

"Be quiet. I'll decide that myself." Initiating the process of his contemplation, Virus began considering the various dilemmas.

His first dilemma was whether to buy or rent a shop. However, considering his capital, it was clear he could not afford even renting the cheapest store right now, not talking about buying a shop from a crowded market district.

Thus, Virus was more inclined toward raising his capital before renting a shop somewhere.

As for whether he should rent it in a remote or busy area, that was a decision for another time.

For now, turning toward Luca, while throwing a single Qi Ingot at him, he ordered, "Bring me a pen and a few notebooks."

"Yes, sir." Exiting the room, Luca was gone for around half an hour. When he returned, he had procured a pen and several empty notebooks.

"Here you go, boss."

Nodding in contentment, Virus opened a page of the notebook as he started writing and scribbling on it.

When he was finished, he casually closed the notebook before adding some words on its cover.

「Twisting Tempest Thrust」 :<Class: Mid-Human>

Then opening the first page which he had initially left blank, he added a brief description.

[Description: Twist like tempest a hole in your enemy! The first form requires one pathway as it focuses on the word 'Thrust', the second form requires two liberated pathways as it concentrates the 'Tempest', the third form...]

When he was done, after a brief deliberation, he also skipped to the later pages and added another section called 'Cultivation Trust's Insights'.

In that segment, Virus described his own experience with the technique using the simplest terms he could express. Now, anyone who tried this particular technique would only require around twenty percent of their original efforts in order to learn it.

Then, going back to the cover he jotted down 'Source: Cultivation Trust'. Since the technique originated from the future itself, there wasn't really anyone to claim copyright or ownership over it, not that there was copyright in the cultivation multiverse, to begin with.

The reason why no one dared infringe the techniques of other organizations was mostly that it was considered taboo other than the possibility of such actions incurring the wrath of the said organization if found out.

Throwing the notebook at Archibald next, Virus declared, "Alright, that's it. Let's go auction it off."

"Huh? What's this, boss?" Out of curiosity, Archibald inquired.

"Can't you read? It's a mid-human class longsword technique, we're going to auction that off and then use its money to rent a place."

To be frank, the reason why Virus was willing to sell off this technique of his was that it was no longer of any use to him.

Other than the fact that his current weapon of choice was a sword and not a longsword, Virus was confident even in case he had a longsword, he would've long abandoned this weak mid-class technique.

"Ah, I see! Let's go then, I know an auction house that is held on this very day every month." Even though Archibald and the other three had several questions, assuming Virus may not appreciate their inquisitive questions, they remained silent.

...

"Halt!" When the five reached the entrance of a rather large building with a big signboard stating Esteemed Luxury auction house, a guard stopped them in their tracks.

"The Auction has already started, leave." The guard mouthed arrogantly.

"Hmm, your supervisor probably wouldn't like that." Keeping his cool, Archibald replied. At the same time, taking out the notebook, he waved it in front of the guard's profile, nearly rubbing it on his face.

「Twisting Tempest Thrust」 :<Class: Mid-Human>

"We're here to do business, so go call your boss if you don't wish to be blamed for losing such a valuable item." Caressing his beard, Archibald advised. Although he was utterly bald in the head, he had a long beard on his face.

"Ah, please follow me." Reading the name and class of the technique briefly, the guard knew he had probably made a mistake by attempting to send them away without even checking why they were here.

Therefore, changing his behavior a one hundred eighty percent, he respectfully told them to go after him.

Subsequently, while the other guard remained at the entrance, that guard guided them to the doorstep of a particular room before pointing out, "Please wait a moment."

Afterward, he knocked and entered the room.

"You guys can go inside. Branch chief is expecting you." A few minutes later, returning, the guard urged them to enter before scurrying away.

When the five ambled into the room, they spotted the frame of a plump woman probably in her early thirties sitting behind a desk.

The instant she caught them entering, she stood up and greeted them with a warm smile, "Welcome to Esteemed Luxury, dear clients. I'm Ports, the branch chief of this place, please come and sit." Pointing at the comfortable chairs in front of her desk, she humbly invited them.

After that, when the five sat down, without further ado, she jumped to the main question, "how may I be of service today?"

"Ah..." Examining this plump woman that was full in all the good areas and slim in the unnecessary areas like the waist, Archibald was dazed. He had expected a man to be the chief of this place and not such a stunning woman.

"Yes?" Awaiting his response patiently, Ports simply exhibited a professional smile. In the meantime, she was also inspecting the countenance of each and every one of these five unknown people at her presence.

After her gaze briefly remained on the profiles of Luca, Luna, Archibald, and Augustus, her next target was Virus. Alas, the second she took a glimpse of Virus' features, she felt a little bit stumped.

'Damn, this has got to be the most devilishly handsome face I've witnessed my whole life. Though what's even more peculiar is the fact that I can't read his expressions..' Of course, she still maintained her bearings and did not forget about her professionalism.

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'I wonder who he is, though? And why do the other four seem so conscious of his existence? He must be the leader.' Being shrewd enough after dealing with all types of clients so far, Ports accurately determined.

"Ah, right... we've brought a Mid-Human class Longsword Technique we want to auction off, here it is." Extending his arm, Archibald placed the Twisting Tempest Thrust book on the desk. At the same time, he could not stop sneaking a peek at her great figure.

On the opposite side of him, witnessing this scene, Virus was tongue-tied. 'Birds of a feather flock together indeed. That old friend of his marries someone around his daughter's age and now this oldie's shamelessly eyeing this woman.'

Since she had been notified of the merchandise already, Ports promptly reached out and grabbed the book.

Then, opening it, she skimmed through it for around five minutes before she closed it at last and let out an impressed gasp.

"Amazing!" She said without holding back. "And there is also an insight section which is going to make learning the technique so much easier!"

"Hahaha, of course, what else did you expect?" As if Ports was complimenting him per se, Archibald proudly held his chin high.

"Can you sell this to me? I'll pay a thousand first-grade Qi Ingots this moment if you agree!" Excited about the prospect of getting her hands on the book, she offered. However, looking at the direction of her gaze, it was clear she wasn't asking Archibald that question, rather, she was negotiating with Virus.

Although that act of being ignored promptly made Archibald annoyed, there wasn't anything he could do except forget about it. 'Hmph, does she think she's a big shot just because she has a big butt and huge cow-like breasts?'

On the other hand, seeing that Ports had figured out he was the leader, truthfully, Virus wasn't surprised since the other four's body language was screaming they were his lackeys and that they were merely tagging along.

Thus, locking gazes with her, Virus outright rejected her, "No need. Just auction it off for us. I heard you're holding an auction event right now, sell it there." That was all Virus had to say to this strange woman.

Unfortunately, sitting with locked ankles, Ports shook her head. "Ah, about that... except the main surprise merchandise, we usually spread a list of our items that will be sold a week prior to the auction itself, so I don't think we can do it."

