

Seller 571

Chapter 571: Amulet of Bael

"So, you are saying that Yan Di, the flame Emperor of the myths has reincarnated into someone. Then, Houyi, Change's husband was reincarnated into someone else. Then, both of their souls merged somehow and I was born out of it?"

"Yes"

"Now, as I served the Heavenly Palace in both of my past lives, you want me to join the Palace as one of the apostles of the Jade Emperor, again? In return, I will get a nice weapon, a place to cultivate, and even immortality of elixir when it matures after 845 years?"

"Yes"

"What a load of bullsh*t. Does it even make sense?"

"Human, whether you accept it or not, you cannot change the truth."

"Fine, even if that is the truth, I don't care about it. Because unlike you, I was born out of my mother's womb and my identity will be decided by the physical body I'm inhabiting. The past lives are nothing more than the identities of other bodies. So, their actions have no relation to me."

"Well, that is alright if you wish to think that way. But, I can see that one day, you will face all of your countless past lives. That day, I hope you will make the right choice."

"When such day comes, we'll see about it. If there is else Your Grace, you may return now. I have something to do here in this world. Once I finish it, I will return on my own."

Mark, Chang'e, Bael, and Yuanlong were standing on one of the islands on the Endless Sea of lava, and Mark was arguing with the divine serpent, regarding the so-called past life story she was trying to convince him.

Mark, to some extent, believed the story, as only he knew that his soul was merged with Lu Zhen's. If her theory was right, then, he could be Yan Di's reincarnate and Lu Zhen must be Houyi's reincarnate.

The fact that Jingwei always addresses him as papa, because his aura smells like her father, is something taken into consideration.

But, what if, this divine serpent merely noticed that he is a merged soul through some way and used it to sew a story in order to scout him into the Heavenly Palace?

He just defeated Leviathan in front of her and there is no doubt she will be interested in him too. So, it is likely that this is just her manipulation. Or so, in Mark's opinion.

Moreover, if he agrees with his explanation, this Moon Goddess, who was crazy for her husband, might cause disturbance in his private life. If she could go to the depths of the netherworld to save her husband's soul even after thousands of years since his death, then, she could very well visit the planet and interfere in his life too.

While he doesn't have any qualms about taking another wife, who in fact has powerful cultivation and a beauty that even beats his wife's, he cannot give her the love she expects. His heart belongs to only one person and that is Song Yue.

Hence, he cannot marry anyone who could have strong feelings of affection toward him. Because such unrequited feelings often cause jealousy; history has been the witness for many times that a strong woman's jealousy in love often brings nothing but trouble.

Keeping all this in consideration, Mark firmly rejected it.

But, Chang'e, who is already deeply convinced by Yuanlong, has already changed the way she looks at him. And this troubled Mark more than anything.

Hence, he sought the easiest way to solve this issue. Give an excuse to send her away with the divine serpent, not forgetting to request to send his sister back home.

Chang'e listened to his request and quietly left without bothering him, after handing over her divine essence soul to Bael as promised, leaving the two of them in the middle of the endless sea of lava.

Once they disappeared, Mark finally paid attention to Bael, inquiring him about the divine essence soul.

Mark's performance against Leviathan earned him a lot of respect as well as trust from the demon king; he didn't leave a single thing out as he explained his goal and how he planned on achieving it.

Upon listening to everything, Mark frowned, "Your plan is okay but according to what you have said, during the integration of the essence, your body will be vulnerable. What if you get ambushed by your enemies?"

"Oh, that's not an issue." Bael has already thought of the problem. He replied, "I plan on doing it in an abandoned world, far away from the eyes of the heavenly palace or my fellow siblings."

"Hmm..." Mark went silent for a while and finally mumbled, "Roughly ten years huh..."

Bael understood the meaning behind Mark's mumble. During this integration time, he won't be answering Mark's call for summons, even though that way was already destroyed accidentally by the system.

Without the Orb of Bael, Mark had to depend on the summoning scroll demons usually provide to their contracted mortals, but Bael didn't plan on giving him one in the first place, as it is useless.

So, he did the best thing he could do, to please his favorite contracted human, who seemed like he didn't like divine beings. To solidify their trust, Bael took an amulet out of nowhere and handed it to Mark, "For the next decade, my legion will be at your beck and call, in my absence. I will inform my generals beforehand. So, no need to worry about disobedience, not that they would."

"Hmm?"

Mark took the amulet and curiously observed it.

At one glance, it doesn't look anything special, except for its hideous insignia of Bael's true form. But, when he inspected it, Mark couldn't suppress the smile on his lips.

Amulet of Bael

Grade: Celestial

Description: According to the Book of Solomon's data in the system, the Amulet of Bael is said to be a powerful devil artifact, one that could summon Demon King Bael's 66 legions of demons at any location in the universe. Unless it is in an environment where there is a high concentration of divine energy in the surroundings, the summoned demons will retain their full strength.

The summoned demons with not more than one realm above the user will have complete loyalty. Each legion contains 1 demon general (12-circle), 6 demon commanders (11-circle), 60 demon captains (10-circle), and 6000 demon foot soldiers (7-circle to 9-circle).

Note: Summoning legions of demons consumes a large amount of ether energy and mental stamina from the user.

Effect 1: At the current stage, the user can summon one legion of demons under Bael for 60 minutes. Summoning each legion will reduce the time by 10 minutes.

Effect 2: Using the artifact, the user can resurrect all the fallen demons back to their peak state. However, the cost of each demon will consume a corresponding amount of life force from the user.

The user needs 10,000-100,000 years of life force to bring back a demon general, 1000-5000 years of life force to bring back a demon commander, 100-200 years for each demon captain, and 20-50 years for each demon foot soldier.

Effect 3: The Amulet can be used to absorb the life force from the fresh corpses of living beings and store it, which could be consumed by the user to increase his life span or use it to resurrect the fallen demons instead

of using the user's own life force. At the current stage, the stored life force in the amulet is around 51,446 years.

Temporary Owner: Lu Zhen/Mark Spencer

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After he broke through to the demigod realm, a lot of existing data that the system left behind has been unlocked. And the return of description without the need for artificial intelligence "Ark" collecting it from conversations has been returned.

He now didn't even need to scan the surroundings to know what kind of minerals and rare materials were available in the netherworld at all.

It was one of the things that Mark missed the most in the absence of the system. Adding on top of that, the amulet's amazing abilities impressed his mood even further.

He couldn't help but vigorously shake Bael's hands, "Thank you. With this, my immediate goals will be accomplished in a shortened time."

With great excitement, Mark bid farewell to Bael and used the Return skill, a spatial skill that lets him return to a fixed place, as long as it was within distance limits. Previously, it was a hundred light years, but now, it expanded to 5000 light Years.

Of course, since the netherworld is in a different plane of existence, all of which are stacked upon each other, there is virtually no concept of distance in the first place. From other planes of existence, every place in a foreign plane of existence is of the same distance.

Regardless, Mark returned to his home in an instant, specifically, the master bedroom in his mansion.

"I'm Home... Hmm?"

He expected to surprise Song Yue, but the room was empty.

Mark got out of the room, only to witness that the corridor was also empty when there should be a couple of robots standing outside. He checked the nearby rooms and found all of them empty too. Even the living room downstairs is also empty. No servants, no robots, nothing.

He couldn't but frown, quickly taking out the communication scroll to contact Song Yue.

The reply was quick but Mark's frown only deepened further when he read it.

"This... Damn it..."

"Teleportation"

Mark immediately disappeared and reappeared at the Gates of the Palace. "One trouble is over and another one is already waiting at my doorstep. Even when I seek peace, they always force me to pick violence. Fine, let's give them that."

Chapter 572: You have four weeks

Later on, that night;

"Anan (Golden kitten) got abducted, Baltrow (Manticore) got killed, all five of my Rank-9 robots that are deployed here are destroyed alongside a significant portion of my robotic army, Sylvandira and mom were heavily injured for resisting the enemies, and Lan Ju (Zheng) was forced to leave with them as a hostage.

While this was all going on, that bas*ard guardian god, Yujiang didn't make a move. Can anything get worse than this... *sigh*"

Mark doesn't know who to get angry with.

Is it his fault for not taking extra steps to secure his family?

