

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 1, Delia and Linley

“Whoooosh.” The desolate cold wind blew across the world, bringing countless snowflakes to cover it.

Delia, wearing a white fur robe, was standing quietly in front of a window, staring at the outside world. Behind her were two magical beasts. One was the Worldbear, Hatton. The other was the Wildthunder Stormhawk, Parry. Neither of the two beasts made a sound.

A sigh escaped from Delia’s lips.

“Father, mother...” A bitter smile was on Delia’s face. She really hadn’t expected her parents to deceive her. They had told her that her grandmother was seriously ill, but after she raced home on the back of the Wildthunder Stormhawk, she had discovered that her grandmother was quite healthy.

That very first night back...

Delia had angrily asked her parents, “Father, mother, why did you two lie to me to get me home?”

Delia had originally intended to stay with Linley.

Delia’s father, Dylla [Dai’ya] Leon, had looked at Delia and had asked her, “Delia, have you fallen for that Dragonblood Warrior, Linley? Ever since you first returned those many years ago, you refused to accept any other boys. Was it because of him?”

Delia had been very surprised. She hadn’t told her parents.

“How did you know?” Delia had immediately asked.

Her mother had sighed. “Delia, why didn’t you tell us how you felt? It was your master, Master Longhaus, who informed us upon returning to the Empire. He told us to prepare for you and Linley’s wedding.”

The previously furious Delia had suddenly become bashful.

Her parents had glanced at each other, shaking their heads and smiling bitterly. Her father, Dylla, had said seriously, “My beloved daughter, I must solemnly tell you that it is impossible for you and Linley to be together.”

“What?” Delia had stared at her father.

Her father had said seriously, “Delia, Linley’s younger brother is the husband of the Seventh Imperial Princess of the O’Brien Empire. Without question, Linley is a Saint belonging to the O’Brien Empire. But you should understand the state of the relationship between our Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire.”

“True, both our Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire are two mighty Empires who are enemies to each other, but what does that have to do with Linley?” Delia had been very upset. “Could it be that you believe, father, that me being with Linley would impact the clan?”

“Yes.”

Dylla Leon had nodded. “If a clan were to have a Saint, that clan would rise up and flourish. If you and Linley were to marry...then what happens if the Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire were to engage in a large-scale war? Our Empire would no longer dare to have much faith in the Leon clan.”

Delia immediately had become enraged.

Her father's explanation had seemed laughable.

"Delia, think about it. If you were the Emperor and you discovered that the daughter of one of your largest clans had gotten married to a Saint on the enemy's side, wouldn't you be concerned that this clan would betray him?" Dylla Leon had said seriously.

Delia had been stunned.

There was nothing she could say, because there were historical precedents for this.

In the past, a daughter of a noble clan in the Rohault Empire had married the king of one of the kingdoms of the great plains to the far east. Afterwards, her entire clan had rebelled and joined the side of that great plains kingdom.

Don't think that the Rohault Empire was necessarily far stronger than the kingdoms of the great plains.

The great plains to the far east had three kingdoms in total.

The people of the great plains were extremely violent, and each of them were born warriors. Although in terms of population, they were far lower in number than the Rohault Empire and the Rhine Empire, these three major kingdoms had done battle with the two Empires for countless years without being at any disadvantage.

"Father, Linley and I..." Delia had begun to speak.

Dylla Leon had interrupted her. "Delia. You are a smart child. You should understand everything. Our Leon clan has been building ourselves up for a thousand years. That's why we now have our current status. If you were to marry Linley, even if his Imperial Majesty didn't actually do anything to our clan, without question...his Imperial Majesty's faith in our clan would be lessened!"

"Once his faith in us is lessened, the countless descendants of our clan in the military and in the government will find it very hard to be promoted." Dylla Leon sighed. "Delia, I hope you can consider the interests of the clan."

"But father, Linley doesn't belong to the O'Brien Empire. He has gone to the Anarchic Lands." Delia had hurriedly said.

"The Anarchic Lands?" Dylla Leon had been startled, and Delia's mother had also stared at her in surprise.

Delia had hurriedly explained, "Yes, father. Linley isn't attached to the O'Brien Empire. He wants to start his own undertakings in the Anarchic Lands. In the future, he will be part of the Anarchic Lands. Father...the Anarchic Lands and our Empire aren't enemies, right?"

Dylla had been silent for a moment before nodding slowly.

This was indeed the case. In the entire continent, the only force that was worthy of the Yulan Empire considering it their enemy was the O'Brien Empire.

As for the Anarchic Lands, who would consider these chaotic lands which had several dozen Duchies an enemy?

“If Linley truly were to establish himself in the Anarchic Lands, then it wouldn’t be a problem for you to marry him.” Dylla Leon had said slowly. These words had been like heavenly music to Delia’s ears, making her heart instantly calm down.

Dylla Leon had looked at Delia and said solemnly, “My beloved daughter, I must remind you...only when the day comes when Linley is no longer a member of the O’Brien Empire in the eyes of the imperial clan, will you be permitted to be with him. Otherwise, you definitely cannot.”

“Father, I understand.” Delia loved her parents, her grandparents, her older brother, her cousins, and the rest of her family. She didn’t want to break off her relationships to them.

Dylla had nodded. “For now, stay in the imperial capital. Don’t go looking for that Linley.”

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Thinking back to that conversation, Delia gently sighed again. Delia understood...Linley was already a Saint and had an unlimited lifespan. As a magus of the seventh rank, she herself would have a long lifespan as well, as she continued to train.

She wasn’t too worried about a year or two.

Staring out of the window towards the north, she saw the large, feather-like snowflakes slowly drift down. The entire world seemed so hazy, and nothing could be clearly seen. But Delia’s gaze seemed to pierce through the walls of reality and see into the distant Anarchic Lands, and see into Blackdirt City...

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Outside Blackdirt City, one squad of soldiers after another were running laps on the black dirt, and alongside each squad, there was a military officer constantly shouting, “Faster, faster! Don’t get left behind! Goddamnit, if you get left behind, no breakfast for you!”

On an uplifted area, the fourth of the Barker brothers, Boone, and the fifth, Gates, were clad in just a pair of long pants, their upper bodies bare. They watched the training proceed.

During this period of time, Blackdirt City hadn’t attacked any other cities. They had only been training. The cities around Blackdirt City had all sensed that Blackdirt would pose a threat to them, and their city governors were very nervous. But at the same time, those city governors didn’t dare to attack first either.

Suddenly, Linley walked over. He watched the soldiers train while heading towards Gates and Boone.

“Lord, what do you think?” Gates said proudly.

Linley nodded with satisfaction. “Very good. Oh, right. When do you plan to begin attacking the nearby cities?” Linley didn’t know a single thing about military tactics. The only thing he knew was that unless things came to a critical juncture, there was no need for him to get involved.

Boone laughed heartily. “Lord, we haven’t attacked anybody yet, but some people from the nearby cities have already surrendered to us and promised that they would undermine their cities from the inside.”

“Oh, is that so?” Linley laughed as well.

Gates hurriedly said. “Of course, how could we make this up? Lord, think about it. After the power of we five brothers spread across the Anarchic Lands, many of the nearby cities are terrified of us. In order to deal with those cities, after all, we don’t even need to mobilize our armies. Just by ourselves, we five brothers can slaughter our path into those cities and easily take victory.”

Linley laughed again.

To this sort of small city, a single expert could decide everything. For example, the city army of Blackdirt City numbered only a few thousand people. A warrior of the ninth rank could easily kill that many people. Alternately, he could directly kill the leader and force the rest to surrender!

Attacking a Duchy, however, was different.

Each Duchy had perhaps around a hundred thousand soldiers. Similarly, if in the future, they were to fight against the Radiant Church, perhaps the enemy would have a huge number of soldiers. Against this sort of human wave tactics, how many people could a single expert kill? However, a magus in this sort of situation would be extremely useful.

But as long as there were no Saint-level magi about, when two armies engaged in wide-scale warfare against each other, the quality and the ability of each armies' soldiers was of paramount importance.

"What are you training them in?" Linley frowned as he looked at these scattered squads.

Boone explained, "Lord, this is the training of a medium-sized brigade. Each battalion is split into a brigade of three hundred people who will train together. Each brigade has a captain and six lieutenants who are in charge of supervising and training. This is a very effective way of training."

Gates and Boone had trained soldiers before in the Eighteen Northern Duchies. They knew what the best methods were.

After coming to Blackdirt City and learning what the situation was, Linley returned to Mt. Blackraven.

Like an ephemeral blue trail of smoke, Linley wisped back into the depths of Mt. Blackraven. Linley currently lived in the center of a beautiful lake in Mt. Blackraven, which had several boulders in the center covering several dozen square meters. Linley had found those boulders from elsewhere in Mt. Blackraven, then with his sword, chopped them flat, then moved them to the center of the lake to serve as his base.

In the center of the lake, the boulders were only half a meter or so higher than the surface of the lake. There, atop those boulders, Linley had built himself a wooden house.

"Bebe, what are you up to?" Linley walked atop the water, gracefully arriving at the center of the lake. But when he did so, Linley suddenly discovered that Bebe was digging at the side of one of the boulders.

"Boss!" Bebe turned his head and chortled at Linley, while at the same time his sharp little claws continued to swipe at the edge of the rocks, sending debris everywhere. "I'm making a flight of stairs. I'm going to make a few stairs over here. That way, in the future when I get into the water, I can choose to either rest on the stairs, or lie in the water. That'll be so comfortable. Boss, aren't I, Bebe, simply the smartest?"

Linley began to laugh.

"Slash, slash." Swiping with his claws, Bebe gradually dug out the six steps of stairs, with each step roughly ten centimeters high, with the last one in the water itself. Bebe sat his rear down on the bottommost step, happily whacking the water with his four limbs.

Linley chuckled. Seeing the stones lying around the lake, Linley waved a single hand...

"Whoosh!" A sudden wind began to howl, and a terrifying tornado appeared, picking up a human-sized boulder and depositing it in front of Linley. The beautiful surroundings of Mt. Blackraven had made Linley feel very peaceful, and he couldn't help but think about the person who was in his heart.

Linley's lips quirked upwards slightly, a hint of a smile on his face.

With a flip of his hand, he withdrew his straight chisel and began to carve the sculpture. Pieces of rock flew everywhere. Slowly... a human-sized model began to appear from within the boulder. Bebe, his small claws resting on the stairs, raised his head to stare at the sculpture.

“Oh ho, Boss, you're carving a woman? Haha, I know, it has to be Delia!” Bebe snickered.

But Linley was totally absorbed in his carving. His straight chisel flashed as fast as lightning, carrying with it the soft, gentle grace of the wind. Having already reached the grandmaster level of sculpting, Linley was now totally capable of carving anything he desired.

Linley was entirely focused on his carving, and the details began to appear...

From morning until three in the afternoon of the next day. After having spent more than a day and a night, Linley finally put down his straight chisel.

“Whew.” Linley lightly exhaled, blowing the fine dust off from the sculpture. The woman he had sculpted possessed a unique, heroic aura. In particular, her eyes... they made the stone sculpture look as though it was truly alive.

Linley looked at the sculpture with satisfaction, then turned to stare towards the southwest. In his heart, he thought to himself, “Delia, you should have received my letter by now.”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 2, Two Letters

Although Linley's first love had ended in failure and caused Linley to develop an aversion towards love, Delia's repeated actions, beginning since they had known each other while they were children, had forced Linley to admit...that he enjoyed being together with Delia. He enjoyed that sort of warm, intimate feeling.

At the Institute, Linley already knew how Delia felt about him.

He knew that Delia was waiting for him to make the first move, but after his first love had failed, Linley's heart had become knotted, and he simply couldn't.

Far away, in the imperial capital of the Yulan continent, although the sun was high in the sky, the world was still extremely cold. Delia was wearing an expensive, thick robe as she sat in her courtyard, enjoying the rays of the sun. In her hands was a letter which Linley had sent her. This letter had come to her via the high speed information network of the Dawson Conglomerate.

Holding the letter in her hands, Delia couldn't help but laugh, laugh with great joy.

"Delia, what are you looking at?" A thick, heavy sound rang out. It was the Worldbear, Hatton. Hatton's adorable bear eyes stared at the letter in Delia's hands. "C'mon, Delia, lemme see it. Let Big Yellow be happy with you."

The Worldbear, Hatton, was on exceedingly close terms with Delia.

As soon as Delia saw Hatton, she immediately hid the letter away, wrinkling her nose and snorting at him. "Big Yellow, are you causing trouble again? Where's Teacher? Why aren't you by Teacher's side?"

The Worldbear shook his head. "Master is engaging in closed door meditation training. He won't be coming out for the next ten days or half a month. He doesn't need me by his side right now. So, Big Yellow has come to find Delia." The Worldbear beamed at Delia.

Delia was in a fine mood today as well, and so she continued jesting with the Worldbear for a while.

"Delia, that letter is from Linley, right?" The Worldbear suddenly asked in a lowered voice.

Delia glanced with vexation at him, but she still nodded. Delia's eyes were filled with irrepressible excitement. Linley's letter had clearly detailed how his life had been, and had also told Delia that he was currently in Blackdirt City, in the Anarchic Lands. He even gave Delia clear instructions on how to get there.

Although Linley didn't explicitly say that he wanted Delia to come visit him, just based on how carefully he described the route to the city, his intentions were quite clear.

"That silly man. He's always trying to hide his intentions. If he wants me to go, he should say so." Delia both laughed and cursed him in her heart.

Delia was in such a mood that just sitting there by herself, she would start giggling. The Worldbear, next to Delia, continually chatted with her as well.

"Delia, tomorrow is the Yulan Festival. Will you go back tonight?" The Worldbear, Hatton, asked softly.

Delia, hearing these words, couldn't help but frown. Letting out a sigh, she said, "Yeah. Tonight, the entire clan will be coming together. Ugh...I really don't want to go back." During this period of time, each of the two times Delia had gone back, her clansmen had exhorted her to forget about Linley.

However...

Was that possible?

When Delia had believed Linley dead, she had even made up her mind to never marry. Ten full years had passed like that. Now that she knew Linley was alive, and would soon set up his own dominion, how could she give him up now?

That night.

All of the important members of the Leon clan were in attendance at this banquet. Nearly a hundred important clan members happily chatted and toasted each other, and this noble procession naturally included the clan leader, Dylla Leon. Not only was Dylla Leon himself quite accomplished, his two children were incredible as well.

Dixie was a magus of the eighth rank, and the personal disciple of the High Priest.

Delia had reached the seventh rank years ago, and was the disciple of the Saint-level Grand Magus, Master Longhaus.

These two children truly were extremely amazing.

Today, although Delia didn't put on much makeup, the combination of her noble, aristocratic bearing and her natural good looks made Delia appear more dazzling than any of the young noble ladies. Only, Delia headed to a corner of the main hall with her wine goblet in hand.

A middle-aged person walked towards Dylla Leon with goblet in hand, glancing at Delia. Laughing, he said, "Big brother, Delia truly is growing more and more beautiful. Quite a few young noblemen in the imperial capital have been smitten by her."

Dylla Leon laughed calmly.

"Big brother, the son of Prince Reed [Li'de] has always been enamored of Delia. Do you think there is a chance that the two of them..."

Dylla Leon shook his head. "Third Brother, there's nothing to discuss. If Delia was willing to accept marrying one of the nobles of the imperial capital, then she would have done so many years earlier. As for now...it's best if you don't say anything. Later, I'll let my wife go speak with her."

There had been quite a few people who had raised this issue with Dylla Leon during this banquet.

This was because, clearly, Delia was young, beautiful, and talented, and was the disciple of a Grand Magus Saint. She also had the backing of the powerful Leon clan...such a perfect woman had countless suitors.

Delia sat there quietly in the corner.

"Little sister." A handsome young man, standing 1.8 meters tall with utterly straight golden hair which fell to his shoulders, walked over to her.

Raising her head up, Delia revealed a smile on her face. “Big brother.” The person had come was Delia’s older sibling, Dixie. Just like back at the Ernst Institute, Dixie remained as cold and indifferent to others as ever. But towards his little sister, Dixie was filled with affection.

Dixie sat down opposite from Delia.

“What is it? You seem to be in a bad mood?” Dixie smiled as he spoke.

Delia shook her head resignedly. “Big brother, you are always training by the side of the High Priest. You don’t know much about my affairs.”

“Does it have to do with Linley?” Dixie asked.

Delia laughed as she tossed him a glance. “Big brother, you are quite clever. But both father and mother are somewhat opposed to me being together with him. I’ve been vexed about this...after all, I don’t want the relationship with the family to become too stiff.”

Dixie nodded. He understood how his sister felt. He had watched Delia grow up, and Dixie knew very well...that although Delia was a very determined, resolute girl, in the depths of her heart, she was somewhat mentally reliant on her family members.

“Most likely tonight, mother will come over and chat with me yet again about how promising this young man is, or how promising that young man is.” Delia laughed bitterly.

Every time she came back, her parents would always raise this issue with her.

Dixie frowned. “Those wastrel sons of those rich nobles still want to marry you? Linley has acted improperly as well. He should have openly come to the imperial capital and proposed to you long ago! If he did so, I would definitely support him.” In his heart, Dixie actually quite admired Linley.

After all, Linley was someone who was an even greater genius than he himself was.

“Propose to me?” Delia was startled, but then she burst into laughter.

Delia thought back to that night at Wushan Township and how she had kissed Linley. That look of utter shock and panic on Linley’s face. Even despite her best subtle efforts, she wasn’t able to get Linley to summon the courage to say that he loved her. How could he possibly come to the imperial capital to propose to her?”

“Big brother, Linley is very different from how you imagine him.” Delia laughed.

Delia was in a fairly good mood while her big brother was with her during the banquet. Unfortunately, after the banquet was over, she chatted with her parents for a time, and afterwards, her mood became terrible once again. Her parents tirelessly tried to persuade her.

She hated being pressured like this.

On the day of the Yulan Festival, Delia came to the headquarters of the Dawson Conglomerate in the Yulan Empire’s imperial capital.

“Miss Delia.” The supervisor here knew Delia by sight.

“I’d like to trouble you, sir, to help deliver this letter to Linley.” Delia handed over a letter.

The supervisor immediately nodded. "Please don't worry. I will definitely make sure that this letter is delivered to Master Linley's hands." The Dawson Conglomerate was extremely efficient in carrying out any tasks related to Linley. The same day, they sent a flying magical beast out with the letter away from the imperial capital.

After the blizzard had ambushed them last night, this morning, when Linley left his room, he discovered that Mt. Blackraven was now covered with a layer of silver 'ornaments'. Some snow was drifting about on the surface of the lake. As the warm rays of the morning sun began to shine down from the east, the snow covering the trees and the boulders reflected the light dazzlingly.

"Whew." Taking a deep breath and sensing the fresh air after the blizzard, Linley allowed a smile to appear on his face.

Bebe appeared from within the wooden room as well. Rubbing the sleep from his little eyes, Bebe's four little paws left behind marks in the snow as he walked.

"Lord, Lord!" That loud voice rang out from afar, causing some of the snow on the trees to be shaken loose. Turning, Linley saw a huge figure rush towards him at high speed. With each step, the man moved over ten meters. With a mighty leap from the lake's edge, the man flew over seventy or eighty meters before landing on the flat boulder in the center of the lake.

"Gates, why'd you run over here in such a rush?" Linley laughed.

Gates chortled. "To handle your affairs, of course. Otherwise, I wouldn't rush over here so quickly."

"My affairs?" Linley was clearly rather puzzled.

"Look, see!" Gates took out a letter from his clothes. "This is Miss Delia's letter. The Dawson Conglomerate's men just delivered it to Blackdirt City. Haha, those people from the Dawson Conglomerate have decided to just go ahead and set up a branch office in Blackdirt City."

"Delia's?"

Linley immediately accepted the letter. After opening it, he began to read it. At this time, Bebe growled towards Gates, "Gates, big guy, step aside. Don't try to sneak any peeks at the letter between Delia and my Boss."

"Got it, got it." Gates didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

What Gates did know, however, was that he didn't dare to offend this terrifying fellow, Bebe. Even the Saint-level magical beast Haeru admitted he was no match for Bebe. How would he, Gates, dare to offend him?

Linley was reading the letter very carefully.

"To the most esteemed Master Linley,

Greetings and happy reading!

You've been quite impressive lately. You've already taken over Blackdirt City...but Blackdirt City is just a small city. Given your status as the venerable Master Linley, I'm sure that you can't possibly expect me to come over after you took over a single tiny city such as Blackdirt, can you? Wouldn't that be rather embarrassing for you?

I've come to the decision that I must wait for you to, at the very least, found your own Duchy within the Anarchic Lands before heading over there. Otherwise...hrmph, I won't see you.

As for your questions regarding how my life is? My life isn't bad. I'm just quietly spending my time with my Teacher in training. My grandmother is doing much better now. There's no need for you to worry about my affairs. It's best if you spend your time worrying about the Anarchic Lands and your training.

Remember that I'm waiting for you to set up your Duchy.

The day that your Duchy is founded is the day I will leave the Yulan Empire. This is our appointment!

However...be careful. Don't exhaust yourself. I have all the time in the world, and I'll wait for you to found your Duchy! I'll wait to see you!

Yours...Delia."

After reading this letter, Linley felt warmth in his heart, and he couldn't help but let a smile creep onto his face as he stored the letter into his interspatial ring. The nearby Gates couldn't help but mock, "Lord, you seem to be quite happy. Your face is about to split apart from that smile. What did Miss Delia write?"

"Yeah, Boss, what did she write?" Bebe was staring at Linley as well.

Linley chuckled, then looked at Gates. "Enough. Let me ask you something. When are you preparing to begin attacking the other cities?"

"We can start at any time. But right now, it is the Yulan Festival..." Gates said. The Yulan Festival was a festival which was celebrated throughout the entire Yulan continent. Even many soldiers would go back at this time to reunite with their families. Naturally, a portion of the soldiers would have to remain on duty to keep watch.

Linley shook his head. "Catching them by surprise will reduce our casualties."

"Then give the order, Lord." Gates' eyes were shining.

Linley nodded slightly. "Go back and make preparations immediately. Tomorrow morning, we'll begin our attacks against the neighboring cities. We must subdue the surrounding cities with the greatest haste...our current plan is to take over an amount of land equal to a Duchy in size."

"Yes, Lord!" Gates said in a clear voice.

"Go, then." Linley laughed calmly.

Gates immediately nodded, then left Mt. Blackraven. Blackdirt City, which had been in a state of preparation this entire time, began to frantically prepare to make its move after receiving Linley's orders via Gates. And so, the hibernating Blackdirt City finally began to reach out towards the neighboring cities with its fierce claws.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 3, Expanding Power

Yulan calendar, year 10010. January 5th. Night time. The world was covered with a dim gray gauze, and in some cooler places, the snow had yet to melt. Right now, the city of Tours [Tu'er] was under tremendous pressure.

The city governor of Tours was up on his walls, staring outside in desperation. Outside the city, there was an indeterminate number of people whom couldn't be seen very clearly.

“How many people does Blackdirt City have?” The city governor, Delai [De'lei] shouted a question to his subordinates.

“Lord Governor, the scouts came to report to us as soon as they saw the enemy forces. They weren't able to clearly make out how many men they have. However, the leader of them seems to be one of those five legendary wargods which Blackdirt City possesses.” A nearby subordinate reported back with some panic.

“One of the five wargods?” The city governor grew frantic. “Is he of the ninth rank just because he says he is? Hell, I can say that I'm a Saint! All of you, be careful. You must stand your ground.”

“Yes, Lord Governor.” Those soldiers assented.

Tours City didn't dare to receive the attackers in a pitched battle on open ground. They could only stay inside the city and stand guard. After all, defense was always easier than offense.

The second brother, Ankh, stared coldly at the distant city. Blackdirt City had gone into full mobilization mode. Of the five major battalions, only one had stayed behind to guard the city, while the other four, under the leadership of Ankh, Hazer, Boone, and Gates went to attack the nearest four cities.

“Stop!” Ankh raised his right hand and shouted loudly.

Instantly, the 1800 soldiers came to a halt. Everyone stared worshipfully at the massive figure in front of them. All five of the Barker brothers were evenhanded in their treatment of the soldiers, rewarding and punishing as appropriate, and they spent much of their time with the soldiers as well.

When the soldiers trained, they also trained.

When the soldiers ran laps while carrying heavy weights, those five Barker brothers would train while carrying boulders weighing hundreds of thousands of pounds. The soldiers of Blackdirt City naturally grew to adore their leaders even more.

“Delai, listen up!” Ankh roared furiously.

That voice, brimming with Undying battle-qi, echoed in Tours City like thunder. The hearts of the soldiers of Tours City quailed. That huge voice alone caused their morale to drop dramatically. It seemed the legends were true. How could they possibly resist an expert like this?

The city governor, Delai, was growing frantic as well. But he didn't want to give up his base.

“Say what you want to say. Don’t waste time.” Delai summoned his courage and shouted back, but although his voice was quite loud at the walls, by the time it reached Ankh, it had grown very soft, without any hint of threat.

Ankh continued shouting like a bullhorn. “Delai, if you offer Tours City to us, we can spare your life. Otherwise...my greataxe will show no mercy.” As Ankh spoke, many of the soldiers of Tours City began to have thoughts of betrayal.

In addition, long before Blackdirt City had launched its attack, many people in Tours City had secretly surrendered to Blackdirt City already.

“Oh, you want to fight to the end?” Ankh’s voice once more echoed in the ears of all the soldiers of Tours City.

“Kill!” A loud shout that shattered the heavens.

Many of the soldiers on the walls of Tours City were terrified by this shout. From below, they could hear countless warriors angrily screaming, “Kill!” “Kill!”

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All of them were charging wildly towards the walls of Tours City, their shields held high. Those ferocious, roaring knights created panic in the city guards.

“Archers! Shoot them! Shoot them dead!” The city governor, Delai, shouted angrily, his face red.

The archers on the city walls immediately nocked their bows, then began shooting arrows at the charging enemies. Most of the arrows in this first volley struck the shields. A few injured some of the soldiers of Blackdirt City. Three unlucky soldiers were shot to death.

“Shoot them all to death!” Delai roared angrily.

But before the second volley of arrows was loosed, Ankh charged forward, outpacing his men by over a hundred yards and rushing to the gates of the city. With a mighty howl, he brandished his terrifying greataxe and gave the city gates a thunderous chop.

“BANG!”

The entire city wall trembled, and the gates to Tours City instantly shattered into smithereens which flew everywhere. Even in his human form, Ankh was a warrior of the ninth rank. There was no difficulty at all for him to break past the defenses of these soldiers.

“The city gate is down!”

“That wargod is charging in!”

All sorts of shouts could be heard from within Tours City. Even the city governor, Delai, upon realizing that the gate had been breached, instantly turned pale.

“Whoosh!” With each wave of the greataxe, the surrounding soldiers were instantly blasted into countless pieces, sending blood and flesh everywhere. The nearby soldiers all began to retreat in terror. Ankh, covered by his Undying battle-qi, seemed a veritable devil.

Twirling his terrifying greataxe about, Ankh roared angrily, “Those who stand against me will die!”

Ankh brandished his greataxe about like a tornado, but this ‘tornado’ was a visible one. Anything touched by this ‘tornado’ was instantly blasted to bits. At first, some soldiers of Tours City had attempted to attack, but afterwards, no one dared to get near this fiend.

In but a few moments, the forces of Blackdirt City swept into the city through the gates.

“We surrender! We surrender!”

First, a single voice called out to surrender, but then, countless voices joined in. By the time Ankh and his bloody greataxe arrived at the city walls, the soldiers on the walls had all put down their weapons, while the city governor, Delai, was tied up in rope and placed on the floor. Several military officers were there, awaiting Ankh’s arrival.

“Milord, my name is Ford [Fu’er’de].” One of the military officers said respectfully.

“Oh, so you are Ford.”

Ankh knew very well that Ford was one of the military officers who had surrendered to them even before the battle had begun. Many had done so. Given that Blackdirt City had the five Barker brothers, how could they possibly lose?

Battles were fought by men and won by men.

When two forces were roughly on the same level of power, perhaps some stratagems and deceptions would be effective. But once the gap in power reached a sufficient level, such as now, where Ankh alone could demolish the forces of Tours City? A battle like this had no other possible outcomes at all. There wasn’t the slightest chance of defeat.

Yulan calendar, Year 10010. January 5th. Blackdirt City began its conquests.

By January 6th, Linley’s side already had five cities, and the number of people they controlled, including the various satellite towns and villages, was a grand total of nearly three million. Generally speaking, however, in the Anarchic Lands, only an entity which was in control of a prefectural city would be considered to be a Duchy.

Linley’s side had five cities, but all of them were small cities, with only a few tens of thousands of people within the cities. But a prefectural city was capable of holding hundreds of thousands of citizens.

After these lightning-fast battles concluded, Linley’s side temporarily stopped attacking. Instead, they quickly began to reorganize their armies. The original five battalions of Blackdirt City were now part of the ‘First Legion’, which was the core-most legion. The other four legions belonging to the other four cities all saw their military pay levels increased to roughly two thirds of the salary of the First Legion.

The taxes on the common people were lowered by over half across the board.

Each legion now had nine thousand people. In the Yulan continent, large legions could reach up to twenty thousand people. In the Anarchic Lands, however, since warfare was relatively scattered, Linley decided to lower the number of people per legion, forming five battalions into each legion.

The five legions quickly began to train together and organize internally.

The surrounding cities all sensed the threat, but they knew that Blackdirt City’s forces were simply too powerful. While Blackdirt City’s forces were still busy training and re-organizing, a nearby city voluntarily surrendered. The reason? The previous city governor had taken all of his enormous wealth and his guards and fled from that city.

Barker and Zassler both arrived at Mt. Blackraven. They stared up at the mountain.

“Barker.” Zassler suddenly spoke.

Barker looked at Zassler. Zassler said, “Hazer has reached the ninth rank on the way to the Anarchic Lands. By now, all five of you brothers possess the power of a Saint. I will make my breakthrough in the next year or two as well. Think about it...with you five brothers making up the bulk of our military power, with me providing support, and of course, most important of all, with Linley and his two powerful magical beasts...with such a overpowering force, we can erect our own kingdom, or perhaps even an empire!

“Mr. Zassler, what do you intend?” Barker’s eyes lit up.

Zassler said seriously, “Barker, right now, the continent has six major powers. Aside from the O’Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire, the other forces, ie the Rohault Empire, Rhine Empire, Holy Union, and Dark Alliance, do not have a Deity amongst their ranks.”

Barker nodded his head in agreement.

“As for the Rohault Empire and the Rhine Empire, these two Empires don’t even have an expert on the same level as Haydson. But we not only have Linley, we also have Bebe.” Zassler was extremely confident. “The most important aspect of founding an empire is the strength of its highest level experts. The more powerful its highest tier members are, the better of a chance one has.”

Barker was growing excited as well.

“Mr. Zassler, are you saying that we should build an empire together?” Barker looked at Zassler.

Zassler laughed. “That’s just one of the things I’ve been considering. Our current goal is destroying the Radiant Church’s influence in the Anarchic Lands. However, the Radiant Church currently occupies nearly a third of the territory of the Anarchic Lands. In order to eliminate them, we will need a great deal of land as well. After destroying them and taking over their territory...we would be in control of over half of the Anarchic Lands. At that time, we would then deal with the Cult of Shadows...and the Anarchic Lands would then be ours.”

Barker felt his heart rate speed up.

The Anarchic Lands was an area in constant turmoil and chaos. Although in size, it was smaller than the O’Brien Empire, it was still comparable to the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire.

“Erecting an empire...” Barker’s eyes were shining.

“Haha, no rush. One step at a time. Given our current power, with all of us working together, it shouldn’t be too hard for us to take over at least ten Duchies in the Anarchic Lands and found a kingdom at the very least.” Zassler said confidently.

Barker nodded repeatedly.

The Rohault Empire. The Rhine Empire. How many Saints did they have? The roots of these two Empires weren’t nearly as deep as the roots of the O’Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire, nor did they have the assistance of Descended Angels like the Radiant Church or the Cult of Shadows.

For example, the Rohault Empire could at absolute most produce just over ten Saints.

Linley's side had five Undying Warriors. Once Barker and his brothers reached the Saint-level in human form, they would have the power of true Saint-level Undying Warriors. If the five of them worked together in concert with Linley and Bebe... a force like this wouldn't be afraid of the Radiant Church at all.

So why couldn't they found an Empire, then?

"Occupying the entire Anarchic Lands will be a bit difficult. After all, there are a lot of complicated aspects to this place." Zassler smiled. "But I still feel very confident." Zassler turned and stared up at Mt. Blackraven. Linley was there, in the mountain.

Zassler slowly said, "In my mind, I have a goal. One day, we will create a powerful empire, and Linley... he will be to our empire what the War God is to the O'Brien Empire."

"The War God?" Barker was very shocked.

Zassler smiled and nodded.

An enormous, mighty empire could only be founded with a cadre of fear-inducing top-tier experts. For example, in reality, the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire were both reliant on the Yulan Empire, precisely because they didn't have enough top-tier power.

But in the empire which Zassler dreamed of, the top-tier power was Linley.

Just like how the War God watched over the O'Brien Empire and the High Priest watched over the Yulan Empire... the future Linley would also watch over his future empire! But of course, Linley currently didn't yet have that much power.

"He's only twenty eight years old, but he's already reached such a terrifying level. Can you imagine what someone like him will be able to accomplish in the future?" Zassler laughed as he glanced at Barker.

Barker nodded.

Barker and his brothers were truly awed by Linley's prowess.

"Let's go. Let's go see Linley." Zassler laughed.

Zassler, this old fox who had lived for over eight hundred years, now had a particular desire which excited him. He wanted to see the Yulan continent bring forth yet another Empire. How exciting that would be!

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 4, War Machine

“Rumble...”

Water rushed down from that tens of meters high waterfall, striking against the deep pool of water at the bottom, creating countless sprays of water. The water within this deep pool flowed out into a narrow creek, slowly winding its way downwards. Barker and Zassler followed this little creek deeper and deeper into Mt. Blackraven.

At the end of this creek was a peaceful lake. In the center of the lake, there was a gracefully built wooden cabin.

In front of the wooden cabin, there was a long-haired man wearing a loose robe who was wielding a violet longsword slowly. But in actuality, this ‘slowness’ was an illusion, a misperception of Zassler’s and Barker’s. Although it seemed slow, in truth, it was terrifyingly fast.

This sensation of a visual misperception made Barker and Zassler have the urge to vomit blood.

With each strike of the sword, it seemed as though the surrounding space itself was twisted.

Barker and Zassler glanced at each other, their eyes filled with shock. It had only been a few months, but Linley had made yet another breakthrough! They had never before seen Linley use this sword technique before. Just now, from what they had seen, they were certain...that this sword technique definitely was astonishingly powerful.

Barker and Zassler stood at the edges of the lake, quietly waiting.

After a long time, Linley sheathed his sword.

“Come over.” With a wave of Linley’s hands, a sudden gust of wind emerged, creating a ‘bridge of air’ between the wooden cabin and the lakeshore. “You can just walk over. Don’t be afraid. You won’t fall.”

Baker and Zassler glanced at each other, and then they stepped onto this ‘bridge of air’, walking to the center where Linley’s wooden cabin was.

Linley sat down next to the stone bench. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew a flask of wine and three cups. Laughing calmly, he said, “Zassler, if you had come a few days ago, I probably would’ve only been able to use the wind to bring you over directly. I wouldn’t have been able to do what I just did.”

Zassler was an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank. Although he was almost at the Saint-rank, he couldn’t fly. And given his body’s relative frailty, there was no way he could walk on water either.

“Lord, what was that, just now?” Barker had yet to recover from his shock.

Zassler looked at Linley as well. Laughing, Linley explained, “It is one way by which one can use the Laws of the Wind. Not too long ago, I gained some insights on the ‘Slow’ aspect, which allowed me to do what I just did. But I still am quite a ways off from the ‘Spatial Lock’ level.”

“What is a ‘Spatial Lock’?” Zassler questioned.

Linley didn't explain further. Zassler and Barker weren't practitioners of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. How could they possibly understand his explanations? When Linley had sparred against Miller, that expert from the mysterious mountain village, Linley had suddenly seen a clearer path to gaining a deeper understanding in the 'Slow' aspect of the wind. Naturally, that made training progress twice as fast for half the effort.

If Miller were to have seen Linley training, he would've been shocked.

In just a few short months, Linley had been able to advance this much. This sort of rate of improvement was simply terrifyingly fast.

Pouring cups of wine for each man, Linley raised his own winecup in a toast. Smiling, he said, "Just tell me why you have come."

Barker said, "Lord, after spending some time on the management of our current territory, we have completed our military reorganization, and given them three months of training. It is about time to attack a few other cities." As soon as he heard these words, a smile crept onto Linley's face.

He had been eagerly awaiting this day.

"This time, we should be attacking that prefectural city, right?" Linley said.

The nearby Zassler nodded. "Right. According to my plans, this time, we should attack three small cities and the prefectural city of Moat [Mo'te]." Linley's side currently had six cities and six legions with fifty thousand soldiers. This sort of military power was on par with that of a prefectural city.

However...

Linley's side had experts as well! This was a definite advantage.

"After we take down the prefectural city, we will be able to announce publicly that we have founded a Duchy." Barker chortled.

Linley had been eagerly awaiting the founding of the Duchy. He still remembered Delia's appointment with him in that letter. The day he founded his own Duchy was the day on which Delia would leave the Yulan Empire to come looking for him.

"Linley." Zassler asked, "After we take down the prefectural city, what should we do next? Should we continue taking over cities which belong to neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows? Or should we begin to launch attacks against the cities which the Radiant Church controls?"

Per their battle maps, after taking down the prefectural city, to the south of the territory which Linley controlled was the territory under the dominion of the Radiant Church.

Of course, the Radiant Church's control was in secret. On the surface, they were all Duchies. But in truth, it was quite easy to tell which were controlled by the Radiant Church and which were controlled by the Cult of Shadows! The way to do so was to simply look at the temples in those prefectural cities. If the city had a Radiant Temple, then that Duchy was secretly controlled by the Radiant Church.

If it had a Shadow Temple, then it was controlled by the Cult of Shadows.

"Begin attacking the Duchies controlled by the Radiant Church." Linley's eyes narrowed as he made his decision. "As our activities grow more and more pronounced, the intelligence network of the Radiant Church would definitely take note of the five Barker brothers. Knowing that you are here, it would be strange if they didn't realize that I, Linley, was here as well."

Linley looked at Barker and Zassler, then chuckled. “After we take down the prefectural city, we’ll spend some time stabilizing it and do a wholesale reorganization of our armies. After reorganizing our armies, then we will begin attacking the territory controlled by the Radiant Church!”

“But of course, let’s only launch some small attacks at first, and see how the Radiant Church responds.” Linley laughed calmly. “Let’s see if they immediately counterattack, or if they refrain from doing so, or if they send over experts to find me.”

Zassler understood Linley’s intentions. Laughing, he said, “Right. If the Radiant Church decides to openly fight you, Linley, then...the name of the Duchy will be based off of your family name. Let us call it the ‘Baruch Duchy’!”

“But if the Radiant Church refrains, then we can continue to pretend you are not here, and we can just choose a name for the Duchy at random.”

Hearing Zassler’s words, Linley nodded in approval.

Right now, what they needed to see was how the Radiant Church would react. If the experts of the Radiant Church did not appear, then Linley wouldn’t act. He would let Barker and his brothers stir up trouble, repeatedly attacking cities. If enemy experts appeared...then they would respond in this manner.

“When will we attack the city of Moat?” Barker looked at Linley.

“Hurry up and start.” Linley replied.

Linley’s words caused all six cities to begin gearing up for war. One legion with nine thousand men, led by Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, went to attack three smaller cities, while the other four legions, under the leadership of Gates and Barker, went to attack the prefectural city of Moat.

Zassler watched over Blackdirt City.

“Kill!” The grounds beneath the walls of the prefectural city of Moat were totally red with blood. At first, the prefectural city of Moat had sent their army of twenty thousand out, preparing to directly battle against the enemy. But when the troops led by Gates and Barker had charged into them, massive casualties had resulted.

Gates and Barker were two terrible gods of battle.

Wherever those massive greataxes whirled about, people died in vast numbers. Each army had its own elite squads, and Gates and Barker focused precisely on those people. Wherever there was a tough pocket of resistance, they went to snuff it out.

Quickly, the twenty-thousand man army of the prefectural city of Moat was utterly shattered. Their morale totally gone, many people immediately surrendered, then and there.

More than half had died. The lucky survivors...were all captured.

They couldn’t flee even if they wanted to. The city gates to the prefectural city of Moat were firmly shut. The city governor of the prefectural city of Moat simply didn’t dare to open the gates. Once he did, those two fiends would charge inside and he would definitely die. Right now, the prefectural city of Moat only had twenty thousand soldiers.

The soldiers of Blackdirt City were arranged in neat, orderly rows. Those ten thousand prisoners were utterly demoralized, with many wounded. Only two or three thousand were in battle-shape. Blood covered the ground, and the morale of the city guards of the prefectural city of Moat was at rock bottom.

“What is going on? Why are they standing so far away?” The garrison troops were growing frantic. The range the enemy was at was far beyond bow range.

Suddenly, those two godlike leaders suddenly charged forward at high speed, greataxes in hand. Their speed was so fast that everyone gaped as they watched. The garrison troops immediately shouted out, “Archers, prepare to attack those two men. Fire!”

The hundred elite archers selected from within the ordinary ranged division were all equipped with powerful bows, which they began to use to fire down upon the two men. However, Barker and Gates were simply too fast. Only a few arrows hit them, but even the ones that hit them were deflected off.

“Haha, watch this!” Gates roared in excitement. Raising his heart-stoppingly terrifying greataxe, he chopped down in the direction of that distant city gate.

“Bam!”

A sudden, terrifying sound rang out from the city gates. The tall, strong city gates shuddered and then began to crack, but it didn't actually break.

“The gates of a prefectural city are far sturdier than those of smaller cities.” Gates laughed loudly, the sound of his laughter shaking the heavens. The soldiers on the walls of Moat could hear it clearly. “Big brother, no need for you to get involved, I can deal with that gate.”

That powerful blast of force from afar had already caused the soldiers on the wall to turn pale-faced.

Who fought battles like this?!

Smashing straight through the front gates and charging in?!

“Drop the boulders, quick, drop the boulder!” The shrill voice of the city governor rang out. The walls of this prefectural city were over ten meters thick. Aside from the normally closed city gates, there were actually a few other apertures. From those apertures, massive boulders began to fall down.

Those ten-plus thick, heavy boulders crashed down with enough power that not even a warrior of the ninth rank could disregard them. These were used especially for dealing with experts.

“Dropping boulders?”

Gates' face changed, and he howled angrily, “Motherfucker, out of my way!” That greataxe moved as agilely as a leaf, gently touching the city gate. The gate shuddered violently, and then half of it broke apart and crumbled. But with a low rumbling sound, those boulders began to fall down, blocking off the city entrance.

“Break.” Barker also used the same technique, ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’.

“Boom!” The boulder shuddered, and pieces of rock were sent flying everywhere. Over a meter-deep crack appeared on the surface of the boulder, but compared to its terrifyingly massive size, even a deep crack meant little to it.

Gates and Barker glanced at each other.

“We'll have to act per his Lordship's orders.” Gates laughed.

As Linley had directed, Barker and his brothers were to keep their identity as Undying Warriors a secret. They were one of Linley's hidden weapons. After all, the Radiant Church didn't know their identity for certain. The only thing they could reveal was what the Radiant Church already knew.

"Haeru!" Barker let out a loud roar.

"Groooooowl!" An earth-shaking roar could be heard, and that terrifying black panther which had been in the middle of the army suddenly grew dramatically larger, reaching a height of ten meters and a length of twenty. Seeing this enormous, three-story tall magical beast...all of the people in the prefectural city of Moat were utterly stunned.

"A Saint-level magical beast!"

Those guards were speechless.

"Bang!" The three-story tall Haeru transformed into a black blur, charging at the city gates. In the blink of an eye, he traversed the thousand meters of distance to the city gates. The city gates were twenty meters high, but Haeru's terrifying body slammed directly against that ten-meter thick boulder.

A terrifying explosion could be heard.

That boulder split apart as though it were made of tofu, exploding into countless pieces which went flying every which way. Many of the garrison soldiers in the city were struck by the flying stones and had their heads broken open or their chests caved in...and that was just the appetizer.

The terrifying magical beast, Haeru, charged through and began to kill.

He was an absolute war machine. Anything standing before him would be trampled to death or knocked flying. Countless casualties!

"Surrender! We surrender!"

"Surrender!!!"

Even the sturdiest of warriors, when faced with such a terrifying magical beast, would feel powerless. All of them immediately threw down their weapons and knelt down, signifying surrender. A Saint-level magical beast...how could soldiers like them possibly resist against such an overpowering force?

"Surrender. I surrender." The city governor of the prefectural city of Moat fell to his knees, his entire body shaking.

After taking over the prefectural city of Moat, Linley's side now had a prefectural city and nine smaller cities, and now controlled a population of nine million. They could already be considered a relatively large Duchy in size.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 5, Heading Out

Late night. Within a quiet study, there was a desk with a lit lamp atop it, flickering with dim light.

Atop the table, there was a hawk-nosed, skinny man with long violet hair. This man was flipping through a thick book. Under the dim light of the lamp, the hawk-nosed man's appearance couldn't be clearly made out. But just at this moment... "Knock, knock, knock." The sound of knocking.

"Enter." The hawk-nosed man didn't even look up, continuing to leaf through the book.

"Creaaaak." The door swung open, and a handsome-looking golden-haired middle-aged man walked in. As soon as he walked in, he shut the door, then bowed respectfully. "Lord Praetor, Linley's forces have already taken the prefectural city of Moat."

The hawk-nosed man was the awe-inspiring Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal of the Radiant Church. Osenno.

Publicly, the Holy Emperor was the leader of the Radiant Church. The church did, however, whitewash its actions to make itself look pure. When dealing with some experts, they had the Ecclesiastical Tribunal carry out missions with extreme ruthlessness. Their leader, the Praetor, within the Radiant Church itself, had power and authority not one whit lower than the Holy Emperor's.

"Oh." Osenno continued to read his book.

The golden-haired man said respectfully, "Taking over the prefectural city of Moat is a small affair. More importantly... Linley's side used that mysterious Saint-level panther-type magical beast in order to break through the city walls!"

"They used the Saint-level beast?" Osenno's head suddenly snapped up.

Osenno's eyes were as deep and dark as the depths of the sea. The golden-haired man felt his heart shake from Osenno's gaze, but he forced down his fear and said, "Lord Praetor, Linley's side actually used Saints to do battle. This is a clear provocation."

Generally speaking, Saints did not get involved in battles.

Once a Saint got involved, that meant that there was no leeway left, nor any chance of reconciliation. It would be a fight to the death.

As the prefectural city of Moat was not part of the Radiant Church's territory, for Linley to act in such a way wasn't a direct provocation towards the Radiant Church. But for him to have Saint-level magical beasts engage in battle... this was a gesture. A provoking gesture towards the Radiant Church. Linley's intentions were quite clear...

My magical beast has already shown himself. These forces belong to me, Linley. So what is your Radiant Church going to do about it?

At the same time, Linley's side was displaying their might. 'Since I dare to send out my Saint-level magical beast to do battle, if your Radiant Church wishes to battle me, you'd best bring your Saints along as well. Don't bother with the soldiers.'

“Lord Praetor?” The golden-haired man looked at Osenno.

Osenno’s deep, dark eyes were totally unreadable. Suddenly, Osenno spoke. “Remember. From today forward, don’t fight head on against Linley. We will endure!” The golden-haired man was shocked, and he stared at Osenno in disbelief.

Osenno was definitely an extremely, terrifyingly powerful expert.

As one of the towering figures of the Radiant Church, his power was no lower than Haydson’s, and probably higher. The Radiant Church had quite a few Saints in the Anarchic Lands as well. There was no need for them to fear Linley.

“Lord Praetor, Linley’s side only includes himself and those two magical beasts.” The golden-haired man said uncomprehendingly.

Osenno said calmly, “No. He doesn’t only have so few Saints. Those five Barker brothers, if our predictions are correct, should be the descendants of Armand. They are all warriors of the ninth rank now. Upon transforming, they would be early-stage Saints. Only experts on the level of mid-stage Saints would be able to beat them.”

“Undying Warriors?” The golden-haired man was shocked.

Osenno glanced at him.

When Cesar had rescued Barker and his brothers and threatened Stehle, the Holy Emperor Heidens had immediately suspected that the Barker brothers were of the Armand clan. After all, for Cesar to act in such a way and so strongly...there was no other explanation.

“They aren’t much weaker than us.” Osenno lowered his head to his book again. He said a few final, calm words. “Remember. Endure.”

“Then what if Linley erects a Duchy and begins attacking our territory?” The golden-haired man asked. Although he was the managing supervisor for the Radiant Church’s forces in the Anarchic Lands, now that Osenno was here, naturally Osenno was now in charge.

Osenno said calmly, “If they attack our territory, we retreat and let them take it.”

“Uh...” The golden-haired man stared at Osenno in shock.

Osenno said calmly, “If they provoke us, we will endure. If they attack our territory, we will retreat! Let Linley think that we fear them and that our power is less than theirs...however, understand this. When he takes over our territory, he will naturally reorganize and make use of the soldiers of those cities.”

“Ah!” The golden-haired man’s eyes lit up. He understood Osenno’s hidden meaning.

“The Lord Praetor is wise.” The golden-haired man said excitedly.

Osenno chuckled calmly. “This is how warfare has always been. Human resources are of the highest importance! In terms of ensuring loyalty, what can be more powerful than faith? Linley...I’ll let you know how terrifyingly powerful ‘faith’ can be.”

The golden-haired man was secretly shaken.

Osenno was simply too sinister.

They possessed great power and many experts, but they still used such sinister methods. The golden-haired man could totally visualize...how the cocky, overconfident Linley's forces would suddenly be beaten back to the starting point.

"You can leave now." Osenno lowered his head to his book as he spoke calmly.

"Yes, Lord Praetor."

The golden-haired man left respectfully, leaving behind Osenno by himself in that dimly lit study. He quietly continued to read that book. Next to it, there was another scroll, which had a few words written atop it; 'Linley Baruch.'

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In the northern area of the Anarchic Lands. In one breath, they had taken over a prefectural city and nine small cities, erecting a dominion which controlled nine million citizens. But although they had taken over the prefectural city of Moat, the political center of Linley's side was still in Blackdirt City.

The current Blackdirt City was extremely developed.

The policy of no taxation caused many people to desire to migrate to Blackdirt City, and caused Blackdirt City to be bursting from the seams. This had resulted in the population management department of Blackdirt City to raise the immigration requirements. But as the political center of this dominion, Blackdirt City continued to attract many migrants.

"Boss, Blackdirt City has changed so much." Standing on Linley's shoulders, Bebe accompanied Linley as he walked along one of the primary roads.

Linley also stared at the surrounding hotels, clothing stores, and weaponry stores on each side of the road. When Linley had first arrived at Blackdirt City, the local citizens were dressed in rags and most looked yellow and malnourished. But in recent months, Blackdirt City had totally changed.

Those tattered old stores had all been completely renovated.

The streets had been repaved as well, and there were trees on each side of the road. In some of the hotels, Linley saw many commoners drinking wine while casually chatting. Most of them were talking about their 'five wargods'.

Under the leadership of these five virtually invincible wargods, their lives had become stable, and the null taxation rate had caused their quality of life to improve by several levels.

"If those five wargods were to be defeated..." Just as a person in the hotel spoke these words...

"Motherfucker, what are you farting about?"

"Those wargods are invincible. How can they be defeated? Punk, you better watch your mouth."

Many people instantly began to curse him angrily. These commoners all deeply enjoyed their current peaceful, stable lives. Naturally, they didn't wish for their lives to be disrupted.

"In the O'Brien Empire and the Holy Union, peaceful lives are so easily found, but in the Anarchic Lands, they are so precious and valuable." Linley suddenly was moved. "This is what constant chaos causes."

"If one day, the Anarchic Lands could be unified and the chaos brought to an end..."

Looking at the smiles on the faces of the commoners, Linley suddenly realized that his heart had a happy, satisfied feeling.

“Unification?” Linley shook his head and laughed.

He didn’t aspire to this. To be able to make his loved ones happy and to allow himself to constantly improve in his training. This would make him very satisfied.

“It’s best to allow Zassler and Barker to continue handling the affairs of war.” Linley’s body suddenly flickered and disappeared with a light wind.

Within the city governor’s mansion in Blackdirt City, Jenne, Rebecca, Leena, and the others were eating lunch in the living room. Suddenly, Linley appeared in front of the door...

“Lord.” Barker immediately stood up, and the others did as well. Linley hurriedly said, “Sit, everyone. I’m just here to visit you and talk about a few things.” Linley smiled as he walked to a nearby chair and sat down.

Zassler immediately said, “Linley, we were planning to go find you and discuss recent developments with you. Now that you are here, Jenne...make your report to Linley.” Currently, Jenne was the highest level administrator of their dominion.

But just as Jenne opened her mouth and was about to begin, Linley chuckled as he reached out to stop her. “Jenne, sit. No rush.”

Jenne nodded and sat down.

“As far as the wars are concerned, you can make up your minds on your own. Right now, I am thinking...there is still a period of time before we begin to do battle against the Radiant Church. I want to take this opportunity to make a trip to the south and spar with a few Saints.”

Linley still remembered the invitation from that Miller.

Sparring with experts, especially experts who trained in the same Elemental Laws, would give him many insights. In addition, his forces would soon do battle against the Radiant Church. By the time the battles started, he wouldn’t dare to casually leave.

He had to seize the time he had.

“Lord, don’t worry.” Barker laughed. “However, in another seven or eight days, we will begin attacking the Duchies controlled by the Radiant Church. Given what we discussed with you last time, Lord, if the Radiant Church fights us head on, we won’t cower from them, and a month from now, we will found our Duchy as the Baruch Duchy. If they are afraid of us, we can continue to pretend as we attack them, and pick another name for the Duchy.”

Linley nodded.

“Very well then. Haeru will stay with you, in case of any emergency. Bebe and I will head out.” Linley immediately stood up.

“Big brother Linley, won’t you have a meal with us?” Jenne suddenly said.

Linley chuckled towards Jenne, then shook his head. “No.” Linley’s body flickered, then disappeared from within the living room. Jenne, somewhat disappointed, let out a soft sigh.

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In the southern areas of the Anarchic Lands. Within that quiet, mysterious little village.

Ever since the news of Reynolds choosing to stay here in the village had spread out, Reynolds had been ostracized within the village! The reason? Monica! Monica was the most beautiful, eye-catching girl in this village. There were simply too many suitors pursuing her.

Originally, many youngsters had thought that Reynolds would definitely leave and thus not be a threat.

But in the end, Reynolds had stayed.

Within a hotel in the mountain village. Reynolds was sitting there drinking wine.

“Hey, punk, move over.” Three youngsters walked over and slapped his table hard as they barked viciously at Reynolds.

Reynolds lifted his head up and glanced at them.

“What, you got a problem?” Those three youngsters’ bodies began to faintly glow with battle-qi. A magus of the seventh rank didn’t count for much in this mysterious mountain village. There were dozens of youths here who had reached the seventh rank, and quite a few who had reached the eighth. The three youngsters in front of him? One was a warrior of the seventh rank. The stronger one was of the eighth rank.

There was nothing he would be able to do if they wanted to beat him.

Taking a deep breath, Reynolds held down his temper and moved aside. There was nothing he could do...he had no one to rely on here in this village. But many of the uncles, aunts, grandparents and what not of the youngsters here were all experts. How could he possibly fight against them? And many of the youths here had grown up together. If they banded together, how could he possibly fight them all?

“What are you doing?”

Monica and her serving maid came over, and she snapped angrily at them.

“Princess Monica.” Those three youngsters immediately bowed. Within this mysterious mountain village, Monica’s father’s status was extremely high. According to legend...this mysterious mountain village had already existed a thousand years ago, and at that time, Monica’s father had looked exactly the way he looked right now.

Monica stared angrily at each of them, then grabbed Reynolds by the hand. “Big brother Reynolds, let’s go.”

Reynolds stood up. Taking a deep breath, he left alongside Monica.

“All he can do is hide behind a woman. Useless creature.” Those three youths cursed him in whispers. Reynolds, who had left alongside Monica, naturally could hear their voices. His body just trembled slightly, and then he followed Monica away.

In this mysterious mountain village, he had no one to rely on. All he could do was endure it!

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 6, Third Bro?

Within a grassy area near the mountain village.

Monica had her serving girl go back, and then held hands with Reynolds as they walked together.

“Big brother Reynolds, those people go way too far. This isn’t the first time either. I’m going to tell Uncle Miller and have Uncle Miller teach them a lesson.” Monica was so angry that her face was a bit red. Looking at Monica, Reynolds only smiled. “Monica, it’s fine. Don’t tell your Uncle Miller.”

“But big brother Reynolds, they...” Monica said frantically,

Reynolds shook his head. “These people are only angry that you are always with me. They are jealous of me, get it?”

Monica’s face instantly turned red.

Seeing the embarrassed look on Monica’s face, Reynolds quickly felt that the little bit of unhappiness he had just experienced was nothing. “Monica, for you, I chose to stay in the mountain village. I knew these things would happen. Monica...don’t worry. I’m still weak. When I grow stronger, they won’t dare to do these things any longer.”

“But that will take a long time.” Monica frowned.

Reynolds said confidently, “Trust in your big brother Reynolds. I’ll be fine.”

Monica nodded obediently.

It must be said that Reynolds was extremely skilled in chasing girls. Despite having only known him for a few months, Monica had very early on fallen for this experienced, humorous, and attentive man, Reynolds.

Holding hands, the two quietly walked on the grass.

“If we can always be like this and walk together into eternity, how wonderful that would be?” Monica leaned against Reynolds. Reynolds gently said, “Monica, let’s get married.”

“AH!”

Monica jerked her head up as though she had been hit by lightning. Utterly stunned, her face turned pure scarlet. Reynolds laughed and lowered his head to look at her. “What, Monica? Are you unwilling?” Monica stuttered for a few moments, then said with a frown, “My mother wouldn’t agree.”

“Why wouldn’t your mother agree?” Reynolds asked.

Monica shook her head. “My mother has very strict requirements. She originally said that only a person at the Saint-level could marry me. After my father coaxed and cajoled her, she still said...that my husband had to at least be of the ninth rank. My mother looks down upon the weak.”

Reynolds was stunned.

“How could your mother...” Reynolds didn’t know what to say.

Monica lowered her voice to a whisper. “Big brother Reynolds, my mother is very cold. Only in front of me does she occasionally smile. Usually...even Uncle Miller is terrified of her.”

Reynolds was shocked. Reynolds had a faint idea as to how powerful Miller was. His terrifying speed was something which most likely warriors of the ninth rank would find difficult or impossible to reach. In other words...this Uncle Miller was at least of the ninth rank, or perhaps a Saint.

The two chatted on the grass for a long time.

“Alright, it’s getting late.” Monica looked upwards at the sky. “I need to go back and eat dinner. If I get home late, mother will reprimand me again.” Reynolds nodded slightly, watching Monica as she left.

Monica’s residence was one of the restricted areas in the mysterious village. Aside from a few people like Miller who were granted entry, most of the dwellers of the village were not permitted to go near it. Naturally...Reynolds couldn’t go there either, and he hadn’t met Monica’s parents.

Shortly after Monica had left.

“Reynolds, you seem to be enjoying yourself.” Five youths walked over. Their leader had long golden hair, like that of a lion, and a handsome, rugged face. Seeing these people, Reynolds knew that today was not going to be a good day.

The name of this youngster was Videle [Vi’de’li]. He was one of the leaders of the younger generation. Despite only being forty, he was a warrior of the eighth rank.

To those powerful warriors and magi, their lifespan was usually quite long, at least three or four centuries. Forty was quite young.

“Reynolds, I already warned you last time to stop bothering Monica.” Videle stared coldly at Reynolds. “A man should know his limits. Punk, how can you be worthy of Monica? Monica’s parents are both Saints. And what are you?”

Reynolds was startled. He knew that Monica’s father was a Saint, but this was the first time he had heard that Monica’s mother was a Saint as well.

“Big brother Videle’s father is a Saint as well. Him and Monica are a good match. You outsider punk, what type of thing are you?” The other youngsters were cursing Reynolds as well. These youngsters simply couldn’t stand to watch an outsider take away ‘their’ princess.

“Brothers, help this punk learn his lesson.” Videle said coldly.

The four nearby youths immediately charged forward together, while Reynolds continuously retreated...and then immediately turned and began running towards the village. But he was a magus; how could he compete against warriors in speed? In a few short moments, he was caught up to.

Instantly, punches and kicks began to land all over his body. His face, however, wasn’t injured at all. These people were quite clever, reserving their attacks for Reynolds’ body. But the rules of the village were strict; the villagers were not to engage in mutual slaughter. Fighting was fine, but if someone was killed, those youths would have been in for it.

This was the reason why Reynolds had endured.

He knew that these people wouldn’t dare to kill him.

....

“Creaaak.” Reynolds opened his door. At this time, a burly neighbor of his laughed, “Reynolds, you are back? Hrm? What’s wrong? You seem to have some trouble walking. Did those punks beat you up again?”

Reynolds forced out a smile. “Big brother Field [Fei’er’de], I’m fine.”

In the village, there were still some people who were very kind to Reynolds. These were mostly the older crowd. Because Reynolds had a good character, many people liked Reynolds. Field was one of those who cared about Reynolds the most.

“Reynolds, in the future, don’t go out so much. Maybe you can help out at my weapon shop. As long as you are with me, I’d like to see who’d dare try and abuse you.” Field said repeatedly.

“Thank you.” Reynolds forced out a smile as he entered his room.

In his quiet room, Reynolds sat down cross legged, thinking to himself, “Those bastards! But in this village, I am an outsider, after all. All I can do is to endure. One day...when my power increases, I won’t be afraid of them again.”

His life in this village was very tough.

But Reynolds had never thought about abandoning it. Each time he was humiliated, Reynolds would think about Monica. This was the only reason why he had been able to endure.

“Boss...Second Bro...Third Bro...who knows when I’ll be able to meet you again?” Reynolds couldn’t help but think of his dear friends. And then, he closed his eyes and began to meditate. In the past, he had never trained so hard before, but he knew that the only way he would be allowed to leave the village was if he reached the top ten in the annual tournament.

.....

The sky was clear and blue. Linley flew agilely through the skies, with Bebe by his side. Beneath them was the boundless earth and cities which seemed the size of a fist. They had left at noon. Just by using the Windshadow spell, by the afternoon, Linley had arrived at the southern part of the Anarchic Lands.