"Ah, is that so? Guess we'll just go to another auction house, then. Goodbye." Standing up, Virus honestly wanted to go try the other auction houses and see what they had to offer. He wasn't just faking a strategy to prompt the branch chief to change her mind.

Nonetheless, observing his abrupt course of action, feeling restless, Ports vocalized, "Please stop!"

"Hmm? What is it?" A simpering smirk creeping on his mouth, Virus vocalized.

"Okay, w-we'll sell it in today's auction!" Fidgeting with the corner of her dress, in a tremulous voice, she exclaimed.

"Hmm? What? You don't really need to though. Don't change the rules of your auction house for us alone. Honestly, I can see where you're coming from, if it can't be done, there's no helping it, so we'll leave." Insisting on leaving much to the frustration of Ports, Virus was about to turn around and walk away again.

That reaction, however, only made Ports' eyes go wide open as she pondered speechlessly, 'I just agreed to sell your book for you so why are you the one rejecting now?!'

Luckily, she provided a logical answer outwardly, "No worries, I wouldn't be really breaking the rules of the auction house if I sell it as the second surprise merchandise."

"Hoooh? There was such a thing too? Okay then." Smirking, a mocking tone was clear in Virus' sentence.

...

After going through a few processes, Ports personally led them to a private client area and left them alone there.

Meanwhile, down below, one item after another was being auctioned off by the auctioneer.

There was a variety of items and equipment such as weapons of First- and even Second-Tempering, there were also many types of pills. Alas, so far, there was no technique whatsoever.

Apparently, techniques were much rarer compared to equipment and pills.

Meanwhile, since none of the items were garnering Virus' focus, he began inspecting his surroundings while looking at the various other private cabins that could be perceived from his position.

Beside him, discerning Virus' passing curiosity, Archibald introduced the few people he could identify.

"That guy is a famous disciple of the Poison Deity clan's Poison faction."

"I don't know that one."

"No idea who that is as well."

"Well, I haven't seen that person in my entire life."

"Oh, that's the notorious drunkard younger son of the Deity faction's leader. Everyone knows about him."

After speaking about the so-called drunkard younger son of the Deity faction leader, Archibald was expecting Virus' eyesight to move to the next target when much to his surprise, he realized Virus' eyes remained fixated on the drunkard.

"Tell me more." Came Virus' casual prompt of curiosity.

"Ah, well, some call him the 'dreg' while some others address him as the 'drunkard'."

"The dreg title is because, unlike his older brother, his talent is very mediocre in cultivation, therefore, people have marked him as the undesirable dreg of his father. Everyone believes his father passed all the good seeds to his older son and pumped all the remaining dregs into making the younger son." Agreeing with everyone else himself, a glimmer of contempt was beaming in Archibald's pupils as well.

"As for why they call him a drunkard, obviously, that's because he's a drunkard who's always hanging out in the brothels of the city, tch, garbage."

"Hmm, I see." With his thoughts totally unknown to the other four, Virus focused on the ongoing auction again.

After a few items were sold, the auctioneer suddenly started announcing the part that was relevant to Virus.

"The next object is going to astonish you all..."

Afterward, the auctioneer kept complimenting the technique until the book was pushed onto the stage.

"And here is the amazing Twisting Tempest Thrust! A rare Mid-Human class longsword technique that's extremely potent for all those who are in the Liberation stage!"

With entertaining observations, the auctioneer was chucking, snorting, and even cackling at times.

"Furthermore, according to our branch chief, there is even an insight segment which will help you comprehend and grasp the technique in the shortest duration imaginable! Bear in mind, our branch chief has personally stepped forward to guarantee its quality! Do not lose this rare opportunity." Like he was about to sell his wife, a painful and reluctant light started emitting from his eyes and face.

"Let's begin then, the bids will start from a hundred first-grade Qi Ingots! I repeat, do not lose this chance, even if you are above the Liberation stage already, you could always buy it for your children and other family members! This will be a top-notch Human technique for you!" Shifting his weight from one leg to another, he spread his arms before pointing them both at the book on the board.

When the auctioneer was finally finished elaborating and tempting, the first bid reverberated in the house.

"Two hundred!" By that, the bidder meant two hundred first-grade Qi Ingots.

"Five hundred!"

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Chapter 493 - Missed

"Eight hundred!"

The auction continued for around a few minutes until the price went as far as a thousand Qi Ingots.

"Thousand and ten!"

"Thousand and twenty!"

Now, all the bidders believed the price has surpassed the technique's cap worth. Thus, only those that truly desired the technique increased their bids.

Nonetheless, even those competing people added ten Qi Ingots alone in each bid.

Finally, after the value hit a thousand and fifty Qi Ingots, all the biddings stopped as the auctioneer announced the winner and moved on to the main surprise merchandise.

Soon, the auctioneer pushed a cart with a spear on top of the platform and started elaborating excitedly, "Behold today's main item called Spear Holder, a weapon of Third-Tempering!"

In the meantime, the crowds' cheers and murmurs also wildly surged. It was clear most of the cultivators present today were anticipating this weapon very much.

Listening up to that point, woefully, Virus was no longer interested as he rose to his feet immediately and urged everyone, "Let's go, we're done here."

He could pinpointedly determine that his own sword, Steel of Darkness, was much more superior compared to this low-quality Third-Tempering Item. In case his sword was a high-quality Third-Tempering Item, then that spear put on exhibition was certainly a low-quality one.

Afterward, followed by the other four, the party strolled to the previous room of the branch chief before knocking.

"Come in!" As the muffled sound transmitted over, the five barged inside.

"Ah, you guys are here... I've prepared your Qi Ingots already, please sit." Maintaining her professional act, Ports notified.

Afterward, she explained how the auction house's commission was around five percent, and therefore, the final price that will be given to them was around thousand Qi Ingots of the first grade.

She also didn't forget to add with a helpless and somewhat frustrated sigh, "See, it wasn't any different than the price I offered you guys initially. The only difference is, if you had sold it to me, you could've saved some time and I would've kept it for the next auction event and would've advertised it till then, then according to my predictions, the price would have been elevated to a thousand and five hundred Qi Ingots at the bare minimum. What a pity." Regretful and filled with remorse at the loss of such a great opportunity to earn some easy profit, Ports could not raise her head as she kept it tilted down.

"Hmm, I admit, you are really good at your job," Since Virus truly was not aware of the pricing data of the market for analysis, he was not sure if a thousand Qi Ingots was a loss or not, thus, he wanted to see for himself and be the judge of that. However, at the very end, that wasn't the whole picture as well. "however, I do not regret my decision. In fact, I still believe I made the right call due to some factors I can't talk about.

"Alright, we'll take our leave now." Rising to his feet, Virus signaled Archibald to get the pouch of money as he walked to the door. However, right before he was about to vanish for her sight, Ports' voice traveled through, "If you ever have anything else you wish to sell or buy, you are always welcome to our Esteemed Luxury Auction House."

...

Exiting the auction house, now that he had some capital at hand, Virus notified those behind him, "Let's go see the shops that are up for lease with a monthly rent of a hundred and the deposit of around one thousand Qi Ingots."

