striking down with a force that made the skies tremble.

Dyon's strength made Kywen and Tedric cower. The fear they felt in their hearts multiplied several times over. Crystella could only stand there in a daze as the Dragon King slammed into Mount Volaire.

A moment later, the roar of a Dragon's pride sounded.

The Dragon King entered his draconic form.

His four limbs clawed into the mountain peak of Mount Volaire, his long neck and tail wrapping around its very top. However, compared to the several kilometer long form he must have had as a mortal, he was barely 20 meters from head to the tip of his tail now.

His body exuded an endless pride as he roared toward Dyon, his black scales glistening under the high sun. However, Dyon could sense the wounded confidence he buried deep within his heart.

This was the Dragon King. A man whose legend reigned supreme throughout the mortal plane, a man whose name still struck fear to this very day. Yet, this very same man on the immortal plane was only good for intimidating clans of the outer fringes.

Dyon looked down on him from the sky above the mountain peak, hiding the pity he felt in his heart. For a man like the Dragon King, displaying such emotion would only insult him.

So, Dyon's gaze remained cold. When the Dragon King launched himself into the air after him, he was met with a violent fist to his once majestic horns.

The Dragon King barreled back into the mountain, the vicious sound of large cracking bones sounding.

Those horns were no longer as grand as they once were. They barely separated from the Dragon King's skull, looking more like the bumps of a youthful deer rather than the masculinity of a Dragon.

The yellow reptilian gaze of the Dragon King turned completely red, the slits in his eyes becoming a deep crimson. His roar became more unbridled as though he was losing his grasp on reality.

His silver claws turned a bright red, elongating to over three meters each.

He leapt into the air, swiping at Dyon with all of his power.

Dyon gently blocked with his palm. An undulation whipped through the air, the Dragon King's strike being both blocked and multiplied back toward him in a flash.

A pained roar filled the skies as a rain of claw fragments sprinkled downward.

Chapter 2174: Empty

Those watching felt completely numb as they experienced Dyon treating a Dragon as though he was nothing more than a ragdoll. The difference was so large that there was no question about who was superior. It was only now they realized that the Dragon King's confident words were something both he and Dyon knew he couldn't have been so sure of before the battle began.

He had said those words not because he believed them, but because he had his own pride to protect. He knew how this day would go, how his life would actually end... but he came here anyway. That was his Dao.

Guild Head Zabel had some of the most complex emotions of them all. He knew that with Dyon's intelligence, it was impossible that he didn't know that he had been targeted.

Right now, he wasn't even certain if Taline was still alive and if she survived the eruption event. For a woman who might very well be ash right now, he had offended such a powerful existence. And he might very well follow her soon...

The truth was that the Dragon King's base strength was lower than them all. It was just that his suppressive effect on them was so severe that they could hardly raise a hand against him.

Dyon knew this well... So from the very beginning, he knew the Dragon King didn't stand a chance against him.

"... Are you... trying to go easy on me...? Fuck you."

The Dragon King's last bit of rationality snarled, the red veins across his chest bursting out.

His body was instantly covered in a coat of red, an armor of blood that covered the bubble world in a sinister aura.

Dyon's gaze remained cold, watching a legend descend into chaos.

His finger extended outward. The meridians in his hands filled to the brim with light type qi, condensing over and over again under the fundamental runes of his Silver Mirror constitution.

In less than the span of a single blink, it ripped through the air at an impossible speed, slicing through the Dragon King's right wing.

The blood armored Dragon faltered, tilting and falling from the air.

Another beam left Dyon's fingers, ripping through the Dragon King's left wing.

The plummet quickened, the raspy breath of the Dragon King overshadowed by the sound of sheering wind. His body caught fire as though he was a meteor, falling to the lands of sand below.

Dyon descended from the air to find the Dragon King trying to lift his long neck up.

With a simple palm to his forehead, a strong reflective energy blasted from Dyon, causing the attempt at rising to fail miserably.

"... You're... stronger than I thought..."

The Dragon King's ghastly grin matched with his bestial form looked far more fitting.

"And you're weaker than I thought." Dyon replied blandly.

"How funny. I was thinking the same thing."

The Dragon King's crimson eyes faded back to a bright yellow. His gaze flickered downward to find Dyon's arm piercing through his heart.

Toward the end, Dyon could see his grin morph into something more like a genuine smile of relief. It was the image of a content man.

Dyon grabbed for the Dragon King's nascent soul, but he didn't need to check to see that he had allowed his consciousness to dissipate. In fact, Dyon felt that even his Dragon King treasure now felt strikingly empty.

Dyon took out a familiar black wrist band and stared at it blankly for a moment.

He had never asked what this latter half of the Dragon King thought of this battle. He had assumed that they had diverged enough that he was uncaring. But it seemed that he had misinterpreted his intentions.

