

The Shadow of Immortality #Chapter 21: The Bronze Shield Centipede !!! - Read The Shadow of Immortality Chapter 21: The Bronze Shield Centipede !!!

Chapter 21: The Bronze Shield Centipede !!!

Three days had passed. Gene had been spending all his time bringing back the corpses of monsters. His strength had increased terrifyingly. Clark's anger was blazing. Was it envy? Perhaps. But Clark's perspective was different.

Clark saw his life now hanging by a thread. He didn't know when he might die. This Gene was like a volcano waiting

for its chance to erupt. Now, his life depended on luck.

Gene was asleep. Clark looked at him with hatred, his killing intent palpable. Even a fool would wake from such a

stare. But Gene paid no attention. Why? Naturally, because Clark was no match

for him. So why even give him value or attention? This only fueled Clark's rage further.

Furious, Clark went to the cliff above the massive waterfall. The view of the stars

was incredibly beautiful and magnificent. It pleased Clark's eyes so much that it made him forget his sorrow and anger for a few moments.

But there was a huge, towering star in the sky, and next to this great star, there was a small one. Clark bit his lip in

anger. Blood flowed from the wound. Angry, as if the heavens were mocking him. He wanted to tear the sky from its very foundations.

Greed stirred in his heart. But he said: "I must take the risk. This place most likely increases training efficiency and

effectiveness. So, why not take advantage of it and improve myself? In the end, I either improve myself or remain a child cursing my luck."

Clark fell silent and left the forest. He returned to the grounds where Gene

fought. The place was vast. Soon, he unleashed his killing intent to attract a monster.

Almost immediately, Clark felt the ground beneath him shift. He quickly

flipped backward, looking on in fear. A giant insect appeared: The Bronze-Armored Earth-Boring Centipede!!!

It shattered the earth around it. Its eyes were small, barely visible despite its enormous size.

Clark drew his sword, though he had no confidence in it. He asked himself: "Can this sword cut through its tough bronze skin? No, this is no time for self-doubt. I will give it my all!"

Clark charged. The centipede's sharp scales deflected Clark's sword strike, sending sparks flying upon impact. The

centipede spun like a whirlwind, hurling Clark a great distance. Clark crashed into a huge rock, his body cut by its sharp edges.

BOOM!!!

Blood poured from his mouth and from various parts of his body, though the wounds from the impact were mostly superficial. He laughed, saying: "Hahaha! It seems I was no match for it. But I will surpass my limits!!"

He charged again, faster this time. But this time, the centipede didn't wait for Clark's attack; it too charged, thrusting

its head toward Clark. Clark quickly summoned his embodiment, which was almost transparent. But the centipede's weight drove Clark into the ground.

Clark resisted with his body and his embodiment, pushing back against the immense weight trying to crush him. He

unleashed his black fire. It hit the centipede, but it wasn't powerful enough to deter the beast.

Clark intensified the aura around his blade. A torrential demonic aura surged forth. Clark said: "I feel it! I feel my heart merging with my sword!" He spun around again. The massive centipede... but this time it wanted to attack him

with its tail, full of sharp blades. This time, if Clark failed, the centipede's tail would cut him in half!!!

Clark laughed calmly, raising his sword high. The aura condensed, and the sword became enhanced with the demonic aura. A notification appeared

for Clark: "Enhanced Qi Blade: The sword becomes stronger if you imbue it with your own energy, making it harder and sharper, becoming one with your heart!!"

Clark said: "This is the end, you damned insect!"

A massive, decisive strike! It clashed with the centipede's tail. Clark let out a passionate roar, pushing with his body. He sliced the insect in half! It began to

writhe. Insects like the centipede only die if their heads are destroyed. It tried to flee, but Clark quickly plunged his sword into the centipede's body, enhanced his fists and embodiment with Qi, and screamed: "Now!!!"

Countless blows rained down on the centipede's head. Strike after strike,

incredibly fast!! Clark's fist became harder than steel after being enhanced with Qi and his aura—they were two sides of the same coin.

He destroyed the centipede's head. It began to writhe, its soul leaving its body. Clark laughed.

Soon, a notification appeared: "You have gained five levels! You are now Level 20!!!"

Alert! Alert! Messages popped up before Clark again. The first was from King Agares. He had been silently watching Clark, along with the Constellation of Worlds and Athena.

The gist of Agares's message: "Young man, you are truly a great warrior. Join me, become my messenger, and I guarantee you great successes."

Clark spoke: "I know you can hear me since you're watching me, but my opinion won't change. I will never join you."

Another alert: Agares did not react to your answer, but said: "Interesting! This is the first time a human has refused me like this! Twice now! Ha hahahaha!"

He read the Constellation of Worlds' message: "I am truly glad you used the embodiment I granted you. You put up a great fight. But beware of this demon; he doesn't want you because you're strong, but for something else."

Clark replied: "Yes, I know. But is it related to the past or what?!" The World remained silent. Clark knew it was hiding something but responded with silence in kind.

Another alert appeared, this time from Zeus, Lord of Olympus!": "You use demonic flames! Remember, from this moment on, you are an enemy of Olympus!!"

Clark laughed, raising his middle finger: "Hahaha! You son of a bitch! Your daughter supports and loves me! Get lost! No one asked for your opinion about me!"

Soon, an alert from Athena appeared: "Do not underestimate him! As of now, you are no match for him. Be careful of him, Lord Clark."

Clark smiled and left. "My levels increased." He carried the huge centipede corpse as a trophy.

Upon his return, he threw down the huge centipede corpse, which woke Gene. Gene turned and said, "What's this disturbance?" He saw the huge centipede corpse. He said, "I see! So, you killed an insect at your level." He said it to provoke Clark.

A dense Qi aura condensed around Clark's hand. He tore off the centipede's stinger and held it in his hand. He looked at Gene. Suddenly, Clark's embodiment threw it with all its force beside Gene's head. A superficial wound appeared on Gene's cheek.

But...

BOOM!!!!

A terrifying number of trees and rocks... were cut! The centipede's stinger was extremely sharp! It had advanced, cutting through the trees and rocks in front of it for 300 meters, as if they were cotton candy!!

Gene was shocked.

Clark laughed: "See how sharp it is? I could have thrown it at your body. But that's not a fun way to kill you."

They looked at each other coldly.

But something interrupted them that was completely unexpected!!!!

To be continued...

Chapter 22: Stone shelf opening !!!

The Azure Wolf King appeared. It now had only one eye, its body covered in scars. It hadn't been like this before, but its battle against the sky and the earth had left it in this state.

Suddenly, Gene yelled at Clark, "You fool! Your reckless killing intent attracted it! It sensed it and came to fight us!"

Clark laughed. "Ke ke ke ke ke."

"What's so funny, you idiot?"

"What amuses me is that it didn't come to kill us. It's the Guardian of the Legacy. So naturally, it didn't know about us. It

thought we were intruders. Look at it; it still hasn't attacked us."

The wolf approached them slowly. It stood before Clark. Clark raised his hand, and the wolf sniffed it. It began to smell Clark's hand. Soon, it rubbed its face against Clark's stomach.

The wolf shrank in size, becoming normal-sized. Clark laughed and said, "You see? In the end, it was the Venerable One's pet. Naturally, it won't attack us."

Gene replied, "So, are you thinking what I'm thinking? He he he he."

Clark turned to him. "You mean we kill it

to gain levels?"

"Of course! It would raise our levels insanely!"

Clark replied, "And what if I don't want to kill it?"

Their gazes at each other were cold.

"So, weakness and softness have entered your heart?"

"Of course not! But this wolf can fly and fought a calamity of the sky and earth. So why shouldn't I make use of it? You're right, we could kill it, but its value alive is greater than dead. Don't think I'm soft and oppose its death."

Clark turned to Gene, his eyes gleaming with bloodlust. He continued, "Because if I needed to kill it and gain levels, I wouldn't hesitate for a single moment!"

"Fine, your words are very reasonable. I won't oppose."

Soon, he stood before the stone shelf. Clark asked, "What do you want to do? Don't tell me you want to...!!"

Gene opened one of the shelves and found a new technique, a refinement technique called "Corrupted Saint's Refinement."

A saint can refine life and light energy, but a Corrupted Saint can combine them, extract malice, and implant it in his heart to deepen his power.

It was a bad technique because it takes the souls of the dead, and those souls grow more resentful because, naturally, those dead souls also dwell within your spirit, poisoning it with rot.

But the Venerable One found a solution and created a method to seal the mana and aura heart, allowing one to refine without fear.

Gene laughed loudly. Clark looked at him in bewilderment. "What did this madman find?"

Gene spoke, "I'll be gone for a while. You stay with the furball beside you."

Anger filled Clark's heart, laced with hatred. "What is with this bastard's luck? Every time I think I've caught up, he immediately finds something new!"

Fear seeped into his heart. He thought about strangling the wolf and gaining the levels—a murderous intent. The wolf tried to rub its head against Clark's forehead to soothe... his sadness? Clark's anger surged; he wanted to strangle it.

He thought to himself, "Do you think you can defeat me with emotions? You're just an animal! A damned animal formed in the Venerable One's subconscious! Who do you think you are to make me emotional?!"

Clark moved away from it and went back to the stone shelf. The wolf followed him, but this time, the wolf returned to its massive azure form.

A blade of flame formed, shaped into runic letters. Clark didn't understand their meaning, but he knew it was a runic enchantment. "This wolf is truly special, it's even proficient in magic!"

The shelves split apart as if forming a door, creating a path. Clark entered, but the door swiftly closed behind him—even the wolf didn't enter.

The path was extremely long, insanely so. There was no light, not even a light at the end of the path. Just nothingness, pure void.

Numerous thoughts began to invade Clark's mind: death, life, envy, wrath. All these thoughts rushed into his mind like knives!!! Stabbing into old wounds.

