

## Thief 551

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#### Chapter 551: Thief's Vision

After Ace left Yehuda's office, he again met Mylah and the others.

They had also done signing their institute contracts and changed into their institute attires. Everyone's attire was black, except for the white ribbon outlines on them.

Only Charles's attire had a blue color like Mylah's.

These colors represent different groups of students and departments in the Royal Demon Institute.

White color was for Ordinary Students, Blue for Extraordinary Students, Violet for Special Students, and Red for Core Students. Then there were yellow and orange for staff members.

Green for Council Members.

Instructors wore silver, and Housemaster-level figures wore golden.

Mylah didn't wear her instructor attire because she was also a student and could only wear it during classes. Only the graduate and full-fledged instructors can wear the instructor's attire all the time.

Having an instructor title was also a common thing for Grade-3 or higher-grade students. Any students who could manage to enter Grade-3 Class were elites among elites.

Most of these students ended up appointed as official instructors at their graduation, and the title of the Instructor at Royal Demon Institute was no joke, and many wanted this position, but only a few got them.

After Ace changed into the special student's attire, which was actually his Deft Thief's Robes, which could change into any clothing, Mylah took them toward the bridge.

While walking, Lucas and others were glancing at Archie, who was still as nonchalant as before. He didn't seem to be excited about getting into the special class at all.

Lucas couldn't help but ask with a bitter expression, "Which house do you choose?"

Everyone's ears perked at this question.

The personal information about the students was on their student badges, and there weren't any symbols of houses that distinguish the students from each other except the colors.

It was done deliberately by the institute for some reason, and most believed it was a sign of unity among all the houses.

Archie flashed an amiable smile toward Lucas and Nancy, which sent chills down their spines, and he replied, "Little cousin, and little Nancy, we'll be all together in the Soul Assassin House in the future. I'll visit you daily."

Lucas and Nancy's faces went dark because they knew their life was going to be miserable from now on. Especially, Lucas knew Archie was going to take revenge by making things difficult for him.

It was extremely easy because Archie was a special student while he was only ordinary, so it would be going to be quite easy to bully him.

As for Nancy, she was regretting provoking this little demon and could only pretend to be happy. It was also not a bad thing because Archie was now a special student, and she might benefit from his backing.

So, she decided to stop resisting and seduce Archie seriously, even if she have to suffer some humiliation. She knew it was worth it!

Nancy even planned to seduce someone from the special class in secret and then sow discord between that person and Archie while reaping benefits. All kinds of schemes started to appear in her head at this moment.

On the other hand, Mylah's eyes shimmered in a peculiar glint as she also questioned Archie, "How's your relation with your cousin Daniel Soul Life? He's in the same generation as you, right?"

Ace instantly sensed adoration in Mylah's emotion, and his eyes narrowed ever so slightly while Lucas was also startled by this name, which he hadn't heard for over a decade.

Archie coolly answered in a subtle tone, "We're not enemies, I guess."

Mylah chuckled, "Heh, do you know your cousin was promoted from special class to core class within five years after he entered the institute? Last year, he was promoted to 2nd grade after completing the promotion assignment.

"He's a rising star of Soul Combatant House and the youngest personal student of Housemaster Ampersand. He might help you if you look for him."

The others were also shocked when they heard another genius, even scarier than Archie, was present here.

Although their clans also have some core-grade students, they weren't from the same generation as them.

Lucas's eyes shone with dark light at this moment as if he had gained a treasure and his gloomy expression brightened, and he threw a sharp glance at Archie.

'How could I forget about the genius of the main clan? The institute would never let the news leak from inside, so it's only natural that father didn't know about it as well. The main clan might be hiding it deliberately as well and have some other plans of their own.

'Nevertheless, if he finds out Archie has a chance to enter the core grade class, he might be interested in dealing with him. Furthermore, this woman might be someone already under Daniel and approached us deliberately or on Daniel's order.

'If I could earn Daniel's support, then I might crush this bastard and live without caring about his shadow...!' He thought maliciously.

"I'll pay him a visit." Archie agreed, saying nothing else.

Mylah merely smiled ambiguously and didn't say anything.

They all reached the bridge; the entrance was lit in a green translucent barrier.

Mylah said at this moment, "Everyone remembered, only with your student badges in your hand can you pass this barrier and the entrance bridge.

"Furthermore, once you entered, you'll require a special permit on your student badge from the Student Service Department if you want to exit the institute ground.

"If someone tries to cross it without a student badge and permit, you'll be trapped and captured.

"Although you won't suffer any injuries and could be saved after the institute confirms your identity. However, afterward, you'll be sent to the enforcement committee and will be punished for breaking this rule.

"So, try to sneak here, or you'll regret it. Heh." She giggled lightly before she took out her blue student badge as well.

Everyone remembered this warning in their head while Ace felt this security measure was quite hard to overcome.

From the moment he entered this place, he was feeling all kinds of undulations, as if it was filled with rune symbols. He even opened his fate map, and he only saw terranes, nothing else, which means the runes were higher level than the compass.

Ace also took out a palm size, triangle shape, violet color jade badge which has Baphomet's face engraved on its front and a complex array on the back. It was like a storage ring and could be bonded by a Qi mark or soul mark.

As long as he poured some Qi into it, a projection would appear which could show Ace his personal information, and other important information, and he could receive notices from the institute with it.

Others also took their different color badges according to their classes and just as Mylah said, nothing happened, and they easily crossed the barrier and walked on the long stone bridge.

Ace closely looked at the vast water body, which could be seen as far as his eyes could see. But the water was static, which could also be that the vastness of it was an illusion and its size was limited.

When Ace thought about how his vision skill had been useless. He then suddenly remembered the Thief's vision he got as a reward for completing the first condition.

Since they were still far from the other side, Ace quickly opened the mission panel and saw the details of Thief's Vision with great anticipation.

[Thief's Vision: Secret Martial Cultivation Art]

-Requirements to learn:

- 1) True & False Eyes (Basic) at Perfection
- 2) Soul-Shattering Eyes at Perfection
- 3) Heavenly Darkness Qi

[Thief's Vision: Three Stages]

- 1) Initial Thief's Vision: Three levels (Early, Middle, High)
- 2) Intermediate Thief's Vision: Three levels (Early, Middle, High)
- 3) Advance Thief's Vision: Three levels (Early, Middle, High)

[Claim/Later?]

Ace marveled when he saw Thief's Vision was a secret cultivation art and it was based on two of his already mastered eye skills.

Although he was ecstatic and wanted to claim this cultivation art right away and start learning it, he knew this was not the place, so he stopped himself. He was going to wait until he was alone.

There was still the third reward that could instantly raise his dismantler principles by an entire grade. This time, Ace knew the dismantler principles were going to be a big factor in this thievery.

He never got the chance to use them in thieveries, since their levels were too low, and he was stuck at his current level because of his current cultivation realm.

Ace's first aim was to search for the lightning orb's location and then break into the next realm before he starts this thievery, or any thievery, as a matter of fact.

Before, he could still theft and remained hidden because no one took him seriously.

However, things were different now. The entire demon race was searching for him, and the moment he showed any movement, they will swamp toward him, like hungry wolves.

That's why he first raised Archie's identity as a special student of the Royal Demon Institute. Now, he could go to places where other demons couldn't and start searching for the lightning orb!

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#### **Chapter 552: My Predicament?**

At one of the three large Royal Army harbors, the Octo Harbor,

This place was usually calm, and only when someone from the Imperial Family or a Grand Demon Duke was moving out into the endless sea with a fleet could this harbor be used!

Except for the usual patrolling fleets, this place remained tranquil all year long.

However, today, a large regiment of Demonic Marine Army was present here today and covered every corner of the Octo Harbor as if they were all guarding this place against a terrible enemy.

At the edge of a large empty port, a tall nightmare demon with long hair and a fierce look on his face wore a purple army robe, which was the uniform of the Demonic Marine Army.

This demon was one of three Demonic Marine Generals, and he was in charge of Octo Harbor, Demonic General Alessandro.

Two more demons donned in full-body purple color armor were standing behind him straight. They were his deputy generals.

It clearly wasn't normal to have a Demonic General appear here unless it was an extremely important matter, or the order was from the Imperial Demon Council!

Imperial Demon Council was the decision-maker of the Almighty Demon Empire, and they held power the same as the Demon Emperor. The Royal Demon Council in the outer provinces was a small branch of the Imperial Demon Council.

But unlike the Royal Demon Council, which has branches all over the empire, the Imperial Demon Council only has one headquarters, which was in the Demon Emperor Domain!

The members of the Imperial Demon Council were called the Elder Demons, and they were all scary existences and never appeared in the public eye, and only the Demon Emperor knew their identities!

The demons present on Octo Harbor were all looking at the clear sea with grim expressions on their faces.

At this moment, a silhouette of a ship appeared far in the sea. It was still quite far from the port.

