

The Nameless 461

Chapter 461 Imagine That

Seeing Ri, Uncle Acacia gave her a massive hug as he usually did before passing Ri off to his elder brother.

King Acacia looked down at his daughter with a sad expression on his features. His large hand found a way to her hair, rubbing it gently. But, Ri didn't seem to buy any of that, so she leapt into his arms, hugging his waist tightly.

Clara had insisted that this was a family matter. So, against Dyon's wishes, he had handed her off to Venus and Delia below. He didn't want her to be in an environment like this without him, but her cold eyes had given him an 'I'm not budging' look, so he had no choice but to oblige.

That said, Dyon found his way to a couch seat and sat beside Madeleine leisurely. Clearly unperturbed by the seemingly odd atmosphere in the room.

Lionel came over to greet Madeleine. But, after a few stiff interactions, he went back to his seat. He hadn't bothered to say hello to Dyon, but on the same hand, Dyon hadn't spared him a glance.

In this room filled with outstanding lineages and powerful family ties, it was clear that Dyon was the odd man out. Even Madeleine, who thought she was in the same shoes as Dyon, was actually more connected to these people than she knew.

Ava wasn't present. Realizing that she wouldn't get her chance to fight Tammy, she had settled for fighting for a spot on the meridian formation rankings and was currently below improving her stock.

In the end, King Acacia offered Ri a seat by him and Queen Acacia, but Ri shook her head and instead sat to Dyon's right while Madeleine continued to sit on his left. It was clear that father's opinion or not, she chose Dyon.

Soon, the room became even more quiet than it had been before..

King Belmont, his wife, child and two sons sat in one corner. Big Red, his wife, and eldest son sat in another. King and Queen Acacia sat facing Dyon, Ri and Madeleine. And last but not least, Uncle Acacia stood awkwardly to the side, conflicted. On one hand he loved and respected his elder brother. But, on the other hand, he had seen first hand the kind of man Dyon was. He had already proven that he deserved Ri. This was wholly unnecessary. Especially for a father who had been absent for more than ten years.

“You’re quite rude not to pay respects to your parents in law, don’t you think?” King Acacia’s voice finally broke the silence.

Ri’s brows furrowed, clearly wanting to say something. It wasn’t in her personality to hold back, even when it came to her own father. But, a strong hand found its way to hers.

She looked up to find Dyon still smiling.

Madeleine had to try and withhold her giggle. She had seen this smile one too many times. But, what she had never seen was this smile come out on the losing end.

Seeing Dyon’s intimacy with his daughter, King Acacia imperceptibly leaks some of his cultivation. But, he could only pretend as though nothing had happened when Dyon didn’t react.

“Do you have nothing to say for yourself?”

“That depends.” Dyon responded.

“On what exactly?”

“Is my father in law someone capable of admitting when he’s wrong? Or is he like every other supposed elder I’ve met who thinks his way is the only way?”

Queen Acacia sighed as she turned a gaze toward King Belmont. It seemed he was right again. This wasn’t a child who ever saw it fit to lower his head.

N[0]VEL “I don’t remember agreeing to be your father in law.” King Acacia’s lip twitched.

“You are Ri’s father. She is already my wife. Whether you agree or not, it’s already a fact.” Dyon explained slowly.

King Acacia remained silent, scanning Dyon’s features. But, no matter how hard he looked, he couldn’t find any semblance of wavering confidence. In fact, when his gaze shifted to his daughter, all he found was a small smile and look that seemed to be almost borderline reverence toward this boy.

“Tell me.” King Acacia spoke, “What would you answer have been should I be able to change my mind? And what would you answer have been should I be as stubborn as the other elders.”

Dyon smiled. “If you were as stubborn, I would have nodded and agreed with you.”

King Acacia nodded in satisfaction until he heard Dyon’s next words.

“And then I would never associate with you again.”

Queen Acacia snorted, holding back a bit of laughter along with King Belmont. It was clear at least the two of them were having a good time.

“If you had the ability to change your mind, though. I would tell you that I was only about as rude as a father who hadn’t seen his daughter in eleven years, and yet insisted she come to greet him instead of the vice versa.”

Dyon’s eyes flashed with a hint of aggression that disappeared just as quickly as it appeared. It wasn’t lost on him that Queen Acacia was the only one to come out. In fact, his small smile had been one of pent up irritation. He remembered how many tears Ri had shed for this man, and yet he had never told her where he was going, never sent any messages, then just one day showed back up perfectly healthy and had the audacity to make them come to him? If Dyon was strong enough, he would have let his fists do the talking instead of his words.

King Acacia froze, his eyes darkening. “What did you say?”

Dyon didn't respond. It was obvious that King Acacia had heard his words – and very clearly at that.

Queen Acacia no longer giggled, but she didn't say anything. She too was unsatisfied with how her husband had handled the situation. He had even tried to make her stay behind too.

“To speak to your own father in law like this. It's clear why you're nothing but a commoner from the dregs of the mortal realm.” Lionel spoke out from the side of the room, leisurely sipping on spiritual wine.

Dyon didn't care to respond, instead continuing his stare down with King Acacia.

“Are you not going to respond? Or do you only talk big when you can use my daughter as a shield?” King Acacia asked, probing further. In his estimation, Dyon was only being so bold because he knew he would never attack him because of Ri.

“What a useless question. Why would I bother responding to either one of those Belmont boys? All they know how to do is drool over my women from a distance. Would you respond to such people?”

Elwing, Lionel's younger brother grit his teeth in anger. He hadn't said anything, but Dyon had still dragged him into this. But, he had witnessed Dyon's feats unlike his elder brother. He had a respect for Dyon that Lionel didn't have. As such, he said nothing.

Lionel however, didn't seem perturbed on the surface – remaining deadpan. But, a fire was slowly boiling over inside of him.

King Acacia raised an eyebrow. “Where is all of this confidence coming from? Did cheating really make you feel as though you have the cache to say these things.”

Ri stood abruptly. “Dyon didn't cheat! I can't believe you would say something like that!”

Taking Madeleine's hand, Dyon stood too.

“I think we’ll be on our way now.” Dyon smiled.

Ri was stuck. She thought that Dyon was leaving her behind because of her father, but his next move shattered all of that.

“Little feu glace? What are you doing just standing there?” Dyon stretched out his free hand.

Seeing their daughter sigh in relief to something as simple as a hand made King and Queen Acacia very clear on how deep her love ran.

King Acacia wanted to stretch out and stop Ri from leaving, but he suddenly felt a pinch on his arm. He looked to his side to find a very angry wife.

“Don’t you dare. You’ve done enough.” Kawa’s canines grew and her eyes narrowed into slits as her bestial aura overflowed. It was clear she was pissed.

King Acacia’s brow furrowed. But, he too thought it would be too much to keep his daughter from Dyon. So, he lowered his hand. That said, Dyon’s last words almost made him regret that decision.

“Imagine that.” Dyon turned back before he stepped into the skies with Ri and Madeleine by his side, his eyes burning with a dense black flame. “A supposed king so easily swayed by public opinion. It’s no wonder it took a commoner to save your kingdom.”

King Acacia nearly exploded. But, by the time his vision cleared, Dyon, his daughter, and his god daughter, were gone.

Chapter 462 Losing End

After returning to his section, Dyon greeted everyone with smiles. He sighed in relief seeing that Clara was doing well and even winked at Eli – he wouldn’t mistake his good friend’s glow as having anything to do with something not Delia related.

