

Strongest Mage with the Lust system

Chapter 561: I've been waiting for you

Hearing Emily trying to console him, Max came to his senses and felt warm in his heart. He placed his hands above hers on his cheeks and gave her a dazzling smile. "Yeah. You are right. This will be a new beginning for me."

Seeing he no longer looked 'worried', and was smiling, Emily secretly heaved a sigh of relief and also felt proud of herself that her words of comfort were powerful enough.

Max was stunned when he saw her grin, which enhanced her cold beauty by several folds. Unconsciously, his hands left hers and cupped her cheeks.

This made Emily snap out of her smug daze and she blinked her big, misty eyes, and gazed down at him, looking puzzled and asked. "What are you doing? Why are you touching my face like this?"

"Um..." Max was left speechless for a moment before he blushed and coughed. "Nothing. You looked just too adorable, so I couldn't stop myself. Why? You don't like it?"

"Oh..." Emily didn't say anything and kept staring at him for a while, causing him to become awkward and slowly lower his hands. But just then, grabbed his wrists, placed his palms on her cheeks and said, "It's okay. You can touch them for a while more since you like it."

Although she tried to look indifferent, her face still reddened and her black eyes became limpid like autumn dew, making her look enchanting. This made Max fall into a brief daze. Thump! Thump! When he recovered, he realized his heart was beating wildly, his breathing grew strained, and his blood flow had increased, which made a certain part of him hard and rise toward the sky.

"Hm? You alright, Max? Eh?!" Emily was startled when she noticed his breathing had slowed and his heart was beating loudly. But when she noticed a tent rising right below his stomach, she went still for a moment before her face blushed crimson and she cried out in alarm and surprise.

When Max heard her surprised cry and followed her gaze to his nether region, he grew frantic and cursed himself for having such low self control. "Ah, Emily. This isn't..." Whoosh!

Just when he wanted to explain himself, Emily moved his head away from her lap, putting it on the thin bedding laid underneath them, sat up, uttered a muffled, "It's alright," and dashed away, instantly disappearing from sight.

Even after she disappeared, Max continued to stare into the distance. After a while, he smiled bitterly and muttered, "I'm really hopeless, huh?"

A short while later, he threw these thoughts at the back of his mind and started contemplating what he was going to do going forward.

'I can sense mana now. So, I should try cultivating.' Thinking this, he pushed himself up, sat down cross-legged, and closed his eyes.

As he pushed his senses outwards, he could easily sense mana, and unlike when he used to recover his mana with mana stones, he felt refreshed. After basking in the feeling for a while, he started circulating his basic cultivation technique—that Esther gave him when he wanted to form his mana core. However, he soon realized something. When he used this cultivation technique before, he could easily control the mana inside his body and circulate it around his body however he wanted. But now, he couldn't even grasp the mana in his core, forget controlling it.

'Don't tell me the system was helping me with it?' Realization hit him hard, causing his face to turn dark. In the past, whenever he saw Rima and others cultivate and tell him how tiring it was, he used to feel that he was a genius, since he could easily do it and it wasn't that tiring for him. However, now he realized it was all thanks to the system. Realizing this, he couldn't help but reveal a self-mocking smile and sigh. "How pathetic!"

"Don't tell me I'll face the same problem with my spells" Suddenly, his expression changed. He wanted to try them, but because he didn't have any mana left, he gave up on the thought. Taking out a few hundred low-grade mana stones, he circulated his cultivation technique and started to recover his mana.

After an hour, he used up over a thousand low grade mana stones, but only recovered one fourth of his total mana.

Sigh!

Max sighed and muttered as he glanced at the used up mana stones and muttered, "I wasted more than half mana in the stones. This efficiency... is just too poor."

He knew it wasn't only because he wasn't proficient in circulating his mana through his mana veins since he wasn't too familiar with them, but also because his cultivation technique's grade was too low for a peak three-star mage. Not to mention, he couldn't use it properly like before.

'I can slowly get used to using my mana veins, but I need a better cultivation technique as soon as possible.' He thought. Then suddenly, he recalled when he scolded Ellie, he counted giving Ella this cultivation technique as a favor. Thinking this, his face twitched. If it could be called a favor, what else couldn't?

"Let's try the spells now. Then I'll ask Emily to teach me her cultivation technique." Deciding this, he stood up and started to cast his spells one by one.

Before long, he confirmed... without system, his spells' might had reduced a lot and he needed to train in them again to achieve his former level. But what really made Max frown was the fact that he couldn't accumulate any spell without being noticed, unlike before. This meant he lost the element of surprise, which always gave him the upper hand when fighting stronger enemies. It was a huge blow, and he also realized, once more, how significant the system's assistance was.

"There is no use drowning in sorrow. I should go find Emily now." He muttered and stopped thinking about the things he lost since it would only worsen his mood. Stowing away the bedding in his spatial ring, he walked out of their temporary residence—the cave—to find Emily.

Just as he walked out, he heard a nonchalant voice.

"Oh? You've finally woken up. I've been waiting for you."

Chapter 562: He is too much... isn't he?

Max looked to the side and a man in blue robes, leaning his back against a rock, looking at him with a strange look in his eyes, that, for some reason, gave him goosebumps.

But soon, his brows furrowed because when he walked by, he hadn't sensed his existence at all. Even though he wasn't actively using his mana sense, he still should've sensed his presence since he was so close, but he didn't and this made him realize another problem: His senses also seemed to have dulled. 'No, that shouldn't be the case since I can sense everything in the surroundings except him.' Thinking this, he closed his eyes and spread his mana sense out. This time, he could 'see' a hazy figure leaning against the rock.

'So he can hide his presence? No wonder I couldn't sense him before.' Max heaved a sigh of relief. If his senses were also dulled, it would've meant his all other attributes—that he enhanced with lust points—were also weakened. Fortunately, that was not the case.

"Oh?" Durden frowned in confusion when, instead of greeting him, Max closed his eyes. But when he felt his mana sense scouring the place, he realized what he was doing.

A playful smile appeared on his face and he muttered, "You want to sense me? That isn't easy, kid. My concealment spell isn't something a four-star mage, not to mention a three-star mage like you can see through."

But just a moment later, his smile froze on his lips and his eyes widened in shock, "WHAT?!"

Max opened his eyes when he heard his shocked shout and asked, looking calm, "What?"

Durden couldn't regain his composure. He was proud of his concealment spell and knew even five-star mages wouldn't find him if they didn't specially look for him. Although Max specifically looked for him, he was no five-star mage, but he still found him. So how could he not be shocked?

Whoosh!

Like a ghost, he appeared in front of Max, looked him dead in the eye, his expression extremely serious, and asked, "How did you do it? How did you find me?"

His serious expression left Max surprised. But he soon realized just like how it was a big deal to 'find him', it was the same for him, but for completely different reasons.

Thinking this, he smiled and extended his hand, "Hello, you must be Durden, right? I'm Max. Thanks for helping my group earlier."

"Yeah, it's fine. Now can you tell me how you sensed me?" Durden asked, after shaking his hand.

"Of course. Let's walk and talk." Max said and started walking away. Durden followed and repeated his question once again.

Seeing how anxious he was, Max shook his head and smiled. "You don't have to be so anxious. There is no problem with your concealment spell. In fact, it is very powerful."

"Then how did you see through it?" Durden felt a little relieved when he heard that, but was still anxious. Since Max could see through it, there was a possibility others also could. So, he had to know how he did it so he could take preventive measures.

Max thought for a moment. He knew his mana sense was strong because of his high intelligence stat. But he couldn't tell him about it. Even if he did, he wouldn't understand.

Seeing him become silent, Durden thought Max didn't want to tell him his secret. This made him frown. Although it was understandable and he couldn't force him, he couldn't give up on it either. So, after taking a deep breath, he said, "If you can tell me how you did it, I'll owe you a favor."

Max's eyes flashed when he heard this and nodded, "Alright. The reason I can sense you even when you are using your concealment spell is because my mana sense is stronger than others'. I don't know how much stronger it is exactly, but it's definitely stronger than peak three-star mages, and if I'm not wrong, it should be stronger than ordinary mid-stage four-star mages."

"Stronger than mid-stage four-star mages, huh?" Durden repeated his words and fell into deep thought.

This surprised Max because he had thought Durden would be shocked to hear it. After all, it was or should be shocking for a peak three-star mage to have a mana sense comparable to mid-stage four-star mages. However, Durden didn't even seem surprised.

Max's expression gradually turned solemn because he realized this guy wasn't ordinary and he might really have some hidden motive to stay with them.

Just then, he saw Ella coming back. Her shoulders were slumped downwards, and she wore a sad expression, looking extremely pitiful. Whoosh!

Seeing her like this, Max felt a pang in his heart. He then ignored Durden and rushed over to her. "What is it? Why do you look like that?" He asked.

Ella raised her head and looked him in the eye. "Sir Max, although you weren't wrong, you shouldn't have said all those things to her. If you were in her position, I'm sure you would've acted just like her, if not worse." Max's heart clenched when he noticed her gaze no longer had that gentle look. Right now, she looked at him as though she was looking at a stranger, and this made his blood run cold.

Suddenly, he took a deep breath, stepped forward and, before she could react, pulled her into his embrace.

This left Ella stunned. Before she could react, he spoke up, "I'm sorry. I know I shouldn't have done that."

Ella was dazed. She never expected him to apologize to her like this. Before she could come to her senses, he broke the hug and asked, "Where is she?"

"There... at the valley entrance." She answered without thinking.

"Okay. You go, rest. I'll bring her back." Nodding, he rushed away, quickly disappearing from her sight.

"This guy... he is too much, isn't he?" Durden arrived beside Ella and said. He was displeased that Max left while he was in his thoughts.

Ella acted as though she didn't hear him and continued looking in the direction he left. This made Durden's lips twitch as he cried out in his heart, 'Fuck! Everyone is ignoring me. I'm a five-star mage for god's sake.'

Chapter 563: Ellie is willing, Sudden Danger

"Wu... wu... wu..." When Max arrived near the valley's entrance, he heard stifled sobbing sounds. Glancing over, he saw a delicate young lady, Ellie, sitting under the tree, with her head held between her knees. A large patch of her robe had become wet from her tears.

Seeing this, Max felt bad for her. Sighing, he slowly walked over.

Ellie raised her head when she heard the footsteps in front of her. When she saw it was Max, who had come, she bit her lips and lowered her head, not wanting to look at him, let alone say anything.

Seeing this, Max also didn't speak and instead sat down beside her. Ellie, though feeling resentful and didn't want to be near him, didn't up and leave, afraid that it would anger him.

Just when she had started feeling uncomfortable, she heard Max say in a soft voice, "I shouldn't have said all that. I'm sorry."

"Huh?" Ellie looked at him, astonished. She had thought he was here to ensure she didn't leave or did anything foolish in anger and hadn't expected him to apologize.

Seeing her surprised look, Max smiled wryly and asked, "What? You didn't think I would be human enough to apologize?"

"Yes... I mean no. It's not that... I just..." She became nervous and didn't know what to say.

"It's fine. I know you don't have a good impression of me and I can't blame you for that." Max beamed an easygoing smile at her before looking up at the clear sky.

Hearing this, Ellie became even more nervous, but chose not to say anything. A moment later, Max continued, "I don't want to give any justification, but I wasn't in the right mind at the moment when I snapped at you. Also, you should think about what you want to do going forward."

Ellie was silent for a few moments before she looked at him, taking in his handsome side profile, which made her heart flutter all of a sudden. Quickly looking away, she took in a deep breath to control her emotions and said in a low voice, "I'm also sorry. Like

you said, not only you saved us, you also removed my mother's curse and helped her become a mage. Also, you weren't the one who forced her, but I blamed it all on you. I... I didn't mean to... sob... sob... I'm sorry."

As she started speaking, her eyes became teary and, by the end, she couldn't form a coherent sentence and started crying.

Max sighed. She had just lost everything and must be really sad and heartbroken. On top of all that, she watched helplessly as her pregnant mother was forced to 'help' him. So, it wasn't surprising she hated them, and eventually lashed out.

Max glanced at her and saw her shoulders trembling as she sniffed and sobbed, looking very pitiful. Letting out a sigh, he extended his hand toward her, wrapped it around her shoulders and pulled her to him before saying, "I know you didn't mean to. So, don't worry about it."

Ellie was stunned by his action, but didn't pull away. Instead, she put her head on his shoulder and continued crying her eyes out, pouring out all her sadness and grief she felt all these days. Max didn't try placating her and let her cry all she wanted.

After over ten minutes, her sobbing finally ceased. She awkwardly pulled away and mumbled an almost inaudible, 'Thank you!' to him, her face turning bright red due to her embarrassment.

"It's alright. If you are sad, you can cry. Don't keep your emotions bottled up." Max smiled, and gently wiped her face, causing her heart rate to increase and her face to turn redder even more.

'What's happening to me? Don't tell me I... I'm starting to like him just because he consoled me a little?' Ellie thought as she looked away to hide her blushing face from him.

Unfortunately for her, Max had already noticed her reactions to his actions. This surprised Max, but just a moment later, he understood the reason—his unsuppressed charm. 'Now that the system isn't suppressing my ungodly charm, it's affecting her. Perhaps Emily was also affected, which must've agitated her, causing her to run away. Just my 'bodily reaction' isn't enough for someone like her to act like that, after all.' He thought.

Just when he was lost in his thoughts, he heard Ellie say, "I've thought about it."

"Hm? Thought about what?" Max asked, coming to his senses.

Ellie slowly turned around and looked into his eyes, "You told me to think what I want to do going forward, right? I've decided what I want to do." "Oh? What is it?" Max asked, looking calm, but anticipation and excitement rose in his heart.

"I want to become strong, strong enough to ensure my mother's and my safety. I want to kill the demons and avenge my father and my village. Also, I want to repay you for saving us, and I know the only way to do that is to become strong." She solemnly stated. Then, after a pause, she stood up, bowed toward him, bending her waist almost ninety degrees and requested, "So, please, Sir Max, help me remove my innate curse and make me strong."

A smile unwittingly appeared on Max's face when he heard this. After letting her bow for a while, he asked, "Are you sure about it?"

"Yes." Ellie said, not getting up.

"Has Ella told you what you need to do to remove the curse?"

"Yes."

"You still want to do it?"

"Yes."

"Very well. I will help you." Max agreed, which made Ellie sigh in relief. She then stopped bowing and stood up. Although she tried to act calm, she was, in fact, very anxious. Her heart was beating loudly as though it was about to jump out of her chest and nubile body was trembling ever so slightly while her fists were clenched so tight that her nails dug into her palms and almost drew blood.

