

The People's God: Sacrificing Trillions to Ascend

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Reading Han Wu's expression, Tian Wen understood the student's thoughts. Tian Wen, in his capacity as a teacher, decided to provide some guiding advice.

"Han Wu, for someone at your stage, 1 billion Divine Points is an overwhelming sum. I suggest you reserve a portion for the upkeep and development of your divine realm and utilize the remainder to purchase a powerful God weapon."

"A God weapon?"

Han Wu was aware of the four tiers of equipment used in the Divine Civilization: Common, Faith, Divine, and God. However, he also understood that God-ranked equipment was exclusively for the use of Gods.

"Being only a Divine Being, and not even a Demigod, can I even wield a God weapon?"

"Selecting a less intense God weapon should resolve any potential issues. There are likely God-ranked items that even a Divine Being such as yourself can wield. I am acquainted with a shopkeeper who specializes in God equipment, and I can assist you in your selection," Tian Wen said, patting his chest with confidence.

Han Wu, excited to get his first God weapon, urged, "Let's go then!"

Just as they were about to leave, however, someone called for them. "Locust Plague! I've finally found you!"

Seeing a familiar figure rushing towards him, Han Wu dove behind Tian Wen like a startled cat behind a sofa, tightly clutched his teacher's clothes and pleaded, "Protect your lucky star, Mr. Tian!"

Han Wu recognized the approaching figure as the Elephant Lord, the same Demigod he had just defeated. He immediately anticipated the Elephant Lord's intent to exact revenge for the decimation of half his army.

Tian Wen, sharing Han Wu's apprehension, stepped forward to shield his student, challenging, "Who would be so unwise as to try and injure my student?"

Rendered speechless by Tian Wen's immediate protective action, stopped dead in his tracks. "Wait a moment," he clarified. "There's been a misunderstanding. I have not come seeking revenge."

Han Wu sighed in relief, perceiving the Elephant Lord's sincerity. "If you're not here to avenge your army, what brings you here? I can't pay you back for the loss of your army."

The Elephant Lord's face darkened as the memory of his miscalculation and subsequently humiliating defeat resurfaced. He had lost both a substantial portion of his army and his reputation.

Overcome with embarrassment, he wished the ground would just open and swallow him up. With a sigh, he explained, "I'm here because I wish to be your friend. I find your strength truly remarkable, and I admire your abilities. *Oh*, by the way, I'm Xiang Meng, a first year student at Imperial College."

Xiang Meng extended his hand to Han Wu and shook it.

"You attend Imperial College? I am truly honored to make your acquaintance," Han Wu remarked, genuinely surprised and pleased.

Xiang Meng inquired, "You appear to be quite young. Have you not yet taken the entrance examinations? Are you currently on the reserve list for any colleges?"

Han Wu's hand reflexively moved to the mask his teacher had given him, designed to conceal his personal information. Despite this, Xiang Meng had somehow inferred that he was not yet a college student.

"I'm not on any reserve list. I'm just a regular high schooler."

"What? You can't be serious! That's impossible, utterly impossible! You're joking, aren't you?"

The guy I lost half my army to, the famous Locust Plague, is just a regular highschooler?! Xiang Meng screamed inwardly.

Han Wu stated, "I have no reason to lie to you. My teacher here can confirm what I'm saying," as he gestured towards the nodding Tian Wen.

"Indeed, my student has not been placed on any reserve lists. Actually, he has turned down offers and invitations from multiple colleges, as he is only interested in attending Imperial College. Regrettably, the Imperial College recruiter failed to recognize the potential in his units."

Xiang Meng, amused by the revelation, responded, “Ah, I see. You are quite ambitious. Imperial College is, without a doubt, the most prestigious of the top three institutions. How about you become my junior? I will provide a recommendation to the college, which should ease the examination process for you. Once you return, focus on training your core race and seize the opportunity to secure a place on the Imperial College reserve list.”

With a tone of astonishment, Han Wu inquired, “You're willing to do that for me?” He had braced himself for retaliation, particularly after decimating half of Xiang Meng's army, and found the offered kindness unexpected.

With a jovial laugh, Xiang Meng clarified, “It's not merely out of a desire for friendship that I'm offering my assistance. I also want allies. The path to becoming a God is long and arduous, and having reliable allies is invaluable. I believe you possess the strength to be a worthy ally.

“Additionally, I will receive a bonus from the college if you successfully pass the entrance exams. I will never turn down a free reward. Moreover, I can only recover the losses sustained by my army if you agree to become my junior. Should you enroll in another college, I fear that I would be unable to seek any form of compensation from you, *hahaha*.”

Seeing how sincere and down-to-earth he was, Han Wu felt a greater sense of trust.

“Then I will have to thank Senior Xiang in advance.”

“No worries, but don't get overconfident because of this win. Instead, you need to dedicate your efforts to the development and enhancement of your core race. Aim to nurture one or two Heroic life forms, as the Imperial College enrollment examinations are very challenging.”

Given Xiang Meng's repeated emphasis on training his core race, Han Wu understood that the enrollment exams would most likely center on that aspect. He resolved to prioritize the development of his core race from that moment on.

Once they had bid Xiang Meng farewell, Han Wu and Tian Wen teleported to Wan Bao Street, a street lined with shops that specialized in the sale of equipment. The shops showcased equipment from all four tiers, ranging from the basic Common equipment to the highly coveted God equipment. It appeared that the shops had everything.

Tian Wen guided him towards a small and unassuming shop.

Treasure Pavilion... That's a very old-fashioned name, Han Wu thought, glancing at the worn sign above the shop's entrance.

With a gesture, Tian Wen invited, "Come, let's go in," and proceeded through the doors into the old shop. They were met by a beautiful Demigod who welcomed them with genuine enthusiasm, showing Han Wu no prejudice despite his status as a Divine Being.

"Welcome to our establishment, the Treasure Pavilion. How may I be of assistance to you both? Are you interested in a specific equipment rank, or would you like to speak with one of our expert Blacksmiths?"

"Kindly inform Master Tony that old Tian has arrived for a visit."

Upon hearing the blacksmith's name, Han Wu furrowed his brow. *Master Tony? Is he a master in forging God equipment?*

The Demigod contacted Master Tony through their private internal communication system. Shortly after, a gate materialized, and the teacher-student duo proceeded through it, finding themselves within Master Tony's workroom.

Han Wu immediately noticed a bald man with muscles subtly defined under his fatty physique within the workroom, his rough skin glistening with perspiration as he wielded a hammer and a pair of pliers.

Turning to face them, the man bluntly asked, "Old Tian, did you bring me some fat lamb this time?" Han Wu, upon hearing this, questioned his decision to trust Tian Wen and wished to be elsewhere.

Chapter 42 - God Weapon of a Lost Civilization

Tian Wen coughed awkwardly, saying, "Tony, please be serious. This is my student."

Tony rose to his feet and scratched his bald head. "Tian Wen's student? Then allow me to preface our first encounter with our shop's motto. We do not defraud, discriminate against our customers, or offer student discounts."

Han Wu was stunned.

What kind of motto is that? I need a student discount! It's not easy for a student like me to earn money. I barely managed to earn 1 billion Divine Points after a grueling five-hour match!

Tian Wen hurriedly interjected, "Pay him no mind, Han Wu. Tony has a harsh way of speaking, but beneath his rough exterior lies a gentle disposition. Moreover, the equipment he forges is of exceptional quality."

"Old Tian, that's the first positive thing you've said about me in years," Tony remarked in mock surprise.

Tian Wen began to nurture the thought of leaving and abandoning his ten-year friendship with Tony. He furiously suppressed the thought of hitting the weaponsmith. In truth, if he actually had that ability, he'd have done so long ago.

Tian Wen sighed in helplessness and stated, "Let me show you some of his creations," proceeding to show his student various equipment in Tony's gallery. There were hundreds of God weapons in the gallery, each branded with Tony's seal—he had personally forged each weapon from scratch.

Tian Wen, being mindful of their budget, carefully selected thirty different God weapons and proceeded to give a detailed explanation for each. His professionalism, extensive knowledge and level of expertise startled Han Wu for a moment. *Is he really a teacher? Maybe teaching is a side job, and he's actually a salesman for Tony.*

After detailing each of the thirty selections, Tian Wen asked, "So, Han Wu, do you fancy any of them?"

Han Wu pondered for a while and picked out three God weapons that suited him the best.

[Gu Jar: 2 Star God Weapon. Effect 1: Refine Gu. Can store 100,000 insect-type units into the Gu Jar to refine a Gu. The insects will kill each other until only one survives. The sole survivor has a certain chance to ascend a rank. Highest rank produced: Heroic. Effect 2: Divine Skill: Bug Caller. Attracts insect-type units. Range dependent on Divine Points invested.]