But, when he saw that Ri wasn't having so good of a time, he couldn't help but check on her. After all, they had a full day until the real World Tournament began.

"Ri?" Seeing Ri look up with a dead look in her eyes, Dyon felt his heart lurch. With a wave of his hand, the two of them disappeared from sight.

Clara seemed to have noticed this and looked over to Madeleine to find her smiling. Clara could tell that something had happened, but she had removed herself from the situation and didn't feel that it was right to ask. That said, she knew fully well that Dyon's personality was quite abrasive when it came to dealing with authority, so she had a pretty good idea of what had happened.

That said, her mind was easily distracted by the fighting she could see on the monitors. With her lack of cultivation, it was impossible to see what was going on from so far away. But, she was very thankful that the World Tournament organizers took this into account.

"Amazing..." She breathed out that word for what seemed like the millionth time.

"If you can believe it," Madeleine said while giggling. "This is about as weak as it gets."

Clara blinked. "Then what about you, Dyon and Ri, why aren't you three fighting?"

"Oh, that's because we've already qualified for the main round."

A sudden realization hit Clara. "My dad was always worried about how Dyon would take being at the bottom of the ladder for once... It seems he didn't spend a lot of time there." Clara pouted, she had wanted to make fun of him.

"Not many believe in him though..." Madeleine said softly, looking in the direction Ri and Dyon had disappeared.

"What happened?" Clara asked. But, the explanation she heard only made her angry. "Dyon is a lot of things but he never cheats!" Clara's cheeks puffed, clearly agitated.

Madeleine smiled. "Dyon is the type of person that would rather lose or die than to let someone think he didn't think he was better than they were... He would never cheat." Madeleine confirmed Clara's thoughts. "But, they've made a mistake."

Clara gave glance, understanding what she meant clearly. "They've made him angry..."

**

Ri sat facing Dyon, her head laying on his chest as tears streamed from her eyes. "I'm sorry Dyon. You shouldn't have had to go through that."

Dyon smiled, patting Ri's head. "What do you mean? Didn't you see how beautiful my mother in law is? I'm so lucky!"

Despite Ri's current state, she couldn't help but giggle at Dyon's words. "You know what I meant."

"Ah, don't think about that too much. Your dad loves you too much to get between me and you. And, regardless of what I say, I know he wouldn't have left without saying anything to you without a good reason. Just like he knows his daughter would never fall for a man who could cheat."

"Really?" Ri wiped her tears with her forearm, trying to compose herself before looking up.

"Of course," Dyon smiled, "It's definitely not a coincidence that they came back for the world tournament. This wasn't on a whim. Everything is planned. I just don't know what that plan is just yet. That said, I'm sure they'll tell us when the time is right."

"But, I'm still kicking the first prince's ass. He still thinks he's entitled to my Madeleine. Imagine thinking you could flirt with my woman in front of me." Dyon harrumphed, pulling Ri into his arms.

Ri giggled, kissing Dyon's cheek and enjoying the feeling of being in his arms until she fully calmed down.

"I know you'll prove them all wrong." Ri said softly.

**

About half an hour later, Ri's emotions had finally settled. But, in that time, she had thought of something odd about her father's actions. "Dyon?"

"Mm?"

"Shouldn't my father be able to tell whether you're lying about cheating or not? Why would he say something he should know is clearly false?"

Dyon smiled. "I remember that there was a point in time where I thought your father's disappearance had to do with the destruction of the Celestial Deer Sect. After seeing how being a True Empath could burden a person's psyche with Jade as a prime example, I thought your father might have left because he had lost the ability to cleanse his thoughts and protect his mental health."

Ri nodded. She remembered talking to Dyon about this too. But, the reason he wasn't a hundred percent sure about the theory was because of her mother. She too had disappeared.

"At that point in time, the large stone tome hadn't been used to cleanse True Empaths in millennia because its purpose had been forgotten."

"And because the Celestial Deer Sect was gone, there was no celestial energy to cure my father of his ailments."

"Right. But, you know what my grand teacher told me when I asked him why he didn't just read my mind at certain times?"

Ri shook her head.

Dyon laughed. "The old bastard said he was insulted to be put on the same level as those other True Empaths and he could turn his on and off at will."

A sudden realization hit Ri. "You mean?"

"I can't say for sure. But, I think your father likely reached a level of mastery that he unlocked the ability to turn his on and off. That said, it isn't a level of mastery that matches my grand teacher, so he likely keeps it off so that he can maintain his sanity for as long as possible. If he didn't do this, he would be at a loss for how to handle the influx of bad emotions."

Ri giggled. "You're so bad."

"I have no idea what you mean." Dyon grinned, lifting Ri's petite body up by her ass and gracing his lips with hers.

Ri's laughter, though, hadn't stopped. Lifting a finger, she placed it between her lips and Dyon's. "How long are you going to make my father suffer?"

"I dunno. My head is cloudy. I think I need a few more kisses from his daughter to clear my mind."

The truth was that during Uncle Acacia's recounting of the Elvin story, for the sake of brevity, he had skimmed over a lot of the details knowing that Queen Acacia was eager to see Ri. But, right now, with time on their side, he had just begun going into the full details of the matter.

The more King Acacia listened, the more his blood boiled. His face turned such a dense shade of red that Queen Acacia and King Belmont nearly had their sides splitting laughing at him.

The Son in Law he just dismissed as a cheater and commoner was the last disciple of his long-time allies?

He found their kingdom's next True Empath?

He had cleared out their ancient tomb?

He earned the three ancient texts?

He made their sentinels his body guards?

And worst yet...

He could cleanse True Empaths?

Queen Acacia rolled over on the couch laughing hysterically, clearly un-lady like. It was clear where Ri got much of her personality from.

"It seems," she wiped tears from her eyes, trying to catch her breath, "you're going to need to apologize to your son in law if you want his help."

Even Big Red was losing his serious demeanor, trying his best to withhold his laughter. However, he was failing terribly at that. His enormous, usually stoic figure, was practically bursting with giggles. It was the kind of thing one would have never expected to see from the Head of a Clan of assassins so many feared.

"You!" King Acacia turned his anger on his younger brother. "Why didn't you tell me about these things before!"

Uncle Acacia scratched the back of his head, "I told you that he had proved himself worthy. You should have believed in me."

King Belmont took a deep breath, finally stopping his laughing fit. "I warned you too, old friend. Didn't I say you'd come out on the losing end?"

Chapter 463 Waiting For

King Acacia was a very prideful man. In fact, judging by his entrance, anyone could tell that his arrogance reached the same heights as Dyon. Even in his youth, when he had yet to awaken his manifestation, he had a confidence many made fun of until he proved himself. So, it was no surprise to anyone that the day came and left without him apologizing.

Dyon, though, wasn't worried. He had spent a day of leisure with his wives. Laughing, joking and eating like he hadn't seen a meal in years. But, those who knew him could see the fire in his eyes. He was impatient for the day to end.

**

"You seem to be having a grand time." Ava plopped down next to her elder brother, Arios.

Arios smiled, rubbing his little sister's head. "How'd you do? Top 5?"

Ava snorted. "With all the truly powerful meridian experts competing for the overall rankings, why wouldn't I be top 1? Thanks for not watching me."

Dyon, who was laying down on a couch with his head resting on Madeleine's lap waved.

"I was watching, I swear."

"Liar." Ava pouted. "I went to the skybox first. Why aren't you spending time with your in laws? You can't kidnap poor Ri from her parents!"

Ri giggled, looking up from sitting on a table with Clara, Venus, Delia and the Elvin girls. "How much did my dad pay you to say that?"