Suddenly, a mirror appeared before Clark. Gene was reflected in it. "You can't compete with me. You hide your weakness in your words, but deep in your soul, you're afraid. Despite your denial, you see yourself as beneath me. Even the Legacy favored me over you. You fear death, of course. You walk a path paved with death, traps set by enemies; you might make the whole world your foe, but in the end, you dread death."

Gene laughed. Clark's eyes widened as if Gene had uncovered a truth buried deep in his heart.

But Clark laughed with a terrifying sound, his maniacal laughter filling the entire tunnel. He said, "Yes, it's true. I'm a coward, afraid, I dread death, just as you said. But I am still made of steel; I do not break. Don't think you can shatter my will. Yes, I have flaws, but I will purify them and walk the path of uniqueness and success. You are a blue dragon, Gene, but I am a phoenix, reborn from my ashes. Also, you are not the real Gene; you are merely an illusion!"

Suddenly, Clark lunged forward with a powerful punch, shattering the mirror. He kept walking and walking, into infinity.

Outside, a week passed. Gene was still training, and Clark was still walking.

Clark described his state in the tunnel: "I'm still walking. I've stopped counting time and minutes. I'm terribly hungry, thirsting for blood. Barren emotions still invade my heart. Overthinking tries to break my will, but I keep struggling, walking and walking on a march whose end I do not know."

Suddenly, someone's scream—majestic and terrifying, yet feminine. The ground shook beneath Clark's feet. He trembled in terrified fear. He felt his body paralyzed in place, unwilling to move. His body shook with terrifying intensity. Clark was afraid.

The ground beneath him began to break apart. Soon, a vast and majestic space formed below him, above him, everywhere. A space covered in stars. Those stars formed into a giant mirror.

But it took the form of a beautiful human woman, her beauty so supernatural it captivated even Clark's eyes—all that remained in his heart after that ordeal was perseverance.

Under her mouth was a small, beautiful mole. Her eyes were blue. She wore a small veil covering her mouth, studded and shining, its pattern resembling stars. Her clothes were white, her hair tinged with blue.

This mirror-being approached Clark, speaking to him, but his body was paralyzed. She said, "Ah, sorry. It seems the pressure of my presence has affected you."

She lessened her power so Clark could move. Instantly, he grabbed her by the throat, attempting to kill her. He threw her to the ground, laughing. "Ke ke ke! You fool! Do you think your beautiful appearance will seduce me? It seems the Venerable One was a pervert!" (Clark thought she was part of the test; it didn't occur to him that the real Constellation of Stars had managed to invade the Venerable One's subconscious.)

The Constellation of Stars looked at him with a slight smile. Suddenly, Clark was submerged. He felt his soul torn from his body, experiencing a fall from a thousand meters high, crashing back into his body a thousand times over. He felt immense pressure on his soul and shouted, "Stop!"

The Constellation spoke, "So, you will let me speak?"

Clark didn't answer, remaining silent.

"Then I will take silence as agreement. I'll say this for your benefit: Just leave. You have endured the unbearable. Free yourself from this stubborn desire. You have suffered enough in your heart and soul."

He asked, "What do you mean? You definitely know something suspicious!"

"I know something... You are still as you are."

She put her hand to her mouth, feeling she had said something she shouldn't have.

Clark yelled, "What did you say, woman? Repeat what you said!"

Clark felt he was close to the truth, but she remained silent.

She spoke again, "You only torture yourself. This path of yours is fraught with danger, like those who came before you. Do you want to end up like them?"

Clark replied decisively, "And what business is it of yours, woman? Women think that by the length of their feelings, they can understand what's in a man's heart! You will remain a female who raises children and beds men—that is your destiny! Don't think you're special enough to give me a polished lecture!"

The Constellation of Stars replied coldly, "You are harsh. Why do you refuse my kindness? I can help you. Just put your hand in mine, and you will be free."

He felt tempted by her words. He reached out his hand, but then suddenly pushed her away with force. "Ke ke ke! You fool! Did you think you could ensnare me now? Get lost from here! I will continue my journey!"

The Constellation of Stars spoke, a tear falling from her eye. "You would refuse my kindness to you? I only wanted to help..."

Clark screamed, unable to hear her, as if something was blocking his hearing.

Several alerts appeared: "Someone is trying to breach the system! Protocol One: Protection!"

A bright light flashed in Clark's face, returning him to the tunnel. But then, something strange happened...

To be continued....

Chapter 23: Get the inheritance!!!

Clark was stunned by the sight. It was truly terrifying.

He shouted loudly, "How is this possible? I've been walking for days, one after another, to the point where I lost count. Now I see..."

He stopped speaking and turned in horror. He saw the wall he had been standing next to since the beginning, and in front of him was the end of the passage.

He said, "What madness is this? So from the very beginning, that bitch was toying with me! But how did she manage to enter the Venerable One's subconscious? Is she really as terrifying as described in the records? But it doesn't matter now. Ke ke ke, for before me lies the true Legacy. Let those shelves distract you,

Gene, for in the end, they are mere breadcrumbs, nothing more. For a fool like you, enough talk now!! Before me is what I desired: the great inheritance I coveted."

Clark advanced with a passionate gaze and immense ambition. The hunger that had been consuming his mind vanished. Everything had disappeared: the malicious thoughts, everything!! The challenges, the gaps, the obstacles that

had hindered Clark's journey were gone. Now everything was before him, so what did it matter now?!

Before him lay a rotting corpse. Clark saw something strange at its top that puzzled him: truly, a massive, gigantic fissure, from which the sun was emerging. The sun was so intensely

bright it nearly blinded Clark. He quickly covered his face with his hands. His hair fell onto his face.

He said, "What's happening? My hair wasn't this long before." He was surprised by its length. "Ah, that time... Hahahaha! Since I woke up, I haven't

looked at my face in a mirror or anything, because I didn't care." His hair had grown strangely long.

He cut a piece of fabric from his black sleeve and used it to tie his hair back, throwing away the rest of his coat, which had been torn since the beginning.

He said, "For an inheritance like this, my appearance must be distinguished and magnificent, worthy of the greatness of the toil and the days. Everything, I will reap the fruits of my efforts."

He continued, "Now I will obtain the remaining refinement and skills from the corpse of the Venerable One, the Eternal Great Love!!!"

He began using his Eye of Greed to absorb its power. Soon, the corpse reacted with the immortal subconscious. A great green light erupted, truly

majestic, sending shivers down Clark's spine and terrifying him greatly.

He said, "So this is the refinement of the Immortals who surpassed the Mortals in power! Even the killing intent of that old man doesn't reach this level."

Suddenly, the ceiling tore open. It was horrifying. An enormous and powerful light showered down on Clark's body, which began to rise. There had been an enchantment hiding the tunnel opened

by the stone shelf, but due to the interaction with the Venerable One's corpse, that enchantment was destroyed.

Gene, who was at the waterfall spring, watched in terror at the gigantic, colossal light. He didn't know what was happening with Clark, and he didn't even care what was happening to him, because in his view, Clark was just trash

. It didn't even cross his mind that this was Clark. But a doubt and fear seeped into his heart. He thought it was a new catastrophe, but it wasn't. Gene was afraid, so he went down to get from the shelf whatever skills he could, as much as possible.

But on the other side, Clark was assimilating the Legacy. The power of that refinement was extremely intense. He began to feel his refinement level rising.

Alert! You have reached the second level of Soul Manifestation!

You have surpassed the third!

You have surpassed the fourth!

Alert! Congratulations, you have reached the King Stage!!!

Hahaha! Clark laughed amidst the overwhelming light. But the light became too intense; Clark's body couldn't withstand it.

Alert!!

Athena, Queen of War, sends you Waters of the Lady of the Lake's Pond.

Message urgently: Drink it or you will die from the skill overflow!

Clark quickly took it from the system and drank it. He said, "Yes, now I can assimilate it. Ke ke ke."

Clark remained in that state for three days, refining his power within that massive light. Suddenly, Clark opened his eyes: it was all over. He pushed the light away with a powerful wave of his hand.

Clark descended, his clothes torn to shreds, now completely naked. His black hair hung down his back. He began to look at his body: his muscles had become dense, his veins prominent, his body extremely solid.

Several notifications popped up before him!!!

You have obtained Fist of the Demon King Norak!

Skill Description: The Demon King Norak, it is said he manifested in the human world to aid his messenger. He was terrifying in the demon world, and his fist is unmatched!! He is the master of Black Lightning!!!

Another Alert!!!

The Great Blessing of the Black Dragon Phanore: Enhances all your stats three times and increases your durability, but does not increase skill power!!!

Alert!!! The system has been breached. The skill 'Voidification' has been stripped from you and replaced with an unknown skill: Stop Time for Three Seconds.

Alert!!! The skill 'Manifestation' has been locked.

Clark said, "What? Manifestation?!" He quickly searched for it in his status bar and found it was still there, but its name was marked with question marks. Clark immediately shouted, "So it's you, Constellation of Worlds?!" No response came. He was genuinely puzzled.

He said, "I won't let this dampen my spirits. Now I am truly strong."

Clark left the place he was in. He said, "Oh, right! It's been a while since I checked my level. Was I at level 12 or what?!" He was soon shocked: Level 29! And there was a word in golden color below his level in brackets: (Refinement: King Stage - First Phase).

- Strength: 30

- Agility: 20
- Durability: 34
- Stamina: 20
- Mana: 16
- Qi: 10

Clark laughed heartily, "My power is immense! I've even surpassed Bai Hu and Yi Lian. Besides my refinement, I have the System, and they have nothing like it. Oh, my great fortune!"

Clark exited the passage, standing before the stone shelf, where Gene was standing.

