

## Thief 541

### [Eternal Thief](#)

#### Chapter 541: A Fool or Trickster? (2)

No one thought Archie would cross the two-hundred mark in two minutes, but it is possible if one exhausted their Qi.

However, when he entered the 3-Point radiation level, his speed should decrease with his Qi before the radiation would surround him.

But not only his speed remained the same, but the smirk on his face never vanished. It was like he was taking a hike.

When he almost caught up to the front group without breaking any sweat, someone couldn't help but call out in doubt, "Is he using a high-grade treasure?"

Everyone looked at the invigilators with doubt. They all wanted the answer to this exact question.

This question snapped the dark bronze skin demon out of his stupor. He also felt Archie was using some kind of treasure.

But when he thought about the chief examiners watching the test, he knew it was impossible to escape theirs or the formation detection unless someone was using a grade-7 concealment treasure which was almost impossible.

Because above grade-6, treasures were personally handled by the Grand Demon Duke level figures. Moreover, those treasures were quite special because they could only be used by at least a quasi-law-awareness realm expert.

So, Archie was a diamond river core cultivator who didn't have the means to use one even if someone lent him one or he had those grade-7 Qi stones which were extremely precious in Royal Demon Nation.

"Don't doubt the credibility of the test. No one can cheat here, and if anyone accuses again, I'll have to ask everyone to leave." He coldly answered before turning his focus to Archie.

He suddenly thought about what Archie asked before he entered, and his heart trembled, 'Was he playing to be a fool before?'

Many have the same thought, but it still has to be seen, since Archie was still only halfway.

At this moment, other demons of the grand duke clan saw Archie crossing them, and he even waved at them with an amiable smile that left them dumbfounded.

"H-he?! How!"

Someone exclaimed when identifying who this demon was.

"Cousin, why are you so slow?"

Lucas, who was focusing on preserving his Qi, heard a jolly yet scornful voice from behind and nearly lost control.

Then Archie appeared beside him smilingly, "What's up?"

It dumbfounded Lucas before he gritted his teeth and shouted, "You tricked me again?!"

Archie didn't answer and merely smiled. He continued to run at this pace.

At this time, Nancy saw Archie appearing beside her like a ghost and yelled, "Y-YOU!?"

She clearly remembered she imbued some untraceable poison in Archie's hand which should've infiltrated his skin and then meridians, causing Qi deviation within thirty minutes.

She heard about Archie from her mother, and she told her to get rid of this little punk if she got the chance. But she never thought it would be so easy.

But now, it seemed Archie wasn't affected by her charm or poison, which made her feel fear of this smiling young demon who seemed to be innocuous.

"Don't forget our bet, or I'll make sure to skin you alive and then add you into my 'pretty skin collection', alright?" Archie smiled amiably as if he just said something trivial, but Nancy felt chills down her spine, and she even wanted to escape right now.

This guy wasn't a fool at all, he was a malicious trickster, and now she had fallen into his trap!

Before she could utter a word, Archie's speed suddenly increased while his foolish smile vanished from his face, and it turned cold, and he left somewhat scared Nancy behind.

Soon, he crossed Hugo, Bobby, and Charles without mocking them or saying anything, as if he wasn't interested in them or they weren't worth his time.

Charles's expressionless face finally showed an expression of shock when he saw Archie speeding up on them, even after giving them half an hour's advantage.

He was an extremely prideful person, and he loved to compete with others. He never thought someone like Archie would stimulate his fighting spirit so soon in this contest.

Without caring about anything, he also stopped saving his Qi and chased Archie!

"Hahahaha... that brat even got his old man worried about a moment. I'll beat his ass once I see him." Harvey suddenly laughed out loud, completely different from his gloomy self a moment ago.

When he saw his son crossing everyone within minutes without even being influenced by the radiation or Qi exhaustion and mocking those arrogant brats in the process, he felt like he was dreaming.

But he was glad he wasn't, and his anxiety turned into pride when he saw his son at the very front.

'That brat has really become a trickster with all these years of lying. Even I can't tell when he's lying or telling the truth. Well, I don't have to worry about him being deceived by others.' Harvey was gratified.

Finley and Black Duke, on the other hand, have hideous expressions on their faces when they saw Archie was pretending all along.

Furthermore, he had given half an hour's handicap to everyone, which means from the start, he never considered anyone his match and was confident of winning the first spot.

This kind of person was extremely dangerous, and hard to get rid of.

"It seemed like Charles had found this match this year." Ash Duke meaningfully comment, but his eyes were somewhat forlorn, 'This is troublesome.'

At this moment, Archie finally crossed the 3-Point radiation field and entered the 4-Point radiation field, and soon Charles followed suit.

However, Charles's expression was somewhat pale and went paler when he felt the 4-star radiation and quickly slowed down. But unlike him, Archie was still maintaining his speed without breaking a sweat.

'Just how much Qi he has and his willpower is even more ridiculous!? But it still made little sense, since the martial radiation should at least affect his body. Could it be he had already formed a grade-5 body?!' He thought with a grim expression.

Archie was a soul cultivator, so soul radiation being unaffected by him could still be understood, but what about martial radiation?

Unless he had a grade-5 demon body, but this pressure should at least slow him down.

Albeit, it was unheard of for a demon to have a 5-grade body in the river core realm because the pain and potency of the grade-5 medicines were enough to tear apart a river core cultivator unless they were emotionless madmen.

Those two invigilators' eyes also squinted when they saw Archie still moving unhindered in the 4-Point radiation field. It only happened thousands of years ago when a peerless genius from the Imperial Family appeared.

At this moment,

The four old demons were looking at Archie inside the pool projection with shining eyes.

"It seemed we have an interesting one this year." An old demon with golden skin and black tiger-like stripes commented with great interest.

"Merely a demon with some willpower. He's not a peerless seed." An old black demon whose height was only 2 feet, which was quite a rare sight among demons, coldly spoke.

"But willpower is key to soul path Old Imp. How about letting this brat enter my Soul Combatant House? He's a soul-life demon, and from his records, he's a cunning one." At this moment, the white skin demon with golden horns and a strange black rune symbol below his left eye proposed.

"Hehe, Brother Ampersand, isn't it too soon for us to divide the new students? Let's wait before he passed the last test. Besides, this brat has an unusual resistance toward radiation, a large reserve of Qi, and an impish mind. He would bloom in my Soul Assassin House."

A tall demon with ghost-like empty eyes and ash-black skin smile meaningfully. If one looks carefully, there wasn't anything in his mouth, and it was completely pitch black!

Ampersand merely glanced at this ghostly demon and emotionlessly looked at Archie, who had already crossed the into 5-Point radiation field and still looked the same.

"Well, as Brother Bodach stated, it still depended on the student which house he'll choose after passing the entrance test. Let's not force choices on them."

The two demons remain silent. They knew Archie wasn't suitable for their houses because he was a soul cultivator, so they could only let these two old demons fight for him.

But it still remained to be seen if he could pass the last test.

At this moment, Archie finally crossed the barrier without breaking any sweat, and the four demons looked with different lights in their demonic eyes.

"If we counted individual time, he took to cross the demonic pathway. It's a new record, and it's more difficult to break than the old one.

"But if we counted the time from the start to end, the record wasn't broken, which will also not reward with any Royal Points." Ampersand impassively looked at the three,

"Let's vote on this. I acknowledge this new record!"

### [Eternal Thief](#)

#### **Chapter 542: You have a Good Son**

Ace looked at the demonic gates that were now only a hundred meters away from him with a meaningful look. He could feel the dreadful feeling from that fog inside.

'If I had tried to enter with other means, I might have been detected. This place is not simple, and this mission is going to be a deadly one if I act recklessly,' He mused gravely.

'Now that I showed my unusual resistance toward the radiation and large Qi reserve, they might start to observe me. But it isn't enough to draw the attention of the principal.

'Only the last test remained, and it's always random every year. I just need to pass it at first, and this should be enough to enter a bigwig's good book. As for that demoness, she made things even easier by approaching me and giving me the chance to act and...'

Ace smiled deviously as he looked toward the other side. He could see the demons were still struggling in the 3-Point radiation field while Charles was still far from the halfway point in the 4-Point radiation field.

However, the audience's focus was on Archie as they looked at him with disbelief because he passed the entire field too fast, and it might be a new record. But it remained to be seen if the institute acknowledged his record because he wasted half an hour.

Nevertheless, in everyone's eyes, Archie was already a terrifying youth and had the highest chance of entering the institute.

"You have a good son, Runic Duke." The Dark Fire Duke congratulated impassively at this moment.

Harvey had a gratified smile as he looked at his son standing alone at the finishing point. He nodded, "Indeed."

He finally understood why Archie was so confident in passing and taking care of Lucas.

'He's still hiding his actual prowess. But where did he get the body refinement technique of 5th grade? The main clan would never give it away to Archie, and he needed a Grade-5 alchemist as well. Or he passed this test with sheer willpower and Qi? I have to ask that brat,' Harvey thought.

He knew the body refinement technique of Grade-5 and Grade-6 were in Life Grand Demon Duke's hand, and he won't give it away without any good reason, or at least he won't give it to Archie.

