

Thief 341

Eternal Thief

Chapter 341: Real Pablo!

While all the Iron Demon Tribe was panicking, the Dark Gibbon Army was thoroughly shocked and everyone's focus turned toward the Iron Demon Army.

Henrik, at this moment, moved, leaving an afterimage behind, and abruptly appeared right in front of bewildered Uriah, who was standing right beside Elian.

New Moon didn't stop Henrik as he coolly watched while a cube appeared in his hand. He was using the Eagle Surveillance Formation to the fullest right now. If anyone tried to pull something, he'll instantly know!

Uriah's heart palpitated when he saw Henrik's cold eyes fixed on him, while everyone around immensely felt a mountainous pressure locking on them.

"M-my... L-L... Lord..."

Before Uriah could utter anything, Henrik cut him short with his grim voice. "Call every demon of your clan on the west of the city wall!"

Uriah gulped before quickly nodding his head. He didn't dare to resist or even utter a voice of disagreement.

Elian and other elders also kept their mouths shut, as they could tell something was extremely wrong, and they had no way of resisting Henrik or the New Moon.

It was now clear that they were both targeting their tribe for some reason, and it was even clearer that Uriah's silver-iron demon clan was involved somehow, and they were just about to find out how!

Dustin was watching all this with glee in his eyes. He didn't know how, but things were moving in the favor of his tribe, and it seemed he might win this city without any war whatsoever!

Quickly, all the demons of the Silver Iron Demo were separated, all women, children, old, young, weak, and strong. Everyone was looking at Henrik with a hint of dread in their eyes.

"Take off your war helmets!" Henrik said in an unquestionable tone.

Although he was using his martial sense, he found nothing out of the ordinary about them, not like when he met that thief. That's why he wanted to see everyone's faces, since there were foot soldiers among them, wearing heavy armors.

If he still didn't find that thief among them, then it would mean that the thief can easily change his appearance, since a hex master was capable of such a feat.

Which will make founding him almost impossible among hundreds of thousands of demons. If that were really the case, then Henrik was really about to take far more drastic measures than this!

Every Silver Iron Demon revealed their faces at this moment. They were clearly horrified.

Uriah was also praying desperately that whatever Henrik was looking for was not here. Although he had an idea just who was Henrik looking for, he didn't want to believe that his clan can produce such a thievish genius!

"So, you're still here, you bastard!" Henrik's eyes suddenly turn bloodshot as he roared at the top of his lungs as his eyes were fixed on the demon at the very last row of Silver-Iron Demon.

Everyone focused and turned in the same direction, while Uriah's heart fell into a cold abyss at this moment.

Henrik didn't give any chance to the other party to 'escape' and use his water Qi to form a vivid hand and made a grabbing motion toward that same direction with spiteful eyes.

Everyone finally saw a struggling silver-iron demon in Henrik's water grip. His face was skinny while still handsome as he had long silver dishevel hair while his eyes were filled with terror and puzzlement.

This was the real Pablo who Ace left alive after taking his face!

"Don't kill him!" New Moon has also appeared beside Henrik as he looked at struggling Pablo with uncertainty. 'It was too... easy?'

He couldn't help but think like this because that guy struggling in Henrik's water grip didn't seem to be a cunning Hex Master nor someone who theft thousands of demons and a Demon Marquis!

Henrik's eyes were filled with hatred as he looked at Pablo's terror-stricken face, he felt even angrier when he thought how 'this' guy fool him with the same kind of act that time, and he was still acting even after being caught by him!

Henrik used all his willpower to not squish Pablo to death because he knew New Moon won't let him, and he still needed this scoundrel to remove that disgraceful 'hex' from his face.

So, he placed Pablo on the ground, but he didn't lose his water grip since he didn't want him to pull any tricks and escaped.

Uriah also looked flabbergasted at Pablo's pale face. He didn't dare believe that the thief was his own son, who he had exiled all those years ago. He never paid attention to him, since he knew he was just a rotten egg and a piece of trash. His life or death meant nothing to him. He didn't even know Pablo was recruited into the 'cannon fold army' of vagabond demons!

"Scoundrel Thief, do you admit your wrongs?!" Henrik yelled at this moment, with a hint of killing intent.

Pablo had no idea what was happening, as he didn't even have the strength to breathe because of Henrik's soul realm pressure. He was simply too weak in front of someone like Henrik.

Henrik easily saw through Pablo's struggles, but he didn't decrease his pressure at all because he wanted to torture him to no end after what 'Pablo' had done to him!

"What, you still didn't admit your mistake? Let's see, when I kill your clansmen one by one right in front of you, will you still remain silent?" Henrik's voice was filled with viciousness and hate.

New Moon also didn't stop Henrik and let him release some pent-up anger. As long as he didn't kill Pablo, anyone else's life didn't matter to him.

Uriah shuddered after hearing Henrik's threat and blurted, "My Lord, this bastard has nothing to do with our clan. He's an exile. He has nothing to do with us!"

He quickly kneeled and plead in front of Henrik, without caring about his image. His entire clan's survival was on the line at this moment!

At this moment, a weak, hoarse voice sounded,

"F...f-father..."

It was Pablo's voice that was almost suffocating within Henrik's soul realm pressure.

Henrik's eyes narrowed as he looked at Pablo and Uriah and felt they looked quite similar. He decreased the pressure at this moment, making Pablo breathe roughly.

New Moon was also amazed by this unexpected new discovery and silently looked at what was about to happen.

Uriah's face turned ashen when he saw Henrik was gawking at him with killing intent and quickly said, "My Lord, this bastard has nothing to do with me. I disown him decades ago and exile him from the clan because of his misconducts, everyone can be my witness to this claim!"

He suddenly pointed his finger at Pablo and roared madly, "You Chode, just admit your mistakes, do not drag your entire tribe down with you!"

"But you're still his father, right?" Henrik's voice was calm, too calm actually, which gave Uriah the chills.

"Y-yes... but..."

Henrik didn't listen to Uriah's next word and said calmly, "Let's not take about his sin to disrupt an active Noble Tribe Tile War by 'attacking' an evaluator, but, your son is a Hex Master the enemy of the entire demon race. Just this point has earned your entire tribe a public execution by skinning everyone alive!"

Uriah, as well as the entire Iron Demon Tribe, felt chills when they heard Henrik's calm yet malicious voice and his sword-like sharp words.

Any local demon knew the rules of Almighty Demon Empire were absolute and violating them will only mean death and what kind of death you'll get. You don't even have the right to decide this as well!

Pablo said weakly at this moment after regaining some of his breath, "I have no idea what Lord is saying, I never attack you, you asked my fellow soldiers I was right on my post this entire time, I don't even know what a Hex Master is!"

"Scoundrel, you still refused to admit it?!" Henrik become angry the moment he heard Pablo's voice. He just couldn't seem to hate him enough, and every time he heard his voice, he felt his hate increase!

"Is that so?" New Moon spoke at this moment in his calm voice, "Marquis Henrik, did you sense your Qi mark on your storage ring on him?"

Henrik's eyes narrowed as he knew why New Moon was asking it, "No, but it still hasn't been removed. But it doesn't mean he hasn't hidden it somewhere else!"

"Did anyone sense their storage ring on him?" New Moon's voice rang in everyone's ears.

Every victim standing to the side has the same answer, which was a big no.

"Sigh..." New Moon sighed heavily at this moment, "Marquis Henrik, I think he was unknowingly controlled by the Hex Master with a hex, however, if he was telling the truth about not leaving his position then this also means that the hex master had changed his appearance into this demon!"

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Chapter 342: A Hex Master!

Henrik's eyes contracted when he heard New Moon's word. Although he didn't want to believe it, he knew Hex Masters were shrouded in mystery, and they had strange hex magic and techniques for controlling anyone weaker than them with hexes.

Although Henrik didn't want to admit it, even he felt they had captured Pablo too easily, and he didn't even try to hide from them, nor resist in any way.

But what he didn't understand was how the hex master got their storage rings and where did they go since they never saw anyone leaving this city.

Even New Moon had the same thought.

Suddenly, their minds jolt with another realization, especially New Moon, as he said,

"Sigh... if he was able to control him without even his knowledge, then he can control anyone here or outside within the army of these gibbon demons. Since we didn't know how a Hex-Master works, we probably let him escape with all the storage rings already! Or he's already long gone since he can change his appearance to anyone. It wasn't difficult to mix within such a huge mob."

Henrik's eyes shimmered with unwillingness since he also thought of this, and looked at Pablo, who was still clueless looking at them with utter terror.

Elian, Uriah, and everyone from the Iron Demon Tribe felt immense relief when they thought they had just brushed past death!

However, Henrik's next word made all of their hopes shattered instantly.

"Since Duke New Moon had spoken, it indeed seemed this fool was not involved, but it still doesn't change the fact that the Hex Master chose his appearance of all the demons, and who knows, the Hex Master is from Iron Demon Tribe since he appeared here."

New Moon also nodded and added, "Marquis Henrik is right. From now on, no one from the Iron Demon Tribe will leave these city walls until I report this matter to the Royal Demon Council, and they send their personnel to investigate this city.

