

The Nameless 951

Chapter 951: Twin Nuns

Even without the Dragon King's input, Dyon's Presence was too strong to be fooled by illusions for too long. But, he continued to act as though he was in a daze, taking advantage of the moment to rake the bodies of the twin sister nuns in front of him.

Dyon understood the tricks of The Cathedral rather quickly. Because of the ban on soul cultivation, and the capture or crippling of those with soul talent, something like a bewitching art was easy to use on the entire population.

Suddenly, the unnatural smiles and overly smiley personalities made perfect sense. Only the most noble families could escape such a fate.

As for the commoners who lived elsewhere on Planet Cathedral, they escaped as well. But, if they ever came to Cathedral City, and had the soul talent to ignore this bewitching, they would be exposed almost immediately. As long as someone acted out of expectations, there were only two explanations: the first was that they had a treasure capable of blocking illusions, while the second is that they were talented enough to break free of the illusion themselves!

Dyon understood many things at this moment.

Those with outstanding soul talent would cause abnormal signs at their birth. The Cathedral would monitor these signs and immediately take away the babies that caused them. On the other side of the equation, there were those with soul talent, but not talented enough to cause these abnormal signs at birth. These "stragglers", such as the young girl who was taken away during the Soul Rending Peak assessments, would be taken away the moment they entered Cathedral City because they wouldn't conform to the cultural norms forced by the church.

The only members of this latter group that could escape were children from noble families. Not only would those families have powerful enough means to hide the abnormal signs at the birth of their children, they would also be exempt from having to act the same way the commoners of Cathedral City did...

'This is a million times worse than what Orwell thought it would be...'

The commoners on the outside of Cathedral City were constantly dreaming of one day entering the greatest city ever, in their eyes, all while they lived in terrible conditions. At the same time, the commoner of Cathedral City were trapped themselves, living as slaves and not even knowing it.

The worst part was that the 98th quadrant had the perfect cover. No one wanted to visit them because there was no benefit in doing so. The only people who did visit them were those who knew their secrets already. And, even if others did come to this City, if their Presence and Perception weren't as powerful as Dyon, they wouldn't have even realized that the citizens were acting oddly!

It was no wonder why Zabia didn't want to tell him any of this. The Jafari family must have gotten sick and tired of acting as pillars for such a corrupt system and paid a heavy price for it, not even daring to tell the truth to the rest of the world lest the rest of their family be wiped out by the strong powers that backed Soul Market.

Despite how he was feeling, Dyon buried it deep, looking at the two beauties before him, but only seeing them as conniving snakes.

"I wonder if you sisters could give me a tour? It's been too long since I've come to The Cathedral, I would like to pay my respects."

Dyon silently followed behind the two beautiful nuns, not trying to hide the fact he was eyeing their swaying hips from beginning to end. There was just something about long and loose robes falling over the epitome of the female figure that was even more alluring to the eye than a scantily clad one.

What was odd to Dyon, though, was that these nuns were quite flirtatious. They didn't have the air of conservatism Dyon thought they would have. It was especially weird considering that they were supposed to be the template of purity, yet the movements of their bodies screamed seduction.

Dyon's blood roared, almost screaming in his head to teach these two a lesson for tempting a tiger with raw meat, however, there was nothing he could do.

"Big brother," The voice of the younger twin sister called out, capable of making the bones of males and females alike melt. "This is our hall of worship. We gather here at dusk everyday to pay our respects to our ancestors."

'This little vixen.' Dyon slightly clenched his jaw. 'So seamlessly going from calling me young master to big brother, what exactly are they trying to do?'

The more time Dyon spent with these two sisters, the more confused he became. What was their purpose in seducing him? Could it be that The Cathedral wanted to dip their hands into the pie that was Soul Rending Peak?

It did make sense. After all, Soul Rending Peak couldn't arbitrarily change their rules for fear of losing the protection their ancestors worked for. So, it would be better to control those with power under Soul Rending Peak than to directly control Soul Rending Peak itself...

"This here is a glass work that a celestial adept in the intent of craftsmanship created. Legend has it that she was only a step away from stepping into the world of daos, but she unfortunately passed away before she could do so.

"Despite this, we still worship her as our Den Mother. She truly laid the foundation for what our nunnery has become today."

Dyon followed and silently took note of a few things. Hearing about this intent of craftsmanship, he was intrigued.

According to his master's memories, there were many wills and intents not related to combat. For example, when Dyon first entered Focus Academy, he made use of these very wills to speed read. This, itself, showed that wills weren't only created for the sake of growing stronger physically, but could also be incorporated into the mental aspects of cultivation. The kind of will that would be a part of growing a strong mentality that would greatly help with you dao heart.

Often times, martial warriors would delve into the arts of painting and writing, things like calligraphy and entertainment, all for the sake of calming their spirit and strengthening their dao.

Craftsmanship was among these 'Mentality Daos'.

Interestingly enough, The 25th White Mother's memories also contained a theory that posited the possibility of using mentality daos to cultivate instead of following the conventional path, the devil path, or paths like them that may have been lost to time.

There were legends of existences that were mortal, but still managed to live for tens of thousands of years before breaking through and transcending.

Of course, these were just legends. The idea of someone, completely mortal, leaping over levels of cultivation even the most talented of geniuses found difficult to pass through, and directly transcending seemed ridiculous. But, that didn't stop Dyon's master from spending a lot of time studying it as she found these stories quite cathartic compared to the true brutality of the martial world.

'What do you think Old Lizard, do those people really exist on the transcendent plane? Do they exist?'

There was a long pause between Dyon's question and the Dragon King's answer before the ancient voice took a deep breath.

'The simple answer is that I don't know.'

'And the complicated answer?'

'... It's not completely outside the realm of possibility. I've found evidence of three such individuals, but each and every one of them disappeared without a trace. It's impossible to tell whether I was seeing what I wanted to see, or if these individuals truly existed.'

Dyon nodded. He could understand why the Dragon King and any transcendent would be eager to find these 'mortals'. The transcendent plane, more than any other cultivation level before it, heavily relied on one's mentality. Everything from your life span to your power all relied on it. Understanding this, of course a transcendent would want to exchange pointers with such an individual. Maybe only these geniuses had the key to everything.

After this, the twin nuns introduced Dyon to tens of other ancestors they worshipped. It seemed that The Cathedral didn't have 'a God', per se. But, rather, they had a collection of individuals who once lived that were lauded and respected enough to land in their hall of worship.

In this way, The Cathedral didn't peddle a religion, but rather showed a path to enlightenment that conformed to 'The Way' these legendary ancestors lived their lives to reach the level of cultivation that they did. Because of a promise of growing stronger, the general population and even the elites began to buy into the teachings of The Cathedral, believing that they were all left behind by these ancestors.

Using this, The Cathedral was able to enforce a lot of rules that ranged from innocent things like 'amiability with one's neighbors' all the way and up to the banning of soul cultivation.

"Big brother, your voice is so deep and rich, is that really your real voice?" The younger twin sister asked.

Dyon's eyes flashed with realization. 'They probably wanted to make sure I had fallen into their spell before they made inquiries about me. It obviously wasn't everyday that a core disciple came here, but they want to be clear on my identity before they try to rope me in completely.'

"Of course this is my real voice, how could I dare to fool you two beautiful sisters? I would be angering the heavens if I did something like that."

Hearing Dyon's response, the two sisters smiled sweetly.

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Dyon Perception didn't catch any suspicion in their eyes, but Dyon was obviously lying. He had changed both his inflections and the tone of his voice. With his attainments in body cultivation, doing something like that was as easy as flipping over his hand.

The elder twin sister pouted. "But you're hiding your face from us two sisters. Can't you show us your handsome face?"

Dyon sighed, shaking his head. "I'm afraid that my appearance isn't so good. Normally, when I have to appear in public without my mask on I use a few disguising techniques to hide my terrible birth mark, but it's much easier to just cover it with a mask.

"I actually came here today to try to get over this heart devil of mine. It's much too shameful for a martial warrior like me to be so caught up in what he looks like. I wanted to learn from our esteemed ancestors so I could cleanse this shadow over my heart so my future cultivation would be smoother."

A slight look of pity crossed the eyes of the twin sisters that surprised Dyon. This was the first genuine emotion he had seen from these two sisters and it further proved that he believed what he had said.

Dyon had come up with this story randomly, but it still perfectly explained a lot of things from the reason for his mask to the reason for his appearance here.