It wasn't that he was uncaring, but rather that he too wanted it to end. No matter how far they diverged, they were fundamentally the same person, carrying the same pride.

How must he have felt being beneath Dyon's thumb for so long? Yet, there was nothing he could do about it all this time.

This was the first chance the Dragon King ever had to escape Dyon. His suppression relied on the Heavens recognizing him as a weapon, but Dyon had broken away from the Heavens. On top of that, in the instant of the Dragon King's death, Dyon's intention was for the Dragon King to die. Taking advantage of both things, the spirit Dragon King was able to find a loophole to dissipate his consciousness without Dyon's permission.

Dyon smiled bitterly and shook his head.

"I hear you loud and clear... Old Lizard.."

Dyon held the two halves of the Dragon King's soul in his hands, filled with a complicated feeling.

One had the shape of a small white dragon sleeping without a single sign of waking up. All those who didn't have innate auras had white nascent souls just like this.

The other was a spirit without form or shape. It was clear that the Dragon King hadn't sacrificed his prowess for the fun he was having on the mortal plane. His treasure form only had a small wisp of his consciousness and had next to nothing of his strength.

The only time Dyon had ever directly used the Dragon King's strength was when he evoked a bit of his Dragon Soul when he was battling Chenglei's grandfather. Other than that, this spirit really didn't have much strength at all.

Dyon's bitter smile faded, replaced by a fierce glint.

He lost control of his Presence for a moment. The pressure was so severe that Crystella had no ability to remain standing anymore. Even before the Dragon King, she managed remained standing. But this sort of aura was too much.

Her knees slammed against her flying treasure. A small grimace left her soft lips as she almost felt her kneecaps shatter.

"Since you want to stand at the top of the world, I'll bring you there."

Dyon's good mood dissipated. The immortal plane could push even an existence like the Dragon King to such an extent...

Chapter 2175: Noble

The Dragon King had been by his side for so long. Ever since he was a 16-year-old boy... The Old Lizard hadn't been kidding. He really had watched Dyon grow up.

Dyon had already lost count of the number of times the Dragon King had saved him, the amount of banter they had exchanged, the number of life experiences they had shared.

Others might think it was disrespectful to take the Dragon King as a corpse puppet after all this time, but by now, Dyon had a very deep understanding of the old lizard's demeanor. He would never waste time caring about what happened to his body after his death.

This action wasn't for the Dragon King. It was only Dyon symbolically letting the old lizard know that he cared, that he understood his plight.

Maybe Dyon wasn't truly aware of it until now, but the Dragon King was likely the greatest friend he had had in his lifetime. And maybe even more tragically, this was always the way a friendship between two men like them would always end.

It took a long time before Dyon could rein in his emotions. Beneath him, the Dragon King's blood continued to seep out, coating his bare feet in the sticky liquid.

"... I'll make sure the Dragon King's name rings through this infected land. I'll make these Immortals feel the same despair you felt today. I'll show them that even if their fists were larger than yours, they will never have your courage."

Dyon knew that the Dragon King's current state wasn't entirely because he was untalented.

The [Dragon and Phoenix Dual Cultivation] technique... The Dragon King had been chased like a dog for a long time after others learned that he had it in his possession. Something like finding time to diligently comprehend and cultivate when being chased by the whole of the Immortal Plane was impossible.

As an ascended mortal, even though he was a member of the Draconic Hegemon, he had no standing to ask for their help. Only if he handed over his treasures would he have such a chance. But with his pride, would he ever do such a thing?

Feeling more pissed off than he ever thought he would... he wanted to make them all pay.

"[Corpse Devour]."

Dyon's jaw set, a deathly aura erupting from his body.

The Dragon King's flesh and blood began to seep into his bones, being greedily swallowed with each passing moment.

Dyon casually threw out the corpses of Skull and Roe, causing a sharp intake of breath from Immortal Saints. They had already guessed it before... But now they were certain.

"[Devour]."

Dyon crushed the Dragon King's nascent soul and spirit in his hand, absorbing it himself.

Dyon silently watched as the Dragon King became a dense skeleton of black bone. However, the red pulsing veins on its chest didn't disappear. Instead, it became a part of the Dragon King's form, coursing through his black bone almost like they were countless fractures.

'... A blood sprite...'

Dyon had never heard of the existence of one, nor had he ever read about them. His words were simply a deduction based on what he could observe.

The red pulsing veins had life to them. They weren't inanimate, nor did they seem like a sort of technique. It most definitely was a lifeform.

In addition to this, whatever sort of lifeform it was, it was parasitic.

Theoretically, if a blood sprite were to exist, they would need to act in much the same way Little Rain had.

