

The Nameless 321

Chapter 321 Never

Without Dyon realizing it, a month had passed.

His talent in energy cultivation was so poor that even in the densest energy pool he had ever been in, it still took him this long. When you coupled that with how demanding the inner world cultivation technique was, you would be hard-pressed to be surprised.

However, Dyon was truly disappointed in himself. Had Ri or Madeleine been here instead of him, they would have finished within a day... If that. Even the normal talents from Focus Academy would have taken a week at most. That was how dense the essence energy here was.

And yet, it took Dyon a month.

His heart couldn't help but ache at the thought of him leaving Ri along for that long. And what about Madeleine, was she still fighting for the legacy?

Another problem was the fact that giving Alidor a month, plus even more time, to improve his aurora even further. That additional time might very well wipe out the advantage Dyon had gotten by consolidating his foundation.

'Whatever. I want to beat you at your best.' Dyon's emotions steeled. He would allow himself to worry about his wives but worrying about how powerful an opponent would be just wasn't within his personality.

"Old man are you there?"

Silence answered Dyon, causing him to furrow his eyebrows.

'Grand teacher?' Dyon projected out his mind to try and find the entity once again.

“Who are you calling old man? Should I shove you back in that trial world have your father teach you some more lessons?”

‘It’s a term of endearment in the mortal realm! I call my dad, old man all the time.’

“Hm, I’ll forgive you.

Truth be told, I thought it would take you years to comprehend and cultivate up to this point.”

‘I wouldn’t have cultivated so quickly if I didn’t have knowledge of human anatomy... And yet I was still this slow...’

The truth was that energy cultivation talent was about more than just sensing essence energy or its higher forms. It was also about having an understanding of your body and having a feel with what to do with that energy.

In fact, talent related to sensing energy was a bit redundant when the room you were in was so densely filled.

As such, much of the talent required in a room like this was focused on an understanding of your body and the instinct necessary to flow the energy to the correct places.

This was a talent that should have been provided by one’s meridians. Even in a closed state, they acted like checkpoints for foundational cultivation... However, Dyon didn’t have that.

As a result, he could only rely on his human world knowledge to fumble around with energy in his body. He had to first learn how to sense energy – a task made much easier by the room he was in. And then, he had to memorize a map of his body using the energy as an appendage.

It felt like... writing with your left hand or trying to do something you usually did with your hands, with your feet instead. Except, imagine that it was a limb that you had never had before...

And yet, none of this described the difficulty in following the inner world technique. Even with Dyon's improved basics, seeing through to the right layers of the 3D array with nearly impossible.

"I see... Your human world is quite interesting. Are you prepared?"

Dyon took a deep breath. 'Do you know how long it would take?'

"Think of it like your normal human world operations except on an abstract scale. It would probably take a few weeks to integrate properly, then up to two months to heal appropriately..."

'But – '

"If you're worried about your fiancée, it's likely that you shouldn't. Use your head to think instead of being so caught up in your emotions."

A sudden realization hit Dyon as he pondered the meaning behind the old man's words.

Without Alidor, any reinforcements would take a long time to move across the gates. Especially if they were a large force!

Lotus Tower had been close to Earth Tower, and yet it had still taken them a bit more than a week to reach it, and that was with having to deal with only one incident. And, the only reason there was only a single incident to deal with was because they had been moving from the very stable Earth Tower region.

However, the reinforcement of the basilisks would have a host more to deal with.

Without Alidor, they would need to move the normal way through the gates since Alidor had never planned on sending reinforcements to begin with – he had assumed he had an accurate gauge on Ri's abilities and he thought Dyon was too weak.

This meant that those large armies would need to leave the stable space of Gautama Tower, then cut through their instability of their own tower, all before cutting through Rod and Looming Tower to reach Lotus Tower.

And, none of this accounted for the most unstable reason they'd have to traverse – Epistemic Tower.

It could very well take them months...

'Grand teacher... Will I finish before the gates close?'

There was another thing Dyon had neglected. The reason why campaigns were fought in spurts was because the gates were closed off to the outside world for four months a year. Now that he thought about it, this was likely to recuperate from damage and accumulate energy. After all, the entirety of the gate was an array.

This was why the Elvin Kingdom was 'late' to the campaign and had also returned home 'early' from the previous ones. There were actual set times it was optimal to campaign.

That said, it was possible to remain in the gate during the time it was closed, it was just that it would be more dangerous – with the exception of Gautama and Earth Tower that is. Those two remained as stable pillars.

"Ai. You should finish with about two weeks to the end of the cycle... But, it is likely that those armies would have already reached your fiancée by then. So, you'd have to beat Alidor rather quickly if this is still what you want to do."

Dyon's eyes flashed. 'I'm ready.'

The old man said nothing as Dyon's senses were completely blocked.

"This'll be a pain you've never experienced the likes of before..."

Chapter 322 Only...

Dyon steeled him at the final words he'd be hearing for the next few months.

'Think about it this way. In two months, you'll be strong, right?' Dyon chuckled to himself, trying to ignore the nervous sweat creeping down his back.

Feeling something touch down on him, Dyon took in a sharp breath, trying to prepare himself... But, nothing could have made him ready for this...

Suddenly, Dyon felt like screaming. He didn't know whether he did or not. In fact, he couldn't even feel his own throat vibrate anymore. It was as though the ripping in his chest was all there was to the world.

It felt like his entire body was restructuring itself, breaking down into its smallest components before reforming... Just to break down again.

And maybe the worst part was that he couldn't hear himself scream. It made him feel as though his pain was insignificant... As though in the grand scheme of things, his feelings meant nothing...

All he could do was endure. To feel his organs being shoved apart and rearranged. He had to feel his rib cage expand and contract, bursting out of itself just to reform again – then repeat.

Maybe the most uncomfortable feeling was the invasion of his brain... The uncomfortable crawling of his skin... The feeling of having himself turned inside out...

And yet, there was still worse to come... The nervous system was the connection of the natural to the supernatural as Dyon had said.

Now, what do you think happens when untold pain finds its way to the system responsible for letting you know that you're in pain...

It was as though there was no break to breathe. The meridians were forcibly attaching themselves to a system of things they had no business being a part of before.

They ripped apart Dyon's nerves, finding homes for themselves within. They pumped Dyon's body with essence energy, only amplifying his senses to everything that was going on... and yet still, there was more to come.

