

Seller 511

Chapter 511: Plans to create a civil war

Steve's reminder jolted Mark's senses and almost made him slap his own forehead. "That's right. According to Fu Sheng, both of them and Song Tai were touring the Dragon Empire. There is a high chance that they will be attending the coronation ceremony too," His eyes lit up because of the good news and he made sure to thank his teenage son from the future, "Thank you.

This is actually the best time to act."

Mark no longer wasted the time.

He rose to his feet and walked to the podium in the center of the room where a white-orb-like thing was placed on top of it.

It wasn't an important treasure of something. It was merely the control system Mark created from his imagination when he re-modified the transformation of the divine throne.

Placing his hand on top of that white orb, Mark whispered, "Disable auto mode. Connect me with your eyes, and go at full speed.

In that instant, the spider ship suddenly accelerated to the maximum, achieving hypersonic speeds within ten seconds of time.

Thankfully, none inside felt that sudden burst of speed. Even Sylvandria didn't feel any change from a while ago.

If there is anything that caught her attention, it is Mark's actions.

Just like that, nearly 10,000 kilometers of distance was covered within an hour of time, when it usually takes around 5-7 days for high-tier ships used by the royal families to sail the ocean.

Before they even knew it, they already arrived at the skies above the shores of the Western Moon and the ship slowed down a bit as the sudden break would generate enough force to cause unnecessary heavy damage in the surroundings.

It took another hour to land at some remote location on the plains, roughly 200 kilometers away from the capital city.

There, Zheng, in its beast form, was seen waiting for them alongside an excited Xie Mei, a pale-faced Meng Tao, a shivering griffin that was tied to a medium-sized carriage.

Unsurprisingly, Song Yue and Shen Ling were astonished when they got out of the vehicle.

Song Yue commented as she covered her eyes with the back of her palm, "It was late in the evening when they started their journey but when they stepped out, the sun was burning brightly. Where are we?" She asked.

Shen Ling scanned her surroundings for a few seconds and replied, "It seems we are home."

"Eh? Already?" Song Yue looked at her.

Shen Ling simply pointed her finger at the others waiting for them, "It doesn't make sense for the guardian beast to travel far away from Vermilion bird continent, not to mention, with our friends. The ocean is nowhere to be seen and there is no big island enough with such mountains in between Western Moon and the Dragon Empire either.

The mountains that we are seeing far away must be part of Kunyu mountain range."

On the other hand, Sylvandria went down memory lane and remembered how she traveled on the magic carpet alongside Mark in the Ixitus Empire. It also traveled halfway around the world at great speeds.

She couldn't help but suspect that both were the same. After all, it is not a secret that some powerful Divine grade items have the ability to transform into things whatever they imagined in their heads.

At the same time, her gaze was fixed on the demigod realm beast standing before them.

"First, those two demigods, and now this? Just how many of them are in this world?" She thought to herself as she warily looked at the five-tailed leopard.

Shen Ling also seemed a bit uncomfortable around the beast, but Mark seemed like he couldn't care less about it.

As soon as they got down, Mark looked at the zheng and passed another telepathic message, "I'll return quickly. So, please look after them, Lan Ju."

As the zheng nodded, Mark bid goodbye to the ladies without giving them any sort of explanation on why he dropped in the middle of nowhere, merely stating that he had some urgent business to attend to. Steve was also asked to tag along with him.

The spider-ship flew at an altitude as high as 10 km as it moved in hypersonic speeds, making it appear like a shooting star for those who were lucky enough to catch a glimpse.

Within no time, the spider-ship eventually entered the skies of the Phoenix Empire's imperial city.

As Steve was looking at the imperial city through the glass window, Mark's voice entered his ears, "Okay, now is the time for you to go and abduct the target. Don't forget to knock him out, first."

"Uhh... what?" Steve abruptly turned around in surprise, "do you want me to go down? At such height?"

"You can fly, can't you?" Mark shrugged his shoulders.

"Dad, there are a lot of things, like thin atmosphere, high radiation levels from the sun during morning, the temperature will be like -50C here, ugh..." He shivered at the thought.

"You are a supreme being, Steve," replied Mark in a calm tone. "Theoretically, you will be fine even in the space. Don't be a coward. Now go..." He added.

"That's all and good but..." As Steve was trying to say something, Mark snapped his fingers.

An opening occurred right where the teenage boy was standing. A powerful gust of chilly wind hit the father and son, the former was unaffected due to Blizzard Pegasus bloodline but the latter shivered slightly. "So, cold..."

"Now, go..." Mark controlled the spider ship to tilt downwards, letting Steve fall from the vehicle.

"Ahhh..."

As Steve started falling down, the door was closed and Mark became connected with the ship to keep an eye on his son, just in case.

After free-falling at great speeds for a few seconds, Steve regained control over his body and started descending toward the city while ignoring the coldness.

Once he stopped feeling uncomfortable at 5km altitude, Steve halted his descent for a moment and raised his head to stare at the dot-like object in the sky, "Dad is seriously ruthless even to his own son. Well, I guess his personality hasn't changed much, unlike Mom. Maybe, it is not because of some incident but due to his personality rubbing off on her. Hmm... possible.

Anyway, let's get this matter over with."

He continued to descend with greater speed.

Chapter 512: Splitting the soul is the way to breakthrough.

Meanwhile, at the Great Plains of Chang'e;

As the spider-ship left everyone's sight, Zheng opened its mouth to speak with the ones who remained, "A while ago, I received a request from Lu Zhen. He asked me to bring this human named Meng Tao along with me as I come to this particular location to receive you all and set up a camp.

For the time being, you will be staying here. Once he returns, we will start leaving for Lunaris City. Until then, you can do whatever you want."

"When will he return?" asked Sylvandria without any fear on her face.

Before Zheng answered her, Shen Ling spoke, "I just want to know whether we are at Western Moon or not."

The Zheng first looked at Sylvandria to clear her doubt, "I'm not sure either. But, I can communicate with him and provide you updates once in a while."

The scarlet leopard then turned its head to look at the princess, "Yes, we are not far away from Lunaris City. However, you cannot leave right now. If Lu Zhen hadn't told you anything, then, you can only wait for his return and question him directly."

"I understand," Shen Ling elegantly bowed to the beast as she grabbed her skirt, "Thank you."

Meanwhile, Song Yue was staring at the beast in silence as if she had fallen into deep thought.

The Zheng sensed her gaze and asked, "Lady Song, is there anything you want to say?"

Sylvandria was startled a bit due to the difference in how the demigod realm beast was addressing them, "Lady?"

Shen Ling, on the other hand, didn't think too much.

Song Yue came out of her stupor and said, "Mr. Lan, if I remember correctly, the dots on your body are black. They now appeared white."

"Oh, an excellent observation," The Zheng praised the most probable eldest wife of its master. "The change is due to our connection, Lady Song. Every beast that forms a contract will eventually gain additional abilities. I, on the other hand, acquired an entirely elemental attribute.

I have yet to master the Ice element but once I complete it, I will proceed to create my avatar and make my preparations for the breakthrough."

"Ice Element? Breakthrough?" The three ladies couldn't help but look at each other in a mix of surprise and confusion.

At the moment, all three of them generated the same question in their minds.

As Song Yue and Sheng Ling hesitated to ask, due to the fact that it is useless for someone like them with mediocre talent, and Sylvandria who was uncomfortable around the presence of a beast emperor like the zheng, they fell silent and merely accepted its explanation.

Song Yue's attention was then shifted to the teenage girl, who was walking toward her with Meng Tao.

Soon, all of them started preparing to set up a camp and rest in the middle of nowhere.

Sylvandria's attention was on the demigod beast that was simply lying on the ground and had its gaze fixed in the east.

She excused herself from the rest and walked toward the beast emperor.

The Zheng sensed her presence and spared a glance at her, opening its mouth as she neared him, "Do you need anything, miss?"

Sylvandria didn't mince her words and directly questioned the beast, "How does creating an avatar help the breakthrough? Isn't it just a waste of ether energy?"

The Zheng didn't answer her question at first and simply responded, "Why do you want to know? With such pure divine energy and the blessings of a deity, you shouldn't have any problems with a breakthrough, anyway."

"You can also see that I have the blessings of a deity?" Sylvandria appeared to be impressed.

Lan Ju slowly turned its head to look at the woman far older than himself, "Isn't it something common when one reaches the demigod realm?"

"Maybe," Sylvandria shrugged her shoulders, "I don't know. I'm not a demigod and I cannot become one either."

Lan Ju was forced to take another look at Sylvandria and shook his head, "I don't sense any curses though. You could make a breakthrough."