Seeing this, Max smiled, grabbed her delicate hand, pulled her over and made her sit on his lap. "Don't be anxious. Calm down, alright? You don't need to rush it if you aren't ready."

"I... I'm sorry." Ellie bashfully murmured after lowering her head.

"There is no need to be sorry." Max smiled and softly kissed her on the cheek, causing her to stiffen. He then whispered in her ear, "Just tell me when you are ready, but... it's better to do it sooner rather than later since we don't have much time."

Embarrassed and uncomfortable, Ellie shifted in his lap, which, unfortunately for her, caused his little brother to harden and poke her soft bottom, which sent shivers down her spine.

Ellie panicked and wanted to push him away, but suddenly, she felt a unique sense of excitement that she had never felt before. It was fearsome, yet thrilling.

'What's happening? Why do I suddenly feel like this, and why does it feel... tingly down there?' She thought, panicked and embarrassed. But her lower body didn't stop shifting around and rubbing the 'steel rod'.

Suddenly, her heart skipped a beat because she felt as though some predator was eyeing her. When she raised her head, she noticed his breathing had become hot and deep, and as her eyes met his, she could see an intense desire in them, which made her nervously gulp her saliva, but at the same time, it made her want to let go and let him do whatever he wanted.

Now that his lust overlord's bloodline was complete, Max had expected his lust to spike, but not this much. Just a few moments ago, he was in control but just some slight rubbing, a kiss and her feminine scent almost made him lose himself to his sexual desires.

"Damn it, Ellie! You are irresistible!" He growled before he dove down and captured her lips in his. Inwardly, he was smiling bitterly because he had just said that she didn't need to rush if she wasn't ready and could take her time.

Not wanting to hurt her, he slowed down as much as he could and started sucking her lips, soft lips one by one, savouring them. BUT in his current state, where he just wanted to push her down, do the deed with her, this was nothing short of torture for him. But he couldn't give in to his urges because she deserved the gentleness and love, at least for her first time.

Ellie's eyes widened the moment she felt his lips and instinctively wanted to push him away, but before she could do it, his other hand came down and wrapped around her waist, pulling her into his body. And as he started kissing her lips, strength left her and her body turned soft.

Unable and unwilling to resist, she resigned herself to him and closed her eyes.

Just when things were heating up and their kiss was deepening, Max's danger senses blared.

Whoosh!

Immediately, his mana exploded out of him, and he, along with Ellie, disappeared from the place.

BOOM!!

Just as they did, the tree under which they were making out just now exploded into pieces.

Chapter 564: Dwarf Demons

Upon hearing the loud explosion, Ellie opened her eyes. When she realized what had happened, her heart palpitated in fear and her tiny face turned pale. But seeing she was in Max's protective embrace, she calmed down. Unconsciously, her grasp on Max's robes tightened.

How could Max not feel her fear when she was tightly pressed against his chest? When looking vulnerable, Ellie grabbed his robes, not willing to leave his embrace, his churning anger was further ignited. He had just apologized for hurting her, and had accepted her as his woman, but someone dared to attack them. It was unacceptable.

Ba-Dum! Ba-Dum!

His heart started pumping the blood at an increased rate and slowly, his eyes turned red.

He gently placed Ellie on the ground, making her eyes widen in fear. Seeing this, he forcibly suppressed his anger and tried to keep his expression normal and softly said, "It's alright. You stand here. With me here, no one can harm you."

Ellie suddenly felt a strange feeling well up in her heart. Despite her fear, she bit her lips, lowered her head and nodded, "Mm."

Boom!

Max turned around, and looked into the distance as his mana erupted out of him like a volcano, causing his hair and robes to flap wildly. "WHO THE FUCK IS IT? COME OUT AND DIE!" He growled.

'He is... really angry now?' From the moment she first saw him, she had never seen him become as angry as he was now. Because she knew the reason of anger, she couldn't help but feel moved. As she looked at his straight back, which seemed as tall and sturdy as a mountain, the strange feeling in her heart intensified. She suddenly felt her decision earlier was right. Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Right after he shouted, several figures rushed in from outside the valley like a gust of wind, stopping ten meters away from him.

It was a group of six, red-skinned demons. But it would be more appropriate to call them dwarves because although they were muscular like most demons, none of them was taller than three feet. All of them had a similar, short bone knife, in their hands.

"Dwarves?" Max raised his brows when he saw them. After they appeared, they were greedily eyeing him and, especially Ellie, with creepy smiles on their faces. But when they heard Max call them 'Dwarves', their expression morphed and they suddenly became furious.

Almost at the same time, they raised their bone knives, and rushed toward him, growling, "You puny human dare disrespect us? DIE!!"

Shua! Shua! Shua!

Despite their short stature, and tiny legs, they were surprisingly fast. Almost immediately, they arrived in front of Max and swung their bone knives at him from different angles. Rip~ Rip~ Rip~

As soon as they slashed, ripping noises filled the air, causing Max to narrow his eyes, but he couldn't see anything, as though the attacks were invisible.

On a whim, he injected a wisp of his Lust overlord's bloodline energy into his eyes, causing his eyes to gain a pink hue. When he looked again, his heart throbbed in fear, and felt a chill run down his spine because he saw six, blood red Crescents ripping the air and rushing toward him, targeting his head, heart, abdomen etc.

Almost on instinct, he took out his thunder sword and slashed at the Crescent targeting his head. But when the sword clashed against it, something he didn't expect happened.

Clang!

The Crescent wasn't cut into two. Instead, his sword was deflected and the counterforce threw him off balance. This caused his expression to change drastically.

Just then, a feeling of intense dread welled up in his heart. Not bothering to stabilize his footing, he created layers upon layers of mana shields in front of him and covered his body with a thick layer of fire elemental mana. At the same time, he also circulated the Barbarian God physique to the limits.

But even then, the feeling of danger didn't completely vanish. However, he didn't have time to do anything else.

Under his horrified gaze, the six blood red Crescents phased past his mana shields, as though they weren't there. The same thing happened with the layer of fire elemental mana, proving his defensive measures ineffective. Piak! Piak! Piak!

After that, the Crescents pierced into his body. But fortunately for him, because he was thrown off balance, the Crescent that was to pierce his forehead, only cut off a few strands of hair before rushing past him while the one targeting his heart also missed the target. Perhaps it was because they lost energy to phase past the mana shields and fire elemental mana layer, or his body was tough enough, they only left half an inch holes in his chest, abdomen, legs, and left shoulder, unable to completely pierce through.

Although it took quite some time to describe it, all of this happened in a span of a few seconds.

"Ahhh!!"

Just when Max was sighing in relief, Ellie's sudden heart wrenching scream made him freeze. He stiffly turned his head around, hoping she was alright but what he saw made his eyes widen in shock, and terror. Ellie was clutching the left side of her neck. Her hands, and neck were all bloody. Furthermore, blood was constantly seeping out from between her fingers, dying her robes red. She had a look of extreme pain, horror on her face as she desperately tried to stop the bleeding while looking at him pleadingly.

Whoosh!

Ignoring the dwarves preparing to launch another attack, he rushed over to her. Holding her in his embrace, he took out a healing pill and fed it to her. After that, he took a few blood clotting pills, crushed them into powder and pressed it into the wound on her neck.

After seeing the ghastly slash wound, he had realized it was from the Crescent that he accidentally dodged. This made him feel guilty and also made him realize that even though he could kill mid-stage four-star experts, he wasn't invincible and there were many beings in the same realm who could pose him a threat. After all, apart from the leading dwarf, who seemed to be an early-stage four-star demon, the rest were high-stage and peak three-star demons, but they still almost killed him.

"He dares ignore us? Kill him. Kill him." The dwarves became angry when they saw Max ignore them. Immediately, they started infusing their energies into their bone knives.

Hum~!

The knives started humming and a red light started gathering on the blade which quickly turned invisible. Seeing how Max was completely focused on saving Ellie, the dwarves sneered and raised their hands to slash at him. Crackle~!

However, before they could slash, a sharp crackling noise filled the air.

"Defend!" The leading dwarf seemed to have sensed something and hurriedly shouted with a grave expression. Whoosh! Whoosh!

Immediately, the five dwarves took position behind him. Then, following the leading dwarf's lead, they simultaneously slashed upwards.

This scene would baffle most of the people who saw it because there was nothing above them. But just as the dwarves slashed upwards, a lightning spear, crackling with thunder appeared there out of nowhere and fiercely dove down towards them, clashing against the six invisible Crescents. Boom! The collision resulted in a deafening boom. When the sky cleared, there was no trace left of the lightning spear or the invisible Crescents.

"Oh?!"

A surprised voice rang in the air.

Chapter 565: Surrender or die

Whoosh!

Following the voice, Durden flew out of the valley and gracefully landed beside Max.

"Is she alright?" He asked, glancing at Ellie.

Max, however, acted as though he didn't hear him, and continued looking at Ellie as blood red mist gathered in the depths of his eyes, giving them a malevolent look. At the same time, his heartbeat rose, his blood started churning in his veins like a raging river while his murderous intent spiked uncontrollably.

Durden frowned, a little displeased, but seeing how Max was staring at Ellie's face in a daze, he shook his head and raised his head to look at the dwarf demons. But just then, a strange sensation of oppression enveloped him, which made his blood run cold.

"An emperor?" His first thought was that an emperor demon had arrived as king ranked mages and demons weren't strong enough to give him such a feeling. He immediately raised his guard up, took out a violet short sword and cautiously looked around. However, he found no one apart from the dwarf demons, Max and Ellie.

Just when he was feeling puzzled, the feeling of oppression became stronger. Right then, his gaze landed on Max, his heart skipped a beat and his expression changed because he had realized Max was the source of oppression he was feeling.

'Is he...' An ominous feeling welled up in his heart. "HEY, SNAP OUT OF IT!!" Slap!

Immediately, he let out a loud shout and slapped Max's shoulder hard.

"Hm?" The slap sent a jolt running through Max's body, which caused the red mist in his eyes to disperse, and woke him up.

"You hit me? Why?" Max coldly asked, feeling the pain in his shoulder. Seeing that he had regained his senses, Durden let out an internal sigh of relief. Then, his expression turned cold as he emotionlessly stated, "No matter what happens, you need to keep your emotions in check. If not, there would be consequences and I'm sure, you won't like them."

After saying this, he turned his gaze toward the dwarf demons while Max furrowed his brows in confusion.

'Keep my emotions in check?' Suddenly, his eyes widened and he understood why Durden slapped him, and sent his thunder energy into his body. 'I almost lost my senses just now...' When he had lost his senses last time, he didn't have even a trace of Lust overlord's bloodline in his body, but he still almost crippled himself. Now, he had the complete Lust overlord's bloodline, which he didn't have much control of yet. If Durden hadn't woken him up, and he had lost his senses, he couldn't even imagine what would've happened.

Realizing this, he broke out in cold sweat, and quickly thanked Durden. "Thank you, Durden, for the help."

Durden lightly grunted in acknowledgement, his gaze fixed on the dwarf demons' leader.

Max also turned his head around, anger blazing in his eyes.

"Argh!" Just then, a soft grunt of pain sounded, which made him look down at Ellie. She had already lost consciousness, and her face had become as pale as a sheet of white paper. Fortunately, the healing medicines had worked as the wound on her neck had stopped bleeding, and was slowly healing. Seeing this, he sighed in relief, but then felt a surge of anger, which made some strands of red mist appear in the depths of his eyes. But this time, he didn't let his anger overwhelm him, and took a deep breath and calmed down. Swoosh! Swoosh!

Just then, Emily and others arrived. When they saw dwarf demons, their expressions hardened. Max signaled the four-star female elf to take care of Ellie before he slowly stood up. However, just when he was about to take the lead and attack the demons, Durden spoke up, "I didn't expect to meet the famed Scarlet Dwarf Demons so soon. It seems the demon continent is serious this time." A flicker of surprise and apprehension flashed in the dwarf leader's eyes as he snorted, "We were always serious."

"Hm. So, tell me, do you want to die right now, or surrender your scarlet bone knives and leave here alive?" Durden calmly asked.

His question not only surprised Max and others, but also dwarf demons. They were preparing to fight to death just now, but all of a sudden, they were given a choice to survive?

However, their expressions were ugly because their bone knives were too precious to them as they had nurtured them with their heart blood for several years and even decades. So, how could they be happy by the given choices?

"Boss, let's fight them to death. They must not want to fight us to death because they know they will suffer more losses." A dwarf demon clutched his bone knife as he shouted.

When the dwarf leader heard this, his eyes flickered. However, when he looked at Durden, there was no change in his expression aside from a faint mocking smile on his lips.

Seeing this, he hesitated for a while, before saying in a low, yet cold tone, "We won't give you our knives. If you don't let us leave safely, we will fight you all to death. You should know, if we go all out, apart from you and that pretty boy over there, all others will die."

Hearing this, the four-star male elf snorted in disdain, and released his aura, "Overconfident fiend! Do you believe I can kill you with a single attack?"

Other elves also shouted, ready to attack. Emily looked on calmly while Max had an unpleasant expression on his face. He wanted to kill all the dwarves to avenge Ellie, but he could tell Durden must have a reason for not wanting to fight. Just when he was thinking this, he received a voice transmission from Durden. "Stop your people. We can't afford to waste any time fighting them. Two groups of demons are headed this way. They have multiple four-star experts amongst them. If we don't leave immediately, all of us might die here."

Max's expression changed when he heard this. He immediately closed his eyes and expanded his senses, but didn't sense anyone nearby. Durden raised his brows in confusion when he noticed this. 'Is he trying to sense them?'

As this thought appeared in his mind, his eyes flashed with surprise because he could tell Max wasn't using his mana sense, and since he was just a three-star mage, he couldn't have Divine sense, this could only mean he was using his Natural sense.

'Don't tell me his natural sense is stronger than his mana sense?!' Suppressing his surprise, he sent another voice transmission to him, "Don't bother. They are still a few miles away. You won't be able to sense them."

Hearing this, Max opened his eyes, and stopped the four-star elf, "Stop. Let Mr. Durden talk."

The four-star elf looked at him in confusion, but when he noticed the grave look in his eyes, he stepped back.

Seeing this, the leading dwarf became even more confident, and revealed a mocking sneer, 'You want to intimidate us when you don't dare to fight.'

However, in the next moment, his sneer froze and chill ran down his spine because he saw Durden grin, before he disappeared from the view. 'Not good!' .

Chapter 566: Divine Sense?

He hurriedly raised his bone knife in a defensive manner. Just then, a fist wrapped in thick lightning mana smashed into his knife. Bang!!