Because... the implanting of the meridians was only the first part...

What happens when fully opened meridians enter and merge with the body of a boy still within the foundation stage? ... Agony. Pure and untold agony.

Dyon's body began to bulge as new energies ravaged him. He felt every new will of the Gama energy the meridians had been tempered with coursing through him, but they were of no help... They were like a doorway he was barred from, only to supply him with pain when he poked and prodded.

And yet, still, Dyon couldn't hear himself scream... There was no one to hear his pitiful cries and the old man had pretended as though he had never known Dyon in the first place.

It was as though nuclear bombs were going off ... 108 of them... And Dyon was just a spectator to the destruction of his own body...

In the end... Dyon's body really did burst apart...

Just the bulb of his aurora protecting his soul within remained as the blood and gore floated around him, trying to slowly reform itself.

But, somehow, the pain was still very real.

Every blob of blood felt as though it was still a part of Dyon... every bit of flesh that had been torn asunder... And still, he couldn't hear his own scream...

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At Lotus Tower, a battle still raged on. It had been months since Dyon's disappearance, and Ri no longer worried as much as she had... But, she still got the sinking feeling that something major must be going on for her fiancé to still not have come back yet.

'Are you conquering the Epistemic Tower right now?... Are you safe?...'

"Commander! We need to pull back!" Arios' voice snapped Ri out of her trance.

She suddenly realized that her vision was red and that she could barely feel her arms even though her sword was held out in front of her. 'What's wrong with me?...'

A strong hand grasped Ri's shoulder as they teleported away from the battle field.

"Ugh." Ri collapsed to her knee, stabbing her sword into the ground as she took deep breaths.

"What's going on?" She asked. Looking around, Ri was truly confused.

All of the demon generals had teleported away along with the elves and the few from the Niveus Sect. Right now, they stood as the center of a teleportation pad, distortions fluctuating around them faintly.

Akash kneeled beside Ri, wiping the blood from her forehead. It seemed that Ri had been fighting so hard that she hadn't even noticed a gash had opened up, reddening her vision.

"Akash?"

"Silly girl. You're a princess. Didn't you realize you were out there fighting alone? We were worried sick so we sent Arios out to get you."

"Alone? Since when?" Ri truly hadn't noticed. But, that was beside the point. Why had everyone pulled back?

“It was only a few minutes before we noticed, but, it took Arios quite a while to cut his way to you...”

“But, what’s going on?”

Arios sighed. “You’ve been too distracted to notice. But, I can’t blame you.”

Ri was too disoriented to understand what was going on. If Dyon had been here, he would have likely diagnosed her with a concussion. But, symptoms like that for a martial warrior would disappear within minutes.

“On the first day,” Akash spoke up. “Dyon took out four hundred thousand.” She said solemnly. “With the following two weeks, we managed to whittle them down to just one hundred thousand by using your tactics... But...”

“But?” Ri’s eyes blinked, still trying to adjust to her surroundings.

“But, it’s been more than two months since then and yet it doesn’t seem like their numbers have gone down at all. In fact, in that time, we’ve only taken out an additional ten thousand...”

“What?” Ri tried to stand but stumbled. It was suddenly clear to her that she had long since lost her faith seed transformation. Why had it taken her so long to realize something like that? She was supposed to be commanding! ‘Dammit!’

Over the past two months, the basilisks had been stalling for time... And it seemed like the lotus alliance was running out of time to figure out why such aggressive beasts had suddenly become so clever...

And now, suddenly only their most elite of warriors were left...

What the lotus alliance didn’t know was that a massive army of essence gathering experts was headed toward their location. And Bas and Liska were certain it wasn’t something they were prepared for...

Chapter 323 Today

“What are you moping around for? Your body is healed, wakeup!”

Dyon slowly opened his eyes to find himself back in the cultivation room, lying naked on a platform.

He shivered thinking about what he had just gone through. There had been no time in that state... Dyon's everything had been blanketed with endless pain.

'You could have at least warned me old man...'

"You should be getting on your knees and thanking me for saving your future. Not spouting this nonsense. Get up. I'm sending Alidor here."

Dyon suddenly jumped at the old man's words. There was more to do, he could just lie down and be complacent.

Flashing forward, Dyon leaped off of the platform.

"Whoa! Wait!" Flipping in the air, Dyon's feet landed on a far wall before he flipped back. 'What the hell...'

Dyon suddenly felt as though he was a spirit inside the body of a puppet he was controlling. Even when he looked down at his hands, it was as though someone else was moving them for him.

'That's not good...'

Arrays flashed around Dyon, giving him a pair of sweat pants to cover his lower half. 'At least that still works?...'

Dyon had no idea why the change was so drastic... It wasn't as though he had never gotten a massive boost in power all at once before. On the day he lost his virginity with Ri, his body's strength had jumped an entire full cultivation level – but, it was nothing like this.

His body seemed to breathe everything in through its skin, his lungs seemed to have an endless capacity for air, and even his organs seemed to have an entirely new system pulsing through it.

Dyon could suddenly even feel his soul, something that had been foreign and abstract to him. He could see the demon sage's essence within his – something he had never been able to do before. It was as though an entirely new world had been opened up to Dyon.

The coming together of his energy cultivation had directly boosted his insight into his body and soul... it felt like the epitome of perfection.

Swirls of wills started forming around Dyon, sending a raging wind through the room. 'It's so much less draining...'

The tattoos on Dyon's back even seemed to be deeper, holding faint golden accents to their previous white and black.

Now that Dyon knew his soul was really the accumulation of soul talent that was meant to have been spread through the mortal realm, it was suddenly very clear to him why his manifestations were so powerful. Not only was it dripping in his own arrogance, it also had abilities few other, if any, manifestations could live up to.

'This feeling... Is awesome...'

"You? What are you doing here?"

Dyon's head snapped back to find a young man with a flower in his long black hair. He had an oil paper umbrella in his hand and had a serious expression on his face as he stared at Dyon.

'Did the crack in the game lead him here?' Thought Alidor.

It did make sense. It was unlikely, but maybe there was a spatial distortion that led Dyon to this very location.

“Oh? Did you finally decide to stop impersonating me?”

