

## **Seller 401**

Chapter 401 Who Will Be The Bait?

Allen Spencer

Spirit Path: Fighter

Rank: 8 (current stats: 9.9)

Equipped Weapon: Aries, the sword of light (30% stats buff)

Skills:

Laser eyes: Shoot laser beam from his eyes and caused heavy damage to the opponent. Attack power: 120% (max: 9.9). CD: 10 minutes.

Incineration: Shoot powerful blasts from his palms. Attack power: 120% (max: 9.9). CD: 5 minutes.

Lightning Fist: Punch the enemies and paralyze them with an electric shock. Attack power: 120% (max: 9.9). CD: 5 minutes.

Berserk: Go into a berserk state for 60 seconds, increasing the rank by 1. CD: 12 hours.

Finger Beam: Can release a concentrated energy beam from both of his index fingers separately. Attack Power: 110% (max: 9.9). CD: 180 seconds.

Solar Beam: Absorb the solar energy and use it to attack the enemies. Attack power: 120% (max: 9.9). CD: 5 minutes.

Passive:

Battle Craze: Able to fight nonstop while absorbing solar energy. All injuries are healed almost instantly during the day.

Flight: Able to fly as high as 30 km in altitude.

Hyper sensors: the Android possessed several passive and active sensors which allow him to scan the environment, objects, and living beings; can perceive danger; heightened smell, hearing, and vision, etc...

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"Oh, I almost forgot about that celestial-grade sword given by Emperor Shu. Allen could practically one-shot everyone below supreme realm with ease." Mark was very much satisfied with the results of the double upgrade.

Of course, there is also a slight dissatisfaction too. It is the restriction of the attack power, "Too bad that he won't be a match for either the zheng or that biological mother of mine."

"Anyways, I don't have time to think about unnecessary things. There are only two days left for Ouyang Zen's birthday and I will have to leave tomorrow. So, whatever preparations are necessary, they should be done today," thought Mark as he reached upstairs.

He went to his room where Allen just opened his eyes and was observing himself, opening and clenching his fists.

Upon spotting his master, he quickly bowed without being able to hide his smile as he was too happy to see Mark after so long. "Big Bro..."

Mark then went on asking about his meeting with the Necromancer King.

Allen didn't leave any detail during his explanation. "Sister Alina sacrificed herself in exchange for our lives. But, the enemy didn't know that she purposely gave her core to us instead of destroying it so that she could be revived later on. Thankfully, everything went on our way and Lin Xue managed to return safely, although we lost the sun and moon brooch, the scythe of doom, and her storage ring."

Mark was slightly surprised when he heard those words as Allen was in an unconscious state and couldn't have known what happened later on.

But then, as he remembered how Alina had the access to his memories, Mark realized that Allen probably had the same function now that he is at rank-8.

Mark then patted Allen's shoulder, "Don't worry. Alina will be revived in due time. But, I'll have to bother you with a couple of errands. We don't have much time."

Allen automatically read what was on his master's mind but he didn't speak it out. Instead, he gathered his feet and gave a salute, and asked, "Your orders, Big Bro?"

Mark then turned serious as he said, "I need you to go to the imperial palace and remind the Chief Eunuch about the lunch invitation, then, meet the third prince to repay the favor with information on the organization name Soul.

After that, go to the Galaxy guild and put up an information request on how to contact Soul.

Then, travel to the Kunyu valley to meet our friends there and hand over the letter I'll give you. You will have to do everything before tomorrow's sunrise. Can you manage it?"

"Of course, Big Bro." Allen nodded firmly.

Soon, the android left the store to accomplish the tasks given by his master.

And in just five hours, he returned with good news, surprising Mark with his efficiency.

After reporting the news to Mark and giving him the documents with information on 'Soul' written in it, he rushed to the kitchen to supervise Xie Mei.

For the past ten days, she was the one who did the cooking as she doesn't want to be a freeloader, well, and also to impress Mark and Song Yue.

Song Yue didn't mind it as she treated the teenager as her younger sister but Mark wouldn't shower praise on her as he doesn't want to encourage her.

At the same time, he would also purposely compare her cooking with Allen and Alina's, stating that she has a long way to go.

And now that Allen has returned, he was enthusiastic to make dishes for his master but Mark doesn't want him to cook as it would be disrespectful to his strength.

So, he gave him the job to supervise Xie Mei and also train the butler robots in assisting the cook.

Sitting on his bed, Mark started reading the information given by Shang Wei. The latter collected it from the fourth prince and didn't hesitate to give it to Allen as the organization is rumored to be the one who took up the assignment from his eldest brother.

He doesn't know why Mark wanted this information but if this will help him take down the crown prince for good, Shang Wei would gladly cooperate.

"The information only contained various operations allegedly done by this organization. I need the locations of their hideouts or their names. Without them, all of these were nothing.

But, the info says that Shang Zexi and Nie Rougang might know one of their offices. So, Shang Wei wasn't in the Wuji sect by coincidence. He was trying to escape the assassination by staying there in secret, huh?

But, according to the articles from the newspaper, he was being imprisoned in the Wuji sect and I saved him when I destroyed the sect due to my personal issues with them.

What a story he cooked up." Mark smirked as he shook his head.

"Anyways, it has nothing to do with me. Let's focus on how to make contact with this mysterious organization. Wait a second. They do assassinations right?" It was at that moment an idea popped up in his head.

Mark's eyes lit up as he mumbled, "To lay a trap for them, I need to put a bounty on myself. Let's make someone meet either the crown prince or Nie Rougang and request them to do this... Nah, that's a bad idea."

He immediately thought that if a bounty has been placed on his head, 'Soul' might target Song Yue too.

Mark knows nothing about the strength of this organization and wouldn't underestimate them just because he is in the supreme realm. Furthermore, they might not even accept the mission in the first place as the news of him and his super bodyguard destroying the Wuji sect was already spread all over the continent.

So, he will have to put someone vulnerable.

Mark doesn't want to risk with Song Yue. The Black Knight is still Song Yue's father. Hence, he is also not suitable.

Allen can act as bait but he is too close to Mark's heart. With the demise of Alina, Allen has become more precious. The zheng and the gold dragon were too strong. Manticore and Anan are beasts. Chang Bo is an unrelated person.

That leaves just one person.

"Yup, Xie Mei and her griffin can be the bait I need. I'll leave her at the store and travel to the Eastern Sun with the others. On the surface, she and Chang Bo will manage the store in my absence.

I planned to return to this city in secret using my teleportation skill anyways. Once the war starts in Western Yan, people will be too busy to take of the situation in the Imperial city.

This is what those assassins will think and tries to kill Xie Mei. They will fall into my trap. Once I capture them and get the name, I'm going to reveal my real strength. Until then, I need to be patient and careful with my plans."

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Meanwhile, at the Bloodhill forest;

In the innermost sector of the forest, an army of undead was standing in a line like spectators as two figures were rigorously battling a dragon.

Under the relentless assaults from both of them, the dragon has fallen eventually. Once it collapsed, its core was taken out and all of the energy inside it was slowly absorbed by the Necromancer King while Alina was healing her injuries using the natural energy from her surroundings.

The process went on for the whole night.

As the dawn of the next day arrived, the Necromancer King opened his eyes and clenched his fist, "Advanced stage of the Ninth-circle, finally, I managed to reach my former strength. Now, for my mount..."

He looked at the corpse of the dragon.

Chapter 402 Going To Helios City

At the dawn of the following day, Mark, Song Yue, Black Knight, and Allen departed from the Imperial city, traveling in the bicorn carriages given by the royal family of eastern sun, a while ago.

Xie Mei was left behind at the store, and to keep an eye on her, the manticore was also left at the store.

As for Lan Ju and Jinlong, they traveled to Western Moon and joined the princess.

Following them from behind, an ambassador from the Phoenix Empire also left for the Eastern Sun as a formality. However, strangely, this ambassador wasn't any politician or a member of the imperial court. Instead, it was the fourth prince who usually never steps out of the palace.

Mark didn't know about it and didn't care even if he knew.

Under his orders, the bicorn carriages traveled through the Dwarven kingdom and then went through the Leon Empire, entered the Eastern Sun kingdom, and finally reached the destination by late in the evening.

It took them about 17 hours of travel to reach Helios City. Excluding Allen, all the remaining travelers including the coachmen and the bicorns were dead tired by the time they reached the royal palace.

On the way, he realized that he would need a transport aerial vehicle that has enough space to make it feel like a moving house. He also had his eye on an aircraft.

Unfortunately, he would need a proper runway to fly it in the first place. Hence, he could only postpone the thought of purchasing it until some other time.

Meanwhile, inside a private chamber, Ouyang Zen and Lan Jing were in the middle of a conversation with the ruler of the Dwarven kingdom, King Kraggek Jedefury.

The dwarven king was admiring the wine while Lan Jing was hoping for a possible trade between the two kingdoms other than wine too. "The Blue Jeweled wine is indeed praiseworthy. My people would surely love this taste. Yi Di (the god of wine and alcohol) blessed your kingdom.

