

Card Apprentice Daily Log

Chapter 956 Sugar Mama's Gift

[1,008 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 22:35

Location- Sun Blossom City, Card Creation Association, Auction House, West Wing Hall

Choosing to ignore Agatha's dark humor I turned my attention to my grimoire, planning to go through the contents of the storage card sent by Anna. But I heard Agatha say, "Wyatt, I am not laughing at you but with you."

"I finally know why Aba has such a hard time making friends. With you as her example Aba stood no chance," I said in response to Agatha's remark.

"Haha, now that's not funny," Agatha complained.

"Funny you would say that neither was you using your power to intimidate me," Rather than the threat to my life that I felt because of Agatha's twisted dark humor, I was more pissed about the fact that Agatha had good laugh about it. Who does that, maybe serial killer buddies, 'Haha, I will stab you.'

'Haha, I stabbed you first.'

'Aah, I was joking you son of bitch.'

'Sorry, my bad.'

'Aah, why did you stab me again?'

'They call me Double Tap.'

As my imagination ran wild Agatha too felt her joke was not appropriate. Knowing that she went too far with her joke, Agatha decided to change the topic but she was not as smooth about it as she thought, "Wyatt, for someone who wants to go to the war in an hour you seem to be at leisure wasting time making small talk."

"And whose fault was that? Agatha, tell me," I glared at my shadow.

"Stop, looking at your shadow. People will think you have gone crazy," Agatha said trying to get out of the hot seat.

"Who is to blame for that?" No matter what Agatha said all ended with her as the answer.

"I will stop talking," Agatha pouted but finally went silent.

I was mistaken about Agatha, she was the most talkative bodyguard I had ever met. With Agatha as her bodyguard, no wonder Aba never felt the need to make friends. I bet, in her class, Aba must be known as the weird girl who keeps staring at her shadow. Having figured out Agatha was the reason for all of Aba's social shortcomings I felt pity for Aba, she never stood a chance.

Thankfully, according to the clown mask's future vision, Asong was able to rectify Agatha's mistake when it came to Aba's personality. Hopefully, Asong will be able to do the same in this timeline. Which was highly unlikely because Asong did not need an heir anymore as she was no longer dying.

With Agatha no longer disturbing me I could finally focus on the preparation for the upcoming war. I began by accessing Anna's storage card. It would have been funny if Anna had sent a legend or higher-grade storage card forgetting my current realm. I would be panicking as of now but I cannot disagree with the fact that it would have been funny. Fortunately did not forget and used an A-rank storage card to send me the items I asked for.

Opening the storage trunk I was disappointed as I found two cards neatly placed adjacent to each other in it. From the look of it, they looked like A-rank cards. I was expecting broken runes, not two rare-grade cards, hence my disappointment.

Upon closer look at the cards, my disappointment vanished remembering that broken runes dissipate in the surrounding atmosphere without a proper container to hold them. Before I could pick up the cards to read their info I heard Agatha say, "Look at you, your sugar mama sent you expensive gifts. Must be good."

"Then, why don't you find a sugar daddy for yourself, then we can compete who gets the best gifts," I was not the least bit ashamed saying this. As I thought of having capable dotting sugar mama as a part of my ability. Some people have capable parents, some have capable teachers, and some have capable ancestors, I had a capable sugar mama. I felt no difference between the four.

"*Cough*Shameless," Agatha mocked.

"For your information, not both of the cards are gifts from Anna, these broken runes are my advance payment on a project I planned with Dr. Luna," I clarified to Agatha.

“One gift, two gifts, does it matter?” Agatha said.

“Tell that to the women in a harem,” I said for the sake of the argument and then went through the card info of the cards, Artificial Ego Gem, and Beezulbub’s wings.

Artificial Ego Gem contained the broken runes I asked for as my advance payment and the Beezulbub’s wings card was the gift from Anna. This showed how much she favored me. Having read its effects, I was quite moved by Anna’s gift. This card could save my life in case my plans fail and Agatha can’t come to my rescue.

[Card Name: Artificial Ego Gem

Card Type: Item card

Card Rank: A-rank, Rare-grade

Card Rate: 9-stars

Card Durability: [92/100]

Card Effect: This Artificial Ego gem was created by extracting the dissipating Ego gem of a dead card lord. Unlike the original Ego gem, the artificial ego gem cannot connect with the world’s will but it can be used to store and use Broken runes

Additional Effect: Soul Cover, Rune card operation, Creator’s oath.]

Soul Cover: The Artificial Ego Gem can store the soul of the card apprentice and protect it from any form of soul attacks within its rank.

Rune Card Operation: After equipping the Artificial Ego Gem card, the apprentice can use rune cards within the rank of the card.

Creator’s oath: As the world’s will and its rules as witness the creator of this card swears that the ego gem extracted to create this card was one with the consent of the concerned card apprentice.

The artificial Ego Gem was really a miraculous card, except for not being able to connect to the world’s will it gave the average card apprentice almost all the abilities of an Ego Gem. Though it was not as reliable as the original ego gem it was a good replacement for those that could not forge or were yet to forge their ego gem. The rank limitation was a huge drawback for the card but it was better than nothing.

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Chapter 957 Beezalbub's Wings

[1,494 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 22:37

Location- Sun Blossom City, Card Creation Association, Auction House, West Wing Hall

Rune card operation was the most notable effect of the artificial ego gem card. This effect did not sound impressive if one was not informed that without an ego gem one cannot use rune cards. Unlike normal cards, rune cards did not operate on soul energy but rule power. This ability to allow regular card apprentice use rune cards was what made the artificial ego gem card one of the most sought-after cards. Despite its demand, this card was rather rare in the market because of its card ingredient.

As the card info suggested one of the ingredients of the card was the ego gem of a recently passed card apprentice. Depending upon the state of the extracted ego gem, the same ego gem can be used to make about 4 to 8 artificial ego gems. Now some would ask how was any of this not the same as demonic practice? All the card creationists around the world would say that they had the consent of the card apprentice to extract their ego gem upon their death for a pre-determined price, so this was different from demonic practice. The waters surrounding this were murky as the rich condoned this and the poor did not, the reason was pretty obvious. As for where the royal family and the government stood on this matter, they passed a law that artificial ego gems that were created using the ego gem extracted with the consent of the card apprentice before their untimely demise were considered legal and if not anyone caught selling or using this card without a creator's oath will be executed.

The punishment for this was tough and non-negotiable to avoid strong card apprentices hunting other card apprentices for their ego gems. Considering that this world followed jungle law and had a high mortality rate, I don't think people took this law seriously despite its harsh punishment.

The reason I was so fascinated by this card and not its contents was that I planned to use my calamity daughter gem to create artificially ego gems for my trusted subordinates with the most merit toward my cause. But there were a few problems, I still had to figure out a way to use my calamity daughter gem to create artificially ego gems and how to bypass the creator's oath, the latter problem should be easy once I actually manage to create the card. With artificial ego gem cards, my forces will easily be able to dominate the blossom district even after I leave for higher studies.

That project was for another day, right now, I equipped the card to count the number of broken runes sent by Anna. Peeking into the artificial ego gem I was ecstatic as Anna did not let me down, there were a total of 37 ego gems but they all seemed to of elemental rules with repeating meanings. I did not blame Anna for just sending me generic broken runes, I bet it was Lorenzo's idea. Broken runes with special rules and meanings cost more than regular rules and meanings that every card apprentice with a low synchronization rate comprehends.

The most commonly comprehend rules were the element rules as they were spread thought the world. I know it said that all rules and meanings were strong but Element rules with common meanings could easily be suppressed by other rules with rare meanings hands down. The skills of the card apprentices using the rules did matter but good rules with rare meanings gave the concerned card apprentice an edge over others.

'Damn you, Lorenzo,' cussing old Lorenzo I began sorting out the broken runes. The more I scrutinized them the angrier I grew at Lorenzo. Because out of 37 broken runes, four broken runes belonged to the fire rule, eleven belonged to the earth rule, thirteen belonged to the water rule, and nine belonged to the wind rule. Don't get me started with the meanings of these broken runes they were as common as one could think of. Why go to the lengths of comprehending a rule with a common rune when you can get a skill card with a similar ability?

Right now I had a feeling that the Beelzebub card was not Anna's gift but an apology. Despite feeling betrayed, I held back my urge to call Luna and ask what the heck. Why Luna? Because she was the one who was supposed to give me the broken runes as advance payment. As for Anna, I can only guess that her hands were tied in this matter but considering the effects of the Beelzebub's Wings card I could not be angry at her.

[Card Name: Beelzebub's Wings

Card Type: Item card

Card Rank: A-Rank, Rare-Grade

Card Rate: 8-Stars

Card Durability: [94/100]

Card Effect: The Beezulbub's wings are a pair of wings made from the remains of the Demon Beezulbub's original wings. Since these wings were made using low-quality ingredients the rank of the card has fallen to the current rank. This was also reflected in the flight and skills of the card.

Additional Effect: Hop, Dimension tearing Wind Slash, Haste

Note: While using this card the card apprentice will gain the hostility of demon kin.]

Hop: Once every second the wings allow the user to cover a certain distance within a microsecond.

Note: the distance covered while using hop will depend on the amount and purity of soul energy used.

Dimension tearing Wind Slash: The wings can generate six wind slashes every minute. Each slash contains enough power to make tears in the space. The wind slash travel at the speed of the sound.

Haste: This ability increase the speed of the user's flight and increase their wind resistance.

If you look at it the Beelzebub card can be considered a short-distance teleportation card. Yes, that was not the same as teleportation but its cool-down time was notable which was very lax compared to any low-rank teleportation card available in the market. With my almost inexhaustible soul energy and its low refresh rate, this card would be a good cheat.

With the Beezalbub's wings card, my survivability increased by several folds. The Hop skill of the card allowed me to escape when cornered or ambushed and the dimension-tearing Wind slash card made for a perfect assassin move, I could easily catch my enemy off guard with it, considering its lethality I bet even card overlord would have a hard time defending against it. The funny thing was that all the cards I purchased tonight did not even come close to this card in terms of prowess. If I were to consider the cards that Matthew generously gifted to me, that was another story. Beezalbub's wings card was good but it did not come close to the summon possession and Elusive Aerial puss cards.

Putting aside the Beezalbub's wings card I moved my attention to creating Ego Elementals summon cards using the broken runes. There was no way I could equip 37 Ego Elementals to summon cards, I planned to give most of them to my calamity daughter gems so they can dominate the battlegrounds. Faced with nearly 37 Ego elementals there was no way the circle's members could make a comeback, they would be slaughtered if it ever comes to the fight. Because if my first plan works, there will be no enemies for us to kill.

The Four fire rule broken runes were all of the flare meaning. A common meaning that increases the luminosity of the fire rule. In layman's terms, they make the fire brighter. No matter how silly it sounded it still was a rule and would be invincible for regular card apprentices to overcome. But this totally justified my anger toward Lorenzo and Luna.

Out of the thirteen Water rule broken runes, six were of freeze meaning, three were of viscosity meaning and four were of wave meaning.

As for the elven Earth rule broken runes, like the Fire rule broken runes they too were all made of up single rule harden. Which apparently increases the defense.

Lastly, the nine wind rule broken runes, Five were of haste meaning and four were of Sensory meaning. The sensory meaning allowed the user to sense everything touched by the wind within the limits of their mental strength as for haste, it increased wind resistance for the user along with increasing the overall speed.

I should know better than to say this but all of these broken runes were made of crappy meanings. Ordinary skill cards could replace their application but in a card duel, the rule power did have an advantage over soul energy so, I had that to be grateful for and had to make do with what I had.

Done with complaining, I place a broken rune in the card creation page and feed it to a calamity daughter gem, then transferred its soul pathway to a common core and morphed it into an ego elemental summoning card. I did this to avoid Agatha's curious eyes.

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[991 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

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Ordinarily, when creating an Ego Elemental I did not require the grimoire but this time since I am under constant surveillance I had to use the grimoire card creation as a go-between. And I also made use of common core to turn the cards into a card because I planned to give two of them to Diana and Cindy who had not forged their ego gem yet. Ego elementals were like runes they could be stored in an Ego gem, and since they had been refined they did not have the same disadvantages as the broken runes when stored in an ego gem.

Out of 37 broken runes, I turned 35 of them into Ego Elemental summoning cards. I kept two wind rule broken runes of Haste and Sensory meaning each separate as I had planned to use them to upgrade the Elusive Aerial Puss summons card. Though this summons card was powerful in its current state it was nothing when compared to the Ego Elementals. It made use of soul energy and the Ego Elemental made use of rule power, so no matter how awesome the Elusive spirits' skills were they would not hold a candle when faced with a Wind rule Ego Elemental. Therefore I thought it would be best

if it were upgraded. Since I could refine the spirits of the broken runes with the help of the calamity daughter runes I was not afraid of them negatively influencing the Elusive Aerial Spirit.

First I placed the elusive wind spirit in the grimoire's card creation page and he morphed it back into a core containing a Space trap array that held the elusive Aerial Puss spirit. To gain access to the elusive wind spirit I would have to open the Space trap array that is holding it, but once I open the array formation the spirit trapped within it will try to run for its freedom. Previously I did not face such a problem because none of my card ingredients had intelligence and consciousness but this one did and I needed to be smart about it, so first I conjured a calamity daughter gem and made a small opening in the space trap array I waited for the Elusive spirit to make a run for it just when it was halfway out I closed the array on it. With the back of the body trapped in the array, the elusive wind spirit was stuck. It struggled to break free from the array's constraint and in time it would be successful but before that could happen I sowed the calamity daughter gem in it turning it docile.

Now that it had joined the ranks of my calamity daughter gem monster army, I loosened the space trap array once again. This time the elusive wind spirit did not try to escape instead it peacefully returns to the space trap array. Then I gave it the two wind rule broken runes. Which the elusive aerial puss stored in its very own calamity daughter gem. Now like my stone trolls the Elusive aerial puss too could comprehend rules depending on its talent. But for now, she will have to make do with the two broken runes. Yes, I just found out that Elusive aerial puss was a she.

Patching up the space trap array I morphed the core back into a card. While I was doing this I had tasked the Hive AI to analyze the Space trap array. Since I planned to use it to turn my stone trolls and other monsters into summons cards. That could be a very profitable business and a way to reward my forces for their contribution to the upcoming war. Not everyone in my force was like my calamity daughter gems, they were willing to risk their life and fight my battle because they had something to gain from it and if I did not make that something worthwhile then their morale for the next war would not be as enthusiastic as the current one. This did not mean that I was going to give everyone a summons card, only those with the most contribution as driving for the rest of the forces to more actively participate in the next war.

After upgrading the Elusive wind spirit did not evolve into a demon as the transcendent blood slime spirit did but like the stone trolls, it also gained the viltronian physique and the other skills of the calamity daughter gem. Now that I had upgraded the Elusive Aerial Puss summons card and the Hive AI was done coping the Space trap array. Next up were the energy sword cards.

When it came to these cards there was a dilemma, earlier Cheng had informed me that one of these eight Energy sword cards was a card apprentice's fated ingredient. I hate the idea of coming between a card apprentice and their fated ingredient but I needed

these cards for the upcoming battle. They would make good weapons for me to use when I transform into Gigamite.

I could leave these cards as it is but that was not possible as there weren't as many item card slots to use all eight energy sword cards at once. Therefore I not only planned to modify these energy sword cards but also add them into one card. This way I will not have to worry about not having enough item cards to summon eight different weapons for my gigamite form.

Seeing me lost in thought Agatha spoke, "Wyatt, we don't have time for you to daydream- wait sense it is night should I be calling it dreaming?"

Agatha's blabber awakened me from my train of thoughts. This was an ethical dilemma so I decided to use her council on this one. So I said, "Agatha, What happens to a fate ingredient when someone else other than the fated card apprentice use it?

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[1,009 words]

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"Is it about the energy sword cards?" hearing my question on fated ingredients Agatha immediately knew what was troubling me.

"Yes," I nodded.

"If the fate ingredient of a person is used in the creation of cards other than the origin card for the fated card apprentice the resulting card will become the fate card unless the card creation fails. Then the fate ingredient is lost.

Fated ingredients never appear as cards, they are named fated ingredients for a reason, they always appear in ingredient form. Since this card apprentice's fate ingredient is already a card then it means their original fated ingredient was used to create this card. So if you are hundred percent sure about the card creation then go ahead and modify it. But remember the new card will become the fated ingredient. So unless you are willing to part with the newly created card I advise you not to use it because I personally think keeping a fated ingredient from its fated card apprentices is cruel. But it is not my choice to make so what do I know," Agatha explained that the fate

ingredient doesn't really get affected in any way if used in the creation of a card other than the origin card for the fated card apprentice. And she personally felt that I should not modify it and give it to its fated card apprentice.

Hearing Agatha's explanation I was relieved and despite her opinion, I decided to go ahead and modify the energy sword cards as my use for the cards will be over once I am done with the Circle's sun blossom branch, and as long as the newly enhanced and modified energy sword card's fated card apprentice was willing to pay the appropriate price I had no qualms with selling it to them.

When my ethical dilemma was over a technical problem propped up, the card creation page did not have enough slots to house all eight of the energy cards at once. So I had to get creative. First I placed two energy cards on the grimoire card creation page, then I simultaneously morphed them into their core form and later I transferred the soul pathway of one of the energy swords from its core to another. Then I stored away the empty core in a storage card and continued to repeat the whole process with the remaining six cards.

Once the soul pathways of all eight energy cards were in a single core, now I could begin with the modification process. The modification that I had planned was that would increase the output of the cards. The energy cards were C-rank cards despite their power the lethality to card lords was weak. So I had to increase its output in turn increasing its rank.

For that, I would have to replace the energy cores in the energy swords that acted as a conductor of soul power between the card apprentice and the energy sword.

The energy cores in the energy card were of C-rank and if I were to replace them with A-rank energy cores then the modification would work only if I strengthened the soul pathways of the remaining apparatus of the energy sword to withstand the load output given by the A-rank energy core. This was an important step that I could not skip, as the remaining body of the energy sword was made to handle the load of a C-rank energy core so ignorantly modifying the energy sword card by replacing its energy core with higher grade energy would only lead to the failure in card creation or creation of a faulty energy sword card. A faulty energy sword card meant that the energy swords would explode whenever the soul energy load increased more than what the apparatus of the energy sword can handle. This meant that it will lose its durability faster than before.

Now I need 8 A-rank energy cores and 8000 wooden wisps essences and cores to modify the 8 energy card soul pathways inside the common core. Having figured out what I needed I ordered Cheng to bring them to me but sadly, the card creationist association of the sun blossom city did not have A-rank energy cores. This meant I would have to devise an alternative for the A-rank energy core.

Unable to think of an appropriate alternative for the A-rank energy core that would be easily available in a third-rate city like the sun blossom city, I decided to make them myself by making use of A-rank monster cores.

