

## **Seller 631**

### Chapter 631: The Anti-matter missile

The message did not go unnoticed. This time, it was taken more seriously by the Demon Cat Empress.

Over the next few days, the Feline Empire's General—Ezarith Blackclaw—descended upon Weligar in a storm of rage, his golden eyes burning with a thirst for vengeance.

The Esyr were not just defeated this time. They were exterminated. Their strongholds were reduced to rubble, their people slaughtered or driven off-world as refugees, their entire existence on Weligar wiped away within days.

And yet, General Blackclaw did not leave. He didn't return.

He and his troops continued to stay there. General Blackclaw was appointed as the Governor of Weligar.

Sky Pavilion Sect, headquarters;

In the throne hall, one who looked like a ten-year-old kid was seen sitting on the throne, with grand elders and elders gathered before him. The weakest of those elders was a peak-stage immortal (11-circle), and the strongest was in the peak stage of the God realm (13-circle). Yet, they all were bowing before this kid.

Well, in fact, he is a kid, but at the same time, he is also a thirty-thousand-year-old monster in the body of a kid.

Biologically, he was only 11 years old, but his identity was little special.

Lu Sheng was the founder of the Sky Pavilion Sect, a peak-stage True God realm powerhouse that dominated the lands, but when he failed the breakthrough and died, he used a technique to sacrifice an entire realm and revert his age.

As a result, he is now an 11-year-old who possesses the cultivation of the peak stage of the God realm.

"So, what if Weligar is taken away?" Lu Sheng spoke lazily, his legs were over the armrest.

"Pavilion Master, Weligar is an important source of adamantine. Losing it is the same as giving weapons to the enemies." Grand Elder Xi spoke, stroking his beard.

Lu Sheng blinked in surprise. "Hmm?"

He looked at the elders and asked, "Then, who is willing to go there and claim it for us?"

One of the four grand elders spoke. "Ezarith Blackclaw is one of the most powerful generals of that Demon Cat Empress. Not only is he at the peak stage of the Sky realm (13-circle/God realm), but he is also a great formation master. Unless there is a Heaven realm expert (14-circle/True God), it will be very difficult to defeat him and his forces. Out of us all, only Grand Elder Zhi is capable of it. After all, she has even faced the Cat Demon Princess on the battlefield."

Zhi Yan's face darkened by the suggestion. "Grand Elder Yan, while I can certainly win against Ezarith, sending me to the battlefield to take out a mere general is the same as announcing that we don't have any warriors left in our sect. It will cause huge damage to our sect's reputation." Taking a brief pause, she further added. "And saying that I'm the only one that can stop him is the same as admitting that we are weaker than the Feline Empire. Are you trying to undermine our Pavilion Master's strength, Grand Leader Yan?"

"Uhh..." Grand Elder Yan felt a disturbing gaze from their Lord, and he went into damage control quickly. "Of course not. Unless the Cat Demon Empress herself is taking the action, Pavilion Master won't have to take action. So, I kept him out of this matter naturally. Anyways, don't sidetrack the issue, Grand Elder Zhi. Are you willing to go or not?"

Zhi Yan furrowed her brows but crossed her arms as she leaned back and said. "Alright, I will, as long as you directly admit that you and your faction of elders are not capable of accomplishing this task."

"You..." Grand Elder Yan trembled in anger.

The Pavilion Master interrupted in his lazy tone. "Just stop your nonsense squabble. For mere adamantium, I have no intention to break the balance and go on a full-fledged war against that cat. Our sect will not interfere, but I'm assigning both of you to go and claim Weligar. Approach the clan warlords and use them instead. Just tell them that whichever clans participate in this mission, they can share the resources of the land among themselves."

"Uhh..." "Pavilion Master..."

"What... You have a problem following my orders?"

"No" "No"

Finally, the Sky Pavilion Sect took action. And under the attack of clans that answer to the sect, the world continued to be embroiled in the war.

Mark and Lan Xia approached the battlefield once again.

At the center of the desolation stood General Ezarith, his feline form towering, his aura pressing down like a mountain as he was fighting six Saint realm experts.

This time, he didn't approach them. Instead, he landed far away on the hilltop.

Lan Xia landed behind him as usual.

As Mark observed the situation from afar, Lan Xia asked. "Are you going to wait till he becomes weaker, or just observing this time?"

Mark grinned, casting a sidelong glance at her. "Neither. We are going to attack from here."

"From far away?" Lan Xia blinked in surprise. "This one looked like he was in the Sky realm. Even with your artifact, it won't be easy to defeat him, and killing him from afar with a ranged attack is next to impossible, as he could sense the attack before it reaches him."

Mark shrugged. "Then, watch me accomplish that next-to-impossible scenario."

"What are you going to..."

Lan Xia's eyes widened as she saw something materialize beside Mark. It was even more strange than the artifact she saw Mark using so far. It was big and had these large tubes or something, the size of a medium-sized bedroom.

Mark then placed his hand on the control panel of the ballistic missile launcher that was loaded with two missiles in both of its launchers already. This was the prototype and latest invention of Mark's robots that took 50 years to develop (inside that accelerated time zone).

It's a ballistic missile launcher that can launch two types of missiles: One, nuclear. Two, Anti-matter. And right now, one of those launches has a loaded 10-ton antimatter warhead.

As the panel glowed blue, the notification was heard in his head.

\*Ding! Master, the system is activated. Please lock onto the targets.

A radar map appeared on the panel screen with a bunch of red dots, blue dots, and black dots.

\*Ding! The target is locked.

\*Ding! The blast estimated radius: Total destruction zone: ~150-250km radius. Severe Damage zone: ~600-950km radius.

\*Ding! Warning: Master is in a total destruction zone.

\*Ding! Estimating the damage based on the Master's location from the point of impact.

\*Ding! With level-99 Enhanced durability in effect, the host will receive an attack equivalent to 13.4 stats.

"What! Damn..." Mark's face turned ugly all of a sudden, and he hesitated to press the trigger. But then something clicked in his mind, and he spoke in his head. "Wait... gravity pulls the explosion to the impact point. If I increase the gravitational field by 100 times? Calculate the estimated range, Ark."

After a moment of silence. Ark replied.

\*Ding! Master will be in the Severe Damage Zone. With enhanced durability in effect, Master will not be harmed. But the missile launcher will be destroyed. If the nuclear warhead is not launched, the chances of radiation leakage are high.

"Then, I just need to increase more gravity." Mark's grin widened.

"What's with this guy... one moment he smiles. One moment he gets serious..." As Lan Xia wondered, Mark then spoke. "Lan Xia, get ready to witness the spectacle."

"Hmm?"

"Gravity Dome, 300 times."

However, in the next second, she fell to her knees as invisible pressure pulled her to the ground.

It wasn't just her. Suddenly, the entire battlefield paused as beasts and cultivators from either side fell to their knees, save for the Beast Commander and other Saint realm experts.

"Now, go..."

He launched the missile.

Chapter 632: The Demon Cat Empress' retaliation

The battlefield, filled with beasts and cultivators, now became empty. It is now just a giant crater.

No corpses were left behind as if everyone disappeared out of existence. Neither the Feline forces were left nor the cultivators from various clans.

Lan Xia just stared at the scene in a daze for a while, on her knees. "That... that... what are you?" Her voice quivered as she looked up at Mark's face. She was someone who seldom had emotions displayed on her face. Curiosity and happiness were at least seen from time to time. But fear... she hadn't had that expression for a long time.

Mark stretched his hand to help her to stand as he replied. "That, my dear, is an Anti-matter Missile Launcher, a weapon of mass destruction I developed. And this is the power of technology."

"Technology?" Lan Xia's entire body shivered as she returned her gaze to the empty battlefield.

Placing the banner with the words: You lose again, Golden Demon Cat, Mark left the location. He doesn't need to prove that he killed their general or something, as he was sure that the golden demon cat would sense the loss of her subordinate and would investigate thoroughly and find the banner.