"Ah, boss, I don't think we'll make a profit out of this if you do that..." Confident about his own belief, Archibald advised Virus against leasing such a cheap place. The last thing he wanted to see was his boss going bankrupt due to an unwise business plan.

"Just take me there." His hands clasped behind his back, Virus wasn't in any mood to justify his actions to his servants.

Seeing Virus' persistence, there wasn't really anything else the old Archibald could do except adhering to the order and do as he was told.

Subsequently, it took them around half an hour before they finally arrived at an extremely remote area in the Deity-Half of Outer Ricando where there wasn't a single fly to be found anywhere.

Of course, there were several open stores with a variety of merchandise in them, however, not a single one of them had a visitor or a customer except the owners themselves.

"Boss, this district here is the cheapest location in the city." Gazing into the eyes of the various owners as he bypassed their shops, Virus couldn't discover an ounce of motivation or hope within the eyes of any of them. It was clear this region was the trashiest location in the entire Ricando. "The region is notoriously recognized as the 'dead pool district' amongst the businessmen due the guaranteed financial death and bankruptcy of any businessman who is foolish enough to pick this location."

"Hmm, I see, which shops are up for rent anyway?" Turning toward Archibald, Virus inquired. It was as if everything Archibald had said was entering from one ear before exiting from the other one, he simply ignored all warnings.

Forlorn, while pointing at the several unoccupied stores in their surroundings, Archibald stated. "Ah, there are a lot actually, the owners of all these empty and closed shops you see wish to either sell or rent their shop, you just need to pick whichever one you desire and we're good to go."

"Is that so?" By now, an odd gleam of anticipation was brightening Virus' pupils which annoyed Archibald so much that he began pondering in utter

disbelief. 'I say he's going to die and he's happy about it? Did I perhaps take a madman as my boss?'

Inspecting the surroundings, Virus got to work as he meticulously considered the location of each shop.

In order to make a rational pick, Virus needed to take into account, calculate, and analyze several factors. For instance, the position of the shop, quick accessibility of the shop to the incoming customers, etc.

Fortunately, it took Virus a few seconds alone before he was finished with the process of contemplation as he easily ranked the potential of all stores from the best to the worst one.

Obviously, the best ones were closer to the very entrance of the district which was easily accessible while the longer the distance got, the worse the position became.

Subsequently, wanting the four to also grasp a rudimentary understanding of the potential of the shops, he logically elaborated which ones were the best options while also emphasizing the ones that were of poorer quality.

Virus' purpose in doing so was because he wished for them to quickly get the hang of how the business functioned since he had every intention of leaving the management chores to them.

Albeit, needing to explain even the most basic details made Virus miss the four uglies and appreciate them more than ever. If they were around, they could've swiftly connected to the world database or he could've transmitted the overall data in less than a blink of an eye.. They were greatly missed indeed.

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"So, boss, since that store right there is the best one, no doubt you are targeting it, right?" Feeling proud of his intelligence, Archibald concluded the obvious.

"No, follow me." Denying his assumption with a wave of his arm, Virus sauntered far into the district. The deeper they walked into the district, however, the more lost the four felt.

That was because according to Virus himself, with each step they took deeper into the district, the customer potential also decreased by that much. According to them, Virus was acting completely irrational right now.

Nevertheless, Virus continued on foot until he reached the most distant shop, which based upon Virus' claim itself, was the worst one in the entire district itself.

"We'll rent this one." He mouthed casually as if he was stating the most obvious fact in existence.

"..."

"..."

"..."

"Huh?" Utterly speechless, the four's jaws only remained wide open until Archibald asked tongue-tied. "B-but boss, you said it yourself! This is the most inferior point! Isn't it natural to pick the best place instead of the worst one? Or have I gone senile without realizing it myself?"

That question, unfortunately, only incurred in a somewhat disappointed sigh from Virus who merely replied with, "Just rent the damn shop, you'll understand when the time is right."

Simultaneously, a notion flickered through his brain, 'I miss the goddamn CEO ugly... that bastard would've guessed my whole plan the instant I'd notified

him I wanna open a store... heck, he would've come up with everything himself while I enjoy a cup of tea!

Now that he had picked the shop he wanted, there wasn't really anything else for Virus to achieve around here, hence, turning around, he left the district and returned to the Decent Inn alone.

Meanwhile, Archibald and the other three remained in the district as they went ahead to find the owner of the chosen shop before going through and signing the contract beside other miscellaneous chores.

On the other hand, entering the inn, Virus was faced with the sole presence of the wife, Pira, who was sitting behind the counter with no one else to receive Virus' return.

The instant she caught sight of him, Pira jumped on her feet before beaming a warm and welcoming smile at Virus. "Welcome back, Mr...?"

"Everyone calls me Vee." Expressionless, Virus introduced himself.

"Oh my, Vee." Gazing at his face left and right, a shade of red was clear over Pira's cheeks as she complimented him. "Your name is just as dashing as your face."

A coy smile was apparent over Pira's profile.

"Thank you. I would like a cup of tea to be brought over to my room." Not in the mood to entertain this woman, Virus requested before moving toward the stairs.

Meanwhile, Pira's delighted voice traversed from behind. "Alright, just wait a moment please, I'll personally brew our best tea and bring it to you in a few minutes."

Afterward, going up to his room, Virus collapsed over the chair in the balcony that was facing the view of the ancient city in front of him.

The buildings and the overall architecture of the city were oddly similar to that of ancient Greek with pillars and beautiful designs with a variety of innovative sculptures here and there.

Taking out the pill case of the Absolute Liberation Leveling, Virus decided, "I'll ingest it after enjoying a cup of tea." Since Virus wasn't sure how long the process will be, he wanted to at least drink a glass of tea.

Knock! Knock!

"Come in."

Subsequently, the door to his room was pushed open as Pira brought over a cup of freshly brewed tea.

Ambling to the location of his seat, however, Pira bent over right in front of Virus while placing the tea on the small tea table beside him. What was interesting about this situation though, was the fact that Pira was bending over while adjusting the angle in a way so her cleavage and her bare nipples beneath her dress were right in Virus' line of sight.

"I prepared the tea myself using a special recipe, I'm sure you'll like it, Vee." Opening her mouth with the tip of her tongue showing on the side, Pira maintained that position.

"Okay." Picking up the tea, Virus was about to gently take a sip of it, when he realized Pira was still standing in front of him while continuing to smile. 'What the fuck's wrong with this that?'

"Hmm? Is there anything else?" Frowning, Virus queried.

"Ah! N-no, then I'll leave you alone." Exclaiming that, Pira finally left the room after much hesitation. Even while walking to the door, she kept sneaking a peek back at him.

Alone, at last, Virus took his time to drink his tea. Unfortunately, the second the taste of the tea hit his tongue, he cursed out loud, "Fuck, this tastes like shit! I miss my Lil Belle's tea so fucking much!"

