An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2701

“You guys go first. Follow the stone path and don’t stop,” Dustin commanded in a low voice. Realizing that defense was no longer an option, he withdrew the disk of light and charged forward instead of retreating. His body shot ahead like a flash of cyan light toward the storm of light beams.

His longsword sang as it left the sheath, a sharp, resonant note that cut through the roar. With a flick of his wrist, a torrent of sword light burst forth, forming a rippling cyan barrier in front of him.

The beams struck the barrier in a deafening rhythm of metal and thunder, each impact exploding in blinding flashes.

Most of the attacks shattered against the barrier, but a few slipped through. They slammed into the lake behind him, sending up columns of crimson water and cracking a section of the stone path underfoot.

Rhydian and the others watched with their hearts in their throats, but none dared slow down. Bracing himself against the trembling ground, he shielded Grace, Judith, and Cyprian as they sprinted ahead.

“Trying to run? Did you ask for my permission?” Thymaleon asked with a contemptuous snort.

His figure blurred and vanished from his spot. He materialized before them in the next instant, blocking their path.

He raised his sword finger, and a sharp white arc of energy blade shot forth. The attack carried the power to tear through anything in its path, aiming toward Rhydian in the lead.

The strike came as fast as lightning, and Rhydian had no time to react. At that critical moment, a streak of cyan sword aura appeared before him out of nowhere, striking the energy arc’s flat side. The collision detonated with a thunderous boom.

The energy blade veered off course, grazing past Rhydian and carving a deep trench through the lake behind him that stretched for hundreds of feet.

Dustin appeared beside him, sword in hand, confronting Thymaleon head-on. His breathing was slightly irregular as he had taken the brunt of several hits from that energy blade while saving Rhydian.

“Your opponent is me,” Dustin said, his gaze locked onto Thymaleon, his voice calm yet edged with iron resolve.

“Fine. I’ll kill you first, then deal with those small fries later,” Thymaleon spat, his eyes flashing with murderous intent.

As he clasped his palms together, the white energy and crimson bloodlines around his body intertwined and compressed wildly into a sphere of raw destruction between his palms.

“Annihilation Wave!” he roared.

Thrusting both palms forward, he hurled the sphere-a horrifying amalgam of white and red churning with destructive power-straight at Dustin.

Like a falling meteor, its momentum was ready to crush everything in its path. Light vanished in its wake, and the air around it warped and screamed in protest.

The strike contained all the strength Thymaleon had gained after consuming the Dragonblood Renewal Pill, combined with the dragon blood malevolent energy he had channeled. Its impact could have leveled a mountain.

Dustin’s eyes narrowed, his expression hardening as he braced for the incoming strike. He knew he couldn’t afford to hold back. The mystical pure energy in his body surged and circulated at unprecedented speed, channeling entirely into his longsword.

The blade trembled and hummed, its cyan light blazing brighter. At the tip, a point of ultimate darkness that seemed capable of devouring all light began to condense and compress.

He raised his sword in a slow, deliberate motion that drew in and commanded the very flow of energy surrounding him. The point of darkness expanded rapidly and transformed into a miniature, slowly rotating black hole suspended before the sword’s tip.

“Mystical Void Return,” Dustin said in a low voice.

His longsword, tipped with the miniature black hole, thrust straight toward the amalgam of white and red annihilation sphere.

There was no earth-shattering explosion, nor any blinding eruption of light. The moment the two powers met, time itself seemed to freeze for an instant. In the next second, a silent yet even more heart-palpitating devouring force erupted from the black hole.

The annihilation sphere, powerful enough to level mountains, began to twist and collapse. Its raging energy was violently pulled, torn apart, and then devoured by the black hole. Within seconds, the sphere dimmed and shrank before disappearing entirely.

The arrogant smirk on Thymaleon's face instantly stiffened, replaced by shock and disbelief.

"No!" he cried. "That's impossible. What kind of strength is this? How can it devour dragon's malevolent energy?"

He desperately channeled every ounce of his strength into stabilizing the annihilation sphere, but it was like trying to hold back the tide with his bare hands. The sphere was being swallowed, and there was nothing he could do to stop it.

Within three seconds, that terrifying annihilation sphere was completely consumed by the black hole at Dustin's sword tip and vanished without a trace. All that remained was the slowly rotating black hole, radiating a soul-chilling energy wave.

Dustin's face paled from the effort of channeling the Mystical Void Return technique. Yet, the hand holding his sword remained perfectly steady. The swirling black hole was aimed straight at Thymaleon, as if the next thing to be swallowed would be him.

Staring into that infinite darkness, Thymaleon could feel the core concept of oblivion it embodied. A fear rising from the depths of his soul finally overwhelmed his arrogance and rage.

Even after taking the Dragonblood Renewal Pill and gaining unimaginable strength, the seemingly ordinary Dustin possessed abilities he could neither comprehend nor contend with.

"You... Who the heck are you?" he rasped, trembling in a way he didn't notice.

Dustin said nothing Seeing him slowly raising the tip of his sword, panic flashed across Thymaleon's face. He abandoned all pretense of dignity and mission, staggering back in a desperate retreat.

In an instant, he became a streak of white light, racing from the heart of Vitalis Pool without daring to look back. A final roar, raw with fury and hatred, echoed across the lake long after he vanished.

"This isn't over, Dustin. Elysium Isle will be your burial ground."

With the formidable enemy retreating, the crisis was temporarily averted. Dustin slowly lowered his sword, the black hole at its tip fading into nothing. He drew a sharp breath to steady the turbulent energies within his body.

Though he had once again driven back Thymaleon, the victory had come at a cost. The final use of Mystical Void Return had nearly drained half his true energy.

Grace and the others finally snapped out of their extreme shock and quickly gathered around him.

“Dustin, are you alright?” Grace asked, concern etched across her face. Seeing his ashen complexion, she felt both relief and worry.

“I’m fine,” he replied, shaking his head. His gaze turned toward the direction Thymaleon had fled, then at the lake water still churning with crimson malevolent energy, and the endless path before them.

Though Thymaleon had retreated, hidden dangers remained. He was sure that the next enemy to come would be much stronger.

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Chapter 2702

“Let’s move. We shouldn’t linger here,” Dustin said. He took the lead, stepping onto the slippery and dilapidated path with steady strides.

However, Grace could sense that the energy waves surrounding him had become even more restrained than before. It was as if he were accumulating strength to face whatever unknown challenges lay ahead.

The group followed in silence, the atmosphere thick and suffocating Rhydian and the other two guards gripped their weapons tightly. Their eyes scanned the churning crimson lake, alert for anything that might surge from the depths.

Judith supported Cyprian, whose condition was worsening by the minute. The corrosive effects of the dragon blood malevolent energy were causing his remaining vital energy to drain away. His eyes were beginning to lose focus.

As they ventured deeper, the surrounding scenery began to change in disturbing ways.

The once clearly demarcated boundary between the deep blue lake waters and the corrupted crimson zone started to blur. The two hues now bled into each other like swirling oil paints, forming an unsettling sight.

The spiritual and malevolent energies in the air had also completely merged, growing violent and chaotic.

Even more unsettling was that everyone began to feel an invisible yet omnipresent pressure. It wasn’t coming from any enemy, but from the very space around them.

The first abnormality was gravity. One moment, everyone felt their bodies grow heavy, as if carrying a thousand-pound burden. Each step became agonizingly difficult, and the stone path beneath their feet seemed to bend downward under the weight.

The next moment, the crushing weight vanished, replaced by a faint upward pull that almost sent them floating off the path. They had to circulate their internal energy with all their strength just to stay grounded.

The fluctuation in gravity was completely unpredictable-heavy one moment, weightless the next. The constant changes.

drained their physical and mental strength.

“Stay calm. Regulate your breathing and adapt to the changes.”

Dustin’s voice cut through the chaos, steadying their nerves. An invisible force field seemed to surround him. It weakened most of the chaotic gravity, but he still had to stay focused to counter it.

However, their trials were far from over. Soon after, the space around them began to warp subtly. The path ahead looked straight, but one wrong step could leave them off course, nearly falling into the lake

Objects in their vision would stretch at times and compress at others, and even the transmission of light became strange, inducing intense vertigo.

“It’s spatial distortion,” Grace said, her face turning pale.

She focused on using her spiritual energy to sense the true currents of the space around her. But the chaotic energy twisted and churned her divine sense like a violent whirlpool, scattering it in every direction.

One of the guards tried to slash through an area that looked particularly warped. His blade cut through, but it felt like slicing into thick jelly. Not only did the strike slow down, but the blade itself bent slightly. Startled, he quickly withdrew his weapon.

And this was only the beginning. The further they proceeded, the more chaotic the laws of space became. Invisible spatial rifts appeared without warning, like transparent blades, slicing through everything in their path.

One guard couldn’t dodge in time. When a rift grazed the edge of his clothing, it instantly disintegrated into dust, leaving him drenched in cold sweat

At the same time, turbulent elemental energy would erupt. Ghostly blue cold flames suddenly ignited on the left side, while thick ice walls instantly formed on the right. Fire and ice intertwined in a deeply unnatural display.

Occasionally, fragmented illusions from unknown sources would intrude into everyone's minds, disrupting their perception of reality.

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Chapter 2703

The area felt like a dead zone where the laws of reality itself had broken down. It was a place where even the natural order turned hostile.

Cyprian, already weak and missing an arm, could no longer hold on. When the gravity suddenly doubled, his already weakened body could no longer maintain balance.

Combined with the horrifying illusions constantly flashing through his mind, his foot slipped. He cried out as he fell toward the lake filled with spatial rifts.

"Cyprian!" Judith shouted, lunging to grab him, but a chaotic gust of warped air threw her back. Just as he was about to plunge into certain death, a figure in blue appeared beside him like a ghost.

Dustin grabbed the back of Cyprian's collar with one hand. With the other, he formed a sword finger and traced several swift motions toward a seemingly calm area ahead that actually concealed densely packed spatial rifts.

A low hum resonated as a strange ripple of energy spread outward. The twisted space seemed to flatten as if an invisible hand had pressed it smooth.

Dustin seized the fleeting moment and grabbed Cyprian. Their form flickered several times as they wove through a hail of invisible spatial blades and a sudden geyser of corrosive energy. At last, they landed safely on the path.

Cyprian collapsed on the ground, gasping for breath. His face was pale with terror from his brush with death. The others were also drenched in cold sweat

Dustin set Cyprian down, his expression even grimmer than before. He surveyed the bizarre, perilous scene around him and spoke in a low, steady voice.

"We've reached the heart of the sealing rift's influence. The Void-Tyrant Dragon's power has corrupted the natural laws here, creating this Chaotic Realm. Every step could be a trap, so we must not rely on logic and reason."

He looked at the shaken group, especially at Rhydian, whose internal energy was nearly drained, and his pallid face, as well as the two other guards. He then looked at Cyprian, in his weakened state, and at Judith, whose cultivation was weaker than the others.

“Stay close behind me,” Dustin said firmly.

“Don’t use your divine sense rashly, and try to restrain your energy waves as much as possible to reduce conflict with the chaotic energy.”

The journey ahead grew more treacherous with every step.

Dustin led the way, his eyes glowing faintly with blue-gold light. He didn’t rely solely on divine sense. Instead, he reached out to feel the twisted patterns of energy in the Chaotic Realm and sense the laws of this place as though he were touching the currents of a stormy river.

Sometimes he would stop and signal everyone to hold their breath and stay completely still, waiting for a turbulent energy current ahead to settle.

Other times, he would suddenly change direction, stepping into what looked like an empty void that was actually the only safe path through the distorted space. With perfectly controlled strength, he would shatter nascent spatial rifts before they could fully form.

He was like a helmsman steering through a storm, guided by senses beyond the physical and a deep understanding of the natural laws of this realm.

Grace and the others followed closely behind him. They stepped in each of Dustin’s footprints without daring to make a single misstep.

His figure was not particularly large from behind, yet it looked as though it could bear the weight of this entire chaotic realm. Their awe deepened. This wasn’t just a difference in strength but a gap in mastery, a level far beyond their own.

Within this domain of chaotic laws, even the concept of time had become blurred. No one knew how long they’d been walking. It might have been 15 minutes or an hour. Their bodies ached, and their strength was fading, but sheer will kept them moving.

Suddenly, the despairing twisted scenery ahead began to weaken. Colors gradually returned to normal, and the chaotic gravity and spatial fluctuations grew calmer.

A purer, vast energy swept over them. It still carried a faint, almost imperceptible trace of malevolence, but in every other way it was calm and full of life. They had finally made it through the dead zone.