Lan Xia, upon returning to the clan, didn't step out of her house this time, even after two days, making others wonder whether she is in close-door cultivation or something.

Mark didn't pay much attention to her and took a break for a couple of days. On the third night, he once again secretly stepped into the world portal to travel to the null point.

From there, he traveled to the immortal plane of existence. The guards in azure robes were patrolling heavily this time. Previously, they were only assessing every newcomer.

But this time, they stopped him, seeing he was wearing a cloak and a hood.

Mark lowered the hood and looked at the two guards.

"State your identity." One of them spoke.

Mark replied. "The name is Lan Gengxin and I'm from an official business from the Ice and Fire Realm, representing the Ancient Lan Sect." He spoke in confidence.

The guards were taken aback when they heard the sect's name. They instantly cupped their fists and bowed, greeting him. "We apologize. We didn't know that you were a member of the Ancient Lan Sect. May we know your business? The immortal realm is currently in the midst of a tense situation."

Before they could react, Mark continued. "We got news that the situation is unstable at Weligar. I'm here as a scout and report to the elders."

The two guards blinked, glancing at each other in surprise. One of them spoke. "Scout Lan, Weligar doesn't exist anymore."

"What do you mean?" Mark furrowed his brows.

"It was completely decimated by the Demon Cat Empress two days ago."

"What!"

The news struck like a blade to the gut. Mark stood motionless as the guard continued to speak.

"It was not just Weligar. Several other worlds fell to her wrath. Entire planets turned to dust... hundreds of clans were destroyed as if they had never existed. Thousands of immortals who were ascended from mortal planes were either captured or killed. A full-fledged war is about to start here at any time."

Mark clenched his fists. He had expected retaliation—but this? This was beyond revenge. This was annihilation.

His provocation had drawn her attention, but instead of trying to interrogate who was that was troubling her, she had lashed out indiscriminately, consuming entire civilizations in her fury.

"Damn it... This fuc\*ing cat..." Mark muttered under his breath. His face darkened, and his eyes filled with fury, and a knot of guilt coiled deep in his chest.

He wanted to kill her for his own selfish reasons: To obtain Anan. For that, he didn't even care about the cultivators fighting her forces either. His antimatter missile destroyed both sides.

However, cultivators were prepared to die at any time. So, he wasn't that disturbed by his action. But the fact that his action brought such immense destruction. Mark felt like he had overestimated the Sky Pavilion Sect too much and also underestimated her prowess.

And if he had to deal with her and her forces alone, Mark knew that he had to become a lot stronger and be more prepared.

Mark disappeared into the teleportation array and returned to the null point before returning to the clan.

After returning to the clan residence, he became low-key. Mostly training in seclusion.

Days turned into weeks. Weeks into months.

In no time, 5 months passed.

During these 5 months, Mark followed the same routine. He didn't learn any new techniques from the clan or anything.

Mark just focused on mastering the skills he had, like mastering various combos.

And when he was resting, Ark, the artificial intelligence, would use his ether energy reserves to continuously use his skill: Antimatter creation to collect antimatter for the day he was going to attack the Demon Cat Empress with a mega-ton antimatter missile.

His every moment was consumed with preparation for the inevitable battle against the Golden Demon Cat.

And yet, through it all, Lan Xia never once sought him out.

Not once in half a year.

Various rumors filled the sect as usual, with the two most promising heir candidates cultivating in seclusion, but Mark didn't think much of it, though.

\*

One more month later;

The grand coliseum roared with excitement. Thousands of spectators gathered from across the sect, their anticipation building as the Inner Sect Tournament was about to reach the stage of quarterfinals.

The air buzzed with spiritual energy, thick with the presence of powerful elders and disciples alike.

Mark stood in the waiting area, his eyes scanning the battlefield where a duel was being played out between two disciples.

Next to him, Shang Jiao stretched her arms, exhaling sharply as she mentally prepared herself for the upcoming fight.

As one of the cultivators fell unconscious, the Proctor announced. "The winner is Lan Meiyun."

As the cheers followed up for a few seconds, the proctor continued. "Now, for the last battle for the top 8. Shang Jiao and Mei Changsu."

As Shang Jiao took a deep breath, Mark patted her shoulder with a smile. "Go and defeat him."

Shang Jiao clenched her fists, her eyes falling upon the male who landed in the arena with grace. "I will beat that bastard to death."

Chapter 633: Shang Jiao battles Mei Changsu

Mei Changsu, an inner sect disciple with immortal realm cultivation, was standing straight, a hand to his back, and his chest puffed out as if he were putting on airs of a master.

On the other hand, Shang Jiao was quite stiff and nervous. She clenched her fists and opened them again, a few times as she stared at her opponent.

"Junior Sister, you have come a long way in the competition, and for someone who came from the mortal realm, it is truly commendable, but you can't proceed further. From here on out, your opponents are much stronger, both in cultivation and skill. You know that, too." Mei Changsu said, his hand conjuring an ice sword. "No one will look down upon you even if you give up."

Shang Jiao took a deep breath and shut her eyes for a moment. Her icy wings erupted from her back, and a halberd appeared in her hands. Going into her battle stance, she spoke aloud. "Senior Brother, I await your guidance."

"Alright then. I'll finish it quickly." Mei Changsu let out a smile, raising the sword. With a swing, an arc of energy flew toward Shang Jiao, freezing everything in its path.

Shang Jiao flapped her wings to fly high above the battle platform and charged at him, swinging the halberd.

Right when it almost reached him, Mei Changsu's sword slightly moved, blocking the halberd's blade.

At the slightest touch of his icy sword, the blade of Shang Jiao's earth-grade divine weapon halberd started freezing rapidly. Shang Jiao swiftly flew away a bit and stared down at him.

"It looks like close combat is useless." The 18-year-old furrowed her brows. She let go of the halberd, let it fall to the ground with a thud. She then summoned the staff, a semi-divine one she had been using for her whole life.

Pouring half of her ether energy into the staff, she chanted an incantation.

"By the breath of ice and the whisper of snow, Tengliu, goddess of winter's woe, From frozen skies and glacial deep, Let the ancient frost-wyrm wake from sleep! Winds of the tundra, rage and cry, Wings of rime shall crack the sky! By storm and frost, by sacred decree, Rise, Iceborn Dragon, and fight for me!"

Mei Changsu patiently waited until she finished her incantation as if he wasn't worried in the least.

But when her spell finished, his facial expression changed as a giant dragon flew out of her.

"No way... how could an ascendant realm (10-circle/demigod) unleash a spell of a transcendent realm?" Mei Changsu's eyes turned serious.

The elders of the clan also couldn't help but be taken aback by the spell.

Standing atop the whiskered, limbless ice dragon, Shang Jiao raised the staff once again. "Go..."

The ice dragon opens its mouth, its mere breath releases a concentrated beam of ice, striking Mei Changsu head-on. In an instant, his entire body was frozen in ice.

However, that only lasted a couple of seconds before it shattered from within.

As soon as he freed himself, Mei Changsu raised the sword and swung it horizontally, attacking the dragon.

The dragon breathed out the icy beam once again. The arc of energy collided with. However, it continued to slice through the beam and almost reach the mouth of the dragon.

"Baixuefang."

With an utterance of its name, the ice dragon consumed Shang Jiao's ether energy and increased its intensity.

The surge of power from the ice dragon lit up the sky in frosty brilliance. Snow flurries danced across the battlefield, crystallizing the air around them, freezing the entire battlefield. The spectators held their breath, many eyes widening.

Mei Changsu, nevertheless, was more prepared this time. He protected himself with a barrier.

With his eyes narrowed, fixed on her, he muttered. "Alright. I have vastly underestimated this girl. Lan Gengxin's granddaughter is just as monstrous as her brother." The sheen of frost over his robes cracked and fell away as his body pulsed with a thick aura. A jade-blue mark flickered on his forehead as he further muttered. "You've earned my seriousness."