That's why he didn't believe Archie had a grade-5 body. He clearly remembered Archie only cultivates a grade-1 body and then never touched the body refinement technique. Because he was afraid of pain, and he never pushed him either since it will do more harm than good if it was forced.

But he was no longer sure anymore, the hidden library where all the precious techniques and skills of Runic Soul Clan were open for Archie, and he could learn anything.

Finley also looked grim at this moment. He never thought Archie had hidden himself this deep, and from his performance, it was clear Lucas wasn't his match.

'If he entered the Royal Demon Institute now, even if the main clan finds Archie a thorn and a threat, they won't be able to touch him anymore. Only from the inside could they do anything.

'But with his astonishing performance, he might also draw the attention of a housemaster and become his personal student. Once that happened, the harm they could do to Archie would be even minimum. This is bad.' He frowned grimly as a killing intent appeared in his eyes.

"Old Dog, don't even think about it anymore. Just wait patiently for the next family ranking competition. Let's see who can maintain their NO.1 family spot anymore." Harvey coldly declared while glaring at Finley.

He could sense the killing intent, but he wasn't worried anymore.

After Archie entered the institute, Finley couldn't do anything but pull his hair in frustration. On the contrary, he should be worried about Lucas, who was Archie's target, and he might not even make it to the institute.

Finley coldly glared at Harvey, "It's still too early for you to celebrate!"

The others listen to them but remain silent.

They also had the same kind of competition in their clans, and the completion was fierce. The rivalry between the duke clans of the four Grand Demon Tribes wasn't rare at all.

The only ones who weren't feeling good about this situation were the Poison Wood Demons, especially the Black Duke.

She deliberately wanted to make Archie suffer so she could collect some old debt from Harvey, but she never thought that; Archie was even harder to deal with than Harvey.

At least Harvey could still be predicted, but Archie appeared predictable, but he wasn't, and this would force others to think if they saw through him or not.

Now Nancy had provoked him, and it seemed he had deliberately let her do it as well. No one knows what will he do next if Nancy doesn't remain true to her word.

An hour passed, and almost all the participants were now inside the Mind Breaking Demonic Path, and Charles had just entered the 5-Point radiation field while the others behind him were still in the 4-Point radiation field.

Everyone understood just how terrifying Mind Breaking Demonic Path was and they looked at the young demon who was sitting on the other side calmly with more trepidation.

Archie had completed this test like it was a breeze, but it wasn't the case, and this also proved there wasn't anything wrong with the formation, but Archie was just too resilient.

Two more hours passed by, and only two hours left before the time runs out.

At this moment, Charles finally stepped outside with an ashen expression on his stony face, but there wasn't any joy about appearing second in his eyes but shock as he looked at expressionless Archie.

Although he knew there was a gap between him and Archie, the gap was so big he didn't even want to believe it. His pride as an outstanding youth in his clan was wounded.

But he still won't admit defeat since there was still the last test.

Even though Archie had a larger Qi reserve and more resilience toward the radiations, it didn't mean he was good at fighting as well.

Charles nodded in acknowledgment toward Archie without saying another word and sat down cross-legged a few meters away from him to recover.

Ace meaningfully looked at Charles, 'The Nightmare Demon Clan is famous for their Assassination Abilities, and this Charles is from their first Duke Clan and hiding his true strength. So, he should have their core knowledge.

'Now that his mind is exhausted, it would be easy to get the memories. It might come in handy as a reference, and Noa can directly learn them. There's also the charm and poison techniques from Paul that are not useful for me, but useful for the house members.

'As for Archie, he had core knowledge of Runic Soul Clan's Rune Crafting up to Grade-6. Should I create a library in the thief's house space, with all the useful knowledge I have?'

Ace couldn't help but thought before he used a soul probe on Charles.

He was extremely interested in abilities that were related to the path of darkness and could be used as references for future use.

As for his house members, they could use them directly and learn faster, but it was a very cumbersome task to record his memories in a text.

But the Jad Scroll gave him some insight into this because it can record knowledge directly from the knowledge sea, so he decided to search for its creation method before recording important memories into a jade scroll and then making a library in the thief's house.

As for the lost jade scroll formulation method, he knew better than anyone that nothing was truly lost, and one just had to have the will to find them.

Charles did not know that all the core secrets of his clan and his memories were being annexed by someone.

Ace also planning to absorb the Fiery Demon's memories as well.

This way, he would have all the core knowledge of four grand duke demon clans, including the secret knowledge of Poison Wood Clan.

Paul was a direct descendant of a Grand Demon Duke, so he naturally had more knowledge and core secrets of the Poison Wood Clan than family members like Harvey or Ash Duke.

As time passed and the deadline approached, the young demons started to panic, which made it even more challenging to move forward.

After Charles, his cousin Bobby appeared, and after greeting Archie, he sat behind his cousin to recover.

Surprisingly, the next one who appeared was Lucas with a pale face. He threw a hateful glance at Archie before he started to recover.

Ace looked at Lucas meaningfully. 'This guy is hiding something.'

The next was Hugo with a somewhat ugly expression as he looked at Lucas, but he didn't say anything and also nodded at Archie and picked a place to rest.

After fifteen minutes, Nancy appeared with the other two poison wood demons. It seemed she was waiting for them so they could come out together. She was afraid of Archie after encountering him and hearing his appalling words.

However, Archie completely ignored the other two and smiled coldly, which made Nancy aghast!

## [Eternal Thief](#)

### **Chapter 543: Hunter Mania (1)**

Under Archie's devious glare, Nancy felt uneasy while the other looked at them with hilarity.

Everyone wanted to see what Archie would do now, and no one scoffed at him anymore because of the bet he made with Nancy at the very start.

"I guess it's my win," Archie said with a gentle smile while looking at Nancy.

Nancy suppressed the uneasiness in her heart and forced out a coquettish smile on her pale face. "Big brother, how about you let me rest first before I'll become your girlfriend?"

Her Qi was almost exhausted, and she was also feeling some effects of the radiation. She knew if Archie decided to play any trick, she wouldn't be able to defend herself.

The institute won't intervene in this matter as long as Archie won't get caught doing anything, just like she did.

Now, she even regretted approaching Archie and making a bet with this deviant. If she had known Archie was merely pretending to be a fool to set a trap for her, she would never open her wily mouth.

'If he used soul attack, I'll just use the treasure mother gave me and then expose him and make him eliminate.' She thought.

However, to everyone's surprise, Archie merely flashed a smile and nodded, "Alright, I'm not in a hurry, but don't let me wait for long or you should know about my pretty skin collection."

Nancy felt slightly chill when she thought about what Archie said when he passed her, but the smile on her face didn't vanish, and she quickly agreed, "Of course, a bet is a bet."

Afterward, she sat far away from Archie with the other two poison wood demons who were also vigilant of Archie.

Many were thinking Archie was again planning something, but they didn't know what. Yet, they knew Nancy was going to suffer this time around. Almost all of them gloated at poison wood demons' bad luck to provoke that astute fellow.

Usually, it would be the Poison Wood Demons who were playing dirty tricks and sneakily attacking others, but now the table had suddenly turned by a life demon.

"I hope you remembered what you said at the start of this test?" Harvey suddenly looked at Black Duke with a gloating smile.

In the past, this bitch had once tried to seduce him in front of Ellie and spout many lies which resulted in him beating the shit out of Black Duke, and if not for a life-saving talisman, she would've died by his hand that day.

Nevertheless, the hatred and grudge between these two still exist.

But when it comes to playing tricks, Black Duke is far superior to Harvey while she would never fight with Harvey because he is much stronger than her, she learned the hard way.

This time wasn't different. She almost got her revenge by using Archie, but he never thought his son would turn the table so easily.

Now, he was going to do the same as Black Duke and provoke her without any restraint.

Black Duke coldly said, "Hmph, don't forget this is the Royal Demon Institute. If that little deviant took action out of the rules, you'll be the first one who cries."

Harvey smiled mockingly. "Heh, do you still think my brat is inferior to your little slut when it comes to mind games?"

"Mind your tongue!" Black Duke gnashed her teeth and suppressed her urge to attack Harvey.

"What? Did I say anything wrong? A whore's daughter is naturally a slut." Harvey coldly uttered without holding back. He wanted her to attack him here and suffer the consequences.

Black Duke felt like she was getting provoked too easily today, while Harvey was more restrained from the past. In the end, she covered her ears with Qi and pretended Harvey didn't exist.

Harvey didn't mind and merely flashed a victory smile before he glanced at Finley meaningfully.

Finley was also feeling quite frustrated, but he had no way to vent it.

Time passed, and when the last second of six hours passed,

The dark bronze skin demon coldly declared, "The Demonic Pathway Test had reached the conclusion, and anyone who didn't manage to cross to the other side had failed!"

As his voice trailed off, the gray formation suddenly started to fade before the effective area returned to normal. Many demons were panting heavily, with pale faces at this moment.

Out of three thousand contestants, only 68 passed the test, which didn't come as a surprise because it was a normal occasion in the Royal Demon Institute's annual entrance test.

There were even cases when no demon passed the second test at all.

"Those who failed please return and try next year." The violet skin demon declared with a scornful tone, and then he looked at the other side, "As for those who passed this test, you have only 1 hour before the last test will start, whether you recover or not."

