

Seller 591

Chapter 591: Alina arrives at Genesis City

After her core was extracted, her physical body was possessed two times. The First time, the Necromancy King performed a forbidden ritual on her and made him his undead general, and the second time, it was the old witch who used witchcraft and used her as her battle puppet.

The after-effects of those rituals probably brought some undead abilities in Alina which were boosted further by repair of her body parts and insertion of her old core.

Since Mark didn't exactly know what happened with her in the past and neither did Alina remember anything as her memories exist in the core itself, he could only assume that it was for the best and put those unnecessary thoughts for the future away. Mark tested her abilities for a while before taking back her with him.

The citizens of Genesis City have never seen Alina before. They couldn't help but wonder whether their Lord brought another beauty home. Naturally, they were happy anyway. Their Lord deserves a hundred women, in their eyes.

Sylvandria was the first to meet them, quite coincidentally on the street though. She was helping out healing a sickly elderly woman in their home and when coming out, she had her eyes locked on Mark and Alina who were not far away.

She went toward them and Mark greeted her casually with a wave of his hand. Alina didn't do anything but silently stood behind him.

Sylvandria looked at her in a bit of surprise, "A puppet? Like Allen?"

Mark introduced her, "Meet Alina. You know that robotic three-headed hound you met once?"

"That's me. This is my old body, which my dear big bro found and brought back to me," replied Alina, affectionately grabbing Mark all of a sudden.

Sylvandria was slightly taken aback by her words and her actions, which didn't seem anything like a puppet. She remembered Allen and knew that she would act human-like, but for some reason, she felt like there was a hint of jealousy and attachment in Alina's tone and expression.

Or maybe, she was just overthinking these days. In the end, Sylvandria concluded it like this and maintained a smile, "Hello, Alina. I'm Sylvandria."

Alina nodded firmly, "I'm aware of it, Miss Sylvandria. I'm connected to big bro's mind. I know what happened between you two and also being aware that you are a 'good friend' of my big bro."

"Ahh... I forgot about that. You can see my memories," Mark quickly warned the android, "Alina, you cannot ever tell Song Yue about us."

"Of course, that goes without saying, big bro," Alina let out a smile as she nodded. After a brief pause, she however added, "That time, you aren't exactly yourself. Not to mention, you don't have any feelings for Miss Sylvandria anyway. So, rest assured. Sister Yue will never hear of the things you were uncomfortable telling her through your own mouth. Let's go. I'm dying to meet her, after so long."

"Ah, okay. Syl, are you coming with us to the palace?"

"No, I have to visit another house to treat someone's illness."

"Okay. Come home. Today, we will have a grand banquet, as I have something to announce."

"Big Bro, let's go..."

As Alina dragged Mark away, Sylvandria stared at their back in a bit of sadness. She then put her hand on her stomach and mumbled, "When the time comes, I really hope both of you won't cause chaos in the family."

Mark and Alina returned to the palace, which is more like a large estate that includes his mansion-sized residential home and various other buildings.

Within the palace grounds, there is a butchery house where the corpses of high-quality spirit beasts hunted by Eol/Fu Sheng's army will be brought back here for the meat and other body parts.

Then, there is a breeding farm where the captured spirit beasts are brought back here to breed them in either increasing their population or conduct experiments to create new spirit beasts. There are two types of beasts here. One type is used for purely meat purposes. The second type is used for taming purposes.

There is also an Entertainment house, which is more or less a brothel but without any sexual services. The nobles, the royals, or the officials can visit here, they drink to their fill, are entertained by courtesans with their music or dance, magic shows or live paintings, and return to their homes.

With over a million residents at the moment, Mark could find people in every kind of job.

In Genesis City, the term Noble courtesan strictly refers to the ladies who work at the royal entertainment house, displaying their talent and nothing else. These are all highly educated and skilled, and revered by the citizens. Anyone who lays a hand on them without their consent is bound to face strict punishment or even the death penalty, or so, if one quotes the royal palace's announcement.

Unfortunately, the commoners who aren't working as officials in the royal palace cannot access this place.

For them, there is a common brothel in the city that includes both entertainment and sexual services just like every other brothel in other empires and kingdoms. However, what's different here from anywhere else is the strict law.

The rank-4 robotic dogs and rank-5 robots are considered the foot soldiers who always patrol with at least one rank-6 robot 24 hours all over the city. They were quite merciless against those who committed the crimes.

When the population was only ten thousand, the city was relatively at peace.

But, when it increased to one million after the recent third phase, which was supposed to be at a later date but had to pre-poned it due to certain situations, it was hard for even Mark to keep track of crimes. The merciless robots put too many people in jails for even little crimes that could be ignored for the first time.

To face this challenge, Mark had to recruit some skilled people to accompany the robots, giving them the authority to punish or show mercy to first-time wrongdoers.

Anyway, the strict law and constant patrolling almost ensured zero crime rate in the city and made the women safe, especially the working ones.

Since Mark doesn't look down on any kind of profession, within the past couple of weeks, the people also saw changes even in their own thoughts. But then again, social status is something that not even Mark could eradicate, not that he wanted to. Hence, he modified it in a way to suit his ruling before he could bring democracy to the land.

Like for example, the royal courtesans working in the royal entertainment house naturally get more respect than the courtesans working at ordinary brothels.

The officials of the royal palace will have higher respect than the ones who work to fend off themselves by setting up their own shops and such. The ten thousand prime citizens will have greater respect in the city than even a 100,000 gold net-worth wealthy individual who moved in the third phase.

Back to the palace, other than those three buildings, buildings for each ministry, judicial hall, etc... were all built on the premises of the palace, everything except for a temple.

Alina knew everything from her master's memories, but seeing through her own eyes was a different experience for her. She couldn't help but become proud of her master who managed to build a well-functioning city in such a short time.

Together, as they returned to Mark's residence which is guarded by several rank-8 and three rank-9 robots, they saw Song Yue was busy playing tag with her five-month-old son who already started running a bit.

Little Lu Shan was trying his best to catch her mother but to no avail. His cheeks were puffed and he looked so frustrated that he might cry at any time. Clearly, Song Yue was enjoying that, for some reason.

"Waaaa..."

Lu Shan bent his head forward to charge into his mom. She was about to dodge at the last second once again but then upon sensing the presence of her husband, Song Yue looked to the right and saw both of them together.

"Alina?" She was taken aback in surprise. Lu Shan caught his mom finally but he too shifted his attention toward the source where his mom was looking at.

"Ba Ba..." Lu Shan excitedly charged at his dad, but then just a few steps later, he lost his footing and was about to fall down.

Alina disappeared and reappeared by Lu Shan's side and caught him quickly, earning a surprise from both mom and son.

As Lu Shan looked at her, Alina raised him to her eye level and smiled, "Hello there, young master. We meet again."

"Huh?" Lu Shan cutely tilted his head with his index finger in his mouth.

Chapter 592: King Qi's betrayal

A few days later;

Thousands of citizens gathered on the sidewalks, watching a large number of troops walking in Genesis City. Every soldier was stripped of their armor and weapons and had their cultivation bases sealed.

King Qi, who alone had all of these intact, was leading the troop in the front with his head hung down just like his seventeen hundred soldiers. He was escorted by Alina alone without a single robot or any soldier of Eol's army.

Wearing pure white armor that Eol once wore when he was in the body of an Android, Alina led the prisoners in steady steps to the Palace gates, where Mark and his robotic army were waiting for them.

Upon reaching him, Alina went down to one of his knees and bowed, "Milord, your task is accomplished. Due to the resistance, I killed 4342 enemies and took the remaining enemies as prisoners after King Qi surrendered. However, on the way, some of them tried to escape. As a result, 62 more were killed, and escorted the remaining 1706 to the capital city. But, rest assured, not one enemy has escaped."

Mark stepped forward and patted Alina's shoulder, "Well done, Commander Alina. You broke the will of the enemies all by yourself. Escort the prisoners to the Detention Center and lock them up in the cells. We will see if I have to release them or destroy their cultivation and throw them in Blackstone prison."

"Understood, Milord." As Alina got up, Mark shifted his attention to the man standing beside her, "King Qi."