Ava coughed, seeing that she had been caught red handed. Although she had a very small impression of King Acacia, he was technically still one of her dad's best friends. And, she absolutely adored Queen Acacia. So, they were like an adoptive aunt and uncle to her. As such, when she saw how red King Acacia's face still was, and found out the situation from her elder brother, Riley, she thought she would try to help.

"Dyon, you're too overbearing." Ava harrumphed.

Dyon grinned, nestling his cheek into Madeleine's soft thigh, clearly content with himself as she lightly played with his hair.

"It'll be time to go soon." Dyon said suddenly. "Have they explained the format yet?"

"Normally the way it's set up," Arios began to explain, "Is that the remaining thousand are split into ten brackets, one bracket for each of the top ten. Unfortunately, this year, they've been talking about the 'true top ten', so it probably won't be a surprise to you that they mean ranked two through to eleven."

Dyon sat up, nodding. He had expected as much. As soon as he participated in the final selection round, he had already renounced his right to the top ten.

"Essentially, everyone has practically already decided that the final round robin tournament will be amongst the top ten. But, in the essence of fairness to younger campaigners who might be just as powerful, these first sets of rounds are to gain the right to challenge a top ten ranker for their spot in that penultimate battle.

"The idea is that as long as you manage to make it into the top nine of your bracket, you get to challenge any one of the top ten rankers. This is also for the sake of balance."

Dyon nodded. "This way the top ten will have to fight a lot of battles as well because there will be 90 challengers for 10 people."

"Right. But, that's only in the case where none of the top ten are replaced. In very rare cases, some actually do beat out top ten rankers. But, in those cases, the replacement can also be challenged."

Dyon's eyes flashed. "So that places people outside of the top ten at a severe disadvantage."

Arios nodded. "Imagine having just fought a top ten ranker. If you beat them, it's likely that it was not easy by any measure. Because, if it had been, you likely would be in the top ten yourself."

"With little to no rest, you could be challenged immediately after that battle..."

Arios sighed. "This is why, in year's past, the amount who chose to challenge the top ten rankers were very few. Unless you have supreme confidence in your abilities, it's just not worth it. Those who manage to earn the right to challenge instead decide to save their stamina so they can fight for a better position in the top 100."

It all made sense. If you managed to be among the 90 who gained challenge rights, you were already crowned as among the top 100 talents in the universe. Why risk death or crippling injury? It was better to make a safer bet.

However, this realization only made Dyon's blood boil. He was only now starting to fully understand the gravity of what it meant to have his top ten title stripped from him.

Dyon smiled, chuckling a bit. "If I didn't give them a handicap, would it be any fun?"

"I can't wait to see you get your ass kicked." Clara laughed.

"Someone sounds mad she can't do it herself anymore." Dyon grinned.

"Hmph. Just wait on it. But then what's the format for deciding the top nine of each bracket?" Clara suddenly asked. It was clear that despite her words, she was still worried.

"Essentially, it's a battle for points." Arios explained. "Everyone starts with a set amount depending on cumulative ranking.

"Top 20, of course excluding the top 10 who aren't participating, are given 10 points. Then, it works its way down by 1 until those who aren't ranked start with a single point. So, top 30, or ranks 20-29 in this case, would start with 9 points and top 100, or 90-100, would have 2 points. Everyone from 101 and below will start with a single point.

"As you might guess, hitting 0 points means that you've lost and can no longer gain points.

"Fighting can be done in two ways. You can either use stock rules or betting rules.

“Stock rules are used almost every time. Basically, the warriors with the lower number of points dictate what is being bet – this is to ensure that those with a higher number of points aren’t always being challenged because the penalties are set to hurt the lower points holder much more.

“If you have a single point, you can only fight to gain a single point. But, should you lose, you also lose a single point and are therefore out of the running. If you have two points, you can only gain up to two additional points, but, if you do this, you must also lose two points should you lose. Basically, you can only choose to gain, and therefore lose, points within your range.

“In the end though, this is capped at 5 points. Only a maximum of 5 points can be exchanged in a single match when using stock rules. Betting rules, however... There is no such limit.

“But, this isn’t as simple as it seems. Betting rules are named as such because instead of the lower point holder dictating the amount, it must be agreed upon by both parties.”

“So then how does all of this come to an end?” Dyon asked.

“Simple, really. In a single bracket, since you can only challenge warriors in the same bracket as you, there’s a set amount of points. When a pre-decided amount of those points is held among nine individuals, the contest is stopped. If there are any ties, then those who have tied have a final battle to decide.

“There are 990 people participating. There will be 10 brackets, so 99 to a bracket. The brackets will split the cumulative rankers up evenly – or, try its best to. Meaning each bracket will only have a single top 30 ranker, or a person ranked between 20 and 29. And so on.

“Rankers 11-19 only have 9 people total. But, rankers 90-100 obviously have 11. This means that there’ll be one bracket with no top 20 members at all and yet another with two 90-100 members. This could be a good or bad thing depending on how it shakes out.

“That aside though, a normal group will have 54 points accumulated by 9 rankers, and an additional 90 points accumulated by 90 miscellaneous warriors.

“Once the top 9 hold 108 points combined, or 75% of the total points, the bracket will be closed.”

Just as Arios finished his explanation, the booming voice of Elder Den rang through the massive stadium.

“This what we’ve all been waiting for! Would our final 1000 warriors make there way out! It’s time for the final stages to begin!”

Chapter 464 Point

Dyon stood and stretched. “One last thing Arios.”

“Mhm?”

“How do the challenges work?”

“Ah, almost forgot. To stop the top nine from avoiding competition and picking on the weakest and avoiding the strongest, nine people from the non-rankers take up nine spots on nine stages. Then, people can begin to challenge them.

“Those people can choose to stay on the stage the entire time and accumulate wins from challenges, or they can step down. Because you are only obligated to accept a single challenge in a row, you don’t have to stay on the stage.

“Those people can also choose to send out challenges. But, the difference is that if you’re ruling a stage, your challenge can never be ignored, or it becomes a victory by default. The only exception is a person who just stepped off of the stage.”

“Got it.”.

Dyon didn’t even have to say anything. Before he even finished his last sentence, Ri and Madeleine were already by his side. He found the faint flicker of anger on their features adorable, but he didn’t say anything.

“Good luck.” Clara called out. She could only sigh back into her seat when all she got was a wink and wave from Dyon. ‘That guy never shows his true emotions, tch.’

Zaltarish followed them out. He had made it into the top 1000 as well along with a few other elves. But, Dyon couldn't be bothered with the likes of Clarice Grimbald.

"Be careful." Eli said softly, realizing that Delia would also be a part of this fight.

Delia smiled. She was a head and a half shorter than Eli who was practically as tall as Dyon, but Eli never seemed to act his size.

With speed too fast for anyone present to see, Delia stretched to the tips of her toes and planted a kiss of Eli's cheek before flashing away. It wasn't until she had already caught up to the group that Eli finally registered the faint wetness on his cheek. And it probably wasn't until the battles were underway that he moved.

**

Elder Den looked down from the skies at the remain thousand contestants. Aside from the top ten, they had all gathered at the center of the stadium, prepared for their final fights.

Anger flashed in his eyes when he noticed Dyon smiling and carefree, speaking to his wives as though nothing else of importance was occurring.

In the Clyde Royal God Clan section, though, their king was focused on something else entirely. "It seems your bastard child is a lot luckier than I gave her credit for."