"We all have stories like this," The younger sister said softly, grabbing Dyon's large hand between her two delicate ones. "For one reason or another, we need the core teachings of The Cathedral to show us the light. Come, we two sisters will show you some more. When you're ready to take off your mask, we'll be here for you."

At this moment, the bewitching techniques of the two sisters faltered slightly. It was only for a fraction of a second, a time frame that a normal cultivator would have missed completely, but it was more than long enough for Dyon to see what he needed to see to understand the plight of these two sisters.

They were just as beautiful as ever. The same delicate oval faces, and the same bright blue eyes. However, stretching from their hidden necks and up the sides of their cheeks, were two fiercely ugly and red scars. They cracked and flaked as though they were decomposing from the inside out and even went so far as to cover an entire half of their once flawless features.

When Dyon caught a glimpse of their hands, he realized that the scar was worse than he thought. It didn't just stretch down an entire half of their face, it was an entire half of their bodies!

Just as quickly as the glimpse of reality came, was just as quickly as it disappeared, allowing the peak beauty of these two tragic sisters to come back.

The eyes of the two sisters showed a slight panic once they realized what happened. If it was a normal cultivator in front of them, they wouldn't have been worried because of how quickly they recovered, but this was a core disciple! What if he saw them for how ugly they truly were? How could they face the world again?

However, Dyon pretended as though he hadn't seen a thing. He even hid the pity he felt deep within himself so as not to alert the two sisters to anything, instead pretending as though he had been observing another glass work of art.

Seeing Dyon's appearance, the two sisters breathed a sigh of relief.

Although their scars seemed much worse than what that descriptive word entailed, and also seemed to be alive, as far as they could tell, they were born this way. The younger sister's scar was on her left, while the elder was on her right.

Maybe the most tragic thing was that the scar used to be much smaller. According to those who grew up with them, it had only been a mole when they were a few weeks old, but as the years passed, that mole grew in ferocity, eating away at their appearances more and more everyday.

The two sisters were already prepared for the day that their entire bodies would be rife with that very same rotten infestation, and there was nothing they could do about it...

It was no wonder they felt true pity for Dyon. They felt like his story was very similar to their own.

At the same time, they respected him even more. Because unlike them, he was looking for a way to move forward and accept the way he was born.

These two sisters no longer doubted Dyon. Maybe it was a bit foolish of them, but their hearts had been completely swayed.

"Two beautiful sisters," Dyon suddenly broke his attention away from the work of art before him. "It's been so long yet I still don't know your names!"

Because of Dyon's fabricated back story, the two sisters knew it would be rude to ask for his name after he had already opened up to them, so they simply replied without asking for anything back.

"My name is Bella!" The younger sister spoke in a bubbly voice completely unlike her former seduction filled one.

"My name is Mia!" Just like her younger sister, the Mia's demeanor seemingly changed. Losing her dominatrix type vibe, her voice became like clear water, filled with a calming sensuality that made her a joy to listen to.

Dyon inwardly sighed, but continued to follow the two sisters. It was no wonder they questioned if his voice was real considering they were also changing theirs so completely as well.

It didn't take long for Dyon to understand that they hid their true personalities for a reason. What that reason was? He didn't know. It could be anything from it being easier to utilize their bewitching technique to simply hiding from the reality of their lives.

'Old Lizard, you saw, right?'

'I did. But, I've never seen such a condition. Whether it be my true body or all the bodies I've taken over since, none of them know anything about the scars on their bodies.'

'It seems... Almost alive. Like something is eating them from the inside out... In all likelihood, they've been dealing with this for a long time, yet whatever it is that's eating them hasn't finished its job yet. They also seem to be in constant pain, but it isn't to the point where they can't function normally... Do you think this is the work of The Cathedral again?'

The Cathedral had done many horrible things, Dyon didn't put it past them to experiment on children. These two sisters couldn't have been more than 20 years old. Their cultivation also seemed to be hidden for one reason or another too...

'It's also possible that they simply have special constitutions.'

'If they had special constitutions, wouldn't they have been taken to Soul Market by now? Although not every constitution has high soul talent, high ranking constitutions definitely provide just enough soul talent to be viable for use for that Mystic technique.'

Constitutions provided a boost to all forms of talent. Depending on the ranking of your own, this boost could be small or large. Of course, peak level soul talents were incredibly rare, but the requirements for Soul Market weren't so high.

In reality, the restriction on the soul talent was only in place so that the soul would be robust enough to survive the transfer from one person to another.

For example, Dyon's soul talent was so amazing that even after burning his soul, he survived for hours before his soul was eventually sealed away by his cultivation technique. This allowed him to effectively survive something he had no business surviving, until he finally met Amphorae who completely healed his soul.

This logic was the very for the Mystic ranked technique. It was impossible to use effectively unless the victim in question had a strong enough soul.

All of this was to say that although the requirements were strict, it wasn't so strict that those with constitutions not specializing in the soul couldn't meet them.

'Well, aren't they technically in the hands of The Cathedral right now? They're using the bewitching technique not only to hide their own appearance, but to also probe you, remember? It's clear that they're not here for sake of giving tours, but rather to make sure that nothing goes awry.'

Chapter 953: Conflicting

Dyon sunk into deep thought. He wasn't new to the idea of constitutions hurting their host at all. For example, his own wife, Madeleine, would have died to her Goddess' Disposition if he hadn't found the remains of the Celestial Deer Sect, and thus awakened it for her. Of course, Akihiko claimed that he could do this for her as well, but his only plan was to steal her talent away.

It wasn't outside the realm of possibilities that these twin sisters could also have such a double edged constitution. And considering the state of this 98th quadrant, there was no way they could get their hands on the constitution awakening pill.

The only problem with this was that Dyon had never heard of such a constitution. Although he didn't research them as stringently as Clara had, he still had a rough idea about them all...

'I haven't heard of this constitution either,' The Dragon King continued. 'But, you're still a little too tender. Haven't you wondered why constitutions are constantly repeated? Why so many people share the same constitutions, even to the point where they've 'all' been documented and understood?

'There are 33 God Constitutions, 33 Heaven constitutions and 33 Earth constitutions. This number is almost double if you consider the separation for both genders – although, not exactly double because there is some overlap between constitutions as some of them are gender neutral – do you know why this is?'

'I once hypothesized that constitutions existed as a clue left by the laws of the heavens. As though they were telling us that we should take all three core paths of cultivation, the soul, the body and their energies, seriously.'

'That's part of the truth.' The Dragon King said in slight surprise. 'However, it isn't the heavens who left this clue, it was the powerful members of a generation even older than mine.'

'You mean?'

'Constitutions are a more perfect form of the faith seed. Although they are generally less powerful, they also don't have the same drawbacks.'

'It's a lot like how your aurora flames are. Ancient aurora flames are much more powerful, just like faith seeds are, however, if you tried to fuse them with your soul, you'd do irreparable harm to yourself. In the same way, if you rely too heavily on a faith seed, it will effect your cultivation in the future because your dao will no longer be your own.'

'In order to use aurora flames, they had to be weakened and made more docile. Following this same logic, constitutions are generally seen as weaker than faith seeds, but they also don't put up the same road blocks to future cultivation.'

'The reason this is, is because a group of ancient cultivators gave up their right to transcend to create these constitutions, imprinting their legacy across time.'

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Soon, Dyon's tour of The Cathedral came to an end. Unfortunately, other than meeting the twin beauties, he didn't get much out of it. Of course, he still found gaining a deeper understanding of this quadrant valuable.

The twin sisters seemed genuinely disappointed that Dyon was going to leave so soon, but there was nothing they could do. As devoted members of the nunnery, they likely wouldn't be able to leave for the rest of their lives. At the same time, especially as orphans, they felt that they owed The Cathedral more than they could give. So, even if the opportunity was presented to them, in all likelihood, these two beauties would choose to stay.

"I'll come back to visit often!" Dyon said with a smile. Although the sisters couldn't see it behind his mask, they could feel his sincerity, and that was enough for them.

Watching Dyon leave, the two sisters felt the slight pang of loss.

"Who do you think he is, big sister?" Bella asked absentmindedly.

"Are we even sure that he's a he? He or she might have purposely changed their gender so that they'd be even more difficult to pin who they are..."

"Maybe... There are many more men than women amongst the core disciples. But, I asked him about his voice, how could he lie under our suggestion?"

