

Black Plain 1981

Chapter 1981 Divine Conclave

If Harvey successfully called a Divine Conclave, he could ensure that his faction would be in charge of the temple for the next century!

Though much would change in the meantime due to the presence of Minos in Julian's faction, the growth of the Black Plain Empire and its treaties, and the changes to the organization caused by the ice age, Harvey would still have his faction at the top of the organization if he succeeded today.

As such, when Julian heard Harvey, he clenched his fists in anger at that level 99 Demigod because that was the one thing he didn't want to happen today.

As long as his faction could grow stronger over the next 20 or maybe 40 years, he was confident of taking over the leadership of the temple at one of the next two membership meetings.

'Damn it, Harvey!' He thought as he looked at the old man with the white beard and mustache standing there while everyone muttered about the point.

But since the older elders had the privilege of speaking and making suggestions, Julian couldn't say anything right away while everyone began to discuss whether a Divine Conclave was necessary at the moment.

Aarav stood up and said. "I don't think this is a good idea. A Divine Conclave is necessary for the ice age. But we will meet again in 20 years, at the beginning of this crisis. It would be better to use this mechanism that time when we'll have better information about what will happen to the Spiritual World in the future."

"That would be too late." Harvey replied to Aarav's words: "In 20 years, we won't be able to do anything about the ice age. Everything that needs to be decided will have to be decided in the meantime. years, we won't be able to do anything about the ice age. Everything that needs to be decided will have to be decided in the meantime. But is it a good idea to risk changing factions in the organization's leadership at that time?" He said, looking at the most powerful people at the table.

"I don't want to see our organization go to absurd lengths for the next 20 years so that a new faction can take control of the temple in 20 years and change everything we've done."

There were three major factions in the temple, and it wasn't uncommon for power to alternate between the two strongest factions.

Harvey's speech wasn't necessarily because he felt threatened by Julian's faction. He simply recognized the possibility of a change in leadership that could affect the temple at the beginning of the ice age.

Another high-ranking member of Harvey's faction stood up and said. "This is true. We can't risk changing the direction of the organization in 20 years. Better to decide now on a faction to lead the temple for the next 100 years."

The Pantheon of Honor was an organization that usually decided together how it would function for years to come. However, every organization needs people to run it and decide what to do in emergency situations.

You couldn't rely on votes every time you did something. That could slow down problem-solving too much.

So, to quickly resolve "minor" matters such as strategies, access to resources, sending experts, accepting new members, managing resources, etc., a group elected at such meetings would resolve these matters.

Unless something severe happened that could affect the entire Pantheon of Honor, the chosen group could handle these and many other matters with almost complete autonomy.

That obviously gave such a group a great deal of leverage, which was worth a lot to the faction that remained in that position.

A corrupt group could use such a position to divert resources. But even an honest group could use such a privilege without breaking the organization's rules.

For example, if there is a service to be developed, the group in charge of these administrative matters might decide to hire the services of people who are related to them and who might give them other favors in return.

Such a thing would not be against the rules and could create a win-win situation for the administrative side and the organization itself.

Another example was a member of the administration faction giving subordinates access to the resources of the Pantheon of Honor and even their Spatial Kingdom, which was obviously beneficial to both sides.

Anyway, there were infinite possibilities for whoever was in the position of being the regular administrator of the Pantheon of Honor, which is why there were factions that fought over such things at meetings like this every 20 years.

All the members there began to talk to their faction partners through mental communication, trying to understand what they could do to be the 'winners' of this decision.

'In a crisis like the one we're about to face, the group in power at the beginning of the crisis is usually the one that has been in control of the Pantheon of Honor the longest.' Aarav told his faction members. 'Such a group is also usually the least weakened of all and the one with the fewest casualties during the crisis.'

'That is the point.' Julian remarked with a rueful expression. 'So we have to try to get that position. We're not doing so well now, but if we don't do it today, it will be challenging in 100 years, even if young Minos grows a lot with his empire.'

If a Divine Conclave wasn't called, Julian was sure his faction would be in charge of the temple in 100 years with Minos' help. But with another faction in power for an entire century, even with Emperor Stuart on their side, he wasn't sure he could change anything in 100 years.

In this case, it was all or nothing now!

Either they achieved this position today, or they would probably be under the leadership of one of their rival factions for the next few millennia!

While they were talking among themselves, the people from the other factions there were also preparing themselves, wondering who would have the upper hand today, how they could get new supporters, etc.

The two main factions didn't have that many members. So, they depended on the election of the factionless members to decide who would take the top position in the temple.

Of the 76 members, 15 had no faction, while 11 were from Julian's faction, meaning they wouldn't vote for either of the other two factions. The strongest faction had 26 members, while the weakest had 24.

The chances of Julian's faction winning were slim. Still, if everyone without a faction voted for them, they could tie with Harvey's faction and have the council of elders decide the winner!

That was Julian's only hope, while the other two factions didn't care about it.

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Chapter 1982 Proposals

One way or another, the three factions had only one group in mind: those independent members of the Pantheon of Honor!

Merritt was one of those members, the one who, by virtue of his position, voted last and could be the one to decide who would actually become the temple administrator for the next century.

Then, seeing that everyone was already getting organized, he said. "The three factions here have 20 minutes to decide among themselves what they have to offer the temple. After that, each group will have 5 minutes to explain to the other members why their group should be chosen.

At the end of the next hour, we will decide who will control the temple for the next 100 years!

With that, everyone in the hall would be silent for the next few minutes as members of the same factions talked among themselves, some trying to convince the 15 members of the factionless organization.

Meanwhile, the subordinates of the members of the Pantheon of Honor watched in silence as the Divine Conclave began, knowing that their situation could change dramatically in a matter of minutes.

Some could gain access to guaranteed wealth for the next 100 years, while others could lose out!

Considering how important this was, almost everyone there became a little tense as they nervously waited for the 20-minute time limit to expire.

When the time was up, Merritt opened his mouth again and asked the three groups to choose their representatives to speak on behalf of their factions.

The leaders of each faction were the ones who stood up and then of their factions.

The leaders of each faction were the ones who stood up and then took part in a little lottery to determine the order in which their projects would be presented.

The first to speak was Julian, followed by Wren and then Harvey.

"Elder Julian, you have five minutes to present your proposal to the temple members," Merritt said as he gave the floor to one of the leaders of the Minos faction.