Mei Changsu raised his hand skyward. Clouds gathered at once, churning in silence. The sun vanished behind a dome of ice-laced mist. A low hum echoed across the field as if the world were holding its breath.

"Ice Severing Heaven Art, Third Style: Snowfall Mourning Lotus."

Dozens of lotuses bloomed in the sky, each petal gleaming with killing intent. They descended slowly, almost beautifully, until one landed on the dragon's flank.

BOOM.

The explosion of frost sent a shockwave that fractured the stone platform below. Several other lotuses rained down in quick succession, exploding around the dragon. Shang Jiao's mount roared in pain but held firm, flaring its wings to shield her.

From behind the translucent shield of icy wings, Shang Jiao clenched her staff tightly.

"Don't falter now, Baixuefang..." she whispered.

Then, with a defiant cry, she channeled more ether into the dragon. Its scales shimmered brighter, refracting every falling lotus like prisms.

"Baixuefang, spiral upward!"

The dragon spun into the air in a powerful corkscrew motion, scattering the descending lotuses. Shang Jiao took the chance. She leapt into the sky, her staff held horizontally.

"Heaven's Frozen Gaze!" she shouted.

What looks like a simple icicle, absolute cold aimed directly at Mei Changsu's chest, while consuming her remaining ether energy in the process.

The elder disciples stood up from their seats. "Another transcendent-level spell?"

Mei Changsu crossed his arms before him, sensing its power. A shield of pure ice bloomed outward, but the icicle pierced it like paper, striking him square in the torso and sending him skidding backward across the platform.

Dust and frost burst into the air, silence filling the battlefield for a moment.

Shang Jiao landed on one knee, panting. Her wings flickered. The dragon behind her flickered as well, its body turning translucent. She had completely exhausted her ether energy reserves.

But from the mist, a low chuckle escaped.

"That was well done, Junior Sister."

Mei Changsu walked forward, clothes torn, blood at the corner of his mouth, but his presence, his cultivation, now felt even heavier. "I underestimated you again and again." He smiled, raising the sword. "But you reached your limits already. You lost."

Shang Jiao, who was panting in heavy breaths, growled. "No... the battle isn't over yet."

Mei Changsu raised the sword before turning it upside down with a reverse grip. "No, it is over."

He spun around, releasing spiral mist along his path, which took the shape of a serpent as it was released toward her. She was about to get up, but the attack reached her faster.

The serpent coiled around her, trapping her tightly. The staff fell to the ground, and she stood there like a statue, unable to move.

Mei Changsu looked at her and said. "I told you. The battle is over."

Shang Jiao growled again in anger. "And I told you, it isn't over yet."

"Raaa..."

As a roar, almost that of a distorted tone, escaped her, a blinding flash of light enveloped her for a few seconds.

And when the flash disappeared, in her place, there was a beast, an icy winged horse, pure as white jade.

"Blizzard Pegasus?"

"Blizzard Pega..."

The entire arena was frozen in deep silence.

Chapter 634: The Inheritor of the Blizzard Pegasus

A frigid silence gripped the arena.

The moment the Blizzard Pegasus emerged behind Shang Jiao, even the rowdy audience that was passionately supporting Mei Changsu fell still. Awe and disbelief rippled through the crowd like a wave under the snow.

The elders in the pavilion exchanged glances. Expressions shifted to doubt, curiosity, and understanding.

Seated atop the highest platform, the Sect Leader stroked his long beard and smiled faintly.

"So," he murmured, almost to himself, "Xiao Jiao was the true inheritor. Not Xiao Zhen." He leaned forward slightly, his gaze sharpening. "But how? He possessed those abilities that far surpassed even a typical bloodline of Blizzard Pegasus that one inherits through birth. Was he, perhaps, blessed directly by the Guardian Spirit?"

He chuckled softly at that thought.

On the battlefield, Shang Jiao's form shimmered. Flesh turned to snow-white fur, limbs into powerful hooves, wings stretching wide with divine grace. She looked as if she had become the Blizzard Pegasus incarnate.

Across from her, Mei Changsu narrowed his eyes.

He remained composed, his confidence undisturbed. After all, he hadn't revealed his true strength yet.

With a slow breath, he raised both arms. Power surged from his palms, deep, abyssal cold.

"Ice Severing Heaven Art, Seventh Style: Chains of the Abyss."

Dark, jagged chains burst from the void, writhing through the air like serpents. They tore toward Shang Jiao, seeking to bind her limbs again. However, these serpent-like chains were different from the other. These can seal her bloodline itself.

But she did not flinch a bit.

With her eyes fixed on the incoming chains, she spread her wings.

A breath of air escaped her mouth.

It wasn't just cold. It wasn't just ice.

A wave of stillness washed across the platform, frozen in ice. The incoming chains were frozen mid-way. Mei Changsu's barrier was invaded by the freezing energy, turning him into solid ice, encased entirely in crystal-blue frost.

Gasping voices filled the arena.

"That's the Absolute Freezing..."

"Hey, why were even the elders so shocked?"

"You don't know? That's Absolute Freezing, Only the inheritor can

"Only the Blizzard Pegasus can use that..."

"It looks like she's the real inheritor... Not her brother..."

"The Heavens blessed the Lan Clan."

"Mei Changsu... lost?"

"Wait a second. If this is Absolute Freezing, then, did Lord Mei die?"

"No, look at his eyes. He's still conscious. She didn't kill him."

"Merciful and powerful. She's unlike that arrogant brother of hers, Lan Zhen."

"Quiet! He's still the great-grandson of the Clan Leader."

The murmurs continued, but none dared shout.

Back on the stage, Shang Jiao slowly shifted back to her human form. However, her legs gave out immediately, and she collapsed, losing consciousness.

Mark was about to approach the field, but the Sect Leader was already at her side.

He knelt beside the fallen girl, his hand gently resting over her wrist. After a few heartbeats, he sighed in relief. "She's fine. Just spiritual exhaustion."

"Elder Yuanxing."

A beam of light landed beside him as the Grand Elder, a god-realm cultivator, materialized. Dressed in white robes with silver embroidery, she bowed deeply.

"Lord Lan."

"Take her to the Spirit Pool. Let her recover."

"Yes, Sect Master."

With gentle arms, Elder Yuanxing lifted Shang Jiao. A cold wind stirred, and they vanished in an instant.

Once the girl was gone, the Sect Leader turned his attention back to the platform.

Mei Changsu still stood frozen, his form locked in translucent ice.

The old man flicked his fingers. A wave of spiritual energy surged outward.

The ice shattered instantly.

Mei Changsu staggered slightly as he emerged, steam rising from his skin. He blinked, exhaled slowly, and then closed his eyes. He said nothing. He simply hung his head and walked away. As the proctor stepped forward. His voice rang out, clear and strong as he announced. "The winner of the match, Shang Jiao!"

The arena erupted.

Cheers roared from all corners. Cries of celebration, hands raised to the sky, robed disciples clapping and shouting the name of the girl who gained their acknowledgment and admiration in just one moment of transformation.

Three hours later, the battles for the top 4 were announced. Shang Jiao was eliminated and her opponent, the tournament favorite, Lan Xia, was automatically qualified for the semifinals.

None complained, not because they didn't postpone a bit more to give Shang Jiao an opportunity, but because Lan Xia was her opponent. No matter how much they saw her brilliance against Mei Changsu and how Shang Jiao could transform into a Blizzard Pegasus, in their eyes, she is still not a match for Lan Xia because she possesses the bloodline of a Frost Dragon King, a consort/subordinate of Blizzard Pegasus.

Of course, while Blizzard Pegasus' bloodline is higher than Frost Dragon King, the fact that Lan Xia is an immortal already gives a massive edge over Shang Jiao.

Although some were discontent, neither elders nor disciples objected to it in the end.

"The winner is Lei Fengyun"

"The winner is Bai Longwei."

"Now, for the final battle for the top 4, Lan Zhen and Lan Zihe."