Mia sighed. "Core disciples aren't existences that we can so easily underestimate. With our abilities, we still couldn't see through his cultivation. It's truly baffling."

The twin sisters greeted incoming guests before returning to their private conversation.

"You're right..." Bella muttered. They were among the very few with high soul talent that weren't forced to cripple their souls at birth. As for the reason, they were the people of The Cathedral. Of course they would receive benefits others wouldn't. But, at the same time, this kept them in the dark about many of the happenings of the 98th quadrant, while also making them complicit in many other things. Unfortunately, nothing was so black and white here...

"But, I feel like we can trust him... Our intuition has never been wrong."

"I heard that an important guest came here earlier today?" Suddenly, a voice startled the two silently talking sister. It was particular old and dry, completely void of emotion.

"Den Mother!" The two sisters replied respectfully.

Although the master of craftsmanship intent was their very first Den Mother, this position had obviously been passed down many times. The voice currently sounding in the ears of the two young girls was the current Den Mother of the nunnery.

"Yes, a core disciple came earlier." Mia answered in place of both of them.

"A core disciple?" The mind of the Den Mother immediately flew to one person. "Was it Dyon Jafari?"

Hearing this pointed question, the two sisters were a bit surprised. They didn't know much about the happenings of the outer world, but they did know what was told them by their superiors. Among this information was both a picture and description of Dyon Jafari. For obvious reasons, The Cathedral wanted to keep an eye on him.

A major part of the reason the sisters immediately began by bewitching Dyon was exactly because of this information. Of course, they were aware that Dyon had become a core disciple. Normally, they only used their bewitching arts to hide their scars, but they took it a step further with Dyon, attempting to force him into telling the truth.

"We cannot confirm this, Den Mother. He or she was wearing a mask." Bella interjected.

"A mask?" A slight rage vibrated along with the Den Mother's voice. "Absolutely no regard for the rules! How dare you let him do as he please?!"

The shrill voice was like a thunder clap in the ears of the girls, causing them to immediately pale as a small stream of blood dripped from their cherry lips.

"Please rest your anger, Den Mother." Mia replied quickly. "If we insisted on him or her removing their mask, it wouldn't be in line with the core teachings of our Cathedral. It would do more harm than good. It would also prove that, in the case that he was in fact Dyon Jafari, that we were on guard against him, which is of no benefit to us."

"Hmph. Spend more time training your younger sisters as opposed to fantasizing about nonsense. You two diseased sisters don't have much longer to live anyway, you might as well do some good before you go." The Den Mother snorted, but she knew that Mia was correct. If Dyon had remained covert, and they learned of him through their channels of information, they could deal with him quietly. But, now that he had so publicly advertised himself, and even became a core disciple of their best sect in such overbearing fashion, it was impossible to deal with him as they pleased.

Plus, even if they exposed him as Dyon, it wasn't as though they could act against him right here. The twin sisters were far from strong enough to take on Dyon alone.

After this exchange, the Den Mother left the two girls with a cold sweat down their alluring backs. They didn't even dare to be angered...

However, it wouldn't be long after this that The Cathedral received reports that Dyon had in fact entered Cathedral City, but had left through teleportation station many hours before this mysterious masked core disciple ever stepped foot into The Cathedral.

For reasons even they didn't understand, the two sisters breathed a sigh of relief. They didn't like the idea of the person they so closely identified with also wanting to destroy the place they called home, it was too conflicting...

Dyon silently smiled to himself, as though he already knew that his ploy had worked.

After leaving The Cathedral, he liesurely left the city. After another slight of hand, a few concealment arrays, and some flashing lights, Dyon reappeared as though he had just come back from a journey before strolling out of the city.

It wasn't long before Dyon made it back to Soul Rending Peak territory. In order to keep up appearances, he sped through the forest, but didn't go so far as to injure himself again.

'Wait... Am I imagining things?...'

Dyon was currently standing in the very same spot he had lost his pursuer in. By all rights, there should have been a massive crater along with multiple destroyed trees, yet here everything was, completely unscathed.

Anyone else might not have noticed this, or maybe even ignored it, assuming that they had misremembered the particular location. However, Dyon had absolute confidence in his memory. This had to be the place!

'Old Lizard, what's going on here...'

'I don't know either...'

Dyon's brows furrowed. But, before he could think any further, the sounds of rustling leaves and snapping branches caught his attention.

Up in the air, standing on a particularly sturdy branch was a pale and skinny young man.

"Junior Brother Jafari, Senior Sister sent me here to wait for your arrival."

"Oh? What's going on?"

"It looks like we'll have to enter the Epistemic Tower soon. The core disciple trials are coming up soon, but it seems the elders were inspired by your feelings toward taking risks and improvement."

Dyon raised an eyebrow, remembering how he spoke about risking your life in the tower was better than wallowing in the mediocrity of this 98th quadrant. It was either someone actually decided to heed his advice, or this was another half-baked scheme... Maybe it was even a mix of the two.

"The timing is actually quite good for us." The pale young continued with a faint excitement on his face. "This is also around the time that the Valley of Geniuses is open. If luck shines down upon us, we could ascend the heavens in a single step!"

Hearing these words, Dyon's eyes brightened. He remember the old man telling him that his master had a statue on the saint floors in this Valley of Geniuses. Apparently, the Demon Sage had one as well, but his was found of a higher floor. This was too suprising since the Demon Sage had many more achievements than his master did. For all intents and purposes, he was a transcendent... Or, he would have been had he not been schemed against by so many enemies.

"This is good." Dyon said with a faint smile. "What do you need me to do?"

"Nothing much. Senior Sister just wants us to enter as a faction. The Valley of Geniuses is obviously an area of attraction, and since we're from such a lowly quadrant, we'd be excessively bullied if we were alone.

"The good news is that those who were truly strong would travel alone. This is mostly for protection against those 74th quadrant bastards."

Dyon nodded. "I'll follow you then."

'Maybe if I enter the tower I'll be able to find some time to see Clara and Ri... It's only been about two months, but I already miss them."

The pale young man nodded. He was pleasantly surprised by Dyon's attitude. From what he had heard about the assessments, this was an overly arrogant young man. Of course, he thought of the possibility

that he was the type to only be arrogant against the weak, but according to the stories, he even dared to defy their Vice Master. Considering that, only a fool would categorize him as such.

"You can call me Senior Brother Coudry."

The pale young man said this in passing, but Dyon took a strong mental note of it because the Coudry family was among the four up and coming families.

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Within the Courtyard bought out by the Devil Path cultivators, Lilith was still healing.

Her inner turmoil caused by the past couple days was weighing heavily on her. At the same time, she was feeling emotions she never felt before, nor did she think she would ever feel.

How many times had she heard Sokzac say sweet words to her? Yet, every time, they went in through one ear and left through the other. But, now, it was constantly replaying in her mind...

All her life, Lilith had never needed much help. Despite being born in Nightmare Palace, she was only one among hundreds, even thousands of children her father had had. That was not to mention the countless grand and grand grand children. The fact her father followed the Devil Path, yet was already an expert that could stand at the top of the world, proved that he had already lived hundreds of thousands of years, of course his lineage was too long to take note of completely.

The fact she could rise to her position, especially as a woman, was a product of her relying on herself entirely.

However, it could be said that Dyon was the very first person to force her into a loss. The very first person to make her feel any vulnerability. And now, she could almost feel her heart aching for something to lean on... And she absolutely hated it!

Just as Lilith was brooding over her will to cut Dyon limb from limb, Sokzac knocked lightly on her door.

"Come in." Lilith said softly.

Currently, she sat in meditation, trying to calm the state of her heart. If she let this feeling get out of control, then it would definitely effect her dao heart. Although she was feeling the impulse to lean on someone, she was also feeling a strong repulsion to it as well. Having two drastically different mentalities would be terrible for her future.

Sokzac walked in with a smile on his handsome face. "How are you feeling?"

Lilith felt her heart flutter again, but she quickly calmed with a deep breath. "I'm progressing slowly."

Hearing the slight tenderness in Lilith's voice made Sokzac's eyes open in surprise. Even though he tried to quickly hide it so as not to embarrass Lilith, with her cultivation, she had already caught the slight change in his expression, causing her delicate, ice carved cheeks to redden.

Sokzac tactfully decided not to mention the oddity in Lilith's actions, leaving both of them room to take a step back.

"Here." Sokzac recovered something from his spatial ring.