He said, "There have been intense vibrations. Even that damned eye that randomly shoots lightning kept striking the opposite area randomly."

Suddenly, the wolf, which had been asleep all that time, woke up. It returned to its massive size. Gene didn't know. He soon felt a huge shadow covering him. He was opening one of the shelves and

taking something new from it. He saw the huge wolf behind him. He moved quickly, thinking the wolf would attack him, hiding the scroll he had taken from the shelf in his pants.

But blue flames appeared in the doorway. Gene knew something strange was happening. Slowly, the stone door opened, and the shadow of a man 1.87 meters tall appeared.

It was Clark, naked. Gene was shocked by what he saw: Clark's body, rippling with muscles.

The wolf began licking Clark's face, who was laughing. Gene asked, "Aren't you going to cover yourself?"

Clark replied, "Is there a woman here for me to cover myself from? Do you think you're a woman? Oh! Or perhaps there's another explanation for your words: maybe you're jealous of its huge size?!" Suddenly, Clark felt a sensation... He quickly retreated, covering his lower body.

He said, "You stupid wolf! That's not a place to lick!"

Gene said, "It would have been better to cut it off."

Clark laughed arrogantly, "You're so jealous of my greatness! Ke ke ke."

Gene broke the amusing mood, saying, "Did you see the huge light that erupted from the sky???"

Clark laughed in response, "Naturally! Who else could have caused it but me? Didn't you feel the greatness of my power?!"

Gene's eyes, usually calm, widened.

Clark said, "Feast your eyes! For this sight, I call it true power!!!"

A yellow aura erupted, brimming with frenzied killing intent. His eyes were red. Clark said, "Do you see, you fool? Were you arrogant days ago? Now look

! Feast your eyes! This is immense power! This is the power of Kings, a power you haven't reached yet. You have a long

journey ahead. It was clear from the beginning: I didn't get those stupid skills because, naturally, I got the best. You know? I've been far beyond you since the start, not you being beyond my sight. You have a long road ahead; you might die before you reach it, for in the end..."

Before he could finish his sentence, he lowered his eyelid provocatively and pointed his thumb down at Gene: "You were playing with crumbs, while the

Legacy chose the best for me. I was its master. A mere coincidence transported a fool like you!"

Like dagger stabs, Clark's words pierced Gene's heart, like a bolt of lightning that struck Clark after he finished speaking!!!

To be continued...

Chapter 24: Escape from the Eternal Unconscious !!!

The Heavenly Eye appeared. It had located the hiding place of Gene and Clark.

It struck Clark violently.

The lightning flash dissipated, leaving Gene in shock. He was just one foot away from receiving that insane blow himself.

Clark emerged swiftly after the lightning cleared, saying:

"Ke ke ke ke... He truly deserves his title. The Black Dragon's power is immense."

"Even my flank was unharmed. It's steel-like."

Gene looked at him in astonishment:

"This is no time for boasting, you fool! Didn't you notice you're covered in scratches? But the strange thing is, he wasn't injured at all."

Clark was surprised, not by what Gene said last, but because he truly felt no pain. Is this what he meant by durability? Is it a skill or what? Will he not feel pain? But its duration is short, just two minutes. So, will there be a violent reaction for Clark???

But the two didn't care.

Another bolt struck, shattering the shelf completely.

Clark screamed:

"Let's run, fast! Come on, Wolf, fly us away!"

Clark mounted the wolf's back, saying:

"Come on."

Gene's gaze was fixed on the scroll that had fallen before him. He said: "Another scroll! It's another skill like the one I picked up!!"

He put it in his pants and jumped forcefully onto Clark.

Clark grabbed and lifted him. Clark stood on the wolf's back, holding his sword charged with a dense and powerful demonic aura.

Gene thought to himself: "His power is incredible! So this is the King Stage? How did he achieve such power???"

Clark began deflecting the lightning strikes to prevent them from hitting the wolf and causing all of them to fall, which would mean certain death.

Clark placed his hand on the wolf and said:

"Let's rise to the Eye."

Gene replied angrily:

"Do you want to get us all killed? Don't get arrogant with your power!"

Clark laughed in response:

"I can't destroy a calamity, but I can stop it for a while so we can escape."

The wolf swiftly changed its course, and they all ascended. Lightning bolts began swirling around them, striking from all directions. The damage from the lightning became stronger and higher.

An alert came for Clark and Gene:

WARNING!!!

If you do not stop, you will destroy your soul!!!

Clark screamed with a maniacal laugh:

"Get away from here, you System! You know nothing of the thrill of battle!"

Clark used Athena's Blessing, and Gene used the Tyrannical Domain. In terms of evasion, Gene was better than Clark. Why? Because Gene possessed a supernatural sense for all four directions—he had no blind spots.

The wolf was severely exhausted. Clark said:

"Hold on, my friend. Just a little further, and then we'll all unleash our strongest attacks together."

They rose and reached the Eye itself. Gene used the Fist of the Chaos King, and Clark used the Demonic Norak's Fist. Their strikes merged and harmonized, becoming a more powerful blow. The wolf also helped, firing at the Eye.

BOOM!!!!

The fragments of the Heavenly Eye scattered!!! The scene became truly majestic. The sky changed its form, becoming more angelic. Nine colors intensified in the sky within that gap as the clouds parted.

Clark screamed:

"Fly with all your might, you stupid wolf, or we'll all die!!!"

The wolf surged forward with all its strength. Gene was frightened by Clark's reaction.

He asked:

"What's going to happen? Why are you so afraid?"

"That cursed Eye is angry with us. It hasn't left; it's gathering a tremendous force from the sky and the immortal realm to create a blow that will annihilate the entire place!"

Gene was terrified. Clark continued:

"I was a fool. I became arrogant with my new power and thought I was its equal. But after seeing it again, I realized I had only provoked it to unleash even greater power to kill us. I saw that we are a threat, so it decided not to play around and end this with a single strike."

Dense lightning began forming far from them. Clark yelled:

"Let's descend to the ground! We're close to the exit."

The wolf descended with them and surged forth at its maximum speed. Clark and Gene were shocked by the wolf's immense speed.

They reached the cave.

But something was happening on the other side: The City of Stars had become ruins. Half of it was destroyed. It had suffered numerous disasters because of the Heavenly Eye.

Alyssa, Yi Lian, and Bai Hu had left after the situation became dangerous. A full week had passed since Gene and Clark disappeared!! That is, half a month (three weeks) in the immortal subconscious.

Ling Ochi was present; he did not leave but continued to enjoy himself in the royal palace with guests and women.

He was shocked by the return of everyone except Clark and Gene. His two disciples were severely injured.

He asked fearfully:

"What happened to you two? Answer me!"

Yi Lian replied:

"Master, Clark disappeared into a cave and never returned. After that, giant lightning bolts appeared, leaving nothing untouched."

"What? Clark? Where is he? Was he harmed, or was he the cause?"

Bai Hu responded:

"It wasn't him. A giant, powerful hand appeared, terrifying all of us—even you, Master. If it returns, I doubt you could be a match for it if it caught you."

The wait wasn't long; an hour was enough for them to explain what happened.

Ling Ochi fell silent, stunned. He remembered what the Venerable One of his sect had told him a hundred years ago:

There was a man whose name and origin were unknown, but he was the most unfortunate and unluckiest person in the world. Wherever he stepped, disasters from the sky and earth would spontaneously occur. No one could describe the disasters because, naturally, no one survived them.

Ling yelled:

"Let's go and see! I will shatter that door with my power! After all, I am a refiner at the Void Manifestation level!"

When he returned to the forest, everything was calm until they reached the mentioned gate.

He said:

"So, this is the gate?"

Yi Lian replied:

"Yes."

The elder did not answer her. Instead, a dark aura formed around him. His eyes turned black and terrifying.

He said in a majestic voice: "Second Move: Black King's Fist!!!"

The Extreme Fist!

He raised his hand with force...

And... BOOM!!!!

He thought he was the cause of the gate's destruction, but the gate was struck from both sides and hit from the inside with even greater force!!!

Ten seconds before Ling Ochi struck the gate, Clark, Gene, and the wolf were running through the passage leading outward.

Clark shouted to Gene and the wolf:

"Let's strike again, friends! Someone is trying to destroy the gate from the other side! If we hit it from all directions, it will be destroyed! I sense the presence of a powerful refiner behind the door."

They did it again! Clark and Gene's strikes synchronized, and the wolf helped.

BOOM!!

The gate was destroyed, and thick smoke appeared.

The trio emerged. Clark was still... With a wave of his hand, Clark dispersed the dust and appeared naked.

They all fell to the ground, looking in astonishment: Why is this madman naked?

Clark said:

"What's wrong with you? Your faces are pale."

Yi Lian screamed at him:

"Can't you see, you idiot? You're naked!"

"Oh, that."

He saw Proteus's clothes lying on the ground and put them on.

"I think you've broken through to the King Stage," said Ling Ochi.

Clark replied:

"Naturally. Nothing is difficult for me."

"Fine, then fight me! Let me see your progress. Do you deserve personal training from me or not?"

Clark looked at him, thinking to himself: What's wrong with this battle maniac?

He asked Yi Lian in her ear:

"What's with him? Did I anger him somehow?"

Yi Lian replied:

"After seeing you like this, with your body purified in a strange way—as if you were steeped in the Reverse River—he wants to see your power."

Clark laughed:

"Alright, my master. If you want to test my power, then use your strength so you won't be beaten by your student."

A giant dark aura erupted from Ling Ochi:

"Of course, my disciple. You are the first student worthy of me showing my true power and fighting seriously."

Clark unleashed his supreme demonic king aura. The fight would be with fists and without any mercy.

They soon charged at each other.

BOOM!!!

This explosion was not due to the clash of Clark and Ling Ochi's fists but because of the girl who descended from the sky onto Ling Ochi's back.