A crisp bang sounded, the web between his forefinger and thumb split apart, and he almost lost his grip on the knife. That was not the end as the fist continued forward and smashed his chest. Crack!

There was a crack as several of his ribs snapped before he was sent flying, spitting out blood.

Just as he was about to crash into the ground, a scarlet light flashed, considerably slowing down his speed, which allowed him to land on his feet. However, his face had turned pale, and deep terror could be seen in his eyes.

But when he looked up, his expression turned dark because Durden was looking at him with a small smile on his face as he clenched one of his subordinates' neck and raised him into the air.

"Tell me, do you still want to fight to the death?" Durden asked and started clenching the dwarf's neck tighter, making him gasp for air.

Seeing this, the dwarf leader's expression changed and hurriedly shouted, "Wait! We don't want to fight any longer. We'll give up our knives. Don't kill..."

Crack!

Before he could finish his sentence, Durden's hand clenched tighter and snapped the dwarf's neck, instantly killing him. He then threw the dead body away and sighed in regret, "Sigh! If you had spoken a moment earlier, he would be still alive. What a pity!" Adam and Jasmine looked at each other, and smiled bitterly while Marsh, Shasha and other elves flinched. This guy...

"How dare you?" "Shameless human!!"

"You deserve to die!"

"Attack!"

The dwarf demons roared in fury. It was unbearable for them to see one of their own be killed. "SHUT UP!!"

Just when they were about to lose control and attack Durden, the dwarf leader shouted, immediately silencing them.

"Leader, this bastard killed my brother. He deserves to die." A dwarf said through gritted teeth, his eyes red with anger.

The dwarf leader's expression wasn't any better and his chest was heaving up and down. He was barely able to control himself from attacking but he knew doing so would only result in their death, so he suppressed his anger. At the same time, he regretted the fact that he underestimated Durden even though he knew the human was a lot stronger than him.

Glancing at the corpse of his fellow demon, he sighed inwardly, 'Only if we had surrendered our knives earlier...'

"Give them your knives." He said in a defeated tone, before throwing his knife toward Durden. The rest of the dwarves were reluctant and furious but they also knew they could only comply if they wanted to live. So, they also threw their bone knives, took their fellow demon's corpse and retreated.

Everyone watched as demons disappeared, feeling confused. They still didn't know why they didn't kill all of them and allowed them to leave.

Marsh glanced at Durden, wanting to ask this when he saw Durden spat out a mouthful of blood.

""Big brother!""

Jasmine and Adam anxiously shouted and rushed over to him. "I'm alright." Durden wiped his lips. He then glanced at Max and gravely said, "Let's go. They will be here at any moment." His statement confused everyone. Who'll be here?

Before anyone could ask anything, Max released the silver hawk, and ordered everyone to get on it, "Let's go."

...

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Two minutes after Max's group left the valley, a large group of horned demons arrived.

A four-star horned demon frowned as he looked around, "It seems they somehow knew we were coming so they left." He then glanced at the Dwarf demons in his group, who they met just a while ago, "That's also why they didn't fight you."

"Yeah, I was wondering why they let them when they had a five-star and multiple four-star mages. But how did they know we were coming this way?" A shrewd looking horned demon muttered in confusion.

Hearing this, the four-star horned demon frowned. 'That's right. Even a five-star mage doesn't have a strong enough divine sense to sense someone almost ten miles away. Only king ranked or stronger experts can do it.'

Thinking this, he glanced at the dwarf leader, "Are you sure the strongest of them was just a five-star mage?"

"Yeah. I'm sure." The dwarf leader nodded, his expression solemn. Inside, he was feeling bitter. He should feel angry by the fact that their lives were only spared because the humans didn't want to waste time on them, but he was feeling relieved because if this wasn't the case, they would've lost their lives.

"Should we give chase? It hasn't been long since they left." Another four-star demon asked.

"If a five-star expert wants to escape, we can't stop him, so it's useless to give chase. They should be heading over to the Green leaf battlefield. If fate wills it, we'll meet them there." The shrewd looking demon said. Hearing this, others nodded in agreement. Then, they moved in the Royal city's direction.

...

After traveling for over a hundred miles, Durden sighed in relief, "We are safe for now."

"Mm. Let's rest there." Max nodded and directed the hawk toward a nearby destroyed city. Ellie needed time to recover while he also needed time to get used to the changes in his body. Besides, he already had the Drop of life, so he was no longer in a rush to head to the battlefield.

Durden didn't say anything as he also needed time to recover from his injuries.

After landing in the city, everyone found some intact buildings to rest. After resting for a day, Max checked on Ellie. Her wound had mostly recovered but she had yet to regain her consciousness. After that, he summoned the Elves.

As Ray, Kamesh, Shasha and others wondered why they were gathered, Max spoke up, "You guys no longer need to accompany me to the battlefield. You can head back to Ninam city."

No matter if it was Kamesh, Shasha or others, everyone was stunned. "What did you say, team leader?" Ray asked, thinking he had heard wrong. He had thought they might be gathered to discuss some fighting strategy or something else, but he had never thought Max wanted to send them back. Weren't they supposed to go to the battlefield? Could it be that the recent fights, or Ellie's injury had made him afraid? No, that wasn't right. If he was really afraid, he would also return, and wouldn't send only them back.

Shasha looked at him with furrowed brows, while Kamesh and others appeared confused yet relieved. Max glanced at them, a little surprised by Ray's and Shasha's expression. Clearly, they weren't accepting of the sudden change of plans.

"I've achieved the goal for which I needed you all. So, there is no need for you guys to risk your lives any further." Max calmly said, before glancing at Ray and Shasha, "Of course, if any of you want to experience the battlefield, you are welcome to accompany me."

Hearing this, Shasha's expression eased. "I will go to the battlefield." She said, before stepping to the side.

Ray hesitated for a brief moment, before he smiled, "I'll continue accompanying you, team leader." Saying this, he walked over to Shasha.

Max nodded. He then glanced at Kamesh and others. Kamesh kept his silence, a ruminating expression on his face.

Seeing this, an elf, who got injured a few days ago, and was yet to recover, cautiously asked, "If we return without you, won't the Lord commander punish us?"

Chapter 567: Underestimation

Max glanced at the elf, and shook his head, "No, he won't." He knew just saying this wasn't assuring enough, so he waved his hand and took out a wooden box, "You are heading back to deliver this box, which contains medicine that my father needs to heal."

Kamesh and others' eyes flashed when they heard this.

Max glanced at Kamesh, and ordered in a high voice, "Kamesh, you'll be the team leader and lead all these guys to return and deliver this medicine to my father. This is your mission. Do you accept it?"

From their reactions, Max already knew they all wanted to return. So, not wanting to waste any more time, and to give them a proper excuse, he gave them the mission.

Kamesh hesitated. Just like Ray, he also could tell Max was someone extraordinary, and this belief strengthened further when he absorbed the white light that Max exuded a few days ago, and benefited a lot. Because he knew this, he wanted to follow him, and benefit even more, but another part of him told him to go back to the safety of Ninam city as he had already come close to losing his life a few times already. If he really followed him to the battlefield, he felt the chances of him surviving were pitifully low, and he wasn't ready to die yet, and had two beautiful wives, and a newly born son waiting at home.

Upon thinking this, he took a deep breath, and nodded, "Yes, I accept the mission, team leader." As soon as he said this, he felt a sense of loss, but since he had already made his decision, he wasn't going to change it. A short while later, Ella, Ellie, Kamesh, and the rest of the elves, except Ray and Shasha, sat on the silver hawk and headed back to Ninam city.

Whoosh!

A short while later, Ella, Ellie, Kamesh, and the rest of the elves, except Ray and Shasha, sat on the silver hawk and headed back to Ninam city.

Whoosh!

Emily arrived with a gust of wind, and watched the hawk disappear on the horizon. She then turned toward Max, and asked, "Did you send them back? Why?"

"I didn't want them to risk their lives any longer." Max breathed out, a relieved expression appearing on his face. Seeing this, Emily frowned. She knew Max came here to find a way to heal their father. She didn't know how they were supposed to find it, but she had a guess. However, if her guess was true, wasn't sending them back a bad idea? Or Could it be that he was no longer confident to find a way to heal their father...

Thinking this, her fist clenched tight, an anxious look appeared on her face, and she hesitantly opened her mouth. But before she could say anything, Max added, "I also needed them to send the medicine back to heal father since he only has a few days left."

Emily's expression rippled when she heard this, before letting out a relieved breath. Max waited for her to ask how he acquired the medicine, but she stayed silent, clearly not intending to ask anything.

Max let out a relieved sigh in his heart. He didn't want to concoct any lies, while the truth would be hard to digest for her. So, it was for the best that she didn't ask anything.

Just then, Emily gave him a peculiar look and asked, "Why didn't you ask me if I wanted to go back? Aren't you worried something might happen to me on the battlefield?"

She didn't ask why they didn't go back too, since it was obvious Max still wanted to join the battlefield.

Max turned his head around, met her gaze, and said with a smile "Of course, I'm worried. But would you have agreed to go back?" Max gave her a small smile.

Emily turned around and the corner of her lips curled up slightly.

"Rest up, and recover quickly. It isn't safe to stay in one place for long." Saying this, she transformed into a gust of wind and vanished from his sight. This surprised Max, and he muttered, "She has made quite some progress in her movement technique."

I wonder how Lily is doing and what life threatening situation she is going to face... Seeing how much her master dotes upon her, she shouldn't face any life threatening situation. Could it be that she is going to participate in the war? But why would her master allow it... His expression turned grim when he thought this, as the sense of urgency became even stronger.

No, this won't do. I need to work hard and quickly break through to the four-star realm and complete the mission. Thinking this, he told Ray and Shasha that they were going to stay here for a few days, and asked them to inform Durden's group, before entering the building, intending to gain control over his mana, bloodline, and get used to newly formed mana veins.

...

At the same time, Oliver, Lily and several others had arrived in a forest at the border of the border of Black Dragon Empire. Initially, they planned to go to the Flame Dragon Empire, see if their help was needed. If not, they were to proceed to the smaller kingdoms. However, a day before, they were ordered to travel to the Black Dragon Empire and report to the War Rankings hall at the empire's battlefield.

"Tsk! Why haven't we encountered any demons yet? I can't wait to kill a few hundred." A white robed man said in annoyance. Apart from Lily, who was cultivating in her tent, everyone else was gathered around a small campfire.

"A few hundred? Even ten would be more than what you can handle on your own, or could it be that you want to kill a few hundred low ranked demons?" A rough looking man sitting across from him scoffed.

"Of course, I'm talking about five-star demons. Do you think I'm a weakling like you who kills lower realmed enemies to appear strong?" The first man mocked back.

"You bastard! Do you wanna see how strong your father is?" The rough looking man immediately got angry, and started a verbal assault. Seeing this, Oliver frowned, and

swept his gaze across everyone. Upon seeing how everyone was laughing without any worry, his expression hardened and he abruptly shouted. "Shut up!"

Immediately, the two arguing become silent, and warily looked at Oliver. Others also looked at him, wondering why he suddenly became angry.

"What do you think the demons are? Helpless sheep who you can kill whenever you want? Don't you know how fearsome they are? Do any of you have any clue at all?" Oliver shouted.

Chapter 568: Ambush

Only two or three people's expressions turned solemn when they heard Oliver's questions, but everyone else had blank looks on their faces.

The rough looking man belonged to the later category, and he blurted out, "Of course, they aren't helpless sheep. But as long as we don't let their demonic energy infect us, there is nothing so fearsome about them. At most, they are slightly more troublesome enemies to kill than we are used to. Isn't that right?"

Oliver sneered at him and then glanced at others, "Do you all also think the same as him?"

By now, even the rough looking man knew something was wrong. So, no one responded even though they also thought the same. In the distance, Little Snow standing guard in front of Lily's tent, sneered and thought proudly, 'They are really fools. Shouldn't they have tried to gather some information on the demons before leaving? Are they looking to die?'

'...wait! Don't tell me others who left the mountain to join the war also don't have much information about the demons?' As she thought this, her heart thudded violently. Although she didn't know many people on the Sovereign mountain, she didn't want them to die in vain. A moment later, however, she relaxed, 'There is no way the Elders will not consider this. They must have made some arrangements to inform them. Ha! I got worried in vain.'

She patted her petite chest and heaved a sigh of relief. After that, she continued listening to Oliver's group.

Seeing no one responded, Oliver let out a sigh, "It's been a few decades since the last war with demons, and most of the information on the demons is always slightly secretive. Since you guys spend most of your time outside doing missions, it's normal you don't know much, so, I can't exactly blame you."

After a pause, he added, "I won't bother telling you everything I know about them since the War Hall of the Black Dragon empire will tell you. But until we arrive at the War Hall, you all should keep your guards up at all times. We have yet to encounter any demons until now doesn't mean they aren't nearby." Saying this, he took a deliberate pause, and cautioned, "Demons aren't easy opponents, so don't ever underestimate them, because if you do, you'll die. Also, before you have decapitated them or have crushed their heads, don't ever think they are dead. Because many of the demons possess strange abilities and can immediately recover from a near death state."

"Yes, senior brother." Everyone echoed, their expressions turning solemn.

Rustle!

Shua! Shua!

Just then, a faint sound of leaves rustling sounded over a hundred meters from them in the forest, which was then followed by sharp wind whistling sounds.

"Enemy attack!" The rough looking man shouted as he shot to his feet and a broadsword appeared in his hands.

'Fuck...!' Oliver inwardly cursed. He knew it was only a matter of time before they met demons, he still hoped they wouldn't encounter any before reaching the War Hall so he could spend a few more days with Lilly. Because he wanted to spend more time with Lilly, he had asked his father to change their destination from the Flame Dragon empire to the Black Dragon empire that was several more days away.

He cast a glance at Lily's tent and saw her come out. Suddenly, his eyes flashed. 'I should try showing off my strength a little. Maybe that'll impress—'

Just as this thought crossed his mind, his expression changed drastically because he had sensed more than fifty demons in the surroundings. What was even worse was that there seemed to be three six-star and more than a dozen five-star experts among them. "WE ARE SURROUNDED! DEFEND AND TRY TO BREAK OUT OF THE ENCIRCLEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!! DON'T DELEY—" He roared as his aura, ice elemental mana and Ice God halo burst out of him. However, before he could finish shouting, his roars were drowned by a salvo of attacks.

Bang!

Boom!

Boom!

Only a few seconds had passed from the moment they first heard the leaves rustle, and most of the people in the group had yet to properly react when countless attacks fell on them one after another.