"If they found nothing, the Iron Demon Tribe might have a chance of survival, but if they found the trace of a Hex Master inheritance... heh, even I don't know what will they do."

Elian felt his heart nearly stop beating when he heard the last words of the New Moon. He couldn't help but marvel about the tragic fate of his tribe, just only because of a thief.

Before they still had a chance of survival, but after this Elian knew they'll be now at the complete mercy of the royal demon council's mood!

"Marquis Henrik, please look after this place while I make this report to the Royal Demon Council's branch in Might Blade Province." New Moon said to Henrik with a stern tone.

"Here, this is the Eagle Surveillance Formation. I'm lending it to you!" New Moon sent the small cube in his hand toward Henrik.

Although he was somewhat unwilling to leave such a formation in Henrik's hands, he knew if he didn't secure all these victims, he'll be blamed, which he didn't want at any cost.

Henrik solemnly grab the small cube and nodded, "I will!" He knew if he messed up this time, he'll be dead with all the ocean demon tribe, so he was far more motivated than anyone else!

New Moon quickly left with his Snowfall Wolf at the fastest speed, he knew this event was going to ruffle many feathers and Mist Demon King will also have to give up on that thief because the royal demon council might not even let him come to contact that thief!

Henrik and New Moon didn't know all this drama was watched by a small bird sitting on the tall city wall from start to finish. Even if they saw this small creature, they might find it harmless and not even bother to act against such a creature.

But New Moon had forgotten his own words or paid little attention to them or thought a little deeper into it that a Hex Master can control anything, which included these small creatures, not just cultivators and demons!

At this moment, All-Knowing Parrot suddenly opened her mesmerizing icy blue eyelids, revealing ocean blue eyeballs filled with disbelief and utter astonishment.

She mumbled in her melodious voice filled with excitement, "So, that thief is a Hex Master!"

"Those fools didn't know if that person really wanted to kill them. They'll be dead by now because I clearly saw him comprehending a half sword intent and now just any sword intent. It was clearly a dark element sword intent, an absolute myth!"

"Just how can there be such a genius present outside the royal zone, no, he's far stronger than those so-called geniuses. He might be the number one genius on this continent!"

"No, if he comprehends that complete element sword intent, he'll be unrivaled in this world. He's also a powerful Hex Master."

"Since he's playing 'thief' to collect resources, it meant he's probably alone and needs support. But he was too reckless showing his abilities like this and using even Hexes just to humiliate Royal Demon Council."

"Is he decedent of a survivor of that massacre? This also clarifies his hate for the Royal Demon Council, but he was still too reckless, and now those despicable fellows will do anything to kill him."

The all-Knowing Parrot suddenly showed very rare emotion on her fairy-like face. Worry about another! She never showed such emotion to anyone, since she considered everyone her disposable pawn!

A hint of resolution flashed past her mesmerizing eyes, "I have to find him before anyone else and see if he's a friend or foe, but I don't think he'll reject me... a fellow Hex Master and also someone who hates Royal Demon Council to the core!"

A pitch-black dark smoke suddenly rose from All-Knowing Parrot when she uttered 'Royal Demon Council' before it completely vanished as she returned to her aloof self...

The culprit who had no idea that he had just unknowingly poked a vast hole in a hornet's nest was counting his gains without even caring about what was happening outside because of him.

Ace had quickly made his escape toward his secret hideout, which was twenty kilometers away from the battlefield at the front gates of the Iron Demon City.

This place was completely barren right now, and he had heard Henrik's enraged voice when he was halfway there.

He nearly thought he will get caught by Henrik or New Moon with that formation in play, but for some reason, those two never come.

However, he didn't know it was New Moon's mistake to focus all the power of Eagle Surveillance Formation on that enormous army and completely ignore this empty area. That's why he could reach his hideout safely!

Noa was also shocked when she saw Ace returning completely unharmed and so quickly because she clearly got Ace's message on that mission that he might return after a long time, which made her extremely worried and agitate.

But she didn't go against Ace's command and stay put since it will only make things difficult for Ace with her meager power!

However, after seeing Ace, she felt immense relief that he had returned safely.

"Leader, what happened out there?" Noa couldn't help but ask. She also wanted to go out and earn some house points but didn't dare to after receiving Ace's mission.

Ace took off his mask and grin wildly. His gains were tremendous this time. Not only did he breakthrough into the second realm of dual shadow swords technique, but he also got two system rewards and thousands of thieveries and thief points!

He couldn't help but looked at the thievery report that he didn't get the chance to before while telling Noa about what he did outside and especially to Henrik!

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[Quick Report of Thieveries]

[Successful Pick Pocket Count: 2,421]

[Low-Level Thieveries: 2,290]

[Middle-Level Thieveries: 131]

[Total Rewards: 12.5 Million TP]

[Thief Point(s): 18,012,000]

-Low-level Thievery(s): 5,231

-Middle-Level Thievery(s): 166

-[Please Open Thief Panel]

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"Leader, what happened?" Noa's confused voice snapped Ace out of his stupor.

"Oh, nothing. I was just to catch up for a moment." Ace merely shook his head as he didn't tell her he was looking at the huge number of thief points he just got in disbelief.

Furthermore, his thievery count has also reached a sufficient threshold for the next rank, but he didn't get any notification about it, but the system was telling him to open the thief panel instead.

However, he didn't open it too quickly and patiently tell Noa about what happened when he was outside without any distraction this time.

Their conversation lasted for an hour before Noa was fully satisfied with what has Ace done to Henrik since she also hated him because of his close relationship with Livy, and she got back to her cultivation, so she could become more powerful and do the same herself next time!

Ace finally became free of Noa's questions and quickly opened the thief panel to see why the system want him to open it.

"Thief Panel!"

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Chapter 343: First Job Mission!

"Thief Panel!"

[[Thief Panel]]

[Job [NOT Changeable]: Thief]

[Thief Name: Sky Stealer]

[Thief Title: Disciple of Darkness]

[Thief Rank: Trainee]

[Thievery needed to reach next Rank: 5,000 Low-Level Thievery & 100 Middle-level Thievery: Completed!]

[Thief Fame [Host and Symbol]: Popular]

[Thief Symbol: Dark Owl]

[Summoning Symbol: unlocked at the Popularity Level, Fame: Completed!]

[Job Mission: 1] (New)

[[Thievery Count Section]]

[Low-Level Thievery: 5,231]

[Middle-Level Thievery: 166]

[High-Level Thievery: 1]

'My first Job mission?!' Ace was startled when he saw the thief panel and couldn't help but felt this was not good at all.

Because he clearly saw, that both his fame and thief rank requirements were completed, but the system didn't release the rewards, which meant this was probably related to this Job Mission.

If he still wasn't familiarized with the system's ways of doing things, then all his hardships were in vain.

Nonetheless, he knew he had to complete this Job Mission, or he could forget about raising his thief rank or getting the symbol summoning ability, which he was looking forward to all these years.

"Open the Job Mission!" Ace commanded.

[Congratulation Host on overcoming the two Beginning Thief Ranks [Novice & Trainee]]

[All the conditions have been completed, and the host has unlocked the first thief job mission to enter the level of Intermediate Thief Ranks!]

[Job Mission]

[Mission: Mind Stealing]

-Description: A Heaven's Stealer can not only steal physical treasures, but a Heaven's Stealer can also steal the precious mysteries deeply hidden within the mind in an instant!

-Requirement (1): Learn a way to steal an essential memory with an instant soul probe!

-Requirement (2): The host cannot use the soul probe continuously to search for an important memory or to steal a memory.

-Requirement (3): Target has to be stronger than the Host.

-Requirement (4): The host can only try three instant soul probes on one target before the system will deem that target unqualified for the Job Mission.

-Requirement (5): The Target must completely forget about the memory the host stole.

-Requirement (6): The stolen memory had to be something important to host, or the stolen memory will not count!

[Time: 2,000 Days]

[Reward (1): Art of Mind Stealing]

[Reward (2): Thief Symbol Summoning]

[Reward (3): New Thief Rank]

[Reward (4): New Thief Tittle]

[Mission Fail Punishment: Thief Panel Reset]

[Note: Until the Host completes this Job Mission, the thievery count will remain stopped!]

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Ace was looking at the Job Mission with disbelief at this moment. He never thought the system would give him such a mission, which involved stealing someone's memory, that he never even imagined being possible.

Although he can easily absorb someone's entire memory with a long soul probe, he never thought about stealing them because he even considered it doable.

Now, the system suddenly issued a job mission that seemed quite easy, but it wasn't with all those requirements attached to it, and he had to find a way himself to steal someone's memory, so they can forget it afterward.

Just this requirement alone was enough for Ace to pull his hair in frustration.

However, the rewards of completing this job mission were just as tempting as its complexity.

Just the art of mind stealing which might open a new path for the thief for him was enough to give him enough motivation to complete this mission, not to talk about Thief Symbol Summoning and a new thief title that will greatly boost his strength.

'Although this mission sounds complex, it isn't if I consider it. The system had already given me a hint about the soul probe. It seemed I'm not using this ability to its fullest potential.