Those contestants didn't dare to neglect this grace period, and they quickly recovered because one hour was quite short.

Even those participants of the four grand demon clans weren't different and paid little attention.

Ace pretended to be in meditation, and didn't make any move. He didn't want to show that he didn't exhaust any Qi while doing that stunt at the start, or it would be more ridiculous to have this amount of Qi.

One hour passed in a flash,

The dark bronze face demon coldly looked at everyone while standing right in front of the demonic gates and loudly said, "Alright, gather!"

The young demons finally opened their eyes and unwillingly gathered together.

There were 52 males and 16 females among these contestants.

"This is the last test, and like every year, we only have 10 seats open to grab, no more, no less. Despite ten seats, it's been many years since all ten seats were filled in an annual test. So, I would recommend giving it your all." The violet skin demon declared.

The dark bronze skin demon nodded in agreement and spoke, "Now, moving toward the last test, which will be random like every year. This year's test is... Hunter Mania."

"They're sure are ruthless to have Hunter Mania this year." The Ash Duke clicked his tongue with indignation.

"There might not be a single winner this year." The Dark Fire Duke's expression was also somewhat perplexed.

Harvey didn't comment, but a hint of worry flashed past his eyes as he looked at Archie's back.

The contestants' faces went also pale because they knew what this Hunter Mania was. It was one of the hardest final test themes of the Royal Demon Institute!

The violet skin demon smiled coldly and said, "I would explain the rules of the Hunter Mania, which are extremely simple.

"Everyone here will be given a special Hunter Badge to wear all the time. Remember, you can't take it off nor hide it, or store it in any storage space treasure. If anyone violated these rules, they will be eliminated from Hunter Mania.

"Afterward, you will enter the misty swamp behind the demonic gates, which will be your location for Hunter Mania.

"All you have to do is to gather at least five hunter badges of your opponents to pass the hunter mania test. As for how to gather them, I think I don't need to state the obvious, but I still tell you, 'By any means possible!'"

The violet skin demon coldly declared, "The moment the badge leaves your person, you'll be eliminated from the fight for ten entry seats. However, this doesn't mean you'll be completely out from the Hunter Mania."

The bronze skin demon spoke at this moment, "Those who lost their entrance qualification can still snatch others' hunter badges and also make them lose their qualification.

"Now, if someone has any questions related to the Hunter Mania Test, speak."

Everyone took a deep breath of cold air because this Hunter Mania was really as ruthless as it was described in legends, and from many records, in every hunter mania, someone seldomly passed.

Because those who lost their badges could band together and make others lose their qualification as an act of revenge.

It makes this event ruthless, and these demons are all pitiful to encounter it this year.

At this moment, a hand was raised, and it was none other than Archie, who had this amiable smile on his face, unlike everyone else, as if he wasn't afraid of this test.

The violet skin demon's expression softened a bit when he saw it was Archie. He no longer looked down at him. He nodded, "Speak."

Archie nodded and politely asked, "Is killing allowed?"

Everyone's faces turned ashen and looked at Archie, who was still smiling, and felt this guy really had a knack for stirring others.

The violet skin demon's eyes narrowed slightly, he replied, "If the other party is stubborn and doesn't surrender their hunter badge, then the accidental killing will not violate the first rule of the entrance test. But if someone surrenders or hands over their hunter badge peacefully and you still stuck a killing blow or tried to kill them, it would violate the first rule."

Archie nodded in understanding before he asked something. "What if we kill someone before they can even speak or react? I mean, with a single hit or sneak attack...!"

### Eternal Thief

#### **Chapter 544: Hunter Mania (2)**

"What if we kill someone before he/she could even speak, I mean, with a single hit or sneak attack?"

"Please don't take me wrong, but if we declared our presence beforehand, it would alert the other party, and they would, of course, fight, then hand over their badges peacefully.

"Furthermore, if the other party is powerful, then sneak attacks will be the most obvious method and practical method. Then, if someone died because of that sneak attack or someone is quite weak to not even take a single attack, they will die at that time as well.

"Besides, since the loser can still join the fray and eliminate me by joining with other losers, I won't hesitate to kill them the moment I get the chance without giving them a chance to cry surrender.

"It's a far better option than leaving behind such a danger, right everyone?"

Archie looked at everyone with a smile as he asked the obvious.

But everyone didn't have his smile. They were all looking at Archie with unfriendly, distant gazes. This guy was simply stating that he killed them the moment he had the chance and won't give them a chance for survival.

"Your son sure is bold Runic Duke, but I like his style." The Dark Fire Duke said with a smile.

"He just stated the facts. We might do the same in such a scenario. Killing those hidden dangers is more effective than sparing them and then waiting for them to get back for revenge. But he's also putting a target on himself." Archie's boldness also impressed Ash Duke.

"Hmph, it might be his scheme. It would be far easier if others come to him than finding them in the misty swamp. Or he was simply scaring everyone, so they avoid any conflict with him or hand over their badges for fear of dying. But it's difficult to intimidate everyone with few words." A Poison Wood Demon scoffed.

Harvey didn't retort and merely stated, "But the person who said this is someone who just broke a record, so it might have some effect."

The violet skin demon looked at Archie with a somewhat strange gaze as he said, "I already said my piece. As long as you kill someone who wanted to surrender, you will violate the first rule.

"But if someone surrendered and wanted to have his/her revenge on you, then it's still debatable to look at it in another way.

"I hope this will answer the question regarding killing. Anyone else has any questions?"

Bobby suddenly asked, "You said the moment we took off our badges, we will be eliminated. What if no one eliminates us but we took off our badges and throw them away or hide them somewhere, or even destroyed them?"

"Will it consider a normal elimination and that hidden badge count as a point as well or in case we destroyed it will still affect the total points pool?"

The violet skin demon smiled, "Interesting question. If you take off your badge on your own accord, then hide it somewhere. You will still consider a normal elimination without violating any rules.

"But if a contestant with an intact badge found that badge, it will still give them a point.

"As for destroying it, it will naturally reduce from hunter badge total number and no one can get it afterward."

Everyone looked at each other with different thoughts, and some frowned.

According to this demon, if they all destroy their badges, then no one could pass this year's test. While if they destroy their badges after getting beaten by someone and before they took them from them and then surrendered, it would also mean they would decrease the chances of others passing the test.

However, when these thoughts came to their minds, they all looked at Archie, who was smiling even more deeply at this moment.

They all felt chills suddenly because now everyone will go after each other's lives since they won't take a chance to let others destroy their badges.

Did he predict all this?

They all couldn't help but think about it.

But one thing was sure, now this test was far more dangerous, and escaping with their life would be even more difficult if they made a mistake or didn't surrender in time.

Yet, no one was willing to back off after coming this far.

Afterward, no more questions were asked, but everyone was more vigilant of the others. Especially the demons from grand demon clans who passed the test first.

"Alright, since no one has any more questions, let's start the Hunter Mania. This test will last for ten days.

"Now, I'll hand over the hunter badges to everyone, and afterward you may enter the demonic gate behind me, and you'll all appear in the misty swamp.

"To make it fair and interesting, after you get your badge, you'll give a one-hour grace period. In this one hour, no one can attack you or snatch your badges." The dark bronze skin demon declared.

The next moment, he waved his sleeve, and many streaks shot toward the contestants' chests.

Thereupon, a black triangle badge with a glowing golden ruin appeared on everyone's robes. It was the hunter's badge.

But no one tried to take it off yet.

"The demonic gate is open!" An imposing voice reverberated through the vicinity at this moment.

The thick mist surrounding the demonic gate suddenly turned green at this moment.

"Go, now the one hour has started!" The violet skin demon solemnly declared.

No one hesitated anymore, and they quickly headed toward the demonic gates of the Royal Demon Institute.

Ace didn't try to show off anymore and also entered the green mist, which didn't give him any more alarming feeling. He could sense this mist was some kind of location-changing formation, and these demonic gates might be more extraordinary than he thought.

After passing the green mist, he suddenly stepped into a liquid and when he saw around, he was in the middle of a vast swamp with everyone else. A light green mist also filled the air.

This mist was also poisonous, but it wasn't enough to affect river core cultivators like the participants.

Everyone first activated a treasure before they all ran in a different direction without stopping. They all wanted to hide and found different locations before the hunting began.

No one wanted to stay close to anyone since everyone was an enemy.

Ace smiled, seeing everyone scattering in different directions. He also took out a grade-four concealing cloak and does as everyone else did. He didn't want to use his heartless stealth, if not necessarily here, or it might draw some unwanted attention.

Although he could simply say he awakened this stealth ability with his high-level grade body, as a soul life demon, he knew it was impossible to awake a stealth-type ability.

The life demon tribe's innate elements were all related to life and nature, and very few life demons had other elements than these categories.

Archie's element was soul wood, and Ace was using his soul earth element to put up an appearance of soul wood element because their colors were the same.

As long as someone didn't pay attention to his Qi structure, no one would know its real element. Even Harvey suspected nothing.

But if someone questions him, he could always say he had two elements that were rare but not impossible. That's why he wasn't too worried about this matter.

Lastly, he can't show his half-sword intent, or it would be too different from the real Archie.

No matter how much of a genius he was comprehending a weapon, the intent wasn't something anyone could learn unless they were peerless geniuses which Ace didn't want to become.