Is it the Moon Goddess' fault for putting him through a troublesome quest of hers and wasting his time, because of her half-knowledge?

Is it the fault of Yujiang, who was supposed to deny the entry of any Saint and above realm cultivator or a beast?

Or is it the fault of his sister who landed herself in trouble in the first place, trying to get the Orb of time without consulting him?

Many things ran through his head, as he was lying on the bed and staring at the ceiling, not being able to sleep; Song Yue and Little Lu Shan, on the other hand, were sleeping in peace. Perhaps, Song Yue was affected quite the most, by this incident. Even after four into the sleep, her hands were tightly around his arm.

After thinking thoroughly about how to get back his friends (Zheng and Anan) while making sure to keep his wife and the child safe from any kind of problematic enemies, Mark decided to finish up his old promises.

The next day morning, in the King's study room;

"You can't be serious," King Shen Niu couldn't control his voice as he heard Mark's decision. "But, there are no auspicious dates around," Princess added, with a frown on her face.

Mark shrugged his shoulders, "The recent incident made it clear that I have a lot of enemies that I still need to take care of, in this place before I go and save my friends. I'm not telling you to hurry up the marriage preparations in a day or two. I just want you to look for the best date possible for the marriage, during this time. After that, I might leave this place for a few years.

So, it is up to you if you want to marry your daughter to me or wait until I get back."

"Four weeks? That's enough time," Shen Niu's eyes lit up instantly. "Leave it to me," He raised his tone once again, but this time, it was in excitement.

Of course, he was excited. For the past few months, Shen Niu was pestering Mark for the marriage every now and then. Shen Ling, who was still working on pushing for the reforms of removing Patriarchy in the Kingdom, kept on postponing it in the name of not having auspicious dates so far.

She wants to have enough support before the marriage so that when they officially become husband and wife, she will directly announce her candidacy for the throne.

She and Mark made the agreement long ago. Now when he becomes her husband, he would gladly use his power to remove Patriarchy in the kingdom and carve the path for her to succeed her father as the first-ever Queen Regnant.

Mark supported her as it is what she wants to do.

But, the situation has changed and so were his plans.

Shen Ling obviously was displeased by his announcement, without even consulting with her beforehand.

But, she cannot say anything in her father's presence and can only stay silent, until she escorted him to the gardens with an excuse of spending some quality time together.

When they were finally alone in one of the gardens of the palace, Shen Ling inquired about him and expressed her displeasure on the matter too.

Mark took a glance around and leaned his head to her ear, whispering his plans for her.

"Wha..." Shen Ling's eyes widened and she took a step back in surprise. "Now it finally makes sense why Cabinet and the alliance were established. It was never about..."

"Shh..." Mark stepped forward and put his finger on his lips, "Some things cannot be revealed before they happen."

Shen Ling bloomed into a smile and nodded, "I understand."

A few hours later, Mark and his family (Song Yue, Lu Shan, and Shang Jiao) left the city in their Spider-ship, a transformation of the divine throne. It might have a scary appearance for the spectators but he had used it so many times that it had become his symbol.

It was necessary to also let it fly at a low altitude to warn his hidden enemies that he was back and they shouldn't try anything funny from now onwards.

Within no time, they reached Fujian Island, where a familiar-looking little girl was waiting for them.

As soon as they stepped on the island, she rushed forward and hugged Mark with all smiles, "Papa..."

Usually, Mark would either pat her head or brush her off, but this time, Mark put his arms around her and responded with a smile, "I'm back, Xiao Wei."

Jingwei raised her head with a look of surprise on her face, as she never had been called that way. As her eyes met Mark's, her smile widened even further than earlier, "I missed you a lot, Papa."

"Haah, if someone would see this, they think that you had a daughter when you were a teenager, Markie," A cheeky comment came from above. Song Yue was slowly coming down the stairs, carrying her son in her arms. Shang Jiao followed her.

'Ah, it is the scary lady and scary baby,' Jingwei thought in her head but her wary expression gave away her thoughts.

But then, Mark's reaction absolutely blew her mind so that she forgot all about her wariness toward the Chaos element.

"She is still the daughter from one of my past lives, my Schatz. Thousands of years passed away and we still met in the end. Isn't it fate?" Mark replied to her, slightly indicating to the girl that he knew the truth.

As Song Yue was surprised this time, Shang Jiao clapped in realization, "Ah, that's right. I remembered the portrait of the Moon Goddess' mortal husband. You look strikingly identical to each other."

"Eh?" Song Yue's surprise turned into shock; she abruptly turned her head to look at her in-law, "What did you say?"

Mark's face stiffened this time. He hurriedly spoke before Shang Jiao uttered more things, "nonsense. Reincarnation doesn't give you the same appearance, Xiao Jiao. The bloodline will give it. Most probably, both of us are his descendants and that's probably why she wants to help us out."

"Ah, is that so? But, I swear she heard addressing you as her dear when she sent me back to the kingdom, yesterday. I thought something might have happened back in the netherworld between you two. Maybe, I misheard it." Shang Jiao murmured, momentarily falling into her thought.

As Mark was worried about Song Yue's uncomfortable expression as if she wanted to say when he would stop chasing after beauties, Jingwei came to Mark's rescue with her comment, "No, Papa is not Houyi. Papa is Papa's reincarnation. They have the same souls."

"Yup, it does look like she could tell because we formed a contract," Mark confirmed his theory, upon hearing her comment. "But then again, isn't it funny that I was such a mythical character in my past life? Nah, the current me would wipe the floor off with him."

Chapter 573: Project Ultron

Three weeks later;

"Day 20, Experiment no. 36. Subject: Rank-8 Robot."

Mark carefully inserted a 1cm*1cm chip into a cube-shaped core made of titanium alloy.

After successful insertion, he placed it on one of his palms and used the other to pour ether energy into it, giving it the necessary power.

Soon, all the markings that appeared on the core were filled with blue light, making it seem like a burst of energy trying to escape a maze that has no exit, once the notification received by Mark about the completion of this step, he went on inserting it into the chest of a Rank-8 robot, "Alina, switch on the battery."

While the core could be supplied the power through his ether particles as its needed energy, the robot, on the other hand, needed a battery as the power source as it runs on electricity.

But, creating conventional batteries is a time-consuming task and he doesn't want to stop the production of his weapons, now that they went into the market a week ago, resuming his business.

A store was set up in atleast one city of every state of the alliance and the grand opening happened a week ago.

Things haven't been as smooth as he expected, atleast in some states like Eastern Sun due to Ouyang Zen's dissent to let his public access to the firearms and Qilin Empire, where the Ming dynasty or its people not being able to get used to a new type of weapons that could actually hurt them if they are not careful.

Of course, the Ming Dynasty was quick to act. Within just one week of its release, Emperor Ming passed an order to put an age restriction on firearms and explosives.

Anyways, back to the factory, Mark opted to use electric current-filled scrolls available in the market, each costing up to 3 gold coins and supplying electricity to at least 5 electric fans and 6 bulbs for a whole day. A scroll can also be used to charge the rank-1 robot to full.

It was expensive for normal people but for the rich, it didn't cost much.

Mark didn't hesitate to use 120 of them at the same time, supplying the electricity to the Rank-8 robot, which had its energy depleted completely on purpose.

As a huge amount of current passed into it and charged its battery, causing it to go overload, the excess current automatically made its way to the core inserted in its chest.

"I have destroyed 35 Rank-8 robots so far. This is the 36th. Due to the incident, I now only have a Rank-10 robot, 5 Rank-9 robots, and 17 Rank-8 robots. Most of the destroyed robots are missing too, along with the weapons given to them. Who knows where they all ended up in? If this ends up in failure, I will lose another prized robot, which is even of a higher grade.

Then, I would have no choice but to abandon this project..."

Mark was too nervous at this point, hoping that the rank-9 robot would not be destroyed by the overloading caused by the cube. Due to the fail-safe he built inside, there won't be an explosion but if all of its transistors,

wires, and battery end up dead, the rank-9 robot will become nothing but a lump of titanium and adamantium alloy.

Five seconds passed, ten seconds passed, twenty seconds passed, and Mark's facial expression changed.

After a whole minute, Mark's face was now filled with excitement as he saw the cube continue to glow, integrating with the robot's system. "Good, so far so good. All we need is now to wai..."