Looking at the experts there, Julian said. "I did not expect a Divine Conclave today, but since we are here to decide the next 100 years, I would like to ask the organization's members to think about where we will be in 40 or 60 years. By then, the worst of the ice age will have caught up with us. Then we need the best we have at the helm!"

As he spoke, Julian gestured and changed his tone, drawing the attention of the people there to him while looking mainly at the factionless members.

"I suppose my faction is not the best in our temple at the moment. But will we always be like this? With the young Emperor Minos Stuart on our side, everything could change in a few decades.

Not only that, but as a genius who has built his state from the ground up, Minos can be an important part of the temple's leadership from now on!

He can certainly work with elder Aarav and me, combine our knowledge and experience with his ideas and come up with fantastic plans for the temple.

So I ask you to consider this carefully. In 50 years, Minos will be a Demigod capable of stealing the cultivation base of his opponents and will have an army of Demigods in the Black Plain Empire. He will also be the greatest agricultural force in the world and will be able to help us all.

With our faction in control of the temple, I'm confident we will come out of this crisis with the best possible outcome."

"All right, your time is up," Merritt said right after Julian's last word, and the man sat down while many of the temple members looked at Minos.

Most of them had expected Julian to use the prominent Minos. However, some of the temple members were surprised because the level 97 Demigod's greatest hope was a level 85 Sage.

As talented as Minos was, some felt he needed to grow more before they could place their hopes in him!

When Wren began to speak, she used this very topic.

"Elder Julian is right about young Minos' potential, but he's far from reaching that level." She looked at Minos and then at those who didn't have factions yet.

"I believe that one day, Minos could be the strongest in this temple. But until then, there is a long and difficult way ahead of him..."

Don't get me wrong, I want Minos to reach my level one day. But will that ever happen? How many prodigies fail in the middle of their journey?

I'm not saying he will fail because of his own mistakes. Even geniuses are endangered by the steps of others.

I don't want to put the future of our temple on the shoulders of a level 85 boy. If he's still here in 100 years and willing to lead the temple, then I will vote for the faction of elders Julian and Aarav myself. But today, I can't agree that we should consider this faction, which has so much to develop.

On the other hand, everyone here knows my faction's specialty. We may not be the most numerous, but we have a long history of leading the temple in times of crisis. We were the leaders during the last calamity, and the temple's results then were the best we've ever had during such difficult eras.

So, I am asking the temple to trust us again. We can lead the organization to the end of the ice age, as we have done in so many other calamities."

Merritt again hinted at the end of Wren's faction's time, then turned to Harvey.

"Members of the temple. What will you choose?" Harvey pointed with his hands. "A faction that relies on a junior? A group that uses a distant history to try to convince you and gain your trust?"

No. We are much more than that. We can't risk our millennia of cultivation or the million-year history of this temple like that!

As the current temple administrator, I ask you to trust our management. In the coming years, we will increase the number of members, provide access to information and resources at a lower cost, and even increase the flow of experts into our special domain.

Instead of trusting those who promise an uncertain future, trust those who have done much for you and can do much more now.

Under the command of my faction, I promise you that the temple as a whole will be strengthened. Not only my faction will benefit, but everyone here, whether they are from rival factions or factionless members.

Even young Minos can benefit significantly from our leadership!

Whether he'll make it to the end of the next 100 years, I don't know. But as far as my faction is concerned, we will open all doors to someone of his potential, and if he is to become the next leader of the temple, then so be it.

But until he is ready, I ask you to trust those who have the experience of running this great organization for thousands of years.

Minos may be the future. But we are the present."

With those words, Harvey sat down while the undecideds pondered the possibilities, some talking among themselves, others trying to predict what would happen depending on their choices.

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Chapter 1983 Fierce Dispute

Merritt addressed everyone. "Now that the candidates have their time to expose their plans, the temple members will have 10 minutes to consider their options. At the end of that time, you must cast your votes."

Everyone looked at the box in the center of the large table that was used to record votes on issues discussed at the meeting so as not to reveal who each person was voting for.

Thus, the next few minutes would be even more tense than the factions' moment of deliberation, as the members of each faction would vote first, while the neutrals would think more about their choices.

Each faction member would obviously vote for their own group, which didn't require much thought.

But the neutrals had three options to consider, and given their numbers, they could choose the leader between three options. If they all voted for Julian's group, the tie-breaker would go to Harvey's group. If only one of them voted for another group, Minos' group would be out of the running, and the decision would be between the other two.

Depending on how many voted for Julian's faction, it could be difficult for Wren's group, who needed votes from the neutral members to win.

With 24 members, they needed at least 2 votes to tie with Harvey's group or 3 votes to win if all the other neutral votes went to Julian's faction.

So, the very fact that one decided to vote for Julian could favor Harvey's group because the more neutrals voted for Minos' faction, the harder it would be for Wren's group to win.

Thus, the most calm people at the beginning of the vote were naturally the people from Harvey's group, while the most nervous people were from Wren's group, who needed to get more support.

Julian's group needed more support, of course. Still, given that they needed 100% of the neutrals and a favorable decision from the council of elders, their chances of winning were slim.

Most of Minos' group, with Emperor Stuart, didn't believe they could win.

So they weren't as nervous as Wren's people, just disappointed that a Divine Conclave had just been called.

But soon, the first factionless members of the temple began to cast their own votes, dropping their tokens into the box, which was a device that would display the final result when all the tokens were in.

These tokens were completely smooth, with no numbering or inscriptions of the kind that carry spiritual information. In other words, it was impossible to know who someone had voted for or even whose vote they had cast. Only that array could count the votes for the three possible factions.

That was a vote where you had to choose between the three groups, so there was no way to not choose anyone.

Finally, at the end of the time Merritt had mentioned, he cast his own vote, ending the ballot.

When his token went into the box, everyone was silent momentarily while the lights in the box-shaped array glowed, preparing to show everyone the result.

This box displayed the result in colors. Each faction had its own, with Julian's being red, Harvey's being blue, and Wren's being black.

When the white light in that array went out, many of the subordinates there held their breath, knowing the result would appear in the next moment.

[Blue!]

The members of Harvey's faction rose to their feet at the sight of that bright light appearing on all four sides of the urn, seeing that they would remain in charge of the temple for the next century.

Harvey felt his heart race, for this was probably the most important moment for him of all the meetings in the last few thousand years. I think you should take a look at

While his group celebrated, the others watched the results, which showed the number of votes received by each group immediately after the winner was announced.

