

The Witch 831

Chapter 831: Hecate's Jealousy?

According to the Everlasting Blood Mantra, reviving diluted yet powerful bloodlines was possible.

So long as the powerful bloodlines once existed within certain species, the user could locate them and strengthen them with the Everlasting Blood Mantra.

Even if only a single blood essence of that bloodline remained in the body, it was said that the Everlasting Blood Mantra could easily locate it.

In other words, even if the target was only some commonly found house rat, as long as it was a descendant of some rat god, the Everlasting Blood Mantra could pinpoint the source of its rat god bloodline and strengthen it in folds through the continuous blood refinement of its rat god blood essence.

Nevertheless, the Everlasting Blood Mantra was only most effective on beast bloodlines due to their inherent traits to record ancestral memories in their blood.

Honestly, the technique seemed far too powerful to be true.

After all, if Vaan could successfully cultivate it, he would be able to strengthen the Red Dragon Clan's Fire Dragon God Bloodline and not worry about depleting the reserve of the Fire Dragon God's blood essence.

"This technique seems a little too outrageous, does it not? If something like this was legit, it has to be the technique of some primordial god of blood..." Vaan commented.

In Pangea, the god term was loosely used to refer to any Rank 6 Divine Being. However, a True God was far more powerful than that; only a Rank 11 Divinity would be called a True God.

A primordial god normally referred to such a being or above.

"It indeed seems that way. However, my ancestors still obtained it from the Mysterious Primeval Secret Realm. So, there must be something special about it. Unfortunately, I have both failed to cultivate it and learn its secrets," Hecate said self-deprecatingly.

"Lady Hecate, you mentioned that the denizens of Chaos believed the Mysterious Primeval Secret Realm came from the very first era, the Primal Chaos Era?" Vaan mentioned.

"That's right, Sir Vaan," Hecate nodded.

"If the Everlasting Blood Mantra truly came from the Primal Chaos Era, could the heavenly laws of Chaos have changed since then, causing the technique to work no longer as intended?" Vaan guessed.

"I've also thought that might be the case, but I never really had the opportunity to verify its possibility until now. Honestly, I've also completely forgotten about it until very recently, Sir Vaan," Hecate smiled wryly.

There was a time when she studied the Everlasting Blood Mantra intensively in order to surpass the limitation of her soul.

However, she had already given up on it.

Furthermore, she was currently focused on the Nihilism Law. After all, its concept had already shown her the path to Rank 7.

As such, it was a bigger priority than the Everlasting Blood Mantra.

"Maybe it was destiny that led me to give the Everlasting Blood Mantra to you, Sir Vaan," Hecate casually said.

"Perhaps," Vaan uttered, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Shortly after storing all his gifts, he asked, "Are we conducting the contract ceremony now, Lady Hecate?"

Hecate immediately looked offended as she gasped, "Are you in such a hurry to get rid of me, Sir Vaan? I did say I would perform it after passing you the gifts, but it didn't have to be literally after."

"I came bearing such great gifts, but you won't even show me the least bit of hospitality? My, this saddens me quite a bit," Hecate said exaggeratedly.

Vaan smiled wryly, pointing out, "Even if I wish to show you my hospitality, I'm afraid there isn't much to show around here, Lady Hecate."

There was nothing but hard layers of rocks around them.

Maybe if they returned to the moon colony, he could at least treat her to some dry biscuits and clean water.

However, that would be the extent of it.

After all, only a small part of the moon colony was recently rebuilt, and it was still far from a luxury stay.

As such, how could it possibly match the standards of a Great Devil such as Hecate?

"Indeed, there aren't any fancy restaurants or cafes around here. Not even a single scenery or piece of entertainment. However, staying in this pure land is still far better than any developed city I know of," Hecate smiled before adding, "Moreover, I'm only asking to stick around for a bit."

"You see, I'm quite curious to watch how you bullied my Dreamcatchers, Sir Vaan. They don't even know how to greet me after seeing me anymore," Hecate sulked as she glanced in a particular direction.

In that instant, the space twisted before Seventh Dream and Ninth Dream emerged from their dream field, dropping to their knees.

"Mistress, we were wrong!" Seventh Dream and Ninth Dream pleaded guilty.

Evidently, they had been hiding in the area since Hecate arrived. No, they had been hiding in the area even before she arrived.

Nevertheless, Vaan already knew about their presence. Thus, he didn't pay them any mind.

"Whatever could you mean by bullying them, Lady Hecate? On the contrary, I think I've been treating them quite well, if I had to say so myself," Vaan smiled shamelessly before commenting, "It's strange, though. Is that a hint of jealousy in your tone I sense, Lady Hecate?"

"You must be imagining things, Sir Vaan," Hecate coolly played before turning to her Dreamcatchers. "You three, line up here right now."

"Y-Yes, Mistress!" the three Dreamcatchers quickly answered.

Even Fourth Dream was no exception. She joined up with Seventh Dream and Ninth Dream despite feeling great fear in facing her mistress. None of them dared to make eye contact due to their guilt.

Fourth Dream felt even greater pressure when Hecate gave everyone a sweeping hard look.

"Looks like you have all made improvements in your cultivation," Hecate nodded with approval before asking, "So, who wants to return to Dreamdust Territory?"

"..."

Surprisingly, all three Dreamcatchers hesitated to answer. Although they missed their home, they were reluctant to return so soon.

"What is this? Feeling reluctant to return already?" Hecate slyly smiled, mentioning, "I still remember how unwilling you all looked when I instructed you three to stay behind."

The three Dreamcatchers immediately felt ashamed. Indeed, they couldn't deny it, even though they were afraid to admit it.

"Are you seeing this, Sir Vaan? If you hadn't bullied them, how could they not dare to even look me in the eye?" Hecate mentioned.

Chapter 832: Shameless Exhibitionist

Vaan was suddenly amused.

Although they both knew exactly why the three Dreamcatchers were behaving as such, Hecate wasn't willing to admit defeat and stubbornly claimed he bullied them.

"I am seeing, alright. However, I don't believe we are seeing the same thing, Lady Hecate," Vaan softly chuckled before cheekily saying, "To me, it looks like you are the one bullying them since you have just lectured them."

"But let's say I did bully them, Lady Hecate? What will you do after knowing that? Do you wish to be bullied, too?" Vaan asked roguishly.

The three Dreamcatchers couldn't help but gasp in shock at his boldness immediately.

Who did he think he was talking to?

Nevertheless, Hecate did not appear offended. On the contrary, her heart slightly shook with embarrassment. Even so, she maintained her composure on the surface.

Hecate's nose twitched before she looked away.

"It seems I am no match for your shamelessness, Sir Vaan. That's a direction I'm unwilling to accompany you down. So, I will concede defeat in that regard," Hecate coolly stated.

At the same time, she felt confused. She suddenly wasn't sure what she was aiming for in their conversation.

Maybe she wasn't even aiming for anything? Or perhaps she was just expecting a little something back for everything she had given? She wasn't actually feeling envious and just wanted to express it, did she?

Hecate wasn't sure what she was feeling and suddenly felt lost.

"Let's be honest, Lady Hecate," Vaan chuckled and said, "You already knew what you were exposing them to when you decided to leave them with me. Thus, you shouldn't be feeling salty about a decision you made, don't you think?"

When Vaan said this, it wasn't for Hecate to hear but for Fourth Dream, who felt conflicted over what happened between them.

"That's true," Hecate thoughtlessly acknowledged with a nod before saying, "However, I still feel like I've suffered a big loss."

"Is that so?" Vaan smiled slightly before shamelessly saying, "Unfortunately, I am poor, so I'm afraid I don't have much to make up for your loss. However, feel free to stay and use this pure land anytime you wish, Lady Hecate."

"That is what you said, Sir Vaan. You can't go back on your word, alright?" Hecate replied with a bright smile.

"I am a man of my word, Lady Hecate," Vaan smiled back wryly.