Clark was astonished.

Yi Lian quickly said:

"It's the eldest sister, Yi Fei, the Master's daughter!"

Yi Fei yelled at her father:

"Where have you been hiding, Dad? I searched for you only to find you here playing around!"

Yi Lian and Bai Hu approached, saying:

"Sister, your father—we mean our master—was on a mission testing his new student, nothing more. He wasn't playing around."

She screamed at them:

"Liars! I went to Dranglik Palace, and they told me the truth: He was roaming around everywhere, having fun and performing dual refinement!!!"

To be continued....

Chapter 25: Back to the capital !!!

Yi Lian and Bai Hua's cheeks turned red.

Clark asked:

"What do you mean by dual cultivation?"

Bai Hua whispered in Clark's ear.

Clark's face turned red with embarrassment:

"Really? But shouldn't dual cultivation be done with a female cultivator?"

So he did it just for pleasure!!!"

Yi Fei heard that, and her face turned red with extreme anger:

"So it turns out, Father, that you do it for debauchery and nothing else!"

Bai Hua and Yi Lian quickly rushed to stop her.

Clark went to help Ling Ouchi stand up.

Clark teased the old man, saying to him:

"So it turns out you're weak before your daughter! From what I see, she beats you severely. Is she stronger than you?"

"She is not stronger than me, and she is not my real daughter either.

She is the daughter of the demonic sect leader!!!"

Clark replied:

"What? You mean she's not from the orthodox faction? And how do you have a friend from the demonic faction?"

Ling replied:

"There was a boy... they say it was a thousand years ago!!! There was a village full of cultivators, its livelihood and strength coming from the cultivators themselves.

In one of those villages, a person was born named Huang Bo Tai Fei.

His grandfather raised Tai Fei and wanted him to become strong to bring his grandfather joy.

But one day, news spread about the son of a demonic cultivator. Naturally, that mother was killed and her son disappeared.

But the son had vanished. Tai Fei's grandfather found him in a cave, and his joints were being violently severed in a way that wasn't even human.

And the perpetrator... was Tai Fei himself!

The grandfather scolded the boy, saying: 'We are a righteous faction; we know only justice.'

But those words didn't reach the boy, who was punished with indefinite imprisonment by his grandfather.

Days passed and the boy was still imprisoned, so he decided to escape through his window. It wasn't even locked, so he ran away.

He reached a dark alley beside their palace.

That was the moment he realized there were no morals in a world ruled only by strength and nothing else. And justice...

In his memoir, Tai Fei wrote:

'Justice is not defined by eloquent words or righteous acts.

The strong are the ones who define it.

No one will care about you or sympathize with you, even if you are the most righteous, pure, and noble human alive.

Do you think anyone cares about you, your fate, or the unjust judgment passed upon you?

No one cares, because in the end we were all insignificant cases no one would ever look at.'"

Clark asked:

"So what did he see that shifted the balance of his life and personality?"

"He saw his grandfather planning to betray and overthrow his cousin, because his cousin was the eldest and wisest of the grandchildren.

Such a murder was unjust.

Tai Fei cried bitterly that day.

And twenty years later, the grandfather was sentenced to inevitable death.

Don't think he entrusted me with his daughter or anything like that. She is actually my wife's daughter. Tai Fei raped her and made her pregnant.

I lived like a fool, thinking she was my daughter, and I loved her as if she were truly mine,

until her mother confessed on her deathbed that Tai Fei had raped her, and Tai Fei was her daughter's father.

I was shocked and went insane over this matter. I went into seclusion for ten years before coming out.

I blamed myself and pitied poor Yi Fei, and cursed Tai Fei, that bastard."

Ling Ouchi fell silent.

Clark spoke:

"Your story is tragic, Master Ling.

But what that friend said is true: he is a demon, and he doesn't need justification. He will do anything in pursuit of perfection and brute strength.

Let's look at it from a deeper perspective:

Your wife hid the truth.

So tell me, was she really a victim, or just a woman who was drawn to him and lifted her skirt to enjoy herself with him?"

Ling Ouchi quickly grabbed Clark by the neck to kill him.

Clark smiled and said:

"Calm down, old man, I'm only suggesting possibilities."

Ling Ouchi calmed down and stared at Clark.

"I mean, man... it's impossible for him to make her pregnant the very first time unless she had willingly slept with him.

A rapist doesn't 'sleep' with his victim. Think about it: neither your wife nor Yi Fei were the victims. The real victim from the very beginning... was you!!!"

Ling Ouchi was shocked, and his forehead trembled.

He struck the air with his withered hair, laughing:

"You're right! I've been living my whole life, nearly two hundred years..."

Clark was stunned:

"Wait! Since when have you been married, and when did this girl appear?"

Ling replied:

"I used a technique to maintain my youthful appearance, but later abandoned it and let things take their course.

Also, I married my wife long ago, and that incident happened twenty years ago!!!"

Clark replied:

"What about Tai Fei? Didn't you fight him or see him afterward?"

Ling Ouchi replied:

"I wasn't brave enough for that."

Clark asked in surprise:

"Is he really that strong?"

"Naturally! He also has a simple law for killing: if he feels you're annoying, you'll never see the sun again.

The former emperor was killed by him because he accidentally stepped on his foot. Tai Fei's reaction was violent, he ended his life without mercy."

Clark replied in horror:

"Who is this audacious man who dares to kill the emperor of the strongest nation?"

"Yes, he is terrifying. I saw in his face the experience of a man who had lived a thousand years!

I tried to drive him away, but everyone feared to offend or provoke him."

Clark replied in shock:

"What?! Who remains in this world to live a thousand years like the Great Exalted One or Ren Zu thousands of years ago?"

Ling Ouchi did not reply.

Clark realized there were still many unknowns in this world, and he was like a frog at the bottom of a well.

Clark shouted at everyone:

"Let's return to the capital!"

As they traveled, Jin came beside Clark.

Clark broke the silence between them and said:

"So you were eavesdropping?"

Jin replied:

"And what will you do if I was?"

Clark replied:

"I don't care."

Jin thought to himself:

"So will he leave for the Qin Kingdom? I don't think so, because the information and benefits here in Drangleic are not yet finished.

Also, if I can take control of this place, I'll benefit greatly.

I must control the minister's heart to make him give me everything, and then we'll see how Clark resists me."

Yi Lian asked:

"Will you two take this strange wolf with you?"

Both replied:

"Naturally! This wolf is extremely powerful. Even though his eye was destroyed, he restored it, meaning he can heal himself with his flames."

Yi Lian replied:

"That means he has extraordinary regeneration."

They all fell silent after that.

They walked through the forest.

Clark was deep in thought:

How can someone live for a thousand years? And his suspicious disappearance!

Also, if he was in the demonic path, how could he care about a romantic relationship that never mattered in the first place?

Unless he wanted to spread his lineage for some important purpose.

Had he reached the world that the Exalted Urban wanted to reach?

So many questions filled Clark's mind.

The questions continued until they reached the capital gates, the City of Stars once again.

But it was in ruins.

Jin was shocked, asking Clark:

"So the disasters have reached beyond the immortal subconscious? My God! Is there a human capable of such strength to create a merciless catastrophe?!"

Clark fell silent, saying in his mind:

"I did well telling the story, because I didn't reveal what happened with the Exalted One that made the great disasters chase him relentlessly!!"

They kept walking until they reached the middle of the city.

There they found Alyssa and the minister.

Alyssa hugged both Clark and Jin, pulling them together.

The two were disgusted, but the girl insisted, saying:

"Why did you scare me like that?!"

Both replied:

"There was no other choice!!!"

The minister asked curiously, excited:

"So what was the inheritance?"

Jin replied:

"There were two inheritances, not one."

The minister shouted:

"What?! Did you obtain something for the empire as well?"

Clark wanted to speak harshly, but Jin stopped him, saying:

"Leave it to me."

Jin spoke:

"Did we ever tell you that what we'd do had anything to do with you? Did we promise you anything from the beginning? No!!!"

The minister's face turned pale with shock.

Everyone was surprised by Jin's harsh words.

But Clark pushed Jin to speak himself, saying:

"The inheritance was destined for me from the very beginning. I obtained the strongest, while he got many of the Exalted One's techniques—or some of them, not all.

Also, as I told you that day, Minister—or I'll call you Francis instead of Minister—you tried to exploit us!

You tried to manipulate your words that day in the palace, portraying yourself as our savior."

(Weeks ago in the palace, when Clark woke up)

"I sent you the battalion to save you because you are very important to our nation. You are the true heirs who will save our state from the curse!"

(In the present)

"And so Minister Francis tried to manipulate us with mere illusions and burden us with his own problems!

They will exploit us and then throw us into the trash. The method won't matter. Why?

The answer is very simple: convince them they are heroes and noble so they lower their guard, then bring someone from outside the nation to kill them—just like the emperor did to get rid of us!

I look forward to seeing his shocked face, with Ling Ouchi and his disciples beside me! Ke ke ke!!!"

To be continued...

Chapter 26: Imperial Party!!!

Everyone was looking at Clark as he spoke those words.

But he was truly realistic; he did not lie in a single word.

Therefore, even if everyone tried to look from many angles, the minister's actions were extremely cruel. He tried to exploit two people we don't even know, convincing them only with legends, leading them to destruction.

He didn't even care if they were alive after being dragged into the subconscious of the Exalted.

And that was enough to prove that the minister was truly vile, just like the emperor.

They wanted to drag Clark and Gene into their own shell, and that was injustice and oppression to them.

Political manipulation.

They say you are free, but in truth, you are merely a prisoner of their shadow.

They get angry at you if you voice your idea of escaping their shadow.

And if you try, death will greet you!!!