The man raised his head to look at Mark. His eyes seemed lifeless, as if he had lost the will to live and was prepared to get beheaded.

Mark then said, "Follow me. We have things to talk about."

After a while, at the Administration building,

In Mark's office, King Qi sat on the sofa; his eyes retained some hope to live but also extremely nervous, based on how his enemy was treating him so far. Nevertheless, he didn't have any plans to ambush a demigod like Mark.

Serving him the cup of coffee and then serving one for himself, Mark dragged the chair and sat before him, "I might have born a prince, and now I might be a King, but I have a businessman's heart, King Qi. So, don't worry. You won't die if you have something valuable to trade for it."

King Qi couldn't help but abruptly raise his head to look at Mark in surprise, "Trade my life with something? I will give you all the treasures I have in my storage ring and also our ancestral treasures lying in our treasury back at my palace." His eyes were now filled with hope. They were no longer lifeless. The nervousness also disappeared for a moment.

However, Mark shook his head with a smile, "I'm afraid that won't suffice." Taking a sip of coffee, Mark continued, "You are our prisoner, King Qi. The reason you weren't stripped of your powers and the weapons is because you have some use to me, and for that to happen, you need to keep your reputation. Regardless, as the winner, I already own everything that was on you, including the things in your storage ring. As for your ancestral treasures in your palace treasury, they would also be mine soon, anyway, once I defeat the Shi Dynasty."

"So, what is it that you want, then?" King Qi once again grew nervous.

Mark answered, "First things first, I need to know about the list of lords that are too loyal to Emperor Shi and the ones that are too selfish. Secondly, I need you to formally declare independence from Leon Empire and merge with ours. Of course, I will give you partial autonomy for the first ten years. After that, your state will attain full autonomy. As a bonus, I will also give you your surrounding territories once my conquest is over. This is the proposal from me. Accept it, and I'll let you return to your home. The imprisoned soldiers will return with respect once the declaration has been made."

"What if I deny?" King Qi asked nervously, just trying to probe Mark's line.

Mark calmly put down the cup and said, "I'll kill you and your army right now. Since your state is on the border with the forest, I'll first invade your land and raze everything to dust. Even if you return and don't fulfill the promise in the following 48 hours, I'll still do the same. If I have to kill all of your five hundred thousand soldiers waiting at your place and trying to protect it, I will do that without any hesitation.

I don't show mercy to my enemies who aren't useful to my objectives. And I never let go of the hand of my friends who stand behind me and support my decisions either. So, it is your choice, King Qi. Stand behind me, or you will find yourself standing against me. Be my friend or be my enemy. No third option here to choose."

It didn't take long for King Qi to decide at all. He agreed to the deal and left the city a day later. A rank-8 robot escorted him to the border and returned.

Meanwhile, at the imperial palace, Emperor Shi was holding a meeting with the Dwarven kingdom's prime minister and the crown prince, putting forth a formal alliance.

At first, the Dwarves felt tempted to form an alliance, but then the news of King Qi's return was received by them, and they held it off, asking for time to think about it, using an excuse that their King could not be easily convinced by Emperor Shi's proposal when no such threatening letter came from Genesis Federation. Not to mention the fact that the dwarves were never the adventuring type, they didn't have an issue with whether Bloodhill Forest was captured or stayed free.

Emperor Shi summoned King Qi to the palace to understand what happened. As soon as he got the news, the emperor sent his eunuch to summon him.

However, a day later, the eunuch returned alone with nothing but a letter.

The eunuch presented the letter to the Emperor in the assembly as he was told.

The letter was, shockingly, the Letter of Independence. The second largest region of the Empire rebelled against the throne. The letter also further demanded the head of the prince who dared to abduct the Queen of Golden Eagle Kingdom.

Early in the morning, Mark went for a walk to inspect the farming land that had just been created after clearing the wild trees and plants over there. As he was enriching the land with his divine energy, Alina appeared out of nowhere, teleporting right next to him with a piece of good news from Leon Empire.

Mark couldn't help but smile and mumble, "it looks like King Qi stayed true to his promise. Now, for the next thing... throwing the empire into chaos."

Chapter 593 An attack in the night

Imperial Palace, Leon Empire;

At around 2 in the morning, when every official is in deep sleep while the patrolling of soldiers in the palace is as strong as ever, a figure shrouded in darkness appears in the sky without being detected by anyone.

He then raised his hand, stretching it forward and conjuring a seal, "Arise my soldiers."

A giant portal glowing in scarlet appeared in the middle of the palace grounds, alerting every soldier around.

As the nearby ones rushed toward the portal, hundreds of demons flew out of the portal, spreading in all directions.

"An attack," "Quickly inform the Commander," "Kaaa..."

Screams of agony followed the scene; the demons just attacked whatever appeared in their sight and killed whoever they laid their eyes on, causing mayhem everywhere inside the palace.

However, their operation was strictly focused on the premises of the imperial palace. The demons didn't chase after anyone who left the palace gates.

A few generals and even the Grand Marshal, who were currently in the palace, were forced to exit the residence. At the same time, the princes and the Emperor were kept protected in different underground bunkers linked to various secret tunnels.

Emperor Shi was isolated from the princes and the rest of the members of the imperial family and had a general and trusted guard to protect him. Originally, this shouldn't have been done so swiftly, but as the Grand Marshal sensed the presence of several Supreme Being demons, he took control of the palace and made the arrangements.

The Grand Marshal, Shi Zhouyang, unleashed the sword of Ifrit and swung it down. Streaks of flames traveled in different directions, killing all the demon soldiers in its path. The humans in the way weren't harmed in the least.

"Grand Marshal is here." "Everyone, fight." "Kill these bas*ards"

A new enthusiasm brought in the soldiers. The ones initially running away stopped and turned around to face the demonic creatures.

As the Generals with 7-circle realm strength joined the battle, the low-ranking demons were killed one after another; the Grand Marshal took care of captain-ranked demons. These demons each have a similar strength as the Generals, but none could defend themselves against the onslaught of the Grand Marshal's sword.

His divine-grade sword's flames burned them to death, one after another. In a span of mere thirty minutes, the demonic invasion seemed like it had ended, and the last one was also burned to death.

There were a lot of losses. Three Generals and more than six hundred soldiers were killed in the battle. On the other side, two hundred demons died.

The Grand Marshal was panting heavily, taking support of the sword to stand on his feet, "Is it over?" A General grabbed his shoulders, "Grand Marshal Shi... are you alright?"

The four-and-fifty-year-old Supreme Being nodded weakly, "It has been a while since I battled so intensely. Need some rest." As he sat down to regulate his breathing and replenish his ether energy reserves, another General ordered the soldiers, "collect the corpses. At dawn, we will give them a respectful cremation."

"For that, you have to stay alive, human," A voice echoed in the surroundings, changing everyone's expressions immediately.

The Grand Marshal, the Generals, and the rest of the soldiers raised their heads to look at the sky as a well-dressed man, resembling a nobleman or a scholar at one glance.

Outwardly, he does look like a human with scarlet eyes, but the experts with superior sensing abilities could sense that terrifying evil aura emitting from the stranger's body.

The Grand Marshal was forced to stand up, raising his sword, which started burning in thick Ifrit's flames, "Who are you?"

Reaching everyone's visible sight, the demon gave a gentleman's bow, "Grand Marshal Shi, my name is Mephistopheles. You can call me Mephisto. Under the orders of Demon King Alloces, I'm here to exterminate everyone here."

"Demon King Alloces? Who was he?" The question appeared in everyone's mind. The Generals couldn't help but look at each other. Even the Grand Marshal furrowed his brows, "Are you an ally of Lu Zhen? I have heard about the appearance of a demon in a war between Western Yan and the Phoenix Empire. I knew that Lu Zhen is associated with demons."

Mephisto let out a grin, "If you know who that is, you will die of heart stroke, human. Anyway, are you humans ready for round 2?"

Snap

With a snap of his finger, another portal appeared randomly in the middle of the imperial gardens, and demons rushed out once again. This time, all of them are captain-ranked demons, each of them having the strength equivalent to that of a 7-circle realm Spirit Warrior.

The flames around the Grand Marshal's sword became more intense. He raised the sword, stretching above his head, "Die."