[Myriad Race Decree: 3 Star God Weapon. Effect 1: Intimidation. Passive. Intimidates units below Heroic rank. Effect 2: Prestige. Collects Faith Points from different races. Intimidation grows stronger with each different race's Faith Points collected. Effect 3: Divine Skill: Control. Forcefully controls a life form's action. Strength dependent on strength of Intimidation and Divine Points invested.]

[Undead Banner: 2 Star God Weapon. Effect 1: Divine Skill: Undead Strengthening. Strength dependent on Divine Points invested. Effect 2: Divine Skill: Undead Command. Strength dependent on Divine Points invested.]

While the three God weapons offered a significant boost to the strength of his units, Han Wu, mindful of the potential Imperial College entrance exams, ultimately selected the genocidal 2 Star God Weapon, Gu Jar, which would specifically aid his core race.

The weapon was priced at four Divine Essence, about 600 million Divine Points. Although this was a relatively high cost for a Divine Being like himself, he deemed it a worthwhile investment that would yield returns over time.

Tian Wen smiled and nodded with approval, recognizing that although the God weapon wasn't offensively powerful, it was optimally suited to Han Wu.

Tony, clearly pleased with Han Wu's choice, exclaimed, "Marvelous! The cost for that will be four Divine Essence, or 580 million Divine Points. How do you intend to settle the payment?"

Tian Wen discreetly drew Tony aside and initiated a prolonged negotiation session, and at one point, they nearly came to blows.

Tony, after much persuasion, finally conceded and added an extra item for a very low cost. For 600 million Divine Points, Han Wu would receive not only the Gu Jar but also a 0 Star God weapon, the Inspect Eye.

The Inspect Eye had just one purpose: to analyze the data of any life form below the Divine Being rank. It was a popular God weapon, usually sold for 50 million Divine Points.

In total, Tony granted Han Wu a 5% discount, illustrating the value of Tian Wen's friendship in this transaction.

As Han Wu was on the verge of exiting with his two new God weapons, Tony called out, "Hold on, esteemed guest. Please do not leave just yet."

Han Wu was bewildered. Tony, who hadn't talked to him much before, now addressed him as an 'esteemed guest' after he made a purchase. *This guy changes his attitude so quickly.*

"Esteemed guest, I've forged a special God weapon based on an incomplete blueprint discovered from a long-lost civilization. I think it suits you a lot."

Tony produced the God weapon, a plain golden sphere. Tian Wen, intrigued, employed his Demigod authority to examine it. Upon discovering the sphere-like weapon's complete lack of functionality, he was both surprised and infuriated.

"Tony, how dare you? All this time, I thought we were friends! Do you truly believe I'm that stupid and powerless that I won't use violence?" Tian Wen roared, considering Tony's actions as a blatant act of disrespect towards him, by attempting to deceive his student. He found the situation deeply humiliating and could not let it pass.

Tony shook his head and said, "Listen. This item is quite unique. Allow me to provide an explanation."

Tian Wen's anger dissipated almost instantly, and he agreed with a simple "Fine." Han Wu was taken aback by his teacher's sudden calmness.

"This is the Ravenous Wolf, a God weapon that possesses the unique ability to strengthen itself by absorbing other God weapons." Han Wu, immediately captivated by

this feature, asked, "Master Tony, could you elaborate further?" Seeing Han Wu's curiosity, Tony slowly began to explain the weapon's capabilities.

The Ravenous Wolf originated from a lost civilization where pillaging was commonplace. They were a kingdom of bandits that looted God weapons from various sources. However, God weapons were bound to their owners, rendering them unusable by others unless the original owners were deceased.

The civilization's ruler, disheartened by the vast collection of unusable God weapons, tasked their most skilled craftsmen and blacksmiths with finding a solution. After a millennium of intensive and dedicated research, they succeeded in creating the God weapon, Ravenous Wolf.

This God weapon, capable of consuming other God weapons to enhance its power and replicate their effects and Divine Skills, became a source of intense resentment among neighboring civilizations. This animosity ultimately culminated in the civilization's annihilation during a coordinated assault.

Tony, concluding his narrative as if he had personally witnessed the events, paused abruptly and addressed Han Wu, "Esteemed guest, as a valued VIP of our establishment, you have the exclusive opportunity to purchase this incredible God weapon for a mere 1 billion Divine Points. Do not hesitate to seize this exceptional offer!"

The price of one billion Divine Points struck Tian Wen as remarkably low. He found it perplexing that a God weapon responsible for the downfall of an entire civilization would be offered at such a meager sum. He found this extremely suspicious.

Noticing Tian Wen's skepticism, Tony quickly explained, "The reason for the reduced price is that I only possess incomplete blueprints for this weapon. The Ravenous Wolf has a minor defect. It maintains its ability to consume God weapons for growth, but at a significantly reduced rate—ten times slower than intended. Furthermore, it cannot replicate the Divine Skills of the consumed weapons, though it might retain their passive abilities."

Tian Wen scoffed, "So, it's practically worthless, isn't it?" He considered the weapon to be significantly inferior to its original counterpart and wouldn't take it even for free. No rational individual would pay such a high price for a low-quality, mass-produced item.

Tony, visibly irritated, retorted, "Tian Wen, you are free to insult me, but you will not insult my creations."

"And why should I not? It's completely useless!"

Just as they were about to engage in a quarrel, Han Wu interjected, "I'll buy it for 400 million Divine Points."

Tian Wen urgently drew Han Wu aside, advising, "Han Wu, please don't buy that junk for my sake." However, Han Wu possessed a genuine interest in acquiring the weapon due to its unique ability to consume other God weapons.

He recognized that the original version of the weapon was indeed powerful, as it could absorb and replicate the Divine Skills of the God weapons it consumed. However, that did not mean the Ravenous Wolf was completely useless. Its ability to consume other God weapons was a significant advantage in itself. Han Wu considered using it to capture a powerful God weapon from an opponent and then destroy it with the Ravenous Wolf, effectively weakening them.

More importantly, Han Wu sensed a similarity between the Ravenous Wolf's operation and his Refinery. He planned to thoroughly conduct a detailed examination once he had purchased it.

Han Wu replied, "Mr. Tian, you've misunderstood. I genuinely admire Master Tony's craftsmanship. The fact that he could forge the Ravenous Wolf from an incomplete blueprint is amazing! I'd like to buy it to support his passion, but I'm short on funds and only have 400 million Divine Points. Would Master Tony consider selling it for that price?"

Tony, with a mixture of suspicion and gratitude, scratched his bald head and asked, "Do you really like it?"

"I do."

Seeing the sincerity in Han Wu's eyes, Tony relented. "Alright, fine. I will accept 400 million Divine Points. It is not often that I encounter someone who appreciates my creations. The Ravenous Wolf is now yours!"

Han Wu completed the payment and received the God weapon, Ravenous Wolf, in exchange. Tian Wen then accompanied Han Wu, ensuring his safe return home.

Han Wu was eager to initiate the ceremony to establish himself as the rightful master of his new God weapons.

Chapter 43 - Improving the Divine Realm

Han Wu entered his landing pod and traveled to his divine realm to begin the weapon branding ceremony. Adhering to the instructions provided with his purchased weapons, he constructed an array using some Divine Points. Inside the array, he placed the God weapons and dripped a single drop of his blood onto each.

His blood spread open as if they were becoming the blood vessels of the God weapon. The 0 Star God weapon, Inspect Eye, the first God weapon to recognize him as its

master, transformed into a glowing orb and attached itself to his earlobe, and if he wished to inspect the data of other life forms, he only needed to activate it mentally.

The next God weapon to bond with Han Wu was the 2 Star God weapon, the Gu Jar, which transformed into a pot-bellied toad and croaked quite loudly. To test the Jar's functionality, he ordered 100,000 Elite locusts into it, understanding that the refinement would require a full day.

However, the Ravenous Wolf, the last God weapon, refused to acknowledge Han Wu as its master. He received a notification indicating that the weapon needed more blood.

I was utterly mistaken in believing that all God weapons would yield so easily.

Han Wu, with a heavy sigh, supplied the required amount, almost passing out from the blood loss before the Ravenous Wolf finally accepted him as its master.

The Ravenous Wolf transformed into a small wolf pup and immediately began clamoring for food, demanding God weapons. Han Wu furrowed his brow, as he lacked the funds to buy more God weapons at that moment. Visibly disappointed by Han Wu's denial, the wolf pup began to sniff its surroundings, its eyes suddenly brightening as it detected an alternative food source—pure Energy Stones.

Han Wu, possessing a good amount of Energy Stones in his inventory, fed some to the wolf pup. The pup happily munched on the Energy Stones, which were as hard as steel. Seeing how effortlessly the wolf pup crushed the Stones with its jaws, he was finally convinced that the Ravenous Wolf was indeed capable of devouring God weapons.

With the God weapons dealt with, Han Wu turned his attention to the Refinery. It had produced 428 Sources of Sacred Objects from the 48 Rank 2 Sacred Objects he had previously fed into it. He then allocated 400 of these Sources to Yuan Zhong for the repair of his God weapon and used the other 28 to improve his Rank 2 Sacred Object: Law of Gluttony (Incomplete).