In order to be born, Little Rain had to immerse himself in a dense pack of minerals. The same was true of the fire sprite Little Rain had swallowed. Who knew how long Orcus had spent feeding it flames?

So, by extension, a blood sprite would need a lot of blood. Large creatures full of vitality like Dragons were an ideal choice.

'... This thing was attached to the Dragon King by other Dragons on purpose...'

When Dyon got to this part of the Dragon King's memories, his rage reached another level. It seemed that it wasn't just because he was being chased that the old lizard failed to advance, but also being this thing was eating away at his vitality...

'Good... What a noble Hegemon...'

Dyon clenched his teeth tightly.

They used the Dragon King for their experiments. Yet, didn't extend a hand to help him at all when he ran into problems. Dyon was so mad he began to laugh. His every chuckle was so oppressive that the Immortal Saints who remained behind felt that a foot was continuously stamping down on their chests.

Dyon's Sovereign Flame licked across his skin, snatching something invisible to the eye from the air without allowing it to dissipate.

Dyon pupils constricted. 'Dragon Soul.'

Not only had Dyon not been able to see it even with his eyes, but he had been completely unable to sense it with his Immortal Sense as well. However, his Sovereign Flame not only found it, it snatched it for itself, swallowing it whole.

The golden flame formed an equally golden fog, stretching up into the skies and into the form a dragon.

A devastating roar projecting outward, causing rings of gold to pulse out from the fog's lips.

Dyon's shock faded away, his jaw setting once more. He would allow the Dragon King to swallow the Dragon Clan in revenge. His Dragon Soul would snatch their spirits... The very Blood Sprite they gave him would snatch their bodies.

"Come here."

Dyon stretched out a hand toward Kywen, causing the latter's neck to uncontrollably fly into his palm.

The fear in Kywen's gaze was palpable. But he didn't have the ability to resist. Dyon's Presence was far too fearsome.

With a casual toss, Kywen was sent toward the Dragon's King's corpse.

The blood red veins lashed out like tentacles, stabbing into Kywen's body without a care for his screams.

Dyon's pupils constricted. '... What kind of madness is this... It's actually taking... His blood essence?!'

Blood Essence was the one thing perpetually protected by the Heavens. No matter how weak or strong your race, without your expressed consent, it was impossible for another to snatch away your blood essence. Yet, this infallible rule had actually been broken right before him.

'... I see... So that's what happened...'

The Dragons fused an incomplete product with the Dragon King tens of millions of years ago. Those who came before him didn't even live a hundred years past the time of their fusion, but the Dragon King was different, managing to survive by far the longest. The secret behind his success wasn't only his tenacity, but the fact that he had managed to perfect the blood sprite.

When he accomplished this, he should have been able to skyrocket in strength, forcibly absorbing the blood essence of his enemies to strengthen himself. But, by the time he succeeded, his body was a mere shell. The only thing that kept him going was his own will.

The mighty Dragon King had become a cripple.

He was seeking out Dyon because he needed an alchemist capable of healing him. No Venerable or Emyrean was talented enough to help him, and it was simply impossible for him, a mere Immortal Essence expert, to employ an Alchemy God.

'... If you needed help, you should have just asked.'

Dyon looked up into the skies, his eyes glistening with unshed tears. For the sake of the Dragon King, he refused to let them fall.

Kywen's screams faded and rattling of bone followed.

The Dragon King slowly stood to his four limbs, his bony wings spreading outward and his long neck stretching into the skies. Fog billowed from its body, creating the faint shadow of what his most glorious form once took.

A body of several kilometers long. Horns that pierced through the Heavens with disdain. A pride that thumped across his chest endlessly.

His ruby eyes looked down and met Dyon's. For a moment, it seemed to carry real life to it before it faded forever.

The Dragon King, a legend of an era... Had passed.

Chapter 2176

Dyon felt completely numb. He didn't feel much of anything until he suddenly realized that two soft bodies had attached themselves to him.

He smiled slightly, his heart calming.

It was as they said. One didn't realize what they had until it was gone. Dyon had never truly had a friend of this caliber in his lifetime. He simply couldn't count Eli, their stations were too far apart. It was lonely when one stood at the top of the world.

This event reminded him that what he did have... he had to hold onto as tightly as he could.

His arms wrapped around Saru and Lilith's small waists, breathing in their delicate scents. In that moment, he felt extremely comfortable.

"You two have gotten stronger." Dyon said with a smile after a while.

Lilith looked up toward Dyon and grinned. "We ate all your heavenly herbs."

Dyon's lip twitched as he sent his senses into his Inner World. He couldn't help but feel a bit of heartache when he saw that she wasn't lying. His precious herbs...

Aside from three Emyrean Grade herbs, the rest were all gone. How could he not be left speechless?