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Chapter 2704

After passing through the dead zone, a breathtaking sight unfolded before them. At the end of the path lay an enormous circular platform constructed from white stone.

The platform floated above the waters of the Vitalis Pool. It was surrounded by swirling clouds and mist, with spiritual energy condensing in the air like rain. At its center was a spring no more than ten feet wide.

What flowed from this spring was not ordinary lake water, but concentrated spiritual liquid so rich it couldn't dissolve and shimmered with seven-colored radiance. It turned out this was the source of the pure vitality and spiritual energy.

The moment they crossed through the Chaos Realm and stepped onto the platform, the pure spiritual energy brought no relief. Instead, a pressure heavier and more terrifying than Thymaleon's, or the chaotic laws themselves, pressed down on them like a mountain.

At the center of the platform, the spring still shimmered with seven-colored spiritual liquid. Above it, the seal's crack hung open like a bleeding wound with crimson malevolent energy dripping in thin streams. Between the spring and the crack stood a towering figure.

He wore a dark battle robe embroidered with faint gold, and his frame was as imposing as a mountain. His mere presence felt like the immovable pillar anchoring the core of the Vitalis Pool, like a demon guarding the gates of hell itself.

His face was stern and handsome. But within those profound eyes lay an unyielding coldness and an absolute indifference that viewed all living beings as insects.

He was Malthor, chief of the Elysium Isle guardians.

His gaze swept over the battered group, taking in their exhaustion and nearly depleted internal energy. It lingered briefly on the faint royal providence surrounding Grace with a trace of barely perceptible disgust before settling on Dustin like a predator locking onto its prey.

"This is no place for vermin like you," Malthor said.

His voice was calm and low, yet it carried a strange resonance from the laws of the universe. Every word struck their minds like a hammer, rattling their very souls.

Rhydian and the two guards groaned as blood trickled from the corners of their mouths, their knees threatening to buckle.

Grace and Judith trembled as their faces drained of color.

Only Dustin remained unshaken, standing tall like a pine tree. It was the invisible sword aura flowing around him that quietly pushed back that terrifying pressure.

He met Malthor's gaze, calm and unflinching. "Is Elysium Isle your private property? We came only to seize the one chance to save a life that hangs in the balance. We mean no disrespect."

"Save a life?" Malthor sneered. "Set foot here, and you walk straight into death. Your flesh and souls exist only to fuel the revival of the Dragon Lord. That alone is the greatest honor you insects could hope for."

He didn't give Grace a chance to plead, as if their purpose and their struggle meant nothing to him.

His gaze fixed on Dustin as he added, " Especially you. Your body and your soul possess considerable power. You'll be the perfect candidate for a puppet vessel. Once refined, you will become a formidable Dragon Puppet warrior."

Malthor remained perfectly still. He raised his left hand casually, fingers flicking as if plucking invisible strings, and quickly formed an ancient, unsettling hand seal in the air.

As soon as the seal was formed, the dense, almost impenetrable spiritual energy around the spring erupted, mixing with the dragon blood malevolent energy. They twisted and surged together, boiling violently.

A low, throbbing hum rolled through the air, and the very space itself seemed to groan under the strain.

Four crimson pillars of light, mixed with seven-colored spiritual liquid, shot skyward from around the spring. Within each pillar, a humanoid silhouette slowly condensed and took form before crashing down to the ground, blocking the path between Dustin's group and Malthor

Four humanoid puppets stood before them. Their height matched that of ordinary people, and their bodies displayed a dull metallic luster. Yet their surfaces were covered with crimson patterns that pulsed and flowed like the veins of living beings.

Their heads were smooth, featureless, with only two flickering points of scarlet light for eyes that radiated violent, destructive intent.

A heavy, deathly energy wave radiated from them, laced with the dragon blood malevolent energy, and the strange, pulsating vitality of the Vitalis Pool. The mixture of energies created an extremely contradictory and terrifying presence.

Their razor-sharp claws gleamed with a predatory, metallic coldness, and each puppet emitted energy fluctuations no weaker than Thymaleon after he had consumed the Dragonblood Renewal Pill.

Moreover, their energy waves shared the same source and resonated with one another. It was vaguely forming a killing formation that completely sealed off every escape route for Dustin and the others.

“These are my Dragonblood Battle Puppets, refined from the corpses of fallen cultivators, supplemented with dragon blood malevolent energy and Vitalis Pool spiritual liquid,” Malthor said, his voice cold and flat, as if introducing several insignificant creations.

He added, “They possess an undying will to fight and a portion of the power granted by the Void-Tyrant Dragon.”

He looked down upon Grace and the others, whose expressions had now paled. His gaze finally settled on Dustin, with detached indifference, as if granting a favor.

“Should you manage to defeat them...” he said, “You might just earn a sliver of a chance to glimpse the true secret of immortality that lies within Elysium Isle.”

With that, Malthor’s figure, along with the crushing pressure that accompanied him, dissolved like a mirage.

In a flash of dark golden light, he shot toward the central seal on the platform and vanished into the seal’s crack, as if he were never there. His departure was even more abrupt and unsettling than his arrival.

The four Dragonblood Battle Puppets he left behind had their scarlet eyes fixed on Dustin like a predator. A tidal wave of palpable, violent intent crashed down, inundating the entire stone platform.

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Chapter 2705

“Take your positions and protect the princess!” Rhydian gritted his teeth against the searing pain clawing at his mind and let out a raw, guttural roar.

He and the two other guards summoned the last reserves of their internal energy to form a makeshift triangular defensive formation, shielding Grace, Judith, and the dying Cyprian behind them.

But they all knew that before these four terrifying puppets, their defense was as flimsy as paper. Still, the fight could erupt at any moment.

Deep within Elysium Isle, the opulent palace remained untouched by the chaos outside. Wine and meat flowed freely, and the decadent music never stopped playing.

Malthor's figure appeared silently on his enormous white recliner, as if he had never left at all. Lysander stopped playing his lap harp and asked with a smile, "Malthor, you're back?

Talmor and Valindra also turned their gazes toward him. Malthor ignored them. He merely reclined lazily, casually accepting the wine offered by a woman at his side. However, his gaze was fixed on the center of the hall.

A massive mirror, rippling like water, suddenly appeared in the empty air. Through its surface, the white stone platform at the heart of the Vitalis Pool came into view. Dustin stood there as he prepared to fight, and the four Dragonblood Battle Puppets glowed with menacing energy.

"Oh? So that's the punk who defeated Thymaleon and even broke through the Mirage's illusion?" Talmor asked, sitting up with newfound interest and staring at the water mirror.

Valindra covered her mouth and chuckled, her eyes sparkling with mischief. "He does have rather handsome features. I wonder how many moves he can last under Malthor's Dragonblood Battle Puppets? Wouldn't it be dreadfully boring if he got torn to shreds right away?"

Lysander plucked a teasing note from his lap harp. "To force Malthor into deploying all four battle puppets is no small feat. Let's see what supreme divine power this punk possesses."

Malthor slowly sipped his wine. His indifferent gaze stared at Dustin in the water mirror, as though watching an impending gladiatorial match.

On the white stone platform, Dustin faced four Dragonblood Battle Puppets whose energy waves were interconnected and radiating a deadly pressure. He knew any attempt at testing their strength would be pointless.

He drew a deep breath, and his nearly exhausted mystical pure energy circulated at a frantic, desperate pace inside his body. The sword aura around him was no longer restrained but shot skyward like an unsheathed divine weapon

A roar split the air as Dustin's sword aura seemed to provoke the four puppets. At the same time, they also unleashed an inhuman roar.

They transformed into four dark crimson afterimages, charging at Dustin from four separate directions with devastating momentum that could rip through anything in their path.

They moved with astonishing speed. Each swipe of their claws tore through the air, leaving subtle distortions in space.

Dustin's eyes narrowed. He advanced rather than retreating. His longsword released a resounding dragon's cry as the blade glowed with a brilliant cyan.

"Cyan Blade Vortex!" he shouted. With him as the epicenter, countless dense yet razor-sharp cyan sword auras erupted outward in an instant. They formed a blade field spanning dozens of feet in diameter Within the field, sword auras crisscrossed in an impenetrable web

The four puppets charged into the blade field. Their claws collided violently with the sword auras, producing a relentless cacophony like metal hammered in a storm.

Sparks flew in all directions, and the sword auras splintered. Yet the puppets' bodies were unbelievably tough. Even the cyan sword auras could only leave faint white scratches and failed to break through their defenses.

However, the dragon blood malevolent energy coursing through their claws continuously corroded and tainted the sword aura, disrupting the flow of the entire blade field.

"Such a tough shell," Talmor commented, raising an eyebrow as he watched the scene in the water mirror.

Valindra chuckled and said, "Of course. Malthor refined them personally. They've been tempered by dragon blood malevolent energy and Vitalis Pool's spiritual liquid for years. How could ordinary sword auras harm them?"

On the platform, Dustin was also aware of the puppets' toughness. He changed his approach, abandoning the wide, sweeping attacks.

His form became a blur as he weaved through the onslaught of the four battle puppets. Then, his longsword became a concentrated streak of cyan lightning Each thrust, jab, flick, and slash struck precisely at the puppets' joints, eye sockets, and other vulnerable points.

"Mystical Barrier Breaker!"

A pinpoint of piercing mystical light condensed at the sword tip, specifically targeting that dense dragon blood malevolent energy.

One puppet's eye socket was struck by sword light. That scarlet glow suddenly dimmed, and the puppet's movements instantly froze. But the attacks of the other three puppets were already upon him from behind.

Dustin didn't even turn around, as if he had eyes on the back of his head. With a backhanded sweep, his sword traced an arc.

"Seamless Revolution!"

A flawless, sweeping arc of condensed sword aura shot out and deflected all three puppets' claws. But the tremendous force shook him, disrupting his internal energy flow and forcing him back several steps.

The battle instantly reached fever pitch. He pushed his footwork, swordplay, and mastery of mystical pure energy to the absolute limit. Amid the four puppets' hurricane-like assault, he rolled, twisted, and shifted through the narrow gaps between attacks.

Sword light and the crimson afterimages collided and intertwined in a deadly dance, each strike erupting in continuous thunderous booms. Even the entire white stone platform shook violently.

The dispersing energy shockwaves hammered into Rhydian and the others, forcing them back step after step until they could barely keep their footing.

Meanwhile, Malthor remained expressionless as he drank his wine while watching the fighting scene on the water mirror.

Lysander's fingers danced faster across the strings of his lap harp, the tempo quickening as if drawn in by the battle. Even Talmor and Valindra's amusement faded as they watched intently.

"This punk's swordsmanship is divinely skilled, and his footwork techniques are even more profound. Even his mastery of strength has reached a state of perfection, "Talmor commented.

He went on, "If not for his depleted internal energy and the extraordinary nature of these battle puppets' bodies, he would likely have already destroyed every one of them by now."

Valindra nodded and chimed in, "

Unfortunately, mortals' strength has its limits. His true energy is nearly spent, while the Dragonblood Battle Puppets' strength is nearly inexhaustible. If this drags on, his defeat is inevitable."

After a particularly brutal exchange, blood finally trickled from the corner of Dustin's mouth. His energy flow had become visibly erratic.

The four battle puppets seemed to sense their prey weakening. Their attacks became even more frenzied and savage. Dark crimson malevolent energy blazed across their bodies like hellfire, intensifying their assault by another 30%.

A sharp glint flashed in Dustin's eyes as he knew the time for holding back was over. Planting his longsword firmly in the white stone floor, he formed intricate, almost imperceptible hand seals before his chest.

A vast, ancient power began to swirl around him, as though he were drawing on the rotation of the stars themselves. He was about to unleash his ultimate technique.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2706

The longsword planted before Dustin hummed incessantly as he formed hand seals. His movements were so fast they blurred into afterimages.

The mystical pure energy around him, which had dimmed during the fierce battle, didn't falter. Instead, it now roared to life with even greater depth and restraint, resonating with the fundamental laws of creation itself.

Dustin no longer relied on his own internal energy but had become one with the cosmic order. "By the Celestial Host Judgement, I command you! Mystical Seal, lock away this evil!"

His voice rang low but commanding, each word carrying the weight of divine decree. As the final word left his lips, the longsword planted in the ground erupted with dazzling cyan radiance that shot straight into the sky.

The battle puppets let out pained, defiant roars. The pulsing crimson patterns on their surfaces flashed frantically, attempting to resist the stellar sealing power.

They lashed out with their claws, shredding the starlight piece by piece. Crimson malevolent energy and cyan starlight collided violently, annihilating each other in deafening explosions.