Everyone was a five-star mage in the group, and had their fair share of battle experience. Therefore, they could sense that even the weakest attack falling on them was slightly stronger than an average mid-stage five-star mage's full powered attack. Even more frightening, there were multiple attacks beyond five-star level.

Despite them trying their best to defend, they were quickly drowned out by the barrage of attacks. Most of the weaker people had perished while others got varied levels of injuries. The strongest among them, Oliver, had trails of blood flowing down the corner of his lips.

Before they could recover from the sudden assault, the second wave of attacks arrived which was quickly followed by the third and fourth wave of attacks.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

...

After a while, the dust and smoke cleared and revealed a completely destroyed patch of land. One could see dozens of badly mangled corpses strewn across the area. Shua! Shua! Shua!

Dozens of demons that had black insect wings and goat heads flew out and landed around the destroyed area. Some of them landed near the corpses, and started kicking them. Once they confirmed everyone was dead, they revealed expressions of joy.

One of the three king ranked goat demons, a middle-aged female goat demon, swept her gaze across the area and frowned, "A few rats still managed to escape. How troublesome!"

"It's alright. Even though they escaped, they were severely injured, and would die when they encountered others." Another king ranked goat demon comment.

"Tch! If these useless punks hadn't alerted them, all of them would've died and we've made some significant contribution since they were from a sovereign faction." The female goat said in displeasure as she eyed a few goat demons who had mistakenly stepped on the dried up leaves.

The goat demons shuddered when they felt her gaze and hurriedly lowered their heads.

"Leave it. It's inevitable to make some mistakes here and there. We didn't suffer any losses. So, there is no need to make things difficult for these little ones." The last king ranked demon remarked.

"Hmph! You didn't suffer any loss but I did." The female goat harrumphed.

"Oh?! What do you mean?" The king ranked demons asked with interest.

The female goat didn't answer. She had sensed two high grade physiques, and wanted to capture them. That's why she had deliberately shielded them from life threatening attacks. But just when she was about to sweep them away without anyone noticing, they used talismans and vanished.

Seeing this, the two king ranked demons exchanged glances but chose to not say anything. ...

In a place far away, the space above a river rippled and a young man covered in blood appeared. He was holding an unconscious, similarly bloodied figure in his hand.

The man was Oliver, while the unconscious figure was Lily. After he had sensed there were several dozen demons with multiple king ranked experts among them, he knew they didn't stand any chance against them. So, when the first wave of attacks fell, he had taken out his defensive treasure and his life saving talisman—the random teleportation talisman, which his grandmother, Synthia, had given him.

When the second wave of attacks fell, he moved over to Lily, who had gotten severely injured by then, and knocked her unconscious. Right before he used his talisman to escape, his defensive treasure had broken apart, resulting in him getting injured.

As he glanced down at unconscious Lily, a smile appeared on his face, which looked very menacing due to all the blood. "It was worth getting injured."

After that, he glanced around and flew away.

Chapter 569: Sparring With Emily

For two days, Max slept for only four hours, and spent the rest of his time on familiarizing himself with his mana pathways, and training his mana control. Although it was hard for him to do because he hadn't trained with such focus and pressure, he managed to do it and the results left him satisfied.

He had familiarized himself with his mana pathways and as long as he paid a little attention, his mana flowed through them in a very smooth fashion. Of course, the current mana circulation efficiency couldn't compare to before. But he knew given enough time, and with some more effort on his end, it would reach the same level. Furthermore, despite the fact that manually circulating mana was slightly inconvenient for him, it gave him a strange sense of satisfaction. He felt as though everything was in his control.

The system's absence hadn't affected his mana control much, but after his two days' training, it also improved which indirectly helped him familiarize with mana pathways quicker.

'If I'm not wrong, my current combat strength should be around 80% of my peak. But I should verify it in a fight. Maybe a fight will help me even more.' Max thought. He then left the building where he was huddled away, and went to find Emily.

Emily was sitting cross-legged, cultivating with a pile of mana stones around her. When she sensed him arrive, she opened her eyes. "How was your training?" She asked.

"It was great. But I need a good fight, so let's spar." Max said.

Emily wasn't all too surprised by his request and immediately agreed. Soon, they were standing, facing each other in an open area some distance away from their temporary residences.

After they stretched for a while, and got ready to fight, Max suddenly said, "Don't use your full power at the start, give me time to get used to it." Emily raised her brows at this. Get used to what? Although confused, she didn't ask anything, and just nodded.

Swoosh!

Wind elemental mana gushed out of her, causing her robes and long black hair to flap wildly. Max's eyes lit up when he saw this because strangely, Emily looked very charming in her battle form. However, he couldn't admire the beautiful scenery in front of him for long because she seemed to teleport in front of him before throwing a punch at his chest.

Wind ranged around her fist, and before it even landed, Max could feel pressure on his chest. He focused his mind, and took a small step back before slapping a palm at her fist.

Emily's gaze sharpened when she saw this. Although she wasn't using all her strength as he requested, seeing how he responded with a normal palm without using any mana, she thought he was underestimating her. But in the next second, she found out he wasn't because as soon as his palm met her fist, the wind around it was neutralized and her fist was grabbed.

Although she was a little surprised, it didn't stop or delay her from making her next move. She moved a step forward, so she was close to him, flexed her hand before thrusting her elbow towards his chin.

Snap!

The speed and strength behind her elbow strike caused air to snap, but unfortunately, her attack missed its target because as soon as she had stepped towards him, Max knew what her next was. So, he immediately released her fist and slid back, easily dodging the strike.

A tiny, proud smile appeared on Emily's face. She was happy to see his battle awareness. In the next moment, however, she appeared before him, twisted her body and kicked at his chest.

Bang!

Max tried to dodge, but was slightly slow to react. The kick connected and he was sent flying.

Whoosh!

Bang! Thud!

Before he could regain his balance and land, Emily appeared beside him and elbowed his stomach hard which made him blanch, and crash into the ground.

Tap! After that, she gracefully landed beside the small crater and looked down at Max with a hint of mischief in her eyes. However, when the dust cleared and she saw Max had blood traces on the corner of his lips, she shook, and asked in a slightly trembling voice, "A-Are you alright? Sorry, I was too harsh. I'll try to hold back more."

Max looked at her, speechless. If he didn't know her well enough, he would've thought she was being sarcastic. But seeing how anxious and apologetic she was, he sighed as he stood up, casually wiped the blood away and said, "It's fine. Since we are sparring, some injuries are inevitable. You don't need to feel sorry. Also, please don't hold back too much. If you do, there will be no point in sparring."

"Okay." Emily calmly nodded. "Let's continue then." Inwardly, however, she was feeling embarrassed and scolded herself, 'Why was I so anxious? It's normal to get injured when sparring. Now I've destroyed my image.'

Max didn't know what she was thinking or his expression would've been interesting. As her younger brother, he, of course, knew her 'cold and emotionless lady' persona was not genuine and she had 'copied' it from her mother, Esther.

Soon, the second round started. This time, Emily didn't go out of control, and gradually increased her strength. When she starting using a little less than half of her peak strength, Max stopped relying on his Barbarian God Physique, and started using mana. His physique was only at level one after all, and therefore, wasn't strong enough. Still, he was quite satisfied to see he could force her to utilise almost half of her strength with just his physique. One should know Emily wasn't an ordinary high-stage three-star

mage, and she with half of her peak strength was probably equal to an average high-stage three-star elemental mage.

Whoosh!...

Swoosh!...

Bang!...

Boom!...

...

The fight continued for over an hour. Apart from their strongest offensive attacks, they utilise everything.

Both Max and Emily were quite surprised to see how strong each other was. Emily already knew he was very strong, but she subconsciously gave the credit to the thunder sword, and his ability to instantly cast spells. But today, he didn't use the sword, or utilize his instant cast ability, but he still fought to a draw with her. Also, she could feel he was holding back, no, wasn't able to utilise his strength properly. If not, she wouldn't be his match.

As for Max, he was also surprised by her strength. He knew she was strong, but how strong, he didn't know. But now, he knew she could easily fight normal early-stage four-star experts and if she pushed herself and used her trump cards, she could fight and even kill normal mid-stage four-star experts. Furthermore, she was just a high-stage three-star mage like him, when she reached peak three-star level, her strength would only increase. "You are strong!" Emily emotionally said. Just a few months ago, he was just an ordinary guy, who others had to protect. But now, he was even stronger than her, who had devoted most of her life in training and cultivation. So, how could she not be emotional? Of course, she wasn't jealous or anything but happy for him.

He is not a weak boy who I need to protect anymore. Now, he is more than capable to protect me. She thought. Although she already knew this, but was still subconsciously thinking he was her little, vulnerable baby brother. But now, she had realised that wasn't the case.

This is good. I no longer have to worry about our family's protection all time and can focus more on my goal. Supreme realm, I'll definitely achieve it. She clenched her fists and a fire blazed in her eyes.

Chapter 570: Petty Guy Exacting Revenge

"You are also very strong." Max's voice brought her out of her thoughts. She smiled and was about to say something when a voice sounded.

"Both of you are strong. So, stop flattering each other. Most importantly, your fight was quite fun to watch. Are you going to continue it or not?"

The duo looked towards the source of the voice and saw Durden reclining on a wooden chair under a tree. He had a look of impatience and clearly wanted them to continue their fight so he could enjoy it.

Emily's delicate brows furrowed slightly when she saw him. She then glanced back at Max and said, "You'll not benefit any more if you continue to fight me. Find a stronger opponent. Alright, I'm going to rest. Don't disturb me unless there is something important." After saying this, she walked away.

After she left, Max walked over to Durden and heard him murmur, "Strange. I didn't do anything bad recently. So, why does she seem to dislike me?" Max had a guess but wasn't sure, so he didn't say anything. Instead, he asked, "Since you don't have anything to do now, why don't you be my sparring partner? I need to test some things out and need an opponent who can give me pressure."

Durden's expression turned solemn which made Max think he said something wrong, but when he heard him, he didn't know what to say for a while.

Durden stared at him in silence for a second before asking, "... Which bastard told you I have nothing to do? I've many important things to do and am very very."

Max looked at him, then around him before looking at him once again.

"What's with that look? I came out for, cough, a short walk and happened to see you two sparring. I was going to stop for just a minute before going back to cultivate but you two suddenly stopped." Durden said with a serious look. Max looked at him weirdly. Why was this guy trying to give him justification? If he didn't want to spar, he could just say so. It's not like he was going to or could force him.

But a moment later, he found out why. ""Big brother!""

Durden flinched when he heard the shouts while Max looked over and saw Adam and Jasmine run over with stern and exasperated expressions on their young faces. "What are you doing out here, big brother? Why aren't you healing your injuries? Do you not know if you delay too much, they would affect your future cultivation?"

"If you don't heal and recover your strength, how are we going to survive this mess, let alone return home?" Adam and Jasmine complained.

Durden looked at the duo, his expression serious and said, "I've been focused on healing for the past two days, and it isn't good for our bodies to stay cooped up in a room for so long. So, I came for a short walk for fresh air."

Saying this, he pointed at Max, "I was going back but he stopped me. You can ask him if I lied." After watching this scene, Max finally understood why this guy was behaving so strangely. It turns out he was afraid of his siblings' nagging. How... amusing?

The duo turned their heads and glared at Max.

Durden gave Max eye signals, telling him to defend him if he wanted to spar with him.

Max felt thrilled inside. Without feeling ashamed, he nodded at the duo, and lied . "That's right. He only arrived a short while ago, but because I said I wanted to talk to him about something, he stopped."

The young duo glanced at their big brother, looking suspicious. They felt these two were lying to them but couldn't say anything now that they said he came out for just a walk. They knew very well. He was a mischievous and impatient sort, and wasn't able to stay in the same place or do anything he didn't like for long, and would jump around. Back at their home, he caused many problems. If not for the fact that he was amazingly talented, their elders would've locked him up long ago.

They sighed. Why did we tag along when we already knew how troublesome he was?

Jasmine stared at Max and asked, "Are you done talking? If yes, we'll take him away now."

Max looked at Durden when he heard this but Durden only stared back at him, not willing to say anything. So, Max gritted his teeth, and gave his best smile, "Jasmine, right? I want to need to spar with someone stronger than me, it's very important. Apart from your big brother, no one fulfills the condition. Besides, he has already agreed to spar. So, how about you guys wait for a..."

Before Max could finish speaking, Adam and Jasmine cried out in anger, "Preposterous! Don't you know he is injured? Yet, you still want to fight him? Get lost."

Max's face grew dark. When was the last time he was scolded like this? Not to mention, the people scolding him were just two kids. Alright, they were only 3-4 years younger than him, but his mentality had long transformed and he no longer thought of himself as a 18 year old teenager.

On the other side, Durden gave him a death stare when he heard that he had already agreed to spar. Wasn't he just trying to bring him more trouble? These little fellows would nag him to death. But he couldn't say Max was lying because it'll expose his

earlier lie. Besides, he wanted to fight Max, and see for himself just what level of genius someone from this abandoned place could be?

When the duo scolded him, and Durden saw his dark face, he gloated inwardly. You deserve it.

Just when the duo turned their gazes towards him, he immediately raised his hand, and with a serious expression on his face, he said, "Don't be disrespectful, you two. I've already agreed, and can't go back on my word. Besides, I'll have to fight less, and focus more on healing my injuries if he can gain something after fighting me and become stronger."

"But..."

"No, but. I've already decided. Now, sit here and watch. Maybe you'll learn something too."

Adam and Jasmine sighed in resignation. They knew he wouldn't listen now. So, they sat down and watched as Max and Durden moved away from them and stood facing each other.

"Don't blame me later if I accidentally beat you too hard. Although this is just a spar, we have to fight as though it's an actual battle to benefit more." Durden said with a smile, but that smile gave Max chills. Shit! He is going to take revenge. His expression changed, and he immediately tried to tell him they didn't need to be so serious because he only wanted to familiarize better, get used to using his mana pathways in a battle.

"Hey, there is no need to be so serious. We can just..."

Whoosh!

But before he could finish speaking, Durden appeared before him like a ghost and sent him flying with a punch in the gut.

"Hehe, of course, we need to be serious." Durden cackled and chased after him.

- Chapter 571: Level Two Physique

Chapter 571: Level Two Physique

Max seemed as weak as a chicken in front of Durden and was beaten black and blue, without any chance to counter attack.

This frustrated him to no end, and also made him realize something—Durden wasn't a five-star mage like everyone thought. Although he couldn't be sure since he never

fought someone above four-star, he had a feeling he was six-star or maybe stronger at his peak.