However, I was actually looking forward to tasting that legendary Black Spirit wine of your kingdom."

"Ugh... this barbarian has nothing but alcohol in his mind." Ouyang Zen wanted to speak about the situation of the trade of veggies and fish meat.

Eastern Sun kingdom shares boundaries with the Dwarven kingdom, Leon Empire, Kun Empire, and even the Xiezhì Empire of the Black turtle continent.

The majority of its kingdom was in the Vermillion bird continent and it was mostly filled with the Rocky Mountains and barren lands.

As for the remaining part, they were just islands in the ocean between the Vermilion bird continent and the Black turtle continent. Those help the kingdom in extending their maritime boundaries and so, in turn, help in fishing.

Hence, the kingdom majorly depends on either Kun Empire or Leon Empire for vegetables.

Having a border with Xiezhai Empire known for its fertile land, Ouyang Zen compromised on some islands to form trading relations with its northern neighbor and reduce dependency on the other two empires.

And he wanted the Dwarven kingdom to follow his route with Eastern Sun becoming the mediator.

However, the drunken dwarven king didn't even give him an opportunity to talk about it. He kept asking things about meat and alcohol, and Lan Jing was forced to give him explanations as the host.

It was then a soldier disrupted their meeting and informed them of the arrival of Mark.

Ouyang Zen immediately got up on his feet and excused himself as the matter wasn't going anywhere, "I need to go and attend to an important guest. Our Prime Minister will keep you company."

The Dwarven King furrowed his brows in displeasure. "Important guest? Which Empire's prince is he?"

"No, he is a commoner and the owner of a weapon store," replied Lan Jing in Ouyang Zen's stead. The teenager smiled as he added, "he can be considered a chief guest for this event. So, if you excuse me..."

He turned around and picked up his pace as he was walking away.

"A weapon store owner?" The Dwarven king fell into thoughts for a while before he opened his mouth, "Is he 'that' Lu Zhen?"

Lan Jing asked with a slight surprise, "You know him?"

"I read newspapers too," replied the dwarven king. "We might live in mountains but that doesn't mean we aren't aware of the world outside of our kingdom. We heard that he sells unique weapons called firearms and has a supreme being as a servant with the power of a pseudo-demigod."

Lan Jing nodded with a bright smile, feeling proud of his grand nephew. "His weapons will change this world. I think dwarves will benefit a lot if you form a friendship with him."

"I have seen a couple of those firearms. They couldn't be made by simple hammer and forge. Furthermore, the parts of each weapon are different from another. It is easier to make a semi-divine grade weapon compared to an ungraded firearm." The Dwarven King thought that it wasn't worth learning the making of firearms when they could just make semi-divine-grade weapons and earn lots of gold.

As for protection, the treaty with Leon and Phoenix empires will keep it safe. Hence, he didn't see any benefits that Lan Jing suggested.

Lan Jing could only shrug his shoulders and think that it is a pity before taking this opportunity to bring up the trade.

Meanwhile, Ouyang Zen reached the entrance of the palace and welcomed Mark and his companions in person.

"Who else has arrived, King Ouyang?" asked Mark as soon as he met the teenager. The latter answered, "The Leon Empire has sent its third prince and a minister. The Dwarven King is also here."

"What about Prince Qin Yu? Is he coming?" asked Mark. He had personal business with the crown prince of the Kun Empire but didn't have a communication talisman to talk with him like he had with Shen Ling, Lan Jing, and Feng Wu. Hence, his participation is important.

Unfortunately for him, Ouyang Zen only had a piece of bad news. The teenager shook his head, "No, the representative was changed at the last minute. The fourth prince, Qin Zhi, is coming."

Mark could only inwardly sigh and nod in understanding, "Okay, umm... Princess Shen Ling was also on her way. King Shen Niu wasn't coming because of some urgent matters. Anyways, shall we go?"

Soon, everyone was escorted to their rooms, leaving Ouyang Zen to have a private talk with his chief guest.

As they took their seats, the teenage King went on to ask about the Eye of Talim.

eaglesnove1,coM Mark took out a fist-sized, eye-shaped amulet and, showed it to him. "With the help of an expert (system), I removed its consciousness. All that's left is to use it on Mari, I mean, Zan Rong to unlock her memories."

Ouyang Zen sighed in relief after seeing it with his own eyes, "phew, finally, I can relax a bit. Thank you."

"You can thank me after the task," replied Mark. He then said, "Anyways, let's talk about the business. Your kingdom is full of rare materials and I'm interested to buy them in raw form. We could..."

After a while, the discussion was finished and Mark went to his room to sleep, well, atleast in the eyes of Ouyang Zen and his soldiers.

However, once he locked his room from inside, Mark didn't hesitate to open the skill tab and scrolled down to the section where his spatial skills were listed. He clicked on teleportation.

As soon as he did it, a new window was opened, displaying a 3d globe of the planet.

Just like his home planet, this one is also made of mostly water (~84%) but larger in size and has four continents with two in the eastern hemisphere, one in the center, and the other in the western hemisphere.

The system also made it quite convenient for him by dividing the continents by their kingdoms and empires. Along with the provinces, even towns, and cities were displayed, although the villages were omitted for some reason.

The Vermillion Bird continent was divided into eight regions. Phoenix Empire in the south. Above it, there was Bloodhill forest covering the vast area.

To the left of Bloodhill forest, there's the Western Moon kingdom. To the right, there was the dwarven kingdom and the mountains of Kush. And to the north, Leon Empire covered a massive area.

To the north of the Leon Empire, there's the Kun Empire. To the right of the Kun Empire, there is the Eastern Sun kingdom, and to the left, there's the Qilin Empire, which was isolated geographically from the Kun and Leon Empires by the mountain range of Tawang.

And to the northeast of Eastern Sun, a couple of thousand kilometers away, the Black Turtle continent is located.

The Black Turtle continent is ruled by just two empires, the Empire of Xiezhi, and the Empire of Baize.

As for the central Dragon continent, it was ruled by only Dragon Empire.

And the remaining White Tiger continent was called the beast empire, where various top-tier intelligent Spirit beasts formed their own kingdoms like the Werewolves, Pantheras (lions, tigers, leopards, jaguars, etc...), Bears, giants, etc...

The ocean is inhabited by a lot of known and unknown species. It is not much explored in history. As a result, the system couldn't gather much information from the timeline.

It wasn't the first time he used teleportation, and hence, he wasn't that surprised by the details given by the system.

However, when he just practiced during the past few days, he didn't travel so far. So, this was more exciting for him.

He couldn't stop smiling as he zoomed in a lot of times and finally clicked on a mountain nearby the Kunyu valley.

\*Ding! The destination is selected. Please wait for ten seconds for the generation of the spatial door.

Chapter 403 Mark Starts The War With A Surprise Attack

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

As the ten seconds passed, a portal appeared in front of Mark. He stepped inside.

The portal disappeared and he stepped outside to see himself on the top of a grassy hill. Because it is a wild region, not a thing could be seen in plain sight.

Cracking his knuckles, he mumbled, "Okay, now, let's plant the bombs."

"Equip, Exoskeleton Suit"

The night vision of the suit cleared the problem of the darkness and flight ability made it easier for Mark to travel directly to Western Yan without worrying about the pathway.

He reached the capital city in no time and continued to fly to the city center and then silently landed on the ground without alerting anyone.

Mark went on to activate stealth mode and took out a C4 from the inventory. "Well, the D-day for the doom of the Phoenix Empire is finally here. Starting from this day, Shang Fu and Lan Jingyi will never be able to sleep peacefully."

A couple of hours later;

Mark returned to the Kunyu valley where a bandit/soldier is waiting for him to escort him to the village.

He went straight to the cave where he met Feng Wu and his grand tutor. They looked a bit sleepy. It was Mark's fault in a way as he was the one who made the both of them wait for him until his arrival.

The three of them sat together and were having a tea session while Mark did most of the talking. "Look, I have set the timer to 5 o'clock in the morning. The sun rises around 6:30 to 6:45. So, our aim is to finish the war within those 90-100 minutes of time."

Feng Wu gasped in surprise. "90 minutes? That's impossible, Brother Lu. Just traveling itself will take an hour."

"I know." Mark nodded with a smile. "That's why your army will start atleast half an hour early and if you follow my plan correctly, it will take just 30-40 minutes to win this war."

He briefs his strategy once again, "Ji clan's grand elder, the northern general, the captain. Basically, everyone above the 6-circle realm will be taken care of. All you have to do is to make the remaining enemies surrender and get a firm hold on your capital.

The battle robots and tanks should be stationed at the border; the snipers will continue to station on top of the hills like usual but half of them will be shifted to the roofs of the tallest structures within the city; I will lend you a batch of advanced robots until the situation calms down; as for the Ji clan heir, he needed to stay as a hostage for a few days.

Once you received a formal acknowledgment of independence from the Western Moon and Eastern Sun kingdoms, you will release him and his family along with the prisoners on the grounds of humanity.