Just when I was about to order Cheng to fetch me 8 A-rank monster cores, I remembered I had a better alternative for the A-rank energy core with me all this time, my calamity daughter gems. Yeah, If I could refine them then I could use them as replacements for A-rank Energy cores for the modification of the energy swords.

The calamity daughter gems were not a replacement for A-rank energy core they were better than them. As the calamity daughter gems were modified versions of Ego gems, and Ego gems were inherently better than Monster cores which were used to create the energy cores.

Not only did the calamity daughter gems make better replacements as conductors of soul energy between the card apprentice and energy sword but they also had other advantages that could easily turn the Energy sword card I was planning to create the strongest sword card in A-rank cards I had seen so far.

Why would I make such a bold claim? It was because the advantage of using the calamity daughter gem as conductors of soul energy between the card apprentice and energy sword was that they could not only conduct soul energy but rule power as well.

That meant that I could wield an energy word made entirely of rule power that I had comprehended in my ego gem. Be it wind rule, Fire rule, or any other rule, if you own it you could use it to create an energy sword.

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[1,010 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

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The more I thought about using my calamity daughter gem as a replacement for the energy cores that help conduct the soul energy between the energy sword and card apprentice the more I grew excited about this Idea. A sword purely made of soul energy was considered lethal but a sword purely made of rule power was deadly.

Getting excited over this idea was of no use because for me to use the calamity daughter gem as the replacement of the energy core in the energy sword handle, I would first have to figure out how to refine the calamity daughter gem as normal ego gem or artificial ego gem per se. The main reason I had to refine the calamity daughter gem as an artificial ego gem was because I planned to sell this card to its fate card apprentice afterward. I did not mind granting the viltronian physique if the appropriate price was offered but if the card apprentice used the card made using the calamity daughter gem as their origin card then their will would be enslaved to me. For that not to happen I will have to think of a way around it. So I only introduced viltronian core for my clients and never used calamity daughter gem except for the exceptional ones, therefore this problem never arose.

As I had previously mentioned the project of refining a calamity daughter into an artificial ego gem was underway. And with the tireless effort of my three slave consciousnesses and Hive AI, we have been able to figure out a way to strip most of the abilities of the calamity daughter gem to modify them into regular artificial ego gems. This could be achieved by snipping the soul pathways of the calamity daughter gem that represented the unwanted abilities, simple right? Wrong, editing the soul pathways was not a new thing for me but this was a complicated case.

The ability that I wanted to remove from the calamity daughter gem was that allowed it to turn its host into loyal followers of the calamity soul gem. This ability was an innate ability of the calamity soul gem that it inherited from the dungeon calamity seed. The calamity soul gem was created with this ability as a base, and if I were to snip out the soul pathways of this ability then the calamity daughter gem will become unstable and collapse. This was what made the editing of soul pathways in this case complicated.

So far my three slave consciousnesses and Hive AI have come up with two possible ways to counter this problem, considering the limited time and resources spent on this project it was already incredible that they were able to come up with solutions.

The first solution was that instead of cutting out soul pathways related to the enslaving ability of the calamity daughter gem, we turn it sterile. That was to let the soul pathways be as they were but permanently switch them off, cutting off their access to the card apprentice. Meaning, to turn the soul pathways inactive. After numerous simulations, we were able to find a way to keep the calamity daughter gem stable after permanently turning off its core ability. This solution was a success but it left behind the potential danger of revealing my secrets to whoever might try to study the said card. This solution was simple and it had potential risks that I would rather stay away from.

The second solution put forward by my three slave consciousnesses and Hive AI was to replace the soul pathways related to the enslaving ability of the calamity daughter gem with some other soul pathways. This solution proposed that I replace the unwanted core ability of the calamity daughter gem with a new core ability this way I get what I want without sinking the ship. But the problem was replacing the foundation will definitely affect the top which meant even though the new sterile calamity daughter gem was like

a ticking time bomb though it was stable for now you never know when it will blow up on your face so I would have spare some effort repairing the soul pathway arrangement of the newly formed artificial ego gem.

After endless simulations, my three slave consciousnesses and Hive AI had finally found a list of replacements for the soul pathways related to the core ability of the calamity daughter gem. Out of the list of replacements, I selected one that I thought would be the perfect fit for the creation of the new energy sword handle depending upon the ability of the ingredients in the card creationist association of the sun blossom city.

The replacement ability I selected was the Rare-grade Enchanting ability of the A-rank Enchanted Earth Serpent which was indigenous to the A-rank Serphant Chamber gate dungeon which falls under the jurisdiction of the sun blossom city. So the card creationist association had a healthy stock of A-rank Enchanted Earth Serpent cores.

“Master Wyatt, here are the ingredients you asked for,” following my order pretty soon Cheng arrived and handed me a storage card containing 8 A-rank Enchanted Earth Serpent cores, 8000 wood wisp essence, and 8000 wood wisp cores.

“Hum,” taking the storage card I gave Cheng further instructions, “Cheng, according to the plan we discussed earlier, stealthily lead our forces from the outskirts to the Circle’s sun blossom branch headquarters.”

“Yes, master Wyatt,” obeying the orders Cheng retreated to execute them.

After sending Cheng away on new orders I sent Cindy a message informing her that the plan was a go and to advance as we had previously discussed and heard curious Agatha ask, “What did your cronies do to this guy for him to be so obedient?”

“Now, that’s a trade secret. I can’t go around revealing it to the likes of everyone curious,” I answered Agatha ambiguously.

“What trade secret? You must have threatened him using the southern emperor’s name, tell I am wrong,” Agatha guessed.

“Since you know the answer why ask?”

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Chapter 961 Card Customization Successful

[1,000 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

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Location- Sun Blossom City, Card Creation Association, Auction House, West Wing Hall

I did not bother to correct Agatha's speculation about the events that transpire between Cheng and my cronies earlier this evening since it worked in my favor. But it did invite mockery from Agatha, "Must be good to throw around your sugar mama's name at every problem you face."

"Yes, it does feel good. So I advise you to get one," I advised Agatha.

"Nope, I can't do it. Not everyone is born with thick skin like yours," Agatha replied with a sneer.

"I will deal with you later, let me customize cards in peace," For Cindy and my forces to make it into the city under the guidance of Cheng it would take a while in that time I planned to create the new custom energy sword. Therefore I did not have the time to bicker with Agatha so I let her have the win this time.

With a low snicker, Agatha went silent. Ignoring her I turned my attention to the grimoire. Equipping the storage card handed by Cheng, I fetched a core of the A-rank Enchanted Earth Serpents and placed it on the card creation page. Then I extracted the soul pathway's belonging to the Enchanting ability of the monster from the core and transferred it to the common core containing the soul pathways of the eight energy sword handles. Later I stored away the serpent monster core along with the common core from the earlier. Then repeated this whole process with the remaining 7 serpent monster cores.

I am used to being economic and hoarding half-used ingredients that I feel like I could use later. But I cannot do the same when it comes to the clients at least not without their permission as that would count as misappropriating property from a client, a crime known as Embezzlement. But right now I was using my ingredients and did not need anybody's permission on how to handle the leftover ingredients.

After transferring the 8 soul pathways of the Enchanting ability into the common core, I then conjured 8 calamity daughter gems and transferred them into the common core. Afterward, I did not immediately use them to replace the soul pathways of the C-rank energy cores in each of the energy word handles. Instead, I used the soul pathways of the Enchanting ability to replace the soul pathways of the enslaving ability of the calamity daughter gem. With the base successfully replaced I began removing the other skills granted by the calamity daughter gem except for the viltronian physique, successfully turning the calamity daughter gem into an artificial ego gem.

The viltronian physique was not for the card apprentice but for the ingredients that assembled the energy sword handles. Was I not worried about other card creationists finding the soul pathways related to the Viltronian physique? Nope, because the ability of the soul pathways related to the Viltronian physique was basically enhanced strength which could be achieved using any number of other replacements out there. Meaning nobody will give a damn about but it was different when it came to absolute enslavement ability, that would brew Strom.

Now that the artificial ego gems were created I used them to replace the soul pathways of the C-rank energy cores in each of the energy word handles. And thanks to the soul pathway of the viltronian physique the other ingredients became more durable and adding to that the effect of the Enchanting ability that replaced the enslaving ability, also increased the overall durability of the energy sword handles by a huge margin. With this, the customization of the energy swords was complete even without my needing to use the wood wisp essence and core to enhance the durability of the energy sword handles.

But seeing that I still had time to spare to be on the safer side I decided to use the wood wisp core and essence to strengthen the energy sword handles to bear the load of the new energy core, aka the sterile version of the calamity daughter gem, it had abilities to that of an artificial ego gem with two added extra abilities, Enchanting and Viltronian physique, whose effect would only spread to the energy sword hands and not the user. Meaning, that the sterile calamity daughter gem too could not help the card apprentice connect with the world's will similar to an artificial ego gem.

Without wasting any more time I began transferring the soul pathways of the wood wisp essence and core to strengthen the soul pathways of the 8 new custom energy sword handles. With this, I had successfully modified all 8 of the energy word handles in the common core. Then I morphed the core into a card.

Card Customization Complete!

I immediately got off the couch, equipped the newly customized card in my grimoire, and summoned the 8 sword handles as I partially activated my gigamite physique. With that three pairs of floating hands appear on my back and all eight of my hands held a sword handle. Reminiscing about the plasma sabers used by the fictional characters back home right at this moment for the first time, I was genuinely happy that I transmigrated into this card world.

The excitement I felt right now could not be described in words, suppressing those feelings I focused and poured soul energy into all eight of the sword handle,

PSHEW *PSHEW* *PSHEW* *PSHEW* *PSHEW* *PSHEW* *PSHEW* *PSHEW*

Eight bright neon blue light columns similar to the blade of a sword extended out of each sword handle in my hand. Listening to the sound of the energy blades extending

out of the sword handles, I felt chills. It would be an understatement if I were to say that this moment right now was the single greatest moment of my life. Right now I felt that I had made it, this feeling was rare for me, the only other time I felt way was when I killed the viltronian bastard in my past life.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 962 Brewing Storm

[1,503 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:19

Location- Sun Blossom City, Card Creation Association, Auction House, West Wing Hall

[Card Name: Eight Handle Energy Saber

Card Type: Item card

Card Rank: A-rank, Rare grade

Card Rate: 7 stars

Card Durability: [99/100]

Card Effect: When activated card apprentice can summon eight saber handles each of which can conjure a saber blade made of soul energy or rule power supplied by the card apprentice.

Additional Effect: Crit Hit +10, Crit Rate increased by 65%, Penetration +15, Energy Slash, Damage absorption.

Note: The additional effect applies to each of the energy sabers separately and does not stake. The strength of the energy saber blade increases with the purity of the soul energy or rule power used to create it.]

VMMM *VMASH* *VMMM* *VMM*

Sounds could be heard when the energy sabers burned through the air as I waved them, mimicking my childhood fantasy character. Greatly enthused I was looking forward to using the eight energy sabers in the war tonight.

“Stop waving around those energy sabers before you hurt yourself, you look like a child who has found a new toy,” Agatha complained from within my shadow.

“Shut up Agatha, don’t ruin this for me,” I yelled at Agatha before realizing that the moment was gone.

“...” Being yelled at, Agatha looked at the boy wondering if he was for real, she did not understand what could be attractive about a couple of energy swords. Shaking her head she thought, ‘All card creationists are quirky.’

Learning that the modifications made to energy saber handles were working fine with soul energy as fuel I then decided to switch the fuel to rule power, Blood rule power.

PSHEW

Soon after the neon blue blades of the eight saber handles retracted they were replaced by ominous neon red blades. These blades did not make sounds when they came in contact with air like the soul energy blades. Which dampened my excitement for the energy sabers a lot. I don’t know about others but the energy sabers without their awespringing sound effects were a deal breaker for me.

“Holy shit,” Agatha cussed seeing the eight blood rule powered saber blades, and continued to say, “How is that even possible? Wyatt, what the fuck did you do?”

The shock of rule-powered energy sabers unconsciously brought out Agatha’s street tongue back into play despite her years of eloquence training.

“What? Have you never seen rune items?” I answered Agatha with a question instead.

“Don’t be smug, of course, I know about rune items, I have been using them since before you were born. But how did you turn the energy swords into a rune item? You clearly don’t have the ingredients to pull that off,” Agatha did not lie rune items were common for high-ranking card apprentices.

“I made do with what I had, don’t sweat the small details, we have work to do and places to be,” saying that I deactivated the energy saber card and the partial gigamite physique. Then sat back on the couch to create artificial ego gem cards for the Fine gold trio. So that they will be able to use the ego elemental cards that I was planning to give them. Following the steps that I used to create sterile calamity ego gems for the energy sword handles, in no time I created the required artificial ego gem cards and then chanted, “Summons Possession – Elusive Aerial Viltronian Puss.”

With the completion of the chant, my boy morphed, a feline tail grew at the end of my tail bone and white feline fur covered my arms, legs, back, and back of my neck. While my hair turned white and grew longer looking like a white lion's mane. The black fur of the Elusive Aerial puss turned white after it evolved into the Elusive Aerial Viltronian Puss. I did not complain because I liked the new look more than the previous one.

[Card Name: Elusive Aerial Viltronian Puss

Card Type: Summons Card

Card Rank: A-Rank, Rare-Grade

Card Rate: 6-Stars

Card Durability: [100/100]

Card Effect: when activated the user can summon an A-rank Elusive Aerial Viltronian Puss.

Elusive Aerial Viltronian Puss is the viltronian variant of Elusive Aerial Puss is a wild spirit blessed by the wind. It is said that like the wind one cannot catch an Elusive Aerial Viltronian Puss as its fur can sense and manipulate wind, helping with its unique evasion ability, which allows it to make use of the kinetic energy of the wind to boost its agility helping it to easily evade attacks of strength few realms above it own.

Addiction Effect: Blessing of the Wild, Blessed By Wind, Wind control, Wind runner, Wind Shadow, Wind Claws, Fur Clones, Elusive Spirit Blessing, Calamity Daughter Gem]

[Author's note: I did not want to waste word count listing all the additional abilities of the calamity daughter gem the elusive spirit gained after fusing with it, so I directly listed the calamity daughter gem as an additional effect.]

...

Soon following the location shared by Cindy I wind walked to the fine gold carrier floaters and landed on the deck of the carrier floater in the lead, where Cindy, Diana, Jaya, and Van were awaiting my arrival.

"Welcome, boss," the trio greeted me in unison, in response I gave them a nod and watched as the air traffic police hovercars lead the carrier floaters as they flew over the sun blossom city airstrip without landing and headed to the northern part of the city where the Circle's sun blossom city branch headquarters was located. I had Cheng to thank for this. Through his influence, he had the fine gold carrier floaters enter the city disguising the visit as merchant purpose, skipping the regular check at the air toll booths.

Seeing that the plan was going on smoothly and as planned I contacted my new calamity daughter gem, the circle's in-house disciple of the yin-yang harmony sect, and informed him to be prepared to commence with the plan that we had previously discussed at my command.

I did this before arriving at the Circle's headquarters because they must have been already notified of the suspicious carrier floater heading their way. So if the circle decides to act on this information, I had ordered my new calamity daughter gem to immediately execute the plan that we had previously agreed upon. This way the members of the circle will be trapped in the array by the time the floater carriers get to the headquarters. And hopefully, all of the members of the circle's sun blossom branch will be present there. It would be great if I could end all of this tonight without having to search the entire city for the remnants of the Circle's sun blossom city branch.

After relaying instructions to the Yin-Yang harmony sect disciple, I turned to look at the Fine Gold trio and Van. Then said, "I have made all the preparations to ensure that we get an easy and overwhelming win against the circle. Still, many variables are unaccounted for therefore I have prepared these cards that will be helpful for you guys during the upcoming war. And in return, all I ask of you guys is to ensure that the casualty is to the minimum."

I did not ask them to win the upcoming war because I believed we would win the war but at what cost was the million-dollar question. Not being able to answer that question was what bothered me. Therefore I tried everything that would possibly help me keep the casualties to the minimum knowing that not waging the war was not an option.

Soon I handed Cindy, Diana, and Jaya an artificial ego gem card each along with an ego elemental card. The trio curiously took the cards that I handed to them and their expressions could not be more vivid as they went through the card info of the two cards I had just gifted them.

"Awesome," Jaya yelled. As for Diana and Cindy, both tried hard to control their turbulent feelings, and then in unison, they thanked me, "Thank you, boss."

"..." Shaking my head at their excitement, keeping a few ego elementals for myself I hand the remaining ego elemental cards to Van with instructions, "Keep one for yourself and distribute the rest to the other leaders."

"Yes, boss," Van placed the ego elemental cards that I handed to him in his card holder and flew to other carrier floaters to distribute the remaining cards among his fellow comrades, the calamity daughter gems.

"Sister, I got earth rule ego elemental which one did you get?" Jaya asked Diana in excitement. As this was her first rune card.

"I got a wind ego elemental," Daina respond to her over-enthused younger sister. She could not blame her sister because she too was equally excited about the cards and her boss. Today for the first time she felt that she made the right choice. Back when the southern emperor visited her on behalf of her boss she was shocked but not as this enthusiastic because the southern emperor only cared for their boss not her, but now these cards showed that their boss who was valued by the southern emperor valued them.

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Chapter 963 Strengthened Opinions

[1,543 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:33

Location- Sun Blossom City, Fine Gold carrier floaters

Her new boss showed prospects and promises not just for himself but everyone around him and for that Daina respected him and agreed to follow his leadership giving her all. But having founded and manage a big conglomerate like Fine Gold for decades she knew those were not the only things she should be looking for in a boss. Prospects and promises were important but dependable back to follow were equally important. She needs to know that she can trust her back to him for her to fight for his cause with undivided attention.

And today when she heard the boss handed each of them an artificial ego gem and ego elemental cards to keep the casualty at a minimum in the upcoming war she saw the leader she admired in her boss. But she also felt that they were undeserving of these cards that their boss had gifted them, Diana was moved by her boss's generous actions but she felt she had done nothing to deserve such generous accommodation from her boss.

It has only been a few days since the Fine Gold has a new boss, who has time and again shown her that they could trust him but she and her sisters had nothing to show him that they were worthy of such generousness for him. Having grown up on the streets she had always earned the respect she deserves unlike the fortunate ones of her age. Therefore she was feeling burdened seeing her new boss be so good to her and her sisters, even in the Circle she had to prove herself first to live. For the first time

in Diana's life, someone had put their trust in her even before she proved her worth. Therefore Diana could not help but be sincerely moved by the gesture of her boss.

"Cindy, what rule does your ego gem represent?" Jaya asked Cindy. Unlike her sister, she did not think too much about her boss's actions but it did help her improve her impression of him. Ever since her ethereal spirit has grown more vivid, she had started to feel a sense of crisis in her bones around her boss as if he was her natural enemy. Leading to her existing feeling conflicting with her new-found instincts. In the end, her feelings did manage to overcome her instincts but it made her feelings for him more complicated. And today her boss's generous behavior made those complicated feelings of hers for him less complicated. And once again she reverted to the lovestruck she was a day ago.