'System even hinted about I can even probe an important memory with a single try, which means there's still more to learn about soul probe. I should also focus on learning this aspect of soul probing first before thinking about stealing something incorporeal, like a memory.'

Ace knew this job mission was not like his previous missions, where he had to steal from someone using any method. This job mission was more like a test to check his capabilities if he was worthy of stepping into the ranks of the intermediate thief.

Moreover, this job mission also revealed a dangerous flaw in Ace, which was his narrow thinking about the path of a thief and underestimating his own innate abilities.

This also made Ace reevaluate his previous innate abilities again. He was forced to think that he wasn't using them to their full potential.

'Sigh... just when I thought I'm becoming strong, this black-hearted system always put me in my place with a single freaking mission. Heh...' Ace smiled wryly as he lamented.

However, inwardly, he was happy that the system has given him such a mission and given him a new understanding of Heaven's Stealer's abilities, and he knew he doesn't even have one percent true abilities of a Heaven's Stealer.

Such a grand name was enough to tell anyone just what kind of existence Heaven's Stealer was!

'Oh, I almost forgot about my High-level thievery reward, the Heavenly Talisman!'

Previously, Ace didn't have time to check the Heavenly Talisman which he got from the system amid that chaos, and he was also busy escaping.

Ace quickly send his soul sense into his thief's space and saw a new pitch-black talisman coin lying with all other pentagon talisman coins.

However, this new pitch-black talisman coin wasn't a pentagon, but a pentagram filled with tiny symbols, and in the center of this black pentagram talisman coin was Ace's thief symbol.

This was the Heavenly Talisman Coin, which the system rewarded him.

"System, tell me what kind of Heavenly Talisman is this?" Ace quickly asked.

[Heavenly Talisman: Instant Flash Teleportation (Grade-7)]

[Use: One Time]

[Effect: Instantly Teleport anywhere within Ten Thousand Mile Radius from the activation position.]

Ace was momentarily shocked before a wide smile bloomed on his face.

'This is a degraded version of Life Coin but not as absurd as Life Coin and I can even use it anytime I want, and I won't be teleported into another continent this time.'

This Instant Flash Teleportation Talisman was now Ace's biggest trump card, which will guarantee his life, and he doesn't have to be on the brink of death to use it as well.

However, this doesn't mean this heavenly talisman didn't have limitations. Although the range of this talisman wasn't as absurd as the Life Coin, it was still random, and who knows he might get into a more dangerous situation than he escaped from?

That's why Ace can't use it just on a whim, and he will only use it if he had no other choice than to use it.

After he was done with the Heavenly Talisman, his focus turned to another side of the thief's space.

There lay a dark blue square token-like crystal. It was five inches in diameter, and it was completely ordinary without any scratch or writing, just like a crystal jade.

However, Ace knew this was his biggest gain of this entire trip, the Item Upgrade Token!

"System, how should I use this item upgrade token?" asked Ace.

"[The host just needs to tell the system which item the host wanted to upgrade, and the system will immediately start the process.]"

'Simple enough.' Ace nodded in understanding, 'But on which item I should use it? I wanted to upgrade the invisible bead, but now that I have the Instant Flash Teleportation Heavenly Talisman, I didn't need to waste it. Then which item is more important than Invisible Bead?'

Ace mulled over it for a while and in the end, he wasn't able to decide on which item he should use this item upgrade token, so he simply decided to put this matter aside for now and save the item upgrade token for now.

He didn't need any item which he wanted to upgrade right now, so he thought it would be better to save it and if he fell into some difficult position, he'll use it at that time.

After Ace was done sorting his gains, he quickly focused on his training again.

As for the job mission, he knew he needed some guinea pigs to experiment with his soul probe, and he had to go outside for this. But he knew going outside right now would be akin to committing suicide because he knew those two-soul realm experts will be desperately searching for him right at this moment.

Especially Henrik, whose face was now ruined by him, and it was even witnessed by thousands of bystanders.

That's why Ace wanted to wait a week or two before taking a step outside.

As for asking Noa to become his experiment subject, it would be too impolite to ask her to let him probe her memories, and he won't do it even if Noa agreed to it either.

In the end, he just concentrated on his skills for now...

However, Ace had no idea ten hours later from now, an emergency meeting has been called in Royal Demon Council's Branch in Mighty Blade Province. All the high-level members were summoned from other provinces, and even the Blade Demon King was summoned!

It was all just because his thief symbol led to a huge misunderstanding!

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Chapter 344: Royal Demon Council

Inside a luxurious, spacious hall, there were ten rows of chairs arranged in ten chairs in a single line, neatly in order, all these seats were filled with different demons wearing the same black attire, with their God Baphomet, white imprint on its back.

However, there were small golden stars, shimmering on each of these black attire notched collars. In the last five rows, demons have two golden stars, the front four rows demons have three golden stars, and the row at the very front has three golden stars and one silver star.

In the very front of these ten rows were five black thrones, and currently, five tall demons were sitting on each of them and giving off an unfathomable feeling. Each wore the same black attire. However, they had five golden stars and one red star!

Two aged demons were sitting on the right side and one middle-aged demon was sitting right in the middle of these five, while the other two were women sitting on the right, both of them were old and appeared to be in their sixties, but their charm was still there despite their wrinkled skins.

All of them were emitting an invisible deadly aura that was proof of their high cultivation.

At this moment, someone stepped inside this grand hall and quickly get on his knees without even a second delay. This was none other than New Moon, a Demon Duke was keening in front of these five demons!

"Harold Wolff greeted Royal Demon Council Elders and Five High-Elders!" New Moon, or Harold's voice, was filled with respect and reverence.

Everyone inside this hall was clad in that black attire were a Royal Demon Council Elders present in all provinces and five high-elders who managed the Royal Demon Council outside the royal zone!

Simply put, at this moment, the entirety of the Royal Demon Council's upper echelon was present in this hall!

All of this was for one reason, a... Thief!

"Rise, Harold, I didn't think I would see you this soon after I granted you your title." The High-Elder, sitting at the very right, spoke with an amiable tone, giving an elderly smile to Harold.

This old demon's wrinkled skin was red, and a pair of crimson eyeballs, and curved black horns on his head with short red hair. However, this old demon's ears were lit by red flames, which were flickering sporadically.

Harold didn't dare to show any disrespect and quickly replied, "High-Elder Crimson Flame, I also didn't think I would get another chance to see your exalted self again in this life."

Harold was telling the truth because these High-Elders didn't meet just anyone and the common public didn't even know about their existence. Only when a Demon Duke level Demon appeared did they get the chance to see one of the High Elders, and one could imagine just how rare it was to see all five of them together!

Furthermore, these High-Elders in seniority and rank were even higher than Demon Kings because they were under the direct command of the royal family, and they can contact the Royal Zone at any time, while Demon Kings didn't have such privileges.

That's why Harold didn't dare to show any kind of arrogance here because he knew if any one of these five High-Elder found him an eyesore, even the Mist Demon King behind him will kill him just to please them!

These High-Elders of the Royal Demon Council have this kind of authority or simply put, the royal zone was just too scary for all these demons living outside it!

High Elder, Crimson Flame, just smile amiably. He likes Harold because of his upright character and talent. It was quite to his liking, and that's why he didn't want to make things difficult for Harold.

However, this didn't mean others would have the same thoughts as him, though.

The old woman sitting on the fourth seat spoke impassively at this moment, "We, heard about your entire report about this incident from elder council... that thief or hex master, stole storage rings from over eighteen hundred demons and a demon marquis, and you didn't even notice, what were you a Demon Duke, doing while all this was happening right under your nose?"

This old demoness had an icy demeanor, her skin was gray while her eyes were brown with the same brown long hair, she had small gray horns and the most eye-catching thing about this woman was a three-centimeter diamond shape black gem embedded right between her eyebrows.

Harold suddenly felt a chill run down in spine when he felt the coldness in this old demoness voice, he didn't dare to talk back and quickly got on his knees and said, "I, know I have failed my duty as an evaluator and a demon duke, please punish me!"

"Hmph, do you think the punishment is enough for you? From my resources, I found out that you were using a Low-Grade-3 Surveillance Formation, but you still failed to notice that thief, and only when that hateful thief had done the deeds did you notice it... Oh, you didn't even notice it then as well, it was a victim!" The old demoness sitting at the very left coldly glared and berated Harold.

This fiery old demoness had yellow skin, a pair of silver horns, and long blonde silky hair, and her special trait was her pair of silver and golden eyeballs, giving off the feeling of cold and warm.

Harold sweated heavily at this moment. He knew he would be blamed for this since nothing can hide from these five high elders. They had a vast network of information, and they might've already known what has transpired in Iron Demon City before his report.

That might also be the reason they were able to gather together on such short notice from different parts of the continent.

"Now, now, ladies, don't give little guy such a hard time." The old demon sitting beside Crimson Flame spoke coolly at this moment, "I, also read the report and investigate it myself as well, it seemed that Hex Master has a very high-level hex for his appearance change, and he could use an unbreakable hex on a soul realm cultivator. However, what I'm not able to comprehend is why his victims remain unharmed despite being affected by those hexes."