The Law of Gluttony had undergone some changes after continuously being repaired with the Sources of Sacred Objects. After absorbing the 28th Source of Sacred Object, it emitted a brief flash of light. Han Wu, upon inspecting it, was surprised to discover that it had been upgraded.

[Rank 3 Sacred Object: Law of Gluttony (Incomplete): Grants the Gluttony trait to the core race when equipped. Common life forms evolve into Elite life forms after consuming food equivalent to 100 times their basal metabolic rate, and Elite life forms evolve into Unique life forms after consuming 1000 times their basal metabolic rate. (Incomplete. Effective only on Common and Elite life forms.)]

Han Wu was astounded by just how powerful it had become. It effectively provided a complete Evolution Path, transforming a Common life form into a Unique one. He only

needed to ensure that his locusts had enough food, and they could all ascend to the Unique rank!

The thought of having billions of Unique locusts at his command filled him with excitement. Despite their relative weakness, Unique locusts would still have advantages such as enhanced life force, extended lifespan, and increased Faith Point production. He could use the Gu Jar to refine them, gradually building a massive army of Heroic locusts.

Han Wu's hopeful vision of the future was abruptly interrupted by a sudden crack in his Core. Upon immediate inspection, he discovered that his Core was overloading. The upgraded Law of Gluttony, now too powerful, had pushed his Core beyond its limits. With his core level, he was only supposed to equip Sacred Objects up to Rank 7, but his total rank had now reached Rank 8.

If he didn't act quickly, his Core would face imminent destruction. However, he was unwilling to simply unequip the Law of Gluttony, as Divine Beings were restricted to equipping Rank 2 Sacred Objects at most. The only reason the Law of Gluttony, now a Rank 3 Sacred Object, was equipped right now was because it had ranked up while it was still equipped to his Core.

Should he unequip it now, he'd first need to become a Demigod to equip it once more. He'd essentially exploited a minor loophole, allowing him to equip a Rank 3 Sacred Object as a Divine Being.

In an attempt to prevent his Core from further deteriorating, he quickly unequipped the Rank 1 Sacred Object, Poison Orb, planning to re-equip it when his Core leveled up later. However, right after removing the Poison Orb, it unexpectedly shattered.

"The hell?"

Stunned and bewildered, he couldn't comprehend why the orb had shattered. He quickly went online to investigate, and ultimately, he discovered that Sacred Objects would disintegrate if unequipped from a Core above level five.

Despite feeling a pang of sadness at the loss of a valuable Sacred Object, Han Wu sighed in relief, realizing he had made the right choice in removing the Poison Orb rather than the Law of Gluttony or the other two Rank 2 Sacred Objects, as losing them would have been far worse.

Once he had gathered the Poison Orb's fragments and deposited them into the Refinery, Han Wu became aware of certain changes taking place in his divine realm.

Under the effect of the Law of Gluttony, the locusts were constantly feeding, resulting in continuous rank advancements. The other four races were also engaged in their respective activities: Steely was diligently learning a new skill, the Scorching Dwarves

were mining and forging with zeal, the Minotaurs were crafting new totems, and the skeletons... were proudly displaying the Bone Stones their god had graciously given them.

Thanks to the Bone Stones, the Skeleton Lord's three negative statuses had effectively been reduced to two, restoring it to Heroic status. It had also gained a new skill: Summon Skeleton Knight.

The little skeleton had gained the ability to summon Skeleton Knights from the remains of Unique life forms, an amazing skill that would be incredibly useful and particularly active in extended battles.

As Han Wu nodded in satisfaction, he suddenly noticed a newly constructed building within his divine realm. Upon closer inspection, he discovered it was the Blood Coliseum. In contrast to the original Blood Coliseum, which was enormous, this one was considerably smaller, roughly 10 sq km in size at most.

He could send his units into the arena to battle, and those who won had a chance to ascend to the next tier. Even Unique life forms had a small chance of evolving into Heroic life forms without the need for a Heroic Template.

Han Wu's eyes gleamed with excitement upon seeing the Blood Coliseum's effect, and he quickly sent his Unique units into the arena to fight. After all, obtaining a Heroic life form would be a significant benefit to his realm.

Chapter 44 - New Life Form: Locustmen

Han Wu led a simple yet fulfilling life, attending classes during the day and managing his divine realm at night. Through the constant use of Increased Growth on his locusts, he managed to cultivate 14 billion of them within a few days.

Remarkably, only ten percent of the locusts were Common; thirty percent were Elite and the remaining sixty percent were Unique.

He knew people would be shocked by the sheer number of Unique locusts in his divine realm. Considering that an average God possessed a maximum of 8 billion Unique life forms, and a Demigod even fewer, Han Wu's situation was exceptional. However, supporting so many Unique locusts was very expensive.

He was forced to expend nearly a million Divine Points daily just to obtain enough Flesh Golem corpses to feed his locusts. To make things worse, a recent shortage of those corpses had led to a slight price increase, making his realm even more expensive and difficult to manage.

With a heavy heart, Han Wu made the difficult choice to Sacrifice his locusts, keeping only a billion Unique ones. The colossal array materialized in the skies above his divine realm, absorbing the life force of the sacrificed locusts.

As usual, Han Wu was then presented with three options.

[Option 1: 10,000 Unique Night Hunters]

[Option 2: 3 Star God weapon: Overlord Sabre. Effect 1: Also functions as a Sacred Object. When equipped to the Core, it enables the core race to summon a metal sabre as their weapon. Effect 2: Increases damage against beasts by 15%. Effect 3: Divine Skill: Overlord Body.]

[Option 3: Rank 2 Sacred Object: Revelation Stone. Offers a chance for a core race to receive a revelation and transform into a demi-human when equipped to the Core (Exclusive to core races that are neither human or demi-human)]

Han Wu's gaze lingered on the third option.

He'd initially thought Sacrifice had malfunctioned, giving him a mere Rank 2 Sacred Object after the sacrifice of 13 billion locusts. However, upon reading the Revelation Stone's description, he realized his mistake. The first two options paled in comparison!

The idea of a core race gaining humanoid characteristics wasn't unusual; in fact, it was a relatively common occurrence within the Divine Civilization. Races like the Swordwinds, minotaurs, Lizardmen, and even Ratmen were classified as demi-humans. Despite potential misconceptions, a demi-human form offered significant advantages to a core race. For instance, they had the ability to use weapons designed for humanoid forms.

Han Wu's long-cherished ambition of gaining an aerial army was within reach, as the humanoid locusts could fly and wield weapons simultaneously. After all, nothing said "elite military unit" like Unique ranked weapon-wielding mutant bugs.

Without hesitation, he selected the third choice and the Rank 2 Sacred Object materialized, resting weightless in his palm. He examined his Core, and after a tense moment of contemplation and deliberation, he finally removed the Molten Earthflare. The Sacred Object shattered upon removal, but he just shrugged, completely unbothered.

With the Revelation Stone now bound to his Core, an invisible and subtle but undeniable energy wave radiated outward, surging through the entirety of his locust swarm—all 1 billion of them.

The Revelation Stone's power coursed through his swarm, marking approximately one thousandth of his locusts—around 1 million—for mutation into demi-humans. The

transformation process was gradual and time-consuming, so Han Wu zeroed in on a single Unique locust, scrutinizing the changes taking place.

After a full realm month, the transformation of all 1 million locusts reached completion. One million locusts stood reborn as something entirely new, their forms unlike any recorded demi-human. Han Wu couldn't wait another second, diving right into analyzing every detail of their mutation.

[Race: Locustman]

[Rank: Unique]

[Talent: Flight, Low Intelligence, Humanoid]

[Faith: Zealots]

[Faith Points: 50,000/day]

[Reproduction: 5/lifetime (Produces high-quality eggs)]

[Lifespan: 10 years]

As Han Wu scanned through the data streams, a satisfied smile crossed his face. The new species were no mere mutated insects, as they had transformed and ascended into actual Unique Locustmen! Surprisingly, these humanoid creatures now possessed real intelligence. Sure, they only possessed the cognitive ability of preschoolers, but for Han Wu's plans, this was absolutely perfect!

Given that his locusts had previously lacked any semblance of intelligence, the emergence of even rudimentary cognitive abilities was a welcome improvement. For an army comprised of former locusts, this was a game-changing development for his forces.

Han Wu shifted his attention to two other important details: their Faith Points and lifespan. Upon analyzing the Faith Point generation stats, he gasped. Each Locustman, should it complete its lifespan without further evolution and ascension, would generate a staggering 180 million Faith Points, equivalent to 1.8 Divine Points.

Given Han Wu's consistent population of tens of billions of locusts, he could effortlessly sustain 10 million Locustmen. Like an ecosystem, this stable population would generate 1.8 million Divine Points for him daily, 18 million in ten days, and 1.8 Divine Essence in a hundred days.

Han Wu could already visualize his Divine Essence accumulating rapidly in his inventory.