Putting the tea aside immediately, Virus had a change of mind and was resolved to consume the pill instead of torturing himself with the shitty tea.

Therefore, sitting cross-legged, Virus opened the case at long last ensuing the revelation of a purple pill that was shortly put on display.

'Ah, if I only had the tech to analyze it before eating it.' If there was one thing Virus regretted about taking the Absolute Liberation Leveling pill right away, it was the fact that he could not study it thoroughly enough.

"Now..." Grabbing the pill, after a brief hesitation, Virus went ahead and swallowed it. 'Well, there's no helping it, my survival matters the most.'

Gulp!

Closing his eyelids next, Virus sank into a meditative state while focusing every bit of his concentration inside his internal world.

For a few minutes at least, there was no reaction whatsoever until his stomach started heating up while waves after waves of warmth traveled through his organs until they came to a halt on his eighth pathway that was only one or two percent synthesized.

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Chapter 495 - Absolute Liberation Leveling

Following shortly, the percentage of the fusion experienced a gradual rise.

In one hour, the fusion rate increased to nine percent.

By the third hour, the synthesis was elevated to thirty-five percent.

Compared to Origin's absolute and instantaneous escalation speed, this so-called Absolute Liberation Leveling pill was still like a joke.

When the tenth hour elapsed, the fusion rate finally climbed to one hundred percent synthesis as the eighth passage became a complete and connected whole!

At the same time, the last vestiges of the pill efficacy that refused to die out tried pushing themselves to the next level in order to initiate the synthesis process of the final ninth pathway!

Alas, while he stayed at the very brink, just as the remaining potency of Absolute Liberation Leveling was about to push him beyond the eighth level to the ninth, an intense resistance, unlike anything Virus had experienced so far hindered the path of the last traces of the energy from the pill!

'The third taboo!' Sensing it, Virus concluded at once. Right now, out of nowhere, at the blocked entrance of the seventeenth and eighteenth passages, an intense quiver that was shockingly dealing internal damage within him had materialized!

Cough!

The vibration force inside him was so unbelievably potent that it didn't take long before Virus puked blood due to a part of him being damaged.

When he was about to break through to the seventh level, the first taboo, the easiest one, had attempted to block his path. Albeit, it was utterly incapable in the end.

Subsequently, at the time of his breakthrough to the eighth level, the second taboo was an even raspier barricading force that had temporarily hampered his way. And yet, in the end, Virus came out on top in a rather laid-back style.

And now, he was against the Third Taboo!

'The inhibiting force from the heavens must be at least a few hundredfolds more severe than the second taboo which honestly makes it scary even for me.'

It was at this time that Virus finally realized just how much the Heavens were against the Ninth Level of Liberation!

If they 'disliked' the seventh level and 'hated' the eighth level, they didn't just 'abhor' the ninth level, rather, it was so bad that they simply 'did not allow' the existence of the ninth level!

Calculating the possibility of him triumphantly shattering the restriction and forcing his way to the ninth level without any assistance, Virus noticed that his chances were initially less than five percent. And that five percent existed only because it was him, Virus!

'Damn, that would've been extremely hard! And time-consuming!' With some beads of sweat covering his forehead, Virus felt like he had just dodged a bullet. However, soon, he felt as if a second bullet was shot at him!

Cough!

Puking more blood, much to his disbelief, Virus noticed that despite having swallowed an absolute type of pill that could assure the breakthrough eventually, he may not survive that long in case the breakthrough process took long enough.

'This damn pill is too slow! My insides will be messed up to death before it can actually help me fucking breakthrough!' One rudimentary scrutiny was all it took before Virus knew for sure he could not sit still any longer or what awaited him at the end was nothing but death!

'I can't remain passive anymore!' Pondering that, Virus entered a deep state of meditation before gathering his entire focus at the ending point of his eighth pathway!

Next, assembling every bit of his cultivation energy, together with the undying force of the Absolute Liberation Leveling, he bashed everything into the vibration force!

Bam!

The wall of obstruction shook wildly. But sadly, it did not shatter!

"Again!" Shouting that out loud, Virus pushed all his energy and assimilated it with the undying energy of the pill before crashing them all to the wall once more!

BAMM!

Cough! Pfft!

Frankly, this time it was his own violent attack on the barrier that harmed him. And worse yet, the invisible wall set up by the heavens had only shown a few cracks on itself!

Gritting his teeth and ignoring the internal damage and pain, a pure rage was shooting off Virus' being as he collected every bit of energy from every corner plus the undying force and assaulted the wall with bloodshot eyes behind his closed eyelids. "BEGONE!"

BOOM!

The entire world within his physique was shaking so hard that Virus had no sensations left anywhere in his being as he passed out!

And yet, although gravely impaired and wrecked, the wall of the heavens was standing tall, the heavens had come out on top!

Despite Virus' active efforts together with the assistance of the surefire pill which was known to nearly break all common sense as it had an absolute effect of raising the cultivation level of the consumer to precisely one percent

fusion rate of the following level, Virus had still failed as he was forced into unconsciousness.

Although Virus had failed and one may assume that to be the end of the road for him, that was not the case at all. As a matter of fact, even while Virus remained unconscious, the Absolute Liberation Pill's heaven-defying undying force continued eating away at the seriously weakened third taboo as it gradually made it weaker and weaker.

Moreover, on the plus side, due to Virus' unstoppable strikes, the wall had grown so feeble by now that it could no longer worsen Virus' injuries. So, in a way, it was Virus who had been the winner!

Meanwhile, the heaven-defying undying might of the pill proceeded to slowly but surely erode the taboo until finally, it was so fragile that it naturally crumbled away like wet thin paper.

Boom!

Internally, a thundering noise reverberated in Virus' physique inside his pathways as wild energy charged into his seventeenth and eighteenth single passages and promptly fused them to the state of one percent!

Ninth Level of Liberation, broken through!

Now, Virus was at the very peak level of Liberation, having achieved something that was nothing but a myth, a never-seen-before legend, in his past life in the future!

THE GOD VIRUS

Chapter 496 - Boss

After an unknown duration of time, Virus' eyelids suddenly jumped open while his pupils dilated to the extreme!

Gazing around next, he was faced with the concerned faces of Luca, Luna, Augustus, and Archibald.

"Boss! You woke up at last!" Catching the sight of Virus regaining consciousness, Luna shouted in utter happiness.

"Boss!" The other three were also glad Virus was seemingly fine.

In the meantime, examining the surroundings, Virus noticed that he was lying down on his bed inside the inn's room.

"Ah..." Intending to move into a sitting position, a harsh pain overwhelmed Virus, catching him off-guard.

Concentrating his unique sense of awareness within himself, Virus realized that he was suffering from a serious form of internal injury. As a matter of fact, there was internal bleeding occurring concurrently which needed to be handled at once since it was guaranteed to threaten his life if left untreated.

'I need to heal up.' Although that notion went through his head, looking at the four people surrounding him, he demanded a question to be answered first, "Why are you four here in my room?"