"Without an order from our lord, if I do that, my body will break down," Sylvandria let out a sigh. "I betrayed Lord Auri-El and joined Lu Zhen's side. Any further actions of raising my cultivation is considered selfish and this will result in losing not only his blessing but also his blessing. Anyway, it is a complicated story. You won't understand."

Lan Ju stared at her for a couple of seconds and asked, "Then, are you asking simply out of curiosity or do you have a wish to escape this Auri-El's control over your fate?"

Sylvandria couldn't help but sigh once again as she remembered certain memories, "As I no longer hold any purpose to live, I have decided to dedicate my life to Lu Zhen, who gave me this new life. Turning into a demigod would probably ease his major worry but I cannot just go against our deity."

"Then, this technique would be perfect for you," said the Zheng as it got up in a bit of excitement. "Our Ancient Lan's avatar creation is different from the rest. Here, our avatars won't be born, but instead, they are merely created as our mirror selves. It's like a clone but with your soul."

Using an ancient technique of Lan Sect, we will split our soul into two equal parts. Along with your soul, your ether energy will also be halved. However, the basic requirement is that you should possess multiple attributes so that you can give one to your avatar.

Unlike Beasts like me that have such privilege, it is incredibly rare for humanoid races to be born with multiple elements. You can use an elemental seed as a replacement in that case in the creation of the avatar.

Anyways, after splitting yourself into two parts, both of you then resume your training to reach the peak before merging back into oneself, forcefully breaking through to the next realm.

This way, you won't go against your lord because you aren't actually making a breakthrough but the breakthrough will happen by force when you merely merge with your otherself."

"Hmm... splitting one's soul, huh," The former high priestess of the Ixitus Empire grabbed her chin and thought about it seriously.

Chapter 513: Discussions at the Imperial Palace of Phoenix

After thinking about it thoroughly, she asked, "What are the risks involved in this method?"

"Risks?" The Zheng raised its head to look at the horizon for a moment as if it were trying to memorize something. The beast emperor shook its head, "Not that I'm aware of."

"After the split, what if your counterpart tries to kill you or worse, run away to lead a different life?" She asked curiously.

The Zheng firmly shook its head, "No, that cannot be possible. If our soul is split into equal parts, we both have the same personalities and thoughts. We will be identical to everything. If I didn't have any thoughts of running away, neither would my counterpart have the same thought.

In the event of my counterpart killing me, my soul and my ether energy would be absorbed into it and I will be reborn as a whole once again. It will be me in the end."

Sylvandria wasn't still convinced. She argued, "Our actions and behavior change based on the things we encounter. What if you and your counterpart encounter different types of situations?"

A while ago, she looked very pitiful. Then, as a ray of hope appeared in the form of a loophole, it turned into curiosity. Now, that curiosity turned into confidence and her tone seemed a bit more authoritative.

She continued, "Both of you will have additional memories that the other doesn't have. This could result in a change of personality. The more different memories they gain differently, the more their personality and thoughts will change.

And there is also a question of whether your counterpart will also retain your contract with Lu Zhen. Whether it becomes a free beast or stays under contract, then, what would happen if someone forcefully captures it and forms a contract? I know that there are techniques to forcefully wipe off a contract with the beast.

To prevent such a scenario, either of you would have to train in an extremely remote location or an enclosed space like some sort of pocket dimension until your goal is achieved. Isn't it?"

"Well..." The Zheng became speechless for a second as it didn't have the answer. It merely explained the details of the technique that its previous master told it years ago.

To hide its embarrassment, the Zheng snapped at the elf, "For someone with a single attribute, you do have a lot of questions, otherworlder. Now, go and join your companions. Let me take a rest."

The scarlet leopard lay on the grass and closed its eyes, acting like it slept.

Sylvandria narrowed her eyes to stare at the beast for a while before she shook her head and left it.

As she was leaving, the beast emperor slowly opened one of its eyes, looked at her back, and thought, "This lady has divinity, just like that kid." The Zheng glanced at the teenage girl with the others. "However, this one is slightly different. There's something off about her. She reminds me of Lord Yuqiang for some reason. It looks like I need to keep an eye on her, even if it is from far away."

Imperial City, Phoenix Empire;

At the imperial court, Shang Jun was in a closed-door meeting with the ministers without any audience from the other court officials. The news of the Dragon Emperor's death has already reached them and Shang Jun is looking forward to cash on the opportunity to forge relations with the new Emperor.

"I'm aware that Imperial Uncle is at Dragon Empire and would probably attend the coronation ceremony but it is more like a personal visit, not representing the Phoenix Empire's interests," said Shang Jun as a minister reminded him about Shang Fu and others' whereabouts.

His Prime Minister, the third prince, Shang Wei, stated his opinion, disagreeing with the Emperor, "His Imperial Majesty can represent our interests as long as we inform him. His previous relations with the Dragon Empire's late Emperor might help us in stating our terms without the need for a formal letter too."

"Hmm, I can see your point." Shang Jun leaned to the side and placed his elbow on the throne's handle while resting his chin on his fist. He glanced to the other side, "What do you think, Special Advisor Cao?"

Everyone's attention immediately shifted to the monk sitting in silence. It was obvious that his opinion was the most important in the court due to the Emperor's dependence on this monk with mysterious origins.

Cao Wen stood up and bowed in the direction of the Emperor, "Your Majesty, I don't mean any disrespect for the former emperor but he recently stepped down from the throne. Using him for any kind of diplomacy will make the Emperors of foreign lands look down on His Majesty's ability."

Shang Jun's face immediately changed all of a sudden by the statement from his advisor. Furrowing his brows in seriousness, he said with a bit of arrogance, "Unlike the previous emperors, no one handed me this throne on a silver platter. I earned with these own hands. I don't need Imperial Uncle's support on this matter."

Hearing this, Shang Wei's facial expression hardened. But, he controlled himself by clenching his fists for a few seconds and releasing them before speaking in a bit of frustration, "There is also Venerable Song, Your Majesty. If he does the diplomatic work, won't it send a message that a Supreme realm expert is at your command?"

"Oh, that makes sense indeed," Shang Jun's eyes lit up at his cousin's suggestion.

However, Cao Wen didn't back down. As if he had already prepared to counter, he spoke, "Your Majesty, this is the same expert who couldn't get back Western Yan that was forcefully taken away from us. And this is the same person who abandoned his duty of protecting his homeland and went along with Imperial Majesty on a vacation. What if someone takes advantage of the situation and invades us?"

Such thought would have come to him, right? We cannot let a person whose loyalty to the throne is questionable represent the interests of His Majesty. It's not about giving an impression but about right and wrong."

From the moment Cao Wen started speaking, Shang Jun's expression turned worse and worsened further as he went on explaining his reasoning without mincing his words.

Shang Wei's face also darkened further at the same time, feeling very difficult to listen to such words.

He gave up on convincing his cousin and kept his mouth shut.

Cao Wen observed that, and taking advantage of the situation, he further made a suggestion, "The crown prince might have ascended to the throne because of the sudden demise of the Emperor, but the Tang Dynasty's biggest support is the Lord of Reignar, King Rong Huang. It is better if we get him on our side. With his help, we can take back our land.

Even in case of a failure, he will force Emperor Tang to take revenge."

As the ministers were stunned to hear a sinister plan from a monk of all people, Cao Wen ended with a comment, "Ego is always a vulnerable part of people at high positions and those with powerful strength, Your Majesty. Hurt that ego; they will even burn the world."

"Hmm, you are right, mister," Suddenly, an unfamiliar high-pitched voice was heard in the surroundings, startling everyone. "But, every action has consequences, don't you think?"

Followed by the voice, the door to the courtroom was sliced down in half.

Thud

They fell down, revealing a black-hooded person with a sword in his hand.

Chapter 514: Launching the Space station

Everyone got up in shock. "Who are you?" Shang Jun roared in anger.

Steve neither gave his introduction nor did he bother to reply. He rushed forward at a speed that couldn't be captured by anyone in the room and swung his sword at the young emperor.

Before he knew what happened, Shang Jun's left hand rolled on the floor and he screamed in pain with his knees touching the floor while the blood started dripping at a crazy rate.

Picking up the hand, Steve said, "The true heir to the throne says hello."

"Who is there... Kill him..." Shang Jun shouted but no imperial guard responded. As he desperately looked at Cao Wen, he saw the monk was shaking in fear.

Steve then left the palace in a hurry, bringing the hand to the spider-ship, where Mark was waiting for him.

Mark directly placed the hand with a fresh wound in his inventory and patted Steve's shoulder, "Good job."