Was that what Hecate was after? His verbal consent to her using the subterranean region of pure mana? Did he misread her intention?

Vaan started to doubt.

Nevertheless, shortly after shaking his head, Vaan said, "If there's nothing else, I'll take my leave and not take up any more of your precious time to enjoy this pure land, Lady Hecate."

"Where are you going, Sir Vaan?" Hecate casually inquired.

"To cultivate this Everlasting Blood Mantra in a suitable place, of course. I can't exactly do that here, can I?" Vaan replied.

Since he had already been told that Hecate failed to cultivate the Everlasting Blood Mantra during her time studying it, he figured it was because the conditions weren't right.

If he guessed correctly, he had to cultivate the Everlasting Blood Mantra in a world with heavenly laws similar to the world of the Primal Chaos Era—Before Chaos was formed.

In other words, he just had to go to a world that had yet to be part of Chaos.

Although he couldn't be certain that he would successfully cultivate the Everlasting Blood Mantra, he figured making the attempt in his original world would still give him a higher chance than in the subterranean region, which was part of Chaos.

"I see... I wish you the best of luck, Sir Vaan," Hecate sincerely prayed.

She had a strong urge to follow him and observe his attempt at cultivating the Everlasting Blood Mantra.

However, she knew better than to disturb someone cultivating.

"Thank you, Lady Hecate," Vaan nodded.

Shortly after Vaan left for the dimensional crack and returned to the side of the moon colony, Hecate calmly shook her head.

She suddenly recalled that Vaan did not ask her about the hundred types of blood in the blood bottle she gave him.

Did he trust her that much?

Nevertheless, she hoped he wouldn't be too disappointed in the quality of the blood essences she provided.

After all, the Everlasting Blood Mantra did not have any demands on the quality of the blood essences; they only needed to be from different types of beings, ideally beasts.

"Fourth Dream," Hecate suddenly uttered.

"Y-Yes, Mistress?" Fourth Dream nervously answered after a moment of fright. She felt like she was about to receive her death sentence.

However, Hecate softly said, "You can relax. I don't understand why you are all so afraid of me. It's not like any of you did something wrong, right?"

"..."

The three Dreamcatchers did not know how to answer their mistress. However, they did feel fortunate that they were facing her good side and not her bad side.

Hecate sighed before saying, "I left you three with Sir Vaan so you would encounter opportunities while following him. On that note, none of you have disappointed me."

"You three have reached the eighth stage of the Divine Dream Realm in such a short time. That is something worth celebrating and to be proud of. So, why do you all look guilty?"

"Ask yourself, have you really done something wrong? If you truly believe so, now is the chance to confess," Hecate calmly stated.

After a moment of silence, Ninth Dream hesitantly confessed, "Mistress, I have been peeking at Sir Vaan doing the nasties with several women..."

"And what is wrong with that?" Hecate calmly asked.

"Err... Pardon?"

Ninth Dream felt her mind short-circuited. She didn't expect her mistress to be so nonchalant about it.

"I saw something I wasn't meant to see...?" Ninth Dream answered unconfidently.

"Something you weren't meant to see, huh?" Hecate smiled amusedly and asked, "And what exactly weren't you meant to see, Ninth Dream? I sent you three to protect Sir Vaan. You three knew that. Sir Vaan also knew that."

"Thus, whatever Sir Vaan did with his women, he should have expected you three to see it as well. So, if anything, it's not that you saw something you weren't meant to see but Sir Vaan being a shameless exhibitionist."

"Let me ask you something – Did Sir Vaan strictly tell you not to spy on his private business with his women but you did it anyway?" Hecate asked.

Ninth Dream opened her mouth, but no words came out. She was unable to refute and even felt speechless. She realized her mistress had made a very reasonable point.

It even made her feel dumb for thinking she had done wrong.

Chapter 833: Frigid Heart

When Ninth Dream also recalled that Sir Vaan could see through their invisibility, she realized he had been teasing them by taking advantage of their innocence and naivety.

As their mistress said, Sir Vaan did bully them.

It was no wonder he could accurately guess when they were playing cards in their dream field.

Ninth Dream and Seventh Dream couldn't help but feel their faces turning red-hot with shame and embarrassment when they thought about Sir Vaan watching them pruning their flower gardens.

They felt so overwhelmed by the revelation, but they couldn't even get angry at Sir Vaan for it.

After all, he wouldn't have seen their flower gardens if they had not acted shamefully in the first place.

"Sir Vaan, he..." Ninth Dream covered her red face and said resentfully yet coyly, "He is so bad~!"

"No, he is a bad scoundrel!" Seventh Dream corrected her statement, feeling similarly abashed.

Meanwhile, Fourth Dream had a dumbfounded look.

After seeing her mistress's perspective, her greatest fear quickly disappeared. However, in its place came many questions and doubts related to her own heart.

She had lost her innocence to Sir Vaan.

Although she didn't feel regretful over what happened, she still felt a sense of loss. After all, she wasn't sure what she was to Sir Vaan and where she stood between him and her mistress.

At the same time, she didn't understand her mistress's intention either.

"Mistress, there's something I don't understand. If you knew what you were getting us into, why did you still push us to Sir Vaan's side?" Fourth Dream asked doubtfully.

When Seventh Dream and Ninth Dream heard that question, they also perked their ears to listen. After all, it was a very good question.

Did their mistress want them to be bullied by a big bad wolf from the start?

Nevertheless, in the face of that question, Hecate calmly smiled before saying, "Before that, why don't you three answer my question first? Why don't you three want to return to the Dreamdust Territory with me yet?"

The three Dreamcatchers immediately fell silent.

In their hearts, they also asked themselves the same question – Why didn't they want to return yet?

At first, they truly wished to return to the comfort of their home. However, after several days following Sir Vaan, they were indeed feeling reluctant to leave so soon.

Furthermore, it wasn't because they grew fond of Sir Vaan or anything.

Instead, it was because there always seemed to be something exciting or new for them to learn around Sir Vaan. Their hearts had never experienced so many chaotic storms of emotions when they spent their days back in the Dreamdust Territory.

Maybe the thrills drew them to stay. Of course, the pure land was another big reason.

Nevertheless, Hecate didn't wait too long for the Dreamcatchers to answer before she provided one for them.

"You are reluctant to leave because it has been fun, has it not? Being around Sir Vaan is quite exciting compared to the dull life you have all been living up until now. Can any of you say with certainty that this wasn't the case?" Hecate confidently asked.

"No... You are right, Mistress," Seventh Dream acknowledged before saying, "Although it had been embarrassing and shameful most of the time, it has truly been fun."

"Are we actually masochists for feeling this way...?" Seventh Dream doubted shortly after.

"Not at all," Hecate calmly shook her head before explaining, "You are experiencing the long overdue feelings of living, and there is nothing wrong with wanting to live with more vibrant colors. After all, we are living beings, not puppets with stone hearts."

"However, due to the place where we mostly cultivate our dream power, we are subjected to the development of the Frigid Heart, which dulls our emotions and suppresses our feelings."

"I have practically raised all of you and see you as my children. That's why I had hoped that by pushing you three to Sir Vaan's side, you could all become more normal children and not heartless puppets who only know how to do my bidding," Hecate stated.

"Mistress..." The three Dreamcatchers immediately felt touched by Hecate's words.

Little did they know that while Hecate's words were mostly true, she did not mention she had an ulterior motive for doing so as well. In truth, she was also using them to tie Vaan to her side.

Alas, her honeytrap plan would have backfired if she did feel jealous over it.

...

...

...

Meanwhile, in the sea of stars, several hundred kilometers away from the moon, Vaan prepared to cultivate the Everlasting Blood Mantra in the void of space, away from the influence of Chaos and its mana.

He couldn't help but possess a sense of expectation.

After all, cultivating the Everlasting Blood Mantra would grant him stronger regenerative abilities. If it could augment his bloodline's existing power of regeneration, it would increase his survivability.

...

The Everlasting Blood Mantra was divided into six stages.