At once, the floor started shaking all of a sudden. Mark lost his balance and was about to fall. The robot's dead eyes glowed blue and it disappeared, reappearing behind Mark, catching him in a fraction of a second. Mark's eyes met with its eyes and the robot spoke, "Master, are you alright?"

"Hmm?" Not only did the robot speak to him when it didn't have any voice modulator but the voice was also too familiar to him. "Ark?" he wondered out loud.

The robot helped him to stand up straight and went down to one of his knees like a knight, "Integration successful, Master."

"Wait a second. How?" Mark's eyes widened as realization dawned upon him without hearing its explanation, "I created the core and its quantum chip based on the data extracted from your core instead of Alina because yours is superior to hers. Of course, it is going to be your copy. F**k, here I thought I could make a new one."

The robot rose to its feet and replied, "Master, you lacked the proper equipment to build a new one from scratch. You need a computer with specialized software to get started. You don't possess the knowledge to build such a thing. But, now, with me here, your creation ability will not be limited to weapons."

"Hmm... with Ark acting as my substitute, I think it is possible," thought Mark in his head.

In reply, a notification screen floated before his eyes.

*Ding! Now that I was integrated with the robot's nanochip, as long as the core is intact, I can establish a connection with every other robot that has a similar nanochip even from a distance. Essentially, apart from the higher quality robot (Rank-10), I could now control every other robot that is 500 meters around my body.

However, I recommend building more cores to give intelligence to every robot here, in order to improve work efficiency.

"Ultron..." Mark's eyes lit up.

Ever since he got a robot from the system, he always had a fascination with commanding robots like how this character named Ultron did it in a movie franchise, back in his past life.

However, after using the robotic army, it didn't feel like it. Instead, he felt more like a necromancer who is using an undead. But, with added intelligence to the robot, where its main consciousness lies inside him, he felt like his dream could be achieved.

While there was also a worry of losing control over the artificial intelligence that keeps on learning new things, he was confident in destroying them too, with his newfound strength. But, it isn't also the time to think about unnecessary things. He felt like this was the time to focus on development.

Slightly tweaking his intended plans, Mark then spoke to the robot, "Your name will be Ark Prime from now onwards. I give you permission to name the robots you will give intelligence to."

"I understood, Master," The robot placed his arm to its chest and bowed its head slightly.

Mark continued, "Your first task is to give intelligence core to all the robots here."

"Understood, master," The robot nodded, but then it replied immediately, "However, I recommend Master to do this task."

"Me? Why?" Mark was taken aback by its request. It's Day 1 of its creation and it is already disobeying his orders?

The robot clarified by explaining, "When the Master creates the core, the master's ether energy is being integrated with the core, and I could extract a basic or a variant attribute from it, giving its properties to the robot. This body has inherited the element of space." Following its words, the robot created a set of black portals, one before it and the other ten meters away.

It walked into it before walking out from the other.

"The f**k... you can do that?"

Chapter 574: Alina and the old witch

Mark didn't expect to see this. It was already overwhelming enough for him to realize the potential of replicating the intelligence cores. But, this news was even top of it.

What makes an Android different from a battle robot? Of course, the appearance makes a huge difference, but it is the presence of the core in the Android that makes it more special.

The intelligence core not only houses the Android's consciousness but also has unique abilities based on how it was created. That's why Alina, Allen, and Ark had different abilities in the first place. The system created them based on what it thought their abilities suited its host the most.

But, since Ark Prime was created by Mark, who used his own ether energy as the medium, the artificial intelligence Ark's intention here is to maximize the output. So, it went on extracting the best variant element it could do, from its ether particles and supplied it to the core, giving it space-based elements.

This newfound discovery brought several thoughts to Mark.

He broadened his horizons in a matter of seconds as his brain ran faster and faster.

Clap

"Ark, I bet if you are upgraded to the next rank, you can extract advanced grade attributes too, right?" he inquired inside his head, under the assumption of Yes.

*Ding! I cannot say it certainly without any data on other A.I.s but there is a high chance that I could do it.

"There's still a reward from the system left for me. I could upgrade Ark to rank 8 through Upgrade Crystal. However, I need to expand it more. Including the main branch, I have opened 7 so far. So, 3 more are needed. Not to mention, I need to sell at least 1000 weapons from each.

Hmm... since there is no system to monitor my process, let's just do it using a loophole process. I need 10 million gold coins of worth transactions through the store, right? Let's complete both quests at the same time."

Since it is better to wait until Ark's upgrade, Mark halted the current project and gave another task to the robot, "Ark Prime, I want you to work on upgrading the Song missile, and Alina..." He then looked at the three-headed robot dog, "How far can you track your body's nano-chip?"

"Big Bro, you want to get back my body?" She asked; her voice filled with surprise.

As Mark nodded, she started jumping on her four legs like a poodle, "Yay, Big Bro is the best..."

She might be of lower rank than Ark and less knowledgeable, but she is certainly more emotional compared to Ark. It was as if she was a human in the body of a robot.

Mark couldn't help but smile when he saw that, and Ark gave a weird glance at the jumping dog; his gaze was filled with curiosity.

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The same day evening, Lei Yan City, Leon Empire;

In the streets of the seventh biggest city of the Leon Empire, roughly two dozen corpses were lying on the ground, some of them had their heads cut off away, some were mere stabs in the necks or in the chest, and some had several cuts all over the body, and some turned into dried flesh.

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The City Lord was in fear, with his trusted subordinate of 7-circle realm cultivation shielding him, as an old witch with a staff was slowly advancing toward him with a creepy smile.

However, she wasn't the one who the city lord and his bodyguard were afraid of. It is the hooded woman standing beside with a scimitar in her hand. Under the hood, her face was emotionless and her steps were steady, as if she had no intention to move.

"We don't have any personal enmity, senior. If you show me mercy, I'll pay compensation two times the amount you were commissioned with," The City Lord pleaded with a roar.

The old witch let out a chuckle, "Sorry, but the client promised us something more valuable than your pitiful money. You should die. Surrender to your fate and you will die without much pain. Resist and you will receive a death worse than your servants."

The City Lord's eyes couldn't help but wander the streets to glance at the corpses once again. He gulped his saliva.

"Lord Yi, I will stop them here. Take the chance to escape," said the bodyguard as he took another pill to stabilize his cultivation. He wasn't originally a 7-circle realm expert. He was a 6-circle realm expert who took a high-quality augmentation pill to raise it temporarily. He had two of them.

Taking another one will not help him much but it will give him some more time to maintain the realm. Once its effects are over, he is going to become so weak from double consumption that even a kid could kill him.

Yi Caijun knew it but he couldn't bear to leave his best friend, whom he had grown up with, to die. At the same time, there is no guarantee that he will live either. As a last resort, he took out the family inheritance and threw it to the ground, "How about take it and leave us alone? Announce to your client that we were killed. We will be leaving this city... No, this Empire, and never to return."

Snap

"Tch, so noisy..." The old witch snapped her fingers, in response to his deal. Suddenly, vines erupted from the ground and captured them, absorbing their life force. "Puppet, go..." She ordered the hooded woman, simultaneously.

The woman charged forward and swung down the sword at their necks, not giving them any time to even defend themselves.

As both of their heads rolled on the ground, the hooded expert returned the scimitar back to its sheath, returning to her master with a single leap.

The witch then slowly walked forward and picked up a double-sided mirror, "Foolish human. I can get the Mirror of Truth after killing him too. Why would I spare him and risk my reputation?"

After observing it for a while, she poured her ether energy into it and aimed toward the hooded expert. The latter stood there, without moving an inch.

As one side of the mirror emitted rays of light and shined upon the target, the other side displayed a metallic robot. "Hmm, she wasn't a human who died. She was a lifeless puppet who was probably discarded by its owner." Her smile grew further as she gazed at the hooded woman once again, "This makes it even more perfect to use for assassinations.

Anyway, let's continue." She took out a scroll and opened it, revealing several names on the list. Almost all of them were struck off. She struck off the name Yi Caijun's name with a tiny beam of ether energy from her finger.

As soon as his name has been cut off, another name is revealed at the bottom of the scroll, "Shi En? The successor to the Nuwa Church's Supreme Pontiff? This is going to be troublesome" She furrowed his brows.