[Blue: 26]

[Black: 25]

[Red: 25]

When the number of votes for each faction appeared, everyone, whether winners or losers, changed their expressions as they saw that the result was extremely close, and the winning faction had not even received a single vote from the neutrals.

Almost all of the neutrals had voted for Julian, while the one who decided the outcome that day had voted for Wren, giving the result to Harvey's group.

Julian felt a terrible sensation when he saw that he had lost by only one vote.

'Shit! If we had one more vote, we would have tied. With me, Aarav, Merritt, and Wren, we could have won this!' He thought, knowing that if he tied with Harvey's group, Wren would vote with his faction, and they would have beaten Harvey.

Unfortunately, someone had voted for Wren instead of him, giving the better result to the faction with more people on their side.

But even though he had won, Harvey was concerned to see that even as the head of the organization, he hadn't received a single vote from the neutrals in the temple.

Wren was the most upset of all, as she felt it was wrong for a faction that could not get the votes of the neutrals to be the big winner.

But she knew there was nothing she could do about it. A vote could not be taken back, and the winner was declared!

"The Blues have won and will lead the temple for the next 100 years," Merritt announced the result, frustrating most of the temple members who hadn't voted for Harvey.

Undeterred, Merritt continued. "With that decided, let's get on with our meeting. Although the Divine Conclave has decided that the blue faction will continue in leadership, we have several matters to deal with at this meeting.

As elder Harvey reminded us at the beginning of this meeting, an ice age is yet to come. In less than 20 years, we must be prepared to deal with the onset of this new crisis.

So, I ask everyone to put aside their defeats and focus on helping the temple. Whether we come out of this crisis with a good or bad result will depend on the joint action of all members. One faction cannot decide this."

All of the faction leaders there knew this and quickly tried to put the outcome of the Divine Conclave aside, knowing they had other matters to attend to.

Minos himself didn't care about the outcome of the previous vote, as he had never considered things beyond his control in his plans. He considered that he could benefit from Julian's faction. Still, he didn't consider that it would come from this faction reaching the leadership of the temple.

In other words, the situation was the same for him as it was yesterday. He was much more concerned about the decisions and agreements that could be made at this meeting regarding the ice age!

Anyway, they would soon begin to talk about rule changes, moves, and business that would be valid for the next few years.

Chapter 1984 Level 100 Within Reach

After a whole day of discussing things similar to what had been discussed at the elves' expert meeting, the temple group also discussed things of their own.

As an organization with lower-level members who didn't have access to the elven-led meeting, not everyone from the temple had attended it. Many had to listen, talk, and negotiate things necessary for their forces to survive the ice age ahead.

Part of the conversation, of course, was to advise these temple members with partnerships and conversations similar to those that had taken place at the elven-led meeting in the Pantheon of Honor's headquarters temple.

But soon after this discussion, the group moved on to internal matters concerning the temple's leadership in the coming years. Even though the blue faction had won the previous vote, that didn't mean they would decide everything themselves.

The power of the temple members in meetings like this outweighed the power of the faction at the top of the organization. The ruling faction was merely the group that could make decisions and get things done in the short term. But when such meetings took place, the rules decided upon were those that pleased the majority, not necessarily the interests of the faction in control of the temple.

In short, the blue faction would have to follow the rules chosen by the temple members at that meeting.

Among the measures approved at that meeting were an increase in the number of temple members, a decrease in the number of merit points required to access temple resources, the creation of food reserves to alleviate food shortages for temple members, and a ban on temple members becoming involved in outside conflicts.

There were several other points decided at the meeting, but these were the most important and were to be implemented immediately.

Finally, after the members had finished talking and negotiating with each other, the great meeting of the members of the Pantheon of Honor came to an end.

Because of the Divine Conclave, the mandatory membership meetings that took place every 20 years would no longer be mandatory for the next 100 years - they would only have to hold a new mandatory meeting in 50 years.

Since the ice age was a time when each power had to focus on protecting itself, its strongest representatives couldn't travel to other continents and distant lands.

But a lot could happen in 50 years, so the temple couldn't continue for much longer without another mandatory meeting.

Without constant maintenance and changes, a high-level organization couldn't remain intact for millions of years!

So when Minos finished his business in the late afternoon, he promised Julian and Aarav to see them again at the Continental Tournament and then at the meeting in 50 years.

As evening fell in the temple's headquarters city, he and his party departed through a local wormhole port to begin their journey back to the Black Plain Empire!

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The following day, Minos' party was already sailing across the East Sea, heading west, toward the north of the Central Continent, to the Snowlands.

Having no trouble leaving the Divine Continent, Minos' party left at midnight, having already sailed for hours, long enough for these lands to have disappeared over the horizon.

With the Sea Folk's ship and several high-level beings to help them, the journey ahead would be quick, and in less than three months, the group should reach the capital city of Snow.

With all of them having had unique experiences there over the past few years, some having traveled there with Minos for more than 5 years, it was time for them to make their final preparations.

In a few more years, it would be time for them to enter the most dangerous sea in the Spiritual World!

There was no guarantee who would be able to return from that place. So, everyone could already feel a certain nervousness, knowing that they had to make the most of the next few years in the Black Plain Empire but also strengthen themselves as much as they could with Minos' support.

So, while they sailed, most of the crew took their time to meditate, leaving only the essential personnel to take care of the journey.

Minos was among those who cultivated, using his Divine Seal on one of the giant bones in his Spatial Kingdom to cultivate and further increase the density of the chaotic energy of the supreme beings from the distant past of this world in his body.

In this way, he could better prepare his body and soul for the experiences he might have to deal with in a few years!

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While Minos traveled to the Central Continent, Maximilian was in the Spiritual Church's Spatial Kingdom, cultivating with a smile on his face while an old man's body lay beside him.

In that high-level place that only he could enter at the moment, a cloud of colored spiritual energy surrounded the outskirts of a large cultivation chamber.

In this place, powerful spiritual fluctuations were causing the entire surrounding space to tremble, and spatial distortions were attempting to form, even though this was a stable Spatial Kingdom where spatial manipulation was not normally possible.

But with a Divine-grade medicine right in front of Maximilian and him processing the chaotic energy of that essence, there was no way this space could handle it as if nothing was happening.

He was cultivating to become a God, someone who could manipulate this space!

Maximilian cultivated with satisfaction after successfully stealing the Divine-grade medicine from the former head of the Spiritual Church without losing its medicinal effect.