Seeing the orb of light and the blood red pill, Lilith felt a shiver go down her spine. However, she still took them, placing the pair into her own spatial ring.

"Try to get better as soon as you can. An elder of the sect came by earlier today, apparently we're going on a trip to the tower to gain experience. The Valley of Geniuses is opening soon, so we should go try our luck."

Lilith's brow furrowed. "We still have many things to do here."

"It's best if we leave those tedious things to the supervisors we've long since stationed here. This isn't an opportunity we should miss and it's also a good opportunity to make our presence known."

"That won't be possible. If we reveal ourselves as devil path cultivators before matters are concluded, everything we've worked for would be meaningless. There is still one massive shipment we have to oversee, then we can gut the funds and destroy all of the evidence before those conventional path leaches have time to see that something is wrong. We can't do anything to jeopardize that."

Sokzac smiled. "With our power, as long as we're not suppressed, would we really need to use our devil path energies to make a statement?"

This was true. As devil path cultivators, they were suppressed even more than Dyon was, easily by 70 or even 80%. Although they wouldn't be able to use their true strength so as not to be exposed, it would still be a net positive for them.

Lilith sighed, "As much as I want to, if we went now, people would begin asking questions about just where a mere 98th quadrant got disciples as powerful as us. If that makes people more interested in the happenings here, it could be trouble."

"We'll do it as you say, then." Sokzac took a step back, agreeing with Lilith. In truth, this was the longest he had ever sustained a conversation with this little beauty. According to the usual Lilith he knew, if she disagreed with him, she would simply say no without explanation.

Lilith couldn't bring herself to make eye contact with Sokzac, so she only meekly nodded and saw him out. It was only after he left that it began to dawn on her what was happening...

'I can't be falling for him, right?...'

Chapter 955: Scum

Dyon and Wess, his senior brother, soon made their way into Violet's massive courtyard.

'The more time I spend around this Violet girl, the more odd it is. She's ranked 6th, yet Wess follows her despite being ranked 4th, all while she lives in the 1st ranked courtyard? What is going on here?'

The moment Dyon walked in, following behind Wess, tens of pairs of eyes trained on him, causing him to raise an eyebrow. These individuals were definitely not all core disciples, most were outer, with a large percentage being made up in inner. In total there were only 4 core disciples, 3 of which included Dyon, Wess and Violet. The reason why Dyon was surprised was because although he, as a core disciple, could easily walk between regions, it wasn't allowed for those of lower status to walk into higher ranked regions. The fact so many non-core disciples were here was definitely in opposition to the rules.

"This is our new vice leader?" A voice filled with anger and rage filled the room.

"Vice leader?" For good reason, Dyon was shocked by these words. They were clearly aimed toward him, but he didn't remember ever accepting such a position nor even being offered it.

When Dyon looked over to have been spoken, he realized that it was actually the 4th core disciple of the faction.

"Junior Brother Novrel, behave yourself." Violet spoke in a cold voice.

'Yet another member of the up and coming families?'

"But, Senior Sister! I'm not convinced! How can a disciple who hasn't even passed the trial and become a true core disciple become out vice leader?"

At first, Luka had wanted to mention the fact Dyon was ranked dead last amongst core disciples, but he didn't want to give Violet a reason to be angered. After all, she was ranked below both him and Wess, did that mean she couldn't be leader?

Of course, Dyon was only ranked last because he was the last among core disciples to join and hadn't formally challenged anyone – this was because he wasn't a disciple when he defeated Asyna, so she didn't lose her placement. That said, he couldn't bother to care about such rankings. Maybe if he was feeling petty enough in the future, he'd do something about it.

"Enough." Violet cut Luka off. "If we want to resist against the Caedes family faction, as well as survive the attacks and tribulations of the Valley of Geniuses, we have to stay together. I don't want any of you

getting injured. When we come back, if you're still unsatisfied, then you can challenge Junior Brother Jafari as you see fit.

"Let's go. The elders are already waiting for us all at the gates. On the way, I'll explain a few things to you all."

...

Just a few hours later, eager members of Soul Rending Peak had gathered on a large boat. It seemed that just like Earth and the Flaming Lily Sect, the pillars that led to the 98th quadrant's Epistemic Tower were also placed in a large body of water.

Looking out toward the two massive pillars, etched intricately with ancient symbols, Dyon stood silently behind Violet while also listening to the seemingly endless words of the elders. Dyon found these old men and women significantly less interesting than the beauty that was Evangeline, but a Vice Master wouldn't come out for such a small matter. In fact, even the highest ranked elder here was merely an inner sect elder.

Dyon had expected this. After all, the only reason why Evangeline proceeded over the assessments to begin with wasn't because her status warranted her participation, but rather because she wanted to make sure that Soul Rending Peak wasn't thwarting the chances of the commoners. Since those of them present now were already admitted into the sect, there was no need for her to oversee such a thing.

"... All of you need to remember that this is a great opportunity. The Valley of Geniuses can provide you with opportunities even we cannot, but it is also rife with dangers, not just from the statues themselves, but also the members of the younger generation who will fight with you over these opportunities.

"Every statue represents a great genius of the past, and although there are thousands of them, they can only be activated once per opening of the valley.

"The issues that you'll all face will come clear when you get there, but the challenge is two-fold. The first is to resonate with the statue. While the second is to compete with the others who resonate to claim the ultimate prize. This second step will be the most dangerous, how that does not mean that the first is safe. Those who are capable of noticing competing resonators earlier on might decide to stop their own first step in order to wipe out the competition.

"As much as we'd love to believe that all of you will receive benefits and return safely, this is simply not realistic. You must all understand that this is the world of cultivation. Your lives will be on the line constantly, but should you grasp the rewards your future will be endlessly bright."

The inner sect elder continued to speak, both encouraging and warning those of the sect. But, it wasn't until the end that Dyon understood just why Soul Rending Peak was putting so much effort into this...

"... In the case that any of you are lucky enough to complete your resonance with a statue, do think about the sect and quadrant that raised you all up. Of course, The Cathedral and my Soul Rending Peak will give you proper compensation for your troubles, so there is no reason to worry about that.

"In the case that you fail, do not let it hamper your progression forward. Take this as a learning experience. After all, the younger generation is the pillar of our futures."

It seemed like the elders were intent on boring Dyon out of his mind, either that or they were trying to make up for hundreds of years of guidance in the span of a couple hours. The whole thing made Dyon feel quite disgusted, to be truthful.

First of all, if you resonate with the inheritance of statue, how could you hand it over the sect? How could they simultaneously be the pillar of their future, while also crippling themselves for the sake of a bullshit sect.

Dyon didn't believe for one instant that the elders didn't understand what they were asking.

Think about the word "resonate" for a moment. This wasn't a branding on the skin, this was a branding on the soul! The idea of handing over such a treasure would not only be inconceivably stupid, it would also further cripple a soul that was likely already crippled by this bullshit quadrant.

No matter how much the martial world might look down on soul cultivators, that was only in regard to combat prowess. And even then, the soul was helpful for many things, especially comprehension.

The soul was a lane that connected the body to the heavens. Without a powerful soul, comprehending wills and higher energies would become almost impossible. These fools wondered why they couldn't

ascend past the saint levels, when the reality was right in front of their faces. How could you ascend to the celestial realm when your comprehension was crippled? Even the concept of doing so was asinine.

'This must be another ploy by Soul Market... I can use this.'

Other quadrants wouldn't even bother to speak about handing over the inheritance one of their geniuses resonated with. After all, it would require breaking a part a piece of their soul. However, didn't this 98th quadrant have a way to do that already?...

In fact, it would be easy! A strong enough inheritance might even have the ability to heal the crippled souls of those hidden geniuses here. If that happened, The Cathedral would use this as an excuse, labelling them as traitors to the church, all in order to take their souls away to be sold.

A sudden realization hit Dyon. No matter how good the products of the Soul Market were in the past, how could they compare to the inheritances of a genius great enough to enter the Valley of Geniuses? The amount of money they could sell such a soul for... It would be astronomical!

Dyon grit his teeth. 'These absolute scum!'

Chapter 956: Ignorant

Dyon had already decided that he would make this quadrant pay for its greediness. 'You want to swallow the things I've earned? Good.' He would make them understand the meaning of taking a bigger bite than you can handle.

At first, Dyon assumed that the Devil Path cultivators timed their visit for the opening of the Valley of Geniuses. However, according to the Dragon King, the valley's opening was completely random and would only stay open for half a year at the most. It seemed that all of this was just a happy coincidence for them as well.