However, no one seemed surprised by seeing that ship. On the contrary, all the soldiers emitted a murderous aura as if they were deranged by whoever was on that ship.

Demonic General Alessandro's eyes went icy as he declared, "Look alive, the Devils are here!"

The Royal Demon Institute,

Ace and the others crossed the bridge, and after crossing another barrier, they finally stepped onto the institute campus.

In front was a lush forest, and between this forest were four roads with different signboards, each route leading toward a different house's campus.

Four demons in front of each road were waiting with large carriages, and these carriages didn't have any beasts pulling them.

Mylah smiled and said, "Everyone, please head toward the roads with your respective house's signboards. The one with Martial Arts House can follow me." She suddenly glanced at Archie and smiled ambiguously. "If fate permits, we might meet again."

Ace squinted his eyes as he was feeling something was amiss. But this won't stop him from going forward. If he could sense Mylah's cultivation, he might've tried to soul probe her, but he didn't dare to take the risk.

He had already aware of treasures that could block soul senses or even soul search. His Demonic Eater Mask was a such treasure, so he won't risk exposure just to quench his curiosity.

"Let's compete again." Charles left this last sentence for Archie before he goes toward the Martial Arts House.

Hugo also nodded before he goes toward Martial Weapon House.

Archie with Lucas and Nancy, moved toward the carriage of Soul Assassin House and the soul life demon on the soul combatant house side was the only one left with no students.

However, he didn't seem frustrated at all and seeing there wasn't anyone who joined the Soul Combatant House, he shot a glance at Archie's group and moved toward his carriage so he could return and report back.

The demon who received Archie's group was a nightmare demon with a handsome face. He was in special student attire, and when he saw three students coming his way, his eyes lit up.

Especially seeing Archie wearing the special student's attire, but his expression remains stoic.

"Senior." They greeted him respectfully. This person was a special student, so no one wanted to get on his bad side.

He nodded expressionlessly, "My name is Jefferson, and I'm a second grad special student. Let's go. We'll talk on our way toward the Soul Assassin House Campus."

Afterward, they embarked on the carriage, and a runic plate appeared in Jefferson's hand. The moment he used that runic plate, the carriage suddenly moved at a high speed.

Then Jefferson suddenly spoke while looking at Archie, "So, you decided to join our Soul Assassin House in the end, huh? Housemaster would be quite pleased."

Ace was startled when he heard this. "Housemaster? I don't know. I had become so popular without even entering the institute." He smiled wryly and lamented.

The other two rolled their eyes at Archie's narcissism but were still shocked that he gained the attention of a Housemaster.

Jefferson nodded and said, "You're new, so it's only natural you didn't know this, but whenever a special grade level student appeared, it was announced by the institute.

"It served both as a welcome and a warning toward the other house's geniuses, whoever this genius ends up standing against.

"However, just as you said, it wasn't enough to draw the attention of a housemaster, since they're only interested in core grade-level students."

Ace's eyes narrowed when he heard this somewhat forbidding feeling emerge in his heart.

"Senior, you mean is?" He asked, pretending to be surprised.

Jefferson replied expressionlessly, "If I'm correct, then you might be at the peak of the platinum river core realm, right?"

Ace knew hiding Archie's cultivation didn't matter anymore, so he nodded. "Yes."

Jefferson's lips suddenly curled at this moment as he said, "You see, the minimum condition for becoming a core grade student is having a Soul Realm Cultivation before the age of a hundred. So, you still had the chance to become a core grade student."

Ace was surprised by this revelation. Because the public did not know this matter and a student of the royal demon institute couldn't talk about the institute's internal affairs with those of none members, it would be akin to breaking the soul contract.

Lucas and Nancy were also shocked when they heard this.

Lucas's expression went hideous. 'This bastard is really lucky. But this also means I don't need to make lies to join hands with Daniel. He'll surely try to eliminate or suppress this bastard and not let him reach the same status as him.

Ace suddenly understood why Mylah was giving him a strange feeling, while he also sensed some hostility from that demon who came from the Soul Combatant House side.

"So, as long as I can break into the Soul Realm, I can be a core-grade student?" He asked with fake excitement.

Jefferson nodded in affirmation. "Yes, this is the easiest way to enter the ranks of core grade students. Daniel Soul Life also used this way to join the ranks of Soul Combatant House's core grade class.

"Moreover, that guy has a terrifying talent in runic combat, and most people believed he could've entered the core class with this base as well."

Jefferson's expression went cold as he looked at Lucas and Nancy all of a sudden, before he ordered, "You two trash, go in the back room. You heard enough."

Lucas and Nancy felt their hearts tremble with Jefferson's icy glare and didn't dare to retort despite feeling humiliated, but they left with their heads low.

It was the harsh truth of the Royal Demon Institute. Without status, you're just trash in the superior student's eyes.

If not for Archie's presence, a special-class student like Jefferson would've never come to pick up a mere ordinary student.

Jefferson's change in attitude also astonished Ace.

After they were left alone, Jefferson went on, "Anyhow, you also have a chance, so I suggest not to waste it and try to break into the soul realm as soon as possible. But it won't be easy since some core grade students might not enjoy having to share their benefits with one more person and might try something." He warned.

"Why are you telling me all this?" Ace felt this guy didn't have any reason to warn Archie, so there had to be some kind of purpose.

Jefferson's expression turned deep. "I was briefed to approach you if you joined the Soul Assassin House by another Core Student. I can't tell you the identity, but know this: no one dared to offend this person.

"This person had taken a keen interest in you and wanted to help you in your predicament with only one condition: your utmost loyalty!"

Ace's eyes narrowed. "My predicament? What kind of predicament? Senior, I know you and that person have good intentions, but I don't want to become a core student, so I should be out of trouble, right?"

This unexpected answer startled Jefferson, but he soon shook his head. "I'm afraid your problem is not just core students!"

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#### **Chapter 553: Secret Invitation**

Archie questioned startingly, "What's that supposed to mean?"

Ace felt nothing from Jefferson. This guy had excellent control over his emotions, and he didn't give any clues like Mylah.

However, what Ace doesn't understand was why Archie even fell into this kind of situation at all. Because Archie had just entered the institute, there shouldn't be any grudge between him and anyone.

So, Ace was on full alert after hearing Jefferson saying that he was already in a predicament and the core grade student was just part of it and it can't be avoided.

Jefferson was expecting this kind of reaction, so he elaborated, "This information is classified for now, and only my backer could access this information. So, before I reveal it to you, I need you to swear, using this oath contract, that this conversation would not get out of this carriage."

Jefferson took out an oath contract which looked like a blank sheet, and handed it to Archie as well as activated another concealment array so no one would hear their conversation, which was about to come.

Ace gave Jefferson a deep look before he used the oath contract since it was just a silly oath he cared little about, even if it was a soul contract, he would still not care.

But this also aroused his interest in this mysterious backer of Jefferson because an oath contract was quite rare, and using this for just a mere talk was quite ludicrous.

When Jefferson saw the black sheet turn into black ashes, he knew the oath contract was established, so he spoke with a stern look. "Tell me, do you know about the upcoming Ancient Allied Gathering in over three years?"

Ace felt instantly alarmed as he nodded. "Yes, I do. But what it had to do with my predicament?"

He clearly remembered Harvey telling him to avoid entering this gathering because it would be going to be bloody this time, and he didn't want Archie to risk his life.

So, he just had to enter the soul realm even if he was got selected by some fluke since a soul realm cultivator couldn't enter the secret realm.

However, getting selected after just becoming a special-grade student was completely unexpected. He didn't even enter the campus yet, but he was already selected. It was clearly a conspiracy or just dumb luck.

Ace was more inclined toward the former.



Although he already guessed what might be the real problem, he wanted to hear it from Jefferson and what caused it.

Jefferson nodded and explained, "This time, the gathering is going to be a war between the young generation in the secret realm, as to why you might've already been warned about it. Even if you won't, you'll be soon.

"Because our institute was supposed to send twenty students to this gathering, and this number is already quite high because our total student count is merely under ten thousand.

"Only the students who were still in the first grade were eligible for this section, and the institute could've sent all those trashes from the ordinary grade to not risk the lives of elite students.

"However, the decree come straight from the Imperial Domain that every house was to send five students, two ordinaries, two extraordinary, and one special. Our special grade seldom received any student below the age of hundred, and in the river core realm.

"And most of the old students were over the age of a hundred. So, whichever house didn't meet the requirements can send a student from a lower grade. It was the case for almost every house's special grade class.

"Until..." Jefferson looked at Archie meaningfully.

"Until I appeared as a special grade student." Archie's expression turned gloomy.

While Ace also wasn't feeling good about this because it wasn't a good thing for his mission.

Jefferson nodded. "Right, but if Housemaster wanted, he could've refused to send you by giving an excuse that you're just a new student and inexperienced. However, he didn't, and it seemed he wanted to use this threat to make you break into the soul realm before the gathering started.