The voice reverberated in Queen Clyde's ears, causing blood to drip from her nose again. But, she had learned her lesson. After witnessing her daughter almost die, she cut off her emotions entirely. They were only a detriment to her now.

"As you all know, there will be ten total brackets and only the top nine from each of these brackets will earn a right to challenge the top ten rankers and fight for spots in the top 100. This will be on full display for all to watch and there won't be possibilities for cheaters to prosper." The monitors focused on Dyon, hoping to embarrass him. But, all they found was a handsome young man happily laughing with his wives.

The ire of the crowd seemed to be drugged up again. They didn't seem to want to allow Dyon's powerful display to change their hate for him.

King Acacia's eyes burrowed into Dyon's back. "If you can't make it to the top hundred, you aren't worthy of my daughter."

"He technically already has, big brother." Uncle Acacia chimed in.

"Don't give me that nonsense." A stubborn light flashed in King Acacia's eye.

Kawa giggled. "Maybe if you were nicer, your son in law could have cleansed you. Then you could check for yourself."

King Acacia grit his teeth, focusing his attention on the battle below.

In the Sapientia sections, Madeleine's parents were having a reaction not too far from King Acacia's. But, no one wanted to see Dyon fail more than Connery Sapientia.

He couldn't confirm it because his 6th sense was nowhere near as powerful as Dyon's, but he had little doubt in his mind that Madeleine was no longer a virgin. He wanted nothing more than to see Dyon killed.

"Kill him." Connery sent a message covertly, his voice seething in anger. "You've already failed once. I won't accept failure again."

The voice of a woman soon responded. "I think you have something misconstrued, Patriarch Sapientia. Regardless of the agreement we had before, I am still a genius of a Ragnor auxiliary clan. I hope that in your threat, you're willing to provoke the Ragnors. I'm sure with the information the Sapientia have access to, you understand how foolish that would be.

"That said, I don't need your motivational threats to have enough incentive to kill him. For what he did to my little sister, he's already signed away his life."

In the crowd of 990, a beautiful woman with striking red eyes and long jet-black hair. Anyone who paid attention knew who she was. The undisputed genius of the Ipsum clan and top 4 ranker of Planet Earth. What did that mean? It meant she held a spot amongst the cumulative top 20. She was without a doubt among the most powerful experts taking part in this round and she only had one goal in mind – Kill Dyon.

“Everyone please turn your attention to the monitor before you. Soon, 99 names will appear. These will represent the members of our first bracket. If you pay attention to the number that will appear beside the name, these represent your starting points and over the course of the match, will represent your accumulated points.” Elder Den spoke.

In an instant, the names appeared. It was clear immediately that this would be a normal bracket because there was only a single member of each tier.

At the very top of the list sat a name everyone recognized. The number 14 on the cumulative rankings, number 13 on the true cumulative rankings, and a beauty that fell just shy of the 6 known throughout the universe. That said, she was still among the four junior royals of Earth, widely known as the second most powerful after Prince Lionel Belmont.

Iris Ipsum – 10pts

However, before Elder Den could even allow volunteers to take the spots on the nine stages, a very familiar figure had already flashed onto the one at the very center.

He yawned, stretching his neck as he heard satisfying popping resound through his spine.

There, a boy in sweat pants rolled to his calves and a crisp white T-Shirt stood, his smile having disappeared.

There was not a soul in this stadium or even out in the universe watching that didn't know who this young man was.

The Cowardly Demon – 1pt

“I don’t think any of you mind if I take this spot, right?”

Chapter 465 Happen?

The crowd didn’t know how to feel about Dyon being so eager and knew how to handle his lack of a smile even less.

Ri and Madeleine looked at each before shaking their heads. He hadn’t even said goodbye. In fact, no one should have been able to go through a list of 99 people so quickly, even as cultivators. It was clear that no one had anticipated these final matches more than Dyon.

Elder Den laughed uneasily. It seemed Dyon’s actions had frozen the non-ranking contestants to the point where none seemed apt to volunteer. Well, that was until Dyon turned his gaze toward the crowd of them.

“It’s best you all don’t waste my time. If you volunteer quickly, there’ll at least be 8 of you I don’t challenge.”

Dyon’s words seemed to jolt the non-rankers into a sudden realization. In a near instant, 8 more warriors appeared. They hadn’t even had time to think about how embarrassing it was for them to fold to Dyon’s words so easily. But, there was an air to Dyon that made them feel as though he shouldn’t be disobeyed... His demonic will was becoming tougher and tougher for him to reign in.

Elder Den cleared his throat. “Challenges work based on –”.

“You.” Dyon pointed out and into the crowd.

Without a shred of hesitation, Dyon had already picked his first opponent. He felt no need to wait for an explanation and his anger was definitely not going to allow him to do that. He had waited too long already.

King Belmont’s lip twitched as he looked of at his long-time friend, King Acacia. “Did I say he was just as arrogant as you? I apologize, old friend.”

When everyone saw who Dyon had challenged, a collective breath escaped the stadium. Not even the most ignorant found any room to laugh and everyone had only one thought: 'If you truly believed you were number one, isn't this how you'd act?'

Iris Ipsum's lip twitched. The crowd of warriors had separated from her, there was no doubt that Dyon had pointed toward her. Everyone understood what it meant.

For a person with only a single point to challenge a person with 10pts immediately was unheard of. Even if you had a grudge against a person, it was of little benefit to you. Even if you won, you would only take a single point from that person. But, if you lost, you would be out. That's not to mention how powerful a person with 10pt would be in the early game. Dyon's choice simply didn't make any sense.

It was clear he only had one purpose: to prove a point.

"Are you going to get up here? Or are you only good at sneak attacking people?" Dense black flames danced in Dyon's eyes as he looked down at Iris.

'He knows...' Iris' features barely fluctuated as she made her way to the stage, gently and gracefully landing.

It didn't seem as though anyone was intent on challenging anyone else. Everyone's focus was on this one fight.

"Do you know why I'm going to kill you today?" Iris' sweet voice rang through the stadium, pushing everyone to the edges of their seats.

Clara's heart seized when she heard these words. It suddenly dawned her just the kind of place this martial world was. Dyon's life was on the line here, she couldn't forget something like that.

The Elvin girls felt bad for Clara. They had gotten to know her well over the past day, and despite her cold eyes, she seemed to have a bubbly sense of humor to her that completely contrasted the feeling you got from looking at her. But, that personality was never more prominent than when she was interacting with Dyon... It was clear that she cared for him deeply.

So, to then have to hear someone so blatantly threaten his life, it didn't take a genius to understand what she must be feeling right now.

Dyon, though, said nothing in response. Instead choosing to stand there and observe quietly.

"There are a few reasons actually." Iris spoke faintly.

"First is my sister. You had the audacity to cause her pain. Who gave a commoner piece of shit like you the right to kill my sister's love?"

Clara gripped her fists at her knees. Although she had been aware that it was likely that Dyon had killed before. But, hearing it stated so clearly... She didn't know how to feel.

"The second reason though, is much more personal."

Iris' eyes began to glow a dense red, her jet-black hair flaring outwards and fluttering in the wind. Dense red crystal veins began to appear in the air, as though they were living vines of themselves.

"Because of your senseless deeds, I missed a campaign year two years ago, tending to my sister. You are directly responsible for my not being in the top ten right now."

Rage built in Iris' heart. She too understood the importance of having a top ten spot when it came to the final rounds. To her, it was because of Dyon that she had basically lost her ability to compete for the spot. All she could do now was aim for eleventh place.