Linley was able to easily find that large mountain around a hundred kilometers south of Southmount City.

“This little mountain village really is mysterious.” Flying into the air above the mountain valley, Linley stared down at the quiet little village below. Linley instructed Bebe, “Bebe, don’t use your spiritual energy to scan them. Let’s just go down.”

Bebe snickered, “Boss, I got it. It is very impolite to use spiritual energy to scan other Saints, right?”

Linley nodded slightly.

It was actually not a big deal if a powerful Saint used his spiritual energy to scan a weak Saint, but Linley had interacted with Miller before. According to Miller...there were multiple Saints within this mysterious village, and in particular, they had that ‘Lord’ amongst them.

Someone whom even Miller would refer to as ‘Lord’ was definitely someone much more powerful than Linley.

In a place such as this, it was better to be a bit humble.

Before Linley even had a chance to fly down, suddenly, a human figure streaked into the air at high speed. It was Miller. Miller's face was all smiles. "Haha, brother Linley. You came. This is wonderful. As soon as I got back, I began to wonder to myself when you would come, brother Linley."

"Miller, you really are powerful. As soon as I came, you noticed me." Linley said with surprise.

Neither he nor Bebe had utilized their spiritual energy, and yet they had been discovered so quickly. This was indeed terrifying. Miller laughed self-mockingly. "Linley, I am not as formidable as that. When you arrived, his Lordship discovered you and spoke to me mentally to inform me."

"Spoke to you mentally?" Linley stared at Miller in surprise.

They weren't master and magical beast companion. How could they mentally communicate? At most, Saints would be able to reach the level of using spiritual energy to broadcast their location or to scan people. There was no way one could use spiritual energy to communicate.

"You and I aren't capable of it, but that doesn't mean his Lordship isn't capable of it." Miller laughed.

Linley became even more curious about this mysterious expert.

Suddenly, another human figure flew towards them at high speed. It was someone with fiery red hair and a dominating aura that made even Linley feel surprised. This person should be extremely powerful.

"Miller, is this the genius, 'Linley', that you mentioned?" The red-haired man stared at Linley, as though staring at some sort of rare specimen.

Miller immediately made the introductions. "Linley, this is my good friend, Livingston [Li'wen'si'dun]. He trains in the Elemental Laws of Fire, and is on par with me in power." The nearby red-haired man hurriedly said, "What do you mean, on par with you? Miller...when you fight with me, you always dodge here and dodge there. If you are so tough, take me head on!"

Linley began to laugh.

"That's Livingston for you." Miller laughed as well.

Livingston glanced at him, then laughed towards Linley. "Linley, although I rarely leave the village, I've heard of you long ago. You are only twenty seven...oh, twenty eight years old now, right?"

Linley nodded.

"I am so ashamed I could die. I'm over a thousand years old." Livingston said with a self-mocking laugh.

"Useless. So useless." Bebe's voice rang out.

Livingston and Miller stared at the little tiny 'Bebe' on Linley's shoulders. When they did, Miller's face suddenly changed and he said with surprise, "Linley, is this Saint-level magical beast the one which defeated Haydson?"

"Twas indeed I, Bebe!" Bebe arrogantly raised his little head up high.

Miller laughed and nodded, then said to Linley, "You've come at just the right time. Today, we are holding our annual village tournament. Livingston and I are responsible for organizing it. In a while, the tournament will begin. Linley, come take a look with us."

"A village tournament?" Linley grew interested.

Linley, Livingston, and Miller all flew downwards, while Miller introduced some of the details about the village tournament. Hearing more and more, Linley was quite astonished. This mountain village really was quite strict, for them to make it so hard for someone to leave the village.

In the empty area east of the mountain village, virtually all of the villagers had assembled. Thousands of people were there, filling the tournament grounds to the brim.

Within the village, this annual competition was one of the biggest events of the year. Because so many people participated, each tournament would take a great deal of time. Generally speaking...Saints would be the officiators for the first day's competition.

“Lord Miller and Lord Livingston have arrived.”

Those thousands of people stared at the sky as those two human figures flew over at high speed. They instantly recognized Livingston and Miller. Although the mountain village had many experts and quite a few experts of the ninth rank, producing a Saint was extremely difficult. Centuries might pass without a single new Saint appearing. Thus, all of the people in the village were very much in awe of Miller and Livingston.

“Hey, who is that lord who is flying alongside Lord Miller and Lord Livingston?” Many villagers were puzzled.

Reynolds, standing in the middle of the crowd, just stood there, stunned as he stared at that familiar figure. That person chatting and laughing with Miller and Livingston...“Third, Third Bro?” Reynolds' eyes were filled with disbelief.

But Linley was busy chatting with Miller and Livingston. How could he possibly notice that in this crowd of thousands, Reynolds was present?

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 7, Desri

Virtually all of the villagers in this secretive little village in the southern part of the Anarchic Lands were clustered here, staring at Miller, Livingston, and Linley as they flew over. Those thousands of people instantly grew excited and began to chant the names of those two Saints.

“Miller!” “Miller!” “Miller!” “Miller!”

“Livingston!” “Livingston!” “Livingston!” “Livingston!”

A wave of cheers echoed forth from the valley. The atmosphere here was extremely lively and energetic. Miller, Livingston, and Linley flew to the center. Miller just extended his hand and waved, and everyone in the area fell silent.

Everyone stared at those three people in the center, and many also noticed the cute little Shadowmouse on Linley’s shoulders.

A smile appeared on Miller’s face. “This year will be the same as the past. We are about to begin our annual tournament. However, there is one difference this year. First of all, there is a total of 1022 participants in this year’s tournament, which is much higher than in the past. And secondly...this year, Master Linley, renowned throughout the Yulan continent, has come!”

Master Linley?

Upon hearing this name, the thousands of villagers all fell silent, turning their gazes towards Linley...and then, the entire village exploded into explosive cheers of welcome. Everyone felt extremely excited that such a legendary genius Saint had arrived.

“Excuse me. Excuse me.” Reynolds constantly squeezed forward.

But there were too many people. Reynolds, having always been low-key, had originally been at the margins of the crowd, but now, he was squeezing forwards.

“Why are you squeezing forward?” An unhappy shout.

Reynolds turned his head and saw that it was Videle, the youth who had a grudge against him. Right now, the area was filled with thunderous cheers, but Videle stared coldly at Reynolds and whispered, “What, you want to take a look at Master Linley? Haha...what a joke!”

But Reynolds paid Videle no heed, passing by more people as he continued to squeeze forward.

“Everyone, silence.” Miller reached his hand out and waved, and the villagers began to fall silent. But just as Miller was about to speak, a voice rang out from within the crowd. “Third Bro!”

Linley had been engaged in quiet chatter and laughter with Livingston, but suddenly, his face stiffened. Seeing the change in Linley’s expression, Livingston couldn’t help but feel startled. He whispered, “Linley?” But it seemed as though Linley didn’t even hear him, as he slowly turned his head towards the direction of that noise.

That familiar figure in the crowd...

“Third Bro...” Reynolds was so excited that his entire body was shaking.

“Fourth Bro!” Linley felt filled with joy and excitement. Paying no heed to what Miller and Livingston were saying, Linley’s body turned into a blur as he rushed towards Reynolds, who had already squeezed his way in. The two bros immediately embraced each other in a hug.

A very tight hug!

After learning the truth behind how Reynolds had ‘died’, Linley had been filled with utter rage, and in that rage, slaughtered Prince Julin. When Linley had learned that it was Hugh who had killed Reynolds, Linley had planned to kill Hugh right there in the military camp to avenge his bro.

But afterwards, Hugh claimed that Reynolds didn’t die. Only then had Linley forbore from killing him.

Linley was no soldier. In his heart, he didn’t care about noble ranks or military matters. According to noble privileges, as the saying went, ‘If the monarch ordered his officials to die, his officials had no choice but to die.’ Prince Julin, in his fear of death, had let Reynolds ‘die’ pointlessly. He could do this because according to noble privileges, the rights of the lord were far greater than that of the subject.

But to Linley?

Bullshit!

Even the Emperor wasn’t as important as his bros. What was the big deal about an Emperor? He was born to the royal clan and inherited the Imperial throne. What, did that mean he was necessarily more noble than Linley’s bros? That was nothing more than the brainwashing foolish commoners believed in. Linley didn’t care about those at all.

“Reynolds and Master Linley...but...” Everyone was stunned.

In particular, Videle. That ‘pretty-boy’ Reynolds was tightly embracing Linley? What was the relationship between them?

Linley and Reynolds released each other.

It was rare for Linley to have such a look of utter joy on his face. Turning to look at Miller and Livingston, he said, “Miller, so sorry. I interrupted your officiating over this tournament.”

“It’s fine.” Miller hurriedly said, but then looked at Linley in confusion. “Brother Linley, you and Reynolds...?”

Linley casually rested his hand against Reynolds’ shoulders. “Reynolds is my friend, one of my closest, dearest brothers, like a real brother.” Reynold laughed as he slapped Linley on his shoulders as well. “Third Bro, don’t say such sappy things.”

“Haha...” Linley laughed with great happiness.

The village tournament was held in accordance with the normal rules, of course, but many of the youngsters, upon seeing Linley and Reynolds together, felt utterly stunned. They had bullied Reynolds in the past, serving him regular meals of punches and kicks. If Reynolds was to tell Linley, and Linley was to tell Miller...

Given Miller’s legendary severity in dealing out punishments, they would be doomed.

“This Reynolds...how did this Reynolds get involved with Master Linley?” Videle and the other youths felt full of regret.

After the tournament’s officiating ceremonies were ended, Miller, Livingston, Linley, and Reynolds departed together, heading to the restricted area; Monica’s home.

“Uncle Miller, I shouldn’t go.” Reynolds saw that distant copse of trees and immediately said.

This was a restricted area.

Miller laughed. “No need. Since you are Linley’s bro, come along with us. It is no big deal.” Miller suddenly frowned and let out a laugh. “Reynolds, you called me Uncle Miller...but I address Linley as brother. This...this really is...amusing, haha.”

Linley and Reynolds were both startled. Only now did they realize this as well.

Livingston laughed as well. “Miller, enough chitchat. You each can address each other as you should. You and I are both over a thousand years old, yet we know Saints who are over four or five thousand years ago. Don’t we all just address each other by name?”

“I’m just making conversation.” Miller pursed his lips unhappily.

Reynolds began to laugh as well. Even the normally icy-faced Miller had his humorous side, it seemed. Most likely, very few people in the village had ever seen Miller laugh. Reynolds understood...only in front of experts of his own level would these people joke about so freely.

“Miller, let’s hurry. I’m very curious about those experts you mentioned.” Linley urged.

Linley had always felt a hint of anticipation whenever he thought about the experts in this mysterious village. He knew...these experts were perhaps some of the people whom the War God had spoken about, those ‘experts who were quietly training in seclusion’. These experts weren’t very well known in the continent these days. Or perhaps, long ago, they were very famous. These experts, in terms of power, were much stronger than the famous people of the current era.

Passing through the dense copse of trees, they arrived at a large grassy area, filled with flowers and with stone benches and stone tables placed nearby.

In the center of the grassy area was a round lake.

Passing by the grassy area, they arrived at a location next to the mountainside. Next to the mountainside were several stone houses. The mountainside itself had been hollowed out as well with several tunnels.

“Big brother Reynolds!” An excited and happy voice rang out, and from a nearby tunnel, a figure dressed in white came running out. Seeing the jade-haired, beautiful girl, Linley turned to look at the expression on Reynold’s face.

Linley laughed softly. “Fourth Bro, no wonder you weren’t willing to leave.”

Reynolds let out an awkward chuckle.

The look Linley saw on Reynolds’ face made Linley feel as though he had seen a doppelganger. The playboy Reynolds could actually be embarrassed? Could it be that this time, Reynolds had really fallen?

“Big brother Reynolds, what are you doing here?” Monica grabbed Reynolds by the hand. She was very excited. Reynolds immediately walked with Monica off to one side, then whispered and explained to Monica, who immediately turned to stare at Linley in surprise. “He’s Linley?”

“Haha, I hear Linley came?” A loud laugh could be heard.

Three figures emerged from the other side of the grassy area. The person who had just spoken was an old man with snow-white hair but the ruddy complexion of a child. The other two? One was a rather chubby, friendly seeming middle-aged man, while the other man who walked between them was an elegant middle-aged man with long black hair who wore a moon-white long robe.

The elegant middle-aged man was clearly the leader of the three.

“Father.” Monica immediately ran towards the elegant middle-aged man, tugging his hand affectionately as she pointed towards Reynolds and introduced him. “Father, this is the Reynolds who I spoke to you about.”

Monica had immediately introduced Reynolds, making him nervous.

This was the tantamount to seeing his father-in-law for the first time. Most importantly...his future father-in-law seemed to be an extremely incredible personage.

“Not bad.” The elegant middle-aged man favored Reynolds with a friendly smile. Miller immediately introduced, “Lord, this Reynolds originally went to the same school as Linley. They are close friends. For them to be able to meet with us here means that the bonds of destiny tie us together.”

As Miller spoke, he walked towards the elegant middle-aged man, while at the same time, he mouthed something.

The elegant middle-aged man’s face froze for a moment, but then it returned to normal. However, when no one was paying attention, he snuck a peek at the little Shadowmouse, ‘Bebe’, on Linley’s shoulders. The smile on his face instantly increased in friendliness by another 30%.

“Linley, hello. Very happy to be able to meet you. Haha...let me introduce you.” The middle-aged man spoke in an extremely friendly manner. Pointing to the ruddy-faced old man, he said, “This is my good friend who came here with me, Hayward [Hai’wo’de]. He is a magus as well, but he is a fire-style magus.”

The red-faced elder, Hayward, chuckled towards Linley. “The ninth rank by age twenty seven. Truly admirable.”

“This gentleman is Foreman [Fu’man]. He’s a Saint-level warrior, and like you, he trains in the Elemental Laws of the Earth.” The elegant middle-aged man laughed. “I have another friend who is currently in training. He should be arriving a while later. Oh, right. I haven’t introduced myself yet.”

The elegant middle-aged man smiled as he stared at Linley. “My name is Desri. I train in the Elemental Laws of Light.”

Linley’s heart shook slightly.

It was him after all!

According to the War God, the Yulan continent had five Prime Saints who were only one step removed from becoming Deities. Fain of the War God’s College was one such, while another was an expert named Desri in the Anarchic Lands.

Linley understood that experts such as these people could defeat him with just one move, much like how Fain had caused him to collapse and nearly pass out with one attack.

Both Fain and Desri had reached the doorway to the Deity-level. With one step past that doorway, they would reach it, but that step was extremely hard. Cesar, for example, who had previously been on par with Fain, had taken thousands of years as well, but upon breaking through and taking that last step, he had become a Demigod.

“Respectful greetings, Mr. Desri.” Linley said humbly.

Desri laughed calmly. “Come, let’s take a seat inside. My wife should be arriving soon as well.”

Everyone immediately headed into a nearby tunnel.

“Whoah.” Linley stared with astonishment at the architecture inside the mountain. The insides had been hollowed out, creating a large, empty space with all sorts of rooms and courtyards built inside. Most importantly, the ceiling above was filled with all sorts of gemstones, filling the area with a multicolored, dazzling, dream-like light.

Inside the mountain, the sound of dripping water from a mountain spring could occasionally be heard. It seemed so peaceful.

The temperature today was rather low, but inside the mountain, it was much warmer and quite comfortable. In an empty area, there were multiple square tables which were covered with all sorts of fruits and delicacies.

“Linley, take a seat first. Let me go call my wife. Hayward, you and the others can keep Linley company for now.” Desri smiled, then immediately headed deeper inside. After taking a number of twists and turns, Desri arrived at a sealed stone room.

The sound of stone rumbling could be heard, and the stone door swung open. A jade-haired beautiful woman dressed in a noble white robe walked out. At a casual glance, she looked nearly identical to Monica. Only when one stared at her more closely would one notice that she was a bit more mature and poised than Monica.

“Wife.” Desri laughed as he looked at this lady. “Come. Today, not only has Linley come, but Reynolds has come as well.”

The beautiful woman frowned. “Why did that Reynolds come?” She truly disliked this pretty-boy who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere and wanted to pursue her daughter.

“Reynolds and Linley are good friends who grew up together.” Desri explained.

“So what if they are? Linley’s nothing more than a genius.” The beautiful woman didn’t hold Linley in any particular regard. “If it wasn’t because his rate of training is so fast and if we were only to look at his current level of power, how could he be worthy of me leaving my training for him?”

Desri laughed as he shook his head. “Wife, I think you had best not prevent Reynolds and our daughter from being together, and you need to alter your attitude towards Linley.”

“Why?” The beautiful woman frowned.

Desri said confidently, “Go take a look at that Saint-level magical beast on Linley’s shoulders and you’ll know why. I think...when you see it, your attitude will change.”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 8, The Terrifying Power of Grand Magus Saints

“Oh?” The beautiful woman was surprised.

A hint of a smile was on Desri’s face. When he had seen Bebe on Linley’s shoulders, he had been shocked as well. As soon as he saw Bebe, Desri had decided...he had to build up a good relationship with Linley, no matter what the cost was.

In Desri’s heart, he found it hard to believe that Bebe would recognize a human as his master.

But Desri understood that since Linley was Bebe’s master, then building a good relationship with Linley was absolutely necessary.

“I want to see what sort of magical beast this is.” Seeing the secretive air that Desri was putting on, she chuckled then followed him out. After walking for a while, Desri and his wife arrived at the place where Hayward, Livingston, and Linley and the others were.

The beautiful woman immediately stared at Linley’s shoulders.

But...there was nothing on Linley’s shoulders.

“On the table.” Desri’s voice rang out in the beautiful woman’s mind. Only now did the beautiful woman notice that adorable little Shadowmouse, Bebe, was holding a cup of wine and drinking it in a very satisfied manner. “The fur is black!” The beautiful woman’s heart shook.

Mice with black fur weren’t necessarily restricted to just the lowest type of Shadowmice.

Perhaps the Radiant Church and the War God’s College weren’t familiar with what Bebe was, but the Anarchic Lands and the Frost Goddess Shrine definitely were.

“Father. Mother.” Monica was extremely happy, but upon seeing her mother, Monica began to worry for Reynolds. She knew what sort of temper her mother had.

Desri and the beautiful woman walked towards the table together, taking the hosts’ seats.

“Desri’s wife?” Linley stared at this beautiful woman in astonishment. In terms of hair and every other aspect, Monica and her mother looked identical. Outsiders would think that they were siblings. However, that icy aura surrounding this beautiful woman made Linley feel surprise in his heart.

“Yet another expert, one who isn’t much weaker than Miller.”

Linley once more felt that the War God’s words were very true. The War God had said...of those experts who had quietly trained in seclusion for thousands of years in the Yulan continent, aside from the Deities, the highest tier was the five Prime Saints including Fain and Desri. The second tier was the tier of the Holy Emperor, while the third was Haydson. Haydson’s level was just an ordinary level amongst the hidden experts.

This was the reason why Olivier had tasted bitter defeat in the Arctic Icecap. After all, he wasn’t even able to defeat Haydson. Who could he possibly defeat?

Desri said warmly, “Linley, let me make the introductions. This is my wife, Pennslyn [Bing’s se’lin].”

“Sincerest greetings, Madame.” Linley said humbly.

A friendly smile appeared on Pennslyn’s face. “I truly am sorry. I’ve been training this entire time and just came out now. I hope you don’t mind.” As soon as she said these words, the nearby Monica was shocked. Her mother’s temper was such that aside from Monica’s father, her mother paid others no heed.

But...her mother had actually apologized? Was being polite?

Was this her icy, cold mother?

This was the first time Linley met Pennslyn. Naturally, he didn’t know about her normal temper. He thought Pennslyn was very friendly by nature, and he immediately laughed, “Madame, you are too courteous.”

“Monica, this is the Reynolds you’ve spoken of?” Pennslyn chuckled as she looked over at her daughter, and then her gaze rested on Reynolds. Reynolds had been warned by Monica early on, and thus he felt some dread towards this future mother-in-law of his.

Monica hurriedly said, “Yes, mother.”

“Sincerest greetings, Madame.” Reynolds felt rather nervous.

An approving look was in Pennslyn’s eyes. “Mmm, not bad at all. Monica...good eye. Why didn’t you bring Reynolds over sooner?” These words from Pennslyn instantly filled Reynolds with joy. It seemed as though this future mother-in-law had taken a liking to him.

But Monica was flabbergasted once again.

Was this her mother?

Linley’s impression towards Pennslyn became even more favorable. Just at this time, a clear, loud voice rang out. “Big brother, I hear we have guests?” A middle-aged man with long, dazzling golden hair walked in. His gaze immediately fell upon Linley, but at the same time, when he noticed the nearby Bebe, he raised an eyebrow.

“Higginson [Xi’jin’seng], hurry on over. You are the last one.” Desri laughed.

Immediately, Desri turned to look at Linley. “Linley, Higginson, like Hayward, came alongside me to this place. He also trains in the Elemental Laws of Light.”

“Sincerest greetings, Mr. Higginson.” Linley immediately said.

Higginson found an empty seat and sat down, then laughed, “Linley, don’t be so courteous. Just treat this place like you would your own home.” Hearing these words, Linley felt warmth in his heart. Desri and his gang truly were incomparably hospitable.

Within this inner mountain residence, there were some serving maids as well.

The serving maids brought over all sorts of delicacies, and the group began to engage in idle conversation. Reynolds and Monica sat there, not daring to say much. It was primarily Desri and the others chatting with Linley, while occasionally mentioning Bebe.

But today, Bebe didn’t have much to say. As Linley would’ve described it...Bebe was ‘playing it cool’.

Over the course of this discussion, Linley had discovered that the leader of this group was Desri, of course, followed by Hayward and Higginson, who had come to this place alongside Desri. Next was Miller, Livingston, and Foreman. This was obvious because... Miller, Livingston, and Foreman all addressed Desri as 'Lord', while Hayward and Higginson addressed him as 'big brother'.

After the meal.

After having eaten and drank their fill, these people naturally wanted to go do something.

Linley and the other experts naturally wanted to engage in some sparring.

"Linley, Foreman is also a practitioner of the Elemental Laws of Earth, just like yourself. How about you two have a spar?" Miller chuckled, while a hint of a smile appeared on Foreman's face as well, revealing two large dimples. "Miller, there's no need for me to spar with Linley. My training path in the Elemental Laws of Earth is roughly the same as Haydson's. Since he has already competed against Haydson, there's no need for him to spar with me."

Livingston glanced at him. "Foreman, you scared?"

Desri laughed, "Foreman speaks the truth. His power is almost identical to Haydson's. There's not much point to him sparring with Linley. How about this... Hayward, why don't you spar with Linley instead?" Desri glanced at Linley. "Linley, you need to be careful. Hayward's power is extremely strong."

"But he is a Grand Magus Saint." Linley still remembered Desri's introduction.

"So what if I am?" Hayward laughed.

Linley let out an awkward laugh. In his view, a Grand Magus Saint without the protection of a magical beast who was to engage in open battle against a Saint-level warrior would be at a great disadvantage. Linley asked, "Mr. Hayward, can it be that you don't have a magical beast companion?"

"I did, and he was a Saint. But unfortunately, he is dead already." Hayward sighed.

Desri nodded. "Two thousand years ago, for the sake of protecting Hayward, that Saint-level magical beast died. That time, another one of my close friends died as well. I wanted to save him, but I wasn't able to help in time... alas..." Desri, Hayward, and Higginson seemed to be reminiscing about past events.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Despite Desri having been there, a Saint-level magical beast had died in order to protect Hayward. Just how fierce had that battle been?

"Why did you bring up magical beasts? Can it be that you believe a Grand Magus Saint with no magical beast is inadequate?" Hayward looked at Linley with a laugh.

Linley could only chuckle.

As Linley saw it... in sparring with a Grand Magus Saint, he would rely on his speed to charge over and defeat the opponent before his opponent had even had the chance to use any magic. Wouldn't that be an easy victory? If he were to allow his opponent to use his magic, on the other hand, then he probably wouldn't even have a chance to run.

The main thing that mattered was speed. What was the point of competing?

“Linley, after reaching the Saint-level, you’ve been living in the O’Brien Empire, right?” Desri suddenly said.

Linley nodded. “Right. What of it?” Linley was confused as to why Desri would suddenly ask him this.

Desri laughed, “That makes sense. The O’Brien Empire is famous for its warriors, while the Yulan Empire is famous for its magi. Most likely, all the Saints you encountered in the O’Brien Empire were Warrior Saints, and you haven’t truly sparred against a Grand Magus Saint.”

Linley started.

This was indeed the case. All the people he had competed against were warriors. There wasn’t a single magus.

Longhaus was a Grand Magus Saint, but they hadn’t dueled.

“Grand Magus Saints are far fewer in number than Warrior Saints. However, the ratio isn’t as lopsided as in the O’Brien Empire.” Desri sighed. “In the continent, generally speaking, out of every four Saints, one is a Grand Magus Saint while the other three are Warrior Saints. But in the O’Brien Empire, perhaps only one Grand Magus Saint will appear for every ten or more Warrior Saints. The ratio is far too low.”

“The Yulan Empire is different, however. In general, one out of every two Saints is a Grand Magus Saint.” These words from Desri made Linley’s heart tremble.

One to one ratio?

The Yulan Empire truly was the wellspring for magi. Desri continued, “The Holy Union is also famous for its magi. However, the Holy Union is famous more for its basic-level training, while the Yulan Empire has the High Priest, which is why it has so many Grand Magus Saints. Generally speaking, all of the disciples of the High Priest have the potential to become Grand Magus Saints.”

Linley’s heart clenched.

Two freaks!

One War God, one High Priest.

One trained a heap of Warrior Saints, while the other taught a heap of Grand Magus Saints.

“Grand Magus Saints aren’t as simple as you think them to be. Let me tell you this. In a one on one battle between a Grand Magus Saint and a Warrior Saint, the Grand Magus Saint has the greater chance of victory.” Desri laughed. “Grand Magus Saints find it harder than warriors to train and advance to begin with. Even in a place such as the Yulan Empire, which highly prizes magi, the ratio is still only one to one.”

Linley nodded.

It was true that magi found training to be far harder than warriors. Linley had always thought it strange...since it was so hard for magi to train, if they were inferior to warriors at the Saint-level, wouldn’t that be very unfair? But in the O’Brien Empire, Linley had witnessed how powerful Warrior Saints were.

As for Grand Magi Saints? He hadn’t.

“Come, Linley. Let’s go...today, let Hayward show you how powerful Grand Magi Saints are. That way, when you meet Grand Magi Saints in the future, you won’t be caught off-guard.” Desri stood up.

Linley immediately rose to his feet as well.

Only after a true spar would he learn how powerful Grand Magi Saints were.

At this time, Bebe hopped onto Linley's shoulders as well, and their group left the cave estate. Reynolds and Monica couldn't fly, so they stayed inside. Everyone else left and flew out of the valley.

Linley and the others flew to a different part of the mountain.

"This is the place where we usually spar against each other. You'll spar here." Desri said.

Desri, Hayward, Higginson, Miller, Livingston, Foreman, Pennslyn, Linley. In total, there were eight of them standing there in mid-air. Linley and Hayward moved to stand opposite of each other at a distance of a hundred meters.

"Come." Hayward chuckled. Linley, not hesitant in the slightest, removed his outer robe and immediately Dragonformed. Those ferocious spikes erupted forth from his forehead, and his draconic black tail began to sway from behind...and his eyes turned dark golden.

Linley's body suddenly flickered. "Boom!" He charged towards Hayward at high speed.

"Linley's speed is a bit faster than last time." Miller noticed Linley's improvement. "But he's still unable to overcome Hayward."

Smiling, Hayward didn't move at all. He just quietly waited for Linley to arrive. When Linley reached a distance of ten meters from him, Hayward finally made his move. He transformed into a flash of blazing light in the blink of an eye, immediately pulling away from Linley. The distance between the two actually increased.

In terms of flying speed, Linley was inferior to Hayward.

"But..." Linley's face changed. If his flying speed was inferior, didn't that mean the opponent would be able to cast spells and easily devastate him? Indeed, moments later, a terrifying blast of heat began to emanate from Hayward's body, and countless flecks of light began to swirl around in the air above Hayward.

A brilliant, clear bird cry split the air!

Two gold-tinged red wings, that crown-like crest of feathers, those cold, arrogant eyes...this terrifying creature was a size larger than even those gigantic dragons. Before this massive Fire Phoenix, Linley and the others were like ants.

"Crackle." The air itself began to crackle from the terrifying heat, which forced Linley to raise his defenses.

"The forbidden-level spell, 'Phoenix Metamorphosis'?" Linley felt a surge of panic.

Fire magic was reputed for its offensive power, and its single-target attack, the 'Phoenix Metamorphosis' spell, was only weaker than the 'Dimensional Blade' spell. Linley didn't have the ability to deal with it yet.

The Fire Phoenix suddenly shrank in size, but it appeared to become more substantial. When it shrank to the size of ten meters in length, in all aspects, be it the plumage or the gaze, it looked just like a real magical beast. The entire body of the Fire Phoenix had turned golden.

But although it had shrank in size, the amount of pressure it was exerting on Linley had increased to a terrifying level.

“Whoosh!” The Fire Phoenix charged straight towards Linley, whose body was now covered by a layer of that roiling azurish-black mist. This was the Pulseguard Defense which Linley was so proud of.

“Rumble.” Linley’s azurish-black battle-qi was being burned away at a visible rate. “If this continues, I’ll only be able to sustain it for a few more seconds.” Linley immediately flew backwards, and the Fire Phoenix flew back to Hayward’s side as well. Only then did Linley let out a sigh of relief.

This golden Fire Phoenix was simply too terrifying.

Laughing, Hayward looked at Linley. “Both Warrior Saints and Grand Magus Saints can fly once they reach the Saint-level. As far as flying speed goes, warriors are not necessarily faster. For example, wind-style magi and light-style magi...are extremely fast. Even I, a fire-style magus, am extremely fast, given my current level of training. Just through speed alone, I can make sure that you are unable to catch me, while I easily trample you.”

“But of course, those entry-level fire-style or water-style Grand Magus Saints are inferior to you. In terms of speed, Grand Magus Saints are still a bit weaker than Warrior Saints. But despite that, there are Grand Magus Saints who are faster than Warrior Saints.”

Linley understood.

In terms of speed, Warrior Saints might have an advantage, but that didn’t mean all Grand Magus Saints were slower. Some of them flew at an astonishing speed. If one were to encounter an extremely fast Grand Magus Saint, then that would be dangerous...upon meeting such a person, the only choice was to flee.

“But of course, this sort of technique is only suited for a minority of Grand Magus Saints.” Hayward continued. “Now, come attack me again. I’ll show you the technique which Grand Magus Saints usually use against Warrior Saints.”

Linley suddenly had the feeling...

That perhaps, Grand Magus Saints truly were more terrifying than Warrior Saints.

“Are you ready?” A visible smile was on Hayward’s face.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 9, Sparring

Desri, Higginson, Miller, and the others all quietly watched this sparring competition from afar.

“Now, let’s pretend my speed was lower than yours.” Hayward grinned at Linley. “Come attack me. Watch how I deal with you.”

Linley felt a hint of anticipation.

If his speed was inferior, how would a Grand Magus Saint cope?

Linley suddenly moved, transforming into a black blur. As Linley moved, Hayward also transformed into a flaming blur, retreating at high speed, but clearly his speed was far lower than Linley’s.

“I want to see how you are going to block me.” Linley stared at Hayward.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” Suddenly, the air was filled with house-sized chunks of flaming meteors. The large number of flaming meteors carried tremendous power as they slammed towards Linley, and in a blink of an eye, they totally covered the space in front of Linley, forming a barrier in front of him.

Linley’s facial expression changed.

Fire-style magic of the ninth rank: Scorching Meteor Shower. This technique, although much weaker than the forbidden-level spell ‘Heavenly Meteor’s Descent’ in terms of both scope and single-target damage, still forced Linley to have to break through these countless meteors if he was to continue attacking Hayward.

The meteors were clustered so densely that there was no space to dodge at all.

“Bang!” Linley charged forwards, smashing hard against a flaming meteor.

Those massive flaming meteors were knocked flying by Linley, one after the other, while some others exploded and split apart. But although Linley’s body was tough enough that he didn’t fear these attacks, the constant impacts against these meteors caused his speed to decrease quite a bit.

“Bang!” With a punch, he shattered the final flaming meteor in front of him. Linley finally saw the distant Hayward.

Hayward stood there in mid-air, his face covered with smiles. “Linley, you lose again.”

Linley nodded.

“Your spells of the ninth rank are unable to hurt me, but they can greatly lower my speed. By the time I charged out, you probably would’ve already used a forbidden spell.” Linley understood this very well, but he didn’t have any choices. Those meteors weren’t like ordinary rocks, and Linley had to use great force to break each one of them.

The nearby watching Desri said, “Linley, the most basic method which Grand Magus Saints use against Warrior Saints is to instacast spells to block them while retreating at high speed, then utilizing forbidden-level spells to attack them.”

Linley nodded.

“However, Mr. Hayward, you were able to instacast a spell of the ninth rank. This truly is...” Linley now knew how terrifyingly powerful this man was. Even while depending on the Coiling Dragon ring, Linley was only able to instacast spells of the seventh rank.

Hayward chuckled, “But of course. Most Grand Magus Saints have very powerful spiritual energy, but can only instacast spells of the eighth rank. The reason I can instacast spells of the ninth rank is only because I’ve trained for many years and thus have even stronger spiritual energy.”

Linley secretly sighed, “His Phoenix Metamorphosis can cause a Fire Phoenix which was hundreds of meters tall to condense into a phoenix which was only ten meters tall. I’ve never even heard of such a thing.”

Generally speaking, the Phoenix Metamorphosis spell was capable of creating a Fire Phoenix which was roughly a hundred meters tall, and which was already frightfully powerful. But Hayward...clearly was one of the most powerful of Grand Magus Saints.

“But in a dangerous situation, if a Grand Magus Saint was to wildly and repeatedly instacast spells of the eighth rank at you, they would still be able to slow you down.” Hayward said with certainty.

Linley nodded and laughed. “However, it wouldn’t be effective as you, Mr. Hayward, instacasting spells of the ninth rank. It would take me far longer to break through your Scorching Meteor Shower. If it was a spell of the eighth rank that was used to block me, my speed probably would’ve been much faster.”

“Linley, you can be considered a peak-level Warrior Saint. An ordinary Warrior Saint wouldn’t be able to break through an instacast spell of the eighth rank as quickly as you.” Hayward said.

Linley nodded.

Linley fully understood now...it was like how an ordinary person could sprint a hundred meters in ten seconds, but if he were running atop a track of mud, he might take fifteen seconds or even longer. Mud, to ordinary people, didn’t pose much of a threat either.

But it definitely would be able to slow their speed down.

“Linley, you must understand; the most important thing for a Grand Magus Saint to do when fighting against a Warrior Saint is to lower the opponent’s speed! Instacasting spell is one method, while for example darkness-style spells includes maledictive slowing spells...as long as the Grand Magus Saint can prevent you from catching up to them for a time, then the Grand Magus Saint will use that chance to utilize forbidden-level spells against you.”

Desri and the others flew over as well.

“Now that you’ve encountered a forbidden-level spell from a Grand Magus Saint, you should know how powerful they are.” Desri chuckled towards Linley.

Linley nodded.

Forbidden-level spells truly were terrifying. For example, that Phoenix Metamorphosis. Even if Linley were to stab straight through the skull of the Fire Phoenix, it would still constantly attack him, because it was a creature formed from elemental essence and wasn’t actually alive. A forbidden-spell like this was even more terrifyingly strong than a Saint-level magical beast.

At least Saint-level magical beasts feared injury.

To deal against forbidden-level magical spells, the only option was to break it by repeated blows and make it run out of energy.

“Linley.” That beautiful lady, Pennslyn, smiled as she spoke. “Instacasting and slowing the opponent’s speed is a rather passive way for a Grand Magus Saint to deal with an opponent. Actually, Grand Magus Saints have another powerful method.”

“Oh?”

Linley stared at Hayward in astonishment. “Mr. Hayward, can it be that you have other tools at your disposal?”

Grand Magus Saints were too terrifying!

Hayward nodded. “Of course. This method is a fallback method which Grand Magus Saints rely upon. Linley, come and try to attack me again. If you experience it yourself, you will understand it clearly.” As he spoke, Hayward flew backwards, pulling once more to a distance of a hundred meters away from Linley.

“The fallback method they rely on?” Linley was curious.

“Boom!” Linley once more charged towards Hayward, but Hayward didn’t move at all, only staring at Linley with confidence.

Once Linley drew near him though, Linley’s face suddenly changed. He felt a terrifyingly powerful storm of mental energy suddenly surround him and attack his spirit. In the blink of an eye, Linley suddenly felt dizzy, and his body swayed. Only after several seconds later did he fully recover.

Several seconds, to Saints engaging in battle was more than enough to determine the outcome.

Linley stared at Hayward in astonishment. “Mental attack?”

“Haha...” Miller flew over, laughing. “Linley, that isn’t a mental attack. If it was a mental attack, your head would be splitting from pain and you would’ve collapsed.”

Desri and the others flew over as well.

Desri personally explained to him. “Linley, what’s the biggest advantage magi have over warriors?”

“Mental and spiritual energy.” Linley didn’t hesitate at all.

Desri nodded. “Right. Magi possess the most powerful spiritual energy. The spiritual energy of a Grand Magus Saint is as powerful and boundless as the seas. They are far more powerful than that of a Warrior Saint. Aside from those few Grand Magus Saints who just entered the Saint-level, the vast majority of Grand Magus Saints are capable of using this sort of basic ‘Mindstorm’ attack.”

“This Mindstorm attack doesn’t require any understanding of any Elemental Laws. It is nothing more than a spiritual energy based attack that uses a great deal of spiritual energy to strike at the opponent’s soul. This sort of tactic is very simple. Upon reaching the Saint-level, a Grand Magus Saint will quickly come to understand it.” Hayward said with absolute certainty.

Linley understood this as well.

The so-called ‘Mindstorm’ just then felt like a tremendous amount of spiritual energy smashing upon his soul time and time again, even though it didn’t actually cause much damage to the soul.

“Hayward, naturally, developed his own unique spiritual attacks long ago. If he truly were to use his spiritual energy against you, you would be in trouble.” Desri laughed.

Linley now understood the basic underpinnings of these mental attacks (or spiritual attacks). It was to form that normally soft and weak spiritual energy into sharp 'knives' and repeatedly stab at the opponent's soul. This sort of attack was truly frightening! If one's soul wasn't strong enough, it might be directly shattered and destroyed.

"Mindstorm! Haha..." Hayward shook his head and laughed. "This name was created by Grand Magus Saints long ago. But in truth, it's nothing more than a very basic mental attack. It is only useful against Warrior Saints who are far weaker in mental energy."

Linley felt a sense of dread.

Grand Magus Saints truly were powerful.

Whether by instacasting spells to slow movement or by using Mindstorm type attacks to attack the soul...they had methods to be highly effective.

"Grand Magus Saints are far fewer in number than Warrior Saints. Generally speaking, Grand Magus Saints have an advantage." Higginson laughed loudly. "Linley, Warrior Saints have their experts, but Grand Magus Saints have their own as well. Who is stronger? That depends on the person."

Linley nodded.

If he were to truly fight all out against Hayward, when faced with Hayward's meteor blockade, he would've used his Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves attack to blow a tunnel straight through all of the blocking stones.

In the past, Linley's sword blow had created a tunnel in an entire mountain.

Just then, Linley was playing the role of an ordinary expert. But if this were a true life-and-death battle, most likely Bebe would've gotten involved as well. If Bebe and Linley were to charge forward together...given Bebe's speed, how many Grand Magus Saints would be faster?

Even if they used mental energy to attack, could it be that they could simultaneously attack Linley and Bebe?

"Grand Magus Saints being stronger than Warrior Saints is just a generality. It can't be treated as an absolute." Linley understood.

But of course, if this Hayward wanted to kill him, it would be very easy. All he would have to do is use a mental attack. Given Hayward's ability, he could definitely cause Linley's head to hurt badly enough to make him collapse, and then Hayward could use the Phoenix Metamorphosis to attack. He wouldn't even have had the chance to flee.

There is always someone mightier than the mighty.

Hayward was mighty, but if he were to encounter Fain, he probably wouldn't be able to do anything. After all, Linley had personally witnessed how powerful Fain's mental attack was.

On the flight back with Desri's group, Bebe was mentally chatting to Linley while standing on his shoulders. "Boss, when in the future you reach the Saint-level as a magus, you'll be both a Dragonblood Warrior and a Grand Magus Saint in one. Hrmph...by then, beating them will be easy."

Linley chuckled.

If he were to reach the Saint-level in his human form as a warrior and also as a magus, the synergistic power would probably increase his power by dozens of times, if not more. By then, Linley most likely would be confident in his ability to deal with even the likes of Fain and Desri.

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The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. Master Longhaus' residence.

Delia was seated in a courtyard alone, drinking some tea while flipping through some of Master Longhaus' magical tomes. The Wildthunder Stormhawk, Parry, as well as the Worldbear, Hatton, were off to one side, chatting in the language of magical beasts.

"Hrm?" Delia saw something of interest in the magical tome. Her eyes lit up and she smiled.

Grand Magus Saints truly did have a deep understanding of magic. Delia felt that she truly was reaping great benefits here.

"Someone's coming." The Worldbear, Hatton, suddenly spoke. Delia stared questioningly towards Hatton. "Someone is coming? Why haven't the guards informed us? Big Yellow, are you just making things up again?" Delia laughed as she looked at the Worldbear, Hatton.

The Worldbear stared at Delia with wide eyes. "Delia, you don't believe me? Am I that sort of bear?"

"Someone really is coming." Delia sensed it as well by now. In terms of environmental awareness, she was far inferior to a Saint-level magical beast.

Soon afterwards, footsteps could be heard from the outside.

"Might I ask if Master Longhaus is here?" A calm, confident voice could be heard.

"Come in." Delia said casually. For this person to be able to come in unannounced meant that he definitely was no ordinary figure. The door was pushed open, and two handsome youths walked in at the same time. Delia immediately rose to her feet. "Respectful greetings, your Imperial Majesty."

Of those two youths, one was the Emperor of the Yulan Empire, his Imperial Majesty, Emperor Rande [Lan'de].

Emperor Rande's eyes lit up when he saw Delia. Laughing, he said, "Delia, you are growing more and more beautiful. Right, where is your teacher?"

"Your Imperial Majesty, wait a moment with George." Delia said, then she turned to look at the Worldbear. "Big Yellow, ask Teacher where he currently is. His Imperial Majesty wishes to meet with him." The youngster who had come alongside Emperor Rande was indeed the youngest Grand Secretary of the Yulan Empire, the highly favored minister, George.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 10, Forget It!

Emperor Rande smiled towards Delia. “Delia, We haven’t seen you in quite some time. Ever since you’ve returned from the O’Brien Empire, you haven’t gone to the imperial palace.” Emperor Rande was roughly the same age as Delia and they were on quite good terms.

“Teacher is quite strict. I have to train hard and study my magic.” Delia pretended to be resigned.

Emperor Rande laughed.

Right at this time, the Worldbear, Hatton, said to Emperor Rande, “Hey, blue-hair. My master says you can come in.” The Worldbear wasn’t the slightest bit courteous in his words, but Emperor Rande didn’t mind in the slightest. “Big Yellow, even if you don’t address Us as ‘your Imperial Majesty’, you should at least call Us ‘Rande’. That way, We would at least save a bit of face.”

“Is ‘Big Yellow’ a name which the likes of you can call about?” The Worldbear turned his big furry head away, seemingly very disdainful.

Rande chuckled, then after saying a few words to George and Delia, he entered the inner room. Right now, only George and Delia were left inside the courtyard. Delia had a very good impression of George...because George was Linley’s good friend.

Second Bro, ‘George’. He was the most rational and most reliable of the four bros.

He had a very good temper and rarely grew angry at others. He had extremely good relationships with people.

But Delia knew very well that George was also an extremely formidable person. At such a young age, he had become one of the Grand Secretaries of the Yulan Empire. It must be understood, the world of officials and bureaucracies was a dark, sinister place. For someone to reach such a powerful, influential official position and even become a Grand Secretary meant that in secret, George surely used quite a few tricks as well.

As to who was most vicious amongst the four bros, it was George, amiable, good-natured George, who had become the most vicious.

“George, sit.” Delia laughed.

George smiled and sat down. “Delia, last year, you should’ve seen Third Bro in the O’Brien Empire. Oh, by Third Bro I mean Linley.” In his heart, George longed for his dear bros, but as a high level member of the Yulan Empire, he simply didn’t have the opportunity to visit the O’Brien Empire.

“I know.” Delia’s smile was very bright. “Linley’s often thinking about you as well.”

George felt warm in his heart.

After separating from Linley, over ten years had passed. George was now twenty nine years old, nearly a man in his thirties. He even had two children. Those crazy childhood days were beautiful recollections.

The ten years he had spent in bureaucracy had caused George to become more and more mature and more and more crafty. But the more mature he became, the fewer the number of people he truly trusted in the Yulan Empire.

“I feel very proud that Third Bro was able to reach his current accomplishments.” George sighed emotionally. “In the O’Brien Empire, most likely no one would dare to offend him. In this entire world, only upon reaching the pinnacle of power can one be confident.”

“Linley has gone to the Anarchic Lands.” Delia said.

“The Anarchic Lands?”

George frowned. He remembered the enmity between Linley and the Radiant Church which he had found out about in Hess City. In particular, with those high level people of the Radiant Church. George knew very well how powerful the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were in the Anarchic Lands. “Given Third Bro’s temperament, he definitely wouldn’t be interested in just taking over territory. That means...”

George looked at Delia and whispered, “Third Bro is about to begin his battle against the Radiant Church?”

Delia felt a hint of shock in her heart. George truly was formidable.

“Right.” Delia nodded. Linley had told her about this long ago.

George began to worry. He knew what sort of temper Linley had. In the past, for the sake of vengeance, Linley was willing to give up everything. If it had been him, George, he definitely would’ve continued to secretly endure until he reached the point where he had absolute certainty of victory. Then, he would make his move.

“Is Third Bro confident of victory?” George looked at Delia. “The Radiant Church isn’t as simple as it would appear to be.”

Delia laughed as she looked at George. “George, Linley isn’t as simple as you think he is either.”

George laughed. Indeed. Despite being a genius, George never imagined that after they separated, Linley would become so powerful that he could fight Haydson to a virtual standstill. In particular, that Shadowmouse, Bebe... George felt quite speechless. “That little rascal, Bebe. He’s so monstrously powerful. What a freak.”

After a while later, Emperor Rande came out.

“George, let’s go.” Emperor Rande said to George, and George immediately stood up. Emperor Rande smiled towards Delia, who was sending him off. “Delia, if you are free, you can come to the imperial palace for a stroll. The Third Princess has been missing you.”

Delia laughed. “I definitely will go.”

“Then there’s no need for you to send me off.” Emperor Rande laughed, then left alongside George.

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The imperial palace. Emperor Rande’s study. There were only three people present; Emperor Rande, his personal palace attendant, and the leader of the Leon clan.

“Dylla.” Emperor Rande put down the quill in his hand, raising his head to smile towards Dylla Leon. “Today, We have summoned you for the sake of your daughter, Delia.”

Dylla Leon looked at Emperor Rande. “Your Imperial Majesty, what do you mean?”

Emperor Rande smiled. “As We recall, your daughter is yet unwed.”

“Right.” Dylla Leon nodded.

Had Emperor Rande taken a fancy to his daughter?

Emperor Rande nodded. “That’s right. In honesty... We rather like Delia. How about this. Help Us say a few words to Delia on Our behalf, and see if Delia is willing to marry Us. But of course... you have to let her make her own decision.”

Dylla Leon said respectfully, “Your Imperial Majesty, don’t worry. Your servant shall definitely go ask Delia.”

Emperor Rande nodded and smiled as he looked at Dylla Leon. “Dylla, you should understand that when We were but a prince, We had to have children before We could assume the throne. We don’t have much affection towards that woman. In terms of lineage as well as character, Delia is far superior to her. If Delia was willing to marry Us... We promise that Delia can become the Empress.”

Dylla Leon’s heart trembled.

Empress?

If his daughter were to become an ordinary concubine, there would be no need for the mighty Leon clan to agree. But the Empress... now that was a different situation.

Dylla Leon knew quite well that this Emperor Rande was an extremely upright and extremely bold person. If he said Delia would become Empress, he would definitely make that happen.

“Alright, you can go now.” Emperor Rande said with a faint laugh.

“Yes, your Imperial Majesty.” Right now, Dylla Leon’s heart was still in a state of excitement.

Dylla Leon immediately sent someone to summon Delia home. Delia actually didn’t wish to go home. Each time she did, her parents would try to persuade her on the subject of marriage. Although Delia insisted that Linley was now outside the O’Brien Empire and that her marriage to Linley wouldn’t pose any problems to the clan, it seemed as though her parents didn’t really like Linley.

In Dylla’s eyes, Linley’s younger brother had wed the Seventh Imperial Princess, Nina, after all. There was an indisputable relationship between Linley and the O’Brien Empire.

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“What?” Delia immediately rose to her feet, staring at her parents in astonishment.

Her mother hurriedly said, “Delia, his Imperial Majesty’s age is close to yours, and he is one of the boldest, most competent Emperors in the history of the Yulan Empire. You are on good terms with him as well. If you were to marry his Imperial Majesty... it would be wonderful for both you and the clan.”

“It would be wonderful for the clan, but how would it be wonderful for me?” Delia couldn’t help but be furious.

She hadn’t thought that the reason her parents had summoned her back so urgently was to discuss this with her.

“Delia, can it be that his Imperial Majesty isn’t talented enough? Do you dislike him?” Dylla Leon hurriedly said.

Delia said angrily, “Father, what does his Imperial Majesty’s talent have to do with me? No, I don’t dislike him. But there’s many people I don’t dislike. Does this mean I have to marry them all? Marrying someone has nothing to do with whether or not I ‘don’t dislike them’, understood?”

“Delia, his Imperial Majesty’s feelings for you are genuine. He said that so long as you marry him, in the future, you would definitely become the Empress.” Dylla said hurriedly.

“Then what about the current Empress?” Delia frowned.

Dylla Leon laughed calmly, “That Empress was just someone the Emperor married when he was only a prince. She isn’t very capable, and she was born to a common noble clan. There have been many people unhappy that she became Empress. It will be easy for his Imperial Majesty to remove her.”

“Hrmp!”

Standing, Delia stared at her father. “Father, perhaps to you, the position of Empress is very important, but to me, it isn’t worth a fart.” The furious Delia began to spout obscenities.

Dylla Leon was so angry that he slapped the desk and stood up as well. “Delia, how can you say such things?”

“Father.” Delia stared at her father. “Don’t try and put on a brave show in front of your daughter. Let me make it clear for you today...with regards to his Imperial Majesty, you can forget it! Even if I die, I won’t marry him. I won’t marry anyone aside from Linley.”

Dylla Leon stared disbelievingly at his daughter. His daughter actually dared to speak to him in such a manner?

“I’m sorry, father.” Delia took a deep breath.

“Cough...cough...” The furious Dylla Leon began to cough. Dylla’s mother immediately went to assist him, but Dylla stared angrily at Delia. “Delia, you are no longer a child. Don’t be so rash and immature. Enough. Go back and think it over.”

Delia glanced at her red-faced, coughing father, then silently turned her head and left.

“What happened to my parents?” Delia could still remember how when she was a child, her father and mother had treated her like a precious treasure. Whatever she wanted done, her father would do. She had even ridden on her father’s back like a horse.

Her childhood memories were so beautiful, and her parents were so perfect.

But now...

Delia cared about her family. Her parents, her big brother, her grandmother, her other relatives...Delia had always hoped that she would be able to be together with Linley, while maintaining the relationship with her clan.

“I’ll wait a bit longer. I’ll wait for Linley to found his Duchy. By then, father’s attitude would change.” Delia chose to continue to endure.

.....

In the mysterious village. On the wide expanse of grass in front of the cave estate. Desri, Hayward, Miller, Pennslyn, and the others were seated around a stone table, drinking wine while watching Linley and Higginson spar. As for Reynolds and Monica, they were at the side of the grassy area.

“Monica, were you telling the truth in the past when you described your mother?” Staring at the distant Pennslyn, Reynolds then looked at Monica in puzzlement.

Monica didn't know what to say either.

In the past, her mother was always rather cold and distant. It must be understood...her mother came from the Frost Goddess Shrine. That sort of cold arrogance was bred in the bones. But these past few days, Pennslyn had treated Linley and Reynolds unbelievably well.

Reynolds had even begun to suspect if Monica had lied about her.

“I don't get it either.” Monica was truly speechless.

At this moment, Linley was wielding his adamantine heavy sword, while Higginson was wielding a silver, blurred longsword. The two were sparring, and Linley had begun to truly use his ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’. Although he hadn't gone full force, it was still enough to cause Higginson to sigh with surprise.

“Bizarre, bizarre.” Higginson sighed in praise. “I've never seen such a bizarre attack.”

Linley stared helplessly at Higginson as well. Dealing with an expert of the Laws of Light truly was a pain. This was because once a person reached a certain level in the Laws of Light, his self-healing abilities would become extremely terrifying. Even broken arms would self-repair in a short period of time.

“Linley, at this time, you should take a look at my ultimate attack.” Higginson smiled.

Linley was startled. Up till now, Higginson had demonstrated a speed that was even faster than that of Olivier's. But he had been just playing around?

“The name of this sword technique is ‘Illusionary Void Sword’.” Wielding that silver longsword, Higginson suddenly transformed into a line of white light, appearing before Linley in the blink of an eye. A layer of azurish-black energy was swirling around Linley, and his adamantine heavy sword was at the ready as well.

Linley paid careful attention to the sword.

Why was it called ‘Illusionary Void Sword’?

“Rumble...” The space itself in the surrounding area began to shudder and ripple. The silver longsword clearly appeared before Linley's eyes, but the strange thing was, Linley felt as though the longsword had transformed into multiple layers, and the nearby space had transformed into multiple layers as well. It was as though space itself had turned chaotic.

“You lose.”

Before Linley even had the chance to react, that sword came to a halt in front of Linley's eyes. Linley hadn't even had the chance to resist or to block.

“This...” Linley's mind was totally preoccupied by that sword. He felt as though he had suddenly mentally found something. He immediately descended to the ground and closed his eyes, beginning to meditate. Without paying any attention at all to the nearby people, he immediately began to try hard to find that sense again.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 11, The Order Comes Down

Higginson stood there staring at Linley. Linley had actually immediately begun to train without paying attention to anyone else.

“Amazing, amazing.” Higginson let out a sigh of praise, then flew over to Desri. Desri’s group was staring at Linley with approval in their eyes as well. All of them sat down, and Hayward laughed, “Big brother, this Linley truly is a genius. Even when sparring with Higginson, who uses the Elemental Laws of Light, he will still have some insights.”

Desri’s group of people were all amongst the highest class Saints.

Seeing Linley do this, they knew that Linley must have gained some insight into something important, which was why he had immediately started training.

“Uncle,” Reynolds had immediately run over after seeing Linley’s actions. “What’s wrong with Linley? Is he wounded?”

“Haha...” Desri and the others began to laugh loudly. Miller laughed and said, “Reynolds, Linley is fine. However, it is hard to say how long he will be in training. For those of us at our level, it is very hard and rare for us to suddenly gain an insight.”

Only then did Reynolds relax.

Currently, Linley’s mind was filled with all sorts of movements. A longsword-wielding figure was flashing about in his mind, once again stabbing at him using the technique Higginson had just displayed. Higginson’s sword had seemed like an illusion...

The sword striking out. The flash of light. The distorted space...

Those folded, blurry layers of space...that terrifying penetrative power...it had seemed unstoppable.

“What is it? What exactly is it?” Linley was repeatedly thinking on this matter, and in his mind, he replayed that sword attack over and over. For an instant, upon seeing that sword, Linley seemed to have understood something.

But it was extremely blurry!

Again and again, he replayed the attack in his mind, concentrating on it whole-heartedly.

Suddenly-

It was as though a lightning bolt had suddenly flashed in Linley’s mind. Linley’s heart shook, and that layer of obscuring fog was stripped away. He finally understood that sensation he had felt. “Right. It is the wind. The wind! The ‘Fast’ aspect of the wind!”

Linley’s heart was filled with wild joy.

Previously, when Linley had witnessed Miller using the ‘Slow’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley had come to understand the direction in which he should train the ‘Slow’ aspect. Linley had learned that the power of his ‘Tempos of the Wind’ technique could increase.

This was because the ‘Tempos of the Wind’ was similar to the Profound Truths of the Earth. With the Profound Truths of the Earth, the more vibrational waves created, the more powerful the attack was.

By that same logic, the ‘Tempos of the Wind’ utilized the combined forces of the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the wind to create the frictional force that created a spatial edge attack. The deeper his understanding of the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the wind became, the more powerful his combination attack would become in creating a more powerful ‘Tempos of the Wind’.

After having sparred with Miller, Linley’s insight into the ‘Slow’ aspect of the wind was slowly increasing.

But his progression in understanding the ‘Fast’ aspect of the wind had come to a standstill.

Elemental Laws of the Wind – What was the path to training in the ‘Fast’ aspect?

But today, after seeing Higginson’s ‘Illusionary Void Sword’, Linley now clearly understood how he should proceed. “Of the Elemental Laws, in terms of speed, the Elemental Laws of Wind and the Elemental Laws of Light have an advantage. Higginson is fast, so fast that in the instant of his attack, space itself is distorted. But the ‘Slow’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind can cause space to suddenly freeze. Right...the Elemental Laws of Wind, in their ‘Fast’ aspect, should also be able to instantly cause space itself to distort into multiple layers.”

Linley already had some basic insights into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of Wind, and he had been pondering it for some time now.

But now, he knew exactly what his goal was...Linley’s mind began to rapidly ponder how to train. It was as though he now knew the starting point and the endpoint. What he now needed to do was to decide what was the best way to go about on this path, and then actually follow the path to its endpoint.

Linley’s mind played countless scenarios in his mind, and gradually, his insights into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind deepened as well. Whenever he could no longer resolve a question in his mind, Linley would stand up and use the Bloodviolet flexible sword to test out a theory on the spot.

This was the nature of training; tough, pain-staking, and occasionally needing a burst of insight.

It was as though a person had suddenly seen a flash of light and seen the rough picture of the road ahead of him. He now had the general idea of where he should go. All that had to be done next was to continue studying and continue testing. As long as one had enough time, one would definitely be able to reach that goal.

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To be able to gain insights into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of Wind from watching a sword technique based on the Elemental Laws of Light wasn’t something which just anyone could do. Right now, Desri and the others didn’t have any idea what Linley had suddenly understood.

“It’s been over half a month, but Third Bro, he...” Reynolds stared at the meditating Linley with some urgency in his eyes.

The nearby Monica laughed. “Big brother Reynolds, last night, I saw Linley suddenly stand up and then perform what appeared to be a sword technique. However, his sword was so blurry and indistinct. When that

violet light flashed, the wind began to blow all around him, and the speed of his sword was very fast as well. I couldn't see anything clearly."

"If Third Bro continues like this, who knows how long it will take." Reynolds said with some agitation.

"Big brother Reynolds, look." Monica suddenly pointed towards Linley excitedly. Reynolds turned to look...and saw that Linley had already stood up and was smiling towards Reynolds while walking over to them. "Fourth Bro, what's the matter? Did a flower blossom on my face?"

At this moment, a black blur suddenly streaked out, leaping onto Linley's shoulders.

"Bebe." Linley lovingly rubbed Bebe's head.

Bebe quirked his lips unhappily. "Boss, it's been half a month. You sure can sleep."

"Sleep?" An involuntary laugh escaped Linley's mouth.

He knew that while he was training, Bebe had definitely been extremely bored. However, Linley was in an extremely fine mood today...because he had made progress in the 'Fast' aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. Linley understood very well that in order to reach the power of that sword attack of Higginson's, he would most likely need to spend at least ten or so years.

As for reaching Miller's level in using the 'Slow' aspect of the wind, he would most likely only need three or four years.

Clearly...Miller had a much lower level of understanding than Higginson. Linley was secretly delighted. Indeed, sparring with experts truly did allow one to improve much faster.

If he had been training by himself in the mountain the entire time and training aimlessly, if he was lucky, perhaps in ten years or a hundred years, he would've found the correct path. If he was unlucky, he might spend hundreds or even thousands of years before finding the correct path.

This was the nature of training. If you gained insights quickly, you trained quickly. If you gained insights slowly, you would train slowly. After all, not too much time was needed after one reached the Saint-level for one's battle-qi to reach the limits of the Saint-level. Everyone spent their time on increasing their insights into the Laws...for example, Olivier was able to defeat Dillon as soon as he had reached the Saint-level, precisely because Dillon had virtually no insights into the Elemental Laws. There was nothing for it.

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In the northern part of the Anarchic Lands, a large-scale campaign had begun.

As per Linley and Zassler's plans, roughly seven or eight days after Linley headed off to the mysterious village, Barker and the others began to attack southwards, invading one of the Duchies controlled by the Radiant Church. The name of this Duchy was the Sherry [She'li] Duchy.

The soldiers of the Sherry Duchy were inferior in quality to Linley's forces. Linley's people lived very close to the Forest of Darkness, and were thus highly accustomed to violence. They had a much greater battle strength. And of course, they had the five Barker brothers leading them into the fray.

Utter devastation!

The most powerful experts of the Sherry Duchy were nothing more than three experts of the eighth rank. They didn't have a single expert of the ninth rank. How could the Sherry Duchy possibly stall Linley's forces at all?

Barker and his brothers were like five gods of battle as they led their ravenous troops into a slaughtering invasion, breaking past all defenses. In just four days, the prefectural city and five smaller cities of the Sherry Duchy had all been taken over. Linley's territory had just dramatically expanded.

Gates, Hazer, and Ankh all stayed within the prefectural city of Sherry.

"They are totally unable to fight back." Gates said loudly. "Too weak. Too weak. There's no one here who can even slow us down." Indeed. Even if they did meet with strong resistance, who would be able to fight in single combat against the likes of Gates and the others?

In addition, the Saint-level magical beast, the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, had been in a state of readiness this entire time, ready to attack.

"Andrew [An'de'lu]." Ankh suddenly turned to stare at a silver-haired middle-aged man behind them. The man immediately bowed, awaiting Ankh's order. Ankh asked, "Right now, how is the reorganization of the Sherry Duchy's military proceeding? And what is the situation amongst the masses?"