"Didn't he sever his ties with the royal family? Why does the prince want him dead? Was he worried that the prince would return to the family and claim the throne? Well, he is in the direct line of the previous emperor. In theory, he does have the right... Oh, well... we can't question his intentions. According to the deal, I promised to kill 50 of them.

And so far, I have killed 48. Once I kill him and then the next, who might even be that old Emperor or another prince in competition, I will finally get that Amon Scroll's last fragment. Once I finish collecting the pieces, I will be able to summon Amon and form the contract. I'll be invincible then. Not even those demigods from Western Moon will be my match."

Chapter 575: A.I. controlled beasts

Three days later;

At an unnamed island;

"3, 2, 1..."

Boom

A missile was shot from the sky, aiming at the Black Tortoise that is suppressed to stay still by the Gravity Dome.

Of course, the effects of the Gravity Dome were also on the missile. But, unlike the beast, the missile didn't slow down but had its speed increased a thousandfold.

The majestic black tortoise couldn't even conjure up its shield and helplessly stared at the missile that fell on it and its siblings.

As the missile struck the island, the antimatter injected into it released into the surroundings, causing a huge explosion, enough to sink down the entire 1 sq. km of the island into the ocean.

As the Holy beast was drowned in the ocean, Mark came out from the divine throne, which was now in the shape of a huge flying ship in the sky with a missile defense system and a missile launcher mounted on top of it.

He stared down at the body of water and raised his hand, "Release."

The Gravity effects in the surroundings became normal and the beasts slowly floated to the air.

"Mas...ter..." The Black tortoise's pitiful call echoed in the surroundings as its head came out of the water, its gaze was on its favorite human who probably met them only ten times so far in the past year, only to push them to death when met again after a long time, "It doesn't work. We Holy beasts need the offering of a demigod realm's divine or a demonic beast's heart to breakthrough."

Mark put his hands behind his back, exuding the air of a demigod that people describe in the books, as he replied, "That could be one of the ways, but it doesn't mean it is the only way. From my experience, what I learned is that you could make a breakthrough if you touch the death door. So, try to live while I try to kill you. You'll become a demigod realm beast within no time."

"Mas...ter..." As it once again pitifully looked at Mark, the latter stretched his hands toward it and unleashed another skill.

"Attraction"

A large amount of suction force erupted from his palms, pulling the majestic beast to the sky.

"Ahhh..."

The one with an all-seeing eye, who taught many junior deities in its past life, has now ended up under the mercy of Mark. As it reached its master, a box hit on its head and it flew down hundreds of meters once again and crashed into the waters. It fainted right away.

After a while, as it gained consciousness, the Black Tortoise received a few more rounds of beating to the point of losing its consciousness once again.

Until the evening, this repeated 18 times to be exact but it never showed hostility even on one occasion, despite the fact that Mark never activated his titles of either "Absolute Authority" or "Master of Holy Beasts", both of which give him complete control over them.

Once the sun had set down and the Black Tortoise woke up for the 19th time, expecting to be beaten down once again, it found itself levitating, being carried away into the facility it was familiar with but never stepped inside.

When it entered, the Black Tortoise found its three siblings being tied up on the ground with normal ropes; two of them seemed to be unconscious while the Azure Dragon was struggling to move, flapping its legs and arms uncontrollably but still couldn't break the ordinary-looking ropes for some reason.

Meanwhile, a few high-ranking robots are using various divine weapons (Mythril-grade swords and spears) given by Mark to tear the dragon scales apart.

"Relax, Qing Long, it is just going to be fine. Bear with the pain and you will achieve the breakthrough," said Mark as he walked forward at a steady pace.

"Gra..." "Graaa..." "Graaa..." The dragon continued to roar, pleading with him to free it. But, Mark turned a deaf ear to it and went past it, placing the tortoise on the floor before the robots rushed forward and tied it up with large and thick ropes, which were tied to a heavy steel bar on the side.

Once it was tied up, Mark then placed his arm on one of the ropes that tied its shell and the body.

"Density Manipulation, 1000 times."

Each of the rope and the steel bar had its density increased by 1000 times and the holy beasts' cultivation was brutally suppressed by the factory. However, Xuan Wu has incredible physical strength, especially its hard shell that could even take the attack of an immortal. So, Mark wasn't confident.

Fortunately, his beatings made it completely obedient to the point that Mark wondered whether he should have done the same thing to the Azure Dragon too.

As it lay there lifelessly as if it was implying that it didn't care anymore, Mark observed its shell and knocked on it a few times, speaking out loud, "Ark Prime, does it only work if it was implanted in the chest? Can we implant it in its head, you know, integrating it with its brain instead of the heart? Its shell is a lot sturdier than those scales of Qing long."

The robot supervising the vitals of the dragon replied, "It can be possible, Master, but it will be a complicated surgery. Any mistake will cause permanent damage to the brain, ending up brain dead and living as a nonliving thing for eternity. It is not easy to revive the brain, unlike the heart. Moreover, there is a moderate risk of amnesia and a high risk of losing intelligence.

You will turn a Sage into a fool."

The Black Tortoise didn't know what they were planning but the robot's words caused a shiver all over its body, "ma... master, I... I can remove the shell." It forced out its words in a shaking voice.

It doesn't fear death but fears losing of its extensive knowledge of the cosmos, which it was proud of. Moreover, since it always retains the abilities and the memories it had in past life, Xuan Wu will not retain its knowledge if it loses now.

"You can remove the shell?" Mark always thought that the shell was a part of a tortoise. So, he never considered such a possibility.

"Yes, I... I can transform it into a huge dome to protect the area, but I cannot use it with the suppression on me."

"Hmm..."

Mark thought for a bit and gave a nod, "Fine, we'll do your operation, outside the facility. Ark Secundus, you follow me." "Yes, Sir."

Azure Dragon's eyes widened when it heard him and it tried to protest, "No... this is unfa... Argh..."

Little did it know that outside the facility, as Black Tortoise removed its shield and transformed into a giant barrier that covered its 500-meter surroundings, the Gravitational force descended upon its thin and weak body, almost crushing its bones before it turned upside down and had its interior skin cut by a laser beam by a robot.

This robot is called Ark Secundus, the second robot where the A.I. core was installed, but with inheriting the Gravity powers from him.

Using its elemental and Ark's connection with Mark, this robot managed to stay unaffected by the Gravity Dome and calmly operated on the vulnerable Black Tortoise, which had even louder screams than the dragon.

But, its resistance is a bare minimum and so was its defense. Hence, it didn't take long for the robot to finish its surgery, successfully implanting the A.I. core into the body of Xuan Wu.

Once the operation is finished, Mark removed the gravity dome and resummoned the divine throne from his inventory, using its ability of Divine Healing to heal its external wound from the surgery and the internal injuries from the Gravity Dome altogether.

*Ding! Integration has been successful. Proceeding to dismiss the skill.

Xuan Wu, for the first time, heard a voice in its head that it didn't recognize, but it didn't feel hostile toward it. The beast doesn't know why but it just trusted the voice on its intuition and let it control its body.

Probably the main reason is that Ark's main body and Mark were connected while Mark and Xuan Wu are connected by contract.

The Black Tortoise's appearance was restored and eventually, it has also gone into a deep state of sleep as the rest of them.

Seeing that everything went smoothly, Mark let out a sigh of relief as he stared at the beast, "Beating it to the death over and over made it less stubborn and become more obedient. I thought it would be the hardest to handle because of its arrogance over its knowledge and stubbornness over its decision, but it looks like beasts are certainly different.

According to the glossary left behind by the system, my Primeval bloodline did have an enormous effect on lower bloodlines. Only Primordials could resist it.

Anyway, the first step is done. Now, once the dragon is also operated, I can move on to the next step, Neural Synchronization, and a forceful breakthrough."

Chapter 576: Mark and Song Yue's intimate moment

Leaving the rest of the tasks to Ark Prime, Mark left the island and traveled to the island of Yong, around 130 kilometers away from the factory, which was usually inhabited by the giant anaconda king, Yong.

But, right now, apart from the serpent beast, there was also a wooden house built near the beach of the island. It was a simple wooden cottage built on top of sturdy, featuring a wooden structure with a sloped roof and large windows that let in plenty of natural light.