Alidor remained silent, his normal reserved expression resurfacing. Dyon hadn't said much, but it was enough for Alidor to understand quite a few things. But, the most important was that Dyon had followed him in here and had almost definitely witnessed the death of fifth son and Alidor's attempted framing.

It didn't matter too much to Alidor, considering the people he wanted to trick had been tricked... Unless. 'Did he catch up with Kaeghan? Or did he come here without doing so?'

Alidor suddenly thought of many possibilities he didn't like as well. Dyon's one sentence was like a choking point on Alidor... and the worst part was, it took Alidor the longest to figure out the most crucial point. 'My sister!'

This was a duel between innate aurora wielders... where the shortest of phrases and the most insignificant of actions suddenly become important. Alidor's mind ran just as quickly as Dyon's did... But, what would be enough to win? Who would win?

“What did you do with my little sister?”

Dyon chuckled to himself, turning his body toward Alidor. 'It seems I really don't have to use but so many words with you.'

“Are you sure your sister is someone you should be worrying about right now?” Dyon's eyes subtly darted toward the key orb in the middle of the room, drawing Alidor's attention.

'This...' Alidor's eyes sharpened. He hadn't spoken to the old man for as long as Dyon did because he spent most of his time in his trial. But, for the past few days, he had been inexplicably pulled from said trials and told to recuperate.

And now, he was thrust in a room with maybe the only other man in this gate that could feasibly enter this tower under his own power... The goal of that voice was clear.

“I swear if you did something to my little sister... Death will be something you beg for.”

Dyon didn't seem too perturbed by Alidor's words. Instead letting his senses wander through his body as he pushed himself to get accustomed faster.

“If anything happened to your little sister.” Dyon said faintly. “It would be as a result of the will you, yourself, sowed.”

“You...!” Alidor felt as though he was losing his composure for the first time in a long time. His little sister wasn't something he was willing to play with, and yet, all Dyon was doing was spitting in his face repeatedly.

Dyon rolled his wrists and stretched his back out of habit, but, it seemed his body wasn't cracking like it usually did. It was as though he had truly been reborn.

“My younger sister is a child. She was not a warrior on the battle field like your fiancée.” Alidor's features steeled. He looked at Dyon with a burning hatred in his eyes. “Today. You die.”

Chapter 324 Unperturbed

A raging and dense will manifested around Alidor. It was as though a sand storm had picked up, and yet, the will was ethereal.

“Say whatever you need to say to make yourself feel better. But, know this well. The minute you decided to attack my fiancée, was the minute I had already decided to punish you.

I don't care what your backstory is. I don't care what your goal is. I don't care what purpose you had or have. You don't touch my family.” Dyon said faintly.

Alidor didn't reply, choosing to instead brandish his oil paper umbrella as his long robes fluttered around him.

The cultivation platforms seemed to have a mind of their own, immediately escaping to the extremities of the room as the two men faced each other.

One had a fire lit in his eye for revenge. The other's raged in anger. But both had one goal in mind: win.

Dyon launched himself forward, his eyes reddening as the Mathilde family's asura eye bloodied his vision and his pupils darkened.

Alidor's eyes sharpened. He couldn't tell why Dyon was suddenly so fast, to him, Dyon still had no cultivation.

It was exactly like with Madeleine... Their meridians were so pure that no one could find an accurate gauge on their cultivation... Until, it was too late.

Dyon's fist grew in Alidor's eyes, forcing him to retreat while he pointed his umbrella forward.

A magnificent array appeared at its tip, smashing into Dyon's fist and lasting a mere instant before it crumbled to dust.

Dyon suddenly laughed. "I don't need to hold back anymore!"

A raging silver and black swirled around Dyon, molding together into shimmers of eerie light that blanketed the room around them.

Alidor suddenly felt as though his weight had multiplied, his knees creaking underneath the pressure. 'What is this... I've never felt or heard of this will... But I felt... He fused them?!'

Dyon's body bulged, reddening under the strain of his technique as a slow steam escaped his lips. "First act, second stage, Demon Emperor's Will: perfection."

Before this, Dyon could never have dreamed of using will fusion and his body enhancement techniques together without serious consequences. But, now it felt as easy as breathing.

His body was constantly replenishing itself. Essence energy flowed to where it was needed, acting as a magical elixir and filling Dyon with a constant calm feeling.

Suddenly, Dyon's weapon's hall manifestation blasted into existence, dripping the already dark area in a bloody red as a flash of light escaped its doors.

Dyon grasped at the air, smiling to himself as the light materialized into an oil paper umbrella.

'He's mocking me?' Alidor's brows furrowed, his grip tightening on his umbrella as thoughts of his little sister swept through his mind.

Dyon pointed his umbrella forward, demonic qi dripped from its tip to blacken it completely. The umbrella seemed to roar to life, lengthening as Dyon pierced toward Alidor.

'Since you think this is a game. I'll crush you. Allow me to show you what a supreme law can do.'

Dyon's eyes sharpened, his technique immediately picking up the oddity in Alidor's movements.

His feet slammed into the ground, propelling him to the side just as a blast of dark gold will flew by him.... He could only watch as it ate through the cultivation platforms, crumbling them to dust.

'Those platforms couldn't have been so flimsy... Could they?'

And yet, Dyon didn't have much time to think about it.

Arrays bloomed into existence behind Alidor, whirling in the air with pockets of dark gold energy.

Dyon was aware that Alidor couldn't move freely under the effects of his gravity will combination. So, he had anticipated that Alidor would use his arrays to make up for it... But, this will was too problematic.

It didn't seem to be a power unto itself. But, it was, rather, an amplifier. An odd vibrational energy that destroyed things from the inside out.

‘No wonder why the old man said it didn’t need to be high to work... The vibration is decided by the extent to which the will is learnt, but, the power behind it is decided by what technique you meld it with... This technique is the ultimate offense...’

Dyon had the sinking suspicion that if he was hit by this will, unprotected, it would rampage through him like it had before. But, this time... Alidor was serious...

“Weapon’s Hell: Ethereal Permeation!” Alidor’s voice boomed.

Dyon’s feet flashed as he dodged the pillars of dark gold will. ‘There’s got to be a better way...’

Alidor wasn’t blindly attacking toward Dyon. His arrays were positioning themselves to tighten Dyon into a corner. It didn’t take long for Dyon to notice this at all, but, there was little he could do about it. If he kept dodging like this, he would eventually not be able to dodge anymore...