Excellent! I'll get richer and richer, and then become a Demigod. Demigod status, here I come!

He was engrossed in enhancing and nurturing his divine realm when a video call request from Tian Wen appeared.

Tian Wen had called to inform him that the Imperial College would be administering another test to determine Han Wu's eligibility for the reserve list. The recruiter would be at school to meet with him tomorrow, so Tian Wen wanted him to get ready.

Han Wu expressed his gratitude to Tian Wen and then dedicated his attention to nurturing his locusts in preparation for the significant day ahead.

The following day arrived swiftly, and Han Wu was teleported to his classroom, his presence instantly causing a stir among the students. Having secured first place on two separate occasions, Han Wu was regarded as someone almost divine.

Seeing that Qin Shuang's desk was empty, Han Wu thought, Is she still nurturing her Lord life form, or has she already gone to the Imperial College?

"Good morning, Han Wu," Xu Sun greeted him cheerfully as he walked over.

Having witnessed Han Wu's power during the previous test, Xu Sun had resolved to adopt a more humble attitude when interacting with him.

Han Wu silently nodded in response.

Xu Sun inquired, "Han Wu, how's your divine realm progressing? If you need rare resources for its development, with my Demigod family's extensive network, I can assist you in obtaining them. They're difficult to find online."

Xu Sun was confident that Han Wu would soon be accepted into an elite college. Establishing a favorable relationship with him at this juncture wasn't just prudent; it was an investment in future influence.

As it happened, Han Wu had been thinking about getting more core fragments. He had already exhausted all the core fragments he had obtained from the Blood Coliseum to repair the cracks in his Core.

It would be amazing if I could obtain enough core fragments to raise my core level to 10, the maximum for a Divine Being.

He then asked Xu Sun, "Can your family get me some core fragments?"

Xu Sun's eyebrows lifted slightly at Han Wu's unusually specific request for such a scarce resource. After a moment's consideration, however, he nodded to himself and

deemed it reasonable. If core fragments were easy to get, Han Wu would have them already. Someone of his caliber would require exceptional materials. Common resources would have already been within his grasp.

“I can acquire them, but they are quite expensive, even if I were to sell them to you at their cost price.”

“That’s fine. I require enough core fragments to raise my core level from 7 to 10. Can you inform me of the total Divine Point cost?”

After contacting his family, Xu Sun relayed the price: 400 million Divine Points. And that was merely the cost price, not to even mention the market price.

Han Wu found himself in a predicament, as it was a significant amount of money. Even with his Locustmen earning him a lot daily, it would take a long time to save that much.

Xu Sun proposed an alternative. “My family mentioned that you could sell us 1,000 Unique Skeleton Knights instead if you’re short on funds at the moment.”

“Unique Skeleton Knights?” Han Wu asked, surprised. It seemed Xu Sun had mentioned him to his family.

“Yes, Unique Skeleton Knights. And if you could also sell us the Heroic Osteomancer, I might be able to negotiate a reduced price.”

Han Wu preferred the Osteomancer because its bone giant form was considered the strongest Heroic life form by the Divine Civilization, and even Demigods coveted their strength!

However, skeletons rarely acknowledged anyone other than their Lord as their master. Han Wu’s ability to command them was solely due to the Skeleton Lord’s suppression; otherwise, he would never have gained their loyalty, even if they were reduced to dust.

After confirming that the recruiter had not yet arrived, Han Wu, eager to finalize the deal, stated, “I’m not selling my Osteomancer. However, I am willing to sell the Unique Skeleton Knights, if we agree on a condition.”

Xu Sun, equally eager to secure the deal and earn his family’s praise, asked, “What’s your condition?”

“I need corpses of Unique life forms from your family.”

“Hold on, let me check with them.”

Xu Sun contacted his family, and they promptly sent him a card containing 1,000 Unique life form corpses.

Han Wu transferred the card to the Skeleton Lord within his divine realm through the landing pod on his desk. Following his commands, the Skeleton Lord transformed all the corpses into Unique Skeleton Knights. Han Wu then sealed the Knights into a card and handed it to Xu Sun, who, in exchange, provided him with the core fragments he had requested.

Just as he prepared to upgrade his Core, Tian Wen entered the classroom and summoned him. “Han Wu, could you step out for a moment?”

The recruiter from Imperial College had arrived.

Chapter 45 - Foreign Civilization Doron City

When Han Wu walked into the office with Tian Wen, he couldn't believe his eyes. It was the same Imperial College recruiter from before! And judging by the recruiter's shocked expression, the feeling was totally mutual!

The recruiter's eyes narrowed slightly as he processed this unexpected development. He was surprised to learn that Han Wu had connections with someone from Imperial College, enabling him to pursue enrollment through the recommendation route.

Despite the recommendation, the recruiter harbored secret doubts about Han Wu's success. The recommendation exam was designed to be merciless, and the contestants could only rely on their core race, rendering it nearly impossible for those with weak core races to pass. The test was deliberately more challenging to eliminate external influence and ensure fairness. Only a select few ever succeeded.

The recruiter, representing Imperial College, announced, “Han Wu, I will now commence your test. Do you have any questions?”

“No.”

The recruiter nodded and went straight to business. “Very well. Here are the test details. You'll be infiltrating Doron City, a city on the outskirts of a massive civilization.

“This particular civilization has its own systems and classifications. Upon entry, their system will automatically classify you and your core race as hostile monsters. The inhabitants of Doron City will attempt to eliminate you.

“Your objective is to kill one of Doron City's heroes. Once achieved, your test will conclude, and you may return. It's just like a video game.”

Han Wu, seeking more information about the heroes' strength compared to the general population, inquired, “Sir, I have several questions. How strong is Doron City? How many heroes do they have?”

The recruiter steepled his fingers. “Though merely a border settlement, Doron boasts a population of ten million, and approximately one million hold combat-capable classes. But true heroes?” He held up an open hand. “Only five exist in the entire city.”

Han Wu, considering the population, had a general understanding of the heroes' strength. They had to be exceptionally powerful to distinguish themselves among millions. The fact that his core race was locusts further complicated his chances of passing the test.

Interrupting Han Wu's thoughts, the recruiter stated, “You'll have to explore to learn more. You have one hour to prepare.”

He quickly reached out to Tian Wen, traded his remaining class points for three especially useful Rank 1 Sacred Objects, and then went back to his divine realm.

In one fluid motion, Han Wu assimilated the core fragments he had bought from Xu Sun into his own Core, elevating its level to the maximum permissible for a Divine Being. With new available slots on the Core, he equipped all three Rank 1 Sacred Objects.

[Rank 1 Sacred Object: Poison Gland. After equipping to the Core, there is a certain chance for the core race to obtain the poison attribute and grow a poison gland.]

[Rank 1 Sacred Object: Earth Core. After equipping to the Core, there is a certain chance for the core race to obtain the earth attribute and increase their defence.]

[Rank 1 Sacred Object: Elf Shortbow. Both a Sacred Object and God weapon. After equipping to the Core, there is a certain chance for the core race to obtain the ability to summon a shortbow as their weapon. The God will also obtain the power to summon a shortbow as their weapon.]

The three Rank 1 Sacred Objects released a shockwave of energy, surging through all 5 billion locusts in his divine realm. Almost sixty percent of his Heavenly Demon Insects grew poison glands, while half his Abyss Bugs obtained the earth attribute, with their exoskeletons becoming tougher. More astonishingly, ninety percent of his Locustmen gained the ability to summon shortbows.

Han Wu grew confident, seeing his core race becoming stronger. The preparation time soon ended, and he once again stood before the recruiter.

“I am ready.”

The recruiter handed Han Wu a small sphere. “Hold it tight. It will teleport both you and your core race to the outskirts of Doron City.”

Following the instructions, Han Wu was instantly teleported to a forest. Accompanying him were all 5 billion of his locusts—just enough to break the local ecosystem and scare

the existing wildlife—which completely filled the area and obscured the skies, their countless wings beating in unison, creating a deafening hum that vibrated through the very trees.

A sudden warning blared in his mind.

[Outsiders detected. Please leave immediately or you will be branded as a monster for extermination]

[Outsiders have refused to leave. Rebranded as a monster. Title: Demon Locust King]

[Calculating monster level...]

[Opening monster interface]

Han Wu realized he could check his personal data again, but this time the interface was black.

[Title: Demon Locust King]

[Level: 80 (60 from the unit with the highest level + 20 for being a Divine Being)]

[Class: None.]

[Talent: Chosen One (Exclusive)]

[Equipment: Gu Jar (2 Star God weapon), Inspect Eye (0 Star God weapon), Ravenous Wolf (Special God weapon)]

[Divine Powers: Increased Growth, Sacrifice (Exclusive), Summon Elf Shortbow]

Each of his units possessed a data interface as well, which Han Wu rapidly scanned, discovering shared characteristics among them.