'Just wait a little longer, Vico. In a few years, I'll leave this room...!' He continued with closed eyes and a broad smile on his face.

'I will leave this place at level 100!'

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Meanwhile, the people on the outskirts of the Spatial Kingdom had no idea what was going on inside the Supreme Pontiff's cultivation chamber.

But Forrest, who was there at the time, would soon discover what Maximilian had done.

Shortly after his master's soul disappeared, he and Duncan Evergreen's other disciples would learn of the former Supreme Pontiff's unexpected death!

Considering the presence of Maximillian Flamen in the Spatial Kingdom, Minos' partner in the journey through the Ancient Dragon Space Kingdom, currently at level 94, would soon become suspicious of the circumstances of his master's death.

'Guys, we have to assume that Maximilian is behind this.' He said in the minds of his companions in the Spiritual Church.

'What are we going to do? No one below level 99 will be able to enter the chamber where he is. And if he succeeds...' Someone worried.

Forrest then suggested, trying to suppress his loss since there was no time to mourn now. 'Let's go to the Black Plain Empire. We'll talk to Minos. He'll help us find a way out of this problem.'

Chapter 1985 The Next Target

Three months later...

It was late afternoon in the east of the Black Plain Empire when a Sea Folk's ship appeared on the horizon from the capital of the Snow area.

At the sight of the ship bringing the emperor and his family back to their state, the soldiers of the Black Plain Army immediately rang the local bells, alerting the forces in that city to the moment they had been waiting for the past few months.

Minos had sent word of when they would arrive from their long journey. As such, there were several people who wanted to see him again in the city run by the Snow family.

As it was snowing locally, the members of the leading family in the area rushed to the local harbor, happy but without any hope of getting a chance to speak to Minos.

At that moment, demigods from the imperial army, Spiritual Sages from allied states, and subordinate forces were waiting for Minos in the city, and even mid-level demigods were there.

Among them was a level 94 man with black hair, a high-ranking cardinal of the Spiritual Church.

When he arrived at the local harbor and saw these experts from afar, the son of Misty and Ambrose Snow watched from a distance beside his mother at the arrival of Emperor Stuart, about whom he had heard many stories from his mother.

The blonde woman was there with her son to see the arrival of the ship of the man she had such fond memories of. But Misty no longer had any hope of physically bonding with Minos, as she had done a few times in the past.

She had reached level 70, but the distance between them only grew as the years passed. Meanwhile, Minos had his own family and many problems to deal with.

After longing for him, this woman had learned to admire him from afar, working for him and his empire.

"Look, little Albert. That's the great emperor of our state." She pointed to the brown-haired man who was climbing down from his ship and showed her son, who had the same name as Minos' father.

The boy looked at Minos with a gleam in his eye, seeing someone as famous as the emperor for the first time in his life.

As little Albert Snow watched Minos with his mother and a crowd of local nobles, Emperor Stuart disembarked from his ship with his wives, followed by the long line of Demigods on the ship.

As soon as he met Forrest in the harbor, Minos put aside his expression of happiness to be back in his empire, realizing that trouble was likely awaiting him.

"Congratulations on reaching level 85, Minos. You truly are a cultivation monster." Forrest said as he stood next to two other members of the Spiritual Church, both at level 94, just like him.

Meanwhile, there were two men from the Longus family who had reached the 10th stage, as they were currently serving the army in this area.

Seeing them there, along with emissaries from Albano, Blackrock, and Rosser, Minos didn't need to hear from anyone to know that his forces had developed well in his absence.

He greeted his men and then asked Forrest as he walked toward the local wormhole port.

"Why are you here?"

"We have problems. Maximillian may have killed my master and is about to reach level 100." Forrest said without wavering.

Hearing the words of this black-haired man, the women of Minos and his crewmates changed their expressions.

That was critical news even for the least connected to the Black Plain Empire!

The advancement of a level 99 Demigod to level 100 was relevant to every being in the Spiritual World!

Even the dragon in its human form narrowed its eyes upon hearing such information, seeing that the rumors about the experts from the Central Continent trying to advance to level 100 were true.

"This is terrible!" Abby muttered.

"If he advances to level 100, the war in the south will end along with our peace here in the north." Gloria was blunt while wearing a worried expression.

"This is really a problem." Minos sighed, understanding Forrest's urgency in coming to this place to wait for him.

Forrest commented. "Minos, I hope that from now on, we can help each other more than ever. If Maximilian succeeds, the first thing he'll do is kill Vico and end the war.

We'll be safe for a few weeks, maybe months. But after that, he will come after our groups for his own reasons.

We have to be prepared!"

"I understand. He'll probably eliminate the disciples of the one he killed, and he might change his mind about my state." Minos understood Forrest's thinking.

With the war in the south over, the Black Plain Empire would, of course, be of most interest to Maximilian in his expansionist plans!

As much as the northernmost part of the continent was considered an area of influence for the Spiritual Church, that force had less and less influence in the area because of the growth of the Stuart family and especially the growth of Minos.

From Forrest's point of view, Minos would be a big problem for Maximilian in the future, so the man would definitely try to deal with the Stuart Emperor as soon as possible after the war ended!

Since he wanted to take revenge on his master and also protect himself from Maximilian, he was there to plan with his ally.

Minos sighed and then said. "Let's talk about this calmly. Maximilian could still fail, and even if he doesn't, the evolution of a Demigod to level 100 is not easy.

So let's talk about it in my capital after I've been informed about the local situation, shall we? My daughter has made some arrangements in my absence that may make some of our actions difficult. At the same time, we have several other problems to solve."

"I understand." Forrest knew there was time for them to talk about it and didn't insist. "But Minos, are you aware of the ice age that is upon us?"

"Hmm, I attended a meeting of experts on the Divine Continent on this subject. Some of the issues I have to resolve now are for the sake of my state's future during this crisis." Minos said as he saw the wormhole port, he would use to return to Dry City.

"And that group next to you?"

"These are companions I picked up on my last journey. We'll be leaving for the North Sea in a few years."

After saying this, which caused Forrest to become a few degrees more serious, Minos entered a wormhole with his group and returned to the empire's capital!

Chapter 1986 Entering the Dome

Quickly crossing the wormhole space tunnel that connected the main city of the Snow area with Dry City, Minos and his group were soon back in the empire's capital.