During this time, my servant will stay as your guest to make sure even Song Tai won't try anything funny. Alright?"

Feng Wu and his grand tutor nodded in understanding.

Roughly about three and a half hours later;

Ji Palace, Gong city, Western Yan;

The heir of the Ji clan, "Ji Guanli" (15 years old); his father and the clan patriarch, "Ji Cheng"; an important clan elder, "Ji Wu"; the clan's grand elder, "Ji Jianguo"; Mt. Hua sect's representative and paternal uncle of the grand elder of Sui clan, "Sui Ping"; the new northern General of Phoenix Empire, "Hu Shi"; finally, the archbishop of the church of Nuwa surnamed Ma; all of them had an emergency meeting early in the morning.

As for the elder son, Ji Mingyu, he is more of a scholar who hates fighting and scheming. Hence, he stayed away from the clan as the imperial troops entered Western Yan to defend the territory and also to search for the Kunyu bandits who could no longer be ignored due to the emergence of their grand tutor.

And this meeting is due to the sudden activity of a large army crossing the Kunyu Mountains and on the way to Western Yan.

Newly promoted general after the former one retired citing health reasons, Hu Shi was reading the paper he received from his subordinates.

"Feng Wu's army has about 700-1000 soldiers in number and everyone is equipped with firearms. Based on the latest attacks on our soldier units who ventured into the mountains, some of them surely possessed ether firearms that can strike us from at least a couple of hundred meters away.

Apart from that, atleast 200 of those metallic puppet weapons called Panzers were also spotted in the wild. It was the same model General Shang Wen had recently included in the army.

Each of those is not strong enough to kill anyone above 5-circle and even 4-circle Spirit Warriors can protect themselves but below that, there's no stopping it. I personally witnessed their power when I was a lieutenant under General Wen. The Panzers will be too troublesome if they enter the city and target our civilian population.

These weapons need a coachman sitting inside to move them and atleast one more to operate the firearms smoothly. But, due to the lack of numbers, they might allot only one person to operate them. Hence, their movements will be unsteady and slow during the war.

This is where we might gain an advantage."

"This Lu Zhen really brought upon a headache for us," commented Ji Cheng while gritting his teeth in anger. He further said, "Everything started because of him. I bet he is behind this invasion too; all so that he could see our destruction."

"There is no evidence of him involved in this war except for selling weapons to Kunyu bandits." Hu Shi wasn't interested to go against Mark as the latter had the support of the imperial palace. "Furthermore, if he could destroy the Wuji sect, then, he wouldn't need Kunyu bandits to destroy your clan. So, let's focus on real factors, Lord Ji."

As Ji Cheng grunted and stayed silent, Arch Bishop Ma asked, "couldn't you have requested the list of weapons he sold to them?"

General Hu Shi shook his head, "We already did that and he replied that he cannot give the list because of the confidentiality between the seller and the client."

Sui Ping then pitched in his opinion, "His weapons might be revolutionary but the ones operating are still the Kunyu bandits. There's a saying, a divine grade sword in the hands of an amateur will lose to a copper grade sword in the hands of a master swordsman."

"True," Elder Ji Wu nodded in agreement and then voiced his opinion, "we should just make our move ahead of them and surprise them with a bombard of attacks. They likely only have one 7-circle Spirit Warrior. If he takes him and Feng Wu out, the rest don't matter whether they have amazing weapons or not."

Everyone then looked at the Grand Elder of the Ji clan for his opinion. He was in deep thought, thinking about all kinds of possibilities.

Just as he was about to give his nod, all of a sudden, a powerful explosion occurred far away from the palace but due to the fact that everyone else is sleeping, it was loud enough to reach all the way to these experts.

\*Boom\*

"Hmm?" A few of these experts furrowed their brows when they heard it and looked in the direction of the sound.

Little did they expect to hear sounds continue with each one getting louder than the previous one, i.e. the successive explosions are getting near to the palace.

\*Boom\* Boom\* Boom\* Boom\* Boom\* Boom\* Boom\*

More than a dozen explosions occurred all over the city in various places, destroying their surroundings, and randomly killing the innocent citizens living nearby.

The citizens are quickly seen running in the streets and Mark was flying in the sky in stealth mode with a holographic screen floating before him.

The holographic screen has the image of a circle with the percentage increasing slowly as the souls were flying into the sky and disappearing into the screen.

"54%" "73%" "89%" "112%"

Once it crossed 100, the circle stopped absorbing the souls, letting them go to the spirit realm instead.

Meanwhile, the summon option appeared below the circle. He landed on the roof of a building and clicked on it. "I summon you, Demon King Bael."

A blinding flash of light appeared before his eyes and a humanoid figure appeared in place of the three-headed demon, taking Mark by surprise.

"Eh? Bael?"

#### Chapter 404 Western Yan Has Been Captured

"I can shapeshift into any creature. Since we are in the human world, I thought this is an apt transformation. My strength in this world appeared to be limited to that of an immortal (11-circle) and I can stay for a maximum period of 6 hours," explained Bael as he was asked about his transformation.

Mark remembered the details of his abilities and nodded in understanding. He was also happy with this arrangement as it eventually becomes his advantage in the end.

He said, "Okay, time is of the essence here. Capture everyone in the surroundings with a 6-circle realm of cultivation and above. Imprison them and bring them here. After I confirm their identities, you can have them as your meal. As for the weaker ones you encounter on the way, just knock them out."

"Consider it done." The demon was very much excited to do the job as it is in his nature to do such evil deeds. Rising into the sky, Bael then looked at the city where people are running in fear and glanced at his contractor, "my judgment is correct. This man will bring chaos with him. And I like it. Anyways, let's get this party started."

The demon king Bael proceeded to scan the entire city and spotted the majority of the individuals gathered at one spot. He couldn't help but lick his lips as he stared at the majestic palace from far away.

There were a couple of them hiding in the city and one individual helping the others but the demon gave priority to the spirit warriors in the Ji palace as they were more in number and appeared tastier.

Meanwhile, in the palace, the clan heir Ji Guanli and his mother were house-arrested by Ji Cheng, the Clan Patriarch.

He placed several guards as their security as the grand elder summoned the clan members to protect the palace while the Church of Nuwa, guilds, Mt. Hua sect, and the imperial troops currently present within the city outskirts proceeded to enter the city to look for the culprits.

"Some of the enemies have breached our walls and I will focus on capturing them until Feng Wu's army arrives at the city," said General Hu Shi as he was prepared to head out.

The others also had jobs to supervise their subordinates or at least pass the orders to them. A couple of them also planned to head out but all of their actions were interrupted by the appearance of a stranger who just looked like some civilian.

"Who are you? How do you get inside?" Ji Cheng shouted at Bael as he saw him. General Hu Shi didn't know why but he felt something off and quickly halted his footsteps. He was about to take out his platinum-grade sword from his storage ring but the stranger captured his thoughts almost instantly and raised his hand.

"Bone prison."

\*Snap\*

As he snapped his finger with a devilish grin on his face, bones erupted from the ground out of nowhere and surrounded Hu Shi from all sides, imprisoning him.

"You bastard." Hu Shi took out the sword and slashed at the thick bone but it even didn't leave any scratch on it, displaying its toughness.

Meanwhile, the others became alerted as realization dawned upon them. "An expert."

Grand Elder, Ji Jiango made his move. He conjured a hot fireball in his hands and quickly fired at the stranger without any hesitation, believing they were under attack.

Bael smirked as he looked at the fireball, which only has the power of a mid-7 circle.

"My servants of the darkness, arise." Bael unleashed another ability of his.

In an instant, skeletons rose from the ground one after another. The fireball hit one of them but didn't do any damage. And there were ten such skeletons in the room.

"A necromancer with 9-circle cultivation?" The same thought came to all of them as their eyes fell on the skeletons, and instantly, the imprisoned General take out his communication talisman and sent a message to Supreme Commander Bai Xun.

The demon overlooked it as he wasn't instructed to keep an eye on the humans' actions after they were imprisoned.

Once the undead skeletons heavily injured the targets, they were also imprisoned in a bone prison before all of those prisons started floating in the air, following the demon.

Bael returned to the same spot in just five minutes with the prisoners. Mark felt amazed at first but then thought that it is obvious these 6-circle and 7-circle experts are no match for the demon king, who had the power of an immortal at the moment.

Due to the lack of sunlight, the prisoners couldn't see Mark and the light from the fire caused by explosions from far away was quite dim. All they could see is a blurry figure.

Ji Cheng went on to threaten Mark without knowing his identity. "Free us, you mixed egg (bastard). Or else, you will pay for the consequences."

Mark ignored him for a moment and looked at Bael, "Are these all?"

Bael shook his head, "there were three more."

"Then, bring them here too." Mark gave his order and focused on his prisoners.

The audacity of a human to order a higher being like a servant amused the demon instead of offending him. As a demon king, he was just fond of all the bad traits in his contractors.