Dyon couldn't get the smug white-haired girl's face out of his mind. He'd give that little girl a good spanking to teach her a lesson. She got off much too lightly.

Those around sensed the change in Dyon's demeanor and began to feel slightly uncomfortable. But, no one dared to say anything as they headed into the swirling teleportation formation.

**

"Given the signs around the Valley of Geniuses, it'll open in just a few days time." Violet started. "We should start by visiting Sapientia Corner. The faction doesn't have a lot of funds, but it should be enough to give each of us a couple of healing type pills that could be the difference between life and death."

They had just entered the 98th corner. However, there was a massive dome of fog projected in the distance that hadn't been there when Dyon came earlier. He suddenly realized that had he been just a few weeks later, he wouldn't have been able to enter the 98th quadrant at all because it would have been protected. If that happened, he would have never found out about Soul Market and those poor souls would continue to suffer.

He could only thank his luck that Lilith didn't take over the role of key wielder until after he had already joined Unseen Peak. Now, he should be able to come and go as he please, even with the fog barrier up.

"Is that Lady Violet I see?" A snide voice sounded off from the surroundings. When the members of the faction looked over, each of them had ugly expressions on their faces.

One had to know that according to the rules of the fog barrier, only those of Duke status and higher could allow those not from the 98th quadrant to enter. In the entirety of the 98th quadrant, aside from Kernick Caedes, the former Soul Rending Peak Legatee, there was only a single other Duke. This meant that now, there were only three individuals with this power. Kernick, Soul Rending Peak's second Legatee, a man Dyon had heard nothing about so far, and Lilith, who had these abilities not because she was a Duke, but because she was the key wielder.

The problem was that both Legatees had long surpassed 1000 years old, and thus lost the right to enter the tower long ago. That meant that there was currently no one here who could allow another in, which also meant that whoever it was that they had ugly expressions for, was actually a member of their own quadrant.

"Senior Brother Caedes, I have no deep relationship with you. It's best you not cross the line. I don't remember giving you the right to call my name so casually."

The relatively short Arthurian Caedes was actually the first ranked core disciple of Soul Rending Peak and son to the Caedes family grand elder. It was only now that Dyon understood a few things.

He had been under the impression that Arthurian was already around, if not having long since surpassed 1000 years old. But, since he was here, clearly that wasn't the case. But, Dyon knew that this was likely his last chance to climb to the celestial realm before being barred from entering the tower entirely. Since he was here, he would go all out...

Arthurian raised his hands up in mock surrender. "I just wanted to say hello," He continued, speaking with a cold smile. "We're fellow disciples, we should stick together. We wouldn't want anything untoward happening to such talented individuals, hm?"

No one missed the fact Arthurian gaze turned toward Dyon. After Dyon so publicly killed a member of their Caedes family, it would be more of a miracle than anything else if they actually chose to not retaliate.

However, seeing his gaze, Dyon only lightly smiled. What a joke, even Asyna suppressed to 70% could defeat this fool, let alone Dyon who had defeated her. On top of that, they were in the tower now. Dyon was completely unleashed.

Violet snorted. "If you even think about laying a hand on one of my own, I'll embarrass you even worse than I did last time."

Hearing these words, Arthurian's features twisted into an assortment of colors. Clearly the fact Violet lived in the first ranked core courtyard had next to nothing to do with the fact her father was the sect Master, but everything to do with her forcibly taking it away from Arthurian.

Dyon lightly chuckled. Although he wasn't a huge fan of Violet, he did appreciate this part of her personality. She maintained a grip on power, while still keeping a low profile. Despite her short comings, she had the makings of a leader and was definitely a woman who knew what she wanted. Intriguing indeed...

"Hmph." Violet turned, not bothering with Arthurian anymore. "Let's go."

Watching the faction disappear through the teleportation formation, Arthurians fists clutched to the point that blood dripped. He knew this was his last chance, if he didn't find a way to break through within two years, he'd forever be marred in mediocrity. He wouldn't allow such a thing to happen!

...

It wasn't long before the faction had entered the Sapientia Corner. After arriving, they split into their own various group, while Dyon, Violet, Wess and Luka headed toward the deeper regions to stock up for the faction as a whole.

For obvious reasons, the disciples of Soul Rending Peak couldn't afford much here, so the outer and inner disciples were forced to stay on the outskirts and try to find good deals here and there. Violet, however, was the sect Master's daughter. Her funds, as well as the funds of those from the Caedes family, couldn't be so easily dismissed. That said, she was also aware that she didn't have the capital to be a spend thrift, so they also had to look for good deals themselves.

The Sapientia Corner was a hub of activity. Aside from Central City, it was likely the busiest region of the tower, in fact, it was often busier than Central City.

The corner itself was rife with alchemists, formation experts and weapon's masters, and that didn't mention the myriad of other useful professions such as runic vein masters. It was essentially a miny reflection of the Sapientia Quadrant, the only difference being that the things bought here were regulated and created by apprentices of the saint realm.

Obviously, not everyone was like Dyon and Clara who had soul strength surpassing their energy and body cultivation, in fact, Clara's wouldn't if she didn't dual cultivate with Dyon. It could be said that Dyon was the only true soul cultivator who could achieve such a feat on his own.

All of this was to say that the products available here weren't top of the line. After all, even the best of geniuses here would only have saint level souls at the best. However, that didn't mean that they could create grandmaster level pills and weapons, most were still practioners, with the best being at the master level.

The reason for this was simple. The number of years of dedication that it took to ascend the ranks of any secondary profession were long and grueling, not to mention the fact that the trials for being officially recognized were even stricter. The strength of one's soul only represents the upper limit of what someone can accomplish, but doesn't necessarily mean that one can accomplish it.

In terms of number of grandmasters, there were only a maximum of three per profession on the saint floors, and they were all undisputed geniuses. Many of them were already hundreds of years old, with the youngest being dozens of years old at the least. Of course, Dyon was quite proud that his wife was among them, so he had no need to worry about affording pills on these floors.

Chapter 957: Help

Soon, the group of four made it to a culdesac of sorts, surrounded by seven identical towers, each with three floors. These towers were reserved for each one of the professions. Formation masters, alchemy master, beast masters, weapons masters, poison master, magic masters and runic vein masters.

The limit of Dyon's knowledge on the Sapientia Quadrant was what Clara had told him, so he was still quite surprised the poison masters had such high position in the martial world. Usually, even in the human world, those who specialized in poison would be seen as the scourge of society, but here they were, heads held as high as any of the other arrogant geniuses of second professions.

It wasn't that Dyon looked down on poison masters, after all, if it wasn't for the existence of their dao, he would have likely died in his second trial. He was just surprised. Maybe poison masters had a use he was ignorant of.

"Alright." Violet suddenly stopped the four of them before they entered the alchemy tower, making sure not to get in anyone's way. She was currently a farcry from the overbearing daughter of the sect Master. Every action she took was deliberate and filled with caution, clearly she didn't want to offend anybody. "Before we go in, you all should know that this is no longer our 98th quadrant," She continued in a small voice. "Follow me and only speak when you absolutely have to. Cool your heads and think about the bigger picture."

Wess and Luka nodded seriously, but Dyon only smiled a knowing smile before nodding lightly. There was no need for him to cause unnecessary trouble for Violet, after all, she had yet to truly act against him.

"Good. The tower is split into three floors, however, only Dukes and above can enter the second floor." Violet looked at Dyon with an expectant gaze. "We'll have to rely on you to buy a few pills on that floor, unfortunately, I'm still a Marquis."

"No problem." Dyon nodded.

This quick and easy response surprised Luka. He, much like everyone else he disliked Dyon for various reasons, assumed that he had made up his status as a Duke. In fact, even Violet was currently testing Dyon, which was why she hadn't said this any earlier despite them having had a meeting just a couple hours before. Clearly, she didn't want Dyon to find an excuse to disappear.

Violet smiled sweetly, confirming many things in her heart. "Alright. We'll start on the first floor and buy a batch of pills there first, then we'll buy a few on the second floor." She couldn't hide the faint excitement in her voice, she had never had the opportunity to step into Duke exclusive floors, this would be her first time.

...

The moment the four of them walked in, they were greeted by a beautiful host who gave them a quick tour of the first floor before allowing them to go off on their own.