He climbed the staircase and entered the house, revealing a cozy living area attached to a small kitchen and two bedrooms with minimum furniture.

"Bah Bah..."

A pleasing voice entered Mark's ears as soon as he put away his footwear. As his head turned aside, his eyes fell upon a baby crawling toward him with a wide smile on his face. "Bah bah..." .net

Mark's face instantly bloomed into happiness as he crouched with his arms stretched forward, "Shan Shan." As the two-month-old baby, who was supposed to be still in a crib, crawling as fast as a spider, a voice came from the kitchen with a commanding tone, "What do you think you are doing, Markie?" It was quite chilling in Mark's ears; he was frozen on the spot. "Lu Shan, come here now." The baby was frozen in his footsteps and quickly turned around, crawling back to the kitchen at the same pace as earlier.

Soon, Song Yue came out with a paddle in one hand while carrying the baby through her other arm; her face looked serious as she looked at her husband, "You stink with blood, gun power, fish, and other unpleasant things. Do you want Shan Shan to get sick or something? Go and fresh up first." Once she said what she wanted to, she turned around and returned to the kitchen.

"Um..." Mark was slightly disappointed by her behavior but he hung down his head and let out a sigh, going straight into the bathroom for the shower.

Once he freshened up and went to the kitchen, he saw she was busy cooking with the baby sitting on the floor and playing with the toys.

"Bah Bah..." Lu Shan's eyes lit up once again and rushed one more time. This time, Song Yue didn't react and let Mark pick him up and carry him in his arms, taking him back to the living room and started playing with him.

Song Yue stood there before the gas stove and increased her grip on the wooden paddle so that it almost snapped it into two. "This man doesn't even give atten..."

About ten minutes later, Mark slowly carried little Lu Shan into the bedroom and carefully placed him in the cradle, making sure not to wake him up. The rank-10 robot was given the task of gently swinging the cradle.

Mark then slowly stepped outside the bedroom and walked into the kitchen, where Song Yue was seen using a broken paddle to stir the soup. He hastened his footsteps and suddenly hugged her behind, "Schatz..."

"Ah..." She blushed a little bit but swatted his arms on her waist, clicking her tongue in expressing her displeasure outwardly; although, her heartbeat rose a little bit from happiness, "Don't touch me."

Mark slightly loosed his arms and said, "C'mon, you are still angry?"

"Do you expect me to be jumping in joy?" She snapped at him. "It wasn't enough that you imprisoned us here in the name of protection and now you have gone for 36 hours straight."

"Uhh... well, honestly, I lost track of time yesterday. But, I won't give you any excuses that will turn your mood worse. How about something positive instead? Want to hear some good news?"

"What is it? Your wedding date is finalized?" Song Yue asked in a sarcastic tone.

"Well, yes, but that's not the good news part that I'm going to tell you."

"Then?"

"My work is almost done here. We will leave by tomorrow noon"

"Really?" Song Yue abruptly turned around to find Mark's face just an inch away from her. As their eyes met each other, her face turned beet red and she hurriedly looked away, "So soon? I mean you said it will take atleast another week or two."

"You are the one who was angry with me for the past week, blackmailing me to return you back home or else you won't even let me touch you. I had to take shortcuts and worked nonstop for 36 hours without any sleep, at the factory," Mark shrugged his shoulder before tightening his grip over her waist to pull her closer to him and whispered, "I think I deserve a reward, don't you think?"

"Not... not now. I need to cook," Song Yue tried to turn around, but this time, Mark's grip was tight and didn't let her go, leaning his face forward and playfully pinched her lips, "the soup won't get bad if it cooks for another half an hour unsupervised. So, I was wondering... should we give a sibling to Shan Shan..."

"No... no way, I'm letting you. He's already troublesome enough to deal with," While Song Yue firmly refused to get pregnant once again, Mark didn't react much and just whispered, "Not a problem, I'll pull it out in time."

"You... sh... shameless..." Song Yue's embarrassment increased because of the dirty talk from her husband, "The sun has just gone down and I..." She tried to stop him but couldn't stop herself as Mark went on kissing her neck and caressing her body. Perhaps, due to the significant gap, she only got more aroused as time slowly ticked by.

Within no time, both of them were naked in the other bedroom, enjoying their time on the mattress. But, the moment didn't last for even ten minutes as they were interrupted by the baby's cries. Song Yue hurriedly dressed up and went to the master bedroom to handle Lu Shan's crying while Mark banged his head against the mattress with a defeated expression with an imaginary chibi inside his head that was having animated tears, "Ugh... After six weeks, we got an opportunity again and that was gone in a poof... No matter, she was no longer angry at me and I should be content with it, for now. I'm tired. Let's take some rest."

The next day morning, at Fujian Island;

Outside of the facility, the four holy beasts, almost in a collapsed state and struggling to get up; all were enveloped by a layer of their respective attribute energies but their eyes seemed blank as if they were in a state of trance.

Mark patiently waited in the sky, staring down at them, as 500 times the gravity mercilessly pulled down his contracted beasts.

It lasted for three hours until a beam of light erupted from the dragon's head, shooting to the heavens as it let out a powerful roar.

*Ding! Qing Long has reached Rank-10, Master.

A notification arrived to Mark, bringing a smile to his face, "Good."

The Azure Dragon came back to its senses as it stood straight against gravity and stretched its wings. It tried to fly but couldn't at the moment. Hence, it stared at its master and then spared a glance at its siblings in trance.

Not long after the notification, similar scenes occurred one after another.

Roar

*Ding! Bai Hu has reached Rank-10, Master.

Screech

*Ding! Zhu Que has reached Rank-10, Master.

Rustle

*Ding! Xuan Wu has reached Rank-10, Master.

As the last one also made its breakthrough, Mark finally removed the Gravity Dome and slowly descended to the island.

A blinding flash of light enveloped each of them, transforming into humanoid forms at the same time. However, except for one, none even looked remotely like a human as Zheng used to be.

The Azure Dragon, Qing Long, transformed into a little boy with bluish scales covering his entire body, except for his face, and he had long green hair that was touching the ground. He also had dragon wings on his back.

The White Tiger, Bai Hu, also transformed into a little boy with pale white skin and messy white hair with black streaks, whiskers protruding from his cheeks, ears resembling a cat, and a tail growing from the back.

The Black Tortoise's appearance was even weirder. Its humanoid body had the scales of a serpent while its face looked like a mixture of a male and a female. If seen from the left side, its face will look like a little girl. But, if seen from the right side, one would think it is a little boy.

The Vermilion Bird, Zhu Que, on the other hand, transformed into a little girl with long scarlet hair, although with feathery wings in the back.

Mark threw sets of robes and tunics for them to cover up themselves. He prepared it beforehand, knowing that they would have kid forms when they transformed. How did he know about it? Well, he experienced it with the golden kitten, he had the Zheng, and a beast-taming book that his sister gave him on his engagement ceremony, back then.

The rest of the three obeyed it while feeling uncomfortable in clothes, but the Azure Dragon protested while looking at them in his hands, "Master, what about my wings? I can't retract them back into my body, like Sister Zhu Que. I want custom-made."

"Tch, just make holes in the back and fit them," Mark clicked his tongue, making an ugly expression of annoyance. The Azure Dragon was always a rebellious kid, complaining when he stayed at the island in isolation, complaining when he was forced to hunt down the wild flying beasts in the sky at 10km altitude, resisting his best when it was operated on, and complaining about its freedom of thought when the A.I. took over its conscious for a forced breakthrough, etc...

Chapter 577: A summon from Mark (part-1)

The Night before Mark's departure from Yong Island

Helios City, Eastern Sun Kingdom;

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It was late in the evening.

The King of Ouyang Dynasty, 13-year-old Ouyang Zen was seen in the palace grounds, with a sniping rifle in his hand and lying on an elevated wooden platform. Lan Jing, the eight-circle realm expert, his prime minister as well as his guardian, was standing beside him with his hands to the back. Both of their gazes are on the same thing, a wooden target in the shape of a man located roughly about two hundred meters away and barely visible to the naked eye under the moonlight.

The one that Ouyang Zen was carrying had its scope as well as its laser sight missing, more like removed away on purpose. Hence, this king was entirely dependent on his eyesight as he aimed at the target.