“I’m not some cornered rat...”

BOOM!

The Tree of Life and Death jetted out its obsidian roots, tearing through the ethereal energy and blasting the arrays apart as Dyon flashed forward.

Alidor’s eyes narrowed, ‘He shouldn’t be able to absorb that energy... What is that technique?’

Despite how it looked, Alidor was right. Dyon couldn’t absorb the energy. All he could do was dampen it before it reached himself, making it easier to deal with. A supreme law was simply too much for a technique Dyon had spent barely a week learning.

Dyon’s hand shot forward causing the oil paper umbrella to propel toward Alidor. ‘Since you’re having trouble moving, let me force you to move.’

“Weapon’s Hell: Celestial Will.” Dyon matched Alidor with his own array alchemy.

Alidor's eye trained on the incoming umbrella. Or, at least they wanted to until massive arrays that were all too familiar began blooming behind Dyon.

Pillars of light charged toward Alidor as his feet dragged through the increased gravity.

And yet, Alidor seemed completely unperturbed. 'As if a supreme law would be so simple...'

Chapter 325 Scythe

Alidor's feet bloomed with a defensive array, causing its golden light to tear through the surrounding gravity.

Leaping backwards and continuously dodging, Alidor avoided the pillars of celestial will that threatened to remove all of his defenses from him.

Dyon's eyes sharpened. 'He's not just adding wills to his arrays after the fact... He's quite literally using characteristics of the will within his arrays.'

This was a technique Dyon had yet to master. It required not only a fundamental understanding of the array itself, but, also the will. It was a rudimentary version of actually inscribing a will from scratch.

Using an array to create a will had a level of difficulty neither Dyon or Alidor could imagine... But, Alidor had grasped how to perfectly fuse his wills with his arrays much like how Dyon learned to fuse his wills themselves.

This was completely different from how Dyon usually used his wills in conjunction with his arrays. Whenever he used weapon's hell, he would form the spears first, before then coating them with wills... But, Alidor was etching his wills into the arrays themselves. The result was magnificent!

The dark gold defensive array seemed to tear through everything. Dyon's gravity was completely useless as long as it remained beneath Alidor's feet. The vibrational energy shook every technique it met to its core... shattering it from the inside out.

In the end, Dyon had no choice but to retract his space and time wills. 'So, this is a supreme law... huh...'

What Dyon didn't know was that his gravity will shouldn't have lost so easily... Space and time were already high-level wills. If you then considered the fact that gravity was their fusion, how could it lose out to ethereal permeation so easily?

The problem lied in the fact Dyon's gravity will was only at the first level since it was the fusion of space and time of the first level. Dyon simply couldn't control it at a higher output.

"Alright then." Dyon's hand flashed as a long sword appeared in it. Although he was disappointed that his demonic umbrella had no effect, he needed to get serious. Ri likely needed him right now.

"I learned something quite interesting from those spatial tears." Dyon said faintly – his sword twinkling with a silver light. "Watch carefully, or else you won't know how you died..."

Dyon suddenly vanished. With his increase in cultivation, his celestial movement technique, which had been stalled, had finally broken through to the peak of the first act. His speed was quite simply nothing like it had been before.

And then... Dyon swung.

A tear that could only be described as the crumbling of space tore toward Alidor. It sparkled the air as though it was a harmless breeze catching the rays of delicate sunlight, and yet, the killing intent Alidor felt from it was like nothing he had ever experienced...

'This... He fused sword and space will... I can't hold back anymore!'

Alidor threw his umbrella into the air, causing it to unravel and bob gently. His hands clapped together, a blinding light radiating from them.

Rings of gold spread outward from Alidor as the sword and space qi fusion bared down on him.
"Gautama Legacy's Reign: Buddha's Rage!"

Arrays began etching themselves into Alidor's back.

BOOM!

Arms of gold jetted out from them, hundreds reaching Dyon's sword slash to tear it apart.

Alidor's eye being golden was just not enough to describe it... It was as though his entire being had become encased in gold, leaving even the balls of his eyes to look like the precious stone.

The arms battled against the wave of sword and space qi as Dyon watched. Although it seemed like he was winning, it was very much clear to him that the arms coming from Alidor's back seemed endless. And... It didn't look like that was the end of it.

"Gautama Legacy's Reign: Buddha's Ethereal Permeation!"

The bright gold of Alidor's body suddenly became a dark gold... His robes blasted from him, revealing his scarred and muscled torso.

At this moment, Alidor really did seem like a buddha. Sitting on an array, his hand suddenly reached up toward his floating umbrella. "Ethereal Rain. Buddha's Tears."

The umbrella spun viciously in the air, a dark gold jetting out from it and seeking to blanket everything.

Dyon's eyes sharpened. 'Not good.'

Buddha's rage sent arm after arm after Dyon, not allowing him time to rest as the umbrella continued to spin in the air.

It was as though Alidor's projections wanted to slap Dyon down from his pedestal and end all chance of victory. But, Dyon kept dodging, his celestial movement technique working in overdrive as ripples of space tore through his every step.

But then... There was no more room...

Dyon's sword slashed outward, sending spatial tear after spatial tear into the sea of dark gold arms, but the ethereal permeation seemed to end all thoughts of Dyon cutting through. 'Dammit.'

There was no space left to run... Dyon found himself in a corner, his sword in his hand as he tried to defend to no avail.

Dyon and Alidor had been fighting for more than an hour... And yet, neither had sustained a single injury... Until now...

The hands slammed into Dyon, sending him blasting against the wall. They shattered through all of his attempts at forming defensive arrays and the Tree of Life and Death simply couldn't keep up...

"Ugh..." Blood dripped from Dyon's mouth as endless hands slammed into him, burying him further and further into the wall.

And then... Buddha's tears finally hit.

It was silent and almost comfortable at first, and yet, even as the Alidor's own Buddha's rage technique crumbled under them, Dyon was crumbling too...

'Huh... Still doesn't hurt as much as the past two months...'

Needles of supreme law shot into Dyon as the umbrella furiously raged in the air, seemingly intent of tearing Dyon from the inside out.

And yet, all Dyon did was stay still... Almost as though he was dead...

Minutes later, Alidor's stamina finally ran out. The umbrella touched down to the ground.