Why? Because he didn't believe any five-star mage, even someone like the elf commander, Ryan, could toy with him so effortlessly when he was injured like Durden. Furthermore, he controlled his strength exceptionally well. Although each attack was more than enough to cause him pain, none gave him a serious injury. Max was awed. But at the same time, he was incredibly annoyed because if he didn't give him time to fight back, this spar would be useless—if it could be called a spar. "This..." Suddenly, his eyes widened in surprise. His Barbarian God Physique had started circulating on its own, and the dozens of minor injuries that Durden left on his body in these short few minutes slowly healed, and his body started strengthening little by little.

"Oh?!" Durden also exclaimed in surprise at the same time. Then, the corner of his lips curled up, "A body refining technique? Not bad. It seems you are born to be beaten up."

The corner of Max's lips twitched when he heard this while astonishment filled his heart. This guy... how did sense it?

Unlike magic spells, the Barbarian God Physique technique didn't cause any abnormalities whatsoever in or around the user. That was why it was incredibly difficult, almost impossible for anyone other than the user to know that it was activated. Of course, Monarchs and Supreme realm experts were exceptions. But Durden sensed it almost at the same time as Max. What did that mean?

"You still have time to be surprised." Durden chuckled before slapping him away, and the second round, more intense than first started. Bang!...

Slap!...

Thud!...

Boom!...

...

Adam and Jasmine watched the miserable scene in front of them with looks of respect on their faces.

"Big brother is still so strong!"

"But that Max guy, he is too pitiful." Adam said, sighing.

Jasmine shook her head, "No, he isn't because he should be benefiting from being beaten up like this."

"That's true. Every time big brother sparred, his opponents always benefited greatly." Adam nodded and then wistfully said, "I wonder when I will be able to spar with him."

"Keep working hard. That day will come soon." Jasmine said, her eyes shining with expectations.

...

When Durden stopped over an hour later, he was out of breath while Max was on the verge of losing consciousness. Despite that, there was a brilliant smile on his face. He had broken through to level two of the Barbarian God Physique, and to his delight, it was very powerful.

Before he broke through to level two, his skin had turned blue and split apart in many places due to the beating. Even his muscles, and bones were on the verge of breaking despite Durden controlling his strength. However, it didn't take more than five minutes for the injuries to heal and skin tone to return to normal while his muscles and bones seemed to have strengthened a lot, and he was filled with power. He felt he could kill a high-stage four-star demon with a slap. Of course, he first needed to recover his stamina.

Durden rubbed his hands and gave Max a dirty look, "You really have a thick skin." He then patted his clothes, waved Adam and Jasmine over and left.

After Max overcame the euphoria of becoming stronger, he noticed Durden and others had already left and grumbled, "That bastard! He left me alone."

After cursing him for a good while, he tried to stand up but felt pain all over his body. "Damn, do I have to be beaten up like this to progress my body refinement?" He shuddered, "No, I have to find a suitable energy source. This can't continue."

Because of the pain he felt every time he moved any muscle, the walk back to his quarters, which should've normally taken a few minutes, took him more than half an hour.

His lovely system had already helped him upgrade his mana core to four-star level. Now, he only needed to reach the peak of three-star, purify and condense it to four-star level to reach the four-star realm. Although it sounded easy, he knew this process would take a lot of time and effort now that he had to do it himself. With the danger of the demons looming over them, he didn't have time to waste. That was why, despite his body urging him to rest and recover, he forced himself to sit down cross-legged, took out a few hundred mid-grade mana stones and started to cultivate.

...

A majestic silver hawk flew over the forest and arrived above Ninam city.

The city guards recognised it and let it land on the square near the City entrance.
Whoosh!

Ryan arrived. When he saw the people jump down his beast companion's back, he frowned because he didn't see several of his subordinates, Emily and Max. Just when he was thinking Max and others may have met with an accident, he noticed his subordinates that arrived didn't look sad or downcast, which was abnormal if something bad had really happened. So, he sighed in relief in his heart and asked, "Why did only a few of you come back? Where is that kid, Max, that girl, Emily and the rest?"

Kamesh and others hurried over and bowed, "Reporting to Lord Commander, we met several groups of demons on the way to the capital city and in one battle, we lost a few of our brothers. Then..."

Kamesh slowly explained what happened and why they came back without Max and others.

After hearing everything, Ryan kept silent which made Kamesh and others feel uneasy.

Ryan glanced at Kamesh and others, before looking at mother daughter duo, Ella and Ellie, and said, "I understand. Go deliver what he gave you to the Garfield mansion and also take these two with you. They will stay with them. After that, you can rest before reporting back to your posts."

Kamesh and others sighed in relief and saluted, "Yes, Lord Commander!"

...

Esther, Amelia, Mina, and Anna were in Ashton's room. All of them looked very worried as they looked at unconscious Ashton in the bed. After he suddenly woke up a few days ago, his condition had been getting worse each day.

Since no medicine seemed to be working on him, their only hope was Max but based on his current condition, he would not last for more than two days but according to what Max told them before he left, he would return several days later.

Anna glanced at Esther and asked, "S-Should we inform Max and Emily about the current situation now?"

Esther frowned and glanced at Amelia and shook her head, "No. He doesn't want to rush them and put their lives in danger."

Anna went silent after hearing this. Just then, butler George arrived with a wooden box in his hands, and a nervous and hopeful expression on his face.

Chapter 572: Ashton Recovers

Esther, Amelia and Anna didn't notice him, but Mina did. She was about to ignore him after knowing it was their butler but paused when she noticed his expression and the wooden box he was carrying with utmost care.

"What is it, George?" She asked, her question attracted the three ladies' attention and they also looked over.

"T-Third lady, an elf, just delivered this box and told me that young master Max has sent it. Inside it is a medicine that can heal the master." Butler George said, his voice trembling from the surge of emotions.

"Really?!" Amelia and Anna shot to their feet and cried out at the same time. Esther and Mina also trembled. Esther even asked him to repeat what he said in case she had heard him wrong.

Butler George repeated and handed Mina the box because currently, she was more emotionally stable than others.

Mina didn't open the box immediately. Instead, she asked where Max was and why someone else delivered it.

When Anna heard this question, she felt his heart clench. "U-Uncle George, Max... he is alright, right?" She asked in a trembling voice.

Esther and Amelia also looked at him and hoped he was alright because neither Ashton nor they would be able to forgive themselves if something had happened to him while finding the medicine.

Only after butler George explained the situation that the ladies relaxed.

"That fool! Since he already found the medicine, why didn't he return? Why does he insist on joining the battlefield? Doesn't he know it's dangerous out there?" Anna grumbled, worried.

Mina glanced at her, and shook her head, "He wants to become stronger quickly to protect everyone."

"Still... he shouldn't risk his life like this..." Anna muttered in a low voice before saying, "Forget him. Third mother, hurry up and feed father the medicine."

Mina nodded. She sat down on the bed beside him, opened the box and took out the crystal bottle. Pop!

Swish!

When she popped the cork, a refreshing scent spread in the room. After they breathed it in, they felt refreshed, energized and their moods improved. Even Amelia, who had been depressed since the day Ashton got injured, felt her mood improve.

"Such strong vitality! This can definitely cure the master." Butler George cried out. The ladies' eyes also lit up and their breathing quickened.

"Mina, hurry up. Feed it to him." Amelia anxiously said. Mina didn't waste time. She carefully forced open his mouth and emptied the bottle's content inside.

...

Everyone held their breath as they waited for the medicine to work. But when they didn't notice any visible signs of healing even after more than half a minute had passed, they grew anxious.

"Please work! Please work!" Amelia and Anna mumbled, their eyes glued on Ashton's body. Esther, Mina and Butler George also clenched their fists and prayed.

After another minute passed, there was no visible change. Everyone felt their mind go blank. Amelia shuddered, and knees gave out. "How could this happen?! How could it not work?! Wasn't it something that had immense vitality?!" She muttered, looking despondent.

Their final hope was Max. Now that even the medicine he sent didn't work, didn't this mean Ashton no longer had any hope?

Just when everyone was feeling gloomy, a light coughing sound sounded.

Cough!

Unlike Amelia, who seemed to have lost her senses, and Esther, who had closed her eyes, Mina and Anna had yet to lose their hope and were staring at Ashton, waiting for a miracle to happen. So, when Ashton coughed, his eyelids trembled and he opened his eyes, they were the first to notice. They immediately squatted beside him and held his hands.

"F-Father!" Anna cried. Mina's eyes were also red. Esther and butler George looked over and let out sighs of relief. Esther then squatted down beside Amelia and placed a hand on her shoulder and said, "Amelia, it worked."

"Huh?" Amelia looked at her in confusion.

"The medicine, it worked. He is recovering. Come, take a look." Esther clarified and helped her to her feet.

Amelia stood in a daze, watching Ashton smile at her warmly.

Unlike when he woke up in the past few days, Ashton had a relaxed expression on his face, and it wasn't forced at all. The injuries on his body were rapidly disappearing.

"...come here." Ashton weakly beckoned her over.

When she heard his voice, tears started falling down her cheeks. Then, she rushed over and hugged his neck, and kept crying.

Ashton slowly consoled her and then talked to everyone one by one.

Everyone was emotional. Amelia, and Anna were smiling through tears, while Esther's eyes had also turned moist. Only Mina looked normal, but her eyes were also red as she hadn't, and didn't want to let go of his hand. Butler George was also happy. He watched as they talked for a while before silently leaving the room.

Ashton noticed but didn't stop him because he knew George was giving them space to talk.

"Wah... father, we were so worried." Anna sniffled.

"Hehe, little Ann, you don't look pretty when you cry." Ashton gave a small chuckle and felt his heart warming when he saw how worried everyone was. However, when he didn't see any of his sons around, his expression turned conflicted and he asked, "Where is Mark, Max and others?"

Amelia and Mina hesitated. Seeing this, Esther spoke, "Mark, Noah and William came a while ago. As for Max, he went out more than a week ago to find medicine to heal you."

"Little Max found medicine for me?" Ashton was surprised when he heard this. "He must have suffered a lot." He knew how badly injured he was. It was already a miracle he didn't die immediately after using that self destruction technique that day. He knew the things that could heal him could be counted on one hand, and all of them were very rare and weren't something a three-star mage like Max could get his hands on.

The ladies remained silent. They also realized this and felt extremely proud of and sorry for him.

They continued to talk and soon half an hour passed since he was fed the Drop of Life. By now, most of his internal and external injuries had healed.

This surprised Ashton quite a lot and he tried to guess what medicine he was fed but even with his knowledge, he couldn't think of any that could heal him so quickly. Then, all of a sudden, his eyes widened in shock.

"How is this possible?!"

Chapter 573: Bloodline Awakening

His shocked shout caught the ladies off guard. Then they became worried and asked, "What's wrong?"

Ashton, however, acted as though he didn't hear them and closed his eyes. After a while, he opened them and burst out in a loud, happy laughter. "Hahaha... it's amazing! I would have never thought little Max could find such miraculous medicine." Realizing there was nothing wrong, the ladies sighed in relief while Anna grew curious when she heard him mention Max's name and asked, "What happened father? What made you so happy?"

Ashton controlled his laughter, glanced at everyone and said, "Not only did the medicine that little Max sent healed my body, it also healed my destroyed mana core. Not only that, my mana core seems to have been upgraded by four levels, meaning half of the obstacles to emperor realm have been removed for me. It's... unbelievable!"

Everyone became stunned when they heard this and muttered in a daze, "It's really unbelievable."

Apart from Ashton, who had previously reached peak three-star, and Anna who still had a long way to go, everyone here was just two-star. For them, even reaching the peak of the mortal boundary was near impossible given their age and talent, let alone the Emperor realm. So, they were naturally shocked upon hearing he had hopes of reaching this legendary realm. After the momentary shock, they became delighted. Unlike the older ladies, Anna couldn't help but jump in joy and shout, "Wohhh!! It's amazing! Our family will have an emperor mage in future."

Before she had joined the Cloud Academy, she felt she had a powerful background, but after she joined academy, and interacted with others and saw multiple three and four-star mages, she realized her background wasn't anything special. After seeing five-star and king ranked mages, she lost every last bit of the pride she originally had and felt as though she wasn't from a noble, but a common family.

But for someone who was raised like a princess, this reality was a bit cruel. So, she adjusted her future goals and even though she knew it wouldn't be easy, she vowed to become a king ranked expert at least and if possible, an emperor or even a Monarch, and earn back the pride she had.

But despite her vow and determination, she was painfully aware that her talent was not too good. Therefore, the chances of her achieving this goal weren't too high. That was why when she heard how her father's path to the Emperor realm had become a lot easier, she was incomparably excited. So what if she couldn't achieve the goal she set? Her father could do it and her family and she would still gain their lost pride.

...

Although this Drop of Life was diluted, the energy it contained was immense. Even after healing all of Ashton's injuries—visible and hidden, new and old—and restoring and upgrading his mana core, there was still some energy remaining.

So, while they celebrated, it circulated throughout his body as though searching for something more to fix, but he was already completely healed.

Since it didn't find any injury, it slowly started seeping into his blood. But before it could, microscopic golden chains manifested around each of his blood cells and blocked the energy. This seemed to enrage the energy. It rammed into the chains again and again. Each time the energy clashed with the chains, some of it would disperse. But under the unrelenting assault, some cracks finally appeared on the chains and before the last bit of the energy dissipated, there was an inaudible crack as the chains shattered.

As soon as it did, a surge of golden energy flooded his blood cells. When the golden energy appeared, the composition of his blood started changing. It slowly turned golden, and as it did, it became stronger, purer and more complex. It was as though it was evolving.

Right when the chains shattered and golden energy appeared in his blood cells, Ashton who was gleefully smiling with his family, froze.

Since he was the focus of everyone's attention, the ladies immediately noticed the change in his expression. But just when they wanted to ask what happened, their expressions also changed while Anna cried out in alarm.

"What's that?!! What's happening father?!"

Immediately after that, everyone lunged forward. Esther tried to freeze him. Amelia tried to heal him. Mina tried to cover him in earth elements while Anna took out a few thick blankets and covered him. "Why isn't anything working? This fire..."

...

Ashton could feel a strangely familiar energy coursing through his blood, making it boil like magma, and filling him with almost endless strength.

He was learned enough to know he was undergoing bloodline awakening. This, however, confused him. How could he have a bloodline inheritance? From what he knew, none of his ancestors reached the level where they could bestow their descendants with a bloodline. So, why was he awakening one right now?

However, these thoughts were interrupted by the sudden and 'strange' actions taken by his wives and daughter. Noticing they weren't stopping and were preparing to launch more 'attacks' at him, he, for a moment, thought they wanted to kill him but immediately dispelled the thought as it was impossible and asked in a confused and slightly irritated tone, "What are you guys doing?"