"But, why?" Steve asked in confusion while protecting his body from cold using a layer of ether energy. "We are supposed to abduct him. Why did you change the plan at the last second?"

"I just remembered something, that's all," Mark didn't share his secret and just gave a vague answer.

Steve didn't probe into the matter too much and reported to him about what he did down there.

Mark's spider-ship returned to the Great Plains in a jiffy, where a camp was set up and everyone was resting inside their respective tents with the beasts guarding outside.

The next day morning;

"Hmm hm hmmm hmm..."

Song Yue was humming in a good mood as she was walking in the corridor. After seeing her mother after so long, it seemed as if all of the traces of her sadness had gone away, atleast on the outside.

As she reached Mark's room, she saw it was open. When she peeked in, she saw Mark was with Steve as they were drawing something on a large sheet of paper and discussing something in an unfamiliar language with her.

knock knock* knock*

She knocked on the door three times to get their attention.

Mark sprung on his feet while swiftly hiding the paper behind him before sending it to the inventory, "Good morning, Schatz." "Good morning, Mo... Miss Song."

"What are you doing?" She asked.

"Weapon design" "venue design"

Both of them replied at the same time, although differently.

"Huh? What design?" Due to the overlapping of the words, she couldn't hear it properly.

"Miss Song, we actually..." Steve was about to say something, but his shin received a sharp kick from his dad. Wincing in pain, he shook his head, "Nothing important."

"Hmm... what's so secrecy?" Song Yue only became more curious.

Mark walked forward and grabbed her shoulders with a smile, "Nothing, it is just something we are working on. Once it is done, I'll let you know. Alright?"

Song Yue nodded twice, letting out a smile.

Not intending to disturb him further, she left using an excuse that she would go and meet her mother.

After she disappeared from his sight, Mark turned around and gave a serious look to Steve, who apologized right away, "Sorry, I couldn't help but become nervous in Mom's presence."

"C'mon, she won't eat you." Mark casually commented, to which, Steve replied, "The one from my time was so strict and cold that I..."

"Stop right there..." Mark hurriedly interrupted him, "Didn't I tell you not to speak anything of the future?"

"Sorry." Steve apologized once again, looking down at his feet, "Without James on my side, it is tough to control myself speaking about it. I'll try my best to keep my mouth shut."

Sigh

Mark could only shake his head with a sigh and comment, "Sometimes, I forget that you are still a 14-year-old. Anyway, let's back to the venue design. You focus on that. We shall make it so grand that it should go down in history."

A few hours later;

Mark returned to the Great Plains in an LNovelBin, all alone.

After making sure that no one was around, Mark opened the inventory and clicked on the image that looked like a shiny object with solar panels all around.

In an instant, a large titanium cube appeared on the ground, slightly bigger than himself.

"Uhhh... this wasn't what I imagined," Mark was stunned for a second before activating his God's Eye ability.

Space station-III

Grade: Gold

Crew: 10-20 astronauts

Length: 80 meters

Width: 60 meters

Height: 30 meters

Weight: 300,000 kg

Armament: None (Designed for peaceful purposes)

Ammunition Capacity: N/A

Cartridge type: N/A

Max. speed of vehicle: 28,000 km/hr (Orbital velocity)

Fuel: Solar panels for power generation, advanced propulsion systems

Cruising Range: Indefinite (Orbital)

Armor: Advanced shielding technology (Rank-5)

Additional attachments: Docking ports for spacecraft, science laboratories, living quarters, observation decks, and communication array.

Description: An advanced orbital space station designed for scientific research, international cooperation, and exploration. Equipped with cutting-edge shielding technology, it prioritizes peaceful endeavors and serves as a hub for various space missions. Capable of accommodating a large crew and supporting a wide range of experiments and observations.

Note: It shall be launched into space using a space rocket. Once it is placed into the desired orbit (400km altitude), the host can unfold it to its full size.

SKILLS:

Active:

Descent: The space station can descend back to the planet without any side effects whenever the user wishes. Cost: 50% ether energy (max). CD: None

Teleportation: The user could teleport directly into the space station in the blink of an eye. Cost: 50% ether energy per one-way trip. CD: None.

Passive:

Connection: The space station, once set in orbit, will activate its connection with the system, thereby, letting the user control some of its functions, such as tracking environmental changes, studying and predicting natural disasters, gathering data on climate patterns, monitoring the movements of enemies and allies using deep scanning, etc...

Barrier: The space station absorbs solar energy and generates a barrier that protects from unknown attacks of any kind up to the 7-circle realm.

<<<Upgrade>>>

*

"Okay, this one has one thing I need. It is quite indeed different from my past life. Well, I guess that's to be expected. It is created by the system, after all. Anyway, let's just upgrade it to Diamond before sending it to the space. Who knows?

I might even get to weaponize it."

Mark sent it back to the inventory and opened its details before clicking on the upgrade.

*Ding! 120k credits are deducted. Space Station-III is upgraded to Space Station-IV.

*Ding! 840k credits are deducted. Space Station-IV is upgraded to Space Station-V.

"That reduced all of the remaining credits to a little above 350k. I guess I won't be doing purchases for a while, not until I earn a huge amount of credits by an event. Well, I could still sell the stuff in my inventory but it is better to sell them at Qing Jie's store. I could earn more money that way. Well, let's see the result."

The image in the inventory slot didn't change and when he took it out, its appearance also didn't undergo any changes.

But, when he saw its details, Mark's face glowed up in satisfaction. "Laser-based DEWs and a Solar beam? It is more than enough to take down my enemies while sitting at home. Now, it is finally ready to be launched. Nah, wait a second. I still have a superior-grade upgrade stone.

Should I use it? Hmm..."

Space station-V

Grade: Diamond

Crew: 40-50 astronauts

Length: 320 meters

Width: 240 meters

Height: 120 meters

Weight: 1,264,778 kg

Armament: Direct Energy Weapons – Laser Cannons (2)

Ammunition Capacity: Unlimited

Cartridge type: High-energy lasers

Avg. speed of vehicle: 62,132 km/hr (Orbital velocity)

Range: 32,000 km

Fuel: Solar panels for power generation, advanced propulsion systems

Cruising Range: Indefinite (Orbital)

Armor: Advanced shielding technology (Rank-7)

Additional attachments: Docking ports for spacecraft, science laboratories, living quarters, observation decks, communication array

Description: An advanced orbital space station designed for scientific research, international cooperation, and exploration. Equipped with cutting-edge shielding technology, it serves as a hub for various space missions and can be used to protect the planet from extraterrestrial attacks.

Due to the consumption of a heavy amount of solar energy, the excess is used to push its speed above its intended orbital velocity.

Note: It shall be launched into space using a space rocket. Once it is placed into the desired orbit (400km), the host can unfold it to its full size.

SKILLS:

Active:

Descent: The space station can descend back to the planet without any side effects whenever the user wishes. Cost: 30% ether energy (max). CD: None

Teleportation: The user could teleport directly into the space station in the blink of an eye. Cost: 30% ether energy per one-way trip. CD: None.

Solar Beam: Using solar panels made from special materials, the space station can weaponize the solar energy it absorbs to shoot a Solar Beam at enemies with an attack power of 200% (max:9.9). Cost: 100% ether energy. CD: 24 hours.

Laser bullets: Using the laser cannons, the space station becomes the first line of defense for the planet against any invasion from space. Attack power: equal to 7.5. Cost: None. CD: 5 seconds. Range: 100 km.

Laser Beam: The Laser cannons, together, conjure a powerful laser beam and fire at the target with an attack power of 120%. Cost: 20% ether energy. Range: 1000 km.

The Third Eye: The space station momentarily scans the entire planet it was revolving around to find the desired object/person the user wishes. Cost: 25% ether energy. CD: None

Passive:

Connection: The space station, once set in orbit, will activate its connection with the system, thereby, letting the user control some of its functions, such as tracking environmental changes, studying and predicting natural disasters, gathering data on climate patterns, monitoring the movements of enemies and allies using deep scanning, etc...

Barrier: The space station absorbs solar energy and generates a barrier that protects from unknown attacks of any kind up to the 7-circle realm.

<<<Upgrade>>>

"Man, this kind of tech really needs the best upgrades. Too bad I'm out of cash already. Should I use Upgrade Stone or use the credit limit? I think I can upgrade it all the way to celestial grade. Who knows how powerful it will get..."

After thinking for a bit, Mark became against such an idea.

The superior grade upgrade stone is best used when the item is at Mythril grade so that it becomes Celestial grade and saves tens of millions of credits.