However, the Celestial Host Judgement was one of Dustin's ultimate techniques. It drew upon the magnificent power of the Cosmic Mandate itself and was most effective against such evil and sinister entities.

No matter how the puppets struggled, those seemingly delicate yet incredibly resilient starlight chains continued layering around them. Countless profound sealing runes branded themselves like hot iron deep into their seemingly indestructible shells.

Their movements slowed, while their roars faded to weak rasps, and the dark crimson glow of their bodies dimmed rapidly.

Ghostly outlines of the Celestial Host began to shimmer in the void above the platform, which had long been cloaked in the spiritual mist of Vitalis Pool and the malevolent energy of the sealing rift.

The vast, ancient, and majestic stellar power pierced through spatial barriers. It was drawn down by Dustin's supreme divine power and merged seamlessly with his mystical pure energy

The four Dragonblood Battle Puppets that had been charging forward madly seemed to sense the arrival of a natural predator. Their scarlet eyes flashed wildly as they roared with fear, their charging momentum faltering.

"Descend now!" Dustin shouted, pointing his sword finger toward the ground.

Endless streams of cyan starlight, intertwined with runes of refined mystical energy, poured down like a cascading galaxy. It coalesced into a net of the Cosmic Mandate, instantly engulfing the four puppets.

Finally, with a reluctant cry like shattering porcelain, all four Dragonblood Battle Puppets froze completely in place.

Countless starlight chains bound them into four massive cyan cocoons, runes flowing endlessly across their surfaces.

They could no longer move. Only two points of scarlet light flickered weakly within the cocoons, seething with endless malice and resentment.

The violent energy fluctuations on the platform suddenly subsided. Only the afterglow of starlight remained, slowly fading away

Dustin's body swayed as he coughed up blood. His face turned pale, and his internal energy depleted to the extreme.

The consecutive fierce exchanges, especially forcibly executing this Celestial Host Judgement technique beyond his own limits, had nearly drained all his true energy and mental focus. He leaned on his sword just to stay standing.

"Dustin!" Grace cried, rushing forward to support him. Her eyes were full of worry and pain.

Rhydian and the others also breathed sighs of relief. They felt both the joy of surviving disaster and even deeper awe toward Dustin.

Silence reigned inside the palace before the water mirror. The decadent music had long since stopped playing. The men and women indulging themselves had unconsciously ceased their activities

Instead, they stared in disbelief at the four battle puppets sealed by starlight in the water mirror, and at that man in white who, though swaying, still stood upright.

Lysander’s hands froze midair over his harp strings, while Talmor just held his wine cup, forgetting to drink.

Valindra slowly lowered her hand from covering her mouth, her eyes filled with disbelief.

“The Celestial Host Judgement technique? “Talmor muttered. “He can actually draw upon stellar power? That punk... What exactly is his origin?”

Valindra took a deep breath, suppressing the turmoil in her heart as her gaze became incredibly fervent. “Such pure strength and a formidable sealing technique. If we could obtain his essence and merge it into ourselves, how wonderful that would be.”

Malthor, who had been lounging lazily on his recliner all this time, slowly sat upright. For the first time, clear emotion crossed his face that had remained cold and impassive for ten thousand years.

He stared at Dustin in the water mirror, watching him gasp for breath while working to steady his disrupted energy flow Surprise flashed in his eyes, then a calculating assessment. But what dominated was raw possessive desire that was reserved for discovering an irreplaceable treasure

“This kid has surpassed mortal limits and can draw power from the Cosmic Mandate. He is no longer just a martial artist but is approaching true transcendence.”

Malthor’s voice was low, carrying a hint of excitement even he hadn’t noticed.

“He... He is qualified to step into our realm, ” he said, setting his wine glass with a flash of determination crossing his eyes. ”

Pass the order and open the Immortal Reception Bridge and invite him into the hall.”

On the white stone platform, Dustin had just taken the most precious healing tablet Grace had given him. It was salvaged from the cave supplies left by the previous traveller. He barely managed to suppress the turbulent internal energy surging within his body.

Suddenly, the empty void ahead rippled with a strange, shimmering disturbance. A seven-colored-hued streak of light shot up from the spring at the heart of the Vitalis Pool.

It twisted and coalesced in midair, stretching outward to form a radiant bridge of pure energy, arching across the void like a shimmering rainbow. The other end of the bridge disappeared into the void at the far edge of the platform, as if it led to another world.

The dense, pure spiritual energy was far superior to the place they were standing. Yet it carried the same source of temptation as the dragon blood malevolent energy, which rushed forth from the bridge’s far end.

Simultaneously, a grand yet indifferent voice transmitted clearly through the rainbow bridge into Dustin and Grace's ears.

"The Immortal Reception Bridge has opened. Honored guests, please enter the hall for a chat."

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Chapter 2707

The sudden turn of events left Grace, Rhydian, and the others exchanging bewildered glances. They couldn't tell if the invitation was a blessing or a curse.

After taking a moment to circulate his internal energy, some color returned to Dustin's pale face. He stared intently at the rainbow bridge, its enticing glow hiding something unknown.

His eyes were sharp, measuring every detail. He could sense that Malthor and the others were waiting for him at the far end, inside that lavish palace.

"It seems we can't uncover the secrets of the Vitalis Pool without taking down the mastermind," Dustin said, slowly rising to his feet.

Though his internal energy hadn't fully recovered, his eyes had regained their sharp, resolute gleam. "Stay here. I'll be back soon."

"I'm coming with you," Grace said firmly, her eyes filled with resolve. He glanced at her and saw the worry and unyielding resolve in her eyes. Finally, he nodded. "Stay close behind me."

She followed him across the Immortal Reception Bridge, formed from streams of seven-colored light.

As soon as they stepped onto it, the world around them twisted and blurred, as if they were crossing an endless expanse. When the distortion faded, they were standing in a place completely unlike the one they'd left behind.

Beneath their feet lay flawless white stone flooring. The palace surrounding them featured intricately carved beams and painted rafters that shimmered with gold and jade brilliance. Luminous pearls and coral trees adorned the space, casting a soft yet opulent glow.

The air was thick with the intoxicating scent of indulgence and a heavy concentration of spiritual energy that almost felt liquid. But the most striking sight was the hedonistic feast at the heart of the hall, where men and women indulged without restraint.

At the very top, Malthor lounged lazily on a white recliner. On either side of him were Lysander, Talmor, and Valindra. All four pairs of eyes snapped toward Dustin and Grace the instant they stepped into the hall.

“Welcome to Elysium Immortal Palace,” Malthor said.

His voice remained calm, though the absolute coldness it had carried before had softened slightly and was replaced by something difficult to define. His gaze lingered mainly on Dustin, as if Grace were little more than an irrelevant accessory

Talmor gave Dustin a once-over and let out a low whistle in amazement. “You’ve already grasped the laws of the stars in a mere mortal body... Kid, your talent is truly astonishing.”

A playful, alluring glint danced in Valindra’s eyes. Her voice was soft, teasing, and impossible to ignore. “You’re handsome and so talented... You’re making my heart... flutter with anticipation.” 2

Lysander chuckled softly and plucked a teasing note from his lap harp.

The palace and its four figures seemed like a vision of immortal grace. Wine glasses clinked, and ethereal music floated through the hall.

However, Dustin’s divine sense was extraordinarily keen. He could perceive that beneath the dense spiritual energy lurked a darker, purer, and twisted power, linked to the dragon blood malevolent energy

Those people, though radiant with apparent immortality, radiated something darker, more monstrous.

The so-called orgies of pleasure didn’t contain pure vitality at all. Instead, it held refined and corrupted life essence extracted from living beings.

Those men and women indulging in pleasure had vacant eyes and weak energy waves. They didn’t look like immortals, but more like livestock, penned and bred to be drained of their life essence

So, this place wasn’t an immortal palace at all. Instead, it was a nest of monsters, masquerading as a home of the immortals.

“Immortal Palace?” Dustin scoffed, his lips curving into a faint, icy smile as his gaze swept over Malthor and the others.

His eyes were sharp, unflinching, and full of scrutiny as he added, “In my opinion, this place is a breeding ground for evil where demons steal dragon power and cling to existence.”

At these words, the decadent music abruptly halted.

The men and women who had lost themselves in indulgence were frightened into silence. Lysander's hand stopped playing his lap harp, the smile on Talmor's face froze, and Valindra's eyes flashed with sharp intent.

Malthor's expression remained unchanged. Instead, there was a flicker of admiration in his eyes.

"Excellent discernment. The distinction between immortal and demon is but a thin line. Power itself is neither righteous nor evil. What matters is who controls it."

He straightened in his seat, eyes locked on Dustin. His tone was irresistibly persuasive, leaving no room for refusal.

"Your potential shouldn't be wasted among mortals. Join us, and unlock the secrets of Elysium's immortality. The spiritual energy here is inexhaustible, and you could even commune with the primordial power of the dragon itself. Eternal life and roaming the world freely are no longer a fantasy."

Malthor raised his hand, and a pill the size of a large marble appeared in his palm, radiating rich vitality and a golden-red glow. It was the Dragonblood Renewal Pill.

"This pill can instantly heal your wounds and even boost your cultivation to the next level"

He then gestured toward the obscene feast and added, "Here lies endless pleasure-wine, beautiful companions, and anything you desire."

Finally, there was a hidden weight to his words.

"Once you nod and sign the pact, you will spend your immortal life guarding Elysium Isle. You will aid us in unlocking and controlling the power of the Void-Tyrant Dragon, and all of it will be yours. We can even help to heal that young woman's father and extend his life with the true essence of the Vitalis Pool."

The offers were extremely tempting-immortality, power, pleasure, and even hope for healing Grace's father seemed within reach.

She nervously looked at Dustin, her hands clenching unconsciously.

His gaze landed on the pill in Malthor's hand that contained tremendous power yet also concealed endless danger, before sweeping over the gilded, decadent hall.

Finally, his gaze returned to Malthor's seemingly calm eyes, which actually harbored boundless ambition. Dustin slowly shook his head. His tone was clear and resolute, echoing through the silent great hall.

"Our paths are different. There's no point in working together. My path is to follow my heart, to live freely, and to protect those who matter.

"I won't ally with demons like you, stealing destructive power and clinging to this shameful parasitic existence while calling this demonic lair an immortal palace.

"What you're doing isn't the work of immortals. It's the work of demons. Keep your pact and your twisted version of eternity."

As his words fell, the palace seemed to pulse with lethal intent.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2708

"Demons masquerading as immortals." Dustin's declaration landed like a thunderclap in the opulent yet eerie halls of Elysium Immortal Palace.

The moment those words fell, the temperature in the entire hall seemed to plummet to freezing. Even the spiritual energy rising from the wine pool solidified for an instant.

The men and women indulging in pleasures fell silent as if an invisible hand had clamped their throats. They shrank back in terror, not daring to breathe too loudly

Lysander's fingers froze on the strings of his lap harp, while Valindra's seductive smile vanished, replaced by a mask of cold disdain

Even Malthor, who had been languid and indifferent, finally showed a flicker of distinct anger in his deep-set eyes. The struggles of mere ants might amuse him, but their scorn and defiance were an affront to his authority.

"Insolent fools!" Talmor snapped first, throwing his wine glass to the ground. It shattered instantly, sending wine splashing everywhere

He sprang to his feet, his robe whipping around him with the force of his sudden movement. The cynical, world-weary smirk on his face disappeared, replaced by a dark, menacing scowl.

"How dare a mere mortal swordsman, who stumbled upon some opportunities, slander the sacred grounds of the immortals. Today, I'll let you witness the actual immortal technique."

He was clearly infuriated by Dustin's earlier accusations that their place was a breeding ground for evil, where demons steal dragon power.

After all, Dustin had accurately exposed their reliance on the Void-Tyrant Dragon's power. This was tantamount to exposing the ugly truth beneath their glamorous facade.

Malthor didn't intervene. He leaned back in his recliner and watched coldly, silently granting Talmor permission to act.

Lysander and Valindra observed with detached interest. They also wanted to see how long Dustin could last under Talmor's full-force attack. After all, he had consecutively broken through several barriers and defeated Malthor's Dragonblood Battle Puppets.

Talmor swiftly formed hand seals. As he chanted, a thick, cyan light swirled around him. It was saturated with a twisted, paradoxical energy of vitality and decay.

Though he cultivated wood-element arts, prolonged exposure to the dragon blood malevolent energy had caused him to stray far from the righteous path into something sinister and unnatural.