Anna and others were panicking because their 'attacks' were ineffective when they heard his voice. Noticing he wasn't panicked and his voice was calm, the ladies took a close look at him. Soon, they furrowed their brows in confusion as though they saw something incomprehensible.

Anna pointed at him and said in a shaky voice, "Father... you are burning. But it's strange. The fire doesn't seem to be hurting you."

"Fire? Burning me? What are you say..." Confused, Ashton looked down at his body and saw he was engulfed in blazing, golden fire. His heart skipped a beat and he instinctively wanted to jump off the bed and try to extinguish it. But then he realized, the fire wasn't hurting him just like Anna said. In fact, he felt very comfortable.

But seeing how his clothes and bedsheets had already burnt into ashes and the bed was slowly disappearing along chunks of ice, the blanket Anna wrapped around him to put out the fire and even the pile of earth Mina conjured, he realized the fire was only harmless to him, not to others. Then he told everyone to leave the room and wait outside.

After they went out, he jumped off the burning bed and sat cross legged on the ground and waited for the bloodline awakening to complete.

The golden fire blazed for over an hour before it slowly receded into his body. After it completely disappeared, Ashton opened his eyes to reveal golden pupils. At the same time, a subtle regal aura spread out from his body.

Ashton felt the changes in his body and couldn't help but exclaim "A bloodline can cause such transformation? How amazing! No wonder those with bloodlines are always stronger."

If before he used that self sacrifice spell to protect his family and completely destroyed his mana, his strength could rival early stage four-star mages, and after he took the Drop of Life and recovered and his core was upgraded, he had become strong enough to completely overwhelm any mid-stage four-star mage, then now, after his bloodline awakening, he was sure he could kill most of the peak four-star mages, and if he went

all out, even if couldn't defeat, he could fight on equal footing with a newly ascended early-stage five-star mage.

Ashton's emotions were in turmoil. Just a while ago, he was on the verge of death but now, not only was he in perfect health, even his mana core recovered, of which he had already lost hope a few years ago, and had such a huge increase in his strength.

"Little Max..." He muttered under his breath, a complicated look flashing in his eyes.

...

In a dark hall in a place very far away from Ashton, four pairs of eyes snapped open at the same time and looked towards a stone table, a part of which was flashing with golden light.

"Someone has awakened the Imperial bloodline?" One of four pairs of eyes owner said a level of excitement in their voice. The other three pairs of eyes also had excitement flashing within. "Find out who this kid is. No matter if he is from the main or branch families, bring him here." Ordered one of four, their voice ringing throughout the dark place. Immediately, a respectable voice answered, "Yes, Ancestor!"

Chapter 574: You'll Regret it!

Immediately after the voice sounded, countless people became active and started looking for the person they were ordered to.

Half an hour later, their investigation bore results.

"Ancestors, none of the main or branch family members have awakened their bloodline recently." The voice respectfully conveyed their findings.

The four pairs of eyes snapped open once again. They discussed for a moment before ordering, "Use the bloodline beckoning compass and find every last person of our bloodline living outside the family." "Yes, Ancestors!"

...

A day later, an unconscious Lilly was laying in a dimly lit cave inside a forest in the Black Dragon empire. Oliver was sitting not far away from her, grilling a piece of meat on the fire. But he wasn't paying attention to the meat. Instead, he was staring at Lilly with a heated look in his eyes. After escaping from the demons, he found this cave and fed Lilly some healing pills. Even though most of her injuries had recovered after a day, she was yet to regain consciousness. Looking at the girl he wanted so badly laying helplessly in front of him, he was having a hard time controlling himself. But he stopped

himself until now not because he was a gentleman or anything. He wasn't one, and had already decided to force himself on her because he knew she didn't like him at all and would never willingly surrender herself to him. But he wanted her to be conscious when he did it, and enjoy her expressions and her struggle. That was why he had been patiently waiting for her to wake up.

After a while, the meat was ready. Keeping his hungry eyes on Lilly, he tore the pieces of flesh with his teeth and slowly ate. Just then, Lilly's long eyelashes gently fluttered and she slowly opened her eyes. Oliver stopped eating, and without making any sound, kept looking at her as she slowly sat up and looked around. When she saw him, he smiled at her, and asked, "Are you alright now, Junior sister?"

Lilly frowned in disgust and apprehension when she saw the look in his eyes. Then, she nodded in response to his question and asked, "Where are we? Where are the others?"

Oliver noticed her look of disgust, but ignored it and unhurriedly said, "We are in a forest in the Black Dragon Empire. As for what happened..."

He slowly told her how he 'saved' her and escaped using his random teleportation talisman.

Lilly didn't show any expression when she heard everything, and asked. "What about little Snow? Did she manage to escape?" Oliver frowned. He threw the meat in his hand away, stood up, walked over to her side and sat down before grabbing her delicate hand in his. Lilly frowned slightly but didn't resist which made Oliver smile brightly at her. Feeling her soft hand, he felt his blood boil. "I'm sorry, junior sister. I know how close she is to you. That was why I wanted to bring her along too, but circumstances did not allow it." While saying this, he slowly leaned towards her, and as he inhaled her intoxicating scent, his breathing became rough.

When his face was almost touching her hair, Lilly finally couldn't keep a neutral expression on her face.

"What are you doing, senior brother?" She asked while trying to move away, but because he was holding her hand, she couldn't move far.

"What I have dreamt of doing for so long!" He said, and pulled her back next to him.

Lilly didn't try to move away, or resist. Currently, she was as weak as an ordinary person because she wasn't able to use her mana. She knew this bastard must have fed her some sort of mana restricting poison. So, even if she wanted, she couldn't resist him in her current condition. Despite her rage, and disgust, she calmly looked at him and said, "You will regret it."

"Haha! I don't know about me, but you will soon regret always showing me indifference. I will ravish..." Oliver laughed out loud when he heard her. But suddenly, he seemed to

notice something and his expression changed drastically. A surge of energy surrounded Lilly, and injured his hand by which he was holding her, forcing him to let go.

Then he heard Lilly's cold, apathetic voice.

"No one, not your father, your grandmother or even god would be able to save you."

"Arghh! You bitch!" Oliver shouted in rage as she disappeared from the cave. But immediately after, he calmed down and revealed an evil smile, "Did you think I didn't know your master had also given you a random teleportation talisman? I'll enjoy this chase before I enjoy you." After muttering, he took out a square shaped wooden token before taking out a small vile that had some blood in it, and dropped a drop on the wooden token. After that, he watched as the wooden token disintegrated into ashes while the drop of blood shot in a direction before hitting the cave wall.

The wooden token was a Blood Sensing talisman. If you drop someone's blood on it, it will tell you the general direction of the person, as long as they weren't too far.

Since the random teleportation talisman Lilly used was of low quality, the distance it could teleport her to wouldn't exceed 50,000 miles, which was easily within the range of Blood Sensing talisman. Because he knew this, he wasn't worried she would be able to escape. Despite that, he wasn't happy about the situation. Because he already knew she also had a random teleportation talisman, he had taken her spatial ring away, but didn't find the talisman inside. Thinking that she might be carrying it on her body, he had frisked her too, but still didn't find it and thought that maybe she had already used it up.

How could he have known she still had it and before he could react, she used its energy to injure him and teleport away.

Fortunately, before leaving the Ice Sovereign Mountain, he had already acquired a few Blood Sensing talismans and even though he didn't find the talisman, he still took some of her blood when she was unconscious just in case he needed it. If not, it would've been near impossible to track her down.

'I just hope she doesn't encounter some magic beast or any demons. If she does, without her mana, she won't be...' When this thought appeared in his mind, he froze, and muttered in confusion, "Didn't I feed her a mana restricting flower? Then how did she still use her mana to activate the talisman?"

"I'll know when I find her." With that, he threw the thought to the back of his mind and rushed out of the cave before flying in the direction Lilly was.

...

50,000 miles away, Lilly emerged 20 meters above ground and unable to control her body, she fell down.

She tried to use her mana, but could only use a small quantity, which wasn't enough to cast any of her spells. Thus, she could only grit her teeth and prepare for the impact because there wasn't any tree or anything else she could use to slow her fall. Thud!

Fortunately, she was a four-star mage and had a stronger physique than ordinary people. So, she didn't suffer any major injury.

Unfortunately, the sound of her fall attracted a magic beast in the distance that roared and charged towards her.

Lilly looked at the incoming beast and revealed a helpless smile...

Chapter 575: Reaching Peak Three-star

"How unlucky!" She muttered under her breath, looking helpless. Even though the beast rushing towards her was just a two-star beast, she knew she wouldn't be able to outrun it and if she wanted to survive, she had to kill it, or scare it away.

Thinking this, she closed her eyes. The beast growled in excitement when it saw its prey did not try to escape, and increased its speed. However, just when it was ten meters away from its delicious prey, an indistinct, pure white halo appeared around her. In the beast's eyes, its vulnerable prey had suddenly transformed into a god-like existence, and it felt it wasn't running towards a delicious meal but its death. It yelped in fear, turned on its heels and fled without looking back.

Phew~!

Watching the beast disappear from her sight, Lily released the breath she was holding until now, and relaxed.

'Fortunately, it was a low level beast, and had yet to gain intelligence. If not, my rudimentary [Ice God Halo] wouldn't have been effective.' She thought. If Oliver had seen her use the [Ice God Halo], his face might have turned black due to jealousy because she had achieved the same feat while in the four-star realm which he barely managed to achieve at peak five-star.

Lily had also comprehended the [Ice God Technique] while she was in seclusion. Before she had the chance to share the good news with her master, she found out she was 'asked' to leave with Oliver to gain experience in the war. She knew Oliver's intention towards her and knew it was risky to go with him. If she wanted, she could reveal her Ice God Halo, gain a status equal to or even higher than that of Oliver. But she didn't do that because she knew she wouldn't be allowed to leave the Ice God mountain before she became strong enough to protect herself. However, she wanted to leave, and find a

chance to go to the Green Leaf kingdom and find her young master, whom she was so worried about and missed so much.

After recomposing herself, she looked around but only saw barren land. Although she didn't know her exact location, she knew she was in the Black Dragon Empire. 'The Green Leaf Kingdom is in the southwest of the Black Dragon Empire.' Turning around, she started running in the southwest direction while hoping for the mana restrictive poison to wear off as soon as possible. She needed her strength back to fight or flee in case she happened to encounter more beasts or demons. Besides, she had a premonition that Oliver would be able to find her...

After running for over 20 minutes at full speed, she grew tired and breathing turned ragged, causing her to slow down.

Just then, she heard the wind whistle behind her in the sky. For a moment, her heartbeat stopped, thinking that Oliver had arrived. But when she saw it was a golden sparrow-like flying beast, she heaved a sigh of relief because it wasn't Oliver's flying beast.

Seeing this flying beast, she suddenly remembered her friend, little Snow.

'I hope you escaped too, little Snow.' She prayed in her heart as the golden sparrow flew over her.

However, instead of continuing to fly away, it descended and landed in front of her. Lily immediately became cautious, and warily looked at the trio sitting on it.

In front was a man in golden brocade robes. He looked handsome and had a regal air to him. Behind him, on his either side were two middle-aged men in dark robes. Both were expressionless, and looked at ease as they looked at her, but Lily could tell both were alert and ready to act at a moment's notice.

From this, she could tell the guy in the middle was some young master while the two middle-aged were his guards.

"May I ask what your esteemed self wants?" She asked, looking at the young master. Although she looked and sounded calm, her heartbeat had increased because she sensed all three of them were five-star mages, and not ordinary ones.

Swoosh!

The man in golden robes jumped down in front of her, causing Lily to take two steps backwards. With a small smile on his face, he elegantly put right hand on his left chest and slightly bowed in greeting, "Hello, young lady. I'm Eric. Please do not worry. I didn't approach you with any malice, and mean you no harm."

"Hm. May I ask what Mr. Eric wants?" Lily nodded her head slightly in response as she asked.

His two bodyguards frowned when they saw she didn't show him any respect, and were about to say something when Eric said, "I noticed you didn't have any transportation, and because we are going in the same direction, I thought maybe I should offer you a ride. I wonder if you are willing to travel with us?"

Lily looked at him, and then his bodyguards. After considering it for a moment, she asked, "Where are you heading to, Mr. Eric?"

Eric's smile grew when he heard this and said, "We are going to the Green Leaf Kingdom. We can drop you off at your destination if it's on the way. If not, I can give you a flying beast to travel."

Lily's eyes flashed when she heard this. Eric was quite perceptive and immediately noticed the slight change, and left surprised, "Don't tell me young lady is also heading to the Green Leaf Kingdom?"

Lily was silent for a moment before she slowly nodded, "That's right. I'm going there."

Eric clapped his hands and laughed, "That's good. Now, if you don't mind." He was about to extend his hand but stopped and just gestured to her to climb up on the sparrow.

Lily had been paying attention to him ever since she saw him. So, she naturally noticed this and relaxed slightly. It seems he was a bad person. Of course, she still wouldn't lower her guard.

Soon, the golden sparrow took off and flew in Green Leaf Kingdom's direction.

Not long after they left, Oliver arrived not far from where Lily was.

"It has been almost 50,000 miles." He muttered and took out another Blood Sense talisman and dropped a drop of Lily's blood on it.

Soon after, he flew in the direction the golden sparrow went.

...

Although Max's absorption speed was slightly reduced due to the system's absence, it was still several times faster than an ordinary peak three-star mage with a good cultivation technique thanks to the cultivation technique he bought from the system.

After 24 hours of hard work, he had completely absorbed and refined all of his mid-grade mana stones' mana. With all this mana, not only did he break through to peak

three-star, he made quite some progress to the limits of three-star. Now, he only needed slightly over 15 thousand more three-star mana to reach the realm limit. Once that happened, he could start the further purification and compression of his mana to elevate it to four-star level and become a four-star mage.

But now he faced a problem which wasn't a problem before—Mana stones. He had stored most of his mana stones, most of which were low grade ones, in the system inventory and only had over 200,000 low grade mana stones in his spatial ring. This amount wasn't at all enough to reach the current realm limit and to convert the mana to four-star level.

Sighing at the problem, he stood up and stretched, "It's time to go to the Royal City."

Chapter 576: Power Of Laws

When he walked out, he saw Rey and Shasha in the distance, casually talking. They also noticed his presence and looked over.

"Good morning, team leader!" Rey ran over and greeted him enthusiastically. Shasha also followed him and nodded in greeting.

Max returned their greetings and asked, "Where is Emily, Durden and those two little guys?"