The First Stage of Regeneration required ten origin blood, the Second Stage of Rejuvenation required a hundred origin blood, the Third Stage of Reparation required a thousand origin blood, the Fourth Stage of Regrowth required ten thousand origin blood, the Fifth Stage of Revival required a hundred thousand origin blood, and finally, the Sixth Stage of Everlasting required one million origin blood.

Refining a single type of blood essence according to the Everlasting Blood Mantra would create a single origin blood. Thus, he needed the blood essence of one million different species to achieve complete mastery.

Even if Vaan scoured the entire planet of Pangea, he wasn't confident if he would even reach ten thousand origin blood on his own.

After all, if a Blue Rabbit, Red Rabbit, and Black Rabbit alone could already give him three origin blood, then reaching one million origin blood didn't seem too difficult.

However, how could the ancient technique of a primordial god be so easy to master?

It was more likely that the different species of rabbit share the same ancestry. In that case, Vaan would only acquire the same origin blood multiple times.

He realized the Everlasting Blood Mantra was lacking in some areas of its details.

Nevertheless, all answers will be revealed to him once he starts cultivating the technique.

'I should be able to reach the second stage of Rejuvenation with this bottle of blood essence, right?'
Vaan mused.

Chapter 834: Five Elements

Nevertheless, before Vaan could even cultivate the Everlasting Blood Mantra, he had already realized the first problem – How could he refine blood essence into origin blood if he couldn't even manipulate the blood?

The Everlasting Blood Mantra explained the 'how' of refining blood essence into origin blood but not the 'what' of refining.

'Is comprehending the Blood Law an unstated prerequisite to cultivating the Everlasting Blood Mantra?' Vaan frowned in wonder.

However, he felt like there was a problem with this line of thought.

After all, it was like saying that in order to learn how to become a blood immortal, one had to be a blood immortal already.

'Maybe the Everlasting Blood Mantra is only suitable for a certain Blood Race?' Vaan guessed.

However, he quickly scratched the idea.

After all, Hecate had already told him she had given up because it was a broken technique for her.

In other words, she failed to produce any desirable result, as recorded in the Everlasting Blood Mantra. Even if she wasn't compatible with the technique, she should have been able to refine the origin blood.

However, since that wasn't the case, suitability wasn't the issue but something else.

Vaan couldn't control blood, but he could control pure mana. Thus, he could try using pure mana to manipulate the blood essence and refine it into origin blood.

However, this alternative method was also problematic since the pure mana came from Chaos. It might not produce the desired result recorded in the Everlasting Blood Mantra.

Furthermore, Hecate must have already tried using mana to guide the refinement of blood essence into origin blood.

Nevertheless, Vaan decided to give it a test run since Hecate didn't use pure mana. It might discover a different result.

Ding!

<You have successfully increased the blood potency of the Snow Tiger Blood Essence>

<Low-rank Snow Tiger Blood Essence has become Mid-rank Snow Tiger Blood Essence>

...

After Vaan withdrew a drop of blood essence from the blood bottle and refined it with pure mana, he received a positive result.

However, it wasn't the desired result – Blood essence didn't turn into origin blood.

'Well, that was to be expected...' Vaan thought.

He had already predicted the same result in his mind. The practical experiment only confirmed it.

Since that was the case, he decided to review what he knew.

'If the Everlasting Blood Mantra came from the Primal Chaos Era, where Chaos and mana had yet to exist, the primordial beings of that time must have relied on another source of energy to refine the blood essence...'

'Something more primitive but natural...'

After a little bit of thinking, Vaan was quickly enlightened to the answer. The truth had been quite simple from the start.

However, it had been buried by circumstances.

Most denizens of Chaos probably wouldn't know of its existence since the overabundance of mana had replaced it.

On the other hand, every living being on Pangea was stripped of it by an unknown force.

'Spirit energy...'

Suddenly, Vaan couldn't help but feel amused. Hecate had dismissed the value of divine energy. Yet, little did she know that it was required to cultivate the Everlasting Blood Mantra that she failed to study.

Despite her great wisdom, such a simple truth had completely eluded her eyes for so many years because she was a denizen of Chaos.

Even he would have missed the answer had he not been enlightened to some knowledge about the Divine Realm.

'I don't have spirit energy, but I do have a lot of divine energy, its higher form... However, I still need some foundation in energy cultivation before I can officially start cultivating the Everlasting Blood Mantra...'

'But while I do know the True Divinity-rank energy cultivation method of an Empyrean God, it's not really suitable for me...' Vaan frowned.

Empyrean Scarletsea's True Divinity-rank energy cultivation method was too heavily aligned with the fire element.

On the other hand, his past lives were that of a Heavenly God of Space and the Lord of the Boundless Seas and Skies. Furthermore, he had also dabbled in fire and earth in his present life.

In other words, he had a connection to all five elements. He had messed around with too many elements to be singularly devoted to fire.

Fortunately, the element specialization aspect of energy cultivation wasn't a concern until after the fourth realm of energy cultivation, the Heaven Ascension Realm.

'The Energy Gathering Realm, Spirit Condensation Realm, Revolving Core Realm, and Heaven Ascension Realm are mainly about accumulating spirit energy and transforming them through the three states of gas, liquid, and solid.'

'If I refine divine energy, I will most likely reach Heaven Ascension Realm extremely quickly... That should be more than enough spiritual control to cultivate the Everlasting Blood Mantra...'

'As for what comes after the Heaven Ascension Realm, I may have to devise my own energy cultivation method if I can't find a suitable one within a year...' Vaan decided.

The fifth realm of the energy cultivation system, the Truth Manifestation Realm, was special because it was the first aspect of element specialization. It was also the most important realm in energy cultivation.

After all, a cultivator's entire future was centered around the type of elements they comprehended during Truth Manifestation.

Suppose their comprehension was too poor to comprehend any laws. In that case, they may not even be able to set foot into the Truth Manifestation Realm.

The relationship between the heavenly laws and Truth Manifestation was like water and a plant seed. Without any watering, the plant seed would not have much hope of germinating.

Should Heaven Ascension Realm cultivators fail to enter Truth Manifestation, their only hope of continuing cultivation would be to shatter their core and enter the Void Realm.

Although Truth Manifestation and Void cultivators could both enter the Divine Realm, the difference between their power and lifespan would be like heaven and earth.

Of course, Vaan was completely confident in entering the Truth Manifestation Realm. However, there was still a difference in how perfectly it could be done.

Ding!

<Rich amounts of divine energy detected>

<Would you like to open the Lower Dantian and initiate energy cultivation?>

...

Shortly after Vaan took out a divine energy crystal from his Heaven-Swallowing Space, the system prompted him.

'Yes!'

Chapter 835: One Step to Heaven

Ding!

<Divine energy (gas state) has been extracted from the divine energy crystal>

<Channeling divine energy through the designated pathways>

<Repeating circulation of divine energy...>

<Repeating circulation of...>

...

Ding!

<Divine energy has been refined>

<Channeling refined energy to the Lower Dantian>

...

Ding!

<The energy pathway has been obstructed>

<The refined energy has unblocked the obstruction and opened the Lower Dantian>

<The refined energy is filling up your Lower Dantian>

<You have entered the Energy Gathering Realm>

<You have entered the middle stage of the Energy Gathering Realm>

<You have entered the late stage of the Energy Gathering Realm>

<You have entered the peak stage of the Energy Gathering Realm>

...

Ding!

<Accumulated refined energy has fully condensed>

<You have entered the Spirit Condensation Realm>

...

As Vaan absorbed the divine energy crystals and circulated them through his body in sync with the system, his refinement speed doubled. At the same time, his energy cultivation quickly soared at a speed that would only make energy cultivators turn green with envy.

After all, while the system had shown a gradual process, he did not even stay in the Energy Gathering Realm for three breaths before advancing to the next realm.

Due to his already sturdy body, he had practically skipped the first realm of energy cultivation.