"Spirits of the forest, heed my command and kill this fiend!" he uttered, gesturing with his hand seal toward the spiritually luminous exotic spiritual flowers, rare plants, and spirit trees that decorated one side of the hall.

Those once serene plants erupted with savage intent, as though gripped by madness itself. Vines burst forth with explosive force like venomous serpents, their sharp wooden thorns gleaming as they whipped toward Dustin.

The spirit trees' branches twisted into countless lethal spears, raining down in a relentless barrage, while a faint scent of rot spread through the air, leeching at his life essence.

Though Dustin's strength hadn't fully recovered, his eyes remained razor-sharp as he raised his sword with a flourish.

Rather than unleashing wide, sweeping sword techniques, his figure moved like the wind, weaving through the storm of vines and spears.

Each strike landed with surgical precision, hitting the core of a vine or the weak point of a spear. Streams of cyan sword aura flared across the hall as the raging vines split apart, and the wooden spears were shredded into splinters.

His sword moved with speed, precision, and ruthless intent. Every strike carried a purifying intent, slicing through lies and delusions. Even Talmor's seemingly unstoppable wood-element arts were countered with effortless precision.

Talmor snorted and said, “Not bad. Let’s see how you handle this.”

Seeing Dustin survive his first attempt, Talmor scowled. With a swift change in hand seals, the cyan glow around him flared violently, faintly tinged by a wisp of corrupt, black energy.

“Wood-Element Transmutation. Spirits of the Shadow Wood, heed my call.”

He slammed his palm onto the floor. From the cracks between the white tiles, countless twisted, translucent black shadows shrieked as they emerged.

These were Wood-Element Spirits. They were formed from the plant spirits tainted by dragon blood malevolent energy that couldn’t be reborn, mixed with the lingering souls of fallen cultivators who had perished there.

Though formless, their attacks targeted the enemy’s very soul. Their piercing wails and ethereal claws washed over Dustin like a tide, dimming the light in the hall as they advanced.

Talmor flicked his sleeve, releasing three dark projectiles marked with glowing talismans.

When they struck the floor, they transformed into three Wight-Gilders clad in ancient court regalia. Matted black hair hung over their mottled blue-black skin, and their fingernails had twisted into long, sharp claws the color of bruised flesh.

These undead had been corrupted by dragon blood malevolent energy. Their presence radiated a suffocating, deathly energy wave. They moved like shadows, impossibly fast and impossibly strong

Along with the invisible Wood Spirits, they launched a coordinated assault on both physical and spiritual levels.

“Watch out! It’s the soul-stealing shrieks and Wight-Gilders,” Grace reminded him.

While watching from the side with her heart in her throat, she hastily circulated her internal energy to protect herself from the wood spirit’s screams.

Even when facing a dual assault on both body and soul, Dustin’s expression remained unchanged. His left hand formed a sword finger and tapped his brow.

A clear ripple of divine sense spread outward like water flowing over stone, instantly neutralizing most of the wood spirits’ piercing shrieks. At the same time, his right hand guided the long sword in a perfect, circular arc.

“Mystical Purity Exorcism. Let the thunder’s sound pacify the souls!” he chanted.

Faint arcs of violet lightning crackled along the blade. With its movement came a low, yet profoundly authoritative, thunderous tone. It wasn't a physical sound but was the manifestation of the sword aura striking directly at the soul.

The charging wood-element spirits were struck by the sword aura's thunderous resonance. Like ice shattering under the blazing sun, they let out piercing screams and collapsed almost instantly. The few that remained were reduced to faint, translucent forms and could no longer pose any threat.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2709

Dustin faced three black-haired Wight-Gilders, each impervious to weapons. He moved like smoke through fingers, weaving through their coordinated assault with fluid grace.

He no longer met them head-on. His swordplay turned sharp and unpredictable, the blade always finding a joint or the pulse of talismanic energy that bound the undead together. He struck at weak points to dismantle the whole. Metallic clangs and sharp hisses rang out as sparks flew.

One Wight-Gilder's knee joint was pierced through by sword aura, freezing its movements in place. Another had the control talisman on its back, flicked apart by his sword tip, sending it spinning wildly like a headless fly.

The last one was the most ferocious. Its claws aimed straight for Dustin's chest, but he slipped aside with perfect timing.

With a swift backhanded slash, his sword slid straight into the gaping maw from which it spewed deathly energy. The sword aura exploded inside, tearing the undead's head apart from within.

In just a few heartbeats, the three powerful Wight-Gilders were reduced to nothing more than broken husks beneath Dustin's flawless sword technique.

"Useless!" Talmor roared.

Seeing his techniques repeatedly countered by Dustin, his face darkened with humiliation and barely contained fury.

He slammed his hands together, and the cyan glow around him deepened into a dark, ominous green that seemed to swallow light itself.

"Verdant Divine Thunder-Extinguish all life!"

Talmor thrust both palms forward. A bolt of lightning, as thick as a tree trunk and radiating an unholy dark green energy, tore through the air with a scream like the wailing of tormented souls. It carried an overwhelming energy of annihilation as it crashed down toward Dustin.

This was no ordinary heavenly thunder.

Instead, it was a pseudo-divine thunder conjured from the deathly miasma of corrupt wood-element energy and amplified by dragon blood malevolent energy.

Its force was immense, infused with corrosive and decaying energy meant to erode the life essence of anything it struck.

Dustin narrowed his eyes as he faced that devastating strike. He could feel the pressure rolling from that strike exceeded the raw power of any single strike from the Dragonblood Battle Puppets.

He held nothing back, as he frantically channeled what little mystical pure energy had recovered within his body into his longsword.

The blade hummed under the strain. Cloud patterns etched along its length seemed to come alive as a miniature cyan sword dragon coiled around it.

“Dragon’s Fury Strike!” he roared, exhaling sharply.

Man and sword became one, as he transformed into an extremely condensed cyan streak that seemed capable of piercing through the void itself. Instead of retreating, he advanced boldly to meet the dark green divine annihilation thunder head-on.

He didn’t dodge or rely on flashy moves. This was a strike in its purest, most absolute form.

The cyan streak and the dark green divine thunder collided fiercely in midair, triggering an explosion far more violent than any previous clash. Blinding light instantly devoured everything.

The rampaging energy shockwave spread outward like a tsunami, whipping the spiritual liquid in the wine pools into towering waves and causing the surrounding stone pillars to tremble with rattling sounds.

The pleasure-seeking men and women who couldn’t get out of the way in time were sent tumbling with pitiful cries.

As the light dissipated, Dustin stood there holding his sword. His robes had been torn open in several places by the dissipating lightning, and a trace of fresh blood seeped from

the corner of his mouth. Taking the full brunt of this pseudo-divine thunder had clearly taken a heavy toll on him.

But the longsword in his hand still pointed steadily forward.

The dark green divine annihilation thunder had been split cleanly in two by his Dragon's Fury Strike. The residual lightning energy crashed into the ground behind him, blasting a charred crater. Corrosive energy hissed and crackled around its edges.

Talmor stared in disbelief, shock written across his face. One of his strongest attacks had actually been countered by Dustin's direct attack.

In that fleeting moment when his focus slipped, Dustin struck. He seemed completely unaffected by the earlier clash. In the blink of an eye, he vanished from sight, and the next instant, he was standing directly in front of Talmor.

Before he could even process what happened, Dustin had closed the distance. All Talmor saw was the cold glint of steel expanding in his vision before a sense of lethal crisis instantly enveloped his entire body

He scrambled to conjure a wooden shield for defense and attempted to execute an escape technique to evade, but it was already too late.

Dustin's longsword pierced with perfect precision through the thick wooden armor formed by countless intertwined vines that Talmor had hastily conjured before his chest, then penetrated through his left shoulder blade. Blood sprayed from his wound.

The incomparably sharp sword aura instantly surged into his body, madly destroying his circulatory pathways and the corrupted wood-element energy flowing within him.

Talmor let out a shrill, agonized scream. His body flew backward like a kite with its string cut, crashing heavily against a stone pillar before sliding down to the ground.

His left shoulder was drenched in blood. The lingering sword aura actively prevented healing and gnawed away at his very life force.

His face turned deathly pale, and his energy wave collapsed instantly. The gaze he directed toward Dustin was filled with terror and pure hatred. Seeing that Talmor was seriously wounded with just one strike, the palace fell into deathly silence.

The relaxed and mocking expressions on Lysander's and Valindra's faces completely vanished, replaced by an unprecedented solemnity. Malthor slowly rose from his recliner. Fury and killing intent were finally ignited in his cold eyes.

Dustin leaned on his sword, breathing slightly labored. The continuous high-intensity combat had pushed him to his absolute limits. But he still kept his spine straight, his gaze fearlessly meeting Malthor's stare that resembled a primordial savage beast.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2710

Malthor didn't strike immediately at Dustin's provocation. However, the look in his eyes was a final verdict, as a death sentence had been passed on Dustin.

"Impressive. Very impressive," Lysander said, drawing out the words. His voice remained soft and alluring, yet laced with venom cold as ice. He gently set down his cup and rose to his feet, smoothing out his pink-purple robe with elegant movements, like a performer about to step onto the stage.

"The fact that you managed to injure Talmor so badly shows your swordsmanship is worthy of praise. Shame you had to cross paths with me-Lysander, "he introduced himself. The instant his words fell, the water vapor throughout the entire palace suddenly grew dense.

The spiritual liquid in the wine pool rippled without any wind. Fine droplets of water condensed on the surface of the luminous pearls embedded in the walls.

Even the dense spiritual energy in the air turned moist. Lysander seemed to have become the sovereign of all water elements in this space.

Dustin stood with sword in hand, gasping heavily. The continuous brutal exchanges, especially countering Talmor's divine annihilation thunder and delivering the fatal counterstrike, had nearly drained his last shred of true energy.

But his gaze remained sharp as a hawk's, locked onto Lysander without daring to relax even slightly. He could sense that Lysander was even more dangerous than Talmor.

Lysander's energy wave was like the deep ocean. He appeared calm on the surface, yet hiding violent currents in its unfathomable depths.

"Water Dragon's Roar."

He didn't give Dustin much time to catch his breath. His fingers came together in an elegant gesture, pointing toward Dustin.

From within the wine pool, torrents of spiritual liquid mixed with dragon blood malevolent energy surged skyward. It instantly condensed into three dark blue water dragons with distinct scales, vicious fangs, and claws.

These dragons weren't mere illusions. They roared loud enough to split eardrums, eyes glowing with the same malevolent light as Lysander's. They shot toward Dustin from three directions at once, unstoppable and freezing cold, jaws gaping wide.

The water dragons hadn't even arrived yet, but their bone-chilling cold had already coated the ground in white frost and formed ice crystals on Dustin's eyebrows and hair.

Dustin forcibly channeled his internal energy. His long sword swept out, the sword light splitting apart like a peacock spreading its tail. Dozens of sharp cyan sword auras surged forward to meet the three water dragons.

The sword auras collided with the dragons, tearing into them. Their heads were severed and bodies torn apart, but the scattered dark blue water didn't disappear.

Instead, it writhed in midair as if alive, swirling and instantly reforming into new dragons. They lunged forward again in an endless, terrifying cycle.

"It's useless," Lysander said with a chuckle, flicking his finger again. "Abyssal Ice Prison!"

The three water dragons opened their maws wide and spewed massive gouts of ghostly blue mist. Wherever it passed, the air froze. Even space itself seemed to be freezing solid.

Countless sharp ice spikes instantly sprouted from the ground, spreading toward Dustin and encircling him like a thorny forest.

The temperature across the entire battle area dropped sharply, transforming the area into an instant prison of absolute cold.

Dustin dodged frantically. His sword aura shielded him as he sliced through the jagged ice spikes and cut a path through the freezing blasts. But his speed was clearly affected by the frigid air. His protective sword aura was constantly eroded and weakened by that extreme cold.

Even worse, those three water dragons still circled and lunged around him. Combined with the ubiquitous abyssal ice attacks, they left him struggling to keep up with the onslaught.

"Water Mirror Clone."

Lysander's voice rang out again, tinged with mockery. His figure blurred, and in the next instant, three identical figures of himself appeared. Each positioned around Dustin, launching attacks simultaneously.

Water dragons, ice spikes, and sinister water waves that assaulted the soul came from all directions.

Dustin's eyes sharpened. He scanned all three with his divine sense, but found their energy waves and fluctuations perfectly identical.

There was no way to distinguish the real from the clones. He could only rely on his extraordinary combat instincts and his sword technique, weaving and dodging within the limited space.

His sword light formed an impenetrable barrier, blocking and countering each attack. However, each clash left his blood roiling and his internal energy in turmoil, draining him enormously.

