

Seller 621

Chapter 621: Departure

Ten more weeks passed away in the blink of an eye.

Qilin Empire and Pearl River kingdom lost the war against Genesis Federation, under the leadership of Commander Alina. It was actually a brutal war.

Unlike Shi Chong, the Ming Dynasty refused to bend his knee even when his defeat became certain. Even after Emperor Ming was killed, the war didn't end, as his son stubbornly continued to fight, and neither did most of the vassal lords try to rebel.

It was quite a bloody affair. Or else, it would have only taken Mark a couple of days to make it fall.

Alina tried her best to keep casualties to a minimum, but still, more than 400,000 civilian casualties and the death of 300,000 soldiers (that's almost 90% of the entire force) occurred in the end.

As a gesture of good faith for the former Kun Empire, the only empire that accepted the annexation without any resistance, the Entire Qilin Empire was merged into the kingdom of Kun, increasing its size bigger than the Golden Eagle Kingdom and turning it into the biggest vassal state.

As for the Pearl River kingdom, they gave up midway through the war, and hence, Mark handed back their governance, although with limited autonomy.

From the wars, the vassal state kingdoms started their recovery process. The robots were aggressively mining gold, ether ores, and rare materials all over the continent so that the economy would see stability very soon.

As if Mark put away his grudge, he also established friendly relations with the Dragon Empire, although it is strictly on trade and nothing else. He put an AI robot and a bunch of robots in every kind of department so that innovation would rise at a quicker pace.

With nothing else to do, Mark was prepared to say goodbyes to his family. Because of Behemoth's threat, He decided to leave Song Yue and Lu Shan in Vienna City.

A formal coronation ceremony was held at Vienna, which has seen not just the vassal lords but even the Emperors from abroad. Only the Tang Dynasty sent its prime minister as an envoy. Almost all leaders of the sects belonging to the continent were present. The leaders of Mage, Archery, and Assassin guilds were also there, mainly to amends. The swordsman guild leader wasn't seen in the ceremony as the guild was banned long ago all over the continent after the war with Leon Empire, The members were either advised to join other guilds or face exile.

Mark made everyone witness the strength of Genesis Federation so that no one would attempt anything foolish in his absence. In the grand parade that went on for atleast two hours, thousands of robots displayed their sheer number, uniformity, and various formations; AI-controlled robots displayed their attribute skills and showcased the powers of demigods in a protective barrier. It was such a visual treat; Lan Ju, Jinlong, and the four guardian beasts also made their appearance to remind everyone of their existence. Fu Sheng/Eol and Allen sparred in a protective barrier, giving a treat for the audience but a firm threat to the guests, showcasing that the Federation doesn't just have puppets and beasts, they also have demigod warriors.

Too bad that Sylvandria once again missed the event. Mark confronted her and she said that she was in the middle of cultivating some ancient technique. Mark had to believe her and not bother her anymore.

Once the coronation ceremony was over, Shen Ling was officially appointed as the Empress Regnant of Genesis Federation. It was also when people understood that the Chancellor's title that Mark held actually had a different set of powers than they thought, and he was only exercising the Empress' powers so far because there were none.

As the Chancellor, Mark was the head of the military, akin to a Supreme Commander/Supreme General.

Secondly, he holds the highest legislative authority. Mark was the constitutional head, meaning his permission was required to enact any law in the country. He also has the veto to reverse any decision made by Empress Regnant.

Thirdly, in the absence of Empress Regnant, there would be no acting Empress Regnant. Instead, he would hold her powers as well.

One could say he is more like a counterpart of the Empress Regnant or the Shadow Emperor.

But, he had his limitations as well, now that an Empress Regnant is appointed.

He cannot initiate or execute policies directly without the Empress Regnant's approval either, unless within the military domain.

As for the Empress Regnant, Shen Ling is the sovereign ruler who directly rules over the people. She had all the powers that a ruler would usually have, except that she wasn't a monarch who could just make decisions whatever she wanted.

In his absence, she would also take over his constitutional powers but share the authority with the Vice Chancellor over the military, each requiring the other's approval to make changes to the military, for the war, or whatever that is significantly big. And, when the Vice-Chancellor is also absent, she would have the power of the monarch.

Apart from those two, the third strongest existence in the country was the revived Genesis Cabinet, which even had the power to override Mark's veto or the Empress' decisions, although it would need at least a 75% vote. The head of the Genesis Cabinet was given the title Vice Chancellor, and at the moment, 18-year-old Shang Jiao, the youngest demigod in the history of mankind, was the Head.

The day of the departure arrived.

A lot of loved ones, once again, apart from Sylvandria, were gathered in a private chamber of the mansion as Mark, Shang Jiao, and their grand-uncle Shang Jing were prepared to leave.

And the entire room was filled with nothing but the cries of a baby; the 4-month-old Shen Yi clung to Mark like glue, not willing to leave him. As for 18-month-old Lu Shan, he just stood there, grabbing his mom's hand. He was completely calm and collected, although his eyes said otherwise. Tears welled up in those cute little eyes, but they didn't leave the eyes. His free wrist was tightly clenched as Mark soothed the baby girl and put her to sleep, giving her to Shen Ling's best friend and personal maid.

As the three of them formed a circle and grabbed each other hands with a white colored stone put in the center, Lan Jing spoke, "Hold each other tight no matter what. If you miss, we will be stranded across the plane instead of directly returning home."

"We know, you have already said it, Grand-uncle. Let's get over this," said Shang Jiao.

Chapter 622: Earth 12994: The world of fire giants

Mark looked at his loved ones and smiled, "I'll return in no time. Stay safe. My Schatz (Song Yue), Xiao Shan's training is up to you.

Hun (Shen Ling), the fate of our country is in your hands. If anyone dares to undermine your authority in my absence, Alina, my sister, will be taking care of them as your commander.

Allen, my dear brother, I promise that once I take care of this business, we'll retrieve your memories for you. Until then, I hope you protect this world of mine I created and be patient with your adopted sister.

Mother, I promise you that I'll keep Xiao Jiao safe no matter the costs.

And Alina, in my absence, you have complete authority over the factory and the space station. Do as you see fit."

"Farewell, everyone."

The light shone brightly just in time as Lan Jing's spell was completed. A blinding flash of light enveloped over three of them, and the three of them disappeared soon after.

Their surroundings changed to a village burning in hot temperatures, two bluish-white stars in the sky, one on the left and one on the right. The left one looked a lot bigger, like a proper sun, while the right one seemed quite smaller in comparison, indicating its far distance.

It was so hot that Mark and the other two felt trouble breathing for a moment.

Shang Jiao had to use her ether energy to form a layer of energy barrier over her body to nullify the effects.

Meanwhile, notifications rang in Mark's head one after another.

*Ding! Scanning the planet's atmosphere.

*Ding! Oxygen levels: 31.4%, Nitrogen: 58.2%, CO2: 2.1%, water vapor.

*Ding! Atmospheric pressure: 2.4 bar

*Ding! Current temperature: 261 degrees Centigrade.

*Ding! Natural energy density: 556.4 Ed

*Ding! Scanning the planet's core.

*Ding! Planet radius: 1.2R.

*Ding! Surface gravity: 4.2g

*Ding! Master, do you need in-depth analysis? It will take 70 minutes as I would scan the entire planet. However, the system will have limited functions during the time period. Do I proceed?

"Not right now," Mark dismissed it and placed his attention on the incoming trouble.

Soon, they were approached by a dozen 10-foot giant humans who looked like they were made of rocks, and lava seemed to be flowing through the gaps.

"What the..." Lan Jing was taken aback. "Was there a mishap?" He wondered aloud.