Staring at what looked like Dyon's corpse, Alidor landed. He didn't seem happy or content with his victory... All he could think about was his little sister and what must have happened to her.

He wanted to get up and mutilate Dyon's corpse, but... How would that fix anything?

Alidor could only turn toward the key at the center of the room. So, he slowly dragged himself toward it.

But, just as he was about to reach it, a golden light suddenly caught his attention. "What?..."

Alidor couldn't believe his eyes as he watched Dyon leisurely walk out of the hole in the wall, stretching his limbs as dried blood flaked off of him.

"That's quite some technique... Unfortunately, I don't know if I can ever feel pain the same way anymore... And maybe just as unfortunately, you didn't output enough for it to be useful to me..."

If Alidor knew that Dyon meant that he was trying to use the Florence family technique to absorb the onslaught of attacks as a catalyst to form an ethereal permeation humanoid... Who knows how he would have reacted.

To think someone would allow themselves to get mutilated just for that. And yet, Dyon's wounds were healing at a visible speed... The combination of his aurora and energy cultivation was just too much.

'How is this kind of healing possible...?' Alidor didn't know what to think anymore. He could only prepare himself for the next round.

"Since you're no longer of any use, I think its time we end this."

Dyon's humanoid manifestation slowly bloomed under the eyes of Alidor. But... Something was different.

Tattoos of grey and black started to crawl over Dyon as the stench of bloody roses filled the room.

Dyon's hand reached for a dense black light that flew from his weapon's pagoda, grasping it firmly.

His eyes darkened into black and lifeless holes, staring emotionlessly at the trembling Alidor.

'This... This is death...'

There, Dyon stood, matted with tattoos that looked like ancient inscription patterns. And yet, his most striking feature was the ten foot tall staff that he held in his hand... Well, that was until that 'staff' materialized a blade of fogging darkness... A blade that curved menacingly in the air... The blade of the reaper himself... The blade of a scythe.

Chapter 326 Raging On

The battle was over in moments.

Dyon's scythe made Alidor's buddha's rage feel as though it was never there to begin with – slicing through them with an eerie ease. Alidor simply stood no chance.

Not only was his energy cultivation lower than Dyon's, his stamina was entirely too low and his ethereal permeation seemed to have no answer for Dyon's death will.

Death qi was like erosion incarnate. Techniques, energy, wills... All of them seemed to wither before it and disappear. There was no purification like celestial will... There was no shattering like ethereal permeation... There was only an inevitable end to a short beginning.

Alidor's body withered as Dyon clenched his throat tightly.

Neither said a thing, only waiting while Alidor's eyes seemed only moments away from losing all life.

"You have one chance to live." Dyon said faintly. His voice seemed layered with the depths of hell itself, booming and eroding even the air as he spoke.

Alidor said nothing. To him, his sister was dead and his plan had failed. What use was there in living on.

“You become my servant and I’ll allow your sister to keep her elder brother. There’s a price to pay for attacking my fiancée. And this is it.”

Alidor’s eyes flashed at the mention of his little sister. ‘She’s alive?…’

Struggling with the last bit of his strength, Alidor nodded his head. If it meant not allowing his sister to despair, lowering his head was something he was more than willing to do.

Dyon nodded as his scythe disappeared into his weapon’s pagoda. “You’ll have to accept this array. Know that should you ever have thoughts of erasing it, it will kill you. Should you have thoughts of betraying me, it will kill you. There is no out unless I remove it myself. Your soul strength is not as powerful as mine and even if your fundamentals are good, you have no way of dealing with my death qi.”

Not removing his hand from Alidor’s throat, Dyon began drawing an array. But, it was pitch black.

Taking inspiration from Alidor, Dyon inscribed his array with the will of death itself. In reality, the method behind the array was no different than the one he had used to bind the 14 Elvin sub families. However, this time, with the help of death qi, the punishment had an entirely new level of severity.

But, Alidor could only watch as the black seal entered his pale and withering forehead. This was the price he had to pay.

After he was done, Dyon released Alidor, washing him over with celestial will to remove the residue of death qi before he walked over to the key.

Not bothering with Alidor for the moment, Dyon smirked to himself.

Looking at his hand, a simple tracking array appeared with the name Alexandria Acacia on it. ‘I think I’ll take credit for this, hm? The demon sage’s first true victory.’

The name slowly changed as Dyon’s eyes flashed with gold.

Content, Dyon grabbed the key before walking back to Alidor. But, as he did so, he suddenly felt information stream into his brain... Information about the Epistemic Tower and a road map spatial tears.

'This...' Dyon chuckled to himself. He had known that the Epistemic Tower held a map of the gate... But, as the only Epistemic Tower in the entire universe, it was connected to every gate in this quadrant... Quite simply put: Having a road map of spatial tears here meant having an untold advantage over attacking the other gates.

It was suddenly very clear to Dyon that he and everyone else had been thinking on too small of a scale. Or, rather, the scale the old man was thinking on simply far outdid everyone else...

'To transcend means conquering an entire quadrant and reaching the top of the Epistemic Tower... Sounds... fun?' Dyon chuckled bitterly. This wouldn't be easy at all...

However, he had taken a good first step. Or, rather, the secret of this universe had taken the first step for him, making this step much easier.

The Epistemic Tower was never meant to be a part of such a weak universe. The old man had never designed it like that. How ridiculous was it for the most important gate of a quadrant to be attached to such a backwater place? It would have been simply too convenient if that was the case...

But, wasn't it true that the Celestial Deer Sect was once a main force of this universe? That the Daiyu clan was once a main sect of this universe? That the demon qilins, although Dyon hadn't heard a word from them since accepting Little Black's father's essence, had also once been in this universe...?

In fact, it was likely that those weren't all of the powerful clans that had once been here...

It was clear that this universe wasn't weak when the gates were established. In fact, with so many peak dao formation experts at its disposal, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that it was once among the very best the universe had to offer...

To put things into perspective, there was only one cultivation rank separating a dao formation expert from transcendence. It was the cultivation rank the demon sage had been. A rank of untold power and

destruction and the epitome of what someone could hope to be in this realm... The rank of the half-step transcendent expert.

And yet, Dyon's universe had once been filled with experts just a breath away from this level.

Over the stream of time, many forgot the once central universe... Or, maybe, not many had known about it in the first place.