In order to manage a country, one naturally had to use appropriate personnel. Barker and the others were only used for military conquest.

"Milords." Andrew said respectfully. "Currently, the military reorganization has already concluded. We have placed many soldiers of Blackdirt City into their ranks as well."

Barker and the others didn't fully trust these surrendered troops. Thus, the only thing they could do was to try and spread them out as much as possible, preventing them from easily coordinating with each other. At the same time, they killed some people while inserting their own loyal followers.

"The Sherry Duchy has been dominated by the Radiant Church for a long time, and there are many believers in the Radiant Church here." Andrew said with concern. "I believe if the Radiant Church was to come attack us, the masses might even rebel against us. But there are too many people here. There's not much we can do."

"Rebel?"

Hazer said confidently, "What are we afraid of? Threatened with death, how many waves can these commoners possibly cause?"

"Andrew, we have just taken over the Sherry Duchy. Right now, the people are still restless. We'll have to trouble you to handle it." Ankh instructed. Andrew respectfully assented to the order.

"Enough. You can leave now." Ankh laughed. Soon, only Ankh, Hazer, and Gates were left.

Ankh looked at his two siblings. "The results of Mr. Zassler's meetings have come. We are ordered to stop attacking for now, and prepare to found our Duchy half a month from now. By now, we have over ten million people under our banner."

Hazer and Gates both grinned.

"I didn't expect that the Radiant Church wouldn't fight back at all. It seems they don't want to go against us head on." Gates laughed. "Then just like how we originally planned, we'll continue to put on an act. Only after we publicly announce the founding of our Duchy will we continue our attack against the Radiant Church."

The Radiant Church really was spineless. The Church indeed had convinced Hazer and Gates...that they were unwilling to face their forces head on.

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The golden-haired middle-aged man once again arrived at the dimly lit room.

“Lord Praetor.” The golden-haired middle-aged man said respectfully.

Seated behind his desk, Osenno’s eyes were flickering with flames. He calmly said, “Right now, Linley’s side has just taken over the Sherry Duchy. They will definitely spend quite some time absorbing it. I trust they now believe we aren’t willing to fight them.”

The golden-haired middle-aged man looked towards Osenno and said excitedly, “Are we going to attack?”

“Our attack must utterly annihilate Linley’s side.” Osenno’s voice was freezing cold. “This Linley poses an enormous threat to our Radiant Church. If he is allowed to flourish, then we won’t live to regret it. Even now, he already dares to provoke us and attacked the Sherry Duchy. Clearly...he intends to fight against our Radiant Church.”

“Since they want to fight, then we must annihilate all of the experts on Linley’s side.” His voice grew even colder, and a devilish purple light flickered in his eyes.

The golden-haired middle-aged man grew more and more excited. But then, he said in confusion, “Lord Praetor, can it be that we are going to use Saints? But wouldn’t that result in dissatisfaction from the Cult of Shadows, the O’Brien Empire, and the other sides?”

“No need to worry about that.” Osenno said coldly. “If Linley is allowed to continue to expand, then the work that the Church has carried out for thousands of years here in the Anarchic Lands is going to be laid waste. In addition, Linley himself cannot be permitted to grow further. His rate of improvement is simply too terrifying. Right now...I still have the ability to kill him. But if this continues...”

Osenno looked at that golden-haired middle-aged man. “Enough. Carry out our original plans, and begin the protocols.”

“Yes, Lord Praetor.” The golden-haired middle-aged man assented.

“Tomorrow night, nine Saint-level Angels will immediately head out...and I myself will have a good ‘meeting’ with that rat-type pet of Linley’s.” Osenno was extremely confident. He was on the same level of power as the Holy Emperor, and was a full level higher than Haydson’s.

He was fully confident in his ability to kill Linley.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 12, A Sudden Change of Events

The night was pitch-black. Dark clouds covered the moon, and the entire world was cast in shadows. Suddenly...from the north, nine streaks of white light blazed through the sky at high speed towards the Sherry Duchy. Halfway there, five of the streaks of white light changed to fly towards each of the five small cities around the Sherry Duchy, while the other four streaks of light flew towards the prefectural city of Sherry.

If one drew near, one would discover...

That these streaks of light were awe-inspiring Angels who were radiating a soft, holy light. Every single one of these Angels had four wings. For them to immediately enter their Angel forms meant that the bodies they had descended into were totally capable of sustaining their might.

According to the hierarchy of Angels...

Two-Winged Angels were low-level Angels, Four-Winged Angels were middle-stage Angels, while Six Winged Angels were peak-stage Angels. As for Eight-Winged Angels...those were of the Demigod level. The legendary Twelve-Winged Angels possessed the awe-inspiring might of a Highgod.

Unfortunately, in the Yulan continent, it was impossible to find a body capable of withstanding the descent of a Twelve-Winged Angel.

“What a pity...” Osenno, flying behind those four Angels, mused to himself while staring at them. “The Radiant Sovereign created these humanoid constructs, but there is no chance of them making any breakthroughs. No matter how long they live for, their power will not change at all.”

People of Osenno’s level knew a great deal about what Angels were.

Angels, in truth, weren’t living creatures. They were humanoid constructs which the Radiant Sovereign had created in the Divine Realm of Light. Of course, Osenno had no idea how they were created, but he understood that Angels would never be able to break through. However many wings they were created with, that was how many wings they would forever have. For example, the Radiant Church had Angels who had lived for thousands of years, but their power was the exact same level as it had been thousands of years ago.

Although Angels were powerful, they were not capable of advancing.

This caused Osenno to somewhat look down on the Angels. He just treated the Angels as tools. On this day, his forces consisted solely of Angels, aside from himself. Not a single human Saint had come. As far as Osenno was concerned, the lives of human Saints, who were capable of advancement, were far more valuable than these Angels.

Within one of the smaller cities in the Sherry Duchy, a Four-Winged Angel descended into the center of the city. The soft, holy radiance around the Four-Winged Angel suffused the surrounding area, turning the night into day and illuminating the city.

Seeing this light, the citizens of this village all came running out.

“Ah! Angel!”

“An Angel!”

Everyone here was awestruck. Due to the long-term presence of the Radiant Church, many of these people believed in the Radiant Sovereign. Now, all of them had the feeling that the emissary of the Lord had come to save them.

Countless civilians fell to their knees.

“Those who have faith in the Lord shall receive the Lord’s protection. Those who betray the Lord shall be destroyed in the end.” The Four-Winged Angel’s voice penetrated throughout the little city, and over half of the four thousand soldiers in the town fell to their knees as well. As for the others who came from Blackdirt City, they stood there, feeling astonished.

An Angel?

A legendary Angel?

“Kill those heathens!” Suddenly, someone drew out his sword and stabbed a nearby military officer to death. Many of the military officers here were from the prefectural city of Moat. They didn’t believe in the Radiant Sovereign, and had even destroyed several churches in recent days.

But today...

A large number of nearby soldiers as well as civilians began to charge forward to kill all of the outsiders.

Without having to do a single thing, the Four-Winged Angel had reclaimed this city.

“Followers of the Lord, the Lord shall definitely give you his protection.” The Four-Winged Angel’s voice rang out.

The entire city was on its knees, filled with sincerity and faith. A smile appeared on the face of the Four-Winged Angel. He had easily discovered that there were over ten or so people here who trained in light-style magic. The Four-Winged Angel landed on the ground and walked towards one of the experts. “What is your name?”

The silver-haired old man was very excited. He respectfully said, “Oh, mighty and venerated Lord Angel, my name is Felton [Fei’er’dun]. In the past, I was a priest in the Radiant Church here in this town. I was lucky enough to survive.”

The Four-Winged Angel nodded. “From today onwards, Felton shall be the city governor for this city.” The Four-Winged Angel’s voice shook the skies, penetrating the entire city.

“Felton!” “Felton!” “Felton!”

The citizens of this village all began to shout loudly in joy. As they chanted, the Four-Winged Angel flew into the air, and in a burst of dazzling, holy light, the Four-Winged Angel left this little city and flew towards the prefectural city.

The other four little cities saw the exact same happen. The appearance of the Angels caused the believers of the Radiant Church to go crazy, and they fearlessly slaughtered the ‘heathens’, while those who trained in light-style magic or light-style battle-qi became appointed the new city governors.

As for the prefectural city of Sherry...

When the other five Four-Winged Angels had arrived, fires could be seen everywhere, because there were many soldiers who had come here from the prefectural city of Moat or from Blackdirt City, causing the battle here to be extremely intense.

“Lord Praetor.” The five Angels flew to Osenno’s side.

Osenno stood in mid-air, watching the three major battles going on below. Three Four-Winged Angels were currently engaging in battle with three Undying Warriors.

“Undying Warriors?” One of the Angels called out in surprise. Osenno nodded calmly. When Osenno had brought these four Angels to the prefectural city, due to the majestic awe-inspiring presence of the Angels, countless citizens began to attack Linley’s forces.

Even some soldiers had turned traitor.

This battle was extremely unfavorable for Linley’s side.

“Fuck off!” A terrifying, three-meter tall body that looked like a war machine, with bulging, muscled arms the size of a human waist. The man was covered with a layer of marble-like armor, revealing only his face, which was an awe-inspiring green color.

A Saint-level Undying Warrior!

Three Four-Winged Angels fighting three Saint-level Undying Warriors.

“Second brother, these guys are too fast.” Gates shouted angrily. The three people here were Gates, Hazer, and Ankh. All three of them were only warriors of the ninth rank. Even after transforming into Undying Warriors...they were only early-stage Saints. Perhaps they had the advantages of possessing the terrifying ‘defense’ and ‘strength’ inherent to Undying Warriors, they were able to fight the middle-stage Four-Winged Angels head on...but the Angels were too nimble.

A Four-Winged Angel very agilely swooped in from the side, kicking viciously against Gates. That kick, easily capable of shattering boulders, landed directly on Gates, but it only caused his body to tremble slightly.

Gates suddenly stared up at the sky, and saw that even more Angels had come. He immediately shouted, “Second brother, third brother, let’s go, now! More Angels are coming!”

They weren’t even able to handle three Angels, but six more Angels could now be seen above them, along with that human Saint. How could they win this battle?”

“Let’s go. The Radiant Church is really going all-out this time.” Ankh growled with anger as well.

With mighty leaps that caused the ground to shake and shatter, the three flew wildly towards the north like human meteors. However, of the Four Supreme Warriors, the Undying Warriors had the slowest flying speed.

As for Angels, they specialized in speed.

With a flicker of their wings, four of the Four-Winged Angels instantly appeared in front of Gates and the other two, while the other five remaining Four-Winged Angels appeared behind them.

“Fifth brother, what should we do?” Hazer looked at Gates.

Of the five brothers, Gates usually had the most ideas, but right now, seeing how they were surrounded by nine Angels, he only had the desire to cry. Good heavens. The difference in power was just too vast.

One on one, they could just barely fight to a standstill.

Nine on three? How could they fight?

“What to do?” An insane light appeared in Gates’ eyes. “Motherfucker. Let’s go all out. If we take one with us, that’s a fair trade. If we take out two, we’ll have profited.” Gates let out a growl, then wildly charged towards the Angels. Although the Four-Winged Angels had good defense, they didn’t dare to clash head on against these human-shaped monsters.

The distant Osenno said calmly, “Angel Battle Formation.”

Instantly...

Three of the Four-Winged Angels flew away at high speed, while the other six Four-Winged Angels immediately set up the Angel Battle Formation, surrounding Gates and his brothers. One was above them, one was below them, while four were around them. This sudden encirclement caused Gates, Hazer, and Ankh to all be stunned.

“Break through!” Gates charged viciously against one of those walls of light.

“Bang!”

A terrifying, blazing force pierced towards Gates’ white armor, knocking him backwards.

“Fifth brother, are you alright?” Ankh immediately went to support him.

“I’m fine.” A hint of blood could be seen at the corner of Gates’ lips. “What tremendous force. It should most likely be comparable to a peak-stage Saint. Fortunately, this Undying Warrior Armor is also very strong. Otherwise, I’d be dead.”

Osenno flew over, calmly watching Hazer, Ankh, and Gates. “Saint-level Undying Warriors. The Armand clan?”

Gates and the others didn’t pay any attention to Osenno.

“I’ll give you three a chance. As long as you are willing to surrender to our Church, then I won’t kill you.” Osenno said calmly.

Gates, Ankh, and Hazer exchanged glances.

“Motherfucker, if you have the ability to kill us, then come kill us.” Gates stared angrily at Osenno. “Daddy aint afraid of you!”

Osenno’s face turned cold.

“Do you take your old man to be a fool?” Gates said, staring upwards. “Stop bullshitting. Can it be that your Radiant Church has forgotten Lord Cesar’s warning?” In the past, the King of Killers, Cesar, had said long ago that if the Radiant Church dared to act against the five brothers, then Cesar would slaughter a path to the Holy Isle.

Osenno snorted coldly.

Indeed, just now he had just been trying to trick Gates. He really didn't dare to kill Gates and his brothers. After all...he didn't dare to disobey the words of Cesar. The King of Killers who had become a Saint five thousand years ago had reached a terrifying level of power long ago.

And in recent years, he had reached the Deity-level.

He had become a Deity!

Even if Osenno was ten times as bold, he wouldn't dare to offend him. Offending him...meant that perhaps the Radiant Church would face annihilation.

"Disperse the Angel Battle Formation." Osenno said calmly.

"Hrm?" Gates and the other three exchanged glances. Could it be that Osenno would be so kind-hearted as to release them? But as soon as the six Four-Winged Angels dispersed the Angel Battle Formation, Osenno's body transformed into a black blur. Gates and his brothers didn't have the chance to dodge at all.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

Three vicious kicks landed against each of the three brothers, transforming these three humanoid monsters into meteors which slammed into the ground at high speed.

"Boom!" The ground split apart from the collision, and the earth itself shook violently. Three massive human-shaped craters appeared, with Gates and his brothers in the center of each of them. Their white armor had cracked like a tortoise-shell, and blood was vomiting forth from their mouths.

They could no longer move. Osenno's control of force had been perfect. Although he had badly injured them, they weren't in any mortal danger.

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved three adamantite-alloyed manacles and tossed them to the nearby Angels. "Help me chain them up. You two are responsible for watching over them. The rest of you, come with me to the prefectural city of Moat." After finishing his words, Osenno flew off towards the north, not even looking at Gates and the others, followed by seven Four-Winged Angels who followed him.

Between the prefectural city of Sherry and the prefectural city of Moat was a distance of a few hundred kilometers.

Gates and his brothers had been suddenly ambushed, and they hadn't had a chance to even warn the remaining brothers. Caught totally off-guard, the prefectural city of Moat was hit by the sneak attack of Osenno and the seven Four-Winged Angels as well. This time, Osenno acted very quickly!

As soon as Barker and Boone had transformed into their Undying Warrior forms, Osenno had given each of them a kick.

"Bang!" "Bang!"

The two Undying Warriors were smashed into the ground by the kicks, creating two man-shaped craters.

"And there's a Saint-level magical beast as well." Osenno's spiritual energy quickly discovered the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, who was currently retreating at high speed. As soon as Haeru had seen Barker and Boone be defeated in the blink of an eye, he had known what the situation was. If he were to defeat Barker and Boone at the same time, he would have to spend a little bit of time.

This mysterious human Saint was simply too powerful.

Without even doing battle, Haeru had immediately turned tail and fled.

“Master, master. Come back, quick!” Haeru called out in his mind.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 13, Linley’s Return

Osenno transformed into a black blur as he chased after Haeru at high speed.

“He’s too fast! This isn’t good!” Haeru frantically flew towards the southeast at high speed, and as he did, his spiritual energy detected Osenno chasing towards him. In terms of speed, Haeru’s speed was a good bit lower than Osenno’s.

Haeru had a very good understanding of his own level of power.

In truth, Haeru was only an early-stage Saint-level magical beast. Because magical beasts were naturally more powerful than humans, he was able to compete against peak-stage human Saints. For example, the Worldbear was a creature who would be able to defeat most peak-stage Saints as soon as it entered the Saint-level. This was a question of inherent gifts!

Bebe was the same as well.

Bebe had only just reached the Saint level not too long ago, but Bebe belonged to an extremely rare, exalted lineage. Despite only being an early-stage Saint, he was so powerful that even the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was inferior to him. In terms of inherent giftedness, even the Worldbear was a level lower than him.

“You want to flee?” Osenno quickly saw that the Blackcloud Panther was scurrying away through the air at high speed.

Osenno’s entire body was currently surrounded with dim black flames, making him look like a fiend from hell. Osenno quickly charged towards the Blackcloud Panther, preparing to attack. Haeru, terrified, instantly shrank in size, quickly transforming into a fist-size.

“Swish!”

The now mouse-sized Blackcloud Panther dove directly down into the ground.

“Bam!” A terrifying surge of black flame blasted towards the ground, instantly vaporizing the rocks and the dirt, revealing an incredibly deep tunnel in the ground. Osenno landed near it, peering down into the immeasurably deep tunnel.

“Hmph. You really can run.” Osenno sneered coldly.

Saint-level magical beasts could change their size freely, and after shrinking in size, they could move incredibly fast. Human Saints, by contrast, didn’t have this ability. Although Osenno was extremely powerful, he was far inferior to a Saint-level beast when it came to tunneling through the ground.

Hundreds of meters below the ground.

Haeru frantically continued to dig, creating a natural flow of sharp wind in front of him as he quickly pierced through the dirt.

“Master, Master!”

Haeru was extremely panicked. “Master only said he was going to the south. The distance is too far. We can’t even communicate spiritually.” Magical beasts and their masters had a maximum distance by which they could communicate spiritually. The more powerful the spiritual energy, the greater the distance they could communicate at.

Currently, Linley and Haeru could communicate at a distance of a thousand kilometers.

However...right now, Linley was in the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, fully three thousand kilometers away from Haeru. There was no way Haeru could communicate with Linley. All he could do was vaguely sense the direction Linley was in. Travelling beneath the ground, Haeru ran frantically in Linley’s direction.

Osenno returned to the prefectural city of Moat. In the air above it, he stared at those Four-Winged Angels and instructed, “Take those two Undying Warriors and imprison them in the prefectural city of Sherry along with the other three. I’ll go pay a visit to Blackdirt City.”

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved two more adamantite-alloyed manacles and tossed them to the angels.

“Yes, Lord.” Those Angels said respectfully.

Osenno stared towards the north. According to his calculations, Linley should be in the Blackdirt City region right now. “That panther-type beast of his should have gone to inform him. I wonder if Linley will fight or flee!”

And then, Osenno transformed into a black blur and began to fly towards the north.

In the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, within a small forest in the mysterious village, there was a stone room with a stone table inside. Linley and Reynolds had been drinking here all night. It was roughly 3 AM or 4 AM by now. At daybreak, Linley was going to leave.

“In another two or three hours, Bebe and I will both leave. Fourth Bro, when you are free, you can go back to the imperial capital for a while. Your parents most likely have been missing you very much.” Linley instructed Reynolds, and then winked at Monica who was seated next to him. Laughing, he said, “Alright, Fourth Bro, you should go get some rest. You haven’t slept all night.”

Monica and Reynolds were sitting side by side.

“Third Bro, thank you so much for everything.” Reynolds said gratefully.

Whether it was allowing him and Monica to be together, or allowing him to have the special permission of leaving the village once every year, it was all due to Linley. Reynolds understood...given his own abilities, Desri and the others wouldn’t have cared about him at all.

Linley’s lips quirked up in a smile, and he laughingly berated him, “Fourth Bro, why do you stand on courtesy with me?”

“Uh?”

Linley’s face suddenly changed. Haeru was now within a thousand kilometers of him, and Haeru’s voice instantly rang out in Linley’s mind. “Master, things have gone badly. The Saints of the Radiant Church have attacked, and Barker and his brothers have already been captured.”

This news came as a huge shock to Linley.

“Reynolds.” Linley’s face suddenly became grim. “I’m sorry. I have something to take care of. I need to leave immediately.”

“What happened?” Reynolds and Monica were both surprised.

Linley shook his head. “Some private matters. Right. Fourth Bro, you don’t need to worry about it.” Linley squeeze out a smile, then clubbed Reynolds on the chest. “Alright, I’m off.” With a flicker, Linley disappeared, transforming into a blur. Arriving at Desri’s residence, he said in a clear voice, “Mr. Desri!”

In the area around the mountain residence, there were a number of stone rooms. Hayward was currently with Foreman inside one of them.

“Linley, what’s wrong?” Hayward, who had just been in the middle of training, stopped and walked out of the stone room. For Linley to have rushed here at such high speed meant that something must have happened.

A few moments later...

Desri and the others walked out from the residence.

Linley looked at Desri, Hayward, and the others, then immediately said apologetically, “Mr. Desri, everyone...something came up, and I need to leave.” Linley had an apologetic look on his face.

“Did something happen? Do you need my assistance?” Desri asked.

“No need.” Linley shook his head.

Linley knew that Desri and his group had been training in seclusion for a long time now. No doubt, they had no interest in fighting over power or authority. Desri asking him if he needed help was nothing more than him just being courteous. If he truly asked for Desri to go help him deal with the Radiant Church, that might actually make Desri feel resentful towards him.

More importantly...

Over this recent period of time, Linley had come to understand that in the past, Desri had been a member of the Radiant Church. Naturally, he had already left the Radiant Church by now. It wasn’t just Desri; even Higginson had previously been a member of the Radiant Church.

“Everyone, farewell.”

After bowing, Linley instantly utilized the Windshadow spell and flew into the sky. Bebe, who had been sleeping nearby in the grass, instantly transformed into a black shadow as well and flew into the air. A man and his magical beast flew away, just like that. Desri and the others watched them fly out of the mysterious village, out of the mountain, and then continue north at high speed.

It was still late at night.

“Boss, what happened? What’s the rush?” Bebe asked while flying alongside Linley.

“The Radiant Church is playing for keeps.” Linley’s eyes narrowed, emitting a razor-sharp light.

Bebe instantly grew excited. “Oh? The Radiant Church really dares to go head on against us? Wonderful! I’ve been bored to death lately. Now, I can have some good fun.” Bebe’s eyes had a hint of bloodlust in them. “It’s been a long time since I’ve had a nice good slaughterfest.”

Linley's eyes contained a killing intent as well. "I've waited for this day for a long time!"

Linley felt utter hatred from the depths of his heart towards the Radiant Church. Whether it was his father, his mother, or Grandpa Doehring...all of his loved ones had departed for reasons related to the Radiant Church. This superficially honorable but secretly vicious organization was one which Linley had desired to destroy long ago.

Linley and Bebe flew at very high speed.

Soon, they saw a black blur erupt from the ground below and join them, flying next to Linley.

"Master." Haeru said respectfully.

Bebe immediately called out, "Haeru, what's the situation? Quick, speak up."

While flying, Haeru said, "Barker and Boone were staying in the prefectural city of Moat, but today, seven Four-Winged Angels of the Radiant Church and a human Saint came attacking out of nowhere."

"Seven Four-Winged Angels?" Bebe's eyes lit up. "Whoah-ho! Awesome!"

"The Four-Winged Angels weren't so bad, but that human Saint was absolutely terrifying. In the blink of an eye, he kicked the already-transformed Barker and Boone and injured them so badly they couldn't move. I didn't dare to fight against him at all. My only choice was to flee. When I fled into the ground, he emitted a wave of black fire that blasted a hole several hundred meters deep. I nearly lost my life. That human Saint is too powerful. I feel he is far more powerful than that Haydson." Haeru, when discussing Osenno, still felt a hint of fear even now.

Linley pondered this in his mind.

"According to what the War God said, the 'Holy Emperor' of the Radiant Church should be a level lower than the likes of Fain and Desri, but stronger than Haydson. The person who came today...it sounds like he is on par with the Holy Emperor."

Black flame, and power on par with the Holy Emperor...

"Could it be the person who is on par with the Holy Emperor in both power and status...that ruthless, diabolical...Praetor Osenno of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal?" Linley secretly wondered.

Linley didn't believe that the Holy Emperor himself would attack, but it was very possible that Osenno would.

"Bebe, this opponent should be more powerful than Haydson. You need to be careful as well." Linley reminded. "This time...we can't be overconfident in the slightest. When we reach the Sherry Duchy, I'll cast the Windshadow spell on both of you."

As a spell of the ninth rank, despite only being a supportive spell, the Windshadow spell still consumed a great deal of mageforce. Fortunately, Linley possessed the Coiling Dragon ring, and by casting spells through the Coiling Dragon ring, he only needed to expend a sixth of the normal spiritual energy and mageforce.

"Windshadow?" Bebe rolled his eyes. "Could it be that he's faster than me?"

"We can't be too cocky." Linley shook his head.

Bebe nodded. Linley said towards Haeru, “Haeru, let me and Bebe handle that human Saint. As for you...go deal with those Four-Winged Angels. When we first arrive, we’ll help you kill a few Four-Winged Angels as well.”

“Yes, Master.” Haeru replied.

Immediately, the man and his two magical beasts flew north at high speed. At around five in the morning, as the sky was just barely beginning to lighten, Linley, Bebe, and Haeru arrived within the borders of the Sherry Duchy. Upon reaching the Sherry Duchy, Linley immediately Dragonformed while also casting the Windshadow spell on Bebe and Haeru.

“Boss, I feel as though your current level of speed has increased quite a bit.” Bebe could sense the extra speed provided by the Windshadow spell, but at the same time, he stared in puzzlement at Linley.

“I had some insights while training on the Elemental Laws of the Wind. Naturally, my speed went up a level as well.” Linley laughed as he spoke. Linley had made breakthroughs in both the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the wind, allowing him to be even more graceful and even faster.

Given that he was a Dragonblood Warrior to begin with, and had the Windshadow spell supporting him, Linley’s speed was now a full level higher than when he had dueled with Haydson.

“How rowdy.” Linley saw one of the small cities of the Sherry Duchy from afar. The families of that town were all extremely active, with lamps lit everywhere. Not too long ago, on this night, two Angels had descended! Naturally, these small cities were filled with so much excitement that nobody could fall asleep. All of them were even firmer in their faith towards the Radiant Church now.

Linley saw quite clearly that the flags on the small cities had all changed, returning to the previous flag of the Sherry Duchy.

“As soon as the Angels arrived, the lost territory was all reclaimed.”

Linley couldn’t be bothered with the small cities. He flew straight towards the prefectural city of the Sherry Duchy. Soon, the man and his two magical beasts arrived in the air above the prefectural city of Sherry. By now, it was day, and the fresh morning air filled the lands.

The Dragonformed Linley, Bebe, and Haeru stood in the breezy air above the prefectural city of Sherry.

“Only six Angels and Barker and his brothers. No other Saints present.” Linley’s spiritual energy quickly scanned the entire area below.

“Just six?” Bebe seemed rather dissatisfied.

By now, those six Four-Winged Angels had sensed Linley’s spiritual energy. They flew up into the sky at the same time, surrounded by that dazzling holy aura. It was as though six suns had suddenly risen into the skies. At the same time, lightning danced within Linley’s eyes, and he barked coldly, “Kill all six of the Angels!”

“Yes, Boss (Master).” Bebe and Haeru replied simultaneously as they transformed into two flashes of black light, charging towards those six Four-Winged Angels.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 14, Downfall

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry knew that there were Angels within the governor's mansion, so many people were continuously watching the mansion. Seeing those six Four-Winged Angels fly out into the air, they instantly began to shout jubilantly...which in turn attracted the attention of even more citizens.

Six Four-Winged Angels. Creatures whom these commoners had tremendous faith in.

“What are those three black shadows? How dare they fight against Angels?” Many people also noticed that the six Four-Winged Angels were currently engaged in a wild battle against three black shadows. In the blink of an eye, the citizens once more shouted in joy...

Because those three shadows had already been completely surrounded by the six Four-Winged Angels.

“Their movements are very orderly and almost perfectly choreographed in sync.” Linley laughed calmly as he stared at his surroundings. Just then, Linley, Bebe, and Haeru had charged forward to fight them, but unexpectedly, the Angels had instantly scattered in multiple directions, setting up the Angel Battle Formation in the blink of an eye, surrounding Linley, Bebe, and Haeru within it.

The six Four-Winged Angels had turned into six points of this heavenly cage.

“Growl...” Bebe sent out a claw swipe against one of the Four-Winged Angels, but that pure white light only shuddered and didn't break.

Linley secretly sighed in amazement. This Angel Battle Formation truly was formidable. These were nothing more than six middle-stage Four-Winged Angels, but the Angel Battle Formation they created couldn't be broken by even Bebe, who dared to fight Haydson's 'Worldbreaker' attack head on.

“This magical beast is very formidable. Be careful.” One of the Four-Winged Angels immediately shouted.

At the same time, a brilliant light began to emanate forth from the Four-Winged Angels, blasting forth towards the skies. When it reached a certain height...that eye-piercing brilliance suddenly exploded, temporarily blinding the countless citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry.

Immediately, the citizens began rubbing their eyes, trying their best to stare upwards at the battle.

“Informing Osenno?” Linley said to the six surrounding angels.

“Hrmph. Linley. This time, you will definitely die.” One of the Angels said with certainty. “Soon, the Lord Praetor shall come, and you won't have the chance to flee.”

“So it really is Osenno.” Linley's gaze turned cold. “You think you can defeat the Lord Praetor?” The six Four-Winged Angels were very cold and arrogant. They knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful Osenno was.

The faces of the six Four-Winged Angels turned cold, while at the same time, a thick, powerful blast of holy light was transferred to one of the Four-Winged Angels. Linley knew that this was one of the powerful attacks of this formation. Shaking his head, Linley let out a cold chuckle.

“Whoosh!”

Linley suddenly appeared in front of one of the Four-Winged Angels, and that Four-Winged Angel's body immediately began to glow with divine light. "How laughable." That Four-Winged Angel was very confident. According to their reports, Linley's power was only on par with Haydson. It wasn't greater than that of the magical beast named Bebe.

If even Bebe couldn't break the Angel Battle Formation, how could Linley?

A hint of satirizing amusement appeared in Linley's eyes. If he wasn't confident, how could he have let himself be 'trapped' within this Angel Battle Formation?

"Bang!" The adamantine heavy sword struck against the protective light.

A terrifyingly powerful surge of vibrational force transferred directly into the Four-Winged Angel's body. Those vibrations actually caused the internal organs of the Four-Winged Angel to instantly rupture and turn into a pile of soft mud. Even Haydson would have been badly injured after taking this blow, to say nothing of the Angel.

The face of that previously very confident Angel instantly turned ashen pale, while fresh blood spurted forth from his nose, ears, and mouth. In an instant, his eyes turned dim, and then like a pile of soft mud, he fell down from the skies, smashing into the ground like a ruptured sandbag and kicking up a cloud of dust.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 150 Layered Waves!

This was Linley's limit!

"Last time, it was six Angels also. And this time, once again..." Linley laughed coldly. "The Angel Battle Formation is useless against me. But unfortunately, those six Angels who died last time didn't have the chance to tell you."

The power of this 150 Layered Waves attack was far stronger than when he had previously competed against Haydson. Even someone as defensively powerful as Haydson probably wouldn't be able to take two of these hits head on.

"How is this possible?" The other five Four-Winged Angels were still in a state of shock. They hadn't felt much of an impact against their holy power, but their comrade had died. And at this time, Bebe and Haeru instantly transformed into streaks of black lightning...

"Shkreeeee!" An ear-piercing, heaven-shattering screech.

"Slash." A Four-Winged Angel wanted to dodge, but Bebe, after having his already-terrifying speed enhanced by the Windshadow spell, was simply too fast. The Angel simply couldn't fight against him at all. Those sharp claws tore directly into the Angel's chest and ripped out his heart.

Bebe, with just three claws, sent three Four-Winged Angels falling from the skies, their blood covering the ground.

"Bang!" Haeru killed one of the Four-Winged Angels as well.

"Whoosh..." Linley's body seemed to have turned into the wind itself, as he flickered everywhere. Sometimes, his adamantine heavy sword moved fast, while sometimes, it moved slowly...in front of the adamantine heavy sword, a spatial edge actually appeared, chopping down at the head of one of the Four-Winged Angels. The Four-Winged Angel, terrified, tried to dodge, but it was chopped into two halves.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind.

“Using the adamantine heavy sword with the Profound Truths of the Wind is indeed somewhat weaker.” Linley chuckled calmly as he looked down at the corpse on the ground.

The Profound Truths of the Earth and the Profound Truths of the Wind could be used with any weapon, even fists. Only, the level of effectiveness would vary. If the adamantine heavy sword were used to display the Tempos of the Wind attack, it would only be roughly half as powerful as the Bloodviolet sword. The power was roughly the same as using a knife-hand chop.

Although all of this took a while to describe...

In truth, when Linley used the Profound Truths of the Earth to kill one of the Four-Winged Angels, it happened in the blink of an eye. And then, the other five Four-Winged Angels were killed by Linley, Bebe, and Haeru. Six Angel corpses lay scattered on the ground.

“How...how is this...”

“Imp...impossible...”

The countless citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry all stared. The Angels whom they venerated in their hearts above all other creatures. The ‘Messengers of the Lord’! But the six Four-Winged Angels had died in the blink of an eye by those three shadows.

Linley’s body was covered with a roiling layer of azurish-black battle-qi, and he floated high in the air.

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry stared up at this fiend.

“You actually believe in the Radiant Sovereign? What a joke!” Linley’s voice seemed to shatter the heavens like thunder. “The teachings of the Radiant Church are nothing more than a type of deception. In this world, don’t entrust anything to a ‘god’. Rely on yourself. If you are strong, you can even kill an Angel as easily as you can raise your hand.”

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry were somewhat baffled.

The Messengers of the Lord. Those six Four-Winged Angels had been killed, just like that. According to the teachings of the Radiant Church, nothing could block the glory of the Lord, and in the face of the Messengers whom the Lord sent, anything blocking them would be turned to ash. But today...the ones which were turned to ash were the Angels!

“Who is this person?” Many people in the prefectural city of Sherry were quietly whispering this question to each other.

“Remember. My name...is Linley!”

Linley’s voice echoed nonstop in the prefectural city of Sherry, and then Linley, Bebe, and Haeru flew into the governor’s mansion. The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry remained in a stunned state.

“Linley...it’s actually Linley...”

In the Yulan continent, there was only one expert named Linley. It was the grandmaster sculptor, the genius magus, the Dragonblood Warrior...Linley Baruch!

Ever since he knew that he would have to fight head on against the Radiant Church, Linley had decided to no longer conceal his identity. The reputation of a peak-stage Saint was extremely alluring, and so Linley immediately proclaimed his identity. Most likely, some of the other Duchies would no longer dare to resist and might even immediately surrender to him.

“Boom!”

Osenno was flying at high speed towards the prefectural city of Sherry. “I didn’t expect that Linley would head to the prefectural city of Sherry. I thought he had fled.” Osenno had badly injured Barker and Boone, then sent people to lock them up with Gates and the other two in the prefectural city of Sherry, then headed towards Blackdirt City in the night.

But in the area around Blackdirt City, Osenno couldn’t find a single Saint-level expert.

“Linley ran away!” This was Osenno’s first reaction.

He believed that the Blackcloud Panther had mentally contacted Linley, and Linley had been so terrified that he immediately fled. Osenno was quite disappointed. He had no choice but to return to the prefectural city of Moat. But unexpectedly, just as the sky was beginning to brighten, a dazzling burst of light could be seen from the direction of the prefectural city of Sherry.

It was a signal!

The signal of Linley’s appearance!

“Although Linley is powerful, when those six Four-Winged Angels join forces and set up the Angel Battle Formation, even if they cannot kill Linley, they should be able to stay alive.” Osenno said to himself. The reason he had arranged for six Four-Winged Angels to be there was so that they could set up the Angel Battle Formation.

After all, they were six Four-Winged Angels! To the Radiant Church, they were still extremely valuable.

When Lyndin and the other five had died, the Radiant Church hadn’t minded, because Lyndin and the others were only of the ninth rank, after all. Only when going all out could they have the power of a Saint. The Radiant Church had quite a few of those low-level Angels. But these six Four-Winged Angels were another matter altogether.

To find bodies capable of holding the power of Four-Winged Angels was fairly difficult.

Those bodies had to be of the seventh rank in physical power alone. Only those bodies could allow Four-Winged Angels to descend into them and for their full power to be put on display. Bodies of the seventh rank...the Radiant Church only acquired a few despite thousands of years of searching.

“I’ve arrived.” Osenno saw the distant prefectural city of Sherry and instantly flew towards the governor’s mansion.

Osenno’s spiritual energy encapsulated the entire prefectural city of Sherry like a tempest, but his face quickly changed. In the blink of an eye, he arrived in the air above the governor’s mansion. He clearly saw that on the main walkway in front of the governor’s mansion...

Six corpses!

“All six of the Four-Winged Angels died?” Osenno’s heart contracted tightly. Even when the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin, had led his Saint-level magical beasts to attack the city of Fenlai, the Radiant Church hadn’t lost many Saint-level experts. But today, in the blink of an eye, they had lost six Four-Winged Angels.

Osenno’s dark eyes flashed with cold light, and the temperature around him dropped precipitously. The blood on the corpses of those six Four-Winged Angels actually began to turn to ice.

“Linley, get out!”

Osenno’s cold voice shook the heavens. Those citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry, who had just been agitated by Linley, now found to their shock that yet another figure with dark golden eyes was standing in the air above the governor’s mansion.

“A challenge to Linley?” Many people felt their hearts tremble.

They had simply been over-stimulated too much today. First, Angels had descended, and then, the Angels had been killed by Linley’s forces. But now, yet another Saint had come to challenge Linley...in their entire lives, they had never seen such a constant stream of exciting battles.

“Linley, are you only capable of hiding inside the governor’s mansion? Do you think I am unable to find you?” Osenno’s voice contained a hint of extreme rage.

In the past, he wanted to kill Linley because Linley was a threat. But now...Linley had killed six Four-Winged Angels. When had the Radiant Church ever suffered such a loss? If Linley was a Deity-level expert, then the Church would only be able to swallow their anger. But Linley’s power was inferior to Osenno’s!

“Hide?” A cold voice rang out from the city governor’s mansion.

“Osenno, you think too highly of yourself.” Regular, stable footsteps could be heard. Linley, dressed in a long, deep blue robe, casually walked to the courtyard with Bebe and Haeru by his side. Those Barker brothers were behind Linley as well. They formed a straight line.

Linley stared upwards at the mid-air Osenno. Osenno stared downwards at Linley as well. Their two gazes met, and as they did, it seemed as though the space between them began to shudder and rumble.

Within several hundred meters around Osenno, the temperature had reached to an extremely low level.

Extreme cold. Deathly silence.

In this area, it was as though Osenno was in total, complete control.

“Whoosh!” Suddenly, a wind arose in this area. The origin of the wind was Linley. Linley’s deep blue robe and his long hair fluttered in the wild wind, which twisted upwards towards Osenno. But Osenno was like a boulder upon which the waves broke themselves. He didn’t move at all.

“You killed six Four-Winged Angels of my Church. Today, I must kill you, and also let your soul forever be tormented by the flames of hell.” Osenno’s voice seemed to be as cold as a dagger, piercing into everyone’s ears.

Linley stared up at Osenno. His lips curved into a smile. “If you are so tough, then come on over.”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 15, The Fierce Battle Against Osenno

Black draconic scales. Fierce, sharp spikes. They all quickly emerged, covering Linley's entire body as he Dragonformed. The blue robe that had been covering Linley's body was torn to shreds by the ferocious battle-qi, and pieces of it fluttered around Linley.

“Go!” Linley's dark golden eyes stared at Osenno.

Instantly, those countless pieces of blue cloth suddenly shot towards Osenno like arrows. As they did, Bebe, who had been directly behind Linley, suddenly disappeared, crossing those hundred meters...

In just the blink of an eye.

The half-meter long Bebe suddenly appeared in front of Osenno. “Shkreeee!” The ear-piercing screech tore through the skies, while at the same time, Bebe's sharp claws transformed into a fierce storm which tore down towards Osenno.

“Crackle.”

Osenno's body immediately exploded with a black flame which emanated from within his body. The black fire surrounded his fist, which clashed directly against Bebe's sharp claws. “Bang!” “Bang!” Eardrum-rupturing collision sounds could be heard repeatedly.

“Swish!” Osenno quickly retreated a hundred meters in an instant.

Bebe stared angrily at Osenno. “Osenno, if you are so tough, don't run.” Just as Osenno opened his mouth and was about to speak, a tempest suddenly appeared in front of him, while at the same time, a scale-covered draconic claw slashed through the air, chopping towards him like a sharp blade.

Osenno once more dodged backwards.

Only now did Linley reveal himself fully. Standing in mid-air, the azurish-black energy surrounding him, he said, “Osenno, why do you keep on retreating? Didn't you say that you were going to kill me?” Linley's voice was very low. His eyes flashing like cold daggers, he was a heart-shaking sight.

“Boss, those black flames Osenno uses are very powerful. But they shouldn't be able to break your Pulseguard Defense.” Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

“I know. Osenno hasn't used his best techniques yet.” Linley was very careful.

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved a pitch-black, narrow and long sword. Osenno stared coldly at Linley and Bebe, the man and his magical beast. “Just now, I wanted to see how strong you were. Indeed...you are worthy of me drawing my blade.”

Linley and Bebe on one side. Osenno on the other. Staring at each other.

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry stared with bated breath at this battle, the likes of which Sherry had never seen since its founding.

“Let’s go.” Linley’s voice rang out in Bebe’s mind, and the two of them almost simultaneously charged towards Osenno. The adamantine heavy sword in Linley’s hand radiated with azurish light, chopping down agilely at Osenno.

Seeing Bebe and Linley charge towards him, Osenno instantly came to a judgment: “This magical beast called Bebe is even faster than me. This Linley is a hair faster than me as well. Our intelligence was wrong?”

Linley’s body seemed to drift forward gently as though it was very slow, but also as though it was very fast. It was extremely bizarre.

The deeper his insights into the Elemental Laws of the Wind had become, the faster Linley had become as well.

Bebe was the first to arrive in front of Osenno. Osenno just stood there in mid-air, not moving at all, allowing Bebe to claw at him. But the black katana in Osenno’s hands suddenly flashed, then chopped down against Bebe’s claws.

“Clang!”

A metallic ringing sound. Osenno’s body was sent flying back nearly a hundred meters, but Bebe stood there, not moving at all.

“Bebe.” Linley had a bad feeling.

“Boss, be careful. His katana attacks contain a spiritual attack.” Bebe warned him. “Just then, my head went dizzy for a moment.”

Linley grew nervous. Spiritual attack?

However, from what Linley could tell, this Osenno was a Warrior Saint. Most likely, his spiritual energy wasn’t too powerful. This was much like Olivier, who despite being capable of spiritual attacks, only had the spiritual energy of a magus of the eighth rank. Thus, his spiritual attack wasn’t too dangerous to people with powerful souls.

“My spiritual energy has reached the ninth rank. I should be able to take it.” Not hesitating at all, Linley once more struck out with his adamantine heavy sword, while Bebe, shaking his head a few times, let out another screech and charged towards Osenno.

Osenno’s body flickered as he actually moved forward to face Linley.

“Whoosh.” The adamantine heavy sword flowed gracefully through the air, slashing down at Osenno in an instant. Osenno’s black katana seemed to pierce through space itself, coming at an incomparably monstrous speed as it chopped against Linley’s adamantine heavy sword.

The adamantine heavy sword and the black katana clashed...

Linley’s body was sent flying backwards, and he shook his head in pain.

“Rumble...” A bizarre, terrifying vibration had passed through the black katana and attacked Osenno. It had pierced straight through Osenno’s protective layer of infernal black flames and directly attacked Osenno’s internal organs. Those terrifying, powerful vibrations caused all of Osenno’s organs to shudder.

“Urgh.” Osenno spat out a mouthful of blood.

Osenno stared at Linley in disbelief. He didn't expect that he would have suffered a serious injury in just his first exchange of blows with Linley.

"If this happens another time, I probably won't be able to take it. This Linley's attack is too bizarre and too terrifying. My defenses are useless." Osenno now realized how terrifying Linley was. "I didn't expect that I would have to use my ultimate technique to deal with Linley."

Only now did Linley's head feel a bit better.

"What a terrifying spiritual attack." Linley's heart shook. "It didn't just attack, it also possessed an illusionary, mesmerizing power."

"Die!" Bebe charged fiercely at Osenno, the tips of his sharp fangs biting down at Osenno, but Bebe actually passed straight through Osenno. 'Osenno' was still in his original position.

"Two of them."

Linley stared in astonishment. At this moment, there were two 'Osennos' standing in mid-air. And they definitely weren't illusions. Both were real!

"Doppelgangers?" Linley couldn't believe it.

The two Osennos suddenly moved, transforming into four Osennos. This was totally different from Olivier's technique, which relied on high speed movement to create illusions. All of these four Osennos were real. Linley's spiritual energy could detect all four of these Osennos and sense their auras.

"This...what in the world is this?" Linley couldn't dare believe it.

The four Osennos stood in mid-air, staring coldly at Linley. The four Osennos each said one phrase at a time. "Linley, you really do have some skill. You forced me to use this technique. Just then, you saw that when you attack me, you will find that my body is illusory, but when I attack you, you will find...that my body is real. In other words, I can attack you, but you can't attack me. Your death is...inevitable."

The four Osennos all flew towards Linley at high speed.

"Die!" Linley flew at high speed towards one of them, but suddenly, Linley utilized his adamantite heavy sword to chop at a different one.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 150 Layered Waves.

However, it was as though he had hit nothing but air. Linley's adamantite heavy sword passed straight through this 'Osenno', not having harmed him at all. But then, this 'Osenno' suddenly chopped towards Linley, and Linley quickly used his adamantite heavy sword to block.

"Bang!"

Linley was knocked flying back, and his head felt dizzy yet again.

"How is this possible? How can someone possibly have such a freakish ability?" Linley didn't dare to believe it. Even when dealing with Fain or Desri, Linley hadn't had such a hopeless feeling. He couldn't attack his opponent, but the opponent could easily attack him? What the hell was this?

"Osenno, don't believe your own lies."

Bebe's voice rang out. Linley turned to look at Bebe. Bebe's little eyes were staring at Osenno. "Others are unable to attack you? If four people simultaneously attacked your four bodies, tell me...would they be able to attack you?" Bebe seemed to be quite familiar with this technique.

All four Osenno's were wielding that black katana.

"It seems you understand this technique?" Osenno laughed coldly.

"Of course. Don't forget. I am a darkness-element magical beast." Bebe's body suddenly flickered, and then split into two as well. The two Bebe's stood there in mid-air. Osenno was stunned as well, and Linley was also awestruck.

The Barker brothers were watching all this from below.

"What the hell?" Hazer looked at Gates.

Gates shook his head, lost. "This battle isn't one in which the likes of us can get involved in. Let's just watch."

Linley flew towards the two Bebe's, while Bebe said to Linley, "Boss, there is a relatively basic darkness-style attack known as the 'Stealthwalk Technique'. Once the Stealthwalk Technique reaches an extremely high level, it can be transformed into the Shadowshape Technique. The Shadowshape Technique causes one's body to merge with the shadows themselves. However...there is a level even beyond the Shadowshape technique which is known as...the Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique. This is something which only Saints can train in."

"However, Osenno's Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique is more powerful than mine!" Bebe said.

"So this is known as the 'Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique'?" Osenno frowned.

"You didn't know?" Bebe looked at Osenno.

Osenno was silent. In truth, while Osenno had been training in the Elemental Laws of Darkness, he slowly managed to develop this 'Doppelganger Technique'. As for its name, he had casually decided to simply call it the 'Doppelganger Technique'.

Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique.

The basic underpinning of the Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique was to create a shadow from another shadow, and then allow the real body to change position at any time from amongst the shadow-bodies.

Just then, when Linley had attacked one of the doppelgangers, Osenno had switched places with one of his other shadows, and then when he attacked Linley, he had switched back.

This technique was very powerful, but in the face of the Godrealm technique of Deities, it was still useless.

"Bebe, when did you learn this technique?" Linley asked mentally.

"Darkness-elemental magical beasts are born knowing some darkness-style spells and special attacks. Only upon reaching the Saint-level was I capable of utilizing this Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique. Unfortunately, I'm not as good at it as Osenno." Bebe said resignedly. Magical beasts were born with some special, magical skills. The more powerful the beast, the more powerful the magic.

Linley secretly sighed as well.

“And so what if you know it? You will still die!” The four Osenno moved at the same time. The target...Linley! The four Osenno attacked together, and Linley quickly flew back...one against four, how could he fight them? He could block one, but the real body would then be in one of the other three.

If he fought head on, he would definitely lose!

“Shkreee!” As Linley retreated, the two Bebes screeched fiercely as they charged forward.

The two Bebes were freakishly fast. The two Bebes engaged in a wild battle against those four Osenno, but since Osenno could choose between those four shadow dopplegangers, he could dodge much more easily than Bebe.

“Bang!” The two Bebes flew back.

“Bebe, quick, come over to me. Listen to my order.” Linley was currently standing in one of the streets of the prefectural city of Sherry. Standing on the ground, his head was upraised as he stared at Osenno in mid-air, quietly awaiting Osenno to come over.

Bebe was somewhat puzzled, but he still flew over towards Linley at high speed.

“Boss, what do you want to do?” Bebe asked suspiciously.

But when Bebe heard Linley’s mental response, his eyes instantly lit up, and he once more scurried atop Linley’s shoulders. Linley and Bebe just stood there on the ground, staring up at the four Osenno, not afraid at all.

“Hrm? What trick do you have up your sleeves?”

Seeing how confident Linley was, Osenno was rather suspicious. But when he scanned the area with his spiritual energy, he found that Linley and Bebe didn’t have any backup at all, nor were there any apparent traps. In addition, for someone like him, an expert who trained in the Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique, how could he be afraid of a trap?

“Hrmph.” Osenno sneered coldly. No longer hesitating, the four Osenno simultaneously charged down towards Linley!

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Linley wielded the adamantine heavy sword in one hand, and Bloodviolet in the other. He stood there in the middle of the street, and Bebe was on his shoulders, not moving. The man and the beast stared as Osenno charged over, but when Osenno reached within ten meters of Linley, he suddenly paused.

There was a plot here!

Osenno stared at Linley, who seemed brimming with confidence. He grew a bit nervous.

“What sort of nasty trick does this punk have up his sleeve?”

“What, are you afraid?” Linley, his two swords in his hands, stared at Osenno. “If you are afraid, then just roll the fuck out of my city. It’s fine. I won’t chase you.”

Linley’s words made Osenno so angry, he could vomit blood.

“Chase me?” Osenno secretly cursed Linley in his mind. It was clear and apparent that he, Osenno, had the advantage. But Osenno was born cautious. He truly began to wonder if Linley did indeed have some sort of nasty trick up his sleeve. But seeing how confident Linley was looking, Osenno suddenly thought, “Wait, can it be that Linley is just pretending to be like this to try and scare me away?”

Osenno carefully inspected Linley. “If Linley really had some sort of ultimate attack, he would’ve used it long ago. Why feign weakness? In addition, if one has an ace up one’s sleeve, one wouldn’t be so blatantly self-confident. Being this confident is as good as telling someone you have a technique lying in wait.”

Osenno laughed coldly in his mind. “What is true is false, what is false is true. This punk is trying to play me. I refuse to believe he is able to wound me.”

“Why are you hesitating, Lord Praetor? What happened to your usual awe-inspiring presence and decisiveness?” Linley mocked coldly.

Osenno stared at Linley’s dark golden eyes. He sneered, “Punk, I still...” Halfway through his words, the four Osennos simultaneously attacked Linley with terrifying speed. But right at that moment...

“Rumble...”

Within a hundred meters, the land quickly became covered with a layer of earthen light, and Linley and Bebe’s body became covered with it as well.

Instacast – Supergravity Field, rank seven!

A Supergravity Field of the seventh rank would cause the strength of the gravity affecting one’s body to instantly quadruple. This gravity wouldn’t just impact the muscles; it would also affect the organs and the blood vessels. Even powerful opponents would be slowed when suddenly affected by this.

To a Saint, if you threw a boulder weighing ten thousand tons at him, he would easily shatter it with the flick of his finger, not harmed by it at all.

But the Supergravity Field was different.

For example, the quadruple gravity wasn't something as simple as just adding a few hundred tons of weight. It could cause the flow of blood in a person's body to slow and make breathing more difficult...weak people, under a quadruple gravity field, might even die in an instant. Even Saints would have their physical functions impacted.

“Kill!”

After instacasting the Supergravity Field as well as the nullifying magic on himself and Bebe, Linley charged forward towards Osenno with Bebe by his side in a simultaneous attack. One Linley and two Bebes arrived at the four slower Osennos.

The adamantine heavy sword once more chopped down, while at the same time, Bloodviolet chopped through the air as well.

“Bang!” Osenno was knocked flying, and all four of the Osennos merged into one. A hint of blood could be seen dribbling from his mouth. He had dodged Linley's attack, but he wasn't able to dodge the two Bebes attacks.

Linley didn't hesitate at all, charging directly towards Osenno, but Osenno instantly transformed into four people as well, while at the same time, his body began to emit a large amount of black flame. The ground around him was burnt to nothing, and Linley's Supergravity Field was wiped out as well.

“I didn't expect you to have this sort of technique.” Osenno stared angrily at Linley. “However, this technique of yours is useless.”

“Useless?”

Linley stood on the ground confidently.

The four Osennos once more charged forward at high speed, while at virtually the same instant, Linley's surrounding area once more appeared to be covered by that earthen light – Supergravity Field of the seventh rank!

The four Osennos paused slightly, and then, with a ‘Bam!’, the black flame began to burn, once more wiping away the Supergravity Field. Osenno's eyes were filled with fury. “It is useless, Linley. My body is totally capable of getting accustomed to this level of Supergravity.”

“Bebe, let's do it.”

Linley and Bebe both charged towards Osenno, while at the same time, Linley once more cast the Supergravity Field. Only this time...it was a Supergravity Field of the sixth rank!

Osenno had already been prepared for quadruple gravity, but when he suddenly became affected by double gravity instead, his movements couldn't help but falter a bit.

“Bang!”

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind. Bloodviolet seemed both ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’, and that spatial edge appeared on the edge of Bloodviolet. The edge of the sword chopped down directly towards Osenno, and was actually able to cut through his infernal flames, sending him flying back once again.

A wound had appeared on Osenno's chest.

Osenno had dodged Linley's adamantine heavy sword and the attacks of the two Bebes, but he had been injured by Bloodviolet.

“How can it be so powerful?” The look on Osenno’s face changed.

Just then, he had nowhere to run. Because all four of his shadows were attacking Linley, Linley naturally attacked two while the other two were easily attacked by the two Bebes, who was faster than them. No matter what, he would end up taking a hit.

He didn’t dare take the adamantine heavy sword head-on, and he didn’t want to take a hit from Bebe’s claws either.

In the end, he had chosen Bloodviolet.

However...that Bloodviolet sword seemed to be even more formidable than Bebe’s claws by a whisker.

“According to our intelligence, the attacks of that violet sword aren’t very powerful though.” Osenno couldn’t believe it.

Indeed, when he dueled with Haydson, Linley’s ‘Tempos of the Wind’ was not too powerful. But now that he had broken through to a higher level of comprehension towards both the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, then combined them in his ‘Tempos of the Wind’, the power had been raised by far more than just one level; it was raised by at least two levels, or even more.

“Osenno, didn’t you want to kill me?” Linley seemed very arrogant.

Attack!

The demonic-looking Linley and the enlarged Bebe charged wildly towards Osenno. As they did, Linley instacast the Supergravity Field again, filling the area once more with that earthen glow.

“Bang!” In the blink of an eye, Osenno’s infernal black flames once more wiped away the Supergravity Field.

But for Linley, this sort of low-level technique was something he could use a hundred or two hundred times without exhausting his mageforce. And more importantly, Linley had the Coiling Dragon ring and only needed to use a sixth of the mageforce to begin with.

Supergravity Field of the seventh and sixth ranks. Linley was using them on a rotational basis.

“Not good.” The constantly changing gravitational power caused even Osenno’s attacks to become less coordinated.

The Supergravity Field of the sixth rank increased gravity by two times. There was a big difference between it and the Supergravity Field of the seventh rank...these two spells with huge differences in power caused Osenno to constantly be unable to get accustomed to the local gravity. It was as though an ordinary person, when walking, would suddenly feel gravity disappear, and then he would have to walk while weightless. He wouldn’t be used to it.

Same line of reasoning.

Sometimes, Supergravity Fields weren’t necessarily the stronger the better.

With no way to dodge, Osenno was struck viciously again by Bebe’s two claws and was sent flying. With a crunching sound, Osenno’s rib had broken...this time, Osenno didn’t fly into the air, nor did he dare to go closer to the ground. After having learned this lesson, Osenno didn’t dare to get near the ground again as he remained in mid-air.

“I didn’t know that different Supergravity Fields could be used at this level.” Osenno said.

He had been badly hurt.

After being struck by Linley’s adamantine heavy sword and the Bloodviolet sword, he had then been struck twice by Bebe’s claws now.

“Bebe, let’s charge. He’s badly injured and not in great shape.”

Osenno didn’t hesitate at all. His four shadows instantly flew at high speed towards the south, paying no attention to Bebe who was behind him. Perhaps Bebe would be able to catch him, but he could change between the four shadows nonstop. He had no reason to fear Bebe.

But if Linley were to charge over....

Perhaps Osenno would be the one to injure Linley instead. After all, in mid-air, Linley would not be able to utilize the Supergravity Field. His speed would then be inferior to Osenno’s. Wasn’t he just asking for trouble if he did that?

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At this time, Barker and his brothers came running out of the city governor’s mansion.

“That Osenno escaped.” Ankh sighed.

“His Lordship and Bebe beat Osenno so bad he ran away.” Gates was excited. The brothers carefully inspected the streets in front of the city governor’s manor, and instantly, they were speechless. The bodies of the six Angels had already been frozen into blocks of ice.

Near Linley’s position, the ground itself was a full meter lower.

In addition, another meter of earth had been burned by Osenno’s infernal flames and destroyed by it. Linley was currently at the end of that depressed patch of land.

“Lord.”

“Lord.”

Barker and his brothers ran excitedly towards Linley, while Linley transformed back into his human form. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew a robe from his interspatial ring. Bebe landed on Linley’s shoulders, and Linley let out a long sigh.

“Lord, we won.” Barker said excitedly. The other four stared at Linley with excitement as well

A hint of laughter was on Linley’s face. He stared towards the south. “We didn’t truly win. What a pity. The attack power of each strike of my ‘Rippling Wind’ isn’t powerful enough. If it was more powerful...I would be able to hold off Osenno by myself.”

The Rippling Wind could instantly create ten million swords.

It was the absolute peak of speed, but each attack wasn’t too powerful. If Linley were to use this attack against the four Osennos, he wouldn’t be able to harm them at all. Instead, he would be the one to be wounded.

“Tempos of the Wind and Rippling Wind are two different concepts. There is no way to merge them. The only thing I can do is infuse the ‘Rippling Wind’ with the insights I have gained into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. By then, the power of the ‘Rippling Wind’ would increase by another level.”

Linley still remembered Higginson’s sword technique.

It had been so fast that it had distorted and folded space itself, and it carried a terrifying penetrative power.

If Linley was able to reach that level and use his Rippling Wind technique, then the equivalent of countless ‘Illusionary Void Swords’ would attack his opponents. Although the attack of each sword would still be a bit lower, it would be incredibly powerful nonetheless.”

“Me too.” Bebe muttered. “If my Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique could reach the level of splitting into four shadows, I would be able to fight him by myself.”

Barker and his brothers stared at Linley and Bebe, the man and his magical beast. They were speechless.

“Lord, you aren’t even thirty yet. Yet you are so powerful.” Barker finally said loudly.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other, then laughed.

Good point. One couldn’t be too greedy.

Linley was on the fast track to understanding both the Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Elemental Laws of the Earth. He wasn’t like some people who were bottlenecked or stuck. He should be overjoyed.

“Barker, immediately send people to reclaim the Sherry Duchy. Here in the prefectural city of Sherry, most likely those soldiers won’t face a single bit of resistance.” Linley was quite confident. After that massive battle with the Angels and the battle just now, who in the prefectural city of Sherry would dare to resist?

“Yes, Lord.”

“Per our plans, since we are fighting head on against the Radiant Church, then we will make our affiliations public. Ten days from now, we will openly proclaim to the world that we have founded a Duchy, and the name of the Duchy...is the Baruch Duchy!” Linley announced.

Barker, Ankh, Hazer, Boone, and Gates all said with respectful excitement, “Yes, Lord.”

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The battle at the prefectural city of Sherry had determined that for now, the Radiant Church was not capable of suppressing Linley. Linley had slaughtered six Four-Winged Angels, and then forced Praetor Osenno to flee. This victory, once announced by Zassler and the others, quickly spread across the entire area.

The morale of Linley’s side was like a rainbow.

The Sherry Duchy no longer had any hint of resistance. It once more returned to Linley’s control.

Blackdirt City. Within a garden.

“Lord Linley, the western Anne Duchy immediately surrendered to us after we said a few threatening words to them. The Duchies to the east are a bit more stubborn.” Zassler laughed. Linley’s reputation was extremely useful.

A simple threat had caused an entire Duchy to capitulate.

How could they not surrender though? What, would they fight against a Saint? After all, the most powerful combatants in a Duchy were usually of the eighth rank only, and a very few Duchies had warriors of the ninth rank. As for Saints...how could a Saint stay in a Duchy?

“Zassler.” Linley instructed. “In three days, I will found the Baruch Duchy. How about this...send some people to one of the branches of the Dawson Conglomerate. Tell them immediately send a message to Delia in the Yulan Empire. Tell her about the founding of the Baruch Duchy.”

Zassler assented.

Linley stood there in the garden, staring towards the south. “Delia. I’ve completed my side of our agreement. So...when will you come?”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 17, Homecoming

Osenno's study.

“Lord Praetor?” The golden-haired middle-aged man called out softly. Ever since Osenno had been defeated and sent fleeing by Linley and Bebe, Osenno had become even grimmer and colder. His subordinates didn't even dare to get close to him.

Osenno raised his head, staring at him with those cold eyes.

The middle-aged man squeezed out a smile. “Lord Praetor, how should we deal with Linley?”

“Linley?” Osenno let out a cold sneer.

The middle-aged man's heart quailed. He could sense the temperature in the room drop. Osenno said coldly, “Immediately send someone to deliver the news to the Holy Isle and inform the Holy Emperor. If Linley is not eradicated...then in the future, if the Radiant Church is eliminated, it would most likely have been done by Linley!”

Osenno was truly frightened by Linley's rate of improvement.

Last year, in August, when Linley dueled with Haydson, Linley's strength was just on par with Haydson. But now, in the following April, just eight months later, in eight short months...Linley's power had increased by an astonishing amount.