"You didn't think my dowry would be cheap, right?"

"... Dowries are supposed to be given by the bride's family..." Dyon replied helplessly.

"You are my family!" Lilith's smile widened pretending as though she didn't understand.

Dyon coughed and shook his head. How was he supposed to reply to this?

Saru giggled, snuggling into his chest as though to pretend she was innocent in this matter. But, it was obvious she had taken just as much as Lilith had.

In the distance, the pressure on the Immortal Saints finally slowly alleviated. None of them understood how Saru and Lilith seemed completely unaffected, but they could only thank them for appearing. Or else who knew how long they would spend kneeling on the ground.

Crystella, despite her usual demeanor, couldn't help but blush a pale red. Recalling the words she had spoke to Dyon before, speaking as though they were two of equivalent station, even her face wasn't thick enough to completely disregard this.

Was she really worse than two mortal women, though?

She sized up Saru and Lilith for the first time and found that they truly weren't inferior to her. Their features were no less beautiful. And, who was to tell if their battle prowess wasn't as obscene as Dyon's?

Was it even possible for mortals to be so gorgeous? What would they look like when they shed their mortal bodies, then?

"Alright, we're done with this world." Dyon said casually.

"Where do you want to go?" Saru asked.

"A place with a lot of resources." Dyon said. "And one with an alchemy guild I can manipulate with this paperweight."

"... Um!" Crystella voice called out.

It sounded completely unlike her, carrying an uncharacteristic nervousness.

"My Dark Flame bubble world is open to you..." She finally said.

Dyon shook his head. "Not interested —"

Dyon suddenly paused, his gaze training on the fan in Crystella's hand. She had taken it out when the Dragon King appeared.

He extended a hand, ripping it from her control. It soared through the air and landed in his palm.

"... Where did you get this fan?" Dyon's gaze narrowed.

Crystella blinked in shock. A warrior's greatest taboo was losing their weapon, but she felt that she couldn't even fight against Dyon's will.

In addition, the pressure she felt beneath Dyon's gaze made her shiver.

"It – It was given to me by my master."

"..."

Dyon said nothing for a long while. Even Saru and Lilith were looking at him in confusion. Was there something important that they were missing? Still, they didn't interrupt Dyon's thoughts.

"Alright, I'll come with you." Dyon threw the fan back.

Crystella's irises brightened at the sudden change. She had thought that there was no chance after Dyon's first words. But, it seemed that something about her master had changed his mind? How was that possible? Her master... Well, it was suffice to say that there shouldn't be anyone outside their Nightwell Clan who knew her, she was a great mystery to most of the Dark Flame world as well. And, only her grandfather knew the true extent of her strength.

She didn't know where Dyon came from, but he must have been born on the Immortal Plane, right? If he had transcended, he would have an immortal body. At least that was what the norm informed her of.

However, her master was a rare Transcended. In addition, ever since she came to the Immortal Plane, she had never left their Dark Flame bubble world even after billions of years. By all rights, it was impossible for Dyon to know who she was, and even more impossible for him to recognize her through a fan.

Dyon, though, had already stopped paying attention to Crystella. He turned his thoughts back toward the Dragon King. Despite absorbing 3 Immortal Saints, he was still an Immortal Essence puppet. But this was only to be expected. How could normal Immortal Saints raise his battle strength?

Dyon sent the Dragon King into his Inner World. For now, he didn't have the time to build a Death World. If he was going to do it, he wanted to do it right.

...

"Alright, let's go."

"M-miss Nightwell, this really isn't appropriate."

Tedric gritted his teeth and finally squeezed the words he wanted to say out.

"What did you just say?" Crystella's sharp gaze turned toward Tedric.

"It's fine if you want to be angry with me, and it's also fine if he simply kills me, but if you bring him to the Dark Flame world, our lives will be over. First you'd be bringing Kywen's killer back, how could his Clan ever accept such a thing? You'd be throwing us into chaos.

"On top of this, have you already forgotten that he just killed a Dragon? Not only did he kill a dragon, but he's a Necromancer who turned one into a corpse puppet! What are we going to do if the Draconic Hegemon finds out about this? They only have to send one of their Immortal Law experts to crush us!"

Chapter 2177: Shut Up

The more Tedric spoke, the more animated and confident in his words he became. Even Crystella couldn't help but hesitate at these words.

But in the end, she shook her head. "I've made my decision."

"But Miss! The event --!"

"That's enough!"

Dyon yawned, bored with the matter. "I think you're misunderstanding something. I don't need permission to go to your world. I'm going because I feel like it, your opinion is unnecessary.

"Also... I really do hope those lizards find out what happened here today. At the first opportunity, I'll inform them myself."