Dyon wasn't too surprised by this good treatment. After all, those who came from truly powerful backgrounds would have next to no need to come to a place like this, they would either rely on their own family alchemists, or go directly to Sapientia Quadrant. Why would the rich and powerful rely on apprentices for their things? As a result, the hosts of these towers were used to dealing with those of lower status, so they didn't have any disdain that one might normally see when members of a mere 98th quadrant walked in.

Even if they were members of the 100th quadrant, they would be treated with respect because they were the main clientele of this tower. If they stopped coming because of poor treatment, the Sapientia Quadrant would lose out on a good source of income. Of course, Sapientia Corner was also aware that they were pretty much the only option for this demographic of individuals, so while they were polite, they weren't servile either.

"Hello, I'd like 1000 essence condensing pills." Violet brought them to the counter specializing in energy recovering and directly asked to buy a thousand.

The young man behind the counter wore azure robes with three bronze bands on each one of his sleeves. By the system set by the Sapientia family and the Head Alchemy Guild, this made him a 6th stage Practitioner of Alchemy.

After nodding lightly, the young man began to arrange the pills into various boxes before handing them over for Violet to store. The process was smooth and without issue.

With that completed, they then went to the healing pill counters and bought 1000 bone mending pills.

The reason why alchemists were so lauded was because of their ability to aid those even beyond their cultivation level. For example, a Practitioner, despite only needed the soul level of a meridian formation warrior, is capable of creating pills useful to essence gatherers. Both the essence condensing pills and bone mending pills were examples of this. In fact, depending on purity, they could have minor effects on saints as well.

This trend continued with master level experts as well, with them being capable of creating pills effective for saints, and so on and so forth. Therefore, no one dared to lightly disregard an alchemist just because of cultivation level.

"Alright, we can head to the second floor now," Violet said with a faint excitement.

Just as the group of four was about to head to the second floor, a large commotion erupted outside that caused them to frown. There weren't many people who dared to cause trouble here, so what could possibly be going on?

When Dyon looked around, he found it odd that the alchemists and hosts here were actually pretending as though they hadn't heard anything.

At first, the four of them had planned to ignore it as well, but that was when Violet heard a familiar voice.

"That's Virvor!" Violet frowned deeply.

She had gone to Virvor, much like Dyon, in order to ask him to join. However, he had rejected, stating that he preferred to be alone. Violet hadn't felt the same pull toward forcing him to join as she had with Dyon, so she simply let it go. After all, there was no guarantee that Virvor would pass the Inner disciple trials anyway. But, now that he was here, and clearly in trouble, it might be an opportunity to get him to join.

The problem was that Violet didn't want to start a commotion here, lest she offend someone she wasn't supposed to. Weighing the pros and cons, getting Virvor on her side might not be worth the trouble, especially if she couldn't fully control him in the future.

However, the next words that they all heard made this something Violet couldn't ignore, even if she wanted to.

"98th quadrant trash, I made it very clear to you that that piece you bought was something I had been eyeing! Hand it over and kneel here for three days and three nights, or else I'll cripple you where you stand!"

Dyon raised an eyebrow, looking over at Violet. "Do you recognize that voice?"

Violet nodded slowly. "He's a Duke from the 74th quadrant. I have no doubt that he purposefully made problems for Virvor..."

"I see..." Dyon turned and walked out of the tower before Violet could stop him. Even Luka's normally fiery personality was doused in water as Wess stood rooted in place.

As core disciples, they understood the fear for the 74th quadrant more than the younger disciples did. They had quite literally suffered bullying for centuries at their hands, completely unable to retaliate. The legacies and core teachings of a quadrant 24 ranks above their own was simply too much to overcome.

Even worse, among the weaker quadrants that made use of Sapientia Corner, the 74th quadrant was among the strongest. Quadrants ranked higher than 70 rarely came here, and when they did, it wasn't

usually to the alchemy tower, it was usually for other more niche things as they weren't in need of pills from apprentices.

For all intents and purposes, this made the 74th quadrant one of the rulers of the Sapientia Corner because very few weak enough to need this space could oppose them...

When Dyon walked out of the shop, there was already an accumulating crowd. Virvor stood at the center of the culdesac, facing this 74th quadrant Marquis with all of his escape routes cut off by who Dyon assumed were either more of the 74th quadrant lackies, or those of weaker quadrants looking to curry a favor.

Chapter 958: Hiding

"Hey, stop. This is Big Brother Rand's business. If you know what's good for you, you'll stay out of it." One of the lackies gripped Dyon's shoulder firmly, looking to severely injure him. However... he would soon be severely disappointed.

Dyon's fist blasted to his side, firmly connecting with his rib cage and causing him to keel over and violently belch out volumes of blood.

As though nothing had happened, Dyon found his way to Virvor's side before casually looking over this Rand character's stout figure.

"I didn't ask for any help." Virvor suddenly said.

"I didn't say that you did." Dyon responded with a shrug.

"Good. Good." Rand felt his fury building. Not only did this trash from the 98th quadrant dare to buy something he wanted, another had actually injured one of his men in front of him. "I'll tear you both limb from limb!"

The crowd had steadily grown to this point. By now, it was clear that those hosts and apprentices of the seven towers had no intention of stepping into these affairs. In all likelihood, as long as their stores weren't affected, they wouldn't care at all what happened.

"Now that you've gotten your petty pride out of the way, are you going to tell me what happened?" Dyon casually glanced at Virvor.

From the looks of it, no altercations had happened just yet because neither party was injured. In fact, Virvor didn't seem very nervous at all, despite facing up against a Duke.

It had to be said that Dukes were almost guaranteed to have Presence in some capacity. Even if it didn't completely incapacitate Virvor, it would definitely hamper his combat prowess. For Virvor to not be afraid, it was either that he was very good at hiding his emotions, or he was still confident.

Without his soul, Dyon had no way of knowing that Virvor had been hiding his cultivation for the longest time. So, he simply took Virvor's 10th stage essence gathering prowess at face value. What he didn't know was that the only reason Virvor's power was so that it wouldn't be possible to notice that he was suppressed in Cathedral Universe. But, now that he was in the tower without any intentions of ever going back, what would it matter if he showed off his real power? In fact, since he wasn't suppressed here, his worries about exposing himself were moot anyway.

"I bought a weapon from the flea market before I came here to buy some pills. However, long after I had left, that bastard shop keeper realized that he sold me a master level weapon for the price of a practitioner level one and felt cheated.

"Apparently, this shameless bastard also realized the shop keeper's mistake, it was just that he didn't have enough energy stones on him at the time."

Dyon chuckled lightly. "Such an arrogant Duke so far above us trashy members of the 98th quadrant doesn't have enough money on hand to buy a mere practitioner level weapon? Isn't that a bit too sad?"

Despite his stoic personality, Virvor's lips couldn't help but curl upward slightly. He had been excited beyond belief when he noticed the mistake of the shop keeper. After all, in the 98th quadrant, even their Legatees were only given practitioner level weapons at the most. Even a family like the Caedes family only had one such weapon of that level.

However, it was for this very reason that Rand was so angered at his missed opportunity. In their 74th quadrant, the reality wasn't too different, even the best quadrants only had a few master level weapons on hand. To get one so cheaply was something he could only dream of!

The problem was that practitioner level weapons weren't exactly cheap either, even well made common level weapons were worth more money than he could casually bring out. Despite being a Duke, and being of high status, weapons were simply too valuable!

A well forged weapon or piece of armor could take weeks to forge, depending on the level, even months or years weren't outside the realm of possibility. At the level that the apprentices were in Sapientia Corner, forging a master level weapon would take months of time. Maybe the only ones who could do it in days would be those grandmaster geniuses.

It was no wonder that Rand was green with regret. He had run back to his clan at the fastest speeds possible, all for failure. How could he allow such a loss?

So, after he came back, he went to the shopkeeper who was more than happy enough to tell him where Virvor had gone.

"Do you really believe that trash like you deserves such a weapon? I won't repeat myself again! Hand me the rod and kneel here for three days and nights! If you don't, you'll have to face the consequences."

Virvor's small smile disappeared, replaced by an incomparably serious expression. Although he wasn't scared, that didn't mean that he thought this would be an easy battle. Although he now had such a good weapon, he wasn't well versed in the art of the Bo. In fact, he had never used any weapons before. But, for the sake of such a good weapon, he had no qualms about learning. The problem was that learning in this setting was asking for death.

"If you handle the lackies, I can take care of this clown." Dyon said off-handedly.