This old demon had a scholarly demeanor. He had light blue skin with a pair of white eyeballs and black long hair sporting a pair of white horns. There was nothing special about him, except for four inches of holes in the center of his palms.

"I agree with brother Dark Hole. That's what I'm curious about as well, don't you all find it strange that this Hex Master can easily rob thousands and even hexed them at the same time, but he didn't attack them or kill them with his hexes and completely leave them alone?"

"It also seemed he wanted everyone to know his name, and he's using those hexes to announce it. Even before this event, this thief had appeared in the Iron Demon City before and done the same kind of stunt with his hexes, placing them on the theft sites. The reason for this entire war was him as well.

"It is just that no one else paid attention to him at that time and thought he was just a petty thief who was after fame. However, now he again appeared and take everyone by surprise, and he also got the fame he wanted. Now everyone knew about him."

Crimson Flame said with a hint of curiosity in his elderly voice. He had done his homework about Sky Stealer, and he knew this thief didn't kill anyone and just stole while putting hexes on places he theft.

This fascinated even someone like him because he can't see through this thief's motives. After all, no one will be foolish enough to enrage the royal demon council just for fame and attention.

Furthermore, if this thief was a hex master, then using his hexes publicly seemed even more foolish. Either he didn't know the status of hex masters in the demon race, or he just didn't care.

"Sigh... it's useless to debate over it. I have already received the order from the Royal Zone." At this moment, the middle-aged demon spoke in a grave tone.

This middle-aged demon has an imposing demeanor. His skin was white with a pair of golden eyeballs and short, white hair. His sword-like golden horns were two feet long. The most eye-catching thing about him was his sword-shaped fingers gave off a sharp, chilly feeling.

However, the moment this demon spoke, everyone's face turn serious when heard Royal Zone. They all knew their order was absolute, and they had to make sure to implore it.

Dark Hole promptly asked, "Brother White Sword, quickly tell us."

White Sword's eyes turn sharp as he said, "We should wait for the Blade Demon King, he's already approaching the assembly hall!"

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Chapter 345: Two Announcements

Just as White Sword's voice faded, a burst of jolly laughter rang, followed by a powerful deep voice, "Hahaha... Elder Brother Sword, it's been such a long time since you visit my domain!"

The old demoness with the black gem on her forehead frowned as she mumbled, "The Lunatic Blade finally appeared!"

The other three elders also showed different emotions, while White Sword's lips slightly rose in a faint smile.

At this moment, the assembly hall's large door smack opened, and a tall and broad-shouldered middle-aged demon entered everyone's view.

This newcomer was 2.6-meter-tall with a sturdy build. He wore black long king's robes with a blade insignia on its back. His skin was bright silver, while his eyeballs were crimson. His long red hair was like crimson fire, while his two silver horns were as sharp as two thin blades.

Two long blades were sheathed around his waist in black scabbards. He wore a broad smile on his pale silver lips, which showed his white beastly teeth.

This demon was none other than the Blade Demon King of Mighty Blade Province and also known as the Lunatic Blade within Soul Manifestation Realm Circle of Almighty Demon Empire!

As for why they called him Lunatic Blade, it was because Blade Demon King was a battle manic, and he'll challenge anyone who he found strong. He had no regard for their status or authority. His personality was straightforward.

"It seemed you're still crazy as ever, heh little blade." White Sword looked meaningfully at Blade Demon King with a faint smile.

If anyone dared to call Blade Demon King, Little Blade, they'll be instantly chopped into a thousand pieces, but Blade Demon King didn't seem angry at all. On the contrary, his smile widened while looking at White Sword.

He said, "Haha, Elder Brother Sword, you know me too well. I don't like pretentious or formalities. But you hurt this little brother's feeling by not even saying a word before coming to my home, and didn't even stop by at my castle for reminiscing over wine."

The old demoness with silver and golden eyeballs suddenly said with pursed lips, "Lunatic Blade, watch how you're talking with the First High Elder of the Royal Demon Council!"

Her tone was clearly unfriendly as if she was holding a deep grudge against Blade Demon King.

Blade Demon King merely threw an annoying gaze at this old demoness and said with pursed lips, "Old Witch, Lora, do you want to lose with another three moves?"

Lora's wrinkled face instantly flashed when Blade Demon King revealed her biggest shame in front of everyone. It was like someone just lit her tail on fire!

Harold was flabbergasted, and all the other elders of the Royal Demon Council were also watching all this with incredulity. But no one dared to say even a word, heck, they won't even dare to breathe loudly because they could tell Blade Demon King's words were true and Lora will kill them to hide her secret, and they pretend to not hear anything. But it was still shocking news that Lora had lost to Blade Demon King in three moves!

Nevertheless, the way these Soul Manifestation Realm Eccentrics were talking with each other left everyone baffled, especially White Sword calling Blade Demon King, 'Little Blade' and the other party reacting positively afterward.

Before Lora could fly toward Blade Demon King and attack him, White Sword's deep voice rang with a mountainous pressure. "We didn't have time to play around right now. They're here!"

Blade Demon King's easygoing demeanor suddenly changed into seriousness, as he also felt a very strong aura from outside. It was far stronger than White Sword. It was clear the other party deliberately releasing its aura.

Lora also swallowed her resentment and hatefully glare dagger at Blade Demon King, but didn't say another word.

Thereupon, two more tall and slim figures entered the assembly hall. Both were hiding their faces with black masks and wearing similar plain black robes.

However, the masked demon with pitch black eyeballs was giving off a very scary aura like a deadly snake, he was emotionlessly watching everyone. He was standing two steps behind the other mask demon, which clearly implied that he was a servant despite his deep cultivation!

As the other mask demon standing in front, his mask was even hiding his eyeballs with a thin layer of the dark mist. Furthermore, no one inside the assembly hall could see through his cultivation as if he was just a mortal demon, but everyone knew he was nothing but normal!

Just this demon's extraordinary bearing and the way he was facing six soul manifestation experts were enough to tell he had an extraordinary background.

This made everyone in the assembly hall astonished.

Both mask demons' horns were nowhere to be seen and everyone inside this hall have some idea that they were using some kind of illusion to hide their horns and that their black hair color might also be fake.

Moreover, the other demon seemed to even have a treasure to hide his cultivation, and no one tried to probe it either with their martial sense as well because it would be too rude and simply courting death with that other powerful demon behind him.

White Sword promptly stood up and greeted with a noble demon salute, "I welcome the Royal Envoys from Royal Zone!"

Everyone's faces changed when they heard 'Royal Envoys' because they knew only someone from the royal zone had the right to be greeted by the First High Elder of the Royal Demon Council in this manner, not even demon kings make him his head lower.

Everyone quickly stood up and follow suit as all the high elders and Blade Demon King perform the same salute as White Sword, while Harold and all the other Royal Demon Council Elder fell to their knees.

The demon who seemed with no cultivation said in a deep, imposing voice, "Killer, get me a chair."

The demon with pitch black eyeballs suddenly blurred for a moment before coming back to his position within a moment. But a black throne had appeared behind the commanding demon while the White Sword's throne had vanished from its position because this black throne was originally his, to begin with.

Those soul manifestation realms' high elders and Blade Demon King were shocked because they didn't clearly see this 'Killer' moving, and before they react, he had already moved the black throne right under White Sword's nose.

The other demon didn't mind their shocking expression, nor did he show any hint of apologizing to White Sword for talking on his throne so rudely and comfortably sitting on it before saying, "At ease, everyone."

Everyone was looking at this ordinary demon with astonishment because it was clear now that he was the leader between him and Killer, and he can easily order around a soul manifestation realm demon who seemed even more powerful than White Sword.

Which clearly made them dread this mysterious demon even more and his background inside the royal zone. No one dare to sit anymore, even high elders because White Sword was standing with an impassive face.

He didn't show any kind of emotion and just looked at the demon sitting on his throne. This was a blunt disrespect to him, but he knew he wasn't a match for the other party, so he could only endure without even showing his anger.

Even someone like Blade Demon King didn't show any kind of discomfort, although he was a battle lunatic he wasn't a suicidal lunatic, and he could tell clashing with the other party would not go in a very pleasant ending this was still his domain, and home.

A fight between soul manifestation realm experts was never pretty for those below this realm!

The demon sitting on the throne spoke again, "I'll not take all the elders' important time. I'm here to announce two things on the behalf of Emperor's Domain!"

It was another shock for everyone. What was Emperor's Domain? It was the central area of the mighty demon continent, where the Demon Emperor Palace was located!

They finally understand this masked demon was probably someone from the royal family since only a member of the royal family can represent the Emperor's Domain!

This time it was not just council elders but High Elders and Demon King who also fell on their knees and White Sword deeply said, "We're ready to receive his imperial highness announcement!"

The demon on the throne didn't reject being called, 'Imperial Highness', which was also akin to silently admitting he was from Emperor's Domain.

He said, "First, I'm here to arrest the vile villain of Hex Demon Race and I want elders' support."

"Your Imperial Highness, you're too polite. We'll naturally assist you!" White Sword quickly agreed, and everyone nodded after him.