The minister looked into Clark and Gene's eyes and said:

"I never tried that, nor did I try to exploit you. I only wanted to help you, and in return, you would help me."

Quickly, Gene spoke:

"Or have you forgotten how you threw me into the forest while I knew nothing? With your smile, as if you were saying: yes, go to your doom."

It doesn't matter; words need no expression of emotions.

"Francis, your greatest mistake is thinking you are the only intelligent one in this world, that no one could surpass you.

But in the end, you were just an easy prey for the one above you."

Francis replied, trying to justify himself:

"I followed you into the forest with all my soldiers, even my own sons. I accepted their deaths so that you could rise. I believed in you, I thought if I helped you, I would free my empire from its oppressive injustice."

Clark replied:

"See, you are truly laughable. You didn't follow us out of fear for our lives, but because you feared we would die before achieving your great desire, isn't that so!!!"

The minister's pride was shattered, and all the beliefs in his heart. He became a slave to despair, falling into a dark abyss.

Elisa held the two by the shoulders and said:

"Why are you so harsh on him like this?"

Gene replied:

"We are not harsh, we are simply speaking the truth. Minister, there is still much awaiting you, so rise from your seat and prepare yourself for what is coming. The events are starting to become fun, he he he he."

Everyone was surprised and didn't know what he meant, except one—and that was Clark.

They had crushed his heart and his will, his eyes devoid of any light.

The first step at the beginning was to wash his brain and free him from his trivial beliefs.

Now his will was completely destroyed; he had become without will.

He no longer knew what loyalty, love, faith, or anything else was.

Now, he would be used as a tool, exploited.

What would they do???

They arrived at the imperial palace. Red carpets were laid for them, and the paths decorated towards the imperial hall.

They entered.

The emperor was standing in anger after learning that Clark and Gene had returned.

He said, shouting with rage:

"It's good you returned, Ling Uchi. Kill these traitors! How dare you kill the three Exalted!"

Ling Uchi replied:

"Alucard Emperor, how dare you utter the word 'Exalted' in front of this great master standing before you!!!"

"What? How dare you speak to me in this tone? Have you forgotten I am the emperor?"

"I have not forgotten. But there are fools who think themselves Exalted in my presence—that is sheer mockery. Even kings and emperors never gained the title of Exalted, for only one ever reached it, and that name remains his."

"So how could a weak one, not even strong, not even refined, dare call himself Exalted?"

That is a disgrace to the title itself. Even I never took the title, because I simply do not deserve it."

The emperor replied:

"The pillar of my nation, and that child has killed them! What will remain to protect my state from invaders? Tell me! I paid your sect great wealth, sacrificed half my resources, and now you refuse my request?"

"I am not a breaker of oaths; that is what my orthodox path demands. But you ask me to kill my disciple—that is a personal offense against me."

The ministers in the royal hall were shocked, even Francis, for he did not know.

Especially the emperor, who collapsed on his throne and stammered:

"Wh-what? Your disciple? How? How could a child who knows nothing of politics or life draw you in?"

"What a joke! If you say he knows nothing, let me tell you he solved everything to keep you on your throne, while you only bedded beauties hoping it would calm you."

The emperor replied angrily:

"Then your sect shall get nothing! You refuse to fulfill my request or lift a finger to solve our problem?"

A terrifying killing intent erupted from the Exalted, Yi Lian, Bai Hua, and Yi Fei.

The ministers and everyone, except Clark and Gene, felt as if their hearts were being crushed.

Ling, the Ancient, said:

"You are bold to say that—but will you endure the consequences of what will happen to you and your kingdom!!!"

Faces turned pale, and the emperor could not say a word.

Quickly, he prostrated before the feet of the Ancient and said:

"Forgive me, I won't repeat it. You shall be treated with respect. I am sorry, just don't let your state move against us."

Clark quickly left, glancing at the minister beside the emperor, saying in his mind:

"Go ahead and console this fool in your arms. Ah, how I love it—how they beg each other, and in the end betray each other. Humans cannot be trusted."

It was an ancient dilemma, since the beginning of everything.

Humanity truly is wretched—pure corruption, treachery, false loyalty, everything nothing but a vile brood.

At night, Clark was in his room, standing before his mirror, dressing himself:

An ornate long coat of black and white, reserved only for imperial heroes, to be adorned with medals.

He held scissors, intending to cut his hair, but hesitated and said in his mind:

"It's better to keep my hair. When I go to the State of Qin, my appearance will be good enough, making me look like a rare talent from some city. I'll change my name to blend among people and explore... since everyone there has long hair."

"But my eyes... they are so sunken, deeply dark. Funny, it's the first time I've focused on my own appearance."

But to me, it wasn't such a big deal. Why? Because I didn't care.

"Alright, enough talking to myself."

Clark left his room, finding Gene waiting for him.

Clark asked:

"Why are you waiting for me here!!!"

Gene replied with a question:

"So, you'll do it? I'll leave the matter in your hands."

"You mean that? Of course I'll do it. That building wasn't made for nothing. Today, a new emperor shall be crowned without fail!!!"

The two laughed manically.

They entered a grand hall, a banquet table, people from across the empire.

Ling Uchi, the pervert, mingling with women, only to be struck by his daughter harshly for embarrassing her.

In the corner were Yi Lian and Elisa.

Elisa wore a sparkling blue ornate dress, with a beautiful blue flower as a hairpin.

Yi Lian wore a crimson gown, her face angelic to the extreme.

Even Clark thought in his mind: She is even more beautiful than Elisa, by far.

They were truly beauties, attracting men from across the hall to dance with them, stealing even the spotlight from the emperor's daughter.

Clark and Gene approached.

Elisa was shocked—they were truly handsome.

Gene trimmed his hair, making it better, while Clark chose to keep his hair long, tying it in Bai Hua's style, who was himself dancing with women.

Gene spoke:

"It seems boring. What do you say, Elisa—shall we dance?"

Her face flushed red in embarrassment, and she said:

"Alright."

The two went to dance, stealing the spotlight from everyone.

Clark spoke, breaking the silence with Yi Lian:

"They seem to be enjoying themselves."

"Yes, but I have always hated these parties. They bring me nothing but misery. Princes, nobles, all trying to propose to me. But I don't like that, I don't like arranged things—it only brings me misery."

"You're just overthinking. Why didn't you dance with anyone? Don't tell me you're afraid of that group of fools. Bai Hua is also here—is there nothing romantic between you two?"

"In truth, I never told you, but Bai Hua... is actually my brother."

Clark was shocked:

"Whaaaat? That fool is your brother? He doesn't even look like you, his hair is blond!"

"He's illegitimate, not a trueborn. But my father acknowledged him and made him legitimate. Yet he chose to be called only Bai Hua, instead of Yul Tak Bai Hua."

"So that explains the matter between you two."

Clark quickly turned, stood before her, took her hand gently, kissed it, and said:

"Lady Yul Tak Yi Lian, would you accept to dance with the lowly commoner, Clark?"

Her face turned red with shyness, but she smiled, laughing a gentle laugh, her rosy lips revealed.

She said:

"I accept."

To be continued...

Chapter 27: The assassination of the emperor !!!

The two stood in the middle of the party. He wrapped his arm around Clark's shoulder, and their other hands were intertwined.

Yi Lian said:

"This is really embarrassing."

He replied, laughing:

"What's the big deal about people? Just imagine that we're alone in the hall, and you'll become braver in the crowd."

Yi Lian closed her eyes and then opened them, imagining that no one was there except her and Clark.

She replied to him:

"You're right, my heart isn't pounding like before."

Clark replied, teasing her:

"So if it's not pounding, does that mean I don't excite you? Is this ordinary Clark really not exciting?"

Yi Lian blushed with embarrassment and replied:

"I don't think you're bad. Perhaps you're better than all of them."

He replied to her:

"Oh, a bold confession."

"Shut up, you fool! You're making it more embarrassing."

The eyes of everyone were drawn to Clark and Yi Lian, who stole the spotlight.

But something was strange: the Minister had left the hall.

Jin signaled to Clark to notice the matter.

Clark nodded to him to go out.

Jin left the hall, tugging at his collar.

He said in his mind:

"How bold you are, Minister! You did it so quickly without anyone telling you."

Jin opened many doors in the palace until he reached the royal court!!!

He found the Minister covered in blood, and in front of him was the Emperor's corpse.

His face was trembling with horror, frightened, seeing that he had committed an unforgivable, vile deed.

He was almost screaming when Jin quickly approached, putting his hand around the Minister's shoulder, saying:

"What's wrong, Francis? Didn't you achieve your wish?"

"Now you can steer your country as you wish on the path of righteousness and greatness."

"Everything is ready for you. This Emperor abandoned you before, so why now? Why the sadness?"

Francis replied:

"But this is high treason against the country."

Jin quickly slapped him, saying:

"How do you call this treason? That bastard, son of a whore, destroyed your country, and you say you betrayed him? What treason? Tell me, what is your concept of treason?"

Francis replied:

"Isn't treason the breaking of covenants?"

Jin replied:

"They convince fools like you of that. The superior human doesn't care about fools; he is unique in his decisions and path."

"Covenants were created to be broken, what's the difference? While the first to break the covenant and betray everything was the Emperor himself! He sacrificed half the country, no, all of it, just to bring in outsiders to clean up your filth, then crown himself a hero and savior."

Jin felt a thrill in his mind; he felt he had reached his peak.

He shook the Minister's shoulders with both hands, continuing his speech:

"You have suffered bitterly: betrayal, breaking covenants, the bitterness of losing children, everything. So what's the difference if you commit one sin?"

The Minister fell silent, and Jin subsequently fell silent.

That was an ancient dilemma from the start, but Jin was merely manipulating words. And that dilemma was the feeling of guilt.