Arriving at one of the satellite cities of the capital of the Black Plain Empire, their entire group saw that strange human area, which couldn't be found anywhere else in the Spiritual World.

On one side of the place where they arrived, there was a huge ring-shaped city surrounded by almost endless agricultural fields on the outside, while on the inside of the metropolitan ring, there was another area of plantations. In the center of this area was a space completely devoid of light, dark to the limit, something that emits crackling sensations even to mid-level Demigods.

"Is this the capital of the state of Minos?" One of the mermaids in the group wondered as she sensed the strange spiritual fluctuations in the area.

However, even though their group was basically made up of Demigods, none of them thought that Dry City was poor in spiritual energy. On the contrary, this city was currently as good as the most spiritual energy-rich places on the Central Continent!

It still lost out to the city where the Pantheon of Honor temple was located, as well as the headquarters of the dragons, elves, phoenixes, and sea folk. However, the difference between these places and Dry City was not significant.

You would only feel such a difference if you spent thousands of years in Dry City instead of one of these places!

Therefore, the group couldn't help but be surprised when they compared the sensation they felt when they arrived at this place with the stories they had heard before and even during their journey here.

Minos had elevated a poor area in the north of the central continent to a high level, a place that could even host high-level Demigods without embarrassment!

Forrest saw and heard the reactions of these beings for the first time in this city, and he agreed with them about what they thought of this place and of Minos.

As he did so, he saw their confidence grow, even though they would soon leave for the dangerous North Sea.

Seeing how capable Minos, the commander of their crew, gave everyone more confidence that they would survive such a voyage.

Forrest himself felt less doubtful than a moment ago, feeling once again the richness of this city, which not so long ago had been nothing like the current reality.

'Minos really is someone who can work miracles... Perhaps he can return from the North Sea.'

What worried Forrest the most was that Minos would not return, and he would be left alone with his faction members within the Spiritual Church. Even though young Stuart was still nothing compared to Maximilian, that could change soon, and this Cardinal very much wanted the brown-haired man next to him to be able to face Maximilian together with him.

Then he sighed and said. "Minos, I hope you will be successful on your journey. The Black Plain Empire, our allies, and my faction depend on your return from this journey.

When will you leave?"

"In a few years. I'll go into seclusion now, and when I reach level 87, I'll leave."

'Level 87, huh? That would temporarily make you level 89 when you use your innate ability.' Forrest thought as he flew with the group between the ring of cities and the dome of Dry City.

"Well, the stronger you are before the journey, the better. But I think that will be your limit. In no more than a decade, either Maximillian or Vico will show results from their seclusion." He said as everyone forgot Dry City to look at the black-haired man again.

"Let us hope they both fail in their advances. But if one of them succeeds, the war in the south of the continent will be over in a decade at the most. That's how long we have to prepare for the consequences if one of the two sides wins the war."

"That's enough," Minos said, thinking about the time he would take to get to and from the North Sea but also about the deals he had recently made that would bring many experts to his state in the coming years.

"It will take me six months to get to and from the North Sea. I'll try to explore the area in less than three years and then return. That should be enough for me to be in my city before the end of the war."

"Hmm, yes, that would be enough. But be careful. Your plans won't work out the way you think. The North Sea forces even Demigods to do things out of plan." Forrest advised.

"I know. Don't worry, we'll try to get back before that interval you mentioned." He looked into Forrest's eyes. "Do you expect to reach level 95 by then?"

"It is hard to say. It is much harder to advance at the 10th stage than on the 9th." Forrest commented without much hope.

A Demigod who could advance one level every 20 years could be considered extremely fast in their cultivation, a genius rarely seen in the world!

Forrest had only reached level 94 a few years ago. Therefore, he didn't know if he could advance to level 95 by the time of the Continental Tournament.

It wasn't impossible to advance before then, but the probability was very low.

"I see... Well, I'll try to get to level 89 by then. My state will also improve a lot in the meantime." Minos said confidently, knowing he had to improve a lot in the next few years.

Forrest didn't doubt Emperor Stuart's words. Before going to the east coast of the continent to await the arrival of Minos and his family, he had been to Dry City.

There were currently a few dozen Demigods there, many of them friends and allies of Minos, but some were soldiers of the Black Plain Empire.

Many of the high-level Sages that Minos had left in his state five or six years ago had improved their levels to the peak of their stage, and some had advanced to the 10th stage.

Even though many others were still stuck at level 89, most could advance in the next 10 years, which would give the Black Plain Empire more than 30 Demigods.

Considering the resources Minos had, Forrest didn't doubt that one or two level 90 Demigods from the local forces could advance to level 91 in the meantime. As difficult as it was to advance within the 10th stage, the first few levels were generally the easiest for cultivators to advance.

Since Minos had always worked wonders, Forrest didn't want to underestimate his ally!

Trusting his ally's words, they entered the dome of Dry City and quickly made their way to the imperial palace, where several of the Demigods currently in the area were.

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Chapter 1987 The Current Power of the Empire

"Your Majesty, welcome back!" Dillian, level 80, said as he bent his knee in front of Minos, doing the same as several other guards around the imperial palace.

Seeing their leader again after years of separation was an incredible thrill for many of these people.

And when they sensed the level Minos was at now, they couldn't help but be moved to see how far their leader had come, how strong he must be now.

Eduard, Barbara, Elen, and Elena, all currently at level 80, were also there, some with their knees bent, others standing next to members of the government and the imperial family.

Some of the women from Minos' family and his wives were currently in the Spatial Kingdom, but many old acquaintances were there with Sarah and Dillian, showing Emperor Stuart how much they had improved in the past few years.

Sarah had reached level 73 and stood next to Lee and Alison, who had reached levels 77 and 76, respectively.

In addition to them, many of the 9th-stage army members had improved by one or two levels since Minos had last seen them, and there were now several Demigods in this imperial force.

Minos greeted them all with a nod, smiling with satisfaction at seeing his forces on a whole new level, with many of his men finally reaching the limit of what their talents could take them.

That was the case with Dillian, who with a Black-grade talent should be limited to level 89, as was the case with Emlyn and Kyla, there with the group of newcomers among the many Demigods who were Minos' companions.

While the mood was positive, Sarah went to her parents' side, missing them after years of not seeing them.

She also missed her siblings, but she knew she would soon have the chance to see how the children of the Stuart family were doing in the Spatial Kingdom.

Minos looked at his people and said. "Thank you for the warm welcome, my friends. I'm glad everyone here has grown stronger in my absence. That's good, we've got a lot of problems ahead of us, and I'll need to borrow your strength again."