In the past, that violet sword was incapable of harming Haydson. But now, it harmed him. Osenno!

“He...he's not yet thirty!” Osenno's heart was filled with worry.

“Yes, Lord Praetor. I will immediately send someone conveying your words to the Holy Emperor.” The middle-aged man hurriedly said.

Osenno sighed in his heart. “If...if in the past, the people we had killed and sacrificed to the Radiant Sovereign didn't include Linley's mother, then perhaps...perhaps Linley would have become the central pillar for the Radiant Church, capable of helping us overthrow the Cult of Shadows.”

But it was too late.

Linley and the Radiant Church were now openly opposed.

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The Anarchic Lands. Currently, there were three primary factions. One was the Radiant Church. One was the Cult of Shadows. And the final one was Linley's. Because of the battle at the prefectural city of Sherry Duchy, the Radiant Church was now quite silent and kept its head low.

The Cult of Shadows wouldn't interfere. They wanted to see Linley and the Radiant Church continue to fight against each other. Naturally, they too, would just keep their head low and watch. As long as Linley didn't antagonize them, they definitely wouldn't antagonize Linley.

In this sort of situation.

Linley's side was the most vigorous and expanded the most, and was now preparing the festivities for the founding of the Baruch Duchy. Currently, the Baruch Duchy had three prefectural cities, nineteen small cities, and led over twenty million citizens. This sort of large faction was actually about the size of half of a regular Kingdom.

This was an extremely large Duchy.

And Linley? His legend was once more sung about in songs by the countless masses...his list of myths now included destroying six Four-Winged Angels and defeating the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Radiant Church. Linley's fame continued to grow, causing many warriors and magi who worshipped Linley to head to the Baruch Duchy in a wave.

They wanted to fight for Linley!

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The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire.

Master Longhaus' residence. Delia was in the courtyard as always, soaking up the rays of the sun and enjoying the fresh air while studying Master Longhaus' notes on magic.

"Miss Delia, the Dawson Conglomerate's representative is here." A guard ran over and reported to her.

Delia's eyes instantly lit up.

"I, Big Yellow, am willing to bet that it is a letter from Linley." The Worldbear next to Delia chortled, while Delia glanced at him sideways. She said, "Quick, let him come in."

"Yes." The guard said respectfully.

A short while later, a beaming, middle-aged man entered the courtyard. Seeing Delia, he immediately withdrew a letter from his robes. "Miss Delia, here is your letter. It comes from the Anarchic Lands." This wasn't his first time delivering a letter to Delia.

As soon as Delia saw this person, she knew that the letter came from Linley.

"Miss Delia, I bid you farewell." The middle-aged man was extremely polite.

Delia laughed in excitement. After the man left, she immediately opened the letter and began to read. The nearby Worldbear craned his big head over to sneak a peek as well. Delia couldn't help but turn and glance at him. "Big Yellow, I'm getting angry."

The Worldbear immediately let out a couple of deep, awkward chuckles.

Delia laughed as well, then continued to read. But as she did, Delia's body began to tremble.

"Wonderful. Wonderful." Delia was so excited that she immediately rose to her feet. She could feel her heart racing and her entire body was beginning to be covered in sweat.

"Delia, why are you so happy?" The Worldbear asked puzzledly. Even the nearby Wildthunder Stormhawk stared towards Delia in confusion. Just at this moment, a middle-aged man appeared in the courtyard. It was the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus.

"Teacher." Delia said respectfully.

Master Longhaus laughed as he looked at Delia. "Hatton tells me that you received a letter from Linley. It seems there is some joyous occasion?"

Delia stared at the Worldbear, who began to laugh delightedly.

"Teacher." Delia was still quite excited. "It is Linley's letter. He tells me...that the Baruch Duchy is going to be founded this year, April 16th. That's today. Linley is finally founding his Duchy. This is...this is wonderful."

Master Longhaus knew everything there was to know about Delia's affairs.

"As happy as that? Is it because you're about to be able to see Linley?" Master Longhaus teased.

Delia's face had turned red. Was it because she was embarrassed, or was it because she was too excited?

"Alright, Teacher. I can't talk right now. I have to go home first and tell my parents about this. According to what they previously said, now that Linley has erected his Duchy, they shouldn't be against me and Linley being together anymore." Delia said.

Master Longhaus nodded.

"Fine. Go."

Delia repeatedly nodded. She immediately rode the Wildthunder Stormhawk 'Parry' and left her teacher's residence. Watching Delia fly away, Master Longhaus shook his head and sighed. "Delia's father won't be so easily swayed, I'm afraid."

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Within the Leon clan's residence.

Dylla Leon and his wife were both quite puzzled. Why had Delia pulled them here to this quiet room to discuss something?

"Father, mother, there's something I need to tell you." Delia took a deep breath.

Delia's mother started to laugh. "What sort of joyous event is it, that has you all worked up like this?"

Delia began to laugh as well. "Right. Father, mother, didn't you say that if Linley and I were together, it would lower his Imperial Majesty's faith in our clan? But now, Linley has erected his own Duchy in the Anarchic Lands."

"Erected a Duchy?" Dylla Leon and his wife looked at each other.

"Delia, my dearest daughter, I hope you aren't lying to your father. After all, I've never heard of this." Dylla Leon said.

Delia secretly laughed.

Linley's Baruch Duchy was being founded today. It would take at least ten days or half a month for the news to spread several thousand kilometers away to the Yulan Empire. It would be a strange thing if her father did know about it.

"It is true. I just have some advance information. Linley's Duchy is named the Baruch Duchy." Delia said with certainty.

Dylla Leon and his wife exchanged glances.

“It’s true. Father, mother, can it be that you don’t believe me?” Delia frowned.

Dylla Leon chuckled while shaking his head. “I believe you. But why must you marry Linley? Although Linley has founded a Duchy...can being the wife of a Grand Duke compare to being the Empress of an Empire?”

Delia’s smile froze.

“Father, what are you trying to say?” Delia’s face was more serious than it had ever been.

Dylla Leon stretched his hand out, placing it on Delia’s shoulder. Sighing, he said, “Delia, it is true that Linley is a Saint and is powerful. But Emperor Rande is the Emperor of our Yulan Empire. If you marry him, that would be wonderful as well. And...it would be very beneficial for our entire clan.”

Delia looked at her father, her eyes filled with disbelief.

“Father. Are you still that father who loved me?” Delia’s voice had turned hoarse.

Dylla Leon was startled, and his wife was taken aback as well.

“Father. I love Linley, love him very much. But this isn’t because he is a Saint. When I met him at the Ernst Institute, I fell in love with him. Was he a Saint back then? Why do you have this sort of idea in your mind about the type of person your daughter is?”

“Also. Ever since returning from the Institute, in the past eight or nine years, why is it that I refused to accept the advances of any young man in the imperial capital? Why? Can it be that you don’t understand?”

Delia truly didn’t know what her parents were thinking.

“Ever since I came back from the O’Brien Empire and told you about Linley, what I wanted was your blessings. But...instead you tried to stop me.” Delia’s eyes were glimmering with tears. “I admit, your words are very logical. Back then, if I was to be with Linley, it would indeed lower Emperor Rande’s trust in our family.”

“Father. Mother. I love you. I love my family. That’s why I didn’t want to put you in a difficult position. Although I wanted to go meet Linley a long time ago, for your sake, I’ve been enduring. I’ve stayed in the imperial capital, because I cherish my family and cherish you.”

“But you try to convince me to marry this person and that person. What is it? Can it be that Linley is inferior to those nobles? Why are you always like this?” In the past seven or eight months, Delia had felt extremely depressed.

“I finally waited for this moment. Linley’s erected his own Duchy. I today came to you filled with excitement. I hoped...I hoped I would receive my parents’ blessings. But...” As Delia spoke, her tears began to come out. “You disappoint me. You truly disappoint me.”

Dylla Leon and his wife were silent as they faced their daughter.

“Father. Mother. I love you both very much, and cherish you both very much.” Delia took a deep breath. “If you still love and cherish me, I hope that on the day of my wedding with Linley, I’ll receive your blessings. But if you no longer care about this daughter of yours...then forget it.”

After finishing her words, Delia turned and left.

Dylla Leon and his wife were both somewhat stunned.

Only after their daughter had gone did they come to their senses.

“Delia!” They called out, but Delia was already seated on the back of the Wildthunder Stormhawk and had flown away.

....

Delia was mounted on the Wildthunder Stormhawk and looking down at the rapidly shrinking imperial city. She had bid her teacher farewell, and then left the imperial capital. The wind blew against Delia’s golden hair, and also blew her tears dry.

Right now, Delia’s aching heart only longed to see Linley. Only in Linley’s embrace would she find comfort.

The Wildthunder Stormhawk let out a few hawk cries as well, as though comforting Delia.

Slowly...the Wildthunder Stormhawk and Delia disappeared into the northern horizon.

.....

Blackdirt City. At the base of Mt. Blackraven.

“Linley is currently training at Mt. Blackraven.” Zassler pointed towards a mountain while laughing. Seeing the beautiful scenery of Mt. Blackraven, Delia managed to clamp down on her excitement. “Mr. Zassler, is Linley always there?”

Zassler laughed. “Almost his entire time is spent there training. Bebe is there as well.”

As they spoke, they headed up the mountain.

Following that creek, Zassler led Delia to the side of a lake. Delia instantly saw Linley. Right now Linley was dressed in a long, sky blue robe. His long hair was unbound, and he was wielding a violet longsword on the surface of the lake, testing out his sword attacks.

Wherever the violet sword passed, space itself seemed to ripple, making Linley seem indistinct and hazy.

Clearly, Linley was currently immersed in training.

“Ah! Delia. You came. BOSS!!!!!!” Bebe, who had been playing around in the water, immediately saw Delia, and he immediately let out an excited cry.

Linley’s movements came to a halt, and he turned around.

Seeing Delia, Linley seemed to have suffered a blow to his spirit. His entire body froze...but then, he flew over at high speed. As for Delia? A smile had made its way onto her face, and her eyes had instantly turned moist.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 18, (title hidden)

Linley landed on the side of the lake. Filled with excitement, he stared at Delia, whose eyes were filled with unshed tears. He had the sudden urge to immediately take Delia into his arms. But although he had this urge, he still just stood there in front of Delia, his mouth open, but not knowing what to say.

He had ten million words in his heart, but he couldn't get a single word out.

“Linley, you haven't changed.” Delia laughed. She was the one to reach out to him, with her left hand.

Seeing that white, dainty hand, Linley was stunned for a moment. Delia glanced at him out of the corner of her eyes. “Hey, Dumbo, are you going to make me use the Soaring Technique, just so that I can get to the center of the lake?” There was a distance of several dozen meters from here to the center of the lake. If Delia didn't use the Soaring Technique, she wouldn't be able to get there.

Seeing the way Delia was looking at him, and her ivory white arm, Linley immediately reached out with his own right hand and took hers in his own.

“So, uh, Linley. I'll be leaving now.” Zassler finally spoke.

Linley and Delia's faces both suddenly flushed pink. Linley turned to glance at Zassler, speechless. Zassler winked towards Linley, then turned and ran away at high speed.

“That's just how Zassler is.” Holding hands with Delia, Linley tapped his foot, summoning a wind which swirled around both of them. Gently...Linley and Delia floated to the center of the lake. They stepped onto the edges of the stone platform, then sat down next to each other.

The two continued to hold hands. Feeling the soft warmth of Delia's hand in his own, Linley felt as though he was currently standing in the clouds. Delia's face was slowly turning pink as well. The atmosphere between the two instantly grew more intimate.

Suddenly...

Linley saw that in the water, not too far away, Bebe had popped his little head out and was using his sneaky little eyes to peek at Linley and Delia.

“Oh! Boss! You guys keep doin' what you were doing. Bebe's gonna just go somewhere else to play for a bit. You guys keep on at it!” Bebe, knowing that he had been discovered, immediately sank down into the water. However, Linley and Delia didn't notice that far away, on top of a tree near the peak of Mt. Blackraven, a Wildthunder Stormhawk was stealthily peeping at them.

“Hehe.” Delia immediately began to giggle. “Linley, Bebe really is adorable.”

Linley nodded and laughed as well. “That's just how Bebe is. Oh, right. Delia, why is it that you waited so long to come here after you left the O'Brien Empire? Did something happen?” Linley still remembered how, when Delia had left, she said she would soon come find him.

Delia nodded, but she fell silent.

The events which had occurred in the imperial capital had truly hurt Delia. She was very disappointed in her parents. Linley's words...instantly made Delia feel downcast.

“What happened? Talk to me.” Linley squeezed Delia’s hand.

“You really want to know?” Delia stared at Linley, her face close to his.

Linley nodded.

“If you listen to the story, then you’ll have to marry me.” Delia suddenly said.

“Wha...” This sneak attack truly caught Linley offguard. Delia truly was the only woman Linley was currently interested in, but for him to immediately marry her...Linley, in his heart, was still rather nervous. His first relationship’s failure had caused Linley to be rather defensive in these matters.

He still didn’t dare to totally invest himself in any relationship with a woman.

He was afraid he would be utterly heartbroken once again.

“I’m just joking with you.” Delia began to laugh, then let out a flirtatious sniff. “Sheesh, Linley. Can’t you just pretend or just tease me for a moment?” Delia’s words made Linley feel less awkward.

Delia took a deep breath. “I can tell you the story now, if you still want to hear it?”

Linley immediately nodded.

Delia settled her thoughts. Holding Linley’s hand, staring at the peaceful lake waters, she slowly said, “Linley. When I received my clan’s letter saying that I had to go back, I found, upon my return...my grandmother was perfectly fine. There was nothing wrong with her at all.”

Linley frowned.

When Delia had written him a letter saying that his grandmother was in excellent shape, Linley had already sensed that there was something that lay hidden.

“Afterwards, I found out that my parents found out from Teacher that the reason I stayed behind in the O’Brien Empire was to be together with you. Thus, my parents used this scheme to get me to come back and to part from you.” Delia laughed bitterly as she looked at Linley. “This scheme was a very clumsy one, but I still fell for it.”

Linley was puzzled. “Your parents...”

“It was for the clan.”

Delia sighed. “Before you had started your own side in the Anarchic Lands, virtually everyone in the six major forces believed you were a member of the O’Brien Empire. The O’Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire have always viewed each other as principal rivals.”

Linley understood. The most powerful forces in the Yulan continent were these two Empires.

“In my parents’ opinion, if I were to marry you, then that would be tantamount to colluding and allying with an important Saint of the enemy. The Emperor of the Yulan Empire would have less trust in our clan. Thus, my father and mother didn’t want me to be with you.”

Delia glanced at Linley. “Naturally though, this was just my parents’ opinion. They didn’t know...that we’ve never discussed marriage.”

Linley could only rub his nose.

Delia said falteringly, “The imperial capital is filled with people pursuing me, and my parents kept on trying to persuade me to marry someone else. I wasn’t willing! I really hate that! Linley...I really wanted to leave right away and come looking for you, but I didn’t want to break the relationship between me and my parents. I really love my parents!”

“I understand,” Linley said consolingly.

Of course he understood how Delia was feeling. This was because he, too, was a man who cherished his relatives and his parents.

“I really wanted to come find you, but I didn’t want to lose my parents either.” Delia chewed on her lips, lowering her voice. Linley could clearly sense that Delia was squeezing his hands more tightly now.

Linley rested Delia’s hand on his leg.

Delia glanced at Linley, a hint of a smile appearing on her face. “I was waiting...waiting for you to found your Duchy. But my parents said that I should marry the Emperor of the Yulan Empire and become the Empress.”

“Hrm?” Linley felt a hint of anger in his heart.

Delia’s parents really were going too far.

“I wasn’t willing. That time, I got angry with my parents.” Delia shook her head helplessly. “I’ve always been a filial, obedient child in front of my parents. But that time, I really lost my temper. I told my father clearly that I would rather die than marry those people.”

Linley felt a grateful feeling in his heart. For a woman to be willing to do this was truly moving.

“I was waiting...and finally, the letter I waited for arrived. You had founded the Baruch Duchy.” Delia looked at Linley. “At the time, I was extremely excited. My parents would no longer block us from being together.” Linley felt extremely happy as well.

As Linley saw it, Delia should have come happily after having a good talk with her parents.

“But when I told this news to my parents...they once again advised me to marry that Emperor.” A bitter look was on Delia’s face.

“How can they be like that?” Linley’s face changed.

For them to act like this...Linley could totally understand how Delia must have felt.

“Right, how can they be like that?” Delia’s eyes had a sad look in them. “I had went to them happily, but I didn’t expect that this would be the result. Actually...I should’ve predicted it. My father is the leader of our clan. Of course he has to think about things from the clan’s standpoint. In his eyes, the Emperor is very talented and has a high status. Marrying him would also be of benefit to the clan. Marrying his Imperial Majesty truly would have been absolutely perfect. However...he had never considered things from my standpoint.”

Delia took a deep breath. “So. I didn’t spend any more time on vain hopes.”

Delia looked at Linley. “I just came. I didn’t bother with discussing it with my parents. I left the imperial capital and came to find you.”

Seeing the look in Delia's eyes, Linley, in his heart, had a powerful surge of emotion...he felt moved, saddened, and fulfilled!

"Delia..." Linley wanted to say something, but the words stuck in his throat and wouldn't come out.

The girl in front of him...

For his sake, she had waited ten years by herself.

For his sake, she could ignore the allure of becoming the Empress.

For him, she even left her beloved parents and journeyed all alone to this place to find him.

.....

Linley suddenly felt a strong sense of humiliation. He suddenly felt that he really despised himself, really hated himself!

"She's a girl. She's sacrificed so much for you, but from start to finish, you've never even...you've never even given her as much as a promise." Linley was berating himself mentally.

"What am I waiting for? What do I have to hesitate about?"

He looked into Delia's eyes. Delia had always made her feelings very clear, and had always been waiting for him...but he had always been hesitating. But today, Linley knew that he could no longer hesitate. He had kept on hesitating for so long...

What he had gained was already extremely precious.

"She gave up everything and waited ten years. And she is still waiting...without any promises from me." Linley saw the tears in the corner of Delia's eyes. His heart twitched hard, and he howled at himself, "Do you want to have Delia wait forever? Until the day her heart dies and she leaves by herself?"

Linley felt a stabbing pain in his heart.

"Crunch."

That layer of ice surrounding Linley's heart finally shattered and melted away.

Linley didn't want to wait any longer.

He didn't want to make himself wait!

And he didn't want to make Delia wait either!

"Linley, what's wrong?" Seeing the look on Linley's face, she couldn't help but feel concerned.

Linley suddenly stretched out his hand and held Delia by her shoulders. Delia could feel her heart begin to thump. Linley stared at Delia, took a deep breath, then said seriously, "Delia...marry me!"

Delia's eyes turned as round as the moon as she stared at Linley in shock.

Upon these words coming out, in Linley's consciousness, a bolt of lightning flashed past his mind, illuminating every single scene he had shared with Delia. From the very first time they had met at the Ernst

Institute and he had seen that adorable girl. Their time spent together as children. That farewell kiss that night at Wushan Township...

One scene after another.

He felt a warm feeling in his heart.

With a wife like this, what more did he need?

“Linley.” Delia cleared her throat, staring at Linley with wide eyes. “What did you just say? Can you say it again? Please?” Delia’s voice was quavering.

Linley stared at Delia. One word at a time, he said to her, “Delia. Marry me! Marry me, Linley. Be with me forever, and let us never be separated. Alright?” Linley’s voice was trembling as well. Right now, Linley felt very nervous.

Right. Nervous.

Delia looked into Linley’s eyes. Suddenly, her tears came rolling out.

How long had it been?

How long had she waited for this day?

Even when they were children and their affection was rather indistinct, she had hoped for this day to come one day. Hoped that Linley would become her knight in shining armor.

One day after another, she had waited...

That year, she had only been a little girl in her teens. But now, she was already a twenty eight year old lady. Over ten years had passed. Whether it was when Linley and Alice had been together, or when Linley had gone missing for ten years, or when her parents had stopped them from being together, she hadn’t given up.

The only thing she was afraid of was...

Linley abandoning her!

She had always been waiting. She hadn’t even dare to force Linley to give her any promises!

“Are you willing?” Seeing Delia’s entire face covered with tears, Linley felt deeply touched and moved.

Delia suddenly threw herself into Linley’s embrace, wrapping her arms around him tightly and saying repeatedly into Linley’s ear, “I’m willing, I’m willing, I’m willing...”

Linley could feel the warmth from Delia’s body. In his heart, he felt more content than he ever had in the past.

[TL – The name of this chapter was, ‘Delia, Marry Me!’]

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 19, Kingdom

Linley clearly could sense how, when he held Alice in his arms when they were young, he had felt happy. But now, when he held Delia in his arms, Linley felt, in the deepest part of his heart, a sort of contentment, a spiritual fulfillment!

This...was true happiness!

The ice covering Linley's heart had totally melted.

Delia's face was covered with smiles. She had never been so happy before.

"Linley. I'm so happy." Delia gently whispered into Linley's arms.

"Me too." Linley gently stroked Delia's fragrant hair and touched her sleek shoulders.

Delia obediently rested herself against Linley's chest. She murmured, "Linley, I feel as though I'm in a dream...tell me, is this real?" That tough woman who could make even an Emperor feel nervous was now as obedient as a child.

"It's real, it's real." Linley could feel the warmth from Delia's body, and a warm, protective feeling arose in his heart.

Delia suddenly raised her head and looked at Linley haltingly. "Linley, if one day, Alice comes to find you, what would you do?" Delia was truly afraid, afraid that Linley would be taken away by someone else.

"Alice?"

Linley's hand paused, but then he continued to stroke Delia's hair. He said comfortingly, "The affection between the two of us ended long ago. I feel neither love nor hatred to her. After all, she can choose who she likes..." Linley stroked Delia's face and chuckled, "Delia, don't overthink things. I'll never leave you. If I abandon you...then I would truly be an utter fool."

"Delia, am I an utter fool?" Linley looked at Delia.

Delia laughed, laughed very happily.

"You are a genius. You are the greatest genius in the Yulan continent." Delia harrumped 'coldly'.

Seeing Delia's full, bewitching lips, Linley suddenly had an urge...without hesitating at all, Linley lowered his head and planted a kiss on Delia's lips. Delia seemed to have been struck by lightning, and her body quivered. But then, she sank into the kiss....

This was the second kiss Linley and Delia had shared.

The first was that night at Wushan township.

After that, they were a long time apart.

Delia didn't say anything, just staying in Linley's embrace. A hint of shyness was still on her face. To Linley, Delia was so utterly mesmerizing right now.

“Ah, hell, I can’t watch any more, I can’t watch any more, I can’t watch any more!!!!” Suddenly, Bebe burst out from underneath the lake water.

Linley and Delia both were startled.

Bebe, in mid-air, laughed openly and honestly. “Uh, sorry, Boss! Sorry, Boss’ Wife! You two can continue.”

“Boss’ Wife?” Linley and Delia couldn’t help but begin to laugh.

“So you were peeking the entire time, Bebe. Tell me, how should I punish you?” Linley guessed by now that Bebe was peeking the entire time, and actually, Bebe had utilized the Shadowshape technique and been hiding within the shadows of the lake.

Linley hadn’t been searching for Bebe with his spiritual energy, so naturally he hadn’t noticed.

“Punish me?” Bebe pondered for a moment. “Oh. Punish me with a lady mouse, one as powerful as me. I’m very lonely right now.” Bebe put on a very pitiable look.

Linley and Delia couldn’t help but both begin to laugh.

“Unfortunately, I am an extremely, unnaturally gifted mouse that might appear once in a thousand years.” Bebe sighed, then giggled. “Boss, Boss’ Wife...when are you getting married? I’m getting impatient for you.”

“Get married?”

Linley looked at Delia. It was indeed time to discuss this issue.

....

The governor’s manor. Blackdirt City.

When Barker and the others saw Linley and Delia holding hands and walk in together in such an intimate manner, all of them were stunned. Zassler was the first to recover and intentionally said in a loud voice, “Lord Linley, what’s going on between you and Ms. Delia?”

Because of Linley’s status, when they were in front of other people, Zassler addressed Linley as ‘Lord’ Linley.

“Delia and I are getting married.” Linley smiled.

This news had the effect of a forbidden-level magical spell, instead causing everyone present to explode with sound.

“Wow! Getting married?” Gates was the first to shout.

“Whoaaah! Ms. Delia, you and Lord Linley are getting married? Wonderful!” Rebecca jumped up in excitement as well. The entire hall instantly became a pandemonium of excitement. There was only a single person whose smile was rather forced. Jenne. In recent days, Jenne had immersed herself in managing the affairs of the Duchy.

She hadn’t expected to suddenly receive this sort of news.

But of course...Jenne had expected that this day would come, long ago.

There was nothing which Linley kept from Delia, and she knew of the history between Jenne and Linley. Smiling, Delia walked over to Jenne, then took Jenne's hands in her own in an extremely warm manner. "Jenne, when Linley and I are getting married, you come be my bridesmaid, alright?"

Looking at the smile on Delia's face, Jenne nodded.

Delia immediately pulled Jenne into a friendly manner off to one side and began chatting with her.

Linley walked towards Barker, Zassler, and the others. "Delia and I have already come to a decision. We will directly host a wedding ceremony. The day of the wedding will be three months later, on July 2nd." Linley laughed as he looked at Barker. "Barker, I think...in the next three months, it would be good if we can take over the nearby Duchies and found a Kingdom before three months are up. Can you do this?"

Linley wanted his wedding with Delia to be an exciting affair.

But three months, in Linley's opinion, seemed to be rather short.

"Three months? No need." Barker was extremely confident. "One month is enough."

"A month?" Linley was puzzled. "It would be hard to just organize and drill the troops in a month, and we'd have to also reorganize the conquered Duchies. That's all rather troublesome. How can you take them over in a month?"

Gates laughed loudly. "Lord, there's something you aren't aware of. Please take a look." Gates walked to a military map that had been hung up on a wall. "Lord, take a good look at the current disposition of forces in the Anarchic Lands. These twenty-plus Duchies all belong to the Radiant Church, while these all belong to the Cult of Shadows. But these...these are unaligned."

Linley immediately understood.

This power distribution was quite strange.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both controlled Duchies in the center of the Anarchic Lands as well as in the south. They occupied more than half of the Anarchic Lands. Only the northernmost areas next to the Forest of Darkness were unaligned.

The Anarchic Lands were rectangular in shape. If you were to divide it into four equal quarters, then the northernmost portion was the portion closest to the Forest of Darkness.

Neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows wanted that area!

"Lord, our Baruch Duchy is located near the Forest of Darkness." Barker explained.

"Oh. In the past, I never paid attention to this." Linley stared carefully at the military map. "The Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church have taken over half of the Anarchic Lands. But why is it that they don't want the northernmost area which is located close to the Forest of Darkness?"

The Baruch Duchy, after all, had been set up close to the north.

"Lord Linley." Zassler walked over, laughing. "This is why we say that we can easily unify the area in a short time."

"Oh?" Linley looked at Zassler with a questioning glance. "Is it because it belongs to neither side, which makes it easier to unify?"

Zassler explained, laughing, "That's not what I mean. I mean, aside from our own Duchy, most likely more than half of those seven other Duchies near the Forest of Darkness would be willing to directly surrender to us."

"More than half would surrender to us?" Linley didn't understand. "Can it be that they feel pressured by our power?"

Zassler explained, "Lord Linley. Have you forgotten that every few decades or every decade, there will be a massive wave of magical beasts from the Forest of Darkness? Each wave of magical beasts first attacks the border Duchies closest to the Forest of Darkness, and thus the battles rage on the most in these Duchies as well."

Linley instantly understood.

"Are you saying that these Duchies..."

"Right. These Duchies are the poorest Duchies in the Anarchic Lands and the most pitiable ones as well." Zassler sighed. "The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows are both uninterested in unifying it, because...resisting the magical monster waves costs too much gold, far more than these Duchies can generate."

Linley now fully understood.

This was a barren wasteland!

Unifying this region meant that one would have to struggle against the countless magical beasts in the Forest of Darkness. Linley could totally imagine how brutal those battles would be...each time, most likely over a million people would die, or even more.

"Linley, of the seven Duchies here, aside from a few who don't want to surrender, the rest all deeply desire to have a strong base of support. And you, Lord...are a Saint and would make an excellent, powerful support." Zassler laughed. "Not just them. Even the commoners wish for you to lead and unify them. That way, they would be safer."

Barker laughed. "And Lord, even now, there have been at least three Duchies who sent people to come and negotiate the terms of their surrender. Only, because their territories are not immediately adjacent to ours, we need to first take over the Duchies east of us."

Linley nodded. "Since that's the case, then do it as quickly as possible."

Gates slapped his chest and boasted, "Lord, a month from now, a full quarter of the Anarchic Lands will be under your control. Of course...this is the poorest quarter in the Anarchic Lands, but at the same time, it is the most militant and ferocious quarter."

Linley nodded. "Zassler, make the arrangements. Have my wedding invitation letters be sent to these people. I'll send the list of names to you in a while."

"Yes, lord Linley." Zassler acknowledged, and then laughed. "Then are you planning to openly announce the news of your marriage?"

Linley looked towards the side at Delia and Jenne who were happily chatting. Linley had a desire; no matter what, he would definitely have to make Delia happy.

"Publicize it! I want the day of the founding of the Baruch Kingdom to be the day of my grand wedding!" Linley said heroically.

Clearly, this meant that a month from now, they would unify their quarter of the Anarchic Lands under their banner, while three months from now...the Baruch Kingdom would be founded and the wedding would also be held. From a territorial standpoint, controlling a quarter of the Anarchic Lands meant controlling quite a large swathe of territory.

The size of it was significantly larger than the former Kingdom of Fenlai.

In population alone, there was roughly a hundred million citizens.

....

A lonely island in the oceans. The most core area of the Radiant Church – the Holy Isle. It received news from the Anarchic Lands.

On the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple. Heidens was reading this letter.

“When Linley and his magical beast combined forces, they were able to force Osenno to retreat?” Staring at this letter, Heidens felt as though he had been stricken heavily. Osenno’s power was unquestionable. Especially his ‘Doppelganger Technique’, which let him divide into four. It was incredibly terrifying.

Even Haydson probably would have been badly injured and then killed by Osenno.

After all, it was simply too hard to block the ‘Doppelganger technique’.

“Osenno speaks the truth.” Heidens’ heart tightened. “If this continues, then...”

The Radiant Church didn’t fear Linley.

But Linley wasn’t alone. He had that mysterious, godlike magical beast, Bebe. He also had five Undying Warriors...and his little brother.”

“In the future, when Linley reaches the Saint level in his human form and the five brothers also reach the Saint level in human form, and when Linley’s little brother reaches the Saint level in his human form...that means they have seven peak-stage Supreme Warriors. If you add in that magical beast rodent which is no inferior to Supreme Warriors...that means they will have eight!”

Every single peak-stage Supreme Warrior was capable of being described as the most powerful of Saints.

Seven Supreme Warriors and the magical beast Bebe, if they were to attack the Holy Isle in masse...Heidens could totally imagine the scene. The Radiant Church would be in a battle for its very life, and in the end, it would probably perish.

“Unacceptable. Linley must die.”

Heidens turned to look at Cardinal Guillermo. He ordered, “Guillermo, go invite Commander Lehman, quickly!”

“General Lehman?” Guillermo was shocked.

In the Radiant Church, the most powerful person was the Holy Emperor, Heidens. The most frighteningly mysterious person was Osenno. The most admirable and most respected person was the spiritual leader of the Ascetics, Lord Fallen Leaf. But the person who caused the most dread...was the legendary Commander of the Zealots: Lehman!

The Zealots all possessed a unique power.

“Why are you hesitating? Quick, go!” Heidens rebuked.

Heidens didn't dare to hesitate any longer. He had to send a man whose power was no lower than that of Osenno's; Commander Lehman. If the two joined forces...then it would be surprising, indeed, if they were still unable to overcome Linley!

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 20, A Procession of Arrivals

One of the prefectural cities in the northern part of the Anarchic Lands. Ankh, Gates, and Boone each wielded their massive long-handled greataxes, standing atop the city walls like wargods. Corpses littered the ground around them, and fresh blood stained the walls and the ground below the walls.

The nearby soldiers were all terrified.

They didn't dare to fight back anymore. All of them put down their weapons.

“Of the seven Duchies, five Duchies have voluntarily surrendered. The previous Duchy was easily taken over. You are the last one.” Gates grabbed the leader of the town guards, his furious, ox-like eyes staring into the terrified, quivering leader. “Motherf*cker, why fight back when you don't have the power to? Isn't that the same as just ordering your soldiers to commit suicide? Eh?!”

It was indeed tantamount to suicide.

The two sides were on totally different levels of power. Gates and the other two had killed a huge number of the enemies by themselves.

Hoisted high into the air, the captain of the guards said in terror, “Lord, this has nothing to do with me. It was the orders of the Grand Duke.”

“Fifth Brother.” Ankh laughed. “Enough. Let's go down. Big Brother and the others are all down below. Most likely, they are already drinking celebratory wine. After having taken over this prefectural city, when we add it to the five which surrendered and the one we just took over, that means we have finished our mission!”

Gates and Boone both began to laugh loudly.

In twenty short days, all of the eight Duchies which bordered the Forest of Darkness had been reformed into a kingdom; the Baruch Kingdom. The Baruch Kingdom had over a hundred million people under its rule and took up a quarter of the Anarchic Lands.

Although the people here were poor, they were very violent and ferocious.

In the richer areas of the Anarchic Lands, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows still remained in control. From this point onwards...the Anarchic Lands had been divided into three major spheres of influence.

The number one genius in the history of the Yulan continent, Linley, was going to hold a wedding with Ms. Delia of the Leon clan of the Yulan Empire! The day of this wedding was going to be the same day the Baruch Kingdom was formally established.

Time: Yulan calendar, year 10010, July 21st.

Place: The future capital of the Baruch Kingdom – Baruch City (currently known as Blackdirt city, being rebuilt).

This news quickly swept throughout the Anarchic Lands like a tornado, and at the same time, it was made public to the various powers in the entire Yulan continent. One letter of invitation after another was sent to the various locations of the Yulan continent... countless eyes were focused now on the Anarchic Lands.

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. The Leon clan's main hall.

In terms of status, the person with the highest status in the Leon clan wasn't the clan leader, Dylla Leon. It was Dixie Leon!

First of all, Dixie would be the next clan leader. But more importantly... he was the personal disciple of the supporting pillar of the Yulan Empire, the High Priest. The High Priest was one of the most powerful entities in human society. In the hearts of the countless masses, perhaps only the War God could compare to the High Priest.

An astonishingly powerful expert who had wielded the power of the Deities before the Yulan calendar had even started. The vast majority of the people the High Priest accepted as a personal disciple ended up becoming Grand Magus Saints!

The personal disciple of the High Priest, and a future Grand Magus Saint! And a dual-element Grand Magus Saint at that!

Dylla Leon was currently frowning as he handed the letter of invitation to his son, Dixie.

His back was ramrod straight, and his golden hair was long and unbound. He had an aura of icily keeping all comers at arm's length. This was just the way he was. Dixie. After reading the letter, however, a rare smile actually touched his lips. "Linley didn't disappoint my little sister after all."

"Dixie, what do you think we should do?" Dylla Leon asked.

Dixie glanced at his father, then frowned. "What do you mean, what we should do? My little sister has finally gotten the happiness she has been pursuing for over ten years. Of course we need to celebrate."

Dylla Leon and his wife hesitated just a moment.

"Father, Mother, I know what you two were scheming." Dixie said calmly. "You must allow your vision to expand beyond the limits of mortal, worldly power. The true controllers of the destiny of the Yulan continent... are still the likes of the War God, the High Priest, and the various Saints."

Dixie had to admit that his parents were rather short-sighted.

"Dixie, my beloved son, no matter how powerful Linley is, how can he possibly influence the Yulan empire?" Dylla sighed. "After all, the root of our clan lies in the Yulan Empire."

Dixie glanced at his father. "Father, I must tell you something. You underestimate Linley."

"Oh? How so?" Dylla Leon was a bit puzzled.

Dixie said seriously, "Actually, this time before I returned, Master gave me an order."

"Master? Ah!!! The High Priest!" Dylla Leon's eyes instantly turned round. Good heavens. Ordinary people like them might never meet the High Priest in their entire lives. But now, the High Priest had personally issued an order to their son.

They suddenly felt honored and glorious beyond compare.

“The High Priest instructed me and two of my fellow apprentices to go to the Anarchic Lands and be his representatives in congratulating Linley.” Dixie said seriously.

Dixie didn't understand it either. Why did someone at the level of the High Priest need to express such friendliness towards Linley? Especially since Dixie knew...the War God and the High Priest were on opposing sides. Linley was on good terms with the War God. Logically speaking, the High Priest should be on bad terms with Linley.

But it seemed...

The High Priest actually wished to express friendliness towards Linley.

“The waters of the Yulan continent are deep indeed.” Dixie sighed to himself.

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. The Walsh clan.

“Milord, this is the letter of invitation from Master Linley, from the Anarchic Lands.” The housekeeper respectfully handed a letter to George. By this point in time, George had already been appointed the successor to the clan leader possession by the Walsh clan.

George accepted the letter.

“Haha...Third Bro, Third Bro. I didn't expect that you'd end up with Delia after all.” George began laughing loudly as he read the letter.

“The world plays jokes on us all.” George still remembered how, when they had first entered the Ernst Institute, Delia would often go looking for Linley. But when George had seen Alice and Linley start to date, he had thought that Linley and Delia would never work out.

Unexpectedly, in the end, after ten years, the circle was completed.

Linley and Delia had gotten together.

The leaders of all the organizations in the Yulan continent which either had some relationship with Linley or were extremely powerful all received letters of invitation. After all, this wasn't just a wedding ceremony. It was also the founding of a Kingdom. Naturally, they had to invite the leaders of the various organizations.

Ever since Linley had entered the city of Blackdirt, Blackdirt had begun to engage in a construction boom. By now, Blackdirt City, despite being territorially small, was extremely exquisite and lavish. Even the region outside Blackdirt City was beginning to engage in large-scale construction.

Linley had invited many guests. Amongst the first group to arrive in Blackdirt City was Wharton, Nina, Uncle Hillman, and Grandpa Hiri.

In the governor's mansion. A scene of excitement and joy.

“Big brother, Nina and I have decided that from today onwards, we won't be leaving. We'll be staying here at your place.” Wharton laughed loudly. “Big brother, you've worked so hard to establish your own realm. How can we live a life of luxury and comfort in the imperial capital? We're embarrassed to do so!”

Linley was secretly overjoyed.

He didn't actually have much free time to manage the Kingdom. Most of his time was spent training.

“Wharton, I've been waiting a long time to hear you say these words.” Linley laughed.

Linley suddenly stared towards Nina's stomach, then looked at Wharton with suspicion. "Wharton, it seems Nina's stomach has gotten a bit bigger. Can it be that..."

Nina and Wharton exchanged glances, then began to laugh. The nearby Uncle Hillman laughed as well. "Linley, you truly are a Saint-level expert. Your perception is truly amazing. Right. Princess Nina is already pregnant. Linley, you've fallen a bit behind in this area. In the future, you and Delia need to work hard."

Linley and Delia didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Sister Nina, have you decided on a name for the child yet?" Delia asked.

Nina nodded. "I have. Whether it is a boy or a girl, we are going to name it Cena [Xi'ne]."

"Cena." Linley looked at his little brother Wharton. "Does this have some sort of special meaning?" Wharton immediately began to laugh loudly, exchanging a knowing glance with Nina. Then he said secretively towards Linley, "This is a secret between me and Nina. I can't tell you."

Linley clapped his hands to his head. "What? You are keeping secrets from me, your big brother?"

Everyone in the hall laughed joyously. Halfway through the event, Linley secretly pulled Wharton into a nearby flower garden, and the two siblings took a private walk.

"Big brother, what is it?" Wharton waited for them to enter the garden before asking.

Linley looked at his little brother. Probingly, he asked, "Wharton, I've always been hoping that you would decide to come here and live with me. Now that you are here, I truly am happy. But...is Nina truly happy about it as well, in her heart? Don't make her do something she doesn't want to do."

Wharton nodded. "Big brother, Nina had a long talk with me. She decided to come with me, and in the future, when she has some free time, she'll occasionally go back for a visit."

"That's the only way, I suppose."

Linley laughed as he looked at Wharton. "Wharton, after the Baruch Kingdom is formally founded and Delia and I are married, I intend to directly coronate you as the King of the Baruch Kingdom." Linley was telling his little brother in advance, so as to mentally prepare him.

Wharton was stunned. "King?"

"I've already named the Kingdom 'Baruch'. Naturally, it must be ruled over by the heirs of the Baruch clan." Linley had made this decision a long time ago.

Wharton didn't decline. "Fine, then. I'm currently only a warrior of the eighth rank. It should be twenty or thirty years before my human form reaches the Saint-level. Right now, there's not much of a point to training to gain a higher level of understanding. When I reach that level, I'll pass the throne down to my son, or perhaps your son, big brother." Linley understood what Wharton was thinking; Wharton would need to spend time training after all.

But training in understanding the Laws was something which required someone to be in harmony with and able to clearly sense nature, and to sense the various movements of the elemental essences. That required an extremely high level of elemental essence affinity. Generally speaking, magi had high levels of elemental essence affinity, but the same was not true for warriors. Their elemental essence affinity was not as high.

The same was true for Wharton. Right now, he virtually couldn't sense nature at all. Thus, it would be extremely hard for him to gain any insights on the Laws.

But upon reaching the Saint-level, things would change.

Upon reaching the Saint-level, one would have a much greater level of ability to sense the surrounding elements. Saints could clearly sense the elements and quickly increase their level of insight! This was the same reason why it was so hard for one to advance from being a warrior of the ninth rank to the Saint level. Only a small number of warriors of the ninth rank had a high elemental essence affinity.

However, Supreme Warriors didn't need any particular level of insight. So long as they could train their battle-qi to a certain level, they would naturally reach the Saint-level.

After spending three days in the city of Blackdirt, Linley and Delia left the city and returned to Mt. Blackraven and began a life of quiet training. As for Bebe, whenever he got bored, Bebe and Haeru would go around the Forest of Darkness, slaughtering magical beasts.

.....

The light blue skies had a dark streak of light and a white streak of light flashing through it at high speed, heading in the direction of Blackdirt City in the Anarchic Lands.

The black streak of light was Osenno.

Today, Osenno was dressed in a long black robe with golden threads interwoven into it. His devilish purple hair flowed freely in the wind. By his side was a powerful middle-aged man dressed in a loose, long white robe. This powerful middle-aged man's body was an astonishing 2.5 meters tall.

A height of 2.5 meters was virtually unheard of in humans.

His long white robes fluttered in the wind, and his short green hair gleamed like steel needles. His face seemed to have been carved from stone, but there was an extremely faint seal located in the center of his forehead. The seal of a white flame. His body emanated an oppressive, heart-shaking aura.

This person was the Commander of the Zealots. Lord Lehman.

The two flew together, side by side, as Osenno constantly explained about Linley and Bebe's combat tactics and abilities to Lehman. "That's everything. Lehman, by now, you should have a good sense of the situation, right? How confident are you?"

Lehman glanced at him, his eyes flashing with light. His deep voice echoed forth from his massive chest, "Osenno, that man and his magical beast are inferior to you in strength, but you were still defeated by them. However, that isn't surprising; your single-target attacks are not that strong. What you mainly rely on is the bizarreness of your Doppelganger Technique. As for me...I can kill both of them by myself."

Osenno understood, as well, that his single-target attacks were relatively weak.

But for Lehman, it was the opposite; his forte was in single-target attacks.

"Blackdirt City is up ahead." Osenno pointed at the city below them. "Next to it is Mt. Blackraven. According to my intelligence, Linley spends virtually all of his time there at Mt. Blackraven. We should head directly to Mt. Blackraven."

Lehman focused his gaze on the below Mt. Blackraven.

Instantly, the two charged down towards Mt. Blackraven.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 21, The Laws of Light

Osenno and Lehman flew at high speed towards Mt. Blackraven, while at the same time, they spread their spiritual energy to encapsulate the entirety of Mt. Blackraven.

“Linley is at Mt. Blackraven. He’s the one wearing blue!” Osenno immediately said.

“Got it.”

Lehman’s eyes were flashing with light, and at the same time, the energy in his body began to be roused. In Lehman’s hands, a three meter long longstaff suddenly appeared. Although it was a ‘longstaff’ to him, to an ordinary person, a better word would be ‘tree branch’. However, given Lehman’s size and 2.5 meter height, his massive hands could fully wrap around the thick ‘longstaff’, which had various mysterious runes carved onto it.

“That rat-type magical beast isn’t there, but there are two other Saints present, along with an ordinary woman. Could that be Delia?” Osenno was rather puzzled.

But for now, there was no need for them to over-think things.

“Boom.” It was as though a bolt of lightning had blasted down. Lehman, staff in hand, charged down at high speed. He ignored all others, focusing on his target: Linley.

Linley and Delia were currently entertaining guests. Desri, and his wife! Desri and his wife had just gone to the Frost Goddess Shrine, and on the way back, they came to visit Linley and to offer him their congratulations. Just as the two couples were chatting happily...

A terrifying surge of power descended from the heavens. The target: Linley!

“Out of the way!” Linley’s face changed, and he immediately pushed Delia aside. A surge of wind suddenly surrounded Delia, while Linley himself immediately transformed into the Dragonblood Warrior form. His sky-blue robe was directly shredded into pieces, and the adamantine heavy sword appeared in his hands.

A silver longstaff that carried boundless force with it had already appeared in front of his eyes.

“Whoosh!”

The air itself rippled and folded, as though space itself was being ripped apart. The silver longstaff smashed directly towards Linley, who sensed that he was facing a greater danger than he ever had before. He could sense that he had been totally locked down, with the surrounding space applying pressure on him.

“Linley.” Delia, who had been pushed to the side, stared at him with eyes filled with terror.

But just at this moment...

A milk-white, gentle light appeared in front of Linley, appearing like a white silk cloth. That silver longstaff, which seemed to contain enough force to obliterate the entire Mt. Blackraven, smashed against the milk-white light and the white ‘silk cloth’ formed from energy.

The white silk cloth only caved in slightly, and the longstaff could no longer push any further.

But the longstaff wielding Lehman felt the rebound force, which sent him flying backwards before landing a hundred meters away. Osenno also landed by Lehman's side, staring at Desri in astonishment. He knew that it was this person who had blocked Lehman.

"Who are you?" Osenno spoke.

"Osenno, it's you!" Linley's face became grim. Delia ran over to Linley's side. She was extremely worried.

Right now, Linley and Desri were in the center of the lake, while Lehman and Osenno were on the shore. The two sides stared at each other across the water.

"The Radiant Church's forces?" Desri frowned.

Linley was secretly startled. "Desri used to belong to the Radiant Church. He wouldn't still feel a degree of nostalgia for them, would he?" At the same time, Linley immediately spoke mentally to Bebe, "Bebe, stop messing around in the Forest of Darkness. Come back, quick. The Radiant Church's forces have come knocking."

"Boss, I'll come back at top speed." Bebe immediately replied.

Linley carefully looked at Osenno and Lehman, especially Lehman, whose 2.5 meter tall frame was terrifying to behold and gave Linley a forboding feeling. "Just then, the one who attacked me was the big guy. That big guy is definitely not one bit weaker than Osenno."

"Delia, make sure you protect yourself." Linley whispered to Delia by his side.

Delia didn't dare to make a sound. She didn't want to distract Linley.

"Who are you?" Osenno stared at Desri. "This is the private affair between Linley and the Radiant Church. I hope you won't interfere. It seems that you, too, are a practitioner of the Elemental Laws of Light...today, if you step aside, it would be considered giving the Radiant Church face. In the future, we will definitely repay it."

The proud and arrogant Lehman didn't say a sound.

The technique that Desri had used just then had let Lehman know exactly how much of a threat this man was.

"My name is...Desri." Desri finally spoke.

"Desri, it's you?" Osenno and Lehman's faces both changed dramatically.

Desri was a legendary figure within the Radiant Church. Long ago, the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst founded the Holy Union. In that era, Desri was the spiritual leader of the Ascetics of the Radiant Church.

His position was equivalent to the status of the current Lord Fallen Leaf.

Osenno and Lehman exchanged glances. They both could sense the terror in each other's heart. They were facing a Saint from the era of the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst. From then to now, one could simply imagine how much more powerful the person had grown.

"Lord Desri, I hope that you will consider the former affection and relationship between our two parties and not get involved in this matter." Osenno said sincerely.

“Hrmph. In your dreams.” An ice cold voice rang out from behind. It was the nearby Pennslyn.

Pennslyn gave Linley a ‘no need to worry’ look. Hearing Pennslyn’s words, the formerly nervous Linley felt a sense of gratitude. But Linley still turned to look at Desri...after all, the decision maker here was Desri.

“What are you thinking about?” Pennslyn said angrily as she saw that Desri was hesitating. As far as Pennslyn was concerned, there was nothing to hesitate over.

Delia began to grow nervous as well. She looked at Desri with concern.

“Lord Desri, can it be that you’ve forgotten the kindness which Lord Ernst showed you in the past?” Osenno hurriedly said. Desri hesitated for a while, but then sighed and said, “I won’t allow you to kill Linley. You can leave, now.”

Desri did indeed feel some degree of affection for the Radiant Church.

Especially Ernst. In the past, the two had been as close as real brothers.

“Lord Desri!” Osenno said frantically. “This Linley killed six Angels and shows no mercy to our Radiant Church at all. If he is allowed to develop, especially alongside those five Undying Warriors, the threat he will pose to our Church is simply too great. Can it be, Lord Desri, that you are just going to watch as the Church is destroyed by him?”

Desri frowned.

“I told you to leave.” Desri’s voice turned heavy.

Osenno and Lehman glanced at each other. They had already made a decision.

Lehman stared at Desri and said loudly, “Desri, since you are going to be like this, we don’t have any choice either.” They now addressed Desri directly by his name. Lehman’s body suddenly began to glow with a white fire, and a terrifying surge of power began to emanate from him, turning the grass nearby into nothingness.

The silver longstaff in his hands flashed like a bolt of lightning.

“Zealot?” Desri chuckled calmly.

Osenno’s body began to emanate with that black fire, and his body transformed into four Osennos. “Lehman, I’ll deal with this Desri. I’ll hand Linley to you.” Osenno felt that although he was weaker than Desri, by using his doppelgangers, he should be able to hold down Desri without too much trouble.

“Madame Pennslyn, I entrust Delia to you.” Linley whispered.

“Don’t worry.” Pennslyn immediately pulled Delia away. Delia didn’t say anything, just giving Linley a meaningful look. Linley felt his heart swell with the desire to do battle: “No matter what, for Delia’s sake, I can’t die.”

Linley immediately stared coldly at Lehman.

“So what if your attack is powerful? Can you kill me with one blow from your staff?” Linley’s body began to be surrounded by that roiling azurish-black energy. “My Pulseguard Defense has already reached 152 layers. With my draconic scales protecting me as well...kill me in one blow? In his dreams!” Linley felt confident in his heart.

His Profound Truths of the Earth was nothing to laugh at. “At this time, I have to use my last, fallback technique.” Linley’s left hand gripped Bloodviolet. At the critical juncture, he would have to utilize the terrifying baleful aura held within Bloodviolet.

“Boom!” A terrifying sonic boom could be heard as Lehman charged forward.

At the same time, the four Osenos also emitted sonic booms as he charged forward to try and entangle Desri. Because of his sudden acceleration, the nearby wind began to howl, and stones were actually blown loose from Linley’s stone house and were knocked far away, while the water of the lake began to rise in waves.

“How laughable!”

A clear sound rang out from Desri’s mouth. Desri simply stood there in mid-air, while his entire body began to emanate a dazzling white light. Instantly...Desri transformed into the sun, and lines of white light shot towards all four of the Osenos as well as Lehman.

No matter how fast someone was, they couldn’t be faster than light.

The four Osenos and Lehman were all struck instantly by those beams of white light. All four Osenos shuddered, and three of them instantly collapsed, while the last one blazed with that black fire, using it to resist the white light.

“Ah!” Lehman let out a furious howl, and the seal of white fire on his forehead instantly lit up.

“Bang!” Lehman actually smashed straight through Desri’s protective barrier with his silver longstaff. Desri was extremely shocked. Before he had the chance to let out a second attack, Linley and Lehman exchanged blows.

After having broken through Desri’s first barrier, Lehman saw a pair of cold, dark golden eyes and a dark blue heavy sword. Lehman was startled. “It’s Linley!” Not hesitating at all, he swung his longstaff down and smashed it hard against Linley.

Linley didn’t hold anything in reserve either, attacking simultaneously with his adamantite heavy sword and his Bloodviolet longsword.

“Die!” Lehman howled with rage, a fierce look on his face. The seal of a white flame on his forehead became even brighter, and the silver longstaff in his hands seemed to have created ripples in space as it smashed down against Linley with terrifying force.

Linley instantly activated the ‘baleful aura’ hidden within Bloodviolet.

Linley’s dark golden eyes suddenly contained a hint of red, and his consciousness immediately became filled with that familiar scene...the boundless sea of blood, with skeletons and corpses of various species littering the place. Corpses of ten meter tall giants covered with scales and two horns on their forehead. White skeletons that had a hint of strange gold tint...

All of the corpses and skeletons had the aura of at least a Saint, and some were even more terrifying.

“Ah!” Lehman suddenly let out a wild howl.

That terrifying baleful force penetrated his consciousness. That baleful aura that belonged to an incomprehensibly powerful expert caused even the likes of Lehman to quail in fear. Even the white flame seal on his forehead shook, and the longstaff in his hands naturally weakened.

“Bang!”

The silver longstaff and the adamantine heavy sword clashed.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 152 Layered Waves!

Linley’s adamantine heavy sword was smashed so hard, it was knocked back towards his own body. When that terrifying force struck his Pulseguard Defense, the energy of the defense immediately sprang up, but a terrifying power which he had never before experienced still was able to break through the defense.

Linley was knocked back flying...

“Linley.” The distant Delia grew frantic.

With a somersault, Linley landed on the edges of the lake. He flashed Delia a smile. “Don’t worry. I’m fine.” As he spoke, Linley forced down the blood that had risen to his throat. Seeing the shattered draconic scales on his chest, Linley couldn’t help but be secretly startled.

If just then, he hadn’t used the Bloodviolet longsword, he probably would’ve been deeply injured and collapsed.

Lehman was still standing in mid-air, a hint of blood leaking from his mouth. His gaze was clear now.

“Bastard.” Lehman let out a furious howl, once more smashing down against Linley with his silver longstaff.

“Hrmph.”

A cold sneer could be heard, and a translucent ripple that could be seen by the naked eye emanated forth from Desri’s body. In the blink of an eye, it struck against Lehman. Lehman’s massive body trembled, and then collapsed down from the skies. “Splash!” He sank directly into the lake.

“The two of you, don’t force my hand!” Desri’s face had turned grim.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 22, The Four Sided Gathering

“Such powerful spiritual energy. He is able to cause injuries from a distance with it. Lehman wasn’t able to resist at all.” Linley was utterly shocked. “No wonder the War God said that Desri and Fain are the five Prime Saints who were at the doorway to becoming a Deity. They only need to take that last step! They are simply too strong.”

Osenno no longer dared to move. His heart, too, was filled with terror.

“Burst.” A human figure charged up through the water. It was Lehman. Lehman, at this point, obediently flew to Osenno’s side. His face was exceedingly pale, and he stared at Desri with a hint of dread in his eyes.

Desri looked at these two men with furrowed brows. “You know that in the past, I was the leader of the Ascetics. You should also know that I am a Grand Magus Saint.”

Osenno and Lehman exchanged glances.

Grand Magus Saints specialized in powerful spiritual energy, especially this sort of expert like Desri, who had trained for millennia. When using his spiritual energy, he was on a far higher level than his good friend Hayward. In terms of spiritual energy or in understanding the Elemental Laws of Light, Desri was at the absolute limit of power a Saint could reach.

With one more step, he would become a Deity.

“Lord Desri.” Osenno once more addressed Desri as ‘Lord’.

Osenno still remember the information regarding Desri in the scrolls of the Radiant Church. He knew that Desri had been on extremely close terms with the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst.

“Lord Ernst worked all his life to raise up the Radiant Church. He founded the Holy Union. He let the Radiant Church rise to glory! These five thousand years, we have never given up and never stopped working hard.” Osenno’s voice was very low.

Desri frowned.

In his heart, he didn’t feel much affection for the Radiant Church. But, he felt a great deal of guilt towards Ernst. Ernst was like an older brother to him! His older brother had indeed labored on behalf of the Radiant Church his entire life, and in the end, he had gone to the Divine Plane of Light.

“But Linley...not only is he himself a Dragonblood Warrior, he has a younger brother and five Undying Warriors under his control. He also has that magical beast, Bebe, who is no weaker than him.” Osenno looked at Desri. “In a few decades, that means he will have seven peak-stage Supreme Warriors and a terrifying magical beast. If they were to attack together, our Church would be finished!”

“Lord Desri, our Church would be finished!”

“The life’s labor of Lord Ernst would be destroyed!”

Osenno's voice caused Desri's heart to tremble. He still remember the help and affection which Ernst, his 'big brother', had given him.

Linley, Pennslyn, and Delia were standing together. Pennslyn sighed softly to Linley. "The only person Desri feels guilty towards is Ernst. He must feel very torn right now."

The Ernst Institute got its name from Ernst.

Linley naturally knew much about Ernst as well.

A sigh could be heard from Desri. Desri stared at both sides, then said in a bright voice. "How about this. Both sides take a step back. Consider it giving me, Desri, some face. Alright?"

"Take a step back?" Osenno and Lehman stared at Desri in confusion.

Linley was mystified as well.

"Both of you, come to the center of the lake." Desri said. Linley trusted Desri, and so with Delia's hand in his own, he flew to the center of the lake. Osenno and Lehman also quite obediently flew to the center of the lake.

Linley and Delia stood on one side of the massive central boulder, while Osenno and Lehman stood on the other side. Both of them were on guard.

"What is Desri planning?" Linley frowned.

Desri smiled calmly. "I know very well that there is a deep grudge between the two of you. How about this...in the next twenty years, the Radiant Church is not permitted to kill Linley."

"Twenty years?" Osenno was unhappy. "Lord Desri, twenty years later, Linley will be at the Saint level in human form. Even if we wanted to kill him, we wouldn't be able to. Unfair. Unfair!"

"Shut your mouth!" Desri had a hint of anger on his face.

Osenno's heart shook. He suddenly remembered at this moment...it was Desri whose words counted.

"This requirement is the same as asking the Radiant Church to take a step. As for you, Linley, I also wish for you to take a step back." Desri looked at Linley.

"Lord Desri, pray tell." Linley said.

Desri smiled apologetically. "Osenno's words are true as well. Linley, you yourself aren't a major threat, but combined with your little brother and those five Undying Warriors, you represent a force of seven Supreme Warriors. That is indeed capable of destroying the Radiant Church. Thus, I want you to agree that from today onward, if you want to seek revenge on the Radiant Church, you have to do so by yourself. The others, including your magical beast, cannot."

Hearing these words, Osenno and Lehman both let out a sigh of relief.

What sort of place was the Holy Isle?

That was the headquarters for the entire Radiant Church. They had a huge pile of Angel Saints, and the likes of Heidens and Lord Fallen Leaf. And given that the Holy Isle was also protected by some large-scale magical formations...anything short of a Deity would definitely die if they attacked.

“Do you understand what I intend, now?” Desri looked at the two sides.

“Our side, within the next twenty years, is not to act against Linley. In exchange for Linley only being allowed to seek revenge on his own?” Osenno laughed calmly. “I can agree. If we can’t even hold you off by yourself, then there is nothing I can say on behalf of our Radiant Church if we are destroyed.”

Osenno agreed easily as well.

The Radiant Church wasn’t afraid of Linley. They were afraid of the entire group of people behind Linley.

“Linley, how about you?” Desri looked at Linley.

In his heart, Linley was rather unwilling.

“Exterminate the Radiant Church by myself?” Linley still knew his own limits. “A Church which has existed for ten thousand years...that’s no easy task. But to reach the Deity-level...even Cesar spent five thousand years. The legendary War God who reached the Deity-level in a short time period actually was simply fortunate enough to find a divine spark. If it was just based on his own abilities, who knows how long it would have taken?”

Linley frowned.

“Linley!” Desri spoke again. Osenno and Lehman were both looking at him.

Linley suddenly turned to look at Delia by his side. Linley’s heart trembled. “No matter what, I can’t let Delia come to harm.” Linley made up his mind. He immediately said to Desri, “The Radiant Church is not permitted to attack me within the next twenty years, fine, but there’s one more clause...they are forever forbidden from harming my family and friends.”

“Fine.” Osenno hurriedly said.

Linley looked at Osenno, a hint of cold light in his eyes. He secretly said to himself, “By myself? Although I might not dare to attack the Holy Isle, but if I ever meet you people traveling alone, can’t I kill you then? If you want, then just stay inside the Holy Isle forever!”

For the sake of his family and friends, Linley chose to accept this compromise.

Osenno and Lehman both let out secret sighs of relief. After all, Desri was on Linley’s side. They didn’t have much support here.

In the middle of the lake in Mt. Blackraven, Linley’s side and the Radiant Church both accepted this treaty.

“If in the next twenty years, Linley comes to attack us, we will counterattack. If he dies due to our counterattack, we cannot be blamed.” Osenno hurriedly said. Linley sneered. “Hrmph. Don’t worry. I don’t plan to play word games with you.”

Linley suddenly laughed loudly. “If in the future, someone like the War God leads experts to attack the Holy Isle, I’ll also seize the opportunity to go. I cannot be blamed in that situation.”

“That naturally wouldn’t be your fault.” Osenno shook his head.

If the War God wanted to destroy the Radiant Church, most likely the Radiant Church would’ve been finished long ago.

After the two agreed to the treaty, Delia suddenly said, “Then what about the territory in the Anarchic Lands? Will Saints take part in the battles?”

“Saints?” Osenno frowned.

Indeed. The Radiant Church had a large expanse of territory under its control in the Anarchic Lands, and Linley did as well. If the two came to a fight...once Saints got involved in the battle, then perhaps before the twenty years was up, Linley and the Radiant Church would come to blows.

“How about this.” Desri spoke.

“Mortal, worldly battles...Saints are not to be involved.” Desri looked towards Pennslyn. “Madame, go find O’Casey [Ao’ke’xi] of the Cult of Shadows. Tell him I need to speak with him. We’ll wait for you here.”

“Fine.” Pennslyn nodded, then flew away immediately.