Just how many would have had the right to fight in the Epistemic Tower when it was at its pinnacle? How many universes would be strong enough to fight the likes of the Celestial Deer Sect and clans on its level?...

And on top of that, the fabric of reality was vast... Even a clan as powerful as the Uidah could only claim to understand a small percentage of the universes in its quadrant.

Whether intentionally by design, or coincidentally... Everyone had forgotten about the Epistemic Tower – even to the point of playing the game entirely incorrect.

But, one thing was still true. The other Epistemic Towers were still very much connected to this one... And the competition was still raging on.

Chapter 327 Detect

The key sunk into Dyon's skin, disappearing for the time being.

Dyon winced, his eye lids twitching as he began to feel some of the lingering effects of his death qi. 'My own will shouldn't hurt me... Should it?'

The truth was that Dyon had felt his own organs eroding under that special state, although at a much slower pace than what Alidor was feeling.

He had wisped celestial qi through his body to remove it, but, he was still feeling some of the past damage. And, the trouble was that it was healing much more slowly than his other wounds usually did.

'How ironic...' Dyon sighed, sitting in front of the meditating Alidor. It seemed as though he too was trying to get out the last of Dyon's death qi. It was clear that Dyon's previous celestial will hadn't been enough.

It seemed a lot of powerful wills had draw backs... demonic will made you more susceptible to losing your mind in anger and loss, and it seemed that death will was almost masochistic...

Dyon had been worried about this at the beginning, which is why he hadn't used it immediately to take out Alidor. Well, that and he wanted to get used to his practically all new body. But, this really wasn't convenient...

The only good thing was that Dyon had a fairly good counter. His celestial will would benefit him greatly. The only problem was that his celestial will wasn't as powerful as his death qi. He still needed to boost it to the 9th level before that...

"How much power do you have in the Uidah universe. Specifically, this gate." Dyon suddenly spoke as he watched Alidor meditate.

"I'm sure you know the answer to that question. So, why do you ask? The only benefit to being under you is that I shouldn't have to explain so much." Alidor's eyes remained closed and his face showed no sign of a shift in emotion.

"I have you so I don't have to do any guessing. You used more words to explain why you shouldn't have to answer than it would have taken to answer."

Alidor's brow twitched. He wasn't used to being refuted so easily. "I have no power in the Uidah verse as a whole. In terms of this gate, it's easy to manipulate things behind the scenes."

Dyon nodded. After hearing Alidor's backstory, one thing had become clear to him: Alidor wasn't working from the shadows to fake out their universe... He was working in the shadows out of necessity to avoid scrutiny from his own universe.

In the end, it was likely the basilisks were the only clan he could actually command without worry. The other clans had to be manipulated covertly.

The Phantus was a perfect example of this. Alidor had made use of the fact that they were ashamed of their loss to Madeleine to prod them into a fool's errand. Not only had they helped Alidor test his theories, they had plotted the perfect distraction for Alidor.

The truth of the matter was that although the Epistemic Tower was usually accepted as the last tower to be conquered, that didn't mean that it wasn't monitored by the universes.

As Dyon spoke with Alidor, he suddenly realized the purposes behind his plans.

Because Epistemic Tower was monitored, any movement toward it was usually detected. The only way to get by this was to either somehow directly teleport into it, yet out of the range of the scouts, or, get rid of the scouts entirely.

But, without the Epistemic Tower key, all of Alidor's teleportations relied on his strict and grueling calculations. And, these calculations became so convoluted and complex when entering the domain of the Epistemic Tower, due to the excessive amounts of spatial fluctuations, that the best option was to get rid of the scouts.

So, Alidor hatched a distraction plan. After studying the Saeclum clan, he came to understand that their clan, although they benefited Dyon's universe as a whole, actually belonged to a single entity: The Ragnor clan.

All Alidor had to do was devise a sufficient reason for the Ragnor clan to selfishly pull their auxiliary clan away, thus allowing Alidor free reign on the Epistemic Tower without anyone becoming suspicious to his ulterior motives.

'Hm. So it turns out that the Saeclum clan didn't report to us because they simply weren't there? Alright...'

Alidor's plan was actually quite ingenious.

Because the Saeclum clan was pulled away, it also left the other Towers highly susceptible to sneak attacks. As such, Lotus Tower, and likely Rod Tower, were taken completely unawares.

However, Alidor never had any intentions of taking Rod or Looming Tower, he was fully aware of how powerful their protectors were. Even Lotus Tower would have only been a plus... The true plan was to take hold of Epistemic Tower.

That said. There was another purpose: the stealing of the Uidah clan faith seed.

“Isn’t stealing a faith seed taboo? And wouldn’t doing so completely ruin your plans of staying hidden?”

Alidor’s brows twitched for what seemed like the millionth time. “You know my backstory. Why would stealing a faith seed from a clan I share a lineage with alert them of anything?”

A sudden realization hit Dyon. Although the Gautama and Uidah families had separate names, there was a reason why they were two sides of the same clan once. They had both originated from the same bloodline and had intermarried so often that there were little differences to be had in them. It was just that the main lineage of the Gautama family had better soul talent, thus resulting in their innate aurora users.

But, the point was that while it was taboo to steal the faith seed of a family and have it enter another. And while it was true that every family with a faith seed had fail safes against it... What would happen if a faith seed was stolen but remained with this same family?... How would the Uidah detect anything if the faith seed technically never left the family?...

Chapter 328 Rock to their Waves

“Interesting. So, while you didn’t know what benefits the Epistemic key would give you, what you did know was that being around the tower itself would give you enough of a power boost to be able to take out the first son of the essence gathering layer. But, unfortunately for you, you ended up with the first son of the meridian formation layer.”

Alidor nodded. What Dyon said was true. Although the calculations for teleporting from outside to inside the range of the Epistemic Tower were too complicated. The variables were significantly lessened if you were just talking about teleporting within the range of the Epistemic Tower itself. As such, Alidor could make use of the spatial tears to greatly nerf the essence gathering first son, kill him and then take his faith seed as his own.

After that, Alidor planned to use the Epistemic Tower to diligently train.

Because he didn't have a tracking array, his actions remained completely covert. So, he could have bided his time, growing stronger with each passing day.

Then, once he reached the peak of the essence gathering stage, he could almost single handedly conquer this gate alone.