Furthermore, Archie practiced Runic Archery, which was an Upper-Sky Rank Art of the Runic Family, which used the Bow and Qi Arrow.

Most of the soul cultivators practice archery since they do not have powerful bodies.

This art's first level, Qi Arrow, was easy to replicate since its function was like his soul bullet. While the remaining three parts were complicated, Ace could replicate them with some time.

However, he didn't have time to replicate them here, so he was going to use his thievish soul cord as well.

No one could connect this treasure Sky Stealer and there were many kinds of treasures like the thievish soul cord so that it won't draw any attention.

Despite it being grade-6, it was a treasure from the system and used heavenly Qi as a medium, so those formations won't be able to detect its actual rank at all.

The four demons were also looking at the pool projection, which now had different views of different demons.

Old Imp looked at the young demons, who were moving in different directions, and said with a frown, "I don't think over two or three will pass this test."

Ampersand looked at Archie's projection and smiled, "Whoever can pass the Hunter Mania have a very high chance of having Grade-7 talent, and this year's batch is rather interesting. So, it might surprise us this year!"

### [Eternal Thief](#)

#### **Chapter 545: Hunter Mania (3)**

It had been six hours since the Hunter Mania had started, and contestants had entered the misty swamp.

Outside the demonic gates, a large projection appeared, which showed some contestants to the spectators.

It was also to show the institute was impartial and any kind of judgment will be fair and unbiased.

Everyone was watching closely the movements of the young demons and up till now no one comes face to face with anyone and most of them were hiding instead of wandering.

The four grand demon clans were also paying close attention without speaking.

"That's why this competition is so difficult to pass. Most of the time, everyone just hides with concealment treasures. Even their martial or soul senses can't see through those treasures." The Ash Duke sighed ruefully.

Everyone agreed with him, and they had somewhat ugly expressions because their descendants might not pass this year's test.

Finley, on the other hand, was happy with this new development because if Archie didn't enter the Royal Demon Institute this year, then he would have had an entire year to get rid of him.

This time, even the main clan might aid in this, which will make it even easier.

"Look, that life demon is moving close to where another participant is hiding. He didn't even use his concealment treasure and walked without any care in the world. Do you think he got ambushed by him, after all that talk?" Someone from the branch clans crowd exclaimed, drawing everyone's attention to Archie's projection.

Harvey looked with a hint of worry as Archie was getting in someone else range, and Archie just wore his concealment cloak like a normal cloak. He didn't even activate it as if he wanted others to attack him!

Ace move unarmed in the swamp without showing any discomfort or worry.

'I'm being observed, so doing anything out of the ordinary would not be a wise choice. I could only pretend to walk aimlessly towards a participant and then act.'

Ace could vaguely sense the hidden Qi undulation in this place, and he reckoned that it was filled with monitoring formation arrays. So, he didn't want to do anything that a life demon couldn't.

So, he decided to walk without concealing himself, and if someone attacked him, he could use his 'superior cultivation' to overpower the other party.

While the truth was, those concealment treasures weren't enough to hide from his soul sense.

Furthermore, Ace also discovered that this swamp was like a small maze, and it was only large enough to give contestants some space to hide. But they can't leave the area, and eventually, they will come in contact with someone.

It also gave him some insight into just how advanced the Royal Demon Institute's formation arrays were, and this was just the entrance. He didn't dare to imagine just how advanced the formation arrays would be at the core of this place.

At this moment, Ace's lips curled slightly. 'He took the bait.'

He could feel the other party's martial sense locked on him, and he was under the impression that his martial sense was concealed with a treasure, and Archie had no idea that he was already been discovered.

As the distance between them got closer and closer, he was still moving closer to Archie.

Thereupon, when Archie was passing by a swamp tree, a shadow suddenly flashed toward him from above, and a sharp blade was going to pierce through Archie's head. It was a clear killing blow, and the other party had no intention of sparing his target!

Just as he was a few meters away before his sneak attack would connect, Archie's jeering voice rang. "Your killing intent gives you away. Now can be on your way."

Archie's sudden response startled the attacker, but strangely, he didn't move a muscle, which made the attacker think Archie was bluffing.

However, the very next moment thereafter, paper talismans started appearing over Archie's head, forming a small web.

The attacker instantly saw through the famous talisman web of the Runic Soul Demon Clan, and he knew the other party was a descendant of the Grand Life Soul Demon Clan!

He knew if he touched this talisman web, it would be akin to death. He quickly blurted, "Wait... I...!"

However, it was already too late. The talisman web suddenly shimmered, and 'Boom', an enormous blast, sounded in the vicinity!

Archie finally looked toward the charred body that fell not far away and walk over.

Although the body was intact since the demon managed to activate a defensive treasure at the last moment, a collective explosion of 18 high-grade-3 talismans wasn't a joke either.

It was a surprise that this demon was still alive.

He weakling tried to utter with great difficulty, "I... su..."

"Not happening!"

The next moment, 6-foot-long runic white bow appeared in Archie's hand and he pulled the string before the green runes on the bow lit up and a vivid green Qi arrow formed which was ethereal. It was an arrow made with soul Qi.

He let go of the string and the arrow flashed into the demon's head, killing him before he could surrender!

All of this took only just two seconds!

Ace's eyes narrowed slightly as he held the bow in his hand. 'Why was that feeling?'

Just as Ace drew the bow, he felt a strange feeling as if he could shoot down anything from anywhere. But that feeling was fleeting, and it vanished as fast as it appeared.

Furthermore, he never tried archery before, but his reaction speed while using a bow and arrow was extremely fast, as well as his aim. It was like he was practicing it for years.

'Could it be because of the memories I annexed that's why I gain mastery of Archie's archery as well?' Ace mused, and he wanted to try other weapons as well to see if it was true or not.

Because getting memories and getting the entire mastery over weapons were two different things.

Nevertheless, it was the time or place to check his hypothesis, so Ace collected the hunter badge, which was intact even after enduring that explosion.

He also took the storage ring, but he didn't leave the area and hid within the tree crown, and waits for someone to come.

That explosion will draw someone's attention, and they might come here to see if they might fish in troubled waters.

But they would be falling into Ace's trap and give him a chance to experiment with archery more and collect more badges.

Outside, the area was completely silent as everyone saw how Archie killed the demon with little trouble and a cyan skin demon in the crowd had a pale expression.

He was the father of the deceased demon and was from the branch clan of the nightmare demons, but he couldn't even curse after his son's death and could only endure.

Because everyone saw his son was the one who had gone for the kill, and if he uttered any complaints, even the main clan of nightmare demons wouldn't help him no matter what.

On the other side, the Dark Fire Duke's eyes narrowed as he looked at Harvey meaningfully. "It seems Archie's soul sense is much more powerful than a diamond river core cultivator."

Everyone had grave expressions since they thought the same, but kept their mouth shut since hiding cultivation was a common thing.

Harvey also kept quiet about it, but he was no longer worried about Archie and was completely relaxed. He knew Archie was a platinum soul river core cultivator, and it was bound to come out eventually.

He even flashed a mocking smile at Finley, who seemed as if as had swallowed a flea.

At this moment, everyone saw a fiery demon slowly creep toward where Archie was hiding and couldn't help but shot that pitiful fellow a rueful gaze.

If Archie's soul sense was really at the platinum level, then without a grade-5 treasure, it was impossible to completely hide Qi fluctuation unless they were in the same cultivation realm.

The demon was extremely vigilant, but just as he was fifty meters away from the explosion's location. They all saw Archie suddenly pull the string, make an arc, and a soul arrow manifested.

The next moment, he let go, and the arrow headed toward the hidden demon's head.

However, it wasn't the end, but within a second, he again pulled the string and shot another arrow, and in five seconds, Archie had shot ten arrows in succession!

It just proved that his cultivation was above the Diamond Dou River Core Cultivation Realm!

The hidden demon didn't discover those incoming arrows because of the mist until they were ten meters away from him, and it was already too late.

Before he could react, the arrow pierced through his throat, and the next nine arrows landed all over his face, making it a horrible sight to see. Another one was dead!

Ace appeared again, holding his bow and collected the badge and storage ring with a cold smirk on his face, and left the vicinity this time to search for more targets to practice his archery, which he found delightful all of a sudden!

### [Eternal Thief](#)

#### **Chapter 546: Movement in Thief's Space!**

On the fifth day of Hunter Mania,

In these past four days, out of 68 contestants, 22 had been already eliminated, and 14 out of 22 were dead!

However, the more astonishing news was out of these 14, Archie had killed 5 of them within two days and completed his quota of five badges per person.

The remaining nine were divided among Charles (2), Bobby, (1), Lucas (1), Hugo (2), Nancy (1), another fiery demon (1), and a demon from the poison wood demon clan (1).

The four demons around the projection pool haven't moved for a moment and scrutinized the contestants.

Bodach looked at Archie's projection. He was currently laying on top of a tree lazily, completely concealed within a formation and his concealment cloak.

He couldn't help but comment with a chuckle, "Do you guys also think that this challenge seemed a child's play to this brat?"

Old Imp frowned and said in exasperation, "Hmph, he's just lucky to encounter those idiots with inferior cultivation. They can't even ambush someone who was so recklessly walking around, they deserved to die!"