With a single leap, Mark and his opponent landed before each other, the battlefield remained frozen, and neither bothered about it anyway. After all, most of the planet they were living on is practically filled with snowy and frozen landscapes anyway.

As soon as their eyes fell upon each other, Lan Zihe smirked, "So, does young master also have a surprise awaiting us, just like Lady Shang?"

Mark smiled back, "Oh, you will definitely be surprised. She only showed the superiority of her bloodline. I'll show you how useless your cultivation, which you painstakingly trained for decades, is."

Lan Zihe's smirk was wiped off her face instantly, and a frown replaced it. "Lan Zhen..."

Mark blinked, faking surprise. "Why? Aren't you the one expecting a surprise? I'm merely answering your question. Why do you look angry, Senior Brother... umm..." Taking a moment of pause, he suddenly tilted his head and added. "What's your name again?"

"You..."

Lan Zihe, offended by Mark's remark, raised his palm as he charged forward.

\*Bang!\*

\*Argh...\*

A bullet wound appeared on Lan Zihe's right leg, putting a brake to his movements for a second. A large silver handgun was in Mark's hand.

"Disciple Lan Zhen, I believe I haven't said start." The Proctor's tone turned serious, his eyes fixed on Mark. The latter raised the gun and rested it on his shoulder as he replied. "I didn't see the Proctor make any move when the other party charged at me with the intention to beat me. You are someone in the Saint Realm. Yet, you failed to react. In front of so many clansmen here, are you trying to prove that you are biased or incompetent?"

"Lan Zhen... You are overstepping your boundaries... You..." As the Proctor's face reddened in anger, Mark ignored him and stared at his opponent. "So, you want to fight, or should I wait until you heal?"

"This amount of injury is nothing..." Lan Zihe growled. The bullet was pushed out of his body, and his wound was automatically healed by his recovery speed. Capturing the bullet, he looked at it with surprise. "This is adamantite?"

Mark smiled once again. "Yup, this is a weapon I specially designed, Adamantine Desert Eagle. What do you think of it?"

Chapter 635: The power of technology

Lan Zihe stood up straight, his body quickly healing the wounds he had sustained earlier.

The Proctor's voice finally echoed through the arena, announcing the start of the match. The air grew heavier with anticipation.

With a quick motion, half a dozen glowing energy sabers materialized around Lan Zihe. His eyes locked onto Mark, cold and furious.

"You might have taken me by surprise earlier," he said, voice sharp, "but you can no longer..."

Bang! Bang!

The sound of gunfire cracked through the air like thunder, once again.

"Argh..."

Lan Zihe staggered.

One bullet had pierced his left thigh, another tore into his right shoulder. Blood splattered onto the platform as he clutched the wounds, teeth gritted in pain.

"You..." He trembled with rage, his glare burning into Mark.

Mark simply smiled, calm and confident. "This gun can shoot bullets at hypersonic speeds and has automatic tracing. Unless you're an expert at speed or have high-end reflexes, it's next to impossible for you to evade. So, try your best to dodge, alright?"

"Ugh... I'll kill you, you bas..." Lan Zihe growled. Despite the pain, he raised his hands, a shimmering layer of energy coating his body. The energy sabers floated once more, humming with power. With a sharp flick, he

launched them at Mark, deadly projectiles that screamed through the air, each one charged with the might of an immortal.

Mark didn't flinch. He reached into his inventory and pulled out a flat, metallic disc, unassuming at first glance, but clearly no ordinary tool. Holding it in his left hand, he pressed the button at its center.

The disc hummed softly, then let out a pulse of blue light.

As the first energy saber neared him, five meters out, it suddenly disintegrated into sparkling particles, sucked straight into the device. The next one followed. Then another. One after another, all six energy sabers vanished, absorbed completely.

Gasps erupted from the stands. Even the usually composed sect elders leaned forward in their seats, stunned.

"What just happened?"

"He absorbed the sabers...?"

"That's not an artifact... what even is that?"

Mark glanced around, then casually explained, "This is another prototype. Took our bots 30 years to perfect it inside the orb of time's accelerated field."

Lan Zihé's face twisted in disbelief. "What are those weird artifacts? I can't sense a shred of any magic inside them."

From the stands, an elder called out, "Sect Head, don't you think this is too much?"

"Lan Zhen was using artifacts to win this battle," another added.

"He needs to be disqualified!"

"Yes."

"I thought he would turn better after months of closed-door cultivation, but he only turned more and more unruly. Sect Head, please punish that brat..."

"Hey, be fair. He's fighting someone from a higher realm. Of course, he's gonna use some support."

"That disc-shaped object and that weird thing in his hands are just as much a weapon as any sword. Why can't he use his own tools?"

Arguments broke out among the sect leaders, the entire arena buzzing with confusion and frustration. But on the battlefield, the tension was far from over.

Lan Zihe, seething with anger, snarled, "So, you want to depend on your artifacts to win this battle?"

Mark smirked, hands still steady. "I told you before. I'll render your efforts of cultivation useless. And these..." he gestured at his gear "these aren't artifacts. This is the power of technology. Something even a regular person can use to destroy an immortal like you."

"You..." Lan Zihe's face contorted with fury.

Mark raised a brow. "Don't you get tired of saying 'you' every time? Do you have some habit or something..."

"Fuc\*ng bas\*ard! I'll kill you." The immortal cultivator roared, his power surging violently. His aura exploded outward in a thick wave, condensing around him like molten armor. The pressure made the entire arena tremble. His attributes were skyrocketing; his body was blazing with power and killing intent as thick as it could get.

In a blur, he dashed forward, moving so fast that most spectators couldn't track him.

Mark, however, didn't move.

"Automode, on."

He flicked a switch on his gun with his thumb and gently pressed the trigger.

Bang-bang-bang-bang-bang...

Thirty rounds in 2.5 seconds. The weapon spat adamantine bullets at a terrifying rate, each one piercing the air with surgical precision.

Lan Zihe kept moving until his body suddenly jerked mid-sprint.

He stopped. His body staggered before dropping to his knees, blood dripping from a dozen wounds. Bullets had torn through his limbs, embedded deep in bone, punching past his enhanced defense like paper. His arms trembled. His breath came in shallow gasps.

A beat of silence fell over the arena.

Mark stepped forward, looked down at his opponent, and said coolly, "And the battle is over."

Lan Zihe tipped to his side, unconscious before he hit the ground.

Healers rushed to the platform, while the Proctor, after a long pause, finally raised his voice.

"Winner: Mark Lan Zhen."

The Semi-finals began not long after.

Match 1: Lan Xia vs Bai Longwei.

Then came Lan Xia's turn.

The moment she stepped onto the battlefield, the atmosphere shifted.

A faint chill hung in the air as Lan Xia stepped onto the battlefield, her steps light, elegant, like falling snow. She wore a pale blue robe that shimmered with frost.

Across from her stood Bai Longwei, tall and imposing, his own aura swirling with frost energy. He narrowed his eyes as their gazes locked. One can see determination and seriousness in his eyes.

"Lan Xia, last time we fought, we had an equal cultivation than mine," Bai Longwei said, raising his clenched fist and pointing at her, "But this time, I broke through the transcendent realm (immortal) while you are still stuck in the demigod realm. You are no longer a match for me."

Lan Xia didn't respond to his provocation. Her expression remained serene, almost disinterested, as if his words were nothing more than a passing breeze.

The Proctor raised his hand.

"Begin!"

The moment the word was uttered, the entire stage was swallowed by a sudden, biting cold.

Lan Xia moved.

There was no dramatic buildup, no warning. Just a blur of pale blue as her figure vanished, reappearing just meters away from Bai Longwei.

A glacial lotus formed beneath her feet, crystalline and delicate, but pulsing with terrifying power.

Bai Longwei reacted, raising his hands. "Frost Dragon's Breath!"

A serpent of ice roared from his palm, spiraling through the air with jagged teeth and coiling mist. But Lan Xia simply waved her fingers.

"Petal Shatter."

The ice lotus beneath her cracked and bloomed at once.