We commit sins and wrong actions, and then we feel guilt. We muster the courage to do wrong, be it murder or drinking alcohol. Then you ask yourself: why did I do that?

What does it matter? Will asking "why" turn back time for you to retreat?

But in truth, you will repeat the mistake endlessly.

That was the explanation of those who follow the demonic path.

You can reach the peak and the Great Dao if you get rid of the conscience that restrains you. It restrains your self and your heart.

And Jin used verbal manipulation to give Francis a different perspective on the course of events.

The course Jin gave him was a feeling of liberation.

Humans have always been slaves to their psychological shackles that hinder their evolution.

Francis spoke after a long silence:

"I was a fool for following this lowlife. He caused the destruction of my power and everything, and now I am liberated. I am no longer a slave to anyone; I have become free—free for myself, my desires, my whims, for my country."

Jin replied:

"Yes, well done. You have achieved what you sought. Now you are free. Now the next Emperor will be crowned soon."

Those words carried both hidden and clear meanings at the same time.

Jin started running through the corridor, returning to the party.

He forcefully opened the door, shouting: "The Emperor has been killed!"

Panic appeared on everyone's faces; they all became scared and terrified.

Yi Lian asked Clark:

"Did Jin kill him?"

He replied to her:

"No, he didn't kill him. He actually didn't do anything. Politics, Yi Lian, are like a chessboard, and you are free within it. Do you want to be eliminated in it? Or do you want to be a manipulator who reaps all the benefits!!!"

Everyone started leaving the hall in terror, returning to the throne to see what had happened to the Emperor.

And here, everyone was shocked. They stared, with looks of awe on their faces.

Quickly, all the ministers turned to Ling Ochi and Clark, saying:

"You are the ones who killed him! You are the reason. All of you have a motive for it."

Clark replied, laughing:

"Are you a fool or what? The venerable Master Ling cannot kill kings or anyone, so how can you judge that? On the contrary, if Master Ling or anyone killed him, that would cause his own death in his country. No one has been bold enough to kill kings since the Great Venerable One thousands of years ago. What you're saying is nonsense!!!"

That minister fell silent with a twitching face.

The Emperor's daughter rushed to hug her father's corpse.

Alyssa moved beside her to console her.

She cried like a small child, grieving for her departed father.

Ling Ochi approached Clark, whispering in his ear:

"Do you know who killed him?"

Clark replied:

"Isn't it obvious? The game you manipulated, whose mental faculties were completely shattered, is, of course, Francis."

"What? Then that will cause a great civil war in this corrupt country!"

Clark replied:

"That won't happen. You will ask me why, and my answer to you is: you see the Empress before you; she will be a pawn in my hands that I move as I wish. Now Francis has already written a fake will to make his death look like a suicide, and he wants to install his daughter as his successor. Thus, nothing will happen. And the one who will rule is me, in secret. Keke."

Ling Ochi looked at him in shock, stunned by Clark's cunning. But such has been life since ancient times: they wanted to exploit him, but they didn't know they were letting a wolf into their home!!!

Clark left, heading to the Emperor's room. He walked calmly and comfortably, quiet like a tiger, knowing he had gained control of the mountain.

He arrived and opened the door, finding the Minister writing the will, nervous, at the Emperor's desk.

Clark touched his shoulder.

The Minister was terrified and fell to the ground, thinking Clark was one of the guards.

Clark gestured for him to continue.

Ten minutes passed for the Minister, and then the windows shattered, and a terrifying bloody blade rushed in.

Quickly, Clark tried to restrain it, to block it, but that strike was fast.

Clark screamed, "Time, stop!"

Everything froze, stopping in its place; the terrifying strike dissipated.

The Minister was even frozen; the clock on the wall had also stopped moving.

Clark laughed, saying:

"Keke, the most terrifying thing is to possess time itself, and in my case, I am the emperor and dragon who possesses time itself."

Clark exited through the destroyed balcony to see who caused such chaos.

He saw Jin fighting a woman with silver hair and green eyes like emeralds. She wore a formal suit, and on her chest was a brooch resembling a crimson flower, terrifyingly beautiful. But what was frightening was her terrifying intent to kill. Clark sensed her despite time being stopped! How could her hat not fall with those mana fluctuations!!!

Also, her fighting style was suspicious to Clark. She held a katana in her left hand, its blade slender, and a very strangely short dagger in her right hand!!!

Time returned. It seemed it was only four seconds for Clark, no more.

Clark descended, landing in the middle of them all. He asked the two:

"Will you allow me to join?"

The woman scrutinized him.

Suddenly, Jin rushed to attack her, unleashing his oppressive domain.

Her dodging of his blades was very precise, but he ultimately tried to avoid his blade clashing with hers.

It seemed she possessed higher strength than Jin, allowing her to restrain him.

But the question that truly occurred to Clark was: Did they not feel that time had stopped?!

...To be continued.

Chapter 28: Blood Tower !!!

The clashes between Jin and that woman intensified.

Jin became faster, adapting to her fluid movements and dodges.

But despite her combat intent, Clark noticed something: she wasn't aiming for his vital points. She wasn't trying to sever his arms or inflict serious injuries.

Furthermore, on the palace's watchtower, someone was observing. It seemed to be that woman's assistant.

Clark thought to himself:

"It seems I'll be joining this fight too... but before that..."

A theory had been brewing in Clark's mind for some time: Could he channel Qi into the ground to propel himself upwards, granting him a powerful leap? Clark wanted to make a dramatic landing right on that observer. He might crush him, but Clark didn't care; he wanted to test the theory.

The idea crystallized in his mind: If he could push his Qi into the solid earth and have it rebound through his body, it would grant him an explosive force, maybe even allowing him to jump 20 meters.

He said, "Keke, we won't know if we don't try, right?"

He instantly released his Qi, adopting a forward stance to crash onto the watchtower's roof.

BOOM!

He leapt with a force that exceeded his expectations, perhaps because the Qi of the King Class was immensely powerful.

Clark, gripping his sword in his left hand, saw the man on the roof notice his approach and immediately draw his weapon—a slender, pointed blade. But that blade wouldn't be enough to block Clark's incoming strike. Clark flipped mid-air, adding even more force to his attack, aiming to split both the sword and its wielder with a single blow.

The two swords collided, and Clark's power was overwhelming.

Laughing like a madman, Clark taunted, "So you blocked that, huh? Well then! Let's see how you handle THIS!"

Demonic Qi surged forth. From the very beginning, Clark hadn't enhanced his sword or used Qi to amplify his strength. The raw force was so immense that the watchtower couldn't withstand it and completely shattered.

Clark jumped back, saying, "Hahahaha! Looks like I used a bit too much force. Now, come on out!"

The strange man emerged, pushing rubble aside, and looked at his broken blade. "You seem like a savage beast! But no matter, I enjoy facing opponents like you."

Clark retorted, "You've got a big mouth! But your sword is shattered. Fine, we'll settle this with our fists."

Clark threw his now-sheathed sword aside. "Don't think my fists are any less ferocious than my sword."

The man replied, "I expect nothing less. I can tell you yearn for a hand-to-hand fight."

But suddenly, a powerful punch struck the man's face, sending him flying three meters back. He quickly kicked off the air to regain his balance.

"How is he this fast?!" the man thought.

But then... Clark stopped time.

He dashed forward at an illusory speed, closing the distance instantly. Time resumed flowing right in the middle of his attack, leaving the man shocked at how Clark had appeared beside him.

Clark laughed. "Bite down on your teeth and endure the pain from my fist!"

BOOM!!!

He used his "Nurak" fist technique, which utterly crushed the man, killing him!

Speaking with a disappointed tone, Clark said, "I expected you to be extraordinarily strong, but it seems the opposite was true. You couldn't even handle my power! Hahaha!"

Clark quickly grabbed the corpse, and with the veins in his arm bulging, he threw it right into the middle of the fight between Jin and the woman.

"Enough playing around, you two!" he declared.

He immediately stepped in front of the woman and said, "Jin! Was it you who killed the Emperor? And now you're destroying the palace?!"

Jin looked on in shock. He betrayed me that quickly?! That scum!

The woman addressed Clark, "Who are you?"

Clark used his sword's scabbard to lift her chin. "Truthfully, I'm still figuring that out myself. But I expect you, my lady, know a great deal. So, why don't you tell us about yourself?"

The woman replied, "I am Maria di Archiduke, from the Eastern Blood Tower."

"Very well, Lady Maria. So, what's the reason for your fight with Jin?"

She answered, "I was sent to confirm the Emperor's corpse, but he prevented me from doing so."

"Oh? So, Jin, you stopped her, is that right?"

Jin thought to himself, He's trying to shift the balance! He wants to win her to his side by using me as a scapegoat. That means he won't hesitate to kill me if it serves his purpose with her. Or is this a gamble? I've absorbed the corpse of the man Clark killed. The 'Corrupted Saint's Refinement' allows me to absorb souls and massively increase my power. That man was undoubtedly a 'Refiner'. I've trained for this.

He opened his status screen to check the new skill he had been training.

A strange alert appeared: "Your purple star constellation is watching you!"

He thought, Let it watch. You're about to witness something you've never seen before.

New Skill: "Authority of Heaven and Earth" - Grants the ability to manipulate weights and centers of gravity, and allows flight.

Alert!!! "The Shining Emperor bestows upon you the blessing of Light Lances."

Jin laughed inwardly. So you want a fight? You'll get one.

Suddenly, everyone looked on in astonishment. Clark and Maria were both shocked. Jin was floating in front of them with immense pride! Several luminous swords, shrouded in a demonic aura, materialized and shot towards Clark.

BOOM!!!

One of them pierced Clark's shoulder. "Damn! The damage is terrifyingly strong!"

As the dust settled, it was clear Jin had already absorbed the corpse and sealed his meridians. His eyes had turned pitch black and demonic, terrifying and frightening.