“O’Casey? Who is he?” Linley frowned as he asked.

Osenno said, “O’Casey is the Elder Judge of the Cult of Shadow’s Tribunal. His position is equivalent to mine in the Radiant Church. He is also the general supervisor for the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands.”

Linley nodded.

“In mortal battles, Saints are not to participate. Linley...dare you accept?” Osenno stared coldly at Linley.

“Barker and his brothers aren’t Saints in their human form. They should be able to participate in battle, right?” Linley asked.

“Of course. They are just five warriors of the ninth rank.” Osenno said disdainfully. “Linley, in terms of the numbers of experts of the ninth rank, you are far from being able to match our Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.”

Linley smiled confidently, not paying any attention to him.

“Delia.” Linley held Delia’s hand. Right now, he was still in Dragonform, and his hand was covered with scales, but Delia didn’t mind at all. She looked at Linley, and in a soft voice, she said, “Linley, thank you.”

Delia knew that Linley had compromised for her sake in part.

Linley didn’t say anything.

After all these years and having suffered so much, Linley had learned something. Sometimes, a single mistake caused by being unbending could cause someone to suffer a lifetime of regret. The occasional compromise that allows one’s loved ones to be safe also allowed one to pursue revenge with even greater ferocity!

“What, I am unable to eliminate the Radiant Church by myself?”

Linley secretly said to himself, “In history, has there ever been a Supreme Warrior Saint who was also a Grand Magus Saint?” When his power reached its utmost peak, Linley would prepare to challenge the Holy Isle. Even if he wasn’t able to destroy it, he should be able to escape with his life.

A long time later.

“Boss!” A black shadow streaked towards him at high speed.

“Bebe.” Linley felt delighted.

Bebe hopped directly onto Linley’s shoulders, then stared angrily at Osenno. “This guy came again?”

“It’s fine now.” Linley said.

“Hrmph.” Bebe sneered coldly, then said mentally, “Boss, don’t be afraid of these people. In the Forest of Darkness, I made friends with a few Saint-level magical beasts. All of them are really powerful. When the time comes, I’ll ask them to help out and deal with these guys together.”

“Saint-level magical beast friends?” Linley stared at Bebe in astonishment.

When Linley trained, Bebe would often go have fun in the Forest of Darkness. Unexpectedly, he had actually made friends with Saint-level magical beasts.

“Right. They are all quite powerful. Haeru’s race is normally at the ninth rank. He just barely broke through. His power amongst Saint-level magical beasts is just ordinary. But these friends that I made, like ‘Big White’, he is a Thunderwinged White Tiger. The ‘Big Guy’, he is a Golden Behemoth. Or ‘Big Snake’, a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor.”

Linley was utterly speechless. How could Saint-level magical beasts make friends with other Saint-level magical beasts so easily?

“Right. One of the Saints is also a rat-type magical beast.” Bebe chortled.

Linley was startled.

A Saint-level rat-type magical beast?

“Unfortunately, he’s male.” Bebe mentally said with resignation.

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. As they mentally conversed, he asked, “What does that Saint-level rat-type beast look like? Is he like you?”

“No.” Bebe shook his head. “That Saint-level magical beast is all purple. He’s quite handsome. However, he treats me quite well. He even gave me many precious, delicious things to eat.” Bebe’s face was all smiles.

Linley secretly sighed.

A purple Saint-level rat? The books had no record of such a creature. It seems the books were incomplete.

“But Boss, all of those friends of mine are very arrogant. They only became my friends after fighting with me.” Bebe’s face was covered with a delighted smile.

Just at this moment, two human figures streaked through the air at high speed. One of the two was Pennslyn. As for the other, it was a man covered in a long black robe. It should have been Osenno’s counterpart in the Cult of Shadows; Senior Judge O’Casey.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 23, The Wedding

O’Casey landed in the middle of the lake, while at the same time, removing his enveloping black robe. Inside, he was wearing a tailored suit, like a gentleman at a banquet.

“Lord Desri, I’ve heard of your famous name long ago, but only today do we meet. I truly feel honored.” O’Casey smiled as he bowed, and then turned to look at the nearby Osenno. “Oh, Osenno. Who is this person next to you?”

Lehman’s voice rumbled out, “Commander Lehman of the Zealot Division!”

“Mr. Lehman.” O’Casey smiled and nodded.

“Master Linley, ten years ago, our Cult of Shadows invited you to come to us, but sadly, at that time, the Radiant Church had sunk its claws into you and wouldn’t let you go.” O’Casey looked at Linley and began to grumble, as though seeing an old friend of his.

Linley could only smile politely.

“Enough.” Desri laughed calmly. “Everyone should know what the situation is. It truly is rather inappropriate for Saints to participate in mortal battles. The Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire both do not use Saints in normal battles. Saints are just used as a source of fear.”

Desri sighed. “I’ve been in the Anarchic Lands for thousands of years now. I don’t want it to be too anarchic. Thus...I suggest that in the battles between your three sides, Saints are not to participate. Would you be willing to accept this?”

“Yes.” Osenno nodded.

Linley smiled and nodded.

Desri immediately looked at O’Casey, who grinned. “Do you need to ask? Of course I accept.”

“Wonderful.” Desri’s face grew solemn. With a flip of his hand, he retrieved four scrolls of paper and a pen. “Then today, let the four of us write down a treaty. If any side goes against it...then the other three sides will join forces to destroy them!”

Linley frowned, while O’Casey and Osenno were also startled.

Right now, the strongest of the four sides was definitely Desri’s side. After all, Desri had Higginson, Hayward, and the other Saints behind him.

“Sign here.” Desri quickly wrote down the four agreements, then handed them to Linley, Osenno, and O’Casey.

With a smile, O’Casey was the first to sign his name. Linley didn’t hesitate either as he put down his name.

“Sign!” Osenno signed his name as well.

“Excellent.” Desri smiled. “Each of us will have a copy of this agreement. But of course...this agreement is founded on our personal honor. If someone is so shameless as to allow Saints to do battle, then destroy the

evidence...you must know that no secret is airtight. Once it is discovered, then the other three sides will immediately destroy the fourth.”

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It was nightfall now. The night fog covered the skies.

Linley and Delia were enjoying the peaceful night.

“From today onwards, our life will become very peaceful.” Delia’s face had a hint of happiness on it. Smiling, she said, “In the future, we’ll no longer need to worry about many things. Linley, in the future, will you regret today’s decision? Actually, you didn’t have to agree today. I think Desri would still have supported you.”

Linley, too, had the feeling that Desri was still on their side.

Even if he had not agreed, Desri wouldn’t have allowed the enemy to kill him.

“No. I will never regret today’s decision.” Linley held Delia in his arms. “Because if I did not agree, given my current power, although I can protect myself, I am not necessarily able to protect you. If you were to die...I think I would regret it for the rest of my life!”

It was because he had thought of Delia and of his family and friends that Linley had made this decision.

“Thank you.” Delia rested her head against Linley’s chest and said in a soft voice.

Feeling her soft warmth, Linley felt all the more certain that this decision was the right one.

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Yulan calendar, year 10010. July 21st. The city of Baruch (formerly Blackdirt City) was a hubbub of commotion. The construction of Baruch City was now complete. The inner city was a renovated Blackdirt City. The construction style of Baruch City focused on ‘simplicity’ and ‘practicality’.

The palace didn’t take up too much area. It was only two square kilometers in size.

In the past, when the Baruch Duchy had been founded, they had begun the renovations. After five months, they had finally finished. Most of the buildings in the palace were a single story tall, while the tallest buildings were only two stories high. The main hall of the main palace was very large, capable of holding several hundred people.

And today, the main hall was full of guests.

“Your Majesty, Linley, I come as the representative of the Emperor of the Rohault Empire to bring our sincerest congratulations.” A middle-aged man said respectfully to Linley. Linley toasted him with a cup of wine, while Delia held her arm in his. Smiling, the two toasted him.

The two were very tired from all of this, but they were very happy as well.

“So many people have come today.” Wharton walked to Linley’s side. “Big brother, the envoys from the Rohault Empire, Rhine Empire, and the O’Brien Empire have all arrived. Oh...look. Those ones are from the kingdoms of the great plains of the far east.”

“Mighty King Linley, on behalf of our King of the Muhan Kingdom, we would like to convey our King’s most sincere congratulations.” An envoy from the Muhan Kingdom of the great plains of the far east also toasted Linley, and Linley naturally had to give him face and respond.

Linley and Delia shared a smile.

“Linley, you seem rather tired.” Delia said softly.

“I’m not too bad.” Linley forced out a smile. Linley hated having to welcome guests, but today was his own wedding. He couldn’t hide from this responsibility. Delia said softly, “How about this? For those people of lower status, let me handle them.”

In the past, Delia worked as a diplomat. Thus, making conversation was quite easy for her.

And she was much better at it than Linley, who would just say a few short, blunt sentences.

“Lord Cardinal Guillermo of the Radiant Church has arrived!” The voice rang out from outside the hall, and the entire hall fell rather silent. Linley and the Radiant Church, and the grudges between them, was known to everyone here. After all, the news of Linley’s slaughter of those six Angels had spread across the continent.

But now, the Radiant Church was actually sending someone over?

“King Linley.” Guillermo bowed modestly as he stepped forward.

Linley still remembered how, ten years ago, Guillermo had went to the Ernst Institute to recruit him. Now, after more than ten years, Guillermo was still a Cardinal, while he was now the King of a Kingdom whom even the Radiant Church had to compromise with.

“Mr. Guillermo, please come inside and rest.” Linley said with a smile.

“The disciples of the War God’s College have arrived!”

The people who came were Castro and two other personal disciples.

“Lord McKenzie has arrived!”

Yet another Saint.

“Lord O’Casey of the Cult of Shadows has arrived!”

Hearing the list of names, the envoys of the various kingdoms and Empires all headed off to the various corners to engage in conversation. Good heavens. All of them were Saints.

“Three disciples of the High Priest of the Yulan Empire have arrived!”

Linley and Delia immediately went to welcome them. Seeing these people, Delia immediately called out with excitement, “Big brother!” The person in the center of this three-person delegation was Dixie. Dixie and his two fellow apprentices both walked over, offering Linley their congratulations.

“Linley, you finally lived up to my little sister’s hopes.” In front of Linley, Dixie finally showed a smile.

When they were at the Ernst Institute, Linley and Dixie had been acknowledged as the two major geniuses.

Dixie suddenly whispered into Linley's ears, "Linley, let me warn you. In the future, you better not make my little sister angry. Otherwise...even if I'm not able to deal with you, I'll ask my Master to personally make an appearance!"

"No need for your Master to make an appearance. I'll engage in self-punishment." Linley began to laugh.

Today, Linley could feel that he and Dixie were on very close terms now. Seeing how friendly Linley and Dixie were being, Delia felt extremely happy.

Right at this time.

"The disciples of the 'War Saint' of the great plains of the far east have arrived!" The voice ringing out from outside the hall confused Linley.

Who was the 'War Saint'?

Desri had arrived very early today, and he went to Linley's side. He whispered, "Linley, currently, there are four people on par with me in the Yulan continent. The number one expert of the great plains of the far east, the 'War Saint' Tulily [Tu'li'lei] is one of them."

Linley now understood.

There were five Prime Saints. One was Fain. Another was Desri. So a third was this Tulily. Who were the other two?

A middle-aged plainsman with a turban around his head walked in, two people behind him. Seeing Linley, the plainsman smiled. "King Linley. I, Moor [Mao'er], would like to bring my master's most sincere greetings and congratulations."

"My deepest thanks to Mr. Tulily." Linley smiled.

The eyes of the plainsman, Moor, lit up. "So King Linley also knows of my master's name. Ah. Lord Desri." The plainsman immediately bowed upon seeing Desri.

Moor had previously seen his master, Tulily, personally spar with this Desri. His master, Tulily, had said that this Desri was on par with his own power. Naturally, Moor was extremely courteous.

"The Holy Lady of the Frost Goddess Shrine has arrived!"

Desri and Pennslyn immediately went to welcome her. Naturally, Linley and Delia went as well. Linley felt quite curious. How powerful exactly was this mysterious Frost Goddess Shrine?

This 'Holy Lady' had long, jade hair, and she seemed as cold and as unapproachable as a block of ice. Behind her were two beautiful girls.

"Big sister." Pennslyn was boundlessly overjoyed.

Desri whispered to Linley, "Linley, this 'Holy Lady' of the Frost Goddess Shrine, Rosarie [Luo'sha'li], is the number one expert of the Frost Goddess Shrine. Her power is on par with mine." Hearing these words, Linley understood that this Rosarie should be yet another of the Five Prime Saints.

He now knew four of the Prime Saints: Fain, Desri, Tulily, and Rosarie.

"Who is the last one?" Linley secretly wondered. Unfortunately, the last expert didn't arrive, even by the time the wedding was concluded.

In the main hall of the Baruch Kingdom, there was a huge pile of Saints. All the envoys of the various Empires were engaged in conversation, while the Saints were engaged in conversation with the other Saints. Desri and Rosarie and the others were together as well.

Each level was segregated quite clearly.

“The envoy of the Yulan Empire has arrived!”

The person who had come was George.

“Second Bro.” Linley began to laugh loudly, and George excitedly ran towards him, then intentionally made a deep bow. “O most puissant King Linley! I, George, on behalf of his Imperial Majesty...urgh!” Linley whacked George on the shoulder, not letting him get the words out.

“Enough, sheesh. Acting like this in front of me.” Linley was overjoyed. “Come, come see Fourth Bro with me.”

“Fourth Bro is here as well?” George was extremely excited.

Ever since they had separated seven or eight years ago, he hadn't seen Reynolds a single time.

“Fourth Bro!” “Second Bro!”

As soon as Reynolds and George saw each other, they instantly shouted and then threw their arms around each other. And right at this time...

“The Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate has arrived!” Before the announcement was even finished, Yale rushed into the main hall. He immediately saw Linley, Reynolds, and George.

“Haha, Second Bro, Third Bro, Fourth Bro, your Boss has arrived!”

Laughing loudly, Yale charged towards them.

The many people in the hall all looked at these four friends. If ordinary people had caused such a scene, they probably would've been rebuked already. But this was Linley and his closest friends. No one dared to say a thing.

Ten years late, the four bros had finally come together in one spot.

“Hey, as soon as this kid Linley has become a King, he starts acting differently. His attendants even ask me where my letter of invitation is? And asks me who I am? Jeeze, what a pain!” A lazy looking middle-aged man in a long, loose robe suddenly appeared in the middle of the hall. He grabbed a nearby cup of wine, then took two sips, seeming to enjoy it very much.

“Mm. Not bad.” An expression of satisfaction was on his face.

“Lord Cesar?!” In the main hall, Barker suddenly saw this middle-aged man. He would never forget this Deity who had saved his life.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 24, That Night

Barker and his brothers immediately rushed forward, but Cesar frowned in impatience. “Don’t get so close to me. Don’t let me become the center of attention. Low-key, low-key!” The five brothers could only grin awkwardly as they greeted Cesar from far away.

“Gurgle.”

As he sampled the wine, Cesar went hiding into a corner of the room. Whenever he encountered the envoys of the kings and Empires, he would toast them, not putting on any airs of being a Deity at all.

“Cesar.” Suddenly, a cold voice rang out.

Cesar turned. An awkward smile couldn’t help but to appear on his face. The person who had spoken was the Holy Lady of the Frost Goddess Shrine, Rosarie. Rosarie stared at Cesar. She snorted a few times, but she didn’t say anything else. Being stared daggers at like this, Cesar couldn’t do anything except grin stupidly.

“You’ve already become a Deity, but you still act like this.” A hint of moisture seemed to appear in the eyes of Rosarie, the icy beauty.

Cesar squeezed out a smile. “Rosarie, aren’t you having a wonderful time being the Holy Lady? Alas, I’m just a wastrel who wanders all over the place. I go wherever I like and do what I like. I can’t take good care of you.” Cesar felt some misery in his heart.

“Lord Cesar.” Linley saw Cesar as well.

“Don’t go.” Desri held Linley back, a ‘nasty’ little smirk on his face. “Why are you going to get between those two lovebirds?”

“Lovebirds? Isn’t she the Holy Lady?” Linley was stunned.

“Who says a Holy Lady can’t have a man?” Desri glanced at Linley. “Rosarie is almost at the Deity-level herself. For her to continue working on behalf of the Frost Goddess Shrine is already giving it quite a bit of face.” Desri grinned as he watched Cesar and Rosarie from afar.

Linley exchanged amused glances with Delia. “Linley, so this is the Lord Cesar you spoke of?” Linley nodded.

“It seems this Deity has incurred a romantic debt.” Delia pursed her lips as she laughed, and Linley shook his head as well. “Lord Cesar, he, uh...how should I put this...he’s quite the dissolute romantic.”

This night was quite a festive one, especially Desri’s group. George, Yale, and Reynolds as well. By the time he greeted and chatted with everyone, it was already midnight. Only now did Linley head towards Delia’s room...

One of the benefits of being a Saint was that despite having drank an enormous amount of wine, Linley wasn’t drunk at all.

“Linley?”

He heard someone call his name before he even reached the door. Linley turned and saw Cesar lying on a couch and drinking wine. “Linley, how come you ended up getting married? Jeeze, after I heard you got married, I felt really sorry for you.”

“Really sorry?” Linley was stunned.

Cesar stood up, then flew over gracefully. “Really sorry! Yet another man has stepped into his tomb!” As he spoke, Cesar’s body flew high into the air. “Oh yeah, happy wedding. Alright, I’m off.” Cesar’s voice sounded in Linley’s ears.

Suddenly...

“You old lecher!” A clear sharp sound. A graceful, white-garbed figure flew into the air as well, chasing after Cesar.

Cesar’s flying speed instantly increased.

“Uh...maybe it’s better to be in the ‘tomb’.” Linley had a hint of a smile on his lips as he headed out. Soon, he arrived at the doorway to Delia’s room. There were two beautiful maids in front of it, and the two maids respectfully drew open the door.

Linley waved his hand at them. “You can go now.”

“Yes, your Majesty.”

In the dark room, the only person there was Delia, sitting quietly in front of her bed. She just looked at Linley, waiting for Linley to speak. And finally, Linley did speak...“Bebe. Get out.”

“Haha, Boss.” Bebe crawled out from beneath the bed.

“Bebe?” Delia didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. Today, Bebe disappeared very early on. Who would’ve thought he had been hiding here?

Linley looked at Bebe, also not knowing whether to laugh or to cry. “Bebe, what are you doing?”

“Preparing a gift for ya, Boss!” Bebe raised his head high.

“What gift?” Linley was puzzled.

Bebe grinned, his little claws handing over a black rock. “This is something my good friend gave me. It was that violet-gold Saint-level rat that I told you about last time. I’m too young and haven’t accumulated much wealth, so my bro gave me this.”

“What is this?” Linley took the black stone in confusion. “Can it be some sort of rare or precious mineral? Can’t be. What use would a small piece of rock be anyhow?” Linley carefully inspected it, but couldn’t tell what it was.

“I don’t know either.” Bebe handed it to Delia. “Delia, personalize and soulbind it with blood.”

“Bind it with blood?” Linley raised an eyebrow.

Anything that needed to be bound by blood was definitely a treasure. For example, Linley’s Bloodviolet sword, or his Coiling Dragon ring. Even the adamantine heavy sword wasn’t worthy of needing to be blood bound. Generally speaking, only extremely rare and valuable items would require this process.

“Alright.” Delia trusted Bebe very much. A blade of air cut Delia’s finger, immediately creating a tiny wound.

A single drop of blood fell onto the black stone.

The black stone suddenly transformed into a ray of light and suddenly enveloped Delia. Linley was shocked...he watched as the black stone merged into Delia’s body and utterly vanished.

“What is going on?” Linley was shocked.

He had never seen anything as weird as this before. Bebe stared with a gaping jaw as well. “I have no idea.”

“Delia, how do you feel?” Linley immediately asked.

Delia shook her head, puzzled. “I don’t feel anything at all. Hmm...actually, it seems I can sense the nearby elemental essence much more clearly. Right. That’s it.” Linley secretly nodded. Generally speaking, even the vilest of items, once bound by blood, wouldn’t harm its master.

Linley wasn’t too worried about that.

But...what was that thing?

“Bebe, this black stone...why did that magical beast give it to you? This seems to be a treasure.” Linley asked. Of course, all they knew right now about this treasure was one thing; it could increase elemental essence affinity tremendously.

Bebe hurriedly shook his head. “Boss, honestly, that good friend of mine gave it to me. He said it is very useful to magi.”

“Very useful to magi?” Linley understood. Perhaps this was some sort of special object that could enhance elemental essence affinity. It was useless to Saint-level magical beasts, which is why he gave it to Bebe. But Linley had a feeling...

There was more than met the eye to this black stone!

“Alright, Bebe. Do you plan to stay here?” Linley stared at Bebe.

Bebe’s beady little eyes rolled, and then he rubbed his nose twice. “Boss, once you got a wife, you forgot about Bebe. Sniff.” Linley immediately sent a kick in his direction, but by then, Bebe had already disappeared in a flash as he left the room.

The door shut.

The room instantly turned quiet. Linley and Delia sat side by side on the bed.

“What are you looking at?” Delia was a bit shy right now.

Linley laughed. “I’m thinking...about how many kids we should have.” Delia was startled. Linley suddenly lifted Delia up and carried her over to the bed, and then...one piece of clothing after another came flying out from the bed.

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“Unngh...”

They hadn't slept all night.

"Whew." Linley lay there on the bed, with Delia resting on top of him, her head against Linley's chest. Beads of sweat caused Delia's fragrant hair to stick to Linley's body. Linley lowered his head to look at Delia. That faintly red face looked like that of a kitten's.

Her pert little nose was sniffing.

Linley's hand gently stroked Delia's slick, bare back. In his mind, he continued to savor what had happened just then. How nervous he had felt when he had entered Delia's body...Linley had to admit, things had gotten just a little too wild just then. It had been three entire hours.

"Delia, what is it?"

"I want to cry." Delia hugged Linley's chest. "I just want to cry right now. When I think about how you and Alice were together, I want to cry. When I think about how I waited ten years, I want to cry. Sob."

Linley held his head in his hands.

Women. It was impossible to understand them.

"Linley, can I tell you something?" Delia said softly.

"Hrm?" Linley lowered his head to look at Delia.

Delia raised her head to look at Linley. Her face serious, she said in a soft voice, "You...got hard, down there."

"Uh?"

For a moment, Linley had no idea what to say.

"Delia, you know, Wharton and Nina's kid is going to be born in a few months. Don't you think the two of us need to work harder?" Linley whispered.

"Um?" Delia was startled.

"So, I need to keep at it." Linley flipped over and pressed Delia down once again.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 25, Twelve Years in the Blink of an Eye

The Radiant Church. The Holy Island. The ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

Staring outside the window, a hint of worry was on Heidens' face. Previously, Linley had made an agreement with the Radiant Church, allowing the Radiant Church to relax. After all, without the assistance of his Supreme Warriors and that terrifying rat-type magical beast, Linley, by himself, wasn't too great a threat.

But they were only relaxed for nine years.

Because on the ninth year, the Radiant Church discovered a terrifying secret.

Linley's human form had reached the Saint level.

"Heidens." An icy voice rang out. Osenno, his devilish purple hair fluttering behind him, appeared in the middle of the ninth floor.

Heidens didn't turn. Calmly, he said, "Osenno, what is it?"

Osenno had a hint of frustration in his voice. "Heidens, the many experts of the Church have been cooped up in the Holy Isle for three full years. During these three years, you've ordered that we are not to go outside the Holy Isle without authorization. Heidens...can it be that just because of Linley, we have to live like this?"

"And Heidens, you must understand, the information we got came from an agent who overheard the conversation which Linley's son was having with Wharton's son. That's the only information we have stating that Linley has reached the Saint level in human form. The words of children are not necessarily true." Osenno said unhappily.

Because of this news, that Linley had reached the Saint-level in his human form, Heidens asked Osenno and the others to not leave the Holy Isle.

Heidens remained with his back turned towards Osenno. Calmly, he said, "Osenno, first of all, Wharton's son, Cena [Xi'ne], is a very reliable and very meticulous youth. His words should be true. And secondly...when Linley was hidden within the O'Brien Empire, he had already reached the ninth rank. It has been over ten years now. Given the rate of growth for Dragonblood Warriors, it is about time that Linley reaches the Saint level in human form."

Heidens suddenly turned and stared at Osenno.

"You should be very clear about how powerful Linley is. Twelve years ago, he was only slightly weaker to you. Now that his human form has reached the Saint-level...his power should be more than ten times greater than before. Even if he didn't gain any additional insights at all, he can defeat you. But do you believe that in twelve years, Linley hasn't increased his level of insights at all?" Heidens asked Osenno.

Osenno was silent.

He knew full well how quickly Linley trained.

Twelve years without any breakthroughs? Who would believe it?

That ancestor of the Baruch clan who had only reached the 'impose' level when he reached the Saint-level as a human-form Dragonblood Warrior was nonetheless able to rely on his terrifying post-Saint-level defense and power to fight head on against peak-stage Saint-level magical beasts.

And Linley?

In strength and battle-qi, he was not inferior to his ancestor. However, he had a very deep understanding of the Laws. He was even more terrifying to deal with than the ancestors of the Baruch clan.

"Heidens, the Holy Isle doesn't need me to defend it, does it." Osenno asked.

"Osenno, if you truly want to leave the Holy Isle...I won't try to stop you." Heidens said calmly. "But leaving the Holy Isle means that you are betting that Linley won't find and kill you! Of course, your fleeing abilities are top notch. But I'm not certain if you would be able to flee from Linley."

Osenno had the Doppelganger Technique and was very fast.

But he probably only had a fifty-fifty chance of fleeing and surviving if Linley encountered him.

"Hmph. Fine. I'll wait until my Doppelganger Technique reaches the peak before I have another tussle with Linley." Osenno sneered coldly, and then with a flicker, disappeared from the ninth floor. But although his words were tough, clearly he had already submitted.

A hint of a bitter smile could be seen on Heidens' face.

It was virtually impossible to keep tabs on someone at Linley's level. Right now, Linley's flying speed was far quicker than it had been in the past. It would take him less than half a day to cross the entire Yulan continent. This sort of speed...if he wanted to chase after and kill someone, he could definitely make sure that his opponent didn't have time to call for help.

Yulan calendar, year 10022. May. An area outside Baruch City with wild flower and wild grass swaying, their beautiful dance so moving to behold. Right now, there were two luxurious carriages and a squad of elite knights who were escorting them down this wild road.

"Your Majesty, we are at Mt. Blackraven." A knight said respectfully towards the second carriage.

Immediately, a husband and wife couple stepped out of the carriage, along with a youth. The couple was Wharton and Nina. Wharton was much more mature now than he had been. He was the King of the Baruch Kingdom, and his personal strength had dramatically increased as well. Wharton's body emanated the aura of an expert. As for Nina, she wasn't as unripe as she had been in the past; her body was fuller, now, and she had become even more womanly.

As for that twelve or thirteen year old child in front of them, who seemed so friendly and yet graceful? This child was the son of Wharton and Nina: Cena Baruch.

"Wow, we are at Mt. Blackraven!" An excited voice rang out from the carriage in front of them, and a very excited youth clambered out of the carriage.

"Taylor [Tai'le]." Cena laughed as he called out.

"Big brother." Taylor ran over happily. Taylor was relatively handsome, but he was far more energetic than Cena.

At this time, yet another beautiful lady stepped out of the carriage in front, as well as a pretty young girl. It was Delia and her daughter, Sasha [Sha'sha]. Sasha looked quite similar to Taylor. The two of them were actually twins, but Sasha was born just a little while before Taylor was, and thus Taylor was forced to be the 'little brother'.

Cena was twelve, while Sasha and Taylor were ten.

"We're about to see Father soon. I haven't seen him in half a year." Taylor was extremely excited right now, and Cena's eyes had a hint of excitement in them as well. As the children of the Baruch clan, they all worshipped this person who supported the entire Baruch clan...Linley.

The countless members of the Baruch Kingdom also worshipped Linley. Linley was the spiritual support for the entire Baruch Kingdom. There was no question about this.

Although twelve years had passed, Delia's appearance hadn't changed at all. In fact, she actually now had a certain aura about her. Delia's children had blissful smiles on their faces. Twelve years of peaceful, happy life. Delia truly was very satisfied.

She stared at the distant Baruch City.

The royal capital, Baruch City, had been expanded long ago. The normal population was over a million. Because Linley had brought the massive fortune he had taken from the Kingdom of Fenlai, the Baruch Kingdom had easily weathered the first few tough years, and now, the entire Kingdom was prospering very nicely.

Raising her head to look at Mt. Blackraven, Delia's heart was already by Linley's side.

"Wharton, Nina, let's go up the mountain." Delia laughed. "Taylor, Sasha, Cena, follow along."

"Got it." Taylor said loudly.

His sister, Sasha, was very quiet. The squad of knights came to a halt at the foot of Mt. Blackraven, while Wharton, Nina, Delia, and the three children went up Mt. Blackraven together. Mt. Blackraven was as beautiful and graceful as ever.

Following the little creek, they finally saw the lake in the distance.

There were now three massive flattened boulders in the center of the lake. The central boulder was the first one which Linley had put down, and the stone house was naturally the one he had built long ago. As for the other two boulders, Linley had arranged them after his wedding, for when people came to visit for a while.

A faint blue figure was currently fishing in the middle of the lake.

"Father!" Taylor's voice rang out from far away.

That blue-robed figure turned around. It was Linley. Linley looked slightly more mature than he had in the past, and looking at him from a distance, one had the sense that he had totally become one with nature. Linley immediately stood up and laughed, "Haha, Taylor!"

Linley's standing motion gave the sensation of moving with the wind itself, but it also gave an extremely solid, stable sensation as well. These two opposite sensations, merged into one person, was simply unimaginable for those who didn't personally experience it.

Linley waved his hand...

“Bang!” Part of the flowing water instantly came to a halt, forming a bridge of water. The other parts of the lake continued to flow normally. Taylor and Sasha, quite experienced, stepped directly onto the bridge of water and ran over.

The water bridge was solid and durable.

If one looked at it closely, one would see that on top of the water bridge were minute, tiny flows of air.

“Taylor. Come. Hug.” Linley happily lifted Taylor into his arms, and the nearby Sasha immediately stared at Linley with her big, innocent eyes. Linley immediately reached out and lifted his beloved daughter into his embrace as well. “Taylor, Sasha, it’s been half a year since you’ve seen Father. Have you missed Father?”

“Yes.” Taylor said immediately. “Every day.”

Linley’s face instantly was covered with smiles. He now totally could understand how Grandpa Doehring had felt towards him, and how his father’s superficial severity masked a deep layer of love.

“Hey. Taylor, Sasha, Cena, you all came.” A happy voice emanated from the skies, and a black shadow suddenly appeared in the middle of the lake. It was the magical beast Bebe, now two meters long.

Linley looked at Bebe and couldn’t help but laugh inwardly.

Whenever Bebe was in front of these three ‘juniors’ (Taylor, Sasha, and Cena), he always made his body a little bit bigger. As Bebe put it, ‘if my body is too small, I won’t have the aura of an elder’.

“Uncle Bebe.” Taylor immediately broke free from Linley’s embrace and went to hug Bebe.

When Taylor was young, Bebe often played around with Taylor.

Wharton chuckled. “Big brother, let’s sit down first. We can talk while eating. I brought many delicacies with me.” As he spoke, the family sat down around a long rectangular table, and within his interspatial ring, Wharton withdrew the freshly prepared dishes.

The family began to eat.

“Big brother, have you heard of the big battle that occurred in the O’Brien Empire?” Wharton asked.

With an ‘Oh’ sound, Linley said, “Are you talking about half a month ago, how Olivier challenged Haydson to another duel?” Olivier had already returned from the Arctic Icecap, returned with the aura of utmost confidence.

Wharton sighed appreciatively. “Right. With just a single sword blow, he killed Haydson, who was famous for his defense. How terrifying.”

“Haydson. Is it the Haydson who dueled with father at Mt. Tujiao?” Taylor raised his head up high and asked. This little fellow deeply venerated Linley, and he knew the details of Linley’s famous battles as well as anything.

Linley laughed and nodded.

The nearby Delia also sighed in approval. “This Olivier really is formidable. Just one sword blow! Haydson’s defensive abilities were legendary. To be killed in one blow...” Delia also sighed repeatedly. The nearby Cena suddenly looked at Linley and asked, “Uncle, if you were to duel with Olivier again, can you win?”

Linley laughed calmly.

“Olivier’s improvement speed was faster than I had anticipated. In just twelve years, he reached the level of being able to kill Haydson with one sword blow. Without actually competing with him, it’s hard to say who would win and who would lose.” Linley laughed.

“Boss, what are you being modest for?” Bebe said unhappily. “Haydson’s defense was on par with yours in the past. But now? Just by relying on your post-Saint transformation, the defensive power of your draconic scales alone is on a higher level than the combined power of your draconic scales and Pulseguard Defense of twelve years ago. And now, your Pulseguard Defense is more than ten times greater than before. In front of you, that Olivier isn’t worth a fart. Even people on the second tier, like Osenno, don’t dare to offend you. I think...only the five Prime Saints are able to compete with you now.”

Wharton also said, “Big brother, you are the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in the history of our clan. Why be modest?”

Wharton and the others knew exactly how terrifying Linley had become.

After twelve years of painstaking training, Linley’s level of achievement in understanding the Elemental Laws of the Earth and the Wind was so high as to make Wharton and the others utterly speechless.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 26, Blueheart Grass, Dragon’s Blood

Power?

Linley knew exactly how powerful he currently was.

He had reached the Saint level in human form. Once he Dragonformed, his draconic scales were ten times as powerful as they had been in the past. His strength and battle-qi had also risen to terrifying levels. Linley could fully understand...the reason why his ancestors, despite not having a high level of insight, could rely on Dragonform alone to defeat peak-stage Saint-level magical beasts.

As for insight...

The Throbbing Pulse of the World. He had already mastered 256 layers of vibrational waves. The more waves, the more difficult improving became. It had always been like that, but upon reaching the 256th layer of waves, after spending an entire year, he hadn’t been able to improve whatsoever.

It seemed...as though 256 layers was some sort of limit.

“It can’t be a limit.” Linley was very certain. “According to the War God, if one follows an aspect of the Elemental Laws to its limits, then one would enter the Deity-level. I’m far, far away from the Deity-level. So what exactly comes next, after the 256 layer level?”

Linley didn’t know either.

His understandings of the Throbbing Pulse of the World were unique, and there was no one he could ask for advice. All Linley could do every day was to try and immerse himself in the Throbbing Pulse of the World and try to make a breakthrough.

As for the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley continued to slowly but surely improve. He hadn’t reached a bottleneck yet.

“However, spiritual energy really is hard to build up. After twelve years, I’m still only at the peak of the ninth rank. Breaking through to the Grand Magus Saint level really is hard.” Linley sighed in his heart. If anyone else heard what Linley was thinking, they would have cursed him to hell and back.

As a magus, going from the sixth to the seventh rank was one bottleneck, while going from the ninth rank to the Saint-level was the other major bottleneck.

How could this bottleneck be so easily broken through?

Linley looked at Delia, and he couldn’t help but think back to that black rock which Bebe had given her on their wedding night. “In just twelve years, Delia has advanced from the seventh rank as a magus to the ninth rank as an Arch Magus. Although she previously had already been at the seventh rank for quite a few years, this sort of improvement rate really is terrifying.”

Delia was already an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

After the wedding, Delia had discovered that it wasn't just her elemental essence affinity that had been raised to a terrifying level; she even was able to absorb mageforce at an astonishing speed, and her spiritual energy rapidly increased as well...her rate of improvement vastly outstripped Linley's. As Linley saw it, there was only one explanation for this change.

That mysterious black rock.

After the meal.

Cena, Taylor, and Sasha were having fun by the lake, while Linley, Wharton, Delia, and the others all sat down.

"Big brother." Wharton finally brought up the purpose of their trip. "Cena and Taylor were tested when they were young. The density of Dragonblood in their veins hasn't reached the required level. It seems we'll have to use that method you spoke of in the past."

Linley frowned.

"Oh? That's right. It is time to use fresh dragon's blood to activate the Dragonblood in their veins, so they can begin training in the Secret Dragonblood Manual early on." Linley nodded slightly. When Linley had chatted with the Planar Overseer, Hodan, he had realized...

There were far more Dragonblood Warriors in the history of the Baruch clan than the book had mentioned. The real number was very high, and they relied on dragon's blood.

"Would it be very dangerous?" Delia was a bit nervous.

"As long as the dragon's blood is mixed in with Blueheart Grass, there is no danger at all to activating the Dragonblood in their veins." Linley said with absolute certainty, while at the same time, he looked at the three children by the lake. "Taylor and Cena need to have their blood activated. What about Sasha?"

"Sasha?" Wharton and Delia both looked at the distant Sasha.

Sasha was just a girl. Although male warriors generally were somewhat superior to female warriors, that didn't mean girls couldn't become experts.

Delia smiled calmly. "Let her make her own choice."

Linley nodded slightly.

....

"Become a Dragonblood Warrior?" Taylor was the first to whoop in joy. "Oh, I'll do it, I'll totally do it. I dream about being a Dragonblood Warrior like Father. Wow! I'm excited just thinking about it."

Cena nodded slightly as well. "I'll do it."

Linley, Wharton, Nina, and Delia weren't surprised. It'd be weird if any of the male children in their lineage passed on this opportunity. Now they all looked at Sasha. Sasha was very quiet. Although she was just ten years old, the beauty she had inherited from Delia was beginning to show.

"I...I'll do it also." Sasha bit her lips, but nodded firmly.

Delia stroked Sasha's head and praised, "Sasha, in the future, you are going to be a powerful female Dragonblood Warrior." A smile appeared on Sasha's face.

“Alright.” Linley nodded. “If that’s the case...then Wharton, Nina, you can just hand Cena to me. I’ll take the three of them to...the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun to search for Saint-level dragons. It’s time to engage in some bloodletting with Saint-level dragons.” Linley chuckled.

Engage in bloodletting with Saint-level dragons. These words filled the eyes of Sasha, Taylor, and Cena with shock and joy.

“I’ll go as well.” Wharton was somewhat nervous.

“Hey, little Wharton, you’re only at the ninth rank. Even after transforming, you are only an early-stage Saint.” Bebe flew over here and said unhappily, “Do you think your level of insight is comparable to the Boss of twelve years ago?”

Although he was also an early-stage Saint after transforming, in terms of insight, Wharton was far inferior to Linley.

“I’ll go with the Boss. Shit, if one dragon comes we’ll kill one dragon; if two comes, we’ll kill one, then capture the other one to use as a mount.” Bebe was extremely boastful, but he had the strength to back it up. After the past twelve years, Bebe’s power was far stronger than it had been twelve years ago as well.

Wharton nodded and laughed. “Since you are going as well, Bebe, then I won’t be worried at all.”

The squad was thus decided as being: Linley, Bebe, Delia, and the three kids. Delia was responsible for taking care of the kids, and Bebe’s job was to protect them. As for Linley...he would deal with any Saint-level dragons.

....

The skies stretched off far into the distance, and a few white clouds were drifting here and there. A ten-meter long magical beast was soaring through the air at high speed. It was the transformed Bebe, with Delia, Cena, Taylor, and Sasha on his back.

Delia had cast a magic spell to form a protective invisible barrier, preventing the wind from scraping against the children’s bodies.

“Wow...Mother, that city is the biggest one I’ve ever seen.” Taylor pointed below at a ‘fist-sized’ city. Although the city seemed small from up above, the size of this ‘fist’ was actually a huge space.

A complicated look was in Delia’s eyes. Sighing, she said, “That is my homeland, the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire.”

“The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire?” Taylor, Sasha, and Cena all looked down.

“Hungry yet?” Delia withdrew some food they had brought along from the interspatial ring. Bebe had transformed to ten meters in length, and his back was naturally very wide. Given that Delia had then used magic to block the wind, this made Sasha, Cena, and Taylor feel as stable as when they were on the ground.

They sat down and began to enjoy the food.

Bebe flew very stably, with no turbulence at all.

“Delia, don’t pamper those kids too much.” Linley, flying alongside Bebe, said with a laugh as he saw this.

Delia looked at Linley. “Linley, don’t reprimand me. You see your children so rarely, and you are going to reprimand me?” Linley immediately didn’t dare to say a word. He actually did feel very guilty. Sometimes, he would go off and train for months at a time. He did indeed feel as though he owed the kids and Delia a lot.

Linley looked down at the boundless earth. They weren’t too far from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts now.

The three major gathering grounds for magical beasts in the Yulan continent were the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the Forest of Darkness, and the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Of course, other places also had magical beasts, but they were much rarer in those places. But in these three places, a terrifyingly high number of magical beasts congregated.

By now, both the Forest of Darkness and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had a Deity present. Thus, Linley had chosen to go to the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun.

A long time later...

The peaks of the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun appeared in the horizon. The Mountain Range of the Setting Sun started from the Dark Alliance, followed the southern boundaries of the Yulan Empire, and then intersected between the Rhine Empire and the Burning Desert.

In truth, the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and the Burning Desert were both the southernmost points of the Yulan continent.

If one went past the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun or the Burning Desert, they would enter the boundless Southern Seas.

“Wow, it’s so big. It seems to be even longer than the Forest of Darkness.” Taylor said in surprise. Taylor and the others had flown on Bebe’s back before and had seen the Forest of Darkness from the air.

Cena said, “Taylor, according to the books, the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts are both very long, but only around a thousand kilometers wide. As for the Forest of Darkness, it is thousands of kilometers long, but also two or three thousand kilometers wide.”

Taylor nodded in understanding.

“Get ready to go down.” Linley suddenly said.

The giant Bebe next to Linley suddenly dove down along with him. When they were only a few hundred meters away from the mountains, the two halted in mid-air.

“We’re going to fly at this height for now. Bebe and I are going to go meet some dragon Saints.” Linley said to Delia and the kids.

“Don’t worry about us, Father.” Taylor said confidently.

Linley, looking at his son, couldn’t help but chuckle, and then split apart from Bebe. At the same time, he began to scan the below area with his spiritual energy. The Mountain Range of the Setting Sun didn’t have fewer monsters than the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Naturally, there were quite a few Saints as well.

But the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun was very large. The Saint-level magical beasts were scattered all over. To instantly find a Saint-level dragon was not likely.

“Hrm?” Linley’s spiritual energy suddenly discovered a Saint-level magical beast, one which Linley was fairly familiar with. It was a Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape. This terrifying, three-story tall Saint-level beast suddenly noticed a human was scanning him.

“Who is it?” The Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape’s voice rang out like a bolt of thunder, and it raised its head to stare at the human in mid-air.

Linley stood there in mid-air, transmitting his voice downwards. “Linley of the Anarchic Lands. Excuse me for disturbing you.” After finishing speaking, the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape didn’t bother with him any further. Saint-level magical beasts were more intelligent than even your average human.

Ones that had lived a long time were very familiar with the experts of the Yulan continent.

Some of the most powerful experts, such as Desri of the Anarchic Lands, Hayward, Tulily of the great plains, were known to them. Linley of the Anarchic Lands had also become well known amongst magical beast experts. As long as Linley didn’t go too far, these Saint-level magical beasts didn’t want to fight such a peak expert either.

After searching for quite a while.

“Boss, I found a Saint-level dragon. It is a darkness-element Tyrant Wyrms.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. Not hesitating at all, Linley flew directly towards Bebe at high speed.

In the ground atop a mountain, Linley instructed, “Cena, you and the other kids all stay here. Delia will take care of you... Bebe, no matter what, you have to protect them.” Linley looked at Bebe, who said confidently, “Don’t worry, Boss. My Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique is able to create four now.”

Given Bebe’s terrifying speed and his Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique, even three ordinary Saint-level magical beasts working in concert still wouldn’t be able to hurt Delia and the others.

“Be careful, Father.” Sasha said.

Linley began to laugh. “Right. Just wait here. I’ll go bring that Tyrant Wyrms over.” As he spoke, Linley flew away at high speed. Delia and the kids just stood there, watching. Fortunately, because they were on a hill, they could see far.

A short while later...

Linley arrived in the air above the Tyrant Wyrms. The dragon race was divided into two types; the extremely strong and tough wingless dragons, and the magically powerful winged dragons. The Tyrant Wyrms was one of the most powerful wingless dragons. Its enormous body was over a hundred meters long, and its pitch-black, marble-like scales were terrifyingly hard.

The Tyrant Wyrms had already noticed Linley. Its massive eyes burned like fire as it stared at Linley. “Who are you?”

“Linley of the Anarchic Lands.” Linley said.

“Linley?” The Tyrant Wyrms growled, “I am Plaket [Pu’lei’ka’te] of the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Linley, what do you want?” This Saint-level Tyrant Wyrms, Mountain Range of the Setting Sun, was also an apex combatant.

Linley smiled. “Plaket, I want to borrow some of your draconic blood.”

“Growl...” The eyes of the Tyrant Wurm, Plaket, filled with a fiery rage, and the massive trees and boulders around him began to burn. “Linley, are you trying to humiliate me, Plaket? If you don’t beat it, then prepare to receive my fiery rage.”

In mid-air, Linley could only shake his head and sigh helplessly. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew Bloodviolet.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 27, A Heated Battle

Seeing Linley draw out Bloodviolet, the Tyrant Wyrms knew that Linley was going to go head on against him!

As a Saint-level dragon, the Tyrant Wyrms was naturally extremely arrogant.

“Bang!” It angrily stomped the ground, causing the earth to shake and crack. The nearby trees all snapped apart and fell, and the Tyrant Wyrms’s hill-sized body shot directly into the air, breathing hellfire as its fiery red eyes stared at Linley.

It didn’t dare to be overconfident.

“Plaket, you are so huge. I just want a little bit of draconic blood.” Linley shook his head and sighed.

“You are trying to insult me, insult a mighty Saint-level dragon!” The Tyrant Wyrms, Plaket, suddenly opened his mouth and blasted out a scorching cloud of black draconic fire, which suddenly enveloped ‘Linley’...but ‘Linley’ immediately dissipated.

Plaket suddenly stared upwards.

Linley was right above him. “Be careful. I’m going to start attacking you now.” Linley seemed to be quite polite.

“Hrmp.” The Tyrant Wyrms, Plaket, felt even more insulted, and his massive body immediately rose at a terrifying pace. “Boom!” A sonic boom could be heard as the Tyrant Wyrms sent its entire massive bulk against Linley.

But hadn’t he already noticed Linley’s astonishing speed?

“What a sly Tyrant Wyrms.” Linley’s body immediately transformed into a wind-shadow, appearing somewhere else. A black shadow sliced through the air, striking through ‘Linley’. It was the Tyrant Wyrms’s draconic tail.

“Boom!” The speed of the Tyrant Wyrms’s tail caused the air itself to form enormous wind blades which flew in the same direction. The nearby trees and boulders were chopped into small pieces like tofu, and the nearby trees all collapsed.

The speed of the draconic tail alone was enough to create such terrifyingly powerful wind blades. Then how powerful must the actual tail itself be?

“Must not take this draconic tail head on.” Linley’s face grew serious.

“Whoosh!” Linley’s speed suddenly reached its limit, turning into nothing more than a tiny gust of wind. Linley’s current level of control over the wind was now far more terrifying than it had been twelve years ago. The Tyrant Wyrms’s entire body was emitting a scorching, infernal heat, and the air around instantly began to rise to a terrifyingly high temperature.

If Linley was going to attack, he would have to enter this realm of infernal heat.

Linley's body was covered with that azurish-black wave of energy. Using the Pulseguard Defense, Linley charged straight into the black flames.

“Swish!” Bloodviolet transformed into a streak of violet lightning. It seemed to have passed through reality itself as it reached a terrifying speed, causing space to grow distorted. The blurred space began to fold and distort, and the violet ray of light landed directly on the Tyrant Wurm's body.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Spatial Folding.

Crunch!

Bloodviolet chopped out a large wound that was one meter long and thirty centimeters deep. However, not a single drop of the Tyrant Wurm's blood came out. This was because its scales were more than thirty centimeters thick.

“What strong defense. It wasn't broken through by my sword.” Linley was startled. The power of his Spatial Folding attack was so great that it was only one step lower than Higginson's ‘Illusionary Void Sword’. After all, Linley's understanding of the ‘Fast’ aspect was still lower than Higginson's.

Higginson had trained for thousands of years, after all.

“If you have any balls, come fight me, Plaket, head on!” The Tyrant Wurm roared angrily. He could clearly sense that Linley's speed was simply too fast, but just as he roared out these words and Linley was about to respond, dozens of black tentacles of infernal fire suddenly appeared out of nowhere from the Tyrant Wurm's body and surrounded Linley.

“Tentacles?”

Linley was startled, while at the same time, he felt the tentacles surrounding him were as cold as ice. Linley didn't worry about his current situation at all. Instead, he began to wonder, “These things are like octopus tentacles. How is it that a Tyrant Wurm...”

“Boss, these are the ‘Icy Tentacles’ of the darkness-style spells.” Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley now understood.

The Tyrant Wurm turned and stared at Linley with its flaming eyes. “Linley, prepare to die.” But before it even had a chance to attack, the deep azure layer of energy around Linley began to roil about and expand...and as it did so, those Icy Tentacles began to shudder.

“Bang!” They exploded.

The Pulseguard Defense now had 256 layers to it. It was more than ten times as powerful as it had been in the past.

But just as Linley exploded those Icy Tentacles...“Swish!” That lightning-fast draconic tail slashed over once more. Linley's body instantly retreated at high speed, but it nonetheless grazed the edges of the Pulseguard Defense. The terrifying power transmitted by that draconic tail caused Linley's body to shake.

“There is nothing even remotely ‘ordinary’ about the strength of Tyrant Wyrms.” Linley was secretly surprised.

Experts on the level of Haydson probably couldn't do anything against this Tyrant Wurm, given its power.

“Growl!” The Tyrant Wyrms roared angrily, and its terrifying voice somehow seemed to be ‘locked’ into a specific region and blasted against Linley. The terrifying sound caused Linley’s ears to ring, and then, the Tyrant Wyrms wildly charged against Linley.

There was only a distance of a hundred meters between Linley and the Tyrant Wyrms, but as it charged at Linley, its size rapidly began to shrink.

However, its charging attack power seemed to have become even more powerful.

“Groowl!” In the blink of an eye, it seemed like an earthquake or a mountain was charging at Linley.

At the same time, a gray fog appeared out of nowhere, surrounding everything within several hundred meters, including Linley.

“Can’t get hit.” Linley didn’t pay any attention to the fog at all, and he quickly began to dodge as fast as he could while Bloodviolet began to dance in his hands as well. He just barely dodged the charging attack of the Tyrant Wyrms, and then Linley delivered yet another sword onto the Tyrant Wyrms’s body...

His sword was agile and mysterious. It fused both the ‘Spatial Freezing’ concept and the ‘Spatial Folding’ concept, two major yet opposite concepts, to form the ‘Tempos of the Wind’. The power of this attack was a level higher than even the ‘Illusionary Void Sword’.

“Crunch!”

That thick scale instantly split apart.

“Groooooowl!” The Tyrant Wyrms let out an agonized, furious growl. Instantly, fresh blood became to spurt out from that meter-long wound.

Seeing draconic blood spurt out, Cena, Sasha, and Taylor, watching from afar, all let out whoops of joy. A hint of a smile appeared on Delia’s face as well. Clearly, Linley had the advantage. And in truth...Linley hadn’t even gone into his Dragonform.

The Tyrant Wyrms was actually knocked flying towards the ground.

“Crash!” An earthquake occurred as the Tyrant Wyrms’s hill-sized body smashed into the ground. At the same time, it raised its head high and howled. “Hooooowl!” A terrifying burst of sound exploded forth from the Tyrant Wyrms, transforming all the nearby trees to splinters.

Bebe managed to react very quickly, instantly creating a black barrier around Delia and the children.

“What are you doing? Showing off your loud voice?” Linley flew down from mid-air. “I’ve already opened up a wound on your body. Just let me retrieve a little bit of fresh blood. Don’t worry, I won’t kill you.”

“You are insulting me.”

The Tyrant Wyrms, Plaket, growled with the utmost anger.

But Linley’s face suddenly changed as he turned to stare into the horizon. Two enormous magical beasts were flying towards them at high speed. One of them had a perfectly sinuous body and a pair of enormous physical wings. It was one of the legendary Saint-level Gold Dragons.

As for the other dragon, its shape was roughly the same as the Tyrant Wyrms’s, except its scales were a deep blue, and lightning crackled on the surface of its body.

“Saint-level Gold Dragon. Saint-level Thunder Lizard!” Linley felt a bit numb.

The Tyrant Wyrms were already very formidable. Even Linley, if he didn't Dragonform, wouldn't dare to take the Tyrant Wyrms' draconic tail head on just by using his enhanced Pulseguard Defense. The weakness of the Tyrant Wyrms was their speed.

But Saint-level Gold Dragons were extremely fast, and Thunder Lizards... were as fast as lightning.

“Plaket, what's wrong?” A deep voice came forth from the Thunder Lizard. “Is it this detestable human?”

The Tyrant Wyrms growled, “It is, big brother. This detestable human is relying on his speed and reaction speed.” The Tyrant Wyrms were furious. If it wasn't for the fact that they were slow, how would they be losing? Tyrant Wyrms were slow, but possessed terrifying defense and attack. They were similar to Undying Warriors.

The Thunder Lizard stared at Linley with its two golden eyes.

Saint-level Thunder Lizard. Saint-level Gold Dragon. Saint-level Tyrant Wyrms. These three dragons made up an extremely powerful force in the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Whenever they met a powerful foe, they would all help each other. When they combined forces... they were terrifying, especially when they compensated for each other's deficiencies.

“Father!” The distant Taylor grew nervous. Cena and Sasha both watched the three Saint-level dragons with concern as well.

The Tyrant Wyrms flew into the air. Each of the enormous dragons were the size of a small mountain. The three Saint-level dragons flew in the air side by side, blocking out the sunlight. Their terrifying suppressive aura alone was enough to make one's heart shudder.

“If he's just fast, he's not worth us using our combination attack.” A calm voice came out from the throat of the Saint-level Gold Dragon.

A hint of a smile was on Linley's face. This battle was becoming more and more amusing.

Suddenly...

“Swish!” An enormous flash of lightning split the skies. The Thunder Lizard's enormous body suddenly appeared in front of Linley, and it reached out with its sharp claws at such speed that Linley couldn't dodge at all. It clawed viciously against Linley's body.

Linley's Pulseguard Defense was actually reduced by more than half in power, and Linley's body was sent flying.

“Bang!” The Thunder Lizard's eyes simultaneously shot out two bolts of lightning, striking against Linley's body.

Linley's body slammed against the wall, then slid down. “Bang!” The ground shook from the collision and began to crack, while a huge gouge appeared in the ground.

“This speed is monstrously fast, almost as fast as Bebe.” Linley, in the ground, was secretly startled. “However, the Thunder Lizard's attack power is a good deal lower than the Tyrant Wyrms'. My Pulseguard Defense was almost broken through, but in the end, it still managed to take the hit.”

High speed, but somewhat weaker attack.

After all, if a creature moved as fast as lightning but had an attack as powerful as the Tyrant Wyrms, then it would be invincible.

“Is father fine?” Sasha was nervous.

“He’s fine.” Bebe could clearly sense Linley’s current condition. Laughing, he said, “I bet the Boss is actually really excited right now.”

Right now, the three Saint-level dragons were circling in the air above, staring at the ground.

“Bam!”

Linley suddenly erupted from another spot in the ground, shooting out at high speed. But just as he shot out, a terrifying beam of light suddenly shot out towards Linley’s head, carrying a terrifying amount of light-style energy. Linley’s heart shuddered, and he immediately dodged, but as he did so...

Just as the light touched Linley’s body, Linley felt a terrifying wave of force attack his soul.

This was a very familiar sensation. When Linley had tested for magical aptitude, they had used this ‘Overawe’ spell to test his spiritual energy’s strength. But the ‘Overawe’ spell, when used, was like a thin, snake-like ribbon of light.

By contrast, the Overawe attack this Gold Dragon was using was a ten-meter thick beam of light.

“Light-style magic, ‘Overawe’? How can there be such a powerful ‘Overawe’ spell?”

“Haha, my turn!” The Tyrant Wurm, Plaket, charged down, and its terrifying draconic tail slashed through the air like a whip against Linley. This sort of group attack was one which these three Saint-level dragons had perfected. The Gold Dragon would use the ‘Spiritual Intimidation’ spell to cause the enemy to feel woozy, and then the Tyrant Wurm would deliver it a full-strength attack.

“Whoooooosh.”

As the enormous draconic tail swung down, space itself began to tremble, and a terrifying howling sound wave blasted the nearby trees into splinters.

“Haaargh!” A furious roar emanated from the center of that gradually dissipating beam of light, and then the Tyrant Wurm felt a terrifying force binding its draconic tail. The beam of light disappeared, and that Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and the distant Bebe, Delia, Taylor, and the other kids all saw a terrifying sight.

A human-shaped aberration, covered in deep azure scales, emerged. On top of its scales was a layer of azurish light that was constantly flowing around it.

This was the Dragonform of a Dragonblood Warrior who had reached the Saint-level!

A peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior!

His arms were wrapped around the Tyrant Wurm’s tail. The mountain-sized Tyrant Wurm roared madly, trying to struggle to pull free its draconic tail, but it couldn’t budge Linley at all. This was the terrifying strength of a Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior.

“Haaaaaargh!”

With a powerful, explosive roar, Linley actually swung the draconic tail and sent the mountain-sized Tyrant Wurm flying in an arced line before slamming heavily against the ground.

“Bam!” The Tyrant Wurm’s body smashed heavily into the ground, which immediately cracked and shuddered, blasting countless boulders and trees apart as though they were made of tofu.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 28, Submission

“Rumble.” The earth broke apart with many cracks appearing, and sand and stones slowly rolled into those crevices.

A mountain-sized indentation in the ground. The massive dragon shook its head twice, then stared at the terrifying creature which had stopped in midair. The dragon’s fiery red eyes were filled with disbelief. A peak Dragonblood Warrior! Those dark golden eyes swept down towards the Tyrant Wyrms.

Silence!

The only sound that could be heard was that of the wind blowing, the leaves falling, and dust scattering. The Tyrant Wyrms, the Thunder Lizard, and the Gold Dragon had all been stunned by Linley’s terrifying strength.

“Wow! Father’s awesome!”

The distant Taylor was beginning to cheer, while Cena and Sasha were excited as well. In Delia’s heart, she felt all the more proud of Linley. After all, this was her man! Bebe chortled and said, “These three Saint-level dragons aren’t bad. They’ve forced the Boss to use his Dragonform.”

Linley’s current Dragonform was different from how it had been in the past.

In the past, Linley’s scales had been black, but now, they were a fusion between ‘black’ and ‘azure’, creating a ‘deep azure’ color!

“Although I drank the blood of the Armored Razorback Wyrms in order to activate my Dragonblood in my veins, it was still the Dragonblood that truly caused my power to increase.” Linley secretly mused. How could the energy in the draconic crystal of the Armored Razorback Wyrms compare with the exalted lineage of the Dragonblood Warriors?

A pure Dragonblood Warrior, when transformed, should have azure scales like Wharton did.

Despite having drunk dragon’s blood, upon transforming after having reached the Saint-level, the scales would still trend towards azure.

The massive body of the Tyrant Wyrms flew into the air, once more joining the Thunder Lizard and the Gold Dragon. These three dragons exchanged glances, then turned and looked seriously at Linley. They didn’t have any of their earlier arrogance and boastfulness.

Linley had a better sense for these three Saint-level dragons as well.

The Tyrant Wyrms’ power and strength wasn’t any weaker than that of peak Dragonblood Warrior. The reason why Linley had been able to so easily grab the opponent’s tail wasn’t just through his strength; he had also used his Pulseguard Defense to reduce the opponent’s attack power.

After transforming, the battle-qi in Linley’s body was far more powerful than it had been in the past.

The Pulseguard Defense was naturally even more powerful after transforming as well. Using it to reduce the attack power of the tail before grabbing it allowed him to seemingly easily grab the Tyrant Wyrms’ tail, then send it flying far away.

As for the Thunder Lizard...

Linley was certain that even after transforming, in terms of speed, he was still a level lower than the Thunder Lizard. But the opponent's attacks weren't very strong and thus weren't able to harm him. Naturally, the 'not very strong' attacks was only in reference to someone with Linley's level of terrifying attack power.

Gold Dragons...

This was a race of dragons that was extremely good at using magic. Linley was now certain of it. But what they had done just then was a simple exchange. He still wasn't too clear on the extent of it.

"Done chatting?"

Linley stood there in mid-air, his dark golden eyes staring at the three Saint-level dragons. In a bright voice, he said, "The three of you, do you intend to fight me to the death, or just give me a little bit of draconic blood?"

The three Saint level dragons had already come to a decision. Their leader, the Thunder Lizard, rumbled out, "Linley of the Anarchic Lands, your power has earned our respect. As long as you leave immediately, we can agree to not quibble about what just happened."

Linley's lips quirked upwards.

Twelve years of quiet training had improved his temper quite a bit compared to the past.

"It seems we will have to let our fists do the talking." Linley clenched his fists, and a wave of deep azure battle-qi spread out around Linley, blasting wildly in every direction and causing the entire area to shake.

Linley's dark golden eyes stared coldly at those three Saint level dragons. "Come. I haven't had a true, full-force fight in twelve years. Today...I'll have a good bit of fun with you." Linley's draconic tail swished, causing the air to shudder with each movement.

The three Saint level dragons all stared at Linley.

"That was just one of our simplest teamwork attacks. You had best not really believe you can beat all three of us." The Thunder Lizard rumbled. "Linley, I'll tell you clearly. The name of this technique is called 'Lightning Flashing, Thunder Booming'."

Clearly, this Saint-level Thunder Lizard was totally confident.

Linley stood there in midair like a demonic fiend, not concerned about the three Saint-level dragons in front of him at all.

"Rumble..."

The Thunder Lizard's blue scales began to flash with lightning, and the air itself seemed to have become electrified as lightning snaked everywhere. At the center of it, the Thunder Lizard stared coldly at Linley...and then suddenly, a terrifying, enormous bolt of lightning struck towards Linley.

No. It wasn't a bolt of lightning. It was the Thunder Lizard's body itself!

"Haha..."

Laughing loudly, Linley instantly transformed into countless shadows as he began to move at high speed. The space around Linley seemed to have frozen, while at other times, it seemed to have folded and distorted. The area around him was totally blurred.

The Dragonblood Warrior, Linley, was constantly shifting about.