"But —"

Dyon shrugged. He knew that Virvor had a lot of secrets that were probably better kept a secret, it was just that he didn't know what they were. But, a commoner, carrying around enough money to buy a practitioner level weapon? That was enough to raise eyebrows.

"Don't worry about it, his Presence won't affect me, but you haven't taken your trials yet."

When the crowd heard Dyon's words, their eyes widened slightly with shock. For the Presence of a Duke to not affect you, wouldn't that mean you had to be a Duke as well?... Since when did the 98th quadrant have a Duke young enough to enter the tower? What was going on?

"I won't join your faction because of this." Virvor suddenly said, but it was clear that he was still very grateful.

With a laugh, Dyon took a step forward. "You'll have to take that up with our fearless leader."

At this moment, Violet, Wess and Luka had just come out of the tower. But, clearly it was too late for them to stop much of anything.

...

"What right do you think you have to fight Duke Rand!?"

Eager to prove themselves, the weaklings that surround Rand like swarming flies stepped up one after another, using their larger numbers to fuel their guts.

However, before they could reach Dyon, they were blocked by Virvor. A moment later, Violet, Wess and Luka also stepped forward, pushing their way into the circle.

The crowd seemed to have a tacit agreement, easily backing up and allowing a near two hundred meter radius around them.

"What's going on?" Some late stragglers hopped into the mix, whispering to each other to figure out the details.

"It seems that Duke Rand wants a piece of equipment a disciple of the 98th quadrant bought, so he came to forcefully take it back."

Although the voices of those who explained were filled with pity and disgust, there was nothing they could do. Here, for all intents and purposes, the 74th quadrant was an overlord. It wasn't the first time they had done something like this...

Maybe the only time the 74th quadrant lowered their head was when those genius apprentices came to challenge one another. During those times, they didn't dare to be blatantly arrogant, lest they offend the wrong person. But, right now, there was no such event.

"Then who is that person facing off against Duke Rand alone?"

"We don't know. He proclaimed that Duke Rand's Presence wouldn't affect him, so he's likely a newly minted Duke himself. However, we don't know his name."

"That massive sword on his back is practitioner level weapon, if he can show it off so blatantly, maybe he really is strong?"

The murmurings of the crowd only caused Rand to become angrier. It wasn't that he, himself, couldn't see how much of a bastard he was being, but a master level weapon was far too greed-inducing. He couldn't give it up, even if people scorned him behind his back.

What was even worse was the fact that Dyon was casually glancing at the situation around him, checking to make sure that his fellow disciples weren't being overwhelmed by the numbers.

The good news was that, in order to keep his find a secret, Rand hadn't told any other more powerful members of the 74th quadrant, so despite being outnumbered 5 to 1, they were still barely holding on.

'This Violet girl still seems to be holding back... I wonder what she's hiding...'

Chapter 959: Disgust

Suddenly, the sound of a sword unsheathing caused Dyon to turn his attention back to Rand.

"I'll only give you one chance. Take out your weapon now, or else you won't know how you died!"

A sound that sounded like half a laugh and half a scoff escaped from Dyon's lips. "Against you? I don't need my weapon."

Surprising those around, Rand didn't get angry. Instead, he sneered, brandishing his double edged sword with two hands.

He crouched forward, pushing his sword forward. His body seemed to disappear, as though the tip of his sword was the only thing left on his person, as though it was the only thing left in this world.

Dyon nodded slightly. "Not bad." He could tell that Rand's attainments in sword will weren't shallow, but he had yet to break into the intent level. Some wills were simply harder to break through in compared to others, and the sword was especially difficult. In fact, weapon type wills in general were extremely difficult to progress despite not being supreme laws. It was for this reason that despite his overwhelming talent in all weapons, Dyon's Weapon's Master Supreme Law was still at the first will level.

Of course, that was also because Dyon had comprehended it with his life on the line and his soul was sealed soon afterward. However, that was only one way to look at it. The other way to look at it was that despite Dyon's overwhelming comprehension abilities, despite the fact he could learn death will to the intent level in just a few months, despite the fact his comprehension was vastly improved while his soul was burning, and despite the fact he was fighting with his life on the line, he still couldn't push past the level of a first will.

Just imagine that, a person with the soul strength nearing a half-step transcendent couldn't progress in a will even when given a few hours. What a joke! Any dao formation expert right now could randomly pick up a will they had never studied in their lives and learn it to the peak of the will level in moments. That was the level their comprehension reached.

That was the exact position Dyon was in. Although he had burned his soul to reach that level, it had still been there... Yet, none of that mattered in the face of the supreme law of weapons...

"Hmph." Rand snorted, not allowing Dyon's bland compliment affect him. "Knight's Honor. First Slash. Scorpion's Sting!"

A blinding flash of light erupted from Rand as his sword qi coalesced in pulses, growing into a massive sphere, then condensing into a sword tip, then repeating.

A moment later, his foot violently slammed into the ground, propelling him forward as speeds an essence gatherer couldn't match up to. It was clear he had earned his Duke title by grasping it in his own hands.

"Die!" Rand's Presence erupted, bearing down with ferocious vigor. Those who felt it almost couldn't control the impulse to kneel, yet they weren't the ones feeling the full brunt of it!

CLANG! CHIII!

Rand never got the chance to reach Dyon's unmoving form... Before he could, a celestial beauty appeared out of nowhere, forcefully pinching the tip of his sword, and snapping.

"How dare you fight here?!"

The culdesac fell into absolute silent. Not only was the voice of this beauty far too sweet, none of them had ever seen a woman so beautiful. However, what shook them to their absolute core was that this beauty wore silver robes with 12 total golden bands on them! This otherworldly beauty was actually a 12th stage grandmaster!

"Do you think this is your 74th quadrant?!"

"This..." Rand stuttered, unable to overlap the fairy-like beauty with the rage in her sky-blue eyes.

"This, what?" The beauty pressed forward. "Are you not aware of the rules of the Sapientia Corner? Do you not understand why the shopkeeper didn't dare to personally seek an explanation from him? Are you too stupid to comprehend?!"

"I..."

"Leave! You and that shopkeeper are banned indefinitely! If I see you here again, don't blame me for being impolite!"

Rand's face turned ashen white. Banned indefinitely? How would he buy his equipment? The Valley of Geniuses was just about to open too!

However, he didn't dare to say anything... This beauty was only a single step from entering the ranks of comet experts, yet she was so young. The number of clans willing to worship at her feet were innumerable! What did he, the pitiful Duke of a mere 74th quadrant have to say to such a woman? If he even dared to have any untoward thoughts, she would kill him where he stood, and his clan wouldn't dare to retaliate.

Rand clutched his fists, before glaring at Dyon hatefully and leaving.

From start to finish, Dyon was hardly paying attention to him at all, instead, his eyes were glued to the back-view of the beauty in front of him, scanning over her curves again and again.

When the beauty turned around and saw Dyon's gaze, there was a slight dissatisfaction in her eyes. However, Dyon only grinned. "You're quite beautiful, Grandmaster Clara. I've long since heard your esteemed name."

When Violet and the disciples of Soul Rending Peak heard this, along with the crowd, they felt like fainting from anger. This beauty had just gone out of her way to save you, yet now you want to harass her? Men really were scum.

The feeling was even worse for those of the 98th quadrant because they felt like they had just dodged a bullet, not Dyon was putting them right back in the line of fire. Although they all acknowledged that

Dyon was easily among the most handsome men they had ever seen, that wasn't enough to deserve the attention of a beauty. Clara was an Empress, Dyon was a Duke, the difference between them was too large!

Even the women who flipped social norms and built their own harems wouldn't add men too far below their station or else it would cheapen themselves. Just what was Dyon doing?!

Of course, none of them guessed that Dyon was the only man in the world Clara would allow to speak to her like this. Why wouldn't she allow her husband some advantages?

However, Clara was still Clara. Taking advantage of the fact that Dyon didn't want their identity as husband and wife to be exposed so soon, she smiled evilly. "What did you say?"

Dyon felt a bad premonition coming.

"Grandmaster, please forgive him for not knowing his place." Violet stepped forward and bowed in the place of Dyon.

Seeing a beauty step up to defend Dyon, Clara raised an eyebrow. Despite not being as beautiful as Clara, Violet was definitely a woman who deserved a second and a third look. "And what's your relationship with him?"