"Ah, boss, let me tell you." Volunteering to respond, Luca added, "After leasing that shop you selected, we returned. However, then we noticed that no matter how hard we knocked on the door, you would neither reply nor open the door!" A concerned gleam radiating his pupils, he picked the rest of his description.

"In the end, we were just about to leave when we heard you yelling 'begone' or something, so left with no other choice, we barged in only to see you puking a lot of blood before fainting!" As if that bloody scene was repeating itself for the second time in his mind, Luca's eyes went wide open while color left his profile slightly. "That nearly scared us to death since we had no idea what to do... but good thing you're conscious again."

While maintaining his awareness of Luca, simultaneously, Virus was busy checking his cultivation as he discerned the clear achievement of the ninth

level of Liberation. 'Even though I failed, the Absolute Liberation Leveling pill still carried on with its task and helped me breakthrough in the end.

Magnificent!

A grin crept over Virus' face while he felt extremely gratified and happy about consuming the pill in order to break through to the ninth level.

Imagining what could have happened in case he had not eaten the pill for his breakthrough, a shiver went down Virus' spine. He could clearly see that if he had attempted to accomplish that feat on his own alone, the third taboo would've most likely put an end to his frail life before he even had a chance of elevating his cultivation to the ultimate level. 'Phew, I dodged a bullet indeed. Guess I should thank my own wits and circumstances which made me take the pill right away.'

'Thanks to me and no thanks to heavens, I survived while achieving the nigh impossible!'

Promptly snapping out of his reverie, while patting Luca's head, a broad smile exhibited on his profile, "I see, I appreciate your concern, I truly do, but for the moment at least, I'm fine."

Turning toward Archibald after that, he interrogated, "Anyway, did everything go well with the leasing task?"

Catching the question, a shimmer of excitement brightened Archibald's countenance as he joyfully notified him. "It couldn't go any better, boss! In fact, it went wonderfully well!"

"Hmm, why do you say that?" Confused, Virus waited for further clarification.

"Well, since that place was the least sought shop in the district, we noticed its owner had put it up for lease for a measly price of fifty Qi Ingots a month plus a deposit and five-hundred Qi Ingots and that's it!"

"Oh, is that so?"

"Yes! And now the shop belongs to us for a year."

"Alright, that's good I guess." Unlike Archibald's enthusiasm, Virus seemed entirely relaxed about the situation, like he did not care about that little bit of discount at all.

"But boss, what should we do now? Can you at least tell me what you're going to be selling at that shop? Perhaps fruits? Food? Clothes? What?" Feeling curious, Archibald tried shedding some light on Virus' mysterious plan.

"About that, I'll tell you soon, but before that, although I'm fine temporarily, there is an open internal wound in my body bleeding as we speak, I need to take care of that." Virus announced with visible sweat covering his forehead.

"Ah, my sincere apology, sir. I didn't know."

"It's okay. Luna, give me a pen and paper." Commanding Luna, Virus waited for a few seconds before they were delivered.

Subsequently, writing the name of some materials, Virus turned toward Augustus before ordering, "Augustus, you go buy the list of materials and other stuff written on this paper."

"Alright boss." Adhering to the command, Augustus didn't delay at all as he took his leave swiftly.

Since the most urgent matter had been mentioned, Virus locked eyes with Archibald and gave further instructions. "Now, about the shop, before we get to the part about what we're going to do with it, you prepare and install the signboard."

"O-oh, okay, what should I write on the signboard though?"

Sneering at the old man for not having realized the name up to this point, Virus proclaimed, "Of course, the words on the signboard will be... Cultivation Trust. Go now!"

Observing Archibald depart as well, only Luca and Luna were around now.

"Luca." Virus opened his mouth, again.

"Yes, boss!" Nervous from the pit of his stomach, Luca shouted. He didn't know what his new boss' instructions were going to be, but whatever it was, he vowed to accomplish them to the best of his capabilities!

"You and your little brother, I want you two to do something for me." A grave expression was also clear on Virus's face while he said that sentence.

"I swear we'll do precisely as you tell us to do, boss! Whether you want us to cross a sea of flames or a mountain of swords does not matter!" Resolution forming inside his eyes to the point of fanatical and blind faith, Luca made the oath.

"Good! I want you two to tail someone. I wish to know every location that person visits whether it's to eat, drink, fuck, or sleep. It does not matter where. In other words, I want you two to unravel all the places that person goes to usually during both day and night."

"Your wish is my command, boss. Who should we follow?"

"Hmm, I'm still unaware of his name, however, he's notoriously known as the dreg or the drunkard by everyone in the city." Afterward, Virus went ahead and described the drunkard's exact profile without missing a single crease on the said person's face.

When he was done, Virus didn't forget to warn the two as well, "Be absolutely careful not to be discovered. This task needs to be accomplished without you

two getting caught. So, always maintain your distance and do not approach the target no matter what, do you understand?"

"Yes, boss!" Heeding the command, both Luca and Luna bowed respectfully before going out to do their boss' bidding.

THE GOD VIRUS

Chapter 497 - In Motion

Left in the room all by himself, Virus' expression contorted slightly while his nerves received and transmitted the sensation of sharp pain to his brain.

"Now that everything is in motion, I better rest until Augustus comes back."

Murmuring that sentence out loud, Virus closed his eyelids as he sank into a deep sleep.

Hours escaped by.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

A repetitive knock suddenly awakened Virus out of his brief slumber.

"Come in!" He said in a hurry since dealing with the internal issue of his physique was his top priority.

Pushing the entry open, Augustus walked inside and placed a bag filled with various materials on the table.

"Everything you need is here, boss." Tilting his head respectfully, Augustus mouthed.

"Where is the special metal pot with a lid I asked for?"

"Oh, that... please wait a second." Going out momentarily, Augustus returned together with a small pot and a lid on top of it. "Here it is. Its owner promised me it's an extremely durable piece of pot since it was made using a special metal. He sold it to me for one-hundred Qi Ingots."

Since everything he had asked for was indeed ready and accessible now, nodding in sheer satisfaction, he dismissed Augustus. "Alright, you may leave. Oh, right, don't let anyone disturb me until I say otherwise."

"Yes, sir."

...

Left in the room with a variety of plants and herbs, a strange type of wood, and a lidded pot, Virus forced himself into a sitting position while the intense pain flooded his brain again.

Amongst the three categories of items procured, the object that was especially garnering Virus' focus was the unique bar of wood that had strange yet beautiful engravings on itself, engravings that were the result and work of nature itself.

Regardless, he did not linger on it longer than necessary. Hence, standing up, ignoring the affliction completely, he picked everything up and moved to where the fireplace was located in his room.

Then, he was just about to grab the water container filled with drinking water and pour some of it into the pot when an idea bubbled up, 'Hmm, what if I use that instead of this?'

Immediately, having decided on his following course of action, he was already on the move as he left outside.

"Boss! Why are you on your feet instead of resting?"

"I've something I need to fetch, so I'll be departing briefly." In spite of his face being ashen white due to damage, Virus ignored his condition and continued taking one step after another toward the exit.