Furthermore, he won't be staying here for a very long time. Hence, it didn't seem worth using a credit limit and upgrading it three more times.

But, at the same time, there was also this curiosity about what kind of new abilities would the space station acquire in its upgrades, leaving him in a dilemma.

So, what should he do now?

In the end, he decided to play it safe.

Taking one last look at the details, Mark proceeded to take out the rocket launching station from its inventory.

The rocket launching station was quite simple, compared to the ones he witnessed in his past life. In fact, it was so simple that it doesn't even look like a launching station at all.

There were no complicated machines attached or huge structures built for operations and everything. Rather than a launching station, it looked more like a hundred-meter-long cannon placed on a large docking port.

"Where the hell is the rocket?" Mark couldn't help but wonder aloud.

Chapter 515: The Third eye

*Ding! The host has to manually unlock the rocket. It costs 10 million credits to unlock and the price of a rocket depends on its size.

"You..."

Mark wanted to swear at the system even if he had to risk taking an electric shock, but fortunately for him, the system followed up with another notification, making him swallow down those curses.

*Ding! With a peak force of 9×10^{25} N, the cannon launcher has enough force to launch objects directly to even this planet's moon, resisting every kind of force that has an opposite effect, as long as they can fit inside the cannon and are durable enough to withstand it.

"Oh, I see," Mark had faced enough shocks in the past few months that he was no longer stunned by the system's created items that defy the logic of science he learned while growing up.

"Anyway, system, launch the space station"

*Ding! Affirmed.

The block of the cube disappeared from his inventory and was transported to the launcher.

A green-colored light in the form of a line appeared at the bottom of the launcher before another one appeared a couple of meters above it.

Third one, and then, the fourth one, and so on, until the tenth one at the center of the launcher.

*Ding! The cannon launcher is charged up. The required force to the desired orbit is achieved. Get ready for the launch.

*10

*9

*8

*7

*6

*5

*4

*3

*2

*1

Swoosh

The giant block of cube was fired vertically from the launcher without any sort of sound. Mark got a glimpse at it when the object was released but it instantly disappeared from his sight.

Mark sent the so-called portable rocket launching station to his inventory and returned to Lunar City by walking into the portal.

After randomly appearing in a remote location that just looked like a wilderness, Mark summoned his LNovelBin and started driving back to the palace.

Not even five minutes passed since he started driving and Mark received a notification from the system.

*Ding! Space Station-V successfully reached its orbit (400 km altitude) and activated.

*Ding! Space station panel is added to the character menu. Check it for the details.

Mark was forced to hit the brakes and stop the vehicle, "Already?" He couldn't help but ask the system to confirm it again.

It responded in a way that made it seem like it was mocking Mark's intelligence.

*Ding! System clearly mentioned that objects launched by the cannon launcher with enough force that all kinds of resisting forces will have negligible impact on them.

After a few moments of silence, Mark let out a sigh and passed the order, "System, open Space station panel."

"Activate the skill, Third Eye"

*Ding! Need the name and other details, the better the details, the less time is taken.

Mark closed his eyes and imagined the appearance of his eldest half-sibling in his mind before mumbling, "Name: Shang Zexi, age 38 or 39. Location Priority: Phoenix Empire."

*Ding! The Third Eye activated. Wait for the details.

As 25% of his ether energy reduced instantly, in space at 400km altitude, the large space station that just unfolded into its real form and started revolving around the planet in its desired orbit glowed brightly for a few seconds and momentarily increased its scanning ability to the entire planet instead of just the partial area it was designed to scan.

Back to Mark, after activating the ability, he waited in patience, thinking that the job would be done within a few minutes unless the former crown prince was hiding deep in the underground caves of some mountains.

The system's creation didn't let him down and gave him the GPS location of the target within 15 seconds.

It showed him the location of Northern Yuan Province's Silla, a town located near the border with Zhao Province.

"Shang Zexi was found. Now, all that's left is to force him to start a rebellion. But, hurting Shang Jun isn't enough to do that. I would have to take action by myself.

However, if I go in person, there is a significant chance of getting rejected. A guy like him might even twist the facts and blame me for his current situation. Well, I might have played a part but he is still responsible for his own demise.

Anyway, let's send someone he doesn't know but strong enough to give him that courage. It is time for that nonexistent mysterious backer of mine to come into the limelight." Mark let out an evil grin, imagining the scenario of the future of the Phoenix Empire.

Meanwhile, at the Phoenix Empire;

Shang Jun was lying on his bed with a dazed expression on his face with his left arm being treated by the imperial healer.

Various officials were seen standing on the side and watching him, including His principal advisor, Cao Wen; Prime Minister, Shang Wei; The Supreme Commander, Bai Xun.

After the treatment was completed and the imperial healer left, Cao Wen spoke, "Your Majesty, the regrowth pill is already on the way. Within a couple of weeks, your left hand will return to normal without any side effects."

Shang Jun didn't respond to his words filled with assurance. He continued to stare at the ceiling in a daze.

Shang Wei and Bai Xun glanced at each other. The latter slightly shook his head, gesturing for him not to speak anything and stay silent on the spot.

"Your Majesty" "Your Majesty..."

After calling him a couple of times, Cao Wen walked to the bed and touched his shoulders, "Your Majesty..."

Shang Jun finally responded by moving his eyes to the side to spare a glance at his advisor.

Cao Wen softly spoke, "Fourth Prince's organization (NET) was working with everything they have got. His Highness promised that we will find the assailant's identity within a week."

"The true heir to the throne says hello. This is what he said, Advisor Cao," Shang Jun slowly opened his mouth, "Do you know what that means?"

"Crown Prince Shang Zexi?" Cao Wen yelped in surprise. Shang Wei and Bai Xun also seemed taken aback.

"Are you implying that Eldest Brother is the one behind this incident?" Shang Wei couldn't help but ask, "But, the assailant seemed like a supreme realm expert."

He had no love for the brother who tried to harm him multiple times, but that doesn't mean he would sit quietly if Shang Jun just blatantly pins it on the one who went into hiding in fear.

However, to their surprise, Shang Jun bitterly smiled as he slowly shook his head, "There is someone else. The one who attacked me is no doubt a direct descendant of the Shang Dynasty. You should have also sensed it, Prince Wei. There's a Phoenix Bloodline inside him and it was very pure, but not pure to the extent that he or his immediate ancestors received a blessing from the Phoenix.

If I'm right, a line from the previous emperors must have existed without us knowing. If we want to find out his identity, we should start from there." He shifted his attention back to Cao Wen, "Advisor Cao, I need you to send a message to our brothers. Tell them to come here."

"Our Brothers?" Shang Wei and Bai Xun spared a glance at each other once again. They shared the same thought.

Chapter 516: An offer to the former crown prince

Northern Yuan Province, Silla town;

In the most famous brothel of the Silla town, beautiful maidens were dancing as the top courtesan was playing a piece of melody music, good enough to make everyone go into a trance and enjoy it.

There are many men around but two of them seemed set apart from the others. No one seemed as wealthy as two men whether it was their attire or the dishes and the wine they were served. They were also accompanied by three popular courtesans.

One of them was actually the crown prince who was on the run while the other was the lord of the town.

As no one had ever seen the former crown prince before, he was wearing a half-mask that was covering the left part of his face, not to mention he was in the 6-circle realm, and was sitting up on the second floor reserved for only VIPs, they only assumed that it was some powerful elite warrior their town lord knew.

No one bore any suspicions about his identity and focused on the entertainment presented before them. Meanwhile, the two men were discussing the affairs of the empire, and it looked like Shang Zexi looked a bit displeased at the moment.

Taking a sip of wine, Shang Zexi spoke in a bit of a drunken state, "You know, Lord Yi, one year ago, I was in a position where I may ascend to the throne at any moment. Fate kicked me like a dog."

"Your Highness, a lot of nobles are dissatisfied by His Majesty's policies. It's not even that long he ascended to the throne and he has already offended at least half of the sects and guilds. Now that he is injured in the imperial court itself, the bells of rebellion could be soon rung. His Highness could use this opportunity to rise once again," replied the town lord.

Shang Zexi let out a bitter smile, "If there is anything I have learned in these past couple of months, it is that no amount of politics is a match for absolute strength. To dethrone Shang Jun, loyalty from the nobles isn't enough. Now that they are no longer in authority, their influence alone wouldn't give me the throne.

As for the sects, even if they express dissent against the imperial court, they won't interfere in the matters of the court. I need someone like Song Tai on my side; someone like Lu Zhen, who could change the dynamics of a war. I hate that bastard but I must admit that he is quite powerful."