"Fire," Cindy replied nonchalantly as if the two cards were no big deal. But her heart her blood was pumping so fast that her ears and cheek could not help but turn red in excitement giving away her true inner feelings about receiving the two new cards from her boss.

Cindy acted so because she wanted to appear professional in front of her boss. Thanks to Daina's dimwit sister, she was finally given the chance to prove herself better than Jaya's elder sister not just to her boss but to herself. It was about time she got a promotion. Yes, she was indeed made in charge of the slime fairy cards project but if she played her cards right her boss may end up allowing her to take over the entire blossom district instead of Daina. Unlike Diana who left her back to the new boss and Jaya who had developed a crush on him, Cindy saw him as the opportunity for her to fulfill her ambition to suppress the sisters and get them back for the misery they put her through. Either way, each had an opinion about their new boss which was only strengthened by his recent actions. One sought a worthy master to lay her life for, another sought a prince charming of her dreams, and last sought an opportunity to prove herself and fulfill her ambitions.

"Fire? That is way better than my Earth rule ego elemental do you want to exchange?" In Jaya's opinion Fire rule suited her better than Earth rule.

"..." Cindy gave Jaya a blank stare and asked, "What do you think?"

"Humph, cheapskate," Jaya snorted and then turned to look at her boss and pleaded, "Wyatt, I want to exchange mine for a fire ego element, petty please."

"..." Hearing her younger sister act spoiled in front of the boss Daina who saw her boss in a new light was dissatisfied and wanted to set her straight but before she could act her boss spoke, "Jaya, these ego elements I have selected specifically for you guys depending on your area of expertise. Earth ego elemental that I gave you has the hardening meaning, which will fit perfectly with your origin card the Viltronian. Don't you agree?"

"Harden only increases my defense other than that it has one other noticeable effect earth manipulation. Which I find tedious to use," Jaya complained.

"Shut up, you are yet to be punished for your insubordination earlier and you still dare to act out? Boss is right, that ego elemental is a correct fit for your card," Diana erupted hearing Jaya complain despite their boss being tolerant of her ignorant behaviors.

"Sister-" Jaya wanted to argue but was interrupted by her elder sister's stern words, "Not one word."

Jaya shuddered in fear hearing Diana's words, her years of experience with her sister's temper told Jaya that the look in her sister's eyes meant she will not hesitate to use corporal punishment on her if she continued to speak.

"..." Cindy too was surprised by Daina's sudden change of attitude towards Jaya's ignorance. Just an hour ago Jaya almost blew their entire mission and Daina tolerated that and even planned to cover for her but no all of a sudden she no longer tolerated Jaya's behavior over a few ignorant words. What changed?

Cindy went over the event that transpired in her head and then realized Diana had found a new purpose and was finally getting serious. Cindy knew Diana was lying when she said that she was not bothered by the fact that she no longer owned Fine Gold. Despite how cool Diana played and said claimed that she was fine, well she was not. It was clear by her attitude towards work. Though it looked like Diana was doing a good job, only Cindy knew that Diana could do better. If it was old Diana she would have fought to be in charge of the slime fairy cards project. Heck, she would have never allowed their boss to keep it separate from Fine Gold, instead, she would have swallowed it and made it a part of Fine Gold like she to all her competitors so far.

Cindy knew how ambitiously and ruthlessly capable Dania was. For the legend who at the age of nineteen operated a high school gang and ran a thriving company at the same time, it would not be too much work to expand her conglomerate and head a project at the same time.

Yeah, Diana did not fight to head the slime fairy card project, that was not because she was busy with the expansion of the Fine Gold rather she was not herself having lost the company she built with her blood and sweat just for a shot to the top. She knew she had made the right decision for the company and herself but the fact that it came at a hefty cost eat at her even though she claimed that she was fine and did what had to be done.

Even though Diana will deny it but by exchanging Fine Gold for a shot at being in the top one percentile of the world she felt lost. Fine Gold meant a lot to her than she would like to agree. Even though she made the right call when the opportunity came knocking at her door but a decision like that needs time to move on. And the only way someone like her could move on was possible if she knew that her choice was hundred percent correct.

The new changes introduced a lot of variables in her plans for her and her sister, the safety net she had built around her small life using the Fine Gold was now gone as she decided to pick up the sword that she left to dust for so long to fight for more. Though the actions of the person she chose to follow time and again proved him and his leadership, she never felt convinced until today when he handed out the two cards to three of them. Trust can be complicated for people the same was true for Diana, she did not understand how to find it in people around her but the streets had taught her that the easiest way to measure trust was through their capital. Seeing that the new boss had invested so much in them before they proved their worth and loyalty meant that he had opened a bridge of trust between them and was waiting for her in the middle. And she did not keep him waiting. Diana's eyes had never been clearer about her intentions before.

Realizing this Cindy glanced into Diana's eyes conveying, 'Bring it bitch.'

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Chapter 964 Role With The Rules

[1,535 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:35

Location- Sun Blossom City, Fine Gold carrier floaters

Diana's gaze meets with Cindy's. As if she had heard Cindy's warcry she nodded at her as if acknowledging Cindy as her rival and implying, 'Game is on, bitch.' With this, both Cindy and Diana had come to a tactical understanding about which the fool Jaya was totally oblivious being lost in her puppy love.

The small actions of the trio did not escape my watchful eyes and I nodded in satisfaction getting the reaction I was hoping for. This excluded giggling Jaya, I don't know what was wrong with this girl.

I had just gifted each of them two extraordinary cards worth a small fortune, I would be stupid if I did not bother to check to see if these people were grateful about it or if I was just raising a bunch of Scorpions. Thankfully they seem to understand my efforts and appreciate them. But Jaya acted spoiled, I guess she was ignorant, Diana needs to work on her.

“Are we there yet?” I asked. Since we were floating above the city, the carrier floater’s speed was restricted, in order not to affect the infrastructure of the city. For our exuberating motives, this was one slow ride.

“At this speed another 5 to 6 minutes,” Daina answered before Cindy could.

“Why aren’t we using stealth to surprise the enemy?” instead of the slow speed I was worried about the enemy taking action knowing that we are coming.

“Association master Cheng said that the city will ring the warning sirens if warship-sized carrier floaters were to enter the city in stealth mode. So he advised us that it would be in our best interest not to use stealth on our big vessels which can easily be mistaken for a warship by the city array formation prompting it to take predetermined actions planned against invasion. Therefore he has arranged for these air traffic cops to lead us to our destination without having to worry about the city array attacking the carrier floaters after finding that we are not in the permitted area i.e the airstrip,” Diana explained which once again pissed Cindy. As the new head who replaced Diana on this mission, Cindy felt it was her duty to answer the boss’s questions but she was being outdone by Diana. This could not be more depressing for her. Having figured out her stuff Diana brought her A game, increasing pressure on Cindy.

“I see,” I was not familiar with the city’s air traffic rules for big vehicles but inside the city, there were indeed speed limits on all vehicles.

We were going to attack a local force why do we care about the city’s laws now? It was because we were here only to make an enemy out of the circle, not the entire city. As long as they did not interfere with my attack on the circle’s headquarters I will roll with their rules but once they do not I would have no choice but to fight the entire city if they wanted to.

Shaking my head I added, “Are all the preparations made as we discussed before?”

“Ye-“

“Yes, boss. All preparation has been made accordingly, I personally saw to it and double-checked them,” Diana was the first to respond again but Cindy cut her off in the middle by hurriedly yelling out the response in a single breath so that Diana does not get a chance to break her off in the middle as she did to her.

“Good, if not, check it once again, we have a few minutes left to spare. I don’t want half of my forces to die at the start of the war because their parachutes mall-functioned, or something sillier,” I ordered Cindy and Diana.

“Parachutes?” Cindy said in puzzlement and looked at Diana to see if she knew what their boss meant.

“Don’t worry boss. We have enough card apprentices with hovercar cards on each carrier floater they will get our forces to the ground,” Diana immediately answered feeling the boss’s concerns were about how their forces would land.

“...” Cindy decided to give Diana this one but did not plan to make it a habit of it.

“You must have practiced this already in the drill, right? How much was their response time?” I asked because there were nearly six hundred card apprentices on each of the carrier floaters. If they all were to be dropped to the battle one by one then that would not be efficient and easier for the enemies to act against them.

“Boss, their response time is 2 minutes, within that time they will have completely surrounded the array formation and be ready to move in at your command,” Diana replied having personally attended the joint training between the Fine Gold Guards, Tiger squadron, and TSR guild, The fast deployment of the soldiers was the main goal of the joint training since all the forces will be mixed during the war there will be confusion not knowing which chain of command to follow. In order to avoid this, all 3 forces needed to learn how to collaborate with each other as the situation demands them to.

“Excellent, what about the carrier floater shields? How dependable are they?” Since we were arriving on a carrier floater at a minimum speed limit we were easy targets for our enemies to shoot us down from their base. Hence we needed powerful shields that were capable of handling whatever the enemy threw at them.

“We have to arrays on all the floaters, one for stealth and one as the shield for the carrier floater. Since we will not be using a stealth array, it can also be used as a secondary shield by carrier floaters in case the primary shield array is breached. But I would not trust the sheath array as a secondary shield array. I would not worry about that because I don’t think that we will be needing them to act as one on this mission,” Cindy answered as she was in charge of this.

“Let’s hope it doesn’t,” If my plan went accordingly all this preparation would be unnecessary but if it did not then we would be grateful that we did all these preparations.

“We are here,” Jaya announced standing at the edge of the deck as she looked down at the headquarters of the circle sun blossom branch. As for the air traffic cops that guided us here, they were nowhere to be seen, they split the second we reached here without saying goodbye.

“Cindy,” I signaled Cindy asking her to commence with the plans.

“Carriers, Fan out,” upon my signal, Cindy yelled, following which the six carrier floaters behind the carrier floater I was standing on moved to circle the Circle’s headquarters. Within seconds, seven carrier floaters surrounded the entire Circle’s sun blossom city

branch complex. Unfortunately, these were not warships, otherwise, this scene would be more epic. But if the carrier floater were a warship then we could not have made it past the city wall till here.

“Boss, If I may,” Diana asked my permission to use her origin card.

“Go ahead, there was a reason why I gave you wind ego elemental,” I granted Diana permission for her to use her origin card.

“Summon Origin Card – Phantom Fleet,” With Diana’s chant 15 huge ass warships manned by phantom sailors were summoned. Then the warships moved to fill the gaps between the carrier floaters.

“...” I waited to see if there would be any response from the Circle’s side but it was totally quiet despite all this commotion, so I used my soul pupils to check what was going on, only to find that the desolate punisher array wasn’t the only array covering the circle’s headquarters, there was this other array dome above the dome of desolate punisher array. Though I did not know what the first array above the desolate punisher array did. From what I could deduce with my expertise in array formation, this array happened to be shielding the inside world of the array from being spied on by the outside world by casting a prerecorded mirage of sorts to those on both sides. The people inside will see a beautiful sky or sunset according to the time or their preference and the people on the outside will see that headquarter was deserted and there was hardly any human activity in it. This way this array not only stopped us from peeking inside but also hide the desolate punisher array under it.

‘Master, you have arrived,’ My three calamity daughter gems inside the array contacted me. It seems the people on the inside were able to watch us surround them.

I immediately asked back, ‘What is happening in there?’

‘They are waiting for your forces to enter the array,’ Roy answered.

‘Do they not know that we know that their headquarters is protected by a desolate punisher array?’ I asked Roy confused as I thought that the Circle having a Desolate punisher array was common knowledge to all. This could only mean that I had underestimated the intelligence given by Rami. That old bastard, he should have been keeping tabs and eyeing the Circle ever since they moved to his city. After all, two tigers can’t live in one mountain.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 965 Ji Feng

[1,517 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:39

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

“Boss, though this branch of the circle recently got the desolate punisher array and people here are tight-lipped, I don’t think Mike wouldn’t have considered that the news about the headquarters being protected by desolate punisher array had not reached his enemies ears,” Roy said that but looking at his colleagues preparing to ambush the invaders with the help of desolate punisher array he could not help but doubt that maybe Circle was that foolish.

“I see, but why did you guys not tell me about the second array covering the Circle’s headquarters?” It was alright for Rami to not know of this tricky stealth array, Ji Feng who propped up the Desolate array should have known that there was another array covering his desolate array.

“I did not know,” Roy answered. Hearing Roy reply that he never noticed that two arrays were covering the headquarters despite all the time he spent in the headquarters complex, I believed him because he was the dimmest of all my calamity daughter gems.

“Not you, Roy. Ji Feng, answer me,” I said sternly, wondering why Ji Feng did not bring this matter up when we were discussing our plans to attack the Circle’s sun blossom branch. To which Ji Feng replied ignorantly, “Boss, you never asked.”

“...” I was without words. Ji Feng was the Circle’s sun blossom city branch’s in-house Yin-Yang disciple and my latest calamity daughter gem. And apparently not the brightest or the free-willed of the bunch. Thanks to him, now I knew I was correct not to choose a calamity daughter gem to head my business operation in the blossom district and was relieved that I was able to hire the Fine Gold trio for it. Even though the trio was still in training I never had to worry about them destroying everything I had built here.

“Okay, you guys get to safety. Especially you Ji Feng,” I said shaking my head understanding that it takes time for the calamity daughter’s will to unwind after the absolute brainwashing of the gem’s innate skill. And planning to commence my attack on the Circle’s headquarters I warned my calamity daughter gems behind the enemy lines to get to safety as I did not want casualties due to friendly fire right at the beginning of the war. And considering the role Ji Feng was going to play in my attack,

his life would be in imminent danger. Therefore I asked them to hide before I began my attack.

“Yes, boss,” Roy and the others agreed before signing off.

“Diana, do your magic,” Glancing at the fancy complex below I asked her to launch the first strike.

“My pleasure boss,” Diana said solemnly but the excitement she felt was apparent in her eyes. The day she wished for had finally come true, the destruction of the Circle. With Circle’s sky blossom branch relocating to sun blossom city the resentment that Diana had for the Circle’s sky blossom city branch shifted to the Circle’s sun blossom branch. Therefore she would not feel any less pleasure as she destroyed the Circle’s sun blossom branch, though it was a pity that the old leader of the circle had already left the southern region and moved to the main branch of the Circle. His time will come but for now, she planned to enjoy the appetizer in front of her.

“Rune summons, Ego Elemental,” Diana then summoned her wind rule ego elemental and then moved to the edge of the carrier floater’s deck looking down on the Circle’s headquarters complex her eyes suddenly became resolute and she yelled, “Phantom Fleet prepare your cannons.”

The cannon’s on the 15 phantom warships turned to aim at the Circle’s headquarters. Then blasted cannonballs at the array covering the Circle’s headquarters at Diana’s order, “Open Fire.”

Boom! Boom!

Before the cannonballs could make contact with the array dome, the mirage displayed on it changed and began to act as a mirror by reflecting our image to us. This way when the cannonballs headed toward the array dome it looked like another round of cannonballs was heading out of it straight at the cannonballs heading toward it. And when finally the series of cannonballs made contact with the first array hiding the true headquarters complex under its mirage, ripples could be seen in various locations on the array dome wherever the cannonballs made contact. Surprisingly the array was able to withstand the first wave of attacks.

Having already studied the array dome with the help of soul pupils, once I saw Diana’s phantom fleet attack I knew the cannonballs fired by them did not have enough power to break through the array. But it was too late for me to remind Diana now, maybe if I had joined my forces while they were performing joint training I would have known what Diana’s origin card was capable of and warned her that the power behind the cannonballs fired by her origin card was not strong enough to make through the array dome. It’s okay though because Diana was a big girl and she knew how to learn from her failure.

“Boss,” Just as I was wondering if Diana learned from her failed attempt and if she could break the array with her next attack I heard Ji Feng’s voice through hive AI. And asked, “What is it?”

“Boss, the array is called Duo mirror array formation. It will only break with strength higher than it and constant waves of attack will not be able to leave a scratch on its surface. It can easily switch between stealth and defense. Hope this helps,” Earlier I did not bother to ask Ji Feng about the Duo mirror array covering his desolate punisher array because I knew Diana could destroy it with little effort despite a little setback but it was good to know that Ji Feng was not a lost cause like Roy.

Seeing that the Duo Mirror array formation did not break with her first attack Diana frowned, this was not the result she was hoping for. And realized that she may require the phantom fleet to fire a few more rounds of cannonballs to take down the Duo mirror array. But she did not have the time for that as she wanted to impress her boss by taking down the Duo mirror array dome with the first wave of cannonballs. Since now that was not possible, hopefully, she achieves her goal with the second wave of cannonballs, “Open fire.”

Hopefully? Nah, she was going to make sure that her attack works this time around. As the 15 phantom warships fired the second round of cannonballs aimed at the Duo mirror array dome, she yelled, “Wind rule Ego Elemental use wind manipulation, combo skill wind rule powered cannon balls.”

Shatter!

Under the impact of the wind rule powered cannon balls, the Duo mirror array dome shattered like a broken mirror revealing the real Circle’s headquarters complex. Unlike the previous deserted headquarter complex with a lack of human activity, this one crawled with Circle’s Card apprentices who were buzzing witnessing Diana destroy the array with her second attack. Seeing a person strong enough to take down an A-rank array formation single-handedly the Circle’s members could not help but began to panic wondering what kind of force had they annoyed this time. One can’t blame the circle’s members for being a little cowardly and cautious when the enemy was at their doorsteps after all their organization had just moved into this city after a few card emperors appeared out of nowhere and began destroying their old headquarters.

“Silence,” A sound spread through the headquarters complex. Hearing the voice the panicking crowd went silent all of a sudden and then yelled in unison greeting the card apprentice belonging to the voice, “Branch Leader.”

“Don’t overestimate the enemy they are nothing but a rag-tag group who came together in search of vengeance. Kill them and be rewarded or turn your backs and be killed. Choose,” Mike hovered between the ground and the array dome such that each of the organization members at any corner of the headquarters complex could see him stand tall and gain the courage to follow through with their oath to the Circle.

"Kill them," The masses screamed stating their choice to their organization leader. Hearing this Mike's frown finally cleared and was replaced with a confident expression while he thought, 'I really want to see how the enemy planned to deal with the desolate array covering the headquarters.'

After a short but thorough glance over all the organization members present, Mike once again yelled, "Take your positions. Let them come, today we will paint this land red with our enemys' blood."