One of them, probably the leader as he was slightly bigger than them— about 12 ft, conjured a concentrated ball of lava and spoke, "State your identities and reasoning for the visit, intruders."

Mark observed them. He couldn't sense ether energy inside them but there was attribute energy.

"Eyes of God, activate."

A holographic screen appeared before Mark with details of the guy who had just spoken.

Equivalent Rank: 8-circle

Species: Fire Giant

Type: Intelligent Humanoid

Attribute: Lava, Fire, Earth

Age: 122 EY (earth years)

Bloodline: None

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"Scan the others too..."

Meanwhile, Lan Jing calmly tried to resolve the situation, "Sorry for the intrusion. We are a group of travelers who like to roam the cosmos. We don't have a home, and neither do we have any affiliation with someone. Can you tell us where we are? Which world is this? And what plane of existence this is?"

"As if we believe the words of travelers who reek of the ice, our eternal enemies," He growled at Lan Jing while glancing at Mark who reeked of nothing.

He was about to launch the attack, but then Mark mumbled, "Gravity Imprisonment, 100g."

At once, the lava giant leader was forced to crash to the ground, turning the others hostile immediately.

"These are all weaklings. Knock them out."

Shang Jiao then charged forward at one of the incoming lava giants. With a sweep of her hand, the fire giant was knocked out and she proceeded to change the target.

Leaving the others to his sister, Mark slowly walked to the Lava giant who was struggling to get up. He approached him and crouched down, placing his hand on the giant's head.

"Ark, extract the information."

"Arghhh..."

The fire giant leader's scream increased more and more as time passed by before eventually collapsing like a corpse with lifeless eyes.

*Ding! Information is extracted.

"Omit his personal life and only inform me what I should be aware of this planet, its history, its forces, etc..."

*Ding! According to the data we extracted from the target, the planet is Glacadore or Earth-12994. It is in the plane of ice and fire, the realm of the Frostveil Expanse, controlled by the Ancient Lan Clan. The ruling Empire is named the Heavenly Ocean Empire.

For eons, the planet has been inhabited by Ice elves on the dark side of the planet and fire giants on the bright side of the tidally locked planet.

Roughly three heavenly years ago (equivalent to 14 earth years), a god realm warrior appeared to have lost a battle, and his remains transformed into a sun, bringing light to the dark side of the planet, weakening Ice Elves, and mutating the fire giants in the process. The temperatures rose on the planet, and Ice Elves lost their war against Fire giants. The royal family and many other ice elves fled the planet, and the Fire giants took over it.

The current ruler of the planet is named Agaroth, a fire giant lord with cultivation equivalent to 13-circle. His personality is rumored to be vicious and bloodthirsty, and he often kills his own kind for fun. Like all Fire Giants, He has a deep hatred for Ice element beings and wouldn't hesitate to sacrifice his kin to kill his enemies. The rule of nature on this planet is the law of the jungle, the strongest prevails and the weak become the prey.

Due to Agaroth's strong prowess, the planet is granted autonomy by the Heavenly Ocean Empire as long as they pay tribute to the Emperor. The Ancient Lan Clan no longer controls this planet.

The fire giants' source of food is the fire elemental crystals, which form in the planet's crust as the planet's core absorbs the natural energy and refines the expelled impurities.

The world portal is located approximately 1200 kilometers away from this location, and it is guarded by the Molten Legion's elite troops, a group of fire giants, 64 in number, each with a similar strength as this target named Ruther.

Another interesting thing is that the fire giants worship the Immortal Phoenix and consider Blizzard Pegasus as their bitter enemy.

"Hmm..." Mark fell into deep thought, analyzing the information extracted from the fire giant. Meanwhile, Shang Jiao defeated the rest and joined Mark.

As Lan Jing apologized to him for making a mess, Mark explained to them what he learned so far from the target.

Shang Jiao made an uncomfortable face due to her brother's ability, while Lan Jing commented in a serious tone, "Then, we have to be swift in dealing with them before we attract the attention of immortal and powerful fire giants."

"Nah, I have a better idea." Mark smiled mysteriously.

Chapter 623: Null Point: The hidden dimension of portals

Somewhere in the northern hemisphere of the planet, a giant portal was seen floating above the lake that spread about a few square kilometers around.

Floating islands were seen here and there on the lake, and on the top of them, pairs of fire giants were either seen sleeping or fighting against each other.

On the shores, a couple of fire giants were lazily lying around and gossiping about various things.

Ignis: "Say, I heard that Tharnir was stabbed by Ravnak in sleep."

Draknir: "Yeah, I too heard about it. Wasn't that too cowardly? How was Tharnir not punished?"

Ignis: "C'mon, Tharnis had a special background. He was the grandnephew of General Morvak. There would be no way he could get punished."

Draknir: "Morvak was just a squad captain three years ago but after killing a bunch of weakened ice elves and luckily killing a general, his status has been upgraded."

Ignis: "Life's unfair too. We couldn't participate back then and had to guard the borders. General Morvak used the opportunity that he got. Moreover, even though he got a mine as a reward... if he didn't have potential, he couldn't have broken through the immortal realm either way."

Draknir: "Don't you think we have potential? If we get an endless supply of fire crystals, we will become immortals too. Look at both of us. We reached Tier-7 on our own, didn't we?"

Ignis: "Whatever... I just... huh? Draknis... look over there."

Draknis: "Huh... is that?"

They abruptly stopped their conversation and got up, alerting the others with a shout.

"Hey, brothers... an incoming alert... the sky..."

At once, the fire giants went into alert and stared into the sky, where they saw a large ball of flames. As it was getting bigger, and so was the pressure in the surroundings.

But, when it reached visible distance, they saw a flaming bird coming right at them.

The leader of the legion's elite troops, the 20ft fire giant, gave an immediate order, "Attention."

They all stood straight as the visitor reached them and went straight to the world portal.

Mark, in his phoenix transformation, was seen carrying Shang Jiao and Lan Jing in his claws as he flew toward the portal.

No one stopped him and stood there, watching silently as he successfully entered the portal.

However, just as he disappeared from their sight, another figure appeared. It is a fire giant but with wings.

The winged fire giant frowned as he stared at the portal that was brightly glowing, "That was..."

He flew down and descended onto the floating island where the troop leader was standing.

"Lord Torveth... you just missed it," Kelvar spoke as if he was still elated by the earlier scene. "An apostle personally came here."

"An apostle? That's what I sensed earlier?" The winged fire giant mumbled before he asked, "Are you sure it is an apostle?"

Kelvar nodded firmly, "Yes, sir. We saw the immortal phoenix, but only a lot smaller and weaker. No doubt, it is an apostle in training."

"But, why was an apostle here?"

Kelvar replied with a shake of his head, "I'm not aware, sir. But, he was coming from that direction."

"That place?" Torveth stared in the direction and said out loud, "That was in the direction where the intrusion took place." He couldn't help but wonder aloud, "So, an apostle was chasing after them?"

Torveth then flapped his wings and flew away while mumbling, "By right, even an apostle shouldn't have entered this realm without informing our Lord. I should inform him."

*

Meanwhile, Mark, in his phoenix form, exited from the other side of the portal, teleporting to a random location on another planet, somewhere in a valley.

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What welcomed him was the sight of dozens of portals all around and a bunch of green-skinned humanoid aliens with horns protruding from their heads.

"Look, it is a firebird." "Idiot, that's not a firebird. Look carefully. It is the Phoenix."

"Hey, an apostle of Phoenix is here." "An apostle of the Divine Phoenix?"

As murmurs passed along in the region, Mark transformed back into a human upon landing on a nearby flat surface; Lan Jing smiled and introduced the place, "Welcome to Null Point, the center of the very celestial existence."