If he hadn't broken through to the terrestrial immortal realm that allowed him to absorb spiritual energy from his surroundings to replenish himself continuously, he would likely have collapsed long ago.

"Found you," Dustin said.

A sharp gleam flashed in his eyes as he caught an extremely subtle sluggishness in the energy flow of one "Lysander" while casting a technique.

Without hesitation, he ignored all other attacks. He unified himself with his sword, transforming into a supremely condensed streak of cyan light that shot straight toward that "Lysander's" heart.

The long sword penetrated that body without any resistance. However, the impaled figure broke into an unsettling grin.

His body rippled like water, then turned into a clear puddle that splashed onto the ground. It turned out to be a water clone, and the real Lysander had already appeared behind Dustin.

In his hand had somehow condensed a ghostly blue crystalline longsword, its sharpness capable of piercing the void itself. He silently thrust it toward Dustin's back. The sneak attack was masterfully executed with perfect timing, angle, and speed.

But Dustin seemed to have eyes in the back of his head. Still surging forward, he twisted his waist at an impossible angle and swept his sword backward.

The two swords clashed with a crisp ring. The terrifying cold wave contained within the crystalline sword spread along the blade. Dustin's sword-gripping arm was instantly covered in a thick layer of frost, the bone-piercing cold penetrating straight into his circulatory pathways.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2711

Dustin let out a low grunt as his mystical pure energy burst forth, shattering the frost encasing his arm. Using the momentum, he glided forward several yards to create a distance between himself and Lysander. His sword-wielding arm trembled slightly, and his complexion grew even paler.

Lysander's evasion techniques and clone arts were simply too swift and unpredictable. There was no way to guard against them all.

"You've got quick reflexes," Lysander commented with a sneer, toying with the crystalline sword in his hand.

"But how many times can you dodge? As long as the water element is inexhaustible within this immortal palace, my body is indestructible. No matter how sharp your sword is, what can you do to me?"

Resolve flashed in his eyes, and he took the initiative to attack again. His sword light flared violently, as if he were throwing himself into a life-or-death duel.

His strikes were relentless, tearing apart the three water dragons once more and forcing Lysander to constantly use water-based escape techniques to retreat.

After another brutal exchange, Dustin's sword momentum seemed to pause slightly due to exhaustion. His protective sword aura also fluctuated, exposing a small gap at his left ribs.

This opening vanished in an instant. But for an expert of Lysander's caliber, that brief instant was more than enough.

"Got you now," he said, a predatory gleam flashing in his eyes. He wouldn't let this perfect opening slip away.

As if to prove his point, the wounds Dustin had suffered from the water dragon and ice spear began to react. The lingering cold water energy stirred like a living thing, burrowing into his body, trying to freeze his vital energy and corrode his circulatory pathways.

Dustin frowned, his heart sinking. He'd tried attacking multiple times and even recklessly trading blows to strike Lysander's true form with his sword aura.

But every time, the part of Lysander's body that was struck would instantly dissolve into water and reform elsewhere moments later, completely unharmed.

Lysander's near-immortal form, combined with his fluid water-element techniques, made him an opponent that was almost impossible to pin down.

If this fight dragged on, Dustin knew defeat was inevitable. He had to change tactics, since brute force wouldn't work, and he couldn't lock onto Lysander's true body. But there was only one choice left.

His form rippled like disturbed water, and he instantly reappeared at Dustin's left side. The crystalline longsword in his hand shot forward, like a viper lunging from its den straight for the unprotected opening at Dustin's exposed left rib.

Lysander had poured 80% of his strength into this single, decisive thrust, aiming to end the fight in one blow. He could already envision the wonderful scene of his longsword piercing through Dustin's body, the cold energy freezing him into an ice sculpture.

But just as the crystalline longsword was about to touch Dustin's robes, his exhausted, frozen gaze suddenly deepened, as cold and infinite as a star-filled sky.

He completely ignored the lethal strike aimed at his ribs. Instead, his left hand, which had been lying, moved at lightning speed. He made a sword finger and struck Lysander's forehead with pinpoint accuracy.

It wasn't a sharp sword aura that gathered at his fingertips, but countless incredibly intricate mystical runes shimmering with pale golden light, instantly emerging and spinning.

"Mystical Pure Seal-Soul Shackle!"

Dustin's low shout rumbled like thunder in Lysander's consciousness.

"What? He deliberately exposed that opening?" Lysander's eyes widened in shock. Every instinct screamed of danger. He tried to retreat, but it was already too late.

Dustin's finger seemed to disregard the very concept of space, landing with unerring precision squarely on the center of his forehead.

A vast, ancient power, carrying a supreme sealing intent, flooded like a breached dam from Dustin's fingertip into Lysander's consciousness. Countless pale golden runes came alive like chains, instantly coiling around the origin of his soul and binding it tightly.

Lysander's vision went dark. The water elemental power that had been circulating freely throughout his body instantly lost control, as if its source had been severed.

His sword, thrusting toward Dustin, abruptly halted when it was only an inch from its target. The light on his crystalline longsword rapidly dimmed and dissipated.

He tried to transform into water and escape, but discovered his soul was locked. Even his connection to the external water element was forcibly cut off.

“No... That’s impossible!”

For the first time, Lysander’s face showed extreme horror. He felt as though he were turning into a lifeless statue. All his power and perception were being ruthlessly stripped away and sealed by those pale golden runes.

After using that technique, Dustin’s body swayed violently as well. His complexion turned ghastly pale, and every ounce of energy was nearly spent. He nearly crumpled to the ground.

The Mystical Pure Seal technique specifically targeted the root of one’s soul. It drained Dustin of his most fundamental mental energy and core essence, far more than any move he had used before.

Still, he forced himself to stay on his feet and coldly stared at Lysander before him. The latter’s body had frozen mid-motion, his face twisted in terror and stubborn defiance.

An intricate web of pale golden runes began emerging on the surface of Lysander’s body. These runes branded themselves like seals, embedding deeply into his flesh and even his soul.

The ethereal water mist surrounding his body rapidly dissipated. Even the crystalline longsword completely disintegrated, and his attempt to transform back into flowing water was forcibly suppressed by the runes

Finally, he lost all movement and stood rigid, like an exquisite puppet. Only those eyes gradually losing their luster still retained traces of utter disbelief.

The palace fell into deathly silence again. The wine pool stopped churning, and the biting cold suddenly receded. The men and women who had been indulging in pleasures had long since collapsed to the ground in fear, trembling violently.

Valindra gasped, covering her mouth with her hand. A flicker of tension crossed Malthor’s face that hadn’t changed in ten thousand years. For the first time, his eyes showed extreme seriousness.

He couldn’t believe Dustin had consecutively defeated Talmor and Lysander. Yet, Dustin still possessed such a strange and formidable sealing technique.

He wondered how many more trump cards Dustin had up his sleeve. Dustin leaned on his long sword, breathing heavily. Sweat mixed with blood slid down from his temples.

He raised his head, his gaze sweeping over the sealed Lysander and locked directly onto Malthor and Valindra on the high platform, where killing intent had practically solidified into physical form.

“Who’s next?” he rasped, yet every word radiated an unshakable resolve.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2712

The pale golden runes sealed Lysander. He stood frozen like a puppet, his face locked in an expression of shock and stubborn defiance.

The scene tore through Elysium Celestial Palace like an arctic gale, seizing the unease that had begun building after Talmor’s defeat and freezing it into bone-chilling silence.

The men and women, who had been indulging in lust and pleasure, had long since collapsed to the ground. Even their trembling had stopped. Only the violent pounding of their terrified hearts broke the oppressive silence.

The wine pool no longer rippled, and the tangled bodies stopped moving. Even the decadent music had died mid-note. It was as if the entire palace was mourning for the two “immortals” who had fallen in succession.

Valindra was also known as the “Earth Goddess”. Only a roiling sea of shock remained in those captivating eyes, along with a trace of cold dread she refused to acknowledge. Talmor’s defeat could be chalked up to carelessness, to his elemental weakness being exploited.

But what about Lysander? His nearly immortal water elemental body and his myriad of unpredictable arts had been completely suppressed by that unheard-of soul-sealing technique.

Just how far did Dustin’s limits extend? Within that body that seemed ready to collapse at any moment, just how many terrifying methods were still hidden?

At that thought, a sense of wariness she had never felt before coiled around her heart like a poisonous vine.

The unshakeable composure Malthor had maintained finally cracked. His jaw clenched, and his eyes that looked down on all living beings now brimmed with a murderous intent that threatened to erupt.

The consecutive losses, especially Lysander’s defeat, went beyond a matter of pride. They were actively undermining the very foundation of their small group.

Malthor vowed to kill Dustin. That refined and peculiar power within him, his mastery of the laws of nature, and especially that strange sealing technique. Malthor had to either claim it or destroy it completely.

A suffocating pressure began to emanate from Malthor's body, far more terrifying than before. It was like some primordial beast awakening from slumber. The white stone floor throughout the palace began to tremble, emitting strained groans as if it might shatter at any moment.

He slowly raised his hand, and a dark-gold glow began to gather at his fingertips, and the destructive energy was brewing.

"Malthor!"

Just as he was about to strike, Valindra suddenly spoke. Her voice had lost its honeyed softness, now carrying an unflinching resolve.

She stepped forward to block Malthor's path. Her gaze was locked on Dustin below, who was leaning on his sword and gasping for breath, seemingly at the end of his rope.

"That kid has fought consecutive fierce battles. His true energy is depleted, and he's already at his limit. If you step in yourself, it would give him undue credit and make us seem like we have no capable hands here," she said, her voice laced with a carefully controlled calm.

She added, "Let me handle him instead. I want to see just how many tricks this sinking ship still has left to play. And I'll show him that my name as the 'Earth Goddess' is not just an empty title."

Her words were meant to maintain Malthor's dignity, but they also hid her own ulterior motives.

Dustin had consecutively defeated Talmor and Lysander. If she could be the one to beat Dustin, she would not only reverse their losing streak but also demonstrate her strength. Her position within this small group would become even more secure.

Besides, she refused to believe a man running on fumes could pose a threat. Her powerful earth-element techniques excelled at overwhelming opponents through sheer force. They were perfect for dealing with someone exhausted like Dustin.

Malthor's movements paused slightly. His cold gaze swept over Valindra, catching the insistence in her eyes and that barely perceptible competitive spirit.

He pondered for a moment. The terrifying pressure around him eased, and the dark-gold glow dissipated, signaling his unspoken permission for her to attack.

He also wanted to see whether Dustin could still perform miracles despite Valindra's heavy, overwhelming earth-element techniques.

After seeing his approval, Valindra's heart settled. She took a deep breath to suppress her wariness of that strange sealing technique Dustin had used earlier. Her breathtaking smile returned to her lips, though now it failed to reach her eyes, which were filled with lethal intent.

She moved forward with swaying grace, looking at Dustin from above the platform. Her voice remained soft and seductive, yet carried the oppressive feeling of an approaching storm

"Young man, you're quite impressive for injuring my two seniors. But the game ends here. I don't really enjoy violence, but if someone doesn't know their place, I'll have no choice but to let them... sleep eternally in my embrace."

Before she finished speaking, she stomped her foot lightly on the white stone floor, and the entire Elysium Immortal Palace shook violently. It was unlike the earlier energy surge, but this time, it was a deep resonance from the earth itself.

From the center of her toe, a visible, earthen-yellow ripple spread rapidly outward like a wave. Wherever it passed, the incomparably hard stone floor that contained spiritual radiance rolled and surged up like soft sand.

Sharp stone spires and heavy earthen ramparts erupted instantaneously from the ground, surging from all sides to crush and impale Dustin.

The entire combat area instantly transformed into a wildly growing, continuously closing forest of rock. Additionally, a gravity field as heavy as mountains suddenly descended. It pressed down on him with the intention of crushing and pulverizing him.

With one strike, Valindra unleashed an earth vein upheaval of massive range that combined offense and defense, designed to overwhelm with brute force.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2713

Dustin felt his body suddenly grow heavy, as if a mountain were crushing his shoulders. Even lifting his arm became a struggle.

The ground beneath his feet roiled and churned, making it impossible to maintain a steady footing. Countless deadly stone spikes and rock walls closed in from all sides, sealing off every avenue of escape.

Summoning the last of his true energy, his longsword erupted with a final, pure radiance. The spinning sword light formed a protective shield around him. The clash of sword aura and stone sent fragments flying, the air thick with swirling dust.

Dustin's sword remained razor-sharp, each strike cleaving through massive chunks of rock. But the onslaught seemed endless. Just as he destroyed one pile, another erupted from the ground.