"But you and I both know, breaking into the soul realm is an arduous process, and if you try to break without proper preparation or force it, you'll be only destroying your future potential."

'Nah, I just need to adjust my mask's cultivation, and I'll be in the soul realm,' Ace scoffed inwardly.

His worries faded when he heard it was just a coincidence and no one was plotting against Archie, and as long as he showed the cultivation of the soul realm, no one will make trouble for him anymore.

But he also wanted to know how this person got the information about a housemaster's motives as well as what he wanted from him.

They clearly didn't just approach him for the good of their heart.

So, he played along and nodded at Jefferson's claim, "I know, senior. So, what this person wanted from me?"

Jefferson liked Archie's mindset and conveyed, "I already told you, if you're willing to give your utmost loyalty, my backer will help you break into the soul realm and even become a core student.

"You might not know this but, the Royal Demon Institute isn't like other institutes of the Demonic Academia Region. The institute won't interfere with the students' infight as long as they won't try to kill anyone. However, it wasn't impossible either with the presence of the Life and Death Stage.

"Anyhow, many students chose to enter an alliance formed by powerful students so they could avoid such scenarios, and you'll be also part of an alliance.

"But this alliance is far more powerful than an ordinary alliance, and not just anyone can join it. Our existence is also completely hidden, no one knows about our members.

"We invite our members individually, and all these members were selected by the leader. Every member needed to sign a soul contract with the Leader upon joining.

"Now, I'm inviting you as well and as long as you agree, you'll get many benefits from this, even Royal Points and any resources you want, as long as you show your worth."

Ace looked at Jefferson, who seemed quite passionate and prideful when he mentioned this secret alliance.

'So, all they wanted was to bond a core grade level genius with a mere favor? But this person seemed to be of high status since this nightmare demon might have the same hierarchy identity as Archie's, and they won't submit to someone with lower status than them, no matter what the case,' Ace thought.

However, he didn't want to agree instantly or disagree because as long as it was the case of being a soul realm, he could do it whenever he felt like it.

But being a core student means being closer to a housemaster who might have a Quasi-Law Awareness Realm cultivation and he might get exposed if they use their martial or soul sense on him in person.

However, going to the ancient alliance gathering was also quite troublesome because there was a chance that a real law-awareness realm cultivator might accompany them on this venture.

Since this was going to be a warlike situation, there was over a ninety percent chance of this would happen, so in both situations, Ace would be in danger of exposure.

Unless he has a higher-grade mask!

When Ace thought up to this point, he suddenly asked, "Senior, even if I enter this alliance, it would still take me some time to enter the soul realm. Even with help, it would take a minimum of two years.

"I'm quite sure the selected students might have to go in some sort of training. So, can you tell me when this selection begins, and will these selected students still be in the institute?"

Jefferson was astonished by Archie's question and looked deeply at him. 'He's difficult to rope in.'

But he had no choice but to answer, "In one month, the selected students from every institute will leave their institutes and go into the Imperial Domain for preparation."

Ace's heart turned cold when he heard the Imperial Domain because that place was definitely a no for him. It was the place guarded by grade-7 formations, and he will be instantly exposed if they scan him with a grade-7 formation.

Jefferson took Archie's silence as a travesty since anyone with a sane mind would think, how could someone pull strings in the imperial domain while being in the royal demon institute?

So, he assured, "Don't worry, my backer can support you in the Imperial Domain even better than the Royal Demon Institute. In fact, this was the reason for their confidence, and you'll return within a year."

Ace's eyes narrowed as he couldn't help but asked, "Could it be this backer is a member of...?"

Jefferson sighed ruefully. He wasn't able to hold himself back and give out a clue.

But he didn't regret it because his actual order was to make Archie sign a soul contract no matter what, even tell him some truth if he showed unwillingness!

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#### **Chapter 554: Checking the Location**

The special grade district of Soul Assassin House was completely lavish compared to the other districts. The special-grade students were given their own mansions, and every mansion was akin to a small castle.

Archie stood in front of a luxurious mansion.

The institute allocated this mansion to him as a special student, and he was going to live here from now on.

However, Ace wasn't looking too optimistic about this situation because of his secret discussion with Jefferson.

In the end, Ace had no other choice but to agree to join this secret alliance, since offending an imperial family member wasn't a brilliant choice. In fact, he had no room left for rejection, since he was invited by a demon with such a status.

Jefferson, on the other hand, also thought the same, and after helping in registering in the special district, he dropped him in his personal mansion and told him he would come back in a week to pick him up for the meeting with his backer.

In the meantime, he was free to do anything. He could even join other alliances, but he couldn't reveal the existence of this secret alliance, no matter what.

However, Ace had other things in mind after his deal finalized with Jefferson. He was thinking about how to show his soul realm cultivation so he won't have to go into the Imperial Domain.

But he hesitates since it might put him into a dangerous spotlight, so he has to be careful about what he chooses.

Nevertheless, he still has a month before the selected students will get notified about their selection. The new classes were also supposed to start a month after the entrance test.

In every demon institute, each grade lasts for ten years, but this didn't mean that a new and an old student were on the same level just because they were in the same grade.

That's why each grade was divided into ten levels.

When a new entrance test began every year, an annual assessment for the old students was also gone under these level tests to move toward the next level.

With each level cross, a student will give many perks, while failing was not an option.

Because failing in the royal demon institute means direct degradation for students above ordinary classes. While for ordinary classes means expulsion.

Students could also enter higher grade classes, but it was very difficult because of the absurd conditions attached to it.

From Jefferson, Ace found that there were just three more first-grade, special students, besides him in the first-grade area of the special district, and those three were still undergoing their yearly assessment and won't be back until next month.

Ace finally realized just how small the number of students the royal demon institute had and why they considered elites among elites.

Anyhow, if this Ancient Alliance Gathering wasn't looming over his head. In that case, Ace was planning on staying here for at least a decade and setting up a plan for his chain mission while becoming powerful and searching for the elemental orb.

Ace placed his student badge in front of the runic barrier which was the entrance of the mansion. It was a security measure to stop anyone from disturbing the students.

Without a student's permission, only personal instructors could enter their student's mansion or a housemaster-level figure.

But Ace wasn't too optimistic about this alarming and defensive formation because they were just a fifth-grade formation enough to keep a soul realm out.

As he entered the mansion after, he had to admit it was really grand, like the mansion of the runic soul family.

Now, he had this vast mansion all to himself, and it had many facilities, and he could do almost anything here.

But it was a pity that Ace wasn't in the mood to explore or waste any time because he needed to decide in a week if he should show the soul realm cultivation or not.

'I was told I could go to the central library and select three skills of lower sky rank, one cultivation art of upper earth, and one secret skill of lower earth rank as a reward for being a special grade student.

'While I can also select a grade-4 attacking array and a grade-4 soul treasure from District Treasure Trove of Special District. Last, this training facility in the royal tower, which had a strong illusion array to stimulate real-life training effects, and I was given 48 hours for free.'

Ace remembered the rewards in his student badge, and he even had 5,000 royal points, which was a huge amount for a new student. Not only that, but he would get 100 Royal Points every month from the institute.

At this moment, Ace entered the mansion, which was completely clean despite its size and without any servants, it was the work of an array as well.

Students weren't allowed to bring any servants inside the royal demon institute, and neither they were given any.

But there was not any rule about making other students their servants as long as they were willingly doing it. The institute will turn a blind eye to it as long as no slave item was utilized.

Anyhow, Ace directly headed toward the cultivation hall, which was underground. He already had a small map of this mansion, so he knew where the facilities were located.

He then activated all the concealing formations and then use his own formations on top to make sure no one would spy on him. But he was still not sure since it was the royal demon institute, he couldn't be too careful here.

Before, he was planning to let out one Winter and have her take Nancy's face, but after he entered the institute and knew about the rules and contracts, they had to sign and thought otherwise.

Not only that, but those three ladies were all in their respective spaces and engrossed in cultivation after they all got a massive amount of rewards from the system in their last thievery.

Ace didn't want to distract or disturb them unless necessary and let them absorb all those techniques and skills completely.

"Moira, do you recover completely?" Ace tried to communicate with Moira, in his true soul.

After the system used some mysterious power to forcibly activate the live fate map power to show Ace the elemental orb's location, it naturally affected Moira as well.

Although he could still use the fate map, Moira has become completely dormant and hasn't spoken a word since that day.

That was why Ace also didn't try to activate the map to see the elemental orb's position again because he was afraid it might affect Moira again. So, he was waiting for Moira to recover because he activates that position again.

Before, he was still far away from the exact position of the lightning orb, so he didn't manage to pinpoint its precise location. But he clearly remembered that it was somewhere in the center area of the royal demon nation.

Now that he was in the Demonic Academia Region, which was also considered a center of the royal demon nation, he should be able to pinpoint the accurate location of the lightning orb now.