He was about to swing it down, but the blade didn't come down. Mephisto was seen teleporting to right above the Grand Marshal and grabbing the blade of the sword with his bare hand. The flames died out with Mephisto's demonic energy soon after.

The nearest General attempted to attack Mephisto, but the latter gave a kick to his face without even taking a look at him.

The General's face exploded, and blood splattered on the faces of nearby generals as well as the Grand Marshal.

Grabbing the blade, Mephisto flew up. The Grand Marshal didn't lose the grip on the sword and flew along, distancing himself from his subordinates and leaving them an opportunity to deal with the demons.

The Grand Marshal poured more of his ether energy into the sword, but the flames of ifrit didn't light up on the blade as it was overwhelmed by demonic energy.

He let go of one of his hands on the hilt and attacked Mephisto in the abdomen, unleashing a torrent of flames through his palm.

Mephisto's body was struck head-on at a very close range, but the demon simply tilted his head to look straight into the eyes of the old man, "Unfortunately, your power isn't enough, human. Anyway, now it is my turn." He raised his free right arm and stretched forward.

The Grand Marshal's facial expression changed.

Some of the Generals were also about to charge forward at the incoming demon captains, but then a groan escaped from the old man, forcefully grabbing their attention.

When they raised their heads, they saw their Grand Marsha's heart was taken out by Mephisto. With a heart in his right hand and the sword in his left, Mephisto looked down at the falling body of the enemy.

"Grand Marshal Shi..." "Grand Marshal is dead," "We are doomed." "Bless me, Oh Goddess Xihe" "Run away"

At once, hundreds of soldiers left their posts and started running away in fear.

Chapter 594: The messenger from Genesis Federation

That night, Emperor Shi and the entire imperial family of the Leon Empire survived, as the demons' objective was never them in the first place. But, the palace wasn't so lucky. The grand structures that had stood for centuries were now nothing more than scorched ruins, with bodies of soldiers strewn across the palace grounds. Over eight generals, more than 200 imperial knights, and thousands of soldiers were killed. The few hundred who survived had run away in fear before the battle had ended.

The aftermath was pure chaos. Criminals who had been hiding from the authorities now roamed the streets freely. In the heart of the capital, gangs formed, prisoners escaped, and the city, once the pride of the empire, teetered on the edge of anarchy.

A day later, the reinforcements arrived from the border. But while the palace was fortified, the city outside remained unprotected, and criminal activity skyrocketed. It was a city on fire, in more ways than one.

Inside what remained of the palace walls, Emperor Shi sat surrounded by his ministers and generals. The room was thick with tension.

"We're not just dealing with an attack," a general growled, pounding his fist on the table. "The demons targeted us. This was a message."

Minister Li, one of the emperor's oldest advisors, nodded gravely. "We need to address this threat swiftly before rebellion spreads like wildfire. The vassal states... they smell blood."

Emperor's favorite grandson, Prince Shi Xuan, stood calmly among the bickering. "But we still don't know who orchestrated this attack. Lu Zhen? Demons? Someone else?"

"Lu Zhen!" Minister Li exclaimed. "It's obvious! He's been lurking in the shadows, waiting to strike! There's been talk of his alliance with demons—rumors from the Bloodhill Forest are spreading."

"Rumors," Shi Xuan said, cutting him off, "are not evidence. We must act on facts, not whispers."

Before another minister could respond, the heavy doors to the chamber creaked open. A guard stepped inside, saluting with urgency. "Your Majesty, there's a messenger at the gates—someone from the Genesis Federation."

Silence fell over the room as the ministers exchanged uneasy glances. Genesis Federation was synonymous with Lu Zhen in their minds.

"What do they want?" the emperor asked, his voice low and controlled.

"The messenger carries a letter, but... the guards are holding them outside. The situation is unclear."

"A trap, no doubt!" one minister snarled. "We should have him executed—Lu Zhen's dogs cannot be trusted."

Shi Xuan stepped forward. "Messengers are immune to punishment, even in war. You all know that. If we act rashly, we'll be no better than the rebels we're trying to control."

Minister Li sneered, "Lu Zhen has every reason to be behind this. The Bloodhill Forest, our past disputes—he has a motive. He's a snake."

"And yet," Xuan countered, "we don't have any proof. Grandfather, we should at least hear the messenger out."

Emperor Shi's sharp eyes flicked between the ministers. After a long pause, he nodded once. "Bring the messenger in."

Moments later, the large doors swung open again, and in walked Alina—tall, graceful, and impossibly beautiful, her every movement precise. The ministers looked at her with confusion, some whispering in hushed tones.

"She's so beautiful" one of the generals muttered under his breath. For anyone under the Supreme Realm, she is a beautiful woman who can lure any man into the trap with a simple gaze, and unluckily for them, no Supreme Realm expert is present in the courtroom. Hence, the fact that she is an android is not known to the people. But, some ministers, despite the state of crisis they were in, couldn't help but enjoy the beauty.

Without any formal greeting, Alina stopped in the center of the room. Her eyes, cold and calculating, locked onto the emperor.

"I carry a message from my master," she said in a soft yet commanding tone. Then, to everyone's shock, her eyes glowed, and a holographic projection materialized from them, floating in mid-air.

Gasps echoed through the room. Not even the most powerful demigods could conjure something like this.

In the projection, Lu Zhen sat calmly on a chair. He stared ahead, expression neutral but intense.

"Emperor Shi," his voice rang through the room, "you have my sympathies."

The ministers shuffled uncomfortably in their seats, glaring at the projection as if Lu Zhen himself stood before them.

"I have some idea why the demons attacked your palace," Lu Zhen continued. "They were under orders to search for something precious—something you have. I won't tell you what it is, for obvious reasons, but know this: the demons won't stop until they finish their job. The attacks will become more frequent in the future."

The emperor's fists clenched on his throne, his eyes narrowing. Lu Zhen's voice remained calm, calculated.

"I can help you in stopping these attacks, but in return, you'll have to acknowledge the Genesis Federation's legitimacy and cede control of Nanjing as compensation for your interference."

A murmur spread through the room at the demand. Minister Li's face turned red with anger. "He dares—"

But Lu Zhen wasn't finished. "And one more thing," he added. "King Qi is now under my protection. Consider your next moves carefully, Emperor. You don't want to add more enemies to your list."

The projection flickered, then disappeared, leaving the room heavy with silence.

Alina, unfazed by the chaos around her, gave a small bow. "I've delivered my master's message. The decision is yours."

With that, she turned and walked out of the room, leaving the imperial court to face the crisis at hand.

Once she was gone out of their sight, Minister Li was the first to speak. "He wants us to surrender? Ridiculous! He's behind this. We should prepare for war! Let's activate our spies at the same time and cause suicide attacks all over the place. If we can't directly hurt Lu Zhen, we can destroy his allies at will. It would teach him a lesson."

But Xuan's voice cut through the panic. "Grandfather, I think... we should think this through. Neither of our parties had yet to declare war on each other. Moreover, If he's telling the truth, there's more at stake than just the demons or the rebellion. Moreover, we still haven't brought the Church of Doom to our side. There is no use in revealing our cards like this."

Emperor Shi's gaze never wavered from where the projection had been. "We will not make any rash decisions. Not yet." His voice was calm but carried the weight of authority.

Meanwhile, Mark was seen flying above the endless expanse of the ocean. The wind whipped past him, yet his focus remained solely on the holographic screen floating before him.

On the screen, a detailed map was displayed with landscapes, cities, and borders meticulously laid out. His current location was marked by a small blue dot, and far ahead of him was his destination, a red dot, pulsing faintly.

This was a function developed by Ark, in conjunction with the Space station revolving around the planet, up there.

He narrowed his eyes at the screen, watching as the blue dot crept closer to its target. "Almost there," he muttered under his breath. His destination was a remote island, completely isolated in the middle of the ocean. No other landmass was visible within a 100-kilometer radius; just endless water as far as the eye could see.

Finally, the island came into view. It was barren and desolate, with only one defining feature: a volcano, towering over the otherwise empty landscape. The volcano wasn't dormant either; the fiery orange glow of boiling lava bubbled ominously at its base. Dark smoke billowed from its peak, trailing into the sky like a beacon of destruction.