Hearing these words, Dyon broke out into a cold sweat. 'Please don't say anything stupid. Please don't say anything stupid.'

Violet, thinking that she had found a way out for Dyon leaped at it. "He's my boyfriend, he's always been too honest with his words and without sense of propriety, please forgive him."

"Your boyfriend you say, hm?" Clara looked over from Violet to Dyon who was trying to find anywhere but forward to place his eyes.

"Yes, please have pity." Violet said, bowing again.

"Alright. But, he still needs to be punished." Clara spoke slowly. "He'll be my assistant for one month, whether that be in forging or in combat. Any objections?"

Although Violet was feeling gloomy because they really needed Dyon's battle power for the coming days, she still nodded.

By this point, Dyon didn't even dare to speak anymore. When had he become Violet's boyfriend? Now he was Clara's assistant?

CLING!

Suddenly, a pair of cuffs appeared in Clara's hands and snapped onto Dyon's wrists without giving him a chance to retaliate. The speed was so quick that no one noticed until it was too late.

At that point, while the men around championed Dyon's bravery in flirting with Clara, even while in front of his own woman, they were also feeling pity, because everyone was clear on Clara's fiery personality. Whether or not Dyon survived this month was completely up in the air...

Dyon was then unceremoniously pulled away by Clara, already dreading the coming days. But, he still turned back and winked toward Virvor and them, trying to say that he'd be alright.

Luka's face twisted in disgust. "Fucking idiot! Provoking an Empress!" He was even angrier that Violet had given up her perceived innocence to protect him, yet he didn't seem grateful at all!

Chapter 960: Inescapable

Violet only sighed. Dyon was a wild one from the very beginning, there really was no controlling him. However, no one noticed the sly smile on her face as she turned back

'Let's see you dare to run away from me now. You forced me to see you naked, tainting my innocence. Now you've tainted it once again by forcing me to defend you. The fact you'll be punished is also a good thing, you'll learn that the best woman you can afford to be with in this life is me. You'll learn that you were lucky to not be killed this time around...'

In Violet's own world, she couldn't imagine a world where anyone who called themselves a man would dare to taint the innocence of a maiden twice, and still not take responsibility.

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It wasn't long before Clara had dragged Dyon to the weapon's master tower, ignoring the odd gazes they received, and up to the top floor. Her prestige here was so great that none of them dared to stop her.

After reaching the third floor, Clara stepped onto a formation that brought them to the off-limits fourth floor, a place reserved for apprentices, then directly went to the sixth floor, a place reserved for Grandmasters.

As soon as Clara stepped onto that floor, those there sensed it. There were only three total individuals with the rights to come here, so it was obvious that one of them coming here was a rare occurrence. However, when the other two learned that it was Clara dragging along what looked like a slave with her, they ignored it. They had once pursued Clara as well, but she had sliced them apart with her words one too many times, so they could only let it be.

With that, Clara dragged Dyon into her personal forgery, slamming the doors shut and activating all of its arrays before glaring at Dyon.

"Boyfriend?"

Dyon coughed lightly, "I have no idea what she was talking about."

"You expect me to believe that women just go around claiming boyfriends because they feel like it? What did you do to her?"

"Nothing!" Dyon felt aggrieved. "I was taking a dip in a stream and she peeped on me, I'm innocent!"

"Hmph." Clara rolled her eyes. Of course, she could tell that Dyon wasn't lying, their souls were connected after all.

"Are you going to undo these, my beautiful wife? You can't do this to your husband."

Clara waved her hand, unlocking to the two restraints.

"See, isn't it better like this?" Dyon wrapped a strong arm around Clara's waist, pulling her in tightly.
"These robes suit you."

Clara seemed to lose her strength, collapsing into Dyon's arms. "Did you find any clues about Soul Market?"

It was no surprise that Clara knew about Soul Market already, after all, Dyon spoke to his wives quite often with the use of her invention. The problem was that they were cut off from Madeleine now since the gates didn't have any reception towers for Clara to make use of.

"Not much," Dyon responded with a frown, "But, if I managed to resonate with a statue from the Valley of Geniuses, they might lose patience and forcibly take me away."

"They actually want to do something like that?" Clara's voice quivered with anger. "You can't use yourself for bait like that, it's too dangerous. For all we know, there are far more powerful individuals hidden within the Cathedral."

Dyon sighed. "I have no choice. I have a feeling that Soul Market will be closing down soon. If I don't save them before that happens, what do you think they'll do with ones they haven't used yet? It's no good."

"Fine. But if things start going badly, you need to run with the best of your abilities. It isn't your job to save everyone."

Lightly stroking Clara's cheek, Dyon bent slightly to kiss her cherry lips.

A slight and bone numbing moan escaped from Clara just as her small and soft tongue intertwined with Dyon's.

The husband and wife pair stood flush against each other, as though even a single centimeter of space was too much, completely losing themselves in pleasure.

It wasn't until Dyon snapped out of it, realizing there was no suitable place to take Clara right here and now that he calmed himself and pulled away, vowing that he'd take this little vixen another time.

"Come, show me how much your weapon's forging has improved." Dyon said with a slight teasing tone.

Clara snorted adorably. "You might have me beat in formations, but you've fallen behind me in alchemy and you'll never be my equal in weapon's forging. You can't just sit down and read your little books to understand weapon's forging."

Dyon laughed, but Clara was right. Dyon's comprehension abilities were so fierce that he could do what many only dreamed of. Simply by reading and inwardly comprehending, he could execute the things others needed years of practice to produce. However, this was an exceptionally difficult trend to continue with alchemy, and even more so for weapon's forging.

Simply put, if Dyon didn't practice, he would soon lose his ability to progress his secondary professions along with his soul strength.

"I'll show you the armor I created for the Demon Generals. They're still prototypes right now, but that's all I had time for. Creating 3000 sets of armor, especially in such high quality, in only 13 years... Clearly you were trying to kill me."

Although Clara said this, she had much less than 13 years. More than half of that time was spent in her trial worlds, while at least two were spent preparing the internet for mass usage. Dyon really had put too much pressure on his little wife.

But, at least now, the Demon Generals were well protected for their reveal to the world. Those Golden Crow Sect bastards would suffer a lot for sure.

Because of this, Dyon didn't hold back in showering his wife with praise, listening attentively as she walked him through all of her decisions and the difficulties she had faced. It was a refreshing time for the both of them.

"I just remembered something." Dyon suddenly said hours later. "I ran into a pair of twins that were truly too pitiful. I'm not entirely sure, but I think it might be a constitution sickness of some sort. While you were researching constitutions to pick your own, did you come across anything that might help them?"

Of course, Dyon was referring to Bella and Mia, the two sister nuns. If he could get them on his side, this whole Soul Market ordeal would go much smoother.

Clara frowned as she listened to Dyon's description of the twins. Even though she hadn't been there, she too couldn't help but feel pity.

Before she had begun to cultivate her soul, her looks were within the parameters of a mortal. Although she could be considered to be among the top percentage of female mortals, she still fell short when compared to Madeleine and Ri. It wasn't until after she stepped onto the path of cultivation and began to cleanse her impurities with the universe's energies that she managed to catch up to her two sister wives, and not until she awakened her constitutions that she firmly became their equal.

This was all to say that even a woman as unworried about the thoughts of others as Clara was deeply concerned over her appearance. Not for the sake of herself, or for the outside world, but she always wanted to look her best for Dyon, because she loved him. With this being true, how could she not feel pity for two women who had their appearances compromised like this?

Although the twins had use of their bewitching techniques, just how useful could such a thing be? They were only able to use it so easily in the 98th quadrant because everyone either had poor soul talent, or had crippled their soul talent.

What if they stepped into the outside world? Even if they became powerful enough, so powerful that their bewitching techniques worked on any and everyone, when the day came that they fell in love and chose the individual they would meld their souls with, no matter how powerful they were, they wouldn't be able to hide anything from that individual. The same way Clara could tell whether or not Dyon was telling the truth and see his true self, whoever their dao partners were would be able to do the same.

Of course, it was possible to have sex without taking this soul melding step. Only true partners for life would trust each other to take this final leap of faith together, it was for this very reason that Dyon called Clara, Ri, Madeleine and Amphorae his wives despite not having given them a ceremony or ring, why would they need such things if they had taken a step much more meaningful than that?

However, it was because this step was so important that anyone you chose not to take this step with couldn't be considered your true partner in life.

It was an inescapable of fate... They were truly too pitiful.