The demon tiger strips chortled. "You and I both know it wasn't the case, Old Imp, so stop denying it and accept it. We have a genius soul cultivator joining our institute this year."

Bodach nodded with a meaningful smile on his empty mouth, "Don't worry if he joined my Soul Assassin House. I'll make sure he won't tease those pups in your Martial Arts House."

"Hmph, who said I'm afraid of a pesky soul cultivator?!" Old Imp retorted muffledly.

Everyone smiled when they heard this, but they didn't tease Old Imp anymore. They were all old friends and often pulled each other legs.

Ampersand smiled before he said while looking at Archie, "Alright, enough joking for the day. This little brat is not bad. He had perception and a calm mentality with astute decision-making.

"From his personal records in Secret Royals, we all know how he lived his life in the Life Grand Demon Region. Which made it quite clear he was someone who like to hide until he got the chance to attack and finish everything in one fell swoop.

"Furthermore, his archery skills are above average, but he can improve with good guidance. So, ..." He looked at Bodach and asked, "Tell me, Brother Bodach, do you want to take him as a personal student?"

Bodach thought for a moment before he said, "I'll let Old Fifth take him as a personal student in Special Grade-1. I want to see if he could break into the soul realm before he reached 100 years and then shift him into Core Grade-1 to myself.

"Although his personality and deceitfulness are very much to my liking, he's still not talented enough to enter the Core Grade and become my personal student.

"Even if I accept him, those brats from the direct bloodline of Awareness Realm might try to suppress him. But if he entered the soul realm before the age of 100, then he's worthy of fighting for the best resources of our institute."

Everyone couldn't help but nod at Bodach's approach regarding Archie.

Everyone knew there were four types of classes in the Royal Demon Institute, Ordinary, Extraordinary, Special, and Core, with five grades. Each grade lasts for 10 years.

Although every student in the royal demon institute was at the top of their generation, the students in the Core Grade Class were considered geniuses among geniuses of the Demon Race.

Furthermore, the number of students in Core Grade Classes wasn't even two digits, and each of these students had at least a 30% extra chance than their peers to break into the Law-Awareness Realm.

At their graduation, a core grade student was appointed in the Demon Emperor Domain to further nurturement.

If they managed to enter the Law-Awareness Realm within five thousand years, they will be granted the title of Grand Demon Duke and could start their own tribes if they wanted.

That's why the students in Core Grand Classes were arrogant and won't accept someone who they deemed inferior, and they might suppress them secretly, extinguishing their future.

That was why, without sufficient strength, it would do more harm than good to send someone who has a chance to become a core grade student to a core grade class.

The Special Grade Class was a much better choice. That place was also for the elites, and competition there was fierce as well. But it was a perfect place to send an immature core-grade seed and see if it really could bloom there or get crushed.

It was a common method used by the Royal Demon Institute to test these immature core grade seeds, and if they can't even handle the pressure of special grade classes, then they only amount for this much.

Although Archie's mentality was like those in the core grade classes, his straight was still lacking in comparison.

Ampersand also agreed with Bodach's opinion, eyes shimmered with ambiguity as he said, "If he chose my Soul Combatant House, I'll also place him in Special Class. But unlike Brother Bodach, I think he's more of a kind who thrives under pressure, and if we wanted to turn him into a core grade seed, it needs a different approach."

"Oh? It seems brother Ampersand had something in mind." Bodach questioned, and others also looked at him with interest.

Ampersand nodded and said, "Let him include in the team of Fiery Hell Secret Realm from our institute. That place is filled with opportunity, and this might help him break into the soul realm."

"This?" The others were startled by this proposal.

Although the Fiery Hell Secret Realm was indeed filled with opportunities, it was a perfect place to nurture talent. But this expedition wasn't like the past anymore, and those who were going inside might lose their lives.

"He's cunning enough to survive in that environment, and sending him to a special class will only waste his talent and time.

"We should allocate him to the expedition team directly that was going to form in the Imperial Domain in one month.

"If he broke into the soul realm within three years under that pressure, then there's no need to do anything, and we'll accept him in the core grade class," Ampersand said matter-of-factly.

Bodach fell into deep thought, while the two didn't remark, since it didn't matter to them in the least because they couldn't accept Archie because of his soul cultivator status.

Bodach finally smiled and nodded, "Alright, this method is really more suitable to temper this little wily brat. He's already at the platinum river soul core realm and if he enters the fiery hell secret realm, it'll also strengthen the demon race team."

Ampersand smiled in satisfaction and said, "Then it decided, whichever institute's house he joins, we'll give a seat to the fiery hell secret realm to him. As for how much he benefits from this opportunity, it depends on his will to live."

Ace was completely oblivious to the thoughts of the Royal Demon Institute's Housemasters, and even if he knew, he didn't have time to care about them at this moment, because something in his thief's space was showing movement!

His entire focus was on a palm-size, oval shape stone that was white and filled with small black dots, which looked like dark rune symbols now, and they were all shimmering in gray luster at this moment.

It was none other than the egg of Nether Paradise Bird, he got in the blade domain as Feng, because an alchemist misunderstood it for the Nether Flame Alloy.

At that time, the system had told Ace to store it in the thief's space and let it absorb his Heavenly Qi every three days, and it'll hatch within 1000 days.

Although he didn't clearly remember how much time had passed, he never forgot to feed it his heavenly Qi every three days. Because it was a beast above Grade-9, and if he could tame it and raise it, who could stand in his way in this world?

The most astonishing thing was, as Ace fed it his heavenly Qi, it would always absorb a little bit more than the previous time, and two days ago, it almost exhausted Ace's entire heavenly Qi reserves!

If it kept increasing like this, he might not have enough Qi to feed it, but to his surprise, after the last absorption process, the dark dots on this egg's surface suddenly changed into black runes and started glowing unexpectedly!

Ace knew it was time for it to hatch, so he stopped hunting others since he had already achieved the target to pass this test and kept observing the little egg with expectancy.

Yet, three days passed, but the egg showed no movement, and only those mysterious black runes were glowing deeper and deeper.

Ace even moved the egg to a spacious area of his thief's space so it won't affect Eva's cocoon. As for talking it out, he had no such plan in this place.

At this moment, the glowing egg suddenly started to tremble as if the creature inside was ready to come out!

## Eternal Thief

### **Chapter 547: Nether Paradise Bird!**

The glowing egg of Nether Paradise Bird trembled in the thief's space, and the glowing black runes on it suddenly started to dilate, covering the white surface of the egg with black.

Ace felt a strange pressure suddenly released from the egg of Nether Paradise Bird, and his heart palpitated because he suddenly imagined himself surrounded by immeasurable dark flames.

However, this feeling was only feting before the illusion broke and that strange pressure by the egg suddenly vanished.

The system's voice sounded at this moment.

=====

**[The Nether Paradise Bird is about to hatch!]**

**[Warning (1): The Nether Paradise Bird isn't from the Mortal Sky Heaven, and the moment it appears in the environment of the Mortal Sky Heaven it will draw Heavenly Punishment!]**

**[Warning (2): If the Host left the Nether Paradise Bird as it is in the Living Thief's Space, it will destroy anything as long as it was not at the same rank as the Nether Paradise Bird!]**

**[Host has two choices!]**

**-Choice (1): Form a Master and Servant Pack.**

**[Master & Servant Pack: An ancient pack used for everlasting servitude. Any being bonded by this pack will form a Master and Servant relationship for life. The Master can dispose of the Servant anytime, while the Servant will become forever loyal to their master without any thoughts of betrayal. The Cultivation of the Servant will be suppressed to the same realm as the Master. Until the Master reached the exact realm of the Servant. The Servant Cultivation will never surpass the Master's cultivation...]**

**-Price: 50 Million Thief Points, 50 Million Peak Grade-3 Qi Stones, 5 Million Grade-3 Soul Crystal**

**-Choice (2): Kill the Nether Paradise Bird after its birth and acquire an unmaturred Nether Fire Spirit!**

**-Price: 10 Million Thief Point**

**[Note: The host has only 1 hour to decide before the Nether Paradise Bird will hatch and the First Choice will vanish!]**

=====

Ace's eyes dilated when he heard and read all the information in the notification panel.

When he saw the second option, he was flabbergasted and blurted, "Nether Fire Spirit?! As if the Fire Spirit that Noa needed?!"

Ace was completely stunned by this revelation because he didn't think the fabled Fire Spirit will fall into his lap just like this.

Furthermore, this Nether Paradise Bird sounds quite dangerous when he read the warnings, and he understood that being like Nether Paradise Bird couldn't exist in the first heaven and Heaven will never bear its existence.

If not for his heavenly Qi, this egg of Nether Paradise Bird won't have even a chance to hatch in this kind of environment. But the system also never gave him any kind of prior warning that it was this dangerous to hatch it.

**"[Yes, the Neither Fire Spirit can only be acquired from killing a Nether Paradise Bird. It's born from the Nether Paradise Bird's corpse.]"**

Ace took a deep breath to calm himself and then asked more questions, "Then what about this master and servant pack? If I formed it, will the heavenly punishment still be drawn by it once I exposed it to the first heaven's environment?"

