

BloodLine 911

Chapter 911: Exposing the sinister plot

Grage Family Estate:

“Do you dare to deceive me again?” Lowell McClain demanded, his voice a chilling whisper that echoed through the opulent chamber.

His eyes, cold and calculating, bore into Alnod, the Grage family’s head, who was struggling to rise from the floor.

With a powerful kick, Lowell sent Alnod flying, his body crashing into the ornate wall, shattering it into a thousand pieces.

Alnod landed with a sickening thud, coughing up a torrent of blood.

His face contorted in pain and humiliation.

This was a public disgrace, a humiliation before his own family.

Rage surged through Alnod.

He yearned to lash out, to strike back at Lowell, but he knew he was outmatched.

He had to think, to find a way out of this predicament.

Lowell watched Alnod’s reaction with a contemptuous sneer.

He saw the desperation in his eyes, the feeble attempts to justify himself.

“Enough!” Lowell bellowed, his voice booming through the room.

The family elders behind him trembled in fear, their faces pale.

The family representative hesitated, unsure whether to step forward and intervene.

But seeing that the Family Head was still trying to bluff, he decided to wait and see.

“Listen, everyone,” Lowell said, his voice carrying a note of authority.

“Your Family Head has committed a heinous crime.”

He then proceeded to outline the intricate plot Alnod had devised, a plot that had nearly succeeded.

The details were shocking, revealing a side of Alnod that no one had ever imagined.

Gasps of disbelief echoed through the room.

The family members were stunned, their faces contorted in horror.

They couldn’t believe that their leader had been capable of such treachery.

The thought of the Federation Head’s wrath sent a shiver down their spines.

Even the elderly women, who had traditionally been more reserved, were visibly shaken.

“Only the Great Elder can save him now,” one of the women whispered to herself.

Alnod, meanwhile, was paralyzed by fear.

The sudden revelation had left him reeling.

He had thought he was so clever, so cunning, but Lowell McClain had seen through his deception.

He coughed again, blood staining his lips.

His world was crumbling around him.

“Federation Head has asked me to collect more compensation for your despicable act.

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When it comes to your punishment, he will decide later,” Lowell said to him, his voice cold and unyielding.

Hearing that, Lowell sighed deeply.

He was caught completely.

There was nothing to pretend anymore.

Since the Federation Head is not going to punish him right now, he heaved a sigh of relief.

Now he understands why Lowell attacked him without any worry.

The Federation Head must be behind him, providing unwavering support.

“Alright, I will give you those resources,” Alnod said, his voice tinged with resignation.

He then turned to his representative and signaled him to bring the treasures from the treasury.

The representative, who had been watching everything unfold, nodded his head to the family head before disappearing from the spot in a swift motion.

He immediately went to the treasury to collect the treasures, moving with a sense of urgency.

The elders, who had been silently observing the situation, sighed as well.

There was nothing they could do in this matter.

The elderly women, in particular, sighed with a mix of relief and concern.

The problem was coming to an end without them having to disturb their great elder.

However, she couldn't shake off the feeling that Family Head Alnod had made a grave mistake this time.

Lowell snorted, a sound filled with contempt, before waiting for the representative to arrive.

He knew he couldn't abuse Alnod anymore.

Since Alnod had given in, there was no point in beating him up further.

Shortly afterward, the representative appeared, holding another storage ring.

He approached Alnod with a respectful bow.

Alnod, despite his injuries, stood up and tried to walk towards him.

Though the injuries were not life-threatening, they caused him considerable pain.

He gritted his teeth, his face contorted in agony, as he forced himself to move.

With a trembling hand, Alnod picked up the storage ring from the representative's hand and handed it to Lowell.

Lowell received it with a look of disdain, immediately checking its contents with his mental power.

Inside, he found the usual collections of herbs and fruits, along with a variety of pills.

His mental power meticulously examined the quality of the pills.

The pills in the boxes were genuine, of high-grade quality.

This time, there were no combination pills; instead, the pills were expensive ones commonly sold in markets.

Seeing this, Lowell's mouth curved into a satisfied arc.

There was no fraud involved this time.

He looked at Alnod, his eyes cold and unforgiving, and gave a final snort of derision before turning on his heel and leaving the place.

When Lowell finally left the place, everyone breathed a huge sigh of relief.

The tension that had gripped the estate dissipated like a heavy fog lifting.

They had been deeply worried that their estate would be run down by the formidable Lowell McClain.

Seeing that he left after collecting the resources, they could finally be at ease.

The elders of the family then turned towards their Family Head, Alnod.

Their faces showed a mix of complex emotions-relief, disappointment, and concern.

The Family Head had made a grave mistake, and they had been perilously close to the brink of destruction.

The weight of their near-catastrophe hung heavily in the air.

Fortunately, the Federation Head had no immediate plans to deal with them further.

The elderly woman, a respected figure among them, sighed deeply.

She then turned around and gently asked the family members to leave, not wanting to embarrass the Family Head any further.

Her voice was calm but firm, a clear signal that the matter was to be put to rest for now.

Family Head Alnod felt a wave of humiliation wash over him.

His pride was wounded, but he was grateful that the elderly woman had saved his face at the right moment.

He then turned to his representative and, with a weary voice, asked him to guide him to the training room so that he could begin the process of healing himself.

The representative nodded and led the way, leaving the hall that had been filled with so much tension just moments before.

Chapter 912: Grage Family humbled

From MC's Perspective:

I was waiting in my room, pacing back and forth, with the weight of anticipation gnawing at me.

The walls around me felt smaller than usual, and the stillness in the air made the silence deafening.

I couldn't help but wonder what was happening beyond this door.

If my instincts were right, Teacher Lowell must have caused quite a stir by now.

I chuckled softly to myself, knowing that the families who dared to challenge us would think twice before making any more moves.

Their fear would keep them at bay for a while.

Even if they somehow mustered the courage to strike again, there's no way the Federation Head could accuse me.

My eyes gleamed with a flicker of determination.

I was lucky-so lucky.

I hadn't blindly consumed those pills when I had the chance.

Had I done so, all my hard work would have gone to waste.

No one else understands what I'm going through, what's at stake for me.

While others might be chasing power without a second thought, for me, this steady progression is a matter of survival.

My mind wandered back to the truth of my existence.

If I don't develop my physique to the highest possible level, the ancient blood hidden inside my body will one day take my life.

This bloodline, once revered, could be my undoing.

I clenched my fists.

Only by pushing my body to the extremes, refining every fiber of my being, could I hope to contain the immense power of my inheritance.

Until I reach that pinnacle, it feels like a sword hangs over my head, a constant threat of death lingering in the shadows.

But something's different now.

That constant worry, that nagging fear-it's not as sharp anymore.

The Federation Head, alongside Teacher Lowell, seemed confident that Star University would extend their hand to me.

And not just through the usual trials.

A special situation was brewing-one that would allow the University to accept more warriors without stringent tests.

The thought of being at Star University filled me with hope.

There, I would have access to the kind of resources that could help me push my physique to the limit.

I could finally chase after the power that would save my life, and perhaps, even go beyond survival.

After what felt like an eternity, but was in truth about 30 minutes, a sharp knock echoed through my room.

I turned and walked to the door, my mind still racing with thoughts of what might be unfolding.

As I opened the door, there stood Teacher Lowell, a wide smile spread across his face, the tension that had once marred his features now gone.

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"Zack, take this storage ring," he said, his voice light with satisfaction as he handed over a small, unassuming ring.

"I'll give you the other rings after we finish testing."

I took the ring from him, feeling its cool surface in my palm, knowing the resources inside could mean the difference between life and death for me.

Before I could say anything, Teacher Lowell added, "I've already spoken with the Federation Head.

You can use these resources without any worry."

Relief washed over me as I nodded in response.

We exchanged a few more words, discussing next steps and plans, but my mind was already racing ahead.

After a few minutes, Teacher Lowell left, leaving me alone once more.

I stared at the ring in my hand.

It was a small thing, but it represented so much-hope, power, survival.

The path ahead was still uncertain, but I was more prepared now.

Every step I took from this moment would bring me closer to mastering my body, to controlling the ancient bloodline inside me.

One day, the sword of death would no longer hang over me.

One day, I would be free.

Meanwhile, the Federation Head sat in his office, his face etched with a mix of frustration and relief as he contemplated the events at the Grage Family Estate.