"Ah, boss, you shouldn't do that... how about this, I'll do it for you, just tell me-"
" Alas, before he could even finish his sentence, shaking his head, Virus rejected Augustus' kind intentions, "I need to do this myself."

"Then... I'll follow you."

"No, not this time, just stay here in the inn until my return." Persisting stubbornly, Virus pushed ahead unhindered.

"But..."

"No buts, stay!"

"Yes."

Afterward, despite every step transferring a piercing pain all over his being, Virus kept taking one step after another until he vanished from the vicinity of the inn entirely.

...

One hour later, Virus' silhouette materialized near the inn again. However, instead of returning empty-handed, there was an additional item on his hand this time. To be precise, it was a bottle of water.

Nevertheless, ambling back to his room slowly, Virus closed the door and released a sigh of relief, 'Water of Life, procured!'

Indeed, as he was claiming, when Virus was gone just now, he was away to fetch some Water of Life from his spaceship floating invisibly outside the city dome. When the idea of using 'that' instead of drinking water had stroked him, by 'that', he was obviously referring to the Water of Life.

Luckily, he had brought some Water of Life to this journey of his since he wanted to keep his promise of letting the Pagoda master experience and taste the true top-quality tea.

Anyhow, the Water of Life was why Virus had to be the one to go get it himself since the spaceship was a top-level secret of his that he didn't want any else to be aware of.

Nonetheless, since he had the Water of Life now, Virus went ahead and poured some of it into the pot in the fireplace before proceeding to place the bar of wood beneath the pot.

Next, using something similar to flint and steel, Virus made sparks and ignited the single bar of wood beneath the pot.

The moment the wood was ignited, strangely, red fire was inflamed.

Soon, the terrifying heat began boiling the Water of Life inside the pot.

On the other side, seeing that the water was boiling already, Virus threw one plant after another into the container at a variety of intervals.

At last, when every single ingredient was dumped inside, locking the lid, all Virus had to do now was to wait.

Unfortunately, as time passed, cracks began forming on the pot itself, apparently, the container was too fragile to tolerate the steam pressure locked within it as it was about to explode any seconds now.

'Just a few more seconds! Endure it a bit more!' As if he was praying to the pot itself, Virus urged it to last a little longer.

Crack~ Crack!

One crack after another extended on the pot as it was getting closer and closer to its detonation point.

By the time the third second passed, the automatic timer within Virus' head went off, indicating the procedure to be over.

Pssst!

Emptying the drinking water of the room on the fireplace with no delay whatsoever, Virus extinguished the flame.

Then, opening the locked lid of the pot, wild steam escaped it, relieving all the pressure at once. Albeit, that sudden release of pressure seemed too abrupt to the poor pot since its upper frame suddenly broke through as a huge chunk of it fell inside it.

However, none of that mattered to Virus, what mattered to him at the moment was the single transparent orb of green that was standing alone in the middle of the broken pot.

After the flame had elevated the heat within the pot to the extremes, the water within the pot had gotten so hot that all of it had vaporized and turned into steam within the container itself.

But when that happened, due to the horrendous pressure from the steam plus the factor of the special design and shape of the pot Virus had demanded, the herbs within the pot itself were forced into the very center itself as they had all melted before being jammed into one another until the eventual formation of the current perfectly fused orb.

'Finally, my Basic Angel Tear pellet is ready!' As Virus was saying, this pellet in his line of sight was called the Basic Angel Tear which was one of the most miraculous healing pellets of the future amongst medicines of First Refinement.

What made this pellet so special and worth creating today was the fact that it was the result of accumulative knowledge and research from the best scientists of the Technology Earth in the future based on the alchemy or pillsmithing field of the Cultivation Multiverse.

Despite it merely being a pellet of First Refinement which was the weakest type of pellet the pillsmiths can produce, Virus knew that wasn't the case at all

since the scientific planet had put it together in a way so, in spite of being merely a medicine of First Refinement, it would have the potency and strength of a pill of Second Refinement!

Therefore, one could even say this pellet was a miracle that technology had brought forth, a miracle that absolutely did not exist in the current Cultivation Multiverse of today.

'It sucks to not have the MDA with me.' Indeed, in case Virus had access to the Maker Device Apothecary right now, this entire money-burning procedure which was usually utilized by the so-called First Refinement Pillsmiths of the Cultivation Multiverse would have been easily avoided.

Unfortunately, since the MDA wasn't with Virus at the moment, left with no other choice, Virus could only go back to the basics and use the alchemy methods of the Pillsmiths.

Nonetheless, now that the remedy was ready at last, without any ado, grasping the ball of green crystal, Virus throw it into his mouth before swallowing it directly.

THE GOD VIRUS

Chapter 498 - Basic Angel Tear

Once the Basic Angel Tear hit the pit of Virus' stomach, it seemed to instantly melt as it turned into streams of healing energy that transmitted all over his internal body.

Seeing the pill already about to take effect, sitting cross-legged, Virus shut both eyes and entered a meditative state.

Focusing his sense of awareness on the section where it was injured, Virus observed the wounds healing up and closing at a breakneck speed.

Still, despite the swift pace, it was going to take a few hours at least before the injuries mended. In the meantime, not wishing to just stand still without doing

anything useful, Virus retreated into his mindscape before checking the state of the decryption of the movement techniques in his database.

'The decryption procedure is over already. Now, all I need to do is to develop the third and fourth forms.'

Indeed, precisely as Virus was claiming, the deciphering phase of the movement techniques was finished. In fact, it had been some time since the process was over, however, being busy with a variety of affairs, Virus didn't start the development phase of the third and fourth forms as of yet.

However, now, having nothing else to do, Virus figured it was perhaps the best timing to put together the next two forms.

In the first form, using five of his liberated pathways, Virus took advantage of electricity to stimulate his muscles and nerves as he came up with the 'Impulse' form.

In the second form, provided by six liberated passages, Virus designed two water turbines and placed them side by side to create the 'Friction' form which resisted air particles of the environment.

However, coming to the third form, against expectations, Virus didn't want to come up with an entirely new concept and attribute that had nothing to do with the first and second forms.

That was mainly because, although each form can be strong on its own, if Virus continued designing and adding new attributes in every form, at the end of the road, when everything was said and done, each form was sadly destined to be shallow in the overall depth of their utilization, thus resulting in a weaker technique that just encompassed a variety of innovative attributes that were not developed beyond their basic fundamentals.

Virus wanted to evade that at all costs, and the method of doing so was to expand and reinforce the already established forms further than their current limits.

Thus, for his third form, Virus wanted to augment either 'Impulse' or 'Friction' by improving his comprehension, understanding, and utilization of one of them.

'The question is... which one should I refine first?' Contemplating the question for a short period, Virus quickly set his gaze on 'Impulse'.

'Impulse it is.'

In the first form, when Virus designed 'Impulse', he used five of his liberated passages in order to generate the weakest type of electrical pulse that could be supported by those five pathways to generate a faster reaction and movement speed.