Dyon's cold words caused them to shiver uncontrollably. Calling the Dragon King, Old Lizard was one thing. It had very clearly evolved into a term of endearment. However, boiling down such a Hegemon to a single word was nothing short of the epitome of disdain.

Dragons on the mortal plane were worthy of Dyon's respect. They were prideful creatures who placed respect and power above all else. But those of the Immortal Plane...

Crystella grit her teeth, trying to stop her trembling hands. Her gaze couldn't help but shift toward Saru and Lilith who seemed completely unaffected. Was she really worse than them?

"... Yes, please give me a moment. I'll prepare the formation..." Crystella said softly.

Dyon acknowledged her words and turned his gaze toward Zabel. The latter froze as though this was the very last thing he had wanted to happen.

But, in the end, Dyon turned away, not caring. The 'smart' thing to do would be to kill everyone here and then go to test to see if that woman was really who he thought it was. However, Dyon was never one to say false words.

He had said what he meant and he meant what he said. He wanted the Dragons to know what happened here today. He wanted them to know that he was coming for them.

"Let me."

Dyon shook his head after realizing how long it would take Crystella to finish. Judging by her speed and expertise, several hours would be needed at a minimum. He didn't feel like waiting so long at all.

'These talismans are interesting.' Dyon observed the embroidered thin sheets of paper for a moment.

Talismans were simply higher-level array plates. They were far better in that there was a greater level of flexibility to them.

When one draws on an array plate, they were limited by its size and quality. It was impossible to build large scaled arrays on them, and once one starts encroaching on higher and higher level arrays, the cost exchange for the materials needed to hold them just wasn't worth it – especially not for a one time use item.

However, talismans were different. Unlike array plates, one could store a single array across multiple talismans. This meant that one could always make up for lack of quality with quantity.

In addition to this, unlike array plates, talismans didn't store the qi needed to activate them. This meant that with cheaper materials, one could also store more formation lines. The downside to this was that whereas array plates activated instantly, talismans needed to absorb the necessary energy first.

The cheaper the talisman material, the smaller the bottleneck for energy it could accept at once. So, it might take two experts of drastically different levels the same amount of time to activate a talisman if its material was cheap enough.

Even with these downsides, though, for those weaker in the soul path, talismans were invaluable.

'Seems I have another possible stream of revenue.' Dyon thought casually. 'It shouldn't be too difficult to scrounge some funds up from this path.'

After thinking to this point, Dyon burnt Crystella's talismans to ashes.

"Ah!" Crystella couldn't help but call out.

Those were the only talismans she had. How could she possibly get back home now? Her Clan was in dire need of her!

Could it be that he was lying all of this time? Did he just want an excuse to keep them here? Crystella's face turned pale.

"... We shouldn't have trusted him!" Tedric nearly became hysterical. How many centuries would it take them to get back via normal means.

"Shut up." Dyon's words made his blood freeze as he felt death looming overhead, ready to fall. "The quality of material in your talismans was too low. If I just poured qi into it normally, we would be here forever. I'd rather not waste a day like that."

The moment words fell, a massive spatial whirlpool appeared, stunning them silent.

...

The Dark Flame bubble world was very much similar to the desert bubble world in that it carried a perpetual, unquenchable heat to it. However, this was about where the similarities ended.

In reality, the Dark Flame bubble world was actually just a quarter of the size of that desert bubble world, but with this tradeoff came innumerable benefits. For one, the density of qi couldn't even be compared, even a difference of ten times wasn't too exaggerated. Secondly, the deserts of the Dark Flame world were inexplicably filled with odd trees that took sand as their soil. And finally, the society of the Dark Flame bubble world had far more than just three large cities... There were dozens of them, all sprinkled about and each having a more robust economy than the last.

In the skies of the Dark Flame bubble world, there were six suns. Three of them were a dark violet, and the remaining three were a black-red. It made it feel as though night might fall at any moment despite the fact it was midday.

Despite this perpetual bleakness, the Dark Flame world's people weren't overly affected by this at all. In fact, their cities were lit much like the nightlife cityscapes of the mortal world Dyon had grown up around.

Yet, unlike the mortal world, these artificial lights were oddly quiet natural, floating around like fireflies in the night. In addition, any formation master could tell you that these fireflies actually doubled as cooling mechanisms.

Chapter 2178: Embarrassment

It was ingenious, even Dyon had to admit so. The fireflies would absorb the residual heat, use it to power the light they produced, and effectively lower the obscene temperatures of the world. As a result, unlike the desert bubble world that was nearly impossible for mortals to live in, it wouldn't be difficult for one to do so in this Dark Flame world.

"... Father, Grandfather, this is an opportunity. I'm well aware of the risks, and now you two are as well. We cannot let it slip us by."

At this moment, Crystella faced her father and grandfather within an underground city.