"Why would being at the peak of the essence gathering stage be enough for that?" Dyon felt he knew the answer, but, he asked anyway. He was enjoying the exasperated feeling Alidor had whenever he was forced to answer. It was clear Alidor wasn't used to this.

"Haven't you noticed the vast difference in quality between your universe and others? The only reason you're not constantly fighting against peak essence gathering experts is that the Uidah universe doesn't deem you worthy of their best. If it wasn't for your special cases, meaning those of you with faith seeds, they wouldn't send essence gathering experts here at all.

It is likely that you, as someone with previously no cultivation, had the ability to leap up and fight experts at even the peak of the meridian formation realm. However, I'm telling you right now that that's only possible in this universe. If a competent meridian formation expert from the Uidah could lose to some with no cultivation, they would have been killed off long ago because of their uselessness."

"And what's the difference?"

"The difference is quality of wills, techniques and cultivation. Your universe might see a genius having learned 3 wills as a genius."

Dyon nodded. This was indeed true. Back at Focus Academy, most only learned a single will. In fact, the only people Dyon had ever seen use more than two were among the best geniuses he knew. These were people like the Elvin campaign leaders, Chenglei, and even the God clan geniuses.

"However, in the Uidah universe, this is the norm. And none of that is to even touch their technique and superior cultivations"

"Well, it was enough to beat you, no?" Dyon grinned.

Alidor remained silent for a while before speaking. "Point being. The quality of my peak essence gathering cultivation outweighs many from your universe. Even to the point of being tied down by army after army of meridian formation experts."

Understanding, Dyon shook his head.

"So. Can you call off the attacks. Or not?"

"I can control the movements of the basilisks easily. However, the other clans have their own goals. The only reason I was able to convince them to attack was by provoking them before sending out an army of thousands to attack Lotus Tower. In all honestly, they have no idea I exist."

Dyon pondered on this point a bit before he suddenly realized something... If Alidor had no control over the other clans, and the basilisks called for reinforcements in retaliations... Didn't that mean that Dyon had to fight? There was no getting around it. He couldn't just tell Alidor to stop it...

"Let's go." Dyon stood. It was time to go. He had a sinking feeling that he should hurry.

**

Away from Dyon and at the Lotus battle field, he couldn't have been more right.

It had been a day since the lotus alliance finally realized they were being played, but, another army was already approaching them... And, it was clear that this army was much more powerful.

Ri stood, stumbling under the pressure of her own weight before Akash caught her shoulder. "Princess. You're not in any condition to be fighting right now. It's best you don't..."

Ri shook her head. "I'll be fine. This is the last stretch. After we beat them, it not like they can call for even more reinforcements, right? After all, there isn't that much time left in this campaign. They need to save time to head back to their gate entrance." Despite the weakness of her words, the determination firing in Ri's eyes was undoubtable. It was clear that she had no apprehensions about their victory.

Rolling the ring Dyon had given her on her finger, Ri took out two of the final remaining fruits before swallowing them. She closed her eyes, relishing in the warm feeling they gave her as they slowly replenished her tired body.

She couldn't remember how many she had used, but, it was clear that there was no more left to be had.. The truth was Dyon had made a ridiculous amount, but, he hadn't anticipated being gone for so long, or even that this battle would have lasted for just as long. And yet, here they were, about to fight again.

More than two months of continuous fighting with only a single day of rest... It was a miracle that they had even lasted so long. But, everyone knew that there was only one man to thank for that... Him and his tactics.

That said, there was someone else to thank too. Someone who had become the backbone of morale the lotus alliance needed with their backs against the wall, the rock to their waves of emotion, the pillar to their fragile hearts... Someone who happened to be that man's fiancée ... Ri Sacharro.

Chapter 329 Enemies

Arios smiled before looking back toward the rest of the demon generals.

The truth was that they were very much used to battles that lasted for months at a time. Things like teleportation pads for rest and energy supplying fruits were completely foreign to them.

It wasn't that the demon sage didn't care for their wellbeing, but, he was equally as tough on himself. How could one complain as a general when you saw your head commander fighting just as hard as you? Especially when he took more upon himself than even they did?

There was also something all demon generals had that they had yet to make full use of.

As the chosen geniuses of the demon sage, they were also privy to some of his techniques. So, although it wasn't as complete as Dyon's version, each had their own understanding of Demon Emperor's Will. Add this to the fact that their bodies were already stronger than normal due to their mastery over demonic will, and their stamina was simply unquestionable.

“Alright Commander. Let’s go.”

Aeson stood in a corner, blood dripping down his arm as he tightened his grip on his spear. He hadn’t said anything in weeks, but the fire in his eyes was just the same. However, the disgust he held for himself was stronger than ever. Even after he had promised himself to put his life on the line for Ri, he had still been forced to retreat before her. His heart steeled because he knew he had to be better.

Actually, it seemed that quite a few people were feeling unsatisfied with themselves. Delia, for instance, had fought to the best of her abilities – but, she was fully aware of the fact that had it not been for the demon generals, her impact would have been all the more minimal.

“What’s the situation?” Ri asked Akash.

“We sent a small group from the big sects to skirt around the battle field to check on the situation. It was a bit difficult since the land is so flat, but they managed to get us some information.”

Ri nodded as she listened.

“Their number amount isn’t so much, only about a thousand. But, although our scouts couldn’t be sure, they’re definitely more powerful. The big sects don’t have anyone who is able to read cultivation levels much past the lower levels of meridian formation... So, in reality, the approaching army could be anything from upper meridian formation experts to even essence gathering.”

The brows of those listening creased. Although Akash had been lenient in her assessment, everyone here could tell that it was likely the approaching army was made of essence gathering experts. After all, what would have been the point of calling for more meridian formation experts? Especially when it was only a thousand. That wouldn’t make any sense.

Now the lotus alliance had more problems to deal with. Over the past few months, they had reduced the number of the enemy to the extreme. However, with the coming reinforcements, this wasn’t entirely a good thing... Why? Because that meant all of the remaining experts on the enemy side were ones strong enough to survive an onslaught of demon generals, Ri and the best the Niveus and Elves had to offer.

Because of this, the coming reinforcement of essence gathering experts was about to merge with the best meridian formation experts the basilisks had to offer...

“Do we have any idea what we’re dealing with aside from power? Like information on their wills or techniques like we had for the Phantus clan?” Ri wanted to see if there were any possible counter measures. Dyon still had many tactics they had yet to put into practice. Maybe there was still a way...