Common locusts had the lowest level, ranging from 0 to 9. The Elite locusts were between 10 and 29 while the Unique locusts ranged from 30 to 59. Standing even higher above them were two Heroic Locustmen, the result of days of dedicated effort. Their levels were capped at 60, making them the highest leveled units in his possession.

[Race: Sapper Heavenly Demon Locustman]

[Level: 60]

[Class: None]

[Equipment: None]

[Talent: Magma Sacrifice, Sadist, Gluttony, Flight, Low-level Intelligence, Humanoid]

[Skill: Magma Spit, Summon Shortbow]

Level 60? What's that? It seems I still need more data about this civilization before I start my test.

As Han Wu was considering his next move, a Locustman interrupted to deliver news of an attack by an unknown life form on their perimeter forces.

He swiftly mounted one of his Unique Abyss Bugs to investigate the situation. It was time to see what the fuss was about.

Chapter 46 - Foreign Civilization's Adventurers

"There are so many monsters here! When did they appear?" shouted the greatsword wielding adventurer in panic, his eyes darting across the nightmarish locust swarm.

Soren, the greatsword wielder, had organized a monster-slaying team for a Core-hunting expedition. Within his four-member team, Soren stood alone as a Second Class Dragon Warrior; the other three—a Fire Mage, a Brawler, and a Water Sage—were still First Class.

The three were doing their best to kill the encroaching locusts.

"Soren, this is great! We'll get tons of Cores from these monsters. With enough money, we can afford our Second Class and become stronger!" The Brawler yelled, punching a locust into oblivion.

The Brawler made short work of the level 13 Elite locust, its toughened exoskeleton no match for his powerful fists. As the creature's corpse dissipates into swirling black mist, a gleaming thumb-sized Core materialized mid-air. With a graceful gesture, the Water Sage summoned miniature water spirits that delicately retrieved their prize and stuffed it into their magic bag.

"Pathetic insects! These locusts are weak! I'll exterminate them all!" The Fire Mage sneered, summoning massive sweeping flames that swept across the locust swarm with a wave of their staff, reducing the biblical plague to drifting ashes.

Soren relaxed slightly as he observed his companions absolutely wrecking the locusts with practiced efficiency. However, they remained blissfully unaware of Han Wu's presence as he observed them from above, perched silently on an Abyss Bug.

His Inspect Eyes activated, revealing the data interface of the four adventurers below. In contrast to Han Wu's interface, which had a dark, villainous-looking background, theirs glowed white.

[Name: Soren Ainz]

[Level: 37]

[Class: Dragon Warrior (Second Class)]

[Equipment: Steelcutter Greatsword (God weapon), Steel Armor (Faith equipment)]

[Talent: Fighting Spirit, Greatsword Proficiency, Dragon Blood]

[Skill: Shattering Split, Great Cleave...]

Han Wu had also observed that all four wore identical badges. Soren's badge, however, gleamed silver while the other three had bronze badges.

This might be an important clue to the differences in their strength.

Han Wu silently studied their combat patterns, simultaneously gathering intelligence.

Despite having eliminated thousands of locusts, the four adventurers noticed the swirling black mass showed no sign of thinning. Soren was the first who noticed something was wrong.

"This battle is unwinnable—there's just too many of them! We're getting swarmed! Retreat now!"

The other three nodded in agreement and prepared to flee, but Han Wu had no intention of allowing them to escape so easily—they had precious intel on Doron City, and he was determined to pry it from them.

After ordering his swarm to cut off their escape routes, Han Wu gestured towards a Heroic Locustman, and ordered, "Go down there and test their strength."

Obedying the command, the chosen Locustman plunged downwards and landed with ground-shaking force directly before the adventurers, effectively blocking their retreat.

Immediately sensing the overwhelming presence of a powerful enemy, Soren yelled, "There's a Third Job monster! Everyone, run! I'll buy you some time to escape!"

A cold sweat trickled down Soren's brow as he took in the humanoid mutant before him, but his battle instinct took over, drawing his greatsword and delivering a powerful downward swing with his Great Cleave skill.

Unfortunately, the attack failed—the Locustman didn't even flinch, its level 60 defenses rendering the Dragon Warrior's strongest technique utterly meaningless. A thin white line appeared on the Locustman's carapace—the only evidence of Soren's desperate strike.

Soren's eyes widened in disbelief as he realized he had failed to inflict any significant damage on the Locustman. The monstrous being before him was far too powerful. The creature retaliated with a swift and casual blow against his greatsword, effortlessly sending him hurtling through the air like a discarded toy until he collided with the earth.

The three adventurers didn't get far before they were swiftly captured by the other Heroic Locustman. Once they were completely restrained, Han Wu finally materialized before them. Soren's body shook uncontrollably, his eyes wide with terror like he'd just seen a demon lord instead of Han Wu's normal face. Han Wu's brow furrowed, surmising that Soren was likely perceiving an illusion, a distorted image of his true form.

The Brawler finally lost it, yelling in a terrified voice, "Stay away from us, you hideous monster!" which was maybe not the smartest move when tied up by mutant Locustmen. Han Wu almost laughed as the bound Brawler thrashed.

Han Wu was dying to know what terrifying sight the native adventurers were perceiving. His voice carried an edge of dark curiosity as he loomed over the captives. "Answer me if you wish to live. What do I look like?"

The Brawler growled, "Rot in the abyss before I give you that satisfaction, you hideous being!"

A sharp crack echoed through the clearing as Han Wu instantly twisted the Brawler's neck with casual brutality, silencing his meaningless defiance forever. The Fire Mage and the Water Sage, witnessing the brutal act, cried out in terror. Finding their sobs irritating, he swiftly ended both their lives as well.

The last living adventurer, witnessing his companions' gruesome demise, glared at their murderer with a mix of anger and terror as he knelt beside him, yet he was powerless to act. "Shhh," came the whisper, fingers brushing tears from his cheeks.

"Let's try this again," Han Wu calmly murmured, tilting his head with a curious expression. "Just describe the monster you see beside you."

With a trembling voice, Soren described him, "Large eyes, long antennae..."

Realization dawned on Han Wu. He now had a general idea of his appearance, which, according to Soren's terrified description, was basically a giant Locustman! Han Wu deduced that this was likely the form the Will of the Civilization had imposed upon him as an invader.

“Good, now continue answering my questions. What does the badge on your chest signify?”

For three hours, Han Wu questioned Soren, extracting all the information he needed about the rules of this world. Soren's voice grew hoarse as he divulged everything about badges, classes, and the civilization's structures, hoping Han Wu would spare his life.

“Alright, that’s all I wanted to know. You can go now.”

The ropes fell away from Soren’s limbs. He cautiously backed away, every muscle tensed for betrayal as he carefully observed Han Wu, only believing his release was real after putting significant distance between them.

Soren was experiencing a mix of emotions as he stumbled through the forest. He was relieved that Han Wu had let him go, but he was also deeply mourning the loss of his three teammates. *They probably would’ve survived if only they had cooperated.*

Wiping his tears, Soren steeled himself. Mourning could wait. He needed to run back to the Adventurer’s Guild to warn them about the approaching nightmare swarm.

Soren remained blissfully unaware that Han Wu was following him, quietly monitoring his progress from the back of a Unique Abyss Bug.

Han Wu trailed Soren until he spotted a city on the horizon, confirming it was Doron City. He then summoned his Elf Shortbow and eliminated Soren from his elevated position.

Invading a civilization required absolute secrecy, and one misstep could annihilate his locust army. Every variable had to be accounted for, and every witness had to be eliminated. Therefore, Han Wu would never risk exposure until he had gathered sufficient information.

At least, Soren’s death was swift and painless.

Chapter 47 - Recruiting and Classes

Han Wu analyzed the four Class Fragments he had obtained after killing the four adventures as he pondered his next course of action.

Based on the information he had obtained from Soren, Han Wu knew about the presence of an organization called the Adventurer’s Guild. Apparently, they were the ones who managed the adventurers.

There were millions of registered adventurers in Doron City’s Adventurer’s Guild.

Individuals ranging from level 0 to 9 were classified as new adventurers. They possessed basic Classes and wore badges made from black stone. Furthermore, they constituted the largest population of adventurers.

Adventurers with levels 10 to 29 had achieved their First Class advancement. They had a lot of different classes to branch into later on, and they wore bronze badges. The Brawler, the Fire Mage and the Water Sage had all been First Class adventurers.

Adventurers ranging from levels 30 to 59 had achieved their Second Class advancement. They had upgraded their previous classes, resulting in increased strength. These adventurers were the core strength of the Adventurer's Guild. They were distinguished by their silver badges. Soren had been a Second Class adventurer.

Adventurers ranging from levels 60 to 99 had achieved their Third Class advancement. They had further enhanced their classes, resulting in a significant increase in strength. They were usually the leaders of larger adventurer teams, and they wore golden badges.