The city's on the surface were only the tip of this world's iceberg. When it came to where the true power of this world was held, one could only find out more by sinking deep within it. Only those of great standing could find themselves a place in these underground havens.

The fireflies of the surface cities might lower the temperature to somewhat reasonable levels, but the underground world was completely cool and had a refreshing breeze sweeping through it. However, this wasn't even top ten in the reasons why the underground world was so valuable.

Up above them, the roots of the trees that swept through their deserts could be seen. However, instead of being a ghastly sight, it was one with beauty beyond words.

The dark roots spread out in a web, covering the 'skies' of the underground world. Along their dark bark, bulbs of light bobbed like the fruits of a heavenly tree.

Not only was it an absolutely gorgeous sight, but these bulbs of light carried their own purpose. And, it was this purpose that made certain that the density of qi in the underground world was easily even a hundred times that of the surface!

It was clearly a haven for the elite.

Crystella, her father and her grandfather were within the garden of their family mansion, the gentle light of the glowing fruits hovering far above their heads.

Crystella's father was a middle-aged man with a large and robust build. He wore red robes just like his daughter, but his were outfitted with delicate silver and gold embroidery.

Her grandfather held a much gentler expression compared to her father. He too wore red robes, but his golden embroidery was so dense that one could almost mistake it for a golden robe with red embroidery instead.

At this moment, they both looked hesitant. Of course they were happy when Crystella said she brought home the third ranked alchemist on the certification ranking. They were aware how dangerous harboring Dyon was, but abandoning him later after taking advantage of what he could bring wasn't too bad of an idea. And, if they managed to hide his existence, maybe they would never have to abandon him at all.

But, after Crystella continued with her story, their expressions only grew more and more solemn.

Suddenly, there was a shift at the gate and a gorgeous middle-aged woman appeared. The gentle features of her face, the slopes of her enticing curves, the elegance of her gait... It was difficult for one to tell that she was a day over 20 unless you dared meet her eyes.

"I hear that my daughter brought home a husband? Where is he, why don't I see him?" The woman's voice called out in a tease, causing Crystella to blush deeply.

"Oo? Blushing? Now I really must meet this young man...."

Suddenly Crystella froze, realizing something. She hadn't told anyone about her attempt to take Dyon as a husband. She had left it out of the story she told her father and grandfather. And, she obviously knew that Dyon wouldn't go around mouthing off like that, such a thing was far beneath a man so powerful.

So, how did her mother know?

"Tedric!" Crystella's embarrassment gave way to anger. For a woman who hardly showed emotions to show so many now, it was clear just how flustered Dyon had her.

Before she could address the confusion of her parents and grandfather, a flustered maid rushed in, bowing in apology several times.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry... Please punish me..." The maid stuttered several times over. "The young man you charged me with young mistress has disappeared. I believe he's entered young mistress' Master's abode..."

Simultaneously, all four of them froze.

As for the young man in question, Dyon himself didn't care much about this. He had only come here for one purpose, why would he waste his time loitering around?

"... So it really is you." Dyon's gaze met a pair of gorgeous eyes.

"Who?!" The woman suddenly found Dyon standing before her.

Her fairy-like appearance flashed with several emotions. Confusion, then indifference, then, as though she suddenly sensed something, she erupted into a violent rage, a fan appearing in her delicate palm as she attacked Dyon with all she could muster.

The family mansion quaked and groaned, everyone turning their heads toward the direction of her surging might.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa." Dyon put his hands up as though surrendering, but that unfortunately didn't stop the closed fan from smashing into the center of his chest.

Dyon felt that the air was completely knocked out of him, his bones flexing inward before rebounding out. Though he hadn't broken anything, it was most definitely not a comfortable feeling to say the least.

The good news was that Dyon's defensive prowess was even better than he himself had calculated. To not even fracture a bone under that kind of attack was more than just a little impressive. It showed that the automatic dispersal of attacks throughout his body was working perfectly.

The bad news was that this woman was a headache. The Dragon King had warned him that he should avoid both Amethyst and Kukan because they would most definitely react in this way, but Dyon had just assumed he was exaggerating.

Both women should have known that by leaving their Faith Seeds behind to be inherited, this would likely happen at some point. How was it his fault they didn't make plans for this possibility?

Chapter 2179: A Moment

The only reason he had come here in the first place was because he felt that Amethyst might be in trouble. The moment he saw Crystella's fan, he recognized that its build was nearly identical to Madeleine's. Fans were an incredibly niche and rare weapon to begin with, there was no universal build standard for them like there might be for other weapons. So, seeing two nearly identical products flipped Dyon's antennas up.

As for why he thought Amethyst might be in trouble, it was simple really. What was she doing with the Dark Flame world? Why hadn't she gone to the Phoenix Hegemon?