Mark hovered in the air, his sharp gaze scanning the rest of the island. No signs of life, no hidden structures, and no indication of anything but volcanic rock and flowing lava.

"This is it?" he questioned, his voice laced with curiosity. "No signs of an entrance. Maybe he's hiding underneath."

With that thought, his face broke into a small, knowing smile. He was used to things being more complicated than they appeared.

Channeling his ether energy, a shimmering scarlet aura enveloped his body, creating a protective barrier between him and the harsh environment below. Without hesitation, he dove straight into the lava, disappearing beneath the molten surface.

The lava pressed against him, thick and searing, but his ether shield held firm.

He swam deeper, navigating through the fiery liquid as easily as if it were water. Kilometers passed, the heat intensifying with every stroke. The further he went, the more the pressure built, but Mark remained unfazed.

After what felt like an eternity, he finally reached his destination, a massive cavern hidden deep beneath the volcano. The cavern was vast, with rivers of magma snaking through the ground like glowing veins, casting an eerie red light on the rocky walls.

Mark emerged from the molten stream, landing lightly on the solid ground. His eyes quickly adjusted to the dim, hellish glow of the cavern. It was quiet, save for the occasional crackle of molten rock and the distant gurgling of magma rivers.

Then, in the distance, he saw it—a figure cloaked entirely in shadows, standing still as if waiting for him. The figure's form was hard to make out, its features obscured by darkness, but the immense power radiating from it was unmistakable.

Mark's lips curled into a sly smile as he took a step forward, his voice a low whisper to himself. "I've found you, Yan Hai."

The figure stirred, the darkness shifting slightly as it heard Mark's whisper. As the aura of darkness dispelled, the Supreme Pontiff of the Church of Doom calmly stared back at Mark. "Lu Zhen..."

Chapter 595: Mark vs Yan Hai

Yan Hai

Rank: low-10-circle (max: mid-10-circle)

Status: Humanoid form

Attributes: Fire, Water, Wind, Lightning, Earth, Light, Darkness, Lava, Wood, Metal, Ice, Poison, Sound, unknown.

Bloodline: Dragon

Affiliation: Western Moon Kingdom

Description: The Supreme Pontiff of the Church of Doom.

Mark was quite taken aback to see the list of attributes Yan Hai has mastered. He never met a man who could have so many attributes.

Of course, he himself is an exception. But he has the system. So, it can be understood that Mark has so many attributes.

What did Yan Hai have that he managed to awaken these many?

It was then his eyes captured that one word, 'Dragon' bloodline on the details, and suddenly everything made sense for him. Before it wasn't, now it was.

Then, he remembered that the former Emperor of the Tang Dynasty siding with the Supreme Pontiff, passed away, and the blame for his death fell upon his head instead.

"The power to absorb other people's abilities?" The thought came to his head at once. He couldn't help but comment, "You practiced a cultivation technique that lets you absorb the powers of the ones you have defeated."

Yan Hai wasn't surprised by Mark's comment. Instead, he let out a smile, "And I'm looking forward to gaining your powers once I kill you, Lu Zhen."

Mark didn't take his words seriously and replied, "It's funny that I have a similar ability, although it only works on those with Tier-5 bloodline."

"Tier-5 bloodline?" Yan Hai furrowed his brows.

Mark didn't explain and simply shrugged his shoulders, "It doesn't matter. The Dragon Bloodline you had stolen is insignificant anyway."

Yan Hai's frown deepened further by Mark's comment, but then he let out a smirk instead, "If your Blizzard Pegasus Bloodline is better, then I'm happy to replace it with the current one."

"Oh, do you think so?" Mark raised his eyebrow.

"Gravity Dome, activate."

Mark didn't waste in unleashing his most used skill, the Gravity Dome into the surroundings.

Yan Hai went down to his knees at once. Mark slowly walked forward in confidence.

Looking down at the kneeling suppressed enemy from a close distance, Mark coldly asked, "Any last words?"

Suddenly, Yan Hai's facial expression changed. The smirk returned to his face one more time as he stretched his arm.

"Ugh..."

Shrouded in a dark aura, Yan Hai's hand pierced Mark's stomach.

Mark spat out a mouthful of blood, taken aback in surprise, as corrupted energy invaded Mark's insides through Yan Hai's fingers.

The Gravity Dome skill was dispelled in an instant, and Mark staggered back a few steps with his hand on the wound. Yan Hai retrieved his hand, smeared by Mark's blood, and got up; he observed his fingers for a second, "Hmm... it looks like you have multiple bloodlines in your body. Interesting."

"Ark, what's going on?" Mark found out that his ether energy could not heal his wounds, and this corrupted energy that invaded his system also started spreading rapidly, trying to attack his organs. Most importantly, this strange power is also interfering him to take out weapons from the inventory. For a person who was confident about winning, the setback has really hurt his ego

Just like the system in the past, the artificial intelligence is also quick to analyze his body and give him the needed answer.

*Ding! The unknown energy has the properties of dampening your powers, master. Do you authorize me to take over your system for the solution?

"Yes, please... Ugh..."

As Mark felt what it felt to be suppressed of his powers, Yan Hai charged forward and gave a punch to his gut.

Mark's physique withstood the pain due to Enhanced durability, but the raging corrupted energy inside his body attacked his lungs at once due to the vibration sent by the punch.

Coughing out another mouthful of blood, Mark asked as if he was desperate to know the answer more, "It is impossible. What energy was that you injected into my body? I can't use my abilities."

Yan Hai answered with a confident face, "It is the Doom energy, Lu Zhen. Your attributes don't matter. Your bloodlines don't matter. Not even your cultivation level doesn't matter."

The scene reversed with Mark struggling to breathe while Yan Hai placed his hand on Mark's chest, continuing to brag, "I went to great lengths to please Lord Doom to acquire this power. Only something like cosmic energy can resist this. A mortal human like you can never..."

Yan Hai's words ended abruptly as golden divine energy gushed out of his body, forming a layer over his skin. His eyes also turned golden and started glowing as a smile appeared on his face, "Thanks for the info, Yan Hai." Yan Hai's facial expression was frozen, "Divine energy?"

"Activate, Anti-matter Blast."

In an instant, large amounts of concentrated antimatter energy conjured above his palm in the form of a sphere, before it was launched at the enemy. Yan Hai couldn't evade the attack, for it was too close. He was struck and blasted away in the air.

Mark then swiftly summoned the divine throne from the inventory, placing it on the ground and sitting on it, unleashing an ability of the throne.

*Ding! Your stats are increased by 2 points.

"Activate, Divine shield."

"Ahhh!"

A piercing scream filled with pain emerged from Yan Hai's mouth as the antimatter was about to explode inside. He tried using his Doom energy to suppress it.

Mark could also see Yan Hai transformed into a humanoid dragon covered by energy layers of lightning, fire, water, etc...

All of them acting together managed to suppress the antimatter energy, but not enough to destroy it. As a demigod, Yan Hai knew very well what might happen if he tried to destroy it with force. Moreover, he was also aware that he didn't have much time. The best way for him is to kill his enemy as fast as possible and absorb his powers so that this foreign energy will become his asset instead.

"Lu Zhen..."

An enraged Yan Hai charged down at Mark, covered by a glowing golden barrier.

As Yan Hai's strongest attack - a concentrated beam of doom energy struck the divine shield generated by the throne, couldn't do any damage, Mark couldn't help but let out an arrogant smirk, crossing his legs, "Your Doom or whatever energy is something I didn't expect to hurt me earlier but now that I'm prepared, there is nothing you can do right now to prevent your death."

"Then, I will kill you before that happens," Yan Hai lost his cool. His humanoid dragon form slowly evolved to a giant red dragon and opened its mouth. A sea of black flames powered up by tried to destroy the divine shield. While nothing happened to it, the ground beneath Mark, however, started to melt down.

Mark, whose ether energy reserves were steadily increasing, waited for at least more than half a minute as the ground around him melted and magma rose to his feet.

Meanwhile, Yan Hai, who was on the brink of his death, not to mention in his beast form, only became more enraged and evolved even further, developing a third eye on his forehead that merged all the attributes he had to release a white beam of concentrated energy.