Moreover, the crushing gravity limited his speed and strength. It made every swing of his sword a monumental effort.

His face had gone even paler, and his breath came in harsh, wheezing gasps. The webbing between his thumb and fingers split open, blood dripping freely.

"It's a futile struggle," Valindra said with a chuckle.

She formed hand seals and gestured toward the two massive stone dragons carved and coiled around the palace ceiling.

"Awake, my guardian!" she roared.

The eyes of the decorative stone dragons suddenly blazed with crimson light. A grating rumble of grinding stone filled the hall as their colossal forms shuddered to life. Stone fragments crumbled away, revealing dragon scales beneath that glowed with earthy yellow spiritual light.

Silent roars echoed as they broke free from the ceiling. They crashed down like twin avalanches-one from the left, one from the right onto Dustin and trapped him inside the jagged stone forest below.

Their claws were sharp enough to shred steel, while their massive tails swept with hurricane force, whipping up a violent gale.

With the stone dragons joining the fight, Dustin instantly fell into a desperate situation and was cornered on all sides. The ground he stood on churned and rose in jagged waves.

Around him, the gravity field pressed down with crushing weight, and above, two colossal dragons of limitless strength attacked him from both sides.

"Dustin!" Grace screamed. She watched in terror, her heart nearly shattering. She tried to rush forward, but the terrifying gravity field and rampaging earth and stone forced her back.

Dustin's gaze remained calm, even in the face of certain death. While arduously wielding his sword to fend off attacks from both the ground and the stone dragons, he used his remaining divine sense to perceive his surroundings.

He noticed that the movements of the two stone dragons had an extremely subtle, synchronized fluctuation with Valindra's hand seals and the yellow spiritual light circulating around her body. Even the churning earth drew its power directly from her.

Strike the head, and the body would fall.

Dustin was resolved to attack her. But breaking through the forest of stone and the two stone dragons blocking his path was another matter.

His mind raced, and a ruthless glint flashed through his eyes. He deliberately left an opening, slowing his movements by half a beat while parrying the claws of a stone dragon.

The dragon's claws tore through his protective sword aura. They ripped four deep gashes across his left shoulder, cutting down to bone. The massive force sent him flying backward.

He slammed hard into a thick rock wall that had suddenly shot up behind him, coughing up a mouthful of blood. His energy was depleted in an instant, and he looked like he'd blacked out any moment.

"It's over," Valindra said, a gleam of triumph flickering in her eyes.

With such severe injuries and the suppression of the gravity field, she knew Dustin was incapable of continuing to fight.

She controlled the two stone dragons.

Their jaws opened wide as they lunged toward Dustin, who was still half-embedded in the rock wall and appeared too weak to fight back.

Simultaneously, the ground churned, and countless stone spikes lunged up like striking pythons, stabbing toward his back. But at that split-second between life and death, Dustin's dim eyes suddenly flared with light that burned brighter than stars.

He'd been waiting for exactly this moment.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2714

Dustin paid no attention to the stone dragon lunging to devour him or the stone spear thrusting toward his back.

Instead, he channeled every last ounce of mystical pure energy remaining in his body, burning a portion of his life essence, and condensed the last trace of his inner energy into his right index and middle fingers. Forming a sword finger, he leveled it at Valindra on the platform.

This strike didn’t have any earth-shaking momentum or dazzling radiance. It possessed only an invisible force, refined to the absolute limit, that seemed to transcend space and defense itself, striking directly at the source.

“Mystical... Mindseal!”

This was neither a sword technique meant to strike the body nor a forbidden art to seal the soul. It was Dustin’s trump card, a secret interference technique targeting the connection between a cultivator’s mind and internal energy.

However, this technique would have minimal effect against Valindra when she was completely focused. But in this fleeting moment, as she fully committed to her ultimate attack, the slightest lapse in her concentration made the balance tip.

She felt as though an invisible needle had pierced her consciousness. Her energy connection with the two stone dragons and the surging earth beneath her suddenly froze for a brief moment.

At that instant, the two lunging dragons halted mid-motion, and the stone spear erupting from the ground stopped mere inches from Dustin’s back.

The moment he’d thrust out that finger strike, he had already planned his escape. Using the rebound force from the rock wall behind him, combined with a momentary fluctuation in the gravity field, his body became weightless.

He moved in a trajectory that defied all logic, slipping through the gap between the dragons’ gaping jaws by the most dangerous of margins.

Simultaneously, he flung the last of his high-grade Armor-Breaking Golden Edge talismans, ones he had salvaged from the cave Ysolde had left behind. They streaked forward as razor-sharp golden streams of light.

Dustin didn’t aim them at Valindra.

Instead, he targeted the two stone dragons that had temporarily lost control when their energy connection froze. Specifically, their eyes, the cores where their power flowed.

Two sharp cracks split the air. Golden streams of light hit the stone dragons’ crimson eyes with deadly precision. The talisman carrying the destructive power to pierce any defences exploded instantly.

The two stone dragons released silent cries of anguish. Their massive bodies shuddered violently as the crimson glow vanished from their eyes in an instant.

A heartbeat later, the yellow spiritual light covering them faded rapidly and disintegrated. They soon turned to lifeless rubble, crashing to the ground in clouds of dust.

With the stone dragons destroyed, the earth's surging veins calmed due to Valindra's momentary lapse in focus.

The backlash from her technique hit her hard. She let out a muffled grunt, her face draining of color. Shock, fury, and disbelief flooded her eyes.

Still, she'd never imagined that in such a desperate situation, he could find such a minuscule flaw in her technique and exploit it with such a bizarre technique.

While Valindra's mind reeled from the shock and backlash, Dustin had already moved. He burst through the settling dust and scattered rubble like a phantom, appearing directly in front of her.

He looked deathly pale, and his energy was so weak it seemed on the verge of snuffing out. However, his eyes blazed with terrifying intensity, as if fueled by the last sparks of life itself.

Instead of drawing his sword, he made a sword finger again. The tip of her fingers was wreathed in the last faint trace of pale-gold sealing runes, designed to lock down the opponent's energy cores. In a flash, they drove straight toward her forehead.

Seeing that, Valindra's eyes widened. She tried to dodge and conjure an earth shield. However, his strike contained every ounce of his remaining will and calculation. It was executed with blinding speed, deadly precision, and absolute ruthlessness.

"No..."

Amidst her desperate scream, Dustin's fingertip lightly touched her brow.

"Mystical... Core Seal!" he roared. The pale gold rune instantly entered her forehead. The majestic, weighty yellow spiritual light surrounding her body collapsed abruptly like a punctured balloon.

Her body convulsed violently, and the light in her eyes rapidly dimmed. Like someone drained of all strength, she collapsed limply to the ground. She was wrapped in a pale golden cocoon that locked her completely in place.

With three straight victories, Dustin had taken down Talmor, Lysander, and Valindra one after another.

However, he could no longer hold on and coughed a mouthful of blood. His body swayed, and only by stabbing his longsword into the ground did he manage to stay upright.

He raised his head, looking toward the platform at the only figure still standing-Malthor, whose killing intent had reached overwhelming heights.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2715

Valindra collapsed to the ground. She was encased in a pale golden cocoon of light like a moth trapped in amber.

Her stunning features had frozen mid-expression, caught between shock, fury, and disbelief. Only her dimming eyes held a last flicker of awareness. Her gaze was locked onto Dustin, who was swaying on his feet, with his sword as the only thing keeping him upright.

It didn't make sense to her. She commanded the earth element, and inside Immortal Palace, that power should have made her untouchable. He was clearly at death's door, yet he still managed to defeat her.

Endless regret and venomous hatred gnawed at her remaining consciousness. But the sealing power clamped down like iron shackles, suppressing all her strength and fury inside that beautiful shell. Not even a wisp of divine sense could escape.

Nearby, Talmor lay in a pool of blood, his shoulder pierced clean through. Through the haze of fading awareness, he felt Valindra's overwhelming presence suddenly snuffed out like a candle.

A cold dread mixed with excruciating pain nearly pulled him under. He couldn't believe she had been defeated as well.

His mind replayed the moment Dustin's sword strike countered his divine annihilation thunder, along with that piercing gaze that had seen through a thousand writhing vines to pinpoint his core with chilling precision. He could tell Dustin was not an ordinary swordmaster.

Lysander could neither move nor speak. His soul and life essence were firmly sealed by Dustin's Mystical Pure Seal. Though his body was frozen, his consciousness as a Water Lord raged with disbelief.

He could feel the stone dragons shatter and sense the earth's elemental currents suddenly flatten. And yet, he was shocked to see that Valindra, steady as a rock, had actually fallen.

A shiver ran through him as he remembered the nearly immortal strength of his water element body, severed in an instant from the world's energy flow by Dustin's strange finger strike.

He had never imagined a sealing technique could go this far, directly locking his core and cutting off his connection to the world's energy.

Lysander had assumed Dustin was just a swordmaster. Now he was horrified to discover that Dustin's understanding of cosmic laws, the soul, and the essence of energy far exceeded anything he had imagined.

On the high platform, Malthor finally moved. Instead of using flashy movement techniques, he walked down the white stone steps like an ordinary mortal.

But with each footstep, the tiles glowing with spiritual energy didn't crack. Instead, they vanished beneath his feet, crumbling into fine dust as if consumed by some unseen force.

Malthor wasn't trying to intimidate anyone. It was the manifestation of his suppressed rage and boiling killing intent, so potent that it had materialized into a field of pure obliteration. Wherever he walked, existence itself returned to nothingness.

He stopped in the center of the hall, 30 feet from Dustin. To him, that distance felt no wider than a hair's breadth and could decide life or death.

Malthor's eyes were cold as ice, yet beneath that chill burned a destructive fire. His gaze swept over Dustin's pale, blood-streaked face. It passed over his hands, trembling from spent internal energy. Yet Dustin still held the sword hilt with an iron grip.

Then, he looked at Dustin's eyes. Even in the face of certain death, they remained clear, deep, and fearless.

Malthor felt an unprecedented rage surge through him as he witnessed his three right - hand men fall-Talmor with his untamed arrogance, Lysander with his sly unpredictability, and Valindra steady as bedrock.

He had spent centuries shaping those three into the foundation of his rule, the ones who upheld the Elysium Immortal Palace's order and strength.

And now, some unknown brat whose cultivation was clearly inferior to theirs had defeated them all, one after another, through his own strength alone.

This wasn't simple defiance. Dustin had crushed the authority Malthor spent ages building and ripped open the truth behind their so-called immortality, the dream sustained by the Void-Tyrant Dragon. Because of that, he had to die.

The energy in Dustin's body was impossibly refined, far beyond anything mortal. His swordsmanship was flawless, almost supernatural. And his sealing technique was unlike anything Malthor had ever seen, and should be eliminated.

Yet if he could strip and consume Dustin's very essence before killing him, he might ascend to a higher realm. A thread of insatiable greed wove itself into his rage, entwining his murderous intent and hardening it into a freezing, lethal resolve.

“Dustin,” Malthor began.

There was no roar of cosmic energy in his words this time. Instead, it carried a deathly silence that seemed to swallow everything around it

“I will show you mercy one last time.”

He stretched out a hand, palm up, and a swirl of dark-gold flame and a blade of platinum light appeared in midair. They twisted and collided with each other, hissing with a sound that grated on the soul.

The dark-gold fire seemed capable of burning through the soul itself, while the platinum light could slice through even the laws of reality.

“Swear your loyalty to me. Offer me your soul imprint and swear eternal servitude. I can overlook your past defiance, and even grant you a strand of true dragon essence to share in our immortal pleasures.”

He paused, and the chill in his voice sent shivers through everyone present.

“Otherwise, your body and spirit will be annihilated. Your true essence will be scattered into the void and lost forever in absolute nothingness.”

This was the final judgment. Malthor’s killing intent was raw and unrestrained. It was enough to crush the mind of anyone not strong enough to resist.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2716

“Dustin!” Grace shouted, her heart clenching. She could feel the terrifying gap in strength between Malthor and Talmor, Lysander, and Valindra.

Without hesitation, she pulled out the vial she always kept close. Before she left the palace, her father’s unfathomably powerful guardian had personally entrusted it to her with grave solemnity.

He’d told her it contained the Ninefold Rebirth Pill, a life-saving treasure from the royal family’s secret vault. It was so rare that even if they poured the entire nation’s resources into it, they couldn’t produce another.

Grace rushed to Dustin’s side while ignoring the suffocating pressure bearing down on them. She pressed the warm bottle into his freezing hands.

“Take it now. This is our only chance,” she said firmly.