Nevertheless, it didn't end there.

Shortly after entering the Spirit Condensation Realm, his cultivation continued to soar to the next realm with seemingly endless momentum. Within a few minutes, the gate of the Revolving Core Realm was forced open.

The accumulated energy in his Lower Dantian had regained its original solid state.

Although it seemed like a pointless process since he transformed solid divine energy into gas, only to turn it back into a solid state again, the Revolving Core in his Lower Dantian was completely different from the original divine energy crystal.

After all, the Revolving Core completely belonged to him.

On the other hand, the divine energy crystal belonged to someone else from the past. Even if it entered his body as it was, he would hardly have any control over it. That was why it had to be broken down and refined.

In the process of circulating the divine energy throughout his body, he was wiping out its residual will and replacing it with his own.

Only energy with his will was his to control freely.

Nevertheless, the divine energy crystal in Vaan's hand was quickly depleted within minutes. All of its divine energy was absorbed, refined, and assimilated with his Revolving Core.

Vaan took out the next piece of divine energy crystal from his Heaven-Swallowing Space and continued to cultivate.

The middle stage of the Revolving Core Realm...

The late stage of the Revolving Core Realm...

The peak stage of the Revolving Core Realm...

It took an instant to enter the Energy Gathering Realm, several breaths to enter the Spirit Condensation Realm, and several minutes to enter the Revolving Core Realm.

However, entering the Heaven Ascension Realm took Vaan more than an hour.

Although it was much slower than the earlier realms of energy cultivation, Vaan had no complaints about the speed.

After all, according to some of the fragmented memories of his past life, most cultivators from desolate realms would spend at least a decade in the Energy Gathering Realm, two decades in the Spirit Condensation Realm, and half a century in the Revolving Core Realm.

As for the Heaven Ascension Realm, many cultivators from these desolate realms would take at least a hundred years to reach it.

Of course, the main problem for their slow progress was the scarcity of spirit energy in their desolate realms.

However, even in the higher realms, reaching the Heaven Ascension Realm in one hour was very rare. No doubt, Vaan had the system, his powerful bloodline, and overwhelming talents to thank for such an achievement.

After reaching the early stage of Heaven Ascension Realm, Vaan ended his cultivation and shifted his attention back to the Everlasting Blood Mantra.

Perhaps due to the fragmented memories of his past life, he felt rather familiar with his energy cultivation. Thus, it didn't take him much time and effort to gain complete control of his energy.

'This should do...' Vaan thought after several energy circulations.

Ding!

<You are re-attempting to refine the Snow Tiger Blood Essence with the Everlasting Blood Mantra>

<A latent power is emerging from within the Snow Tiger Blood Essence>

...

Ding!

<You have successfully refined a drop of Snow Tiger Origin Blood>

<You have successfully refined a drop of Snow Tiger Origin Blood>

<You have successfully refined a drop of Snow Tiger Devil Origin Blood>

...

Ding!

<You have learned the secret of the Snow Tiger's ancestral bloodline, the Snow Tiger Devil Bloodline>

<You have learned how to strengthen the Snow Tiger Devil Bloodline of the Snow Tiger Demon Race>

...

Ding!

<You have assimilated the Snow Tiger Origin Blood>

<The Snow Tiger Origin Blood has been replaced by the Snow Tiger Devil Origin Blood>

<Your body has been slightly strengthened by the Snow Tiger Devil Origin Blood>

<You have achieved initial success in the Everlasting Blood Mantra>

...

After successfully refining his first origin blood, Vaan had no doubt the Everlasting Blood Mantra was a supplementary technique for energy cultivation.

However, Vaan didn't expect the first type of blood essence he drew from the blood bottle to possess a strong ancestral bloodline.

He thought the bottle of a hundred different blood essences collected was something Hecate had done casually on short notice.

Was that not the case? Or was it just a coincidence?

Nevertheless, Vaan didn't look into it too deeply. He continued to cultivate the Everlasting Blood Mantra with the remaining blood essence in the bottle.

Ding!

<You have assimilated the Demon Deer Origin Blood>

<You have assimilated the Wind Leopard Origin Blood>

<You have assimilated the Ice Phoenix God Origin Blood>

<You have assimilated the Frost Giant Origin Blood>

<You have assimilated the Snow Harpy Origin Blood>

<You have assimilated the Dark Fae God Origin Blood>

...

...

Ding!

<You have assimilated ten types of origin blood>

<You have reached the Everlasting Blood Mantra's first stage of regeneration>

<Peak-rank Regeneration has been slightly strengthened>

...

'Dark Fae God Bloodline...?' Vaan was surprised.

Chapter 836: Ancestral Bloodline

After multiple god and devil bloodlines appeared during Vaan's blood essence refinement, he realized Gehenna had a more extraordinarily long history than he initially believed.

It was hard to imagine how many gods and devils once dominated the realm before becoming a part of history.

Was there still any surviving inheritance from that era waiting to be claimed?

Nevertheless, out of the ten types of blood essence he had refined so far, he was undoubtedly surprised by the Dark Fae God Bloodline the most.

It had triggered another piece of knowledge from his fragmented past life memories to surface.

According to Varuna's memories, the Dark Fae God Clan was part of the Twelve Guardian Clans that ruled over Chaos. The power and influence of the Twelve Guardian Clans were only below that of the Lord of Chaos and the Lord of the Boundless Seas and Skies.

As such, one could easily understand how astonishing it was to find the Dark Fae God Bloodline among the blood essences within the blood bottle provided by Hecate.

More importantly, where did she acquire the Dark Fae Blood Essence?

Vaan immediately suspected Hecate's background once more. He had a strong feeling the Dark Fae Blood Essence and Dark Fae God Bloodline came from her.

After all, there was little difference between the Dark Fairy Clan and the Dark Fae Clan. They were arguably identical and hard to differentiate. Anyone could mistake a Dark Fae for a Dark Fairy and vice-versa.

The only real difference was the length of their history.

Gehenna's Dark Fairy Clan could only be considered a newborn compared to an ancient behemoth like the Dark Fae God Clan.

Nevertheless, there was something Vaan didn't quite understand immediately.

The Guardian Clans were all blessed by the supreme bloodline of their ancestors. Every member born within these clans would be like heaven's chosen compared to the rest of the denizens in Chaos.

They should be blessed with peerless talents and endless resources. Even if one of their members were born with mediocre talents, they would be reformed with the resources and strength of the Guardian Clan.

As such, Hecate shouldn't be stuck at Peak Rank 6 Divine Being, even if she was only part of a tiny branch family of the Dark Fae God Clan.

But then again, Vaan couldn't be certain.

After all, each Guardian Clan ruled an entire chaosverse to themselves, and their people could be as numerous as the sea of stars in Chaos.

'Was Lady Hecate's branch family expelled from the Dark Fae God Clan due to some past sin of her ancestors?' Vaan guessed.

Nevertheless, he could only leave Hecate's private matter for another time. It wasn't right for him to pry if she wasn't willing to open up about it.

Shortly after pushing his distracting thoughts to the side, Vaan focused on cultivating the Everlasting Blood Mantra.

If there was no issue with the blood essence, reaching the second stage of rejuvenation should be expected. At this stage, his regeneration would become even stronger, and his youthful appearance would be longer lasting.

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Gehenna, Outer Boundary

At the edge of the star realm, an inconspicuous black starship shuttled through a small asteroid field as it left the star realm behind, eventually disappearing into the depths of the dark-reddish void.

Helcan thought he was being discreet by avoiding the use of teleportation arrays and star gates.

However, little did he know Mephistopheles had seen him leaving.

Minutes after Helcan's black starship disappeared for another star realm, Mephistopheles emerged from the dark side of a U-shaped asteroid.

He silently glanced in the direction of Helcan's departure before shaking his head.

"Helcan, oh, Helcan... Your intentions are so obvious. Who are you trying to fool?" Mephistopheles muttered with amusement.

Helcan had taken off in the direction of the Great Divider.