Relying on his understanding of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, he was actually able to dodge the Thunder Lizard's attack. The dragon passed by Linley, clearly not having hit him at all...but the lightning flashing in the Thunder Lizard's eyes became even more cold and sinister.

"Rumble..." A clap of thunder could be heard.

The thunderclap seemed to appear in Linley's area, as the Thunder Lizard's powerful draconic tail struck wildly and nonstop at Linley. The speed of the tail was far faster than the speed of the Thunder Lizard itself, and Linley didn't have time to dodge at all.

Because of the back-and-forth motion of the attacking tail, the nearby space began to be distorted, creating multiple terrifying thunderous booms.

The draconic tail attack was the real power of the 'Lightning Flashing, Thunder Booming' attack.

Linley's Pulseguard Defense retracted to the thickness of just twenty centimeters, but the power of the Pulseguard Defense didn't lessen at all. It was like an elastic membrane; each time the draconic tail slashed towards him, the Pulseguard Defense was able to neutralize over half of the force.

One or two hits, Linley didn't mind.

But in the blink of an eye, that draconic tail had whipped him a thousand times.

"This speed really is terrifying." Linley was truly speechless. He had never seen such frightening speed. A dragon's tail was also shockingly fast, and naturally, the tail of the speed-focused Thunder Lizard had reached an apex of speed.

"Is Father alright?" The distant Sasha was worried.

"Uncle Bebe, is Uncle Linley...?" Cena was a bit worried as well. They simply couldn't tell clearly what was going on in the battle in the distance. All they heard was constant, awe-inspiring thunderclaps and countless lightning bolts appearing in the area.

Bebe grinned widely, revealing his white fangs.

"Beat it!" Linley let out an angry growl.

And then, with a clapping sound, the Thunder Lizard suddenly retreated at high speed, while at the same time, its draconic tail could no longer attack at high speed...because just then, Linley had landed a full force punch against the Thunder Lizard's tail.

The Thunder Lizard possessed powerful defense. An ordinary power punch wouldn't do anything to it, but Linley's punch included the 'Profound Truths of the Earth'. The cartilage and soft, flexible bones inside the draconic tail had been broken by the vibrations. The Thunder Lizard roared angrily, "Quick!"

The three Saint-level dragons moved in concert in a practiced manner.

"Groooooowl!" An angry howl erupted from the Gold Dragon's mouth.

The Gold Dragon had been collecting energy for a powerful attack this entire time. And now, a pure, thick white spear of light shot down towards Linley from up high. This pure white spear carried with it a terrifying amount of force, and even Linley's face changed slightly.

“Light-style, forbidden magic: ‘Holylight Lance’?”

The power of a single-target forbidden-level spell was shockingly strong.

Linley didn't have the chance to dodge at all. All he could do was watch as the light flashed, and as it did, the huge white spear of light slammed against his body, like a sharp spear slamming against a tough shield. But this spear was the light-style forbidden level spell, ‘Holylight Lance’.

And the shield was a peak Dragonblood Warrior who had the Pulseguard Defense!

“Boom!”

Linley's body was sent flying into the ground. The collision between him and the Holylight Lance had caused invisible cracks in space in every direction, and wherever those cracks in space passed by, the nearby trees and boulders turned into powder.

The cracks were like ripples in water.

Even the earth itself rippled once.

“Careful.”

Bebe immediately used a powerful amount of darkness-style energy to easily stop this omnidirectional ripple attack. Even at such a distance, the ripple still possessed tremendous force, and within a radius of several kilometers, everything had been turned into dust. Not even a single leaf could be seen.

Because the leaves had been turned to dust as well.

“Is he injured?” The Tyrant Wyrms said quietly.

“That was a forbidden-level spell. Even powerful Saints shouldn't be able to take it head on. However, Plaket, since he was able to grab onto your draconic tail, most likely his defense is very powerful.” The Gold Dragon was somewhat uncertain and hesitating as he spoke. “But even if it couldn't kill him, it should have badly injured him.”

“Prepare the final attack.” The Thunder Lizard said quietly.

The Gold Dragon and the Tyrant Wyrms immediately began to prepare. Their ultimate attack was a single combination attack using the power of all three of these Saint-level dragons. This combination attack was so strong that as far as they were concerned...there shouldn't be any expert beneath the Deity level who was capable of blocking it.

The Gold Dragon's massive mouth was mumbling, as though chanting the words to some sort of malediction.

Draconic-language spell!

“Bam!” Linley shot out from the ground like an arrow with grace and speed. Not a single wound could be seen on him. The defense granted to him after transforming by his Pulseguard Defense and his draconic scales was terrifying indeed.

Just then, the forbidden-level spell had broken through his Pulseguard Defense, but the remainder of the power of the spell wasn't able to damage his scales at all.

Suddenly, the world began to shake. An invisible ripple began to emanate from the Gold Dragon's body, then charged directly towards Linley. Linley instantly understood...in the past, Desri had used this exact technique to badly wound Lehman, the Commander of the Zealot Division, and knock him into the lake.

The ultimate attack of the Saint-level Gold Dragon – Soul Shout!

The Pulseguard Defense around Linley's body just barely weakened the power of this invisible ripple, which charged directly against Linley's consciousness.

Now...

In the mysterious depths of his consciousness, a half-translucent, seven-colored crystal floated, surrounded by an endless, ocean-like amount of spiritual energy. This endless amount of spiritual energy slowly flowed about it like water, but with a strange rhythm that seemed to carry the mysteries of the Profound Truths of the Earth within it.

If one was able to carefully inspect it, one would find that the spiritual energy surrounding that seven-colored crystal had an extremely faint layer of azure light protecting it as well.

Currently, that external burst of ripple-like spiritual energy was charging in wildly, with the target being Linley's soul.

“Bang!”

The Gold Dragon's most powerful attack collided with Linley's soul.

When the Gold Dragon used this technique, the Tyrant Wurm once more began to emit hellfire from its body, while at the same time, with a thundering sound, its muscles and bones began to crackle and pop as it gathered a tremendous amount of force.

The Thunder Lizard was very confident. It was certain...that right now, Linley had already had his soul badly damaged. Even if he didn't die, he would be dizzy for a while.

In this sort of situation, Linley wouldn't be able to control his defense at all.

But just as the Tyrant Wurm was preparing its most powerful attack...

“Swish!” Linley, who logically shouldn't have been able to move at all, suddenly transformed into a blur and struck against the exhausted Gold Dragon. With just one mighty fist, he smashed the Saint-level Gold Dragon out of the air and into the ground.

The Tyrant Wurm and Thunder Lizard stared at Linley in shock.

Linley's dark gold eyes swept them with its icy gaze. His voice was calm. “Stop resisting. Plaket, I can tell that the power of the attack you are about to use is definitely ridiculously powerful. However, given your speed, there's no way you will be able to harm me at all.”

How could the Tyrant Wurm not understand this logic?

If he couldn't touch the opponent, what use was even the most powerful of attacks? They had thought that combining this attack with the ‘Soul Shout’ would be perfect, but Linley wasn't affected by the Soul Shout at all. The three Saint-level dragons couldn't believe what they had just seen.

Linley was secretly laughing.

“Spiritual attacks? My ancestors in the Dragonblood Warrior clan were able to reach the Saint-level in just a few decades. They didn’t have a high level of understanding, and their spiritual energy wasn’t very strong either. There are many people in the world capable of ‘spiritual attacks’. So why, then, was our Dragonblood Warrior clan so famous? Why would they be proclaimed as the strongest of Saints?”

The Dragonblood Warriors were the Supreme Warriors who had been blessed by the heavens.

Even Linley’s ancestors, who had ordinary souls, no longer feared spiritual attacks upon reaching the Saint-level. This was because once they Dragonformed at the Saint-level, their souls would be protected by a unique, strange energy possessed only by the Dragonblood Warrior lineage.

This was what a Dragonblood Warrior was! The invincible Dragonblood Warriors!

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 29, Glory

Seeing this godlike, invincible Dragonblood Warrior, the Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and Tyrant Wyrms all began to feel a hint of dread in their hearts.

Right. Dread!

Dread of Linley killing them. These three Saint-level dragons already understood that the Gold Dragon who possessed the most powerful magic amongst them was unable to harm Linley, while the physically most powerful Tyrant Wyrms wasn't able to match him in speed.

As for the Thunder Lizard, someone like Linley with such ridiculous defense was his greatest bane.

“Will we die?”

The three Saint-level dragons didn't know what to do. They didn't think that Linley would spare them, because at the beginning, Linley had been lenient with them, but then the three of them had used their ultimate attacks on him, trying to kill him.

Just then, they truly had wanted to kill Linley. Would Linley spare them?

The three Saint-level dragons didn't think so!

But just then, a calm voice rang out, which to the three of them sounded like music from the heavens. “Choose death, or choose to serve as my mounts for a hundred years.” Linley's dark golden eyes stared at the three Saint-level dragons. Perhaps because of his twelve years of quiet meditation, Linley was now rarely moved to engage in slaughter.

The three Saint-level dragons were unable to deal with Linley. But they would be effective against people of Osenno's level.

The Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and Tyrant Wyrms all secretly sighed in relief. Just a hundred years. To these creatures with an unending lifespan, that was a fairly short time frame. In addition, as magical beasts, they respected the powerful. Linley had defeated the three of them by himself.

Submitting to him wouldn't be considered a stain on their honor.

“Master!”

The three Saint-level dragons lowered their proud heads towards Linley. From far away, the watching Delia, Taylor, Cena, and Sasha all came over, riding on Bebe's back. The kids were cheering happily. Even the mighty Saint-level dragons, in the end, had lowered their heads to Linley, the one who the kids worshipped.

“Father, you are so powerful! Wow! Three Saint-level dragons!” Taylor screamed in excitement.

Sasha and Cena were normally calm, but upon seeing the three massive Saint-level dragons, their eyes shone and they were extremely enthusiastic as well. Bebe sneered, “You three stupid worms, why'd you have to fight against my Boss? You should've just admitted defeat from the start.”

“Hrmp!” The three Saint-level dragons stared furiously at Bebe.

Only now did Linley speak out. “This is my dear brother, ‘Bebe’. He is also a Saint-level magical beast. However, his power is far higher than you three’s. Bebe’s speed is almost on par with yours, Thunder Lizard. He isn’t that far off. But his defense and attack are both greater than that of the Tyrant Wyrms.”

These words utterly stunned the three Saint-level dragons.

Was there such a monster of a magical beast in the world?

Speed almost on par with a Thunder Lizard, and power and defense even more terrifying than a Tyrant Wyrms. How could this sort of magical beast exist?

“You are a rat-type magical beast?” The Saint-level Thunder Lizard said in a low voice, shocked as he stared at Bebe. They didn’t doubt Linley’s words in the slightest. An expert on Linley’s level wouldn’t lie to them.

Bebe nodded.

“But...but...your fur is black. Not violet.” The Thunder Lizard didn’t dare believe it. “In the Yulan continent, there’s only one type of rat-type magical beast at the Saint-level...the legendary Emperor Rat of the Forest of Darkness. But the Emperor Rat’s fur is a violet gold color.”

The place where the most Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice lived was the Forest of Darkness.

“Violet gold?” Bebe suddenly understood. “Oh. You are talking about my friend. He is indeed an Emperor Rat.”

“A black Saint-level rat-type magical beast, this...” The three Saint-level dragons simply couldn’t understand it.

Bebe looked at Linley. “Boss, isn’t it time to be getting back?” Since they had the three Saint-level dragons as steeds now, they could go back and have Cena, Taylor, and Sasha rouse the Dragonblood in their veins.

The Tyrant Wyrms rumbled, “Master, aren’t you going to cast the soul-binding technique?” Only by using the soul-binding technique would one be able to effectively control a magical beast. Since these three dragons had admitted defeat, they were willing to accept the restrictions of the soul-binding technique.

“No need.” Linley said calmly.

Soul-binding technique?

Based on what Linley knew, a person was only capable of having three magical beasts. If he wanted to take over another one, he would then have to release one of his other master-servant relationships with another magical beast. Linley already had two magical beasts. He would at most be able to take another one.

“No need?” The three Saint-level dragons were shocked. Three Saint-level magical beasts were presenting themselves to him, but he didn’t want them?

“I trust you.” Linley said calmly.

The sensation of being trusted was quite a good one.

“We three brothers have agreed to serve as mounts for a hundred years. We definitely will honor our word.” The three Saint-level dragons felt a hint of admiration for Linley in their hearts. Seeing the three Saint-level dragons being so obedient before him, Linley felt a hint of nostalgia.

He still remembered when he was young, his father had led him to read the legends of his clan in the ancestral hall.

“Baruch, the very first Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4560 of the Yulan calendar, outside the walls of the city of Linnan, Baruch did battle against a Black Dragon and a Titanic Frost Wyrn. In the end, he slew both the Titanic Frost Wyrn and the Black Dragon, causing his fame to be spread across the world. In the year 4579 of the Yulan calendar, along the coastline of the northern sea of the continent, Baruch did battle against a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor. On that day, the waves crashed unceasingly and nearby cities crumbled, but after a vicious fight lasting a full day and night, Baruch finally executed the Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor...in the end, Baruch founded the Baruch clan, and became the first leader of the Baruch clan!”

“Ryan Baruch, the second Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4690 of the Yulan calendar, in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he defeated and subdued a Saint-level Golden Dragon, and became known as the Golden Dragonrider Saint! In the year 4697...”

“Hazard Baruch, the third Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. Born in the year 5360 of the Yulan calendar, in his very first battle, he fought fiercely with a Saint-level Bloody-eyed Maned Lion in the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. He defeated the lion, forcing it to scurry away and flee, causing Hazard to become famous throughout the world...”

Linley still remembered how his father had looked.

That look of arrogance and pride.

Pride in his ancestors. Pride in being a descendant of the Dragonblood Warrior clan.

However, his entire life, his father had one regret. He had always dreamed of reclaiming his clan’s ancestral heirloom. Dreamed...that one day, he would witness the rebirth of his clan’s glory.

“Father...can you see this?” Linley murmured in his heart. “I, Linley Baruch, Yulan calendar year 10022, went by myself to the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and fought against three Saint-level dragons and then tamed them.” This record alone surpassed the achievements of his ancestors.

Linley could name himself the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in his clan’s history without any shame.

“If only Father could see this...”

His father had desired his entire life to restore the clan’s glory. When Linley had become an Ernst Institute student, his father had entrusted him with the important tasks of recovering the clan’s ancestral heirloom as well as restoring the clan’s glory. And today...

Linley had done it all!

But his father was gone forever.

“Let’s go. Time to return. The three of you need to shrink a bit.” Linley sighed, then issued the orders.

Instantly, the three Saint-level dragons shrank in size to roughly ten meters or so, the same size as Bebe. With the three dragons in tow, Linley’s group began to fly at high speed north, towards the Anarchic Lands.

The Anarchic Lands. Outside Baruch City. Atop Mt. Blackraven.

“Big brother, your actions really were amazing.” Wharton’s face was covered in shock and joy. “You brought three Saint-level dragons here directly to have them serve as mounts for a hundred years. In the future, our descendants won’t need to go find Saint-level dragons at all.”

Linley laughed.

Indeed, when he had decided to have these three Saint-level dragons serve as mounts for a hundred years, aside from increasing the Saint-level power on his side, part of it was indeed for the reason Wharton stated.

“Big brother.” Wharton was extremely excited. “I have the feeling...that our Dragonblood Warrior clan is about to reclaim our glory of thousands of years ago. Didn’t you say to me that Hodan said in the past, our clan had dozens of Dragonblood Warriors?”

Linley nodded. “Right. Thousands of years ago, our Dragonblood Warrior clan definitely used this same method to produce many Dragonblood Warriors. Dozens of Dragonblood Warriors in one place...the stories of the Four Supreme Warrior clans being able to dominate the Yulan continent definitely weren’t just tall tales.”

How splendid his clan had been! One could just imagine it.

“Unfortunately, the reproductive ability of our Dragonblood Warrior clan is weak.” Wharton sighed.

Indeed. Linley’s grandfather had only a single son, Hogg. Hogg only had two children; Linley and Wharton. It must be understood...in many clans, there would be seven or eight children in each household. But the Dragonblood Warrior clan clearly was different.

Linley and Delia, aside from their twins, hadn’t been able to have a single additional child.

“The heavens have already been kind enough to us. If they also gave us many children...then nobody else would be able to survive in the Yulan continent.” Linley laughed, and Wharton laughed as well. Indeed, a person couldn’t be too greedy.

Linley instructed, “Wharton, let Cena and the other two kids prepare. Tomorrow, the Dragonblood lineage in their veins will be roused.”

Rousing the Dragonblood was a major event. The next day, Haeru and Bebe both stayed obediently at Mt. Blackraven. The three Saint-level dragons, knowing this was Linley’s will, didn’t object at all. To these three massive Saint-level dragons, it was just a little bit of blood. It was nothing at all.

The Tyrant Wurm, Thunder Lizard, and Gold Dragon had all shrunk in size, and were looking at the three kids. Laughing, Linley looked at the three children. “You all know that once you drink live dragon’s blood and rouse the Dragonblood in your veins, the type of blood you drank will have a major impact on your transformation.”

“For example, in the past, I drank the blood of an Armored Razorback Wurm, which is why my knees, forehead, and elbows all sprouted the razor spikes of the Armored Razorback Wurm. And my speed was relatively fast as well. This, too, was thanks to the influence of the Armored Razorback Wurm.” Linley explained in detail. “Think well on your choice.”

Taylor, Sasha, and Cena were all considering this question.

The three of them could choose the same dragon, or they could choose different ones. For these three Saint-level dragons to give all three children blood was very simple.

“Taylor, which one do you choose?” Delia looked at her son.

Taylor carefully looked at the three Saint-level dragons, then focused his gaze on the tyrannical, indomitable Tyrant Wyrn. “I choose the Tyrant Wyrn. He’s so powerful. I like him.” Taylor’s words made the Tyrant Wyrn very happy. “Indeed, I, Plaket, am quite powerful.”

“I choose the Gold Dragon.” Sasha’s clear voice rang out. “The Gold Dragon is so beautiful. Those scales are so slick, they look just like gold.”

“Beautiful?” Linley and Delia exchanged glances.

Their daughter had actually chosen the Gold Dragon for this reason? The Gold Dragon was relatively happy as well. In the past, he would have considered offering his blood as an insult, but now, his master was Linley. For his master’s child to select him meant that they liked him.

Dragons were proud creatures. They hated being inferior to others.

The Thunder Lizard immediately looked at Cena. Cena’s face was as graceful and calm as ever. With a chuckle, he said, “Then I choose the Thunder Lizard.”

Actually, no matter who they chose, the draconic blood would only have some impact at the beginning. The most important thing was still the Dragonblood Warrior lineage.

“The three of you, put the draconic blood into those three small buckets.” Linley pointed to the side at three buckets which were large enough to completely fill one’s belly. To the dragons, however, these three buckets were nothing at all. The Gold Dragon very straightforwardly cracked and plucked off one of its scales.

The Gold Dragon placed the scale above the wooden bucket, and a single drop of fresh blood, the size of a head, dripped down, instantly filling the bucket.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 30, Discovery

The buckets filled with dragon blood were placed in front of the three children, and with a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a large quantity of Blueheart Grass from his ring. The jade green leaves of the Blueheart Grass glimmered with that layer of faint blue light. Linley divided it into three parts, with each part having five clumps.

“Listen up, the three of you.” Linley looked at the three kids.

Cena, Taylor, and Sasha all stood attentively in front of Linley, listening to their elder’s instructions. Linley said, “In a while, drink as much dragon’s blood as possible, until your stomach is totally full. But before doing so, you must eat this Blueheart Grass. Logically speaking, three clumps per person should be enough, but just to be safe, it’s best if you each eat all five.”

“Eat grass?” Sasha wrinkled her nose unhappily.

To let a child eat Blueheart Grass, especially one who had been pampered all her life, would naturally result in some resistance.

“Sis, when Father was in his teens, he had to go all by himself to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts to search for Blueheart Grass and drink the blood of the Armored Razorback Wurm. Father is now placing dragon’s blood in front of us. And you’re afraid to drink it?” Taylor didn’t have any concerns; he immediately grabbed the Blueheart Grass and began to eat it.

With big gulps, he swallowed it all down.

Seeing this, Linley couldn’t help but reveal a hint of a smile on his face. Linley was quite satisfied with his son, Taylor. Although Taylor was rather playful, he was able to work hard and endure bitterness, and he trained hard as well. Taylor wasn’t much weaker than the level Linley had been when Linley was ten.

Cena smiled, then grabbed the Blueheart Grass and began to eat it as well.

“Sasha, it’s fine. The Blueheart Grass’ juice is actually quite cool and refreshing.” Cena said enticingly.

“Oh?” Watched by her father, Sasha picked up the Blueheart Grass and began to chew it. As she chewed, her face turned bitter. “Big brother Cena, you tricked me. The juice is cool, but the leaves make my mouth go numb.” Despite complaining, Sasha still ate it.

Linley and Delia were laughing.

“Glug, glug.” Taylor was the first to lift up that small pail of blood and began to pour it in his mouth. Taylor knew that the more dragon’s blood he drank, the easier it would be to activate the Dragonblood lineage in his veins, and so he drank it all with big gulps and no hesitation.

Cena and Sasha raised up their pails and began to drink as well.

“Glug, glug.” The three children drank dragon’s blood at the same time. This sight caused Linley to sigh endlessly with emotion.

The predecessors cut the firewood, and the successors will not fear the cold.

Linley's hard work had made it possible for these descendants to not have to experience those life and death dangers.

"Ah!" The first one to begin shouting in pain was Taylor. The pail in his hand toppled to the ground, and Taylor was in such pain that he collapsed to the ground as well, rolling around. His face instantly turned white, and beads of sweat began to pour down his face.

Delia's face immediately changed.

"It's fine." Linley reassured Delia.

Delia knew...that the first time a Dragonblood Warrior activated their Dragonblood, they would involuntarily transform. This first transformation would be an extremely painful one. Linley had experienced this pain in the past as well...when the pain reached a certain level, one would pass out. And indeed...

As black scales sprouted out of his body, Taylor fainted.

Immediately afterwards, Cena and Sasha began to scream in agony as well, both of them rolling around on the ground. Blue scales began to slowly emerge from Cena's body. The sensation of scales growing out of nowhere into his body was even more painful than being killed.

"If they can't even withstand such a little bit of pain, what can they possibly accomplish?" Linley quietly watched.

Shortly afterwards, Taylor and Cena had both fully transformed. As for Sasha, who had been the last to drink the dragon's blood, she finally began to transform as well. Taylor's draconic scales were black, as he had inherited the coloration of the Tyrant Wurm. Cena's scales were blue, as the Thunder Lizard was blue.

As for Sasha...

"Linley, look." Delia seemed startled and frightened.

Linley had noticed Sasha's transformation as well. With a rumbling noise, two golden, butterfly-thin wings began to sprout from Sasha's back. This was what she had inherited from the Gold Dragon; it's two massive physical wings. But these faint gold wings made Sasha look like a celestial spirit.

However, those golden scales which covered her entire face made Sasha look very mysterious, especially given that she had that draconic horn on her forehead and that draconic tail, which gave Sasha's Dragonblood Warrior form a domineering aura as well.

....

After a long time, the three children woke up. After waking up, the three kids excitedly stared at themselves and their transformations.

"Whoah, sis, you have wings?" Taylor stared at Sasha jealously.

Sasha liked her wings as well. They were part of her, like her hands. The two wings fluttered slightly, and Sasha gracefully flew into the air, excitedly shouting, "I can fly, I can fly!"

"I feel so powerful." Taylor excitedly punched at a nearby piece of rock, and that rock instantly split apart into tiny pieces. A ten year old child who was able to smash rocks into pieces? No ordinary person would be able to accomplish this.

Cena was extremely excited as well.

“Whoosh!” Moving like a flash, Cena’s body left behind after-images when he moved. He was extremely fast.

Linley, Delia, Wharton, and Nina all laughed as they watched this.

“How marvelous.” The Saint-level Gold Dragon sighed in praise. “Dragonblood Warriors truly are incredible.” The three Saint-level dragons all sighed in amazement at this scene. The legendary Supreme Warriors really were amazing. They could already foresee...in a few decades, these three children would be three Dragonblood Warrior Saints.

After the three children got tired from playing around.

“Mother. Where’s my clothes?” Sasha said to Delia.

The transformation had badly damaged her clothes. Fortunately, Sasha’s pants weren’t damaged; they were just a little dirty. But her upper body clothes had been shattered by those two wings of hers. It was no big deal right now, in Dragonform, but if she returned to her human form, wouldn’t she be totally exposed?

Delia began to laugh.

Linley laughed as he said, “The three of you, listen up. In the future, focus on training in accordance with the Secret Dragonblood Manual. There is one thing, however...generally speaking, you are not to transform into your Dragonforms. In addition, right now, you are weak enough that even in Dragonform, your power won’t amount to much.”

“Yes, Father (Uncle).”

The three children assented.

“Wharton, I’ll hand these three children to you to manage.” Linley looked at his little brother. The three children should live in Baruch City. They were still young, after all. If they were to be made to live in a place like Mt. Blackraven, where almost no others were around, the children wouldn’t be used to it, and their temperaments would be affected as well.

“Alright.” Wharton nodded.

....

Taylor and the others went down the mountain. Two of the three dragons, out of curiosity, decided to go to the Baruch City palace as well. But of course, they shrank in size first. Linley and Delia remained on Mt. Blackraven, living a life of quiet training.

Most of Delia’s time was spent with Linley. Naturally, she would also go to Baruch City to spend time with the kids.

As for Linley...

He might go for months or even half a year at a time without seeing the kids. Normally, he stayed on Mt. Blackraven and trained.

The sky was dark.

Mt. Blackraven. The stone room in the center of the lake. The inside of the room was carefully laid out, and Linley and Delia were holding each other on the bed. “Linley, have you ever asked Bebe to go inquire what that black stone was that he gave us on our wedding day?”

“I had Bebe go ask, but the Emperor Rat only said that it was something that was very good for training.” Linley said.

Delia began to laugh as well. “Alas. I never thought my training as a magus would reach such a speed. My big brother is such a genius, and is being personally taught by the High Priest, and is now an Arch Magus of the ninth rank. As for me, I wasn’t as good as him...but I reached the rank of Arch Magus of the ninth rank before he did. Every day, I feel like my spiritual energy is rising...even when I’m not training, my spiritual energy is slowly increasing. Even I’m scared by how fast I’m improving.”

“Enough, don’t overthink things. Whatever it was that Emperor Rat gave us, we’ll find out soon enough. Alright, it’s late. Let’s go to sleep.”

.....

While Linley was quietly training at Mt. Blackraven and constantly analyzing the Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Earth...in a short mountain three hundred kilometers east of the Baruch Kingdom, two men were carefully inspecting the quality of the soil.

All Kingdoms and Empires needed their own mineral resources to be self-sufficient.

Before the Baruch Kingdom was unified, this region suffered from constant war and was under rapidly changing administrative controls. Today, you’d be in charge of this city; tomorrow, someone else might. Nobody had time or effort to find mineral deposits for mining.

Even if they found them, they would probably be attacked by the neighboring groups and end up dying.

Thus, no one ever went mining.

But after the Baruch Kingdom was founded, they focused on scouting and searching for mineral resources. Those surveyors carefully inspected every inch of the territory within the Baruch Kingdom. In the past twenty years, they had indeed found quite a few metal mines, such as iron mines, copper mines, gold mines, silver mines, and what not. Only, the mines were all of different sizes.

They even found some rather valuable mines, but the output of these mines was relatively low, such as the ‘black iron’ mines and the ‘mithril’ mines.

Having their own mines meant the Kingdom wouldn’t need to acquire materials for forging weapons from other nations.

“Chief, the soil here seems rather unique.” A golden-haired man as skinny as a monkey said in a low voice. The middle-aged man near him carefully inspected the soil as well, then immediately ordered, “Kaya [Ka’ya], let’s go down and do some digging. Let’s dig a bit deeper and see what is there.”

“Yes, Chief.” The young man immediately brought out the tools and began to dig alongside the chief. Although they weren’t very strong, the young man was a warrior of the third rank, while the chief was a warrior of the fifth. Digging, to them, was very simple.

Their digging skills were quite practiced, and the deep hole quickly deepened without widening.

“Clank.” A piercing sound. It seemed they had ground onto some sort of metal.

“Chief, come take a look, quick!” That young man hurriedly said.

The middle-aged man immediately lowered his head to stare. Right now, it was the afternoon, and there was still quite a bit of sunlight. The middle-aged man could clearly see that something was reflecting the light of the setting sun, and he immediately used his hand to push away the nearby dirt and mud.

A half-translucent gem appeared before his eyes.

“This...this is...” The middle-aged man was speechless for a moment, then said in shock, “This is a magicite gem. A magicite gem. Kaya, it’s a magicite gem!”

“What?! Captain, we’re rich! We’re rich!” The young man’s eyes immediately shone with happiness.

Magicite gems were extremely valuable. In truth...magicite cores of magical beasts were very similar to magicite gems. Although they were ‘cores’, they were a type of gem as well. For example, the cores of dragon’s were also often called ‘draconic gems’.

But of course, natural magicite gems couldn’t have the terrifyingly high amount of energy that draconic gems had.

According to the normal market value...

A low-quality magicite gem – 10 gold coins, equivalent to the magicite core of a magical beast of the third rank.

A middle-quality magicite gem – 100 gold coins, equivalent to a magicite core of the fourth or fifth ranks.

A high-quality magicite gem – 1000 gold coins, equivalent to a magical beast core of the sixth rank.

A top-quality magicite gem – 10000 gold coins. Naturally, it couldn’t match up to the magicite core of a magical beast of the seventh rank, which was worth around fifty thousand gold coins. To find magicite gems or cores more valuable than top-quality magicite gems, one would have to go out and kill magical beasts of the seventh or eighth ranks, or even higher.

It could be said...that a magicite gemstone mine was more than ten million times more valuable than ordinary gold mines. This was because when engaging in gold mining, one had to pan for gold, and it was extremely time consuming. But magicite gemstone mines were different. They had large numbers of magicite gems clustered together....

It was as though a large number of magicite cores had clustered together.

In the Yulan continent, the only thing comparable in value to a magicite gemstone mine was a mithril mine.

“We’re going to be rich, Chief! We can fill up a bag of gemstones, and they’d easily be worth over a hundred thousand gold coins. We’re going to be rich!” The young man was wildly overjoyed.

The chief frowned. “Don’t be hasty. This should be a magicite gemstone mine...let’s take a look and see how large this mine is.”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 31: Magicite Gemstone Mine

“Yes, Chief.” The young man suppressed his excitement, forcing himself to continue surveying the area with the chief.

“Here as well.” The Chief’s eyes lit up.

“Chief, there’s magicite gems here as well.” A hundred meters away, the young man, Kaya, was extremely excited. The older man surveyed his surroundings, and then immediately ran next to Kaya, so excited he was panting for breath. “Kaya, this clearly is a magicite gem mine. We’ve discovered that it is at least a few hundred meters wide. Such an enormous magicite mine is rarely seen in the entire Yulan continent.”

Kaya nodded repeatedly as well.

Magicite gems. A single sack of them was more than a thousand times the value of a sack of gold. This definitely was an enormous sum.

Kaya looked at his chief, then scanned the surrounding area. Seeing no one else was here, he immediately lowered his voice and whispered, “Chief, we’re both rich. We were able to find so many gems in the area around us. The price of the gems in this area alone has to be worth several hundred million gold coins, or maybe even more.”

The chief surveyor was also a surveying expert. Naturally he could tell how much this location was worth.

“Kaya, what are you trying to say?” The chief could already see the greedy look appear in Kaya’s eyes.

Kaya suppressed his excitement and hurriedly said, “Chief, think about it...what’s our yearly surveying salary? Now, as long as we keep quiet about it and don’t tell anyone, we can secretly excavate a bag full of gems, then sell them. Then we’d be rich! It would be possible for us to become two of the richest people in the entire Yulan continent because of this mine.”

The more he thought about it, the more excited Kaya became.

There was nothing that could be done. Magicite gems were a hot commodity, and there were many channels for it to be sold through. In addition, even the lowest of magicite gems were worth ten gold coins. One could imagine how valuable this mine was.

“Kaya, calm down. Even if you have money, you have to be alive to spend it.” Just as Kaya was getting so heated up that it seemed to be summer, his chief poured a bucket of verbal ice water over him. Kaya shivered, then looked at his chief. “Chief, what do you mean?”

The chief said seriously, “You should know how tightly we surveyors are managed and overseen. Those senior people are always worried that we will find some valuable mines, then secretly steal from them. The kingdom is extremely strict in its oversight of us.”

Kaya sneered and laughed, “Chief, what are you afraid of? Yes, there is oversight, but all we need to do is to make one trip then leave and never return.”

“You are still too young.” The chief berated him. “You should know that every day, there are records in the headquarters of the areas we have excavated. If we disappear, they would definitely come investigate this area. By then, they would definitely discover the magicite gem mine.”

“And secondly...” The chief looked at Kaya solemnly. “The kingdom has quite a few experts. Once the kingdom discovers what we have done, they would definitely pursue us. Our families would most likely get caught in the mix as well.”

Kaya suddenly remembered that back in Baruch City, his chief had a very good family.

But he, Kaya, was different. His parents had passed away a long time ago in the chaotic wars. He was all by himself, and hadn't yet married. He had nothing tying him down. Kaya was very confident...that he could take away an enormous fortune, and live a life of luxury.

“Kaya.” The chief looked at him. “If we report this to the headquarters, the headquarters will reward us for discovering the mine.”

“How much would the reward be?” Kaya scoffed. “Ten thousand gold coins would be the most we could expect from them.”

Actually, ten thousand gold coins was an enormous sum already. An ordinary family only used a few dozen gold coins a year. Ten thousand gold coins was enough to allow an ordinary family to live off of for a hundred years. But to enjoy the life of a magnate...ten thousand gold coins truly was nothing.

“Hard to say. It depends on the size of this mine. If the magicite gem mine is fairly large, they might give us several tens of thousands of gold coins, or even a hundred thousand gold coins.” The chief tried to persuade him. “Kaya, the gold that the kingdom gives us, we can spend without fear, and we don't have to be forced to leave our home.”

Kaya looked at the magicite gems in the hole beneath them, then looked at his chief. After struggling a long time mentally, he slowly nodded.

A hint of a smile appeared on the chief's face.

The chief thought of his wife and his three kids. He truly didn't want to make the kids go fleeing with him.

But just at this moment, a sharp dagger suddenly thrust out at the chief. Kaya's eyes were filled with a hint of madness. “Die!” But as his dagger stabbed at the chief, Kaya suddenly found that he could no longer push the dagger forward.

Because the chief had seized him by the hand.

Kaya's face instantly changed.

The chief stared at him coldly. And then, he exerted some pressure with his hand. “Crack!” Kaya's hand and wrist was shattered. Kaya howled wildly, while at the same time attacking the chief with his left hand. Sadly...he was a warrior of the third rank, while the chief was of the fifth.

The difference was too great.

“Bang!”

The chief, with a simple punch, hit Kaya in the chest. A bone-splintering sound was heard while Kaya went flying backwards, slamming against the floor. Kaya's chest was caved in and blood was flowing from his mouth.

“You....” Kaya’s life was fading from his body. He truly couldn’t accept it...he had ambushed the chief at such a close range. Clearly, the chief had been ready for him.

The chief sighed as he looked at Kaya. “Kaya, if I was twenty years younger and didn’t have anything holding me back, perhaps I would have made the same choice as you, to abscond with a large amount of treasure and leave and become a magnate. Thus, I understand how you are feeling.”

The chief had guessed that Kaya would ambush him, and thus had been on high guard, and the battle-qi in his body had been activated as well.

Kaya listened to these words, and then his eyes turned dim. He had no life left in him.

The chief sighed and shook his head as he looked at Kaya’s body. But he didn’t mind too much; when he was young, the Baruch Kingdom hadn’t yet been founded. He had killed quite a few people, and he was rather used to it. For the sake of letting one’s self live a good life, far too many people had lost their lives.

The chief immediately covered up the hole with dirt, then turned and left at high speed to the nearby Nifeng City.

The news that the Baruch Kingdom’s small city of Nifeng had discovered a magicite gem mine quickly spread throughout the kingdom. The area around the mine had been immediately sealed off by thousands of soldiers, forbidding anyone from going near it. They quietly awaited orders from the capital.

Mt. Blackraven.

Wharton was running at high speed through the mountain. He passed through the thick woods, then followed the creek to the place where Linley was training.

“Big brother.” Wharton called out from afar.

Linley, who was meditating in the center of the lake, couldn’t help but open his eyes. Seeing Wharton, a hint of a smile appeared on his face. “Wharton, what has you here in such a rush?”

“Big brother, make a trip with me.” Wharton hurriedly said.

“Little Wharton, what’s going on?” Bebe popped out of a nearby wooded area.

Wharton explained, “Big brother, in the eastern borders, our people have discovered a large magicite gemstone mine. Right now, the scope of the deposit is at least a thousand meters wide. And that’s just the surface layer. Exactly how large it is...hard to say. But even if it’s just a thousand meters wide, the value of it is definitely several billion gold coins!”

“Oh?” Linley was shocked. “There’s such a large magicite gem deposit?”

Magicite gemstones weren’t like iron or copper deposits. Magicite gemstones usually formed only after countless years of accumulating elemental energy. They would constantly compress it...and then finally take form. Some magicite gemstone deposits were only a few dozen meters in diameter.

“Let’s go, big brother.” Wharton said repeatedly.

“Alright, let’s go together.” As soon as Linley spoke, Bebe chimed in. “I’m going too.”

Wharton immediately laughed. “Bebe, if you go, I won’t have to Dragonform.” Wharton, being at the ninth rank, still couldn’t fly unless Dragonformed. But Dragonforming would ruin his clothes.

“Fine.” Bebe agreed easily.

Bebe’s body immediately grew larger. Wharton mounted on his back, and then the three of them flew at high speed towards the east. The current flying speed of Linley and Bebe was so great that in the amount of time it took to drink a cup of tea, they traversed the three hundred plus kilometers.

“Below.” Wharton pointed at the large area protected by a heavy guard.

Linley nodded slightly, and the three of them immediately descended. Seeing people fly over, the soldiers didn’t dare to be too rash. Their leader ran over. Sadly, this senior captain had never seen Wharton before.

“Are you...Lord Linley?”

Seeing Bebe shrink then hop onto Linley’s shoulders, many soldiers let out surprised shouts. This black Saint-level mouse had virtually become Linley’s insignia! He was a legendary figure in the Baruch Kingdom, its spiritual support!

Linley’s influence was tremendous.

“Right. I am Linley. This is Wharton, your King.” Linley laughed calmly.

Wharton resignedly stretched out his arms, which immediately became covered with azure scales. This was more convincing than any verbal proof. Dragonblood Warrior transformation...only the descendants of the Baruch clan could do this.

“Your Royal Majesty. Lord Linley.”

Loud voices rang out.

Wharton said calmly, “Enough. Keep guarding. My brother and I are going to scan this area.”

“Yes.” The surrounding soldiers raised their heads and their chests, keeping their backs straight. All of them wanted to make a good impression in front of their King and in front of this legendary Saint, Linley. Linley, meanwhile, had already begun to spiritually scan this area.

The nearby Wharton just looked at Linley.

“How huge.”

Linley was stunned as he delved deep into the ground with his spiritual sense. Spiritual energy could easily pierce through material barriers, but material barriers would still lessen the range of the spiritual energy much more than air did. After all, in the air, spiritual energy could scan at a range of ten kilometers.

But scanning solid, material barriers lowered that range to one kilometer.

“Big brother, what is it?” Wharton said softly.

Linley cracked a smile. “It seems...I need to take this a bit more seriously.”

Wharton was astonished.

He instantly understood Linley’s meaning. This magicite gemstone mine was so vast that Linley’s casual spiritual energy scan wasn’t able to totally investigate the size and scope of this deposit.

“Big brother’s spiritual energy is capable of covering a very wide area, even through the ground. How large is this deposit exactly?” Wharton’s heart began to shake.

Linley was now using his spiritual energy to scan at full strength.

A full strength scan was very taxing on spiritual energy. Thus, unless there was some special reason, experts rarely would use spiritual energy on such a scale.

Finally...

Linley finished the investigation of this terrifying magicite gemstone deposit.

“How frightening. What a terrifyingly large magicite gem deposit.” Linley had clearly discovered...this magicite gem deposit was an oval, round shape. But of course, in the area around the ‘oval’, there were still some scattered, random deposits.

One of the nearby deposits was fairly close to the ground, perhaps just three or four meters away from the ground.

This massive deposit was over twenty kilometers wide!

Even someone who had trained to Linley’s level of understanding couldn’t help but feel his heart rate quicken. Linley secretly let out a breath, then looked at Wharton. Wharton asked softly, “Big brother, how is it?” Linley immediately walked to the side. “Talk about it over here.”

Wharton and Linley came to a quiet, secluded place.

“Big brother, how big is it?” Wharton was somewhat frantic.

Linley said seriously, “Very big...larger than any magicite gem deposit previously discovered in the Yulan continent. At least ten times bigger.”

Wharton was shocked. After all, in the past there had been deposits that were one or two kilometers in size. To be ten times larger than those deposits...”

“This magicite gem deposit is at least twenty kilometers in length. In addition, it’s very deep as well...based on my calculations, this magicite gem deposit should definitely be worth at least several hundred billion gold coins.” Linley felt his heat tremble as he just thought about this number.

Several hundred billion gold coins?

“Good heavens.” Wharton found it hard to breathe as well.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 32: Joining Forces

The largest magicite mine in the history of the Yulan continent was actually discovered by the Baruch Kingdom which had only been erected for twelve years.

“The Anarchic Lands have been an area of constant warfare and battle. In thousands of years, not a single power has had the chance to do some excavating and mining. I didn’t expect that in this area that I unified, we would immediately find such a large mine.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh with amazement.

But at the same time, Linley felt rather curious.

Magicite deposits were formed from a large amount of elemental essence that was slowly compressed to the point of taking solid gemstone form. To create such a huge magicite mine would require an enormous amount of natural elemental essence. Why was it that there would be so much natural elemental essence here?

But when Linley had scanned the area with his spiritual energy, he hadn’t found anything unique about the ground below.

“Not good.” Wharton’s face changed.

“What is it?” Linley looked at Wharton in surprise, and Bebe did the same as well. “Little Wharton, we just found such a huge magicite mine. Why do you say, ‘not good?’”

Wharton shook his head. In a serious voice, he said, “Big brother, you say this magicite mine is worth hundreds of billions of gold coins. Aside from the financial aspect, the most important aspect of magicite mines is...they can be used in warfare. You should know this, right?”

Linley nodded.

“You are talking about magicite cannons?” Linley asked.

Magicite cannons were created from a sort of alchemy and metalsmithing. They allowed the usage of magic on a wide scale without requiring top-tier Arch Magi. In the past, the Holy Capital of Fenlai City had magicite cannons, but alas, on Apocalypse Day, even Saint-level magical beasts had descended, as well as a large number of flying beasts...this made it so that there was no time for the magicite cannons to begin firing.

In truth, magicite cannons were a type of extremely effective attack in warfare.

For example, some top-quality magicite cannons could consume a large amount of magicite gems and, with each blast, unleash power equivalent to a spell of the seventh or eighth rank, easily killing hundreds of people. On the battlefield, if one could emplace ten large magicite cannons and release a few blasts...

The enemy forces could instantly be reduced by ten thousand soldiers. This would have a huge impact on the outcome of the battle.

But magicite cannons were a bottomless, money-sucking pit. The amount of magicite gems they consumed was simply terrifying. In the past, when the Baruch Kingdom had unified this area, the enemies didn’t use any magicite cannons, because an impoverished area like this simply couldn’t afford to use them.

With each blast from the magicite cannons, magicite gems would be consumed. And these things were more valuable than gold!

“A small amount of magicite gems can be purchased by gold.” Wharton’s face was solemn. “But a large amount would be restricted and monitored by the Empires. They wouldn’t permit any outsiders to purchase them. Although some people engage in smuggling, how much can that amount to?”

Linley nodded. How could a nation allow an enemy nation to purchase military supplies from them in large scale?

Wharton said seriously, “It is easy to buy magicite cannons, and our in truth, given our kingdom’s strength, if we spend some money, we can make our own. With such a magicite mine combined with magicite cannons...our military power would become truly astonishing.”

There were still very few magi, after all. The testing procedure Linley had gone through in the past was testament to that.

After becoming a magus, to reach the seventh rank or even higher? That was even less likely. In the continent, only the great Empires, the Holy Union, and the Dark Alliance were capable of forming entire magi corps.

Linley’s Baruch Kingdom didn’t have the ability to set up this sort of corps either.

But magicite cannons...ten large magicite cannons, if one had enough magicite gems, wouldn’t be one whit inferior to a magi corps.

“Big brother.” Wharton looked at Linley. “You should know that in the continent, the four Empires and the other kingdoms, in their struggles, will not use Saints unless it becomes a life or death war. If Saints do not get involved...then magicite cannons will have the ability to change the course of a battle. If the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows discovers that we now have the largest magicite mine in the entire Yulan continent, then...”

Linley’s expression turned grave as well.

His long time spent training had caused him to forget about worldly battles.

“You are right. Once the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows finds out, they might even join forces to attack our Kingdom.” Linley sensed the threat as well now. In the past, they had agreed that in normal battles, Saints were not permitted to get involved.

Then...

How could the Baruch Kingdom, with a population of just a hundred million, possibly outfight the combined forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, which controlled a far greater population?

The two sides dominated a larger territory than Linley as well, and those were richer areas with higher populations. The total population which the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows controlled was definitely in the four to five hundred million range.

“Big brother, what should we do?” Wharton looked at Linley.

Linley’s eyes shone with a cold light. “No need to overthink it. Right now, we need to come up with ways to buy magicite cannons. I’ll have the Dawson Conglomerate help out! And then, we need to, in strict confidence, begin mining. If the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows truly comes, then we’ll rely on magicite cannons to support our smaller army.”

“Alright, big brother.” Wharton’s eyes lit up as well.

Linley had already made the decision that no matter what, they could not hide or cower.

Soon, a large number of people were dispatched to this area to begin mining magicite. At the same time, a large number of soldiers remained on guard here. When mining, the miners were not permitted to engage in any outside activities. Naturally, their salaries were extremely high as well.

To outsiders, all they announced was that they had discovered a fairly valuable mineral deposit.

The Baruch Kingdom’s code of silence was quite effective. A full month went past without this information being leaked. However, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had quite a few spies planted in the Baruch Kingdom. Occasionally, some news would leak out. In the end, the Radiant Church found out the truth of the news from the family members of the miners.

Within a graceful, noble manor.

“The largest magicite mine in the Yulan continent? At least ten kilometers in size?” A silver-haired youth was reading the letter in his hands. His expression immediately changed, and the more he read, the more serious his face became.

This silver-haired youth seemed to be quite young, but in reality, not even Heidens and Osenno were older than him.

This was because...he was a Saint-level Angel of the Radiant Church. Three thousand years ago, he had descended to the Yulan continent. Although his power as an Angel had not increased, and his potential couldn’t compare to humans, the long time he had spent here resulted in his intelligence and wisdom being as high as any human’s.

Arfan [A’fang], a Four-Winged Angel, the current leader of the Radiant Church’s forces in the Anarchic Lands.

“Good news.” Arfan’s face revealed a hint of a smile, then he immediately instructed the person who had delivered the message, “Immediately go and leak this news to the Cult of Shadows. See what their response is.”

“Yes, milord.” The middle-aged man said respectfully.

Arfan nodded slightly.

If the Cult of Shadows was interested in attacking the Baruch Kingdom, that would naturally be a wonderful affair. Even if they didn’t attack, informing them wouldn’t be of detriment to the Radiant Church.

“Deliver this news to the Holy Isle immediately. Let the Holy Isle give us orders as to what we should do next!” Arfan ordered. He knew...the decision on such an important matter in the Anarchic Lands had to come from the Holy Isle.

Soon...

The order from the Holy Isle arrived.

Arfan read the missive. It was exactly as he had anticipated.

“Join forces with the Cult of Shadows and attack the Baruch Kingdom. We have to get at least a third of the magicite mine’s output. That’s our bottom line.” The order was very simple. After all, many things didn’t

have to be said openly. As the manager for this area, Arfan naturally was no fool. For example, he would do his best to let the Cult of Shadows expend more energy and power.

Arfan smiled. He thought to himself, "It seems that it is time to reply to the Cult of Shadows."

A while ago, when he had sent someone to leak this news to the Cult of Shadows, the Cult of Shadows had responded quite quickly...they had immediately invited Arfan to go and discuss this matter. Arfan hadn't immediately answered them, instead asking them to wait. And now, he had the Holy Isle's orders.

Everything could begin now.

An ordinary, unremarkable little city. An ordinary little courtyard. The Saint-level Four-Winged Angel, Arfan, and the Senior Judge of the Cult of Shadows, O'Casey. The two were seated opposite from each other, drinking wine.

"Not bad. The taste and the texture are exquisite. It should be from the Yulan Empire's Blueflow Winery, right?" O'Casey laughed.

"Mr. O'Casey truly knows his wine." Arfan laughed calmly. "Let's not beat around the bush. Today, you have invited me here, Mr. O'Casey, to discuss the issue of the Baruch Kingdom's magicite mine. What do you wish to say, Mr. O'Casey?"

O'Casey winked at Arfan, then took a sip of wine in satisfaction. "Mr. Arfan, would you mind if I took some of this wine with me when I leave? I think I...have fallen for it."

Arfan frowned. He felt a hint of frustration.

But since this was a negotiation, he had to endure it.

"Mr. O'Casey, could it be that you wish to discuss wine with me until nightfall?" Arfan said seriously.

O'Casey looked at Arfan and began to laugh loudly. "Mr. Arfan, I was just jesting with you. Right. The Cult of Shadows does indeed have some thoughts regarding the Baruch Kingdom's magicite mine. However...we don't wish to engage in warfare against the Baruch Kingdom."

"You don't?" Arfan looked carefully at O'Casey.

What was this O'Casey planning? He didn't want to engage in battle with the Baruch Kingdom? Then what was the point of this meeting?

"Mr. O'Casey, what do you mean?" Arfan's face sank.

O'Casey smiled. "Actually, Arfan, you should understand. All we have to do is send some people to the Baruch Kingdom and say... 'the Radiant Church is preparing to attack the Baruch Kingdom, and has invited the Cult of Shadows to come along with them. As long as the Baruch Kingdom is willing to give up some of the gems, then the Cult of Shadows is prepared to stay out of the game and help neither side. If you are willing to give up a bit more, we can even help you deal with the Radiant Church.'"

O'Casey looked at Arfan, who now had an ugly expression on his face. "Arfan, tell me. What would Linley and Wharton choose?"

Arfan was silent.

"The enmity which Linley has with the Radiant Church isn't a small one." O'Casey said freely.

Indeed. O'Casey's words were correct. Linley's side probably truly would be willing to give some magicite gems to the Cult of Shadows, or perhaps even a large amount to have the Cult of Shadows help them deal with the Radiant Church together.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were opposed to each other, after all.

Arfan knew that right now, the situation was very unfavorable for them.

"Mr. O'Casey." Arfan looked seriously at O'Casey. "Do you know how much that magicite mine truly contains?"

"I don't know, but it should be several times larger than the former top magicite mine." O'Casey said. Very few people knew the exact size of the mine. After all, it hadn't been fully excavated yet. Only someone like Linley who could scan the area with his spiritual energy could clearly understand the size of it.

But how would the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows dare to send a Saint-level expert and risk irritating Linley?

Perhaps Linley would immediately kill that Saint.

After all, in their previous agreement, they only said that Saints could not participate in battles. But Linley was still permitted to kill other Saints.

Arfan nodded. "Since you don't know the size of the magicite mines, then even if Linley gives your Cult of Shadows a seemingly-large quantity of magicite gems, you won't actually know what percentage of the total mine it is."

"True." O'Casey admitted to it.

Linley might only declare the size of the mine as being a fraction and worth only a few hundred billion gold coins, with the actual mine being ten times larger. After all, no one knew exactly how large it was...it would be easy for Linley to lie to them.

"As long as we join forces against the Baruch Kingdom, later on, we'll split the magicite mine fifty-fifty, no matter how large it is." Arfan said.

"Half?" O'Casey shook his head. "Seventy-thirty. Us seventy, you thirty."

Arfan said coldly "O'Casey, don't go too far. If we split it in half, we'll be able to work and coordinate better in the future." O'Casey winked at him, then laughed, "Since that's the case...then I'll go help Linley's side. We won't have to risk a thing, and we'll get a large amount of magicite gems."

Arfan frowned.

"Sixty for you. Forty for us. One word: Yes, or no?" Arfan's face was very grave.

O'Casey looked at Arfan, then raised his wineglass. Smiling, he said, "Mr. Arfan, come. Let us toast our joining forces!"

Arfan's face revealed a smile.

"Cheers." He raised his wineglass as well.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, for the sake of the enormous riches within that magicite mine, had joined forces. This was proof that there was no such thing as 'eternal allies' or 'perpetual enemies'; only

eternal and perpetual interests. And these interests could sometimes be money, sometimes be power, and sometimes be affection.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 33: Calling the Troops, Summoning the Generals

The Anarchic Lands. The Radiant Church's territory. On a public road, an endless army procession was moving forwards, with military officers riding on magical beasts or powerful stallions barking at the soldiers in that massive, endless line.

“Move faster!” Brandishing their whips in the air, the military officers had very strict expressions on their faces.

A forced march!

They remembered the order they had been given. They had to hurry towards the prefectural city of Sherry as quickly as possible. Outside the boundaries of the prefectural city of Sherry was the location where the Baruch Kingdom and the Radiant Church were going to do battle. This was also the place closest to the magicite mines that the Radiant Church had access to.

The mobilization of this grand army couldn't be hidden from the Baruch Kingdom. Naturally, they had to move quickly.

Right now, at the boundaries of Sherry, twenty thousand soldiers had already assembled. These hastily assembled soldiers were permitted a day or two of rest after hurrying over here, and then they would be also be sent to do battle.

“We're going to fight a full on war against the Baruch Kingdom.”

Within a quiet, secluded manor, Cardinal Guillermo was staring at the northern skies. The person responsible for this battle wasn't Arfan. It was Guillermo. After all, in terms of influence amongst the masses, Cardinal Guillermo had more.

And...

Saints were not permitted to get involved in this battle. Arfan would be useless, but Guillermo, as an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, would be able to make a major impact.

“What a true pity. The young man who could've become of great use to the Radiant Church has become our greatest foe.” Guillermo sighed in his heart. He had personally watched Linley grow up, and grow from being a genius magus of the seventh rank to an expert who could kill Clayde, a warrior of the ninth rank.

After being dormant for many years?

He killed six Angels of the ninth rank, and then became an earth-shaking figure in the O'Brien Empire. And then...he founded the Baruch Kingdom in the Anarchic Lands.

“Twenty years have passed. This Linley is now so powerful that even the Praetor and the others are remaining in hiding in the Holy Isle, afraid to come out.” Guillermo mused to himself.

“Milord?” A knight saluted him respectfully, calling out his name in a reminding manner.

Guillermo awoke from his musings. Glancing at the knight, he said, "Let's go. Come with me to the border with the prefectural city of Sherry. Let's go see the Dark Cardinal of the Cult of Shadows, and see if Dark Cardinal Weiss Porter [Wei'si Bo'te] has improved over the past few decades."

.....

The royal capital, Baruch City. The royal palace.

Wharton, Linley, Barker and the others were standing in a line in the main hall. There was a giant army map in the middle of the hall, and a middle-aged man was currently aiming a pointer on top of it. "Milords, the magicite mine is here. If it is just the Radiant Church that attacks us...the place we should choose to fight at is the prefectural city of Sherry."

Linley and the others all nodded.

"However..." The middle-aged man shook his head. "Unless the Radiant Church's commander has gone stupid, they won't choose to attack here."

"Oh?" Barker raised an eyebrow.

The middle-aged man continued, "The magicite mine is over three hundred kilometers away from the capital, while the prefectural city of Sherry is four or five hundred kilometers away from the capital. This is a straight line! If they had to fight their way from the prefectural city of Sherry to the magicite mine, they would have to travel nearly a thousand kilometers if they followed the road. On the road to the mines, there are over ten cities, large and small. The Radiant Church would battle us for a thousand kilometers, deep within our territory? Nearly half their forces have to remain in their garrisons with their borders with the O'Brien Empire and the Rohault Empire. Only half are available to attack us."

"Therefore, our military strength is roughly on par."

The middle-aged man pointed at Sherry. "At the same level of power, if we are to guard inside our city walls while they attack...and they are forced to fight through our territory for thousand kilometers...they would be asking for death."

"Therefore, if the Radiant Church wishes to attack us, they only have one option. Join forces with the Cult of Shadows. They have no other options!" The middle-aged man took a deep breath, the pointer in his hands slashing to the side. "The Cult of Shadows shares a border of over a thousand kilometers with us. The closest place to our magicite mine, without question, is right here!"

"The prefectural city of Cod [Ke'de]!" The middle-aged man pointed at a spot.

"The magicite mine is outside the small city of Nifeng. Nifeng City is one of the small cities under the control of the prefectural city of Cod. From Cod to the mines is a distance of only a hundred kilometers." The middle-aged man had a serious look on his face. "If they break through our defenses here, it would be smooth sailing for them to charge to the magicite mines!"

Linley nodded slightly.

This general explained things very clearly.

"Watts [Wa'ci]." Wharton suddenly said. "If I were to give you full authority to direct the battle as you please, would you be confident in your ability to win?"

Barker also said, "In addition, I can also provide you with over thirty magicite cannons. I'll be responsible for handling the problem of bringing you the necessary magicite gems." Barker had a very high status in the

Baruch Kingdom. He was the one and only Grand Marshal of the Kingdom, and his personal power was also quite terrifying.

Soon after Linley had reached the Saint-level in his human form, Barker had as well. Once he transformed...he was a peak Undying Warrior Saint. Barker, who already had mastered the 'impose' level, wasn't any bit weaker than Osenno.

Hearing that they had over thirty magicite cannons, Watts' eyes lit up.

Watts jutted his chest out and said firmly, "Your Highness, as long as you give me the authority to command our five hundred thousand soldiers, I have full confidence in my ability to hold our ground at the prefectural city of Cod and repulse the enemies."

"Very good." Wharton revealed a hint of a smile on his face.

The Baruch Kingdom actually had over a million warriors, not even counting the ordinary city guards.

"Your Highness." Watts said solemnly. "I'm worried...that the enemy will come with a force more terrifying and more powerful than we expected. If something like this happens and an irresistible force comes, standing our ground would be dangerous."

"A terrifying force?" Wharton was puzzled.

"Right. For example, if a Saint was to appear, or if one of the legendary, powerful magus corps of the Radiant Church was to be sent here, we would be in great danger." Watts said solemnly.

Both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had spent tremendous time and effort in cultivating their magus corps. These two sides all had powerful magus corps, and the weakest member of these corps was of the seventh ranks, while the highest were Arch Magi of the ninth rank.

A corps of over a thousand powerful magi, with several Arch Magi of the ninth rank commanding them, could cast terrifyingly powerful magic spells.

The power of such a corps wasn't one whit inferior to a 'forbidden-level' spell of a Grand Magus Saint.

This was also why, with the Empires normally not permitting Saints to get involved in battles, magus corps had become a terrifyingly powerful force.

"The enemy Saints will not appear."

Linley spoke out.

Watts immediately looked at Linley. Seeing that it was Linley who had spoken, he immediately became very respectful. Linley laughed calmly. "Don't worry. Neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows will send Saints out, at least. Also...as for those terrifying magus corps you spoke of..."

"If they want to produce forbidden-level magic attacks...don't worry, they won't be able to." Linley said calmly.

Although they had previously agreed that Saints were not to be permitted to get involved in battle, Linley knew exactly how powerful forbidden spells were. A single spell could perhaps destroy the entire prefectural city of Cod, and a terrifyingly high number of people would die. Linley wouldn't be so obstinate and stubborn as to allow an entire city's worth of people, over a million lives, to die because of an agreement.

Were the lives of a million people of less value than an agreement?

What's more.

These so-called agreements between countries were only binding and effective when nations were on equal levels of strength. If one side was overwhelming powerful, even if they ripped the agreement to shreds and immediately attacked, so what? This was something that was quite commonly seen in the Yulan continent.

But of course, Linley would only do such a thing if the enemy magus corps jointly cast spells to create an effect on par with a forbidden spell.

....

As the commanding general, information constantly flowed to Watts, and he issued one order after another to his subordinates.

The news that the Radiant Church's forces had arrived outside the prefectural city of Sherry quickly spread to him.

Could it be...that the Radiant Church really was going to attack the prefectural city of Sherry?

"The prefectural city of Sherry already had an army there. Send another army over. The two legions will have a total of two hundred thousand soldiers...stand your ground inside the city, and destroy the trees around the prefectural city of Sherry. Don't give the enemy a place to hide and launch ambushes against us."

"The prefectural city of Sherry definitely isn't the place where the enemy will launch their real attack. They are just trying to tie down our forces. All we need to do is stand our ground."

The Cult of Shadows acted exactly as Watts had predicted. Indeed...they soon joined the fray.

"The bridge ahead of the prefectural city of Cod must be destroyed. Also, the roads around the prefectural city of Cod must also be destroyed. Don't give any avenue for the enemy forces to easily travel towards us. Force them to attack Cod directly." This order did indeed cause quite a bit of frustration to the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

"Within the city of Cod itself, all the civilians must be relocated. The prefectural city of Cod must become a military fort and must be internally reconfigured for war."

One order after another came from the military headquarters, and they were carefully carried out by each of the supervisors in each location. An order came to the magicite mines as well. "Increase the level of production. Mine at the maximum possible speed. No need to continue to try and disguise your activities."

In the prior twelve years, the three powers in the Anarchic Lands had only engaged in small-scale battles. They had never engaged in something like today's struggle. Even before the battle started, the mobilized forces had already reached a terrifyingly high number. Clearly...

This battle was not for training purposes. It was the real deal.

In the endless skies, a blue-robed Linley could be seen flying through the air at high speed in the direction of the Cult of Shadows. Linley knew where O'Casey lived; the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands, a seemingly ordinary Shadow Temple.

Linley's gaze was cold.

"O'Casey actually agreed to the Radiant Church's offer. Hrmph!"

Linley didn't understand this, but the Cult of Shadows actually had no choice either. If they helped Linley, then the Radiant Church's power would essentially be destroyed here in the Anarchic Lands. They feared that at that time, Linley would suddenly turn on them.

It must be understood...