Before the town lord stated his opinion, a voice interrupted their conversation, "Well, thank you for the compliment, Prince Shang."

"Hmm?" Shang Zexi and the town lord turned around to find Mark standing there and staring at them.

Shang Zexi was so shocked that he immediately became sober and got up with a serious expression, "Lu Zhen... what the hell are you doi... Hmm..." He momentarily shifts his attention to the drinks on the table, "You bi*ch, what did you mix in my drinks?" He displayed his anger at the courtesan serving him.

As he caught her throat and she was struggling to breathe, Mark dashed forward and grabbed his hand, freeing her through force. "Get out," he said to the ladies around.

They hurriedly left the room and Mark sat down, gesturing the two of them to sit too. As they didn't sit, Mark threatened, "You are a wanted criminal now, Prince Shang. It is best if you don't cause any ruckus that could attract unnecessary attention. Sit..."

As both of them sat down, the prince asked, "How do you know I'm here?" He warily looked around.

Mark let out a smile, "It doesn't matter. What matters is the fact that I'm here with an offer that you won't be able to refuse. And by the way, on account of our cooperation, I'll forgive your earlier slur about me."

"Cooperation?" Shang Zexi furrowed his brows.

Mark simply asked, "Do you wish to become the Emperor?"

"What do you mean?" Shang Zexi's frown only became deeper with Mark's question.

"I meant exactly as I have said." Mark maintained his usual fake smile as he explained, "I will provide you with advanced weaponry and funds. You need to gather men or other allies on your own though. Start the civil

war and follow my strategy. I will give you the throne of the Phoenix Empire. I will even provide support in the shadows to make sure you keep that throne until you die."

Shang Zexi stared at Mark for a few seconds and replied, "You are certainly not my friend that you want to see me on that throne. According to what I know, you still have a supreme being at your disposal even after losing Venerable Wu. If you want an ally on the throne, your best bet would be the third prince. Why do you want to help me?"

"Well, I'm a businessman, Prince Shang." Mark shrugged his shoulders as if he was saying those things don't matter, "I do things that give me maximum profits. In this case, it is you who give me that. Because you are desperate for that position."

"What do you want from me?" Shang Zexi asked, tempted to shake hands with this devil, despite the fact that there is a part of him that blames Mark for his situation.

Seeing that the other party got interested, Mark took out a large scroll from his inventory and handed it to the prince.

Prince Shang opened it. The Town lord also leaned forward a bit in curiosity. It is a map of the Phoenix Empire.

However, there was something drawn on the map with a pencil. The drawing goes around the imperial city in the north and slowly comes down from the border of the Kunyu mountain range, cutting the Qing province vertically in half.

From the right, it cuts the Sui province horizontally into half and then goes along its border with the neighboring Jin Province before going down and cutting the Zhao Province vertically in half.

Neither of them understood what it meant. As they looked at Mark for answers, the latter said, "Whatever lands located outside the drawing is my price, meaning, the entire Jin Province, the outer sector in the north of the imperial city, half of Sui Province, half of Qing province, and half of Zhao Province. It is around 28% of the Empire's land but only has roughly 162,000 citizens, i.e.

a meager 3.1% of the population and a few notable sects. This is my price."

"Huh?"

After a while;

"Okay then, I'm done here and need to return. Send me your confidant to Lunaris City after you acquire the support of the Yuan clan. Remember that this person will be our mediator until the end."

Mark left the brothel with all smiles, leaving behind a happy Shang Zexi; He was seen clenching his fist tightly as he stared at Mark's back, "I always thought this bastard had a strong background but didn't expect there is a demigod behind him. If I get the support of a demigod, giving up those barren lands is worth the price.

It looks like those rumors about him having the backing of a force from a higher plane of existence aren't false if he wasn't lying about it."

Chapter 517: Cosmic orbs and the cure

Five days later;

Early in the morning, as soon as he woke up, Mark opened the Space station panel to spy on his targets.

"Activate, Third Eye."

*Ding! Need the name and other details, the better the details, the less time is taken.

"Biological mother" A simple word escaped Mark's mouth in response.

*Ding! Checking the registered list

*Ding! Found the details. Third Eye is activated.

Half a minute later, a new holographic window was opened before his eyes, displaying a map of the Dragon Empire where the icon with the image of his mom moved around.

"It looks like she is still there with her husband, touring the places," mumbled Mark, closing down the window. There was this slight disappointment on his face, not sure what else he was expecting.

30 seconds of waiting was enough to recover his 25% consumed ether energy due to the passive skill of ether regeneration, which rapidly increased his recovery rate to the extent that he only needed 70 seconds to recover 100% of his ether energy, and not to mention, there was no cooldown time period for the skill, Mark went on searching other people he was acquainted, one after another.

First, he checked on the location of James, who is still at Baize Empire but in a moving position similar to her mother, indicating that he was roaming around.

Then, he checked Shang Jiao, who was at his private island and in a still position, probably sleeping.

"Hmm... Ouyang Zen also seems to be sleeping."

"Lan Jing, my granduncle isn't with the kid. What was he doing at the Dragon Empire? Is he meeting Lan Jingyi or something? In that case, I cannot trust him. I should pay more attention."

"Hmm... who else..."

"Oh, Shang Jun is also not at the palace. He is still in the imperial city but in the Herald district. It is a residential district for the nobles though. Who could he meet at such a time? Don't tell me he was actually..."

"Bai Xun at his residence" "Shang Wei is also at the palace" "Shang Wen cannot be found. I wonder which plane of existence he left for. Only that trash father of mine knows..."

"What about Fu Sheng? Okay, he is with James."

"What about Shang Zexi?"

"Ugh... I think he was on the way to meet me. I have already told him that I will supply the weapons in a week, based on his budget. Why was he in a hurry? Not to mention, he didn't bother sending a message first and plans to surprise me with a visit."

"Anyway, let's forget about him and look for someone else... who... Hmm... that auction girl... what's her name again... Xin Rui. Let's see where she lives. Maybe, I can visit her to talk about our plan to ruin the Dragon Empire.

Eh? She isn't in the city. It is a mountainous location. Is she living in seclusion or is it the Void Temple? Who is there? I don't know the names but there are demigods living there, right?

If I just give the input like... demi... gods..."

As he was thinking, something clicked inside Mark's head. His eyes lit up in realization and he slapped his forehead, "idiot. Why didn't you think of it before?"

Mark activated the third eye for the nth time.

As the system prompt arrived, asking him about giving the input, Mark spoke, "Name: Unknown. Appearance: unknown. Cultivation realm: Demigod/10-circle. Search..."

After two minutes of searching, the system gave him the results, mapping various locations but without any images of the people.

"Seven demigods at the Dragon Empire? Six of them are in imperial city at the moment? What the heck is going on there?" Mark sprung up to his feet, getting down the bed in surprise.

He was aware of four demigods who were there at the Dragon Empire. One is the Tang Clan's ancestor. One is the Void Temple's Matriarch. One is the Dragon Emperor. And the fourth one is his mom. But, where did the other three come from?

"The Coronation ceremony must have already been over. Even if there were demigods in guest rooms at the auction and attended it, shouldn't they have left by now? Why did they extend their visit?" Mark couldn't help but ponder on this unusual situation.

Almost 16 hours later, in the Dragon Empire;

The new Emperor was in the presence of six emperors; he might be sitting on the highest seat in the room but he never felt as insignificant as he was now as an observer.

With the Tang Dynasty's founder absent from the meeting, Emperor Tang was nervous as hell, feeling like one wrong comment might lose his life. Not to mention, every demigod present is a beast. He could only watch the discussion unfolding before him, or more like an argument.

"Look, our world may have fewer demigods, but that doesn't mean you can just come here to do whatever you want. Okay?" The Beast Empire's Werewolf Lord was all blazing at the outsiders.

One demigod with three horns on his head made a counterargument, "Aren't you someone from the higher realm too? Whose permission did you take to settle down here?"

"There is no restriction of world laws on our bodies, Yanlong," The Dragon Emperor of the Bloodhill forest made a counterargument. She further added, "it clearly indicates that the world spirit accept us as its children. You people, on the other hand, don't hold such privilege. Stop grouping us together."

"Whatever." A demigod with the head of a male lion brushed her off. "Her Majesty's orders are absolute. We cannot leave without his highness. If you don't cooperate, your world will be doomed in the end and not even Yu Jiang will be able to save you."

The Werewolf Lord raised his eyebrow. He looked displeased by the other party's comments, "Oh, yeah? Try us. I too want to see how your queen dares to go against the decree of the heavenly palace."