The Great Divider was an incomparably vast void region that drew the boundary of their chaosverse and the next. There was nothing there except space junk and debris left behind by ancient wars.

Although anything of value from it would have been taken away long ago, it was still frequented by scavengers and pirates who wanted to try their luck.

It was a lawless place of little value—something a Great Devil such as Helcan would find hard to develop a sudden interest in. In other words, the Great Divider wasn't his final destination.

Setting the Great Divider as a destination was only meant to serve as a distraction to throw people off in case his secret trip was discovered.

His real destination should be elsewhere.

"Who uses a starship for stellar travels these days when we have teleportation arrays and star gates? Old Mate is clearly up to no good," Mephistopheles commented before squinting his eyes in thought.

However, he couldn't quite figure out where Helcan was ultimately heading.

Suddenly, he pinched his fingers together and used them to issue a soundless whistle to the small asteroid field nearby.

At first, nothing seemed to happen, even after several dozen breaths.

However, two dozen figures clad in darkness soon emerged from the dark shadows on the U-shaped asteroid.

"You summoned us, My Liege?" one of the dark figures asked.

"Great Devil Helcan has left for the Great Divider on a black starship. Track him and report his movements back to me periodically," Mephistopheles commanded with a rare look of seriousness.

"Yes, My Liege!" the two dozen dark figures answered simultaneously.

Shortly after, the two dozen dark figures sank back into the shadows and erased all traces of their presence. It was unknown whether they were still hiding in the area or truly gone.

The illusive Dark Elf Tribe was generally good at that stuff, and Mephistopheles was lucky to have been able to chance upon them in his territory and employ their service.

"I guess I should also pay Lord Thanatos a visit..." Mephistopheles thought.

Sometime later, Mephistopheles arrived at the edge of the Shadowcage Territory's Sea of Darkness and announced his visit.

"..."

Silence greeted Mephistopheles after he made sure his arrival was known and heard.

"Lord Thanatos, Mephistopheles seeks an audience!" Mephistopheles repeated loudly, feeling a little impatient and displeased.

A long sigh was shortly heard from the floating abode above the Sea of Darkness.

"Two visits in one day. Today must be my unlucky day. What do you want, Meph?" Thanatos asked impatiently without inviting him inside his floating abode.

Chapter 837: Unexpected Visitor

Mephistopheles's lips twitched upon hearing his undesirable nickname. However, he quickly ignored it as Thanatos's words caught his attention.

"Lord Thanatos, did Helcan pay you a visit earlier?" Mephistopheles inquired.

"Since you already know, why bother asking? Are you trying to waste my precious time, Mm?" Thanatos replied.

Mephistopheles's expression immediately turned somber.

Just when Mephistopheles thought his name couldn't get any shorter, Thanatos found a way to exceed his expectations. Moreover, it even made Meph sound like a nice name.

After all, at least Meph sounded like a pet name.

As for Mm, what the hell was even that? An expression of disinterest or annoyance? Could his name fall any lower than that?

It had already dropped to the bottom of the abyss.

Mephistopheles hyperventilated as he wanted to protest. However, he forcefully suppressed his frustration with a deep breath and calmed down, albeit slightly.

"Helcan just left Gehenna and took off in the direction of the Great Divider. Are you aware of that, Lord Thanatos?"

"Mm..."

"..."

"Is that all you wanted to ask?"

"Well, yeah, kinda..."

"Zzz..."

"...Mother fuc—"

"Mm?"

"...I'll take my leave now, Lord Thanatos."

Shortly after their brief exchange, Mephistopheles quickly departed with a darkened expression. He feared that if he stayed any longer, he would either be angered to death or angered into cursing, then get beaten to death for it.

"My apologies... Too much death energy makes me sleepy..." Thanatos's half-hearted apology sounded as Mephistopheles was leaving.

'Bullshit!' Mephistopheles cursed in his mind without turning back.

He was wrong for expecting something out of Thanatos.

After all, Thanatos was most likely the laziest Realm Lord in the history of Gehenna—No, in all of Chaos. He only knew how to sleep all year round and never personally dealt with any problems.

Nevertheless, as dissatisfied as he was, Mephistopheles thought his trip wasn't exactly wasted. At the very least, he found out Thanatos knew about Helcan's departure but had chosen not to take any action.

That said, Helcan had not actually done anything that went against their interest yet, and there was nothing wrong with going to the Great Divider.

In fact, it wasn't wrong to go anywhere outside Gehenna.

However, the timing and secrecy of Helcan's departure proved that he was up to no good. If Thanatos actually waited for Helcan to make a mistake before taking action, it would be too late.

'Lord Thanatos shouldn't be that stupid... Then, is he actually turning a blind eye to Helcan's action because he secretly approves of it?' Mephistopheles frowned in thought.

Undoubtedly, Helcan wanted to get rid of the Soul Master. However, Thanatos wasn't doing anything to stop it.

'Just what is Lord Thanatos's intention? Is he secretly hoping Helcan succeeds in removing the Soul Master? Or is he waiting for Helcan to fail and empty his seat?' Mephistopheles wondered.

If Helcan disappeared as well, the rest of the Great Devils would have a new territory to exploit.

Moreover, Titanfall was highly rich in earth-type minerals, if nothing else. Thus, the rare metals would be useful for the development of their own territories.

However, Gehenna's strength would drop even further if they also lost Helcan.

Furthermore, it was also uncertain what kind of mess Helcan would make. It could prove to be too much for them to clean up after.

'Did Lord Thanatos not think about this? Why does it seem like I am the only one taking this matter seriously?' Mephistopheles frowned.

He wasn't sure what everyone's game was, but he wasn't intending to wait and find out.

'It seems I have to monitor Helcan's movements personally...'
Mephistopheles thought before paying a quick visit to the Titanfall Territory.

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Meanwhile, the Great Ashfallen Forest north of Blackthorn City received an unexpected visitor while the Black Rose Empire was at the peak of its rapid development.

The moment the burly figure with long silvery-grey hair stepped over the Dimensional Crack connected to Gehenna, the air thickened, winds surged, and dead leaves crackled.

It was as if the world of Pangea itself was trying to announce the person's arrival as the heavenly laws were mobilized to suppress his power. However, waves of mana also surged out of Gehenna to block the heavenly laws and counteract some of its suppressive power.

At the same time, the disturbance in the dying forest also drew the attention of nearby mercenaries and scouts.

When they arrived at the source of the disturbance, they were quickly shocked by the divine pressure emanating from Balmodan's huge, burly, and furry body.

After all, it was far more overpowering than that of a Transcendent.

Furthermore, it possessed the devilish aspect of Gehenna that made it seem like a dreadful and gloomy place. As such, many mercenaries and witches at the scene were immediately stricken with fear.

"G-Great Devil Balmodan! It must be Great Devil Balmodan! The Immortal Lycan King! Quickly! I don't care who! Anyone!"

"At least one of us must make it out and alert Her Majesty!" a Senior Witch cried.

Although she was able to speak, albeit shakily, it seemed to have sapped all her strength and courage as she failed to move the way she wished.

Her lack of strength and unsteady balance quickly caused her to take a tumble when she turned to escape.

'I'm going to die!' the Senior Witch immediately instinctively thought in that instant.

After all, how was it possible for a mere Senior Witch to outrun a Great Devil who specialized in power and speed?

Nevertheless, she was still in a better position than the ones who were closer to the Great Devil. They were paralyzed by their fear and couldn't even squeak. The despair of powerlessness could be seen in their eyes.

Why were they so quick to investigate the disturbance?

When they arrived at the scene, Balmodan's devilish aura had already surged past them by the time they thought of escaping.

Nevertheless, outside of everyone's expectations, the overwhelming devilish aura and pressure were suddenly withdrawn back into Balmodan's body.

They had retracted so deeply into his being that he seemed like an ordinary lycan and that everything they had experienced earlier was only an illusion. They couldn't even sense his killing intent.