If not for this serious situation, he would still not try to rush Moira.

Ace knew his prowess was no longer sufficient, and he needed to break into the higher realm if he wanted to have any chance of his thievery or survival, as the matter of fact.

"Please don't worry, Sir. Ace, I'm fine. You can use me as you like. I can handle it." Moira's childish voice sounded in Ace's mind, filled with assurance.

Ace felt Maria's words were quite ambiguous. Nonetheless, he asked sternly, "Are you sure?"

"Yes, I don't know why, but I just have this feeling that it was just a one-time thing. So, please go on, I'll be fine." Moira confirmed.

Ace squinted his eyes when he heard this and thought, 'Moira is an eternal provenance treasure related to fate, so her intuition was not something to be taken lightly.'

In the end, he believed Moira's intuition and commanded the system, "System, I want to see the lightning orb's position again!"

[1 Million Thief Points have been deducted!]

[Host only has ten seconds before the host is required to pay 1 million thief points again for another ten seconds!]

[Thief Point(s): 136,820,500]

Ace wanted to complain about the short time for the whole one million thief points, but he wasn't given the chance because the fate map again activated on its own, and started zooming out like the last time.

Ace's eyes went sharp as they were affixed to the increasing map.

The map soon covered the entire royal demon institute before more and more areas started to appear, and soon the boundary of the Imperial Domain which was closest to the royal demon institute entered the map.

Ace instantly recognized the imperial domain because it was empty on any map of the royal demon nation. There was no map of the Imperial Domain, and neither were allowed to be made!

### [Eternal Thief](#)

#### **Chapter 555: The Plan has Changed!**

Seeing the area of the Demon Emperor Domain, Ace was naturally curious about this mysterious territory, and his second job mission, which required him to stand on top of the tallest building of the demon race, was also related to this place.

Because the Demon Temple was somewhere in the Emperor Domain.

As more and more areas appeared, Ace didn't dare to blink his eyes, afraid he would lose the track of the place.

However, soon when the map stopped expanding, Ace's eyes went widened in disbelief when he finally saw the location of Lightning Orb!

'T-this? It's in the imperial domain!' Ace was gobsmacked when he saw the indicator pointing in the middle of the emperor's domain!

Although the exact location was still hard to see because the zoom-out area was quite large, the surface location was completely accurate.

No matter how many times and from which side Ace looked at the map, it was really inside the most guarded place of the mighty demon continent, the Demon Emperor Domain!

After ten seconds passed, the fate map vanished with a system notification.

[Did the host want to activate the location again?]

"Activate your head!" Ace retorted in exasperation.

He was appalled by this revelation. If this orb were anywhere but the Imperial Domain, he would've already started planning how to approach that place and retrieve it.

But now, he didn't even know where to start. His skills just weren't enough to infiltrate the imperial domain without being noticed.

Ace calmed himself and then asked, "Moira, are you all right?"

He knew he couldn't do anything about this current situation, so racking his brain over this matter won't make it less troublesome or dangerous.

"Yes. I'm fine, nothing happened, and it feels like... natural." Moira's uncertain yet elated voice sounded.

Ace was glad that nothing had happened this time. "Alright, thank you for your help. You can keep resting. I need some time to think about what I just see."

"A-alright, if you need my help, don't hesitate to ask," Moira reply softly.

Ace chuckled and didn't reject her goodwill.

However, his expression went grave the next moment as he again thought about the position of the lightning orb.

'I also found two elemental orbs in the azure wind continent and the lower lands on top of that.

'But here, it just keeps getting difficult and difficult. Someone claims both orbs, and one is missing, while one is probably in the hand of the most powerful family on the continent.

'I wonder if humans didn't know about those two orbs in the lower lands, or they simply just didn't care, or someone left them there to mature, or they were just formed after the royal lands stopped paying attention.

'However, this wasn't the case here. The imperial domain had complete control of the entire continent, and anything that interested them, they took it. No one could compete with them for it.'

Ace frowned. 'Although I can't infiltrate the imperial domain individually, I have the chance to enter it now. Who would've thought the demons would give me the invitation themselves?

'But Archie's identity still isn't enough for searching the elemental orb. I would be restricted in that place or who knows what kind of training awaits Archie once he entered the imperial domain.

'I won't have a chance to roam that place freely, and if I dared to show anything out of the ordinary, they might suspect me. Furthermore, the moment I stole that elemental orb, if it was really in the hand of some influential figure, then I would be exposed!

'Then leaving that place alive would be even more impossible than entering it. I might even have to abandon this chain mission if I want to gasp at this chance of acquiring the elemental orb.

'Elemental Orb is more important right now, and my entire plan was depending on acquiring it and becoming more powerful. Without a power boost, I would put myself in danger if I went to the institute's treasury or library.

'This would also result in alerting the demons, and I would lose my chance to complete my job mission before 5 years as well as I have to give up on the lightning orb in a long run as well.

'In contrast, I could complete my job mission if I planned this well and acquired the elemental orb in the process. Even if something goes wrong and I don't get the chance, I could remain hidden and still have the chance for a comeback.

'I still have more than a decade before the chain mission ends. This trip to the endless sea might be an excellent opportunity if I looked at it in another direction.'

Ace's lips suddenly curled into a conniving smile. 'Archie's identity isn't enough. I need someone who could move freely in the emperor domain, and no law awareness realm cultivator paid much attention to this person, either. I wonder if this demon from the Imperial Family who invites Archie secretly is strong or not...'

Ace suddenly felt like everything was falling into place on its own as he made a new plan, which was completely opposite to his previous one.

Now that he knew the lightning orb was in the imperial domain, he had to add this place into consideration, and the royal demon institute was no longer that critical either. Not for now, at least.

At this moment, Ace suddenly narrowed his eyes, and he flipped his hand. His violet student badge appeared, which was blinking at this moment.

With a thought, he activated it and saw a small notice.

"Special Student Archie Soul Life, come to the Special Instructor Quarters No.03 on Soul Assassin Royal Tower Floor No.99 the next morning. I'll be waiting."

It was more like an invitation than notice and Ace was astonished when he guessed it was probably from a special grade instructor!

'It couldn't be because this person wanted to accept me as a personal student since it's meaningless with the selection in one month. It might be for some other purpose.

'Nevertheless, I can't reject it or dodge this meeting. It would be foolish to offend a special grade instructor.' Ace frowned slightly and stowed the badge away.

In the end, Ace sighed ruefully, 'I need to wake her. She would be extremely useful with her set of skills in this situation and in the imperial domain as well. I hope she'll be in a good mood, though.'

Ace smiled wryly before he closed his eyes and sent his voice into the private space of the Faceless Thief!



The four Royal Towers of the Royal Demon Institute were the symbols of four disciplinary houses.

Each tower was a thousand-meter-tall and had a hundred floors.

The higher the floor was, the more advanced the facilities and benefits of cultivating on such a floor will be, and that's what made these four towers so unique and desired by everyone.

Floors 1 to 10 were open for ordinary-grade students to use training and cultivation facilities. Floor 11 to 30 was for extraordinary students. While Floor 31 to 60 was for Special Grade Students.

The Floors from 61 to 80 were prohibited areas, and only those with special permits were allowed to enter these floors because these floors were for core grade students only.

On Floor 81 to 90 lived the instructors of Ordinary and Extraordinary Grades of the royal demon institute.

From floor 91 to 99 were the quarters of Special Grade Instructors and the personal students of Housemasters.

Lastly, the 100th floor was occupied by a Housemaster.

At this time, in the Soul Assassin House Tower, Floor No.100,

Bodach was sitting imposingly with a faint smile on his face while facing him was a Nightmare Demon who was none other than Jefferson!

However, Jefferson had a silver badge in his hand, which was the symbol of an instructor!

Bodach spoke smilingly, "So, how was it?"

Jefferson had an expressionless face before he stowed the instructor badge away and respectfully answered, "He's alright, but I don't know why Master made me approach him and even arrange for him to join the Prince's Alliance."

Bodach smiled mysteriously and say, "Heh, that little fellow has the potential to be a core student and rank within the top ten at that. It's in his nature which you won't see very often.

"As for why I sent you, isn't it obvious? After me, you'll be the next Housemaster and Tower Master of the Soul Assassin House, and you should start taking students. If that little brat becomes a core grade student, you'll be his teacher, and you can't refuse this time."

Jefferson's emotionless face suddenly showed a frown, as if he was unwilling.

Bodach completely ignored his expression and continued, "As for why I arranged him to go into the prince's alliance and asked the Fifth Prince to look after him in the Imperial Domain, it just equaled the battlefield."

Bodach's empty smile turned ghastly at this moment. "If that Ampersand thinks that I have gone senile, then he's already lost this time!"

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**Chapter 556: Devil Envoys Motives!**

The Northern Imperial Domain, inside a luxurious hall,

Sitting in this hall were two masked demons emanating suffocating auras while sitting in front of them were also two beings in black robes and black masks, only their crimson eyeballs visible, and their pointy, long ears.