The crowd was shocked into a realization. Did that mean that Iris was the equal to the top ten rankers?

"And lastly." Iris' veins of red crystals reached a tempest, blooming into roses that aimed their ire toward Dyon.

"You've disrespected me in challenging me first. You don't deserve to be in the top ten, so you think you can trick others into thinking you're more than you are by using me? How dare you."

Iris' cultivation released the full brunt of its force, a dense red aura cracked the arena beneath her face as features of pure rage colored her once delicate appearance.

The screech of a witch resounded through the arena as a forest of red trees sprung along the arena floor.

Everyone had their eyes on a single event. What would happen?

Chapter 466

Dyon remained completely unmoved by Iris' display.

A dense and opaque white flooded Dyon's general vicinity, cutting off the forest of red from reaching him.

King Acacia's eyes flashed. Many didn't recognize this will, but he did immediately. "Celestial Will..."

Dyon though, still didn't move. Instead, his ring flashed as a familiar friend appeared. One he hadn't used in years.

A six-foot-long sword colored a completely light-immune jet-black appeared. Draconic cries of happiness rang through the stadium as a blood red aura began to drip from the sword.

Dyon's eyes flashed with gold, 'you've been suppressed for too long.'

The array he had placed on the sword so long ago shattered.

The cries of happiness increased, beating against the ears of everyone in attendance. The spirit of Dyon's transcendent sword roared into the skies, cutting through the air itself as a black dragon spanning hundreds of meters manifested.

But then, Dyon did something that no one could make heads or tails of..

With one swift motion, Dyon stabbed his sword into the ground, leaving it to his side. "She's not worthy of you."

The dragon in the skies seemed to nod in acknowledgement of Dyon's words before curling in on itself in a napping position before disappearing.

"You must be wondering why I bothered taking this sword out." Dyon stared into Iris' eyes, completely unperturbed by her output of cultivation. "I think I'll make a list of my own then."

Dyon took a step forward, his skin searing in red as he pushed his Demon Emperor's will to the first level of perfection.

"For one, your bullshit speech was so long that my mind wondered, and I just so happened to remember this sword of mine. At least you managed to jog my memory of the last time I needed to use it."

Dyon took another step, a dense fog escaping from his lips as he pushed his Demon Emperor's will to the second level of perfection.

"Secondly. Your cultivation is at the 6th essence gathering level. And you also happen to be an upper 4th grade expert. So, to save your pride, I was going to go all out."

Dyon took yet another step. His veins bulged, coursing a dense gold blood through his body. Lines of gold began lining his skin as though they were tattoos etched just below.

"But then that leads us to the third thing on our list. After I had decided to be the good guy and spare your feelings, I then heard nonsense about me not being worthy of being in the top ten?"

Dyon flashed forward, rings of red gold being left in his wake. He didn't use his movement technique, his body was just too overbearing.

Iris' eyes flashed. Veins of red crystals lashed outwards, sending spikes of red careening toward Dyon.

Brilliant purple gold formations blossomed in Dyon's path, crashing violently in the crystal arrows.

Showered of red, purple and gold rained down on the arena. But, the beauty was lost on the crowd. They sat at the edge of their seats, intent to see the clash of geniuses.

Iris didn't remain idle. Her arms spread from her recognizing the threat Dyon posed.

"Ipsum Tales, Witch's Forest!"

The forest of red convened, sending branches with a sharp killing intent toward Dyon.

There was nothing more familiar to Dyon than these crystals. He had spent months struggling under the pain they brought. But, that had given him an intimate understanding of just what this will was all about.

It was an Earth type crystal will. However, unlike Dyon's version which had the goal of amplification, this had the role of preservation.

As nice as that sounded. It wasn't.

These red crystals wouldn't stop until its target was completely encased. Even the smallest bit was like a parasite that would latch on and grow.

There was only one reason why it was red. It was a blood sucking leech.

Wings burst from Dyon's back as he clashed with Iris.

Crystal roses appeared at her palms, leeching away the power in Dyon's strike.

Iris flew backwards violently, her eyes widening in shock as her arms shook violently under the power of Dyon's fists.

Shock colored the faces of the crowd. Iris. The undisputed number two of Earth. Had lost in the first exchange.

But, Dyon couldn't be bothered to let her have time to rest.

His wings flapped a single stroke, sending a tempest of wind will crashing into the stadium below and shattering the stage.

In an instant, he appeared above Iris' flying figure.

The golden veins in his arms bulged as he clasped his fists above his head, a dense red gold aura dripping from him as he slammed downwards.

Blood flew from Iris' mouth, her body caving inwards under the pressure. Her vision went blurry as the sickening sounds of her ribs giving way reverberated through the arena.

Dyon's wings flapped again, sending hundreds of participants watching below flying.

Iris could do nothing. Her problem was lack of versatility. As much as she liked to boast, she only knew a single will. But, Dyon's celestial will was cutting through it as though it didn't exist. Why? Because Dyon had spent two months with this will living inside of him. No one knew its weaknesses more than he did.

Iris hadn't even hit the arena floor before Dyon's knee found its way to her face, sending her flying upward just as violently as she had crashed downward.

"NO!" Rose Ipsum, Iris' little sister cried from a distance. How could she have known her sister, someone who was so respected and feared would ever be on the side of a loss like this?

Dyon showed not a shred of mercy, flying upward and catching Iris by her long jet-black hair. Dense flames of black colored his eyes as a deep rage steadily built in his heart. This wasn't enough.

Iris pulled a curved dagger from her hip, slicing her wrists before slicing off the hair Dyon held onto in one swift motion.

Blood flew from her hands. But, it didn't fall far. Instead, it crystallized into two sacrificial blades she held in either one of her hands.

The screech that resounded from Iris' techniques could no longer count as that of a Witch's. It was without a doubt a banshee.

Iris stabbed both blades into her chest under the shocked gazes of the crowd, slicing downward violently and tearing her clothes away. She was naked for but a moment before blood coated her so quickly that she became like a different person entirely.

Robes of red crystals graced her as her jet-black hair became a dark maroon.

A long staff appeared in her hand, seemingly made of wood but holding a large red diamond at the front end of it as its body curled to the natural whims of the branches of a tree.

The sound of Iris' screech increased as her crystal will burst through to the level of an intent. But, it didn't stop there.

One with mind. One with heart...

One with body!

Blood seeped from Iris' mouth, but it seemed to sparkle into the air as crystals before anything else.

"Ipsum's Tale. Scarlet Witch."

Chapter 467 You

Iris' red crystal armor seemed to screech. Her very movements were reminiscent of nails scratching across chalk boards.

Both of her eyes had become an abyss of dark red as blood seeped from them. Whatever it is she was doing, was at a massive detriment to herself. But, she no longer cared.

In the distance, in the same section as the Ragnor and Cavositas, the Matriarch of the Ipsum auxiliary clan shook violently. She knew all too well what this technique was.

There was a reason Iris, despite being such a genius, only knew a single will. Red crystal will wasn't natural. It was fostered through blood sacrifice and often required rituals of untold pain to advance in. That said, in exchange for that, you were able to grasp a will that was infinitesimally close to being a supreme law.

But, that was only the case while it was still at the level of a will. When this will stepped into the level of an intent... It underwent a conformational change.

As a created will, red crystal will worked much like a technique. It had steps of mastery that provided better rewards. Unlike natural wills that often only improved in power output, red crystals changed their fundamental nature.

Unfortunately for Iris, that wasn't what was occurring for her. She had artificially boosted her will to an intent by using a sacrificial technique. As such, she gained the power boost associated, but, none of the fundamental nature change.