"Yeah," The crowd cheered at their leader's words. Mike was able to positively influence his men's morale. And then soon the crowd began to chant, "Kill, Kill, Kill"

With the duo mirror array gone, we could clearly see the circumstance at the circle's headquarters from outside. So when I saw that Mike had not fled the sun blossom city despite having measured me out at the silent auction I was surprised.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:44

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

Despite knowing my plans and that semi-demigods were protecting me from the shadows, Mike did not flee, showing that the Circle had determined to kill me too. This means they must have prepared a few card semi-demigods on their side to stop my semi-demigod bodyguards from saving me when Mike tries to kill me. But the question was where were the Circle's semi-demigods hiding? I ask this because, knowing Anna, she must be keeping an eye out for the Circle's semi-demigods using the array formation covering the southern region.

Anna would do this because if Circle's semi-demigods were to enter the southern region without prior permission or probable cause they would be considered enemies of the state and the Southern royal family could react to it as they see fit, which means nobody could question Anna if she were to kill them. But I don't think the card apprentices from the Circle would be that stupid. I could only wait and see what the circle had in store.

"Boss, should I order the tropes to descend?" Cindy asked seeing me contemplate something.

"No, I have something different in mind," Saying that I removed a card from my card holder and handed it to Diana.

Seeing me hand her a card Diana accepted it without question and went through its card info than with a dignified expression she looked back at me mumbling, "Boss this..."

"Go Wild, I want this place wiped out from the face of this world," I said looking at the Circle's headquarters below.

"Thank you, Boss. I will not disappoint you," Diana nodded and then equipped the card that I had handed to her after that she chanted, "Summon Rune Card Wind Rule Ego Elemental."

With that, another wind rule Ego Elemental appeared behind Diana. Having read the card info Diana knew that both Wind rule ego elementals her boss had gifted her were of the same rule but had different meanings to them. One of them was of the sensory meaning of the wind rule and the other was of the haste meaning of the wind rule.

"How come my sister got two ego elementals? Not fair," Jaya complained watching her elder sister summon another wind rule ego elemental.

"I am not giving her the card, I am just loaning it to her. She will return it to me when we are done here," This was the reason why I did not give Diana the card earlier. I did not care about Jaya's feelings but Cindy was the another case. I planned to have Cindy and Diana to keep each other in check. This would be best achieved if I don't appear partial. So, for Cindy to not get the wrong idea, I had to play it like this. This was where I missed the calamity daughter gems, I did not need to care for their feelings and opinion, if I was happy they were happy and their world revolved around me.

"Yes, boss," learning that the second ego elemental was just a loaner and not a gift like the previous one, Diana's expression dulled but she soon got over it hearing,

"Maybe if you guys earn enough merits, exchanging them for an ego elemental is not impossible," I said looking at Diana, Cindy, and Jaya.

"How much merit for a Fire rule Ego Elemental?" Jaya immediately asked.

"You don't need to worry about the merits, I will ask you when I feel like you have earned enough merits worth exchanging for a reward," I replied. I did not have a merit system in store so I came up with this bullshit on spot but if I did had one then exchanging Ego Elementals would be pricy and performing well in a small guild war like this would not be enough for either of them to get the merits required to exchange for it.

"..." Hearing my explanation Jaya gave me a blank stare. It seems all her enthusiasm from before vanished after learning that I would be the judge of who gets how many merits for what. But the same was not true for Cindy and Diana, they became alarmed misinterpreting my words. And felt that their every action was monitored and graded. They were okay with it because they would do the same if they were in their boss's shoes. This also meant the throne of the blossom District was up for grabs.

This misinterpretation excited Cindy, as previously she thought that after their boss left, Diana would ascend his throne to gain control of the Blossom district but now it was clear that it was not set in stone. After Diana's poor behavior previously it was not a surprise that their boss may have come back to square one, that is, deciding the next in line for his business down south, and Cindy did not know who her boss was leaning toward but she knew that she was one of the main contenders and this war here was her chance to perform and leave a long-lasting impression.

Diana's thoughts were not much different from Cindy's but this did not mean that she was upset that the position she was promised had become shaky, as it was her fault. And she was not worried that Cindy or others would be given the blossom district as she thought she could get her boss to change his mind and win back what was promised to her with her new attitude towards life.

Seeing that Diana and Cindy may have misinterpreted my explanation to Jaya, I did not correct them because Cindy and Diana were competing with each other, that was what I wanted. Hopefully, they both will keep the spirit of competition in their mind because last thing I want was them conspiring against each other, that would not be productive. It seems I will have to think of something to make sure that either of them doesn't cross the line.

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[1,016 words]

Chapter 967: Betrayal

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:45

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

The Duo Mirror array was powerful enough to withstand the attack of 15 A-rank warships which was impressive. It could be seen that the Circle did not spare any effort to keep others from spying on them and protecting themselves. Yet it crumbled in face

of Diana's second way of attack, as this time the cannonballs shot by her 15 warships had been powered by wind rule power. Hence, the Duo mirror array shattered like glass at the first impact of the wind rule powered cannonballs. A soul energy powered array never stood a chance in front of rule-powered attacks.

Seeing the power behind the combo skill Diana had become confident and started to believe that if something unexpected doesn't happen then she alone could wipe the circle's sun blossom branch from the face of the world. Now she understood why her boss did not send the tropes to battlegrounds and instead asked her to finish it off loaning her an Ego elemental.

Diana glanced below from the deck of the carrier floater and looked at her former colleagues who kept chanting 'Kill.' Thinking of massacring these Circle's goons with her next attack, Diana showed no pity or hesitation in her eyes. If not for her trying to figure out how to use two ego elementals in a combo attack she would have already shelled these fools into ash.

"Phantom Fleet Aim," Having thought of a way to use the two ego elementals in combo with her skill, Diana ordered her Phantom Fleet to aim and yelled, "Skill Combo Wind Rule Powered Guided cannonballs."

"Phantom Fleet, Open fire."

"Sensory meaning Wind rule Ego Element use skill Guiding Wind."

"Haste Meaning Wind rule Ego Elemental use skill Speed of wind."

Diana ordered her phantom fleet to open fire and then blessed the cannonballs with two wind rule Ego Elemental's skills to launch the combo skill wind rule powered guided cannonballs. The idea was that Diana would use the skills of the two ego elementals to enhance the power and the aim of her phantom fleet's attack. Enhanced by the wind rule numerous cannonballs entered the desolate punisher array at an unimaginable speed and instead of traveling in a straight line they curved and bend under the guidance of the wind rule and only aimed for areas where circle's card apprentices were present making sure that all of the cannon balls hit their target with a devastating speed.

...

On the side of the Circle, Mike saw the Phantom fleet prepare for the third round of bombardment and immediately ordered the elites of the circle to stand guard just in case some of the cannon balls slipped the prohibition of the desolate punisher array.

Unlike the Duo mirror array that was powered by soul energy, the desolate punisher array was powered by silence rule power. Though it did not have strong defense power like the Duo mirror array it had strong prohibition ability which could render the soul

energy and low-level rule power useless. So in front of the numerous incoming cannonballs, none of the circle's card apprentice present showed signs of fear. As they knew as soon as the cannon balls entered the desolate punisher array, they will lose the enhancement of both the soul energy and the rule power and will be nothing more than mortal-level cannonballs. Such attacks at most would manage to hurt a few feeble card scholars, so they had nothing to worry about. Hence with this calculation in mind, a bunch of promising elite card soldiers prepared to interpret the cannonballs before they ruined their headquarters' beautiful infrastructure.

While the minions moved to defend their base, Mike descended to a nearby building and searched for Ji Feng, to ask him if the desolate punisher array was lacking something. After all, he planned to use the array to help him stall time for his plans. Though he had a strong inkling that the enemy must have something up their sleeves to deal with the desolate punisher array he believed that despite the enemies' counter for the desolate punisher array it was powerful enough to buy him some time. All he had to do was patiently wait until all the pieces were in place.

Just when Mike thought that he had the situation under control a variable occurred he could not find the Yin-Yang harmony sect's disciple. Which gave rise to him thinking of various variables that he had not thought of previously. With that, Mike felt the situation spiral and the only way to put an end to it was to find the Yin-Yang harmony sect disciple Ji Feng. Thinking of this he immediately summoned his grimoire- but he was unable to summon it before he could contemplate why he was not able to summon his grimoire he heard the cries of his underlings.

Mike immediately turned to witness that the influence of the soul energy and rule power on the cannonballs did not get negated after entering the confines of the desolate punisher array instead the cannonballs danced in the air searching and hunting their targets. To his surprise, even the strongest of his minion and the elders of the inner circle were helpless in front of the attacks. That was when he noticed that none of them had summoned their grimoires, to be accurate none of them was able to summon their grimoires similar to how he was not able to summon his grimoire.

With all this proof right in front of him, pointing to the obvious, it did not take Mike long to conclude that the disciple of the Yin-yang harmony sect, Ji Feng, had betrayed him and had turned the array that was meant to protect the Circle's card apprentices equipping the token cards in their grimoires into a death trap targeting those that had equipped the token cards in their grimoire.

"Ji Feng!" Mike screamed with bloodshot eyes watching his subordinates bombarded into a blood and meat shower.

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[1,015 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:48

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

The agony-filled cries of his subordinates soon masked Mike's enraged scream. Now that the desolate punisher array was suppressing his soul energy the only other available power source for Mike to use was his physical strength and rule power. Rule power was more potent than soul energy but the silence rule's prohibition had been maximized by the desolate punisher array making it so that despite his high mastery of rule power Mike would have a hard time channeling it. Experiencing the dread of the desolate punisher array's enhanced silence rule Mike understood why the main branch was desperate to ally with the Yin-Yang harmony sect. But seeing it being used to mow down the members of the Circle instead of protecting them, Mike could not help but wonder if this betrayal was the Yin-Yang Harmony sect's idea or if it was just Ji Feng's idea.

If it was just Ji Feng then the damage was controllable but if the Yin-Yang Harmony sect was behind this then not only he but the main headquarters was in danger. After all, the Yin-Yang harmony sect was authorized to prop up a desolate punisher array at the main headquarters and every branch of the Circle. Mike always felt that the main office was hasty when it came to allying with the yin-yang harmony sect and the events of today proved his gut right.

Though the yin-yang harmony sect's betrayal did catch them unprepared it did not mean that it was unexpected. The Circle had already calculated the benefits and dangers of allying with a force like the yin-yang harmony sect. Dealing with a force as powerful as the yin-yang sect they were more cautious than ever after all they planned to hand the security of all their publically known operations to the Yin-yang harmony sect, they would be fools not to be cautious about this alliance and not consider a betrayal as one of the possibilities of how this alliance could come to its end.

Even though there were so many unknown variables to this alliance why go through it in the first place? Because the benefits of allying with the Yin-yang harmony sect outweighed the risk they could think of. One of the benefits of this alliance was the possibility of the Circle taking control of the Yin-yang harmony sect.

After a series of unfortunate and unexpected turn of events along with the fallout with Matron, most of the previous missions that would have helped the circle gather a considerable amount of strength failed, and the main branch was forced to commence this project ahead of its time. The groundwork of this project was still in the infancy stage so many thought that this was not a good idea, and the current Yin yang harmony sects' betrayal was evidence of it.

Having considered the betrayal of the Yin-yang harmony sect as a possibility it was obvious for the Circle to come up with countermeasures in case of a betrayal. And right now mobilizing his rule power to enhance his physical strength Mike hurried to the basement to implement it while pausing the search for the traitor Ji Feng.

Reaching the basement of the complex Mike turned on a mechanism, revealing a hidden passage. Passing through it Mike arrived at an altar where two cores were placed on it surrounded by heaps of soul jades. These two cores were the main cores of the Duo mirror array and desolate punisher array which can be controlled by the card apprentice using a secondary core that would be morphed into a card. One of the cores seemed to be busted as it did not give out a neon blue shine similar to the other core. The busted core belonged to the duo mirror array, ignoring it Mike reached for the core glowing with neon blue light belonging to the desolate punisher array and crushed it using his rule power. As he crushed the core of the desolate punisher array Mike immediately felt the probation of the silence rule on him disappear.

Soon he summoned his grimoire and passed orders to his remaining subordinates to stand their ground. Getting no response he hurried to the surface to punish the traitor and use it to increase the morale of his forces. By the time Mike reached the surface, the luxurious and grand complex of the headquarters was nowhere to be found and what remained was its ruins covered in the blood and gore of his loyal subordinates.

In the few minutes he was gone, all his subordinates had been killed or were seriously injured rendering them unable to participate in the fight. Seeing the dire situation of the Circle's Sun blossom city branch, Mike felt like a furnace burning with ambers of anger within him. He wanted to scream bloody marry and charge ahead to cut the head of his enemies but there was not a single enemy on the ground for him to vent his anger. This only made him more angry and depressed. Because the mighty Circle that once ruled over the surrounding cities was brought down to its knees by a single person. Mike blamed Ji Feng and the Yin-yang harmony sect for this outcome.

Thinking of Ji Feng, Mike stopped staring at the ruins of the Circle's headquarters and hurried to find Ji Feng and kill him before the others arrived. Only by killing him with his hands will his anger subside but he had a bigger motive for hunting for Ji Feng when his men were dying. He had to uncover if it was Ji Feng who betrayed them or the entire Yin-yang harmony sect.

Though it might not look like it the Yin-yang harmony sect was a huge force in the shadows. Due to their special inheritance of Silence rule, they have a lot of allies who would rather compromise with the Yin-yang harmony sect than make an enemy out of them. Therefore it was of most importance for Mike to find Ji Feng, and steal his soul, before Mike launched his Endgame.

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[1,018 words]

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:48

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

“Holy shit, what is happening down there? Why are they not able to summon their grimoire?” Jaya yelled as she watched her elder sister’s cannon balls dance in the air as they hunted down the members of the circle. For some reason, the circle’s members did not summon their grimoire. With time it became apparent to Jaya that it was not that the circle’s members did not want to summon their grimoires to defend against her sister’s cannonballs but they could not summon them causing her to blurt out in surprise.

“It must be the desolate punisher array that boss mentioned earlier, for some reason it is targeting the members of the circle, prohibiting them from using their soul energy, ” Cindy said remembering that when they discussed the plans to attack the Circle, their boss had brought up the desolate punisher array that made it impossible for any force to ambush or invade the Circle’s headquarters. Thankfully their boss had said that he would take care of it but not even in her dreams would she have imagined that when her boss said he will get rid of the array, he meant he will find a way to use it to trap the enemy. Cindy looked at the back of her boss solemnly and could not help but admire him. She doesn’t know how he managed to pull off such feat but with this, they may win the war without fighting.

“Boss, I have the Circle’s new branch Leader in sight. Do you want me to take it?” Diana who slaughtered the circle’s members ruthlessly without a hit of pity or hesitation respectfully asked the boy. Though her newfound power with help of the ego elementals did boost her confidence in her strength, she did not get full of herself instead she was in awe of her boss who granted this power to her. She could not imagine how powerful her boss was if two cards from him could turn her into a human slaughtering machine.

“No, leave him be for now. I need him alive,” I ordered Diana not to harm Mike because I had other plans for him and also because I don’t think someone who can become the branch leader of the Circle did not have the power to withstand Diana’s attack. Not that I was overestimating Mike’s power instead I knew the hidden secret of all the branch leaders of the circle. The branch leaders of the circle could be said to be invincible in their respective realms. So even if Mike could not use his soul energy, he was still stronger than whatever Diana could throw at him. Therefore instead of wasting time on him, I wanted Diana to wipe out all the members of the Circle before Mike made his comeback.

Though Circle and the yin-yang harmony sect were in alliance, the circle must have already considered the betrayal of the yin-yang harmony sect and prepared appropriately to counter it when the time arrived. So I had to make the maximum use of the time I had on my hand.

“Boss, are you sure you don’t want me to kill him when I have the chance,” Diana once again asked the boy next to her while looking at the Circle’s branch leader who was rushing into the basement of the complex as her rule-powered cannonballs slaughtered his subordinates. Though Diana followed her boss’s orders blindly she did not understand for what reason would her boss want Mike alive. Did he plan to torture him?

“I am sure, don’t focus on him. Kill all the small fries so that our tropes don’t have to take action,” I affirmed my orders to Diana. The development of the attack on Circle’s headquarters was smooth so far therefore I became more cautious because the moment I knew that Matron was involved in this, I knew that things will not end up with the destruction of either side instead bigger players will descend to the battlefield to get the result they wanted. I hate to admit it but right now I was just a pawn in a bigger game even though I was the one who start this game.

All this started with me wanting to take revenge for Wyatt’s family, but with Matron’s involvement, all of this has turned into a three-way power struggle between the Circle, Paw Clan, and the southern royal family. And right at the center of this was me, representing the southern royal family. No matter how this fight concluded, either with my death or Mike’s, it was only the battle of the bigger war that was going to happen today. What started as a simple vengeance turned into something complex which I can no longer control. But that was not of my concern, today I will achieve what I had come for, Vengeance.

‘Boss, the core of the desolate punisher array is hidden in the basement, Mike is playing to destroy it, do you want me to intercept him,’ Ji Feng’s voice sounded in my mind through Hive AI informing me of Mike’s motive to rush to the basement.

‘No, stay put. Even though you have a calamity ego gem you are no match for him. And it does not matter if he stops the desolate punisher array, all of the circle’s members are dead or severely injured.’

‘Boss, do you want us to get to the carrier floaters?’ The three calamity daughter gems that were behind the enemy lines had only one job and that was to hide, and now they planned to hide in the carrier floaters as it was the safest place as of now.

‘You stay behind, Roy and the maid can enter the carrier floaters,’ I ordered Ji Feng to stay behind because I need him for another job and this one will be very detrimental to my surprise present for the supreme leader.

‘Yes boss,’ Ji Feng agreed without a hint of hesitation. Staying behind he sent Roy and the maid to the carrier floaters amidst the dance of the cannon balls.

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[1,076 words]

Chapter 970: Scavenging

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:53

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

"The Circle's fools are finally getting smart and hiding in debris or the basement," Jaya spoke seeing how her sister's targets were getting fewer and fewer.

Diana's carnage was one reason for that, yet many of the circle's members had gotten lucky and escaped into hiding. But unfortunately for them, Diana's cannons were being guided by the sensory meaning of the wind rule. Meaning as long as they were in contact with the air there was no place within a 3-mile radius they could escape to or hide in. Each warship in Diana's phantom fleet carried 30 to 45 cannons on board, that meant 15 warships had 450 to 675 cannons on board. So right now Diana and the two wind rule ego elementals had joined together to manipulate about 500 to 600 cannon balls. The Ego elementals could take more load but the same could not be said for Diana, she may have if I had given her a platinum grimoire. But I can't just be handing her stuff without her earning it.

Just when Diana slaughtered almost most of the circle's members the desolate punisher array covering the circle's headquarters complex suddenly went offline indicating that Mike had managed to destroy the core of the desolate punisher array.

Seconds after the desolate punisher array collapsed, the circle's members instinctively used their soul energy to defend themselves. Realizing that they could use their soul energy they immediately summoned their grimoire and were finally able to put up resistance against the cannonballs enhanced and guided by the wind rule.