*Ding! An unknown energy is detected.

The artificial intelligence set him the notification as the divine shield started cracking with the assault of the white beam. Mark was however calm.

"Ark, check my ether reserves." He responded with an order.

*Ding! At 52%.

"Good. Dismiss the divine shield."

*Ding! Warning: Risk of Death significantly rises.

"Just do it." Mark turned serious.

The cracking divine shield was dispelled at once, letting the white beam come at him.

It was just about to strike him but stopped right when it was about to strike the empty throne. The white beam bent itself, making a U-turn and went toward the dragon instead.

Mark, who teleported to the dragon's behind, pushed forth his hand, unleashing another skill of his, "Activate, Singularity."

A tiny dot appeared on his palm, creating an enormous amount of suction force, bending the space in front of it, and swallowing up the dragon in a second.

Yan Hai didn't even know what hit him before he found himself trapped in a dimension with everything pressing him on all sides. As he tried to protect himself in the black hole, the anti-matter energy broke its prison and released 30 exajoules of energy at once. Not even a speck of cell tissue belonging to Yan Hai remained in the end and to Mark's ignorance, even Yan Hai's soul was also exterminated.

However, it was so high that singularity was destroyed on its own, and the remnant energy leaked to the outside world, much of it formed like a beam of energy that made a hole in the walls and some of it affected Mark, injuring his hand in the process, too. Fortunately, it was only like second-degree burns.

*Ding! You completed one of the quests left by the system: Eliminate the New Threat. Cosmic Essence Absorption has been added to your skill list.

*Ding! Due to the complete destruction of the target, Primeval bloodline fails to extract the essence of Doom.

"Oh, I didn't know this was interested in attributes too; maybe, it was because it was special, but anyway, what's done is done. And now, only two quests are left to be finished before I leave this planet.

With the confirmation from the artificial intelligence, Mark dismissed the singularity and flew out of the volcano in peace.

Chapter 596: Mephisto attack again

One week later;

Imperial City, Leon Empire;

Three Supreme realm experts, the leaders of Iron Thunder Sect, Celestial Crane Sect, and Scarlet Lotus Sect, gathered at the imperial palace on the Emperor's invitation.

These three sects stand on top of the cultivation world, within the borders of the Leon Empire. They were also considered top 5 in the whole continent, and the Scarlet Lotus Sect was even in the top 10 in the entire world.

For ages, sects have stayed away from matters of the material world. Whether the Leon Empire collapses or not has nothing to do with them. And if they used their strength to meddle in the affairs of the empire, the other sects would combine their strength to wipe out the sect that broke the rules.

They intended to stay away this time, too, but the fact that demons were involved in this mess forced these righteous sects to come to Emperor Shi's aid.

Several of their sect elites were stationed on the palace grounds alongside the troops from the vassal states. Apart from this bunch, there were also mercenary groups from various guilds of the empire gathered to protect the palace.

Due to their rivalry in the past, they didn't mix with each other and had their own set of groups, camping out in the dim-lit grounds.

Five young men - a monk, a warrior, a noble, a masked swordsman, and an assassin, were having dinner together, sitting around a small campfire. This is a mercenary group that traveled all the way from the Black Tortoise Continent. Not much there is known about them, apart from the fact that four of them are Exalt realm experts and the masked swordsman seemed like he doesn't even have any ether energy at all.

While the four young men were having wine and laughing together, the masked man was sitting slightly a bit away from the group and just staring at the campfire in silence.

Assassin: "Brother Xiao, do you think the demons going to attack this midnight?"

Masked man: "No doubt about it. According to the info I gathered from the servants, the demon general clearly told the second prince that they would return three days later, after sparing his life."

Warrior: "The demons aren't some righteous beings that will keep their words. They will attack when we least expect it."

Monk: "But the enemy is powerful enough to take out the former Supreme Commander. Those with strength and authority rarely lie. Moreover, it is a fact that they have attacked three times so far and still yet to attack the imperial family members or the ones hiding in the palace, and also the ones that escaped the premises of the palace. This says something."

Warrior: "What if the second prince was colluding with the demons? He was, after all, the only one who survived so far."

Noble: "I highly doubt that. The second Prince isn't a politician. He is more of a warrior. He is also very righteous, unlike those false righteous sect disciples."

Assassin: "By the way, your friend was awfully silent today. Is he in a bad mood or something?"

Warrior: "Probably nervous."

Noble: "Him? Nervous? Don't make me laugh. Did you forget how Brother Xie alone took down that sea beast while we were on our way?"

Warrior: "I really wonder where he comes from. You always try to change the subject whenever we ask about his past, Brother Xiao."

Assassin: "Even more surprising is that on his request, you actually brought us here, willing to work with these righteous sects which you hate to the core."

Warrior: "Sometimes, I wonder why he hides his face. I never saw his face even once during the past few weeks."

Monk: "I know what he looks like."

Assassin, Warrior: "You do?"

Monk: "Hmm...you could say he looks like a human, just a bit otherworldly."

Noble: "Seriously, I don't know his objective either. I believe there is something Brother Xie was looking for."

Warrior: "Forget about his past for a second. Tell us about yours, Brother Xiao. You still haven't told us what kind of beef you had with the righteous sects."

Monk: "From what we know so far, you are the heir of Xiao Manor which you inherited through your mother, but have the knowledge of techniques from the Nethersect, which no longer exist, and hate the righteous sects. It would perfectly make sense if your father is from the Nethersect and killed by the righteous sects."

Noble: "Hmpf, keep on writing the stories, baldy. You won't get anything from me."

Warrior: "C'mon, what would sharing your past do bad for you? We went through so many life-and-death situations. You don't have to keep it mysterious from us."

Masked man: "Such cheeky dialogues won't suit your personality, Li Zhu."

Warrior: "Tch... worth a try..."

Monk: "Anyway, let's get to the business. Our aim is to take out the captain-level demons. And we shall approach it with our isolated method. Listen carefully, Brother Shen."

Assassin: "Hmm..."

Monk: "Brother Xiao is versed in sealing techniques. He'll be the first one to attack. Then, Brother Li (warrior) and I will..."

zzzzz

All of a sudden, the sounds of some kind of insect were heard all over the place, instantly alerting everyone stationed on the grounds. They got up with their weapons as a portal appeared in the sky. This time, a horde of demons didn't rush out like before. Instead, it was just one demon.

The scholarly-dressed demon, Mephisto, came out alone and looked down at thousands of warriors gathered to fight him. With a quick scan of the field, he let out a smirk, "weaklings gathered one more time. This time, they should be taught a thorough lesson."

Mephisto summoned the flaming sword, which he snatched away from the Grand Marshal in the first attack a week ago, and raised it above his head. The flames grew brighter and more intense.

"Everyone, get into the formation," shouted a General. The elite soldiers rushed toward the General, who never expected this demon general to take action in person, this time.

It was at this moment three artifacts, one resembled a round shield, one resembled a seven-layered pagoda, and the last one a crown, suddenly shot from different directions and trapped Mephisto in a prism-shaped prison. It happened quite instantly. The latter calmly looked at them and then shifted his gaze to his surroundings.

Three old men, having the demeanor of experts, were seen floating in the sky, appearing in different directions and surrounding the demon.

"It's Grand Master Xi, Venerable Yu, and Venerable Nie."

Chapter 597: A mysterious savior with name, "Allen?"

"The demon is trapped"

"Guys, don't relax. The demon is a demigod. You can't underestimate it. And demon horde could attack us any time."

Mephisto gazed at one of the sect leaders and grinned, "Never expected one of the demon contractors would make a move against me."

"Sect Master Nie?" The other two couldn't help but glance at their ally.

Nie Zhouyang, with a grim face, said, stretching his arms, "The demon will spout any nonsense to escape. Don't waste time and kill it before it summons the demon horde."

The other two nodded and stretched their arms, too, pouring ether energy into their respective artifacts, which responded by gathering huge amounts of natural energy to form a concentrated beam of energy and struck the demon general at the same time.

A blinding flash of light enveloped the demon general as the beams of energy continuously struck him. The disciples, soldiers, and mercenaries just stared at the spectacle in awe. The power generated by the artifacts generated so much power that spirit warriors could sense their souls tremble in fear.