"Alright but don't kill them. They are my food." Bael didn't forget to remind Mark of his earlier order and flew away.

Mark then went on to activate God's Eye skill, which was upgraded from Sage's eye after the system came online. Its function remains the same, except that no one would be able to hide their information now.

After getting to know their details, he thought, "Church of Nuwa, Mt. Hua sect, Ji Clan, and a new northern general. Everyone gathered in one spot. Good... very good. Let's keep one as a hostage."

Meanwhile, at Imperial City;

Emperor Shang Fu was sleeping soundly in his room but his happy dream, whatever it might be, disappeared as he was forced to wake up early in the morning.

"Ugh... not again." Shang Fu complained as this was the fourth time his sleep was disturbed in the past six months. The fact there were such frequent urgent situations kept on occurring at such unusual times which require his attention only mean not everything is right in the empire.

"Come in."

After giving permission for the guard to enter the room, Shang Fu slowly got up.

The Imperial guard reported the matter to the Emperor without leaving any detail.

And without any surprise, the Emperor was shocked by the report and spoke, "Pass the message to Bai Xun that I want him at the palace this instant. I'm also calling for an emergency assembly."

"Your Majesty." The imperial guard hurriedly left the room and went to inform the Emperor's orders to his superior who passed it to the Chief Eunuch who had the means of communication with Bai Xun, the Generals, and the ministers.

And within 45 minutes, everyone arrived at the courtroom and took their seat.

"I bet all of you must have already been informed of what's going on in Western Yan," said Emperor Shang with a look of frown on his face. "Feng Wu declared the war without giving off any prior notification."

Nie Rougang showcased his loyalty by trying to be angry, "How dare those traitors to try to invade our empire. They must be hanged to death, Your Majesty."

"But, why now?" asked Lin Wuying in wonder. "What is it that made them confident to wage a war when there were a bunch of experts openly waiting for them? Is there a stronger expert in their midst?"

Bai Xun then asked, "what about the updates from the Ji clan?"

"They might be currently engaging with that unknown expert," opinioned the Grand Secretariat. "The message we received from Western Yan is just through captains."

"Are they even alive?" The third prince was feeling suspicious of the state of the allies.

Emperor Shang then said, "I have yet to speak everything. About 40-45 minutes ago, Chief Eunuch had received a message from General Hu through the communication talisman."

As the rest of the ministers turned their heads to look at the guy standing beside the Emperor, the Eunuch informed them, "Before even the war started, an unknown enemy intruded into the Ji palace and attacked everyone. According to General Hu, the enemy is suspected to be a supreme realm warrior and can summon the undead. He is a necromancer.

Everyone has been taken as hostages by the time Feng Wu reached the city with his army equipped with Lu Zhen's weapons and armored vehicles."

Chapter 405 A Letter To Emperor Shang

"Oh! Shit. Prince Wei's suspicion is true?" The Grand Secretariat was taken aback and so were the others. Panic struck a few ministers as they heard of the existence of a supreme realm expert.

Song clan's current head spoke in a hurry, "We have to send Ancestor Song Tai to deal with them. Does anyone have any instant means of communication with him?"

As everyone shook his head, Lin Wuying spoke, "Or we can take Lu Zhen's help."

"Are you serious, Lin Wuying?" Nie Rougang flared up when Lin Xue's father suggested the name. As a person who was on the side of the Crown Prince and Ji clan, he took the opportunity to put allegations against Mark.

"Lu Zhen kidnapped Ji clan's heir and handed him to the Kunyu bandits to take revenge.

He stole Song Yue away from Ji Mingyu when he was supposed to wed her.

He sold those weapons to Kunyu bandits who were using them to murder our civilians.

And I strongly suspect he is also behind Kunyu Bandits as of now. After all, you have heard the reports. A supreme realm expert attacked the Ji Palace. I remember Lu Zhen had a supreme being as his servant.

Don't you think it is likely both are the same person? In this situation, do you want to take his help? Ridiculous."

Lin Wuying became silent as he couldn't counter that. He doesn't actually want to defend Mark at the moment as he had the same suspicion.

However, the Emperor doesn't think so. He immediately scolded Nie Rougang before anyone else react to it, "Don't speak based on speculations, Minister Nie. He is a friend of the Imperial family. Insulting him is the same as insulting this throne."

Nie Rougang realized that the emperor was unhappy and he quickly apologized for his statements before saying that he didn't have any other logical explanation.

Shang Fu snorted and told the rest to get on to the original topic and discuss the best course of action.

In the end, Bai Xun suggested the assassination of Feng Wu, followed by inciting a rebellion from the citizens until we surround them with our troops and let Song Tai take care of that mysterious expert.

Everyone seemed to agree with his suggestion but the Emperor stayed silent. He dislikes such underhanded methods for the sake of victory, and hence, there is hesitation to give the answer.

After a lot of thinking, he turned to his son and asked, "Shang Wei, you are my special adviser. Tell me if there is a better plan than sacrificing innocents."

As if he already had a plan in his mind, the third prince readily answered as he got up from his seat, "Your Majesty, there is one which doesn't involve bloodshed."

As everyone curiously looked at the third prince, the latter spoke, "We give up Western Yan on the condition that Feng Wu and his army remain loyal to the throne."

"What?" Nie Rougang opposed it immediately. He raised his voice at the third prince, "Prince Wei, whose side you are on? You want our majesty to admit defeat against those bandits and give away our land? Do you know how big it even is? It's over 260,000 sq. km."

Even the supreme commander Bai Xun opposed the plan. "The war against the Feng clan took the lives of thousands of soldiers. Giving it away will not be a humiliation to our soldiers but also a betrayal to our citizens there.

Furthermore, the enemy's strength hasn't been confirmed yet. It was only mere speculation from General Hu. If he is a legendary realm expert, then, we can win this war without a problem."

Shang Wei folded his hands and leaned to the backrest as he argued, "Supreme Commander Bai, Minister Nie; both of your arguments are true but it is also a fact that we won't have much support from the civilians as the land was originally ruled by the Feng clan for hundreds of years anyways.

Whether Ji clan rules it or Feng Wu rules, does it really matter as long as he swears loyalty to his majesty? If they can't compromise on it, we can proceed with the assassination of Feng Wu, followed by giving asylum to the bandits and their families to start a new life.

As the great scholar Sun Tzu said, the greatest victory is that which requires no battle."

Shang Wei then looked at his father and said, "His Majesty asked my advice and I gave my opinion. We follow your orders whatever they may be."

Emperor Shang felt that his son is right and he was about to agree to his proposition for the sake of peace but before he did that, a soldier scurried forward and informed everyone that Feng Wu's messenger is waiting for permission to enter.

Soon, the former fatty merchant and a nervous freak, Huo Fen walked into the courtroom with his head held high in confidence. Strangely, he was already in the 5-circle realm. Only he and Feng Wu know how it happened.

Halting his footsteps at the center of the court, Huo Fen calmly greeted the emperor and raised his palms to display a scroll, "Your Majesty, His Highness Feng Wu has sent a letter to you."

The Chief Eunuch took the scroll and read it aloud.

"Dear, Emperor Fu of the Shang Dynasty,

With the greatest pleasure, we're informing you that our Kunyu royal force has successfully captured Gong City and imprisoned the general named Hu Shi, Ji clan heir, and Ji Cheng's wife along with more than fifteen hundred soldiers of your army.

Western Yan gained its independence and we would like to stay that way as we once did.

Seven days from now, there will be an official coronation ceremony taking place at Gong City and the Phoenix Empire is welcome to send its delegate for wishing our new king.

We also hope to receive a formal acknowledgment from Phoenix Empire for the sake of peaceful relations. If you chose peace, Western Yan is willing to forget past grudges.

As a gesture of goodwill, we will release all the war prisoners. In exchange, the soldiers of the Phoenix Empire will also leave our land.

And of course, we would also welcome enmity too. In that case, we will act accordingly.

Hoping for a positive response, yours sincerely;

Prince Wu of the Feng Dynasty"

Everyone except for Shang Fu rose to their feet in anger. The Emperor, on the other hand, tightly grabbed the handle and showed heavy restraint in order to keep his image in front of the messenger. He gestured for everyone to sit down.

As they took their seats, Shang Fu tried to be as calm as possible as he dealt with the matter. "Return and inform your king that I will give him three days of time. Release the hostages, make a proper apology to the victims along with the announcement of compensation, and swear his loyalty to the throne. I will allow him to rule Western Yan with a certain degree of freedom.

If he doesn't, the Phoenix Empire will formally take it as an act of war and retaliate in our own way."

"I'm sorry but can you please provide me an official letter with everything you have said written on it?" Huo Fen refused to deliver the message through the mouth as he was afraid of the scheming politicians sitting in the courtroom. He might show his confidence due to the fact that Feng Wu managed to reclaim his kingdom but he was still afraid of death. He doesn't want to get caught in the middle of all of this.

Shang Fu's face turned beet red and his veins popped up because of his rage but he managed to put it under control and asked for the scroll.