"Null point?" Shang Jiao looked around, "I see a bunch of portals everywhere. Let me guess, each portal leads to a world?"

"Yeah," Lan Jing explained as they walked along, "But since they all look the same, many would often get confused. If one isn't careful, they would even end up in the territory of powerful demonic beasts. That's why many employ the workers here, the race of Tut. They are friendly guides but insult them, and they will turn quite fierce. If you kill a Tut, you would even be banned from this place. Of course, the rules are only for the weak. As long as you are an immortal, you would be pardoned.

Anyway, this place is called the Mountains of Ladakh. All of these portals around will lead you to the third quadrant of the Frostveil Expanse, which is ruled by our family. And the biggest of them all... right there..." Lan Jing pointed at the large portal floating about the peak, "That would take it to our home."

"Umm... excuse me... excuse me sir..." A tut race worker hurriedly caught up to them, stopping them on the path. "Yes?" As Lan Jing took the lead, the worker looked at Mark and asked, "Earlier, I saw your beast form. Are you an apostle of the divine phoenix?"

"Apostle?" Mark blinked in surprise. He suddenly remembered Xin Rui, who was an apostle of Ouroboros. He responded with a rejection, "No, I carry the bloodline."

"Oh, then please excuse me." The Tut worker scurried away, leaving Mark in surprise once again, "what's with the change of attitude? Grand-uncle?"

Lan Jing shrugged his shoulders, "Well, apostles are the messengers of divine beasts and deities." After a brief pause, he then stopped and turned to look at Mark, "But, anyway, I would ask you not to reveal your Phoenix Bloodline while you are at home. We are already in a bad situation. If they find out that your mother married the descendant of a Phoenix, the arch-enemy of our clan, and much less you inherited its powers too, forget about accepting, they might try to execute you instead. And the story is also simple."

"After the death of our grandfather, our mother married a mortal and lived as a civilian until she discovered that we inherited our grandfather's bloodline. She contacted you, and you brought us back to the clan in order to repent the mistakes of your brother. Yeah, yeah, you told us twice already," Shang Jiao looked a bit slightly annoyed for some reason. Her tone was also slightly disrespectful, earning a surprise followed by a frown from Lan Jing.

Mark observed that and he immediately confronted her, "Xiao Jiao?"

Shang Jiao suddenly realized her folly and apologized to both of them, "I'm sorry. It is just that ever since you transformed into the phoenix, I'm feeling heavy discomfort. I guess it is my bloodline. Please don't transform into it, Zhen-ge. I know that you are more than strong enough for that."

"Yeah, don't worry about it..."

Chapter 624: Returning to the ancestral land

Soon enough, they enter the giant portal without any problems on the way.

But once they did, they re-entered the Plane of Ice and Fire, although this time, they teleported to a frozen planet with towering snow-capped mountains stretched like alabaster spires into a pale, star-lit sky. Endless plains of glistening snow shimmered under the auroras, painting the landscape in hues of green and blue.

Crystal-clear ice caverns sparkled like diamond cathedrals while frost-laden forests of ancient, gnarled trees stood silent against howling winds. Amid this frozen splendor, every flake of snow and every gust of frosty air contained dense natural energy, unlike anything Mark experienced so far.

*Ding! Scanning the planet's atmosphere.

*Ding! Oxygen levels: 38.6%, Nitrogen: 58.2%, CO2: 2.1%, Argon and water vapor (remaining).

*Ding! Atmospheric pressure: 7.3 bar

*Ding! Current temperature: -152 degrees Centigrade.

*Ding! Natural energy density: 3225 Ed

*Ding! Scanning the planet's core.

*Ding! Planet radius: 14.9R.

*Ding! Surface gravity: 34.2g

Lan Jing started shivering in the cold, due to the abrupt change in temperatures. Once a native of this place, his body still couldn't adapt to it right away due to spending years on a planet where average temperatures are around 20C. Find more chapters on NovelBin.Côm

Mark and Shang Jiao didn't feel a thing as they were enjoying the dense natural energy in the surroundings, which is more than 3000 times denser than natural energy at their home. The high gravitational force also pressured their body but their demigod realm cultivation made them immune to any gravitational force below 100g.

And just like in the previous world, as they were busy admiring the views, a bunch of guards arrived there and displayed hostility, except that this time, it wasn't because of their element but because one of them recognized Lan Jing. The captain is supposedly an old comrade.

Moreover, these were stronger.

Of the seven that arrived there, the leader was immortal; two of them were in the demigod realm, and the remaining four were in the supreme realm. And just like fire giants, these humans didn't have any ether energy.

It made Mark wonder, if all aliens don't have ether, how come Allen had it? Does exposing a human's body to ether energy is the only way to mutate their cells?

Then, how do ether crystals even come to Earth-43?

He remembered hearing from an enemy in the past a mortal plane wasn't supposed to have a world where its inhabitants could cultivate in the first place.

The Orb of Time has been inside the planet's core for a long time. Perhaps, it is the cosmic orb that altered a planet's composition?

In that case, using the Orb of time, can he cultivate ether mines on other planets?

Many thoughts went through Mark's head as he and the other two were tied up and taken to the City of Tianhan, aka Heavenly Cold City, on the top of an ice drake. In the meantime, Ark began its deep scanning of the planet, which would render some of the system's functions like inventory or god eyes not available for the moment. However, Mark was more at ease this time because these weren't enemies but his family.

From the skies, as their eyes fell upon the city under the moonlight, Shang Jiao commented in awe, "This Tianhan City appeared to be like an architectural marvel. Zhen-ge?"

Mark nodded in agreement, looking down at the city.

Captain Lan Haoyu spoke to her, crossing his arms and staring at it with pride, "The buildings and structures were sculpted from the finest glacial ice of Mordor, yet they are anything but fragile. It isn't just there for the beauty with its glowing attribute. It actually takes a demigod to even make a dent into any structure here. Ancient artisans, blessed by our Deity, Lord Blizzard Pegasus, imbued the ice with a mystical resilience that allowed it to endure the harshest conditions."

Tall spires and winding towers rise from the icy landscape like frozen flames, each structure crowned with intricate patterns and carvings.

The walls of Tianhan shimmered like translucent jade, glowing faintly in the moonlight, while bridges and walkways were made of ice that hummed softly underfoot, as though they were alive.

Clad in frost-woven silks and fur-lined armor like the guards that captured them, the citizens were seen moving gracefully. They looked completely like the human Mark knew, and even the weakest civilian, who was as weak as 1-circle, was comfortably walking on the streets under such extremely cold temperatures and high gravity. If anything was different about them, regarding outer physical appearance, it was just that their skin was too pale, and they had blue, glowing eyes, just like Alina.

In the center of the city, an enormous Ice Palace stands, built into the side of the tallest mountain peak. The palace's vast halls are lined with crystal-clear ice sculptures of mythical creatures, their frozen forms capturing the essence of ancient legends.

That is where the three of them were taken into.

After a while, amid several gazes on the way, the three of them were taken to an Elder's court, where seven large and wide bunch of thrones with spikes were placed in an open courtyard kind of place. The ice thrones and the place around already had glowing properties but under the moonlight, it gave off an ethereal vibe.

Mark didn't know what to make of it, but he couldn't care less about the aesthetics for the moment.

Captain Lan Haoyu and the remaining guards, alongside the captured intruders, stayed put for a while until five elderly-looking men and a beautiful middle-aged woman who kinda had similar looks to Lan Jingyi arrived together.

They didn't spare a glance at Lan Jing at all, until they took their seats, leaving the central throne empty.

"Lan Jing, you have returned," said the woman, although she maintained a cold gaze. She addressed the others before glancing at Mark and commenting, "And you had an uncanny resemblance to my other annoying brother."