Everyone there had expected this and wasn't surprised by Minos' words about more trouble.

Minos then looked at the Demigods, who were not part of his forces and were waiting for him in the city.

Among them were several sea beasts from tribes Minos had passed on his journey through the South Sea years ago. But in addition to these beasts, there were beings from races that Minos had not encountered in his travels.

Stories of him and his crew had spread across the oceans in recent years, and some brave individuals from the seas had heard of the human forming a crew to sail the most dangerous sea in the world.

Some of those who had heard such rumors had decided to come to Dry City simply to see how true the rumors were, while others were there to offer themselves to Minos on this voyage.

But when they saw the crew Minos had assembled over the past few years, they soon realized that the stories were true and that his group was preparing for such a journey.

Minos said to these creatures. "I see that many of you are here for the journey to the North Sea, right? Well, I don't want to disappoint you, we will leave in a few years. But before that, I must take care of some things in my state and finish my preparations.

If someone here has problems to solve, if they come back before four years, there will be plenty of time for them to join our group. After that, you might be late and miss our departure.

In any case, I thank those who have come to join us. Everyone is welcome in my crew."

"Four years? That's not long." A Kraken said as he looked at the two members of his race in Minos' group.

While the beasts waiting for Minos' group to go to the North Sea agreed, the mercenaries he had hired from the Marine Empire looked at his group and those of the beasts who wanted to join them.

'We will have more than 50 members in our crew by the time we leave for the North Sea...' One of the level 90 Demigods among these mercenaries thought to himself, considering it would be worth staying at Minos' side until the end of this journey.

Minos had given them the option of accompanying him to the North Sea and then leaving if they wished. But after all they had gained with him, and what they could gain by going all the way, the mercenaries were more confident about going to the North Sea.

Some were even considering joining the Black Plain Empire, as Minos had invited them several times on their journey here.

With his resources, they could more easily reach their dream levels!

Meanwhile, the members of Minos' group who had recently joined the crew on the Divine Continent naturally liked what they saw when they arrived here.

'This is good. We'll have one more power boost before we leave for the North Sea.' One of the humans in the group thought to himself.

Minos then said to everyone there, "Very well. Those of you who are here to travel with me to the North Sea, please feel free to use the services and resources of my city. For now, you can travel or go into seclusion in my state.

Whatever you choose, my men will keep you informed of events that may interest you over the next few years, so don't worry about being stuck near me.

In the meantime, for those interested, we have some great cultivation areas in our capital."

After he finished speaking, the many members of his group, including those already in Dry City waiting to join them, started talking to each other.

In a few minutes, everyone there would make their decisions, with the majority deciding to stay in the core of the Black Plain Empire, while a few would explore the Central Continent.

But the dragon, the members of the sea folk, and the mercenaries hired by Minos in the Marine Empire would stay in Dry City, as they wanted to be as close to Emperor Stuart as possible.

Meanwhile, the two Nine-Tailed Foxes, Bella and Titus, and the Gorgon, Danyxa, stayed behind with Emlyn and Kyla, the latter two waiting for their moment to return to the Spatial Kingdom.

Danyxa didn't want to take risks, so she preferred staying close to Minos.

Bella wanted to stay at the side of these two low-level 9th-stage foxes, while Titus was eager to have access to Minos' theories.

But there was no time for that now, and first, Minos wanted to meet with his government to discuss the local decisions and events that had taken place in his absence.

Chapter 1988 Updates

After several Demigods left the imperial palace, those who remained made way for the men of Minos' forces as they stood aside in the imperial throne hall.

Minos settled into his throne as his men from the local government and army stood before him, ready to update him.

He looked at Sarah, standing next to Gloria, and asked. "How was your time ruling Dry City?"

"Difficult, at times." Sarah was honest. "Most of the time, it was smooth sailing with the help of everyone here. But the situation with the Gorgons made things a bit difficult... We had to move to secure enough protection before anything else happened."

"About that, you can rest assured. The Gorgons won't cause us any more trouble." Minos removed the level 97 Gorgon's head from his spatial ring as he said this.

Seeing that head, Forrest narrowed his eyes, surprised at the level of influence Minos had achieved in such a short time.

Those in the local forces who still didn't know the Pantheon of Honor had punished the Gorgons in such a way were also shocked, not expecting Minos to have the head of the leader of the Gorgon tribe with him.

Even Danyxa's eyes widened as she looked at the head of the former leader of her tribe, seeing it for the first time since Minos had told her what had happened.

This woman had been the strongest in all of Gorgon's history!

Yet she had fallen because she had 'chosen' her opponents wrongly.

'I'll never forget that lesson.' She thought, realizing sometimes one had to give up on revenge and justice, or else the worst could happen.

"In any case, our agreements won't lose their validity because of this," Sarah commented to her father.

Her state had practically left its 'neutral' position in the war and was now a supporter of the Evergreen Empire. That couldn't be changed, so even if the Gorgons were no longer threatening them, they still had to keep their recent promises to Maximilian's men.

"I know. Anyway, the victory of the Evergreen Empire is the least of our worries." Minos said, thinking it wouldn't change much for him.

Vico hated Minos so much that he wanted to kill him even before these new agreements. It wouldn't change anything for Emperor Stuart.

What might change was his relationship with Sista, that state that had never been hostile to him, even after the start of the war in the south of the continent, which he had basically started.

"We'll deal with the consequences of that later. But for now, I wanted to know how our reserves are doing. Have you begun to follow my orders?" Minos asked, looking at Dillian.

"Yes, we have, Your Majesty. We've increased investment in the agricultural fields, begun to reduce business with forces not allied with the state, and instituted food rationing rules.

Our actions on the continent have gone as expected, and we are already increasing our reserves.

However, things are going even better in our undersea territories. Since Your Majesty's order, we have doubled our underwater food production."

Currently, more than 30 million inhabitants of the Black Plain Empire live in the underwater part of the state northeast of the Ancestral Sea.

However, the empire's marine population was multiplying, and before the ice age began, the government expected at least 100 million people to live in that area.

If their expectations were met, the food production of this undersea area would exceed many of the Minos government's anticipations for food production in the coming years.

That would be crucial for the state at the beginning of the ice age!

"This is great. We must invest as much as possible in the development of underwater agriculture." Minos said, knowing that underwater areas suffered the least during the ice ages.