"Wyatt, you should have let my sister kill the branch leader when she had the shot," Jaya said, seeing that with the removal of the soul energy probation circle's members were escaping even faster than before.

"Maybe, but he is worth more alive than dead," Saying that I watched as the gravely injured members of the circle were running for their life now that the restriction on their soul energy was released.

Then I summoned my grimoire and called old Ben ordering him, "Old Ben, ask your second in command to have your men secure a parameter surrounding the complex, do not let anymore of these rats escape. As for you come to the main floater."

"Yes, boss. I will be there right away," Old Ben agreed and immediately set out to execute the orders.

Hanging up on Old Ben, I called Van and instructed, "Van, instruct Fred to use half of the guild members to help the tiger squadron with securing the parameter. As for the rest, let Sarah lead them to hunt down those who escaped. And you bring the rest of the leaders to the main floater."

"Right away, boss" Van responded.

Having instructed the Tiger Squadron and the TSR guild, I turned to look at Cindy and demanded, "Have the Fine Gold Guards keep the carrier floater on ready for a fast retreat and meanwhile send the experienced ones to scavenge whatever they can from the complex. Our forces are expanding at a faster rate we don't have the luxury to be choosers."

"Great, Idea boss. I was thinking the same thing," Cindy agreed and immediately instructed her on the Fine Gold Guards.

The Fine Gold Guards had the most important task out of the three forces. Not only did they cover our route of retreat but also had to salvage the ruins of the circle's headquarters.

Wouldn't the other forces be better suited for this job? No, the Fine Gold Guards were the best in my force for these kinds of jobs, this was obviously because they were used to doing things similar to their current task.

Most of the adventurers from the TSR guild had sticky fingers, that was part of being an adventurer for most. So if I had asked them to salvage the remains of the complex, most of the precious things would have been pocketed by them. Therefore they were not suited for this job so I had them hunt for the members of the circle that escaped.

As for the soldiers of the Tiger Squadron, these guys were too proud to involve themselves in acts like pillaging, during the monster war era. If I were to ask them to do it now, I don't think they would agree. Considering that they specialized in security, having them form a secure parameter around the Circle's headquarters complex was the best use of their talent.

When it comes to the Fine Gold Guards, even though they were more loyal to Diana than me, they did not have sticky fingers like the adventurers of the TSR guild nor were they too prideful to scavenge the ruins of the Circle's headquarters. They were more like cooperate slaves that did what their salary payers asked them to do. All I am trying to

say was that they were more flexible than the Adventurers of the TSR guild and Tiger Squadron.

Having given out the instruction, I waited for all the leaders to gather at the Main floater. It did not take long, considering the warring situation, they got here as soon as possible, and greeted me, "Boss."

"Van, Old Ben, Bright Brothers, Vivian, you guys get to the battlefield and purge the remnants of the circle," I ordered the remaining calamity daughter gems that had not been assigned any task so far.

The inner Elders of the circle were old veterans in the card lord realm. Most of them had formed their ego gems because of the wealth and resources that they had gathered over the years thanks to the tranny of the circle in surrounding cities. They were strong, if not for them, Diana would have wiped out the entire complex off the face of this world before Mike was able to destroy the core of the desolate punisher array. These old bones made use of their third-rate rule power mastery to resist Anna's wind rule enhanced and guided cannon balls. Not only did they buy time for Mike to get rid of the array plaguing them but also were able to save quite a few of the circle's members. Still, this massacre was a hit, the circle's force was down to one-fourth of what it used to be. But those that are alive were the elite of the elite in the Circle's ranks.

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[1,017 words]

Chapter 971: Beginning

Date- 3 April 2321

Time- 23:58

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

Though these Inner circle Elders were stronger than the average card lords, they were still not a match for any of my calamity daughter gems. Now that they were equipped with ego elementals, they would not even have to make use of their calamity gem's perks to kill most of the Circle's elders. So I handed them the task to deal with them.

"Yes, Boss," all the calamity daughter gems agreed and moved to the battlefield.

"What about us?" Jaya asked pointing at herself and Cindy.

"Cindy use your clones to form a stable chain of command between the hunting team, the perimeter team, the scavenging team, and the Executioner team. If the thing gets out of hand, at my signal I want you to make sure that all of them get on to the carrier floaters as practiced and retreat in a record time," Though Diana had managed to single-handedly cripple the forces of the Circle, knowing the full story, I knew this was just the start of the war, the real war had yet to begin. Therefore I did not get satisfied with the current results instead I asked Cindy to stay on alert and prepare for a retreat at the first sign of complications.

"Don't worry boss, leave it to me," Cindy agreed even though she wanted to get some merits on the battlefield by killing some of the circle's elders. Now that she had an artificial ego gem and a fire rule ego elemental, Cindy was more confident in her strength than before. So she could not help but be disappointed when she heard that she was stuck with the assist duty but considering that she would also be assisting the executioner team, she thought she would get enough opportunity to fight the Circle's elders who were rumored to be the strongest force of the Circle.

"Um, as for you Jaya... you go assist the hunting team hunt the Circle's deserters," Taking Jaya's wilful nature into the account I did not want Jaya anywhere near this complex. I had a feeling that if given the chance she would somehow end up making trouble for me. So I assigned Jaya to the hunting team with the TSR guild. These guys were too wild, they lacked the discipline of the Tiger squadron and the Fine Gold Guards. The joint training was proof that the TSR guild members like Jaya were better of doing some grunt work. Hunting down the injured escapees of the circle was that grunt work. Hopefully, they manage to find them all before the war was over. The Circle's members were more familiar with these surroundings than the TSR guild members so it would not be a surprise if a few of them were able to successfully hide from them. Making Jaya the trouble make a good addition to the hunting team.

"Can't I be part of the Executioner team?" Jaya asked.

"No, just complete the task that you are assigned," I said sternly.

"Pretty please, Executioner team is where all the funs at," Jaya bargained.

"..." Seeing that Jaya was once again acting spoiled and ignorantly not following their boss's arrangements, Cindy used her eyes to signal her to stop but that fool did not even take the hint. So Cindy could only sigh in exhaustion and give up.

"One more word and I will bench you for insubordination," I warned Jaya impatiently. I planned to give Jaya lighter punishment for her insubordination earlier if she performed well during this mission but now I thought otherwise.

Feeling the impatience in her boss's voice, Jaya kept quiet and nodded to his arrangements showing her agreement. And then flew in the direction of the hunting team.

Seeing Jaya leave hesitantly I turned to look at Cindy and asked, "What are you still doing here?"

"Boss, my clones have already taken their post," Cindy answered immediately. I could feel a hint of pride in her voice, which was okay since doing their job was something one could be proud of.

Giving Cindy an approving nod, I looked at Mike who had found Ji Feng as per my arrangement, and said, "Diana, after you are done here join the Executioner Team at the battlefield."

With that I flew towards Mike and Ji Feng, Seeing me arrive, Mike hastened his pursuit of Ji Feng. Yes, Mike was strong but Ji Feng too was strong and had my calamity daughter gem so Ji Feng held his ground against Mike. But with every passing second, it could be seen that Mike was gaining an edge over Ji Feng. Ji Feng was a proud student of the Yin-yang harmony sect but he was at a disadvantage facing a card lord from a third-rate city. It was not because he was mediocre but Mike was that strong, not just Mike every branch leader of the circle was similarly powerful as Mike. Not to mention Mike was one of the younger branch leaders, few of the older branch leaders like the branch leader of the sky blossom branch whom Mike replaced were more strong as over the years the number of resources and strength they had gathered was incredible, enough to make them invincible in their realm. These branch leaders were not to be underestimated.

Despite Mike's aggressive strategy, Ji Feng was able to hold off till my arrival. Seeing me arrive, Mike halted the attack and glared at me. In response, I shook my head and with a polite smile I greet him, "We meet again, Mr. Mike, I believe you guys owe me a big time so I have come to collect on it."

"Haha, I see. Unfortunately, I don't think you have what it takes to collect from us," Mike responded and did not seem to have the slightest bit of worry considering the turn of events and the fact that his people were being butchered on the battlefield.

"I guess, I will just have to prove you wrong."

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[990 words]

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:03

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

"Sure, before we began I need to know why did the Yin-Yang Harmony sect betray us?" Mike asked looking at Ji Feng. He did not believe that the Yin-yang harmony sect betrayed the alliance with the Circle. He said this to test Ji Feng. If Ji Feng readily agrees that it was the Yin-yang harmony sect that ordered his current actions then Ji Feng was lying and trying to frame the Yin-Yang harmony sect in hopes of sowing discord between the Circle and the Yin-Yang Harmony sect. This meant Ji Feng was not just betraying them but the Yin-Yang Harmony sect too. Not to mention his current actions will harm the Yin-Yang harmony sect more than the Circle. Ji Feng would only do this because he represents a third force that will benefit by pitting the Circle and the Yin-Yang Harmony sect against each other. By considering the current circumstance the Southern Royal family being the third force would be evident but Mike felt otherwise. Southern Royal family never bothered with the Circle or Yin-yang harmony sect in the past and had not enough reasons to do so now.

"I know the circumstances will make you think that but anything I say will not change your mind, you will believe what you want to. So why bother with this Q&A session?" Ji Feng answered ambiguously as I instructed him with the plan to make use of Ji Feng's betrayal to send a big present to the Supreme leader.

Ji Feng's betrayal was a great opportunity if made use of wisely then it could turn one of Circle's greatest allies into their die-hard enemy. I would be a fool to not even give it a try.

"Don't beat around the bush and just tell me, I will decide whether to believe you or not. Not you, got it?" Mike had to determine whether the Yin-yang harmony sect was a threat to the Circle or an unknown third force that was targeting the Circle, either way, any information he could get out of Ji Feng would help the circle.

"I don't see the reason why I should answer you. Wyatt, why are you even entertaining him? Let's get rid of him so that I can get back to testing the new array theory," Ji Feng acted as I ordered him to, only this way will Mike be left wondering to the point of desperation where he will believe whatever I feed to him.

"Sure," Saying that I cracked my neck joint as if getting ready for a fight.

"Wyatt, no matter how your men scavenge, they will never find the treasury of my brach. If you help me I will help you," Mike immediately tried to negotiate, seeing that Ji Feng was tight-lipped.

"I question and you tell me the location of the treasury and the traps protecting it," I said even though I honestly did not believe that Mike would keep the end of his bargain. Not to mention with my soul pupils, I could uncover the treasury and traps protecting it by scanning the complex area unit by unit. All this just to make sure that the Supreme leader gets to appreciate the present that I am painstakingly preparing for him.

“Aren’t you being too greedy?” Mike controlled rage that flared with the boy’s unreasonable demand thinking, ‘Just you wait, when the time comes I will take my time killing these two, particularly this high schooler.’

“Is that your one question?” I asked Mike, standing opposite to him I could hear his fist bone’s crackle as he clenched hard on them in rage.

“You...” Mike’s anger flared hearing the high schooler yet he kept his priority in mind and did not let be clouded by his anger then glancing at Ji Feng he said, “I will ask you one last time why did the Yin-Yang harmony sect betray us?”

“Since you are being this persistent let me tell you, no matter who wins today I will die here, it is because I, Ji Feng, have betrayed the Yin-yang harmony sect,” Ji Feng sighed as he answered Mike. His solitude suddenly felt lonely and looked like he carried a heavy burden that he could not share with others.

“...” Hearing Ji Feng’s answer, Mike’s brows frowned because his answer seemed straightforward but it was too ambiguous. Though Ji Feng took all the blame, Mike got the feeling that Ji Feng was only doing what he was instructed to do at the cost of his life. Either of the interpretation sounded plausible bringing Mike right back to the start. But at least this time he had a sense that made him uneasy. Whether the Yin Yang harmony sect was using Ji Feng as a sacrificial pawn to test out something, No matter the result Ji Feng was bound to die today but what did the Yin-yang harmony sect gain from this? What were they trying to achieve? The alliance contract, Mike suddenly remembered the Alliance contract verbally agreed upon by both the forces in presence of the world as it will and rules as a witness. Was the Yin-Yang Harmony sect trying to find a way out of this? Considering the loose terms of the verbal contract that was possible and how did this High Schooler factor into all of this?

“Did you get the answer you were looking for? Now your turn,” I said looking at Mike who had a vigilant stance but his expression was confused. Clearly, what Ji Feng said to him made him consider the possibility that he did not before. It seems without his knowledge Mike was starting to consider that Ji Feng’s actions were instructed by the Yin-Yang harmony sect even though he had a hard time believing it before.

“What is the relation between you two? Why are you with him? Yin-yang harmony sect or the Southern royal family would never ally with each other.”

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Chapter 973 Betrayal Or Double Cross Or ...

[1,001 words]

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:06

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters, Fine Gold carrier floaters

Despite his doubts about Ji Feng's motives for his actions, Mike could not bring himself to think that the Yin-Yang harmony sect guided them because if the word gets out about Ji Feng's action today, then the Yin-Yang Harmony sect would turn all its allies into enemies overnight. The Yin-Yang harmony sect was set to lose a lot, it did not matter whether they were not behind Ji Feng's actions, this fact did not change even if Ji Feng publicly announced that he did this independently out of his own discretion. So it would be bizarre and foolish of the Yin-yang sect to attempt something like this. But Ji Feng's words haunted him to consider otherwise,

'The circumstances will make you think that but anything I say will not change your mind, you will believe what you want to. So why bother with this Q&A session?'

'No matter who wins today I will die here, it is because I, Ji Feng, have betrayed the Yin-yang harmony sect.'

Ji Feng's lonely solitude kept flashing in Mike's mind whenever he tried to affirm himself that the Yin-Yang harmony sect had nothing to do with this incident. Shaking himself awake from his thoughts, Mike found a reason to doubt Ji Feng, what was his relationship with the High schooler? Why did he decide to act out now of all the times? Was the southern royal family somehow involved in this other than helping the HighSchooler? Thinking of this Ji Feng felt that there was a story here that would lead him closer to the truth.

"Hey, that is not the directions to the treasury is it now?" Hearing Mike question the relationship between me and Ji Feng, I reminded him to hold up his end of the bargain.

"The treasury is next to the 7 ground floor of the main tower," Mike said staring at Ji Feng waiting for an answer to his question.

"And the instructions to get past the traps covering it?" I asked.

"That will cost you extra," Mike eyed Ji Feng making it clear that he would exchange the instruction only if Ji Feng were to answer him.

"That was not the original deal," I reminded Mike that that was not what we had agreed on.

"These are the new terms take it or leave it," Mike did not budge but rather made his stance clear.

"Great, then let our fist do the talking-" Just as I was getting prepared to fight Mike, Ji Feng interrupted me following my instructions, "Wyatt, let me. It doesn't matter if a dead man knows too much."

Then glancing Mike in the Eye, Ji Feng said, "Before tonight I had never met Wyatt. But I have you thank for introducing us. It was you who lead me to him. Without you, I would have missed out on a golden opportunity to achieve my agenda.

He wants vengeance, I have my agenda, when I contacted him, we got to talking and it did not take long for us to understand that we had the same goal and might as well help each other. As of now Wyatt and I are in a temporary partnership and your end marks the end of our partnership."

"Honestly, I thought it was going to be a hassle to deal with the desolate punisher array. But thanks to you I made a friend in an unexpected place. Now be a dear and give me the instruction to deactivate the traps covering the treasury," This was a story I came up with to legitimize Ji Feng's collusion with me knowing that Mike or any other well-learned card apprentice would ask this seeing the play Ji Feng put up.

"Haha, so all this time I believed you were trying to make a major breakthrough in your realm, you have been monitoring my actions silently waiting for an opportunity. One thing I don't understand is what the Yin-Yang harmony sect gains from doing this," Hearing Ji Feng and my well-coordinated story of how we met, Mike let out a laugh ignoring my demand to hand over the instruction to deactivate the traps covering the treasury and instead tried to get more info out of Ji Feng.

"Mike, I already answered you Yin-yang harmony sect has nothing to do with this, I betrayed them for my agenda, please handover the instruction to deactivate the traps covering the treasury to my friend here," Ji Feng continued to claim that he had acted independently and the yin-yang harmony sect had not to do with this.

Hearing Ji Feng repeat the same words again like a parrot, Mike got to thinking,

'No matter who wins today I will die here,' This sentence that Ji Feng spoke earlier came to Mike's mind. Making him wonder why would Ji Feng betray the Yin-yang sect at the risk of his life. Who does that? Did he have a grudge against the Yin-yang harmony sect? No, if he did have a grudge against them then he would not claim that they were not influencing his actions in any way instead would try to frame and implicate them. There has got to be something he was missing but all this no longer made sense to Mike yet he tried hard to do his best because this incident will influence Circle's future course a lot. And Mike did not want to be the sinner who led the Circle astray.

Mike remembered something that he learned about the Yin-yang harmony sect when they first installed the desolate punisher array covering their branch's complex, all the Yin-yang harmony sect disciples who left the sect to help the sect's allies manage the desolate punisher array were under a prohibition that banned them from revealing the secrets of the desolate punisher array. Thinking of this Mike suddenly thought of the possibility that the prohibition that Yin-yang harmony sects had placed on its disciple may have more to it than just restricting them from revealing the mysteries of the desolate punisher array.

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Chapter 974 Confused Mind Certain Heart

[1,028 words]

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:10

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

"I get you just a puppet, I will not get any more answers from you. Thanks for the help so far, if it helps know this you will be avenged," Mike concluded that the prohibition placed on the Ji Feng by the yin-yang harmony sect had more other applications. So he realized if the Yin-yang harmony sect was really behind this incident then it was foolish of him to think that he could get any answer from Ji Feng, who was nothing more than a puppet. Even capturing his soul would lead to nothing as the prohibition left by the Yin-yang harmony sect on Ji Feng's soul would turn any of his effort to recover Ji Feng's memories into a useless effort. This way even if Mike were to ask the Yin-yang harmony sect for an explanation about it they would claim that they could not risk revealing the secrets of the desolate punisher array. So no matter who was behind this incident be it the Yin-yang harmony sect or any other third force all the traces of their presence end with Ji Feng.

This conclusion made Mike more paranoid about the Yin-Yang Harmony Sect because only they seemed to have the power to turn Ji Feng so desperate but Mike still could not figure out their motive behind this incident, which made it hard for him to conclude that the Yin-Yang harmony sect had betrayed the Circle. But in his heart, he had concluded that the Yin-yang harmony sect was behind his and the only reason he could think of them doing this was they had found a loophole in their contract and wanted to test it out. And the Circle's Sun blossom city branch which was located far from the main branch in

a third-rate city would make a good test subject as long as they take care of the evidence of what transpired that led to the destruction of the entire branch then they could get away with it.

"I am not sure if you will be able to avenge me, but I thank you for the thought," Ji Feng shook his head and then replied displaying how hopeless his situation was.

"If you two are done, now tell me the instructions to getting rid of the tarps covering the treasury," I demanded, continuing the play to portray that I and Ji Feng were in a temporary partnership as we conveyed earlier by showing that I cared more about the treasures of the Circle's sun blossom branch than whatever Ji Feng was up to.