Apart from them, there are a few knights stationed around but they aren't much focused on what their king is doing. For them, he was spending his leisure time on some kind of weird hobby. Their King seemed to have an obsession with firearms and their ammunition, which he procured a lot but most of the stock would be sent to the Special Naval troops that operate those three warships and constantly patrolling the sea.

Of course, as the prized warriors of the kingdom who honed their skills for a long time, they naturally look down on those who use firearms, terming them as weak.

Bang

A loud sound erupted from the rifle and Ouyang Zen's arm vibrated a little bit for the nth time as a bullet escaped the barrel and cut through the air at subsonic speeds.

Ouyang Zen narrowed his eyes, focusing on the target. He saw a hole appeared right on the face.

He clapped with a smile, "Your Majesty, your aim is once again up to the mark. You shot the left eye of the enemy."

However, Ouyang Zen responded with a click of his tongue, "Tch, it is a bad shot, Lan Jing. I aimed for the forehead."

'This kid's only flaw is his obsession for perfection whenever he starts something,' Ouyang Zen took a meaningful glance at the boy for a second and inwardly sighed before stating, "You were not using those two things, even in such an environment. Umm... what were called again? Yeah, the Laser Sight and rifle scope. So, I guess the reduction of effectiveness can be understood."

"There is a difference between being difficult and impossible, Lan Jing," replied the teenage King, inserting another bullet into the rifle. Aiming at the target once again while pouring his ether energy into his hands, he said, "I aim to turn difficult into easy, not the impossible into possible. And I'm sure that this doesn't come under the impossible category."

Bang

Another bullet was fired, followed by his words. This time, due to the layer of ether energy covering his hands, they were steady.

"Umm... The enemy escaped," said Lan Jing in a low tone. As he took a glance at the king, he saw the teenager was smiling. It was in contrast with his earlier expression even when it was a lethal shot. After a brief pause, he couldn't help but ask, "Your Majesty, did you miss it on purpose?"

Ouyang Zen got up and pointed his finger to the front, "Nope, I did hit the target. Go and take a closer look at the target."

"Hmm?"

Lan Jing took another look at the human-shaped target. His eyes wandered all over the place but didn't find any other damage.

But, seeing a confident expression on the King, the eight-circle-realm expert had to fly toward it and take a closer look.

It was there he found something that didn't exist before. The earlier hole wasn't as uniform as before. It was slightly extended to the right.

"This..." He touched the spot and turned his head to look at the teenager who turned around to walk away, "He aimed for the eye? The Kid really was born to wield that long firearm."

He quickly caught up to the king and walked with him, praising his skills on the way.

He intended to escort him to the King's chamber before taking his leave, but on the way, they were stopped by a Knight Captain, who informed them that an envoy representing Genesis Enterprises wished to meet him urgently. He added that the envoy was the elf of Western Moon.

As soon as they heard that it was the elf, Ouyang Zen and Lan Jing quickly changed their paths to the throne hall, which is usually reserved for urgent meetings with distinguished guests or ministers or messengers who want to speak privately.

As they entered the place, they saw Sylvandria waiting for them, silently standing alone in the middle of the room.

"Greetings, Your Grace," Lan Jing cupped his fists and bowed to the figure. Ouyang Zen also followed the suit. After all, it was a demigod standing in front of him.

Sylvandria smiled as she waved her hand, "You are the ruler of this land, King Ouyang. You shouldn't bow to anyone on your land, not before a demigod or even an immortal. It is quite disrespectful to your ancestors." Her tone was calm but pleasing to their ears at the same time.

Ouyang Zen replied confidently, "Your existence indirectly protects our land from any direct foreign invasion, Your Grace. A protector deserves proper respect from the King, on behalf of his people. I'm doing exactly the same."

Sylvandria's eyes momentarily widened in surprise before she observed the teenage King for a couple of seconds and gave a nod, "You have a good temperament for your age, King Ouyang. I believe with the right guidance, you will be a good ruler; at the very least, enough for your descendants to be proud of their ancestor."

"Thank you for the praise," Ouyang Zen cupped his fists, maintaining a respectful tone.

Sylvandria then told him to take his seat, the throne. Once he sat down, she took her seat and spoke, "Lu Zhen tasked me with a message to each of you. He didn't explicitly say that the message to Lan Jing had to be spoken privately, but if you wish, I will do that too."

Lan Jing glanced at the teenage King from the corner of his eyes and shook his head, "It is alright. There is no secret that I wish to keep from His Majesty."

Sylvandria nodded, "I understand. First, I will pass the message directed to you."

"In a few months of time, I (Lu Zhen) intend to return to the Lan Clan and claim my heirship. Finish your things at Eastern Sun and prepare yourself for the departure."

The message came to them like a tsunami, stunning the teenager as well as the old man, for they didn't expect it from Mark.

However, the reactions were quite different from each other. While Ouyang Zen was filled with shock and disappointment, Lan Jing was filled with happiness. He couldn't stop himself from getting up from his seat, asking Sylvandria for confirmation that he heard it correctly, "Really? Xiao Zhen finally decided to return home. It is indeed a great piece of news."

"I'm not finished yet, Lan Jing," Sylvandria suddenly snapped at him, feeling that he was disrespectful to interrupt the message.

"Ah, Sorry."

Chapter 578: A summon from Mark (part-2)

As Lan Jing apologized and sat back, Sylvandria continued, "Secondly, I (Lu Zhen) am going to resurrect the Lan Sect. Over the past few months, many techniques were compiled into a book by Mother (Lan Jingyi) and Fu Sheng (Eol). I want you to become a temporary elder of the sect and gather prospective disciples in

whatever way you can. I also need you to announce to the world that the betrayers will be forgiven if they return to Mt. Ku and help you in the revival of the sect. That is my condition to help you back into the clan."

The first part of the message made it seem like he could fly to heaven but the second part of the message put a mountain on his head, increasing the burden.

As a result, Lan Jing became silent, going into deep thinking. He knew how difficult the task was. Lan Jingyi hates him very much to work with him. Fu Sheng, another disciple from the clan, was the army commander who had to take care of the Alliance's security. He won't have time to work with him either.

Lu Zhen (Mark) might be the grandson of his brother but he doesn't know a thing about Lan Clan's techniques and Lan Jing highly doubt whether his grand nephew would even be willing to learn them as he had gotten strong enough to even kill demigods. Discover exclusive tales at [m,v--NovelBin.net](http://m.v--NovelBin.net)

Hence, he had to do it alone.

As for the betrayers, the ones he knew were all respected figures at different sects and scattered all over the world. He was sure that they wouldn't return and it wouldn't be easier for him to track them down too. While the task only said that he had to announce, it was also indirectly asking him to bring them to the sect, even if he had to use violence.

Adding on top of that, he also had to take care of Eastern Sun. He had to make sure the Ouyang Dynasty would stay secure even after he was gone.

There's too much work and it made him wonder whether it is worth returning home, where he might not be welcomed by his clansmen even after being forgiven.

Leaving Lan Jing in dilemma, Sylvandria then turned her attention to the young king, who was still pondering on how to deal with the consequences, "King Ouyang, the message for you is not that complicated. You have to depart from this place right away with me and reach Lunaris City by morning. Lu Zhen is going to announce something big and he needs all the members of United Celestial Dominion must attend it."

"Eh?" "Huh?"

Her message was probably also shocking enough for Lan Jing that it brought him out of his thinking about his own headache and focus on it. "Right away? What is it that Xiao Zhen wants to announce?" he couldn't help but ask.

Ouyang Zen also expectedly looked at the elf.

But, both of them only received disappointment.

Sylvandria shook her head, "I'm not aware. But, based on the events that transpired lately, I believe it could be the announcement of the launch of a new firearm, one that could destroy the balance of powers in the world. He would probably offer it to the alliance in exchange for something." She gazed at the teenager in a

serious manner and continued, "King Ouyang, I'm really not sure what's going on in Lu Zhen's mind, but the series of incidents that happened over the past few months indicate that very soon, this world will be embroiled into chaos. During the past three months, two beasts emerged from the ocean and made breakthroughs in the demigod realm. Now, they have taken over White Tiger Continent/Beast Empire completely. Everyone suspects 'Kun' is behind it and we all know the reason, to maintain the balance of powers. Today morning, there was another incident occurred in the ocean but it even blocked my perception. I don't know what happened this time, possibly the Kun has broken through to the immortal realm. No one knows. People are not aware that Lu Zhen's presence indirectly prevented many things across the continent, because no one could gauge his powers or perceive his thoughts. But, once he is gone, everyone with their schemes will come out, especially the ancient sects and dark organizations. If I were you, I'd be prepared for the worst."