Lastly, adventurers exceeding level 100 were classified as Fourth Class adventurers, also known as Heroes. They were exceptionally powerful, capable of single-handedly confronting a team of 10,000 adventurers. Now, Han Wu's trial required him to face and eliminate one of the five such powerful warriors stationed at Doron City.

With his strength and a locust swarm numbering 5 billion strong, Han Wu was a formidable force. Among them, 500 million were equivalent in strength to new adventurers, 3 billion matched the power of First Class adventurers, and 1.5 billion were on par with Second Class adventurers. Han Wu and his two Heroic Locustmen, however, exhibited the same strength as Third Class adventurers.

Theoretically, Han Wu held a significant numerical advantage, his five billion locusts outnumbering Doron City's one million combatants five thousand to one, yet the cold reality remained that the majority of his swarm were fragile cannon fodder. He was acutely aware of his locusts' fragility. With the exception of those capable of Self-Detonation, the rest were almost useless—Soren's team had shown him that.

Even a below-average adventurer team could easily eliminate a thousand locusts on their own. With millions of adventurers in Doron City, his locust army wouldn't stand a chance.

I need to find a way to improve my combat strength, or at the very least, elevate my units to level 60 or higher. But how am I to find such a method?

After careful contemplation, Han Wu realized his locust swarm's fragility couldn't be overcome through conventional means. However, the forest teemed with powerful creatures, and if he could somehow recruit those creatures, he might bridge the gap between his forces and Doron City's adventurers.

Despite their weakness in combat, his locusts were perfect for scouting. Han Wu commanded his 5 billion locusts to disperse throughout the forest and locate all monsters above level 60. His locust army, without hesitation, followed his orders, and information soon began streaming in from every direction.

A report came in about a goblin tribe located approximately 35 km to the south, with their leader supposedly possessing significant strength.

Han Wu, being at level 80, easily and brutally overcame the goblin leader, which led to his conquest of the entire goblin tribe. As their leader fell, the remaining 1,200 goblins immediately dropped their weapons and surrendered, their eyes wide in terror.

Using Inspect Eye, Han Wu discovered that the goblins were generally weak, with adult goblins averaging level 20 and barely able to challenge a First Class adventurer. The sole exception was their leader, who possessed a remarkable level of 62. He recognized that the goblin leader was a Third Class, comparable to the high-ranking adventurers of Doron City.

Through interrogation, Han Wu discovered that the goblin leader had acquired its Class just by consuming the Class Fragments from numerous deceased adventurers.

This information gave Han Wu a new idea. He wanted to experiment and see if his Locustmen could also gain similar Class abilities.

Han Wu promptly issued orders for his locusts to monitor the movements of adventurers and provide immediate reports upon locating weaker teams. He then planned to dispatch a small squad of Locustmen to eliminate them.

Over a period of three days, he gathered hundreds of Class Fragments. He then used Inspect Eye to categorize the fragments, combining identical ones before infusing them with Divine Points.

With the Divine Points' power, the fragments combined, forming complete Classes. After carefully piecing the fragments together, Han Wu obtained four fundamental Classes: Warrior, Brawler, Mage, and Archer.

Han Wu selected the Archer Class and channeled it into one of his Locustmen. Upon complete absorption of the Class, the Locustman's data interface flickered wildly as its stats underwent changes.

[Race: Sapper Heavenly Demon Locustman]

[Level: 60 (Maximum level 65. Increase level by absorbing Cores of monsters)]

[Class: Archer]

[Equipment: None]

[Talent: Magma Sacrifice, Sadist, Gluttony, Flight, Low-level Intelligence, Humanoid Body, Sharpshooter]

[Skill: Magma Spit, Summon Shortbow, Powershot]

He had succeeded! Once the Locustman absorbed the Class, its level cap increased, and it even gained new talents and skills, and this was merely a basic Class. If it could absorb a First Class that synergized with the Archer Class, its level cap would rise even further. Han Wu's own level would also increase if he could find a Third or Fourth Class for his Locustman.

It was no longer an impossible dream to reach level 100. At that point, he would no longer need to depend on his locust army and could defeat the Heroes single-handedly.

Unfortunately, higher-ranking Classes were harder to find. Even upon finding Class Fragments, he would still need a significant amount of luck to locate a corresponding fragment of the same Class.

He could only hope that more adventurers with matching Classes would die in his traps, so he could obtain a higher-ranking Class.

As he gathered Class Fragments, Han Wu continued to recruit monsters.

One day, a Locustman reported discovering a cave, but a dangerous presence prevented them from exploring it further.

Chapter 48 - Black Dragon Alpheus

With the locusts leading the way, Han Wu discovered the small cave, which was situated hundreds of kilometers from his current position.

The seemingly invisible crevice, a small cave opening, only became apparent to Han Wu when his locusts formed a perfect circle around it. So well-hidden was the entrance, a mere meter high and half a meter wide, that even his sharp eyes would have likely missed it had the locusts not persistently drawn his attention.

Han Wu commanded his Locustmen to dig out the cave entrance, and once the entrance was widened, he proceeded inside. After walking a hundred meters, the cave opened into a large chamber. It was then that he felt the terrifying presence emanating from the cave's far end.

That's a powerful presence, and I can sense a trace of Divine Power within. I should check it out.

Han Wu continued following the presence, and after walking for thousands of meters, he arrived at the spot where his locusts had ended their exploration, frozen in terror. They refused to move even an inch further. Only his two Heroic Locustmen possessed the courage to remain by his side.

He ordered the locusts to stay put, proceeding into the deeper recesses of the cave with his two Heroic Locustmen. After walking for another kilometer, he finally located the source of the terrifying presence.

The cavern was immense, stretching the size of ten football fields and soaring to a height of one hundred meters. In the cavern's center, a black dragon was coiled, bound and restrained by thirteen ominous black chains.

The terrifying presence originated from the black dragon. This presence had traveled through the long, winding cave and still retained enough power to halt the locusts' advance. It was evident that the black dragon was immensely powerful.

A satisfied smile crossed Han Wu's face—his history lessons had finally paid off! He knew that some civilizations often resorted to eternal imprisonment when facing adversaries beyond their power to destroy. The black dragon before him was likely sealed in this cave by a powerful expert in the past.

Han Wu attempted to use Inspect Eye to examine the black dragon's data, but he was disappointed to discover that it only allowed him to access a small portion. Even that limited data, however, was sufficient to make Han Wu uneasy.

The data interface displayed a black background, indicating that the black dragon was classified by the civilization's system as a monster.

[Name: Black Dragon Alpheus]

[Level: 103 (Sealed. Original level: 149)]

[Class: Defier (Special Class)]

[Equipment: ???]

[Divine Essence: ???]

[Talent: Great Dragon's Blood, ???]

[Skill: Dark Breath, ???]

The black dragon immediately sensed Han Wu inspecting its data. It opened its eyes, revealing completely black irises that possessed an uncanny ability to draw in souls.

The two Heroic Locustmen were ensnared by the dragon's soul-sucking technique, causing them to walk towards the black dragon's mouth of their own volition. Han Wu intervened just in time, preventing them from becoming the dragon's meal.

Alpheus, the black dragon, was enraged by the interruption and bellowed, "How dare you interrupt my meal? I, the great Defier black dragon Alpheus, will erode your soul and devour your flesh!"

The black dragon forcefully opened its bound jaws, amassing dark energy within its mouth for a breath attack. Realizing he couldn't withstand such a terrifying attack with his current capabilities, Han Wu swiftly ordered his two Locustmen to escape with him, only daring to return after the black dragon's attack was over.

The black dragon furiously exclaimed, "You tiny, insignificant speck of dust! You dare to deceive me, the great Defier black dragon Alpheus? You will not be forgiven!"

The black dragon then gathered more dark energy in its mouth, preparing for another attack. Once again, Han Wu immediately fled the cavern, returning only after the attack had concluded.

The mighty black dragon heaved with exertion, its chest rising and falling rapidly after squandering two devastating breath attacks that had missed their mark entirely, as it lay immobilized by enchanted chains which squeezed tighter with each movement.

Once the black dragon had calmed slightly, Han Wu attempted to reason with it. "I'm not here to make fun of you. On the contrary, I actually want to help!"

The black dragon snorted in disbelief. "This great Defier black dragon Alpheus has seen through your lies. Leave immediately before my anger consumes you!"

Han Wu chuckled. "Do you really think you can consume me while being restrained like that?"

He then summoned his Elf Shortbow and fired an arrow at the black dragon.

Alpheus let out a thunderous laugh as Han Wu's arrows clattered uselessly against its obsidian scales.

"You pathetic insect," it sneered. "My defenses are impenetrable. No mortal weapon can breach my hide."

Yet, Han Wu's smile never wavered and he unsheathed the Steelcutter Greatsword, a God weapon he had retrieved from Soren's corpse. With a roar, he channeled every ounce of his strength into a single, earth-shaking slash aimed directly at the dragon's massive body.