"Kid, you do know that you and your force will either be killed here or be used as the scapegoat to cover what actually happened here," Mike said trying to mess with the boy's head by sowing doubt about his temporary partnership with Ji Feng.

Mike who had an answer to who was pulling Ji Feng's strings from behind was no longer worried and began to focus on the fight in front of him. Due to Ji Feng's unexpected betrayal, his previous plans had more or less become useless. The desolate punisher array was a big part of his plan, now that he had destroyed it with his own hands and lost more than two third of his forces now he could only choose to fight head-on as there was no time to regroup and plan. Though he had no plans, messing with the enemy's head was one of the first things he had learned on the streets.

"Really? Then how about you and I team up and kill him first and then you can kill yourself to save me some trouble?" I said sarcastically. I could see that my sarcasm did strike a nerve with Mike and then added, "Old fart, why don't you worry about yourself? I think I got myself covered."

"Mike, it is useless. We have already reached an agreement in presence of the world's will, this boy here is a lot smarter than you think," Ji Feng reposed to Mike's little mind game informing him that trying to instill discord between him and his temporary partner was useless.

"Kid, we too were in a contract with them, look where it has brought us, if you are not smart about this you too will end up where I am now. When all this is over you are a loose end to them, kid. Do you really think that they risk letting you and your men live?" Mike knew that if the Yin-Yang sect wanted to bury this incident then they will have to bury all the people involved in this.

Hearing Ji Feng's words Mike got to thinking and realized that Ji Feng might have really pushed the boy and his entire forces to swear not to reveal or speak of the info of this incident in the presence of the world's will. That would mean that the boy would have also made Ji Feng swear that no harm will befall the boy and his forces. But the problem was Ji Feng was just a puppet so whatever terms Ji Feng promised to the boy in the presence of the World's will would not apply to Ji Feng's puppeteer. This meant

the Ying-yang sect or the force behind Ji Feng could get rid of the boy and his men without being restricted by the world's will. This discovery made Mike so confident about sowing discord between the boy and Ji Feng.

Mike was adamant about sowing the discord between the boy and Ji Feng because if Ji Feng is not able to finish the job he was assigned, to destroy the Circle's sun blossom branch, then the force behind Ji Feng would have to come forward to finish the job for him. For that to happen he had to make sure that the boy does not coordinate with Ji Feng.

"..." Hearing Mike still at it, Ji Feng just shook his head and let Mike finish. As he, meaning, his master already knew what was going through Mike's head. Which was counter productive to what his master and he had achieved so far by putting up an act.

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Chapter 975 For Revenge

[1,002 words]

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:14

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

"Don't worry old fart, I am not as dumb as you people. I made sure that there is no loophole he can use," I said, having figured out what Mike was trying to put forward. I only wanted to sow a seed of doubt in this asshole's mind but he kept resisting it. Just when I thought I was successful, he thought of the right question to ask which would show that Ji Feng and I were more connected than we claimed.

"You do know that Ji Feng is just a puppet, right? Which means any agreement you made with him will not apply to his masters," Mike said, no matter what I answered him I had to make sure I did not contradict myself.

"I do," I answered Mike confidently. Even though this answer raised the question that if Ji Feng and I were really just temporary partners.

"Then why?" Mike was dumbfounded hearing the boy's answer. And did not understand why would he go through with so a self-destructive deal.

“Revenge makes one do crazy things, besides I too have friends in high places so I am not worried about the forces behind him. As long as I get to inflict even a fraction of the pain and sorrow that my family has been through on your organization then I will gladly make deal with the devil,” As I spoke these words my eye grew red with anger and in the end added, “Vengeance will be mine.”

Hearing the boy say ‘friends in high places’ Mike could not help but look at the boy’s shadow and knew that these people were confident that they could destroy the Circle’s sun blossom branch today and did not have clue about what the circle had prepared in response. Since they were convinced about their victory his words seemed to have no effect.

Neither of them seemed to be worried about getting double-crossed later. Both of them were puppets, one controlled by revenge and the other by his master, they had one goal in mind to destroy his branch of the Circle. With this, Mike realized that though both the boy and Ji Feng claimed to be in a temporary partnership they were actually using each other for their agenda. And concluded that they cared more about destroying his branch of the Circle than their life so anything he said to sow discord between them would not work.

“Sigh! Boy, you are the perfect example of a person blinded by revenge,” Mike no longer planned to continue to sow discord between the boy and Ji Feng as he realized that they valued his destruction more than their life. Mike understood by the boy would join hands with Ji Feng knowing all the dangers. The desolate punisher array was a one-of-a-kind array, get past it was not easy for low-level card apprentices, so the boy recruiting Ji Feng’s help when offered was not a surprise to Mike. Blinded by revenge people do a lot of crazy things.

“I have already died once, now I live for revenge,” I kept throwing third-rate dialogues about vengeance to convince Mike that revenge has blinded me, and to destroy him I was willing to gamble my life. Successfully giving him an answer to why I acted together with Ji Feng despite knowing the risk. And it seems he has bought it.

“Since you don’t value your life, let me take it,” Giving up on messing with the boy’s mind, Mike decided to kill him first and then Ji Feng. Having exchanged blows with Ji Feng he knew he could not kill fast, so he decided to get rid of the card soldier boy with a sneak attack and then continue his fight with Ji Feng. Throwing a punch filled with his brute strength aiming at the boy Mike acted on his thoughts.

“Coward,” yelling that I responded to Mike’s punch instantaneously thanks to the reminder of my slave consciousness and Hive AI. Even though my Gigamite physique was dormant it was my physical strength was still sufficient enough to take a card lord’s attack head-on.

Boom

My fist meet Mike's fist midway and not only did it not manage to counter Mike's force but also push him back three steps. I too took a few steps back after all my stance was not correct being caught off guard by Mike's sneak attack.

Mike looked at me with disbelief, he could not believe that an ant in the card soldier realm was not only able to react to his sneak attack but also counter it with equal strength. If not for having tasted the boy's punch personally Mike would not believe it, he was still having a hard time believing it.

"Kid, It seems I underestimated you. No wonder you dare to jump around, with that strength you do qualify to be haughty but if that is all you got, then unfortunately this place will be your burial ground," Mike said, he was impressed by the boy's power for his realm but felt that it was not enough for him to take the boy seriously.

"Oldman, not only do you shamelessly sneak attack someone who is in a lower realm than you but you also dare to act wise, aren't you afraid that heaven will not be able to tolerate your shamelessness and smite you?" I had shameless people and Mike just put them all to shame.

"Boy, heaven is dead. Nobody can judge me but myself, let's see if you can still talk after taking my next punch," Mike did not waste his breath and rushed to punch me again but soon he notice Ji Feng attack him from the corner of his eyes and immediately retreated.

"Now, who is shameless? Two against one, yet you dare to act righteous?" Mike yelled as if he was suffering from injustice.

"Motherfucker, you attack a junior in a lower realm and still dare to call it a fair fight. You have no right to complain about justice and righteousness."

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[1,491 words]

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:16

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

"Kid, I am not the shameless one here you are. You invade my house and attacked me, yet when I try to defend myself you have the galls to call me shameless, so what if you are in a lower realm than me? Am I to just allow you to kill me? Where's the justice and

righteousness you speak of in that?" Mike gave a fitting reply to me for calling him the most shameless person I have ever met as he distanced himself from Ji Feng while moving sides trying to get closer to me.

"Vengeance justifies my actions, what about yours?" I once again revenge to shield my real motives. Not that revenge wasn't the motive, it was but just a part of it. Mike seems to have decided to go after the weakling of the herd. And according to him, I was the weak link in my group. So I moved behind Ji Feng.

"Strength, my strength justifies my actions," Mike answered. Still trying to near me. At this point, I and Mike were going around in a circle with Ji Feng in the middle. Then Mike added, "Revenge, is that enough reason for you to come to me seeking your death?"

"Yes," I said stalling for time. But what worried me was why was Mike acting along with my charade was he also stalling like I was?

Or maybe he did not plan to kill Ji Feng and still hoped to capture him to interrogate him about the puppeteer behind his betrayal. That could be the reason why he had fixated on getting rid of me first. Mike still counting on capturing Ji Feng would explain a lot. That would mean, he did not plan to attack me instead Ji Feng when Ji Feng happened to be more focused on protecting me than himself. So I was the distraction and Ji Feng was Mike's real goal.

Just when I thought of this, I saw, Mike suddenly rush at me. Following his moment, Ji Feng came forward to intercept him like the previous time but this time Mike was prepared instead of attacking me he abruptly turned to face the incoming Ji Feng, and channeling his rule power he took Ji Feng's attack head-on. At this point, it was already too late for Ji Feng to make use of his rule power to defend. When Mike's rule-powered fist slammed into Ji Feng's palm, the force behind the attack crushed the bones of Ji Feng's arm and sent him flying to crash into a bunch of rubbles.

If it was some other card lord they would have been rendered unable to fight having taken a rule power attack unprepared at point blank. But Ji Feng was no ordinary card apprentice, he had a calamity daughter gem, and its viltronian physique was strong enough to keep him to get back on his feet but he was severely wounded after he had taken a rule-powered attack head-on, not to mention the gem's restructure ability, with it he could reconstruction his wounded body parts with a thought in seconds.

Ji Feng soon rose from the debris, his clothes were no longer neat, they were torn and blood-soaked. Most of Ji Feng's body was also stained with blood. But his wound seem to have closed and was no longer bleeding. Which was a huge surprise to Mike who thought that he had rendered Ji Feng immobile and unconscious therefore he could not help but mumble, "It seems fearing that my attack would kill him I held back a lot. That must be it."

Ji Feng was angry, he failed his master's task. For a being whose world revolved around his master, failing to protect his masters was a huge failure in Ji Feng's books, so his anger right now normal for a calamity daughter gem but he would not dare to act on it unless he was ordered by his master. So dusting himself off Ji Feng immediately rushed to his master's side.

Mike did not stop him or continue to attack him, he was really flabbergasted by seeing Ji Feng doing fine after taking a rule-powered attack at point blank range. It seemed as long as Ji Feng did not try to run Mike would not take desperate measures. Right now, above all, all he cared was about finding the force responsible for Ji Feng's betrayal because of which Ji Feng was his priority. Mike was about to say something but feeling a bunch of unknown but decent powers gathering towards his location he searched for them vigilantly.

"You guys are finally here, what took you so long?" I said looking at the extermination team that returned after dealing with the last of the Circle's elders and the last of its minions. Yes, I was stalling for the extermination team's arrival. Together with them, I planned to take on Mike.

It may not look like it but Mike was the most pain in the ass card lord realm, unlike other card lords I had faced so far Mike had forged an ego gem and had his grimoire upgraded to platinum grade. Putting Mike on a level far above the card lords I had fought so far. I was not sure if I could win against him single-handedly. Therefore I had to wait for the extermination team to face him together and stand a chance to kill him.

My lineup would have been daunting to someone else but not Mike, seeing the powers gathering toward his location were my subordinates, he loosened up a little. Then turning to look at me he said, "Looks like your people managed to kill all the members of my branch."

"Not all, we have one remaining," I said while my team of calamity daughter gems surrounded him and began summoning the ego elemental card that I had gifted to them.

"Summon Fire Rule Ego Elemental"

"Summon Water Rule Ego Elemental"

"Summon Wind Rule Ego Elemental"

"Summon Earth Rule Ego Elemental"

Seeing the ego elementals being summoned one after the other, the expression on Mike's face finally changed to the extreme. His carefree face immediately turned to a grim face, having realized that his advantage of owning a platinum grimoire was no longer an advantage enough.

Then with a gloomy expression, he began to analyze each of the card apprentices surrounding him. To his surprise quite a few of them were very young, they seemed to be of the boy's age. Though their realm was low they had forged an ego gem at their age and also created ego elementals. But he did not feel right about this, on second thought he felt that these ego elementals that surrounded him should have been mass produced by a high realm card apprentice. As it was plausible for one or two of them to form ego elementals but not all of them. Not to mention these ego elementals did not seem to be complete. That is when he became sure that these ego elementals were definitely created by a capable card apprentice.

Coming to this conclusion Mike could not help but turn to look at the boy wanting to ask him how did he manage to get so many ego elementals. For a card apprentice was a lot harder to create an ego elemental out of a broken rune than to create an ego elemental out of their own rune. Only someone truly powerful and capable in the creation process would be able to create so many ego elementals out of broken runes. But why would someone with such capability waste their precious time making so many broken rune ego elementals for the boy? Was it an old senior from the southern royal family? Did the southern royal family value this boy so much that they were willing to risk indirectly participating in the boy's revenge?

No wonder this boy dared to make a deal with Ji Feng despite knowing that it might potentially become deadly to him. It was clear to Mike that the boy was important to the southern royal family when he learned from the sources from the headquarters that the southern royal family had arranged three semi-demigods to act as the boy's bodyguard. But this discovery added new meaning to how far the southern royal family was willing to go for the boy. So a part of him could not help but think maybe Ji Feng defaulted to the Southern royal family but thinking of this he shook his head not finding a reasonable motive for Ji Feng to switch camps to the southern royal family. Without a proper motive, this theory did not make sense so he could only let go of his suspicion of the Southern Royal family being the puppeteer behind Ji Feng. Soon Mike let go of his thoughts as whatever the heck was going on behind the scenes was no longer that important when his life was in danger at the present.

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[1,021 words]

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:23

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

Mike scanned the card apprentice surrounding him one by one. To his surprise other than the damned ego elementals, quite a few of these card apprentices had platinum grimoire. He was noticing this detail now because these sly little fellows had disguised their grimoires as golden-grade grimoires. If he had not carefully scrutinized them then he might have missed this little detail that would have cost him later in the battle. Mike wanted to consider how these card apprentices from a third-class city were able to upgrade their grimoire to platinum grade grimoire but he had no time for it.

The discovery of his enemies having platinum-grade grimoires had alerted Mike, he began to scour his surroundings to check if he had missed any other trap or something laid by the enemy. He had learned that he could underestimate this rag-tag group of card apprentices who got together in the name of revenge. To his dismay, he was right to do that, because he found a bunch of card lords suppressing their breath, and energy signature while hiding not so far away from the battlefield. They seemed to be laying dormant waiting for him to start fighting the card apprentices that were currently encircling him. Mike would like to hope that these card lords belonged to some kind of third force, but he knew better, these card lords were more likely to be of the same group as the card apprentice surrounding him. They must be some kind of assassin squad lying in wait to assassinate him when he gets sloppy while fighting the other squad.

Mike finally realized that he was trapped. Despite being careful and trying not to underestimate his enemies he still ended up underestimating them and had fallen into their meticulously planned trap. The chances of him walking out of this trap alive were very low. Realizing that the enemies he was facing could not only harm him mortally but kill him before his rescue arrives Mike was distressed and turned to look at the boy wondering how a nobody like him managed to achieve a feat like this.

A bunch of loyal card lords, dozens of ego elemental cards, and platinum grimoires were not something that a force originating from a third-rate city should have. Yet Mike was witnessing it right in front of him. Mike was finally afraid for his life. The freaking branch manager of the Circle was afraid for his life. The more Mike understood about his current circumstance the more he felt awe for the boy who made it possible. He could not help but wonder, was this the wonder that thirst for revenge could achieve?

The Circle who only gained information on the boy from the Paw clan underestimated him and his achievements big time despite that his potential had managed to become an eyesore for them. The fact that the boy was able to survive and thrive despite the Circle's past effort to destroy him and his life spoke for the boy. Now Mike finally began to comprehend why the source from the Paw clan emphasized so much on killing the boy when they had the chance to. The paw clan and their master because of their unique style of operating were elusive to the circle too so it was not clear how this boy was related to the paw clan to conjure so much hate from the matron. Considering the current stiff relationship between the Circle and the Paw clan, Circle would rather sit and watch the paw clan's potential enemy grow but fortunately for the paw clan this enemy

of theirs had cultivated a deep hatred for the Circle proving that given the chance to grow he wouldn't just be trouble for Paw Clan but the Circle too.

Now Mike had three goals,

First being obvious to capture Ji Feng, as conclusive evidence of Yin-yang harmony's betrayal or a possible unknown third force targeting the circle.

The second was to kill the boy. If they had found the potential of the boy a few days ago the circle would try to recruit him at all costs and have him forcefully undergo the initiation ceremony to make him loyal to the Circle and its cause. But now it was too late, the Circle appreciates talents but this one had grown fangs that were currently directed at them and had strong wings that would back him even in the toughest of the Storm.

The third was to survive the trap laid by the boy until his help arrived or escape. Upon witnessing the powerful lineup of card lords with platinum grade grimoire and ego elementals, Mike had given up on the idea to try and dominate his enemies head-on with his strength as it was starting to seem impossible so instead, he planned to make survival his priority in this fight along with completion of two other small priorities. With his strength, if gave it his all then these new priorities of his were no longer impossible. Trying to overpower all his enemies was impossible for him but playing it safe was within his strength that was how he planned to fight now. This kind of fighting style was new to Mike as ever since he found out about his relationship with the circle there hasn't been a fight where he had not dominated his opponents. Maybe that was why he was in this situation, the old him would never have underestimated his enemy.

"Not all, we have one remaining," the boy's reply could not have been more obvious and provoking to Mike. Now that the boy had exterminated all his trusted and loyal subordinates, Mike was the only last piece of evidence left that could prove that the sun blossom city recently had a branch of Circle in it.

"Kid , if you want to come for my life then this is not enough," Mike said glancing at the card lords that were hiding waiting for an opportunity to assassinate him when it presents itself. Making it clear to the boy that his trap has been seen through by him.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:23

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

“Old fart, you have good eyes but you haven’t seen the end of it,” I said understanding what Mike was trying to convey. During this whole fight, I did not reveal my sin squad, they had only one job, which was to assassinate Mike if they had the opportunity. Saving me the trouble of facing his suicidal last-ditch effort. Rather than a show of power or dominating the fight, in this war, I was trying to be efficient. Like an extermination company, get rid of the pest infestation by any and all means. Maybe even a little over the top than any extermination company out there, because my pests wielded fucking grimoires and runes.

Other than my calamity gems hiding their platinum grimoire and the sin squad lying in wait, I had not prepared any other tactical cards against Mike, because I had none and did not feel the need to. Yet I bluffed to Mike about having other arrangements because I could not have Mike thinking he had figured my bottom line, I need him to be on his foot watching his back. Only when his mind was divided between fighting us and taking caution against the unknown, will he be prone to make more mistakes because of which we will have an easier time dealing with him. With this in mind, I had bluffed to Mike.

No matter how many numbers I had on my side I will never underestimate an enemy. As a scientist no matter how much a probability was in my favor I would always prepare for the worst, only by knowing that I had done everything in my power was I able to enjoy the process. Not that I was overly cautious I have taken many risks throughout my life but only when I knew that I had done everything in my power to lessen the odds of the risk and prepared for the follow-up contingencies in case of a failure.