"I apologize for startling you all, Humans. I didn't come here to fight, so you can all rest easy," Balmodan said amicably, like some typical grandpa next door.

However, despite the absence of hostilities, everyone still looked at him with dread and apprehension.

How could any of them 'rest easy' in the presence of a Great Devil?

"Where is Vaan Raphna? I would like to meet him," Balmodan requested earnestly, adding, "I would appreciate it if someone could lead me to him or point me in his direction."

"You want to meet Lord Vaan? And you want us to lead you to him or give out his location? Why would we do that? You're just trying to lower our guard!" an Aura Grandmaster accused, full of distrust.

"Everyone, don't be fooled by the words of this Great Devil! If Lord Vaan ends up getting harmed because of our naivety, we'll be eternal sinners!" another one said nervously.

"No, please listen to me," Balmodan patiently implored without getting angry. "It might seem unbelievable and suspicious, but I really come in peace and have no intention of fighting anyone."

"That's exactly what a suspicious person would say! How do you expect us to believe the words of a devil, let alone the Great Devil who invaded our world in the past?! I don't know what your game is, but you're not fooling anyone!" another Aura Grandmaster barked in a trembling voice.

Balmodan's amicable smile became forced after listening to their distrusting accusation. He almost wanted to lash out at them for their insolence. However, he didn't antagonize the humans.

Nevertheless, their courage had certainly grown a lot after he withdrew his oppressive aura from the area. To think he would have so much trouble over such a simple request.

It was easier to be mean than it was to be nice.

"Like I said, I really have no intention of fighting or hurting anyone..."

"We don't believe you, Great Devil! Just go back to your world!"

"Yeah! You're not welcome here! We will inform Lord Vaan of your visit after you leave. However, it will be up to Lord Vaan whether he will agree to see—"

"Quit fucking around and just tell me where Vaan Raphna is, you cunts! When this King asks, you listen!" Balmodan snapped.

He lost the last shred of his patience.

His oppressive aura instantly covered the region and robbed away everyone's courage. Everyone was immediately drowned in endless fear.

Even so, they refused to tell Balmodan anything due to their bottomless respect for Vaan.

Balmodan frowned at their stubbornness.

Seeing how they were so uncooperative, he was prepared to look around and ask someone else. Even he felt impressed at his self-restraint for not killing these humans for their insolence.

"Why did you come and bully my people, Balmodan?" Henrietta's grim voice suddenly trickled over as she maintained a safe distance.

"Ahem, I didn't come here to bully them. They were being unreasonably distrustful and giving me a hard time," Balmodan withdrew his aura awkwardly before saying, "You look like someone more reasonable to talk to, Black Rose."

"I hope you can agree to my request. I truly, truly have no intention of fighting or hurting any more humans. I give you my word."

Henrietta was immediately surprised by Balmodan's earnestness and seriousness. But at the same time, his intention also confused her.

Was this still the same Great Devil who had been at odds with her kingdom for the past hundreds of years?

Chapter 838: Balmodan's Humbleness

"Give me one reason why I should trust you, Immortal Lycan King," Henrietta demanded with a frown.

"Even you won't believe what I say so easily, huh? As frustrating as it is, I suppose it is understandable..." Balmodan uttered sullenly before mentioning, "I don't know if you have heard about this yet, but we, Great Devils, have agreed to give Vaan Raphna a chance to become one of us Great Devils."

"Should he agree and fulfill the conditions, he will get to choose his own territory, and no other Great Devil can cause trouble in it without a justifiable reason. Since Great Devil Hecate has vouched for his talents, I have no doubt he will agree and succeed."

"Of course, that is not the reason for my visit today. I am not here for official business but to confirm a personal curiosity of mine. Either way, I hope you can see why I am not here to look for trouble," Balmodan said.

Henrietta contemplated for a moment before replying coolly, "Suppose what you say is true. How can you be so sure that Vaan will agree to fulfill your conditions and become a Great Devil?"

"Because it is the only way for him to live without losing anything," Balmodan indifferently stated, adding, "Vaan Raphna has already killed Abaddon. Do you think the rest of us Great Devils would just do nothing and let him grow if there were no incentives for letting him live?"

"The answer is no. If there were no incentives for keeping Vaan Raphna alive, we would have hunted him until he was dead," Balmodan stated sternly.

Henrietta quickly frowned in thought again.

At the same time, she also cautioned the mercenaries and witches to leave with a wave of her hand. Moments later, only Henrietta and Balmodan remained in the area with no one else to disturb or eavesdrop on their conversation.

"It's quite funny that you could say such a thing so seriously, Immortal Lycan King. Have you forgotten how you ran with your tails tucked between your legs three hundred years ago?" Henrietta calmly mentioned.

"For three hundred years since that big war, you did not dare to set foot into these lands again. Yet, here you are now, saying the Great Devils would hunt my husband if he didn't agree to become one of you."

"Did the three hundred years of relative peace help you forget the terror of that day and regain your courage? What makes you think all of you can return to Gehenna with your lives if you dare come over here to hunt my husband?" Henrietta coldly asked.

"Your husband...? No, that's not important," Balmodan was momentarily surprised before he quickly shook his head and turned solemn, asking, "How do you know about that day? Did the Spirit of the Golden Dragon tell you that, Black Rose?"

"The Spirit of the Golden Dragon? You think it was the Spirit of the Golden Dragon that scared you off that day?" Henrietta suddenly laughed and said, "I should applaud you for doing your homework since you know about the Golden Dragon."

"Even I do not know if the Golden Dragon is actually still alive or not. However, I can assure you that it was not the Spirit of the Golden Dragon that scared you off that day, Immortal Lycan King."

"It is ridiculous even to think so. That said, I can't fault you for not recognizing an Empyrean God's aura when you are only a mere Peak Rank 6 Divine Being," Henrietta stated, seemingly contemptuous.

'An Empyrean God...? A Rank 13 True Divinity...?'

Balmodan's pupil shrank into slits before he gave the Black Rose Transcendent Witch a hard look as he re-evaluated his understanding of her.

How did a mere Transcendent of some desolate and backward realm know about Empyrean Gods?

Even Great Devils like him had only ever heard about them and never had the chance to see one. After all, Empyrean Gods were peak existences, standing above all but one in Chaos.

"An Empyrean God, you say? I don't know where you heard that term, but you can't bluff me with just that, Black Rose," Balmodan said doubtfully as he tried to see through Henrietta's mind.

"A bluff, huh?" Henrietta smiled, seemingly amused.

"If a bluff was all it took to scare you off, then it must have been a pretty damn good bluff since it bought Pangea three hundred years of relative peace."

"Since you doubt me, shall I remind you of the horror you felt that day?" Henrietta suggested.

However, she did not wait for a reply before letting her master partially take over her body. In that instant, the heavenly laws were stirred as they sensed Empyrean Scarletsea's existence and call.

Very shortly, the primordial aura of an Empyrean God emanated from Henrietta's body.

It didn't feel oppressive and suffocating like Balmodan's devilish aura. However, it completely eclipsed it with its all-encompassing and ancientness.

Balmodan's aura was just an infant learning how to crawl in front of that empyrean aura that seemed like it had been around since the beginning of time.

"T-This is...!" Balmodan's doubtful eyes widened in horror.

The familiar aura immediately triggered his memory to recall the scene during the Holy War.

Although the aura had been very distantly sensed during that war, it was etched into his memory very vividly. As such, he couldn't have been mistaken; it was exactly the same aura.

However, now that he was feeling it again at a much closer proximity, the aura's distinctive traits became clearer to him.

Indeed, this kind of primordial aura was far too ancient to belong to a mere Divine Being. It had surpassed it and entered the realm of True Divinity.

"You..." Balmodan stared at Henrietta with disbelief.

He had never imagined a mere Transcendent figure like her could host such a vast and ancient aura.

How was that even possible?