Granted, her relationship with the Fire and Ice Phoenix Clans wasn't exactly the greatest due to what they had done to her parents, but those were matters of the mortal plane.

It was also possible that the Phoenix Hegemon found her existence to be a taboo. But in that case, it was still equally true that she would be in trouble. Having to hide from a Hegemon like the Dragon King had to wasn't exactly an easy task.

Simply put, he had come here to extend a helping hand in thanks for the karmic ties Amethyst had with his wife, but he received an attack she probably wanted to be a killing blow in return.

'... Women...' Dyon all but rolled his eyes as he soared backward, crashing into an opposing wall and blowing by it.

Shock was the only thing that stopped Amethyst from landing a follow up blow. She was keenly aware that her attack had caused next to no damage, a fact that left her stunned.

She hadn't held back even in the slightest. Of course, she hadn't used any techniques or her flames, so it ultimately tallied up to about 20% of her strength, but the fact of the matter was that that was the strongest attack she could muster without them.

On top of this, the reason she hadn't bothered to bring out her flames or any techniques was because she was cognizant of the fact that Dyon was a mortal. The amount of strength she had put into attacking him was already overkill in her mind. How the hell had he survived without any damage?

Dyon coughed, standing up from the rubble.

A sigh escaped his lips as he wiped the dust from his body, ignoring the shocked stares of the maidservants around him. It seemed that Amethyst had completely knocked him out from her courtyard. There were probably many others rushing here due to all the commotion.

Dyon rubbed his chest. '... Fuck that hurt...'

He turned a glare toward Amethyst. "What the hell is wrong with you? Are you trying to kill your Inheritor's husband?"

The maidservants turned pale at Dyon's words. Let alone speaking to Amethyst in such a way, even entering the ten meter radius of this courtyard's door was a massive taboo. Yet, this young man had not only barged in, but now he was actually saying such words?

Amethyst, who could be seen through the massive gap in the walls she herself created, frowned.

She had honestly never expected to be caused such a commotion because she had expected Dyon to be vaporized beneath her strike. If he was nothing but ash and blood, how could he possibly create such a hole? At worst she'd have to do some light dusting.

But now this matter was only getting bigger.

As though on cue, Crystella, her parents and her grandfather rounded a corner to see the scene before them.

On one side there was the frowning Amethyst, still holding her fan tightly in her hand. On the other was Dyon, who had a striking hole in his once pristine white shirt. And, in between them, there were several collapsed walls that would make the financiers of the Nightwell Clan cry themselves to sleep.

The eyes of Crystella's three elders narrowed toward the hole in Dyon's shirt. They could plainly see that he wasn't even the slightest bit hurt. But judging by the energy fluctuation from earlier, she shouldn't have been holding back.

"Forget it." Dyon shook his head. "I came here to help you, but clearly it's a waste of my time. I have better things to do than to stay here."

Dyon put his hands into his pockets and turned to leave. He didn't have the patience for this.

Hearing these words, Crystella panicked. She wanted to call out, but she didn't know what to say.

"Hold on a moment, young man." The wizened voice of Grandfather Nightwell called out.

"Yes?" Dyon looked over his shoulder.

At this point, there were even guards rushing over. There usually weren't any around Amethyst's courtyard for the aforementioned taboos. But, they obviously had no choice to come now.

It was safe to say that Dyon's casual remark toward their retired Patriarch most definitely didn't sit well with them. And, this was especially so when they realized that Dyon was a mortal.

But, before they could act, Dyon swept a glance over them as though to say 'piss off'. There were no words exchanged, nor were there any energy fluctuations, but a cold sweat matted the backs of the battle hardened guards.

They stopped moving entirely, trying to hide their trembling with stiff upright postures.

"... It isn't very polite to instruct the servants of another household." The retired Patriarch said slowly.

"Maybe not." Dyon said with a shrug. "Wouldn't be necessary though if their owner was better."

The old man's gaze narrowed. "You really don't fear me, do you?"

"Is there a reason I should?"

"I know of your confrontation with the black dragon. I would likely be greatly rewarded for giving that information over."

"Please do so, you'd be greatly helping me out." Dyon replied nonchalantly. "I want those lizards to know that I'm coming."

"And, call him 'black dragon' again and you'll make an enemy out of me. His title is Dragon King."

"That's enough!" Crystella's father took a furious step forward, causing the mansion to quake. "Watch your words boy, or I'll cut your tongue out."

Chapter 2180: Not Sparing

Patriarch Nightwell was a temperamental man to begin with. The only reason he hadn't spoken to this point wasn't out of respect for Dyon, but out of respect for his own father. Even though the old man had stepped down, Crystella's father still took him for the de facto leader of their Clan. As such, if the old man was speaking, it wasn't his place to interfere.