“Your bluff needs a little more work kid,” Mike called the boy’s bluff that the card lords in the hiding weren’t the end of his measure against him. Though Mike felt like the boy couldn’t have planned for other contingencies against him having already learned a lesson on underestimating this particular boy Mike could only take caution against the possibility that the boy had other tricks up his sleeve prepared for him.

“Old fart, if that helps you believe it, but when I step on your cold corpse don’t come to haunt me,” I said while the extermination team had taken their position. When multiple card apprentices faced a single capable card apprentice, the chances of friendly fire were very likely, but when encircled the target, these chances increased drastically. Therefore, multiple card apprentices could only take turns to attack the target at the center but with careful positioning, it could be avoided. This meticulous positioning could not only be used to help decrease the friendly fire but also help create a defense mechanism. Therefore I did not have the extermination squad immediately engage Mike in a fight but had them get into meticulously calculated positions this way not only would they be able to avoid friendly fire and make up for each other’s shortcomings but also create an effective method among them to defend and help each other when the other was in a dire situation. This positioning technique has been wildly known as battle array formation. The brilliance of this was that it would be too late for the enemy before they realize that they had entered a deadly battle array formation.

The other beauty of this battle array formation was that these meticulously calculated positions were that the people in these battle array formations have a faint connection forming between them through the surrounding soul pathways. If the trust and faith between the card apprentices forming the battle array formation were present to a certain degree then this battle array formation displays many miraculous effects. Such as an increase in coordination between the card apprentices or decrease in the cool-down period of their cards or a decrease in the soul energy consumption and stamina. Similar effects can be achieved if the card apprentice forming the battle array formation use the same cards. With all the above-mentioned conditions met the battle array formation also allows a bunch of card apprentices to fight against a higher realm card apprentice.

Being encircled in the battle array formation the target has very little room to take initiative to attack the card apprentices that were the pillar of the battle array formation. As the other card apprentice will interrupt the target's advance prematurely. Leaving the target with only one option, which was to defend. Making sure the target would either die of exhaustion or be overpowered by the battle array formation. These were the only ends for those that were trapped in a battle array formation unless they were strong enough to overpower the battle array formation.

I learned about the battle array formation by exploring the Formation stack skill of the A-rank Southern watch combat arts card given to me by Anna. With my new knowledge of array formation, I was hungry for more but I lacked practice material, so I decided to expand my horizon by studying anything I could get my hands on. So the southern watch combat arts card's skill formation stack was a good place to start. As a skill of an A-rank card, it was a worthy challenge, I gained a lot of insight from it, and one of them was the battle array formation. I had focused on this particular insight because of the upcoming war preparation as I felt that this was a good addition to my arsenal.

Battle array formation was one of those disciplines of array formation which need a very acute sense of the soul pathways. It had very high demands to be mastered by an array master but thanks to my soul pupils and Hive AI, I had little to worry about when it came to mastering battle array formation.

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Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:26

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

“Kid you think you are so smart, you must be feeling good about yourself right about now,” Mike said as the extermination team got into their respective position and completed the battle array formation.

“Yes, yes I do,” Seeing Mike at the center of the battle array formation set up by the extermination team I said smugly.

“Well, let me prove you wrong. Let’s if your battle array formation can hold up against this,” Saying that Mike Platinum grade grimoire suddenly shone with a flash of brilliance as he chanted, “Summon origin card bone dragon.”

With Mike’s chant, a 100 feet-wide magic circle appeared under him, and soon a colossal lizard skull surfaced from within the magic circle and let out a deafening roar.

Roarr!!

Mike immediately climbed onto the bone dragon’s skull and then soon that entire bone dragon’s skeleton-winged bone body climbed out of the magic circle at this point the extermination team could only fan out from their positions to make way for the bone dragon or be caught in the backlash of the magic circle. But this did not break the battle array formation as the team expanded the battle array formation to fit in the bone dragon at the center.

Expansion of the battle array formation was a unique technique to defend against the enemies that were harassing the card apprentices in the formation from outside. By suddenly expanding the formation the enemies outside will be caught off guard and be added to the inside of the battle array formation.

Standing on the shiny white skeleton skull of the bone dragon, Mike who saw that the emergence of the bone dragon was not able to break the battle array formation could not help but frown and added, “Kid you got skills, I will give you that. But today they will not be enough.”

From the meticulous and attentive planning and execution of the battle array formation to the expert-level battle array formation expansion, Mike could not help but be impressed by the boy. He had heard the boy was good at card creation but seeing him skillfully set up a battle array formation mid-combat Mike was in awe of the boy’s talent. The more impressed Mike was the more he felt the need to kill the boy and rid the Circle of potential future trouble.

“Bone Dragon, soar,” With Mike’s command the bone dragon began flapping its skeleton wings and immediately took to the air.

Before the bone dragon could gain elevation its path was blocked by the sudden appearance of the phantom fleet. The bone dragon’s retreat in the air was blocked by the phantom fleet and on the land, the extermination squad had set up a battle array

formation. As I concluded that Mike and his bone dragon were trapped, I heard Diana seeking permission, "Boss, let me take care of the skeleton lizard."

In response, I nodded looking at the bone dragon hovering in the air as Mike tried to figure out a retreat without a fight, knowing that despite gaining elevation he was still within the range of the battle array formation. So if he were to try and fight his way out, he would be entangled by the battle array formation.

"Card Combo – Wind rule powered guided cannon balls, Fire!" gaining my permission Diana immediately used her new card combo to attack Mike's bone dragon.

Aiming at the bone dragon the phantom fleet shot nearly 500 – 600 cannonballs which were immediately enhanced and guided by the two wind rule ego elemental as per Diana's will.

In face of the incoming cannonballs, the bone dragon showed no resistance, it took the attack head-on, causing Diana's brow to frown as the bone dragon would only do that if it were confident of its defense. But contrary to Diana's speculation the bone dragon's skeleton body's defense was not able to withstand the barrage of her card combo attack. Being impacted by 500 – 600 cannonballs its skeleton body was demolished into numerous fragments.

"What the fuck?" Seeing this the extermination team and I was dumbfounded. As having felt the domineering intent of the bone dragon we knew the bone dragon was strong but for it to go down just like that we could not believe that something like the bone dragon would be Mike's trump card.

Speaking of Mike, I immediately searched for him but I could not find him. It was as if he suddenly vanished into thin air with the destruction of his bone dragon. Giving a plausible explanation as to why the bone dragon collapsed without putting up a fight. Mike sacrificed the Bone dragon for his escape.

Considering that Mike may have not escaped far I immediately used my soul pupils to scan the surroundings to find any clue about Mike. But instead, I made another scary discovery, "Guys be careful, the Bone dragon is not dead its skeleton fragments have soul energy and traces of spirituality."

As soon as I was done warning, each of the skeleton fragments of the bone dragon floated into the air and began to grow into an individual bone dragon. The Bone dragon's skeleton body had shattered into hundreds of pieces and was scattered into the surroundings, allowing them to give rise to hundreds of clone bone dragons forming the current Clone dragon army.

Witnessing this I grew alert and hurriedly searched for Mike while the extermination team prepared to face the clone army of the bone dragon. The rise of the clone bone dragon army only signified that Mike did not use the bone dragon as a sacrifice for his

escape instead he used one of his bone dragon's abilities to skillfully hide as his clone bone dragon army took delta with his enemies. Now I realized that Mike and his bone dragon were not trapped by the phantom fleet and the battle array formation instead he had his plans and I played right into them.

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Chapter 980 Bone Dragon's Clone Army

[1,040 words]

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:31

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

Realizing that Mike may have not escaped but instead used the bone dragon's ability to hide I was alerted and immediately used my soul pupils to search the surroundings for any clues about him. Knowing that if I did not find Mike quickly, he will use this opportunity to come after me during the chaos as the extermination team fought the clone bone dragon army to the point of exhaustion.

My search for Mike continued by now most of the skeleton fragments of the bone dragon had already grown into a clone bone dragon but I had yet to find Mike's whereabouts. It was as if he was never here in the first place. Having exchanged blow's with Mike I knew he was here. Therefore I scanned the surrounding area numerous times yet I still reached the same conclusion. Frustrated I persisted to search for Mike while the extermination team stood against the clone army of the bone army.

"Fire," Diana fired another round of wind rule-powered guided cannonballs aiming at the skeleton fragments of the bone dragon that were growing to an individual bone dragon. But to her surprise when in danger a brilliance shone on the fragments of the bone dragon and protected them from her attacks. Soon others followed suit and tried attacking the skeleton fragments of the bone dragon only to get the same results. It became clear to the extermination team that at this stage it was impossible for them to attack or destroy the skeleton fragments of the bone dragon and could only watch as they grew into individual clone bone dragons and form a clone army.

Having grown into individual bone dragons, these clones did not immediately attack us, instead, they waited for the late bloomers of their kind to turn into a fully grown bone

dragons. Each of the bone dragons had the same colossal size and skeleton frame as the original bone dragon. They looked like a perfect copy of the original bone dragon and it was not apparent if they had the strength of the original bone dragon but the domineering intent oozing out of them was nowhere near enough to the domineering intent of the original bone dragon so it was doubt full that these clone dragons had the same strength as the original bone dragons.

In face of the clone army of bone dragons, the extermination team had moved the battle array formation with me as the center as they could only watch the skeleton fragments grow into clone bone dragons. This time the goal of their battle array formation was not to attack the target in the center but to protect the target from outside attack.

Pretty soon all the bone dragons were born, and the ruins of the Circle's sun blossom branch complex became crowded again. Being born the bone dragons did not cause chaos or participate in infighting instead they all acted collectively and surrounded us. Seeing this the extermination team grew more cautious of the bone dragon army and did not dare to underestimate these clones. While I continued to search for Mike's whereabouts with my soul pupils.

Since the bone dragon's clone army was still active it was obvious that Mike was hiding within the vicinity waiting for an opportunity for his next move. I was so adamant about finding him because defeating him would put a quick end to the bone dragon clone army.

After surrounding us the bone dragons at the front of the clone army simultaneously attacked the battle array formation. With a cautious heart, the Extermination team fought them courageously. Thanks to the ego elemental summons the bone dragons were not the match for the Extermination team and their battle array formation.

The strength of the clone bone dragon was a huge letdown, we seemed to have overestimated their strength. Soon the first wave of the bone dragons was laid to waste, then bone dragons behind them filled their position. Maintaining a continuous wave of bone dragon clones for the extermination team to fight. If this continued then the bone dragon's clone army would be annihilated within the next twenty minutes.

Before the extermination team could rejoice they found that the remains of the clone bone dragons that they had just destroyed too floated into the air and began to grow into individual bone dragons, adding to the numbers of the pre-existing bone dragons. With this, the clone army's size kept increasing rather than decreasing. Seeing this the extermination team grew frustrated though these clone army of the bone dragons was not strong they were also not weak, it took a little effort to kill them which over time can accumulate and lead them to exhaustion. So knowing that the clone bone dragon also inherited the clone army ability of the original bone dragon, they knew that the bone dragon's clone army was endless and would only end with them dying out of exhaustion.

Seeing the situation turn dire I could only continue to find Mike, with newfound discoveries of the bone dragon's clone army it had become clear that the only way to bring an end to this clone army was to defeat the clone army. Just when we were getting desperate. Cindy's who was using a fire rule ego elemental made a damning discovery.

The clone bone dragons burned to ash by her fire rule ego elementals did not rise to form more clones and stayed dead. The same was true for the water rule ego elementals with freezing meaning. The frozen bone dragons that were shattered were still trapped in the freezing meaning of the water rule and were not able to raise another clone army.

Seeing this the Extermination team decided that the earth, wind, and water rule ego elementals will trap the clone bone dragons, and fire rule ego elementals will burn them into ash. This method proved effective as finally, the number of the clone bone dragon began to decrease and if this progress continued without any hindrance then within the next thirty minutes the clone army would be exterminated for good.

But just when we grew optimistic about our situation we all heard Ji Feng cry for help but he was nowhere to be found.

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Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:34

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

While the battle array formation of the extermination squad focused on protecting me as I searched for Mike, Ji Feng was all by himself. Still, the presence of the battle array formation right next to him decreased a lot of pressure on him. But the fact remained that at the moment Ji Feng was the most vulnerable of us all, which Mike used to get to Ji Feng, no surprise there.

The question was how did Mike get to Ji Feng without getting noticed by my soul pupils? What happened to Ji Feng? Where are they? Did they move into another dimension or something similar to Anna's field cards?

Answers to these questions were not known to me. But I knew that Mike did not make use of a field card similar to the one that Anna uses. Because with my soul pupils I can spot the soul pathways of the gate where the summoned field connects with this world. And right now did not see any such phenomenon so I knew that Mike was not using

some kind of elusive field card. This also proved my hunch that Mike never left and was lying in wait for us to make a mistake.

From this, I could gather that Mike had a very potent stealth card that he could use to move around and that was how he got to Ji Feng. The problem was that Mike's stealth card was potent that even my soul pupils were not able to find him. This was the first time my soul pupils had failed me. I was accustomed to using the soul pupils to solve all my problems. So this time being unable to use my soul pupils to help me, I felt like I had lost a limb or two.

I guess this situation made a great lesson for me, that I was too dependent on my soul pupils. I don't blame myself for that because the soul pupils were that overpowered, anybody would easily come to be dependent and addicted to them. Now that its power was of no use, I had to think of a way to deal with Mike's stealth card by myself. After a lot of thinking, I finally came up with a plan to catch an invisible enemy and that was the bait and trap method.

I had already put this plan in motion by throwing the perfect bait, Ji Feng. The reason I did not bring Ji Feng into the battle array formation was obviously that I wanted to let Mike get the impression that though Ji Feng and I were in a temporary partnership we were just using each other and did not care if the other died. That was my obvious intention but it had an underlying intention to it which was to use Ji Feng as bait to lure Mike from his hiding. The plan worked perfectly but I had underestimated Mike's means.

Despite keeping an eye on Ji Feng I was still unable to figure out how was it that Mike was able to kidnap him without leaving any trace. Yes, my soul pupils failed me this time too. Now, this was worrying, because if this continues before the extermination team finishes off the bone dragon's clone army Mike will have got to each of us one by one.

Conveniently for us, Ji Feng was a calamity daughter gem, killing him without destroying the calamity daughter gem was difficult, and if he was not dead then I could track him down. For a fact, I knew that Ji Feng was not dead because my calamity soul gem did not feel the calamity daughter gem in Ji Feng's body be destroyed. Without wasting any more time I began to track the calamity daughter gem in Ji Feng's body.

Having tracked Ji Feng I encountered a weird situation. My calamity daughter gem placed Ji Feng in the very position where we thought he was kidnapped by Mike. I tried using my soul pupils to verify the calamity soul gem's findings even though it has proven to be useless in this situation. And as thought, my soul pupils were not able to find anything of suspicion at that location.

Since I already know that my soul pupils were useless against Mike's stealth card, I did not doubt my calamity soul gem's findings. Instead, I focused and tried tracking Ji Feng more accurately using the calamity soul gem's senses, it worked. The calamity soul gem

was finally able to get a lock on Ji Feng. Then I scrutinized according to the calamity soul gem's senses only to find that the entity that the calamity soul gem was the point as Ji Feng was actually a small pebble.

Yes, a small pebble. For a minute I thought, the calamity soul gem had gone haywire but didn't because I could feel Ji Feng's calamity daughter gem in the small pebble. What was Ji Feng's calamity daughter gem doing inside a pebble?

As this question popped into my mind I immediately panicked, thinking that Mike had found out about one of my darkest secrets, the calamity daughter gems. How could I not panic? If the world or just the Circle learns what the calamity daughter gem was capable of then I will be in deep trouble. Southern royal family backing me would no longer become enough reason for the circle to not come after me. Shit! The more I thought of the possible consequence of my darkest secret being known to the enemy I cannot help but panic.

But then I suddenly thought if Ji Feng's calamity daughter gem was inside the pebble why was my soul pupil not able to find it when I used it to scan and search the location pointed by my calamity soul gem? Now, this was suspicious as if Ji Feng's calamity daughter gem was inside the pebble then the soul pupils should have spotted it when I used it to inspect that area.

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Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:39

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

Feeling that something was amiss here, the agitation that I felt thinking that Mike may have discovered my darkest secrets had subsided. With that, I used my soul pupils to scrutinize the pebble pointed out as Ji Feng by my calamity soul gem. Upon a thorough inspection, my soul pupil could not find the calamity soul gem in the pebble or anything odd about it. This was puzzling but also worrying. Because whatever Mike did to Ji Feng was now able to mess with two of my most trusted abilities. Considering the infinite types of cards out there, it was not impossible for a card to exist with an ability that would counter two of my most unique abilities but the probability of meeting a such card was very low. So, I had enough reasons to be worried.

Calming myself down I began to use my soul pupils and ears to scan the soul pathway arrangement, vibrations, and signatures of the pebble pointed out by my calamity soul gems and other pebbles in the surrounding. All this data was collected, organized, and

stored by Hive AI. Why do this? The idea was simple, I wanted to use the data collected on the soul pathway arrangements, vibrations, and signatures of all the pebbles to find the difference between the pebble pointed out by my calamity soul gem and other pebbles in the surroundings, no matter how minute they were.

It did not take long for Hive AI to complete its task. And after comparing the data gathered from the pebble in question and the pebbles in the surrounding, it had found that there was no difference in the soul pathway arrangements and the signature but there was a minute difference in the soul pathway vibration of the pebble in question when compared to the other pebbles. Deducing that the pebble in question was different or something about it was different from the other pebbles.

Apart from this conclusion, Hive AI was also able to uncover another anomaly among the data of the other pebbles in the surrounding. It found another pebble that had the same soul pathway vibration as the pebble in the question. Meaning that the pebble too was different or something about it was different from the other pebbles.

Following the conclusion of my calamity soul gem, let us just say that the pebble in question was Ji Feng then what or who was the other pebble? Asking this question a sudden thought popped into my mind, blowing the whole case wide open.

The brilliant thought that I had was, what if the card used by Mike was not a high-level stealth type card but a high-level disguise card? What if Mike had used his high-level disguise card to disguise himself and Ji Feng as pebbles? That would explain why the calamity soul gem pointed out the pebble in question as Ji Feng. If Mike had turned Ji Feng into a pebble then it would explain why my calamity soul gem felt Ji Feng's calamity daughter gem inside the pebble. But this did not explain why soul pupils were not able to see through their disguise.

Unless Mike's high-level disguise card was not only capable of disguising the targets by changing their appearance but also changing their soul pathway arrangements and signature too. Even the soul pathway vibrations were almost spot on if not for the Hive AI I would have never noticed the minute differences in the soul pathway vibrations. Since soul pupils' forte was soul pathways so it was still disappointing that soul pupils could not tell Mike's disguise apart. But I only blamed myself for not having a higher realm to bring out soul pupils' true potential.