"Yuxuan..." Lan Jing was about to speak something to her before she suddenly waved her hand, "It's Elder Yuxuan for you, traitor."

Lan Jing was already facing trouble adjusting to the cold temperatures and high gravity. The wave of hand generated an energy palm that swiftly slapped his cheek. As a print of her palm appeared on his cheek, he flew to the side but was caught swiftly by Captain Lan Haoyu. Blood trickled from his trips and his legs turned wobbly, his entire body started shivering, "I..." He looked down and bowed, "I apologize, Elder Yuxuan."

Mark and Shang Jiao's facial expressions hardened upon witnessing the scene. Shang Jiao was about to make a move but Mark hurriedly nudged her with his elbows, gesturing for her to stay calm.

"Now, now, Yuxuan... no need to be so violent. Let's first listen to him," said an elder, who had an amiable smile.

Another elder with long ponytail hair was seen stroking his beard as he silently observed Shang Jiao. "Hmm... this girl... no wonder Lan Jing dared to come here." He commented in a mumble, but it was heard by other elders.

"What is it, Elder Ming?" Asked another elder, named Lan Chao.

Lan Ming then pointed his finger at Shang Jiao, "You girl, come forward a bit. Captain Haoyu, free her constraints."

"Huh?" "Eh?"

Chapter 625: Attacking an Elder

The other elders were taken aback by his sudden order and the immortal realm captain immediately followed his order without even looking at other elders.

Shang Jiao's body was freed from energy chains stepped forward as she was told.

Lan Ming then spoke, "I can sense the same bloodline running in your veins, like mine. Did you inherit Gengxin's bloodline?"

Shang Jiao cupped her fists and bowed, "Greetings, elders. I'm Shang Jiao, daughter of Shang Fu and Lan Jingyi, granddaughter of Lan Gengxin." After a brief introduction, she added, "As for your question, yes, I have inherited the bloodline of Blizzard Pegasus from our grandfather. The same goes for my elder brother."

They momentarily shifted their attention to Mark but sensed nothing. Many of them frowned collectively for a moment.

Mark returned their gaze with his own stare. He neither nodded nor greeted them. He simply stared at them in silence. There was no fear or respect in his eyes, and if anything, there was a clear disregard for their authority. They felt as if they were looked down upon by the young man.

"You there... what's with your gaze? Come forward and greet your elders," Lan Yuxuan expressed her displeasure while others calmed down.

Mark responded by breaking the energy chains with brute force and walking to them, stopping beside his sister and crossing his arms like a brute, which is a clear sign of disrespect, "I heard that because of your clan head's stupid decision, my grandfather and granduncle's cultivations were destroyed and had to be exiled from the clan to appease your Emperor. I bet you, elders, are behind this as well. Instead of owing an apology, you people treat us as some sort of intruders instead, acting so high and mighty. Even more, you slapped my granduncle. Secondly, I'm here to claim my grandfather's inheritance, aka, the clan headship in his place. One day, I would be making this clan my own, and you all would be my subordinates. So, I don't feel like bowing to you all. How about this? Satisfied with my explanation?"

"You... damn brat... Annoying, arrogant, and reckless, just like your grandfather." Lan Yuxuan stretched her arm in anger, two arms made of ice appeared out of nowhere, grabbing Mark tightly and raising him high in the air.

"Zhen-ge..." Shang Jiao was worried, but she stayed put, seeing her brother very calm on the surface.

Mark glanced at the ice arms. They surely grabbed him and seemed like exerting pressure on his body, but it wasn't to the extent of trying to kill him. Perhaps, it is because she assumed him weak. Or perhaps, it was because he is family.

Regardless, as he had no time to make them acknowledge him through the traditional route, Mark chose the rebellious way.

The first step he needed to do was to break off this trap.

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And he did with a bloodline skill.

"Freezing Gaze."

His brown eyes glowed for a second and the next second, the woman was frozen in ice. Mark gets freed and he softly lands on the ground.

Captain Lan Haoyu shuddered for a second, watching Mark's back. "This young man... we underestimated him."

"Elder Yuxuan" "You..."

As two elders worried and two became serious, Lan Ming swiftly moved to the frozen elder at a blurry speed, landing behind her and placing his palm on her back, "Dispel."

She was freed in a moment and let out a gasp of surprise, "That's the Blizzard Pegasus' Mythical Freezing Gaze."

"Freezing Gaze? Is that the freezing gaze?" "How?" "Is he an apostle?"

The Elders murmured one after another, and Lan Ming returned to his seat in a jiffy, taking a seat, and spoke, "Freezing Gaze, a unique ability of Blizzard pegasus. Anyone without a bloodline as powerful as the divine beast, couldn't fight it unless they were in the realm of True God."

"No wonder Elder Yuxuan couldn't fight against it. She neither inherited the bloodline nor was she in the True God realm," commented Lan Hengzhi.

Another Elder, Lan Jialei, commented with a frown, "But the unique skills cannot be inherited from bloodline. It has to be inherited directly from the divine beast."

Lan Ming then looked at Mark and asked, "Young man, are you an apostle of Blizzard Pegasus?"

Mark heard their words, and he was aware that it was because of the system that he extracted the best of The best bloodline skills of the Blizzard Pegasus.

As he couldn't tell them about the system, he wondered for a moment whether he should pose as an apostle. But then he remembered that posing as an apostle also carries significant risks. One of them is gaining unnecessary attention from the divine beast itself and he knew that he wasn't a match for it.

Mark's personality is to be extremely cautious against someone who he knows that he cannot beat or at least has less than a 10% probability of survival, but be reckless against those when he had a high probability of survival and significant chances of even winning.

In this situation, he took his chances to be reckless.

"How dare you attack an Elder," Lan Heng conjured a compressed mist in his palms.

In response, Mark shrugged his shoulders in indifference, "In my defense, your elder is the one who attacked me. If you are accustomed to attacking whoever you want and not expecting them to hit back, well, that changes today. Get used to it. Anyway, I don't know why we are gathered here. So, let's be quick with it so that we will be on our way to meet our Great-grandfather if he is still alive. If he is not, then we will pay our respects to his grave and rest for the day. I'm tired from all that traveling."

"This... brat..." "Calm down, Elder Heng.

Lan Ming then said, "You still haven't answered my question, lad. Are you an apostle?"

Mark firmly shook his head, "Not that I'm aware of."

"Then, I believe you," Lan Ming smiled with a nod. He then diverted his attention to the others, "Anyways, let's get this matter over with. There is no doubt that both of them carry the bloodline of the divine beast and since they didn't exist during the time of exile, they are allowed into the clan as well as the sect, by right. As the one who brought them to our doorstep, I believe Lan Jing also earned his right to return to the clan. What do you all think?"

Lan Jieli: "I agree"

Lan Heng: "I reject. I accept the entry of Gengxin's granddaughter. She seems promising. But such an undisciplined brat who doesn't even care about an elder's authority would just bring chaos to the clan. As for Lan Jing, I couldn't care less."

Lan Hengzhi: "I agree. Discipline can be cultivated, but talent cannot. If he can freeze Elder Yuanxan, with the right training, he could surpass all of us and even become a potential leader in the future."

Lan Qi: "No, I reject all of them. If the Emperor learned this, our clan would face trouble. Because of our decline, others were taking away our territories, and the palace wasn't even supporting us anymore. It's not worth the risk."

"Okay, that's 3 to 2. Elder Yuxuan?" Lan Ming looked at the last one, who actually started the whole trouble in the first place.

Knowing that Lan Yuxuan would reject the decision, they were prepared to call the Grand Elder.

But instead, Lan Yuxuan looked at Mark and asked, "What is your name?"