For a while, silence filled the room as Ouyang Zen and Lan Jing were busy digesting Sylvandria's words.

*

Meanwhile, in the Qilin Empire's Royal City;

"So, if I were you, I'd be prepared for the worst..."

Similar words were spouted in front of the Ming Dynasty's Emperor. Surprisingly, Sylvandria was here too. The conversation between her and Ming Xianzhi went almost exactly the same as with Ouyang Zen.

But, the response from them was quite different from each other.

While Ouyang Zen quietly took her warning to heart and listened to Mark's request/order, Ming Xianzhi neither took her seriously nor followed her to Western Moon.

Of course, it isn't that he is not afraid of offending a demigod or something. If he isn't afraid of such existence, there is no way he would seek membership in the alliance and even go as far as forming a relationship with Western Yan through a marriage alliance or paying a significant portion of taxes in exchange for the protection.

He promised to be at Lunaris City by morning but did not follow her as he was asked, as he could use a special teleportation formation recently built between his palace and the temples at Western Moon's palace and Western Yan's Church of Nuwa's cathedral. As for the other three (Northern and Southern Phoenix, Eastern Sun), the constructions are in place but not completed.

As it is merely a prototype, its functions are currently limited. First of all, it is currently a one-person travel. Secondly, it takes a tremendous amount of ether crystals to use these teleportation formations. Last but not least, it only works when the formation is opened from both sides.

Since he had no direct contact with Shen Niu (communication scroll), Ming Xianzhi had to send one of his generals, Wu Shi, to follow the demigod elf's clone to Lunaris City with a letter.

As for why he didn't heed her warning, only he knows.

*

Feng City, Western Yan;

In one of the alleys of Feng City, the witch and its puppet were seen hiding in the darkness; the old woman had her breath suppressed to the point that she seemed lifeless.

Above the buildings, a golden dragon soared in the sky, amidst rain and thunder.

As it disappeared from their sight, the old witch finally exited the alley and let out a heavy breath, sighing in relief, "Finally, we got rid of that dragon. Things aren't easy here. Publicly, the dragon is on the side of the royal family, but we don't know its relationship with Shi En. It would be best if I could divert its attention elsewhere while I take care of the target. But, before that, I have to confirm his current location. Intruding into the cathedral is not easy. Not to mention, the defensive spell inside that will suppress my cultivation. Perhaps, I could draw him out instead. Hmm..."

Chapter 579: Prelude to the war (part-1)

It was unlike any other day in the City of Lunaris.

All the citizens of the city were given a mandatory work leave. Some of them filled the arena; some of them were chilling inside their homes, and the remaining came to the royal road that connects the palace to one of the city gates, stretching for around 12km in length.

Almost one-third forces of the kingdom, i.e. Fifty thousand soldiers, were deployed to block the entire concrete road. They stood on either side of the road, blocking everything.

But, most importantly, at the City Gate, a hundred-soldier unit led by their commander, Eol/Fu Sheng, was seen standing in a large group with their gazes on the front. The Kingdom's General with a couple of his lieutenants was also seen alongside them, instead of staying beside their King.

Commander Eol, who was in possession of Fu Sheng's body ever since the latter died, raised his head to look at the clouds, "I can sense that vehicle's presence." His lips widened a little bit and a mumble escaped from his mouth, "It is almost time. Hmm... there it is..."

Soon, the scary-looking black spider ship appeared in the view and the general immediately shouted, "Chancellor Lu is here."

As his sword rose above his head, the soldiers in the line raised their swords one after another. Within no time, every soldier deployed there raised their swords, giving the kingdom's sword salute to Mark as the Spidership lowered its altitude to the bare minimum and Mark got out of the spaceship and stood on top of it.

Eol and his hundred soldiers knelt down uniformly and greeted him at the same time, "Zero Squad greets the Supreme Commander."

Under Eol, their name was changed to Zero Squad, which was taken from Mark's previous life. It was the most elite squad of the Federation he was a part of.

Mark stared down at the kneeling commander, "Arise, Eol. You are a demigod. You don't have to kneel down to me."

The subordinates don't understand why the chancellor calls their Sovereign Fu with the name of 'Eol' but they don't dare to voice out their thoughts and continue to do their job.

Eol then got up to his feet and cupped his fists, "You gave a new life to me, Chancellor Lu; not once but twice. You are also the one we swore our loyalty to. As your subordinate, it is my duty to remind everyone who I stand with."

"Ah, yes..." Mark was slightly stumped by his answer but he doesn't want to argue about unnecessary things with this Legendary Hero of the Elven world. "Anyway, what's with this welcome," He shifted his gaze to the general.

The General, who didn't kneel like Eol's army because of his loyalty toward King Shen Niu, answered, "It is His Majesty's Order." He then gestured with his hand to proceed through the road.

"Alright," Mark nodded and then shifted his attention to the demigod, "Eol, join me on the spider ship. Zero Squad will follow from behind, participating in this procession." After giving the order, he glanced at the General, "You don't mind it, right?"

The General shook his head, "If it is Lord Lu's wish, it is not a problem."

"Good, let's go." Mark then gestured for Eol to jump onto the Spidership but Eol responded with a request, "Is it alright if my disciple also joins me on the board."

"You have taken a disciple?" Mark was taken aback at once. Surprise was clearly evident on his face, "When? Who is it?"

"Eh?" Eol was surprised this time, "Did you forget that you are the one who told me to teach her the skills of firearms and Lan sect techniques?"

"Huh? I did it?" Mark was momentarily confused but then, he suddenly remembered the event that happened months ago, "Ah!" His eyes immediately wandered, staring down at the soldiers that stood like statues; well, except for one girl.

The 17-year-old was the only one that raised her head and was looking straight at Mark, for a while. Because of the knight's helmet, one cannot see her face but her actions make her identity almost clear.

As their eyes met, she lowered her head and Mark activated his Eyes of God skill right away, inspecting her details and confirming her identity.

Xie Mei

Status: Suppressed

Race: Human/Celestial

Age: 16

Rank: peak-7-circle (high-8-circle)

Spirit Path: Gunslinger

Attribute: Divine/Lightning/Water

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Bloodline: Griffin

Affiliation: Kun Empire (Former)/Heavenly Domain/Western Moon

Description: Born as a child of a human and a pure celestial from heaven, the girl was born with divine energy and no limiters. She is the disciple of Eol and the appointed successor of Zero Squad. Under her master's teachings, Xie Mei also created a new path for herself, Gunslinger, one that can effortlessly use guns and sword magic in battle.

Note: She seems to have a huge crush on Master. According to the notes left behind by my creator, a child from Xie Mei and Master will be born with the highest potential among mortals in the entire universe.

"Shut up, Ark. Don't need to mention that. Erase that note," Mark was impressed by her data but his mood was spoiled by the cheeky note in the end. He coolly spoke to Eol, "She may join, but only as your disciple, not as my acquaintance."

As long as she has feelings for him, Mark would continue to either ignore her or treat her harshly regardless of how much time it passed.

She got out of the formation and followed her master, climbing up onto the vehicle. Mark didn't even spare a glance at her and looked straight as the Spidership slowly floated in the air and flew above the road, maintaining a very low attitude.

After dropping the ladies at Song Mansion, the spider ship changed its course and went toward the Arena where his invited guests and thousands of citizens were waiting for him, although currently watching Meng Tao challenging an Orthrus, a two-headed giant hound. This fierce grade beast is in the 6-circle realm, and yet, a mere 3-circle realm Spirit Warrior like Meng Tao is looking to tame the beast as both of them were imprisoned inside an energy barrier by the mages.

Of course, due to his affiliation with Genesis Enterprises and Mark, Shen Niu told the mages that conjured the barrier to save him, in case of an accidental misfortune.

Meng Tao was wielding dual firearms, both of them were a handgun.

