

Last System 312

Chapter 312 Two Objectives

The spike on top of the otherwise perfectly smooth ball pierced through Vaner's thumb as if his royal skin offered no resistance.

The same skin that could easily withstand slashes of swords and axes alike gave way to the simple spike that wasn't enhanced with even the tiniest shred of spiritual energy.

That alone spoke wonders about the technique used to create this altar, a technique that was long gone to the people of this world.

And then, right as the first drop of blood oozed out of Vaner's thumb onto the spike, the tiny runes that covered the entire surface of the altar finally made themselves known.

There wasn't any sound or cascading effect that would draw one's attention to the change. It only looked as if the single drop of blood got diluted many times over without losing the hue of its color, only to then fill countless rifts engraved slightly below the surface of the stone.

'All of that with just a single drop of blood?' Vaner thought, raising his hand and taking a step back.

Looking at the altar from a slightly bigger distance, he could now see the scale of the engravings. Because even after a few moments, more and more of the altar's surface turned from blank stone to a massive painting of engravings.

"What even are those letters?" Vaner muttered to himself, moving a bit closer to the altar and leaning his face over its surface. Yet, no matter how long he spent staring at even just a single of its letters, he couldn't even begin to make any sense out of it.

Yet, before Vaner could even get over his amazement over the intricate details of the engraving or even the sheer fact that its creator managed to cover those engravings with a layer of stone so thin that one could actually see through it...

The spread of the runes stopped, indicating that a single drop of blood wasn't enough of an offering after all.

"That's strange," Vaner muttered under his nose. "The texts clearly stated that a single drop of blood would suffice," he muttered, throwing a curious look around himself.

Yet, no matter how long he waited, not a single rune more appeared. And just to confirm his belief that the process stopped halfway, some of the runes near the bottom of the altar were clearly cut.

"Well, I guess those ancient texts could be wrong," Vaner muttered to himself, raising his hand and bringing his thumb over the glistening spike again. "Or maybe this place got rusty as the time went?" he analyzed his options, pressing his thumb on the spike once again and annihilating the effects of his healing over that small wound.

This time, however, Vaner didn't pull his thumb as soon as a single drop of blood oozed out of his finger. Instead, he pressed his thumb even harder, almost to the point of the spike penetrating his nail from below.

'Damn, to think that hurting one's finger could be so painful,' Vaner thought, surprised by the unexpected intensity of this minute injury.

For someone like him, used to battling beasts at the very top of the food chain of this world, having his thumb pierced by a spike was nothing but a scratch. Yet now, Vaner was forced to admit to himself that his sacrifice turned out to be pretty damn painful!

Painful it was.. . But Vaner's blood continued to drop down on the altar, allowing the process of uncovering its runes to resume.

"Woah," Vaner shouted in surprise when the runes started to appear again... but rather than just filling every last piece of the surface of the altar itself, they soon started to appear on the walls, floor, and the ceiling of the room.

'Is the entire place made with this technique?' Vaner attempted to figure out what was going on while watching how his blood revealed more and more runes all over the place.

And then, when the entirety of the room was revealed to be fully covered with runes, the place suddenly shone in a bright light of a red hue, as if the illumination came from behind the runes themselves.

"ARGH!" Vaner suddenly shouted in pain and fell to the ground when he felt as if a thousand needles pierced through his skin.

But that was only the beginning.

From every place that hurt him before, Vaner's spiritual energy started to rush out as if there was some force capable of attracting it.

'Is it the orb?' Vaner thought, raising his eyes in a futile attempt at locating the direction that his own energy was flowing towards. Yet, as the spiritual energy had no physical form, Vaner's attempt at spotting it turned out to be pretty futile.

'Just like in the texts,' Vaner thought, gritting his teeth as the power he tirelessly worked over the years to gather continued to empty out of his body.

The seal on Vaner's wrist was one embedded directly into his cultivation. In other words, it was impossible to get rid of it without either its owner releasing it or the cultivator dying.

Or rather, that's what everyone in this world thought to be the case. And now, with Vaner's cultivation shrinking by the second, the seal on his wrist had already started to crumble.

'Even if I will have to start from the very scratch,' he thought, gritting his teeth to the point they neared the point of cracking, 'I will regain my freedom!'

This was the only wish that Vaner had that was strictly related to himself. Because only by regaining the freedom to do and move as he liked could he even begin to wish to pay back all those who he hurt before.

Bit by bit, Vaner's spiritual energy continued to drain out of his body. And for every portion of his power that escaped, the seal on his wrist continued to weaken.

'It's accelerating,' Vaner thought, falling down to his knees as an overwhelming sense of weakness filled both his mind and his body.

Used to his cultivation supporting his physical prowess, now that most of it were gone, Vaner could hardly stand up. And even if it was only a temporary effect, it was still a pretty annoying one.

Crack.

The seal on Vaner's wrist suddenly split into three fragments. And then, it simply vanished, as if it was never there, to begin with.

"Without energy to support it, it will simply vanish," Vaner muttered, heavily breathing in hopes of quickly offsetting his feeling of weakness.

Because according to the sources that led him to this place, this was all but the first step of the process that the altar would force upon his body.

For but a brief moment, Vaner continued to just breathe in and out in silence, enjoying the first moments of his life in over a century when no foreign will imposed its own course upon his actions.

And then, all the runes within the room flashed again.

'It's time,' Vaner thought, reaching out for his storage ring.

Then, his eyes widened when he realized his mistake.

With no spiritual energy, he had no means of accessing the items inside!

Vaner simply stared at the ring in the palm of his hand with a blank expression on his face.

"Fuck," he uttered, right when the altar started the second phase of energy transmutation.

A wave of energy suddenly slammed right into Vaner's body, filling his emptied-out cultivation with a refreshing stream of power.

'I need to be quick,' he thought, instantly directing a strand of said energy into his storage ring.

Yet, the second he injected his newfound power into the item...

The storage ring broke apart, forcing all of its content to scatter all over the place.

"Woah!" Vaner shouted in surprise when a pile of varying treasures suddenly threatened to bury him.

'I didn't expect that,' he thought, instantly shoveling away with his hands through the mess of his wealth.

And there it was. A small, green stone.

One that Vaner spent fifty years of hard work to obtain, all for the sake of this one moment.

'Quick!' he shouted in his thoughts, urged into action by the feeling of his power returning to his body.

There was no telling whether he could use the altar again right away. There was even a chance that it would all crumble apart once it served its purpose. That's why Vaner had no other choice but to make a massive bet.

He reached out... And right as he was about to get buried by the collapsing tower of other treasures, he wrapped his hands around the stone and squeezed hard on it.

The energy from the altar continued to fill his cultivation... And then, the energy that he saved over the last fifty years in that green stone joined the fray, mixing with the foreign power that the altar produced.

'This is the only way,' Vaner thought, gritting his teeth as the two kinds of different energies mixed within his body, fighting for the right to remain within the confines of his cultivation.

The energy from the green stone that he accumulated in the last fifty years by shaving away the entirety of his daily progress of cultivation.

And the foreign energy of the other world that the altar produced in exchange for the spiritual energy it sucked out of Vaner in the first phase of its procedure.

"ENDURE!" Vaner shouted, fighting off the excruciating pain of the procedure.

Because if the main objective of his presence in this strange, abandoned room was to get rid of his seal, his secondary aim was to get himself accustomed to both kinds of energy.

'If I want to survive in this new world, this is the only way!' Vaner thought, gritting his teeth so hard that they actually started to crack, all the while the energy from the stone and the altar continued to carve their mark on his insides.