"Shang Zhen," replied Mark. He doesn't want to bring the whole complicated story. So, he just matched it with his sister, who was elated inwardly, feeling that her brother finally accepted his birth name.

"Shang Zhen..." She called out his name, maintaining a serious look, and said, "Welcome to the family."

Chapter 626 The Ancient Lan Sect

Life in the Ancient Lan clan is anything but a home. Due to his stark resemblance to Lan Gengxin or because of his rebellious attitude toward the elders as soon as he returned, everyone mostly stayed away from Mark, save a few. No one cooperates with him. No one tells him any directions to anything. No one returns his greetings. And it didn't take much time for Mark to realize that some of the elders of the clan were behind these unwelcoming reactions. He couldn't care less as he just had to win the heir trials and force them to acknowledge him.

Shang Jiao, on the other hand, had a better life. Lan Ming, The God realm (13-circle) expert takes her as his personal disciple.

Meanwhile, Mark and Shang Jiao join the clan as inner sect disciples.

Ancient Lan Sect is different from Ancient Lan Clan. The Ancient Lan Clan is filled with descendants of the Lan clan, while the Ancient Lan Sect allows everyone else from the entire plane interested in learning from the sect. It is located completely on a different planet in a different star system, light years away from the ancestral residence. So, it is like returning home but still staying away. However, as someone in the ascendant realm (demigod/10-circle), adding with the fact that he is a direct descendant, Mark was given direct entry into the inner sect. Find your next read on My Virtual Library Empire

Mark met various people there with different surnames over the past heavenly week (~3 earth weeks). All of them looked more or less humanoid, but their skin tones were different from his. Like some have multiple arms, some have green skin, some have red skin, some have multiple ears, some have striped skin like tigers, some have large manes over their faces like lions, etc... but all of them are indeed collectively human races but with different origins. Apart from these, there are also ice elves, a race that looks completely like humans but with icy crystalline skin, who call themselves Glacirians, then there are also ice giants called Ymirkin. And they all speak the universal Orlon language.

Of them, a young disciple, of 48 heavenly years old (~132 earth years) became Mark's close friend. His name is Aerynith, an ice elf hailed from Mist City—an ice planet ruled by Ice elves and comes under the Frosty Elf Empire.

The Frosty Elf Empire is kind of like an ally but not a friend to the Heavenly Ocean Empire. They are also too proud and consider themselves as the superior race. So, ice elves aren't treated nicely anywhere in the human cities. Aerynith was even more of an outcast as the only ice elf in the entire Sect. Perhaps, it was why Mark found it easier to bond with him.

After befriending Aerynith, Mark's life became better. Atleast with little things.

In the past heavenly week, Mark got used to the sect rules, traditions, names of important elites and their personalities and achievements, etc...

The strongest one in the sect is the Sect Master—his great grandfather, who is in mid-14-circle stage, and the three grand elders are in 13-circle. Lan Yuxuan, the one he attacked, is also one of those grand elders. The remaining elders were all in either the Saint realm (12-circle) or immortal realm (11-circle). The immortal realm is the minimum cultivation needed to become an elder in the sect, and the youngest elder—Aerynith is around 82 heavenly years old (~178 years old). The one who has the highest possibility to break that record is an 8-year-old (heavenly years) named Lan Xia.

In terms of earth years, she is roughly around 22, younger than Mark, but is at the peak stage of demigod realm. Because she isn't married yet, she is suppressing her cultivation as once a female becomes an immortal in this realm, they cannot give birth. Her bloodline will end there. According to Aerynith, she was courted by many experts and even a prince from the heavenly ocean empire, but she rejected all those proposals as she intended to become the next clan head, and the head of the Ancient Lan Clan has no place in the royal palace.

It was another casual day for Mark.

The afternoon sun bathed the courtyard in golden light as Mark sat cross-legged on the wooden floor of his residence, eyes half-closed. He breathed in slow, measured intervals, allowing the warmth of the star above to seep into his being. With the Cosmic Essence Absorption skill, he subtly pulled in the energy from the star (sun) even from hundreds of millions of kilometers away, refining it into his ether energy without stirring the surrounding aura too much. Drawing too much attention would only invite unnecessary trouble.

A sharp knock on the door shattered his focus. Before he could react, it swung open, and a familiar figure strode in.

"Shang Zhen!" Aerynith's crisp voice rang through the room. The ice elf warrior stood with arms crossed, her piercing blue eyes locked onto him. "You're being summoned."

Mark exhaled slowly, letting the lingering energy disperse. He cracked an eye open, taking in her slightly tense posture. "By who?"

"Grand Elder Lan Yuxuan."

Mark raised a brow. "Any reason?"

Aerynith hesitated for a beat. "Word is, the clan heiress has returned from her recent expedition. The Grand Elder might want you to spar with her."

That caught his attention. He had heard plenty about Lan Xia from Aerynith—the prodigy, the untouchable heir. A perfect chance to shatter that image.

Mark pushed himself to his feet, stretching slightly before dusting off his robes. "Finally," he murmured, a smirk tugging at his lips. "I was hoping for this. Once I beat her, there won't be any more debate about who the real heir should be."

Aerynith sighed, shaking her head. "Just don't get ahead of yourself. Let's go."

Together, they stepped into the sunlit courtyard, their footsteps echoing as they made their way toward the grand library.

The scent of old parchment and sandalwood filled the air as they entered the vast chamber. Towering shelves lined the walls, each stacked with scrolls and ancient tomes. At the center of it all, seated behind a long wooden table, was Grand Elder Lan Yuxuan.

The elder barely acknowledged their arrival, his gaze skimming over an aged scroll. A moment of silence stretched before he finally rolled it up and looked at Mark.

"You came quickly," Lan Yuxuan remarked, setting the scroll aside. His voice was calm yet carried an unmistakable weight of authority. "Good."

Mark dipped his head in greeting. "I was told you summoned me, Grand Elder."

"Indeed." The elder leaned forward slightly, his sharp eyes studying Mark as though peeling back layers, "Lan Xia has returned. I trust you've heard of her?"

Mark nodded. "Quite a lot, actually."

A small smile touched Lan Yuxuan's lips, though it didn't reach his eyes. "Then you must also know what is expected of you. The two of you will spar. A simple match—nothing more, nothing less."

Mark met the elder's gaze without hesitation. "And if I win?"

"Then that is for the clan to decide," Lan Yuxuan replied smoothly. "For now, all that matters is proving your worth."

Mark's fingers twitched in anticipation. He had waited for this moment. Now, all that was left was to seize it.

"I accept."

Lan Yuxuan nodded before reaching into her sleeve and pulling out a scroll, extending it toward Mark.

"Take this."

Mark grabbed it instinctively and unrolled it. His brows furrowed as his eyes scanned the intricate illustrations of weapons—daggers, swords, spears, even massive broadswords.

"Choose one," Lan Yuxuan instructed.

Chapter 627 A stalker?

Mark glanced up, puzzled. Before he could ask, Aerynith nudged him. "Pick something," she whispered urgently. "That's the prestigious Soul Weapon Scroll. Only the sect's most elite disciples are granted this opportunity."

Mark's grip on the scroll tightened. "Any weapon I want? Will it create it for me?"

Lan Yuxuan's expression remained composed. "Yes. Lan Xia requested this on your behalf, ensuring you have a fair chance in the heir trials."

Just then, a familiar notification pinged in Mark's mind.

Ding! Presence of my Creator detected within the scroll, Master

Mark's eyes flickered. Ark, his artificial intelligence, had sensed something.

(Ark, what do you mean?) he asked internally.

*Ding! It's likely created by a fragment of a Creation Orb with the weapon creation magic.