Eventually, the flames around Mephisto's sword died out and the sect leaders could no longer sense the life in the target enveloped by the flash of light.

"It's over?" Even they couldn't believe what they sensed and looked at each other in surprise.

It was at that moment a whisper of a voice entered their ears, "disappointing."

"Ack" "Ugh.." "Puchi..."

The sect leaders had their eyes widened as blades of demonic energy pierced their backs at the same time.

They stiffly moved their heads to the side, glancing at their behind. They saw Mephisto clones floating behind them with a grin on their faces.

At once, the entire place became silent.

Everyone silently gazed at the sky where the three sect leaders started falling down with the artifacts, freeing the original. Panic spread everywhere. Some mercenaries and soldiers opted out of the battle and tried running away. However, this time, they couldn't escape.

An invisible barrier blocked their path.

Meanwhile, the sect disciples with their elders were prepared to take revenge for their sect masters, even though they knew they didn't have any chance.

Looking down at the humans, the demon general mumbled, "This time, my domain will force you to stay inside and die."

After launching another barrier over the palace, Mephisto once again raised the sword, pouring his demonic energy into the flames, creating a demonic flaming bird in the process, "Die."

Screech

Letting out a piercing screech, the demonic phoenix flew down toward the ground as the sect disciples shot their spells at it.

The phoenix was invincible against the attacks launched at it, which were rendered useless.

"It's over" "We are dead" "We can't even escape" "Why did I bother accepting the offer" "That damn old bas*ard. He was living fine in the palace and killing us."

Screech

The demonic phoenix charged left and right, randomly at its targets, turning them into ash instantly with a single touch. Meanwhile, more and more spirit warriors launched attacks at the energy beast but as if it was invincible against their attacks, none hurt it a bit.

Screams of terror and pain echoed all over the premises of the palace, the number of people getting lesser and lesser as they were turning into ashes.

"Damn it. This time, we have gone for good," commented the warrior before grabbing the noble's collar and jumping to the side, evading the phoenix that zoomed past them.

The demonic phoenix struck another group, generating a huge explosion, and threw off the four of them that originally stuck with each other but were now separated by the explosion.

"Ugh..."

The noble groaned in pain, trying to get up, but the demonic phoenix suddenly made a U-turn and specifically came for him, for some unknown reason.

"Hmm?" Mephisto raised an eyebrow at the strange behavior of the flaming bird.

It then flew into the air and then dived down toward him.

"I shouldn't have listened to that bas*ard. What about my revenge? Damn it. That guy is also nowhere to be seen. Will I die without being able to do anything?"

Several thoughts came to Xiao Chuhe's face as he stared at the descending phoenix.

The monk suddenly came between the noble and the phoenix, using all of his ether energy into his Wuji staff, releasing the azure water energy in the form of a wingless dragon, "C'mon."

"Baldy, no... get away..." Xiao Chuhe shouted, but the monk turned deaf ears to his scream. He motioned his staff toward the descending phoenix.

The demonic phoenix opened its mouth as it met the wingless water dragon; the latter was destroyed instantly and it went down to strike the monk.

Just as it was about to strike him, threads of golden energy came from behind the monk and captured its beak.

"Hmm? This isn't a light attribute. This is divine energy," Mephistopheles cast a glance at the source, spotting a masked individual standing there with a broadsword in his right hand and releasing golden energy threads through his left hand.

The masked warrior clenched his left fist, merging all the golden threads into one thick golden rope before raising his arm and swinging it away.

The demonic phoenix was raised into the air and blasted away, halting everyone's movements for a moment and turning their attention to their savior.

"Brother Xie..." Xiao Chuhe's face lit up by his timely save.

Screech

The demonic phoenix that found its balance let out an angrier screech this time before focusing solely on the one that attacked it earlier.

As the demonic phoenix flapped its wings, increasing the intensity of its scarlet flames even more as it charged at the masked warrior, the latter stood his ground and waited until it approached him.

And when it did, he raised his left arm, releasing golden threads of energy one more time, this time, enveloping all over its body. The phoenix was suspended in the air by the golden energy threads without being able to move, and the masked warrior then flew into the air and swung down the broadsword.

A swing from the sword released an arc of divine energy, slicing the demonic phoenix into two parts and dispelling the magic entirely.

Cheers erupted for a moment as the demonic phoenix disappeared from everyone's sight, changing Mephisto's facial expression, who was merely staring at the battle from the sky.

The masked warrior then slowly walked to the noble and lent a hand to him. As Xiao Chuhe took his hand and got up, the masked warrior spoke while casting a glance to the sky, "I can't defeat him alone. I need your help, my partner."

"I..."

Hesitation drew on Xiao Chuhe for a second. The monk behind him asked in wonder, "What do you mean by that?"

Xiao Chuhe turned his head to look at Mephisto and then at the masked individual, "Alright."

As Xiao Chuhe nodded, the masked warrior raised his hand; mystical symbols started appearing all over his palm, one after another. The monk then saw the masked warrior strike Xiao Chuhe's chest out of nowhere; the latter flew into the air, coughing out blood and shocking the nearby others.

"Xie Tianyu..." The monk roared in anger.

"Shhh..." The masked warrior pointed the finger at the flying Xiao Chuhe. The supposedly noble of the Xiezhi Empire suddenly burst into flames. As they died in a couple of seconds, he saw a beast in place of his friend—a giant stag with the wings of a bird.

"Peryton?" Mephisto frowned at the sight of transformation. The masked warrior took off his mask as he landed on top of the beast, which flew directly to the demon general.

"A Peryton and a half celestial... Who are you?" Mephisto asked curiously.

Looking straight at him, the stranger answered, pointing the sword at the demon, "I go by the name, Xie Tianyu, but you can call me Allen."

Chapter 598: Eye of Nezha

Late in the night, Mark was sleeping comfortably without any occasional baby cries for the past few hours. He was in the middle of a dream where he managed to build a god-killing cannon, which utilizes the power of a star and launches concentrated beams of energy at the enemies.

With the Cosmic Essence Absorption skill, which he got as a reward for completing the mission of killing the Supreme Pontiff of the Church of Doom as a departing gift from the system, he could absorb the energy from the stars, planets, and even black holes to refine it to make his.

Ever since he acquired that cultivation technique, Mark started dreaming of building such a cannon, which could shoot targets from planets away.

He was having a similar dream today too, but it remained incomplete this time as the abrupt knocks on the door woke him up.

As Mark got out to open the door, Alina was seen standing outside.

"Hmm... who is it?" Song Yue asked in her sleepy tone.

"Honey, it's nothing important. You sleep." Mark slowly closed the door and looked at Alina, "what is it?" He asked.

The android answered, "Bad news. Mephisto was dead."

"Mephisto died?" Mark furrowed his brows in seriousness. "He is an immortal realm demon. Even with the world's suppression, there's no force on this planet that could possibly kill him, apart from me. What happened?"

Alina's blue eyes glowed for a second before projecting an image,

"According to the images downloaded from the satellite, it looks like we have a formidable enemy."

The image was kind of blurry, and Mark couldn't see the face of the person or the beast standing beside him, but he did manage to see the golden energy enveloping the large sword the warrior was carrying, which was pointing at the fallen Mephisto.

Alina went on projecting many images but nothing gave away the identity of the attacker.

Mark said, "Pass the message to King Qi about postponing our attack. It's best if I take care of this unknown warrior before thinking of any other strategies. Find out everything about him."

"Understood."

As Alina left him, Mark couldn't help but wonder, "Who is this mysterious expert that Emperor Shi managed to hire? Or was he just passing by?"

Meanwhile, at Leon Empire's imperial palace, Xie Tianyu was in private attendance with Emperor Shi and the sixth prince while Xiao Chuhe was with his friends who became awkward with him.

"No, I'm not here to meddle in the affairs between the two Empires, Emperor Shi. I'm only here to take away my sister with me." Xie Tianyu refused the Emperor's offer to become the Empire's Supreme guardian.