"You really don't care about the consequences," the last demigod also joined the argument with a more sensible comment. "Do you think it is worthy to form enmity with the Feline Dynasty over such harmless investigation?"

The Werewolf Lord replied sternly, "I believe I have made myself clear. If you want to get back your young master, we will search and handover him to you. You are not permitted to explore our world. The world has enough demigods as it is. We won't give a way to any demigod to make this place their home."

"Please, who would want this dump yard, full of those parasites (human race)," scoffed the three-horned demigod.

"Those parasites gave me the home, Niu Mowang." A voice was heard in the surroundings, startling them.

The door was opened and a figure walked into the courtroom. Everyone got up from their seats involuntarily, including even the Emperor.

The sickly-looking pale boy slowly walked toward them. Every time he makes a step, the still air around him swirls around. The natural energy in the surroundings automatically absorbs into his body.

Emperor Tang was relieved by the presence of the new demigod. The other realm demigod beasts, on the other hand, felt invisible pressure on their bodies as they watched the boy walking toward them.

Cough Cough*

As he coughed like a sick person, the rest of the demigods felt like their eardrums exploded. The Emperor was fine for some reason.

The Werewolf Lord and the Dragon Emperor had a look of worry on their faces. The former spoke, "Brother Tang, why did you leave? We will handle the situation here. You go and rest."

The pale boy forced out a weak smile, "I'm fine. There's something important I need to speak about."
Cough

Tang Yifan hurriedly came down to help his ancestor. He slowly escorted him to the throne, requesting him sit on it while he stood beside like some servant.

Taking the seat, the pale boy spoke to the demigods, "Your young master is with a human, who formed a contract with a powerful demon king from netherworld. Even if the three of you work together, you will have a zero chance of success. The human also possessed a power that I'm incapable of understanding either."
Cough Cough* "I urge you to leave and tell your Queen to wait in patience.

We will deliver your young master to the doorstep."

"You know that's..." As the lion head demigod was about to argue, this time, he was stopped by his comrade, the one who looked the most human out of the three, the wise demigod with whiskers on his cheeks, "Since you gave your word, we will accept." He said to the Tang Clan's founder.

They didn't stay there anymore and once they left, the boy coughed once again. The Werewolf Lord and the Dragon Emperor hurriedly grabbed him and inserted their energy into his body.

As his condition stabilized a bit, the Werewolf scolded him, "What could be so important that you have to come out from your domain?"

The Tang Dynasty founder answered weakly, "I found my cure, Brother."

"Where?" Both the demigods reacted strongly.

The former emperor explained, "Both of you are aware that the Orb of Elements has long fused with my soul and we ended up in this world, because of the fact that the Orb of Life is sealed here. My cure needs another cosmic orb to balance the power of the Elemental Orb in my body. However, we missed the fact that there is another cosmic orb here."

"A third orb?" The demigods cast a sidelong glance at each other. Meanwhile, Tang Yifan wondered, "cosmic orbs? What are those?"

Tang founder continued to explain, "A while ago, during the time of the auction, I sensed its presence. It was just for a fraction of a second but I have managed to confirm its existence. All these days, I was busy tracing its location. Since it was sealed in its host, it was tough for me to locate it. But, every fortnight, during the noon here, it stayed active for a couple of moments.

I have now traced it to Western Moon.

The problem is that our target quite possibly is an acquaintance of that human. See if you can solve this without causing any bloodshed. In the event violence cannot be put to rest, I will stop that immortal demon and his master for a while. In the meantime, I need the two of you to bring her to the sanctum and extract the power."

Chapter 518: Shang Zexi and Yuan Meili at the store

Genesis Enterprises, Lunaris City, Western Moon Kingdom;

The weapon store turned enterprise with the successful business strategies from the welpire Chang Bo, subordinate Meng Tao, and the teenager with a crush on Mark; Xie Mei, selling from weapons to food, currently put up a closed sign as they hosted the former crown prince of the neighboring empire.

It wasn't the first time he visited the store. It is the official meeting point of him and Mark. However, there was someone else beside him, this time.

Yuan Meili had this look of unpleasantness on her face as she was given a brief tour.

As they went to the topmost story of the tower, the residence of Chang Bo and Meng Tao, Yuan Meili pinched her nose in disgust, refusing to take a seat when offered, and further commenting, "The place lacks elegance and quite smelly. The store is a lot better..."

In fact, the place was kept neat and tidy with nothing out of the ordinary as pointed out by Yuan Meili, but Chang Bo didn't argue with her about it and even apologized to her for the discomfort.

"Would you like to go downstairs?" As he asked her, maintaining a polite manner, Prince Shang Zexi waved his hand with an awkward smile, "No need, Brother Chang. We will stay here."

Yuan Meili furrowed her brows immediately but stayed silent until Chang Bo left the place, stating that he would go check on the kitchen. They came for the lunch. So, his excuse looked perfect.

Just as he left, Yuan Meili spoke to the prince in a bit of a complaining tone, "Are you seriously the same senior brother that I knew? Forget about waiting in this dump, you even call that commoner your brother? Don't tell me you want to marry your missing sister to that trash. I heard that they are close."

Shang Zexi's facial expression changed quickly. He looked at her as if he snapped, "Do you even know who that is? Chang Bo is Lu Zhen's loyal servant. Unlike us who treat servants as nothing more than slaves, Lu Zhen treats them as siblings. The Sui clan's young master merely insulted his other servant and Lu Zhen destroyed their clan compound and even extorted money in return.

That's when he was merely acting in a low-key manner.

Now, his actions have grown to the extent of destroying the empires at will. If he knows that you have insulted Chang Bo, forget about locating your lover, Yuan Clan will not see tomorrow's sunrise. After he returns, make sure you speak courteously."

"But..." Yuan Meili wanted to speak something in her defense but she bit her lip in frustration after seeing a stern look on her senior brother, and nodded, "I understand."

After a while;

Mark arrived at the store and met with both of them. He recognized the woman in one glance.

As they greeted him, and the crown prince introduced her, Mark responded with a nod, "I remember her." He shifted his gaze to look at the woman. After scanning her information, he was slightly surprised a bit and commented, "You are dying."

"Eh?" "Huh?"

Both the prince and the woman were taken aback by his comment.

"How do you know?" Yuan Meili asked before the prince responded to that. Shang Zexi abruptly turned his head to look at his junior sister and asked upon hearing her response, "What's going on?"

Mark gave the answer to his questions, based on what he found in the description, "Cursed Yin Physique. She was born with it and needs a constant supply of energy filled with a fiery bloodline like Phoenix." He then

looked at the woman and said, "It is amazing that you are still alive unless someone with a Phoenix Bloodline is saving you."

"I..." Yuan Meili looked down at the floor, feeling nervous as her birth secret was suddenly revealed by Mark. She doesn't know what else the other party knows. With a grip of fear in her heart, she slowly explained, "No, it is not like you have imagined. My clan used fire attribute energy and ether crystals to keep me alive. But, it was a temporary solution and it halted my cultivation progress.

If I marry someone with Phoenix Bloodline, then, I could be cured and continue my cultivation."

Mark stared at her for a couple of seconds. He wondered why she was so nervous. Despite being in the supreme realm, Mark was never an expert and didn't have a cent of the knowledge those veterans have. Hence, he took her word for the truth and merely responded with a comment, "So, that is why you were after Brother Wen. I thought you were in love with him. Nobles were indeed schemers."

"You..." Yuan Meili was offended by his comment and even raised her head to look seriously at Mark. However, as their eyes met, she averted her gaze down once again and defended herself, "If I just wanted to live, I have other options too. There is His Majesty (Shang Jun), and Prime Minister Shang (Shang Wei). The Red Dragon Bloodline can also cure me. I can also marry into the Tang Dynasty.

But, I'm only willing to chase after Brother Wen even after he went missing. I hope Lord Lu doesn't humiliate me by doubting my intentions. It is true that my mother urged me to pursue Brother Wen for my survival but my heart has been clear from the beginning."

As Shang Zexi instructed her earlier, she compressed all those negative thoughts in her heart and gracefully dealt with Mark just like an heiress of a noble family.

Mark already had a bad impression of her for a while and it won't disappear for a while. The best he could do was to stay silent and shift the topic.

Escorting both of them to the restaurant, Mark sat with them as Chang Bo brought a bottle with liquid as clear as water and served them in traditional wine cups, which had a maximum capacity of 50 ml of liquid.

"Hmm... what is this wine?" Prince Shang was puzzled.

Yuan Meili also raised the cup and smelled it, "at one glance, it looked like water, but I can faintly smell the scent of potatoes, grapes, and there is also corn? It doesn't seem like wine. Should be another type of alcohol."