Jin laughed. "You've grown arrogant! Did you think you were stronger than me? Let me tell you something: I always come back! Hehehe!"

BOOM! A giant aura erupted, blowing dust in all directions. Everyone stared at Jin, who had become insanely powerful. His voice echoed horrifically, like a demon exiled from the demon world because of its strength.

Laughing, he said, "The refinement is complete! Now, let me show you the extent of my power!"

He soared madly into the sky and began breaking through stages:

-Birth Stage: He reached its peak in an instant.

-Peak Adolescence Stage.

-King Stage: Second Layer.

He broke through consecutively. Even Clark hadn't achieved this! So this is the power of Demonic Refinement!

In the blink of an eye, Clark didn't even see the blow that hit him in the face, sending him flying far away. But he quickly steadied himself using the Dragon's Authority.

Jin laughed. "So, let's begin round two!"

Maria came to Clark's side. "I'll fight with you. He's dangerous."

Clark refused, "No. This is a matter between men. Women have no place intervening here."

He tore off his upper garment, becoming bare-chested. He surged forward with immense power, his bare fists ready. "Come on, Jin! Give me a great fight, not child's play!"

"Of course you'll see a great fight! It'll be the last thing your eyes ever see!"

Clark jumped powerfully, using the King's "Nurak" fist. It clashed with Jin's fist, which was imbued with the King of Chaos's power. But Clark was repelled because Jin's body had been refined using the body of a Venerable One who was at the peak of the Mortal World.

Jin, forced back, had his fist broken, but he didn't care. He made the weight of an entire mountain press down on Clark's back, slamming him into the ground with crushing force.

Clark laughed. "Did you forget? I haven't even used Qi reinforcement yet!"

He immediately stood up, shattering Jin's technique, and said in a deadly tone, "You still have a long way to go, Jin."

Jin retorted, "Hehehe! Then try to dodge this barrage!"

A rapid series of attacks shot forth. Clark dodged continuously, but three strikes managed to pierce his shoulder, hand, and foot. Clark became a mass of wounds.

Jin landed in front of him, grabbing Clark by the hair. "See?! Didn't I tell you I surpass you in power, you fool?! Don't compare yourself to your elders!"

Clark replied, "Great! Up your ass... Time, stop!"

A powerful sound resonated, and time stopped. Clark had manipulated events to bring Jin close. He instantly landed a series of blows on Jin with his Dragon Authority and Qi-enhanced body. Then time resumed.

Jin suffered multiple fractures in his ribs, shoulder, and leg. He was sent flying by the force of the blows, not even fully comprehending what had hit him, and crashed to the ground.

Clark tried to advance to finish him, but his body had weakened, and he too collapsed on the ground.

To be continued...

Chapter 29: Do you believe in gravity? There is a way to reach heaven???

... Someone close the window, the sun is blinding!"

Clark sat up with a terrified face, bewildered by his surroundings. He wasn't here before; he was in the Imperial square!

He glanced at his body and found himself wearing pajamas and covered in bandages. He looked around the room again; he felt this wasn't any of the rooms in the Imperial Palace.

But the strangest thing for him was the woman clinging to his arm, fast asleep!

He quickly realized it was that Maria, but why was she attached to him like this?!

She soon opened her eyes and said:

·"So, you're awake!"

·"Yes, I'm awake! Where exactly am I?"

·"You're in the Blood Clan Tower, at the tri-border!!!"

Clark raised his voice, shocked:

·"What?! The border? How long was I unconscious???"

·"Two full days, unlike the other guy who woke up after ten hours!"

·"What? Explain everything in detail! What's the story with this place? And why were you sleeping next to me? Are you that bold?!"

·"Fine, I'll answer you. First, we are a clan of assassins, or more precisely, we've become one, and I aimed to kill the Emperor that night. Second, you were shivering violently in your sleep, so I warmed your body myself. Because I... well, let's just say the reason I brought you here is a private matter you'll learn later!"

·"Oh, I see! So why did you want to kill the Emperor?"

Clark didn't ask about her hidden secrets, preferring an indirect approach because he didn't care. It was actually good that he was near the border.

·"My reason is that he was the cause of my family's and my clan's annihilation, including my little brother. No one remained but me. His vile, habitual practice was to hire someone else to do all his dirty work. That was his way. So I wanted revenge desperately. But when I moved to act, I found him already dead! I was shocked and furious. That's when I encountered that Jin fellow and we fought!"

·"Oh, I see... Then why am I here?"

·"Because there's someone who wants you present!"

·"Who is this person?!"

·"Don't worry, you'll know soon enough!"

He quickly grabbed her by the shoulders, pressing hard:

·"Woman! I'm not playing riddle games with you! Don't hide anything from me!!!"

A bloody, transcendent Qi suddenly erupted from her. This was a stage that surpassed the King Stage! She surpassed him by a full stage! The aura of those at the Enlightenment Stage!

Clark quickly retreated, saying:

·"So you're stronger than me and Jin combined! Yet you chose to watch us fight it out, waiting for us to weaken each other instead of bothering to intervene! Isn't my analysis correct?!"

·"You're smart, you know when to retreat! Yes, you're right about that. I watched you two fight and waited for you to collapse from exhaustion!"

·"Hahahahaha! A woman's heart is truly a terrifying mystery!"

·"Well then! The person who wants you told me to give you a message, Clark: Do you believe in gravity? There is a way to reach the higher world!"

Clark was shocked, his face pale:

·"What do you mean?!"

·"Truthfully, I don't know what he meant! But you'll find your answer in the library. It's the best library in the world! The Blood Tower's library is even better than Dranglik's own!"

·"What do you want from me? And why should I do this?"

·"You want to know?! You ask too many questions! You lack foundation! Why don't you build a foundation instead of asking pointless questions with no purpose?!"

Clark grew intensely angry. He truly wanted to smash this woman's skull because of her arrogance, which infuriated him. But questions flooded his mind: What did she mean by gravity?

He suddenly remembered something important: In one of the texts from the Secrets of Heaven and Earth, there was a strange passage he thought was a poetic line written by the Venerable 'Great Love'. He sat on the bed, folding his arms, recalling the text. It was:

"Heaven and Earth brace between weights... The Earth is held by a colossal weight, Heaven is held by a colossal weight, but what if a phenomenon occurs that disrupts this balance? Gravity is what holds humans down so they don't ascend to Heaven!!"

Clark suddenly laughed, saying to Maria:

·"Truly interesting! You know many things, you say someone wants me, and that I'll find answers in the library! Well, well!"

Clark left, following a servant to the library. He asked the librarian for a map of the continent and a large number of books on physics and astronomy.

Clark read voraciously for two weeks, until his wounds had healed, devouring books until he concluded something:

The universe balances on gravity! Time only stops due to a physical disruption in spatial force, and spatial force is only disrupted if gravity is disrupted! Time and space all fall within the framework of gravity! There is a cosmic force system, but it's all just theories; the only certainty is gravity!

But indeed, there is a way to reach something greater: The immortal world, Heaven!!!

Let's start with simple things: $1+1=2$, basic axioms. But if we look closer, certain numbers hold stronger meanings, like 1, 3, 6, 9, and finally 0! Many rumors say these numbers represent something greater! Nothing exists without a reason, this is basic and known.

But if one creates a matrix with Runic magic...

Clark got a book and kept reading: "Runic magic, its magical circles utilize Runic numbers which are 1, 3, 6, 9! These numbers used to generate miraculous matrices. But no one uses Runic magic like that anymore, ever since the group called the Lunar Trinity was wiped out for discovering a secret; no one knows who killed them!"

Clark kept thinking, questions arising in his mind: There are cosmic black holes that swallow everything! So what if we create a cosmic phenomenon that generates a supernatural field that doesn't swallow but expels something?! A gateway to a new world!!!

That's what Clark said, but then he added: "But there's something powerful about gravity! It's written in books that compasses work in the nation of Lyon Heart but not in the nation of Qin! So there are repelling fields! There's a mystery in the universe!"

And Clark remembered something! He quickly read about Perfect Relativity. Clark said: "It's perfect! But what if we create something complete?! The matrix must be generated! A Zero man, meaning he is both the engine and the reactant! If we produce that, it will succeed! But there must be a weak polar field, with somewhat weak gravity! A grand phenomenon that only occurs in one place!"

"Let's simplify: Normally, an ordinary human can jump one to two meters! But what if there's a place where, due to a weak gravitational field, you could jump an extra meter and a half beyond your normal leap?! And that's a great secret!" Clark laughed. "Also, the flow of time would be stronger there if we activate the matrix!"

"There are forces in this universe described as infinite! If sunlight were reflected directly, a strange phenomenon would occur, generating a great cosmic light! It would generate immense power, like engines! Meaning: if the Sun is at the opposing point and the Moon at the other point, it creates a powerful magnetic field that could strip away gravity itself and weights! And likely, day and night would alternate at tremendous speed, but this light generates infinite power, power that can overturn the balance and achieve the impossible!"

"But one thing I need to know: Which nation sees the dawn first? And which nation sees the dusk first? It's the Gothic Nation! That's where the grand phenomenon will occur!!!"

"But if we calculate everything, the grand phenomenon will appear in five years! Yet one question troubles me: What if I can artificially create the grand event?! What if I manufacture everything myself? Would I accelerate everything and reach that state of completion that no one, not even the Venerables, has achieved?!"

"Then of course I don't need the Great Tree, or whatever its name is! You can stick it where the sun doesn't shine, you and your Great Tree! Keke ke!"

Suddenly, the voice of a strange man echoed, emerging from the shadows, saying:

·"You have reached a great point! But you are still far from absolute knowledge!!! Humans have always hated knowledge..."

To be continued...

Chapter 30: Great Shadow Temple!!!