"But, didn't you say that your sister has supposedly been snatched away by Lu Zhen?" The sixth prince pointed out the problem. "I believe you were aware of the protection shield over Genesis City, which wouldn't let an outsider enter the city without the palace's permission. Moreover, there are several demigod realm beings in that place. Moreover, Lu Zhen is not that simple. If he could manage to bring four demigod beasts to his side, you can imagine how strong he was. Whatever rumors circulated all over the world about him, I'm afraid he is stronger than that. It won't be easy for you to invade that place and take your sister by force."

Xie Tianyu nodded in agreement, "I'm aware of it, Prince Shi. Or else, I would have already gone there to take away my sister. I have been looking for a certain treasure. Quite coincidentally, it was hidden in this City. As long as I can attain it, I might be able to dispel the world's suppression of me. They won't be of any concern."

"A treasure in this city?" Emperor Shi raised his eyebrow. He couldn't help but remember Mark's message a while back. "Lu Zhen was also talking about it. He said the demons were looking for something and wouldn't stop until they acquired it. What is the treasure you were looking for?"

Xie Tianyu answered without hiding anything, "It's called the Eye of Nezha. It should be in the form of an amulet with an emerald eye embedded in it. If you can get me the treasure, I'll do a favor for you, too. Consider the killing of that demon as a gift."

"Huh?" "Eh?"

The Emperor and his grandson reacted at the same time, as they were taken aback by surprise. Xie Tianyu sensed the change in their emotions and questioned them, "Don't tell me you knew the item?"

The sixth prince then reached to his neck and suddenly took out an amulet, which matches the exact description of this savior mentioned. "It's this item?"

"It's with you all along?" Xie Tianyu was visibly taken aback, reaching out for the amulet as the sixth prince offered it to him. Taking a closer look at the amulet, Xie Tianyu said, "Yes, it is the one."

"Uhh... this belonged to my daughter," Emperor Shi told him. He further added, "She received it as a betrothal gift from her husband which was supposedly his ancestral treasure, and later, I passed it to my grandson as a memento of his late parents."

Xie Tianyu couldn't hide his smile as he commented, "I guess it was indeed a good thing I intervened in your battle. Or else, I wouldn't have found this ancient artifact." He looked back at the old man, "Emperor Shi, tell me, how should I repay you? State your wish. As long as you don't ask me to stay here, I will do my best to fulfill it. I would even kill Lu Zhen if you want. I have heard nothing but bad things about him anyway."

Emperor Shi cast a sidelong glance at the sixth prince and said, "I might have certain wishes to ask but it is a fact that the artifact belonged to my grandson. It is his right."

After exchanging meaningful gazes, the Prince immediately said, "Just one thing. I need you to destroy a facility located on an island. It's Lu Zhen's secret weapon manufacturing facility."

"Huh?" Emperor Shi frowned, looking at his grandson. He was expecting different, like killing Lu Zhen actually. More than the demon invasions or whatever, he was more worried about the southern neighbor that could end his dynasty for good.

"Oh! Tell me about its specs," said Xie Tianyu, suddenly becoming interested in the topic.

The sixth prince explained, "Lu Zhen brought an abomination to this world, Your Grace. I believe you already know about the existence of firearms and his invincible-under-demigod robotic army. Through our information network, we found that it is that mysterious facility located on Fujian Island that is the source of his weapons. We destroy it, we would take off Genesis Federation's limbs."

"Robots? Firearms?" Xie Tianyu's reaction of surprise was out of the prince's expectations. "I seem to have heard of them before. Sss..." He hissed in pain, grabbing his head for a moment as flashes of some blurred memories came to his head.

The Emperor and his grandson couldn't help but exchange glances, wondering what was going on.

"I accept your request." He rose to his feet with a determined face, "Give me the location. I'll destroy it right away before leaving for my destination."

Meanwhile, in another room, in a royal guest room, Xiao Chuhe was explaining his story to whom he considered his friends, "Well, that is how I escaped from the clutches of the righteous sects and ended up in a contract with Brother Xie. However, since I'm neither a demigod nor have a cosmic bloodline like a dragon or phoenix, I can only maintain this human form with his unique sealing method. After that, he went somewhere and I had to live somehow. So, I created this Xiao Chuhe persona and created a nonexistent minor noble family. It's not that I want to come here, but I have no choice but to follow Brother Xie's orders."

Warrior: "..."

Assassin: "..."

Monk: Well, we can understand where you are coming from, but it is a lot to take, Brother Xiao... well, you know, now that we know that you are a bloodthirsty beast of the Nethersect...

Xiao Chuhe: *sigh* forget it. It is foolish of me to think you people are any different.

He left the guest room, closing the door with force.

Chapter 599 Xie Tianyu's attack at the factory (part-1)

Fujian Island, Western Moon kingdom;

It was a regular day at the factory. Ark Prime was working on creating a new generation of robots; Ark Secundus was building a supercomputer from scratch; Ark Tertius was working on upgrading Song missile while other artificial intelligence-controlled robots were busy with weapons manufacturing at a rapid pace.

Meanwhile, the factory Guardian, Jingwei, was training with Mark's sister, Shang Jiao.

Both of them have been spending in this factory testing grounds because of its self-repairing feature, and not to mention, it won't attract anyone's attention and let them go all out.

With her icy wings spread widely, Shang Jiao waved her magic staff, turning icy feathers into spikes and attacking her opponent.

Jingwei was moving at high speeds, evading them with ease.

As Shang Jiao continued to attack her, a sudden vibration felt all over the factory, interrupting their battle.

"An attack?" The girls exchanged glances at each other after the second vibration that was generated from the ceiling.

"Let's go out and see."

As both of them rushed out of the testing grounds, Ark Prime spotted them and stopped them, "Wait, it's not safe." He warned.

"What happened?" The Princess asked.

Ark Prime answered, "A domain has been conjured over the region. My connection to the master has been temporarily severed. It should be a demigod, not an opponent either of you can face. But, our defensive barrier has been activated. You would be safe as long as you stay in this facility."

"Not a problem. I can teleport to Papa as we were contracted by blood and soul. It is not something a demigod can disconnect with a domain," said Jingwei. "After returning to his mindscape, I'll inform Papa."

"That seems like a valid approach," Ark Prime, the rank-9 intelligent robot, agreed with her idea.

"Jiao Jiao, I will be back," Jingwei gave a subtle nod to her only friend and closed her eyes, trying to connect to Mark.

She opened her eyes after a few seconds, with a frown on her face, "I can't seem to connect with Papa, either. Why?"

Ark Prime replied, "The domain's power should have exceeded the power of the demigod realm. But, it is not necessary that the enemy is in the immortal realm. Or else, the factory's defenses shouldn't have blocked the attacks. Or, it could have been because the enemy is testing our defenses. For confirmation, we have to go out and scan the domain and the enemy by ourselves."

"So, what now?" Shang Jiao looked at the robot, while a few more AI-powered robots gathered on the spot.

Ark Tertius said, "As long as we can finish the upgrade of the Song-II missile, it will be possible to make a hole through the domain and form a connection with Master. After all, it was designed to tear through space in the first place. Hence, it can do the same with the domain too."

"How long do you need?" Asked Shang Jiao. She has yet to get used to this complex stuff about firearms and missiles or whatever new terms they are, but at the very least, she had confidence in these robots.

Ark Tertius' eyes glowed for a second and it replied, "Estimated time to finish, based on the current pace of development: 41 days."

"41 days?" The ladies let out a gasp.

Ark Prime then said, "It can be reduced to less than 10 Hours with the assistance from Lady Shang Jiao."

"Me?" Shang Jiao's eyes widened and she pointed at herself in surprise. "How?"

Ark Prime answered, "The Orb of time. If we maximize its output and keep its range minimum enough to cover the building site, we can slow down the time by 100 times."

"Hmm... but slowing down the time by 100 times, even in such a concentrated area, isn't easy..." Shang Jiao has never accomplished such a feat. She was worried about the enormous strain on her soul.

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After thinking deeply, she nodded with a hardened face, "Alright. If this is the only way to survival, let's do it."

Ark Prime then said, "Meanwhile, I, Ark Secundus, and Ark Quartus will try to distract the enemy."

"You three?" Shang Jiao raised her eyebrow, "Even if you are supposedly at rank nine and able to fight a Supreme realm on your own, you are not even a match to me, much less the enemy."