"Emily is in seclusion while Durden left earlier for a walk with those two." Rey answered.

"Okay." Max nodded and said, "You go and tell Durden we are leaving for the capital in a short while."

Rey nodded, and left, leaving Max and Shasha alone. He noticed Shasha seemed to have something on her mind but was hesitating to speak it out, so he asked, "You want to say something?"

Shasha took a deep breath and nodded, "Yes."

"I don't know if it's appropriate to ask this, but can you give me some of that holy energy?"

"Holy energy?" Max asked, confused. After she told him what she meant by holy energy, he understood she was talking about the Divine energy that seeped out from him when the system upgraded his core.

He could understand why she was tempted to get her hands on some more of the Divine Energy because it was just too miraculous. Emily had told him it had different

effects on everyone. After absorbing it, some progressed in their cultivation, some comprehended the technique they weren't able to before, while some, who had incurable diseases, or hidden injuries, had their diseases cured and hidden injury healed.

He was about to tell her he didn't have any, but stopped when a thought flashed in his mind, and looked at her up and down. She had fair and tender skin, an attractive pair of emerald eyes, thin pink lips, a modest bust, curvy figures, a peach shaped ass you want to give a tight squeeze and long legs. Overall, she was very beautiful. Adding in the fact that she was a mature woman, and had a stubborn and aloof personality, she was more than enough to tempt most men, Max included.

Shasha frowned when she noticed him check her out and became uncomfortable, but didn't say anything. Since she needed a favor, she knew she couldn't show any dissatisfaction. Besides, she already knew he wouldn't give something so precious like the Divine Energy without reason, so she was ready to pay whatever price she had to pay.

After checking her out, he calmly asked, "Why do you need it?"

Shasha's eyes brightened when she heard this. This meant he wasn't opposed to giving it to her. Suppressing her excitement, she answered calmly, "A few years ago, I was badly injured in a battle, and almost lost my life. Even though I ultimately survived, and most of my injuries healed, the injuries to my mana core and mana channels couldn't be healed."

"I've searched for the cure for many years, but... couldn't find any. Because of my injured mana core and channels, I couldn't make any progress in my cultivation, and had to do everything I could to stop my cultivation from regressing."

At this point, she took a deep breath, and said, "However, when I absorbed that holy energy you gave off, my mana core completely recovered. Now, only my mana pathways remain injured. If I could get some more of the Holy Energy, I could heal them too, and then I would be able to try breaking through to the five-star realm."

Upon hearing her, Max nodded. Her case was just like his father, Ashton,. But when he heard her last sentence, he frowned and asked, "Five-star? Aren't you an early-stage four-star? How would you try breaking through to the five-star?"

Shasha didn't answer and lowered her head, hesitating. Max grew surprised when he noticed her hesitation. It seemed she wasn't just saying it for the saying sake, but was really confident she could break through to the five-star once her mana channels healed. But how? The gap between early-star four-star and five-star was just too big. She would need at least a few months if not years of continuous cultivation just to touch the realm boundary to four-star.

'It seems she also has some secret.' Max thought to himself, and was tempted to know, but suppressed the impulse, and said, "It's alright if you don't want to say."

Saying this, he turned around and started walking toward the house where Emily was.

Seeing this, Shasha became anxious and called out. "Wait!"

A small, victorious smile appeared on his face before immediately disappearing. He then walked back to her, and waited for her answer.

Shasha took a deep breath, stared into his eyes with a serious expression on her face, and said, "I'm confident to break through to the five-star realm because... I've comprehended an elemental law."

"Huh?" Max looked at her with a confused look on his face. Comprehended an elemental law? He didn't know what that meant and how it could help her bridge the gap between early-stage four-star to five-star realm.

Shasha raised her brows when she noticed his confusion, "You don't know what an elemental law is?"

Max felt he was being looked down upon and felt embarrassed, but he really didn't know. Most of what he knew was from some books, the system and the people around him.

Coughing lightly, he said, "Ahem! I don't know. How about you explain it to me?"

Shasha thought for a moment before saying, "When someone asked Lord Raku, he said this, A law... is some kind of abstract but powerful force or an all encompassing rule. But from what I understand, it is a higher level of control."

"For example, if a normal person has awakened the fire element affinity. But he can control or manipulate the fire only through his magic spells, and can't do it on his own. Even if he can, it will be too basic, like lighting the fire. But if he can comprehend the Fire Law, he would command a superior control and manipulate it according to his wish. He could use it without magic spells, while his magic spells would become one or several fold stronger according to the level of his understanding of the law."

After saying this, she raised her hand and pointed at a broken wall in the distance. Wind elemental mana gathered and condensed at her fingertip. It then shot out at the wall, and,

Bang!

Created a fist size hole on it.

Witnessing this scene, a surprised look appeared on his face because from the moment she raised a hand to the moment the hole was created in the wall, only less than a second had passed. He knew even someone with a high level of control over his mana would take slightly more time to do the same. Besides, he would need a high level of focus too. Shasha, however, didn't focus too much. She was as casual and relaxed as one could be, and didn't even seem to actively control her mana. It moved on its own. Of course, he knew it was an illusion, but still, this was an incredible feat, and wasn't any different than Instant cast. He knew very well how extraordinary and useful the ability to Instant cast was. It could help you fight and kill foes stronger than you, like he did with his Caladius Brachium with the system's help.

Chapter 577: Superior Mana Control

"See that? It's the power of a law. Moreover, I only have the rudimentary comprehension of it. If I can comprehend more, even with my current cultivation, I can fight fight-star mages." Although there wasn't any change of expression on her face, she was undoubtedly feeling proud, especially because of how shocked Max was.

It took Max a few seconds to recollect himself, before he nodded with naked admiration, "It's undoubtedly powerful, and I'm sure just this level of control over your element is enough to make you almost unrivaled in the four-star realm."

"But you still haven't told me how your law can help you breakthrough to the five-star? Also, since you are this strong, why didn't you help me when I was fighting that high-stage four-star demon, and almost lost my life?"

Right after he asked this, he remembered her mana core and mana pathways were damaged. In that condition, how could she utilize her true strength?

Looking at his expression, Shasha knew she didn't need to answer the last question, and said, "I didn't say I'm absolutely certain to break through to the five-star, I said I can give it a try."

After clarifying this, she paused, and raised her hand. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The Wind Elemental mana started gathering above her palm in a football size sphere and became visible. Then, she asked, "What grade mana is this?"

Max carefully sensed it before replying, "One-star."

Shasha nodded. After that, the sphere started shrinking, and soon shrunk by half. She then asked again, "What about now?"

Max sensed again, and became shocked. "This... It's two-star now. Don't tell me..."

Shasha nodded. After that, the sphere started shrinking, and soon shrunk by half. She then asked again, "What about now?"

Max sensed again, and became shocked. "This... It's two-star now. Don't tell me..."

Shasha nodded, "That's right. My Wind Elemental Law doesn't only let me freely control Wind Element, it can also refine normal mana into higher grade. Not only that, it can nourish my physique too. Now, you should know why I said I can try breaking through to five-star after my mana channels are healed."

Hearing the confirmation, he was stunned. He nodded, and muttered, "Since you can refine mana so quickly, you can easily fill your core with four-star mana to the brim. Moreover, since your law can nourish your body, you'll soon have a strong enough body to bear the pressure of breaking past the mortal realm. This... isn't this too amazing!"

Seeing him lose composure, the corner of Shasha's lips curled up before she immediately recovered. Max looked at her with hope and excitement in his eyes, "Can you tell me how I can comprehend my Elemental Law?"

He was excited. Why wouldn't he be when he saw the hope to become stronger quickly? But at the same time, another thought appeared in his mind, 'Why didn't the system tell me anything about the Laws?'

Shasha shook her head, "I can't tell you because I myself don't know how I managed to comprehend it. One day I suddenly sensed the Wind Elemental Law and started to comprehend it."

Max's excitement vanished when he heard this. Noticing this, Shasha continued, "But I can tell you that you should have superior control over your mana before you can begin trying to comprehend a law. If you don't have superior control, you'll never be able to sense these abstract laws. Of course, you aren't guaranteed to sense them even if you have superior mana control. In other words, it's up to your luck."

"Luck, huh?" Max muttered. If it was a matter of luck, he was confident he could also comprehend an Elemental Law. After all, wasn't it his good luck that brought him to this wonderful world after he died that untimely, and pathetic death?

Wasn't it also his good luck that gave him the system that helped him become stronger, and enjoy this life and his beautiful women when he originally couldn't even sense mana? That was why he was confident of his luck. Of course, he would never leave anything up to luck and would make utmost effort to achieve what he wanted.

"How about you show me your mana control so that I know just how far I am from the Superior mana control stage?" Max asked. Since Shasha wanted a favor from him, how could she refuse? So, she immediately demonstrated her superior mana control.

As he observed her skillful mana control, he became fascinated, not only with the superior mana control stage, but also with her. She looked very... enchanting with that focused look on her face. After she was done, she took a deep breath. In her current state, just doing this much was tiring. After that, she looked at Max, wanting to ask if realized how his mana control was lagging behind, but when she saw the look in his eyes, and the bulge below his lower stomach, she shivered, and a strange feeling appeared inside her.

Given her nature and past, she should've gotten angry at him for showing such naked desire for her, but for some reason, she couldn't, which made her uncomfortable.

Max realized what he was doing, and quickly controlled himself and said with a sigh, "I used to think my mana control was quite good, but I now realize how wrong I was."

Shasha looked at him in silence for a moment before choosing to ignore what happened a moment ago and nodded, "It's normal. Before I really reached the stage of Superior mana control, I also used to think the same. Just keep practicing, and you'll definitely reach it."

After saying this, she asked, "Now, can you give me some of the Holy Energy?"

Unlike when he was caught staring at her, this time he immediately became awkward. He knew the reason she patiently told him everything was for the Divine Energy, but how could he give it to her when he didn't have any?

Shasha frowned in displeasure upon noticing his hesitation, "You don't want to give me some?"

"No, that's not the case." Max said.

"Then what's the problem?" She asked coldly. Then as if thinking about something, she said, "You don't want to give it for free, is that the case? If it is, then..."

Before she could continue rambling, he interrupted her, "It's not that I don't want to give it to you, it's that I can't because I no longer have any left." As he expected, Shasha's face fell when she heard this.

"You don't have any..."

Chapter 578: Chaotic City

Royal City, the capital of Green Leaf Kingdom...

Evening...

A group of seven appeared in front of the city gates, looking haggard. Many such groups arrive at the capital daily, but this one attracted some attention from the passersby.

Why?

Because two members of the group were elves. Even in the peaceful times, very few elves could be seen in the city, let alone in these chaotic times of war. After all, elves also had territories to protect from the demons and didn't have time to come here. So, the arrival of these two naturally attracted some attention.

'Maybe they are outcasts...' Many thought before continuing to ignore them.

When the group of seven arrived at the city gates, one of the guards stopped them and asked, "Where are you guys from?"

"Where else could we be from if not from the Green Leaf kingdom?" Max said in a tired voice.

The guard who asked the question narrowed his eyes in displeasure, but his companion waved his hand to calm him down and said, "You misunderstood, little brother. My colleague meant to ask which city you are from."

Emily frowned. "Why? Isn't knowing we are from Green Leaf enough?"

Because they no longer had a fast enough flying beast, they had to travel on foot for two days without rest. Not only that, as they came closer to the capital, they encountered more and more demons. After fighting so much, all of them were drained and wanted nothing more than to find an inn and rest. So, when the guards stopped them and started asking questions they didn't need to ask, everyone was displeased.

The guard's lips twitched, but seeing their haggard looks, he understood their situation and smiled, "It's enough. You guys can go in. Right, don't forget to register yourself at the Royal Palace if you want to go to the battlefield with everyone."

Max and others couldn't be bothered to ask anything. So, they just nodded, and entered the city.

Half an hour after they entered, a beautiful golden sparrow appeared in the sky above the city. A moment later, it landed on the busy square in front of the Royal Palace, and four people elegantly floated down.

A flying beast landing on the square wasn't uncommon, so only a few paid glances over, but those who did, and saw the people who got down from the beast, immediately left whatever they were doing and rushed over with smiles on their faces, and bowed in greeting.

"Greetings, Crown Prince!"

"Greetings, Crown Prince!"

"Hope your journey has been safe and fruitful."

...

It was impossible for this commotion to not attract everyone's attention.

More people rushed over and started greeting the mana in golden brocade robes, who calmly smiled and returned their greetings with a nod.

He then glanced at the lady by his side, who was looking at everything with a slightly surprised expression on her beautiful face. When she noticed him looking at her, she asked, "So, you are Green Leaf's crown prince?"

The man nodded, "That's right. Surprising right?"

"Yeah, but not too much. But the fact that Mr. Eric is not arrogant and is quite approachable despite being a kingdom's crown prince is more surprising." The lady, Lily, said, nodding.

When the crowd saw Eric talking to Lily, they finally noticed her, and were stunned. "How beautiful!"

"Is... is a real fairy?"

"How could she be so beautiful? Even our Kingdom's number one beauty, princess Lexis, falls short in comparison to her." "She! Keep your voice down, but I have to admit you are not wrong."

"I hope she is single."

"Why? You want to make her your woman. Keke, I finally understood what the saying 'A toad lusting for the swan meat' means."

...

Ignoring the crowd's chatter, Eric led Lily towards the Royal palace. His two guards followed.

Suddenly, however, Lily stopped in her tracks and looked in a direction with a vacant expression on her face.

Eric was startled. After traveling for almost two days with her, he had realized she was a woman with a strong character and was someone calm and indifferent. At least he didn't see her lose composure like this even when they faced a demon group led by a six-star demon. So, he was genuinely surprised to see her like this and carefully asked, "What is it, Miss Lily?"

"I... don't know." Lily muttered with a confused look on her face. She suddenly felt a familiar presence for a second but when she tried to sense it again, she couldn't. For some reason, this made her uneasy.

Eric's eyes flashed before he said with a smile, "It's alright. Let's go now. I'm sure you need a good rest."

Lily hesitated briefly before nodding. She wanted to say she could find an inn to stay, but because she had already agreed to stay at his place and rest while he arranged a flying beast for him, she couldn't refuse. Besides, she could tell he wasn't a bad person and wouldn't try to harm her. Also, she intended to ask his help to find a place in the capital for her young master and the rest of the family to stay. So, she nodded and followed him to the Royal palace.

...