Ark responded.

Mark hummed in thought, then turned back to Lan Yuxuan. "Can this really create any weapon I imagine?"

The elder let out a short breath. "No. Everything has its limitations. If you desire a Deity-slaying weapon or something beyond mortal reach, it won't work. The weapon's quality depends on your willpower and the strength of your soul."

Mark smiled. "That's fair enough. How do I use it?"

"Pour your energy into the scroll and visualize the weapon."

Mark nodded, then spoke internally. (Ark, I'm going to use my soul energy. Give me everything you've got. Let's make this count.)

Ding! Understood, Master. I will try my best.

Mark sat down in a meditative pose and shut his eyes. He poured his ether energy into the scroll, feeling the AI's consciousness travel through his soul energy like a thread of a vast network, diving into the scroll's depths.

The images on the scroll glowed briefly before shifting. A new image appeared, forming slowly. At the same moment, a strange weight settled in Mark's hands. He opened his eyes to find a sleek, familiar object resting in his palms.

It was a handgun. While it looked like a regular one, the details displayed on the holographic screen floating before his eyes say otherwise.

Mark ran his fingers along its smooth, polished surface, inspecting the intricate details. The weapon gleamed under the dim light, its craftsmanship unlike anything the sect had ever seen.

"Not bad," he mused, a smirk forming.

Ding! The weapon has been forcefully bound to your soul

Meanwhile, Lan Yuxuan and Aerynith were staring, their expressions frozen in shock. The ice elf was the first to break the silence. "What... is that? I've never seen a weapon like this before."

Mark chuckled. "This? It's an anti-matter handgun."

"Anti-matter?" Both Lan Yuxuan and Aerynith exchanged confused glances.

Mark merely smiled and stored the weapon away in his inventory. "You wouldn't understand even if I explained it."

He turned back to Lan Yuxuan and handed the scroll back. "Thanks. I appreciate it."

*

Later on, the same day;

The grand library of the sect was a labyrinth of towering shelves, ancient tomes, and scrolls filled with knowledge that spanned countless eras. Mark stepped inside, his sharp gaze sweeping across the dimly lit chamber. Dust motes drifted lazily in the air, illuminated by the glow of floating lanterns.

He had come for one reason—to learn about the Immortal Plane and the Golden Demon Cat, along with her elusive Feline Clan. To rescue Anan, the golden demon kitten, he had to know the strengths and weaknesses of this Feline Empire.

As he walked through the aisles, his eyes flickered gold, activating his God Eyes. Information flooded his vision as he scanned the titles embedded in the shelves. His sight locked onto a book titled *Beasts of the Immortal Plane*, resting high above. Without hesitation, he pushed off the ground and slowly floated high and high effortlessly, his robes billowing as he grabbed the book.

"Okay, this is the book I need." Mark smiled as he slowly descended back to the floor. However, just as he was about to land, he felt a cold, piercing gaze bore into him.

Mark turned his head slightly and saw a woman standing in the corner, her face devoid of emotion. Her long black hair cascaded over her shoulders, and her dark eyes remained fixed on him as though analyzing a puzzle. Just a moment ago, he was alone in this section of the library and all of a sudden, a young beauty, in the demigod realm, is here.

Mark tried to ignore her, descending lightly onto the marble floor. As he turned to leave, a soft but firm voice stopped him in his tracks.

"How did you fly?" She asked.

Mark faced her fully. Up close, her presence was oddly unsettling—too composed, too still.

The woman further said. "You didn't use any wind manipulation. You just naturally flew high. But, the runes etched onto the walls around the building prohibit the flight ability."

"It's a secret," he replied casually, tucking the book under his arm before walking away.

The woman did not leave. Instead, she followed him.

Whispers spread like wildfire through the library. Students and scholars turned their heads, murmuring amongst themselves. Mark could hear fragments of their curiosity.

"Why is Lady Xia following him?"

"Who is that guy? I've never seen her interested in anyone before."

"He broke the flight restriction law, didn't he?"

Mark sighed. He sat down at a nearby table, opening the book to the section on celestial beasts, but he could still feel her unwavering stare. She stood right in front of him, unmoving, unblinking. The minutes stretched into an hour.

His patience snapped.

"What?" He looked up from the book, annoyance creeping into his tone.

"How did you fly?" she repeated, her voice devoid of inflection, as if asking about the weather.

Mark closed the book with a thud. "It's a skill of mine that negates such a law."

"I have never heard of such a skill within the sect. Or even within the clan," she stated flatly.

Mark leaned back in his chair. "That's because I came from the Mortal Plane of existence. And we have a variety of skills back at our home."

A flicker of something passed through her usually unreadable expression. Surprise? Shock? It was hard to tell. She stood there, her mind seemingly lost in thought.

Mark took the chance to vanish.

Evening had settled over his residence by the time Mark returned. He stepped through the entrance of his home, expecting peace and quiet. Instead, he stopped dead in his tracks.

There she was.

Seated on the couch as if she owned the place and he was the one intruding.

Mark's brows twitched. He shut the door with a little more force than necessary. "What are you doing here?"

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The woman, still as composed as ever, met his gaze. "Teach me the skill."

"Eh? What?" Mark was taken aback.

Chapter 628 One hit knock out

"What?" Mark was taken aback by her request.

The woman blinked twice and said. "I said teach me the skill. I want to learn."

Mark crossed his arms to the chest, his eyebrow raising in a mix of displeasure and curiosity. "And why do you think I will teach you?"

The woman replied in her usual plain tone. "Because we are family."

Mark didn't know whether to laugh or get angry at this obnoxious woman. In the end, he pinched the bridge of his nose and said. "I cannot."

"Why?"

"Because it's impossible."

"Nothing is impossible." She argued, not moving from the spot.

Mark let out a sharp exhale. "I don't care how you see it, I cannot teach you. Now, leave my home."

She remained seated, unbothered. "No."

Mark's eyes darkened. "I will kick you out."

Silence. For the first time, her expression shifted slightly—just a fraction. "You cannot. I'm stronger."

Mark's fingers twitched.

Without hesitation, he activated his Lightning Clone Skill.

Instantly, an ethereal figure, formed entirely of crackling blue energy, emerged beside him. It seemed more powerful than even a demigod. Her eyes fluttered a bit as she mumbled. "An immortal realm technique?"

Before the woman could react, the lightning clone surged forward and, with a single controlled movement, sent her flying out of the house. The wall was destroyed and she landed gracefully outside, although completely unharmed, but clearly stunned.

She stood there in a daze, staring at him through the big hole. Mark looked back at her and stretched his hand forward. Dense mist flew out of his palm and formed a thick ice wall, covering the hole.

The woman blinked a few times in silence and mumbled. "His powers are more interesting than what Elder Yuxuan told me. But he has a bad personality. How could he reject me? No one rejected my request..."

The next day, Mark walked through the sect's courtyard when Aerynith approached him, grinning mischievously.

"So," Aerynith drawled, nudging Mark with his elbow, "how'd you do it?"

Mark frowned. "Do what?"

Aerynith smirked. "Charm the Lan clan's heiress in just one day. She was following you around like a puppy yesterday. What did you do to her, brother?"

Mark sighed, shaking his head. "Don't talk nonsense."

"But what happened yesterday was true, wasn't it? I heard a rumor that she went to your house yesterday after the sunset too..." Aerynith said, putting his hand over Mark's shoulder like a close brother. A grin appeared on his blue ice elf face. "C'mon, brother. You don't have to hide things from me. I'm literally the last person who can ever spread the rumor in the sect."

"Scram away... I have more important things to do than talking nonsense things..."