Linley's side now consisted of Linley, Bebe, the Barker brothers, and Barker who had reached the Saint-level in his human form. This Saint team was simply too powerful. The Cult of Shadows wouldn't be able to outfight them.

If Linley really did turn on them and ignored their earlier agreement, what would the Cult of Shadows be able to do?

They knew that Desri was actually biased towards Linley.

Linley's Saints were simply too powerful. Only if both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were present would Linley be cautious. Once one of the two sides were destroyed, then most likely both would be finished.

"Saint-level experts cannot participate in battles or kill ordinary people, but I can still kill Saints myself." Linley stared at the distant Shadow Temple. "I'll use death to threaten O'Casey. Perhaps that'll help him to wake up."

Linley used his spiritual energy to scan the entire Shadow Temple.

"Hrm, no one there?"

Linley frowned. The energy around his body began to roil about, and like a flash of lightning, Linley caused the window to shatter soundlessly to dust which then drifted downwards. Linley entered the room.

"Where's O'Casey?" Linley looked calmly at the golden-haired old man in front of him.

The golden-haired old man was one of the most powerful members of the Shadow Temple; a Saint. But he was only a mid-stage Saint, far weaker than O'Casey.

"Linley?" The old man smiled. "Lord O'Casey ordered me to wait for you here, Lord Linley. Let me introduce myself. I am a Four-Winged Fallen Angel of the Cult of Shadows."

Linley looked calmly at the old man.

The old man's attitude was very humble. "Lord O'Casey ordered me to inform you that this battle is unavoidable. As for Lord O'Casey himself, he has already returned to the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows. I am the only Saint remaining here belonging to the Cult of Shadows."

Linley frowned.

O'Casey actually fled back home.

"You aren't afraid that I'll kill you?" Linley stared at the old man. A Four-Winged Fallen Angel.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 34: A Beast of Burden?

Under Linley's gaze, the Four-Winged Fallen Angel only smiled. "Lord Linley is currently a ranking member of the most powerful experts in the entire Yulan continent. I think you most likely wouldn't lower yourself to attack me." The Four-Winged Fallen Angel was nothing more than a mid-stage Saint, after all.

Even twelve years ago, Linley and Bebe could have effortlessly killed this Four-Winged Fallen Angel.

"Help me send a message to O'Casey." Linley glanced at the old man.

"Lord Linley, please tell me what you need." The old man said humbly.

Linley said calmly, "He has chosen to join forces with the Radiant Church. This is an extremely foolish act. In the future, he will definitely regret it."

The old man nodded. "I will definitely convey your words to Lord O'Casey. However, I also want to tell you something, Lord Linley. In reality, in the Anarchic Lands, the threat you pose to us is even greater than the Radiant Church."

"Oh?" Linley laughed.

He understood their meaning. Right now, the only people who posed a threat to him in the Yulan continent were the Five Prime Saints. Linley's understanding of the Laws wasn't a match for those Five Prime Saints. After all, whether it was the Profound Truths of the Earth or the Profound Truths of the Wind, he had only reached the level of Higginson and Hayward.

However, the natural abilities of the Dragonblood Warriors were simply too great.

Dragonblood Warriors were ten times stronger than ordinary people to begin with. Thus, even though the Five Prime Saints had a much greater understanding of the Laws...if they were to truly fight against each other, it would be hard to say who was stronger and who was weaker.

Neither the Cult of Shadows nor the Radiant Church had an expert capable of fighting Linley one on one.

Linley being in such a strong position naturally filled the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows with fear. Naturally, these two organizations would secretly have the desire to work together. After all, no matter how much territory they held...it was the experts of the organizations that determined their fate.

"I understand what you mean." Linley suddenly felt that the Four-Winged Fallen Angel was rather amusing. "However, I don't have much interest in territory. Your Cult of Shadows doesn't need to fear too much if you ally with the Baruch Kingdom."

The old man shook his head. "Lord Linley, an expert such as yourself isn't interested in worldly power, but what about your little brother, King Wharton? Even if your little brother isn't interested, what about the successors to the Baruch Kingdom? They will continuously expand their territory and have the desire to unify the entire Anarchic Lands."

Linley was briefly startled...and then he laughed.

“You are an interesting fellow.” Linley chuckled as he glanced at the old man, then turned and disappeared from the room.

After Linley left, the old man secretly let out a sigh of relief. Although from start to finish, Linley hadn’t acted against him at all, even just standing there, he had given the Fallen Angel a sense of dread...he understood that the difference in power between the two was simply too great.

Within the prefectural city of Cod. Right now, a large number of civilians were being evacuated. The prestige of the royal clan of the Baruch Kingdom was very high. Once the order came down, given how imminently threatening the chance of war was, these civilians all obediently evacuated.

Of course, their future homes would all be arranged for.

What was previously a three-story hotel had become the military command center for the prefectural city of Cod. Watts was standing in front of the third floor window, staring down at the evacuation. In his heart, he secretly let out a sigh. He understood...that the homes of these civilians would definitely be destroyed.

To make the prefectural city of Cod a military fort, many residential homes had to be destroyed, and tunnels and pits were dug everywhere.

Although the King had spent an enormous amount of money for the sake of relocating these civilians, for them to give up the homes they had spent twelve years establishing still deeply hurt these civilians.

“Under the unifying force of the kingdom, their lives are much better than twelve years ago.” Watts looked like he was a middle-aged man, but in reality he was in his nineties. He knew exactly how chaotic the Anarchic Lands had been in the past. The orphans alone were countless in number. From this, one could see how brutal the wars had been.

Suddenly, the sound of knocking could be heard.

“Enter.” Watts said calmly.

“Milord, the Grand Marshal has come.” The soldier reported immediately upon entering.

“His Lordship, the Grand Marshal?” Watts immediately said. “Then quick, bring me to him.”

The citizens of the Baruch Kingdom all naturally worshipped those talented, powerful experts who supported the kingdom. The number one person was of course Linley. After him was his Majesty, King Wharton, and then...the leader of the five wargods, the Undying Warrior Saint, Barker.

Within a courtyard behind the hotel.

Barker was seated, enjoying some wine by himself, when Watts ran in and delivered a military salute. “Lord Grand Marshal!” Barker raised his head and glanced at him, then chuckled, “Oh, it is Watts. Come on over. Be at ease.”

Over the past twelve years, the Kingdom had discovered many talented people.

Barker and his brothers normally spent their time training. They rarely got involved in other matters. Watts, however, was a very promising prospect whom Barker had discovered.

“Come, drink.” Barker poured Watts a cup of wine.

Watts asked, “Lord Grand Marshal, the purpose of your journey this time is...?”

Barker laughed. "Didn't I tell you last time? I told you I'd bring you over thirty magicite cannons." Watts' eyes immediately lit up. Barker continued, "I brought a total of thirty six. These thirty six magicite cannons have already been prepared."

"Already prepared?" Watts was worried. "But how would you bring them over? Lord Grand Marshal, those magicite cannons must be in a distant location. Bringing them over will take a huge amount of time. Will we have enough time?"

Barker shook his head and laughed. "For the sake of these magicite cannons, I spent all day travelling."

Watts was confused.

What did the Grand Marshal mean?

Barker waved his hand in the direction of some empty space in the courtyard.

Instantly, one magicite cannon after another appeared out of thin air. They were divided into four rows, with nine magicite cannons in each row. Each of them were two or three meters long, and the width of the cannon mouths were roughly half a meter. The cannons were covered with complicated magical runes.

Beneath the sunlight, the magicite cannons gleamed with a mesmerizing light.

Thirty six magicite cannons.

"This...this..." Watts was excited.

"Watts, haven't you heard of interspatial rings?" Barker snickered. "Fortunately, mine is pretty big. It was just able to squeeze these thirty six magicite cannons. However, for the sake of these thirty six magicite cannons, I ran around half the Yulan continent and flew for a whole day. Only then did I manage to collect them all and bring them here."

These thirty six magicite cannons were all large-caliber cannons.

The size of the cannon mouths and the complicated runes on them were proof of the level of these cannons. Cannons on this level generally couldn't be bought from the various Empires, but through the connections of the Dawson Conglomerate, they were able to get quite a few.

Through storing them in his interspatial ring, Barker was able to easily bring them all over.

"These thirty six magicite cannons are equivalent to thirty six magi of the eighth rank, and they have virtually limitless mageforce." Barker laughed. Most magi of the eighth rank could only use spells of the eighth rank three times before running out of mageforce.

Even if they had powerful magistaffs, they would perhaps only be able to cast them four or five times.

But these magicite cannons could continue to attack ceaselessly so long as they had magicite gems to fuel them.

"Lord Grand Marshal, with these thirty six magicite cannons, if we use them correctly, they would definitely be able to match the effect of hundreds of thousands of soldiers." Watts' face was filled with irrepressible excitement, and then he laughed. "But of course, I would need enough magicite gems."

Magicite cannons burned through money.

With each blast, it was as though gold coins were being shot out of the cannon. Without enough wealth, who would be willing to use them?

“Don’t worry. Soon, the magicite gems will be brought over as well.” Barker said with certainty.

“Our enemies are over a million in number. When the battle starts, these thirty six magicite cannons will definitely use up an astonishing amount of magicite gems.” Watts looked at Barker. “Lord Grand Marshal, to bring over such a high amount of magicite gems will most likely need many people.”

Barker nodded.

He could store the magicite cannons in his interspatial ring, but the size of the ring was limited. If he wanted to move a large amount of magicite gems, his interspatial ring would be too small. He’d have to make over ten trips.

At the magicite mines, they no longer worked under any disguises or pretenses, since the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had already mobilized their armies. They were excavating at full-speed. These magicite mines weren’t like copper or iron mines.

Those materials needed to be smelted. It was a great deal of work.

But magicite gems only needed to be washed, and then they would be divided into grades. They were one of the easier types of minerals to mine for. The only thing difficult about them...was that magicite gems were very tough.

The higher the level of magicite gem, the tougher they were, far more so than ordinary stones.

Ordinary tools wouldn’t be able to dig them out at all.

These miners were all specially selected. They had at least the strength of a warrior of the third rank. Their strength, combined with some special excavating tools, just barely allowed them to dig the gems out.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Bang!”

Digging sounds rang out nonstop. Many people were here digging. Although they weren’t individually fast, all added together, the result was that bags stuffed with magicite gems were constantly being brought out, then divided by level into piles.

It had been two months since they had started mining.

Despite that, they had only finished digging out part of the mine.

“What’s going on? They told us to bring such a huge iron chest and store magicite gems in it. Such a huge iron chest, if used to hold magicite gems, would weigh several million pounds. How would we possibly deliver them?” The garrison troops stared at those enormous metal boxes which were fifty meters long, thirty meters wide, and thirty meters tall. They were all puzzled.

These boxes were very sturdy. Why use such huge iron boxes to store magicite gems?

Although a single magicite gem wasn’t too heavy, a full box of them would definitely be several million pounds in weight. Several million pounds worth of magicite gems...how would ordinary troops possibly move them? It wouldn’t be so bad if they were divided into smaller shipments, but all together...

Not even an interspatial ring would be able to hold such a large amount.

After having mined for two months, the amount of magicite gems they had mined had finally filled this massive chest. They used a large amount of steel chains to bind the entire chest securely. Every single chain was a meter thick, and there were dozens around the chest.

“Later, giant dragons will come to move the chest. All of you be quiet. Don’t cause too much of a ruckus.” The military officer’s order came out.

Giant dragon?

All of the soldiers stared in the sky as they waited.

It was late at night. The full moon hung high in the sky.

Indeed, a massive Tyrant Wurm over a hundred meters long appeared in the sky. The soldiers below felt the world grow dark, and the natural awesome presence of the Tyrant Wurm made the pulses of these soldiers speed up. The hundred meter long Tyrant Wurm landed on the ground.

“Master had me, a noble Saint-level dragon, to carry things for him. Jeeze...” The Tyrant Wurm, Plaket, secretly sighed.

His fiery, cart-sized eyes swept the nearby soldiers with a glance. His massive nostrils snorted, then his two draconic claws grabbed those sturdy chains. The massive Tyrant Wurm easily lifted that iron chest which weighed millions of pounds into the air. Beneath the glow of the moonlight, it flew off with the massive chest towards the south, in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 35: The Call to Assemble

The prefectural city of Cod was a city with several hundreds of thousands of citizens and which took up a huge amount of space. Given the local geography as well as the intentional destruction caused by the Baruch Kingdom's forces, the Radiant Church's side was forced to attack the city from the south and the east gates.

The north gate was actually open, as they had no fear of the enemy attacking from that side.

The day slowly grew bright, and many soldiers who had been on guard duty at night switched shifts. Logically speaking, there should have been fewer soldiers outside in the morning, but the new shift discovered to their surprise...that there were many people outside, and it seemed as though the soldiers that had been on duty weren't tired at all. Instead, they were excited.

"Buddy, time to change shifts. What are you guys talking about?"

Many soldiers ran to their shift changing positions.

"A titanic dragon, a titanic dragon. It had no wings, but it was able to fly. It was a Saint-level titanic dragon. Wow. It was so huge. It was like a mountain." The night-shift garrison soldiers were talking excitedly amongst themselves.

"What dragon?" The new arrival was shocked.

The night-shift garrison soldier explained excitedly, "Tonight, an enormous dragon flew over...there were a lot of soldiers waiting to move things. Look, they're still moving things. That enormous metal case was delivered by the flying dragon."

The new arrival looked over.

He saw a massive box at least fifty meters long. He sucked a cold breath. How could people possibly move such an enormous box? Perhaps it truly was a massive dragon that had carried it here.

A large number of soldiers were currently right in the middle of the metal box, carrying out bulging sacks.

The news about the giant dragon quickly spread throughout the army camp, causing the morale of the soldiers of Cod to rise. Their side had the help of a massive dragon, and a Saint-level one who could fly, at that. They would definitely be successful.

But the enemy forces, by contrast...

The Liuyan River was a fairly large river. Although it wasn't one of the top three rivers of the Anarchic Lands, it was still fifty or sixty meters wide, and caused endless headaches for the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

The bridge that had been erected at enormous expense had been destroyed by the Baruch Kingdom itself.

Building it was hard, but destroying it was simple.

The Cardinal of the Radiant Church, Guillermo, and the Dark Cardinal of the Cult of Shadows, Weiss Porter, stared at the river, frowning. To build a floating bridge was simple, but how could a million-man army possibly cross on such a floating bridge?

In addition, some of their war machines were extremely large. How would they ship them across?

“We have to immediately build a large number of floating bridges to let the soldiers cross.” Guillermo frowned, urging.

“Then what about the war machines?” Someone below asked.

To attack a city, one had to use war machines such as the escalades, which were dozens of meters wide. How could something so large and so heavy be shipped across? But building a large bridge would take an enormous amount of time; even the time it would take to let the cement settle down and harden would be time consuming.

There wasn't enough time.

“When the time comes, magic will have to be used to freeze the water into ice.” Guillermo frowned.

It was currently August, the hottest time of the year. In addition, this was a very large river. To freeze the river solid enough to allow the escalades and the other large war machines to cross would require at least an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

.....

The prefectural city of Cod was constantly being renovated as well, preparing all sorts of war machines of its own. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows continued to plan ways to bring across their million-man army. In the Anarchic Lands, warfare was about to break out at any moment.

At this time...

The O'Brien Empire. War God Mountain.

“Whoosh.”

The War God, O'Brien, suddenly appeared at the door to his cave. The War God, O'Brien, stood there, as straight as a spear, emanating a fierce air. His scarlet red hair fluttered freely, and a hint of a smile was on his face.

It had been a long time since he had left the cave.

A flash of light suddenly appeared in front of him. It was Fain.

“Master.” Fain stood respectfully in front of the War God, O'Brien. The War God, as soon as he had stepped outside, had summoned Fain.

The War God glanced at his disciple. “Fain, spend the next period of time in training and in preparation...” The War God's voice trailed off, but Fain's eyes lit up. He looked at his master. “Master, are you saying...?”

“Right. It should be starting again soon...because that person in the Forest of Darkness has instructed me to go to him.” The words of the War God O'Brien made Fain's heart begin to tremble.

Fain knew that the Deity in the Forest of Darkness rarely got involved in any matters. For him to now have the War God go over most likely meant...it was time to once again open the Necropolis of the Gods.

The War God O'Brien immediately transformed into a fiery streak of light, flashing across the sky and quickly disappearing into the eastern horizon. His speed was simply astonishing, far beyond the likes of Linley and the others.

On a mountain peak in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

A devilish youth with dark-golden eyes and a long robe stood on the peak, staring at the east. There was a knife-scar in the middle of his forehead. Only people who knew him were aware...that this wasn't actually a knife scar. It was the powerful weapon of the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

The King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts...Dylin!

"Hrmph, that old bastard." Dylin stared towards the east. He had received the summons from that person in the Forest of Darkness as well. Although Dylin disliked him, he didn't dare to disobey either. "He was like this five thousand years ago, and now, he's still like this. The Yulan continent...that old bastard is the most comfortable person here."

"Swish."

Dylin's body flashed, and a dark golden light streaked toward the eastern horizon, then disappeared. The speed...seemed to be even more astonishing than that of the War God O'Brien.

On a cloud-shrouded peak near the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire.

Long silver hair flowing freely. A shining jade mask. Moon-white robes. The person looked like an Angel who didn't belong in this world, or perhaps a spirit. But from the figure...this person seemed very willowy. The person looked somewhat like a woman.

This was the oldest human Deity in the Yulan continent, the pillar of support for the Yulan Empire...the High Priest!

"Is it beginning?" The High Priest stared towards the northeast. The glowing jade mask caused his face to be hidden. "Who knows how many people will die this time." The High Priest let out a sigh, and then a wind arose nearby.

When the wind died down, the High Priest had disappeared as well.

Within a graceful entertainment area in the Rohault Empire.

"C'mon, give me a kiss." Still dressed in a loose robe, and that lazy smile still on his face, Cesar was currently cuddling a beautiful woman, teasing her while drinking wine. But just as they were having fun, his face suddenly froze. "Leave for now." Cesar waved his hand.

The beautiful woman clearly was confused.

"I told you to leave." Cesar frowned. The slight aura he was now emanating made the woman's heart quail, and she immediately left, not daring to protest.

Frowning, Cesar let out an unhappy grumble. "The Forest of Darkness...oh, your Lordship, your mightiness, someone like you has no need for a minor figure like me. I just reached the Deity-level not too long ago. Why do I have to go with you."

Although he was annoyed, Cesar didn't dare to disobey.

His five thousand years of life had let Cesar know quite a bit about the background history of the Yulan continent.

A black shadow flashed, and Cesar disappeared as though he had teleported. If Bebe and Osenno had seen this...they would have been shocked. For someone to be able to reach such a level in the Shadowshape technique was simply too terrifying.

In the air above the Forest of Darkness, the four great Deities flew together, side by side. Sonic booms could be heard continuously. The War God O'Brien, his gaze firm. The quiet, natural High Priest. The cold, devilish Dylin. And the rather lazy, unhappy-looking Cesar who flew a bit farther away from the others.

"Cesar, why the unhappy face? You are a Deity now. You should be happy." The gentle voice of the High Priest rang out.

Cesar forced out a smile. "Lord Catherine [Kai'se'lin], I just reached the Deity level not long ago. When we meet with any danger, I hope you will help me, Lord Catherine. Otherwise, my little life might be over."

"Your little life will be over?" The War God's firm, powerful voice rang out, and he swept Cesar with a lightning gaze. "You have entered the Deity level, and you train in the assassination and escaping aspects of the darkness-element. Amongst the four of us, your escaping ability should be the greatest."

Cesar could only let out a few resigned chuckles.

As for the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin, he flew silently.

"Dylin." The High Priest looked at him, speaking with a voice that was warm and friendly. "Congratulations on escaping from the Gebados [Ge'ba'da] Prison. I must say, your luck is quite good."

Dylin glanced at the High Priest. "Catherine, my luck isn't as good as yours."

Just as these people were chatting...

"Enough. There will plenty of time to chat later. Hurry up." A hoarse, ancient voice suddenly rang out in the ears of the four Deities. The four Deities immediately increased their speed, transforming into rays of light as they entered the depths of the Forest of Darkness.

Across the Yulan continent, the vast majority of Saints, such as Linley and Desri, didn't know that the five Deities were coming together in the Forest of Darkness. Linley was actually in the prefectural city of Cod. The upcoming battle was simply too important.

But soon after Linley arrived at the prefectural city of Cod...

"Lord Linley." Barker suddenly ran over.

"What is it, Barker?" Linley smiled at Barker, who hurriedly said, "Lord Linley, come take a look with me. Someone told me that there was a change in the magicite mines. I took a look and I discovered something incredible."

"Oh?" Linley was curious now. "Come, let's take a look."

Linley immediately followed Barker as they flew to the magicite mine at high speed. Currently, parts of the magicite mines had been sealed off, preventing anyone from going in deeper to investigate. When Barker and Linley arrived, those soldiers immediately withdrew.

"Right here." Barker led Linley inside.

They went deeper into the mines, which was lit by torches. Barker explained, “Someone told me that when we excavated our way deep into the heart of the mine, we discovered that the quality of the magicite gems increased by a terrifying level. They are better than what the historical standard for ‘top-class’ magicite gems are at, but they are still terrifyingly tough. That’s why I came.

Linley instantly spread out his spiritual energy.

Linley suddenly discovered...that at the end of the excavation, there was a spherical nuclear area. This was the center of the mine.

“You say that the quality of the magicite gems reached a terrifyingly good level?”

“Right. From what I could tell, the quality of the magicite gems here are comparable to the cores of magical beasts of the seventh rank, and some deeper inside can even compare to magicite cores of beasts of the eighth rank. A very small number can even compare to the magicite cores of magical beasts of the ninth rank.” Barker sighed in amazement.

Linley’s heart trembled in shock.

“Linley, do you know what this core of the mine is?” Barker asked.

Linley shook his head. He had just discovered many magicite gems clustered around this area when he had used his spiritual energy, but he couldn’t find out anything else at all.

“We’re here.” Barker pointed to the front.

The sides of the excavation area were filled with half-translucent gems which carried a terrifying amount of force. Any of them could compare to the magicite cores of magical beasts of the seventh rank. Linley look ahead; Barker was pointing in the direction of...a door.

This door had a strange spatial ripple in front of it.

But just earlier, when Linley had used his spiritual energy to search, he hadn’t discovered this door at all.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 36: The Door

Hunting magical beasts of the eighth and ninth ranks was an extremely difficult task. One could imagine how valuable their magicite cores were. However, the gems in these magicite mines had actually reached the equivalence of the seventh and eighth ranked magicite cores, with some even comparable to magicite cores of the ninth rank.

Under the light of the torch, the semi-translucent magicite gems produced a bewildering pattern of lights.

And yet, at the end of the mining tunnel was a door.

A door that should not have existed.

“I cannot find this door with my spiritual energy. It is as though it does not exist. What is this door?” Linley was surprised and puzzled. His spiritual energy couldn’t penetrate past this door at all. How could he dare to rashly barge in?

Linley turned to look at Barker. “Barker, did you go in yet?”

Barker nodded. “I did. It was precisely because I went in that I felt shocked.”

“But Lord, it’s best if you go in after transforming. When you step past the door, you will be attacked by a powerful surge of energy. If your defense is insufficient...the door alone will kill intruders.” Barker said solemnly.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Barker was an Undying Warrior Saint, the type of Supreme Warrior with the highest defense. For him to say this...one could imagine how powerful the attack was.

After removing his shirt and baring his upper body, Linley immediately Dragonformed. Instantly, his body was covered by deep azure draconic scales, and he stared at this mysterious ‘door’ with his now dark golden eyes before walking in.

“Slaaaaaaaaash.”

A knife-like surge of energy wildly chopped at Linley as soon as he walked in the door, slashing at him millions of times, creating sparks atop of Linley’s deep azure draconic scales.

“This is...” As soon as Linley entered, he felt shocked. The scene within the door was totally contrary to Linley’s expectations. Behind the door...was a translucent ‘bubble’ of a pocket dimension. This pocket dimension was a spherical dimension, only ten meters long.

A spherical dimension, ten meters long.

And this spherical dimension was organized like a training room. It only had a simple desk, bed, and chair. It was protected by that outer barrier, preventing outsiders from easily coming inside.

Raising his head and staring at the air above, then at his surroundings, he saw that outside the membrane was chaotic space.

Multicolored chaotic space, with rips in reality occasionally appearing and disappearing. Linley felt awed just looking at that terrifying power.

“Lord Linley.” Barker entered as well. “When I came here, I also felt it was hard to believe. Tell me, what do you think this is?”

Linley took a deep breath. “From what I know, the countless planes of existence are all held within chaotic space. For example, in the Yulan continent, if you continue to head a direction to the very end...you will be able to see chaotic space. Once your strength reaches a certain level, you might be able to open your own pocket dimension within the chaotic space.

Linley carefully inspected this spherical dimension.

“And this spherical dimension that seems like a training room is most likely something which an extremely powerful expert created for training. This expert is most likely of the Yulan continent. Or perhaps it would be better to say...he used to be.”

Linley was filled with nothing but the utmost of admiration for the expert who had created this pocket dimension.

“Create a pocket dimension?” Barker sighed in amazement as well.

“Didn’t the Four Overgods create the Four Higher Planes? Didn’t the Seven Principal Sovereigns create the Seven Divine Planes?” Linley laughed. “There are experts capable of opening their own pocket dimension.”

Linley understood that even Demigods only had the most rudimentary ‘Godrealm’ technique.

Someone who could create a stable pocket dimension in the middle of chaotic space was definitely an extraordinary person.

Barker’s eyes lit up. “Lord Linley, now I know why there is a massive magicite gem mine here. Look. The elemental essence density here is terrifyingly high. Even someone like me, who has poor elemental essence affinity, can clearly sense all sorts of elements here. And aside from elemental essence, there is a unique energy here as well.”

Linley, too, could sense the thick density of natural elemental essence here.

Earth, fire, water, wind, thunder, light, darkness. The density of all the elements here was unbelievably high. Aside from these seven, Linley could sense other sorts of energy as well. There was a sort of energy that was rather similar to Zassler’s, a terrifying destructive energy, and also an energy filled with life...

“This should be the energy belonging to the Four Overgods.” Linley knew that aside from the seven elemental types of energy, there were also four types of unique, profound energy.

Linley looked at Barker. “That door should be a connection between the Yulan continent and this dimension. Most likely, this secret room attracted a great deal of elemental energy, which created a huge magicite mine surrounding the door.”

“However...”

“The mysterious expert who trained here should have left a long, long time ago.” Linley was very certain of this.

“Oh?” Barker looked at Linley questioningly.

“Without this mysterious expert training here, there is no way such a large amount of elemental essence would have been drawn here. We’ve been in the Anarchic Lands for a while now. If we didn’t come mining here, who would have discovered all of these magicite gems?”

Linley laughed. “Logically speaking, to form such a massive magicite deposit, there should have been a huge amount of elemental essence here, a terrifying amount. Most likely, the experts of the entire Yulan continent would have sensed it.”

“But no one in our history has ever mentioned such a thing. Thus, the large amount of elemental energy being drawn here should have been something that happened an extremely long time ago.”

As he spoke, Linley suddenly shut his eyes and sat down.

“Lord Linley?” Barker called out softly.

But Linley seemed to have not noticed him at all, as he sat there in the meditative position quietly.

The pulse of the world, and its massiveness...

The ferociousness of the wind, and its gentle agility...

The scorching heat of the fire, and its explosiveness...

The softness of the water, like an endless field of cotton...

Within this pocket dimension, Linley could sense nature with greater clarity than he ever had before. Right now, he could also sense with a hundred times his previous clarity the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, and the unique tempos possessed by the wind. He could also clearly sense the path he should take next.

Even the average elemental affinity he had for ‘fire elemental essence’ was magnified. Linley could clearly sense the fire elemental essence to such a high level that it was as strong as his normal affinity was for earth elemental essence outside of this pocket dimension.

Although the water elemental essence was still quite indistinct, Linley could still sense its unique rhythm and flows.

And he could also sense the unique energy coming from the Four Overgods.

“So this is how the throbbing pulse of the world works.” Linley felt a surge of joy in his heart. He felt as though his previous training was akin to listening to the sound of a clock from thousands of kilometers away. The sound of the clock was indistinct. But now, he was next to a grandfather clock, listening to the sound. He could clearly sense and hear the unique rhythms of that clock now.

The mysteries of the Throbbing Pulse of the World suddenly became clear to him.

“256 layers of vibrations? Haha...so that’s how it works. Here in the Yulan continent, it feels as though there are countless layers to the Throbbing Pulse of the World. But now it seems that although the Throbbing Pulse of the World has layer after layer, that is just the countless mysteries contained with a single layer which carries infinite mysteries, encapsulating all of the mysteries of my 256 layers.”

Linley instantly understood what his path of training should be.

In the past, Linley’s training was similar to reading a book and making the book ‘thicker’. But now, what he had to do was make the book ‘thin’ again. And the book was...the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, one of the profound truths of the Elemental Laws of Earth.

“Upon having reached the 256 layers, I am halfway through my mastery of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’. Now, what I must do is...reduced the Profound Truths of the Earth to a single layered wave.”

Originally, he went from one to 256, and now...he needed to go back to one.

Whenever Linley was able to contain all of the profound truths of that Law within a single vibration, and was able to utilize the full force of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ in that vibration, only then would he be at the level of mastery. Most likely by then...with a single, simple blow from his sword, he would be able to shake his opponent into a pile of mud.

“A precious training ground.” Linley opened his eyes, now filled with shocked delight.

“Lord Linley?” Barker saw that Linley had woken up. He finally relaxed. “Lord, you sat there for three days.”

“Three days?” Linley knew that when immersed in sensing the Laws, the flow of time would become imperceptible. However, it was worth it...he had been stuck at the bottleneck with the 256 layers for over a year.

Without the mysterious training room...

Perhaps he would have been like many other experts and would be stuck at this bottleneck for dozens or hundreds of years, waiting for that moment of sudden insight. Only then would he know how to proceed.

“No wonder that mysterious expert created his own pocket dimension training room. Indeed...training within a pocket dimension in chaotic space allows one to sense the various Laws with a much greater clarity.” Linley had already become aware of the benefits of this place.

Although there weren’t any treasures or divine artifacts in this room, to an expert training in the various Laws, this room itself was a priceless treasure.

“Thank you for your gift, elder.” Linley bowed formally towards the training room.

Turning his head to look at the puzzled Barker, he said, “Barker, let’s go out for now. Most likely in a few days, the battle at the prefectural city of Cod will occur.” As he spoke, Linley walked out of the pocket dimension.

Barker was somewhat puzzled. Why had Linley bowed towards that expert who was currently who-knows-where?

He didn’t understand how grateful Linley felt.

He had been meditating and pondering for over a year, but hadn’t improved at all. That sort of stifling feeling was quite uncomfortable. No one knew how long Linley would have been stuck at that bottleneck. But thanks to the secret room, his path of training in the Laws would be a bit easier to walk.

“Nobody is permitted to enter this excavation tunnel. In the future, no one is allowed to mine here as well.” As he walked out of the tunnel, he gave the order to the military officers nearby. This pocket dimension was something which one could only dream.

It was far more precious than any sort of divine artifact.

Perhaps even the War God or the High Priest would feel envious and desirous if they found out about it.

“Demigods shouldn’t have the ability to create a pocket dimension.” Linley secretly thought to himself. Linley had the feeling that the ability to create a stable pocket dimension within chaotic space, even a small one, was something only a terrifyingly powerful expert could do.

Linley and Barker flew side by side towards the prefectural city of Cod.

The two headed directly to the military headquarters. Within the third floor of that hotel, Watts and his assistants were in a loud argument, but upon seeing Linley and Barker come in, all of them saluted respectfully.

“Watts, what is the current situation?” Linley asked.

Watts hurriedly reported, “Lord Linley, according to our investigation, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows are constantly sending people over the river. However, their numbers are too great, and they have all sorts of siege weapons. Most likely, they won’t be finished with the river crossing until nightfall.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“I heard arguing just then. What are you arguing about?” Barker asked questioningly.

Watts said, “It’s like this. Over sixty to seventy thousand troops have already crossed the river. Their forces are somewhat in disarray, which is only natural following a river crossing. My assistants are recommending that we seize the opportunity to go out and attack them.”

“However, I vetoed that idea.” Watts said.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 37: The Power of Magicite Cannons

“Oh? You vetoed it?” Linley looked questioningly at Watts.

He felt that the suggestion was a rather reasonable one. When the enemy forces were in disarray, a sudden attack could definitely give the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows a bloody nose.

Watts said respectfully, “Lord Linley, the reason I vetoed this subjection has three parts to it.”

Three parts?

Linley had to admit that he didn’t know much about warfare, and so he carefully listened to Watts’ explanation.

“First of all, the chances of success are not high, because there is a distance of several dozen kilometers from the prefectural city of Cod to the river. If we were to send our troops over, by the time they arrived, the enemy forces would number over a million, and the disposition of the troops would have been reformed again.”

Barker shook his head. “For a million soldiers to set up their formations and be battle-ready is not something done so easily.”

Watts nodded. “That is indeed true. I’m just saying that the enemy forces would be prepared for battle. We only have half a million soldiers. How many can we send out on a sneak attack? And this is just the first consideration. The second is... I believe that the commanders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would not have made such an elementary mistake.”

“If I was the commander of the enemy forces...”

Watts smiled. “I would first have my most elite soldiers cross the river, then put on a façade of being in a state of disorder on the other side to lure the enemy to attack. When the enemy truly came to attack, the elite troops would immediately deliver a headache-causing blow to them.”

“It must be understood that our biggest support is the city walls!” Watts said seriously. “With the city walls, we can kill three of them for every one of us they kill. Thus, they want to seduce us into fighting with them on a level playing field.”

Linley nodded in approval.

Watts continued, “As for the third reason, it is because in warfare, tactics are of less importance than strategy. Our goal is to keep the enemy outside and not let them break into the city. This is the most important thing. As long as we succeed, then this battle will be our victory.”

“Therefore, there is no need for us to pay any attention to the ‘flaws’ of the enemy. Who knows if those flaws are even real or not?”

Watts laughed calmly. “All we need to do is stay inside the prefectural city of Cod and rely on the advantage of the walls to stand guard. Unless something happens beyond our expectations, victory will be ours.”

The night passed. The day slowly brightened.

The Dark Cardinal, Weiss Porter, was riding a darkness-element demonic tiger as he stared in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod.

“Guillermo, I have the feeling that this is going to be a very labor-some battle.” Weiss Porter said with a frown. “We already slowed down the speed of our troops crossing the river, and also had our troops be in a state of ‘disorder.’ But the prefectural city of Cod acted as though they didn’t notice. They didn’t send anyone over to attack.”

Guillermo nodded.

They had prepared a ‘welcoming feast’ for the enemies, but unfortunately, the plan had failed.

Right now, the entire army had crossed the river and rested an entire night. They were now steadily advancing in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod. Their total forces numbered 1.6 million soldiers. Such a terrifyingly large army covered the entire area like an endless tide.

“I’m not afraid that Linley’s commanding general is intelligent or sly. What I’m afraid of is that he’ll just hide in the city like a turtle in its shell.” Weiss Porter said.

Guillermo nodded as well.

If the opponent relied on the advantage of the city walls, breaking through the prefectural city of Cod would most likely cause heavy losses to their side. Although they had 1.6 million soldiers, they weren’t willing to waste too many lives.

“Weiss Porter.” Guillermo said. “Then what should we do?”

The commanding generals of this battle was naturally Guillermo and Weiss Porter. In terms of stratagems, Guillermo was inferior to Weiss Porter. Weiss laughed calmly. “There’s nothing for us. Right now, let’s go test the enemy’s strength.”

Only when one knew the opponent and knew one’s self was one capable of being ever victorious.

The entire prefectural city of Cod had been transformed into an enormous military fort. The civilians had been moved out long ago, and most of the houses had been renovated and demolished. Tunnels and pits had been dug. Large numbers of soldiers were clustered on the walls of the east city and the south city. On the west and north sides, however, there were fewer soldiers.

All sorts of weapons had been dragged onto the city walls.

Linley and Barker were dressed in armor, pretending to be military officers doing an inspection on the southern walls. The city walls were a hotbed of activity, and the multi-kilometer long walls were packed with people. There were over a hundred thousand people on the walls of the south side of the city alone.

“So many people.” Linley and Barker stared from afar.

They looked like densely clustered locusts. The 1.6 million man army of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows covered the land, streaming towards the prefectural city of Cod. 1.6 million people! A number that was easy to say, but when so many soldiers came charging over...

It was terrifying!

Even Linley felt a tremendous sense of pressure.

“Who knows how many people will die as a result of this battle.” Barker sighed.

Staring at the dense mass of soldiers, Linley also felt that this battle would definitely be a vicious, cruel one. But ever since human society began, wars had existed as well.

Although Linley and his men could see the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, in reality, those soldiers were still quite a distance off.

Only, because the enemy forces were simply too massive in number, the soldiers on the wall could see them from far, far away.

“Let’s go to Watts. He is our commanding general. We can’t let anything happen to him.” Linley led Barker to the city walls of the south city. Watts was currently in an unremarkable little building in the south city.

Seeing Linley and Barker, Watts immediately bowed.

“Watts, Lord Linley and I have come to protect you.” Barker laughed.

No matter how steady Watts was normally, he grew excited now. Linley laughed. “Enough. Focus on preparing to deal with the enemy. What is your strategy for dealing with a million man army?” Linley personally felt lost.

Watts laughed. “No rush. Whatever methods they use, I’ll use the appropriate countermeasures.”

“What do you think they will do for their attack?” Barker asked.

“After they crossed the river, they weren’t in a rush to attack. Instead, they let their soldiers rest and waited for dawn. I expect...in about an hour, they will reach the city. At noon, they will begin their first wave of attacks.” Watts laughed calmly.

“The first wave shouldn’t be too strong. They will only be testing our strength. How do you plan to respond?” Barker asked.

“Magicite cannons.”

Watts replied.

“You’ll use magicite cannons immediately?” Barker frowned. The magicite cannons were their secret weapons. It should be better to use them at a critical moment. Watts said with certainty, “Lord Grand Marshall, don’t worry. Just watch and enjoy. When the time comes, you will understand.”

“You put on mysterious airs in front of me?” Barker shook his head and laughed.

Linley just sat there to one side quietly. All he had to do was hand the affairs of running this battle to these men. A long time later...Linley suddenly opened his eyes and said to Watts, “Begin to prepare. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows have sent their vanguard to prepare their attack.”

Watts looked at Linley in surprise.

Linley didn’t explain too much. Although he hadn’t used his spiritual energy, given Linley’s insights into the Elemental Laws of the Wind, even from kilometers away, Linley could clearly sense everything going on if he so chose.

“Milord, two legions of the enemy have begun to attack towards our gates.” A military officer suddenly ran inside.

Although the city walls were tens of kilometers long, the attacks would generally be centered around the city gates.

Watts glanced at Linley, then immediately began to issue orders. “Carry out our original plans. Prepare ten magicite cannons. Give our guests a ‘welcoming present’.” Watts chuckled, and the military officer’s eyes had a hint of excitement in them as well. “Yes, milord.”

“Come, let’s go watch.” Linley stood up.

On the city wall, Linley and Barker were staring down. They saw two legions with a large number of people charge forward. Compared to an army of 1.6 million, 40,000 soldiers wasn’t much, but when they charged over, they still felt like a human wave of attackers.

“Kill!”

The tens of thousands of soldiers below raised their shields, charging the city gates with their weapons in hand. Their angry roars sounded like the thunder. A number of soldiers were charging forward while carrying massive escalades, while in their hearts, they were nervous about being shot by the arrows of the soldiers on the wall.

But what shocked them was, no arrows were fired.

“Fire!” An angry roar.

The runes on those ten magicite cannons instantly lit up, and a terrifying amount of elemental essence began to surround them. Suddenly, those magicite cannons emitted a terrifying, ferocious roar as ten explosions of light suddenly struck against the enemy legions.

“Magicite cannons!” Terrified sounds could be heard.

One of the balls of fire landed right in the middle of a legion, and the people nearby the ball of fire were instantly turned to charcoal. When the ball of fire hit the ground, it instantly turned into a blazing ring of fire which began to expand like a ripple of water in every direction. All soldiers touched by the ring of fire began to scream in agony as they were burned alive.

Fire-style magic: Blazing Rings of Fire!

With that one blast, a hundred people died.

One of the other balls of light, a bluish-white one, fell down into the legion as well, and the soldiers in the area around it instantly were frozen solid, then shattered into tiny pieces. This bluish-white ball of light shattered explosively, transforming into millions of terrifying projectile attacks that shot in every direction. “Swish!” Many soldiers were struck by these flying shards, and countless people began to scream in misery as a result of the blast.

Water-style magic: Angry Sea of Arrow Rain!

Different types of magicite cannons would use different types of magicite gems and produce different types of attacks. But without question, this single barrage from the ten magicite cannons caused over a thousand deaths and even more injuries.

But then, the magicite cannons lit up again.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Almost at the same time, the magicite cannons struck again. The enemies were either burned to death, shot to death by freezing shards, devoured by locusts, or electrocuted to death by lightning...the ten magicite cannons fired at the two legions, and to those two legions, they represented the apocalypse.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo were together.

“Milords.” A military officer saluted as he made the report. “The two legions who launched the first wave of attacks against the south gate have retreated, and the legion at the east gate has retreated as well. We discovered that at the south gate, ten magicite cannons have been emplaced, while five have been emplaced at the east gate. These magicite cannons are all large-caliber cannons at the level of magi of the eighth rank.”

Guillermo let out a cold snort. “This is what I was afraid of, that they would have magicite cannons. So they really do have them, and large-caliber ones. Who sold it to them?”

Weiss Porter laughed calmly. “That’s not the issue right now. Their possession of magicite cannons is within our predictions. However, since they only have five at the east gate, then...tomorrow, let’s do a real full-on attack.”

“A full-on attack?” Guillermo looked at Weiss Porter.

Weiss Porter nodded. “Right. We’ll pretend to be focusing on the south gate while sending a small part of our forces to attack the east gate, but the small portion attacking the east gate will be composed of our elite squads.” Weiss Porter said firmly.

“Weiss Porter, what do you intend?” Guillermo looked at him. “To focus our attacks on the east gate?”

The ratio of forces didn’t determine how powerful each force would be. If the soldiers were elite, a hundred thousand of them might be able to defeat a force of four hundred thousand ordinary soldiers.

“True is false, false is true. We’re just tricking our enemies. If a hundred thousand elite soldiers suddenly attack at once, if the east gate isn’t fully prepared, we might be able to break through at one stroke.” Weiss Porter said confidently.

Guillermo laughed. “If I was the enemy commander, when I saw your million soldiers outside the south gate while only a hundred thousand were at the east gate, I would probably focus my attention on the south gate as well.”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 38: Explosive Fury

The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were outside the south gate of the prefectural city of Cod, a seemingly endless sea of forces. The soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod were all on high alert. They knew that this ‘endless sea of soldiers’ in front of them could suddenly transform into tidal waves that would wash over them.

A small part of the below army had separated from the main forces.

This small part took a side route, heading towards the east gate of Cod. Factoring in the local geography, the Radiant Church was only able to attack the south gate and the east gate. As for the north gate and the west gate, there was no way for the armies to make it there. The army that came to the east gate was comprised of two legions.

These two legions were of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows. The elite legions of both sides.

The commander of the legion belonging to the Cult of Shadows was a man with short blue hair and a severe face who was staring at the city walls. Next to him was a gold-haired man, the commander of the elite legion of the Radiant Church.

If they were able to take down the east gate, they would both have rendered huge military merits in this battle.

“Just five magicite cannons.” The blue-haired man said calmly. “Rogers [Luo’jie’si], how about this. Our soldiers will first charge forward, and when we get close to the walls, the vanguard will suddenly form tight ranks and use the escalades to create an opening in the city walls. The other soldiers will follow from behind. As long as we can get onto the city walls, the prefectural city of Cod will be finished.”

Rogers glanced at him. “Brian [Pu’lai’en], then let’s see who will be the first to break through.”

“Fine.” Brian’s eyes were filled with arrogance.

Time passed. The two elite legions were in a state of quiet readiness, waiting...and then suddenly, they heard the terrifying sound of slaughter. Magicite cannons began to boom, warriors shouted with rage, arrows howled through the air, and an ocean-like series of roars split the world apart.

“They’ve started on the other side.” A hint of a smile was on Brian’s lips.

Rogers nodded slightly as well. “When we break through the east gate, our victory will be assured.”

Per their original plans, they would wait for the battle at the south gate to reach a crescendo of madness...after five minutes, Brian suddenly let out a furious roar, “Kill!” Their generals, who knew the plan all along, immediately led their soldiers to charge out and attack.

Those forty-meter long escalades began to move at frighteningly fast speed towards the east gate.

A large number of soldiers advanced at high speed, shields held above their heads.

The five magicite cannons at the east walls began to light up. “Boom!” “Boom!” The magicite cannons howled ferociously, and five balls of light began to shoot out at high speed, exploding into balls of terrifying

light once they hit the floor. Instantly, soldiers began to die in those areas, but the remaining soldiers didn't hesitate at all.

Hesitating meant death.

“So fast!” The commander at the east gate had already discovered how fast the enemies were running towards them. The magicite cannons had only rang out three times, but the enemies were already within a hundred meters. “Wait a second!” He suddenly discovered that the fastest running soldiers of the enemies suddenly formed a unit with perfect coordination.

Clearly, these were elite warriors. They had most likely come to join forces and force a breach.

“Hrmph. It looks like they really did...” The commander's face revealed a cold smile.

“All magicite cannons, prepare!” The commander howled loudly, and instantly...fifteen more magicite cannon emplacements appeared on the city walls. Combined with the previous five, there was an awe-inspiring grand total of twenty magicite cannons. The twenty magicite cannons all lit up at the same time.

Seeing another fifteen magicite cannons appear, the faces of Brian and Rogers, the two legion commanders, instantly changed.

“No!” Brian's face was savage, and he roared in uncomprehending fury.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

Twenty magicite cannons simultaneously unleashed their terrifying fury, and their targets were clearly those special, elite soldiers who were leading at the front of the attacking line. An earth-shaking series of explosions could be heard.

“No!” Many warriors, seeing the light of the magicite cannon blasts fly towards them at high speed, screamed in fury and terror.

But the cannon blasts were simply too fast. With a flash of light, the blasts hit the ground, giving the warriors no chance to dodge at all. The warriors in the area were blasted to smithereens, with some being frozen solid, others burned alive to charcoal, and still others clutching their severed limbs and screaming miserably...

In the blink of an eye, over three thousand people had died, and several thousand were badly injured as well.

It was too terrifying.

Many warriors were stunned and awe-stricken. In addition, many of the dead were the elite of the elite. The remaining soldiers began to feel dread in their heart.

“Charge! Kill the bastards and avenge our comrades!” Some warriors howled with fury as they continued the charge.

“If we make our way up there, we win!”

But before their escalades even had a chance to be boarded, on the walls of the east wall, a large number of warriors began throwing casks of oil downwards, pouring those boiling casks of oil directly onto the bodies of the attacking warriors.

“Ah!!!” Many warriors clutched their faces as their bodies spasmed, and they fell off the escalades.

“Fire!”

A cold sound rang out, and not only did those twenty magicite cannons once more unleash the god of death...other warriors also began to shoot fire arrows at the enemies as well. Many people below had been covered with hot oil, and now, with fire arrows shooting down...

Some of those people who had ‘only’ been scalded by oil but not killed were suddenly turned into human torches.

The ground below the walls had turned into a sea of flame.

Many warriors had become human fireballs, all of them emitting tortured screams before collapsing. The soldiers behind them no longer dared to advance, because in front of them was a sea of flame. However, at this moment, those twenty magicite cannons once more attacked, killing thousands more.

Explosions rocked the enemy camp.

Rogers and Brian were about to go insane. They howled with fierce rage, “Retreat, retreat, quickly, retreat!” In the blink of an eye, over ten thousand of their warriors had died, and several thousand more were injured.

The worst thing was, those twenty magicite cannons were continuing to attack.

The twenty magicite cannons had stripped the attackers of all their courage and morale.

Five magicite cannons might only be able to kill a thousand soldiers in one blast, but as long as they made it through three blasts, they will be able to close in. But twenty magicite cannons were different...the combined attacks of these cannons were totally capable of killing all the elite vanguard soldiers of the attackers.

The power of twenty magicite cannons was simply too great.

Even though they were retreating like mad, the twenty magicite cannons still were able to attack two more times, and thousands more collapsed. Those beautiful, firework-like balls of flight were actually heart-shaking, powerful attacks.

It must be said that the magic attacks were indeed very powerful. For example, the ‘Blazing Rings of Fire’ were like a fiery red ripple.

Unfortunately, although they were as beautiful as a dream, they were as terrifying as a butcher’s blade.

“A hundred thousand soldiers...twenty thousand dead. Another ten thousand wounded.” Rogers’ voice was very low. “In a short period of time, our morale has been completely destroyed. The warriors don’t have the courage to charge those twenty magicite cannons again.”

By relying on their shields, they could block enemy arrows.

But those shields weren’t able to block magicite cannon blasts, especially large-caliber ones.

“Twenty. Why are there twenty magicite cannons?” Brian said furiously. “When the Lord Cardinal sent us here, didn’t they say there were only five magicite cannons? If we knew there were twenty, we wouldn’t have sent them to their deaths like that!”

Magicite cannons were simply too terrifying.

As long as the enemy were in firing range, their lives would be lost. In addition, the reloading time between each blast was very short. As long as they were charged with sufficient magicite gems, they would be able to constantly attack. They were far more terrifying than even twenty magi of the eighth rank.

“Go back.” Rogers looked at his surrounding soldiers and immediately issued the order.

Brian clenched his fists, unwilling to admit what just happened. “Motherf*cker. We were tricked. The people of the prefectural city of Cod really are motherf*cking bastards. Let’s go back.” They had lost thirty percent of their attack power. If they were to attack again, they probably wouldn’t be able to muster even half of their earlier attack power.”

But the enemy hadn’t lost a single warrior.

Of course, the enemy had spent a huge amount of money. Each time the magicite cannons fired, an enormous amount of gold coins was being spent. How many kingdoms would be willing to afford the cost of twenty magicite cannons constantly blasting nonstop like this?

What was real was false. What was false was real.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had played some tricks, but unfortunately, the prefectural city of Cod had been hiding the true number of magicite cannons. They had a total of thirty six magicite cannons, but had only taken out fifteen at first.

According to their plans, the east gate would have twenty magicite cannons, while the south gate would have sixteen.

The battle at the east gate concluded quickly, but the battle at the south gate was extremely brutal.

“Prepare.” A large number of soldiers on the walls of the south side fell to the ground, greatbows at the ready, their arms tensed. Those enormous bows were terrifying to behold. Any of the soldiers here could easily lift several hundred pounds.

And now, for them to need to use both hands and both feet to draw and fire these bows, one could imagine how powerful they were.

“Fire!”

When the order came, countless massive arrows fell down like rain from the city walls, creating a terrifying howl as they descended downwards. Ordinary shields were of no use. These massive arrows punched straight through them, piercing through the shield-bearing soldiers.

Instantly, a large number of people fell down.

But although a large number had died, others immediately charged forward to take their place.

A large number of escalades had already latched onto the city walls, and many soldiers were even preparing to charge onto them. The six previously hidden magicite cannons were pulled out as well, and sixteen magicite cannons roared wildly, spitting brilliant balls of fire onto the ground below, killing men in large swathes.

However, the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were simply too numerous.

They were like an endless wave!

“Let’s retreat for now. If we continue to fight like this, all we are doing is fighting a battle of attrition. Too many will die.” Guillermo was frowning. In such a short period of time, they had already lost over a hundred thousand people. But of course, the prefectural city of Cod had lost people as well, at least over ten thousand.”

The main problem was that those sixteen magicite cannons killed too many people. And also, there were those giant arrows and the falling boulders.

Those atop the walls always had a great advantage.

“I have a bad feeling.” Weiss Porter was frowning as he watched those sixteen magicite cannons roar. “There should only have been ten magicite cannons, but when the battle began, six more appeared. I’m worried...about the east gate.”

Guillermo’s heart trembled.

“Are you saying that more magicite cannons appeared on that side as well?” Guillermo shook his head. “Not necessarily. Perhaps they simply moved the magicite cannons of the east gate to the south gate.”

“I hope that’s the case.” Weiss Porter didn’t care about the dead soldiers.

What he wanted was victory.

“Lord Cardinal.” A disheveled Brian and Rogers came running at high speed towards Guillermo and Weiss Porter.

“What is it?” As soon as the Cardinals saw these two, they knew things had not gone well.

Brian cursed with fury, “Lord Cardinal, who provided the intelligence estimates? They are nothing more than motherf*cking bastards. It wasn’t five magicite cannons, it was twenty! Twenty damn magicite cannons! My comrades...with just a few blasts, twenty thousand of them died, and many were injured as well. Our legions only had a total of a hundred thousand men. We’ve instantly lost thirty percent of our fighting capability. What’s more...the elites of our legion, those who had the courage to charge at the front, died even faster. Our soldiers don’t have any fighting spirit left at all. They are all terrified.

Weiss Porter’s face changed.

He totally understood now.

Staring at the distant prefectural city of Cod, Weiss Porter ground his teeth. “So you played us. You enticed us to attack the east city, then changed five magicite cannons into twenty?” Weiss Porter’s eyes were red from rage. “Guillermo, forget the plans and schemes. Have all the experts of the ninth rank charge, now!”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 39: Battle to the Death

Guillermo was silent for a moment, then said, “Fine. Let them go.”

Soon, six seemingly ordinary warriors appeared in the headquarters. Weiss Porter and Guillermo glanced at each other, and then Weiss Porter said to those six men, “The six of you, mingle into the center of the army and charge with them towards the city walls. When you reach the city walls, increase your speed and break open the city gates, then lead the army into the city. You must catch them off-guard and make them unable to react in time.”

“Yes, milord.”

Three of the men immediately acknowledged, while the other three looked at Guillermo. Guillermo nodded slightly. “Act as Weiss Porter said.”

“Yes, milord.”

On the massive, wide ground, locust-like hordes of men were charging wildly against the city. Sixteen magicite cannons were constantly flashing with brilliant light, taking lives away with each flash. On the walls above the prefectural city of Cod, Linley, Barker, Gates, Hazer, Ankh, and Boone, and the others were watching the battle.

“They are fighting wildly enough.” Gates licked his lips, grinning as he spoke.

Hazer looked at Linley, his eyes shining. “Lord Linley, let us go and teach them a lesson.” Of the five Barker brothers, only Barker had reached the Saint-level in his human form. The other four were at the peak of the ninth rank, about to break through at any moment.

Linley looked at the battle going down below. Laughing calmly, he said, “No rush. You will have your chance soon. But remember, no matter what, you cannot allow them to seize the magicite mine.”

Compared to the large amount of magicite gems, Linley actually valued the pocket dimension more.

That was a precious training place that had to be preserved.

“Unfortunately, Zassler has reached the Saint-level as well. Otherwise, once he acted, he would probably be able to counter a million soldiers at once, all by himself.” Linley sighed as he spoke. Zassler and Linley had reached the Saint-level almost at the same time. Zassler was now a Saint-level Grand Magus Necromancer. After becoming a Grand Magus Necromancer, Zassler’s power had reached a terrifying new height.

What Zassler currently spent his time doing was collecting Saint-level departed souls.

A single Grand Magus Necromancer could collect and tame a group of Saint-level departed souls. One could imagine how terrifyingly powerful they were.

“That old bastard. He spends all his time hiding inside the mountain and training. He never shows himself these days.” Gates grumbled. “Last time, I went to look for him, and he actually sent a Saint-level departed soul to battle me for a while. I have to admit...that zombie was really pretty damn powerful.” Gates sighed.

Linley secretly snickered.

Zassler was only joking around with Gates. Linley himself knew...if Zassler was really acting in earnest, Gates would probably have been defeated in an instant. This was because necromancers were highly skilled in matters pertaining the soul, and were extremely talented at 'spiritual attacks'. Upon reaching the Saint-level, once Zassler used a spiritual attack...

Even a powerful Saint probably wouldn't be able to take it.

"Bang!"

Suddenly, Linley and the others felt the city walls suddenly shake violently. Barker's face changed. "Not good!" Linley's spiritual energy had also discovered that below, six warriors of the ninth rank had joined forces to smash through the city gates.

"Charge!" The attacking soldiers found, to their delight, that the city gates were down.

Immediately, a large number of soldiers began to pour towards the city gates. The leaders of the soldiers were those six warriors of the ninth rank. The garrison guards of the prefectural city of Cod wanted to block them, but they were easily slaughtered by those six warriors of the ninth rank. The commander of the south gate, however, simply watched coldly as this all happened.

"Boulder, drop!" The commander's voice rang out without a hint of panic.

Instantly, dozens of warriors pulled at hidden levers. With clanking sounds, a massive boulder that was over dozens of meters thick began to fall down. The soldiers below wanted to dodge, but most weren't able to do so and were smashed into meat patties.

"Bam!"

The city gates had been sealed!

The soldiers outside weren't able to make it in, and the soldiers inside weren't able to go out either.

"Six warriors of the ninth rank. They really are going all out." Gates roared angrily, and then with a flip of his hand, he retrieved his massive greataxe as he charged down from the top of the walls into the inner courtyard. All six of those warriors of the ninth rank had been inside the city already. Gates jumped down, and he was immediately followed by Ankh, Boone, and Hazer as well.

Within the city.

The six warriors of the ninth rank were engaged in a wild slaughter, with none of the soldiers around them able to fend them off.

"Quick, flee!" One of the warriors of the ninth rank shouted loudly as he sent his warblade chopping down towards an officer, who was instantly split into two halves. Wherever these warriors of the ninth rank went, corpses followed in their wake.

The other warriors of the ninth rank knew that they couldn't stay here for too long either.

They didn't pay any mind to the soldiers who had followed them in either. A golden-haired, one-eyed warrior suddenly launched himself off the ground, easily sending himself over thirty meters into the air, flipping past the wall and arriving outside the city. The other five warriors of the ninth rank immediately also launched off the ground...

“You want to run?!”

A furious howl, and then a terrifying greataxe flashed towards them. Gates was the first one to land, and in mid-air, he stopped one of the leaping warriors of the ninth rank. The warrior of the ninth rank actually wanted to use the heavy sword in his hands to block the axe, but as soon as he did...

“Bam!”

The warrior’s heavy sword shattered into pieces, and he was smashed back down into the ground, the ground shaking from the collision. Gates howled angrily, “You motherf*ckers actually dare to break into the city? Die!” The terrifying greataxe chopped down yet again, and it was as though the surrounding area had suddenly frozen.

Gates had already reached the ‘impose’ level of understanding!

There was no place for the warrior of the ninth rank to flee. “Ah!” A miserable, agonized cry could be heard, and then he was eviscerated by the massive greataxe. Blood and splintered organs splashed everywhere, and his body fell heavily to the ground, never to rise again.

Although they were both warriors of the ninth rank, Gates was at the peak of the ninth rank and an Undying Warrior. The difference was too great.

The other four warriors also encountered Boone, Ankh, and Hazer. Ankh, all by himself, forced two of them back down. The eyes of Hazer, Boone, and Ankh were filled with savage, murderous delight.

The battle concluded very quickly.

“Milord, aside from myself, the other five...were unable to escape.” The golden-haired, one-eyed man clearly seemed unwilling to accept this outcome.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces turned ugly to behold.

“How is that possible? You are warriors of the ninth rank!” Weiss Porter’s face couldn’t help but turn pale as he spoke.

“I saw Linley and those Undying Warriors on the city walls.” Guillermo suddenly said. At Guillermo’s level of power, despite being kilometers away, he was still able to see Linley and the others on the city walls.

Weiss Porter’s voice turned low. “Guillermo, could it be that Linley is ignoring our previous agreement and is acting against warriors of the ninth rank?”

“It shouldn’t be Linley.” Guillermo shook his head. “If it was him, most likely not even a single warrior would have escaped. I expect that it was those Undying Warriors who haven’t reached the Saint-level yet in their human forms. Given their power, it shouldn’t be hard for them to deal with an ordinary warrior of the ninth rank.”

Weiss Porter was beginning to frown.

“You can go now.” The lucky survivor left.

Weiss Porter sent out the order. “Let the attacking soldiers retreat for now. Today, we’ll pause for now.”

“Yes, milord.” The messenger immediately ran out.

Guillermo looked at Weiss Porter, puzzled. Weiss Porter closed his eyes. After a while, he opened them, then said calmly, “Guillermo, at nightfall, let’s prepare to order our men to attack again, late at night. We have to take down the city before daybreak tomorrow. We’ll pay whatever cost in lives is necessary.”

“Late night?” Guillermo frowned as he looked at Weiss Porter. “Even if we don’t care about the lives of our warriors, it’ll be hard to break through.”

Neither Guillermo nor Weiss Porter cared at all about the lives of their ordinary soldiers. They commanded a tremendously high number of soldiers, and it was in fact useful to reduce the population a bit through warfare. Ordinary warriors only required a year or two of training, after all.

They didn’t care about them.

What they cared about were elite soldiers.

For example, the hundred thousand soldiers that had been sent to attack the east gates.

“Tonight, we will attack the city, no matter the cost. If by five in the morning, we still haven’t broken through, then we will use your final trump card.” Weiss Porter looked at Guillermo. “What say you, Guillermo?”

“Our final trump card?” Guillermo was silent for a moment.

He knew what Weiss Porter was talking about. Guillermo nodded slightly. “Fine!”

Actually, if they were to begin attacking at midnight and fight like wild all the way until five in the morning, even if they weren’t able to break through, they would exhaust the forces of the prefectural city of Cod. At that point, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would use their trump cards, making their victory utterly assured.

The countless warriors beneath the walls retreated like the retreating tides.

Watts stood atop the walls, his face expressionless.

Linley looked at Watts from nearby, his eyes filled with praise. Just then, he had watched the entire procession of battle. The enemy had attacked multiple times, at the east gate and the west gate, but Watts’ orders as well as his disposition of forces had been quite perfect.

“Watts.” Linley, Barker, Boone, Ankh, and the others walked towards him.

Watts bowed as soon as he saw the group of people.

Linley smiled. “Today’s battle has already concluded. Watts, get a good night’s rest.”

“No need, milord.” Watts had a very serious look on his face. “Today, the enemy attacked us several times with their armies. They used their elite soldiers to try and break through the east gate, then sent warriors of the ninth rank to break through the south gate. And they had their soldiers attack wildly... I can sense that the opposing commander isn’t a very patient person. I expect that his next strategy will be exposed later today or tomorrow. Tonight, they will probably attempt a sneak attack.”

Watts looked towards the enemy camp.