The most distinguishing features of these two beings were unlike demons: they had dark brown folded bat wings behind them, and their auras were extremely sinister, which would make anyone flee far away from them.

The red-masked demon coldly uttered at this moment, "So, what do we owe this honor of receiving two esteemed devil envoys without any prior notice? Perhaps you two are here for sightseeing?" He was clearly unhappy about these two visitors from afar.

These two were the envoy of the Devil Race and they appeared here without any prior notice. Only when they had already entered the waters of the demon continent, they issued an alert for their arrival!

This action naturally made demons furious because it was clearly the devil race showing no face to the demon race and coming here as they pleased as if no one would dare to stop them.

Although the relationship between the two races was known as friendly by the other continents, they were not that friendly at all.

On the contrary, the devil race was always on guard against the demon race because only they could pose a threat to their number one position in this world.

While the demon race was also ambitious but never showed their fangs because a fight between continents wasn't a joke, and if these two hegemonies clashed, the Hunters will not let this chance pass by and might try to play the fisherman.

These three races maintain a delicate balance and keep each other in check unless someone had completely lost their mind, they would never start an all-out war.

The visit of these two devil envoys was quite sudden, and many demons have some idea about why they were there.

After what happened on the outer continent, it wasn't a secret anymore that they were continually being tricked by the conniving thief Sky Stealer, and this matter just couldn't be contained after his last thievery.

It was the biggest humiliation of the demon race, and they wanted to do anything to capture that thief and skin him alive publicly, but that conniving bastard was too wily and still hiding somewhere.

Despite the demon race's best efforts, they still had made no progress, heck, they didn't even find a single clue about his whereabouts yet. It was like he had vanished into thin air.

Now, these two fellows were here, and everyone knew they weren't here out of the goodness of their hearts but to rub salt in their wounds.

Nevertheless, they couldn't do anything about it since the Ancient Alliance Gathering was coming, and every race had put many resources into this venture this time.

So, if demons make devils dissatisfied, then they might work together with hunters to get rid of them in the secret realm which the demon knows that the hunter would happily agree.

So, they could do nothing but swallow their dissatisfaction and cope with these two envoys.

These two demons were Elder Demons from the Imperial Demon Council, and we're here to tackle these two devil envoys.

One of the devils spoke in a jeering tone, "The Sixth Demon Elder sure are generous but I won't be able to enjoy the scenery while knowing there's a thief roaming free out there."

"You!" Sixth Demon Elder's voice turned sharp as his aura spiked, he was enraged!

"Sixth Demon Elder, control yourself!" The second demon in blue masked sternly warned.

"Indeed, there's no need to take it seriously, Sixth Demon Elder. My second brother like to jest. I apologized if you found his words offensive." The second devil in his husky voice also spoke while shooting an unhappy glance at his second brother.

They were both in someone else's territory, and the other party was showing much consideration by just not attacking them and treating them with utmost importance and ethics.

But if they pushed them too hard, he knew demons weren't pushovers at all.

"Humph!" Sixth Demon Elder grunt coldly, and his aura return to normal.

He also knew attacking them would turn the situation worse and since the other party issued an apology, he couldn't be unreasonable. After all, it was he who provoked them in the first place.

This time, the demon in the blue mask spoke, "Let's not beat around the bush, shall we? So why do you want?" His voice was calm and filled with authority.

The devil, with a husky voice, also didn't let his second brother speak and seriously stated, "Fourth Demon Elder, we are not here to cause trouble or to pick a fight with your guys.

"We are here to help you with your thief's matter. Our races had always lent a hand to each other in predicaments in past, and this time isn't any different as well. I hope we'll receive a positive answer."

Fourth Demon Elder already knows about this, "We naturally appreciate devil race concern and won't slap a helping hand away. But His Imperial Majesty would definitely want to know the reason behind your help and the compensation you want.

"Let's be honest with each other, nothing is free in this world, and we won't take this help without returning something, so please speak freely."

"It would be indeed disrespectful of us if we didn't take the generous offer of His Imperial Majesty the Demon Emperor." The devil said impassively, "I would be blunt with my request, then. We just want that thief's corpse, nothing else."

Sixth Demon Elder blurted in anger when he heard this, "Do you take us for a fool?! The corpse of that thief is undoubtedly the most precious thing on him, and you want that, of all things?"

Fourth Demon Elder also nodded and coldly said, "It's indeed an unreasonable request and you're not giving us any chance of discussion at all."

"I know this very well and your plight, but please consider it. You know about our Blood Clan's innate ability to sense the blood aura which couldn't be hidden with disguise tools or abilities.

"As long as this thief is not from the demon race, we'll be able to pinpoint his direction. We're even willing to perform a blood ritual, which you should know is a secret technique of our Blood Clan, which had a powerful side effect on our vitality.

"I think it's proof of our sincerity in working with you guys. We just want his corpse, and you can have anything else on him and even execute him publicly." The devil said frankly.

Fourth and Sixth Demon Elders were shocked when they heard 'Blood Ritual' which was the infamous technique of the number one and dominant clan of Devil Race the Blood Clan, for its tracking abilities, and no one could escape it, no matter the strength!

They both were now speechless since even they thought this offer was quite generous, and they could also get rid of that thief for good.

The water had long crossed the bridge, and every day that thief remained free the demon race was losing face.

The devil duo sensed the demon elders' hesitation, and they glanced at each other and decided to hit while the iron was still hot.

"I'll also tell you something which is only known by our clan for now and the situation the demon race is in." The devil said ambiguously.

The Sixth Demon Elder was confused. "What do you mean?"

"The human race was going to wake their Prime One for some reason, and the last time we heard from our spies was five months ago. You should know what this means, right?" The devil said coolly.

The Sixth Demon Elder abruptly stood up when he heard and shouted, "Why?! Did they finally lose their mind? Aren't those guys under you?"

Fourth Demon Elder's aura also spiked, as he wanted the answer to this exact question.

The devil sighed, "You guys know the human race never loses their ambition, and they had a knack for striking when someone least expected it. The Fiery Hell Realm before and now is completely different, and I'm afraid the beast race might work with humans this time to force us in giving them some slots to fight for the spirit fire.

"Currently, a strange thing is happening in the beast continent, and I'm afraid the humans have already decided to become independent again the moment they get rid of our people and decided to awake their Prime One.

"Don't forget that thief now had that hex book which had the entire inheritance of the witch race. It was a terrible decision to let it out, but since it happens, we need to act before he masters that book."

The Devil's voice went stern. "We can't let him mature anymore. Last time, it took both Devil and Demon Ancestors to kill the leader of the witch race, and we can't afford another such variable appearing right at this time.

"It might really turn the tides of power this time, and with the spirit fire appearing in the mix, I'm afraid the long peace of Golden Sky World will shatter!"

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#### **Chapter 557: Soul Assassin Royal Tower**

The next morning,

Archie left the mansion and headed toward the Assassin House Royal Tower, which was quite close to the special district.

Each territory of the Royal Demon Institute was like a vast city, but unlike a normal city, it was empty and peaceful. The Qi density was also many times higher than the outside because of special Qi-gathering arrays were all over the place.

The Royal Tower wasn't guarded by another, as there wasn't any need to. There was a powerful formation barrier surrounding the massive structure, and only those with permits in their badges could cross this barrier.

Furthermore, if anyone tried to sneak in, they would suffer terrible consequences!

Since a special grade instructor invited Archie, he was naturally eligible to enter without spending his free training hours.

When Ace reached the place, he looked at the massive gray tower, which was triangular and looked like a plain pillar. No one could tell if there were floors in this structure or even doors.

From Paul's memories, he had seen this place from inside as well, but seeing the real thing could not be compared with a memory.

Holding his student badge, he crossed the gray translucent barrier, and the next moment, his badge lit up.

Thereupon, an outline started to emerge in the structure before it turned into massive gates, which made Ace's eyes narrow in astonishment.

'This entire tower could've been powered on a Grade-6 formation. I wonder what that treasury and library will have in their security. Probably a grade-7 formation!' Ace grimaced just thinking about it.

When he reached the gates, a static voice rang, "Special Grade Student Archie Soul Life, you were given a permit to enter the 99th floor. Please place your student badge on the formation scanner and you'll be given the passage to the 99th floor!"

Thereafter, a small white platform started to rise from the ground with a smooth, runic surface.

Ace was calmed as he placed his badge on the platform, and a gray light enveloped it for a few moments.

At this moment, the gates finally started to open, and the platform also seemed to be done with the badge as the barrier vanished, Ace picked it up, and the platform slid back into the ground.

The voice rang again. "Enter!"

Ace glanced at the door for a moment with an ambiguous look in his eyes, but he still took a step forward and entered the tower.