I know the conclusion I arrived at was weak without evidence, but it made much more sense than the other theories I could think of. The only way I can prove this conclusion was by forcing Mike to deactivate his disguise. So, I moved from the center of the battle array formation to pick the pebbles. I could not order anybody from the extermination squad to pick up the pebbles but I did not as they and their position were what made this battle formation array if one of them moved the others will feel the burden of it or in extreme cases, the array formation will break down. Therefore instead of ordering my subordinates, I went to pick up the pebbles.

Just as I was moving to pick up the pebbles, I realized the potential dangers to it. What if Mike manages to turn me into a pebble similar to what he did to Ji Feng? Then it would be game over for me, being trapped as an inanimate object. I say this because ever since I had concluded that Ji Feng had been turned into a pebble I have been trying to contact him through Hive AI but I did not get any response as if his soul too had been turned into a soul of a pebble.

Whatever card Mike was using its effect was scary and I did not want to be a victim of it so I decided not to step out of the array formation to pick up the pebbles, leaving us with two options,

One, I could summon a summons and have it pick up the pebbles and bring them to me but if Mike wanted to, he could turn the summons into a pebble or use it as a means of transportation to get to me and transform me into a pebble or something worse.

Second, since Ji Feng was unresponsive I could use my authority to take control of his calamity daughter gem remotely through the Hive AI connection. Upon achieving remote control over Ji Feng's calamity daughter gem through the Hive AI, I would order it to disintegrate its current body and restructure a new one. A reasonable plan but it was not without flaws.

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Chapter 983 Asura's Boon

[1,019 words]

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:42

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

The reason why having Ji Feng reconstruct his body to rid of the effect of Mike's card on him was not ideal was because Mike's card was too powerful. It not only turned Ji Feng's body appearance into a pebble but his soul pathway arrangements, vibrations, and signature were also morphed to match that of a pebble. Due to this, Ji Feng's soul also thought it was a pebble and remained unresponsive. Even his calamity daughter gem had morphed as part of the pebble.

Due to this reason, even my calamity soul gem had a hard time pinpointing its location and my soul pupils failed to differentiate it from an ordinary pebble. Despite having most of him morphed into a pebble Ji Feng's abilities were still present in him, this was the reason for the minute difference noted by the Hive AI in the soul pathway vibrations of Ji Feng morphed pebble when compared to soul pathway vibrations of other regular pebbles.

What I am getting at was that even if I use my authority to trigger a restructure of pebble Ji Feng's external body, the calamity daughter gem part will still remain the same. By using restructure I am not undoing what Mike did but actually destroying what Mike did and regrowing a new body in its place. With the exterior body restructured the interior part will still be the same. Meaning even if the exterior of the pebble was destroyed to form a new body of Ji Feng, his calamity daughter gem will still be a pebble. Since the calamity daughter gem house's his soul, it too will think and be a pebble. Meaning even though I have managed to get the external shell back to normal using the restructure ability of the calamity daughter gem, the gem will still be under Mike's card's effect as I cannot use the restructure ability on the calamity daughter gem itself because, once the gem gets destroyed its ability does too, stopping the restructure process of the calamity daughter gem mid way. Therefore, even though it was possible to use restructure ability on the gems themselves I never used it to restructure them. Now that would be idiotic on my part.

There was a story back on earth which told the tale of an asura who manages to please the god with his penance and was granted a boon. The asura used the boon to gain the power to incinerate anybody by placing his hand on their head. Asura being an asura, he doubted the authenticity of the power granted to him by the god as a boon. So he decided to use his new ability on the god to check the genuineness of the power granted to him. Enraged by the asura's audacity, god tricked the asura into placing his hand over his own head, as a result, the asura got incarcerated into ash by his own power.

Many lessons can be learned from this story but one I was talking about was to never forget the possibility that the gun in your holster can not only be used to protect you but can also be used to kill you. The same applied to the restructure ability of the calamity soul/daughter gem. Using it on my mortal body was fine since unlike mortals card apprentice had an active soul but using it on our soul would kill us. Because for the restructure to work it would have to destroy the existing one to create a new one.

So the problem with my second plan was even if I were able to get Ji Feng's body back his calamity daughter gem will still be a pebble and his soul in it will continue to be unresponsive thinking that it was a pebble. This meant the Ji Feng I will get after the use of restructuring ability will be in a vegetative state.

Here was where it got interesting, I know this but Mike didn't. So I will remotely control Ji Feng's vegetative body to pick up pebble Mike and place him in a storage card. This would force Mike to take action because once he was in the storage card it was game

over for him. The storage card does not store living beings for a reason, but right now Mike was not a living being he was a pebble so he could be stored in a storage card and it would also mark his end. If he did not want to die like this then he would have to take action which I will use as an opportunity to study his card and think of a way to counter. This was too much work for a battlefield but without it, I and my team were sitting ducks. And once Mike knows that I had a hint about his card's ability, he will become more aggressive with his attacks, leaving me little time to come up with a way to counter his card's ability.

Therefore as per my plan, I gained access to Ji Feng's calamity daughter gem through Hive AI and instructed it to destroy its exterior pebble body and reconstruct it into its original appearance. If it were normal time this would have happened process would have been completed in under a minute at tops but right now Ji Feng's calamity daughter gem was morphed into a pebble and it was proving difficult for me to remotely activate its ability. Despite the desperate circumstance I could only take my time to proceed further because one mistake could mean the death of pebble Ji Feng.

Trying to deduce Mike's card's ability I had grown to be impressed by it. This ability of Mike's card reminds me of the old fairy tales back on earth where the witches and fairies could morph a being according to their will. The possibilities of this ability were numerous, but the question was whether there was a price to pay for using such an ability. Was Mike's card without any drawback? If yes, then I cannot help but covet it for myself.

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Chapter 984 Origin Of Pebble Mike

[1,005 words]

Mike Brown, though the rest of the city thought that he was destined for greater things, he knew better, his destiny was written before his birth, and he was just another pawn. Only the branch leaders of the Circle knew what this meant.

As the candidate for Circle's branch leader, Mike was given a lot of resources by the Circle since he was chosen. Mike always wondered why he was chosen, there was nothing special about him. He got the answer to this question when he defeated the other candidates competing with him and became one of the circle's branch leaders. He has been given this opportunity all thanks to his father, the estranged father Mike never got to meet as his mysterious father had walked out on him and his mother after impregnating her with him.

When Mike knew about the truth behind his birth, he was extremely nauseated. He felt sickened by his origin. That day he was so repulsed toward his life that he almost ended it but couldn't. He felt that he was better off as a bastard than whatever the truth was, thinking of this he could help but feel sorry for his birth mother. But the truth did not change depending on a person's comfort level so he could only choose to ignore it and pretend that he did not know the truth. Yes, he closed his eyes to the truth so he could live with himself.

Among all the resources that were available to Mike, the best were his two origin cards, the bone dragon and the Myriad devil body. If not for his origin cards he would have lost to the other candidates in the fight for the circle's branch leader position that had just become available, the branch leader of the Circle's new branch, the sun blossom branch.

Becoming one of the branch leaders, Mike learned a lot about the operations of the circle and what happened to the branch leader whose shoes he was filling in. Learning this new information Mike did not feel like a part of something bigger instead he felt more disgusted towards his origin and the circle's part in it. After all, he learned that everything about him was a big lie and the only comfort for him in all this was that his mother was his actual birth mother and not the part of Circles schemes. So she became his anchor for him to live with himself. Despite finding himself in a position of respect and power that could allow him to fulfill all his ambition Mike continued to live with his mother as she was the only part of his life that was true. When it came to this other Circle's branch leaders thought that Mike was lucky and could not be envious of him. The life of the Circle's branch leaders was bizarre trying to make sense of it using commonsense would get one nowhere. Therefore Mike had long since stopped trying to make sense of his origin and decide to link it to the only thing keeping him sane, his mother.

His anchor, his mother was not just the reason that kept him sane from this vulgarity that was his but she also allowed him to use his incredibly powerful card, Myriad Devil Body, without losing himself to the card's ability. Despite having figured out the way to control the power of his origin card Mike did not use it frequently. Yet he had to use it today due to the unexpected turn of events, if only the Yin-yang harmony sect had not betrayed them it would not have come to this.

...

Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:28

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

Having planned to not face the boy and his subordinates head Mike thought of a way where he could complete all three of his objective without much effort. Though this plan

would require him to use his origin card Myriad devil body, wasn't the situation like this why he spent all that time mastering the abilities of this card? So without hesitation, Mike decided to execute this plan.

"Bone Dragon, soar," Mike commanded the bone dragon to immediately took to the air.

Just as the bone dragon was gaining elevation its path was blocked by the sudden appearance of the phantom fleet. This was within Mike's calculation, he had already seen them in action and knew that this fleet of ghost ships would take action to stop his bone dragon if they were to try to retreat by soaring to the sky and this was exactly what he wanted. Being trapped between the battle array formation and the phantom fleet he wanted the enemy to be confident about their strength and underestimate him so that what he was going to do would go unnoticed.

"Skill combo – fire" With Diana's command the phantom powered by her two wind ego elementals destroyed the bone dragon to pieces creating a movement of distraction which Mike made use of by whispering, "Origin card- Myriad devil body – pebble."

By the time all the disturbance was settled Mike had used his card to morph into a pebble and fell to the ground along with the skeleton fragments of the bone dragon. This way he was successfully able to escape the eyes of the boy and his subordinates. And now while his bone dragons clone army engaged the enemy he planned to use the chaos to his advantage and get to his two targets Ji Feng and the boy.

Just when pebble Mike was considering a plan to kill the boy and kidnap Ji Feng, he watched the boy's subordinates control and move the battle array formation to place their boss at the center of the battle array formation to protect him from his bone dragon clone army. This move of the boy put a dent in pebble Mike's plans. Therefore he improvised and decided to kidnap Ji Feng whose temporary partner ditched him during tough times. But that was easier said than done as he was a pebble right now.

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Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:32

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

[Card Name: Myriad Devil Body

Card Type: Origin Card

Card Rank: Unique Grade

Card Rate: -/-

Card Durability: -/-

Card Effect: Myriad Devil Body card was created using the corpse of the Myriad Devil giving the user the physique and abilities of the Myriad Devil.

Additional Effect: Myriad Devil Transformation, Myriad Devil's Hex, Myriad Devil Physique

Caution: The user can lose true self to the Myriad Devil Transformation.]

Myriad Devil Transformation: This ability allows the user to completely transform into any of the myriads of things and beings in existence at their will using a medium.

Note: the medium is the tiny part of any of the myriads of things and beings in existence the user wants to transform into.

Caution: The user can lose himself in absolute transformation and forget their true self.

Myriad Devil's Hex: This ability allows the user to transform any being into any of the myriads of things and beings in existence at their will using a medium.

Note: The medium can be anything from the target's hair, sweat, blood, spit, nails and flesh.

Myriad Devil Physique: this physique enhances the user's body with the growth of the user to withstand the power of the Myriad Devil and allows the user to adapt to their surrounding instantly.

Note: Myriad Devil Physique's adaptability depends on the data available.

...

Why did being a pebble stop pebble Mike from kidnapping Ji Feng? Myriad devil transformation was absolute. This was possible because, when Myriad devil transformation was used, the user doesn't just transform the physical appearance but also the soul pathway arrangements, vibrations, and signature. This made Myriad Devil Transformation so effective that if Mike were to transform into any being or being, then the world's will would take a while to reach a correct conclusion.

The problem was that with the transformation of the soul pathway's arrangements, vibrations, and signature, the soul pathways of the user don't just transform to resemble the soul pathway of the said target but they also start to display the same function as

the soul pathways of the target were intended to. That was to say that the soul pathways of the user will not only resemble the target's soul pathway but also start displaying the same properties. This was the drawback with the soul pathway's arrangements, vibrations, and signature transforming along with the physical appearance. This side effect of the Myriad Devil Transformation made it hard for one to categorize it as a disguise skill.

If the soul pathways of the user started to display the function of the target's soul pathway what happened to their previous functions? Were they all erased? Did the user lose the ability to transform back to the original form again? No, the original functions got backed up as a tiny but redundant part of the morphed soul pathways. The user can access them any time they want but except for the Myriad Devil body skills, most of them will not work at the same efficiency as they would with the original body. But to access them, the user's soul should not lose its true self to the power of the Myriad Devil transformation and keep the spirituality it had before the transformation.

Right now Mike was not just disguising as a pebble but he was a pebble. Thanks to his previous training, his soul was able to retain its spirituality with effort, unlike Ji Feng's soul which has lost its true self and believed that it was a pebble.

After transforming into a pebble it took Mike's soul a while to retain its spirituality. After gaining spirituality, Mike's soul could resist the confusion, memorize its past self, and recall the circumstances. From then on it would struggle to retain whatever it can of its original strength and abilities while maintaining its current form. All of Mike's original abilities were stored in a benign part of the soul pathway so accessing them without affecting his current form was a tough feat. Having trained for this, Mike could access a part of his original strength along with the abilities of the myriad devil body in record time. With that pebble, Mike was no longer pebble Mike but super pebble Mike.

Soon super pebble Mike used its spirituality to navigate its surroundings and find its targets. Discovering that one of the targets was being tightly guarded, super pebble Mike decided to act on kidnapping the second target who appeared to be struggling by himself against his bone dragon clone army.

Then using its spirituality it started to roll its pebble body towards the target. Reaching the target super pebble Mike decided to access one of its myriad devil body abilities, the Myriad Devil's Hex, to transform the target into a pebble.

But to do that, it would require a medium, which could be anywhere from the target's blood, sweat, hair, nail, flesh, or skin. As a super pebble, it will not be hard for Mike to draw Ji Feng's blood but this method had the rise of exposing himself so he ordered his bone dragon clones to increase their attack on Ji Feng so that he wounded and this way Mike could gain access to Ji Feng's blood to use it as a medium to use Myriad Devil's Hex on Ji Feng.

Having acquired a medium to use Myriad Devil's Hex on Ji Feng Mike suddenly had a brilliant plan to get to his next target. Despite being transformed into a pebble it was difficult for Mike to reach his next target because the measly spirituality he was using to move his pebble body around was undetected because of the chaos of the fight. During the fight, Mike purposefully ordered his clone army to kick the dust so that he could move his pebble body around unnoticed. But this would not be possible if he were to enter the battle array formation in which his next target was located. If he wanted to get to his next target then he would require something more than a distraction to get past the battle array formation protecting his next target.

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Date- 4 April 2321

Time- 00:36

Location- Sun Blossom City, Circle Headquarters

When the bone dragon's clone army kicked up the dust Mike would use it to stealth travel to Ji Feng. Even though his pebble body would come off as odd, with so much dust and mud flying around it would be difficult to notice the tiny pebble's oddness. But the same shit would not work if he wanted to get through the battle array and reach his next target.

The reason why Mike could not use the same tricks and distractions to get to his next target unnoticed was that the battle array formation heightens and connects the sense of the card apprentices that have come together to set it up. All the senses of the card apprentice that had set up the formation were near omnipotent in the formation. Therefore Mike's tricks and distractions would not be able to get him past the battle array formation to his next target. Amidst a battle, card apprentices would definitely find a pebble that moves on its own very suspicious. Therefore Mike would have to get creative to get to his next target and the idea that came to his mind earlier was just that.

That was simple but brilliant. It was for him to switch places with Ji Feng. That was to say that He would transform Ji Feng into a pebble using the myriad devil's hex and he would transform himself into Ji Feng using the myriad devil transformation at the same time, this way he would be replacing Ji Feng. And using his new identity Mike would not only have a chance to get close to his next target but also gain the strength to kill him.

But to achieve this small distractions like using dust were not enough. He would have to think of something that would fill the gap of time that would take him to successfully switch places with Ji Feng. Though this time gap for Mike to transform Ji Feng into a

pebble and himself to transform into Ji Feng was less than a second, for a seasoned card apprentice it was enough to be noticed.

After thinking of it a while Mike could only come up with an idea that was not sure-fire but seemed enough, that was to have his clone army suddenly surround Ji Feng completely blocking the view of Ji Feng's temporary partners. Giving Mike the opportunity to switch places with Ji Feng without getting noticed.

Having come up with a will-do-idea to switch places with Ji Feng, Mike first used the blood of Ji Feng that he had gathered to use them as the medium for his abilities Myriad Devil transformation and Myriad Devil's hex. Having made the preparations Mike hurriedly ordered his bone dragon clone army to surround Ji Feng from all sides. The bone dragon's clones acted upon his instructions and immediately closed in on Ji Feng from all sides making it impossible for others to check up on Ji Feng's situation.

Once the bone dragon's clones had played their part, Mike simultaneously used Myriad Devil transformation and Myriad Devil's hex to turn Ji Feng into a pebble and himself into Ji Feng, but just then a complication occurred.

Mike was able to use Ji Feng's blood as a medium to turn him into a pebble using the Myriad Devil's Hex but he could not seem to use the same blood as a medium to turn himself into Ji Feng. Though Mike did not know what went wrong it did mark a tragic failure of Mike's well thought and executed plan.

Mike had trained the abilities of Myriad Devil's hex and Myriad Devil's transformation countless times and each time he had used the same blood of the practice subject as a medium to train both the abilities. And all the time he was successfully able to use both abilities despite having to use the same medium for activation of the two abilities. So Mike knew that the problem did not lie with the medium he used to activate the Myriad devil transformation. And also because if the medium was at fault here then the Myriad Devil's hex should not have been successfully able to transform Ji Feng into a pebble.

At this point forgetting the chaos and confusion outside Mike got to thinking about why his myriad devil transformation ability failed. The only time his myriad devil transformation ability failed was when used it to transform into beings of a higher realm than his realm. But that was not the case here because Ji Feng was not of a higher realm than him. And if it were really the case here then the Myriad devil's hex too like the myriad devil transformation ability should have failed instead it had successfully transformed Ji Feng into a pebble as he will it to.

Was Ji Feng equipping a high-level curse resistance card? Mike immediately discarded this thought because if Ji Feng did equip a high-level curse resistance card then it would have been impossible for Myriad Devil's hex to successfully transform Ji Feng into a pebble too. Instead, only the myriad devil transformation ability failed.

Unable to find the reason why his myriad devil transformation ability failed while the myriad devil's hex was successful Mike became obsessed not even bothering with the confusion he had descended on his enemies by having their temporary partner suddenly vanish as if he was never here, to begin with.

The Myriad Devil body origin card was Mike's biggest trump card, therefore when he saw it fail for the first time he could not help but stop everything else and obsess over it. But no matter how much he obsessed with it he was not able to uncover the reason why he was not able to transform into Ji Feng using the Myriad Devil transformation ability of his origin card.

Unfortunately for Mike no matter how much he obsessed over it he will never be able to find the answer within him or Ji Feng as the problem lied elsewhere.

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