Word had already reached him about the confrontation, and despite the anger simmering within him, he found solace in the fact that Lowell hadn't gone too far-he hadn't killed Alnod Grage.

The Federation Head sighed deeply, leaning back in his chair.

As much as he wanted to teach the Grage Family a lesson, the consequences of their complete destruction would ripple far beyond them.

Other families would grow anxious, fearful, and even paranoid, potentially destabilizing the entire power structure within the Federation.

Such a move would only create more problems.

The Federation had no room for chaos, not now.

After clearing his mind of these thoughts, he turned his attention to other pressing matters, confident that the Grage Family had been put in their place, for now.

As time passed, news of the Grage Family incident began to spread like wildfire through the other noble families.

Whispers filled the halls of mansions, and the story of Alnod Grage's humiliation and near defeat at the hands of Lord Lowell reached every corner.

Among those most affected was Simon Grage, who sat trembling in his room, his heart pounding with fear and anger.

The weight of his actions had crashed down on him harder than he could have anticipated.

Never in his wildest nightmares did he think his petty schemes against Zack Lockwood would lead to such devastation.

They had lost not only precious resources but also the respect of the Federation.

And to make matters worse, his father, Alnod, had been physically attacked and humiliated in front of their own family members.

The shame gnawed at Simon, his face reddening with both fury and embarrassment.

He had always been the one bullying others, used to having his way and flaunting his power.

But now, for the first time, he found himself utterly powerless.

The humiliation was too much for him to bear.

His resentment toward Zack Lockwood only grew.

In his mind, Zack was the cause of all this.

If it weren't for him, none of this would have happened.

But as much as Simon wanted revenge, there was nothing he could do.

Not now.

They had crossed a line, and the Federation Head was furious.

Even worse, none of the other families would dare come to their aid after witnessing the Federation's wrath.

Shortly afterward, Simon made his way to his father's study.

The atmosphere in the Grage household was tense, as if the walls themselves were bracing for the fallout.

Alnod Grage sat behind his grand desk, his face pale but composed.

Though his body had nearly recovered from the hidden injuries inflicted during the confrontation with Lowell, it had come at a steep price.

Expensive resources had been used to accelerate his healing, and the thought of such a waste pained him deeply.

Resources that could have been used to strengthen their family's position had now been squandered because of Simon's careless behavior.

When Simon entered the room, Alnod looked up, his expression cold and detached.

The usual warmth he reserved for his son was nowhere to be found.

Simon could feel the chill in the air as he stood awkwardly before his father, waiting for him to speak.

But Alnod said nothing.

His silence was louder than any words he could have uttered.

Everyone in the family knew what Simon had done-how he had operated under the very nose of the Federation Head, bringing disaster upon them all.

Yet, none of the Family Elders had come forward to question Alnod or to intervene.

Their silence spoke volumes.

They were complicit, quietly standing by their leader despite the shame brought upon the Grage name.

It was their way of showing solidarity with Alnod, reaffirming his authority within the family.

His position was cemented, unshakable.

He had no siblings to challenge his leadership, and the internal politics that plagued other families didn't touch him.

Even now, after all that had happened, his control over the Grage Family remained firm.

But as Simon stood there, he couldn't shake the feeling of being adrift.

His father's coldness, the anger from the Federation, the growing tension between them and the other noble families-it all weighed on him like a leaden cloak.

He had stirred a hornet's nest, and now, the sting of his actions had come back to haunt him.

"What brings you here, Simon?" Alnod asked, his voice laced with concern.

Hearing his father's question, Simon's fists clenched, his knuckles turning white.

His eyes, usually a soft brown, flared red with anger.

He took a deep breath, trying to control his emotions, but the rage was too palpable.

"Father, I want Zack Lockwood dead," Simon said, his voice a cold, deadly whisper.

Alnod's eyebrows shot up in surprise.

He had expected his son to be shaken and fearful after the day's events.

Instead, Simon's resolve seemed to have hardened.

"I understand your anger, Simon," Alnod replied, his voice soothing.

“But we must be cautious.

We are already on the bad side of the Federation Head.

If we were to act rashly against Lockwood, we would be inviting more trouble.”

He paused, his gaze filled with a mix of worry and determination.

“Lowell McClain is also waiting for an opportunity to strike.

We cannot afford to make any moves that would draw his attention.

For now, we must bide our time and plan our next move carefully.”

Chapter 913: Touching the physique barrier

From MC's Perspective:

The following day arrived, bringing with it the familiar rhythm of my daily cultivation.

As always, I began by entering the Essence Chamber.

The cool, sterile air greeted me as I stepped through the threshold, the door behind me closing with a soft hiss of finality.

I approached the console, fingers moving with practiced precision as I activated the chamber.

A deep hum vibrated through the room as the chamber powered up, and soon, the soft glow of white world energy began to fill the space around me, swirling like a living mist.

I took my place in the center of the platform, the cold metal beneath me grounding my thoughts.

Sitting cross-legged, I removed the storage ring from my finger, feeling the weight of the new pills inside.

Slowly, I began withdrawing the boxes, placing each one in front of me with reverence.

Among them, a small red pill caught my eye-rare and expensive, a luxury even for seasoned cultivators.

Without hesitation, I picked up the pill, its surface gleaming under the chamber's light, and swallowed it in one swift motion.

Almost immediately, I felt the pill dissolve within me, releasing a surge of energy unlike anything I'd felt before.

The blood element method stirred within me, and I closed my eyes, surrendering myself to its flow.

Suddenly, the familiar runes of my blood element flickered into life, pulsing in chaotic patterns.

The red energy from the pill coursed through my veins, hot and fierce.

I could feel the energy, potent and raw, being absorbed by my cells, as if every fiber of my being was greedily drinking in its power.

The richness of the pill's essence-crafted from rare herbs and fruits-poured through me, enhancing my flesh, blood, and tendons at a staggering pace.

My body buzzed with vitality as each part of me grew stronger.

At the same time, the ambient blood energy in the chamber began to seep into my body, merging with the red energy from the pill.

The sensation was overwhelming-like a river of molten life-force flowing into my bloodstream.

Above my blood vessels, a radiant red glow began to form, gradually converting the foreign blood energy into something even more mysterious: pure, white energy.

The transformation was awe-inspiring.

The white energy, though subtle, carried with it an undeniable power.

I could feel it sinking deep into my bones, fortifying my very skeleton.

My entire exoskeleton was now bathed in red light, but the white energy coursed beneath the surface, silently reinforcing my bones.

Although there was no visible change, I knew, instinctively, that my bones had grown impervious to damage.

Only someone of a vastly higher power could hope to break them now.

The pain that accompanied this transformation was excruciating, a deep, burning ache that seemed to radiate from my very marrow.

But the excitement bubbling within me overshadowed the agony.

I was growing stronger-so much stronger.

With each passing second, I could feel the shift in my body, the evolution of my power.

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Time became irrelevant as I continued to cultivate, lost in the flow of energy, oblivious to the world outside.

There was nothing but the hum of the chamber, the thrum of power coursing through me, and the steady pulse of my blood element technique pushing me toward new heights.

The pain was a distant whisper now, drowned out by the sheer exhilaration of my transformation.

A few hours later, a subtle shift in the energy coursing through me made me pause.

There it was-the barrier.

It was faint but undeniable, like a solid wall just beyond my reach.

A wave of relief surged through me, sweeping away the exhaustion that had built up over hours of cultivation.

After such a long and grueling effort, I had finally touched the barrier for body strength.

The culmination of my patience, focus, and those rare, expensive body-strengthening pills had begun to bear fruit.

I allowed myself a moment of satisfaction, my body still buzzing with energy, though the effects were beginning to ebb.

The white world energy swirling around me was thinning, signaling that the peak of my cultivation session was past.

Glancing toward the ceiling, I guessed it was nearing nightfall.

I could feel the pull of rest tugging at me, but excitement overshadowed it.

Now that I had touched the barrier, breaking through it would only be a matter of time.

With a little more focus, a little more refinement, it would shatter, and my body would ascend to new levels of strength.

Exhaling deeply, I slowly opened my eyes, the soft glow of the chamber's light casting a stark contrast to the darkness that had settled in my vision during cultivation.

The first thing I saw was the array of empty pill boxes scattered before me.

Their contents, once so precious, were now coursing through my blood, their power woven into the very fabric of my body.

A few boxes still remained, though-the ones that held rare fruits and herbs.

My gaze lingered on them, uncertainty creeping into my mind.