Chapter 636: The devil of Lan Clan (part-1)

"Petal Shatter."

The ice lotus beneath her cracked and bloomed at once. A burst of snow petals shot into the air, sharp as blades. They met the dragon in midair, tearing through it like silk. The dragon shattered into fine particles.

"What!" Bai Longwei's expression faltered.

Lan Xia was already upon him.

She reached forward to tap the air.

From her fingertip, a chain of crystalline ice shot forward, smooth, glass-like. It wrapped around Bai Longwei's arm before he could move.

"Frozen Bind."

Ice crawled rapidly over his limbs, locking him down. He roared, struggling, his qi surging wildly. "Don't underestimate me!"

"Frost Pillars, Rise!"

Spikes of ice erupted around him, seeking to break the chains. But Lan Xia merely lifted her hand.

Her eyes flashed. "Glacier Queen's Descent."

From the sky above the arena, a massive lotus of pure, silver-white ice materialized. The air plummeted in temperature. Even the sect elders leaned forward, some casting defensive auras over themselves.

Mark also couldn't help but raise his eyebrows, his lips slightly widened. "I didn't expect her to make a breakthrough to the immortal realm."

The lotus slowly descended.

Bai Longwei's defiance broke in surprise. "Wait! You... when did you break through?"

BOOM.

The ice lotus landed. It didn't explode, though. Unlike Mei Changsu's exploding lotuses, this one froze.

The moment it touched the stage, everything within a twenty-meter radius turned to crystal. Bai Longwei was encased in a pillar of translucent ice, wide-eyed, mouth open mid-protest.

The arena fell into stunned silence as a faint breeze brushed past.

Lan Xia stood at the center, untouched. Her robes fluttered gently. The battlefield around her was encased in crystallized ice.

She finally spoke without a shred of emotion on her face. "You were too loud."

The Proctor, who had been frozen in awe, took a shaky breath.

"Winner: Lan Xia!"

Cheers erupted in waves, but Lan Xia had already turned, walking off the stage with the same calm grace she had entered with. Not a single strand of hair out of place. Not a scratch on her robes. And behind her, Bai Longwei remained frozen in shame.

People expected her to return to her spot, but instead, she turned and walked toward Mark.

The murmurs grew louder as she stopped before him, her piercing gaze locked onto his. "So, what do you think? Am I worthy enough in your eyes now?"

"Wha..."

As people couldn't understand how they should interpret this, Mark's lips curled into a smirk. "I'll test that myself."

Lan Xia's eyes glimmered as she stepped back, her voice carrying through the coliseum. "I'll wait for you in the finals."

The crowd erupted into chaos.

\*

Now, the next semifinals: Lei Fengyun vs Lan Zhen.

A descendant of the throne, 17th prince of the Heavenly Ocean Empire, Lei Fengyun carried himself with the arrogance of one born into greatness and authority as he stepped into the arena.

He was 114 years old, though his youthful appearance suggested otherwise. As a peak-stage Immortal realm, and the disciple of a Grand Elder, he is no doubt one of the favorites to win the tournament.

Most importantly, everyone in the clan was aware that he fancies Lan Xia.

Lei Fengyun stepped onto the battlefield with an easy smirk, his long silver hair tied loosely behind his back. His robes were embroidered with the azure insignia of the Lei Clan, a silent declaration of his status, even though he is part of the sect. His gaze settled on Mark with an unmistakable condescension, as if he were addressing a mere inconvenience, perhaps because Mark had only defeated lower-level opponents so far and the higher one was defeated with the help of weapons instead of his own power.

Mark, on the other hand, remained impassive. His posture was relaxed, his hands resting casually by his sides.

The referee raised his hand to commence the fight, but Lei Fengyun lifted a single finger.

"Before we begin," he said, his voice carrying across the coliseum, "there is something I must share with everyone."

Mark's brow furrowed slightly.

The audience fell silent, wondering what it was.

With a triumphant smirk, Lei Fengyun spoke aloud. "This man, Lan Zhen, is the grandson of Lan Gengxin, the exiled Lan clan heir, whose daughter married the descendants of the Phoenix. Yes, He carries the bloodline of our bitter enemies."

Murmurs spread like wildfire.

"My heavens! He is a descendant of the Phoenix?"

"How dare he come to our sect?"

"Wait a second. Does that mean that Lady Shang is also the descendant of Phoenix?"

"I thought he was from the Mortal Realm... isn't he?"

"Disqualify him."

"No, kick him out of the sect."

"Kick him out."

"Kick him out."

"Kick him out."

As Mark's facial expression slightly darkened by the chants suddenly produced by a section of the audience, pre-arranged by his opponent, Lei Fengyun drank in the reaction of the audience, his smirk widening as he continued. "As if that wasn't enough, he claimed to be here to take over the clan instead. Every Lan Clan Elder can attest to that. The Sect Leader can attest to that fact, too."

His eyes then locked onto Mark's, summoning his soul weapon, a halberd. "Today, I'll get rid of this evil for the sect and bring peace to the sect."

For the first time in the tournament, Mark reacted a bit seriously.

As soon as the Proctor gave the signal to begin the battle, the air around him distorted as a sudden shift in energy swept over the coliseum. The frozen platform beneath his feet cracked.

The audience felt it before they saw it.

A sudden, invisible force weighed down on everything.

"Gravity Dome, 500x."

Lei Fengyun's smirk faltered as his knees buckled. His breath hitched, his body suddenly feeling as though it had turned to stone. The pressure intensified, forcing him to one knee. "Ugh... The hell is this..."

He struggled, trying to muster his strength, but his movements were sluggish, as if he were being crushed by a mountain on his head.

Mark stepped forward.

His movements were effortless, untouched by the weight pressing down on his opponent. His eyes, once calm, were now burning with intense cold that sent one's chill down the spine.

In an instant, he closed the distance between them.

Summoning his soul weapon, the Anti-matter gun, he pointed it at Lei Fengyun's forehead and spoke as he poured his ether energy into the gun. "You were quite good at painting me as a devil. But you have forgotten that it needs a hero, the symbol of righteousness and strength, to defeat a devil, not a scheming politician who is merely good with his words."

The gun's barrel was glowing as if it were about to shoot an anti-matter beam at any time.

Mark, however, held himself from clicking the trigger in the last second. He put away the gun and said to the one struggling to move. "You know what... destroying a pebble like you will not bring any happiness to me. Humiliating would bring satisfaction, though."

He put away the antimatter gun and took out the adamantite Desert Eagle that was loaded with adamantite bullets. "This is going to sting you a lot... but don't worry, I won't hit any vital spots..." Mark grinned as he released the safety lock and loaded the magazine.

Lei Fengyun's facial expression changed instantly, seeing a sadistic grin on his opponent's face.

Chapter 637: The Devil of Lan Clan (part-2)

The crowd had fallen into a stunned silence as the prince of the mighty Heavenly Ocean Empire was forced to kneel on the ground. It wasn't just him alone. Even the Proctor, who was kinda at a safe distance in the sky,

was forced to crash to the ground; his Saint realm cultivation ended up as nothing in front of Mark's Gravity Dome.

Mark then raised the Desert Eagle and aimed at Lei Fengyun's shoulder.

Bang!

The gun roared like a thunderclap.

A burst of golden flame erupted from the adamantite bullet as it smashed into Lei Fengyun's shoulder with brutal force.

\*Argh...\*

The noble prince let out a guttural scream, his body jerking backward as the impact sent him sprawling on the frozen ground, blood spurting into the cold air.

Cries of shock echoed throughout the arena.

"He's using that same artifact he used earlier. What is that Artifact?"

"Depending on an artifact? That's dishonorable."

"Hmpf, how do you know whether it is a weapon or an artifact. Your prince can use a sword, but Lan Zhen can use that... that... whatever it is?"

"Hey, you focus too much on the artifact. Look at the scene first. Prince Lei and the Elder both crashed to the ground. They couldn't even stand."