They must be tired of living if they reject this person's request.

"Good." He merely nodded before an exquisite golden scroll appeared in his hand with a red seal.

He opened it and read, "**The second announcement is for all the demon race youths outside the royal zone!**"

"For the first time in the history of our demon race, in Twenty-Four Months, the royal zone will open its gates for all the young demons in common provinces!

"Any demon with at least soul realm potential bloodline, age below 100, and cultivation below River Core Realm is eligible for participating in the trails of three Demon Institutes of Royal Zone as long as they pass the Demon Gates Trail...!"

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Chapter 346: Advent

Two days after the Noble Tribe Title War between Iron Demon Tribe and Dark Gibbon Demon Tribe was voided.

This news reached almost every city in the Ocean Demon Duchy and from some unknown source, everyone found out that this event was related to a thief called Sky Stealer.

The most frustrated about this event was none other than Demon Duke Livy because he lost a massive face when the public found out a mere thief has stolen the Left Ocean Spear storage ring and even done something ghastly with his face.

Furthermore, he also got the letter from Henrik himself that he better not took any strange actions since this was related to the enemy of the entire demon race, Hex Demons. At least not until the royal demon council made a decision.

This left Livy extremely infuriated and helpless because he just wanted to get rid of the incompetent Iron Demon Tribe, and the reason for this was also the appearances of different thieves from their city.

He didn't even bother to investigate and directly decided to eliminate the city with an official war.

But he never thought this matter will blow up so much so that a Hex Master would appear causing a tremendous commotion during a noble title war and even dare humiliate his tribe by stealing from Henrik and using a hex on his face.

Moreover, Livy was even more incensed about the appearance of the New Moon in his territory without any prior notice and made the decision to report this matter to the council without his concern.

Typically, it was supposed to be him who had to report this, but he was clueless about this entire thing until Henrik's letter came.

Now, Livy can not only do anything, but he doesn't even dare to go to the Iron Demon City because this matter was related to a Hex Master and this might implicate him since that hex master has appeared in his duchy's second-largest city!

So, to take a minimum damaged, Livy didn't go and wait until the council was done with their investigation and then feign clueless about this entire matter and dump it on the Iron Demon Tribe.

However, he knew even if this plan worked, he would still have to suffer from Blade Demon King's punishment, since it also affected Blade Demon Tribe but not as much as Ocean Demon Tribe.

Livy, in the end, had no choice but to seek advice from his father, the Old Demon Duke who was currently one of Blade Demon King's generals, because only he can save him if things went awry.

On the fourth day,

A stunning announcement was made by the Royal Demon Council which make every demon's heart skip a beat for an instant, and this news was not about the Iron Demon City Incident at all.

This news was more of an announcement, an announcement directly from the Royal Zone!

It was about the mass recruitment of young demons with soul realm bloodline grade potential, and all the details were made public.

This stirred the entire demon race living outside the royal zone. It was almost every young demon's dream to go to the royal zone; it was akin to their dreamland.

But alas, it never happened before. However, now this heaven send opportunity was given to them, how could they let it slide?

Every large demon tribe started to prepare their youths for this 'Demon Gate Trial' going to start in twenty-four months.

Even those hidden demon tribes that seldom made contact with the outside world started to move.

This opportunity was simply too hard to miss, and this also start a large movement in the mighty demon continent.

This announcement greatly affected the resource prices, pills, weapons, and talismans... which made the merchants even happier.

Everyone seemed to completely forget about Iron Demon City as if nothing mattered any more than this Demon Gate Trail.

This was also the result the demon council wanted to achieve for some reason as well!

The Iron Demon City had no idea about this huge announcement, as it was deliberately done to achieve such a result.

Both armies were now waiting for the Royal Demon Council's decision, and Henrik was monitoring both sides.

The Iron Demon Tribe was shrouded in gloominess because things were looking grim for them after what happened.

While the Dark Gibbon Demon Tribe seemed quite cheerful as if they were victors and just waiting for the last order to take control of the Iron Demon City.

At this moment, Henrik, who was sitting on top of the city wall, frowned and took out the cube Harold handed him before leaving.

He saw two carriages enter the perimeter of the eagle surveillance formation and those carriages were nothing but ordinary because they were moving without any demonic beast. They were the size of a small house!

Both carriages were without any emblem, but they were clearly made with special materials.

Henrik didn't dare to neglect these two carriages coming this way because he knew no one would dare to come here except the royal demon council.

He quickly descended the city wall and go toward the destroyed city gate to welcome these carriages.

Everyone's attention was drawn to these special carriages when they come closer, especially Dark Gibbon Army, who was staying outside the city wall.

However, at this moment, something beyond everyone's expectations happened.

Everyone saw hundreds of dark beams shooting toward the sky, releasing from one of the carriages and within seconds, a dark veil started to cover the golden sky like black curtains.

After a few moments, the entire Iron Demon City and ten-kilometer area around it were completely sealed within this dark veil, completely cutting off both tribes from outside.

Henrik suddenly started to feel uneasy, and other tribes' elders as well showed worried expressions.

But they all can only insure themselves by thinking that this formation was for the thief, not for them.

It didn't take before both carriages stopped right outside the broken city gate and both doors slowly opened.

One after another, nine demons disembark the carriages, two from the first one while seven from the other one.

The first two demons were wearing black masks while the other seven weren't and each one of them has distinguished appearances like the old demon with fire ears and the old woman with a black gem on her forehead.

Henrik, even one knows of those seven demons, it was none other than New Moon who was gone to the royal demon council four days ago!

"Is he the one with a hexed face?" the demon, with a mask covering his entire face and eyes, asked deeply, without giving Henrik any chance to greet them.

Harold didn't dare to delay and quickly nodded in confirmation, "Yes, your imperial highness, he's the demon marquis who was affected by the hex demon!"

Henrik was shocked when he heard the 'Imperial' word and knew this person's identity was extraordinary. And dropped to his knees and said, "Henrik Ocean, greeted His Imperial Highness!"

Henrik's action was clearly noticed by both sides, and they all followed suit after him with a hint of awe in their eyes.

However, the person himself seemed completely oblivious to all this as his deep voice sounded again, "Show me your face."

Henrik hesitated for a moment before taking off the mask from his face, revealing the thief symbol.

The demon with pitch black eyes, Killer, suddenly narrowed his black eyebrows seeing the thief symbol while those five high elders and Blade Demon King standing behind also curiously see the thief symbol.

"This is blunt disrespect toward our royal demon council!" Lora couldn't help but exclaim with a hint of anger after reading the Thief Farewell Note.

Even White Sword, who rarely showed any extensive emotion, was frowning. This was really a slap toward noble demons.

Truth be told, they were all here because of this mysterious Imperial Highness, or they would never come to such a place themselves.

After the shocking second announcement, they all wanted to prepare for the upcoming Demon Gate Trail post hastily and even wanted to suppress the news for a month to get an advantage over others.

But this demon didn't let them and made them release the news all over the continent and only after the news was made public did he move toward the Iron Demon City, dragging all the soul manifestation realm experts of Royal Demon Council and even Blade Demon King with him.

Those wily old demons weren't fools, and they quickly understood this demon didn't want the others to pay attention to this place and distract their attention with the huge announcement.

But they still didn't understand just why he didn't want anyone to know about this and had no choice but to follow his command.

They even confirm his identity when he gave the 'Imperial Order' about the Demon Gate Trail to them and this made it even clearer that his identity was too special, so they can't just refuse his request upfront.

At this moment, the mysterious demon spoke, "How much can you extract?"

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Chapter 347: We Called Demons!

At this moment, the mysterious demon spoke, "How much can you extract?"

Everyone became confused by this strange question, as they had no idea about what he meant by 'extract' and Henrik suddenly felt a chill run down his spine when he saw Killer was glancing at him with those icy pitch-black eyes.

Killer, on the other hand, seemed to understand what this question meant and answer candidly while looking at Henrik, "He's at the peak of Early Golden Qi Soul Realm, so I can only extract about fifteen percent of his memory before he'll die!"

A hint of understanding flashed past those soul manifestation realm experts when they heard Killer's answer, while Henrik's face turned ashen.

They were simply talking about soul-searching him like it was drinking water!

They all knew a soul search was the cruelest method to kill someone and also gained information. But they also knew the higher your cultivation, the harder it was to soul search someone and the chance of getting what you want was extremely low before the other party died or turn into a vegetable.

Furthermore, the soul cultivator like Henrik had a very powerful soul, so it was even harder to soul search them if they put an absolute resistance, which anyone who didn't want to die will naturally put.

However, this was still a very cruel method. That's why it was completely forbidden to use publicly, but now this mysterious demon was talking about it like it was nothing big deal.

Those High Elders and Blade Demon King started to understand why this guy wanted to distract everyone's attention from this place and even put such a formation in play so no one could enter or exit.

Harold's complexion was only slightly better than Henrik's because he had a very good impression of Henrik, and he was also a soul realm cultivator, just like Henrik, but this Imperial Highness seemed to don't care about cultivators like them.

"Please show mercy, my lord, I have done nothing wrong, this was all just because I was too careless and let that thief..." Henrik instantly pleaded because he could tell the other party had meant to really kill him or soul search him.