Should I consume them directly, or would they require preparation?

Their potent aura suggested they held immense power, but I wasn't yet sure how best to tap into it.

Pushing aside those thoughts for now, I slowly stood up.

My muscles, though filled with energy, felt sore from the strain of the intense cultivation session.

I stretched briefly, feeling the subtle but profound changes in my body-a new density to my bones, a tautness in my muscles that hadn't been there before.

I walked over to the console, the soft hum of the Essence Chamber still thrumming in the air.

My fingers moved across the control panel, and with a final press, the chamber began to power down.

The swirling white energy dissipated, retreating back into the ether, leaving the room in stillness.

As the machinery shut off, I felt the calm settle over me.

Tomorrow would bring new challenges, but I was ready.

The barrier was within reach now, and soon, it would be nothing but a shattered memory.

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Meanwhile, the tense atmosphere surrounding the Grage Family Estate began to ease, returning to a semblance of normalcy.

However, the change was marked by a noticeable shift in their behavior-they had stopped receiving any guests.

Word of this spread quickly, fueling curiosity and concern among the neighboring families.

Whispers circulated about what could have transpired to cause such isolation.

The once open doors of the Grage Family had now been firmly shut, leaving visitors to return home disappointed and without answers.

Inside the estate, Alnod, the family head, remained withdrawn, his pride wounded and his hands tied.

How could he face the other families after what had occurred?

He knew the weight of his family's actions and the consequences they had triggered.

To open the doors would mean confronting uncomfortable questions, questions that Alnod was not ready to answer.

As a result, the Grage Family became an enigma, a house cloaked in silence.

But the silence itself was an answer.

The other families began piecing together rumors, sensing that something much larger was at play.

It was no secret that the Grage Family had somehow drawn the ire of the Federation Head, a figure of immense power and influence.

This knowledge alone was enough to send a ripple of fear through the local aristocracy.

Those who had once played their petty political games, attempting to undermine or outmaneuver the Grage Family, now thought better of it.

They quickly withdrew their small schemes, biding their time in the hopes that the storm would pass.

No one wanted to risk provoking the same wrath.

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Lowell Castle:

Inside the stately walls of Lowell Castle, the air was much different.

Lowell, seated in his opulent study, received a steady stream of reports.

Each one detailed the ongoing fallout from the Grage Family's predicament.

Standing before him was Jonathan, his most trusted advisor, a sly smile on his face as he delivered the latest news.

"Master," Jonathan began, his voice carrying a note of amusement, "the Grage Family has stopped accepting guests."

Lowell's gaze didn't waver from the document he was reviewing, but a cold, satisfied snort escaped him.

"Harumph," he grunted, leaning back in his chair, fingers steepled in thought.

He allowed himself a moment of silence before speaking again.

"Others may be curious, eager to uncover the details of what transpired.

The fact that they're being met with closed doors, unanswered questions-this will only deepen their unease.

And rightfully so." His voice was low, but there was a palpable amusement in it, as if he were savoring the discomfort of his rivals.

Lowell's lips curled into a slight smile, the expression far from warm.

"The news must have sent chills down their spines," he continued, his tone now laced with satisfaction.

“This is a good thing.

It will stop others from entertaining foolish ideas-at least for the time being.”

He pondered Zack Lockwood, envisioning his student diligently cultivating right now.

Thinking about it, he smiled.

Chapter 914: SS-Elite Peak Stage (Body Breakthrough)

The Following day,

I entered the essence chamber with a sense of anticipation, feeling a surge of new expectations.

Earlier this morning, I received the final set of pills from the Federation Head-these were crucial resources that would allow me to shatter the barrier preventing my breakthrough.

As I approached the console, my movements were precise.

With a few taps, I calibrated the settings, initiating the essence chamber’s activation sequence.

Almost immediately, a soft hum reverberated through the space as the chamber came to life.

The air shifted, becoming thick with dense, pure white essence that began to swirl and fill the room like a mist.

Taking a deep breath, I walked towards the elevated platform at the center, the energy in the chamber already making my skin tingle.

Sitting cross-legged on the cool, smooth surface, I took out a few pill boxes from my storage ring and placed them methodically on the floor before me.

My hands were steady as I selected the first of the expensive pills, feeling its potent energy radiate from its core.

Without hesitation, I swallowed it, and immediately began circulating the “Blood Element Method”.

The moment the pill dissolved in my system, the blood rune embedded deep in my consciousness started to flicker.

A familiar warmth spread throughout my body, coursing through my veins like molten fire.

Every cell in my being began to hum with energy, vibrating with life.

I could feel my body transforming at a rapid rate, as if being reforged anew with every heartbeat.

The chamber intensified its effect as I drew in more blood energy from the surrounding atmosphere.

It rushed into my body like a river, merging with my bloodstream, and as I observed internally, a vivid red light appeared above the bloodstream—a light that seemed to pulse with mysterious power.

Slowly, it enveloped the blood energy, refining it, and channeling it directly into my bones.

The transformation of my body deepened as the red glow permeated my skeleton.

I felt the structure of my bones strengthening, solidifying with each passing second.

My skeleton gleamed, now radiating a crimson hue, as if it had been reforged in blood itself.

The changes were monumental, yet I could sense the presence of the barrier growing stronger, more defined-a seemingly insurmountable wall standing between me and my breakthrough.

An hour passed in this state, the energies within me growing ever more volatile and potent.

Then, suddenly, the flow halted.

The energy coursing through my veins collided with the barrier, unable to break through.

Frustration flickered within me, but I was prepared.

Without wasting a moment, I consumed another pill, feeling the raw power surge within me once more.

This time, I steeled my resolve, focusing every ounce of my will on the""Blood Element Method"".

I would not simply let the energy flow-I would command it to crash against the barrier like a tidal wave, to shatter it with overwhelming force.

I closed my eyes, preparing for the final push.

This time, I would break through, no matter what.

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As time slipped by, I relentlessly hammered at the barrier, launching one attack after another.

Each time, I could feel the energy from the pill seeping into my body, fueling my attempts.

Yet despite my efforts, the barrier held firm, unyielding.

The pill's power was completely absorbed by my body, leaving me with no choice but to reach for another.

I swallowed it, bracing myself for another round.

This time, the energy within me surged violently, crashing against the barrier like a tidal wave.

The sheer force of the impact rippled through my veins and meridians, but to my frustration, the barrier remained unscathed, as solid and impenetrable as before.

Gritting my teeth, I refused to back down.

I swallowed the growing sense of defeat and pressed on, cycling the ""Blood Element Method"" again and again.

My determination was unwavering, even as I felt the toll it was taking on my body.

Slowly, a new discomfort began to creep in.

The pressure in my veins and meridians was mounting, intensifying with each subsequent attempt.

It was like trying to force a raging river through too narrow a channel.

My meridians throbbed with pain, and a searing heat spread through them, warning me of the strain.

Still, I pushed on, my focus fixed on the barrier.

But despite my efforts, the obstacle remained, resolute and immovable.

A frown creased my forehead as frustration mingled with the sharp pain radiating from my veins and meridians.

If I continued like this, I knew the damage could become irreversible.

My body was nearing its limit, and if I wasn't careful, my veins and meridians would be torn apart under the strain.

Reluctantly, I stopped the ""Blood Element Method"", taking a moment to breathe and reassess.

Switching tactics, I began to run the ""Wood Scripture"", summoning the healing energies it provided.

A calming warmth flooded through me, spreading quickly to the areas that had suffered the most damage.

The soothing, restorative power of the wood element flowed gently through my veins and meridians, mending the small tears and relieving the pressure that had built up.

With each passing moment, the pain ebbed away, replaced by a sense of renewal.

I could feel my body recovering, healing itself from the strain.

As time passed, the restoration was complete, my veins and meridians returning to their peak condition.

The healing energies had done their job, and my body was once again ready to endure the intense pressure of the breakthrough process.

Taking a deep breath, I shifted back to the ""Blood Element Method"", reigniting the aggressive energy within me.

The moment had come to attack the barrier once more, and this time, I would push even harder, determined to finally break through.

A few hours later, as night fell and the chamber was bathed in the faint glow of the swirling essence, something began to shift within me.

The barrier, once so immovable, now showed signs of weakening.

Small cracks spiderwebbed across its surface, subtle at first but unmistakable.

I could feel it-the slow but undeniable fracture in the obstacle that had kept me bound for so long.