Having said that, Minos asked about the state of the army, which had already reached the impressive figure of 60 million soldiers, with an average cultivation of level 60.

With over 10,000 Sages and a few Demigods, the group was much stronger than when he left the state to go to the Ancient Dragon Spatial Kingdom.

Minos was curious to see the strength of his men in action, and he soon told his cabinet members to plan extensive military exercises and even competitions to be held in Dry City.

Competitions were a great way to encourage cultivators to become stronger, and not just for the prizes. Even the spectators could get excited about such events, which could increase the entire strength of a state if used wisely.

Minos promised he would fight in a few public fights and even attract the interest of the Demigods in the area, as this was the kind of power level that was unlikely to be seen.

Normally, only other Demigods had the chance to see people with 10th-stage powers fight!

However, the people of the Black Plain Empire would be different. In the coming years, anyone who had the crystals to pay to enter arenas would have the chance to see someone that strong fight.

With that decided, Minos would soon hear some information about his city, migrations, changes in his empire, and, in short, the basics that a ruler like him would need to know after returning from a long journey.

After more than two hours of conversation with his men in the imperial palace, Minos would finish getting up to date, having given several orders to be carried out immediately or over the next few months.

With that settled, Titus would approach him to ask when they could begin their experiments and studies.

Minos would ask him to wait a little longer as he had to get stronger to start the experiments. However, they could already begin to discuss their theories in more detail and agree on how to proceed with their subjects over the next few months.

After talking with Titus, Minos would sign some agreements with some newcomers to the empire to join his group, guaranteeing them support but also secrecy about things relevant to the state.

With all this done, Minos reunited with his family and returned to the Spatial Kingdom.

Now it was time to bring the children of the Stuart family back to Dry City, as well as the people who had spent the last few years in the cultivation sanctuary caring for the little ones.

Emlyn, Kyla, and Bella would go to the Spatial Kingdom together to stay there, while Minos would soon return to Dry City with a group of 9th-stage women.

Chapter 1989 'Stabbed in the Back'

After returning from the Spatial Kingdom with their family, Maisie, level 83, Patience, level 82, Angelica, level 81, the women from Minos' side of the family returned to Dry City after spending more than five years in the Spatial Kingdom with Rowan, Hollie, Kendrick, and Lily.

Rowan, Lily, and Hollie had grown up a lot in those years and were now very active children, very different from the small children when Minos had left the Central Continent.

They still didn't know who they were in the Spiritual World. Still, they already understood the basics of the cultivation world and that they were part of a sovereign family.

As for Kendrick, he hadn't changed much in appearance, but he had greatly improved his cultivation and reached level 61 during this period of seclusion.

When he left the Spatial Kingdom with his grandparents, Eliot, level 79, and Nicole, level 78, he had quickly distanced himself from his family and gone searching for his local "friends," eager to enjoy his freedom again.

Ruth's parents had also returned to Dry City to watch their grandchildren, along with Isabella's mother, who had stayed there all this time.

But Harold's second wife would soon return to the Flaming Empire to rejoin her husband, having seen enough of her granddaughter Lily's growth. She had made good use of her stay in the Spatial Kingdom and increased her cultivation by one level, reaching level 81.

Finally, the beasts of the imperial family had also evolved a great deal in recent years, with Starclaw achieving the best result of all, reaching level 90 months ago.

But while the Stuart family and the government of the Black Plain Empire were learning about the progress of their most important members, Gloria realized something about her daughter and was with Sarah in her office in the temple of the Spiritual Church in Dry City!

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When Gloria looked at her daughter while in the leader's chair of that office, she had a severe look on her face as she looked at her daughter, seeing some details in her daughter's body that she couldn't ignore.

Sarah looked more mature. Her bust and hip measurements were more advanced than before, but her waist was slim, indicating that she had gained measurements without gaining body fat...

Sarah had gained body and was much more feminine!

Her expression was also different and carried the maturity of someone who had experienced things...

As a woman who knew how to notice these signs, it wasn't hard for Gloria to see the obvious!

Her daughter was doing things she shouldn't be doing!

"Sarah, are you still a virgin?" Gloria asked, closing her eyes and clenching her fists, not needing to hear the answer to know the obvious.

'Who was the bastard?' She asked herself, angry that someone had stolen her daughter's purity without even introducing himself to the family and asking for a marriage commitment.

Sarah swallowed her saliva and turned pale, not expecting her mother to notice such a thing even after she was so careful.

'How does she know?' She shuddered, imagining that if her mother knew, her father would soon find out.

If that happened, her beloved George would probably lose his head!

"Mother, please don't tell my father!" She went to her mother's side and begged as she knelt and leaned on Gloria's legs. "I've done things I shouldn't have, but I'm going to marry my boyfriend..."

"Boyfriend?" Gloria asked, still with her eyes closed but pushing so hard that Sarah could see she wasn't happy about it.

"Yeah, I'm dating him. His name is George Sista. He's a prince of Sista!" Sarah decided to take a risk and tell her mother the whole truth to maybe prevent something worse from happening.

George was only level 87, so he wouldn't be a match for Minos. He might even get killed if there wasn't something else to protect him from an angry father!

Not knowing how her old man would react to this since George had been her first lover, Sarah's heart was filled with fear and anticipation.

"Sista?" Gloria opened her eyes in surprise, not expecting a prince from that state to actually be in her territory and even seduce her daughter.

"Yes, he came here to observe the state to see if we could fulfill our agreement with Queen Sista. But we fell in love, and things got complicated after that." Sarah was sincere as she didn't know how to lie, revealing everything without difficulty.

"Oh? So he probably just used you, you stupid child!" Gloria didn't like this at all, especially since her daughter was so naive. "I'll tell your father right away."

"No!" Sarah stood up, feeling tears fill her eyes. "Give me a few days, mother. I'll talk to George and ask him to meet my father. Then we can make it official."

"Huh! If we do that, that damned George will run away to avoid facing your father!" Gloria snapped at her daughter, not believing that this prince of Sista's feelings were identical to her daughter's.

"He won't! He's not a coward!" Sarah tried to hold on to her mother, even though she knew she couldn't go against her. "Please, just give me a day, mother. If you want, you can get someone to watch him. I can tell you where he is."

"Where is he?" Gloria asked as she looked into the eyes of this level 73 girl.

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While Sarah was telling her mother everything there was to tell, George was working in his shop in the center of Dry City when he suddenly felt a pang in his heart.