Ark Secundus replied, "That's because the master has prohibited us from using our attribute powers against Young Miss. If we only focus on using attribute powers, we could distract the enemy for a while."

Meanwhile, outside the factory, Xie Tianyu was seen floating in the sky with a deep frown on his face, "damn it. No wonder that prince asked me to take care of this factory instead of taking care of Lu Zhen. Such building in this lower plane of existence would indeed cause an imbalance of power. Or maybe he already anticipated that I would have to fight with Lu Zhen either way. But a new problem has arrived now. If I can't even break through this building's defenses, would I be able to break through Lu Zhen's defenses? Hmm... Let's just go all out."

Pouring a large amount of his ether energy into the amulet hanging around his neck, which further empowered the broadsword in his hand, Xie Tianyu raised it above his head.

Just as he was about to swing it down, suddenly, the gravity in the surroundings increased abruptly. The pressure on his body was so great that Xie Tianyu started falling at a rapid pace.

Once he landed on the ground, he started resisting the 100 times the gravity on his body, making sure to stand upright as three robots exited the factory and went into action almost simultaneously.

"What? Robots?" A blurry memory came to Xie Tianyu, causing a headache.

"Spatial Distortion"

"Lightning Beam"

At once, the space around Xie Tianyu started distorting, crushing him with spatial pressure. For a moment, Xie Tianyu felt an invisible force squeezing his body, pulling away his skin, in all directions.

As he focused on resisting this effect, the robot shot a concentrated beam of lightning through its palms. They pierced his body and made a large hole in the middle of his chest.

Almost instantly, divine energy flew out of his body and recovered his peak stage while a golden aura enveloped his body, nullifying the effects of spatial distortion on his body. The eyes behind the mask also turned golden, with no visible pupils.

Xie Tianyu charged forward at once and swung the sword at Ark Quartus, who was the nearest.

The robot was split into two parts, falling to the ground.

Chapter 600 Xie Tianyu's Attack at the factory (part-2)

"Suicide mode, activate"

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Ark Prime didn't hesitate to switch to panic mode as soon as he found his comrade fell down to the sword of the enemy in one move.

Ark Prime has Gravity control, and Ark Secundus has spatial powers.

Together, they worked on stalling the enemy, not by facing head-on separately but by merging their energies to create bigger attacks.

As Ark Prime placed his hand on Ark Secundus, supplying him with inexhaustible amounts of energy at the behest of damaging his core, the latter managed to activate the strongest skill he inherited from Mark, the Singularity.

However, Ark Secundus' Singularity is different from Mark's. Unlike Mark, who activates it at the center of his palm, the robot activates the skill using its core.

The singularity radiated a wave of immense energy, creating a whirlpool of pulling force that threatened Xie Tianyu's life.

Xie Tianyu tried resisting it, but this time, his divine aura didn't help him much, and due to the distance being so small between them, the pull was so strong that he was sucked into the robot's core, finding himself in a space, where immense force is crushing him to death. His vision started to get blurry.

Meanwhile, strange visions from the past started appearing in his head; they weren't linear but random fragments from here and there. One time, he was a kid; another time, he was a teenager... But, every memory had one common factor.

"Bro, look at my grades. I got first in the grade"

"Say, lately, I'm forgetting what our parents looked like. Where did you put the album our grandpa gave it to you?"

"I had a crush on this girl, but I'm worried that she might reject going for prom with me." "Hey, don't sell yourself short. Those Max or Riche... they are just spoiled brats of wealthy families who always like to bully others and use their family's authority. If the girl falls for their charms, then she isn't the right one for you."

"Bro, do you think I should propose to her?" "Just do it, Al."

"Al, don't you dare run away by yourself and disappear on me like that. Do you know how much I was worried? I'm this close to pulling a machine gun on Max when he tried threatening me with your name."

"This is where our parents are buried, Al. Sorry for lying to you all this while. Sit down a bit. I'll tell you how they really died."

"Brother, don't go. In the news, they all said that the research facility will be the target of the enemies." "I had to go, Al. This research is important for me. There are millions of lives at stake here. No matter what, we have to complete the bomb and stop this war. Until then, you stay with Aunt Sally. Be careful. And don't worry, we work in a secret facility, not the one those terrorists claimed to fire at."

"No... my brother is not a betrayer. You must be mistaken." "Where did you hide him? I want to meet him."
"Throw him out."

Xie Tianyu abruptly opened his eyes, letting out a gasp. He didn't know how long it had passed and what memories he was experiencing earlier that he never had before, but first things first, he needed to get out of the place.

With his divine energy trying its best to negate the pressure from all sides, the amulet on his neck glowed as an enormous amount of energy flew into it, once again, giving him momentary resistance against the world laws. Letting out a roar, he expelled his ether energy on all sides of his body.

At once, the core exploded, and the robot Ark Secundus blasted into pieces. Ark Prime pushed away and crashed to the ground.

"System Failure," "System failure," "System failure," "Proceed with Suicide mode?"

Errors rang in Ark Prime's ears as Xie Tianyu got out and reclaimed his sword.

"Suicide mode, Activate."

Ark Prime instantly made its choice, activating the suicide mode, a function that's actually an inbuilt one.

Its rank was forcibly raised by 1 as its already 35% damaged core was consuming too much energy from the surroundings, reaching its half-life state almost in a second.

With only less than a minute before the process of disintegration started, Ark Prime charged forward, unleashing Gravity Dome for a few hundred meters around it and increasing the gravitational force by 500 times at once, within its limits.

Xie Tianyu was pressed to the ground for a moment before the divine energy gushed out to negate the effects.

However, before he gets to stand properly, Ark Prime manages to reach him while conjuring a Gravity blade in its hands. It stabbed him in the chest, piercing the blade into his body.

"Argh..." Xie Tianyu couldn't help but let out a painful scream but managed to control it and stabbed the sword at the robot's neck.

This time, the blade couldn't penetrate through its body, leaving behind a scratch and sparks of heat. Ark Prime, meanwhile, consumed enormous amounts of graviton particles from the gravity dome into its eyes, unleashing a concentrated beam of energy.

"Dammit... If it hits me at this close, I might die..."

Xie Tianyu realized that he couldn't get the blade out of his body. Hence, he expelled as much ether energy as he could from his body, intending to blast away the robot.

However, Ark Prime resisted it with full effect. The energy layer over its body was pushed away; its body melted slowly, but the robot persisted in completing the skill.

Just as it was about to launch the beam, the energy dissipated on its own, and its glowing blue robotic eyes became gray. The Gravity Blade also disappeared, freeing Xie Tianyu and taking him by surprise.

Ark Prime became still.

"Huh?" Xie Tianyu looked at it closely, realizing that the robot stopped functioning.

He pushed it with his palm, and it fell to the ground.

"Phew... that was so close..." He couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief before sitting on the ground in a lotus position, replenishing his lost ether energy by swallowing a scarlet-colored potion and meditating.

Five minutes have gone by, and his body has reached its peak state, Xie Tianyu set his eyes on the factory.

Meanwhile, inside the factory;

Shang Jiao was trying her best to control the Orb of time, slowing down time by a hundred times within the building section of the factory as Ark Tertius was in the middle of working, building the warhead.

He suddenly pauses for a second and comments, "Ark Prime is also dead, Young miss."

Shang Jiao asks in worry, "How long do we have?"

The robot replies, "So far, only 60.7 hours have been passed here. Still need 923 hours by estimation."

"I'll go..." Jingwei volunteered to stall the time.

To which Shang Jiao stopped her, "No, you can't. Three of them combined only managed to stall for 36 minutes. There's no way you can stop the enemy."

"Then, what should we do? Wait for him to destroy this place, dear to my papa?" Jing Wei rushed to the exit.

Shang Jiao tried to stop her, but the robot reminded her to focus.

"No, this can't go on. There is only one way to solve this. I need to slow down more..." She mumbled, clenching her fist.

Ark Tertius replied to that, "Theoretically, it is impossible, Young miss. You have to be in the demigod realm to go past your current limits."

"Alright then, I will just do that." The sixteen-year-old steeled her determination.