Mark let out a smile as he introduced the alcohol, "This drink is a specialty of our store, created by my sister's recipe and done by our chefs. It is called vodka. As I'm not interested in creating any alcohol business, I just had it made in the kitchens using traditional methods. The one you were served is also nicknamed one shot down by our customers.

If you don't have alcohol tolerance, I suggest drinking in moderation."

"Brother Lu, since young, we were trained to develop a high tolerance to alcohol as we have to attend many events every year," replied the crown prince with a smile, clearly looking down on the drink.

Yuan Meili also smiled and gulped the drink in the cup in one go, just like they do with tea or wine.

In the next instant, their facial expressions changed.

"Ha..." Yuan Meili felt an extreme burning sensation in her mouth before feeling dizziness.

Flap

Within no time, her head hit the table and lost consciousness.

Meanwhile, Shang Zexi acted quickly by pouring his ether energy into his mouth, skillfully negating the effects. "What the hell was this poison?" he momentarily lost control before forcing himself to calm down, "I apologize."

Mark calmly drank the liquid in one shot and replied, "This one has over 80% alcohol percentage. I know that anything above 40 will be dangerous, but I thought cultivators like you could handle it."

*Ding! Toxic substance is detected. Proceeding to eliminate.

Sigh "One really needs to be fortunate to enjoy alcohol."

Watching Mark let out a long sigh and comment, Shang Zexi said in a hushed tone, "I really appreciate the drink, Brother Lu. It is unlike anything I have ever drunk. It is because this is the first time we drank, I..."

Mark interrupted him with a wave of his hand, "No, I'm not talking about you. I was criticizing my own self." He poured the vodka in the cup and raised it to his eye level and added, "No matter how much I drink, it is just like water to me. For someone like me who loves drinking, this is akin to hell. I guess this is an absolute law of the universe.

Obtaining something without losing anything can only happen in dreams. If someone says that they give you things for free, you should never take it. In reality, you always have to give up your precious things for the sake of achieving your dreams."

Shang Zexi meaningfully stared at Mark in silence.

Chapter 519: The bird from a calligraphic scroll

After a while, the prince finished the lunch and left with one million gold coins of initial funding while Yuan Meili ended up leaving in an unconscious state without being able to enquire about Shang Wen's current whereabouts, not that Mark could find it anyway.

After sending them off, Mark went on with his usual weapon creation and filling the storage room, then, checking the accounts, listening to their future plans from Chang Bo, and giving his permission to proceed with it.

Later on, he returned to the palace to meet the King, who wanted to enquire about his marriage date with Song Yue so that they could proceed with his engagement ceremony with the princess.

He doesn't trust Shen Niu as much as he trusts his daughter. Hence, he didn't share his plans of war against the Phoenix Empire and merely asked him to consult the fortune teller to look up the dates for both events.

Mark didn't talk much with him and swiftly escaped the palace in his LNovelBin to meet with Huang Jie, the merchant who dealt with construction materials. It was for the construction of his runways and also the military bases he planned on building in at least five different locations of the kingdom.

Merchant Huang greatly welcomed Mark at his residence. After a brief tea session and a talk about the progress of acquiring all the required materials, Mark was taken to Huang Ji's private collection.

This private collection was just full of ancient calligraphic works displayed on the walls and paintings displayed on the boards in the space.

With his Eyes of God active, Mark scanned the pieces one after another as Huang Ji was boasting about their historical significance and value. To get into Mark's good books, the merchant even offered him to take away any piece he liked.

At first, Mark thought of taking away some inexpensive pieces as the merchant was insisting, but when he eventually spotted a calligraphy that had profound strokes, he asked about it with a bit of interest.

As Mark finally shows interest in a calligraphic work, the merchant suddenly grows nervous. Still, he explained without hiding anything, "Lord Lu, this is the work of Master Gu..."

After explaining every detail of the calligraphy and also about this Gu Wenchao, the merchant added in the end, "I purchased it for a hundred thousand gold coins during one of the auctions, intending to give it as a birthday present for my son's upcoming 16th birthday."

Mark understood what he was trying to indicate, but he shamelessly asked, "Mr. Huang, if I want this work, would you be kind enough to give it to me?"

Huang Ji was taken aback at once, shocked at how this man still asks for the work. Nevertheless, after hesitating for a bit, he bowed slightly, "Yes, if it pleases Lord Lu."

As the man proceeded to take the calligraphic scroll and fold it up, Mark developed a rare genuine smile on his face as he took out a robot from his inventory, taking the merchant by surprise once again.

Handing him a piece of the scroll, Mark said, "This robot is a battle puppet, strong as a 6-circle realm expert and capable of handling any type of weapon, although like a blank book and needed proper training to use it on the field. I don't know how much it is worth as robots are not for sale. But, I believe it should be at least worth the same as the calligraphic work.

The scroll I gave you has the guide to control this robot. Give this as a birthday present for your son, although be sure to warn him not to use it to bully the weak."

"This..." Huang Ji's hands shivered as he stared at the robot in shock, "6-circle?" Even his voice quivered as he immediately cupped his fists and bowed, "Lord Lu, you are too generous."

He might be wealthier than most of those adventurers but he lacked the strength to protect himself or his family. Hence, he always has to depend on them, handing out lots of money. It is not just his problem. It is the problem of every wealthy individual.

Getting such a powerful puppet is like a blessing from heaven. At that moment, He felt glad to give up his most prized possession.

"haha" Mark let out a hearty laugh as he took the calligraphic scroll and carefully placed it in the storage ring. "In the upcoming years, I'm going to build a lot of things, Mr. Huang. I will be depending on you more."

"Yes, I will try my best," Huang Ji cupped his fists once again.

Soon after, Mark left the residence in his LMV, leaving an ecstatic merchant.

Little did Huang Ji know that Mark was happier than him.

He was whistling and humming various tunes from his past life as he was driving toward the outskirts of the city.

The vehicle traveled for another hour and reached a remote location with nothing but wild plants around.

He then got down from the vehicle and took out the scroll, placing it on the vehicle's hood and spreading it carefully.

"Man, I hit the jackpot once again..." He observed the scroll's details.

Scroll of Gu family

Grade: N/A

Description: An ancient scroll belonging to the Western Moon's Gu family. Beneath the profound work created by Calligrapher Gu Wenchao, hidden a seal that imprisoned an emperor-grade creature.

"System, Open skills list"

"Activate, Seal Breaker"

As the skill activated, the scroll beneath his palm started burning in flames. Mark retracted his hand in reflex.

The entire scroll was burned to ash, leaving behind a bird with colorful plumage. It looked ordinary at one glance.

The bird that was sleeping on its side suddenly woke up and looked around. It saw Mark and chirped in happiness.

Mark immediately scanned its details.

Jingwei

Grade: Battle Emperor

Rank: 2 (9-at her peak state)

Age: 16344

Attribute: Fire

Description: Jingwei is the daughter of Yan Di, the Flame Emperor; one of the three sovereigns of the planet that ascended to the immortal realm. After drowning in the sea, her soul was merged with an immortal bird that consumed the fire seed. Determined to fill up the sea so that no one would drown like her, she started throwing twigs and stones for years and years.

After breaking through the supreme realm, Jingwei proceeds to throw mountains into the sea, almost destroying the ecosystem of the planet. The guardian of the oceans and seas, the Kun worked with Emperor Zhuanxu and sealed her because they couldn't kill her.

"Now, that's a long description..." Mark was observing the description written on the holographic screen while the bird was staring at him, thinking that the human was observing her.

The bird flapped its wings and flew toward Mark. He stretched his left hand forward in reflex and the bird landed on his arm.

As it was tilting its head right and left, Mark let out his business smile, "Hello, I'm Lu Zhen. Do you want to follow me?"

In response, the bird let out a lively chirp once again, but then, it followed it with suddenly attacking his arm.

"Ssss"

Mark retracted his arm in reflex once again, but while letting out a painful hiss. However, the bird seemingly attached to his arm, didn't move a bit. It went on consuming his blood.

Upon consuming it, it started glowing brightly.

*Ding! A contract has been formed.

"Wait, what about my consent?" Mark was surprised that it accepted him as its master, just like that. *Ding!
The host has already given his consent.

"Ah, I guess so..." Mark remembered asking it to come with him. That's the same as initiating the contract.

But, still, he didn't expect the bird would accept it without the medium of any taming scrolls, taming skill, and most importantly, without putting up any fight. Not to mention, the bird wasn't a newborn and lived long enough to be wiser than him.