Meanwhile, in the training grounds, Lan Xia was engaged in a sparring session with Grand Elder Yu. Normally composed and precise, she found herself distracted. A mistimed movement, and the elder's strike landed squarely, sending her stumbling backward.

Grand Elder Yu narrowed his eyes. "You're distracted. What's wrong?"

Lan Xia hesitated before responding. "Shang Zhen... he managed to fly inside the restricted zone of the library."

The grand elder's brows furrowed. "That's impossible."

"He came from the Mortal Plane of existence, had skills that were out of my understanding, and only two heavenly years older than me yet in the same level," she added, staring at the ground. "Does that mean he's more talented than me?"

The grand elder's expression darkened. Lan Xia rarely had any emotion on her face. Most of the time, she is expressionless like a puppet that is devoid of any feelings. Any slight change of expression on her face only shows that she was heavily affected, whether it is good or bad.

He spoke. "You are the most talented descendant the Lan Sect had ever produced, my disciple. Unfortunately, he had a stronger start because he and his sister were blessed with the bloodline of our guardian, Blizzard Pegasus. It's an inheritance. That's why he and his sister could become an ascendant even in the mortal plane. But, worry not. Bloodline can only take you so far. Once you enter the immortal realm and go further, the gap between you two will only widen further." Grabbing her shoulders, he added in a serious tone. "Don't forget that you are the future head of this clan."

Lan Xia nodded.

Later that day, the sect announced an impromptu training session for inner sect disciples.

Mark and Aerynith, curious, attended. Lan Xia was also there but she acted as if she never met Mark before. She stood alongside the other disciples, all stoic and composed.

And then the grand elder Lan Yunxua's disciple, a member of the clan, Ye Anshi stepped onto the battle platform, scanning the gathered students before pointing his finger at Mark. "Shang Zhen."

Mark blinked. "Me?" He had never met this person before. Why is he suddenly challenging him? He could only wonder.

Aerynith leaned his head to the side and whispered into Mark's ear. "He is Grand Elder Yunxua's disciple."

Immediately, Mark realized why. It wasn't any secret that he managed to strike the grand elder right on the day he moved into the clan. Of course, she tried to attack him first, but since the elders don't like him, they can only paint him as a rebellious brat who doesn't know what's good for him.

While Lan Yunxua already forgot about the matter and moved on, others aren't as magnanimous as she was. Of course, there are those who had a crush on Lan Xia and neither did they like how she tagged with him for hours the other day nor do they allow an outsider to become a clan heir.

And after one heavenly week, her disciple finally made his move against him.

Ye Anshi, someone who already entered the immortal realm, went on challenging him, his intentions being obvious. "I heard the rumors that you were blessed by our celestial guardian. How about showing us what you have got?"

Lan Xia looked at Mark, wondering how he was going to respond.

Mark got up to the platform with a single leap. Taking out a metallic box type object out of nowhere, Mark stared back into this immortal and responded. "Sorry but you aren't qualified for it. We'll have to settle with this."

"You..." Ye Anshi's expression immediately turned ugly, feeling like Mark was mocking him publicly and not even discreet about it. He conjured an ice sword in his hands and spoke. "Alright, we'll see whether you have skills that can back up your arrogance or you are just bark."

Pointing its blade at Mark, he further added. "As your senior, I let you have the first strike."

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Mark wasted no time. In an instant, he threw the box right at his opponent with a fast arm. In just a second, it reached its target. Ye Anshi raised the sword and swung it precisely at the same time. The ice blade struck Unnamed but instead, it was broken into two and the metallic box struck his chest. Ye Anshi blasted away tens of meters, crashing to the ground. Blood trickled from his lips and he collapsed to the ground, unconscious.

At once, the entire training field fell silent.

Lan Xia, watching from the sidelines, felt her heart skip a beat. Her cold exterior cracked as curiosity burned in her eyes. "It's the box. What is that soul weapon?"

Chapter 629: Sneaking out of the sect

Curiosity filled Lan Xia, once again, abandoned her stoic and unapproachable personality. She spent the rest of the day pestering Mark.

"What is it made of?"

"Is it only adamantium or something else?"

"Why is it called Unnamed?"

"Who created it?"

"Where did you acquire it?"

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"Tell me its maker's name. I want to make a similar thing for myself."

Mark had a headache while dealing with Lan Xia. She is like this leech that just doesn't give up until she finds the answers she seeks.

As Mark refused to divulge the secrets of Unnamed and the system, Lan Xia continued to bother him every single day.

The rumors passed around that Lan Xia has taken interest in Shang Zhen. Some rumors even go to the extent that Shang Zhen and Lan Xia were originally lovers but since they have to compete for the seat, they broke up. Some rumors go like Lan Xia travels very often to meet Shang Zhen as she still has feelings for him, although he doesn't seem to like her. And that is why Lan Xia refuses the proposal of any other man. Shang Zhen is here, not for the throne but for the girl, blah blah blah...

As people talked about it over and over, the rumors only became more absurd. Neither of them cared about the rumors nor did they have a bunch of close friends to tease them around anyway.

And within no time, one heavenly week passed away.

It was in the middle of the night. With no threats to face, the disciples and the elders were having a comfortable sleep in their quarters. One such quarter didn't have its sole occupant sleep like the rest. It is Mark.

During the past week, he managed to gather enough information about the Feline Empire and he was now more than ever ready with his preemptive strike in the shadows.

Mark left the sect grounds in the dead of night. Cloaked in shadows, he moved swiftly through the empty corridors, his steps light as air. He reached the world teleportation portal, where a few guards stood watch. Without hesitation, he struck, knocking them unconscious before they could react.

Just as he was about to step forward, a sharp presence filled the air.

The Chief Guard. An immortal realm expert.

"Who is there?"

Before the Chief Guard could even notice Mark, the latter used Freezing Gaze on his back, freezing him on the spot. Mark flew toward the teleportation gate/world portal. Just as he was about to step in, he turned, sensing another presence all of a sudden.

The space distorted not far away from him, before a figure materialized. Lan Xia appeared and she spoke. "Greetings, Shang Zhen."

Surprise flickered in Mark's eyes. "How do you know that I was going out? No, how did you follow me? I didn't even sense you." Mark said, still hiding his face under the hood.

She tilted her head slightly. "I have spatial abilities. I can go into another dimension and then reappear anywhere I want. And I had my eyes on you the whole time."

"Okay, first of all. That's Creepy." Mark commenting before narrowing his eyes. "Anyways, whatever I do is none of your business. Leave."

She folded her arms. "No. I follow."

"Leave"

"No"

*

After their long argument, Mark had to confide in and let her tag along. He found her annoying, but definitely didn't want to alert the elders around in the sect.

After a while, one of the teleportation portals in the Null point flared to life beneath Mark and Lan Xia, intricate runes glowing with a brilliance that threatened to blind.

The space around them distorted, twisting and folding like rippling water as an unseen force pulled them forward. In the blink of an eye, the world around them dissolved into a spectrum of cascading light.

Then—silence.

Mark's boots touched solid ground first, his senses instantly sharpened as the air grew heavier, thicker with energy. The Immortal Plane of Existence.

Lan Xia landed beside him with practiced grace, her icy gaze scanning the surroundings. They stood within an enormous teleportation hall, a grand structure forged from celestial stone, its towering walls embedded with countless arrays pulsing with immortal energy. Guards in azure robes patrolled the area, their sharp eyes assessing every newcomer.

A massive banner hung from the ceiling—Sky Pavilion Sect—one of the dominant forces in the immortal plane of existence, controlling hundreds of thousands of worlds. They are also the best allies of mortal humanoid races in the immortal plane.

Mark adjusted the hood of his cloak, pulling it lower to shadow his features. "We're not staying," he murmured to Lan Xia, his voice low but firm.