"I bet it is the artifact's powers."

"Who cares about it? As long as you win, that's what matters."

"Please, if you are depending on artifacts, that itself states that you are weak."

"Does the King become weak if he uses soldiers to fight a war for him? Hmpf... your sense of judgment is really poor."

"Lei Fengyun didn't even stand a chance..."

While mixed reactions were drawn from the public, Mark walked toward him at a slow, measured pace. He didn't care about the fallen Proctor, who was struggling to get up. Even with his Qi pouring outside to strengthen his body, he could only, at best, kneel.

With every step from Mark, Lei Fengyun's heartbeat rose faster, whether it is fear or anger.

"I said I would totally humiliate you today," Mark said, casually adjusting the aim once again.

Bang!

This time, the bullet struck Lei Fengyun's thigh.

"Argh..."

Another scream. More blood.

Mark didn't stop.

Bang! The second leg.

Bang! The other shoulder.

By the time Mark stood over him again, Lei Fengyun was trembling, four bloodied holes in his limbs, his halberd forgotten on the ground beside him.

The mighty 17th prince of the Heavenly Ocean Empire was lying on the ground like a broken doll, gasping, twitching, utterly powerless.

The Elders couldn't believe what they were witnessing. Now, they couldn't help but become intrigued by the weapon Mark is holding.

Mark then crouched beside him, lowering his voice, but still loud enough for everyone to hear. "Let me guess. You thought this was going to be a grand display. You thought you would expose my birth secrets, turn the audience against me, then defeat me and make yourself the hero. Right?"

Lei Fengyun coughed violently. Power surged in him. He forcefully burned his life force to release Qi and tried to get up, "Raaa...."

"Ark, Raise the Gravity by another 100g."

\*Ding!

The gravitational force inside the invisible dome suddenly surged, and Lei Fengyun was once again suppressed to his knees with a thud.

"You know what your mistake was?" Mark whispered, bringing the muzzle of the gun next to the prince's ear.  
"You assumed I cared what they thought."

Bang!

At point-blank range, Mark shot the bullet.

\*Arghhh!

A loud scream escaped from Lei Fengyun as his left ear turned bloody.

The spectators gasp at the sight.

Mark then subtly shifted the Gun, aiming at his right ear, wearing a smile on his face. "Now, would you like to tell me why? It's not like we have personal enmity."

"Lan Zhe..." \*Cough\*

Lei Fengyun coughed out a mouthful of blood, reddened in anger, but instead of making any move, he fell forward. Mark jumped up and moved away in reflex.

Lei Fengyun fell to his face and didn't wake up yet.

Mark blinked. "That's it? I didn't even get to use half of the magazine. His willpower is really too low."

Letting out a sigh, Mark shook his head, then speaking aloud as he raised his head. "Hey, Proctor. Announce the results. The participant is... Huh?"

Mark saw no one in the sky. He was taken aback and looked around, only to find a struggling elder. He blinked in realization. "Oh, you also got caught up in it, heh?"

He raised his hand, just for show-off purposes, and mumbled. "Dismiss."

The pressure was lifted off instantly, the Proctor rose to his feet with great relief.

Looking at Mark, he growled. "You... how dare you attack a Proctor?"

Mark tilted his head. "Hmm?"

The Proctor released his aura, his Qi enveloping him in rage.

"Stand down, Elder Yan." A voice came from the stands. It's the Sect Leader.

The Proctor dismissed his anger immediately and turned to the stands, giving a deep bow and cupping his fists. "I apologize. I let my emotions get the better of me. But, in my defense, Contestant Lan broke the rules and attacked a Proctor."

"Do you have anything to say to that accusation, Lan Zhen?" The Sect Leader asked Mark instead.

Mark shrugged. "It was an area-wide technique. If he comes into my range, it's his fault, not mine. And to be a fact, for someone who cannot even resist a contestant's attack isn't qualified to be a Proctor. For the finals, it's better to have a stronger one. One that doesn't show any bias. One that doesn't try to attack a contestant. One that can keep his emotions in check."

"You..." The Proctor looked at him in hatred. He experienced half a minute of helplessness, akin to hell, and now, humiliated in front of disciples? He is a Saint realm expert, a second-stage transcendent being. If he doesn't teach him a lesson, he wouldn't be able to lift his head in the sect.

As if that wasn't enough, Mark didn't even wait for the Sect Leader's response to his explanation. He calmly walked away from the battle platform.

Then, as if remembering something, he paused and looked back over his shoulder, glaring at the section of the stands where boos were originally came from.

"Those, my little friends in the stands," Mark said aloud, gesturing coldly to the section of the crowd that had led the chants earlier, "Don't think that you can slander someone just because you are in a crowd. You never know whether some people have eidetic memories and some bear grudges."

After giving a warning, Mark walked off the battlefield to dead silence. No cheers. No booing. Just a wall of stunned faces, uncertain of what to do.

The Sect Leader let out a sigh and spoke softly. "Elder Yan, declare the winner."

The Proctor hesitantly raised his hand. "V-victory... goes to Lan Zhen."

The silent audience now suddenly erupted with the announcement.

Shouts, cheers, and disbelieving gasps filled the coliseum. Some disciples were in awe, others horrified.

Lan Xia, standing among the spectators, exhaled slowly. "As long as I maintain a distance of 70 Bu (~105m), I will have enough time to dodge those metallic projectiles. That means..." She smiled as she raised her head. "The best setting for our battle should be the sky."

Chapter 638: A second transmigrator?

Later that evening, Mark was in his residence, busy designing a missile that could have a spatial core in its propulsion system so that he could launch it from one planet and attack the other. The core will absorb the spatial energy from the path and feed it to the missile, constantly giving it a push in the vacuum.

It's just an idea, which he would have never dared to even think in his dreams in his past life, as it is just a thing of sci-fi movies, but after experiencing all the fantasy and his own scientific achievements in the past few years, Mark felt like even the most absurd thing can be achieved.

\*Ding! Model render failed. Would you like me to adjust the specs and see if it is feasible?

"Yes..."

As the AI is working on it, Mark mumbled. "Well, a space laser weapon is much easier to build than this, but they don't carry much damage. That's the issue. It's better to explore antimatter, gravity, and space. I need to make three of these to work and..."

"Lan Zhen..."

A voice disturbed his thoughts.

Mark looked around.

"Lan Zhen, come to the Eastern Pavilion immediately." A voice rang in his head again.

As the voice was familiar and this wasn't the first time he was summoned, Mark understood that the Sect Leader wanted to meet him.

He got up and left his residence right away.

The grand chamber of the sect head was vast, lined with ancient tomes and intricate golden lanterns. Apart from the Sect Head, there was someone, a charming middle-aged person, sitting in the room, his piercing gaze studying Mark.

He couldn't help but shudder for a second, feeling like a pair of eyes looking at his soul.

\*Ding! Resistance Successful

While a notification rang in his head, those pair of eyes disappeared and the stranger's lips widened to a smile, his hands stroking his long beard. "Interesting lad..."

"Sect Head!" Mark cupped his fists with a light bow, greeting him.

"You know why you have been summoned?" The Sect Head asked.

Mark blinked. "Does it have anything to do with the morning fight? You want to inspect my Desert Eagle gun?"

Lan Yujin chuckled, shaking his head. "No. I have lived long enough to understand that several mysterious things exist in the universe, and I have grown too old to have any curiosity in new things." Lan Yujin then pointed his hand to the person sitting nearby. "This is Lord Hei from the Heavenly Ocean Empire's Court. He wishes to talk to you."

"The Heavenly Ocean Empire?" Mark's brows furrowed at the mention of the name. Earlier today, he basically humiliated a Prince of the Empire. Now, a court official is here? But the Sect Head earlier said that today fight has nothing to do with the matter.

So, why is he here?

Questions filled his head.

"Ark, Scan him."

In an instant, Ark scanned the person, using his God's Eye skill, and sent him a notification, almost instantly.

Name: Lord Hei (???)