After a while, Huo Fen bowed and then turned around to walk away with the letter.

Once he is out of sight, Emperor Shang finally showed his real emotions. He couldn't low down his voice as he roared with flames erupting from his body, "A mere messenger of bandits dares to say that he doesn't trust my words? A bandit dared to threaten me with hostages?"

Who do they think they are? Just because I'm showing lenience, those bandits think that I'm weak?"

Shang Fu stared at the startled officials of his and spoke in a powerful tone, "I don't care what sort of busy plans they have but the three remaining generals, retired generals, guild leaders, sect leaders, and lastly the clan leaders have to be at the palace within 36 hours."

"Your Majesty"

The ministers and Bai Xun felt like they were seeing their aggressive emperor of the past days; as a result, everyone's morale received a huge boost.

Chapter 406 Assassination Attempt On Xie Mei

Ji Palace, Gong city, Western Yan;

In the palace, Mark and a few higher rank members of Kunyu bandits took their seats in the place where that earlier meeting Ji clan held it. Behind Mark, the demon was standing like a loyal servant to keep up appearances, although he was the strongest person here. He doesn't have a thing such as an ego when he is summoned. So, no harm is being done here.

"Okay, the sun is about to rise and I need to return to prevent any unnecessary suspicions. Any problem, just send me a message." Mark said to everyone as he rose to his feet.

As the others got up their seats too, Feng Wu slightly bowed in respect, "Once again, thank you for your help, Owner Lu. I never expected to go our war this smooth."

"No mention." Mark smiled as he waved his hand. He further added, "You have to be careful. People don't know that Feng Chun is the real king. And before your enemies know the truth, they would think that you are going to be the king and will likely try to assassinate you during these seven days. You are on your own for that."

"I know." Feng Wu nodded seriously. It was also the reason he was very careful to keep the existence of his nephew a secret, the former king's only grandchild.

Soon, Mark equipped the exo suit and flew away from the palace, landing in a remote location.

As Bael also landed before him, Mark gave his next order, "I need you to go to my home and protect the girl named Xie Mei from the shadows. The place is named Genesis Weapon store. You can find your way by hypnotizing any soldier stationed in the city.

As for your mission, keep an eye on her until someone attacks her. If that happens, you should capture them and send a telepathic message."

"Consider it done," Bael promised to do the task and Mark opened up a portal and walked into it, returning to Helios City, although finding himself in the outskirts.

Nevertheless, he used the tracking system to track Allen's location at the royal palace. With GPS (sort of) function, he made it to the Royal palace and used the stealth ability of the suit and quickly got to his room by flying up to the second floor and getting in through the window, all in a matter of just 30 seconds of time.

Throwing away the suit in inventory, he collapsed on the bed to have some sleep.

Meanwhile, in the Imperial city of Phoenix Empire;

A group of masked individuals made their way through the streets, evading the soldiers who are patrolling around. They were four in number.

"I'm excited about this mission, you know," said a masked individual as they entered the outer sector where commoners live and where there is almost no patrolling because of the invasion. His hoarse voice and his words don't match at all but no one complained as they were used to it.

One of them with the codename Viper replied, "Panther, just because you are a summoner doesn't mean Griffin will submit to you."

"But, I have the greatest chance, right?" countered the guy codenamed Panther.

Before Mark and Allen left for the Eastern Sun kingdom, the android was met with a guild member who surprisingly knows something about Soul.

While the information is useless because it was already something Mark indirectly learned from Shang Wei, Mark figured out that this fellow named Li Ming is pretty much close to Nie Rougang and confirmed that this revenue minister knows a way to contact them.

Bribing him with 500 gold coins to keep his identity a secret, Allen gave him the letter, a pouch with more than 100,000 gold coins, another pouch with 10,000 gold coins, and another scroll with a mission written on it.

Li Ming gave them to Nie Rougang. The letter contained a message stating that he would have to deliver the mission to Soul organization with the advance in a big pouch. The smaller one with 10,000 gold coins is his commission for doing the job.

Now, whether Li Ming does his job, whether Nie Rougang does his job, or they betray because of their greed for gold is something Mark had to take a leap of faith.

But, faith is something Mark lacks. Hence, he made sure to attach a postscript where he threatened Nie Rougang that in the event of betrayal, his name will be given to private assassins. And for that, the employer (Mark) wouldn't hesitate to spend another 100,000.

As for the mission, Soul organization will have to kill Xie Mei when she is out of protection from Lu Zhen (Mark). She should die and her body should disappear while a letter should be left behind stating her departure.

Mark didn't forget to give her details and the abilities he knew. Along with 1 million gold coins as a reward for doing the job, he also mentioned that the girl has griffin as her contracted beast. If they kill her, they can capture the beast emperor and take it with them as their prize too.

The griffin might be a beast emperor but it is still a baby with only the strength of a 5-circle realm. For legendary realm experts, it shouldn't be difficult to defeat it.

That was the thing that attracted Soul organization the most and not just one or two but four members were deployed for the mission.

Soon, they reached the weapon store and are looking for a way to enter.

Having the knowledge of the store's suppression inside, they knew that breaking into the store and killing her would be an impossible task. Hence, they decided to draw her out.

As the rest of the three went into hiding and suppressed their cultivation realm, the sole woman member of the team, codenamed Peafowl, took out her mask and lowered her hood walked toward the store, and knock loudly on the shutter until it was opened by a teenager.

Xie Mei was half asleep as she looked at the person, "what is it?" She asked while letting out a yawn.

The woman grabbed Xie Mei's hands as if she was in a huge problem and is in hurry, "My husband was bitten by stray dogs on the way and bleeding. No one is opening the doors. Please help me."

"Stray dogs? It's weird. Anyways, bring him inside. I know how to save him," replied Xie Mei.

"Thank you so much..." The woman shed tears as she grabbed her hands before saying, "please come with me. He is lying there." She pointed in some random direction.

Xie Mei didn't think too much at first and followed her. But, after walking a few steps, she then asked curiously, "May I ask how it happened?"

"We are traveling merchants from Northern Yuan province. On our way, we met with a pack of mad stray dogs. They attacked our bullock for no reason. My husband protected me and shoo them away but in the process, he was bitten a lot." The woman narrated a story in a brief manner while taking away the girl from the store.

However, Xie Mei felt odd even in that story. She couldn't help but say, "I'm sorry but there should be no stray dogs in our district or the surroundings. I heard that a while ago, all of those stray animals like dogs, cats, goats, and pigs were captured because of the inconvenience they cause to our store and our customers."

The woman stopped walking and turned around. She wiped the tears and let out a smile, "well, I didn't know that. If I had known, I would have used a better excuse."

"What do you mean?" Xie Mei furrowed her brows. "Who are you?"

Three figures simultaneously landed around her. Panther spoke, "well, let's just say your grim reapers."

Xie Mei instantly realized that they were trying to assassinate her as Mark was no longer in the city. Xie Mei quickly used a significant portion of her ether energy and expelled it through her body in all directions.

The assassins didn't expect it and were hit by the sudden attack. They blasted away a few meters and crashed onto the ground, giving space for Xie Mei to escape.

"Iffy." She shouted at the top of her lungs as she leaped into the air.

A powerful screech echoed in the surroundings before the griffin woke up, flapped its wings, and flew into the sky.

It happened so fast that even the assassins didn't expect their target to perfectly land on her mount's back by the time they get up and take out their weapons.

"We can't let her escape," said the woman codenamed Peafowl.

However, the response came from nowhere, startling everyone.

"You have to worry about yourselves, humans."

#### Chapter 407 Capturing The Assassins

The voice of a stranger from nowhere startled everyone. Even Xie Mei, who was prepared to break her vow and use the bow due to an emergency, got surprised by the new entry.

Soon, the demon materialized himself and appeared before the assassins.

"Who are you?" As they felt nothing from the demon king, they were more alert.

Bael smiled in response, "well, who am I is of no importance. What's important here is that you aren't here to assassinate the girl but to give answers."

"Kill him." The leader of the group codenamed Falcon, ordered the others. As they tightly gripped their daggers and were about to charge at their new target, Bael snapped his fingers and all of a sudden, large bones looking like tusks erupted from the ground and pierced each of them in their legs or thighs.

"Aaaah"

The four assassins of the 7-circle realm screamed in pain as their movements are halted. Xie Mei was stunned by the sudden move from her savior and she continued to stare from above.

Meanwhile, Bael used bone prison once again to imprison everyone during the next few seconds and spoke to them, "Now, shall we go?"

Bael slowly flew higher and so were the four bone prisons while the trapped assassins were trying their best to escape but couldn't do it. Even their teleportation scroll is not working inside the bone prison.

As the demon king was about to fly away, Xie Mei shouted, "wait." But Bael didn't stop.

Xie Mei ordered the griffin to follow him. After blocking his way for a moment, she thanked him and asked his name.

Bael waved his hand in response, "as I have said earlier, my name is of no importance here. If you want to thank someone, you can thank Lu Zhen because he was the one who gave me this mission, although he was also the one who used you as bait to draw them out."