Without another word, he strode towards another teleportation array. This one was different. The energy was unstable, flickering erratically as if struggling to maintain its structure. A warning sign floated in the air beside it, written in glowing characters:

"Portal to Weligar - War Zone. Travel at your own risk."

Lan Xia frowned but followed without hesitation. Whatever game Mark was playing, she intended to see it through.

As they stepped into the portal, the world shattered around them once more.

The moment they arrived at a random location, the scent of blood filled the air.

The sky above Weligar was an ominous shade of deep red, fractured by streaks of lightning that never seemed to fade. Explosions rumbled in the distance, shaking the very ground beneath them. Screams, the clash of weapons, the guttural roars of beasts—it was chaos.

Mark exhaled slowly. "Perfect timing."

Lan Xia adjusted the mask over her face, her sharp eyes darting to the battlefield below. Two massive armies clashed in the valley—a monstrous horde of towering beastkin of Feline race against an organized force of cultivators. Energy beams carved through the landscape, sending chunks of land flying into the sky.

They can clearly feel the pressure of immortals and demigods all over the place.

"This is madness," she murmured. "Why are you here?"

Mark didn't answer. He was already moving.

With a flick of his wrist, he donned a sleek black mask, obscuring his identity completely. His aura suppressed, his presence became like a whisper in the wind. Lan Xia followed suit, masking her features before catching up with him.

Slipping through enemy lines was effortless. Mark moved like a shadow, bypassing beastkin patrols with precise steps, never leaving a trace. Lan Xia, on the other hand, moved through the other dimension as she closely followed him.

Ahead of them, the enemy command tent loomed—a towering structure built from beast bones and crimson banners. Guards in heavy armor patrolled the entrance, their Feline beast-like features snarling with barely contained aggression.

Mark motioned by raising his hand. Wait.

He then took out a sleek obsidian black handgun out of his inventory and aimed at the guard.

Aiming at it, Mark's finger pressed on the trigger. Concentrated energy bullet made of Anti-matter flew out of the gun.

The first beastkin of Supreme realm barely had time to register the flash of steel before his forehead was pierced by the bullet.

Mark then swiftly charge forward in a blur and caught his body before it fell, sucking the corpse into his inventory. Lan Xia materialized behind the other guard, her icy blade slipping between the ribs of the supreme realm beastkin with a lion's mane, her movements swift and merciless.

Chapter 630: Provoking the Golden Demon Cat

Within moments, the entrance was cleared. However, Lan Xia couldn't help but glance at the weirdly shaped artifact in Mark's hand. Her curiosity piqued.

Meanwhile, inside the tent, the air was thick with the scent of blood and raw energy. At the center sat a monstrous figure—a towering lion-headed beast clad in dark armor, his golden eyes burning with intelligence. A Saint Realm Commander.

He growled, sensing the intrusion. "Who dares..."

Mark didn't let him finish.

With a flicker of movement, Mark appeared behind him, his gun aimed at the commander's back. As he poured all of his ether energy reserves into the gun, the anti-matter energy bullet was once again fired. It plunged into the commander's back, severing his spine in an instant. The beastkin let out a strangled roar before collapsing to the ground.

Lan Xia stared at the lifeless corpse, her lips pressing into a thin line. "That was... a saint realm expert. How many powerful artifacts did you own, Shang Zhen?"

Mark ignored her. He grabbed a nearby parchment, dipped his finger in the commander's blood, and wrote a single message in bold strokes:

"Golden Demon Cat, you lose."

With that, he turned and walked out, his steps calm as if he hadn't just slain the leading commander of the ongoing war.

The teleportation back was swift, but the weight of their actions lingered on Lan Xia's mind.

As they stepped back into the clan grounds, Lan Xia spoke again. This time, she grabbed his arm, not letting him ignore her again. "Shang Zhen, wait. Today, your actions made me wonder one thing. Why do you go to such lengthy trouble and assassinate a beast, and even leave a letter to provoke the Golden Demon Cat? Why?"

Mark replied calmly under his mask. "Because I need to settle some issues with that cat. It's personal enmity, you can say. And I need the Sky Pavilion Sect's help to keep that stupid beast busy. So, I have to provoke its ego."

Lan Xia's expression didn't change, but something in her gaze shifted. The more she thought about it, the more questions arose. And somehow, she knew, Mark wasn't done with it.

A heavenly week had passed since Mark left Weligar in turmoil, and already, the tides of war had shifted once more.

While Sky Pavilion Sect didn't intervene much as he expected, at the very least, the once blood-soaked fields had been claimed by a new power—the Esyr Race.

From a distance, they resembled humans, but up close, their differences were striking: elongated ears tapering to fine points, two sharp horns protruding from their foreheads, and an unnatural golden sheen to their eyes. They look like a mix of demons and dark elves

Ruthless and efficient, they had swept across the land with terrifying precision, crushing the remnants of the Feline Empire's forces, taking away Weligar from the Golden Demon Cat.

Every night, Mark would travel to Weligar in secret but wouldn't do anything. He simply visited a city each time and calmly returned. Lan Xia continued to follow him, but neither could she understand his purpose, nor did she get any answers from him except for a simple reply that he was waiting for the change.

Nevertheless, she didn't rat him out and kept his visits a secret from the sect. Of course, her curiosity about his actions only increased as time passed.

And sure enough, within three more heavenly weeks, the change that Mark wanted was finally here.

Thousands of feline warriors were seen storming the capital city, headed by one of the Feline Empire's Generals, a towering figure clad in obsidian armor.

They struck fast and without mercy. The Esyr forces that had once dominated the land now found themselves driven back, outmatched against the sheer might of the Feline Empire.

Mark returned to Weligar in the dead of night, his figure wrapped in shadows after the Feline Empire retook the capital and focusing on one of the four key strongholds of the Esyr forces in the mountains.

Lan Xia followed him without question.

"They're already losing," she noted as they watched the battlefield from the cliffs. "What's your plan?"

"No, they won't," Mark murmured. "Let's go..."

Mark took a leap from the tower and jumped to the ground. His foot slightly touched the ground before he charged toward the battlefield, where the beasts were conducting a night raid.

They moved through the carnage like wraiths, unseen, untouched once again.

The Beast Commander, a massive warlord with skin like onyx and eyes like molten fire, stood at the heart of the E syr defenses, fighting the stronghold leader, a fellow Saint realm expert.

"Hahaha... E syr, you think you are a match for me, just because we are in the same realm..." The Beast Commander swung down the broadsword, The E syr commander put up a golden shield to block it.

But the sword only pushed him to his knees, and he started swinging down over and over, cracking the shield a little bit more with every swing. "Die... Die... Die... hahaha..."

It was at this moment that the Beast Commander's sixth sense activated, sensing something powerful coming toward him. he paused, glancing toward the source.

"Eh?"

Mark stopped right before his eyes, standing a few feet away. "Are you the leader of the invading forces?" He asked.

"Heh, a mere ascendant wants to assassinate me?" The Beast Commander smirked, no longer paying attention to Mark and returning his gaze to the person on the ground.

Mark quietly took out the antimatter gun from his inventory and pointed at him.

The Beast Commander didn't even get the chance to turn around to counter.

The Antimatter beam was already shot from the gun, and before he even realized it, it hit him and his entire body was blown into bits from inside.

His lieutenants, around, barely had time to react before Lan Xia swiftly killed them with rapid sword strikes.

Once their core force was destroyed, Esyr forces fought back and turned around the situation, successfully winning this battle.

Meanwhile, Mark took the body of the Beast Commander with him and hung him at the gates of the capital city with a war banner draped around him. The same provoking words were written: "Golden Demon Cat, you lose again."