But, there was only so much he could take. Let alone a mortal, even if an Immortal Celestial born genius descended to this place he wouldn't accept such disrespect.

Of course, this was the difference between he and Dyon. For Dyon, he didn't care even if it was an Immortal God.

"How tiresome." Dyon shook his head. "If there's nothing you wanted, then I'll be leaving."

"Dyon, wait!" Crystella's voice was almost frantic. It wasn't quite there yet, but the change was completely unexpected for the maidservants and guards who had never seen their young mistress act in such a way.

"What is it this time?" Dyon was quite done with this place at this point.

The usual him would have lashed out and attacked someone by now, but the simple truth was that it he would have to go all out just to face up against a Lower Immortal Celestial. He couldn't beat all of them.

In truth, he couldn't even beat one of them. Both of Crystella's parents were Peak Immortal Celestials. And, her grandfather seemed infinitesimally close to the Immortal Law Realm. The only reason he didn't feel the need to be tense was because he didn't believe they had the ability to stop him from leaving this place if he really wanted to.

Plus, he also still had that paperweight. He was sure he could force some alchemy guilds to his side if it came to that.

"My Nightwell Clan will be facing the Darkwell and Dimwell Clans soon. If you could participate under our banner, we would reward you greatly!"

Crystella spoke faster than anyone could interrupt. Even her parents were stunned silent by her borderline begging attitude.

"Why would you need my help for something like that? If that corpse Kywen and that snitch Tedric are the best those two Clans have to offer, you alone should be enough."

Dyon gave Crystella the courtesy of response and withholding his laughter. Nighthwell, Darkwell and Dimwell? Who the hell named these families?

"I can easily handle battle, but the competition is about more than just this. There's still an alchemy and formation portion. I've never been good at these things and the talents we do have are too lacking."

"Is this competition important?"

"Yes, very important. It decides who maintains control of the core of this world. Our Nighthwell Clan has maintained control for billions of years, but my birth took much of the karma away from this generation. So, aside from me, the talents are lacking."

Dyon raised an eyebrow internally. So karma worked like that too? How interesting.

'But the world core? That, I most definitely have to see. I can probably comprehend 9th level Immortal Essence in this world in a few years. It's not exactly abundant in this place, but it's definitely much more than what they had on the desert world...'

"Sure, I can guarantee a win in any category I participate in. But in return, I want to see your world core."

"Absolutely not!" Patriarch Nighthwell roared.

"In addition." Dyon continued. "If she's being held here prisoner, I suggest that you release her."

Crystella was shocked when she saw that Dyon was pointing toward Amethyst.

"What do you mean? My Master isn't a prisoner!"

"Oh? Is that so?" Dyon swept a glance over the retired patriarch. "Well, I don't care much either way since she so rudely refused my help."

Without another word, Dyon walked back to his courtyard, not sparing Amethyst another glance.

...

"... He said 'Are you trying to kill your Inheritor's husband?', I heard him very clearly. I'm certain those were his words."

A nervous maidservant gripped the hems of her dress, looking down at the ground as she accepted the interrogation she was being subjected to.

"Inheritor? Husband?" Mistress Nightwell's delicate brow frowned. "If my daughter likes him, he's not allowed to have other women. Who is this Inheritor? Find out and bring her to me. If she agrees to disappearing, we can let her go. If not..."

Mistress Nightwell's gentle gaze flashed with a sharp killing intent.

"Mother!" Crystella cried out. "Don't say such things!"

"What are you saying? You finally like a boy after all these years, and you want to share him? I won't allow it!"

"Why are you speaking like this boy is acceptable? If it wasn't for Crystella's sake, I would have blasted him into a cloud of blood! You want my daughter to marry a mortal? I won't accept it!"

"What did you just say to me?" Mistress Nightwell glared at her husband.

Patriarch Nightwell's jaw set, but he said nothing more.

The old man shook his head. Why were they arguing about the completely unimportant points?

"Put away your killing intent, Ela. If you let the boy sense such a thing, he really won't hesitate to make enemies out of you. Whether he cares for this wife he mentioned or not, I do not know. But what I do know is that he's completely inflexible.

"What's more important is something else. Amethyst, come here."

There was a level of affection in the old man's eye that wasn't there even for his own son. Maybe only his granddaughter could match it.

Amethyst expressionlessly made her way over, her violet hair flowing to the ground behind her.

"Who is this Inheritor the boy speaks of? And can she be used to control him?"

"... I do not know. I have no way of grasping what happens on the mortal plane."

"So your Inheritor has already transcended? If we could find her, this would be good for you. You'd be able to recover a portion of your strength, no?"

Amethyst's gaze narrowed.