"Eh? I'm the bait?" Xie Mei was shocked again. When she heard Bael's first half of the sentence, she thought Mark was looking after her but the latter half of the sentence made her realize why she was left behind.

She couldn't help but ask, "Who are they?"

Bael shrugged his shoulders, "Who knows? You can ask Lu Zhen by yourself. I'm going to Kunyu Mountains to meet him. You can tag along if you want."

"Isn't he at Eastern Sun?" Xie Mei was once again surprised by the demon king's words. She looked at him warily. After being fooled once, she couldn't trust a stranger's words despite the fact that he helped him.

Bael understood what she was thinking and he didn't mind it. "If you don't want to come, then, don't. You can still wait for his return and then ask him the questions. I'm leaving."

Xie Mei thought for a bit and made her decision, realizing that if this stranger is strong enough to defeat those assassins of the 7-circle realm with such ease, then, he could kill her anytime he wants.

"Wait, I'll come with you." She said.

The demon king took her along with the four prisoners to Mt. Lan where the ruins of the Lan sect are located. He could directly go to Eastern Sun and it wouldn't even take a minute for him to cover the distance but Mark decided Mt. Lan as the place to interrogate them.

After reaching the place, he sent a message and waited.

And it didn't take long for a portal to appear and for Mark to walk out of it. The latter wasn't informed about Xie Mei's presence and hence, was taken aback when he saw her standing beside the demon king. Naturally, he didn't like it.

"What are you doing here?" Mark furrowed his brows in displeasure.

Xie Mei replied, "To get the answers."

Mark meaningfully looked at the demon as if he was asking what mischief is this.

Bael shrugged his shoulders calmly in response, "You never said that I shouldn't bring her with me."

Mark wanted to get angry at him but the demon king is useful to him in many ways. Hence, he clenched his fist and controlled his annoyance before speaking to the 15-year-old.

"I need to draw out the members of the 'Soul' organization to interrogate a certain matter but I can't put my loved ones in danger. Hence, I used you." Mark said it in a way without using any apologetic tone, hoping to use this situation to get rid of her. Seeing the look of shock on her face, he further said coldly, "I will do it again without hesitation even in the future. This is one of the risks you will have to bear if you want to live with me along with facing unexpected assassination attempts."

"But, why save me?" Xie Mei was intelligent enough to understand the hidden meaning behind Mark's words. However, Mark underestimated her willpower and determination. Before he gave her the answer, she answered her own question, "It's because I'm your guest and you hold yourself responsible for my safety. Isn't it?"

Mark's face darkened, feeling like he failed to get rid of her. "I have my own principles that I follow." After a brief pause, he added, "I'm not a god. Just because I believe in something, that doesn't mean I would accomplish it without fail."

Indirectly, he was saying that he cannot save her all the time and today is just an exception. However, the determined teenager responded positively and even put him in a difficult spot with a surprising question. "I guess I should work hard then. By the way, I need a weapon to protect myself. Since I gave the bow because of you and since you said I'm suited for firearms, I guess I will have to depend on you to lend me one. As you said earlier, there will be future assassination attempts on me. I should protect myself."

"Well..." Mark was stumped for a second by her request but it is also a fact that he is responsible to make give up the bow, he also agreed to let her live with him, and he also put her in danger. So, he thought she was logically right and it shouldn't be a big deal to give an ether weapon. "Fine, I will give you one."

Just as he thought about giving her an ether sniper rifle that can be used by her, Xie Mei reminded him, "I will soon make a breakthrough to 7-circle, by the way."

"Alright. Wait here for a while." Mark promised her and shifted his focus to the unconscious prisoners.

"Bael, can you seal their cultivations?" He asked the demon king. The latter replied by shaking his head. "I'm not good at sealing techniques but I can destroy their cultivations though."

"It's even better. Do it." Mark gave his permission to act.

The demon king let out a smile as he raised his hand, "with my pleasure."

Concentrated demonic energy erupted from Bael's right palm before taking the form of four sabers.

He released the bone prisons and attacked them.

The four assassins woke up with a painful scream and continued to scream as the demonic energy was attacking their spirit core while destroying their cells.

Unlike Mark who had gone through gene mutation and don't need a spirit core to cultivate, the cultivators/spirit warriors of this planet were born with spirit cores and they enhance these cores through constant training or absorbing energy from third-party sources and refining them.

This is also why their spirit path and attribute are fixed and cannot be changed, unlike Mark who can just have multiple attributes and spirit paths/professions.

As the respective spirit cores of the assassins were destroyed, turning them into mortals/civilians, Mark walked toward them.

"Lu Zhen?" "This..."

The assassins just went through hell but upon seeing Mark, they felt like their death is near.

However, none of them begged for death as they were already dead inside with the loss of cultivation. They lost their will to live and were not afraid to die. And Mark wasn't interested to deliver their death so soon.

Taking out a handgun from his inventory, Mark pointed it at the woman first. "Now, Ms. Huang Jing of Qilin Empire, we shall start with you."

The woman's eyes widened in shock when her name and homeland is revealed by Mark. Even her teammates don't have any idea.

Mark didn't care to explain himself and proceeded with the interrogation. "Now, I will ask a question. I hope I won't be disappointed."

"Ten years ago, your organization took an assignment related to Huotang village. The names of the victims are Lu Yimu and Yi Zexi. The incident is disguised as burglary. Now, who is the client?"

#### Chapter 408 Threatening The Assassin

As soon as they heard Mark's words, three of them looked confused and the fourth one tried his best to keep a poker face.

One can control their expression but their heartbeat isn't easy to control perfectly, atleast not when one is taken aback because of an unexpected question.

"I don't know," replied the woman, codenamed Peafowl, in the meantime. "Even if I know, I won't answer you."

"She was telling the truth," commented the demon king before pointing his index finger at the eldest of the four, "Lu Zhen, this fellow knows it. There was a momentary spike of his heartbeat."

"Is that so? Then, she is of no use to me." Mark responded to the demon king by clicking on the trigger without hesitation. The bullet left the gun and pierced the woman's forehead, taking everyone by surprise.

She fell to the ground and became a corpse. The middle-aged-looking fellow's heart spiked up again when he saw that before he convinced himself to stay strong and prepare for death.

Mark passed through the two in the middle and stood before the guy. Looking coldly at him, he raised the gun and pointed it toward the youngest of them, the one with the codename Panther. "Now, this was a warning shot just to show you what this beauty can do to mortals."

The team leader (codename: Scarlet Tiger) spat onto the ground and replied, "We were afraid of neither death nor torture. Kill them for all I care."

"Fine, let's see how much willpower you have." Mark clicked the trigger two times in a row, ending the lives of his remaining teammates too.

Scarlet Tiger aka Liu Xing remained unmoved by their deaths.

As he stayed silent, Mark pointed the gun at his shoulder and shot the bullet. A sharp pain struck Liu Xing but he managed to bear the pain and looked straight at the horizon.

\*Bang\* bang\* bang\* Bang\*

Four more bullets were shot one after another, one at his left shoulder, one at his left thigh, one at his right thigh, and the last one at his abdomen region. The blood was oozing out of his body and Liu Xing was feeling dizzy along with pain all over his body but he refused to speak.

The demon king watched the scene with curiousness. He wanted to know what his contractor will do next.

The irritated Mark kicked Liu Xing's abdomen. As the latter fell down, Mark pressed his leg against the bullet wound and said, "Give me the name I want and I will give you a painless death. Don't waste my time or else, I swear that you will wish for your death."

Bearing his pain, Liu Xing forced out the words in response, "You have made a big mistake, young man. The moment you destroyed our cultivation, I have already lost my fear of death. There is nothing that can scare me."

"What if I use your family members to threaten you? You won't get scared even then?" asked Mark, resorting to using the half-baked information to his advantage.

Liu Xing's eyes widened for a moment before he let out a fake laugh, "I don't have a family."

The demon king sensed the change in Liu Xing's heartbeat and secretly informed Mark through their telepathic connection.

Mark, who realized that Liu Xing has a weakness, went on to use his Eyes of God skill once again. Compared to the Sage Eyes, the upgraded skill has more details, especially the description.

He couldn't help but smirk and said, "Is that so? Then, let me tell you about someone I know. His name is Liu Xing and he is from..."

Liu Xing

Codename: Scarlet Tiger

Rank: N/A

Age: 68

Affiliation: Phoenix Empire, Dragon Empire (former)

Description: Liu Xing used to be Honglong province's governor. After a feud with an imperial prince, he lost his position and fame, and all of his assets were forcibly taken by the imperial palace. He assassinated the prince, escaped to Phoenix Empire with his wife, daughter, and son-in-law, and joined the Soul organization. Due to an incident in his latest mission, he lost his cultivation and turned into a mortal.

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After speaking out what he had read in the description, he then said, "I don't know whether you have a grandchild or not but in order to fulfill my revenge, I will not hesitate to break my principles and torture all of your family members including the children right in front of your eyes.