He could feel the medicinal energy inside the bottle. It was immense and alive, unlike anything he had ever experienced. He realized immediately how rare and precious it was.

Dustin glanced at Grace and saw the determination in her eyes, mixed with worry. Without hesitation, he opened the stopper and swallowed the pill. It was no bigger than a marble and glowing with shifting rainbow light.

The pill dissolved immediately, and warm energy spread through him. The immense but controlled energy spread through him, repairing hidden injuries and replenishing his spent true essence.

It couldn't restore him to full strength, but his unstable internal energy finally stabilized. The flickering pulse inside him, barely holding on a moment ago, finally evened out. He had regained almost 30% of his combat strength, and a comforting warmth spread through his limbs again.

Dustin let out a slow breath that carried the faint scent of the herbs he'd taken. He forced down the turmoil in his chest and lifted himself upright once more, spine straight and unyielding.

His gaze met Malthor's icy stare. A faint, mocking smirk curved the corner of his lips, subtle but unmistakable.

"I've always stood for what's right, honored the people who raised me, and remained steadfast in my own principles," Dustin said. "But I never learned how to be subservient to a group of parasites who stole the power of destruction just to stay alive.

"Everything about you stinks of rot and despair. Your so-called immortality is nothing but a parasite on the Void-Tyrant Dragon. It's revolting. You want my soul? Stop talking and come take it yourself."

"Stubborn fool!" Malthor roared furiously.

"You seek your own death!" The last shred of his patience snapped under those cutting words. He no longer held anything back.

His right hand formed a sword-like gesture, and brilliant platinum light burst from his fingertips. With what looked like a casual swipe, he aimed it at the space where Dustin stood.

"Metal Void Slash!"

A hair-thin platinum thread appeared out of nowhere. It was almost invisible, slicing through the space between them in an instant. Wherever it passed, a black rift lingered and was impossible to close. It was as if the very fabric of reality had been torn.

The attack made no sound and showed no flashy display, yet its edge was impossibly sharp. Everyone present felt it in their bones, as if a single strike could cut through not just their bodies, but their very souls.

Dustin's eyes went wide, then narrowed instantly. A sudden, overwhelming sense of death sent chills racing down his spine.

His feet moved almost instinctively, pushing him to the limit. His body transformed into a blur of cyan smoke and darted to the left in a split second.

Behind where he'd been standing, a massive stone pillar-thick enough that several people couldn't wrap their arms around it and inscribed with protective formations-was silently sliced clean through by the platinum thread.

The top half of the pillar slid along the smooth cut before crashing to the ground with a heavy thud. At the break, the lingering metal energy crackled and hissed, as if alive, and the air around it seemed torn.

However, Malthor's attack came like a storm, relentless and without pause.

Dustin had just dodged, and his body was still drained from the last strike. At that moment, he was caught between exhaustion and the moment before his strength could return.

Malthor's left hand clenched into a fist, and dark gold flames erupted from its tip.

They weren't scorching hot. Instead, they radiated a bone-deep cold that seemed to drain life itself.

"Soulfire Fist!"

His fist slammed forward, and the dark-gold flames didn't just fly straight. They twisted and writhed, spreading out like a living net that threatened to blot out the sky, closing in on Dustin from all directions

Within the flames, countless twisted, wailing spirits flickered. Their silent screams sent chills straight to his soul.

Wherever the flame touched, space itself seemed to buckle and collapse. It swallowed the light, leaving only patches of writhing darkness.

Dustin knew there was nowhere left to dodge. He let out a roar, pouring every last drop of the Ninefold Rebirth Pill's renewed strength and the remnants of his true energy into his longsword.

The blade flared with a dazzling cyan light unlike anything he had ever summoned. Layers of condensed energy coalesced into sharp, tangible arcs. They formed a towering barrier before him, etched with the intricate pattern of the arcane sigil.

“Mystical Infinite Barrier!”

A deafening crash echoed as the flames struck the barrier. Dark gold flames erupted in a net of searing power, slamming against the cyan barrier.

There was no massive explosion, but the sound it made was bone-chilling, a shriek that felt as if billions of souls were wailing at once.

The wall shuddered violently. The arcane sigil’s patterns spun wildly, straining to contain the destructive force, but it couldn’t hold. In less than a heartbeat, the barrier groaned under the weight, cracking noises spreading like lightning as fractures spiderwebbed across its surface.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2717

Dustin took the hit, and he felt as if a mountain had crashed into him. The flame’s impact shattered his barrier, sending him backward. Blood sprayed from his mouth and streaked behind him in a sharp arc.

He crashed onto the white stone floor over 100 feet away, tumbling until his momentum finally ran out. Only after driving his longsword into the ground for support did he manage to kneel on one knee.

The blade vibrated in his grip, its glow nearly gone. Whatever strength he’d just managed to recover was scattered like leaves in the wind.

Dustin’s chest and abdomen felt trapped between ancient ice and hellfire. His soul seemed to be getting shredded by countless fangs, each wave of agony threatening to drown his consciousness.

Malthor’s metal and fire abilities complemented each other perfectly. Their combined power didn’t just add up, but it underwent a complete transformation into something far more deadly.

“You survived 70% of my Metal Void Slash and Soulfire Fist. That’s something you can boast about in the afterlife,” Malthor said coldly, his tone like a death sentence already passed.

He walked forward-each step silently disintegrating the ground beneath him-and slowly raised both hands.

In his left palm, countless hair-thin needles, Platinum Essence-Shattering Needles, flickered with deadly white light that gathered like a swirling nebula. They hummed lethally, locking onto every acupoint and energy channel throughout Dustin's body.

In his right hand, a dark-gold fireball the size of a human head rotated slowly. Inside it, countless miniature black holes opened and collapsed in endless cycles. This was the core of Malthor's Great Annihilation Art. It radiated a terrifying suction that could refine everything into nothingness.

The needles would shatter Dustin's essence, and the fire threatened to consume whatever remained. This was a perfect killing formation, sealing off every possibility of escape or defense.

Grace's face went deathly pale, her body trembling uncontrollably. The storm of golden needles was about to erupt, and the dark-gold fireball hung ready to obliterate Dustin along with the surrounding space. But at that critical instant, a voice rang out.

An elderly man's calm voice rang out, yet it carried a power that seemed to calm all chaos in the world. It echoed clearly through the killing intent that saturated the palace, as if it had traveled across endless ages to arrive at this exact moment.

"Infinite Celestial Sovereign."

Immediately after, a pale cyan light materialized from nowhere in front of Dustin. Soft in appearance yet thrumming with boundless cosmic essence, it rapidly expanded and solidified into a slowly rotating arcane sigil.

Within the sigil, two swirling energies spun endlessly around each other, merging and separating in perfect balance. They radiated a force that seemed to push back everything hostile, untouchable, and absolute.

The Platinum Essence-Shattering Needles, sharp enough to pierce through the void itself, shot toward the arcane sigil like a torrential downpour. Yet they vanished like stones thrown into the ocean, effortlessly deflected, decomposed, and dissolved into nothing by the swirling energies.

At the same time, the dark-gold fireball carrying the core of the Great Annihilation Art struck the sigil's surface. A gentle yet irresistible force caught it mid-descent, suspending it in the air. Its destructive suction slammed against an invisible barrier, unable to advance even a fraction of an inch.

For the first time, Malthor's eternally frozen expression wavered. He snapped his head toward the hall's entrance, his gaze cold and piercing.

Cyran stood at the doorway, appearing from nowhere, with a staff in his hand. His robes fluttered around him, and the familiar gaunt lines of his face were unchanged. Yet his eyes carried a storm of complex emotion as they locked onto Malthor and the nearly-dying Dustin.

Next to him was a child, Terraen, in a red vest and topknot. He planted both hands on his hips, round eyes glaring at Malthor.

He shouted angrily, “Malthor! You shameless old bastard. Just because you’ve lived longer doesn’t mean you can go around bullying the younger ones.

“Dual cultivation of metal and fire, my ass! Getting this worked up beating someone half-dead? Ugh! What a pathetic old man.”

Cyran’s sudden appearance, combined with Terraen’s merciless mockery, hit like ice water thrown into boiling oil. The atmosphere in Elysium Palace instantly turned strange and tense.

Malthor’s face, frozen for countless ages, shifted ever so slightly. A deadly, frigid intent radiated from him, zeroing in on the two at the hall’s entrance. He frowned, eyes flashing with unexpected fury.

“Cyran! And you, accursed one! You were supposed to be hiding in that ruined forest, sneaking by unnoticed, and yet you dare show up here and stir trouble?” he barked.

Cyran waved his staff lazily. His face was calm, but his eyes burned with a mix of resignation and resolve.

“Malthor, stop this madness,” he said. ” Sacrificing fellow cultivators’ essence, energy, spirit, and soul to the Void-Tyrant Dragon to gain power is only going to destroy you, and it will bring untold catastrophe. You’ve already betrayed our original purpose of guarding the seal.”

Terraen stamped his feet and shouted furiously, “Old mud-sucker! You’re the accursed one. You turned this whole island into a hellhole, and now you’re trying to murder people? Just wait. I’m going to knock every last tooth out of your head.”

“Original purpose?” Malthor’s laughter rang out cold and manic, as if he’d heard the world’s funniest joke. “Guarding the seal? Spend eternity guarding this pitiful prison while waiting for it to crumble on its own?

“Cyran, you’re hopelessly naïve. Power alone is eternal. It’s the only eternal thing. Since you both insist on dying, I’ll grant your wish. I’ll use your essence to finally gain complete control over the dragon core.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2718

Before Malthor could finish speaking, Cyran had already stopped arguing with him. Cyran's figure blurred, then appeared beside Dustin. His withered hand lightly pressed against Dustin's back.

A stream of pure, vibrant spiritual energy flowed into Dustin, steady and unbroken, filling the hollows of his nearly exhausted body.

Though it shared the same lineage as his mystical pure energy, Cyran's spiritual energy was much purer and refined. It not only repaired his injuries at remarkable speed but also nourished the very essence he had burned through.

"Focus your mind, young friend. I'll help you with your recovery," Cyran said quietly.

Warmth spread through Dustin's entire body. The internal injuries from withstanding Malthor's dual-element attack and the strain on his spirit were healing at an incredible pace.

The exhaustion from consecutive battles vanished, and his depleted energy reserves rapidly refilled. In mere moments, he had recovered over 70% of his strength. He was shocked that Cyran's cultivation went far beyond anything he could measure.

"Thank you, sir," Dustin said earnestly. The sight enraged Malthor Cyran's actions were nothing less than an open challenge and a betrayal.

"Fine. Since you're all so eager to die, I'll send you all on your way," he spat.

Malthor's fury exploded. He stopped speaking since there was nothing left to say. Dark gold and platinum light flared across his body, intertwining into a towering column of deadly energy that shot straight toward the palace ceiling.

He thrust both hands forward and shouted, "Metal Flame Cataclysm! Annihilation of All Things!"

A deafening roar shook the entire Elysium Immortal Palace.

Around Malthor, dark gold soul-scorching flames and platinum annihilating energy surged outward like a tidal wave. Wherever the flames passed, stone melted and metal liquefied. The annihilating energy cut through everything in its path-beams collapsed, columns crumbled, walls exploded.

The decadent wine pools evaporated instantly, and the towering meat racks turned to char. Men and women indulging in pleasure didn't even have time to scream before being reduced to ashes in the soul-scorching flames.

It seemed like the entire grand hall would collapse and be erased under this single attack.

"Let's join forces!" Cyran shouted, lifting his staff into the air. Thousands of silver threads shimmered and spread outward, forming a massive arcane sigil in front of them. The glowing pattern acted as a shield, holding back the onslaught of Malthor's devastating golden flames.

The sigil spun slowly, flowing through cycles of opposing force. It constantly broke down and neutralized the raging golden flames.

Even Terraen had stopped laughing. His small face grew serious as he formed hand seals and muttered incantations under his breath.

The stone floor beneath him softened and bulged upward, reshaping into a solid, earth-colored wall. It rose behind the arcane sigil like a shield of the earth itself, bracing against the shockwave spilling over.

Without hesitation, Dustin's mystical pure energy, now flowing freely through him, surged like a raging dragon. His longsword emitted a clear, piercing cry. He moved as one with the blade, becoming a streak of cyan light that tore through the chaos.

Instead of confronting the torrent of golden flame, he shot through a narrow gap torn open by Cyran's sigil. His movement was precise and deadly, aiming straight for Malthor's body.

At the tip of his sword, all he had learned of the sword path converged into a single, piercing point of extreme cold. It was as if it could cut through every illusion in the world.