Dyon's two pairs of wings flapped in the skies as he looked down on Iris' still falling figure. His shirt had burst apart, revealing his bandaged sides, but he had grown used to ignoring that searing pain inside of him. After taking Madeleine's virginity, the pain at his side has severely lessened due to the increase in his body cultivation. But, it seemed a full heal would only be possible if he broke into the Saint body level. Something that was very much impossible for now.

"I'm glad you've decided to go all out." Dyon's voice penetrated through the screeches, seemingly effortlessly.

In the Sapientia box, Ester snapped her head up. After centuries of working with music will, how could she not tell what was going on. "Intent level music..."

"This way," Dyon continued, "I'll hear less excuses."

Iris didn't seem to be in a healthy state of mind. The bleeding from her eyes only increased as time passed and her crystal armor was beginning to crack and her demeanor was crumbling under Dyon's powerful voice. But, the staff she held in her hand seemed to be glowing more and more feverishly.

"Act 1. Stage 3. Demon Emperor's Will. Perfection."

The veins of gold raged through Dyon's body, his muscles increasing a size before condensing. His skin seared red as the beating of his heart grew so robust that it could be heard by everyone in attendance.

The eyes of Patriarch Pakal narrowed. "That technique... Caedlum."

"Yes, father?"

"Did you say you knew this boy?"

"Yes."

"I believe you said you owed him? Did you give him one of our techniques as compensation?"

"Of course not. My life was never in any real danger because I didn't enter the legacy tower along with the others. I was trying to learn demonic will because it was a good opportunity. Unfortunately, I failed. That said, it is because of him we found the whereabouts of the blood sacrifice technique."

The brows of the Patriarch furrowed. 'Am I wrong?...'

Dyon stood like a Devilish King in the air. In response to the technique, his hair had grown out wildly, whipping about viciously in the wind.

First level wills began to spin around him. Sword will. Space will. Time will. Wind will. Celestial will. Demonic will.

Black and silver clashed.

The arena beneath Iris' feet burst under her, sending tears through the earth as her weight multiplied again and again.

Her screeches increased in protest. The pace of the accumulating red light quickened, sending an eerie feeling through the stadium.

Sword, wind, celestial and space will wrapped around Dyon's arm, spinning viciously as he flashed forward.

The impact of the flap of his wings was unprecedented. A crater spanning hundreds of meters appeared below his feet, creating an abyss that one could barely see the end of.

In an instant, Dyon appeared in front of the screeching witch as her staff screamed toward him.

Dyon's fist ripped through the air, shattering the crystal that held Iris' accumulated power.

A stream of blood coated the surroundings as Iris cried out in agony.

Matriarch Ipsum stood violently. "Impossible!"

Dyon's fist, though, didn't seem intent on stopping. It careened toward Iris' torso, tearing through her red crystal armor.

Iris flew backward, her ribs cracking once again.

“You know.” Dyon spoke, his eyes flashing causing a brilliant purple gold defensive array to abruptly stop Iris’ momentum as his will coated fist slammed into her again. “I find it funny when you nobles think your lives are the only ones that matter.”

Dyon’s defensive array shattered against the strength of his fist, but another appeared just as quickly, catching Iris’ momentum yet again.

“Because I seem to remember,” Dyon’s fist pummeled into Iris’ once delicate face, “my life being threatened by eleven of you so-called nobles.”

Dyon’s gravity will slammed Iris downward, landing her squarely on his viscous kick.

Queen Acacia cringed even as she giggled. “It seems it’s not too good to make our son in law angry, no husband?”

King Acacia’s lip twitched, but he didn’t respond.

“In my estimation.” Dyon’s wings flapped, catching him up to Iris’ flying figure in an instant. “You’re all quite lucky I only killed one of you.”

Dyon’s body rotated as he flexed his torso to the extreme. His heel jettied forward, graced by wind will that increased even as he spun faster.

First level. Fourth level. Ninth Level.

A sickening crack reverberated through the arena as Dyon’s foot nearly caved Iris’ skull inward.

Her body flew downward so quickly that a dense fire began coating her.

But, it didn't seem like Dyon had had enough. His body flashed forward before he coat Iris by her throat.

"Stop! You've won!" Matriarch Ipsum sent a message directly to Dyon. She couldn't afford to anger Patriarch Ragnor, so this was her only option.

"And then you want to talk about how it's my fault you aren't in the top ten." Dyon didn't seem to hear anything. "You're at least 40 years old. Maybe even 50. You think after all those accumulated campaign years that a single year is the reason you aren't in the top ten?" Dyon's grip tightened on Iris' throat as her nearly lifeless body hung in the air.

The crowd didn't even properly register what they were seeing. Was this real?

Dyon's eyes flashed with gold as an array wrapped around Iris' neck and lifted her into the air. Then, with another flashed, the arena was completely fixed. It was as though nothing had happened.

An annoyed look appeared on Dyon's face as he suddenly noticed he had hair in his eyes.

"How annoying." With a single sweep of his sword will, his hair was once again as short as it had been.

"You." Dyon pointed out and into the crowd as he picked up his sword.

Everyone looked around confused. What did he mean 'You'.

But, that was when a sudden realization hit them all... Dyon wanted to continue challenging...

Elder Den's face twitched. What was he supposed to do about this?

The monitors flickered. The Cowardly Demon's name shot upward.

The Cowardly Demon – 2pts

Chapter 468 Difference

The person Dyon pointed at didn't know how to feel. Was he really supposed to go up now? It wasn't as though he was weak. He was number 97 on the cumulative rankings. But, how could that possibly compare with Iris?

He shook his head, vehemently. "I forfeit."

The Cowardly Demon – 4pts

"You." Dyon pointed again. This time toward a woman. Ranked 72nd. In an act that was of no surprise to anyone, she too shook her head.

The Cowardly Demon – 8pts

"You."

The Cowardly Demon – 11pts

"You."

The Cowardly Demon – 16pts

"You."

The Cowardly Demon – 21pts.

Suddenly, the crowd understood what was happening. But, before anyone could say anything. Dyon began challenging those top nine rankers twice to take away the rest of their points. After all, there was a cap of 5pts per battle. But, did they dare to battle Dyon?

In the end...

The Cowardly Demon – 55pts

Iris' unconscious body had been challenged by Dyon 3 times. And because she was unfit to battle, they were deemed as automatic losses for her.

Others may have thought of taking advantage of this too. But, did they dare to provoke Dyon in such a way?

Everyone could only watch as Dyon made a fool of the proceedings. He wiped out the top 9 on his own and had practically gifted eight warriors a spot in the top 100 they didn't deserve. All to prove a point.

Clara rolled her eyes. "And to think I was worried for you. Still the same arrogant ass hat."

The Elvin girls giggled, very much used to both Dyon and Clara's personalities by now.

After accumulating 55 points to himself. Dyon turned his gaze back to Iris who was still hanging by her neck before snorting and dropping her. 'You crippled your own self.'

Dyon leisurely leaped off the stage, releasing his Demon Emperor's Will as he was greeted by tens of bitter faces.

"Oh? Are you all angry with me?" Dyon's smile had come back. He was nothing like he had been.

Cries of agreement rang out, especially from the top nine excluding Iris, of course.

"Even if you had a grudge with Iris, why did you have to take it out on us too! Now we're eliminated!" Using the mob to gain courage, one of the rankers spoke out.

Dyon started laughing. "You want to be mad at me? How about you be angry with the organizers who saw it fit to put me here in a group with people at this level?"