"Besides, why can't I use the Beast Tamer Contract to make it my pet? I'm sure you have the means to make it a pet instead of a servant. More importantly, why the heck do I need to pay you 10 million TP to kill it when I can do it myself?"

**"[No, once the Master and Servant Pack formed, the aura of Nether Paradise Bird would be masked by the Host's, and without its true strength, the Heaven won't notice its existence.]"**

**"[As for why the Beast Tamer Contracts, they would never work on Nether Paradise Bird because it's a Magic Beast with the trace of mythical ??? Bloodline.]"**

**"[These types of Magic Beasts either submit themselves or they prefer death than submission to lower beings. The Nether Paradise Bird is of unyielding nature and violently arrogant beings. They would never submit to anyone even when born.]"**

**"[So, the only way to tame such a creature is Master and Servant Packs, which could be only used when they were about to be born. Or the moment they gain their consciousness, they would rather die than be subjugated by others.]"**

**"[Lastly, if the host tries to kill even an infant, Nether Paradise Bird, without 100% mastery of a [Law], the host won't even leave a scratch on its body, much less kill it. That's why the system needs 10 million TP to kill an infant, Nether Paradise Bird.]"**

**"[Or the host could let the Nether Paradise Bird grow in the living thief's space, which would naturally turn the Living Thief's Space into its nest, and the host won't be able to store any item in it anymore.]"**

**"[But if the host wants to kill it after it becomes stronger, then the system would not agree because it's a one-time offer. The Nether Paradise Bird is worthy of being a servant of Host and few creatures of darkness had such honor!]"**

System reply was cold and ruthless as ever, which made Ace perspire when he understood just what kind of being Nether Paradise Bird was and couldn't help but smile wryly when he thought how he wanted to tame it. He was simply too naïve.

Now, he either has to pay to suppress it to his level, or he has to pay to kill it. Even though he wanted that Fire Spirit for Noa, this was also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

If he formed the Master and Servant Pack, he would have a servant that could increase its strength as long as he raised his, and the system also just stated that not just any Magic Beast could make the system act.

It might be some kind of hint to not waste this opportunity.

The Nether Paradise Bird was a creature of darkness and might bring some unexpected benefits. As for a spirit fire, he had a location, and if he wanted he could try searching for it.

But the egg of Nether Paradise Bird might never appear again!

After considering the pros and cons, in the end, Ace puckered his lips and said, "Fine, I'll choose the first option."

=====

**[Host has chosen to form the Master and Servant Pack with Nether Paradise Bird!]**

**[50 Million Thief Points, 50 Million Peak Grade-3 Qi Stones, and 5 Million Grade-3 Soul Crystal has been deducted!]**

**[The ancient Master and Servant ritual has been started. Please don't move!]**

**[Thief Point(s): 138,020,500]**

=====

Thereupon, Ace noticed inside his thief's space, a dark mist started to gather around the trembling egg of Nether Paradise Bird which had turned completely pitch black after the runes covered it completely.

The dark mist suddenly started to enter the egg without any resistance, and Ace saw dark blue rune symbols appearing below the egg, soon forming a pentagram array.

Ace was completely captivated by those symbols, but they were soon turned into strange lines and started to crawl on the violently trembling egg before that array completely covered the egg!

The dark blue symbols simmered in a dark sheen before a small pentagram appeared on top of the oval egg.

Thereafter, Ace suddenly felt something piercing into his heart before he noticed an extremely dark crimson blood drop, almost black, appeared above the small pentagram over the top of the egg and fall onto it.

Ace felt dazed all of a sudden because this drop was Ace's heart blood!

The egg turned crimson because of the drop of blood, and soon the crimson color was absorbed by the egg, and the dark mist also faded, and the egg returned to its former state.

However, Ace at this moment felt a strong connection with the egg of Nether Paradise Bird or, more accurately, the being within the egg. He could feel its chaotic emotions. It was afraid, anxious, expectancy, obscured...

The strange aura he experienced at that time didn't affect him anymore, either.

The system's voice rang at this moment.

=====

**[The Master and Servant Pack has been successfully established!]**

=====

'What a strange feeling. I can really kill it with thought and order it to do anything, just as the system described.' Ace marveled as he felt the connection with the Nether Paradise Bird becoming more and more clear.

'Crack...'

Ace's attention was drawn to the thief's space by this crisp sound, and he saw small cracks start to appear on the egg of Nether Paradise Bird!

The cracks grew as Ace could feel the creature inside wanting to come out.

'Took...'

A hole was forcibly poked in the eggshell and a tiny black beak surface, and quickly the entire half eggshell was broken and the creature's head became apparent.

Ace's expression became strange because it was a pitch-black bird hatchling with its eyes closed and was only three centimeters in size. It didn't give him any impression of a disastrous bird at all like the system portrayed it to be.

However, his expression soon changed when the hatchling suddenly opened its beak and all of a sudden spit sky-blue fire!

**Eternal Thief**

**Chapter 548: You're weak as a Twig**

The hatchling opened its beak and all of a sudden spit sky-blue fire, which gave Ace the feeling of immense danger even though it was just a flicker.

The next moment, the small flicker of sky-blue fire fell on the eggshell before it spread onto the broken eggshells around, and thereafter, every eggshell was ignited with sky-blue fire!

Ace was baffled by this since the little hatchling was in the middle of this fire, but he didn't stop or help it because his connection with the hatchling was telling him it wasn't in any danger.

On the contrary, the hatchling was excited!

At this moment, the small hatchling while its eyes still closed, opened its small beak again and, 'chirp...' let loose a short, high-pitched, eerily sound.

The sky-blue fire suddenly stirred after hearing this sound, and the next moment the eggshell suddenly started turning into liquid, and with the fire, it started to retract back to the hatchling's small mouth as if there was a suction force in that tiny mouth.

Ace was astonished when he saw this scene, and he noticed the hatchling's aura, which didn't have any kind of cultivation, suddenly started to claim as it devoured the flame and liquid back.

Furthermore, Ace also noticed it was a soul-type Magic Beast!

It soon crossed the soul gates realm and also formed a peerless soul foundation, and within a few moments, it was already at the peak of the soul foundation building realm and entered the Soul River Realm.

However, right at this moment, Ace saw a dark blue symbol appear on the little hatchling's small forehead, and he was shocked when he saw the symbol look like a hood.

Thereupon, the hood symbol shimmered in the dark light before the hatchling's cultivation suddenly stopped at the peak of the soul river realm. That symbol was suppressing its cultivation rise!

Ace could feel the little hatchling's confusion, but it didn't resist that symbol's restriction. It was completely helpless against it.

'So, that's why the system said I won't be able to kill it even as an infant. If this pack wasn't in place, might it be it could reach the eighth or even cross that realm?!' Ace's heart turned cold just thinking about it.

He had no idea what kind of cultivation a Nether Paradise Bird had at its peak, but just this small hatchling was enough to wreak havoc in mortal sky heaven.

He finally understood why it would draw heavenly punishment the moment it appeared outside Heaven will try to destroy it before it disrupted the natural order. Just like Ace himself!

After the hatchling's cultivation was suppressed, the ghastly aura also vanished, or Ace no longer felt a threat from it.

However, the hatchling started to change as fine black plumage suddenly grew on its small body until it was no longer bald. On its head was a small patch of dark blue hair that looked like a crown.

Now it looked like a tiny bird chick.

At this moment, its eyes suddenly opened, revealing two gleaming sky-blue bird eyes. They were filled with confusion and curiosity.

It suddenly opened its beaks, "M... Ma... Mast...er?" and uttered one word in its crisp voice. Which rang in both thief's space and inside Ace's head!

'It was an effect of the pack!' Ace marveled.

However, Ace was more astonished by this little guy who wasn't even born for five minutes and already can grow this much and even speak. Although it had spoken in an unknown language, but Ace can understand it with the help of the pack. Even without it, he would still understand it for obvious reasons.

"You know I'm your master?" Ace tried to communicate with it through his mind as well.

'Chirp... chirp...!' The little chick suddenly chirps with happiness as starts looking around. It was searching for its master.

"I'm not here. You're inside a treasure, and I can't take you out at now." Ace told without hiding.

"Chirp?" Its tinny eyes shimmered in understanding, "Oh... Oh... are... we... facing enemies? Can I burn them for... fun?"

Although its voice sounded innocent and sweet, the intent behind it wasn't.

"Why do you think I was facing an enemy, and burning is fun?" Ace felt this little chick was more intelligent, and its thought was quite dangerous. He was curious to know more, nevertheless.

It was his first time coming in contact with such a creature, and he could tell it wasn't a simple mindless bird at all. According to Winter, the Magic Beasts have the memories of their hierarchy in their bloodline. The purer the bloodline, the more memories they awake.

This Nether Paradise Bird was a descendant of some mythical creature, so having some memories wasn't a surprise.

"Oh... according to my understanding, everything which can move is... an enemy, of course, Master, won't count. So, burning an enemy is naturally a fun thing to do, and it also makes my fire fiercer as I burn more and more and more and more!" It innocently replied with ecstasy, as if it was its grand dream to burn everything.

Ace smiled wryly and finally understood why the system called the Nether Paradise Bird, violently arrogant beings.

"Can I burn this place? There are so many useless things?" The small chick suddenly purposed as it looked toward all those storage rings with contemptuous eyes.