However, Henrik's pleading was cut short by two words from the other demon, which sent him into the pits of hell!

"Kill him," He said those words without any hint of emotions behind his voice.

No one could see just what kind of demon was hidden behind that mask!

Before anyone could react, a twisted voice of someone's neck being cracked sounded in the silent vicinity of iron demon city, and the next moment, Henrik's lifeless body fell backward from his kneeling position.

Everyone's heart turned cold because they didn't see how Henrik, a soul realm cultivator, died in an instant. While those soul manifestation realm's cultivators' eyes narrowed, they clearly knew it was very easy to kill someone like Henrik with their cultivation realm.

However, this was still a soul realm demon with a demon marquis title to his name. But it seemed this imperial highness didn't care about it all, and they knew everyone in the royal zone looked down on the common provinces, but it still felt terrible.

Blade Demon King had an ugly expression on his face because Henrik was from his fief and a soul realm demon marquis of ocean demon tribe, and the old ocean demon duke was his very loyal subordinate.

But he can't do anything right now. This left an unpleasant taste in his mouth and if not for the other party being stronger and having a superior status over him, he would've started fighting!

After Henrik's tragic death, the thief symbol from his face suddenly vanished without any trace, and the Killer and the masked demon were also watching this.

The masked demon spoke again in an impassive voice, "It seemed this hex can't affect or shift on someone else after the victim's death nor does it seem to have any kind of attacking ability, and it didn't activate its function without the caster.

"Which means this Hex was at least an advance level hex magic, and we're dealing with an Advance Hex Master, with minimum cultivation of Soul Realm."

Everyone finally understood why he killed Henrik. It was just because to probe the hex prowess, and it seemed he had a very high evaluation of it.

But he still killed a soul realm cultivator without batting an eye just because he wanted to examine the hex, which showed everyone this demon was too cruel and decisive!

Blade Demon King spoke at this moment with a stern voice, "How can, Your Imperial Highness, be so sure about this?"

He was simply asked for an explanation for why he had to kill Henrik just for this simple reason. They were thousands of victims. They could still achieve the same result just by killing them as well.

White Sword merely sighed, seeing the Lunatic Blade questioning someone from the royal zone, and others also felt this guy really deserved his title as a lunatic.

The other party didn't seem to mind Blade Demon King's rude question and answer coolly, "It's very simple actually, the hex magic is divided into four ranks: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and Flawless. The higher the hex magic rank, the more powerful a hex will be and the more control the hex master had over it as well.

"You see, if this hex was cast with either beginner or intermediate hex magic, then it either activates on its own or it started to spread in the form of a dark mist which also caused the hex master who cast it a backlash.

"But nothing like this happened, which made this an advanced hex, and only a demon with the Hex Demon Bloodline can achieve advanced rank proficiency over hex magic. No other race.

"Because without the hex demon bloodline, you're simply courting death if you practice Hex Magic. It seemed Demon King is unsatisfied with this demon's death?"

Everyone was shocked by this revelation because they didn't know much about the Hex Demon Race since it was completely destroyed by the royal family thousands of years ago.

But it seemed this hex demon race was really dreadful, and it was indeed possible for them to challenge the royal family for their authority as the monarchy of the demon race.

However, they still failed, and this also showed just how fearsome the royal demon family was!

As for his last words, it made everyone tense and those high elders shot warning gazes at Blade Demon King to keep his mouth shut, but would he listen?

Blade Demon King honestly replied, "If your imperial highness knew this much about the Hex Demon Race, then you'll also know how to break these hexes, right? There wasn't any need to kill a soul realm demon, a strong pillar of our race."

"Heh, Blade Demon King's upright reputation indeed precedes His Majesty. But you're wrong this time because there isn't any panacea for advanced hex magic, and we didn't know what that advanced hex was capable of.

"Who knows? It was a mind control hex and slowly take control over his mind without him or anyone knowing about it, and then he'll be directly under the control of that hex master. So, killing him painlessly was showing him the mercy of sort."

He spoke in a mild voice without showing any hint of anger that Blade Demon King questioned his decision and even called him 'His Majesty', which was a kind of recognition toward the Blade Demon King.

However, everyone was shocked by his words, and they felt real dread for this hex demon race for the first time and understood why this race was eliminated and why the royal zone sent someone from the royal family to deal with this matter as quickly as possible.

Blade Demon King's eyes shimmer with understanding, "I understand. Please forgive my previous rudeness."

However, those two sides who were listening to these bigwigs' conversation were gobsmacked when they heard words like 'Demon King' and then 'Blade Demon King'.

Who was a demon king? A god-like existence in the eyes of these tribes and he was standing right in front of them and speaking so respectfully with the other party, this naturally scared them shitless, and they finally understood just what kind of demons had come to this little place, and they even forget about the tragic death of Henrik!

Now they understood one thing: no one can resist these demons, no one!

The masked demon merely chuckled and said, "Heh, Demon King, do you know the one and absolute rule of our demon race?"

Everyone became confused since they're many such rules, not just one, and Blade Demon King also the same and truthfully replied, "Please enlighten this King."

It was Killer who replied with breathtaking killing intent that only a real cruel demon could have,

"Never Forget We Are Called 'Demons'!"

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Chapter 348: Brand Destroyer Talisman

Inside the underground chamber in Iron Demon City,

Currently, Ace was practicing his rune crafting while trying to achieve tier-4, and he was very close to drawing the lightning symbol when suddenly the symbol suddenly turned into dark light particles as Ace's focus suddenly snapped.

Ace was startled first before his heart palpitated when his soul sense buzzed in alarm. However, he didn't use his heavenly sense because this danger wasn't from inside the chamber, but it was from outside.

He looked toward Noa and saw she was completely oblivious to this deadly feeling from outside and felt relief when he thought this was probably because of this room's special material that they remain out of mischief.

Ace finally lose his nerve when he thought they were still safe inside here and might not suffer any danger as long as they wait until this danger passed.

'Did those demons make a move? But just what did they do outside to even make my soul sense tremble to this degree? Right now, I can only feel emptiness and deadly momentum from whatever they released.' Ace's expression turned solemn.

'But this room is really wonderful, even with this deadly, mysterious formation. It still can't affect us? Just what kind of material this room is made of? I even try cutting it with my sword finger, but it didn't leave any mark on it.

'Which means even half sword intent of shadow element isn't enough to cut these stones. I wonder if my complete sword intent will be able to achieve such a thing. I definitely had to come back in the future to retrieve every stone from this chamber. Furthermore, I might get unexpected rewards.' A sharp glint flashed past Ace's eyes when he looked at this mysterious chamber.

This was very good for practice and training, and he didn't have to worry about damaging it, and it could even hide from martial senses, and even high-level formation didn't seem to detect it.

However, Ace's focus was momentarily diverted before he again sensed an even more powerful undulation from outside, as if something was trying to penetrate deep underground, but this chamber was easily resisting this invisible force.

Ace's expression was grave. 'It seemed they're come with a powerful formation this time to see if I was still hidden inside the city and if not for this mysterious chamber, they might've found me...

'Leaving after thieving is still better, it simply too risky to stay behind to observe and reap even more benefits, I'm dealing with the second hegemony of this world and I still didn't know the entirety of their method, so I better escape far away after the theft.'

Suddenly, Noa's pitch black eyes snapped open and shimmer with a dark hue as she looked at Ace.

Ace suddenly felt gazed at by a predator and instantly looked in Noa's direction with a hint of astonishment.

That dark hue suddenly vanished when Ace looked toward her and Noa's melodious voice filled with joy sounded, "Leader, I achieve Low-level mastery in Thief Assassin's Soul View just now!"

Ace couldn't help but feel happy for her and nodded with a faint smile, "Congratulations, this skill seemed quite powerful. It even made me feel cold."

Noa nodded and said, "Yes, Thief Assassin's Soul View can help me view hidden rune symbols, traps, and enemies as well as I can also see killing intent with this skin toward me like a rising smoke even if someone is deeply hidden in it.

"But it can only help me see through Grade-1 runes, while I can only overpower a River Core Cultivator and slightly see through a newly become soul realm cultivator."

She truthfully told Ace about the Thief Assassin's Soul View's pros and cons.

"It also appeared, leader's senses are far stronger than my Thief Assassin's Soul View, or it was impossible to defect even for a soul realm cultivation when I used this skill with No-Kill." She couldn't help but praise Ace for his sharp senses.

Ace merely chuckled and humbly said, "Heh, I just have an innate ability which is too sensitive against danger, or I don't think I can detect Miss Noa's Thief Assassin's Soul View so easily."

Noa's eyes flashed, but she didn't ask further. She knew Ace was just too mysterious, and he had many abilities that he didn't reveal to her. But she was satisfied as long as he was on her side and she could walk on the thief's path with him.

Ace suddenly remembered and flip his hand and a storage ring appeared in his hand and threw it toward Noa, who caught it intuitively before looking at Ace with bewilderment.