Sensing the breakthrough was near, I didn't waste a second.

Repeating the Blood Element Method with renewed vigor, I sent wave after wave of violent energy crashing against the barrier.

Each strike widened the cracks, and with every pulse of energy, my heart raced faster with excitement.

The barrier was finally yielding, and I knew that if I kept up this pace, I would break through in mere hours.

Time seemed to blur as I pressed on, the cracks in the barrier growing more pronounced.

I could feel the pressure building to a crescendo, the energy within me swirling chaotically as it sought release.

Then, at one pivotal moment, I felt it-a distinct shift.

Click!

A sharp, reverberating sound echoed through my mind as the barrier shattered completely.

In an instant, it was as if a floodgate had been thrown wide open.

A torrent of profound strength surged into me, filling every corner of my body with an overwhelming sense of power.

My veins pulsed with new energy, and my entire being felt invigorated, transformed.

I had broken through.

The realization hit me hard: I had reached the “SS-ELITE Rank Peak Stage”-a complete body breakthrough.

A surge of exhilaration coursed through me as I silently whispered to myself, “It finally happened.

Now both my essence and physique are truly at the Peak Stage.” A sense of invincibility followed.

From this point onward, I would have no rivals in the SS-ELITE Rank.

But I quickly pushed those thoughts aside.

Now was not the time for distractions.

I needed to stabilize this newfound strength before it spiraled out of control.

Closing my eyes, I focused inward, feeling the changes reverberate through my body.

My physique had elevated to a new level, beyond anything I had ever experienced before.

My skeleton felt as though it had been reforged, now even denser and more resilient than before.

Each bone radiated with a power I could tangibly sense.

My flesh, my muscles, and even my internal organs had strengthened as well, becoming more robust, more durable.

I could tell-without even tapping into the ""Blood Element Technique""-that my raw, brute strength alone would be enough to overpower any warrior of my rank.

The sheer physical force I now wielded was unlike anything I had possessed before.

I had transcended the limits of the SS-ELITE rank, and the world would soon come to know it.

But for now, I focused on mastering this newfound strength, letting it settle and harmonize with my body.

The breakthrough was complete, and I stood on the threshold of even greater heights.

One hour later,

I completely stabilized the new realm.

When I opened my eyes.

I found the black impurities covering my body.

Seeing that it has become moldy.

I stood up and decided to get a shower first.

Then I turned off the chamber before leaving the essence chamber.

Chapter 915: Part 1:Focusing on skill improvements

From MC's Perspective:

After returning to my room, I felt the weight of my recent breakthrough still buzzing in my mind.

The tension from the long, arduous process finally began to ease.

I decided to unwind.

Stepping into the bath, the warm water soothed my muscles, washing away the fatigue from the intense cultivation.

The bath lasted for a full 20 minutes, a rare moment of relaxation amidst my usual rigorous training.

Once I finished, I dried off and slipped into comfortable clothes, feeling the warmth of my new strength humming beneath my skin.

The breakthrough had brought more than just power-it had given me a newfound sense of confidence.

I could feel it in the way my body moved, each step lighter yet more solid, the energy in my veins more refined.

Now that I had reached the ""Peak Stage of SS-ELITE Rank"", the next step was clear.

I needed to test my limits in real combat, to hone my skills through experience.

The thought of taking on more challenging missions excited me, but I knew I needed guidance.

I immediately thought of ""Teacher Lowell"".

He had been with me through every stage of my journey, and it felt only right to share this news with him.

Reaching for my communication crystal, I made the call.

It connected instantly, his familiar voice coming through with its usual calm authority.

"Zack, what happened?" Teacher Lowell's voice was steady, yet there was a hint of curiosity.

He probably sensed something important had occurred.

I couldn't help the smile that spread across my face as I replied, "Teacher, I made a breakthrough.

Now I'm truly at the ""Peak Stage of SS-ELITE Rank"", both in physique and essence."

There was a brief pause, then his approval came, firm and resolute.

"Good!

Zack, that's excellent news."

But Teacher Lowell was not one to dwell too long on celebrations.

His focus immediately shifted to the next phase of my growth.

“Zack, now focus on taking on some challenging missions.

Only through constant trials and real combat will you gain the experience you need.

Power alone is not enough.

Experience will sharpen your instincts and make that power truly yours.”

His words resonated with me, just as they always did.

He had been through this path before, and his wisdom carried the weight of his own experience.

I knew he was right.

Having immense strength meant nothing if I didn’t know how to apply it under pressure.

“Teacher, don’t worry.

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I’ve already planned to take on a mission a few days from now,” I reassured him, my voice steady with conviction.

“Good.

I’m sure you’ll do well.

Stay sharp, Zack.” Teacher Lowell’s voice softened, and after a few more minutes of conversation, we ended the call.

I sat back, reflecting on our conversation.

In the next few days, my priority would be to get accustomed to my new strength, mastering the subtleties of this newfound power.

The SS-ELITE Peak Stage had transformed my body and essence, but I needed time to let the power settle, to understand how much stronger I had truly become.

Only then would I be ready for the missions ahead.

This wasn’t just about power-it was about control.

About knowing when to strike, when to defend, and how to push myself to the edge without losing my focus.

I knew that the upcoming challenges would test me in ways I hadn’t yet imagined.

But I was ready.

For now, I would take these next few days to train quietly, feeling out the depths of my new strength.

And once I was ready, I would face whatever challenges lay ahead with unwavering resolve.

...

As the days passed, I threw myself completely into my training, determined to adapt to my newfound strength and refine my skills.

With each passing hour, I felt the gap between my old, stagnant techniques and my current abilities begin to close.

For too long, I had relied on the same moves and strategies, but now, with the surge of power from my breakthrough, I knew it was time to push beyond my previous limits.

I focused intensely on mastering my techniques, dedicating time to each of my abilities-lightning, blood element, healing, and, perhaps most importantly, soul techniques.

The improvement was slow at first, but as I continued to train, I began to see real progress.

My control over the "lightning element" became more precise, the energy crackling at my fingertips with newfound sharpness and speed.

I could channel the destructive force with a level of accuracy that had previously eluded me.

The "blood element" had always been a core part of my strength, but I now sought to wield it with more finesse, using its power not just for brute force but for strategic attacks that could overwhelm opponents before they even knew what hit them.

My healing abilities, which had always been reliable, became even more refined.

The flow of healing energy was smoother, more potent, allowing me to recover from even the harshest training sessions in record time.

But it was the "soul techniques" that truly captured my attention.

They had always been my trump card, an ability so dangerous that I rarely needed to use it.

Yet, I knew that if I could master it fully, I would possess a power that could turn the tide of any battle.

The intricacies of the soul required patience and precision.

I put extra effort into understanding the deeper mysteries of the technique, feeling the subtle energy that flowed within.

This power, more than any other, felt like the key to unlocking my true potential.

Time passed in a blur.

The sound of destruction echoed throughout the training grounds as my ""lightning attacks"" tore through the humanoid puppets I used for practice.

Their metal frames crumbled and sparked under the force of my power, but I hardly noticed.

I was completely immersed in my training, my mind focused only on perfecting my craft.

Day after day, I pushed myself harder, forgetting about the outside world and the missions I had originally planned to undertake.

Chapter 916: Part 2: Focusing on skill improvements

From MC's Perspective:

Meanwhile, ""Teacher Lowell"" had been keeping an eye on Zack from afar.

Though he had initially been concerned about his immersion in training, he soon realized how serious Zack was about improving himself.

Seeing the progress I was making, he chose not to remind me of the missions.

He understood that this period of intense focus was just as important as facing real combat.

As long as I stayed committed and grew more confident in my abilities, he was content to let me train at my own pace.

Without realizing it, over a month had passed.

The days had blurred into one another as I delved deeper into mastering each technique.

Every session brought a new understanding, a new level of control.

It took me a few more weeks to truly feel the progress in all of my abilities.

My techniques, once rusty and stagnant, now felt sharp and responsive.

The power surged within me, no longer raw and uncontrolled, but honed and ready.

I knew that soon, I would be ready to take on the difficult missions awaiting me.

But for now, I continued my training, fully immersed in the process of becoming the warrior I needed to be.

...

The following day,

After a month of intense training, I finally decided it was time to step outside and take on a mission.

The day felt different, filled with purpose and a quiet determination.

I had spent so long honing my skills, but the real test awaited me beyond the academy walls.

1.