What greeted Ace was a luxurious and spacious lobby, and there was a fiery demon standing in front. Right behind him was a white triangle platform.

There was also a counter with no one to tend to and a corridor that led toward the inner tower.

"Archie Soul Life?" The fiery demon didn't give Ace the chance to look at the building carefully when he called him impassively. He was clearly here for Archie.

"Yes, I am," Archie replied politely.

"Let's go, we shouldn't tarry. There's nothing to see here. Everyone is cultivating in their private cultivation rooms." He impassively said before he stepped onto the triangle platform while beckoning Archie with his eyes to follow suit.

Ace knew what that platform was and how it worked, but he was still looking forward to using this novel thing.

When Archie stood beside him, the fiery demon warned, "Since it's your first time using the lifting platform, try not to fall or hurled."

Archie merely nodded without saying anything.

The next moment, a transparent barrier of light descended from above before the triangle platform suddenly lifted from the ground, and the ceiling also opened into a triangle shape space just like the platform.

The platform then suddenly shoots upward like an arrow.

Although this much speed wasn't enough to affect a cultivator of the river core realm, many felt scared when they experienced the feeling of soaring upward.

However, Ace was completely fine. Only curiosity shone in his eyes as he was looking at the rising platform, which was taking them to higher floors. It was naturally a function of the royal tower, and there weren't any stairs to go upward or come down.

'If I hadn't seen the memories of Paul about it and now experiencing it, I wouldn't believe a formation could be used like this. The outer provinces are really countryside compared to the royal zone.' He thought as he felt even more urgency to increase his power before he walked into some trap here.

Although he hatched a plan to avoid this exact situation from happening, it's still better to be careful than sorry.

"Senior, can you tell me who invites me?" Ace inquired.

Although he knew he wasn't in danger, he still wanted to know what instructor had taken a liking to Archie, despite knowing he might probably leave the institute in a month's time.

He didn't believe for a second that a special grade instructor wouldn't have any knowledge about the gathering selection.

The fiery demon was somewhat astonished when he saw Archie didn't react to the lifting platform at all, as if he had been on it before and now even talking.

Nevertheless, he still replied while maintaining his outer appearance, "I'm merely a deacon who is in charge of this lifting platform, so I know nothing about who invites you."

After he thought for a moment, he spoke again, "All I can say is the 99th floor is occupied by five personal students of the Housemaster, and three of them are special grade instructors. I don't know anything more."

Ace already knew about what a 99th floor represented, but he wanted to know who had taken an interest in him from that place.

Paul was a member of Soul Combatant House, so he knew little about the Soul Assassin House.

And after Archie drew the attention of an imperial family member, he was on guard against others.

"Who lives in Special Instructor Quarters No.03?" Ace decided to disclose the information he received from the notice.

The fiery demon's expression suddenly changed when he heard this and looked at Archie deeply, "Are you sure it's the Special Instructor Quarters No.03?"

Archie nodded seriously.

Ace instantly noticed the change in expressions and felt something was amiss.

The fiery demon's expression returned to normal as he merely said, "You'll know soon. We're already here."

The platform suddenly stopped at this moment, and Ace saw they were in a spacious hall, and there were ten corridors leading in separate directions.

The fiery demon pointed toward a corridor. "That is Special Instructor Quarters No.03."

Ace looked at the corridor and saw there were a nameplate 'Special Instructor Quarters No.03' there, and there were other nameplates on four other corridors while the other five were empty.

"Since you have the invitation, you just need to hold your badge and entered the corridor, and someone will receive you afterward. I'll be waiting here." The fiery demon impassively stated.

Ace nodded before he moved toward the corridor with his student badge in his hand. The moment he stepped into the corridor, he felt like he had been stepped into quicksand as a ghastly pressure descend all of a sudden.

The next moment, a powerful soul pressure also started to attack his mind.

Before Ace could comprehend what had happened, an icy voice rang. "If you find your way toward me from this Piercing Maze, I'll meet you.

"But if you didn't, then you have no qualification to meet me and receive my guidance. You have three days and can use any means."

Ace was flabbergasted by this voice and thought in indignation, 'What the fuck? Aren't you the one who invites me here in the first place?!'

Still, he didn't say it out loud, as he could feel the physical and soul suppression was getting weaker because of his special traits. Although this grade-6 formation really has some effect on him, it wasn't much.

Ace sneered inwardly as he saw the passage in front of him had turned into a maze. It was clearly an illusion formation, and all Ace needed was to activate the fate map, and the actual path will emerge. No illusion can affect the fate map!

Although he won't be able to see the traps, it was more than enough to see the way.

Nevertheless, Ace would not do it, or it would be too shocking, so he would pretend to lose and struggle and take his time to cross this maze.

The other party didn't have any malicious intent, or he could feel this much pressure was only enough for an intermediate soul realm cultivator, while a grade-6 formation could even make a manifestation realm feel despair.

It was simply a test of Archie's level, nothing else.

On the 100th floor of Soul Assassin Royal Tower,

Bodach has a large projection of Archie standing with a pale expression inside the corridor, and he couldn't help but smile, "If he managed to cross this piercing maze within three days, then his potential is even stronger than that brat Daniel."

His ghostly smile widened, "Don't disappoint us, little fellow!"

## **[Eternal Thief](#)**

### **Chapter 558: Piercing Maze**

Inside the main hall of, Special Instructor Quarters No.03,

A projection of Archie could be seen in an array mirror, and three demons wearing black masks were watching this projection. All of them were wearing Institute Instructor's robes.

One of them spoke at this moment, "So, First Brother, is this the student master found for you? He seemed quite... ordinary." His voice was mild without any emotions in it.

"He's not my student yet, not unless he's a core student before he becomes 100 years of age." The demon sitting in the center of the three replied impassively.



"Oh, now I understand why the master agreed to send him to this upcoming gathering training. If he broke into the soul realm before the participants leave then he will come back as a core student and his experience would also improve." The third demon on the right was a demoness.

The demoness spoke in an icy tone, "But if he failed, then he will go to the gathering as a punishment to disappoint Master and First Brother. I'm afraid he won't even break free from this Piercing Maze in three days. You guys are asking too much from this lad. Not everyone can be a genius like First Brother."

"Although Third Sister is right like always, Master made us observe him for a whole three days. If he passed, we have to teach him one sky grade skill each. Let's see if he could earn this fortune. Don't underestimate Master's intuition." The demon on the left reply impassively.

"Alright, he's about to enter the first level ice soul maze, which will make his soul feel like he's deep within a freezing lake. The Piercing Maze's entire purpose is to train and strengthen our souls in different soul element environments.

"Although only three environments are activated and level were also set to level-1 right now, they're still not something a lad in River Core could cross in three days. But if he really pulled this off, I'll teach him the Shadow Walk." The demoness coldly declared with full of confidence.

"Oh? Third Sister sure is generous. Alright, if he escapes in three days, then there's no need to doubt that he'll be First Brother's student and our first Soul Nephew, so I won't be stingy as well. I'll teach him, Darkles Stealth." The demon chuckled as he was also quite confident that Archie won't be able to cross the maze in three days.

The demon in the center didn't comment or say anything. All his focus was on the projection as if the other two didn't exist.

Inside the Piercing Maze,

Ace was walking slowly toward a blue passage which gave him the feeling of cold in his soul, but it wasn't dangerous at all.

He was deliberately suppressing his soul cultivation so he could feel some effect of his surrounding, or the people watching might suspect something. He didn't want to meet with the Housemaster, especially when there was a chance for exposure in his soul sense.

But he also didn't want to miss this chance to meet with a special grade instructor as well as the Housemaster's personal student at that. If he earned his goodwill, he might get some unexpected advantage or information.

So, Ace was planning to cross this maze in two days. His plan was simple, he would not try to break free from this illusion and used the fate map to slowly exit this place after wandering for some time.

It would appear he had passed the maze with difficulty and won't draw any attention. He mused that a special student with core grade potential should be able to pass this maze which was why he was being tested.

The moment Ace stepped into the blue passage, the pressure on his soul suddenly increased, and its nature also turned cold.

'Is this some kind of training ground to strengthen someone's soul?' Ace mused. 'It might be possible since this place is within the royal tower and on the 99th floor. I already heard about the illusion facilities in this tower.'

'If that's the case, then I should completely surpass my cultivation and see how I fawn on this illusion training ground. It might be good for my soul as well. It's not like I'm in a hurry.'

After Ace decided, he completely suppressed his martial cultivation and used his soul to resist the cold soul Qi, which gave Ace some pressure and made him feel the cold of winter.

But his soul was filled with heavenly soul Qi and still quite strong so, Ace suppressed his true soul cultivation up to peak Soul Gates realm which finally made Ace feel the true might of this soul illusion.

Now, he could finally feel just how strong and aghast this illusion training facility was.

Nevertheless, Ace didn't restore his cultivation and kept it as it is and start walking. He reckoned that now no one would suspect anything.