Ace blurted darkly, "No, you can't burn anything here, or I'll punish you!"

"Oh... it is this Master's nest. That's why I can't burn it?" It curiously asked.

Ace frowned slightly but still replied, "Yes, it's my home, and we can't burn our home no matter what." He felt he might need to educate this chick, even brainwash it.

"I see. Then this is also my home, right since it's master's home?" It asked with anticipation.

Ace didn't reject its thought, "Yes, this is also your home from now on."

"Chirps..." It chirps excitedly and even twiddles its small, underdeveloped wings in happiness.

Ace couldn't help but smile amusingly, 'Who couldn't think this innocent, tiny bird is the most dangerous creature in this heaven?'

"Alright, do you have a name?" Ace asked the small chick who was looking around to explore its home.

"Oh, I know, I'm Nether Paradise Bird!" It replied.

"Well, I guess it's a name, but it's too long." Ace stated, "I'll call you Cyrus."

"Cyrus?" The tiny chick muffled softly, "Alright Master can call me Cyrus from now on!"

Ace was also content with it. "So, Cyrus, what can you do except burning?"

"Oh, for some reason, I can only use 1% of my nether fire, which can only burn weak men and ghosts. Other than that, my other abilities are restricted because of cultivation, and I can't fly either." Cyrus sounded sad.

Ace was about to mollify Cyrus since he knew it was because of him. Cyrus was restricted, but when he heard its next words, the corner of his eye spasmed.

Cyrus said in a soothing tone, "But don't worry Master, since you're weak as a twig, Cyrus will protect you by burning your enemy."

Ace didn't have any words to refute the innocent bird, which clearly had no idea how to respect others. It was unintendedly speaking the truth, and Ace knew it had no malice behind those words.

"Alright, I'll call for you once I need to burn someone." Ace wryly said, "You can roam freely here, but don't go close to that wall in the center, or you'll be punished."

Cyrus's eyes suddenly shone with unwillingness as it said, "B-but I want to live there!"

"Why?" Ace was confused. The entire thief's space was the same, so Cyrus shouldn't have any problem living anywhere.

The only difference was Eva's cocoon there and some unhatched eggs he had accumulated in these years.

'Did he want to eat those eggs?' Ace thought. He felt it might be the case since it was just born, and it might be hungry.

But Cyrus's reply didn't match Ace's thoughts. "Oh, there's something in there that made me want to live there. But if it's Master's nest, then I won't go there."

It was clearly unwilling, but it won't go against Ace's wishes; they were absolute!

'What is there that appealed to a creature like nether paradise bird and unwilling like this?' Ace was also curious.

After thinking for a moment, he said, "I'll let you in, and then you'll tell me what makes you want to go there, but you won't touch anything or burn anything without my permission, alright?"

Ace wasn't worried that Cyrus would go against his will, so he gave him a chance to see what interested him.

Cyrus tweets happily and quickly agree, and with a thought, Ace transfer it inside the storage rings' wall and scrutinizes it.

Ace was relieved when Cyrus didn't go toward the cocoon, which made him even more curious about what he was after.

But when Cyrus approached 'Page 09' with ecstasy, realization dawned on Ace!

[Eternal Thief](#)

**Chapter 549: Entering the Royal Demon Institute**

Today marked the day when the last day of Hunter Mania come to conclusion.

An imposing voice rang through the entire misty swamp. "The Hunter Mania Test has come to an end.

"In five minutes, two light pillars will rise on the east and west sides of the misty swamp. In the east, will ascend a white pillar, and in the west, will ascend a golden pillar.

"Those who had collected five badges will head toward the golden pillar, while those who failed to achieve the target will head toward the white pillar!

"Attacking each other is prohibited now!"

Just as the voice trailed off, contestants appeared. Some were exhausted and relieved, while some had lingering fear on their faces.

Soon after five minutes passed, the mist in the misty swamp started to fade, and two eye-catching, light pillars rose just as the voice announced.

The contestants quickly move toward their corresponding pillars according to the arrangement.

But the contestants moving toward the white pillar were much more than the golden pillar.

The demons moving toward the white pillar knew the test was over for them this year, and it was time to go back home.

At this moment, five demons were moving toward the golden pillar in different directions. One after another, they crossed the golden pillar.

Ace was the last to enter the golden pillar, and when he crossed over the light pillar, the entire scenery changed.

From the gloomy and foggy environment of the misty swamp, he was now standing in a clear grass field under the scorching sun.

Ace's eyes contracted when his eyes fell upon the four tall buildings' silhouettes, almost piercing in the clouds.

Furthermore, he noticed that between those colossal silhouettes and them was a one-mile-wide water body, and there was only a huge stone bridge in the distance that led toward the other side.

Ace was still a few miles away from that bridge, but it was hard to go unnoticed. Around him was a vast land surrounding lush forests from the east side while a mountain range was on the west side and behind him were also woods.

The vast wall and the demonic gates were also a few miles away behind him.

'So, this is the Royal Demon Academy!' Ace's expression was grave.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" A gentle voice rang at this moment, drawing everyone's attention.

A brown skin, gorgeous demoness in institute black attire stood a few feet away from the five contestants. But unlike the two demons on the gate, her attire didn't have white outlines, but they were blue.

Ace's heart turned cold because he didn't notice when this demoness appeared there, and couldn't feel her presence still.

The demoness had a mild smile on her red lips as she looked at the five contestants with a curious gaze.

Including Archie, the other four around him were Charles, Nancy, Hugo, and unexpectedly, Lucas!

However, unlike them, Archie was completely fine while these four were pale and had exhausted expressions on their faces.

A peculiar glint flashed past the demoness' eyes when her eyes fell on Archie.

She spoke again in her gentle voice, "Congratulations, fellow students on passing the entrance test this year and earning yourself the opportunity of a lifetime.

"My name is Mylah, and I'm a third-grade student of the extraordinary class and a substitute instructor of Ordinary-First-Grade of Martial Arts House. So, you guys can call me senior or instructor, I won't mind either way.

"I'm here to escort you to the Royal Bridge, where you all get registered with the institute and the four Royal Houses. According to your test result, you'll be given choices, or you might not be given one at all. It all depends on your performance.

"Let's go. If you have any questions, you can ask me on the way." Mylah beckoned everyone to follow her and start moving toward the bridge in the distance.

No one dared to reject her, and they start following Mylah while keeping their distance from each other, especially Nancy and Lucas. They both were far away from Archie, who was completely at ease.

"Instructor, what are those four buildings in the distance?" Ace couldn't help but ask since there was no information about the Royal Demon Institute's internal structure on the outside.

Mylah replied smilingly, "Those four buildings are the headquarters of the four Royal Houses. We called them Royal Towers. Although they seemed close from this distance, in actuality, they were at least a hundred miles apart from each other.

"The lands of the royal demon institute are divided into four territories, and we from the different houses are not allowed to enter a different house's territory without permission.

"Surrounding those headquarters in a ring-like structure are Ordinary, Extraordinary, and Special districts. As you might've guessed, the students live in these districts according to their class grades. Only the Core Students are allowed to live in the four Royal Towers.

"Let me tell you a small secret which you will discover in time, but as a kind-hearted senior, I'll tell you on your first day." Mylah flashed a mysterious smile before she said, "The closer you're to a Royal Tower, the faster your cultivation speed, and you can even rent a cultivate room in the Royal Tower if you have enough royal points, so don't waste them."

"What are the royal points?" Hugo asked with squinted eyes.

"Royal Points are the currency of the Royal Demon Institute. Each month, you'll get an allocated amount of Royal Points according to your class grade. You can also earn them by doing missions posted by the institute, and there are more ways, you'll know once you are registered." Mylah revealed, "With Royal Points, you can buy anything in the Royal Demon Institute even a chance to comprehend a Low-Sky-Breaker-Grade Technique in the central library!"

Everyone's eyes widened and shone with longing when they heard this, well expect Ace.

Ace pretend to be surprised and asked something which truly interested him, "Is the Central Library the place where all the skills and techniques of the royal demon institute are stored?"

Mylah didn't find this question strange and answered with pride, "Why, of course, the Central Library is in the very center of the royal demon institute beside Principal Manor. The central territory, we called it.

"That place is the true foundation of our Royal Demon institute, and there are all kinds of knowledge regarding any topic. As long as you have sufficient Royal Points, you can access that knowledge.

"But we are all restricted by our grades and ranks. A First-Ordinary-Grade Student can only access to First-Ordinary-Grade Knowledge and so on. But just that ordinary grade knowledge is enough to rival any noble clan out there besides the Grand Demon Clans."

Ace's eyes shone thievishly. 'This central library should be one of my targets. But it won't be easy to break in without getting noticed. I shall make a treasure blueprint of it when I have a chance to visit that place.

'As for the treasury, I just had to keep an eye out for the places where the institute provides pills and treasures, and this will lead me right where the primary source of these treasures...'

Ace had already started working on his scheme to rob the two most guarded places of the Royal Demon Institute.

After a while, they all reached the stone bridge, but they first entered a small building a couple of meters away from the entrance, which was surrounded by a barrier.

Mylah led everyone to a spacious room where an old fiery demon in institute black attire with a green outline was sitting behind a table.