The rankers froze. If Dyon had said these same words just a few minutes ago, they would have been taken as a joke... But now? Could he really have earned his number one spot?

"To call me the cowardly demon? The Cavositas clown clan is nothing but that."

Elder Den's features steeled at Dyon's words.

However, there was a single person who had rage building up that surpassed just about anyone else.

The earth quaked and rumbled under his every step. He was a massive man, standing at four meters tall. His jaw line was so large that who looked almost like an ogre, having both the size and muscle mass to be.

Femi Geb. Rank 11. True rank 10.

Dyon raised an eyebrow as this massive figure stood before him. The earth seemed to want to pull Dyon in and his weight seemed to increase with the glare of this massive man.

'A pseudo gravity will? Interesting.' Dyon thought this even as his feet sunk into the earth below him, making him seem even shorter than he was already was.

The reason he was angry was obvious. He had spent his entire career within the top ten until he got the shock of a lifetime just a few months ago.

That anger didn't dissipate even when he found out that Dyon was likely a cheater, it only made him want to crush this so-called genius.

But now Dyon was practically spitting in his face. Calling the organizers clowns was just like saying him being in the top 10 was nothing more than a joke. That he hadn't earned his spot. And that if the Cavositas were intelligent, he would be kicked out.

"Do you need something?" Dyon's eyes flashed, clearly unperturbed by the height difference.

"I came here to make sure that I was the one you challenged for a spot in the top ten." His voice was deep and coarse, as though there were rocks rubbing against each other in his throat.

"And why would I do that?"

"Are you a coward?"

Dyon scratched an itch on the back of his neck. "Why would fighting someone who doesn't deserve to be in the top ten prove my bravery one way or the other?"

Femi Geb's veins bulged. The reddening of his skin.

"My plan was to challenge the fake number one from the beginning. I'm not here to entertain you people nor do I care about building up your suspense."

Fake number one?

Suddenly everyone understood exactly what Dyon meant. He had never planned on attacking the top ten's weakest link and hoping for the best. No. He had wanted to crush Lionel Belmont from the very beginning. He didn't want to hold anything in suspense nor did he care to.

King Belmont sent a glance toward his son but could only sigh when he saw the same deadpan expression he always did. At first, he had wanted Dyon to prove himself worthy of Madeleine by beating his son. But, Dyon had not only proven that he had no need to fake rankings, he had also slipped away with Madeleine right under his nose. King Belmont had little doubt in his heart that Madeleine's virginity was gone and he had no control over the matter.

And now this child had no qualms about publicly slapping the royal clan in their faces. But, could Belmont blame him? As a king all he had done was allow his subjects to slander someone who was just a boy at the end of the day. King Belmont had little doubt that had he been Dyon back in the day, or had King Acacia or Big Red been, they would be reacting in this exact same way.

Dyon brushed by Femi. He had no intention of wasting anymore of his time here. But, he then said something that made Dyon freeze.

“Don’t blame me for making things difficult on your wives and friends then.”

Dyon turned his head back. “Excuse me?”

Femi suddenly felt as though he had fallen into an abyssal hell. But, as an experienced warrior, he wouldn’t let a look perturb him to the point of showing visible proof.

“I just mean that their brackets are coming up soon. And sure, they’re very powerful. But, this system allows for chain challenges, no? Planet Deimos has quite a few in these later rounds. It would be a shame if they didn’t make it to the top 100 because they were too tired to.”

Black flames danced in Dyon’s eyes.

This Femi character wanted to make use of the same challenge abuse Dyon had used to force Ri and Madeleine into multiple back to back battles.

“And say they get hurt.” Femi’s eyes get a sinister glow. “Accidents happen after all. A few small cuts. And maybe they end up more than hurt. Maybe even dead.”

Dyon suddenly held out a finger. No one knew what he was doing, but for those paying attention, he was clearly pointing toward the Belmont-Sicarius skybox that housed his in laws.

Why? He was very clearly saying he’d handle it.

Queen Acacia's blue-silver tails slowly dissipated in the air. Had Dyon not done what he had, she would have flown out with speeds even faster than she had before. She hadn't seen her daughter in eleven years. She didn't care what war it started, but she wouldn't let anyone threaten Ri in front of her.

Did this Femi think that her Celestial level cultivation was just for show? Did they think that they could just threaten to kill her daughter here and she wouldn't do anything about it?

"Do you know the difference between you and Iris?" Dyon said faintly.

"She was weak. Imagine thinking you could have been in the top ten with such pitiful cultivation and only a single mastered will."

"No." Dyon replied. "The difference is that I'll be killing you."

Chapter 469 Solution?

With a flash, Dyon's body disappeared from its position behind Femi and appeared Ri and Madeleine, a smile gracing his features. He didn't seem anything like the man he had been just a few moments ago. Instead he was caring, warm and even a bit worried.

It was at this point the crowd began to overlook Dyon's cheater label, to a certain extent. Whether he cheated or not, he had just made a very good case for why he should be in the top ten regardless. And, as they all knew, the top ten was a single tier unto its own. The disparity between ten and one wasn't so large as heaven and earth... Or so they thought.

Femi Geb's lip twitched. Unbeknownst to him, Dyon's words had him frozen in place for a split second too long. But, he quickly recovered. He didn't know what it was about Dyon that seemed to constantly suppress everyone around him, but what he did know was that he had no intentions of losing. And since this Dyon had insisted on provoking him, his allies would suffer too.

What Femi didn't know was that Dyon's suppressive abilities were because of his soul strength. Even elders much more powerful than Dyon always felt a constant pressure from him because a part of them would always be weaker than him..

Dyon didn't know it, but he was tapping on a door to something new. At Focus Academy, the very first confrontation he had ever had was with Akihiko's younger brother, Kami Mayumi. During that

confrontation, Dyon directly damaged Mayumi with a single shout, suppressing his soul and injuring it. Because Dyon now had the habit of suppressing his own soul level, he hadn't used this ability since, even to the point of having forgotten about it entirely.

However, the larger problem with using this ability was the vulnerable position it placed Dyon in. The act of attacking with the soul, as Saeclum's passing would attest, was highly dangerous. The only reason Dyon was on the winning side was because he had been severely underestimated – no one had thought he had any cultivation to speak of at all.

Another problem that was probably just as important was the fact that an attacker had to either prepare for an extended period of time as Saeclum had, or, if you had enough talent – as Dyon did – to skip over the preparation time, you still needed a soul several levels higher to be successful. And even then, you would still be at a severe risk.

It was many confounding factors like this that often made creating soul type techniques completely impractical. This was why the movement toward more supplementary soul type techniques like manifestation and array alchemy were created. By using mediums like manifestation and the aurora, you had a shield to the direct damage of the soul.

Top flight manifestation could have a direct impact on the user's physical body or had a physical form of some sort. For example, Dyon's wings. These were a physical representation of his manifestation. This same logic was also true of his weapons.

Because of his soul strength was connected to wings, Dyon could reach speeds comparable to lower level saints should he choose to. That said, it put a ridiculous amount of strain on his soul considering that was his upper cap. At the same time, the rest of Dyon's body didn't make fighting at that speed viable. Why? Because even if he could flap his wings that hard, the rest of his manifestation didn't lend to attacking with speed suitable for that. At the same time, because he didn't have a saint level body, flying at that speed put a massive strain on him.