Age: >2.6 million

Race: Human/???

Rank: 15-circle

Attribute: Void/Dark/Ice

Bloodline: Taotie/Ice Phoenix.

Affiliation: Heavenly Ocean Empire/???

\*

"The hell are those stats... A 15-circle? Seriously? There's no way I can defeat such an existence..." As Mark grumbled in his head, the stranger laughed aloud. "You are interesting indeed, Lad. Not many people could see through my cultivation and my bloodline."

"Eh? He knows I scanned him, too?" Mark's heart skipped a beat. He awkwardly greeted him. "Junior greets the elder."

The Person then spoke. "Relax. I'm not here to punish you or anything. I'm here because I was intrigued by your gun. May I take a look at it?"

Mark hesitated a bit before he decided to take out the Adamantine Gun. With a simple wave of his hand, Lord Hei pulled the gun into his hands.

Staring at it and caressing it gently, before surprisingly taking out the magazine, and then reloading it, he smiled. "Ah, how long has it been since I held this feeling?"

"What!" Mark's eyes widened in surprise. "He knows the gun and how to load it easily. Either he is from Earth, or he has visited Earth. But his age is over 2 million, There is no way he is from Earth. Perhaps, was he a transmigrator like me?" Mark wondered in his head.

To test his theory, he took a deep breath and spoke in English. "Hi, can you understand me?"

"Hmm?" Lord Hei looked at him, his brows knitted in response. "How do you know this language? Who taught you?" He questioned.

"A transmigrator?" Mark was taken aback. "Are you from Earth-192?" Mark couldn't help but ask him, continuing to speak English so that Lan Yujin wouldn't understand and keep this person's secret.

But then, as soon as he spoke, a sudden thought appeared in his head. His cautious nature erupted all of a sudden, making Mark wonder whether this fellow would kill him to keep his secret or something.

No, he absolutely cannot die. He has so much to do in life. Moreover, he had a family down there.

As Mark was feeling as nervous as hell, wondering what

Lord Hei looked at Lan Yujin and said, "Leave us alone."

Lan Yujin, the Sect head and Mark's great-grandfather, was taken aback, but he nodded politely like a subordinate and walked away. At this, Mark was slightly relieved.

Because whenever powerful people do this, it means they are willing to talk. But when weak people do this, they are willing to kill.

However, Mark knew that he should choose his next set of words wisely in order not to incur the wrath of this guy. Or else, the only option he would have left is to use everything to try and escape back to the mortal realm, where this fellow won't be allowed to step in.

With two of them alone, Lord Hei left his seat and walked to him.

Mark stiffened but stood there, trying to control his nervousness.

Almost reaching 4ft away, Lord Hei asked, "Tell me, how do you know this language? Who taught you? And what does Earth-192 mean?"

Mark replied in a polite tone, trying to be vague instead. "Earth-192 is the codename given to my planet. We speak many languages down there. English was a major one."

To which, Lord Hei reached out and grabbed Mark's arms and shoulders and asked, "Did you world, perhaps, has the countries of China, USA, and Russia?" There was curiosity and also fear seen in the stranger's eyes. The fear of being wrong.

"Wha..."

At this, Mark confirmed that this person is definitely a transmigrator. He replied. "Yes, in history, but during World War 3, those countries were gone. I mean, they exist but under different names like the USA was called in my time as the Federal Republic of the American States, encompassing the two whole continents. There was no Russia. Instead, it was Eurasia. Then, China was renamed as Zhongguo. Then there was the Holy Bharata Federation encompassing the Middle East, Indian subcontinent, etc..."

The person remained shocked by Mark's words and started crying for some reason. "So, the earth still existed? Even after hundreds of thousands of heavenly years, humanity thrived there?"

"Uhh... what are you talking about?" Mark blinked.

Chapter 639: Hei Zhenyu, a fellow earthling (part-1)

Mark's brow furrowed slightly as he observed Lord Hei wiping away tears like a man seeing home after centuries in exile.

"You alright, Elder...?" Mark finally asked, cautiously.

Lord Hei exhaled slowly and composed himself. "Earth still exists even after 2 million years. Life still moves forward, and the countries I remember still exist. How couldn't I be moved?"

Mark tilted his head. "Wait... What era are you from exactly?"

"I left Earth in the year 2004."

"Huh?" Mark blinked, baffled. "I'm also from the 21st century, though. Just 40 years from you."

Lord Hei stiffened.

He turned to Mark slowly, disbelief etched into every feature. "Impossible," he muttered. "More than 2 million years passed since I left Earth," Lord Hei replied, his voice laced with quiet horror.

Mark's jaw dropped. "Wait... What?! That... can't be right. Are you sure there isn't some sort of... insane time dilation going on?"

Hei Zhenyu shook his head. "That's not possible. Time dilation only occurs near a black hole. There is only one black hole in this plane of existence, which is basically the center, and we are far away from it. Hmm... wait a second..."

And then, he smacked his own forehead as something else clicked inside his head. "Of course!" he groaned. "The Void Dimension! Time freezes in the Void Dimension. How could I forget something so obvious? I trained there for 2 million years."

Mark chuckled nervously, but deep inside, he was reeling. Training for 2 million years? Seriously?

Lord Hei turned toward him again, his expression softening. "Anyway, forget about it. Tell me your story. How did someone from Earth... someone who doesn't suppose to have any Qi or cultivation... become an ascendant (demigod/10-circle)? I can sense so many elements inside you, even divinity. And some I couldn't even figure out? Were you summoned or... were you given powers... or..."

Mark kept his face neutral and replied calmly. "I died... and reincarnated with my memories intact."

He didn't say anything about the system or transmigration. Why would he anyway? Just because this guy is a fellow earthling doesn't mean he would reveal his secrets.

A moment passed in silence as Lord Hei stared at him, narrowing his eyes

Then, slowly, he nodded. "I can sense that you are not telling the complete truth.

Mark tensed slightly at that comment.

"But that's fine," Lord Hei, however, casually added with a shrug, as if he didn't care. "We're strangers. Everyone has their own secrets, and it's not like I spilled everything either."

There was a silence between them, more comfortable this time.

"So what about you, Elder?" Mark then asked him back. "Are you also reincarnated?"

"No, I'm original," replied the man. He then looked out toward the horizon through the chamber's tall windows, going down into the memory lane from millions of years ago.

"My name is Hei Zhenyu," he began. "Back on Earth, I was just a college student in China. Nothing special. Born as an orphan, with no relatives except for my grandfather. I lived and studied under a state subsidy. I was in my senior year of high school back then. On a rainy evening in 2004, while returning to the campus from a movie date, something caught me. I just disappeared. One moment I was on the sidewalk; the next, I was kneeling before a princess in a palace."

Mark blinked. "Seriously?"

"Oh yeah. The whole 'hero summoning' trope from those Japanese comics, I don't remember their name. Anyway, I was a hero summoned to kill the demon lord. I was blessed with a hero sword and given the best treatment." Hei chuckled darkly. "I was young, stupid, and caught up in the fantasy, thinking my life had more meaning back then. I trained to death, I fought countless battles, and finally, I killed the demon lord... then I married the princess. It should be a happy ending, but that's where my story started."

Mark waited, staring at him interestingly. He suddenly hoped to have popcorn on the side to munch around.

Meanwhile, Hei Zhenyu continued. "On the first night of our marriage, she tried to kill me with a lethal venom."

Mark's eyes widened. "Damn."

"Turns out, she already had a lover. She didn't want to marry me and was forced to marry me," He said with a hollow laugh. "I survived and killed her. The King branded me as a traitor, and I became a fugitive. Many rumors passed around, turning me into an evil incarnate. Then, I realized that since the job of killing the demon lord was done, they no longer needed a hero, and even if the princess wouldn't try to poison me, they planned to kill me in the end, after all."

"What happened next?" Mark asked, eyes focused.