Clark looked with terror... Not stupid or unfocused! How could someone get to him like this without him noticing!

Instinctively, he shouted with all his might: "Time, stop!!!"

He quickly drew his sword from its scabbard and threw it with full force.

He said: "When time resumes, this sword will pierce you! You won't even know what hit you!"

Five seconds passed. Time returned.

But that sword... as if it stopped right in front of the man's nose! Then bounced back forcefully to hit a bookshelf.

Clark was shocked! Nothing happened! Or did he block it?! As if some strange field prevented the man from being hit! The strike stopped before reaching him!

The strange man spoke, clapping his hands for Clark:

"Magnificent! So you have a strange ability! Or rather, time stop! My words are correct since you shouted it just now!"

Clark was stunned! The man analyzed him! Even gave him a lesson not to shout like an idiot with such technique!

But Clark was thinking something else: Stopping time truly is a supernatural ability beyond human imagination! Who could possibly stand against this power...

The mysterious man broke the silence:

"Your analysis is great, Mr. Clark... But you're mistaken about something else too. Your plan is great, even innovative... But do you know what great power will move the matrices?"

"Why should I answer that question?!"

"What's wrong with you, Mr. Clark?! I'm just a peaceful man! I didn't come to fight you! You lack flexibility in some matters! Let me tell you about a secret in life."

Clark looked at him bewildered: What is this strange man ranting about?

The man continued after taking out two cherries intertwined on a single soft branch:

"See this cherry? You might think its stem is soft, any stupid movement might drop it. Let me tell you - if I put it in my mouth, I'll break the stem! See? I swallowed the cherry and broke its stem! But what if I told you there's a way to take that cherry out intact?"

He put the cherry in his mouth.

Clark didn't understand what was happening.

Suddenly, a cracking sound!

"I broke it! Don't pretend to be wise!"

"You're actually wrong!"

The man took it out of his mouth - completely intact!

"See? I call it 'Flexibility'! The Still Water method! Most humans are impatient and harsh-tempered about the true understanding of the Heavenly Dao! Orthodox sect followers think just by doing good they'll reach great refinement - that's also wrong! They're hypocrites too! And the Demonic Path followers don't comprehend their path! The Demonic Path isn't just evil - it abandons wild desires to reach the supreme! The Dao! See? The word repeated! Doesn't that mean something to you?!"

"You mean the dilemma of good and evil?"

"Yes! Exactly! That's what I mean! In one story, there were two brothers: one kind, the other with a corrupted heart! The evil brother fought his good brother to marry his brother's wife! His corrupted heart urged him to kill his brother... and he got the woman he wanted! Do you know what he did???"

"Killed his brother, right??"

"Exactly! Killed his brother! But couldn't bear it! Overwhelming guilt! Similarly, humans commit bad deeds boldly without thinking... then guilt comes! Not before, but after! But the Demonic Path initially said: 'We shouldn't think about guilt! Kill! Steal! Rape! Do everything!' Don't you have a goal???" Then that justifies your desire! The end justifies the means! Doesn't matter if you break a little girl's heart over losing her mother, or steal orphans' money, or rape a poor virgin! Just to satisfy your desire! But that's also somewhat misunderstood! Because the actual path, rather both sides of evil, tells us to abandon worldly desires to reach the peak! More precisely: Immortality!"

Clark laughed:

"Yes! Your words are correct! Evil brings good, good brings evil! Let me answer that: You might think evil is a bad idea, but it comes from tyranny! The 'good' people convince you with refined meanings and hypocritical actions! They violate, steal, kill! But what's the exact goal? Yin and Yang are parallel! Good balances evil, evil balances good! Both are two sides of the same coin! The 'good' people get contaminated by their refined meanings!"

"Well done, Clark! You understood my point! But the question: Who are you???"

"Who am I??? What a question! And funny! Isn't it obvious?! I'm a man walking the path of uniqueness! Only my footsteps exist on the golden sands! A man who preferred his solitude over the world's unimportant refined meanings!"

"Your answer is wonderful! But your heart is unbalanced, if I may say! You're cowardly! Just now, you were so scared of me you didn't hear any of my words! Mr. Clark, you fear death! Isn't that correct?! And you walk a dangerous path - why walk a path you know contains death?! Answer me!"

Clark laughed like a madman, his eyes turning bloody:

"I fear death?! Who do you think you are to believe that?! I'm a great emperor! I walk with great power and great purpose too! Maybe I'm a secondary character in a huge world full of powerful beings, but my heart never hesitated! All people think just sitting on their thrones, no man will come to defeat them and spill their blood! I'll prove I'm not weak or cowardly! I'll prove with these two hands the extent of my development! I don't know what I lived before, but this is my starting point, and this is what I care about!!!"

"Your answer is truly interesting! But I'll prove the extent of your fear of death!"

Clark didn't notice the insane speed at which things moved! With insane speed, he received a powerful blow that shattered several vertebrae, multiple rib fractures, and crushed the cartilage bone in his leg!

Clark screamed: "Time! Stop!"

For the first time, Clark felt fear! He felt his life was in danger!

Bleeding profusely, Clark looked at the strange creature beside the strange man! White-colored, wearing a bone mask! As if flying without touching the ground! Long hair, white eyes! Its gaze alone made Clark lose hope!

He asked himself this question: Will I die... Suddenly time returned!

Clark said:

"Is death really this terrifying?! So many emotions flooded through me: Fear, horror, tingling throughout my entire body!"

The strange man laughed:

"That's what I wanted to convey to you, Clark! This is real fear! Something you don't wish to experience again! We all speak strong, poetic words, but in critical moments, all elaborate plans collapse! Courage, dignity, prestige! All fall before fear! Let me tell you: Ultimately, all smart plans fall before absolute power! So sometimes, be a dog that licks feet! Nobody wants to run over a stupid dog that only thinks about licking feet! You might think it's a humiliating image, but maybe this is the dog watching from afar, waiting for the opportunity it will seize... and obtain the great bone!!!"

Clark was shocked by his words! Truly, this strange man is wise!

"What is this strange thing you just brought out to attack me?!"

"You mean this?! It's called 'Living Embodiment of Asteroid Blessing'! Few humans managed to communicate with asteroids to obtain such blessing! And luckily for you, you're one of them! One of them bestowed this upon you! 'World Planet'! Ruler of time itself blessed you! They say World Planet was human and reached ascension... until a powerful opponent came! Thought he was World Planet's equal! But World Planet laughed in that man's face saying: 'What's the use of speed if I can stop time itself?! What's your use if you can skip seconds of time, while I can stop time itself?!' So nobody could stop him! Just with his punch's power he could crush everyone! Wasn't supported by any planet - he ascended to the constellations and surpassed them! And you, Clark, among all humans, World Planet supported you!"

Clark laughed:

"So... you mean I was born with kingly qualities?!"

"Exactly! Let me undertake the task of guiding you, Mr. Clark! I promise you won't regret it!"

Clark nodded in agreement.

"Now we can depart! Our destination will be difficult, Clark, and exhausting! Are you ready for it?!"

Clark replied:

"Of course I'm ready! But... can you carry me or bring a cane or something so I can stand on my feet?!"

"Of course not! Crawl on your feet! You experienced the fear of death - that's good for you! Now I'll refine you from the soles of your feet to your big head! And that's good, believe me! You need to know hardship! Someday, you'll meet powerful enemies! Maybe you'll crawl on your feet to escape! So you need to feel suffering! Pity, emotions! You might think they're unimportant, but you can refine yourself to reach a stage of indifference! Become like still, manipulative water! Manipulate emotional currents among humans! That's what will distinguish you!"

Clark nodded and started crawling behind the man.

They left the library and headed deep into the forest.

Clark kept crawling behind him...

Until the Master spoke:

"Listen, Clark! You need to understand something: Your plan is great! But have you thought about the genesis of the great matrix?! And how will you learn Runic magic?!"

"Of course I thought! The great beam coming from the moon and sun will be the generator of the great power! So I thought: If that great power descends, who can withstand and absorb it, for hell's sake?! But I learned the matrix I'll create isn't trivial, but truly powerful! Can withstand and harness the force waves! And that will generate the great cosmic acceleration! The universe might contract and destroy! Because, as you know, Earth moves slowly! Because if Earth moved at light speed, Earth and the universe itself couldn't withstand that speed! Because what will accelerate in rotation are three centers: Earth, Sun, and Moon! Making the timeline contract and destroy!"

"Why would you do that?!"

"Why?! Good question! Of course I'll do it to reach the new world where I'll achieve great ascension! You might say: 'So you'll sacrifice humanity arbitrarily!' Maybe I'm insane! But my goal is salvation for humanity and for myself in that gap I can reach! In the new universe, they might live happy lives with loved ones! While I achieve my goal! Knowledge is a great weapon before power! We don't fear the powerfully strong, we fear the knowledgeable who might lead to death! Besides, humans won't disappear or anything! Rather, as you say, the universe will be reset but differently! They'll know their destinies! They'll know everything! Isn't there great wisdom in that?!"

The Master pushed some branches aside, saying:

"Your thinking is great, Clark! You amazed me! But we've actually arrived!"

Clark saw a great cave, like a mirror reflection! Clark didn't understand.

But suddenly the Master raised two fingers and started muttering strange words!

The strange image dissipated, revealing a great staircase leading downward!

Clark asked: "What did you do?!"

"This is the Runic magic you read about! But this is great magic few know! Called 'Ghost Shadow'! The great ancient cults used it! But half of ancient humanity's knowledge perished, leaving only a small piece like a small breadcrumb!"

Clark started crawling painfully down the stairs behind the Master...

Until they reached a strange place, like an underground city temple!

Clark asked: "Where are we???"

The Master replied: "Welcome, Clark, to the Great Shadow Temple!!!"

To be continued...