However, he didn't know he had completely underestimated the Piercing Maze, which was the most precious soul training facility of the two soul houses of the Royal Demon Institute.

This training facility was designed for those geniuses in the soul embryo realm to strengthen their soul in different element environments, even manifestation realm cultivators could train in this facility.

Furthermore, a river core realm cultivator has never crossed three environments in three days. The closest was two environments in three days which were held by none other than the Soul Assassin Housemaster's first student, Clouse Nightmare!

But only a few crucial figures know about it since the Royal Demon Institute never shows off or divulges information about their star students.

Furthermore, it was also done in the order of the imperial domain because they didn't want to reveal this information to enemies like devils.

Nevertheless, Archie was still forced into this impossible test by Bodach because he suspected Archie's abilities from the start.

Archie never showed or could use his true prowess in the entrance test, and someone like Bodach, who was an old, wily demon, could never miss this detail.

So, he decided to test Archie's real soul potential in the Piercing Maze of the 99th floor, which was far more powerful than any floor below, even at the just difficulty of the first level.

If he managed to cross even one environment in one day, then this means he was definitely a core-grade seed and was hiding his true abilities to keep a low profile.

An institute like the Royal Demon Institute would always do a deep background check on every potential student, and Archie was the same.

His personal profile from the past and the current Archie weren't a match at all. It was like he was a completely different person.

But no one ever suspected that it was a whole other person because everyone thought that Archie was hiding his abilities to not get destroyed by his main clan, which was completely reasonable.

Almost all the students in the royal demon institute were from four-grade demon tribes, and everyone understood that the main clan will always try to do everything to remain the main clan.

Grand Demon Duke-level figures would never pay attention to such matters as long as they won't go too far and start killing their own kin.

Bodach thought the same, but he also thought that Archie was being an idiot for not showing his ability in Royal Demon Institute since no one could harm him here and was foolishly holding back and kicking the benefits in the face.

He was even more sure when Clouse told him that Archie said he wasn't interested in being the core grade student. So, his thought of sending him to the gathering training was the right choice to force him to show his true potential.

If he accepts him as a core student, it would benefit no one, so he let Archie face dangerous situations and escape using his abilities.

But Bodach was also wary of Ampersand would play some trick to clear the way for his student Daniel, who was the main descendant of the Soul Life Clan and the most cherished genius.

However, if Archie showed even more potential, then Daniel would be distracted and felt threatened, which would divert his focus from his cultivation.

Bodach had sensed ill intent from Ampersand when he suggested selecting and sending Archie to the gathering training.

Ampersand probably had guessed that Archie would never join the Soul Combatant House since his nature was more like an assassin. It was clearly an attempt to get rid of Archie and clear the path for Daniel.

But Bodach also played along and does as Ampersand suggested, and lets him think that, he was tricked.

Yet, in truth, he was just making sure Ampersand won't suspect anything.

In secret, Bodach arranged a meeting between Clouse and Archie from start and also arranged for him to join the prince's alliance. It could protect him from both instructors and students alike.

Even in the imperial domain, no one would dare to touch Archie as long as some other member of the imperial family interfered.

However, not even Bodach had thought that all these arrangements were going to be a stepping stone in Ace's way!

### [Eternal Thief](#)

#### **Chapter 559: A Brewing Storm**

At this moment, Ace was still unaware of the true nature of Piercing Maze and was moving slowly but steadily toward the third environment, and only a day had passed.

He didn't know that Bodach as well as the three special grade instructors were astounded by his fast advancement and watching his every step like hawks now.

Meanwhile, far away from the demon continent was the Beast Continent,

In the center of the beast continent was a huge mountain range filled with towering mountains with snowy peaks. This place was known as the Ancient Beast Mountain Range.

Only the Magic Beast with at least Manifestation Bloodline could enter and live in this place, and it was also the place where the Beast Emperor resides.

At one of the tallest peaks of Ancient Beast Mountain Range,

A sphere of dark gray mist was revolving in the air, completely ineffective by snowing winds.

At this moment, a blur appeared a few meters away from this misty sphere.

A husky voice sounded within this blur. "Grim Ancestor, I think the children found the person you have told me to keep an eye for. But I'm not sure if they're the same, but there's a 70% chance they're the same since your provided description match almost perfectly."

"Let me be the judge of that." An eerie voice sounded in reply from the misty sphere.

"Very well then, a few years ago, a thief appeared in the demon continent..." The husky voice told all the information on the Sky Stealer they had collected, "... not only his name is also Sky Stealer, but he also left an owl symbol whenever he theft."

"So, that brat somehow ran on the demon continent and even survived all these years while making demons lose so much face? Impressive." The eerie voice of Grim Ancestor sounded astonished with a hint of killing intent.

"So, they are the same person? But then it won't be easy to capture him. Even demons are still helpless against him." The husky voice stated his concerns.

"This is indeed troublesome now. He had the map, and without it, our plan is mere fantasy, and for some reason, I couldn't sense the map's presence, no matter how much I tried.

"I don't know what kind of secret that thievish brat had. Not only he makes a name for himself on the demon continent, but he cut my connection with the map as well." Grim Ancestor told in frustration.

"Then all that sacrifice for that map was for nothing?! You better find a way to take that map back or don't blame me for being ruthless Grim Ancestor.

"Don't even think for a second that I have forgiven you for what you have done in the past, and now you're trying to repeat that tragedy all over again. But I won't let it happen, or you'll really make our race extinct this time!" The husky voice threatened coldly.

"Old friend, don't sound so noble. We both know what happened in the past and why we both are still alive when all those old rivals of ours are tasting dust somewhere." Grim Ancestor sneered coldly and continued, "As for that map, I'll find it, eventually. Since I know that brat's whereabouts, I will find him. But first, I need to regain my cultivation, and the fastest way is a Law Source."

"You mean... don't tell me!" The husky voice rang in astonishment.

"Hehe, I have finally gained full control over this body. That lass was really hard to deal with, and now my cultivation is only at the peak of the platinum soul river core realm.

"Prepared a ship for me. I'm going into the fiery hell realm to acquire that ancient law source. I might even go on the demon continent afterward to hunt that thievish brat down." Grim Ancestor confidently declared.

"It seemed you were planning this from the start, huh? So be it, those fools didn't know just how ancient that fire spirit is, and they just discovered it a hundred years ago. Only someone like us could acquire it.

"At that time, even without that map, we can easily win over this world and return to former glory!" The husky voice was filled with passion.

Grim Ancestor sneered in indignation, "Hehe, see you still the same as before... Beast Ancestor!"

At the same time, on Azure Wind Continent, low-level lands.

In the Eastern lands of 2-Star Cities, two cloaked figures appeared out of thin air, near the bank of a beautiful river.

The meadow river bank was surrounded by rows of colorful wildflowers, creating exquisite scenery and the aromatic scent drifting in the air giving the feeling of refreshment.

However, just a few hundred meters away from this beautiful river was an old ruin filled with wild sward and vines.

"NO! It can't be the River Flower City; how could it be destroyed? No, I must be in the wrong place again!" A melodious voice mumbled in anxiety and incertitude.

However, the other cloaked person retorted softly at this moment, "Princess, I think now is the time to accept the reality that..."

"No! Shut up!"

The mysterious Princess reprimanded loudly as a sharp icy aura suddenly exploded from her, freezing everything in a mile radius, turning everything into an ice field, but this Ice color was bright silver.

The other cloaked figure just barely managed to protect herself from freezing.

At this moment, an old mellow voice rang in the vicinity, "Who are you searching for, Child?"

This mysterious voice startled both cloaked figures.

"Who is there?!" the mysterious Princess inquired as she looked around warily, but no one was there.

"I'm also searching for someone like you. He also originated from this ruined city, once called the River Flower." The mellow voice replied.

They both then looked upward toward the sky because this voice was coming from above, but to their shock, there was no one in the sky as well.

"No! This is not the river flower city, you're lying!" The mysterious Princess again retorted, unwilling to accept the truth. She no longer cared about the identity of this person.

"Senior, please forgive my young miss's rudeness, she's just grieving over her lost brother and wasn't herself at the moment. She didn't mean offense. We'll leave right away." The other woman quickly apologized, with a hint of trepidation in her voice.

She wasn't muddleheaded and could tell this person wasn't simple, and they better leave before it was too late.

"Let's go. We'll search somewhere else." The other women quickly try to drag the mysterious Princess away.

"Wait." The mellow voice rang again. "Did the person you are searching for is known by... Ace White?"

The mysterious Princess's aura suddenly spiked when she heard this name, and blurted with anticipation, "YOU!? How do you know this name?! Where is he?!"

The other woman was also shocked, but she wasn't as optimistic as her companion because, according to her Princess description, this person was just a mortal. How could this mysterious expert have known a mortal?

'This is bad. There is something wrong. I need to take the Princess and escape!' She thought grimly.