This time, however, he had managed to leave a faint mark on the dragon's scales. Alpheus, however, didn't even flinch—to a creature of its colossal size, the mark was less than a mosquito bite. Han Wu frowned, realizing that in order to bargain with the ancient beast, he'd need to make it bleed.

With a mighty roar, Han Wu channeled 10,000 Divine Points into the Steelcutter Greatsword, causing the weapon to tremble as golden light exploded from its blade. The weapon, incapable of containing such overwhelming power, shuddered under the strain, its divine metal threatening to shatter in three seconds. However, Han Wu was confident that three seconds was all he needed to land a devastating strike.

“Whirlwind Slash!”

He had learned this skill from Steely back in his divine realm. Although he couldn't unleash the skill's full potential, it was still powerful enough to shatter the earth. This time, Han Wu managed to cut through the black dragon's thick scales, leaving a significant wound. Thick, tar-like blood oozed from Alpheus's wound, most likely the first real injury it had sustained in centuries.

A piercing yelp escaped the mighty dragon's jaws as it recoiled from the wound—an undignified sound that immediately twisted into rage. Its massive body thrashed violently, but the thirteen obsidian chains held it completely still, tightening with each attempt to move.

“You wretched maggot!” Alpheus roared. “You dare wound me, the great Defier black dragon Alpheus? I shall...”

Throwing away the broken Steelcutter Greatsword, Han Wu pulled out another God weapon, this time a dagger. He aimed it at the black dragon's eye and issued a soft but firm warning, “Keep yelling, and you'll die today!”

His voice was low, but the dragon heard it clearly. For the first time, Alpheus, the great Defier black dragon, felt the chill of impending death.

Chapter 49 - Hundred Year Contract

Seeing that the black dragon had ceased its roaring, Han Wu seized the opportunity to negotiate.

“I have a goal,” he began. “I wish to kill one of Doron City's Heroes, but I'm currently too weak to face them. I need your help.”

The black dragon let out a huff, its voice carrying a note of sorrow. “I, the great Defier black dragon Alpheus, have been sealed here for centuries. I am unable to leave, so how could I possibly assist you?”

Han Wu turned his attention to the thirteen obsidian chains binding the black dragon. He swung his dagger and attempted to slash the chains, but the dagger shattered upon impact instead.

Not willing to give up, Han Wu took out a different God weapon, infused it with 10,000 Divine Points, and swung at the chains. However, the attack, which had been powerful enough to cut through Alpheus's scales, left no marks on the chains. It was as if the black chains were truly indestructible.

The black dragon sighed and explained, "It's futile. The Adventurer's Guild created these chains specifically to seal me. These chains are a unique type of God equipment that even my darkness cannot erode. Don't waste your time trying to destroy them with your insignificant weapons."

"Wait, this is a God equipment?"

"That's what I said, yes. I, the great Defier black dragon Alpheus, do not lie."

"In that case, I have a method to destroy it."

Han Wu took out a golden sphere, his God weapon Ravenous Wolf. He placed the sphere onto one of the obsidian chains, and it transformed into a golden liquid which completely enveloped the chain. The sound of crunching reverberated through the cave as Ravenous Wolf began its work, and almost an hour later, the chain finally shattered.

The sight of the shattered chain on the ground left Alpheus in disbelief. One of the supposedly indestructible chains that had been holding him captive for so long had been broken!

Overwhelmed with joy and happiness, it exclaimed, "Quickly, break the other chains! The great Defier black dragon Alpheus commands you!"

Han Wu abruptly withdrew Ravenous Wolf and stood motionless, silently staring at the black dragon. The black dragon's anxiety intensified, its longing for freedom, after centuries of confinement, becoming overwhelming. Its chance to escape was within reach.

"Quickly, unchain me! The great Defier black dragon Alpheus commands you!"

Han Wu replied with a measured tone, "Great Defier black dragon Alpheus, I've just broken one of your supposedly indestructible chains as a sign of goodwill. But instead of showing gratitude, you're ordering me about? Is this your way of requesting assistance?"

The black dragon, driven by its desire for freedom, became increasingly anxious, desperately pleading, "What do you want me, the great Defier black dragon Alpheus, to do for you? Kill a Hero? Very well, I will, so just unchain me!"

Seeing the dragon's panic, Han Wu replied, "I've changed my mind. A century of service. One hundred years of obedience to atone for addressing your savior like a common servant. That, oh great Defier black dragon Alpheus, is the price of your freedom."

"You worthless creature! You are wasting your efforts! I am the great Defier black dragon Alpheus!"

The cave shook violently as the dragon's strength gradually returned, now that one of the chains had been broken.

Han Wu didn't waver. "I have the power to save you, but I can also end you. Understand this clearly, Alpheus. If you refuse my request, you will simply become a stepping stone for me to grow stronger. Your value to me exists only in two forms—either as a being bound in service or as raw materials for weapons. After all, the corpse of any Great Dragon is a treasure horde. I wonder how many powerful weapons I could forge from your corpse."

The black dragon found itself once more threatened by Han Wu. Despite regaining some strength from the weakened seal, it was still vulnerable, and he had also proven that he possessed the power to carry out his threat.

Faced with the choice between death and slavery, the black dragon ultimately chose to compromise. "I, the great Defier black dragon Alpheus, will serve you for a hundred years. Now, release these chains that have imprisoned me for centuries. I will not endure being sealed for even a moment longer!"

"Don't be hasty. Let's make a contract."

Han Wu was skeptical of the black dragon's spoken agreement, suspecting it might shamelessly retract its word the moment it was freed.

He chose to spend 100,000 Divine Points to create a binding contract, dictating the black dragon's service for a century. The contract not only outlined the dragon's duties and responsibilities but also included an extremely stringent restriction. The penalty for breaking the contract was so severe that it could be fatal even for a Great Dragon.

Han Wu passed the contract to the black dragon. "This is the contract. Sign it, and I will release you."

The black dragon felt utterly humiliated upon reading the contract, particularly by the clause that demanded it obey Han Wu's orders without question for a hundred years. It

viewed this as blatant enslavement! The great Defier black dragon Alpheus would rather die than be reduced to such a state!

Just as the black dragon was about to tear up the contract and fight Han Wu to the death, Han Wu pulled out a small black stone. The stone was crystal clear and contained pure, dark energy, which somehow appeared easily absorbable. The dragon began to drool, its hunger gnawing after hundreds of years of starvation.

“I know you are weakened. Sign the contract, and you get the Dark Stone as a treat.”

He knew that monsters found such pure stones irresistible, much like the Bone Stone had been to the Skeleton Lord. He was sure the black dragon, after being starved for so long, would find it tempting.

As Han Wu had anticipated, the black dragon succumbed to the allure of the Dark Stone and signed the contract. Once completed, the contract transformed into a golden light and merged into both of their foreheads.

Breaking the contract would result in harsh consequences. Pleased with the outcome, Han Wu tossed the Dark Stone into the black dragon’s mouth, and it happily savored the taste, feeling invigorated.

Han Wu then retrieved Ravenous Wolf and began working on the remaining twelve chains. Ravenous Wolf eagerly obeyed, delighted to finally be able to consume God weapons. The golden sphere pulsed rhythmically as it feasted on and consumed chain after chain, its liquid form seeping into every crevice of the enchanted bindings. For ten relentless hours, the cave echoed with the sounds of crumbling obsidian links, until the twelfth and final chain shattered.

The black dragon’s strength surged rapidly as it absorbed the energy from the surrounding air. The great Defier black dragon Alpheus was free once more! It unleashed a triumphant roar, obliterating the cave with a black beam of light that erupted from its body. Every monster within a hundred-kilometer radius trembled in fear, and even the adventurers in Doron City felt the dragon’s terrifying presence.

The five Heroes, gathered in the Adventurer’s Guild meeting hall, sensed the black dragon’s release. They had been stationed there with one specific purpose—to guard the dragon and ensure it remained imprisoned. It was supposed to be a simple, retirement-level task, but the black dragon had somehow unexpectedly broken free from its seal.

The Martial Saint was the first to speak. “The black dragon has just been released. It should be weakened at the moment, so we should join forces and destroy it immediately!”

The Briar Saintess responded, “The black dragon will likely seek a safe haven to recover its strength after escaping. The wilderness is too large to search on our own. We have to enlist the aid of Doron City’s adventurers to find it.”

The Twin Elemental Sword Saint nodded. “The dark energy radiating from the black dragon will empower the monsters in the forest. We need to locate it before the monsters become a serious threat.”

However, the Wind Sage, the youngest of the Heroes, thought they were being overly cautious. “It’s merely a black dragon, recently released from its imprisonment. There’s no need to be so worried, isn’t that right, Dragon Slayer?”

The Dragon Slayer, the most powerful of the five, arrogantly declared, “It’s just a Great Dragon. There’s no reason for fear. I’ve personally slain a Green Dragon that used wind attacks. It was challenging, but not enough to pose a threat to Doron City.”

The Martial Saint cautioned the Dragon Slayer, “This black dragon is not like the others. Ancient texts refer to it as the Defier of the Great Dragons!”