Sword Divide: Perfect wheel (Intermediate)

2.

Lightning Wheel: Perfect wheel (Intermediate)

3.

Lightning Phantom: Perfect wheel (Intermediate)

4.

Blood Field Technique: Big wheel (Intermediate)

5.

Soul Tower Method: Big wheel (Proficient)

6.

Soul Needle Art: Big wheel (Proficient)

7.

Lightning finger technique: Big wheel (Intermediate)

8.

Blood Fist Technique: Big wheel (Intermediate)

9.

Healing Hand: Big Wheel (Intermediate)

10.

Lightning Drop: Small Wheel (Specialist)

I knew that while I had made significant progress, true mastery would only come through practical experience-and unfortunately, time was not a luxury I had.

I needed to continue pushing forward if I hoped to reach the next level.

After getting ready, I stood in front of the mirror, taking a moment to recall the improvements in my abilities.

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Each technique had grown sharper-my lightning element crackled with raw energy, my blood element had evolved into something far more devastating, and my soul techniques, though still a trump card, were beginning to reveal their deeper potential.

But despite the progress, I understood that true mastery was a long road ahead.

Time wasn't on my side, so I made a decision.

It was time to leave the safety of the academy and seek real combat experience.

I left my room and entered the lift, heading down to the lobby.

As the doors opened, I noticed the surprised looks from the staff.

It had been over a month since they had last seen me, my absence likely creating a sense of mystery.

But I had been too focused on my own growth to think about anything else.

Walking up to the mission desk, I was greeted by a digital screen hovering above the console.

It displayed the various missions available for wizards of my rank, each one promising a new challenge.

I scanned through the list, searching for something that would push me but also allow me to stay near ""Delta City"", where I could meet ""Teacher Lowell"" after completing the mission.

It had been a while since we last spoke, and I wanted to share my progress with him in person.

After scrolling down a few pages, my eyes landed on a mission that piqued my interest.

The task was simple yet challenging: acquire ""Class-7 Monster Cores"" from any species of monster.

The requirement was to gather five cores, and the mission allowed for either a team or solo effort.

Without hesitation, I decided to go alone.

I needed to rely on myself, to see how far my newfound strength could take me.

...

Delta City:

The teleportation platform hummed softly as I stepped through, the familiar rush of energy dissipating as I arrived at Delta City.

The bustling metropolis stretched out before me, vibrant and alive with activity.

But my focus wasn't on the city itself.

I had only one goal in mind: the mission.

Without wasting any time, I moved swiftly through the streets, heading straight for the boundary that separated the city from the wild, untamed lands beyond.

Within a few minutes, I reached the edge of the city, the towering buildings giving way to the wide expanse of the wilderness.

In my hand, I held a "black token", a key that allowed me to pass through the invisible barrier that protected the city from the dangers lurking outside.

As I approached the barrier, the token pulsed lightly with energy.

With a small flicker, I stepped through the shimmering veil and emerged on the other side, now standing at the "outskirts of the monster area".

The landscape immediately shifted, the well-maintained roads and structures replaced by rugged terrain, overgrown foliage, and an oppressive, heavy silence.

The air felt thicker here, charged with the presence of powerful creatures lurking just beyond the horizon.

This was a place where only the strong could survive-and I was ready.

With a quiet breath, I reached into my ""storage ring"" and pulled out the ""black sword"" that had served me so well in previous battles.

Its dark blade gleamed faintly under the dim light, an extension of the power that now flowed through me.

As I gripped the hilt, the memories of my last mission surfaced-memories of battles fought, enemies defeated, and lessons learned.

But there was something colder in my mind this time, a sharpened resolve.

My eyes narrowed as I recalled the events of the past.

I had been too merciful, too restrained.

But not this time.

""No more sympathy"" for those who stood in my way.

This mission was about survival, strength, and pushing myself to the next level.

My heart hardened as I made the decision.

I would show no mercy, no hesitation.

The monsters I faced would be nothing more than obstacles to overcome.

Determined, I kicked off the ground, my body lifting into the air.

I soared above the outskirts, moving swiftly towards the “inner area” where the more dangerous beasts roamed.

Chapter 917: Started Killing

From MC's Perspective:

About twenty minutes later, I finally reached the entrance of the inner area.

The atmosphere shifted; the air seemed thicker, more oppressive.

I could feel the weight of the looming danger ahead.

Beyond this point, monsters were far deadlier.

But I needed a Class-7 monster core to complete my task, so I had no choice but to venture deeper.

If I encountered one of these monsters, great.

If not, I could always change direction before it got too late.

With that in mind, I soared towards the inner area, pushing myself to move faster.

The towering trees and darkened sky began to blur as I flew deeper.

Just as I was settling into my pace, something caught my attention.

A group of warriors was heading directly towards me.

My eyes flashed with a glint of interest.

I wasn't wearing my mask-anyone could recognize me.

For a brief moment, I considered the risk of being identified, but I quickly dismissed the thought.

It wouldn't matter soon.

Speeding up, I closed the distance between us.

Meanwhile, the trio of SSS-ELITE Rank warriors appeared to have just completed their mission.

They were returning, perhaps unaware of what was heading their way.

But then, they sensed it-my aura, sharp and unmistakable.

The moment they realized I was alone, their eyes gleamed with surprise.

In this monster-infested region, plunder and murder were everyday occurrences.

Most warriors, unless they were overwhelmingly powerful, never ventured out here alone.

Hunting teams were the norm.

I could hear one of them, a slender warrior with sharp eyebrows and a large sword strapped to his back, sneering as he spoke.

“There’s a single fish coming our way,” he said, his tone cold and calculating.

The other two warriors, his companions, each also armed with large swords, chuckled darkly.

They were dressed in Federation uniforms, marking them as members of the Federation.

Not that it mattered much.

Alpha City may be run by the Federation, but in this wild, lawless region, strength dictated the rules.

Here, no one cared about official titles or ranks.

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“Let’s kill him before he slips away,” the slender one suggested, his voice filled with bloodlust.

I remained cautious as the distance between us closed.

My senses sharpened, and I quickly gauged their strength.

They were all Early Stage SSS-ELITE Rank warriors.

A grin spread across my face.

They were strong, but not strong enough to make me draw my sword.

I could handle them without breaking a sweat.

As we neared, I quietly mobilized my blood energy.

A soft, invisible red hue enveloped my right arm in an instant, surging with deadly force.

One of the warriors, a man with a pointy nose standing to the right of the leader, sneered at me.

“Hand over your storage bracelet, and we’ll let you walk away alive,” he taunted.

“Otherwise, you forfeit your life.”

I didn’t bother responding.

I merely snorted in contempt and kept moving forward, unfazed by their threats.

The arrogant smirks on their faces twisted into anger.

They weren’t expecting this.

Their eyes burned with rage, and I could feel their killing intent rising.

They had no idea what was coming.

The next moment, all three warriors rushed at me, attempting to form an encirclement.

It was almost laughable-they had no idea who they were dealing with.

If they had recognized me as Zack Lockwood, they would have reconsidered attacking.

But ignorance led them to their doom.

Swish!

Without hesitation, I charged at the slender warrior who had spoken first.

His eyes sharpened as he drew his sword, aiming for a quick, clean strike.

But I was faster.

I sidestepped the blade effortlessly, feeling the rush of air as it missed me by inches.

Before he could recover, I drove my fist forward, aimed directly at his chest.

Boom!

The impact was deafening.

My blood energy surged into my fist, and the crimson hue enveloping it shattered the warrior's chest armor and bones as though they were made of paper.

His eyes widened in shock and pain as the force of the blow sent him flying backward.

Pfff!

Blood sprayed from his mouth mid-air before his body crashed into the ground like a broken doll.

The other two warriors hesitated for a split second, their expressions shifting from arrogance to fear.

But they were too slow.

Swish!

I vanished from where I stood, reappearing beside the second warrior in an instant.

He barely had time to register my presence before my fist collided with his face.

His features twisted in terror, but there was no escaping.

Crack!

The sickening sound of bone breaking echoed as my fist connected with his skull.

Blood spewed from his mouth, and he stumbled backward, clutching his face in agony.

His knees wobbled, barely holding him up.

Before the third warrior could even react, I was already beside him.

His face was frozen in disbelief, his hands trembling as he reached for his sword.

Too late.

Boom!

My fist crashed into his chest with brutal force, and I felt the satisfying crunch of bones caving inward.

His eyes went wide in horror as the life drained from him.