Another example of this was how the strength of his weapons directly correlated to his strength. Because he had a saint level soul, he could manifest grandmaster level weapons. However, this was yet another example of how the rest of Dyon's cultivation restricted his soul's full potential. After all, just having a grandmaster level weapon didn't mean you were as strong as a saint. Just like Dyon's Spiritual sword didn't make him as powerful as a celestial level expert.

All of this to say, that unlike body and energy cultivation, soul cultivation always came rife with caveats, exceptions and limiters. And unfortunately for Dyon, he was by far the most talented in this aspect with both his body and energy cultivation being completely average. In fact, if Dyon's set of meridians hadn't come already tempered, who knew how many months to even years it would have taken him to reach the middle of the Meridian Formation stage? Never mind 108 open meridians.

In the end, this was why Dyon had suppressed his advancement to the Essence Gathering stage. He needed more of an understanding. And, if he couldn't get that, he needed to at least gain the most solid base possible. Unlike body cultivation, energy cultivation was highly sensitive to the most minute of changes.

That said, this was Dyon after all. Just how many possible solutions did he already have in mind already? How could he possibly be like everyone else in thinking that the soul was the most useless of the three disciplines?

Did body or energy cultivation directly increase your intelligence like the soul did? Did body or energy cultivation allow you to write the laws of the universe? Did body or energy cultivation allow you an understanding of the universe few could ever dream of reaching?

The answer was no. To every single question. So, how could the soul be useless?

Dyon's senior first brother had failed. His grand teacher had failed. His master had failed. In fact, every expert to ever live had failed. Each one of them had fallen short of that penultimate goal of allowing the soul to blossom and display its true ability.

So, considering how arrogant Dyon was, why wouldn't he think that this task was left unsolved for him to write in a solution?

Chapter 470 Shell

"Are you okay?" Ri asked worriedly, reaching for Dyon's bandages. They had been partially torn off because of Dyon's wings, but because of the position they were in, they had mostly survived.

Noticing this though, Dyon reached down, tearing them off completely.

The crowd seemed to be watching Dyon's every action. And it seemed like with his recent wins, his fan club was growing out of proportion. It wasn't as though no one had noticed how handsome Dyon was before, but that was a trait that was normally ignored for males in the martial world unless they were powerful – something females didn't normally have to deal with. However, having now proven himself, he wasn't short of admirers much to Ri's admonition.

For the shrieking voices to reach so far down, it was clear there were a lot.

Madeleine giggled. "It seems they want to add our husband to the male suitors list." Her smile was bright even as she helped Ri clean Dyon's wound and bandage it again.

Ri's small hands glided over Dyon's lean torso almost as though to say he was hers before she growled angrily.

Dyon though only had eyes for Ri and Madeleine. "You two need to be careful, okay? I can threaten him as much as I want, but I doubt that would change anything. Regardless, for his words alone. He's dead."

Madeleine nodded. "I'm 19th and Ri is 27th. With any luck, we'll be put in the same group. That will lessen the pressure."

Dyon nodded. As much as he tried to rein in his actions to lessen rippling effects, there would always be people out there that cared more for their own glory than even the lives of collateral. What did Ri and Madeleine ever do to this Femi character? Wouldn't he have been able to fight Dyon anyway if he waited?

The more Dyon thought about it, the angrier he got.

"Hey." Madeleine's small hand found its way to Dyon's cheek. "We're warriors too."

Ri nodded affirmatively. Neither her or Madeleine had gone all out yet. And, that was on top of the fact that dual cultivating with Dyon had major benefits to them as well. After all, how could dual cultivating with a Saint not?

Looking at his wives, Dyon nodded. "Alright."

**

In the stands though, there was another heavily debated topic aside from where Dyon ranked on the male suitors list, and that was Dyon's weapon.

It wasn't lost on the experts how amazing that weapon was. To manifest its own soul, and for it to be so large, there was no question that it was extraordinary. But, no one dared to speculate about the rank of this weapon... Because if they did... It would cause chaos.

Daiyu Chenglei had had a Spiritual weapon, yes. But, how many others had a weapon of this caliber? Without a deep family lineage and legacy, how was it possible to such a thing? Even the Elves had lost all of theirs.

"That weapon... There's no question." King Acacia spoke.

"You know that sword?" Queen Acacia asked.

King Acacia grit his teeth.

"Aww, husband. Are you struggling with acknowledging your son in law?"

"Hmph. That kid doesn't even have any awareness of what he just exposed. He was so focused on looking cool that he even took out such a thing."

Kawa Acacia poked her husbands face playfully. "Doesn't he have your sentinels to protect him. Who here could hurt him even if they wanted to?"

Seeing that King Acacia was reddening again, Kawa giggled.

“What sentinels are these, Edrym?” Big Red asked.

Down below, it seemed the monitors were randomly selecting the next group. Luckily, that next group had no one of note, so Ri and Madeleine were safe for now.

“They’re the Dao Formation puppets of the Elvin dead kings valley.” King Belmont noted.

“Dao formation?!” Big Red nearly choked on his food.

King Acacia shook his head. “They should have long since fallen from that level. But, it’s clear they’re still in the celestial realm. The worst part though is...”

“They’re comparable to first grade experts, right?” King Belmont finished his friend’s sentence.

Silence reigned in the room.

It was one thing to be a celestial expert. But, to be a first-grade celestial expert was completely different... Even in this room now, aside from Kawa, they were all at most third or second. This was because although they were all geniuses, they were capped by the poor cultivation in this universe. Kawa was lucky enough to be raised in a different universe entirely, as such, her talent wasn’t capped.

But, even they were the exception. Most celestial experts in this universe were extremely old 4th grade experts who managed to stumble onto some luck to break through.

“I don’t mean to rain on your parade anymore friend.” King Belmont cleared his throat. “But both Madeleine and Ri are both peak first grade experts.”

“What?!” King Acacia’s head snapped. He felt like his vision was going blurry.

There was a massive difference between just being a first-grade expert and a peak first grade expert. But, that wasn’t what really pissed King Acacia off. If the two of them were the only ones who happened to be of such a level, there was only one linking factor... Dyon.

Even Queen Acacia was surprised. “Are you sure? What about Dyon?”

King Belmont shrugged, “I’m not sure about his energy cultivation. He never seems to make use of it directly – it only seems useful to him for balancing out his body and soul prowess. But his soul...”

“I don’t mean to tease you too much husband, but his soul isn’t that far off from being comparable to ours.”

“What do you mean? I’ve already scanned his soul strength. He’s at a measly Middle Foundation stage level.”

Dyon had of course felt King Acacia scanning his soul. But, despite the breach of etiquette, he had forgiven it since he was Ri’s father.

That said, Dyon had learned his lesson from Ulu. So, he lowered his soul to an even greater extent. But, this time, he had lowered it almost too much. It seemed his father in law was looking down on him.

Queen Acacia sighed, looking at her husband pitifully. King Acacia used to be a genius among geniuses and his perception surpassed nearly anyone. In fact, his battle prowess used to be far higher than his cultivation dictated because he could simply read everything his opponent wanted to do ahead of time. Even when he was a lower celestial expert, fighting a half step to dao formation expert wasn’t a problem.

However, as he felt himself losing his mind, he had researched ways to cut off his True Empath abilities. Unfortunately, his method was no where near as perfect as Dyon’s grand teacher. As such, his cultivation had to be suppressed to the first celestial level. He could no longer manifest his soul. And without Kawa by his side, it was likely that he would have died a hundred times over in the past few years. It could only be said that the lack of cleansing was impacting this Acacia King far more than he was willing to admit.

He was a shell of his former self.