"Oh? What a coincidence. Not only we are searching for a person who originated from the same place, but this person happened to be the same." The mellow voice rang with a hint of happiness. "You say he's your brother. Is he your biological brother?"

"First, tell me why are you searching for him and where is he. Is he still alive?" The mysterious Princess didn't answer bluntly again!

Although she was desperate, she wasn't a fool and after she felt some hope, she regained her demeanor.

"Ah, how unbecoming of me. I kept asking questions." The mellow voice coolly said, "You see, child, your brother stole something of mine. I have no grudge against him, and as long as he returns those things, I would not persuade this matter."

"If this is about treasures, I'll return tenfold over what he took! But don't make him sound like a thief!" The mysterious Princess announced confidently in a bitter tone.

"Heh, you seemed to don't know about this brother of yours, huh?" The mellow voice sounded amused. "Nevertheless, I appreciate your offer, but the things your brother took are unique and only one of their kind."

"As long as I discover him, I'll have him return them to you. Just tell me where he is!" She inquired desperately. It was clearly this mysterious voice knew something about her brother.

"That's the problem, child. Your brother is very hard to find, but he might be willing to come if he knows his sister is looking for him, won't he?" The mysterious voice inquired nonchalantly, "Let's look for him together, I'll know just the place where he might be."

"Princess, Run!" the other woman, who was silent for all this time, suddenly shouted before silver ruin symbols emerged on her figure. She was clearly preparing for this.

However, ... "Ah, the sacred technique of Silver Ice Royal Hunter Bloodline, it's been quite a while since I last saw it. But it's a pity it won't activate."

Just the voice trailed off the symbols on the figure suddenly vanished!

"Who are you exactly!?" the Princess questioned with trepidation.

The voice answered, "Dream Shatter... Ancestor...!"

### Eternal Thief

#### **Chapter 560: The End of Piercing Maze**

Ace was moving between red corridors of the Piercing Maze filled with suppressing fiery soul Qi when he suddenly frowned. 'Why do I feel this gloom all of a sudden? Did those demons suspect something?'

Uncertain, he slowed down his pace as if he was struggling, and kept walking toward the third environment, which was only a few hundred meters away.

He was already inside the piercing maze for one and a half days, only half the time left.

But it wasn't all for nothing. After crossing the Soul Ice Environment, Ace felt his soul core strengthen very little.

Although it was only tiny, this change was still good news for Ace because this means that Piercing Maze could also help him strengthen his heavenly soul core!

But he mused that only with the full power of this training facility could he experience changes with his true cultivation level. Yet, he couldn't, or those terrifying demons will personally come to check on him.

Furthermore, he didn't have the luxury of time to train like before. He needed to get on with his plan to enter the imperial domain and search for that elemental orb. The chain mission was no longer important.

Three hours later, Ace finally saw a corridor with a dark blue color and stepped in it without hesitation.

However, the soul pressure suddenly double as this was giving him the feeling of standing in the middle of the windstorm. It was the final environment; Soul Wind.

Ace felt like his Soul Gates cultivation wasn't enough to cross this environment in reaming time. Although he could endure it with his Soul Gates cultivation, it would make his pace like a snail.

However, this was also a chance to temper his soul, so he raised his martial cultivation to the third Qi gate stage and started moving again.

Inside the main hall of Special Instructor Quarters No.03,

The vibe of this place was completely solemn at this moment as all three special grade instructors' eyes were glued on the projection as they didn't want to miss even a moment.

"This? Why did the environment change from level one Soul Earth to level two Soul Wind?" The demon on the left exclaimed in astonishment.

"We clearly underestimated this little one, and it's clearly Master's doing to test him further. His soul talent is even more shocking than First Brother back then. It seemed Master really picked a gem this time for First Brother." The demoness presumed as a tingle of envy could be sensed in her tone at the end.

"Hehe, it seemed someone jealous, huh? Don't worry, you're not alone, though." The demons lament.

The demon in the center suddenly stood up at this moment.

"What happened?" They both looked at Clouse with confusion.

"I'm going to seek the Master to cancel his placement in the gathering training. He's more precious than that." Clouse coldly declared before he vanished from his spot.

"Well, it seemed First Brother is in love." The other demon joked.

"He's always protective of those close to him. If he considered this lad one of his people, then it's his biggest fortune to have the backing of the future leader of the Nightmare Demon Tribe." The demons said matter-of-factly.

On the 100th floor,

Bodach frowned his brows as he watched Archie still moving in the level two soul wind field.

Although his expression was pale and exhausted, he continued to move like he didn't know the meaning of rest.

'How could his endurance have reached the same level of peak platinum soul embryo realm? Did he suffer soul torture from a young age? Highly unlikely, unless his parents lost their minds, they won't do such a thing. So, is this his body tempering?' He contemplated.

At this moment, a masked figure appeared who was none other than Clouse.

There was a hidden stairway between the 99th and 100th floors, which could be used as long as they have given access by the tower master.

So Bodach wasn't surprised when he noticed Clouse.

"I know why you are here. But it's impossible now, I had already submitted the list already. Unless you convince Lord Principal, that brat's fate is sealed." Bodach sighed ruefully.

After seeing Archie's performance, even he was regretting sending him to the gathering training now. It would be far more convenient to train him in the tower.

Even if he had to make it obvious and alert Ampersand, he won't care because Archie's soul talent was even scarier than those of the Imperial Family!

Nevertheless, he also knew once the Imperial Domain found out about Archie's talent, they would defiantly approach him on their own accord.



"Look, I know this brat is a gem, and he met all your high standards. Even I want to make him my apprentice. But I won't stoop to the level where I stole my student's student. I had given my word, after all. In a sense, this might be for the best." Bodach stated.

"What if he didn't break into the soul realm within three years or someone forced him to do their bidding? We both know the battle for Fire Spirit is going to be fought among the younger generation first, and Archie's talent will naturally make those old ones greedy.

"Once they thought it would raise their chances of acquiring the fire spirit, they would stoop to any level to make sure Archie fought for them, just like those inferior breeds." Clouse retorted.

Bodach's eyes narrowed. "What do you think I'm here for? As long as the Fifth Prince didn't want me to side with the Fourth Prince, he won't dare to let anything happen to Archie.

"Besides, do you think that conniving brat would show off his abilities while knowing the danger of the Fiery Hell Realm?"

He suddenly chuckled, "He clearly didn't know about the piercing maze, or I can make a wager that he won't even pass the first element environment. Just have a little trust like I trust you guys.

"Teaching is not always about imparting knowledge or shielding your students from the wind. Sometimes, you have to let them go and experience the world, or they would only remain below you but couldn't surpass you."

Clouse lowered his head. "I was too disrespectful. Please punish me."

Bodach smiled kindly, "I know your nature. Just do as you wish. I'll always have your back. Oh, and don't tell that little scoundrel about the piercing maze for now. Just move according to plan.

"Tell your juniors as well. But teach him our house's secret art instead of the one we selected before in case he had passed the normal test."

"I understand," Clouse answered in affirmation and vanished, just like he appeared.

Bodach's smile suddenly vanished before an icy glint flashed past his eyes, 'Ampersand, if Archie really does not return, then there's no need for Daniel to exist as well!'

Eight hours passed since Ace was moving in the corridors filled with soul winds, and now even without his martial cultivation he could withstand the pressure of his Soul Gates realm cultivation alone.

He could feel his soul core was a little bit stronger, but the effect was still far from satisfactory for Ace.

After all, he had undergone two heavenly punishments already, so this much pressure wasn't enough to give him massive benefits.

But this also made Ace consider the possibility of strengthening his soul and body for the next heavenly punishment.

He clearly remembered that because he formed a Qi sea and opened the hidden manual of Heavenly Black Wind Soul, the system had warned him that the next punishment would be even deadlier than it already was.

Furthermore, he won't use Page 09 to withstand it as well because his sealed bloodline's unsealing also depends on him enduring the heavenly punishment head-on.

So, now that he knew where the elemental orb was and working toward the way to acquire it, he mused that it was time to find other things that could help him withstand the heavenly punishment without getting help from Page 09.

This soul tempering gave him a vague direction to help him achieve his goal.

The soul was always more venerable than the body, and he always feared the heavenly punishment for the soul the most.

'Since there are body tempering techniques out there, then there should be soul tempering techniques as well, right? The fundamental purpose of a tempering technique is to break it and then heal it again and again until it won't break again.

'But doing this with soul will be courting death, however...' Ace's eyes shone as he walked in the piercing maze while an impossible idea formed in his mind, which was akin to seeking his own death.

Nevertheless, he still needed some references to see if it was just fantasy, or not. He won't dare to play when it comes to heavenly punishment, or he won't have a life to play again.

As time passed, Ace finally reached the end of the passage. He made Archie look as miserable as possible. So, others thought he had just barely passed the test.

Ace finally crossed the brightly lit corridor and all the soul pressure on him vanished!