The Royal City was huge. It was easily ten times bigger than any normal sized city. But despite that, it still couldn't handle the inflow of refugees—the people who had to leave their cities due to the demon invasion—and was filled to the brim. If not for the fact that countless people died in demons' hands when coming here, and people in many small cities and towns didn't even have a chance to move out before they were slaughtered, the city wouldn't even have any room to walk on the streets.

After half an hour, they had covered a small part of the city, and had checked dozens of inns, but none had any rooms left. "Do we have to sleep on the streets now?" Adam muttered, his brows furrowed as he looked at several people sleeping or resting on the ground like homeless dogs.

Durden patted his head, and said with a complicated expression in his eyes. "No. We don't have to. This is the outer area of the city, where prices are cheaper, and the number of people here is overwhelming." "As we move towards the central area of the city, prices will soar and the number of ordinary folks will decrease. So, we won't have trouble finding an empty inn there."

Everyone sighed at his words as they understood what he meant. The outer part of the city was overcrowded, inns were overbooked, and people were forced to adjust in any free place they could find.

They had seen many conflicts arise, and people die because more than one party wanted to occupy the same small corner. The increased number of people, and the lack

of order gave rise to robberies, arsons, rapes, killings and several other crimes, making the area chaotic, unsuitable to live in. Even they encountered some people who wanted their money and women. Of course, they weren't shown any mercy and were killed.

Meanwhile, the city's inner and central area wasn't facing these issues. Although they hadn't seen it, they knew it for a fact.

No matter the situation, the strong always commanded many rights and privileges compared to ordinary people.

Just then, they heard a commotion in the distance. Some people were beating an old man, already on the verge of death, and a young girl in tattered clothes was crying and trying to stop them, while the crowd just watched on without any intention to help.

Durden, Shasha, Emily and others just frowned before ignoring them. They had seen too many such scenes on the way, and couldn't be bothered to, or could resolve every issue.

However,

Max's expression changed when he took a closer look at the girl and the old man.

In the next instant, Whoosh!

He rushed towards the group...

Chapter 579: Slapping The Arrogant Young Master

"Please stop! Don't hit my grandpa!" The young girl cried, while trying to rush toward the old man on the ground. But each time she tried, someone would slap her away. Her little face was already bruised and swollen while a trickle of blood flowed down from the corner of her lips.

The old man was very weak and skinny. Under the goons' merciless kicks, he was already coughing out the blood and seemed to be on the verge of death.

"Aren't these guys from the Ming family? Why are they beating this pitiful old man?" Someone asked.

"Who knows? When I arrived they were already beating him."

"I know! This old man and this little girl are somehow related to the Ming family. They wanted to take refuge with them, but the Ming family's young master kicked them out and ordered them to kill the old man and throw the girl out of the city."

"That evil bastard? He is too cold blooded."

"Shhh! Keep your voice down if you don't want to die like this old man."

...

A muscular man, who seemed to be the leader of the goons, frowned when he heard the crowd's murmurs, and shouted at his subordinates, "Stop wasting time. Just kill him."

"Yes, sir." The goons nodded before one of them raised his leg to stomp on the old man's head. "NOOO! Please don't!!" The girl cried in despair. The old man raised his head to look at her. He wanted to speak but no voice came out, so he mouthed the words 'Little Rou, close your eyes.' After that, he closed his eyes, and waited for his death. Suddenly, everything went silent. He thought he had died, but was sure the goon's leg hadn't landed on his head. 'Maybe he did it too quickly for my brain to register.' He thought, but in the next instant, he heard the goons' angry roars, which made him think otherwise.

"Who are you bastard?!"

"How dare you kill someone from the Ming family?!"

"Kill him!"

Everyone was staring at the sky blue haired young man, who suddenly arrived in front of the old man in shock, surprise, pity and excitement. They were surprised to see someone intervene in Ming family's affairs, and were shocked because of the strength he revealed. As soon as he appeared, the goon who was about to kill the old man had died from a finger-sized hole in his forehead. They felt pity because they knew now that he had killed someone of the Ming family, he was sure to suffer. But, one thing was for sure, they were going to watch a drama unfold, which filled them with excitement.

Max ignored everyone, and crouched down in front of the old man. The old man opened his eyes. When he saw Max, he looked confused for a moment before recognising him, "You are—"

"Let's talk later. First, eat these." Max stopped him from speaking lest he aggravated his wounds and fed him two grade one healing pills.

The goons raged when they saw him ignore them but none dared to attack him after seeing how effortlessly he killed their companion. Even their leader didn't dare to move.

The young girl was stunned by this sudden turn of events. But a moment later, she became happy and rushed over to her grandpa. No one stopped her this time.

"Are you alright, grandpa?" She anxiously hugged the old man, tears falling down her eyes.

"Cough! I'm fine, little Rou." The old man coughed and smiled gently at his granddaughter, before pointing at Max, "Look who saved me."

Only after she heard him say this that she turned around and took a good look at their savior. Unlike the old man who took a moment to recognise Max, she immediately recognised him, and kowtowed to him, "Thank you so much, young master for saving my grandpa. Really, thank you so much."

Max smiled and stopped her before her head could touch the ground, and said, "It's alright. How about you tell me what's going on, why are they trying to kill you guys?" Although he had heard the crowds' discussion, he wanted to know the whole story.

However, before little Rou could say anything, an angry shout resounded, "Who are you, bastard!? How dare you interfere in my family's internal affairs?"

Crowd parted to the side to reveal an arrogant looking young man in dark green robes and four fierce looking people behind him.

"Greetings, young master Ming!"

Several people in the crowd stepped forward and greeted him with respectful expressions on their faces but the young master Ming just snorted in disdain and ignored them, his arrogant gaze fixed on Max.

Max squinted his eyes when he saw the dark green robed man and felt a surge of anger in his heart. Why...

Swoosh!

Just as the young master walked over and was about to say something, Max stood up and suddenly vanished from their sight.

"Not good!" The expressions of four people behind the young master Ming changed, but by the time they reacted, Max had already appeared before the young master Ming. Then,

Pa!

The crisp sound of a slap resounded.

The crowd, the goons who were feeling relieved upon seeing their backer arrive, the four people behind the young master Ming, and even he, himself, was dumbfounded. What just happened?

Did this blue haired youth just slap him? The young master Ming?

"Y-You... you slapped me?" Young master Ming asked with a look of disbelief on his face as he touched his left, already swollen cheek.

"Yeah, is it too difficult to believe?" Max asked as he looked at him in disgust.

"You... why?" Young master Ming asked, still stunned. "Because I don't like the arrogant look on your face. It irritates me. Also, you dared to kill little Rou and her Grandfather. You really deserve to die."

Pa!

Even before he said the word 'die', he had thrown another slap, this time on his right cheek.

Everyone flinched at this, and had one thought in their minds, How daring? And also, Now he is really doomed to die.

Although the Ming family wasn't a top family in the capital city since it was residing in the outer city, it was still a behemoth to the masses. Not to mention the other forces in the outer city that had to be extremely careful of them, even the stronger forces in the inner city didn't dare to carelessly offend them, not only because the Ming family head was a four-star mage, and several of their Elders were three-star mages, and the number of two-star and one-star mages easily crossed hundreds, but also because they were rumored to have a connection with the Royal family.

Until now, almost everyone who had dared to offend the Ming family was completely annihilated. That was why, even though they could see Max was a strong mage, they still believed he would die.

Durden, Emily and others had arrived and were casually standing amidst the crowd, hearing their discussion and watching Max slap the arrogant prick's face into a pig head.

"Hey, sister Shasha, lady Emily, should we also join in and have some fun?" Ray asked excitedly, rubbing his hands.

Chapter 580: Domineering

Emily glanced at him briefly before looking away while Shasha scrunched her brows and said, "Not unless his life is threatened. If you go now, it will only exacerbate and escalate the situation."

"Hm? What do you mean?" Ray asked in confusion.

Shasha looked at him in silence, making him uncomfortable before she sighed and said, "You are an elf."

Ray was stunned when he heard this, before smiling wryly, "Yeah, I'm an elf."

If he was a human, he could join the fight. Even if he killed them, there would not be any problem. At most, their enmity with the Ming family would become even stronger. However, he was an elf, someone from a different race. Just like every other race, the human race was also xenophobic. Once he joined in, and accidentally killed someone, the chances were very high, or it could be said it was almost certain this fight would transform from Max versus the Ming family to Max's group versus everyone in the capital.

He also knew this, but currently, he was too exhausted to think clearly, which made him forget this point.

'Sigh! I need to sleep for a few hours or I'll keep making such mistakes.' He sighed, and yawned.

On Durden's side, Adam and Jasmine had a look of displeasure on their faces as they watched Max. They were weakest in the group, so they were even more tired after all the fighting in the last two days, and wanted to rest badly. But this guy was going around saving beg... people and starting conflicts out of nowhere, delaying their rests.

But unlike before when they had just met Max's group, they didn't dare to throw a tantrum now because they had seen how strong Max and Emily were. In other words, they had earned their respect.

Unlike everyone who was focused on Max and the young master Ming, Durden's gaze was focused on little Rou, and he had a look of confusion in his eyes.

...

"Impudent!"

"How dare you!"

The four behind the young master Ming roared and attacked Max at the same time. Although they could feel a sense of danger from him, he surely wasn't a match for all four of them, right?

In the next moment, however, they realized how wrong they were.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Without moving from his place, he attacked four times. One was slapped, second was kicked in the gut, third was punched in his chest and last's hand was brutally twisted, causing his bones to break. Then, all of them flew back and crash landed on the ground, each looking pathetic.

"This...!"

Everyone in the crowd was flabbergasted by this scene. But none exceeded young master Ming's shock.

"You... they... how...?" He couldn't even form a single coherent sentence. Each of his four bodyguards was a three-star mage, one was even a high-stage three-star mage, but all of them were defeated in a single exchange? He couldn't believe this just like he couldn't believe he was slapped, not just one, but two times.

However, the evidence was clear. His bodyguards were on the ground, crying out in pain. Seeing how spineless he was, Max had no intention to prolong this farce. He sneered in disdain and kicked him in the gut, causing him to spat out a mouthful of blood, and sent him flying towards his bodyguards.

"I'm not killing you right now because you seemed to be their relative despite how badly you treated them. But this will be the last time I do so. So, think before you act next time." Leaving these words, he turned around, grabbed little Rou and her grandfather and left with his group.

After they had walked quite far, the old man recollected himself, and lowered his head in a bow toward Max, "Thank you for sparing his worthless life, young master. But... you have invited trouble to yourself. Given how notoriously petty and vengeful that kid seem to be is, he won't let you go."

Little Rou also looked at him worriedly. Max looked at her with a surprised look in his eyes. He had noticed while the old man took quite some time to come to his senses, little Rou didn't seem phased at all. She was mostly indifferent when she saw one of the goons die, when the young master Ming was slapped, and even when he thrashed those four three-star mages.

However, what surprised him even more about her was the fact that she seemed even younger than the time he met her in Zexin city. If at that time she looked like a twelve or thirteen year old girl, she now looked barely twelve. Just what was going on?

Shaking his head, he glanced at the old man, and casually said, "It's alright. If he really wants to court death, let him come."

Hearing this, little Rou's eyes glittered and she thought, How domineering!

After a while, they arrived in the inner part of the city. Different from the outer part of the city, here people weren't as numerous, and no one was sleeping on the streets, even though some temporary settlements could be seen, but they were neatly arranged and were in order. Although people were a little tense, there was no looting, fighting etc, and just like they had expected, not long after they entered the inner city, they found an inn, though it only had four empty rooms.

Emily, Shasha and Jasmine took one room, Durden and Adam took the second, while Max and Ray occupied the third and Little Rou and her grandfather took the last one.

After taking a nice bath, Max went to Little Rou and her grandfather's room to ask them about their current situation.

It turned out, when they got the news of the demon invasion, they had left the city with others from the Zexin city. Almost half of them died in the demons' ambush, some were killed by the magic beasts, while the rest managed to arrive at the Capital city.

After they arrived here, and saw how chaotic the outer city was, they knew they wouldn't be able to survive for more than a few days if they were lucky. However, all hope was not lost because he knew his daughter, little Rou's mother, who he had not seen since she came to the Zexin city to drop the newly born little Rou to him years ago, was working as a maid in the prestigious Ming family in the outer city.

Even though he was reluctant and didn't want to have any contact with his unfeeling daughter, or the Ming family, he had no choice but to grit his teeth and take Little Rou over to the Ming family if they wanted to survive.

But when he arrived at the Ming family's gates and told the guards he wanted to meet his daughter, Daisy, the guards told him there was no person with that name in the family, and immediately kicked them out. The old man was depressed and thought his daughter had lied to him. But he had no time to feel angry, or worry about her because they needed to find some place to live. However, before he could do that, those goons arrived and started beating him, saying they were doing it on their young master's order.

After hearing this, Max said with a thoughtful expression on his face, "It seems your daughter hadn't lied to you about working in the Ming family, and if I'm not wrong, little Rou is an illegitimate daughter of someone important in the family. Furthermore, it seems that person doesn't want to have any contact with her, that was why he had that arrogant prick kill you and throw her out of the city."

The old man looked at little Rou sleeping on the bed and sighed, "Yes, that's what I thought. Sigh! She is such a pitiful girl."

Saying this, he looked at Max with a hopeful gaze and hesitated to say something. Max could easily guess what he wanted to say. So, he calmly said, "Don't worry. Since I saved you two, I'll make sure you continue to live, and not suffer anymore."

The old man visibly relaxed when he heard this and tears welled up in his aged eyes before he stood up and bowed deeply, "Thank you so much, young master. However, I don't want you to bother yourself with me. I'm already a bag of bones and wouldn't live much longer. I just hope you keep little Rou safe. I'll be eternally grateful to you."

Max felt a bit emotional when he saw how much he loved his granddaughter, and was reminded of his father, not Ashton, but his real father back on Earth.

I wonder if I'll be able to return there and meet him again. He sighed. After the system killed that supreme mage, recovered to its original state, and the [World Gate] function appeared, he was given hope of going back and meeting him. But now... with the system in hibernation, that hope was dashed. He didn't know where and when he could find the Divine energy and awaken the system.

Shaking his head, he threw these thoughts to the back of his mind, and said, "Little Rou is young and still needs you, so don't think about dying, instead, try to live longer."

Saying this, a thoughtful expression appeared on his face as he looked at her and asked, "Is it just me or does little Rou really seem younger than before?"

Although he said this while looking at little Rou, his senses were focused on the old man and he immediately noticed the change in his demeanor, but didn't look at him or say anything further. After a moment, the old man took a deep breath and said, "Young master, I was just about to tell you about it."

"Oh?!" Max turned his gaze back to him and waited for him to continue.