He stopped what he was doing, feeling as if something bad was about to happen to him as if someone had stabbed him in the back.

"Is there a problem, Your Highness?" The Demigod who accompanied him during his stay in the Black Plain Empire asked.

Several low-level Demigods are currently living around the Black Plain Empire. The war in the south of the continent had caused several such experts to seek refuge in the state of Minos.

The local forces did not take the number of these individuals into account, as they were not part of the imperial forces and did not add much power to the local forces aside from the resources they attracted to the state by living there.

However, several individuals like George Sista's guard lived in the major cities of Minos' state today, especially in Dry City.

"It's nothing. I just had a bad feeling." George said before he returned to his work.

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Meanwhile, Minos had no idea of his eldest daughter's problem and was now walking with his three youngest children next to Esmond, level 89, the strongest Sage of the family's group related to the Goddess of Life.

"Your Majesty, when can we have our revenge?" Esmond asked as he saw Minos' children running happily around them, witnessing how their father acted as the leader of an empire.

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Chapter 1990 A Father's Disappointment

Upon hearing the question from Esmond, the chief bodyguard of the Goddess of Life's relatives, Minos remembered the situation this family had with the rulers of the Veora Kingdom.

The Veora family had persecuted the relatives of the Goddess of Life for a long time because of an item that an ancestor of that family had stolen and hidden from the royal house.

Because of this, the relatives of the Goddess of Life, who didn't know anything about it, were persecuted for a long time and naturally wanted revenge.

In addition, Minos himself wanted to help his current subordinates complete their revenge because the item in question that had caused them so much suffering could help him.

These people related to the Goddess of Life didn't have the idol with them, but they knew where to look for it. But to do so, they would have to act in the Veora Kingdom, which meant that they would have to complete their revenge before searching for such an item.

Remembering this, Minos answered Esmond's question. "The Veora family is a power with mid-level Demigods. So we can't act against them until we have such people in our army.

But we're not far from that. Before we reach the worst moment of the ice age, we can do what you want."

Esmond didn't want to die in a vendetta that was impossible to complete. So, waiting for his group to get stronger wasn't a problem for him.

He had only questioned Minos that day, for the young leader had been away for several years and might have forgotten the subject. But as someone who had only agreed to join the Black Plain Army because of Emperor Stuart's promise regarding this revenge, he couldn't let the matter 'die.'

"Then I'll prepare my leaders for this moment. More time won't hurt. That way, they'll be able to act on our side when the time comes." Esmond commented with a smile while Minos remembered the three.

"How are they?"

"Well, they're currently..."

They continued walking near the imperial palace while Minos' young children played near him.

Meanwhile, a group of imperial guards stood around them, watching over the children but also there to keep citizens or members of the government from approaching their leader.

At the moment, the area protected by Dry City's dome was as large as the city itself. Also, the core of the capital, where practically only government buildings were located, was a very busy place, even though it was a difficult area to access.

With such a large government and army, this city area was bustling, even though more than 90% of the capital's population couldn't enter it.

Since Minos had become a famous public figure and was increasingly difficult to see, many curious people could approach him if they weren't intimidated by guards.

Whenever he walked through the central parts of the city, as he was doing today, his soldiers would accompany him so as not to waste time.

But while these imperial guards were watching the surroundings, a member of the Spiritual Church, dressed in the uniform of a Patriarch, was suddenly noticed by one of these guards and quickly approached Minos.

"You there, stop where you are!" A level 80 man said to the level 76 Spirit Saint standing there under Gloria's orders.

Minos saw the Church member standing there and imagined this was some kind of message from Gloria.

"What do you want?" He asked as Esmond looked at the Spiritual Saint.

The red-robed Saint replied as he bowed his head. "Your Majesty, I was sent here by Cardinal Frost. She wishes to speak with Your Majesty urgently."

Minos narrowed his eyes, sensing that serious trouble was approaching.

He looked at Lily, the eldest of the children with him, and said. "Follow Uncle Eduard for now. Behave yourselves."

The three children stopped running around at their father's command while Lily tugged on Rowan's ear to get him closer to Eduard.

Meanwhile, Minos disappeared from their sight, quickly making his way to the temple of the Spiritual Church in Dry City, where he soon found Gloria waiting for him with a terrible expression on her face.

Next to Gloria was Sarah, extremely pale and frightened, her heart pounding in her chest.

Seeing them there, Minos looked at them in silence for a moment, trying to understand the problem.

But he didn't notice anything right away. Sarah had been careful in her adventures, and Minos hadn't really paid enough attention to his daughter's body to notice the obvious.

If he had done so, he would have noticed that she was much more beautiful than ever, even if her strength hadn't changed much in the past years.

"What's wrong?" He asked, slowly walking over to the two women standing in Gloria's office.

"Fath..."

"Quiet!" Gloria interrupted her daughter, aware that Minos had spoiled this girl for too long and couldn't let her speak.

"Minos, do you know what this girl has done?" She looked into her husband's eyes and asked.

"What?" Minos asked curiously, not understanding what this was all about. 'Did Sarah do something she wasn't supposed to?'

Minos' mind was on higher-level problems, not the affairs of young people getting to know their bodies. He didn't notice the problem right away, but Gloria would soon open his eyes.

"Your daughter is dating!" Gloria said with a disappointed tone. "Not only that, but the boyfriend of hers is a prince from Sista, to whom she gave herself, even though he's a spy in our state!" Gloria said, looking at Sarah disappointedly, seeing what a fool her daughter was.

She herself couldn't remember how many times Minos had tricked her in the past...

Minos clenched his fists as he felt his heart beat faster, receiving terrible news for a father like him.

Minos saw no problem in his daughter looking for love and someone to relate to. But he wanted her to introduce him to her family first and do her thing within the rules.

He didn't want his little girl unprotected with some scoundrels!

"Oh? Did you do it, Sarah?" He asked in a louder tone, terribly shocked.

The feeling Minos had now was similar to that of being betrayed!

He couldn't believe his little girl had tricked him and acted behind his back!

"Father..." Sarah didn't dare to look at him. She felt terrible now.

Unfortunately, she hadn't given it much thought when she had done her thing with George... After she'd done it once, twice, three times, it wouldn't have made any difference if she'd done it again, so she'd continued.

But now, with her father in front of her, she felt the weight of having done so much for so long behind her family's back.

They at least deserved to know that she had a boyfriend, especially who he was!

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