As Mark was wondering whether he was lucky, the blinding flash of light over the bird enlarged to at least three and a half feet in size, and when the glow disappeared, Mark saw a little girl on the ground with fiery flames covering her, in the form of a traditional robe.

*Ding! Jing Wei's condition restored to the peak.

Mark had his mouth opened and eyes widened for a moment, staring at the scene, "what the..."

The final nail hit the coffin when that girl jumped at him and hugged his legs, "ba-bah (father in affectionate form, similar to Papa)."

Mark: "..."

Chapter 520: Civil War at Phoenix Empire (part-1)

An hour later;

"Papa, the streets look so lively here"

"Papa, look... food is made on the streets here."

"Papa, why are people lining up for food, there and there, and there? Do the rain gods get angry once again?"

"Papa, the roads look so smooth. Do you remember, back then, we used to travel in a jungle and it is tough to..."

"Papa, whose statue is that? It certainly doesn't look like yours."

"Woah, this is where we are going to stay? The house looks so big..." The little girl exclaimed as they got out of the vehicle.

As Mark put away the vehicle, little Jing Wei grabbed his hand and skipped like a normal kid as they climbed the stairs to get into the palace. The guards around couldn't help but wonder who the kid was.

Due to the fact that Mark had the look of an annoyed person, not even the vice general passing by dared to ask him about her identity and merely greeted him.

As both of them entered the palace, the little girl started exclaiming every second, pointing at various things from paintings to even the chandelier as if she was looking at them for the first time. Her voice was also quite loud.

Soon, Sylvandria and Song Yue came down to meet him as he asked them through communication scrolls while he was on the way. As for Shen Ling, she was slightly preoccupied with kingdom affairs at the moment, acting as an unofficial advisor to her dad.

Both of the were puzzled by the little girl and were curious about her.

The little girl looked at Song Yue and suddenly hid behind Mark, "Papa, that pretty woman is so scary."

As the ladies were startled by her comment, especially Song Yue, Mark furrowed his brows in displeasure, "Jing Wei, what's scary about her?" Meanwhile, a sense of confusion arose within Mark.

"I don't know..." She shook her head as she hugged Mark's waist from behind. "She is so scary. I don't like her."

Mark couldn't help but scan Song Yue's details once again. As he saw nothing strange, he reprimanded her, "Do you want to go back?"

"Eek... not that prison. I hate it." Jing Wei's face went pale for a second and she shook her vigorously, throwing a tantrum. "I hate it. I hate it. I hate it..."

Her voice rose higher and higher, enough that Song Yue had to tightly shut her ears.

Mark also raised his voice at her, to stop her shouting, "Fine then. Apologize to her, right now."

Jing Wei was startled by Mark's sudden outburst and so were his ladies. Anan Spencer, aka the golden kitten that was peacefully sleeping in Song Yue's arms, suddenly woke up. After a brief glance at its master and then at the girl, it went back to sleep.

"Markie, calm down..." As Song Yue tried to cool him down, the little girl went on her knees and kowtowed, "I apologize."

"Ah, that's fine," Song Yue was embarrassed. She stepped forward. Just as she touched the kid, the latter shivered and quickly jumped away before going back to hiding behind Mark, "Please don't come near..."

"Jing Wei..." As Mark was about to lash at her once again, Sylvandria interrupted by taking the girl in her hands, "You were fine with me, right?"

The little girl broke out into a beautiful smile, "You smell just like grandma." She went on hugging the elf, bringing a smile to her face as she started caressing her hair. She then turned her head to look at Mark, "I will take her with me."

"Okay"

Soon, both of them left, leaving behind a disappointed Song Yue and an angry Mark.

Mark took a deep breath to calm himself and went on grabbing Song Yue's arm, "Don't worry about that girl. She is not as you think she is."

"Who is she?" Song Yue asked in response.

Mark explained everything, like how he went to the merchant's residence, got the scroll, and later freed her from the prison. He also didn't forget to mention that the girl is more than 16 thousand years old, making her one of the oldest creatures on the planet.

Mark thought that Song Yue's mood got better but it only turned worse instead, "Why is she afraid of me, then? Maybe, she knows that I'm an evil witch who killed her own father. Now, because of me, to avenge my father, you were forced to destroy thousands of lives."

"No, you are not," Mark softly grabbed her face and raised it to look into her eyes, "I told you many times. Don't blame yourself for his death. You would only belittle his sacrifice by speaking in such a manner. And I promised you that I will keep bloodshed to the minimum, aren't I?"

After a brief pause, he added, "My schatz, even in the future, never forget that whatever I'm planning isn't just about avenging your father. It is also to settle down my old accounts. Once they were completed, both of us will get to start a new life together, hopefully one that of a long-lasting peace."

As tears formed in her eyes, she moved forward and let Mark hug her, only to get separated in a second with the interruption from a cat lying in between them and getting squeezed.

"Maw" "Maw" "Maoow"

As the cat expressed its irritation at sleep interruption once again, both of them laughed together, "How cute."

Two days later;

Roughly around 785 kilometers away from the imperial city, lies on the border of Jin province and Zhao province, at an agriculture field that spans over a thousand acres, divided into hundreds of plots of land, an army comprising of about five hundred soldiers marched to the place and gathered all the farmers working there.

Various landlords from surrounding villages were summoned by the commander. A commander position isn't a fixed position in the army. It was just a temporary position given to one of the captains when there were more of them in the army and no Lt. General to command them.

Nevertheless, it is the same as a general summoning the landlords and they didn't dare to neglect the order. It didn't even take an hour for all 26 of them to arrive.

Once all of them came, the leader of the force opened the scroll, "Receive the decree of his Majesty."

At once, every single one of those landlords knelt down in unison. The leader surnamed Fang then read the scroll, "According to the new reforms created by the Imperial Palace, this party location in the county of Zian is selected for building the headquarters of the newly developed Firearms Division.

Henceforth, the landlords is obliged to hand over the deeds to the district magistrate within three days and get respective compensation."

"No, this is unfair. How could we give up this place in three days?" One landlord raised his voice against the decree.

Commander Fang sharply gazed at the person who questioned and raised his palm. A burst of ether energy erupted from his palm and traveled like a beam, striking the said landlord's chest and killing him swiftly.

Everyone around got scared by the sudden actions of this fellow. Commander Fang then spoke, "Anyone who dares to question his Majesty's decree shall be dead. Now, who has any objections?"

After the death of a landlord, who is considered a minor noble, no farmer or other landlord dared to voice out their opinion. They knelt in silence.

Commander Fu observed the people and nodded with a smirk on his face, "Good."

He turned his head to look at one of the captains, "Proceed."

In the next couple of hours, the farmers continued to kneel on the ground and cried in agony as the soldiers destroyed atleast two-thirds of the crops with fire spells.

By noon, the army hurriedly left the place without finishing all the crops for some reason. But, the damage done was enough to cause commotion in the province.

The next day morning, Shang Jun, with a severed arm was forced to assemble the ministers and other administrative officials in the court. It was actually his first appearance since his arm was severed by Steve.

He doesn't want to come out until he regenerates the arm but the urgent situation forces him to come out.

As expected, murmurings could be heard in the place where the officials were standing.

As Shang Jun's eyes narrowed, the third prince, Shang Wei addressed the court, "Silence."

As the courtroom went silent, Shang Jun spoke in a mighty emperor tone, in contrast with his state, "Yesterday, there was an incident at the Zhao Province. I want to ask who authorized it. Who created the fake decree and caused damage to the farmers? General Yu. The soldiers claimed to be from your division. Any explanation?"

A young-looking general came forward and greeted the emperor.

Yu Jianmeng is the newly appointed general of the firearms division. He was originally a captain-ranked officer at the Southern division under Shang Wen, the second prince.

Because of his experience as a commander and his military family background, he was recommended by Shang Wen and later appointed by the former Emperor.

However, the firearms division was still in the recruitment phase and isn't in operation.

Hence, Shang Jun, who knows nothing about firearms, kept his position that way. Not to mention, he planned on disbanding the division in the future as he didn't want to allocate the funds on weapon purchases from Mark and make him richer.

Now, seeing that this very insignificant division caused him trouble, Shang Jun was naturally furious at this young general.

Never in the world would he expect Yu Jianmeng to calmly answer him without any sort of expression as if he was giving a fact, "Your Majesty, they were certainly not from our division. Of our 1681 soldiers, 244 formerly belonged to the Southern division, led by General Wen. They were disciplined and loyal to the Empire. The remaining soldiers cannot cultivate. They cannot launch fire spells.

If His Majesty wants to hold someone responsible, it should be the Zhao clan that controls the Zhao Province."