"Eradicate evil with a single strike!" Dustin shouted. Malthor hadn't expected them to move with such seamless coordination, their offense and defense perfectly intertwined. With a roar, he was forced to split his attention to counter Dustin's deadly, unpredictable strike.

His left hand formed a solid shield from the annihilating energy, ready to block any strike. With his right, he shaped the soul-scorching flames into several fire dragons that shot straight toward Dustin.

The sword and shield collided with a deafening clash, sending sparks flying Fire dragons slammed into Dustin's protective sword aura and erupted into balls of flame.

Almost instantly, a chaotic battle erupted among the four. Cyran held fast to defense, weaving the arcane sigil to absorb Malthor's wide-reaching assaults.

Terraen moved to support him. His earth element techniques alternated between raising massive shields to block the attacks and summoning stone spikes to throw Malthor off balance.

Dustin pressed the offensive, his sword flashing like lightning, and moved as swiftly as the wind. He circled Malthor, hunting for any opening, launching relentless, unstoppable attacks.

Golden light ripped through the air, while flames scorched the sky. Cyan energy streaked in all directions, and the earth. itself roared. The Elysium Immortal Palace had become their battlefield. The once-majestic halls shattered at a terrifying pace.

The massive dome was pierced by countless holes from stray energy blasts, revealing the churning, malevolent sky outside. The giant pillars supporting the hall collapsed one after another, stirring clouds of dust. The ground cracked, crisscrossed with fissures as if struck by a massive earthquake.

Grace had already fallen back to the far edge of the formation, relying on the remnants of the protective array to keep herself safe. She could only stare in disbelief at the battle raging before her, utterly stunned.

So this was the true power of an Immortal Demon. With a single wave of Malthor's hand, mountains crumbled, and the palace itself seemed ready to collapse

She couldn't deny his terrifying strength, or the devastating force of his mastery over both metal and fire. Yet no matter what he did, the trio moved in perfect sync, countering him at every turn

Cyran's defenses deflected most of his attacks. Terraen's constant interference kept him from going all out, and Dustin's elusive, razor-sharp sword kept him on edge, genuinely threatened.

Even Malthor's dark-black war robe was torn. A faint trickle of dark-gold blood ran from the corner of his mouth. His energy wave, once as deep and unfathomable as the sea, had clearly faltered. He was now on the defensive.

"Damn it! How dare you miserable pests injure me!" Malthor roared, his eyes wild with fury and resentment.

He unleashed a massive wave of golden flame to force the three k momentarily Staggering, his face darkened with a terrifying storm of anger.

Dustin and the others closed in, forming a triangular formation around him. Their bodies were tired from the fight, but their momentum hadn't faltered.

Malthor was running on his last reserves of energy. The tide of battle was tipping, and victory was starting to slip from his grasp.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2719

“It’s time for your execution, Malthor,” Dustin said coldly, leveling his sword at him. Cyran swept his staff upward as the arcane sigil slowly pressed down from above, while Terraen cracked his knuckles, eager to jump in.

Just when everyone thought the outcome was decided, Malthor’s face twisted into an extremely unsettling smile-a blend of madness, cruelty, and grim resolve.

“Execute me? You think you can defeat me? He let out a harsh, broken laugh. His gaze swept over Valindra, Lysander, and Talmor -who were either sealed away or lying severely injured nearby. A glint of undisguised greed and cruelty flickered in his eyes.

“To force me to use this technique... You should be proud.”

Before his words fell, he threw both arms wide and began chanting an ancient, sinister incantation that seemed to crawl up from the deepest abyss.

As the chant echoed, the dark gold and platinum glow surrounding him turned pitch black. A surge of evil far darker and more nauseating than dragon blood malevolent energy erupted like a demon waking from eternal slumber.

“In my name, I offer the sacrifice of kindred blood. Devour their souls and return to the source. Rise, Demon Dragon!”

Three jet-black beams erupted from Malthor’s body, each one topped with a writhing dragon skull. They shot across the hall like chains from hell itself and slammed into Valindra, Lysander, and Talmor.

“No...”

From Valindra’s sealed light cocoon came a soul-piercing scream, filled with absolute terror. Lysander’s frozen body trembled violently, his expression cracking into endless pain and regret.

Talmor’s eyes widened in the blood-soaked ground. He let out a piercing, inhuman howl. What happened next made everyone’s blood run cold.

The three bodies deflated like punctured balloons, withering visibly. All the life force and souls they had cultivated over a lifetime, even the dragon essence flowing through their

blood and flesh, were all forcefully siphoned away by the black beams and channeled directly into Malthor's body

Valindra's flawless beauty disappeared in an instant, her body reduced to a shrunken, skin-covered skeleton. Lysander's slender frame collapsed into nothing but a leathery husk wrapped around bones. Even Talmor's bulky frame was stripped down to a dry, lifeless skeleton.

In the blink of an eye, Malthor had turned all three of his formidable guardians into grotesque, horrifying corpses with his dark sorcery.

The last spark of life vanished from their eyes, leaving only endless emptiness and the weight of death.

Having absorbed the power of all three, Malthor began to twist into something terrifying. His already massive frame swelled again, bursting through the tattered battle robes.

Dark, dense dragon scales glinted with a cold, eerie light across his body. His hands morphed into savage claws, fingertips shimmering with deadly chill.

Two massive bumps rose from his forehead, like horns straining to break free. Behind him, a tearing sound split the air as a pair of jagged, incomplete black wings ripped open from his back.

Malthor's face contorted into something neither human nor dragon, with bared fangs. His eyes burned into vertical slits of dark-red fire, raw with unbridled rage, chaos, and lust for destruction.

A storm of demonic energy surged outward, fused with the restless power of multiple dragons he had forcibly absorbed. The black whirlwind radiated from him, tangible and suffocating

The ruined Immortal Palace groaned under the pressure, teetering on the brink of collapse. Malthor had consumed his allies and become a terrifying half-dragon, half-demon abomination.

A roar that seemed to rise from the depths of hell itself shook the entire island. The sonic blast flattened the remaining palace ruins around them.

Dustin, Cyran, and Terraen's faces turned pale. The evil energy radiating from Malthor far surpassed anything they had felt before. It made their very souls tremble, and their hearts sank at once.

Malthor had become a terrifying half-dragon, half-demon abomination. His overwhelming magical power twisted together with the jagged, unassimilated energies of the dragons he had forcibly consumed.

A visible black storm formed, tearing through the last remnants of the Elysium Immortal Palace. Stone and shattered pillars turned to dust in the storm. Even the surrounding space groaned and warped under the weight of such pure malevolence.

He threw his head back, letting out a roar neither human nor dragon. His dark-red vertical pupils locked onto Dustin, Cyran, and Terraen. In that gaze burned nothing but the purest desire to destroy.

“Pests... Become fuel for my ascent to the supreme path of the demonic path,” the demonized Malthor said, ready to attack. He didn’t even need to employ any complex techniques. A single sweep of his massive claw was enough.

The black-scaled talon tore through the void, leaving five jagged streaks of warped space in its wake, sweeping across the battlefield like a grim reaper’s scythe. Wherever the claws swiped, life withered, and spiritual energy vanished.

An Understated Dominance

Chapter 2720

“Watch out!” Cyran’s face went pale as he swung his staff wildly. The arcane sigil flared to its full size in an instant, straining to block the claw.

Terraen shouted and slammed both palms to the ground. A wall of earth, several yards thick and shimmering with ochre crystal light, erupted between the sigil and the attack.

Dustin poured every ounce of his strength into the strike. His mystical pure energy surged through his sword without restraint, forming a condensed cyan sword aura that seemed sharp enough to split light from darkness. He aimed it directly at the center of the claw.

The three unleashed their full defenses, but Malthor’s claws smashed through them with unstoppable force. There was no stalemate, only the sound of everything collapsing.

The crystal-light barrier that Terraen had conjured shattered like paper. Cyran’s arcane sigil twisted violently, the swirling energies spinning madly in a desperate attempt to contain the dark energy.

However, it could only last for a heartbeat before exploding. Cyran groaned, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth, and he staggered backward.

Dustin’s dual-essence sword aura struck the claw mark, and it was like ice against adamantine. The clash rang with a piercing screech, and the sword aura broke inch by inch.

The backlash tore open the web between his thumb and forefinger, nearly sending the blade flying. He was thrown backward as if struck by lightning, blood spraying from his wounds.

All of it came from a single casual swing. Yet somehow, despite fighting together, the three of them were thoroughly defeated.

The demonized Malthor let out a cruel, savage laugh. His tattered demonic wings snapped open, and in the blink of an eye, his ghostly form appeared right in front of Terraen. He moved faster than ever before.

“Accursed one, you’ll be my first appetizer, ” he said. A jet-black dragon claw, radiating an energy wave that could obliterate everything, slammed down toward him.

Terraen’s face went pale, and he tried to use the earth-escaping technique. But the surrounding space was sealed off by demonic energy, leaving him with nowhere to dodge.

“Don’t touch my disciple!” Cyran roared, his eyes blazing with fury.

Ignoring his own injuries, he forcefully activated his inner core, and the energy surged through him. In a flash, he positioned himself in front of Terraen. His staff transformed into thousands of silver threads, swirling like a collapsing river of stars toward Malthor’s claws.

“Dustin! Get him out of here!” he shouted.

“Mr. Xalvador!” Terraen screamed.

“Trying to run?”

The demonized Malthor laughed coldly, and his dragon claw snapped shut. The river of silver threads shattered instantly, vanishing without a trace.

Cyran staggered back, blood dripping from his mouth. His energy wave faltered in an instant, and his inner core clearly suffered a crushing blow.

Malthor’s other dragon claw had already appeared behind Dustin, silent as a shadow. The tips glowed faintly, aiming straight for the back of his heart

Dustin was trapped, attacked from both front and back. It was a brutal sneak attack. He gritted his teeth against the pain and turned to block with his sword.

The clash of metal echoed through the sky. A force beyond description slammed into him, rattling the bones in his arm.

The impact sent him flying again, smashing into a pile of broken walls and rubble. Buried beneath the debris, his life hung in the balance.

The gap in strength between them was terrifying. Malthor, fully consumed by his demonic energy, had long surpassed the terrestrial immortal realm. He had reached an entirely new level of strength. Even if the three of them had fought together, it would have been like a mouse challenging a lion.

He moved forward with heavy, deliberate steps toward the barely conscious Cyran and the terrified Terraen. His dark-red, vertical pupils gleamed with cruel amusement, like a cat playing with its prey.

“Cyran, you stubborn old fool,” Malthor spat. “You will watch with your own eyes as I slowly crush your accursed one’s soul to dust. ”

His dragon claw reached toward Terraen’s head, moving deliberately slowly. But every inch radiated a suffocating, bone-deep pressure.

Terraen’s eyes darted between Cyran’s ashen face, Dustin buried somewhere in the ruins, and the deathly claw closing in. For the first time, his dark, lively eyes showed a resolve and sorrow far beyond his years.

“Mr. Xalvador...” he murmured, his voice trembling but filled with unshakable resolve. “I don’t want to hide anymore. Let’s fight him together.”

Cyran looked into his disciple’s eyes and saw the same fierce determination he recognized in himself. Then he turned to face Malthot and his overwhelming presence.

Any lingering doubt in his mind burned away, replaced by a calm, tragic acceptance. It was the clarity of one willing to risk everything to protect the path of righteousness.

With great effort, he raised a hand and gently stroked Terraen’s hair. His voice was hoarse, but it carried an unusual serenity, a quiet strength in the face of death

“You’re right. Protecting this island and cleansing it of demon energy is our destiny. Today, we will use our broken bodies to fight for a sliver of life for all living beings.”

With that, Cyran straightened his hunched frame in a sudden surge of will. The lifeless energy that had clung to him flared violently, like a dying light returning with a roar But this time, the surge carried something new. It was a burning, all-consuming resolve

A dazzling cyan radiance erupted from his body. It wasn’t spiritual energy but was the essence of his life itself, the fire of his divine soul blazing with unstoppable intensity.

“Cyran! Are you out of your mind?”

The demonized Malthor stiffened, his expression twisting in alarm. His dragon claw lunged toward Terraen, moving with terrifying speed.

“Dustin, inherit my legacy. Strike down this demon.”

Cyran let out a long, earth-shattering roar, his hands thrusting forward with tremendous force. The towering column of vivid cyan energy, burning with life and spirit, did not attack Malthor.

Instead, it traversed space like rivers returning to the sea, instantly pouring into the distant pile of rubble where Dustin lay buried.