However, the Dragon Slayer misinterpreted the Martial Saint’s caution as a sign of disrespect, believing he was being underestimated.

“Everyone, please trust in my abilities. I chose the Fourth Class Dragon Slayer specifically to eliminate dragons. I will personally deal with the black dragon. You just need to protect Doron City in the meantime.”

“Dragon Slayer, you...”

The Wind Sage chimed in, “Dragon Slayer, I’m with you. Could I have the privilege of watching you kill the dragon? I’ll take care of any monsters that might interfere with your hunt.”

“Fine.”

“Thank you, Dragon Slayer. I will immediately put up a request for the adventurers to locate the black dragon.”

The Wind Sage then vanished like a gust of wind to fulfill his task, and the Dragon Slayer left the meeting hall shortly after.

The three remaining Heroes sighed in resignation, understanding they were powerless to intervene. The Dragon Slayer was, after all, the strongest among them.

Chapter 50 - Monster Alliance and the Black Dragon Warrior

News of the black dragon's escape rapidly spread throughout Doron City, and even the monsters became aware of it.

The monsters, who always revered the strongest as their leader, followed the black dragon's scent, intending to find it and crown it as their king. However, the Alpheus had no interest in their insignificant strength. They were nothing more than food to him.

Unfortunately, the Dark Stone Han Wu provided had ruined the black dragon's appetite for other creatures. Thus, to gain more of the delectable stones, it was forced to obey Han Wu's commands and endure the constant influx of monsters.

Taking advantage of the situation, Han Wu assembled an alliance of all monsters possessing the strength of Third Class adventurers.

The monsters, who had endured the adventurers' bullying for so long, were thrilled at the prospect of retaliation. They had desired this for a long time, but their mutual distrust had prevented them from forming an alliance until now. However, this time it was different. They could unite under the banner of the black dragon Alpheus and establish the first-ever monster alliance.

Seated upon a throne, Alpheus unleashed its overwhelming authority as a black dragon. The monsters were immediately suppressed by the sheer pressure of its presence. Even the mighty Treant Sage, with a level of 105, dared not challenge its dominance.

Naturally, Han Wu conducted the meeting, his gaze sweeping over the assembled monsters with pleasure. He had established the alliance to wage war against the adventurers, a strategy reminiscent of how adventurers united to slay monsters. He understood that, while he could not currently establish

himself as their master, they would still be easily persuaded to work for him because of the black dragon's authority.

The monsters were filled with excitement. Many of their kind had been slain by adventurers throughout the years, but due to the adventurers' Classes and the protection afforded by the Will of the Civilization, the monsters were powerless to retaliate. To even contemplate halting the adventurers' actions was a mere fantasy.

However, Han Wu offered them a solution. As the de facto leader of the alliance, he possessed a way to rapidly enhance the monsters' strength. He then revealed one of his Energy Stones.

The pure energy emanating from the stone was incredibly alluring to the monsters, causing them to salivate in anticipation. Had Alpheus not been there to restrain them, the monsters would have undoubtedly trampled him in their eagerness to seize the Energy Stone.

Alpheus observed the monsters and chuckled derisively. *They're acting like that over a single Energy Stone? I, the great Defier black dragon Alpheus, have dozens of them here. What a pitiful bunch of village bums.*

Han Wu then proceeded to create an organizational structure for the alliance. Monsters would be rewarded with Energy Stones in exchange for equipment and Class Fragments. To obtain these rewards, the monsters would have to eliminate adventurers.

To motivate the monsters to work more diligently, Han Wu distributed Energy Stones among the tribe leaders, allowing them to enhance their strength. Upon absorbing the energy from the stones, they shared the same thought: delicious! Several of the weaker tribe leaders even gained a level after consuming just one Energy Stone.

The monsters readily agreed to join the alliance and hunt down adventurers, swayed by the potent effects of the Energy Stones and the underlying threat posed by the black dragon.

In this manner, Han Wu amassed considerable wealth in the days that followed. His locusts became indispensable in his dealings with the monsters. Each day, locust swarms brought in Class Fragments and equipment. He also utilized the locusts to deliver Energy Stones to the monsters who had claimed the lives of adventurers.

The operation ran without a hitch, with the black dragon ensuring the safety of the entire process. Han Wu was certain that, without the dragon's presence, the monsters would have turned on him, seeking more Energy Stones by any means necessary. It was clear that these monsters, who willingly killed adventurers, were far from virtuous.

Han Wu strengthened his core race with the weapons and Class Fragments he obtained. The locusts progressively became stronger, thanks to the resources they had gathered from the adventurers.

The two Heroic Locustmen each found compatible Third Classes and ascended to level 85, with their levels continuing to rise daily. Additionally, 32 more Locustmen surpassed the level 60 cap after acquiring suitable Classes. Han Wu himself benefited from their collective growth, reaching level 105.

A sense of unprecedented strength coursed through him, making him feel as though he could effortlessly bring down an ancient tree with a mere swing of his fist. However, he knew he was still significantly weaker than the adventurers of Doron City, a truth evident in his own abilities.

Having practiced their skills countless times, the adventurers possessed flawless strength, techniques, and timing. Han Wu, however, lacked the same degree of proficiency in his skills.

Increased Growth served as a supporting Divine Power, while Sacrifice was limited to a single daily use and could only be applied to his own race. His sole offensive Divine Power was the ability to summon the Elf Shortbow, which essentially functioned as a long-range God weapon summoning method.

To enhance his power, Han Wu decided to acquire a Class. He carefully considered his situation and ultimately selected the Warrior Class due to its potent ability, Fighting Spirit.

[Fighting Spirit: Increases all stats by 10%]

[Obtained New Skill: Heavy Blow, Great Cleave]

For his First Class, Han Wu selected the Magic Knight.

[Obtained Talent: Elemental Sense. Increases Elemental Resistance by 20%]

[Obtained New Skill: Enchant Fire, Enchant Ice, Enchant Light, Enchant Darkness]

Following that, he selected the Dragon Warrior as his Second Class.

[Obtained Talent: Dragon Blood. Increases all stats and elemental resistance by 20%. Increased strength.]

[Obtained New Skill: Dragon Slash]

However, that was the extent of his Class selection, as he had not yet acquired a Third Class. The majority of adventurers the monsters had eliminated were of lower Classes, and there were simply not enough Third Class adventurers to form a complete Third Class.

Sensing the faint traces of dragon blood within Han Wu's body, the black dragon offered a solution, but demanded 1,000 Dark Stones as payment. Unable to meet that price, Han Wu bargained with the dragon. Eventually, they settled on 500 Dark Stones, to be delivered in installments. Even with the lower amount, the black dragon was pleased, believing it had profited significantly from the arrangement.

The black dragon then assisted Han Wu in acquiring his Third Class. Its method involved filling a massive cauldron with its own blood, in which Han Wu was to soak for a full day. Alpheus's blood was meant to replace Han Wu's diluted dragon blood and elevate his strength to that of a Third Class adventurer.

Han Wu complied with the instructions, enduring a full day of soaking in the pungent black dragon blood. The black dragon, under the guise of hastening absorption, ignited a fire beneath the cauldron, and Han Wu finally discovered how tea leaves felt while steeping in boiling water. The entire process was certainly questionable, but the effects were undeniably real. The bizarre method had worked despite its absurdity.

Once the diluted dragon blood in his body was replaced by the black dragon's blood, Han Wu automatically acquired a Third Class advancement. He was now a Black Dragon Warrior!

[Obtained Talent: Black Dragon Blood. Increases all stats and elemental resistance by 50%. Greatly increased strength. Increased affinity to Dark Attribute]

[Obtained Skill: Dark Dragonification]

Driven by curiosity, Han Wu activated the skill, immediately feeling his bones crack and his muscles painfully bulge as his skin turned black and hardened. The transformation, which concluded with him taking on a humanoid black dragon form, lasted a mere three seconds.

He was covered in thick black scales, which provided exceptional defense. Powerful wings emerged from his back, and his muscles rippled with raw strength. He felt capable of obliterating anything in his path.

As he gradually familiarized himself with the power flowing through his veins, he decided to check his data interface.

[Title: Demon Locust King]

[Level: 125 (85 from highest-level unit + 20 from Divine Being + 20 from Class)]

[Class: Black Dragon Warrior (Third Class)]

[Talent: Chosen One (Exclusive), Fighting Spirit, Dark Elemental Sense, Black Dragon Blood]

[Equipment: Gu Jar (2 Star God weapon), Inspect Eyes (0 Star God weapon), Ravenous Wolf (1 Star God weapon)]

[Divine Power: Increased Growth, Sacrifice (Exclusive), Summon Elf Shortbow, Heavy Blow, Great Cleave, Dark Enchant, Dragon Slash, Black Dragonification]

After reviewing his data interface, Han Wu felt a sense of satisfaction. He believed he was now powerful enough to face a Doron City Hero in a one-on-one confrontation.