Now, for the third form, there were two adjustments he wanted to make.

The first one was obviously to increase the source of 'Impulse' from five to seven liberated pathways. Although that sounded uncomplicated and simple, that could not be further from the truth.

As for the second, it was to improve the potency of the electricity by a notch since the energy of seven pathways could also support stronger lightning now. However, doing so required an even deeper knowledge of electrical pulses than the first form.

Fortunately, as the scientific knowledge of the future backed Virus up, that was not an issue for him since he was already aware of the orderly listed knowledge of a variety of electrical pulses from the worst to the best based on chronological eras.

Therefore, the only difference now was that if he had used the weakest type of first-grade electrical pulse the first time, this time he had to supply and install the second-grade lightning which was a level stronger than the first one.

Alas, doing so was bound to put much more pressure on his body, but that was a side-effect Virus was willing to accept in exchange for more speed.

'Well, in spite of it putting some strain on my body, the next level lightning pulse is still not powerful enough to actually deal permanent damage to my physique.' As a matter of course, after a rudimentary analysis, Virus had noticed that even though the usage of a more advanced pulse of electricity may exhaust him faster, that was all it could accomplish.

Therefore, having made up his mind, Virus started laying the foundation of 'Impulse' once more while setting down seven liberated pathways as the source that produces the electricity.

One hour after another passed quickly.

Although the whole operation sounded quite easy, increasing the number of Liberated pathways for the foundation and development of a technique was an extremely difficult and complicated endeavor.

In fact, the only reason Virus could achieve such a task was because he had deciphered tens of thousands of Human-class Techniques which resulted in him comprehending the very essence of how liberated pathways were connected and transformed for the sake of certain techniques.

On the other hand, in case it was a normal cultivator who was trying to construct a Human-class Technique on his own, sure, he may be able to design a technique that functioned via a single liberated pathway rather effortlessly.

However, when the requirement increased to two liberated pathways, the difficulty rises by tenfold at least. And that was just for the second liberated passage alone.

By the time he wishes to invent a technique through the usage of three pathways, that cultivator may get stuck for years before he succeeds in his endeavor.

Hence, the higher the number of liberated passages, the more complex and demanding the criteria and requirements of the technique-creation assignment turns out to be which means even if one spends decades trying to develop something, success was not guaranteed in the end.

THE GOD VIRUS

Chapter 499 - Toxison

Normally, the cultivators were not expected to create their personal technique in their lifetime since technique-creation was an absolutely disparate field of ability compared to simply learning, grasping, and using an already developed one.

The difference between the two was like that of an automotive engineer and a driver. While the driver could drive the car with no issues whatsoever, he was totally incapable of designing or inventing new car models since that was normally the job of a genius engineer and not a driver.

Notwithstanding, as hours went by, Virus triumphantly achieved the fresh foundation of seven liberated meridians plus the upgraded electrical pulse before moving on to the procedure of redesigning and going over every part of his anatomy once more while recalculating the risks and errors that may have popped up after increasing the overall input and output of energy.

Subsequently, fixing a couple more issues here and there, at last, Virus was finished with everything!

The Third Form was complete!

'Now, it's time for the fourth form.' Since Virus was already into the ninth level and therefore had access to 'eight' liberated pathways rather than 'seven' alone, he wanted to upgrade the second form to that of the fourth one as well.

However, doing that was easier said than done since the difficulty level was much higher than the third form.

If the difficulty percentage of associating seven meridians was one, then for the eighth passage, it experienced a sharp jump to a full one hundred!

'Hmm, now...!' Just as he was about to spark the following procedure inside his mindscape, the repetitive bangs on the door brought him out of his reverie.

"Who is it?" Hence, opening his eyes, Virus questioned. The violent manner of knocking on his door immediately forced a crease on Virus' forehead.

"I-It's Luca, boss! Sob..."

Listening to Luca's muffled and nasal sound, Virus noticed something was probably wrong with Luca, thus, he allowed him to enter at once. "Come on in!"

Next, perceiving his bloody face and red eyes filled with tears and snot, Virus was now certain something bad had happened. As a result, he interrogated calmly, "Why are you crying? Where is Luna?"

"B-Boss... sob... L-Luna, they..." Albeit, unable to restore his composure, Luca seemed to be in a state of shock.

"Calm down first. Take a deep breath. Yes, that's great." Watching Luca do as he was told, Virus complimented him a little before urging him again, "Now, tell me everything in detail."

"Boss, per your orders, we were outside trying to uncover that drunkard's daily schedule, we even came to know that his name is Blaze Detox." Clenching

both fists hard, Luca elaborated. From the nonstop movement of his hands and head, it was clear he was extremely restless right now.

"But?" Pressing his index finger against his cheek and propping his chin on the rest of clenched fingers, Virus questioned. It was at emergency moments like these when Virus was the calmest and most concentrated.

"B-but then when we were just about to return and call it a day, a particular cultivator of the Poison Deity clan blocked our path! He was the one who had delivered us to the colosseum earlier." Ashen white, Luca unconsciously tilted his head down before picking up the rest of his explanations.

"After recognizing us, he r-respectfully notified the person he was following, some guy called Gander Toxison, about our identities while also announcing the fact about you representing and saving us at the Recreation Training Center before, hence, saying we must also be a-aware of your whereabouts." Due to him grinding his teeth so hard, Luca's face was contorting now.

Every second that passed felt like pure torment to the current Luca who was standing alone in front of Virus without Luna to be found anywhere. "Anyway, the instant that guy Gander I-learned about us, he started beating and cursing at both of us... and he just wouldn't stop."

"In the end, refusing to let Luna go, he decided to keep him hostage and told me to bring you to him if I want to see Luna alive ever again. If I don't do per his orders, he vowed to torture Luna to death!" Biting his lips at the mere thought of his little brother's death, his lips began to bleed.

"B-Boss, what do I do?" As tears flowed down his face, Luca's only hope now was Virus' next words and possible solution. Of course, he had not even considered the idea of betraying Virus since he knew both he and Luna owed Virus their lives. If they did indeed betray the trust of their benefactor and savior, then he assumed death to be a better option rather than living such

disgraceful lives. That is also why he had not hesitated to describe everything so detailedly.

At this point, however, furrowing his brows, many deliberations were passing through Virus' hyperactive brain.

Virus was aware that due to him accomplishing something unheard of, he was extremely well-known in Ricando right now, therefore, the common people presumed Virus to be like a being that had made something that had been an impossible feat so far a tangible reality.

'I knew the clan would retaliate against me one way or another, but I didn't expect it to be so fast.'

Since the immovable authority and control of the clan over the city and the common citizens had been brought under question by the indirect result of Virus' act of slaughter, Virus had already predicted some retaliative measures of action to be taken against him!

More accurately, by winning against the disciples of the Poison Deity clan, many of the common citizens of Outer Ricando who were originally dissatisfied with the cruel Poison Deity clan earlier now had some hope burning in their hearts, a hope that had been inflamed as a consequence of them personally verifying and witnessing that the clan was not truly unbeatable.