A complicated expression surfaced on Akash’s features as though she was struggling with something. But, her silence only served to increase the tension at the center of maze.

“This...” Akash started. “According to the descriptions we’ve gotten, they don’t match any of the clans we’re used to dealing with. But...”

“But?” Ri turned back to Akash, trying to gain something from her reaction.

Akash took a deep breath. “I’ve studied a lot of old accounts of past campaigns to try and prepare myself. And... Although I haven’t met clans with these descriptions personally, from what I see there is only one most likely answer...”

Everyone grasped the seriousness of Akash’s words.

This was their fearless commander. To Ri and the demon generals, Akash was an unknown. They hadn’t been the ones to fight along side her in past campaigns. But, the Elves and the women of the Niveus sect were different.

To them, Akash was fearless. She was a woman who put her life on the line for her comrades with every step she took on the battle field. She had no qualms about being a commander on the front lines.

They had already lost count of the number of times she had protected them. There were too many here who owed her their lives. She was a fearless leader and one they all respected to the deepest depths of their heart. This was something that went without saying for them all...

And yet... This same fearless Akash was hesitant to introduce just the name of a clan. This same Akash was visibly trembling as her jaw clenched tightly.

Just what was it that she had figured out?...

'Don't tell me?' Evelyn's white eyes flashed with something imperceptible as she seemingly understood exactly who Akash was referring to. And, if she was right... They were in trouble. Real trouble. This wasn't a clan they could defeat without real power. What was a maze of peak practitioner defenses to an army of genius essence gathering experts?...

They were finished. The mountain they had to climb was far too tall to climb. They had come so far... But how could they possibly cross this final barrier...?

"This clan... It's without a doubt the King God Clan of our enemies... The Uidah King God Clan..."

Chapter 330 Make Do

"King God Clan?" Ri bit her lip. With the limited information they had, much of what they knew was speculation or based on outdated information. The fact the opposing universe had a King God Clan was known to them, but only in so far as what they garnered from the other planets of their universe.

The Uidah King God Clan saw their universe as more of a training ground for their meridian formation geniuses. In fact, Earth was looked down on even more so than the other planets of their universe. So much so that the Uidah clan hadn't had a documented instance of coming here in decades.

And yet, they were now reinforcements? What was going on?

The best explanation they had was that the faith seeds of the Ragnor and Pakal God clans had finally become widespread enough to make Earth a worthy training location again. After all, Caedlum and Thor had only just recently activated their faith seeds. And Vidar hadn't had access to his faith seed for much longer. In the grand scheme, this was only Vidar's third campaign and Thor and Caedlum's second. It would make sense if the Uidah clan only recently caught wind of it.

However, this didn't explain why the Uidah clan was attacking them in specific. The lotus tower was very much known to be the weakest and since Ri had only just recently revealed her faith seed, it was much too early for them to be attacking for her.

But, imagining for an instant that they really had come for Ri – if, for example, they had come for the other three faith seed wielders, but had caught wind of Ri and decided to direct some attention toward her – why then had it taken them so long? Ri had been fighting for months now. She had been fighting for so long that this campaign cycle was very nearly over. And yet, they were coming now?

“What do we know about them?” Asked Ri. They didn't have time to sit in awe and reverence, they needed an action plan.

Akash shook her head. She was embarrassed that she let her emotions get the best of her. She was supposed to be the leader of the Elvin race. They were meant to be proud. What was a King God Clan to the ancient elves? Absolutely nothing. ‘Get yourself together Akash. You're supposed to lead.’

Biting her inner lips, Akash's grey skin flexed as she steeled her features. “The Uidah clan, from the old accounts I've read, have a grasp on a very mysterious will that gives them ridiculous offensive capabilities.

The good news is that this will is rare even amongst them. Only those who've been labeled as Vice Commanders would have access to the will. In their hierarchy, it is impossible to move up without having first understood this will. They place a very deep importance on it.

Another important part is that their commanders are known for making odd movements in battle that sometimes seems absolutely ridiculous, but usually end up working in their favor. I'm not entirely sure on how that works, but my best guess would be their second technique of note. Something they call buddha's eye, I believe.”

Ri's eyes flashed at this. ‘Could it be a technique similar to the Mathilde family's imperial eye?’

If Dyon had been there, he would have agreed immediately. The old man had once told him that the buddha's eye could perform partial functions of the aurora – but, he had also said that it mimicked the Asura's imperial eye's ability to read attacks as well.

It was clear that they were using their ability to see through attack patterns to take advantage of the battle field. It was much like how innate aurora wielders could use their 6th sense to gain a view of the battle no others had.

Ri took a deep breath, "Is there anything else?"

"The rest will have to do with the logistics of battle an army of essence gathering experts... Fighting an army with the ability to fly is... Troublesome."

The problem was that even Akash didn't know how right she was. Because of the difference in purity of essence energy in the Uidah universe, it was likely that not only could they fly – an ability of all essence gathering experts – it was also a strong possibility that they could fly for much longer with much better stamina.

It was at moments like these that the elves wished they had their peak essence gathering geniuses here. There was a reason why Akash could lead while only being at the second essence gathering level... The simple fact was that this gate simply wasn't worth fighting at if you were any higher. Much like First Prince Belmont, even the Elvin geniuses went to other gates, hoping to become powerful enough to one day come back and conquer this gate.

Unfortunately, unlike the Sapientia and Royal God Clan, the Elvin Kingdom was in decline and couldn't afford to ship their geniuses back and forth between planets easily as it was a truly pricey affair. As such, only Elvin geniuses of this gate had come back to attempt to help in stabilizing the kingdom.

If those peak essence gathering geniuses had fought at Earth's gate, it is true that the Uidah universe would have retaliated by giving them competition on their level. However, the resources of Earth simply couldn't compare to that of other planets and gates.

In other places, ranking well gave them access to cultivation materials that were near non-existences on Earth... And that wasn't even mentioning the fact that due to the expansion of earth to millions of times its original size, the energy here was even more diluted than on other planets.

In fact, the only reason the elves didn't send their geniuses even earlier in their cultivation was because without sufficient power, ranking well enough to earn the necessary resources was a near impossibility.

However, there was no use in thinking of such things. Right now, it was only them. And they had to make do.