Ace smiled and said, "These are books related to alchemy that I have 'collected' over the years from my homeland, I don't know if they're useful to you demons or not, but they're useless to me since I already remembered them. They're also books that I 'got' after my trip outside. All in all, they should all be enough for providing you with enough knowledge until 1st Grade Alchemist."

Ace was telling the truth because after he gained heaven's stealer gloves, he found out that his heavenly sense can now be used to instantly memorize these books with just a mere scan.

This made him thrilled because now he didn't have to skim through all those books in his storage ring, and he can just remember them after scanning them with his heavenly sense almost instantly.

That's why he was planning to give these books he got from the treasure mountain and other places to Noa since she needed to be an alchemist to practice her demon body technique she got from the system.

"Thank you." Noa didn't reject Ace's help, since she knew she needed it.

When she probed inside the storage ring Ace gave her, her eyes suddenly went wide with shock because this ring was a low-grade-1 ring with 200 cubic meters of space inside. Even she didn't have this quality storage ring.

But was truly shocked her was this ring was filled with thousands of books, and they weren't just any random books, they were fire controlling techniques, pill formulas, and herb raising... all in all, those books were enough to make any new alchemist like her eyes green with envy and now Ace has given all of them to her.

She knew she didn't need all of them, but she was still moved by Ace's consideration and decided to work harder to not let him down.

Ace merely chuckled seeing Noa's reaction and said, "Also, I remembered, you have stolen storage rings with you, which means they'll be still locked with Qi marks. I can also help you remove those Qi marks."

Ace didn't pay attention to this point before and suddenly remembered that Noa didn't have the ability or system to remove Qi marks from those stolen rings, so he quickly offered his help since it was his duty, to begin with.

Noa's eyes shimmered with uncertainty as she questioned, "Leader have Brand Destroyer Talisman?"

Ace become confused and asked, "What Brand Destroyer Talisman?"

"I heard this Brand Destroyer Talisman is something very expensive and can only be bought from the King Domain, but its supplies were always tiny, and only those powerful demon clans can get their hands on it.

"The reason for this talisman's high demand is that this Brand Destroyer Talisman can completely destroy the Qi mark on the storage ring and also removed the Qi mark from treasures, which will make it extremely easy to refine." Noa quickly told whatever she knew about this talisman to Ace.

Ace's eyes suddenly lit up when he heard there was really something that can save his 100 Thief Points he would use to unlock those storage rings, and he knew many of them weren't even worth this much, but he had no choice but to do so since he didn't know another way before.

But now that Noa had revealed this Brand Destroyer Talisman's existence, he instantly wanted to get his hands-on thousands of them. But he knew he wasn't the only one with such thoughts because something that can remove Qi marks will always be in high demand in the market, and those big clans will never let commoners get their hands on them.

But this doesn't mean he can't get this talisman hands on these talismans because all he had to do was to found the supplier of this talisman which was also quite easy to guess, Life Demon Association, which was the only organization powerful enough to even create and then monopolized something like this under everyone greedy eyes.

'I should really raid 'Life Demon Association' next time.'

Ace really wanted to head toward this organization at this instant, but he knew after his appearance and the commotion he caused, it would be not wise to create any more commotion so soon, or he really might draw some scary existence's attention which will make his thievish life even more difficult.

Well, he still didn't know he was already under the radar of this continent's biggest power, and if he paid some attention to his newly stolen storage rings, he would be shocked to find out that their Qi marks were completely gone!

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Chapter 349: View of Outside

Ace's smiling face suddenly turned serious when his soul sense finally calmed down, but he knew something must've big happened outside since it lasted for whole five minutes.

Noa also noticed the change in Ace's expression and couldn't help but asked with uncertainty, "Leader, is there something wrong?"

Ace knew Noa can't sense what just happened outside, so he told her how he felt that mysterious undulation for a whole five minutes, and then it suddenly vanished.

"It might be a powerful surveillance formation that can also lock cultivators with a specific realm and, by how powerful that undulation was, it seemed, even a Soul Realm Expert will find it difficult to escape this formation suppression. We're lucky this room can evade that formation, or we might've encountered some terrible luck." Ace's voice was grave in the end.

Noa's eyes also narrowed with a hint of dread. She said, "I think we should leave this place as soon as possible, since we didn't know this place's full capacity, and we can't leave our safety in luck."

Ace nodded. "I was thinking the same, but we still have to wait for a week or two, just to be sure. Besides, we have to completely hide this chamber. Who knows, it might come in handy someday, or we can always dismantle this room in the future."

Ace was telling the truth about 'dismantling' this entire room in the future. It's not like he didn't have already tried and failed miserably, since his dismantler rank was still too low.

Noa nodded in agreement with Ace's words.

Three weeks passed in a flash,

But nothing out of the ordinary happened like three weeks ago and Ace was keeping a close eye outside with his soul sense, he still didn't dare to use his heavenly sense because he still wasn't sure if those people left or not or there was any formation monitoring the iron demon city.

Furthermore, Ace's biggest reason for still refusing to exit this room was actually the absence of Iron Demon Tribe or any other tribe, as a matter-of-factly. Because even after three entire weeks, he still didn't find any movement in a living being, which left him confused and worried at the same time.

He knew the demon race wasn't like humans who react too slowly and after the event of three weeks before; he was sure they had made some kind of move, but obviously failed, since he was still safe and sound.

However, Ace still didn't neglect his practice and was rewarded for his effort as well. He was now sure he needed to raise his strength if he wanted to progress any further with his skills and techniques.

Expect some techniques and skills like Soul Words, which solely depend on his law comprehension or his movement skills that required physical practice and experience.

Nevertheless, he was still happy with this increase in his strength, especially in his professions like rune crafting and dismantler art.

"Status!" Ace wanted to see just how much progress he had made and what he needed to pay attention to more.

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[Status Panel]

[Host: Ace White]

[Race: Human]

[Bloodline: Sealed]

[First Heaven: Mortal Sky Heaven]

[Martial Cultivation: Heavenly Dark Sea [Stage-3]]

[EXP: 32,020/50,000]

[Soul Cultivation: Orange Wind Soul Core [Stage-3]]

[SP: 20,000/50,000]

[Skills: 8]

-Heartless Stealth (Art):

[Breathless Stealth: Perfection]

Pulseless Stealth: Perfection

Heartless Stealth: NONE]

-Misperception Sky Steps (Art):

[Camouflage Steps: Low

Lightning Steps: Middle

Misperception Steps: Low

Sky Steps: NONE]

-Soul Shattering Eyes: [Middle]

-Soul Piercing Bullets: [Middle]

-Soul Guardian Barrier (Art):

[Soul Barrier: Middle

Soul Guardian: NONE]

-Pick Pocket: [Perfection]

-Treasure Opening Hands [Art]: [5th Form]

-Lock Eraser King Technique:

Lock Eraser Master: Novice

Lock Eraser Grandmaster: None

Lock Eraser King: None

[Cultivation Technique: 5]

-Heaven Stealer Technique: Volume 1

-Dual Shadow Swords: 2nd Realm (Sword of Finger)

-Heavenly Rune Crafter Foundational Manual: Tier-4

-Soul Words [Despair Manual]:

1. Deep Despair Soul Words: 0.3%

[Three Stages: Low at (10%), Intermediate at (50%), High at (99%)]

2. Extreme Despair Soul Words: 0.0%

[Three Stages: Low at (10%), Intermediate at (50%), High at (99%)]

3. Deadly Despair Soul Words: 0.0%

[Three Stages: Low at (10%), Intermediate at (50%), High at (99%)]

-Heaven's Stealer Dismantler Manual [First Vol]

Three Heaven's Stealer Dismantler Principles:

1. Treasure Dismantler Principles: 6-Star Treasure Dismantler

2. Alchemy Dismantler Principles: 6-Star Alchemy Dismantler

3. Runic Dismantler Principles: 6-Star Runic Dismantler

[Law(s): 3]

-Despair: 0.03%

-Shadow: 0.05%

-Sword: 1.00%

[Thief Point(s): 18,012,000]

[Mission(s): 0]

[Side Mission(s): 1]

=====

Ace smile faintly when he saw the law section on his status panel. After his breakthrough in the second realm of dual shadow swords technique and comprehending half shadow sword intent, he could feel his understanding regarding the sword has improved to a new level, and he could now use faint element intent with his Qi without a sword in his hand, unlike any other weapon cultivator who needed a specific weapon to show a weapon intent's true might!

This was the true meaning behind the realm Sword of Finger which didn't require Ace to hold swords in his hand and he could turn his fingers into swords, but he was still far cry from comprehending the third realm, Sword in Mind, of dual shadow swords.

He mused he needed at least to comprehend 10% of both Shadow and Sword Laws to achieve this realm. Furthermore, he also found that shadow law has made his stealth more potent, although he can't use the shadow Qi yet.

But he knew as long as this law reached a satisfactory threshold he could acquire shadow element Qi or some kind of intent Qi like sword intent. However, he knew this was still a pipe dream since he didn't know how to raise his law comprehension.

Despite that, Ace was satisfied with the second sword art he created after achieving the second realm before he didn't seem to complete it, but after he comprehended half sword intent, he finally completed it, and he was itching to find someone to use it on and his first sword art also become more powerful as well!