His body crumpled, folding under the sheer force of my blow, and he collapsed in a heap.

In less than a heartbeat, all three of them lay on the ground, writhing in agony, barely clinging to consciousness.

Their pride, their confidence, shattered as quickly as their bones.

In the blink of an eye, I had rendered three elite warriors helpless.

The three warriors stood frozen, terror gripping them like a vice.

Their once confident expressions had twisted into masks of pure dread.

They exchanged desperate glances, silently searching for an answer, but there was none.

Before them stood a lone warrior, whose aura was so overwhelming, they couldn't even begin to measure his strength.

It was as if they had unknowingly challenged an immovable force, and now, they realized they had kicked an iron plate-a mistake that would cost them dearly.

On the other hand, my focus sharpened, instincts honed like a blade.

I felt the energy within my body ignite, flowing through my limbs as I charged towards the nearest warrior with lethal intent.

This time, I executed the technique perfectly, my movements fluid, precise, deadly.

Every step I took closed the distance between us in a blur.

“Senior, forgive us!” The warrior’s voice cracked in terror as he threw his hands up, pleading for mercy.

His shout echoed across the battlefield, but his fate had already been sealed.

“Blood Fist,” I whispered coldly, my voice barely audible over the rush of wind as my fist rocketed toward him.

The moment it connected with his skull, the result was instant and gruesome.

A sickening crack filled the air, followed by an explosion of blood and bone.

His head burst into pieces like a ripe watermelon smashed against the ground, spraying the remains in all directions.

The horrifying sight hit the other two warriors like a hammer.

Their comrade’s death, brutal and swift, drained the last remnants of courage from their veins.

They stood, paralyzed for a heartbeat, their minds unable to process the carnage before them.

Then, as though the very essence of their souls had fled their bodies, they broke.

Without a single word, they turned and bolted in opposite directions, their wounds slowing them down, but desperation and fear is fueling their escape.

Seeing that, my eyes flashed with a cold glint.

I chased after the nearest warriors, my heart pounding with a fierce determination.

I invoked the ""Lightning Phantom Technique"", feeling the surge of power as bolts of lightning arced around my legs, crackling with raw energy.

In the next moment, my speed increased exponentially.

In the blink of an eye, I closed the distance between myself and the fleeing warrior.

"Lightning Finger," I whispered, my voice barely audible over the hum of electricity.

In an instant, a thick ball of lightning formed at the tip of my forefinger, glowing with an intense purple hue.

I pointed my hand at the enemy, my aim steady and true.

Swoosh!

The lightning beam shot forth, a dazzling streak of purple light.

It struck the back of the warrior within seconds, the impact force sending him hurtling forward.

"Argh!" A muffled grunt escaped his lips as he crashed into the ground.

Without hesitation, I appeared behind him, my movements swift and precise.

I struck his head with a decisive blow.

Pfff!

The head exploded into pieces, a gruesome display of power.

Blood splattered on the ground, painting a macabre scene of victory.

Then I turned around, my senses heightened, and started moving forward to chase the third warrior.

The air around me crackled with residual energy from my previous attack.

Swoosh!

On the other hand, the third warrior was fleeing frantically, his breath coming in ragged gasps.

He had no idea of the fate that had befallen his comrades, but a primal fear gripped him.

He knew that if he didn't escape from this place, death would soon follow.

As he moved forward, panic clouded his judgment.

He paid no mind to the directions or the lurking dangers of the area.

The current terrain was treacherous, filled with ""Class-7 Monsters"", their menacing forms hidden in the shadows, waiting to strike at any moment.

The warrior's desperate flight through this perilous landscape only added to the tension, each step echoing with the possibility of doom.

Chapter 918: Part 1: Collecting monster cores

From MC's Perspective:

The third warrior had fled far, but my heightened perception picked up traces of his path-disturbed dirt, broken twigs, subtle signs left behind in his desperation.

As I followed the trail, my pulse quickened.

The silence of the forest was suddenly shattered by a heart-wrenching scream, echoing through the trees.

It was filled with agony, and my stomach dropped with the realization that the scream had come from the warrior.

I rushed forward, my heart pounding in sync with my footsteps.

When I arrived, the sight was grim.

The warrior lay lifeless, brutally crushed to death, his body a crumpled heap at the mercy of a massive Class-7 Sky Python Monster.

The monster was colossal-its coiled body stretched out, thick as an ancient oak, easily between 20 and 25 feet long.

Its scales shimmered with an oily sheen, reflecting the dim forest light, and its eyes glowed with cold malice.

A predator through and through.

My gaze shifted from the fallen warrior to the python, and I realized that the monster had already sensed me.

Its body uncoiled slightly, preparing for another strike.

Its predatory eyes locked onto mine, and I felt the weight of its murderous intent.

I reached into my storage ring and drew out the black sword, its blade dark as night and sharp as a winter wind.

It felt familiar in my hand, a part of me, as if it pulsed with my very heartbeat.

Swoosh!

The python lunged with terrifying speed, its powerful muscles propelling it toward me like a bolt of death.

Its maw opened wide, revealing rows of glistening fangs.

I tightened my grip on the sword and braced myself, waiting for the perfect moment to strike.

As it closed the distance, I channeled my energy and unleashed my defensive technique.

“Lightning Wheel!” I shouted, my voice merging with the roar of the forming storm.

A brilliant, dense purple wheel of lightning crackled into existence around me, spinning with deadly force.

The air buzzed with electricity, the power far greater than I had summoned before.

The python slammed into the lightning wheel headfirst.

Boom!

The impact was cataclysmic.

The wheel detonated in a burst of raw energy, sending destructive lightning coursing through the monster.

The Python hissed in agony, its massive head writhing as the lightning seared through one side, burning through scale and flesh.

Yet, despite the damage, the monster refused to back down.

Its resolve was impressive, but its judgment had faltered.

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It was no longer acting with cunning intelligence; instead, it had succumbed to instinct, driven by rage and pain.

“Foolish monster,” I thought, watching it coil and charge again, though its body had weakened.

It lunged once more, and I smirked.

This time, it was pure desperation.

As it neared, I repeated my attack, forming another wheel of crackling purple energy.

Boom!

Another devastating explosion rocked the forest, and the remaining half of the python’s head was obliterated by the powerful surge of lightning.

Its small brain was completely fried.

The gigantic body twitched, then collapsed to the ground with a heavy thud.

The monster's final moments were spent writhing in a pitiful attempt to cling to life, but its vitality was draining fast.

I watched in silence, waiting patiently as the python's thrashing grew weaker and weaker, until it finally stilled.

Death settled over the battlefield like a cold fog.

Only when I was certain that the last trace of life had left the monster did I step forward, the black sword still humming in my hand.

With practiced precision, I began to dissect the python, its massive form laying before me.

I cut through its thick scales, searching for what I came for: the monster core.

After a few moments, I found it-palm-sized, glowing faintly with the residual energy of the monster.

I pried it loose, wiping the blood from its smooth surface before slipping it into my storage ring.

The python's body was still valuable, but without the proper storage containers, it would have to remain here, untouched for now.

As I turned to leave, my thoughts were already shifting toward my next target.

There were more monsters to hunt, and I had no intention of stopping now.

Shortly after dealing with the python, I found myself facing another formidable foe.

This time, it was a Red Striped White Sabertooth, a monster known for its viciousness and raw strength.

It stood there, comfortably gnawing on the remains of another monster, its powerful jaws crunching through bone effortlessly.

The sight of its bloodstained fur and muscular frame sent a ripple of tension through the air.

The monster's fur was a stark white, marred by thick, red stripes that seemed almost like scars across its body.

Its fangs, long and menacing, gleamed as it chewed its meal.

This was no ordinary monster-it was a peak Class-7 monster, a predator that could even challenge a Class-8 with its brute strength and ferocity.

Roar!

The Sabertooth suddenly let out a thunderous roar, its head whipping toward me as it finally noticed my presence.

The force of its roar shook the ground, reverberating in my chest like the rumble of an earthquake.

I could feel the strength of the monster radiating from it like heat from a blazing fire.

This was a seasoned killer, one that had tasted the blood of warriors before.

It stood up to its full height-over seven feet tall-muscles rippling beneath its fur, and it locked its savage eyes on me.

But I could tell by its cautious approach that it couldn't gauge my power.

That hesitation might be its undoing.

Yet, there was no doubt it was hungry, and I was its next target.