The moment the young demons entered the room, the old demon's emotionless eyes scanned through the group and said, "You're all new, I presumed?"

Mylah bowed respectfully, and she conveyed, "Yes, Sir Yehuda, I'm here to get them registered on the order of the Royal Institute Council!"

Yehuda didn't seem surprised, as he had already received the orders from the Royal Institute Council.

The Royal Institute Council was the backbone of the Royal Demon Institute and it oversees and makes almost every decision of the Royal Demon Institute. No one can overstep the Royal Institute Council expect the Principle or the Demon Emperor!

Yehuda waved his sleeve, and two black institute attires with white strips and a storage ring on top of two attires appeared on the table.

He impassively said, "Nancy Poison Wood, and Lucas Soul Life, you two are enrolled and appointed in the First-Ordinary-Grade Class of Soul Assassin House. The further information and the other necessities are in the storage rings."

Nancy and Lucas bowed respectfully and picked up their attire and storage ring, but there was still bitterness in their eyes because they both knew the ordinary class was at the bottom of the institute.

But they had no choice and won't dare to question the allocation by the institute unless they wanted to get kicked out.

Yehuda then placed another attire and storage ring and declared, "Hugo Fiery, you are enrolled and appointed in the First-Ordinary-Grade Martial Weapon House."

Hugo also quickly thank him while picking up his things. Yehuda was his clan's man, so he was more at ease.

Yehuda then placed another set and declared, "Charles Nightmare, you are enrolled and appointed in the First-Extraordinary-Grade Martial Arts House!"

### [Eternal Thief](#)

#### **Chapter 550: Condition 1: Completed!**

"Charles Nightmare, you are enrolled and appointed in the First-Extraordinary-Grade Martial Arts House!"

Charles was startled for a moment. 'I wasn't even managed to enter special grade?' He thought in disbelief. He had always thought he was a core student-level genius, if not a special grade.

He was also at the platinum soul river core realm like Archie, but he still didn't get appointed in the Special Class, which was another blow to his pride.

But he still respectfully bowed and accepted his attire and storage ring without any questions. He then glanced at Archie, who seemed completely at ease, as if he didn't care about anything, nor he was worried about which grade he would get.

'Just what kind of person is he?' He speculated.

Ace looked at Yehuda and waited for him to take out his attire, and he was also curious about what grade they appointed him.

He wanted to be at least in the Special Grade, and with his performance; he was sure they will assign him as a personal student of some high-level instructor.

Even if he didn't manage to become a personal student, he was content as long as he entered the special class and have that level of privilege.

However, Yehuda's next words startled Ace and made him wary.

"Alright, Archie Soul Life stays, and others will leave with Instructor Mylah to sign your Royal Demon Institute Confidential Contract."

This revelation startled those young demons and looked at Archie with envy, admiration, and even malice. Lucas was especially unwilling to accept this situation.

They all thought Archie was going to be appointed into the special class and going to get choices.

Mylah didn't seem too shocked by this and quickly bowed toward Yehuda before she took those four to another room to complete their registration process.

Now, only Yehuda and Archie remained inside the closed room.

A faint smile appeared on Yehuda's expressionless face at this moment while looking at Archie kindly and said, "There's no need to be alarmed. You're different from those four, and they're not qualified to listen to this."

Ace felt relief since it wasn't about some identity issue.

He pretends to be humble and respectfully stated, "Please give your instruction."

Yehuda's smile didn't fade and nodded before he said, "Because of your excellent performance and your sharp mindset, you have successfully earned the goodwill of two Housemasters. Which is an astonishing achievement on its own.

"So, as a result, you'll be a Special Grade Student and given a choice to select between Soul Combatant House and Soul Assassin House. I'll give you a short narrative of both houses as I was told, and then you can choose which house is more suitable for you."

Yehuda conveyed, "The Soul Combatant House is the place for Soul Warriors who walk the path of both Body Refinement and Soul Cultivation simultaneously, and they'll teach you how to fight with a martial cultivate who is also proficient in body refinement on equal grounds.

"There are many more things you will learn, like rune crafting, soul alchemy, runic smiting, and anything a soul cultivates could do, but combat is their main specialty and focus, while other things are auxiliary to strengthen your soul. These things are common in the Soul Assassin House as well.

"The Soul Assassin House's specialty and prime focus are to nurture assassins who were proficient in the art of disguise, poison, trickery, spying, and the art of killing.

"This house is a special house that was created by His Impartial Majesty when he ascended the Demon Throne to improve our information network and train killers.

"Only someone with an assassin-like mind was accepted in this house, and these students are all proficient in the art of killing.

"Just like that Nightmare Demon, Charles, although he was born with a bloodline perfect for assassins, unlike his predecessors, he walked on the path of a warrior, so he wasn't given a choice like other extraordinary grade students.

"Now, choose which disciplinary house you wanted to enter, and this selection is not changeable unless His Imperial Majesty gives his decree." Yehuda chuckled at the end.

Ace didn't reply instantly and thought, 'If I enter the Soul Assassin House, which sounds quite intriguing since it aligns with a thief, I might learn some new tricks. It's also the place where I won't have to fight in the open like in the Soul Combatant House.'

This choice was quite obvious to Ace even if he was given the chance to enter all four houses, the Soul Assassin House suits him the most because he could remain hidden without any worry.

Furthermore, since he was going to steal the entire library of the royal demon institute, it didn't matter where he goes, all that knowledge will be his, eventually.

So, he answered with no hesitation, "I'll choose the Soul Assassin House."

Yehuda didn't ask why or anything else, and he took out a white soul contract from his storage ring, placed it on the table, and said, "This is a confidential soul contract that every student of our institute signs upon admission.

"In this contract, there are rules and regulations of Soul Assassin House which you need to follow, as well as some other important laws of the institute, like you can't kill a fellow student, and you have to create a Soul Mark Disk within the Institute so we'll know when about your condition.

"I know most demons won't create Soul Mark Disk because it's extremely painful, but it is a law, and it's for your own good since we'll be able to investigate and avenge your uncanny death if that ever happened. Take your time reading this soul contract."

Ace's eyes narrowed slightly. 'A Soul Mark Disk and every student had one? Didn't this mean if I killed someone for their faces, I'll be discovered?'

Ace almost forgot about these Qi Mark Disks and Soul Mark Disks, which could alert others of the owner's death.

From Archie's memories, Ace knew Archie never make a Soul Mark Disk because he hated pain, so he never agreed to make one, or it would be far more troublesome if Archie had a Soul Mark Disk in the Runic Soul Clan.

It was a hindrance in his path, but he didn't have a way to break the connection with these mark disks, so he couldn't do anything about it besides being more careful about who he killed from now on.

As for the soul contract, it was his least worry. In others' minds, breaking a soul contract was almost impossible, but he could do it with a simple command.

So, he signed it and then just have to pay a hundred thousand TP to create a fake soul consciousness with the system's help.

Even his house members had this privilege. They can never be slaves of others or bound by anything!

The soul contract was signed.

Yehuda suspected nothing and took out the institute attire and a storage ring.

"These are your attire and all the information and a map of the institute marked with areas you'll have access to and the areas which are forbidden.

"There's also your student badge, which has many functions. Like it will record your Royal Points and other information about your privileges as a Special Grade Student, your living quarters, your class schedule, and any order by the institute will be received by this badge, so don't lose it or you'll be punished!"

Ace picked up the attire and storage ring.

However, the moment he did system's voice sounded.

[Mission: Want to Kill Me? Watch me steal!]

-Synopsis: Someone ...!

-Mission Type: Chain Mission

[Chain Mission: Last Mission]

-Mission: Want to Kill Me? Watch me Steal!

-Condition (1): Infiltrate the Royal Demon Institute.

Status: Complete!

-Condition (2): Rob the Treasury of the Royal Demon Institute!

-Condition (3): Rob the Library of the Royal Demon Institute!

-Reward(s):

-Rewards of Completing (Condition 1): [Reward Released!]

1. 500,000 EXP & 500,000 SP

[Claim/Later?]

2. Thief's Vision

[Claim/ Later?]

3. +1 Grade in Heaven's Stealer Dismantler Principles

[Claim/Later?]

-Rewards of Completing (Condition 2):

1. 1,000,000 EXP & 1,000,000 SP

2. Soul Stealth Art

3. Fundamentals of Array Crafting (Grade-1 to Grade-3)

-Rewards of Completing (Condition 3):

1. 3,500,000 EXP & 3,500,000 SP

2. Absolute Pick Pocket

### 3. Three Intermediate Item Upgrade Tokens

-Thief House Members: Allow

-Time: 12 Years

-Punishment: The end of the mission!

Ace was elated when he saw the rewards of the first condition were released. He was wondering when the system would deem the condition done.

It turned out that the moment he earned and accepted the student badge and attire of the Royal Demon Institute, the system deemed him successfully infiltrating the institute.

Yehuda said, at this moment, "Now, go and change into your institute attire and then join Instructor Mylah. She'll take you to the other side, and then you'll have someone from your district picking you up from there."

"Thank you, elder." Archie bowed before leaving the room as well.

Yehuda sighed ruefully when he saw Archie had left and mumbled, "What were those old whiners thinking?!"