Unfortunately, the clan absolutely would not permit such rebellious thoughts to fester or grow within the mind of its citizens, and that meant retribution was bound to hit Virus, hence making an unforgettable example out of him for everyone to see and learn!

However, Virus also understood the clan could not act against him in broad daylight since it was one of the clan's rules for the monthly competition to be

completely fair as they even encouraged the chosen ones to kill and win the event without any worries of the clan taking offense.

And that's exactly why Virus didn't anticipate such a quick reaction from the clan.

'No, it is not the clan that is retaliating, rather it's probably an independent course of action taken by one of the disciples alone.' Indeed, just as Virus was concluding, as of yet, the clan had not come up with any steps to deal with Virus at all and the so-called Gander Toxison was perhaps just a disciple who felt offended on his own after hearing about everything.

And yet, the clan was most likely already knowledgeable about this playful act of Gander Toxison, however, according to Virus' analysis, they were probably not going to interfere. 'In fact, the figures of authority in the clan may even be encouraging such strikes against me from behind the shadows.'

All the Poison Deity clan promised was that they were not going to take offense or publicly act against the chosen one who wins, which meant only the top figures of authority in the clan would not pursue the matter or prosecute the winner publicly using the clan itself.

However, although the clan would probably not act against him, it did not mean the solitary disciples who had their own free will would not feel displeased or insulted. So, if a disciple stepped up to make a move, the clan would most likely pretend as if the grudges of their disciples had nothing to do with them.

Suddenly patting Luca's head gently, Virus beamed a smile that reached his ears and started comforting the anxious teenager, "Don't worry, kid, just leave everything to me. Now, let's go save your little brother. Take me there."

Subsequently, the second Luca turned around and was on the move to guide him, with his eyes half-lidded, a chilly glint went past his pupils. 'What great

timing.. Just when I was thinking I lack a training dummy to test my new power, this dude shows us.'

THE GOD VIRUS

Chapter 500 - Gander

Watching Luca already on the move to the door, Virus didn't rise to his feet immediately. Instead, releasing his awareness, he checked how much of the damage within his body was healed up.

'Hmm, I'm almost back at my peak state again. That's great.' Grinning in satisfaction, Virus jumped to his feet before chasing after the anxious Luca who was rushing outside.

The mere imagination of what kind of fate awaited his little brother if he was late a bit and thus, Gander concluded he was not going to return was like a pricking needle at his heart. He had to guide Virus to him before it was too late.

Subsequently, after they exited the inn, despite Virus' continuous progress earlier, he didn't seem to be that pleased even now, therefore, retreating into his mindscape, he initiated the process of developing the fourth form of his movement technique as a backup. Because who knew what kind of unexpected circumstances he was going to encounter at his destination?

'Let's see. Since Impulse is updated to the third form and now has the weaker first form and the stronger version that is the third form... I better get to doing the same to Friction as well and add one more to my trump card count.'

Raising one brow, Virus made a decision, 'Unfortunately, there isn't much time left. Even if I trigger my time-freeze perception and dedicate all the processing speed to developing the fourth form while maintaining the fastest speed possible, I doubt I could put it together in time.'

'Well, it never hurts to try though, so let's just do it and see how it goes.'

Now that the decryption routine of the movement techniques was over, Virus already had access to all the necessary information and knowledge required in order to design a Peak-Human class technique that uses up to nine liberated pathways.

Of course, most of the information came from only decoding and interpreting Low- to High-Human class movement techniques since, in his database, there were no peak ones available.

That implied while from the low- to high-human class techniques, aka from the first liberated pathway to the seventh or eighth one, all the knowledge and data were already 'applied and practical', for the absolute peak or the ninth pathway per se, that was not the case at all as there was only 'theoretical' information that had been interpreted from grasping the lower grades.

As a consequence of that absence of practicality, at the time his current technique goes through the operation of evolving to the absolute peak of Human-class, due to the lack of that applied knowledge, the development activity was doomed to inevitably slow down.

'Hmm, initially I wanted to start the decoding phase of the attack techniques while gradually putting the fourth form together, but I suppose I'm coerced to make some temporary adjustments to that plan.' With that notion flickering through his brain, he was resolved to maintain his top pace for the course of designing the fourth form which was configured to be the boosted version of the second form, Friction.

In regards to Friction, other than the increase in the number of pathways, naturally, Virus desired to strengthen the water turbines' spinning power to the point of not only negating the air resistance but also increasing his overall speed further.

By increasing the revolving power of the water turbines, not only would he bypass the resistance swiftly, but in order to force him through the air particles even faster, the air particles themselves were bound to push him forward harder if the rotation was quick enough, denoting the eventual augmentation of his speed by another notch.

Meanwhile, outwardly, Virus continued following Luca's directions without any pauses until they reached a vacant alley where two people seemed to be patiently waiting for them.

The moment Virus arrived at this quiet alley where the two brothers were dragged to earlier, ignoring the two cultivators entirely, with a simple release of his awareness, he checked the current tragic state of Luna in depth.

"L-Luna!!!" Beside Virus, ashen-faced with tears flowing down his eyes, Luca shrieked before running over to his brother.

Currently, in the two newcomers' line of sight, they could see a legless Luna whose both legs were completely chopped off.

However, although there was a puddle of blood on the floor, Luna's legless physique was not bleeding anymore as the wound had strangely scabbed already.

"L-Luna! Wake up! Lil bro! Wake up! Please..." With his eyes bloodshot, Luca shook his brother's unconscious physique violently, trying to discover any signs of life on his motionless body.

Discerning up to this point, Virus easily determined everything that had occurred in the alley prior to their arrival.

Clearly, the two cultivators in front of him had cruelly tortured Luna and had even gone so far as to cut off both of his legs.

However, knowing they cannot truly kill a common citizen without facing heavy punishment from the clan, after chopping off both his legs, they had probably given him some kind of healing pill that could at least scab the bleeding and prevent the injured from dying.

Regardless, after confirming Luna's life was not in mortal danger at least, Virus' bone-chilling gaze was directed at the two cultivators before him.

Facing Virus' cold glare, however, the cultivator in the lead, the person called Gander Toxison, started laughing uproariously.

"Hahaha, who would have thought you'd actually show up? Woah, what's with your look though? Are you perhaps angry that I harmed your little friend here?"

Bam!

Suddenly turning toward Luna's inert physique at the end of his little speech, Gander kicked him hard, sending both Luna and the nearby Luca flying away in return.

Alas, without any words, Virus still continued staring at the guy expressionlessly, which inevitably sent a shiver down Gander's spine while cold sweat began pouring down his forehead with each passing second filled with a deadly silence.

'What's this? Am I scared of him? Impossible!' Promptly, Gander was in utter disbelief at the mere idea of being scared of this nobody.. That, of course, immediately hurt his pride so bad that his countenance contorted into an angry one.