"You Great Devils see my husband as a big threat. However, I have always been your biggest threat, be it past, present, or future," Henrietta coolly stated before adding, "How bold of you to come back after my first warning."

It was unclear whether it was actually Henrietta or Emphyrean Scarletsea speaking.

"This Junior apologizes if he has ever offended you, Your Excellency. This Junior just had a simple wish of wanting to meet Vaan Raphna out of curiosity. There is definitely no malice or ill will involved."

Balmodan humbly lowered his head with a fist-palm salute while breaking into cold sweats. Not a shred of pride or arrogance could be seen in his eyes.

The world has always been ruled by the strong. If he wasn't strong, then he had to act accordingly.

"Go back to your den, Immortal Lycan King. My husband isn't here right now. I will inform him of your intent to visit him when he returns. If he wishes to see you, a messenger will be sent to you."

"There's no need to trouble Your Excellency like that. If you point this Junior in the right direction, he can just—"

"I don't want to repeat myself."

"This Junior will humbly take his leave."

...

Shortly after Balmodan bolted back to his territory, the empyrean aura on Henrietta's body was slowly withdrawn back into her soul, where Empyrean Scarletsea resided.

'Sorry, Master,' Henrietta immediately apologized after a short sigh.

Chapter 839: Empyrean Scarletsea's Undying Love

Naturally, Henrietta was apologizing for exposing Empyrean Scarletsea's existence and risking the spread of her unique soul constitution.

Empyrean Scarletsea had strictly warned her to hide her innate specialty many times since it could draw the unwanted attention of high-level Divine Beings and threaten their lives.

However, Henrietta still chose to rely on Empyrean Scarletsea to send Great Devil Balmodan away.

More importantly, Empyrean Scarletsea couldn't even get angry at Henrietta since her action coincided with her own wish. Otherwise, she wouldn't have lent her empyrean aura to her.

'There's nothing to be sorry for. It was the most logical choice to make, my dear disciple,' Empyrean Scarletsea softly sighed in Henrietta's mind.

'These Great Devils have been comfortably used to others following their wills for countless thousands of years. We wouldn't have been able to send the Immortal Lycan King back to his territory if we couldn't scare him into believing how powerful we are.'

'Fortunately, exerting some empyrean aura was all it took to scare him off,' Empyrean Scarletsea added.

It would have been troublesome if Balmodan had gone to the moon to look for Vaan and find out about its secrets.

'Master, there's something this disciple doesn't understand. I hope you can enlighten me,' Henrietta suddenly requested.

Empyrean Scarletsea hesitated for a moment, but she eventually consented with a sigh.

'What don't you understand?' Empyrean Scarletsea asked, but she could more or less guess what her disciple wanted to talk about.

'In the past, you used to advise me to stay away from love strictly and lecture me on how it would only give me a lifetime of pain and sadness if my partner couldn't match my talent. Yet, you forced me into dual cultivation with Vaan,' Henrietta mentioned.

'Although you told me it was beneficial for my cultivation, you hardly made any effort to remind me not to fall in love. You should have felt the feelings growing inside my heart over time, Master. But to date, you still chose not to lecture me on it.'

'You've even made me teach him your True Divinity-rank cultivation method. Then, there's this instance where you also prioritized Vaan's benefits over our own. You didn't try to stop me at all.'

'From the start, the one you have been trying to help was Vaan and not me. Ever since we met him, I have become your second priority, Master. No matter how much I think about it, I can't figure out why you treat him so well.'

'I mean, I can see that you hold a great deal of feelings for him. However, I don't understand how you come to have more feelings for him than me, his officially wedded wife,' Henrietta stated.

Empyrean Scarletsea was silent for some time before she quietly confessed, 'Because he is the reincarnation of my one and only love, husband, and partner for life, Vanitas.'

'Huh?' Henrietta was immediately stunned and confused.

Although her master gave her a straightforward answer, it also raised even more questions.

'But how do you know if Vaan is the reincarnation of your Vanitas, Master? And if he was, why didn't he recognize you? Furthermore, I thought you hated him because he betrayed you?'

Henrietta frowned with endless questions.

'My dear disciple, Vanitas and I have spent entire lifetimes together. Do you think I wouldn't recognize his unique soul when I see it, given my level of existence? Also, reincarnations aren't guaranteed to remember their past lives,' Empyrean Scarletsea softly replied.

'It was true that Vanitas betrayed me. However, I never have explained to you how exactly he betrayed me, did I? I guess I should have explained that to you first. It was because he broke his promise to me. We were supposed to share life and death, but when the time came, he selfishly sacrificed himself to let me live.'

'That is why I resent him but never hate. Vanitas is the one person I can never hate. I only have respect and endless love for him. You see, he wasn't just my husband but also my master.'

'He cured my illness when no one else could, took me in when I had no one else, and even taught me knowledge that no one else knew. It may have started out as respect and gratitude, but that was how I fell in love with him.'

'Of course, it was forbidden to fall in love with one's master or disciple back in that era. However, I wasn't someone easily swayed by the words of others, not after I had already experienced the lowest point of my life.'

'That said, it still took me a thousand years of pursuit before my master finally accepted my feelings and became my partner for life. I still remember that moment vividly as the happiest day of my life,' Empyrean Scarletsea reminisced, feeling bittersweet.

She lost count of how many women she had to shoo away from her master when she was still his disciple. If not for her diligent effort, her master most likely would have had many wives and lovers.

Alas, happiness couldn't last forever. Everything went wrong with his first death.

'Hm? Master, that is strange...'

'What is?'

'I understand that Master and Mister Vanitas were a golden couple during your era, and it was very painful to lose him. However, he died very early on while you lived billions of years longer than him. Wouldn't such a long passage of time numb the pain of your loss?' Henrietta mentioned.

'If only it were that simple, my dear disciple,' Emphyrean Scarletsea sadly sighed before saying, 'It might have been true if I only lost Vanitas once. However, Vanitas shared a sad fate.'

'What do you mean, Master?' Henrietta asked curiously.

'What if I told you that throughout those billions of years, I desperately searched for Vanitas's reincarnations, only to have him die in my arms every time?' Emphyrean Scarletsea sighed sadly.

'The cruel heavens never seem to let his reincarnations live past a hundred years no matter what I do to prevent them...'

Henrietta immediately froze in shock. When she tried to imagine herself in such a situation, she couldn't help but shiver in fear.

She wasn't sure if her heart could take it if she had to watch her loved one die over and over for billions of years. Yet, her master was able to do it without fail until her body was destroyed and her soul scattered.

She couldn't even begin to imagine the difficulty of searching for the reincarnations of Vanitas across the universe every time.

The time and effort put into it must have been astonishing.

Furthermore, the reward for said time and effort was limited time with her loved one—only to watch him to some cruel fate over and over again.

Empyrean Scarletsea's undying deep love for Vanitas shocked Henrietta and made her wonder whether she deserved Vaan.

At the same time, she was also worried about whether Vaan could live past a hundred years.

Why did Vanitas have to suffer such a cruel fate?

Chapter 840: Grandmist Energy

'Master, tell me more about you and Mister Vanitas,' Henrietta requested.

'How did you manage to find his reincarnations throughout the billion years you lived after his first death? It shouldn't have been easy, right? Did you ever stop to think it was too much and wanted to give up?'

'How were you able to keep going like that?' Henrietta asked.

'My dear disciple, we were dual cultivation partners for thousands of years with no one else but each other. It wasn't wrong to say that we were one part of each other. We were connected on a spiritual level,' Empyrean Scarletsea stated.

'When your soul is close to another person like that, you'll realize that you will have the ability to sense wherever they are, no matter where they are. I relied precisely on that vague sense to track down Vanitas's reincarnating soul throughout the cosmos.'

'Alas, even with this vague ability, it hadn't always been easy. Sometimes, it could take thousands of years. Other times, it could even take millions of years,' Empyrean Scarletsea sighed.

Shortly after, she mentioned, 'You asked me how I could keep searching even when I have to watch Vanitas die each time, but the right question should be—Why couldn't I stop searching?'