'My Heaven's Stealer Dismantler Principles had suddenly stopped improving after I achieve 6-star at every principle, it seemed I needed to increase my strength before I can increase Heaven's Stealer Dismantler Principles further.' Ace thought before he closed his status panel.

He had already made plans for his further advancement, but first; he had to find a place where he could obtain a large amount of soul-type resources, and every time he thought about this problem, it gave him a headache.

This was probably the biggest problem he had to solve after elemental orbs if he wanted to increase his strength.

'I can't think of any better places to acquire those soul materials besides a demon duke tribe's treasury, king domain's big clans, or Life Demon Association where I can gain a large amount of soul type resources.

'But each of these places is more dangerous than the other if I could just have accurate information of a demon duke tribe's treasury...'

Suddenly Ace's eyes lit up at this point because he knew someone who had information on a demon duke tribe, and she'll happily tell him everything, Noa!

'It's time to settle Noa's grievance with Ocean Demon Duchy and Livy.' Ace's eyes shimmered with confidence.

After his successful thievery on Henrik a soul realm expert, his art of stealing became even more perfect, and he knew as long as he didn't encounter a powerful soul realm expert who's using its marital sense to the fullest he might really pull thievery of this level.

As for King Demon and Life Demon Association, he knew if he provoked these two places too soon, he'll have multiple soul manifestation demons on his tail and he knew just how deadly a soul manifestation realm expert was. He nearly died in one's clone hand.

'But first I have to leave this place.' Ace again felt with his soul sense and find nothing out of the ordinary, just like every day.

In the end, with a decisive expression, he finally used his heavenly sense for an instant and after waiting for a while, nothing happened, which made him sigh in relief.

Ace again used his heavenly sense, however, his expression turned ashen when he saw the outside. 'Just what happened here?!

Ace saw the outside was completely turned into a dark wasteland. There wasn't any hint of greenery or any blade of grass present. Everything was black, the houses were nowhere to be seen!

Suddenly, Ace remembered that powerful undulation and sweated. 'Could it be that the formation wasn't some trapping or surveillance formation, but an attacking formation? But even those formations might not be capable of turning a place full of life into a black wasteland!'

Ace felt his scalp tingle in trepidation. He suddenly had a terrible feeling this time around, and he could only think of one thing right now: 'I'm again targeted by a powerful existence!'

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Chapter 350: Land of No Life!

A sudden realization dawned on Ace when he looked at the black land outside. He suddenly checked his thief's space and when he inspected his newly stolen storage ring collection, he was shocked because they were all opened, even Henrik's!

'This could only mean two things, first, the owners of these storage rings' willingly remove their Qi marks, so they could escape the sudden backlash, or everyone is dead... and I think the probability of the latter happening is quite high which would also explain the black wasteland outside. But can these demons really kill a soul realm demon?'

Ace was very confused about this as well as horrified because if all of this was true, then this meant someone with a very high authority has made a move if Henrik was really dead.

But what he didn't understand was would they kill a soul realm demon?

'Is it because of the Thief Farewell Note I left on his face? Well, it's also possible that Livy might get extremely enraged and killed Henrik and everyone here? It is possible for someone like him, but turning the entire city into a black wasteland, I don't think he had such means...' Ace mused with a grim expression.

'I should leave this place as soon as possible.' Ace finally decided as he stood up.

Noa was currently moving in a strange pattern on the other corner of the room, stopped when she saw Ace move. She was practicing the movement skill 'Thief Assassin's Soul Steps' for three weeks, but still hasn't achieved any breakthrough.

She mused it was because the practicing space was too little, but Ace didn't let her go outside because of obvious reasons, so she could only make the best of what she had.

Ace also saw Noa coming toward and said, "Wait here, something happened outside, and I'm going to check if it's safe to leave this place or not. If I came back in a day, then we'll leave this place and if I don't, then you have to stay put."

Noa wanted to inquire about what has made Ace serious, but seeing his grave expression, she nodded and said, "I understand. Be careful."

She knew she can't be any of help to Ace in her current cultivation realm, and she'll only get in his way, so she could only comply to remain idle while feeling extremely perplexed.

With a nod, Ace moved toward the exit and slowly opened the small door, and black soil fell onto the stairs.

He carefully exited with his stealth active and close the door and cover it with black soil and removed his trace. After he was done, he dashed toward the exit of the Silver Iron Demon Clan's territory.

He hoped that this black land was only this area, but he was soon flabbergasted because he didn't see any kind of buildings in silver-iron demon territory, only black lands.

It was as if the entire silver-iron demon estate had turned into black flat lands. There weren't even ruins left. Only black soil was drifting everywhere with the chilly wind of winter.

As Ace moved further toward the city gates, he found nothing but the same black lands, not even the tall city walls were there anymore, nor were any living beings or buildings. It was as if he was in a black wasteland.

'Just what kind of formation is capable of turning an entire city into such condition? Or just what kind of existence is capable enough to take out this formation? A Demon King?' Ace's heart was heavy as he thought about all the possibilities, but he can't get an accurate answer because of his limited knowledge about the demon race.

However, this time he wasn't at fault because even those demons living outside the royal zone can't fathom just what has happened here. After all, it was related to the royal zone and that place was akin to a mystery for common provinces.

Ace finally reached the place where the city gate was supposed to be, and his eyes suddenly dilated when he saw pitch black soil, which differed completely from the other black land.

He couldn't help but touch it, and it wasn't like soil. It was more like a soft powder, and Ace's heart sank when he thought of something after touching this pitch-black soil.

'Ashes?' Ace could only think about this because this left a black, inky impression on his finger.

'These ashes are completely covering a large area and those demons won't burn wood and wood ashes are gray, which means these ashes belong to something else... those demons!'

Ace couldn't help but think this way because when he remembered all those Qi marks vanished suddenly and this ash will completely explain the reason behind them as well!

'They killed everyone?' Ace's heart turn cold when he thought about this possibility, and he knew this was really the case, 'Really worthy of being the demon race, massacring with no remorse even their own people, and this had to be done by an extremely influential demon who see everyone as ant...'

With a heavy expression, Ace make sure there wasn't any trap or surveillance. It seemed the other party was quite sure he wasn't here anymore after that formation had done its work and deemed it was useless to skim through this waste-city anymore and left.

But he knew whoever it was they'll come back if he appeared again, and he had to be extremely careful from now.

Ace quickly returned to the underground chamber, which was probably the only thing left of Iron Demon City. He fetched Noa, so they could leave this place as soon as possible.

When Noa come out, she was even more shocked than Ace when she saw the black lands with no life or any structures.

Ace quickly express his thoughts and Noa also nodded in agreement with him. She also felt this was the work of a very terrifying existence, but even she didn't think of the royal zone and only suspect a demon king, just like Ace.

After hiding in the secret chamber completely, both of them left in stealth. As for their destination, it was Cloud Demon City, the third-largest city of Ocean Demon Duchy, or now second after Iron Demon City's fall.

As for why they go toward this city, it was because first; it wasn't far from Iron Demon City, and second, Ace was still feeling uneasy, and he wanted to collect some information about what has happened to the Iron Demon City.

He extinguished the thought of going toward the Ocean Demon City right now because that was the city under a demon duke and the person who massacred the Iron Demon City might be there. So, the Cloud Demon City was their best choice right now.

After they left the periphery of the former Iron Demon City, they finally saw greenery again, but they were still shocked because the area that has turned black wasteland was far bigger than Iron Demon City, which gave Ace the chills just thinking about how powerful that formation might be.

Now the iron demon city and the ten-kilometer area around it have completely turned into the land of no life!

Ace suddenly mumbled, "I think I need a new face now."

He was currently in Pablo's face and wearing his trainee's hood, completely counseling his face. But he knew wearing an Iron Demon Tribe's Demon Face was nothing but a disaster right now and Henrik had clearly seen it as well, so he can't use Pablo's face right now.

"Yes, I was also thinking the same." Noa's voice sounded in agreement. She spoke little after she saw what happened to the Iron Demon City, and couldn't help but think of her own tribe.

Ace could feel Noa's complicated emotions, but he didn't say anything. He just didn't know what to say.

After they travel for a full day and night, they stopped for rest since Noa was a soul foundation realm cultivator. She can't move continually like Ace and needed rest and eat as well.

But Ace had all it covered since he was foody himself. He also found out that Noa has never eaten something cooked before, and he was shocked to find out that the demons eat raw meat, which left him somewhat disgusted, but he said nothing.

Noa naturally eats in her tent without showing her face and even praised Ace's cooking skills afterward. She never thought 'burning' meat will taste so good.

Ace naturally had excellent cooking skills because he learned them from his grandma and he work at a restaurant from a young age, so he picked a few things despite just being a dishwasher.

They start their journey again, and the Cloud Demon City was only a day's worth of travel away.

At this moment, Ace suddenly single Noa to stop, and they quickly find a large tree to hide behind.

After a few moments, a caravan of carriages came into their view.

There was a black cloud-like emblem on it and Noa suddenly said, "Those carriages belong to the Dark Cloud Demon Clan!"