While both of them are ether weapons, the scarlet ether bullets shot out of them don't have the strength to even graze the beast's skin, but the people are witnessing that a 6-circle beast was being injured by the energy bullets shot by the challenger.

Neither could anyone sense any attribute energy in them nor could anyone sense their attack strength surpassed 2-circle. Yet, Meng Tao was seen injuring it.

As the two-headed giant hound chased after him, Meng Tao kept his distance and shot a couple of bullets, each from the gun, and focused on running away for the next 30 seconds.

This pattern when repeated for at least 12 minutes, the experts drew out their own conclusions, although none could decipher the true trick behind the success.

By the time the Spidership reached the skies above the arena, Meng Tao's battle looked like it was coming to an end. Hence, Mark didn't disturb his moment and quietly watched in the screens alongside his companions, with Eol's invisibility spell covering the vehicle's presence.

Chapter 580: Prelude to the war (part-2)

The two-headed hound was filled with bullet wounds all over its body and its movements slowed down a lot, but its fierceness only grew more and more as time passed away.

However, Meng Tao kept his cool and calmly handled it, using its anger against itself and continuously wounding it further while trying his best to keep his distance.

Eventually, the beast reached its limit and collapsed on the field, midway, and Meng Tao immediately took out the taming scroll and placed it on the ground, pushing his palms on it.

"Activate"

As his ether energy flew into the scroll, the runes drawn on it activated and released magenta-colored energy chains, which shot out toward their target like a bullet and tightly grabbed the beast.

The beast resisted a bit but eventually, it let the spell reach its soul, binding it with his former enemy.

Once the chains disappeared, the two-headed beast, with great difficulty, rose to its feet and looked at Meng Tao, and bowed, letting out a whimper of submission.

As Meng Tao raised one of the guns and stretched above his head with a smile on his face, the crowd erupted in cheers.

"Kuai Qiang" "Kuai Qiang" "Kuai Qiang" "Kuai Qiang" "Kuai Qiang"

In the sky above the arena, Mark, who was observing the battle was more baffled by the cheers. He couldn't help but mumble, "Kuai Qiang? When did this guy change his name?"

Eol, who was standing beside him, said, "Kuai Qiang (Fast shooter) is quite a befitting title for this fellow, Chancellor Lu."

"Oh, I thought that it was something else..." Mark looked away in slight embarrassment and replied, "**Ahem* Well, I too never expected him to draw out its power and use it in firearms. I guess whether it is the sword or a gun, they are nothing more than a tool to bring out one's ether energy and add transformation."

"You mean the Qilin?" Eol raised his eyebrow. His tone changed slightly.

Mark looked at him and said, "You don't need to hate the thing that doesn't concern you, Eol."

Eol was taken aback, but then shook his head with a sigh, "I'm sorry, can't help it. I have these memories stored in my head." After a brief pause, he added, "No matter how I think, the incident was quite suspicious. The Qilin was supposed to be an auspicious and benevolent beast. How could it cause unnecessary destruction?"

Mark nodded, "Yeah, I know. There is indeed someone behind the scenes. But, then again, there's no use in pondering on the matter that ended long ago. Not to mention, Meng Tao's Qilin doesn't remember anything. Or, it's what it claims."

"Uhh... Lu Zhen..." Xie Mei joined in the conversation after mild hesitation, "Is it that same Qilin that I think it is?"

Mark glanced at her from the corner of his eyes, "Yeah, so?"

Xie Mei averted her gaze and slowly said, "Nothing. It's just that I never thought that someone like Meng Tao had such power. I mean it is a beast emperor, you know."

"Isn't a beast Emperor a puny mortal in the end? What's so special about them?" A scoff escaped from behind her, giving chills to her for a second.

"Brother Qing, choose your words carefully."

"I beg to differ, Brother Qing. Apart from the fact that we live for eternity, there is not much of difference in our strength."

"Hmpf, Brother Xuan, you think that way because your abilities lie in the water. Once you are out of your habitat, you have to depend on your shield and precognition. But, I'm different. I can easily tear apart those puny beast emperors with these claws of mine."

"Ha... it's useless to talk with a half-wit, Sister Xuan."

"It's not true, Sister Zhu. As the wise, we have the duty to help the ignorants."

"Ugh... these noisy individuals. Let me sleep in peace for a while. *Roar*"

"Half-wit? You... You dare... I challenge you to a battle, Brother Xuan"

"I refuse..."

"That's good. Wait... what... You coward. *Graaa*"

"Oh, shut up all of you..." Mark couldn't hold back himself anymore as his ears rang with vibrations of their rants.

His command returned the silence to the Spidership and Xie Mei stared at him with her beaming eyes, "Wow, my husband is the best."

Meanwhile, in the field, after the barrier was removed by the mages, a couple of healers rushed toward the beast on the orders of their King, healing its wounds and bringing it back to its peak state once again.

Once they were done with their treatment, Meng Tao took a leap and landed on its back, addressing the audience or more specifically at one person, "Since there is still time for my master's arrival, I wonder if Venerable Song would grace us with his presence and have a spar with me and let me test how stronger have I gotten." He cupped his fists and bowed as several glances shifted to the VIP sections.

In the VIP section, King Shen Niu frowned at his challenge, "What the hell this brat intends to do right now?"

"He is challenging Venerable Song? Is he out of his mind?"

"Venerable Song? Who is he?" "Fool, you don't know who he is? The Supreme realm expert on Emperor Shang's side."

"A mere 3-circle wants to challenge Song Tai? He will die in a second even with Orthrus beast on his side."
"Not necessarily, brother. Shen She is 'His' servant and Song Tai is loyal to Emperor Shang Fu, who is 'His' father. He might play along."

Various whispers and murmurs filled the entire arena but there was no reaction from the man in question. He quietly stared at the young man while stroking his beard as if he was pondering on how to deal with him.

It was then a man flew from the stands and landed in the arena. Everyone saw the man in white robes and hood erect a hexagonal barrier through the smoke he breathed out of the smoking pipe, covering a wide area with the power of the Exalt realm (7-circle).

The knights and the mages deployed there were ready to act but they didn't make a move as the stranger lowered down his hood, revealing to be a familiar figure.

As he walked toward Meng Tao, he calmly spoke, "Venerable Song is a royal guest of the kingdom. Asking him to spar with you is like you are insulting him. We don't want people to think that our Lunaris is inhospitable, right?"

Meng Tao developed a frown on his face as he looked at the person, "It seems like you want to spar with me, Your Highness."

"Please, I'm no longer attached to the royal palace. You don't need to call me that," replied the white-robed old man. He piped out a puff of smoke and added, "Moreover, we are acquaintances, aren't we? You can just address me as Old Mister as you always had."

Meng Tao's frown deepened, "Regardless of your detachment to the affairs of the kingdom, Your Highness is still the beloved elder uncle of His Majesty. Touching you is the same as offending the throne. That is why I have never implicated you when you tried to kill my friend. The hatred I have for you is deep enough to kill you if we spar, which will displease my master too. So, I don't think this spar is a wise decision. Please return, Your Highness, before I regret it."

The entire arena went silent, listening to their conversation. Naturally, it brought mostly negative reactions from the people, against the royal family. Most of the citizens thought that the royals didn't change and did as they wished, without any regard for the lives of commoners.

The elite individuals, on the other hand, thought differently.

Some of them wondered whether this old man was tired of living by hurting a servant of the one who is rumored to be the strongest man in the world.

Others opinioned that the strong takes what they want. This is the basic rule of the world and the weak cannot do anything about it but complain.

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Piping up another puff of smoke, Shen Li let out a chuckle, "Let me correct your allegation a bit. I didn't try to kill your friend. I merely absorbed his life force to feed my weapon. Look, he is doing well right now, and I also compensated him with the money. So, your hatred is unwarranted."

After a brief pause, he continued, "Anyways, let bygones be bygones. No use in arguing about it. The reason I'm here is to scout you. I have been gathering individuals like you, who weren't blessed with potential in cultivation but incredibly talented in using firearms, to create a sect. How about it? If you join me, I will give you the position of an elder. With me backing the sect financially, there is no need to worry about the weapons."

In the Spidership floating in the sky in an invisible state, Mark heard them and he furrowed his brows in displeasure, "This man not only tried to kill Chang Bo and now even daring to steal Meng Tao? It looks like even weaklings think I have gone soft..."