'What couldn't you stop, Master?' Henrietta asked.

'Because if I had stopped, Vanitas's reincarnations would die even more frequently. He was able to live close to a hundred years under my protection. But without it, he wouldn't even reach adulthood. Sometimes, maybe not even past infancy,' Empyrean Scarletsea stated.

She only knew because she had been slightly late at least a few dozen times. Those instances were the worst of all her search attempts.

Henrietta couldn't help but feel deeply shocked.

'How could such a cruel fate follow Mister Vanitas so persistently? Just what did he do to deserve such cruelty from the heavens? Even the most sinful beings in the world wouldn't be condemned to such short lives, right?' Henrietta wondered with doubt.

'There was a time when I wondered the same thing, my dear disciple,' Empyrean Scarletsea sighed before saying, 'However, one thing I don't doubt is Vanitas's inherently good nature.'

'I have seen it far too many times. Even without his past memories, his reincarnations would never sin without justifiable cause. As such, he couldn't possibly have such a sinful past life.'

'It can only be said that the heavens do not tolerate his existence. That must be why they trapped him in a cruel cycle of endless reincarnations,' Empyrean Scarletsea figured.

'Do you hate the heavens for that, Master?' Henrietta wondered.

'Hate? Hate might be an understatement. My hatred for the heavens ran deep as a bottomless abyss and more boundless than the vast cosmos itself!' Empyrean Scarletsea stated.

Suddenly, she thought of something and said, 'Maybe it was because of my deep hatred that the Outer Beings arrived and destroyed everything...'

'Surely not...' Henrietta didn't find it plausible.

However, she still couldn't help but wonder if it was actually true.

If her master's hatred for the heavens did summon the Outer Beings to destroy all of the heavens, how unbelievably deep could her hatred actually be?

Henrietta didn't dare to imagine it.

Nevertheless, after learning about Vanitas's history and fate from Emphyrean Scarletsea, Henrietta felt more affectionate toward Vaan.

Even if he couldn't remember his past lives, she hoped he would be able to live well in this lifetime. In fact, she thought it would be for the best if he didn't remember any of his past life memories.

She feared the countless unfair and unjustly deaths would twist his mind and turn him towards evil.

...

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Sea of Stars

Ding!

<You have assimilated the Dark Minotaur Origin Blood>

<You have assimilated the origin blood of 100 different species>

<You have reached the Everlasting Blood Mantra's Second Stage of Rejuvenation>

<Your blood energy has improved>

<Peak-rank Regeneration has been upgraded to Divine-rank Regeneration>

...

Shortly after Vaan refined the last origin blood in the blood bottle and advanced to the second stage of the Everlasting Blood Mantra, his blood energy underwent a qualitative transformation.

At the same time, the qualitative transformation of his blood energy pushed his Peak-rank Regeneration beyond mortal limits and entered the ranks of the Divine.

By now, Vaan already had a comprehensive understanding of the Everlasting Blood Mantra.

However, he also realized there was a limit to how much origin blood he could strengthen with just the Everlasting Blood Mantra alone. As such, he couldn't help the Red Dragon Clan awaken their Fire Dragon God Bloodline as he had hoped.

The Everlasting Blood Mantra seemed to lack something crucial before its full potential could be brought out. Divine energy wasn't enough to satisfy it.

'If I want to strengthen the Fire Dragon God Bloodline of the whole Red Dragon Clan effectively, what else do I need? Wood energy? Life energy? The power of light? Or... primal energy?' Vaan mused.

After pondering for a moment, he suddenly warped the surrounding area with spatial power and entered an isolated subspace. Afterward, he took out a small space rock of little value.

Ka-cha!

The space rock suddenly disintegrated into nothingness when Vaan applied the power of his Nihility Law to it.

'Too much power...!' Vaan noted before trying again with a new rock.

Ka-cha!

The new rock partially disintegrated into nothingness, leaving behind some remnant earthly powder.

Ka-cha!

Ka-cha!

Ka-cha!

Vaan repeatedly failed to produce his desired result. With each subsequent failure, he came a bit closer to success. However, his frown also deepened.

He shouldn't be this terrible at controlling nihilistic power, even if he had barely used it.

'External factors are augmenting the power of my Nihilism Law, hence leading to my undesired results...' Vaan quickly understood.

He realized the Nihilism Law was getting stronger as the world headed toward destruction and nothingness.

Nevertheless, after repeatedly failing several hundred times, Vaan finally raised the proficiency of his control to the limit and succeeded in his experiment.

A piece of rock was reduced into pure grey essence.

Ding!

<You have successfully refined Grandmist Energy>

<Analyzing potential effects...>

...

'So, this is the primal energy that formed everything in this universe, Grandmist Energy? How peculiar...' Vaan studied the grey energy.

The energy just looked like grey-colored mists. But despite existing in a gaseous state, it seemed surprisingly heavy.

Moreover, this sense of heaviness didn't come from its weight.

Ding!

<Grandmist Energy has been analyzed, and a list of suitable choices is available>

<Please select one of the following choices>

<Option 1: Reinforce your body with Grandmist Energy and advance your strength and defense attributes by 5 points, respectively>

<Note: Reinforcement effect could be greatly enhanced with a suitable body cultivation method>

<Option 2: Reinforce your mana core with Grandmist Energy and strengthen the foundation of your mana cultivation>

<Note: Infusing Grandmist Energy into the center of your mana core could potentially utilize the Grandmist Energy's power of attraction to strengthen your mana core's refinement speed, mana recovery, and mana absorption>

<Note 2: Infusing too much Grandmist Energy will affect the purity of your mana and interfere with your control>

<Option 3: Reinforce your Early-stage Heaven Ascension Energy Core and slightly increase your energy cultivation>

<Note: Reinforcing your energy core with Grandmist Energy will greatly strengthen the foundation of your energy cultivation>

<Note 2: Reinforcing your energy core with Grandmist Energy will greatly increase the difficulty of your breakthrough to the next realm>

<Option 4: Infuse Grandmist Energy into your aura to add a heavy aspect to it, increasing its destructive power>

<Note: Infusing Grandmist Energy into your aura will put a burden on your meridians and blood vessels>

<Option 5: Feed the Grandmist Energy to the Heaven-Swallowing Space and expand its current space by 1%>

...

Vaan was dumbfounded after looking at the effects of Grandmist Energy.

It was only a few wisps of Grandmist Energy refined from a small piece of rock, and yet their effects were already so strong.

If he could refine an entire mountain into Grandmist Energy, how much could he improve his body or expand his Heaven-Swallowing Space?

What about a whole planet's worth of Grandmist Energy?

Vaan completely understood why nihilism users were both the most desired and hated in Chaos.

After all, they had the power to turn any matter into primal energy to strengthen their body cultivation to a terrifying degree and become extremely powerful body refiners.

At higher levels of body refining, the appetite of nihilism users could extend to every celestial body in existence. Everything under the heaven was practically fuel for their body refining.

As such, all nihilism users were seen as destroyers.

'Lady Hecate warned me not to use the Nihilism Law carelessly, but it is also necessary to obtain Grandmist Energy if I want to improve my body refining greatly...' Vaan mused.

Nevertheless, without a suitable body refining technique, he would only be strengthening his body primitively. It wouldn't be good if he created bottlenecks for himself at higher ranks.

Furthermore, he had numerous areas to improve. Thus, he didn't need to focus on body refining for the time being.

'I've successfully cultivated the Everlasting Blood Mantra, but I have yet to refine the divine blood in Abaddon's left arm to acquire his vampiric bloodline... I wonder if I can still cultivate the Divine Blood Refining Art as well...' Vaan contemplated.

After studying both the Everlasting Blood Mantra and the Divine Blood Refining Art, he quickly came to the conclusion that it should be possible.

One was a supplementary technique, and the other was a cultivation method. There was no reason for the two to conflict.

In fact, practicing both might produce a synergizing effect.