"I ran away and hid myself, as I don't want to start a war with the kingdom, because that will only make me into a new demon lord. While exploring the wilderness, I accidentally stumbled upon ruins, which were supposedly a gateway to the higher plane of existence. I started my life fresh, I joined sects, fought wars, rose through guilds... and eventually landed in this plane of existence."

Mark nodded slowly, almost breathless. "And the Void Dimension?"

"Back then, there was no Lan Clan or the Heavenly Ocean Empire. This place was used to be ruled by only one sect, the Celestial Pavilion. The Blizzard Pegasus, the Immortal Phoenix, the Ice Frost dragon, and many other beasts used to be under the command of the clan lord. I was an outer sect disciple of the Celestial Pavilion, and we had a grand expedition into the Chaos Realm," Hei said simply, slightly walking a few steps with his gaze still on the horizon. "An accident occurred due to an invasion of Makhyans, it's a race filled with powerful but evil mages. As cannon fodder, I was supposed to die, but instead, I got swallowed by a tear in space and ended up in the Void Dimension, where time doesn't exist. Where the laws act quite differently from here. Where many banished races and beasts run amok crazily. Where there is no order..."

Mark shivered at the thought. But his curiosity increased more on this Void dimension.

Hei Zhenyu continued to reminisce. "I don't know how long I was there. Might've gone insane a few times. It was only after I made the breakthrough to the God realm did I get the sense of time. Not in the sense of actual time, but I sensed my own bone age. But even after that, I didn't know how to escape. With the help of a makhyan that was banished there, I managed to come out... When I did, I was already at the third stage, transendant realm expert (14-circle). The Heavenly Ocean Emperor found me shortly, offered me a place in his court. And he poured plenty of resources into helping me break through further to the final stage.

The silence lingered for a while longer as Mark was quite amazed by this guy's story. However, at the same time, he also had something nagging at the back of his mind.

"The Void Dimension... the place where time stops..." he murmured, almost to himself. "How do you get there, by the way?"

Chapter 640: Hei Zhenyu, a fellow earthling (part-2)

Mark's thoughts were simple. If he could manage to get used to that place, if he could find a way to establish his factory there, he could endlessly manufacture weapons in less time.

Hei Zhenyu's smile disappeared in an instant. His eyes sharpened, and he stared at Mark with a heavy gaze. "Why would you want to go there?" He questioned him.

Mark shrugged lightly, trying to downplay the whole conversation. "I mean, who wouldn't want to seek out a place where time stops?"

Lord Hei cut him off, his tone flat and grim. "Don't underestimate that place, Lan Zhen."

Mark blinked. "Hmm?"

"You may be strong, kid," Hei Zhenyu said slowly, his gaze flicking briefly over him. "You carry more than one powerful bloodline for sure, but none of that matters in the Void. It's not a place you conquer. It's a place where madness will take over you no matter how much willpower you have. If not for the fact that I had a compatibility with the Void, because that's what my element was, I wouldn't have even survived. It wasn't just that place. It's also an imprisonment to the most evil forces ever to exist."

Taking a brief pause, he continued. "There is a reason why it is called the Banished Realm."

The words hit Mark like a bolt of lightning. "The Banished Realm..." he repeated slowly. "Wait... I've heard that before."

Lord Hei raised a brow.

Mark frowned as memories surged. "There was a mage in the Elf World. Said he escaped the Banished Realm. If I remember correctly, he was a Mahkyan indeed, but he isn't that powerful."

Hei Zhenyu folded his arms, face grim. "There are a few makhyans who live in the void dimension. Some of them were born there. They can freely leave the place even if they don't have the strength. He must be one of those."

Mark shrugged. "I guess."

Taking a deep breath, he said. "Don't worry, I won't seek it out, atleast, not until I attain immortality. If the concept of time doesn't exist, then I should have an immortal lifespan to go over there."

Lord Hei exhaled deeply, his fingers brushing through his beard in contemplation. "If that's what you decide, then it is your choice. But, I cannot help you seek out the Void dimension," he said finally, his voice low. "That would be no different than handing someone a blade and asking them to walk into a storm. After all, if you die there, your soul will be stuck there without a chance of reincarnation unless one goes there and retrieves your soul."

Mark stayed silent at that comment.

"But," Hei Zhenyu added, softening a little, "then again, you made me happy today by revealing the earth's current status. I don't know where it is, and because of world laws, neither could I go there, but if you would like to do me a favor, I will pay you back with anything."

Mark blinked twice and asked. "What is it, Elder?" While saying that, he already had an inkling of what this emotional person was going to ask.

"As someone from the mortal realm who had yet to step into the transcendent realm, you can explore the world. If you would kindly do a favor for me by traveling to Earth and locating someone for me. She's my childhood friend. We grew up together in the same orphanage, and later she also became my girlfriend, but I was summoned in the middle of the date. I just want to know how she was doing, that's all."

Mark couldn't help but stare at him blankly. This guy is over 2.6 million years old and still wants to know about his ex-girlfriend? Seriously?

As Mark was about to accept it for now, but without having any interest in doing this favor, Hei Zhenyu looked Mark squarely in the eyes. "In return, I will do you the favor. In advance, in fact. Tell me. Do you have any desire? Any wish? Anything that I can do?"

Mark blinked. He hadn't expected this level of goodwill, especially not from a 15-circle Elder God-level cultivator who had lived through eras. Just how desperate is this guy to find his ex? Mark couldn't help but wonder.

Mark immediately wanted to tell him to kill Golden Demon Cat and get his Anan, but then, he shook away that thought as he was confident enough to take care of this matter on his own. Instead, he gave a small smile. "I don't need power, but if you are willing to grant any request in advance, I do have one. You see..." He reached into his inventory and pulled out the Adamantine Desert Eagle once again. "I'm a weapon maker. A seller, more accurately. I make weapons, bringing them to this cultivating world. In my world, they are famous. But here, people are far stronger than those simple guns and missiles. So, I wonder whether they will be interested in these high-end models instead..."

Hei Zhenyu's eyes flickered with curiosity as Mark extended the gleaming Desert Eagle to him. "If there's something you can do for me... could you perhaps use your influence to pitch this to the Emperor? Or at least some of the nobles of the Heavenly Ocean Court? See if they're interested."

He kept his tone calm, but there was a subtle glint of ambition in his eyes.

Hei took the gun again, turning it in his hands with reverence and familiarity. "This could indeed impress the Emperor. Especially if I demonstrate it myself. But..." He smirked slightly. "Don't expect miracles. Most nobles in the Court are archaic to their core. They believe anything new is an abomination. And firearms obviously make cultivators useless. They might feel these weapons will destroy what our ancestors had painstakingly built for millions of years."

Mark shrugged. "You've just described 80% of leaders back on Earth. I guess those types exist everywhere, regardless of place."

Hei Zhenyu let out a hearty laugh at that. "Well said, lad."

"I'll try," Hei continued, slipping the Desert Eagle into a black case that materialized out of thin air. "If nothing else, it'll shake up the traditionalists. Sometimes, that's enough."

Mark bowed with a deep nod. "Thank you. Truly."

"Don't mention it," Hei said, waving his hand. "Consider it a token of goodwill. And also, when you have time... come to the Heavenly Ocean Empire. I have knowledge—cultivation techniques, ancient elemental synergies, and void-imbued arts. You've got the bloodline and potential for them."

Mark raised an eyebrow. "Tempting but I don't think I'm suited for swords and fighting technique."

"I know that you are a mage-type cultivator," Hei added with a nod, "I can also see that you've bonded with multiple beasts... I can arrange something else. When you're free, come visit. I'll allow you to form a contract with a God Realm beast."

Mark blinked, surprised by the offer. "That's... generous."

Hei Zhenyu grinned. "You gave me hope by revealing yourself today. You made my mood happy today. What I give is nothing compared to what you gave me."

Mark just bowed, not intending to refuse free lunch, despite knowing that there is no free lunch in the world.  
"I appreciate it, Lord Hei."

Hei Zhenyu gave a nod. "Good, I will wait for the news, then."