I will pluck off each of their nails, then, cut off their fingers, hands, and legs while my dear friend here will recover their limbs before I repeat the process again and again."

As Xie Mei closed her mouth in shock, the demon king was smiling in amusement, and Liu Xing was finally shivering in fear as he was imagining the scene, Mark looked straight into his eyes and further said, "We don't have any enmity. Don't make it into one. Or else, you will know the true terror. Let me tell you about a few incidents that occurred in my life.

Some arrogant noble insulted my sibling. So, I killed that noble and attacked their clan, making them pay the compensation.

Then, their backing, the Sui Clan, tried to do the same. They faced the same result.

In another incident, a minister of the empire insulted me and demanded an apology by falling onto my knees to save myself. As a result, I blew up their mansion located in the heart of the city and send him into a coma.

Then, the Emperor asked me to deliver him the seed of fire for his son. I promised him. To fulfill my end of the deal, I killed everyone who got near my prize. There were a lot of 8-circle realm experts on it. Poor Ironpalm sect almost lost their strength by half because of that.

Recently, when I was on a vacation, I encountered a pitiful teenage couple who faced an ambush from their rival sect and lost their comrade. For the sake of a promise to that couple, I entered a tournament and killed the culprit right in front of her patriarch.

When her Patriarch attempted to attack me and further threatened me with words, I destroyed his whole sect. You must have heard of Wuji Sect's doom or read in the newspapers too.

There are other incidents to say but I think you understood the point.

All of those victims; I don't have too much personal enmity with them as I have with the person who gave the assignment to you. He killed my parents. This one was too personal for me. I will not hesitate to kill a million innocents to punish that culprit.

Now, if you give me the name, I will not touch your family. Or else..."

Mark didn't finish his sentence and quietly stared at Liu Xing who already started sweating.

There is a reason why the Soul organization didn't take up the assignment from Nie Rougang and the crown prince regarding the assassination of Mark. They knew he is strong but only now Liu Xing realized that he is also more ruthless than he expected.

As a person who killed several people, Liu Xing could see Mark contained a tremendous amount of darkness and also have the eyes of a murderer. He could see Mark really meant what he said.

Unknown to him, the nine points of Mark's charm made his words more convincing to the listener.

Therefore, putting aside his work ethic, Liu Xing spoke, "I will say it but don't touch my family."

"I promise." Mark maintained his seriousness, hiding his real feelings of excitement. "Tell me."

Liu Xing explained, "10 years ago, we got an assignment to kill your parents as well as their secret guard sent by the imperial family. But, we also have to make sure that you don't die. While I assassinated the guard, your parents were murdered by my partner. We have a request to make it look like a burglary.

We did as we were requested. However, my partner, codenamed Crimson Lion, was killed by Bai Xun in another mission we did five years ago. He wasn't alive anymore."

\*bang\*

A bullet was fired from Mark's gun as he was irritated again due to Liu Xing's lengthy explanation. It pierced the right side of his abdomen, a bone of the ribcage, barely missing the liver.

As Liu Xing let out a painful scream, Mark growled, "I don't want to know all this bullshit. Give me the fucking name of the one who gives you the assignment. Who is it?"

"Grand Secretariat Li Zhen Kang," Liu Xing revealed the name, taking Mark by surprise. "That fellow? Why?"

"We don't ask the reasons," replied Liu Xing while breathing heavily. He looked like he was going to pass out at any moment.

Mark turned his head to meaningfully look at the demon king who was enjoying the scene. The latter nodded without being asked any questions, "He is telling the truth."

"Then, that's good." Mark nodded.

\*Bang\*

Chapter 409 Attack On The Imperial Palace?

Once Liu Xing lost his usefulness, Mark killed him, stole their weapons, loot their storage rings, before throwing all four corpses into an empty storage ring of his.

The storage ring was further dismantled for credits while destroying their corpses for good.

"So, what now?" asked Xie Mei in a bit of worry. The teenager might not know who Li Zheng Kang is but she was aware that a Grand Secretariat is one of the most powerful men within an empire in terms of authority. Attacking him is the same as announcing a war against the Emperor.

Mark replied with clear signs of anger on his face, "Now, it's time for the Grand Secretariat to pay for his crimes. However, I don't think he is the mastermind for he gains nothing from killing my parents. There is someone from the imperial family that ordered or requested him to do so. I need that name."

"Bael, go to Imperial City once again and search for your next target of abduction. I'm transmitting my thoughts to you in the form of an image. Bring him here without killing anyone. Just knocking them out would be fine. And also, take the girl with you and drop her at our home." Mark passed his next order to the demon king, using his services as much as he wants to, without any hesitation.

Since it is going to be another bad thing to do, Bael agreed to do it readily and went on to grab Xie Mei's arm as well as touch the head of the griffin.

"Wait." Xie Mei stopped him for a moment and looked at Mark in a bit of worry, "I know that you are strong enough to topple the empire but I hope you also thought of the consequences. Doing this will make you an evil person in the eyes of society."

My grandfather said that if a majority of people are on your side, you will become a hero but if they are against you, you will become a villain and heroes will emerge from the public to defeat you. The more you resist the heroes, the more you become infamous. There's no backing from there.

And eventually, there comes a day when you will fall and no one will come to support you. Think about it once again."

Mark knew what he was going to do and he wasn't interested to make Xie Mei understand his emotions or thoughts.

He dismissed her with a wave of his hand, "I'm not forcing you to stay on my side. You can leave if you want. Bael will drop you and your griffin at Xianshu sect."

Xie Mei didn't know what else to speak to this stubborn fellow. As she took a vow to herself that she won't leave his side at all costs like a dutiful wife would be (in her opinion), she could only reply to him to be careful before disappearing with the demon.

After dropping the teenager at Genesis weapon store, Bael fly higher into the sky up to 1km of altitude and scanned the entire city using his senses.

"Found it." Bael looked in the direction of a majestic palace located in the heart of the city. Even though his maximum power was restricted greatly, with the peak stage immortal realm power, he managed to find his target in mere 6 seconds of time.

The demon then flew toward the imperial palace, alerting a certain Queen Consort when he landed right in front of the entrance door and knocked out the door guards.

Fearlessly, he walked into the imperial palace and started walking in the direction where he sensed the presence of his target.

Meanwhile, in the courtroom, Emperor Shang was still in the middle of a meeting with his ministers, the Grand Secretariat, Bai Xun, and the third prince. None of them were aware of what was going on outside as there is a noise-canceling barrier placed within the room to make sure no spies are listening to their conversation in secret.

And at the moment, the third prince and Nei Rougang were arguing about a matter.

"Minister Nie, don't try to evade it. We have proof that your clan secretly acquired a new type of weapon in several numbers from the Dwarven kingdom. However, the Dwarven King isn't aware of it. Your actions are quite suspicious." Shang Wei accused Nie Rougang on the grounds of corruption, deceit, and rebellion. He further demanded the minister in donating those weapons to the imperial army so that they may be deployed to the border and take down the Kunyu bandits' battle tanks.

This matter was brought up by Lin Wuying when Nie Rougang talked about the imperial palace allocating more funds and setting up a war donation box so that the citizens can also contribute to this war without actively participating in the war.

The revenue minister stressed that this is a better way than raising the taxes. As Lin Wuying brought it up, Shang Wei used this matter to his advantage.

When Nie Rougang refused to hand over them as it is considered private property, Shang Wei countered that the minister can use them against the imperial palace when the army is busy at the border fighting a war.

He also pointed out how it is weird for the Nie clan to gather such funds to buy those expensive weapons and that too, high in number.

In response, Nie Rougang almost roared in anger, "Lies. Our clan served the throne for more than 1700 years. We were also one of the few clans who stood behind the founder while unifying this southern land. Don't dare question our loyalty. We won't sit and listen quietly even if you are a prince."

Seeing Nie Rougang agitated by his allegations, Shang Wei leaned back a bit with a smile on his face, "If you cannot donate them or even sell them, then, you should have no problem lending them to the imperial army. Supreme Commander Bai just now mentioned that if we want to defeat them, we need to attack them at the same time.

Each of those cannons can shoot targets from more than a thousand meters away. We can surely surprise the enemies with an all-out attack."

"But, it is not just our soldiers and Ji clan's main family who are kept as hostages. There are hundreds of thousands of citizens too," commented the Han clan's Patriarch. "Is His Majesty really want to go ahead with the war?" The minister of war is clearly against the war. He wanted peaceful negotiations.

However, the Emperor is very angry. He sharply stared at the war minister, "I would have settled for peace if that Feng Wu hadn't threatened us. His arrogance will be his downfall."

"And we don't have to worry about the citizens, Minister Han." Shang Wei made him understand that Feng Wu look at all the citizens of Western Yan as his own citizens and had a bit of emotional attachment to them.

Bai Xun then voiced his opinion, "The killing of soldiers will only give us the reason to go all out against them. They clearly don't want that either. Hence, it is just an empty. Perhaps, the only lives we have to worry about are that of the Ji clan.