Roar!

Another deafening roar tore through the air, shaking the surrounding trees.

Without warning, the Sabertooth charged, a blur of white and red as it barreled toward me with terrifying speed.

Its massive claws dug into the earth, leaving deep gashes in the soil as it propelled itself forward, jaws wide open, ready to tear me apart.

I wasted no time.

Summoning my lightning energy, I formed a dense, crackling purple ball of energy in my palm.

"Lightning Drop!"

I slammed the lightning ball into the ground just as the Sabertooth closed in, and a surge of electrical power rippled outward.

The ground itself seemed to hum with energy, and then-crack!

Several bolts of lightning erupted from the ball, jagged purple tendrils lashing out toward the charging monster.

The first bolt struck the Sabertooth dead-on, and it staggered mid-charge, letting out a guttural roar of pain.

The bolts continued to strike, one after another, each impact causing the monster to flinch and convulse as the lightning seared its flesh.

Its once-pristine white fur began to smolder, and its red stripes became streaks of charred black where the lightning had scorched it.

Roar!

The Sabertooth's roar turned into a howl of agony, and its eyes-once fierce and calculating-now burned with mindless rage.

Bloodshot and crazed, the monster thrashed violently, refusing to succumb to the pain.

But it was clear the lightning had weakened it severely.

Its body was scorched, the smell of burnt fur and flesh thick in the air.

Seeing the monster in such a state, I felt a spark of satisfaction.

The power of the Lightning Drop had exceeded my expectations-it had stunned the monster, and given me a tactical advantage.

A smile tugged at the corner of my mouth.

This would be an effective trump card in future battles.

But for now, it was time to finish the job.

I drew my black sword from the sheath, its blade humming with anticipation as I channeled my energy into it.

The sword pulsed with purple lightning, the energy crackling along its edge until the entire blade glowed with power.

The air around the blade seemed to shimmer as the energy intensified.

“Sword Divide!” I shouted, my voice echoing through the clearing as I raised the blade high.

With a swift, fluid motion, I brought the sword down, unleashing a concentrated beam of lightning energy from its tip.

The purple beam shot forward with incredible speed, carving through the air like a bolt of lightning itself.

Boom!

The beam struck the Sabertooth directly in the head, the energy tearing through flesh and bone with devastating precision.

The monster’s roar was cut short as the attack obliterated part of its skull, sending blood and bone fragments spraying into the air.

The monster’s powerful body jerked violently as it tried to comprehend the sudden, overwhelming pain.

Blood poured from the Sabertooth’s head, staining its once-white fur a deep crimson.

Its eyes, now glazed and unfocused, flickered with the last remnants of life.

But even in its weakened state, it attempted to flee, driven by its primal survival instincts.

The monster turned awkwardly, its body swaying as it tried to escape, but it was clear that death was only moments away.

I couldn't allow it to get away.

With lightning coursing through my veins, I surged forward, closing the distance between us in an instant.

The black sword gleamed in my hand, and with a single, decisive strike, I brought the blade down upon the monster's neck.

The cut was swift and final.

The Sabertooth collapsed, its massive body hitting the ground with a heavy thud.

Its life force ebbed away quickly, the last flickers of vitality fading from its once-ferocious eyes.

I stood over the fallen monster, my breath steady, as the forest around us fell back into silence.

Chapter 919: Part 2: Collecting monster cores

From MC's perspective:

As I began dissecting the massive corpse of the Sabertooth Monster, the pungent smell of blood mixed with the earthy scent of the forest floor.

My hands moved with precision, carving through the tough, leathery hide.

Underneath layers of muscle and sinew, I finally found what I was looking for-the monster core.

It gleamed faintly, pulsating with the last vestiges of the monster's life force.

I carefully extracted it, feeling its warmth against my palm before placing it in my storage ring.

The ring hummed as it absorbed the core, a small but satisfying reward for my effort.

Leaving the monster's body to decay in the wilderness, I turned away, my mind already on the next target.

I moved swiftly, the foliage rustling as I advanced deeper into the forest.

Time seemed to blur as I hunted, each kill sharpening my focus.

By the time I encountered a few Class-7 Monsters, my blade moved like an extension of my will.

The beasts fell easily, their cores collected swiftly.

But as the sun began to sink behind the treetops, painting the sky in hues of orange and purple, I realized it was getting late.

I decided to make my way back home, satisfied with the day's haul.

An hour passed as I retraced my steps, eventually leaving the treacherous inner region and entering the outer areas.

Just when I thought my journey would end without any complications, I spotted a group of figures gathered near the barrier.

My instincts sharpened; something was off.

Six warriors stood there, laughing and chatting casually, but the moment they noticed my presence, their demeanor shifted.

Coldness crept into my gaze.

It didn't take long to understand what was happening.

This group had been waiting for unsuspecting warriors like me to pass by, undoubtedly to extort their hard-earned spoils.

I had heard of groups like this-plunderers who preyed on the weak.

But today, they had picked the wrong target.

As I neared, I caught snippets of their conversation.

"Hey, he's Zack Lockwood," one of them-a heavily built warrior-muttered, his voice tinged with caution.

"Let him go."

The others stiffened at the mention of my name.

I could see the recognition in their eyes as they exchanged uneasy glances.

"Yeah, his teacher is Lowell McClain, the Silver Mark Warrior.

He's a core member of the Federation.

We can't afford to offend him," a female warrior chimed in.

Their words didn't surprise me.

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Lowell's reputation often worked as a shield for me, whether I wanted it or not.

The expressions of the group shifted dramatically.

Fear, apprehension-emotions I was used to seeing whenever my teacher's name was brought up.

But not everyone seemed convinced.

A wiry warrior at the back sneered, his eyes gleaming with ill intent.

"Ha! looks like even the famous ones have to do missions," he said, his tone dripping with sarcasm.

His eyes roamed over me, calculating.

I could see the greed simmering just beneath the surface.

To him, I wasn't just another warrior-I was a target loaded with valuable resources.

Several of the other warriors exchanged uneasy looks.

While two of them clearly wanted to back off, the rest seemed torn, greed gnawing at their better judgment.

They weren't exactly afraid of Lowell McClain or even me-they all came from affluent families, likely familiar with Silver Mark Warriors.

But the lure of what I might be carrying was enough to cloud their judgment.

I could feel the tension in the air thickening.

The bulky warrior and the female warrior, the ones who had initially spoken up, seemed conflicted.

They understood the consequences of crossing someone like me-Lowell's status in the Federation wasn't something to take lightly.

As a core member, he held influence, closer to the Federation's leadership, with the power to sway decisions.

And if they caused trouble, it wouldn't just be me they'd have to answer to; their families might feel the ripple effects.

Yet, despite this, the others were too arrogant to care.

Their privileged backgrounds had made them reckless, and now greed had blinded them.

The tension hung heavy in the air, and I could already sense that a confrontation was brewing.

On the other hand, my gaze swept across the group, taking in their postures, the way they held themselves.

Despite the arrogant looks on their faces, I could tell they weren't beyond reason.

Most of them were SS-ELITE and SSS-ELITE rank-strong, sure, but nothing I couldn't handle if it came to it.

I sighed inwardly, relieved that I wasn't dealing with anyone stronger.

Still, I kept my expression neutral, not wanting to provoke them unnecessarily.

Without a word, I turned my back on them and moved towards the invisible barrier that separated the outer region from the city.

Just as I was about to step through, a voice rang out, dripping with arrogance.

"Where do you think you're going?"

I stopped, feeling the ripple of tension that followed those words.

The bulky warrior and the female warrior, who had initially wanted to avoid conflict, exchanged uneasy glances.

I could see the regret in their eyes as they realized things were about to escalate beyond their control.

Before I could respond, the other three warriors quickly fell in line with the arrogant one, and in an instant, four of them had surrounded me.

Their stances were aggressive, their eyes filled with a mixture of greed and confidence.

I had seen this look before—a dangerous cocktail of privilege and recklessness.

The arrogant warrior, standing directly in front of me, smirked.

His eyes flickered with a sinister gleam.

“Hand over your storage bracelet,” he demanded, his voice calm but filled with expectation, as if he was used to getting what he wanted.

My mouth twitched in irritation.

It felt like I had just escaped the trouble with the Simon family, and now here I was, facing yet another group of overconfident fools.

I couldn’t help but feel the irony.

Trouble seemed to follow me like a shadow.

I glanced around at the four of them, my patience wearing thin.