If we could just manage to save Ji Cheng and Ji Guanli, we could proceed with the all-out attack, but, not without Song Tai and other experts of the 8-circle realm.

And while they were distracted, our assassin will have to make sure to poison Feng..."

\*Sssssh\*

Just as Bai Xun was about to complete his sentence, all of a sudden, the walls were completely frozen in ice.

"Huh?"

Everyone got up from their seats in a bit of confusion.

But, in the next second, the floor and the ceiling were also frozen in ice.

"What the hell is going on?" "An ambush?" "Ice? It's Lu Zhen..." "How is that possible? The ambassador confirmed Lu Zhen's presence at Eastern Sun yesterday." "I cannot sense anything outside this room"

As various murmurings filled the place, the Emperor roared, "Who is it?"

"Your Majesty, let me take care of it." Bai Xun quickly summoned his semi-divine bow and conjured an energy arrow.

He shot at the place where the door was supposed to be located.

The arrow struck the ice but couldn't even scratch it, making everyone's face dark.

Even Bai Xun was shocked and turned his head to look at Shang Fu. "Your Majesty, my power cannot destroy this. We are trapped for good."

"Not really, Supreme Commander Bai. Let me try." The third prince stepped forward.

Chapter 410 Xia Dynasty's Terracotta Army

He walked toward the ice wall and then closed his eyes, raising his hands. Bright flames escaped his palms and took the shape of a large bird before rushing toward its target.

In the impacted region, ice slowly started melting. Some of the ministers who were in Shang Wei's support were impressed by the bloodline skill.

They were about to praise him but the melting ice recovered its solid state once again, throwing everyone into despair once again.

Shang Wei turned around and looked at his father, "Your Majesty, if you and I work together and unleash our bloodline skills, we could open the way."

Shang Fu nodded immediately, "Alright."

Soon, as the others backed away, the father and son duo unleashed their respective bloodline skills of the same type.

"Bloodline skill: the Arc of Inferno" "Bloodline skill: the Arc of Inferno"

Shang Fu used the sword and slashed at empty air, generating flames in the form of an arc and affecting a wide area. On the other hand, the third prince used his staff to slam the floor with the bottom of the handle. The effects were just the same, although less powerful than the former.

Including the frozen floor, everything within the affected region melted and everyone saw the door.

However, the ice appeared to have self-healing power. Just as it was about to recover its previous state, Bai Xun acted quickly by firing an energy arrow and destroying the door while everyone made their run toward the exit without knowing that it wasn't a prison but some sort of protective barrier.

They even managed to get out successfully only to see unconscious soldiers on the floor all around the corridor in the same places they were stationed.

Along with it, there was a huge hole made in the ceiling of the corridor, going all the way to the top. It only means that someone blasted through the walls continuously for four floors and escaped.

"What just happened here?" Shang Fu couldn't help but ask in wonder.

"I will enquire about it, Your Majesty," replied Bai Xun.

Meanwhile, in the skies far above the imperial city, two figures were seen battling against each other.

Every time they clashed, powerful waves were generated but thankfully, they were far high enough that those waves aren't reaching the city.

A couple of minutes later;

After another clash, they separated and looked at each other. One appeared to be enjoying himself while the other one already had signs of tiredness despite the fact that only three minutes have passed.

Letting out a pleasant smile, Bael spoke, "I must say you are quite talented in fighting, for a fake."

Taking heavy breaths, the deadly serious-looking Lan Jingyi answered, "I told you to stop calling me that, you disgusting creature. Nevertheless, I don't care as long as you will not come anywhere near my family."

"Family? Pfft... Hahahahaha" Bael broke out into laughter as he heard her words. "You are interesting, lady. Perhaps, if I wasn't on a job, I would have taken you back to my world for experimentation. I'm really curious about the process of your creation. You are neither an avatar nor a clone. Did your original create you through soul-splitting? I wonder..."

Anyways, I have played around for so long. Now, if you excuse me, I need the life of a man named Li Zheng Kang. I will entertain you later, lady. But for now, you will have to stay aside for some time."

The demon king disappeared and appeared behind her.

She motioned her hand in reflex but Bael teleported before her and gave a powerful punch to her chin. He disappeared soon after.

Lan Jingyi felt dizzy as she flew upward for a while. Because the punch wasn't lethal, she managed to recover within 30 seconds and then proceeded to descend to the ground.

By the time Lan Jingyi returned to the palace while wearing a robe with a hood and covering her face with a mask to hide her identity, she already found her husband and the others in an unconscious state. Bael was seen imprisoning an unconscious grand secretariat in a bone prison.

As she checked upon her husband and son, Bael waved his hand with a smile and disappeared with his prisoner. "See you later."

"What the hell is that guardian Yuqiang doing? Immortals are not allowed to roam this land." Lan Jingyi mumbled in anger but she knew that she cannot stop the demon from leaving.

She never thought of herself as the strongest being on the planet but she was confident that she could protect her family from any threats. It was the first time she felt so helpless at the moment and further wondered about the identity of the fellow who managed to form a contract with such a powerful demon.

Meanwhile, at the Kunyu Mountain range, Mark was waiting for the demon while kept looking at his pocket watch. "It's been five minutes already. I guess he was facing trouble with spotting the target."

Earlier, he thought that it will take Bael a while to accomplish his task and return to Helios City. The result? The demon king completed his mission too quickly. Thankfully, there was no cooldown on the skill. Hence, he was able to return to Mt. Lan once again to interrogate the assassins.

Unlike before, Bael's current task wouldn't need any waiting but he would have to search for the Grand Secretariat in the city with millions of population. Not to mention, there is no guarantee that Li Zheng Kang was currently residing in the city.

If it takes longer time, Mark would rather return to Helios City. Hence, he decided to wait for 15 minutes and then return.

Fortunately for him, Bael returned with the target before the time limit Mark set in his head.

Flexing his fingers, Mark mumbled, "Now, let's wake up this gentleman and extract the truth."

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Meanwhile, in the Bloodhill forest;

An undead army, a powerful undead dragon, and Alina (Xia Fen) were following their master, the Necromancer King, as he resumed his aimless roaming in sector-1 and sector-2 regions of the forest right after he woke up.

After killing the lord of the Bloodhill forest and making its undead version his personal mount, he went on doing that for several hours until midnight while killing every creature he encounters on the way.

As the two innermost regions of the deadly forest were cleaned up completely within just a day, the Necromancer King's army only grew stronger with the addition of 8-circle and even 9-circle beast kings.

"Where is it? It's been more than fifteen hundred years since I was sealed away. My memories aren't clear yet." The Necromancer King appeared to be searching for something.

For the next three hours, he was relentlessly roaming and his soldiers were quietly following behind him without speaking anything.

Eventually, he ended up at the black dragon's lair once again. "I think I should search this area properly once again. This is the safest place to hide them after all."

He then turned around to look at the undead dragon and Alina/Xia Fen, his two strongest servants, "Xia Fen, both of you will take the left path. I want you to check if you see any path that is sealed up with the symbol of two dragons coiled around each other. They might be covered by rocks and soil but look carefully.

As for you, Xia Hei (undead dragon), I know that you don't have your memories but you still have the sense of a beast emperor of a Supreme Being beast. If you feel like there is something wrong, report it to Xia Fen."

The undead dragon let out a hiss and nodded firmly, implying that it understands. Soon, the lady and the dragon set out to the large tunnels in the left direction from the entrance.

The Necromancer King went in the other direction.

Nearly, an hour later, he reached the end of an underground cavern but failed to find what he was looking for.

"Dammit... Where the hell is my ancestors' army?"

Being frustrated by the failure, he got angry, and in rage, he slammed the tip of the scythe onto the ground using his ether energy.

Maybe, he used too much force. The ground beneath him started cracking and the entire place started shaking as if an earthquake occurred.

Realizing that he was underground, the Necromancer King quickly protected himself using an energy shield while floating in the air.

However, the collapse didn't happen as he anticipated.

Instead, only the ground beneath him was destroyed, revealing an energy barrier covered over a large scale. Only a part of it was seen from his point of view but he was more than happy to see it with his own eyes.

At the bottom of the barrier, there were thousands of statues placed around a tomb. There were torches on the wall still burning even after 1500 years.

Clenching his fist with a creepy smile on his face, he mumbled, "I thought I sealed them in a hidden dimension. But, it looks like I didn't. I won't have to find the seal..."

He raised the scythe and used almost all of his ether energy to launch a powerful beam of concentrated dark energy.

The beam struck the barrier and cracks started appearing all over it before making a huge hole.

The Necromancer King descended through the hole and landed on the ground.

Letting out laughter, the Necromancer King used the remaining energy to unleash threads of dark energy into the statues around him.

"Wake up, Xia's terracotta army. The time has come for us to reclaim our land. With my undead army as the support, there's no stopping us this time."

Each of the statues' eyes glowed simultaneously and every one of them started moving their limbs as if they were alive.