“Are you guys stupid?” I asked, my tone flat but sharp.

The arrogance in their expressions faltered, if only for a moment.

I continued, “The Delta City is under the control of my teacher.

His castle isn’t far from here, and he keeps close tabs on my whereabouts.

Do you seriously think you can rob me and walk away unscathed?”

My words hung in the air like a dark cloud, and I could see the flicker of doubt in their eyes.

Mentioning Lowell McClain wasn’t just a bluff; he had eyes everywhere, and they knew it.

Even if they weren’t scared of me personally, the weight of Lowell’s name should have been enough to make them reconsider.

But arrogance and greed are powerful motivators.

The arrogant warrior's smile didn't falter.

"We'll take that chance," he said, clearly banking on the idea that they could finish me off before word reached my teacher.

My hand clenched at my side.

These fools had no idea what they were getting themselves into.

...

Hearing my words, the bulky warrior and the female warrior exchanged knowing glances, their expressions unchanged.

They weren't surprised-of course, they knew whose territory we were standing in.

The presence of Lowell McClain loomed large, and they understood the consequences of crossing him.

"Leave it, Mitch.

Don't cause unnecessary trouble," the female warrior, Catherine, spoke up, her voice firm but tinged with frustration.

She glared at the arrogant warrior, clearly irritated that he was stirring the pot for no reason.

To her, this was a simple equation: Lowell's influence was too great to mess with, especially for something as trivial as plundering a lone warrior.

The bulky warrior stepped forward as well, trying to reason with the others.

“She’s right.

Think this through.

You don’t want the Federation Head personally investigating your families, do you?” His voice carried more weight, aiming to appeal to their sense of self-preservation.

Despite his size, his tone was cautious, as if walking a tightrope between greed and the fear of consequences.

The other warriors faltered, hesitation flickering in their eyes.

They were used to following Mitch’s lead, accustomed to his arrogance and his ability to push boundaries.

But the mention of the Federation Head investigating their families seemed to give them pause.

Their boldness wavered, uncertainty creeping in.

For a brief moment, I thought they might back down.

But Mitch, the arrogant warrior, wasn’t swayed.

He threw his head back and let out a mocking laugh.

“Ha!Ha!Ha! We’ve already caused trouble!

What do you think he'll do when he walks away from here?

The moment he gets back, he'll inform his teacher.

Then what?

We'll be the ones getting hunted down."

His voice dripped with cold amusement as he ignored the warnings from his comrades.

Mitch's eyes, still gleaming with greed, locked onto mine.

"No, we can't afford to let him go," he added, his tone darkening.

His words carried a twisted logic.

In his mind, the only way to avoid retaliation was to silence me now, before I could report back to Lowell.

Despite Catherine and the bulky warrior's attempts to dissuade him, Mitch wasn't listening.

His mind was made up, and I could see the others slowly starting to fall in line behind him, torn between fear and greed.

Chapter 920: Part 1: Madman Mitch

From MC's Perspective:

Hearing the arrogant warrior's taunt, I couldn't help but think he had completely lost his mind.

He was reckless, underestimating the gravity of the situation.

Without wasting another second, I reached into my storage ring and retrieved the ""Destruction Bead"", gripping it tightly in my right palm.

The moment the bead appeared, the atmosphere around us shifted.

A palpable sense of dread filled the air, as if death itself was lingering nearby.

The warriors around me felt it too-their cocky expressions faltered, replaced by uncertainty and fear.

For a brief, precious moment, they were too distracted, their eyes darting to their surroundings, searching for the source of the overwhelming sense of crisis.

I seized the opportunity.

With a swift motion, I pulled out the ""Black Token"", holding it firmly in my left hand.

My heart pounded in my chest, not from fear, but from the rush of anticipation.

I couldn't afford to hesitate.

With both the bead and token in my grasp, I dashed forward, my movements a blur as I surged towards the invisible barrier that had previously held me captive.

My sudden action caught everyone off guard-none more so than Mitch.

He had let his guard down, too wrapped up in his arrogance to notice my escape.

"Damn it!" he roared, his voice full of frustration and anger when he realized what was happening.

But by then, it was too late.

I crossed through the barrier effortlessly, feeling a brief shimmer of energy as I passed into freedom.

Without looking back, I launched myself into the air, speeding towards “Lowell Castle”.

My mind was focused, calculating.

I knew the castle would provide me with the refuge I needed.

Behind me, I could hear Mitch scrambling to follow.

In his fury, he activated his own token to pass through the barrier, hot on my trail.

His frustration was palpable; he had underestimated me, and now, that mistake was driving him mad.

Back at the barrier, “Catherine” stood in stunned silence, her eyes wide as she watched the chaos unfold.

“Why are you following him?” she shouted, her voice full of urgency.

“We should get out of here while we still can.”

The others seemed to hesitate, her words cutting through their momentary confusion.

But the bulky warrior, still nursing his bruised pride, merely scoffed.

“Mitch poked a hornet’s nest.

He can handle the consequences on his own.”

The realization dawned on the group, and one by one, they regained their senses, deciding not to chase after Mitch.

There was no sense in risking their necks for his foolishness.

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Meanwhile, I flew through the skies with single-minded determination, my speed increasing with every passing second.

I could feel the wind rushing past me, but more importantly, I sensed something behind me.

I stretched out my perception and, sure enough, I detected a presence-Mitch, relentless in his pursuit.

It was obvious now.

The arrogant warrior was not just reckless, he was completely unhinged.

His obsession with chasing me down was irrational, bordering on madness.

He was more reckless than “Simon” had ever been, and that was saying something.

I forced myself to push harder, increasing my speed, leaving the barren wasteland and its drama behind.

I had no time to waste dealing with Mitch’s misguided rage.

I had already dealt with worse, and I wouldn't let someone like him derail my plans.

But Mitch?

He was consumed with fury.

I could feel the desperation in his pursuit.

Fear clung to him like a dark cloud, fueled by his failure.

He hadn't managed to plunder anything of value, hadn't achieved the victory he thought was certain.

Worse, he had made an enemy-me, Zack Lockwood-and now he knew there was no turning back.

His pride was shattered, his reputation in tatters.

But in his mind, this wasn't the end.

Mitch still believed that his family could protect him, that their influence would shield him from the consequences of his actions.

But that belief was as foolish as his pursuit.

He didn't realize it yet, but he had already sealed his fate by making me his enemy.

His downfall was inevitable.

...

Shortly afterward, I arrived at “Lowell Castle”, its towering silhouette standing like a fortress against the fading light.

A slight grin tugged at the corners of my mouth, knowing full well that Mitch wouldn’t dare come near the castle.

His arrogance had limits, and even he wouldn’t be foolish enough to challenge the power that the Lowell family wielded.

Feeling a sense of relief, I descended to the ground, landing softly in front of the large iron gates.

As I approached, the heavy door began to creak open.

A shadow moved behind it, and I assumed it was one of the castle’s maids.

When the door fully swung open, my assumption was confirmed.

The familiar face of the “maid”, who had been in service for years, greeted me with a respectful nod.

“Welcome back, young master,” she said with a slight bow, her voice soft but filled with deference.

I returned her greeting with a nod of my own.

“Thank you,” I replied before stepping inside the castle.

The warm, familiar atmosphere of the grand hall enveloped me, and I could feel the weight of the recent events begin to lift from my shoulders.

The tension that had been hanging over me since the mission started seemed to dissipate now that I was within the safety of Lowell Castle.

As I walked deeper into the hall, I saw ""Jonathan"", my teacher's subordinate, approaching me with measured steps.

His usual calm demeanor was present, but his sharp eyes seemed to scan me for any sign of trouble.

"Young Master Zack, have you completed your mission?" Jonathan asked, his voice steady but with a hint of curiosity.

His words didn't surprise me.

Of course, he would have kept an eye on my progress through his own channels.

"Yes," I replied, a small smile playing on my lips.

"I've completed it.

But!" I paused for a moment, seeing Jonathan raise his eyebrows in curiosity.

"I came across another problem."

Jonathan's brow furrowed slightly, confusion flickering across his usually composed face.

He had known me long enough to understand that I didn't smile unless I had the situation fully under control.

If it were truly a problem, why was I smiling?

Sensing his confusion, I decided to elaborate.

“It seems I’ve made an enemy,” I said, the smile widening as I thought of Mitch’s foolish pursuit.

“But not one I’m particularly worried about.”