When two armies engaged in battle, if one could understand the personality of the opposing commander, one would be able to better predict the enemy’s actions.

“Oh?” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face.

Gates laughed loudly. ‘Lord Linley, don’t have any doubts. Watts’ predictions are at least 90% likely to occur.’”

That night, Linley, Barker, and the others were drinking wine in a courtyard. Because Watts had predicted that the enemy would attempt a sneak attack tonight, all of them were waiting.

“A secret pocket dimension room?” Boone seemed shocked by Linley’s words.

Barker nodded as well. “Right. Even I, someone who doesn’t have much of an affinity for the elements, would clearly sense all the elements in that mysterious room. That sort of feeling...was very unique. I felt closer to nature than ever before.”

“Ankh, Boone, Gates, Hazer. You need to train hard. In the future, when you are at the Saint-level, you will be able to train inside the pocket dimension room.” Linley smiled.

The room was ten meters wide. It could indeed permit multiple people to train inside at once.

Suddenly, fierce battle cries erupted from the south gate, immediately followed by the furious roars of magicite cannons. Miserable screams, arrows ripping through the air...Linley, Barker, and the others exchanged glances, then began to laugh.

“That Watts. He guessed correctly. Come.” Linley began to feel some admiration for Watts.

Their group hurried towards the south city gates. The closer they drew, the louder, the more terrifying the sounds of battle became. Illuminated by torches, the ground below the city was filled with corpses, while large numbers of soldiers were falling off the walls as well, as the soldiers below wildly shot arrows upwards.

“Siege escalades.” Linley suddenly saw a huge construct slowly make its way towards the city.

Each siege escalade was over forty meters wide, and was made entirely out of steel and cement. The massive mobile forts was slowly making its way towards the city walls. The part of the mobile fort facing the city walls was made entirely out of a thick layer of steel.

“Boom!” The magicite cannons belched forth their fury.

The blazing balls of fire only caused a layer of metal to melt, but the steel was several meters thick. The massive thing wasn’t budged at all. There were ten of these siege escalades, and they formed a line, slowly advancing towards the city walls.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 40: Meat Grinder

The ten siege escalades were like ten giant steel behemoths, slowly advancing despite the withering rain of fire from the magicite cannons.

“Once the siege escalades reach the walls, then... a large number of enemy soldiers will be able to attack through the escalades to the walls.” Barker’s face was hazily illuminated by the light of the firing magicite cannons. Boone, Ankh, Hazer, and Gates all turned solemn as well.

Linley stood atop the walls, staring down at the locust-like horde of soldiers, and those ten massive siege escalades. Even he felt it was rather problematic.

“The next part of the battle will definitely be a ferocious one.”

Even someone like Linley, who barely knew anything about military strategy, could predict how wild the battle was about to get.

“Charge!” The soldiers screamed furiously, their faces ferocious.

Tens of thousands of escalate ladders were placed against the city walls, and a large number of soldiers began to climb onto them, attempting to charge the enemy forces on the walls and engage them in close combat. However...escalade ladders could be knocked off, and could also be lit on fire by burning oil.

In addition, each escalate ladder could only fit two people at once. Faced with a large number of garrison troops who attacked them at once, they weren’t able to do anything.

A soldier on top of an escalate ladder jumped off, wanting to charge into the garrison.

“Slash!”

Multiple swords and sabers swung out, and that poor soldier in front was only able to make one strike before being chopped into a beehive of holes.

“Bang!” An escalate ladder was knocked off, and a large number of soldiers fell down. For a fall of twenty or thirty meters...it wasn’t a big deal for the strong, but for the weak, they would die or be crippled from the fall. The worst part of it was...many of the weapons of the already-killed soldiers were lying on the ground.

And so when the new soldiers fell off, they fell onto the weapons.

“Snick!” Their bodies were pierced through by the weapons.

A large number of soldiers also wildly shot arrows at the garrison, the hail of arrows falling onto the walls and even into the city. Many city guards fell down, shot to death by the arrows.

Every moment, warriors were dying. Although many garrison troops were being killed, even more attackers were dying.

“Quick, quick!” From behind the troops, the Dark Cardinal, Weiss Porter, was shouting. “Quick, have the siege escalades pushed more quickly to the city walls!” Weiss Porter simply couldn’t keep his calm any longer.

He hoped for a sudden change in fortunes.

The enormous siege escalades were exactly that; powerful tools which could change the fortunes of war.

They were terrifyingly large, and were made almost completely of steel and metal.

These siege escalades were just like giant mobile fortresses. The soldiers in the walls above, when dealing with the soldiers from the siege escalades, wouldn't be at any advantage. After all, the siege escalades would allow hundreds of attacking soldiers to attack at once as well.

“Concentrate your fire against those siege escalades!”

The commander of the south gate issued his order, and instantly, multiple magicite cannons attacked the siege escalades simultaneously. However, the steel canopies protecting the siege escalades were several meters thick. Even powerful magicite cannons weren't able to burn through such a thick layer of steel and break the siege escalades.

At most, the attacks caused the siege escalades to tremble, or perhaps kill a few of the soldiers atop the siege escalades.

But when the soldiers died, more soldiers replaced them from below. After all, one of the primary purposes of the siege escalade was to act as a delivery mechanism for soldiers.

“Come, have the first battalion assemble here and prepare to defend against the first siege escalade.” A commanding officer shouted loudly. To defend against the siege escalades, they had to use their elite soldiers.

The prefectural city of Cod wanted to try their best to block the assault of these siege escalades.

However, these siege ‘behemoths’ were simply unstoppable...

With a sudden ‘bam’ sound, a siege escalade rammed into the city walls. And then multiple ‘bang’ ‘bang’ ‘bang’ sounds could be heard in succession, as one siege escalade after another collided with the city walls.

“Pull, pull, pull!”

Atop one of the siege escalades, a military officer was shouting in anger. Many soldiers around him instantly began to activate the hidden mechanisms of the siege escalade, and with clanking sounds, the thick steel canopy protecting the siege escalade swung down.

“Bang!” The hundred-meter wide steel canopy smashed hard against the city walls.

This immediately became the equivalent of a hundred-meter wide corridor from the siege escalade into the prefectural city of Cod. The siege escalade was taller than the city walls to begin with. With the canopy down, the soldiers of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were able to charge down from the higher ground in a wild attack.

“Brothers, kill them!”

“Avenge the captain! Kill!!!”

Countless ferocious howls came from the soldiers, as they wildly charged down the corridors to the walls of the prefectural city of Cod. They had been beaten senseless, and while they were charging, many had been shot to death by arrows or blasted apart by magicite cannons. They hadn't even had the chance to fight a fair battle with their enemies.

This sort of frustration and resentment had been building in their hearts.

And now, they finally had the chance to explode.

The ten siege escalades represented ten corridors. Large numbers of soldiers swarmed towards the walls, attacking the defenders. The garrison troops of the prefectural city of Cod didn't budge either. They used boulders to attack, or burning oil...the hundred-meter wide corridors were utterly filled with people.

One soldier decapitated his opponent, but then someone else rammed a spear through his chest.

The battle at the walls and the siege escalades was a meat grinder!

The attackers and defenders fought in pitched, close-quarter battles!

Large numbers of corpses clotted the area, forming piles so high that they were even higher than the walls themselves as bodies fell downwards. Blood splashed everywhere, causing rivers of blood to form atop the walls and the corridors. Countless soldiers continued to raise their weapons, charging towards their foes.

For the sake of survival.

For the sake of avenging their comrades.

Everyone fought wildly, their eyes red with bloodlust.

“Bang!” “Bang!” ...

The magicite cannons were aiming their fire against the siege escalades now, because the people atop the siege escalades were very tightly clustered. The density was ten times greater than the ground below! Countless soldiers wanted to use the siege escalades to charge onto the enemy's walls.

Indeed, the soldiers moved quickly. Soon, they managed to charge from the siege escalades into the city walls. It was only a distance of a hundred meters from the siege escalade to the city walls! Given the power of these soldiers, it wouldn't even take them ten seconds to close that sort of distance. They all possessed the hope that during those ten seconds while they were exposed and in the open, the magicite cannons definitely wouldn't be able to strike them.

However!

The magicite cannons continued to fire against the siege escalades, each blast claiming the lives of hundreds of soldiers. Unfortunately, the speed at which the magicite cannons killed people was far slower than the speed at which the soldiers of two sides killed each other in close quarters combat. The soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod began to die in large numbers as well now.

“In close combat, the death ratio is going to be close to one-to-one.” Barker looked at Linley. “Lord Linley, if this continues, we won't be able to hold on.”

Indeed. The enemy had a total of 1.6 million soldiers. Although they had lost some earlier, 1.6 million was an enormous figure, and those losses meant little. The prefectural city of Cod only had 500,000 soldiers. If they were to fight a war of attrition at a one-to-one rate...a loss of three or four hundred thousand to the enemy would result in them still having nearly a million soldiers, but to Cod, they would only have less than a hundred thousand remaining.

This couldn't be permitted to continue!

Of course, this was just the death ratio for the soldiers in close quarters combat. If they factored in the damage caused by the magicite cannons, as well as those who were being shot to death by arrows, the prefectural city of Cod still held a major advantage.

“Gates, go destroy that corridor for me.” Linley pointed at the thick steel canopy-bridge of one of the siege escalades.

Once that hundred-meter wide, multiple-meter thick steel bridge was destroyed, then...there would be a distance of nearly ten meters from the siege escalades to the city walls. Only warriors of a certain rank would be able to leap that distance, and in addition, as they leapt, the city garrison would be able to use their spears to welcome them as they landed...

“Yes, Lord.” Gates acknowledged in his loud voice.

Boone, Ankh, and Hazer didn't hesitate at all as they headed out as well. But Barker, since he was now a Saint, couldn't get involved.

Gates' body was blazing with battle-qi, and in his hands, he was wielding that 5300 pound greataxe. With a mighty leap, he flew directly onto the corridor where the fighting was going on. The bridge was filled with people, as many soldiers wanted to charge onto the enemy walls.

“Bang!” A terrifying axe-shaped blast of battle-qi energy chopped out, splitting several dozen warriors apart at the waist instantly. Body parts flew everywhere, spraying the surrounding area with blood. Instantly, a large gap appeared on the corridor-bridge.

“Bam!”

Like a demonic god, Gates wielded his terrifying 5300 pound greataxe as he landed in that empty area. Almost instantly, a large number of enemy soldiers immediately filled up that gap, all of them attacking Gates wildly.

“Hrmph!” Greataxe in hand, Gates delivered a mighty blow to the bridge beneath him.

The greataxe fell down, as gently as a falling leaf, striking against the steel bridge. Only a gentle clink was heard, but then...a massive hole appeared in the steel bridge, and a huge amount of steel dust was suddenly picked up and carried away by the wind.

Wielding something heavy as though it were light!

“Bang!” Gates' battle-qi blasted out in all directions like countless arrows, killing all of the surrounding and attacking soldiers.

“It really is thick.” Gates murmured confidently. This sturdy steel bridge was something which even a peak-stage Undying Warrior of the ninth rank was unable to chop through at a blow. However, the blow from Gates' greataxe had chopped halfway through it, with only a meter of thickness remaining.

“No!” Many people from the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, upon seeing this, stared with wide eyes.

“Break apart!” Gates brought his greataxe gently down a second time.

“Bang!” That thick steel bridge split into two parts, and the part that was lying against the wall fell down. A large number of soldiers fell down as well. The effectiveness of the siege escalade had instantly been halved.

If they wanted to cross to the walls, the only choice was to jump over.

But the enemy guards had their weapons pointed towards them, with spear tips and sword tips all aimed in their direction. You want to jump? Then jump! You'll know what happens if you do...

“Bang!” “Bang!” One steel bridge after another was broken through as Gates, Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, these four terrifying Undying Warriors of the peak of the ninth rank, moved through all ten of the siege escalades.

The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, who had seen victory within reach, all began to feel bitterness and despair.

“We almost succeeded. Bastards.” Weiss Porter let out an angry growl.

If the earlier situation had persisted, even though the enemy continued to attack with magicite cannons and arrows, Weiss Porter was confident...that after sustaining casualties of approximately seven to eight hundred thousand, they would have destroyed the enemies.

“Weiss Porter, now what?” Guillermo looked at him.

Weiss Porter looked at him as well. “It’s still early. Wait for five in the morning.” Guillermo and Weiss Porter both tacitly understood.

“Although the steel bridges were destroyed, the siege escalades still have some effect.” Weiss Porter stared from afar...indeed, many soldiers continued to charge onto the siege escalades, and then, relying on being on the higher ground, shot arrows or slung rocks at the enemies on the walls.

A large number of soldiers even jumped down onto the city walls.

Perhaps the initial casualty rate would be horrendous, but once a small safe area was established, they were still able to fight on fairly even footing.

“They’ve gone mad.” Gates had experienced countless battles, but even he felt a sense of pressure.

Simply too many had died.

Time passed, one minute and one second at a time.

Three in the morning...

Four in the morning...

As time dragged on, the casualties for the defenders reached nearly two hundred thousand as well. For their casualties to be at such a terrifyingly high number, one could totally imagine how many had died on the side of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

When five in the morning came, Guillermo and Weiss Porter looked at each other.

“Weiss Porter, as you said. It is time to use our trump card.” Guillermo spoke.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 41: Trump Card

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Those magicite cannons continued to attack, as though money truly was no obstacle at all. Beneath the prefectural city of Cod, there was a veritable sea of flame, and the night sky was split up by countless beautiful flashes of light.

From far away, the commanders of the joint forces, Weiss Porter and Guillermo, had shadows cast across their faces.

“Trump card?”

Weiss Porter looked at Guillermo. Snickering, he said, “Lord Cardinal Guillermo, I think that these exhausted soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod would be easily defeated once the Sacred Legion of the Radiant Church attacks. There’s no need for my side to join in.”

The trump card of the Radiant Church – the Sacred Legion!

The Sacred Legion!

In this area of the Anarchic Lands, the Radiant Church had spent a tremendous amount of effort and materials to cultivate this mighty legion.

The Sacred Legion only had a total of thirty thousand people.

Five thousand of the soldiers in this legion were warriors of the seventh rank, while the other twenty five thousand were at least of the fifth rank in power. In the other legions, a warrior of the fifth rank might be considered an elite soldier, but in this legion, they would only be the weakest of soldiers.

It must be understood that the jumping abilities of warriors of the seventh rank alone would allow them to flip past those thirty meter tall city walls.

Such a trump card of a legion, upon entering battle, would definitely be an unbalancing force. However, cultivating such a legion was simply too difficult. The cost of training them was far larger than that of training even the million man army.

“If Linley’s Saints break our agreement and eradicated our Sacred Legion, that would be terrible.” Guillermo secretly mused. Weiss Porter and him were thinking the same thing. They were both afraid that the Saints would betray the agreement and take part in the battle.

For example, those Saint-level dragons. For example, Linley and the other Supreme Warriors.

If a few hundred thousand ordinary soldiers were killed, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows could easily recruit a few hundred thousand more. All they needed was a year or two of training. But the Sacred Legion...every single soldier represented years worth of training and expenditures. Each lost soldier wouldn’t easily be replenished by money alone.

“Weiss Porter, are you joking?” Guillermo’s face sank.

Weiss Porter immediately laughed, “Guillermo, don’t be angry. The Shadow Legion of the Cult of Shadows will attack at the same time.”

The Shadow Legion was built up by the Cult of Shadows for the express purpose of countering the Sacred Legion. Their power was on par.

These were two terrifyingly strong legions.

Although each had only thirty thousand soldiers, and combined they only numbered sixty thousand, to the two sides, the worth of these trump card legions wasn’t any less than that of a million man army.

Atop the city walls, Linley and Barker were watching the battle as though it had nothing to do with them.

The city guards in the area had been dismissed.

“There’s nobody there.” The enemy soldiers clearly saw an area where only two people were standing.

“Quick, attack over there.”

The battle was so frantic that none of the soldiers were thinking clearly. Seeing an ‘opening’ in the walls, they immediately charged over. But just as they ran up the escalate ladders and charged at Linley and Barker with their weapons raised...

“Slash.”

Instantly, countless knives of wind formed a wall. The three warriors who had been the first to charge over were instantly turned into meat paste, and even some of the warriors close to the top of the escalate ladders were chopped into ground meat. This scene...replayed itself over and over throughout the battle. Nobody was able to draw near these two.

“I’m feeling really motherf*cking stifled.” Barker cursed softly.

Barker looked at Linley. Linley didn’t seem to feel anything at all. Barker couldn’t help but say, “Lord Linley, how can you just keep watching?”

“Why can’t I?” Linley stared below.

“Oh?” Barker looked at Linley questioningly.

Linley laughed calmly. “I now somewhat understand how the War God feels. Let worldly matters develop naturally. People will always die in wars. If I hadn’t founded the Baruch Kingdom, perhaps even more people would have died in those endless, chaotic wars.”

Linley looked down below. “The mortal world has its rules. And we, we have our rules as well!”

“I will hold to our agreement. Even if they break through to the magicite mines and seize them, I won’t interfere.” Linley said calmly.

Barker grew frantic. “But what about that pocket dimension room we discovered?”

“What are you afraid of?”

Linley laughed calmly. “It is impossible for non-Saints to enter that secret room. But which Saints would dare trespass on my territory?” Linley was already viewing this battle with a transcendent gaze and mind. It didn’t really matter if they won or they lost...

And in addition, the pocket dimension was immovable.

“You speak truth, Lord.” Barker began to understand.

Upon reaching the Saint-level, they possessed an eternal lifespan. They had transcended past ordinary humans. In truth, worldly battles and affairs no longer belonged to them, and Saints no longer belonged in them either. But although they understood this in their heart, both Barker and Linley had a hint of anticipation...

The anticipation that their side would prove victorious.

“Not good.” Barker’s face suddenly changed.

Beneath the city, a large number of elite warriors charged towards the walls at high speed. They were thickly clustered and definitely numbered in the tens of thousands. This large group of elite warriors ran at an astonishing pace, and with each flicker of their bodies, they moved twenty or thirty meters. In less than a minute, they would arrive at the city walls.

“Fire!”

The magicite cannons from the east gate had been shifted over as well. More than twenty magicite cannons fired simultaneously, blasting down balls of light at the soldiers below.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Many elite soldiers immediately dodged at high speed, but the magicite cannon attacks were simply too fast. Despite many of the elite soldiers being able to dodge the center of the blasts, a few unlucky soldiers would still die, while the others at the boundaries of the blasts would be injured as well.

But there was only time for one blast!

The magicite cannons only had enough time to fire once before the elite soldiers reached the city walls.

“There’s so many people. Tens of thousands. Where did all these powerful warriors come from? There’s so many warriors of the seventh rank.” Barker felt a hint of amazement.

Linley noticed the large number of elite soldiers that had appeared out of nowhere as well. Given Linley and Barker’s current levels of power, they were instantly able to judge the power of these soldiers. “So many are of the seventh rank? They are just like the ace regiments of the Knights of the Radiant Church that I saw back in the Holy Union.”

“This must be an elite force built up by the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, akin to the Eight Ace Regiments. This is their true elite force, here in the Anarchic Lands.” Linley guessed.

And that was indeed the case.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

A large number of warriors reached the city walls, and with a sudden leap, they easily cleared the thirty foot walls. The thickly clustered warriors all arrived atop the walls, and all of them possessed the power of the seventh rank.

“Bang!” Swords and sabers flashed everywhere, and battle-qi exploded throughout the area.

Immediately, almost ten or twenty thousand garrison guards died. The garrison troops were only of the second or third ranks in power. The warriors of the fifth rank would be considered elites amongst them. But these warriors who had jumped onto the walls were all of the seventh rank, and there were nearly ten thousand of them.

A slaughter!

They couldn't fight back at all! And at the same time...

A huge number of warriors of 'only' the fifth and sixth ranks began to climb up the escalade ladders at high speed.

Although there were hundreds of thousand soldiers on the south walls, only twenty or thirty thousand troops could fight against the warriors of the seventh rank at any given time. And when the fifty thousand warriors of the fifth and sixth ranks charged up...

"We lose."

Barker sighed.

After the sixty thousand elite troops of the Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion swept upwards, hundreds of thousands of normal troops followed behind them in escalade ladders. The entire length of the south city walls were occupied with countless enemies, who swarmed forward like an endless stream of ants, attacking the inner city of Cod.

But where Linley and Barker stood, no matter how many warriors charged over, they were all transformed into mincemeat by those countless wind blades.

"Let's leave." Linley immediately flew out of the walls.

"Can't let them have those magicite cannons." Barker said. Barker's body flashed by the city walls, and one magicite cannon after another was stored into his interspatial ring. How could those enemy soldiers possibly block the Saint-level expert, Barker?

"Jeeze, Barker..." Linley shook his head and chuckled.

"All done." Barker flew back to Linley's side.

Barker and Linley flew into the air above the prefectural city of Cod. They could clearly see what was happening throughout the prefectural city. Watts clearly had been prepared for this breach, as a large number of troops were currently retreating through the west gate and the north gates.

At the same time, many soldiers remained within the prefectural city of Cod, preparing to do battle and prevent the enemy forces from chasing.

A large number of troops were fleeing towards the north of the prefectural city of Cod.

Watts stared at the distant prefectural city of Cod and let out a low sigh. In the end, he had still lost. When those two terrifying enemy legions had appeared, Watts knew that there was no way they could block them. The Radiant Church and the Cult of the Shadows, combined, had sixty thousand elite soldiers, ten thousand of whom were of the seventh rank.

To warriors of the seventh rank, walls might as well not exist.

How could one possibly defend against such a monstrously powerful legion?

“Watts, what are you sad about?” Gates was next to him. “If we lose, we lose. When I was in the Eighteen Northern Duchies, losing battles was a commonplace event. But of course...I still felt pretty pissed.”

Gates was resigned as well.

When those sixty thousand elite soldiers attacked, how many of them could he, Gates, kill by himself? After all, they wouldn't just run up to him and wait for him to kill them.

“If I was a Grand Magus Saint, that would be wonderful. I'd just cast a forbidden spell and wipe them all out.” Gates secretly mumbled to himself.

Right at this time, Linley and Barker flew over. They had seen Gates, Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, and thus they flew down. As they did, Linley asked Watts, “Watts, how many people have you assigned to fight the rearguard action to hold off the enemy?”

“A hundred thousand.”

Watts replied. “We have a total of a hundred and fifty thousand soldiers in full retreat, none of them wounded. As for the remaining hundred thousand, half of them are injured, while the other half are at full strength. By relying on the traps and secret tunnels we dug early on, they should be able to stop the enemy forces for an hour.”

“An hour?” Linley asked.

“Right. An hour. After an hour, my men will send a signal arrow, and all the soldiers will immediately surrender.” Watts sighed. “There's nothing for it. If they fight to the end, they will all die.”

Linley nodded with understanding.

In the Anarchic Lands, for the defeated soldiers to surrender was quite normal.

“One hour will be more than enough for us to pull away from them.” Watts said.

There were two hundred thousand soldiers stationed at the magicite mines, and the defenses had been prepared long ago. Watts and his men had fled in the early morning, while in the afternoon, the hundred and fifty thousand survivors arrived at the magicite mines. As soon as they arrived, they were immediately sent to the administrative areas to rest and eat.

Nightfall. Within a tent.

Linley, Barker, and the others were seated together, eating dinner. At this time, someone arrived. The person who had arrived was Delia, and her arrival instantly caused everyone to stop eating. Even Barker, Gates, and Boone all immediately came over to greet her.

“Linley, how can you keep eating?” Delia was somewhat frantic.

“What is it?” Linley looked at Delia.

Delia said, “The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows have almost arrived. What are we going to do?”

“What are we going to do? What can we do?” Linley shook his head helplessly. “Delia, right now, a large number of people are mining as fast as they can. We've already finished mining over a quarter of the total number of gems here.” This was one method as well.

Mine as much as possible.

But suddenly....

“Boss.” Bebe suddenly appeared atop the dinner table. He stared at Linley with his beady little eyes. “The enemies have sent so many people over. Boss, I’ve already brought Zassler over. Let Zassler cast a single forbidden level spell, ‘Undead Calamity’ and summon an army of millions of departed souls in a single spell. Exterminate them!”

At this moment, the tent flap opened.

An old man wearing a black robe walked in. He was as thin as a skeleton. It was the Grand Magus Necromancer, Zassler.

“Lord Linley, I am ready to obey your commands at any moment. If you give the order, none of those million soldiers outside will survive.” Zassler’s eyes flashed with a cold green light. Zassler’s army of departed souls didn’t just include ordinary departed souls. They even included departed souls of the ninth rank, and even quite a few of the Saint-rank.

To exterminate that million man army was as easy as raising his hand!

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 42: An Utter Catastrophe

Everyone in the tent couldn't help but look towards Linley. Without question, Linley was the leader of these Saints.

“Boss!” Bebe called out frantically.

Linley shook his head slightly. “Once we break the agreement, then according to the original text, Desri, the Radiant Church, and the Cult of Shadows will join forces in dealing with us.”

“Why are you afraid of them?” Bebe wrinkled his little nose, and said viciously, “If those Saints come, I'll eat them alive. What's more, Boss, Desri probably won't act against you. He clearly was on our side.”

Desri was indeed on Linley's side.

“Zassler's usage of a forbidden spell to summon an army of millions of departed souls would, without question, result in victory. Desri might not come attack us as a result of us violating the agreement. However, if we act in such a way, we would essentially be destroying Desri's reputation.”

Desri had given him face. He couldn't make Desri look bad like that.

“Goddamnit. What a pain in the ass.” Bebe was somewhat frantic. “Boss, Zassler can just summon departed souls that aren't Saints. As long as non-Saint departed souls do the attacking, then that wouldn't be considered a violation, right?”

Bebe's words made Delia immediately begin to laugh.

Linley swatted Bebe on the head. “Bebe, you are equivocating. How is the ultimate summoning spell, ‘Undead Calamity’, different from other forbidden spells? In fact, in terms of power, the Undead Calamity spell is even stronger. It even can summon Saint-level departed souls.”

“But then we're going to lose!” Bebe said hurriedly.

Linley sighed. “If we lose, we lose. At worst, that just means the enemy will take away the majority of the gems in the magicite mines. Fortunately, we've already mined away all of those gems that were on par with magicite cores of beasts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks. Bebe, you've finished with those, right?”

After discovering the secret door, Linley immediately mentally reached out to Bebe and had Bebe bring Haeru and the three Saint-level dragons to go to the core area and begin mining.

Although those magicite gems probably were only numerous enough to fill up a house, in terms of price, they were roughly on par with two third of the entire rest of the mine. After all, these gems held enough energy that they were on par with the magicite cores of magical beasts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks.

“We've mined them all.” Bebe said hurriedly. “But, we've only mined out twenty or thirty percent of those ordinary magicite gems.”

The 20-30% of ordinary magicite gems, combined with the core gems that they had mined, were worth perhaps only fifty percent of the total value of the magicite mines.

.....

“Rumble...”

The thickly clustered soldiers quickly formed up into two lines. The enormous, million-man army seemed like a behemoth as it swept towards the defenses of the magicite mines.

Within the army, Weiss Porter and Guillermo both had smiles on their faces.

“We win.” Guillermo laughed as he looked at the distant magicite mines.

Weiss Porter chuckled. “Don’t celebrate just yet. Nothing is certain until the last moment!”

“I don’t care about Linley’s soldiers. What I’m afraid of is Linley personally interfering! Or, those Saint-level magic beasts attacking. Our army would probably totally collapse.”

“True.” Guillermo sighed as well.

How effective was their previous agreement in binding Linley?

“First let our army rest. They fought all night, then marched for an entire day. The soldiers haven’t had a chance to rest at all.” Weiss Porter said. “It’s already night. Wait for dawn. Let them rest one night, and then attack again at dawn.”

Right now, the advantage was all on their side. Although their common soldiers were exhausted, those sixty thousand elite soldiers weren’t tired at all.

The weakest soldier of those two legions was of the fifth rank.

During the battle at the prefectural city of Cod, they had only attacked at the very end, and then travelled for a day. Given their power, even staying up for three days and three nights was fine.

Within the Forest of Darkness.

“Rustle...” In this primeval forest, a soft sound rustled throughout the area. One Stoneater Rat and Shadowmouse after another could be seen, moving in dense ranks...as far as the eye could see, there were Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats. Countless rat-type magical beasts were traveling towards the south side of the Forest of Darkness at high speed.

Gray Stoneater Rats, black Shadowmice, silver Stoneater rats, blue Shadowmice, golden Stoneater Rats, violet Shadowmice...

Rat-type magical beasts of all colors were coming out in a constant stream from within the depths of the Forest of Darkness like a tide, surging towards the south.

Amongst them, three violet-gold rat-type magical beasts were flying in the air above.

“Big brother, are we being a bit too nasty?” One of the violet-gold rats spoke out.

“What do you mean, too nasty?” The leader of the violet-gold rats sneered. “We are the kings of the rat-type magical beasts. Since all three of us brothers are making our grand entrance...we have to show off a bit.

Also, we only brought a portion of the rat-type magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness. It isn't as though we brought them all."

The Forest of Darkness was the home of rat-type magical beasts.

In the Forest of Darkness, rat-type magical beast hordes were terrifying in power. No other magical beasts dared to offend these rat-type magical beast hordes.

Even Saint-level magical beasts didn't want to offend the Rat Kings.

Each of these violet-gold rats possessed terrifying amounts of power.

"That Linley hasn't met us a single time yet, has he?" The violet-gold rat in the middle laughed.

"Right. He can be considered as having rendered great merits, for him having taken care of Bebe for so long." The leading violet-gold rat said.

"Big brother, don't be so self-satisfied. From what I've learned from my conversations with Bebe, that Linley's power is quite astonishing. In his full Dragonform, combined with his extremely high understanding of the Laws, you probably aren't a match for him." The third violet-gold rat said.

The leading violet-gold rat let out a few snorts. "At his current level of power, I suppose he finally, just barely, qualifies to be Bebe's 'Boss', now."

Twelve years ago, when Bebe and the violet-gold rat had exchanged blows, Bebe had been at a disadvantage.

But twelve years later, Bebe's level of power had already reached parity with the violet-gold rat.

"They are moving so slowly." The leading violet-gold rat said with impatience. Suddenly, it let out a shrill screech. "Shkreeeee!" The piercing sound rang out, and instantly, the masses of Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice below them began to move more quickly.

Wherever the endless tide of rat-type magical beasts went, the other magical beasts immediately scrambled to flee.

Nobody dared to stop them!

.....

Linley's forces were all hidden behind their defenses. All they could do was rely on the local geography and environment to stop the enemy. Although they knew the enemy forces were exhausted last night, Linley's 150,000 soldiers were exhausted as well.

The day slowly brightened. This morning was a foggy one.

The fog wasn't very thick, but it prevented a person from seeing beyond a few hundred meters.

"The enemy is moving."

Behind the defenses, the soldiers could clearly hear a multitude of footsteps. Clearly, the enemy forces were charging in this direction. In the mist, one could vaguely begin to see countless soldiers appear like a wave crashing towards them.

Linley, Delia, Bebe, Zassler, Barker, and the others all quietly watched.

“Jeeze, this pisses me off.” Bebe grumbled on Linley’s shoulders.

Bebe secretly glanced at Linley, but Linley maintained his silence. Who here was happy? Who wouldn’t be upset at having to give away half the magicite mine to the enemies? But Linley had signed the agreement, and he didn’t want to make Desri look bad. And so, he held to the agreement.

Soon, the hundreds of millions of gold coins worth of magicite gems would belong to the enemy.

Suddenly...

The footsteps came to a halt. At the same time, a loud, world-shaking voice could be heard: “Surrender. There is no way you can resist our army. If you surrender, we definitely won’t mistreat you.” The words were said quite suavely.

“He’s rather polite.” Gates snickered.

“Of course.” Zassler let out a sinister sneer. “They are afraid that we Saints will interfere.”

“If you put down your weapons within one minute’s time and surrender, we definitely won’t harm any of you. The countdown begins now.” After the voice finished speaking, not a single one of the 350,000 soldiers surrendered. They all quietly awaited the battle to start.

One minute and one second passed. A minute was a very short period of time.

The entire battlefield was put under terrifying pressure.

Baruch Kingdom’s side saw many soldiers sweating. Their knuckles were white from how tightly they held their weapons.

“Prepare!”

A voice rang out. The battle at the prefectural city of Cod had resulted in almost no losses to the Sacred Legion or the Shadow Legion. Those 60,000 elite soldiers hefted their shields and raised their spears and warblades.

“We’re going to lose!” Gates said in a low voice.

Delia and Bebe looked at Linley, but Linley remained silent.

But just at this time...

Three violet-gold flashes of light suddenly streaked through the air, while at the same time, their excited voices rang out. “Bebe, I’m here! This time, I brought my big brother and my second brother with me.”

“Saint-level magical beasts?” Linley turned and saw three violet-gold rats.

This was Linley’s first time meeting Saint-level rat-type magical beasts aside from Bebe, and what’s more, there were three of them.

“What is that sound?” Linley, extremely sensitive to the elemental essences, suddenly sensed a sound from far away. That sound was moving towards them at a very fast speed. Linley spread out his spiritual sense, and suddenly he sensed...

“So many!!!!”

Countless rat-type magical beasts. Black ones. Blue ones. Violet ones. Gray ones. Silver ones. Gold ones. All sorts of rat-type magical beasts covered the land, like an enormous, endless sea. Countless rat-type magical beasts raised their head and began to let out excited screeches.

“Shkreeeeeeee!”

“Shkreeeeeeee!”

Terrifying, countless screeches filled the air, the world reverberating with the sound.

“What is that sound?” The Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion, which had just been able to engage in battle, suddenly felt their hearts quiver. The sound was coming from behind the magicite mines, but there were far too many voices, like trillions of magical beasts screeching at the same time.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces instantly changed.

“What is going on?” Weiss Porter and the others all felt nervous, but they didn’t know what was happening.

Not just them. Even the forces of the Baruch Kingdom felt their hearts shake.

“Magical beasts are coming. All soldiers, remain behind the earthworks. None of you are permitted to go out, nor are you permitted to attack the magical beasts.” Linley’s voice could be heard across their entire camp, and his words immediately caused all the soldiers of the Baruch Kingdom to shout in joy.

But the reaction in the camp of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows was the opposite.

“A magical beast swarm?” Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces changed dramatically.

Controlling a swarm of magical beasts to attack wasn’t a violation. After all, the Saint-level magical beasts weren’t personally attacking. For example, the O’Brien Empire had its Vampiric Iron Bull legion, which was a terrifying legion that had had hundreds of thousands of Vampiric Iron Bulls along with their caretakers.

“A swarm of magical beasts? Where did they come from?” Weiss Porter hurriedly said.

Guillermo’s face was ashen pale. “Linley’s rat-type magical beast! Right. It must be that Saint-level rat-type magical beast. The Forest of Darkness is the home of rat-type magical beasts.”

“Shouldn’t be. The rat-type magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness have their own rulers.” Weiss Porter knew very well that the Rat Kings of the Forest of Darkness were violet-gold rats. There was no way they would be under Bebe’s control.

But just at this time...

The squeeks from an endless tide of rat-type magical beasts rang out, and instantly, the horde of rat-type magical beasts covered an area of tens of square kilometers. Tens of kilometers! In other words, as far as the eye could see, the world had become covered with nothing but rat-type magical beasts.

“Wow!”

“Whoah!”

Cries of surprise rang out constantly from Linley’s side. Those rat-type magical beasts all quite orderly avoided Linley’s soldiers, heading towards the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows in a

stream. These rat-type magical beasts were generally able to eat even rocks. One could imagine how sharp their fangs and claws were.

Shadowmice were fast. Stoneater Rats were durable.

The entire swarm of rat-type magical beasts charged over. A swarm like this would even be able to devour an entire mountain.

“Wow, buddy, as badass as that?” Bebe’s eyes were bulging and round as he stared at the other three violet-gold rats next to him. “How many rat-type magical beasts did you bring over? My spiritual energy can’t even encompass them all.”

The leading violet-gold rat said with a delighted laugh, “Not many, not many...this is just a small portion of our forces in the Forest of Darkness. Just a couple hundred million, that’s all.”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 43: The Ratmageddon Wave

Within the endless mist, an endless swarm of rats came. All of the warriors, including the Sacred Legion, the Shadow Legion, and the others felt terror in their hearts. But despite their terror, they still had to wield their weapons and attack those magical beasts.

If the magical beasts didn't die, they would die!

“Kill!” Arrows rained down like the rain upon the wave of rats, but the defense of the Stoneater Rats was simply too tough, while the Shadowmice were too fast. Only a few Shadowmice were killed.

And then...

The wave of rats slammed into the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows' forces.

“Crunch, crunch.” A terrifying series of crunching sounds.

A seemingly infinite number of rats charged forward, biting to death all of the human soldiers who sought to block them. Not only was their flesh stripped; even their bones were devoured. The Sacred Legion and Shadow Legion, all combined, had ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank.

But ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank, in the face of that rat wave, was absolutely nothing.

This was because the rat wave had a terrifying number of rats of the seventh rank, while ordinary Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice of the fifth rank, when charging in mass, could still bite a warrior of the seventh rank to death. Ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank...in front of a tidal wave of hundreds of millions of rats, utterly disappeared.

“Flee!” Some soldiers cried out in terror as they began to run.

Once the first began to flee, many of the other terrified soldiers began to flee as well. They couldn't resist the rat wave at all.

However...

They couldn't flee!

The Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats were extremely fast, far faster than humans. The fleeing warriors were quickly surrounded, then devoured. Even Guillermo and Weiss Porter were so terrified that their faces turned white, and they quickly began to flee.

“Quick, quick.” Weiss Porter and Guillermo didn't try to resist at all.

The attack of the rat wave caused nearly half of the enemy force of a million soldiers to disappear, with not even the bones remaining.

“Linley, it's enough to make them surrender. Don't let this slaughter continue.” Delia couldn't bear to watch any more.

Linley glanced at the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings, and one of them grinned towards Delia. “Sure. Hey, Linley, just make the announcement. As long as the humans kneel down and raised their hands up in a token of submission, the rats won’t attack them.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Everyone, listen up. Kneel down and raise your hands in surrender. The magical beasts won’t attack you if you do so!” Linley’s voice rang out like thunder from the skies.

Hearing this sound, the hopeless soldiers immediately began to kneel down and raise their hands up.

At the same time, the Violet-Gold Rat King opened its mouth. “Shkreeeee!”

The high pitched screech rang out in the mist, and all the rats, as though having heard an order, bizarrely moved passed all of the kneeling soldiers, attacking the other soldiers.

“What to do?” Guillermo was in a state of total panic. Both Weiss Porter and Guillermo were using protective spells to defend themselves.

“How should I know?” Weiss Porter was terrified as well.

Right now, there were over ten rats nearly a meter long staring at them. The ten rats were either violet colored or gold colored, and the violet-furred rats had hints of gold in their fur, while the gold-furred rats had tints of violet in their fur.

Under a normal situation...

High level Shadowmice were violet at the seventh rank, and were known as Violet Shadowmice.

High level Stoneater Rats were gold at the seventh rank, and were known as Gold Stoneater Rats.

But from the seventh rank to the Saint-level, the fur of Violet Shadowmice would slowly turn a violet-gold color, while the Gold Stoneater Rats would see their fur also turn to a gold-violet color.

These ten rats were clearly of the eighth or ninth ranks.

“Squeak squeak.” One of the Stoneater Rats of the ninth rank suddenly pounced at them, biting through Guillermo’s Lightguard spell at one chomp. At the same time, Weiss Porter’s magical defense also came under assault and was broken through, but the ten rats didn’t immediately continue their assaults.

They were very intelligent, not one bit lower than humans in intelligence.

Guillermo and Weiss Porter exchanged glances. Their foreheads were covered with sweat, and their backs were also slick with sweat. They understood...if these ten rats charged toward them, they would instantly be bitten to death. Not even their bones would be left.

But just at this time, Linley’s voice rang out.

After exchanging glances, the two didn’t hesitate at all.

“Thud!” Their knees hit the ground, and their hands raised up.

Instantly, eight of the ten rats left, while the other two stayed there, staring at them. The rats were very smart; the ten rats had instantly discovered that these two experts of the ninth rank, Guillermo and Weiss Porter, were the enemy leaders.

Enemy leaders had to be taken alive, of course.

After the morning fog slowly dissipated, Linley's side could clearly see that large number of kneeling enemy soldiers, all of whom were surrounded by ten, no, a hundred times their number of rats and mice. The visual effect of these massive numbers alone were awesome and terrifying to behold.

"Swish!" A sudden flash of light, as a gold-colored rat with a tint of purple in its fur scurried over, letting out two squeaks.

"What? Only three hundred thousand enemy soldiers are still alive." Bebe said in surprise. Bebe naturally could understand the language of rat-type magical beasts.

The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings narrowed their eyes in delight. One of them looked at Bebe. "Bebe, what do you think?" Bebe looked at the endless sea of rats and sighed, "They really are powerful. It'd be so awesome if these rats obeyed my command."

Who could possibly resist an army of hundreds of millions of rat-type magical beasts?

"Oh, that's easy." The leader of the violet-gold rats let out a few high pitched screeches, and Bebe instantly grew excited.

Linley looked at Bebe in confusion.

"Boss, from today onwards, these hundreds of millions of rats will obey my command. Haha!" Bebe was extremely excited. At the same time, he also let out a few high pitched squeaks which also encompassed the entire battlefield. The countless rat-type magical beasts all lowered their heads and bowed towards Bebe.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Stoneater Rat swarms and Shadowmice swarms were frighteningly strong. Linley had known of this since he was young. But Linley had felt that a rat wave of several million rat-type monsters was already very frightening. But several hundred million...this was simply terrifying.

"Which army can possibly resist these hundreds of millions of rats?" Linley secretly shook his head.

This was like when the magical beasts of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts came charging out. Even Fenlai City itself was broken through in moments, and both the Holy Union as well as the Dark Alliance lost a third of their territory. One could imagine how terrifying magical beast swarms were. And the Forest of Darkness...was the home of rat-type magical beasts.

This small portion of the rat-type beasts within it was enough to lay waste to an Empire.

But of course, that was assuming Saints did not get involved!

The leading Violet-Gold Rat King laughed towards Linley. "Let me introduce myself. My name is Harry [Ha'li]!"

"My name's Hart [Ha'te]. I'm number two." A second Violet-Gold Rat King said immediately.

The final Violet-Gold Rat King nodded and was about to speak, but Linley interjected, "You must be Harvey [Ha'wei], right? Bebe often speaks to me of you." The only Violet-Gold Rat King which Bebe had made friends with in the Forest of Darkness was Harvey. The others, he didn't have much of a relationship with.

"Are the three of you truly giving control of this rat swarm to Bebe?" Linley asked.

This rat swarm was simply too enormous. How could these Rat Kings give them to Bebe to control?

The Violet-Gold Rat King, Harry, said disdainfully, “You don’t understand. In the Forest of Darkness, every so often, there will be a massive internal slaughter amongst the rat swarms. More than half will die, and the weak will be destroyed.”

“More than half?” Linley felt shocked.

The third-ranked Rat King, Harvey, explained: “It’s simple. The lower-ranked the rat, the faster they breed. A single litter can contain a dozen or several dozen. How can that be allowed to continue? If that continues, the Forest of Darkness wouldn’t be large enough for them to survive in. That’s why they engage in internal warfare, weeding out the weak and lowering the numbers.”

Linley understood now.

If the rat-type magical beasts were allowed to develop as they pleased, most likely the entire Forest of Darkness would be devoured by them. Their numbers had to be controlled.

“Thus, Bebe.” The Rat King named Harvey patted Bebe’s shoulder with his little paw and said in a friendly manner, “This rat swarm is yours to control. It doesn’t matter how many you get killed. The Forest of Darkness needs to keep the number of rats under control anyhow. Sooner or later, the weaker ones will die.”

Linley couldn’t help but sigh inwardly.

No wonder there were so many rats of the fifth through seventh ranks, and even several that were higher. So the weak ones had been weeded out long ago. Those grey Stoneater Rats and black Shadowmice were probably still in the growing phase.

“Don’t worry. I’ll definitely complete your mission and let more than half of them die.” Bebe chortled, then looked at Linley. “Boss, how about...let’s use these rats to take over the entire Anarchic Lands?”

“Unify the Anarchic Lands?”

Linley’s body shook slightly, but then he laughed.

“Boss, the two enemy leaders are being escorted over.” Weiss Porter and Guillermo were being brought over.

“Guillermo?” Linley looked at Guillermo. This was a familiar face.

Seeing Linley, Guillermo forced out a smile. Linley laughed calmly. “This time, the Radiant Church and Cult of Shadows has really tested my limits. Because of our agreement, I had to just watch the battle happen and not interfere.”

Guillermo and Weiss Porter’s hearts were trembling.

“It’s fine. I’ll let your Radiant Church and Cult of Shadows also learn what that feels like.”

Linley looked at Bebe and laughed. “Bebe, from today onwards, join forces with Barker. Let the rat swarm and the human army attack together. Divide into ten units and begin to attack the territory of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands.”

“Yes! I, Bebe, will definitely succeed.” Bebe intentionally puffed out his chest, then issued a very proper military salute.

Barker's eyes were shining as well. "Lord Linley, don't worry. With these hundreds of millions of rats, uniting the Anarchic Lands will be simplicity itself." By now, even the elite legions of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had been destroyed. Who could possibly block these rats?

Guillermo and Weiss Porter's faces instantly turned even paler.

They exchanged glances, terror in their eyes. They could imagine what was going to happen.

Yulan calendar, year 10022. September.

What would later be described as the war of the 'Ratmageddon Wave' began. Hundreds of millions of rats, divided into ten units, each containing the terrifying number of tens of millions of rats, began to move in unison with Baruch Kingdom legions of twenty thousand human warriors.

The hundreds of millions of rats and the two hundred thousand human warriors had been divided into ten groups.

These ten groups began to attack the Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church in the Anarchic Lands.

Rat-type magical beasts of the eighth and ninth ranks could understand human speech, and in addition, some of the eighth and ninth ranked experts of the Baruch Kingdom set up soulbinding contracts with some of the powerful rat-type magical beasts. This made it even easier to control the rat swarm.

The rat wave was unstoppable!

The attacking rat waves, even when faced with giant falling boulders by city guards, were able to chew holes straight through the walls. After all, the Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats often ate rocks for food. They bore straight through the walls, then swept through like a flood into the cities. The city guards simply weren't able to stop them at all.

Wherever the rat wave passed, cities crumbled and surrendered.

Even the Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion had been annihilated. Who could resist such a terrifying rat swarm?

The 'Ratmageddon Wave' was only comparable to the 'Apocalypse Day' on year 10000 of the Yulan calendar. In addition, the difference between this and the 'Apocalypse Day' was that this time...the boundless rat wave totally listened to the commands of Linley's side.

This news quickly spread to the O'Brien Empire, the Yulan Empire, and the various other major forces.

At the same time, this information quickly spread towards the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church. But what could they do? After all...Linley hadn't deployed any of his Saints to join the battle. He only deployed an army of magical beasts.

However, the number of magical beasts in his army was simply too astonishing.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 44: Meeting Invitation

The Sacred Isle. The ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

At this moment, the atmosphere was an extremely depressing one. The air was so thick and stifling, it seemed to have turned solid.

The Holy Emperor Heidens, Praetor Osenno, Zealot Commander Lehman, and Lord Fallen Leaf, the spiritual leader of the Ascetics. These four high level individuals were all present. They were staring at the news they had received. Their faces had all become exceedingly ugly to behold.

Silence!

After receiving this news, nobody spoke. Everyone understood the grave importance this news represented. Perhaps to Linley...worldly power, land, and kingdoms meant nothing. Even if the Baruch Kingdom were to disappear, it wouldn't mean much to him.

But it was different for the Radiant Church.

“Rat wave. A rat wave!” Lord Fallen Leaf was frowning mightily. His skinny, emaciated face had a bitter look on it. “The terrifying rat wave of the Forest of Darkness. Why do they obey Linley? This is something which had never happened before.”

Heidens spoke in a low voice. “Most likely it is Linley’s magical beast. It is that Saint-level black Shadowmouse that is controlling them.”

“Saint-level rat-type magical beasts should be Violet-Gold Rat Kings!” Osenno shook his head. “Although Linley’s rat-type magical beast is a Saint, but...the Rat Kings of the Forest of Darkness are Violet-Gold Rat Kings. All Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats there listen to the orders of the Violet-Gold Rat King race.”

This was a truth. All the experts of the continent knew this truth.

The highest echelon of the Yulan continent was the five Deities, with the mysterious King of the Forest of Darkness being one of them. In all the records of the Church, even the earliest ones before the High Priest had appeared, there were notes regarding this King of the Forest of Darkness.

The most ancient of the five Deities.

The most mysterious one.

Never showing himself. Never struggling for power.

But nobody dared to offend him. No matter how powerful, no one dared to offend him.

All the major powers knew that this mysterious King of the Forest of Darkness had one hobby; he loved rat-type magical beasts. With his help, the rat-type magical beasts became an enormous, powerful race in the Forest of Darkness, and the Violet-Gold Rat Kings became amongst the highest tier of Saint-level magical beasts.

Even Saint-level magical beasts such as Nine Headed Serpent Emperors, Worldbears, and Bloody-eyed Maned Lions weren't much stronger than these Violet-Gold Rat Kings.

"Enough." Heidens frowned. "Enough discussion about why the rat swarm listens to Linley. What matters right now is how to resolve this situation. The situation is extremely grave. I imagine all of you understand this quite well."

Osenno, Lehman, and Lord Fallen Leaf all maintained their silence.

Heidens glanced at each of them. "The 'Apocalypse Day' already caused us to lose over a hundred million believers. The Radiant Sovereign is already unhappy with the loss of so much faith energy. Once Linley takes over the Anarchic Lands, then the Church will definitely be destroyed by him. In less than a hundred years, there will perhaps be few to no believers in the Radiant Church in the Anarchic Lands.

Faith!

This was one of the most important reasons why the Radiant Church existed. They had lost a tremendous amount of faith energy last time. They had been very fortunate, for the Radiant Sovereign had not punished them for this.

But if they were to lose even more...

The repercussions would be unimaginable!

"No matter what, we cannot allow our Radiant Church's foundations in the Anarchic Lands to be destroyed. This colossal amount of faith energy cannot be allowed to be lost." Lord Fallen Leaf said in a low voice.

"Right. It cannot be lost." Zealot Commander Lehman said as well.

Osenno's lips quirked up. "Faith energy is important to us, but not necessarily to Linley. Linley most likely doesn't have much interest in land either. We can negotiate with him."

"Right." The eyes of the other three lit up.

This wasn't unresolvable.

Heidens paused for a moment, then immediately ordered, "Since that's the case, then how about this. Lehman, you stay at the Sacred Isle for now. All matters at the Sacred Isle will be under your control. Don't allow Linley to ambush us and destroy our headquarters. As for Fallen Leaf and Osenno, you two come with me, along with six Angel Saints."

The emaciated Lord Fallen Leaf nodded slightly.

Osenno approved as well.

The Radiant Church had human Saints as well, but the potential of human Saints was far greater than that of the Angels. The Church would rather use the Angels as cannon fodder than allow their human Saints to die.

With the Holy Emperor Heidens as their leader, the three pillars of the Radiant Church, Heidens, Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf, alongside six Angel Saints, quickly flew away from the Sacred Isle and away from the ocean, heading towards the Anarchic Lands.

As for the Cult of Shadows, the importance they placed on faith power was no less than that of the Radiant Church's.

The various Saint-level pillars of the Cult of Shadows, such as the Dark Patriarch, also headed towards the Anarchic Lands.

In the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, on a desolate official road, the massive tide of rats accompanied the human warriors in a quite orderly fashion, continuing their attacks. The hundreds of millions of rats and the two hundred thousand human warriors had been divided into ten armies.

Each army had tens of millions of rats and twenty thousand human warriors.

The main use of the human warriors was to placate the citizens of the cities. Within the twenty thousand human soldiers, there was a carriage. This was the only carriage in the entire army.

And within the carriage, there was only...Bebe!

Within the spacious carriage, Bebe stretched his two rear claws out as he lazily lay down while chatting spiritually with Linley. "Boss, five armies under my control have already taken down six prefectural cities and dozens of small cities. How about you? How's training in the pocket dimension going? Oh, fine...I won't bother you anymore."

"I'm so bored."

Bebe let out a resigned sigh.

Although Bebe was roughly two thousand kilometers away from the magicite mines, Linley and Bebe both possessed so much spiritual energy that, when combined with their 'bond of equals' type of soul-binding, they could still chat at such a distance. Their range was double that of Linley and Haeru's.

Twelve years ago, Linley and Haeru could mentally talk at a distance of a thousand kilometers.

By now, Linley and Haeru could talk at a distance of two thousand kilometers. Linley and Bebe naturally could talk at an even greater distance.

"Hey, where are we? How much farther from the next prefectural city?" Bebe said loudly to the outside guard.

Immediately, the soldier pulled open the carriage window and said respectfully, "Milord, according to the maps, we have another fifty kilometers to the next prefectural city."

"As far as that?" Bebe muttered, then closed his little eyes. "I guess I'd better take another nap first."

"The rat swarm is coming, the rat swarm is coming!" Sounds of terror from the city walls.

Atop the walls of this prefectural city, the faces of the thousands of soldiers were utterly pale. Seeing the endless wave of magical beasts in the desolate wilderness, they were all terror-stricken. Even the city governor had giant beads of sweat appear on his forehead.

"What to do?" The city governor was totally baffled.

A nearby city manager said with terror, "Lord City Governor, this rat wave is simply too terrifying. We can't stop them. It's...it's better if we surrender." As he spoke, his voice lowered to a whisper. The soldiers of the prefectural city on the wall had all seen the enormous number of rats coming, with a thin line of human soldiers mixed in.

"Surrender, won't kill!"

“Surrender, won’t kill!”

“Surrender, won’t kill!”

The human soldiers immediately let out an enormous unified chant. This earth-shaking chant, mixed with the terrifying, endless rat wave, caused many guards to throw down their weapons. After all, even before the rat swarm had arrived, these people had heard of how terrifying the rat swarm was.

“Lord Bebe.”

The carriage suddenly halted, and Bebe opened his little eyes blearily. Just as Bebe’s eyes were beginning to focus, his little eyes suddenly turned absolutely round, and with a ‘swish’, he disappeared from inside the carriage.

The city had already surrendered, and the countless rats had been preparing to enter the city. But suddenly, not a single rat was moving.

This was because a group of people were standing there in mid-air, the leader of them a skinny, bald man. Heidens. A terrifying aura spread out from Heidens, terrifying the below rats so badly that they all knelt down, not daring to move.

“A Saint-level expert!” The human warriors below felt a hint of terror in their hearts.

Seeing this, a hint of a calm smile appeared on Heiden’s face.

The air quivered, and Bebe, who had previously been inside the carriage, appeared in mid-air. Bebe’s eyes stared fixedly at Heidens. His voice was extremely shrill. “You damn baldy, even Osenno is standing behind you. So you are that so-called Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church?”

Damn baldy?

Osenno, Lord Fallen Leaf, and the two Angel Saints standing behind Heidens felt amused.

A hint of a faint smile remained on Heidens’ face. Like a benevolent father, he looked gently at Bebe. “So you are Linley’s magical beast. I am indeed the Holy Emperor, Heidens. Today, I have come because I hope to have a good negotiation with Linley.”

“Oh?” Bebe’s beady little eyes rolled.

“Alright. You wait.” Bebe said loudly. “My Boss is still back in the Kingdom. I can’t notify him. You’ll need to wait half a day.”

Heidens smiled and nodded. “Fine. Linley can choose the meeting location as well.” Heidens’ attitude was quite modest.

Bebe’s beady little eyes rolled again, and then he said loudly, “Fine. Just stay here at this prefectural city. I’ll come looking for you in a bit.” Bebe let out a sharp screech, and instantly, the rats below all obediently retreated out of the city, no longer attacking it.

Seeing this, Heidens, Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf all felt shock in their heart.

As for Bebe, he transformed into a black streak of light, flying towards the north. As he flew, Bebe began to reach out to Linley. “Boss, quick. Stop training. Something big is going down.”

In the depths of the magicite mine, a gentle wind blew past. Linley's body appeared in mid-air, while Zassler immediately flew out as well.

"Lord Linley, the value of this pocket dimension room is definitely on par with any divine artifact." Zassler sighed in amazement. This was Zassler's first trip into the pocket dimension room. Just then, Linley and him had been training inside.

Zassler, having been initiated into the secrets of necromancy, knew many occult mysteries, far more than Linley did.

Zassler knew very well that a Demigod definitely would not be able to create such a stable pocket dimension.

"Enough of that for now. Just then, Barker's magical beast notified me that the experts of the Cult of Darkness have arrived. And then, Bebe contacted me as well." A hint of a smile was on Linley's lips. "The Cult of Shadows and Radiant Church are both frantic now."

"Naturally." Zassler laughed. "Lord Linley, you don't care about territory, but religious organizations greatly value the power of faith. If they lose a huge amount of territory, they might even have a punishment fall down upon them from the Divine Plane of Light."

"When their soldiers attacked my territory, I endured the entire time. But now, these people have popped out. I want to see what they have to say!" Linley's eyes had a hint of coldness flash past them.

"Zassler, let's go."

Linley's body transformed into a flash of light, streaking gracefully towards the south. Zassler laughed, then followed him. Only, Zassler's 'laugh', when paired with his deathly, netherworldly eyes, was simply terrifying to behold.

While flying over.

Linley's eyes turned cold as he issued a mental order. "Haeru, you and those three Saint-level dragons come as well." Immediately, the Saint-level magical beasts, the Blackcloud Panther, the Tyrant Wurm, the Golden Dragon, and the Thunder Lizard all flew out of Mt. Blackraven.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 45:Shameless

Above the mighty Liuyan River, a large ship was gliding its way through the waters, but not a single person was on the deck.

In the uppermost inner deck of the ship, however, experts were as numerous as the clouds.

Every single person within this massive inner deck was a Saint-level expert. Within the hall, there were nine chairs, divided into three sides.

Linley, Barker, and Zassler were seated on one side.

The Holy Emperor Heidens, Praetor Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf were seated on another side, while on the other side were the forces of the Cult of Shadows: Dark Patriarch Affleck [A'fu'lai'ke], Senior Judge O'Casey, Fallen Angel Leader Cramerson [Ke'lai'mo'sen].

Behind each of the two sides were a number of Angel Saints or Fallen Angel Saints.

Heidens and Affleck shared a glance, a strange feeling in their heart. The two of them were the leaders of two major religions, and they were enemies to each other.

But today, they were allies.

The reason for this bizarre transformation was Linley. An astonishing genius who had grown at rapid speed. Despite his youth, he had reached one of the utmost peaks of power amongst the experts of the continent. Even figures as exalted as the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch had to lower their noble heads in front of Linley and speak soft words to negotiate with him.

“Heidens. Affleck.” Linley had a hint of a smile around his lips. “I don't know why you have invited me to come here. What is this about?” Bebe rested on Linley's thighs, his beady little eyes staring at the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch.

The Dark Patriarch Affleck's skin was as white and tender as that of a young girl's. His voice was also very soft and gentle. “The reason why so many of us from the Cult of Shadows have come is primarily to ask you, Linley, to make a concession and have your rat wave army halt its attacks. I imagine Heidens has come for similar reasons. Heidens, am I right?”

Heidens nodded slightly, then looked at Linley, his gentle gaze giving off the impression of the spring wind. “Linley, would you be willing to make this concession?”

“Are you all dreaming?” Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Heidens laughed calmly. “Linley, as long as you are willing to make this concession, our Radiant Church is also willing to pay a high price. We will definitely make you satisfied.”

“The same with us. What we pay would definitely be enough to make you feel satisfied, Linley.” Affleck said.

Both of the leaders of the two religions were acting submissively towards Linley.

They didn't want to fight against Linley head on. First of all, they had no excuse to do so. If they fought against Linley head on, they would be giving Desri's side an excuse to intervene. And secondly, the Radiant Church, at least, had agreed that within these twenty years, they were not to attack Linley. The time limit wasn't over.

"Linley, what do you think?" Heidens looked at Linley.

Linley felt deep hatred for the Radiant Church. Linley only harbored a dislike for cruel, savage people, but towards those who feigned benevolence, such as Heidens, and for those who pretended to be as kind as a father, but who in reality were merciless, cruel, and utterly pragmatic, Linley felt the utmost of revulsion.

The leaders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows looked at Linley.

Linley revealed a hint of a smile, but from his mouth, he spoke two words: "No way!"

The faces of both Heidens and Affleck instantly froze, while at the same time, the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, let out a cold sneer. "Linley, can it be that you rashly imagine that you can set yourself against both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows?"

"Cramerson." The Dark Patriarch, Affleck, immediately barked at him.

Linley looked at the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, and let out a light laugh. "Based on what I know, for an Angel to Descend, they require a powerful body. Mr. Cramerson, you are so powerful that this body must at least be of the seventh or eighth rank in power. Where did your Cult of Shadows procure such a powerful body?"

In the past, the five Barker brothers had reached the eighth rank just by physical training alone.

Linley knew very well that most people would only be able to reach the sixth rank through physical training. No matter how talented they were, the seventh rank was virtually impossible, with perhaps one appearing every millennia. Only the lineage of the Four Supreme Warriors was able to constantly produce such a miracle just based on physical training.

Thus, this body of Cramerson's most likely belonged to one of the Four Supreme Warriors.

"Right. Where did that body come from?" Barker stared coldly at the Cult of Shadow's side.

Back then, him and his four brothers had nearly died and had their bodies transformed into vessels for Angels. Thus, this was a very sensitive topic for him.

"That's a secret of our Cult of Shadows." Cramerson smiled. "Enough, Linley. Let's return to the previous topic. Are you truly unwilling to make any concession at all? If you are willing to make this concession, you will win the eternal gratitude of our Cult of Shadows."

Gratitude?

Linley, Zassler, Barker, and even Bebe immediately began to laugh loudly, holding their stomachs.

"Linley, you'd best consider it." Heidens looked at Linley as well.

Linley's laughter faded, and his face grew solemn. He swept the people in front of him with his gaze and said seriously, "Heidens. Affleck. Listen well. I, Linley, will say this to you plainly. No matter what, I will not withdraw my armies. The unification of the Anarchic Lands is going to happen, and there is nothing that can stop it!"

“Linley, don’t go too far.” Osenno sneered coldly.

In terms of his ability to ‘endure’, Osenno clearly was inferior to Heidens and Lord Fallen Leaf.

“Too far?” Linley frowned, his gaze shooting towards Osenno like cold knives. “Osenno, don’t put on airs in front of me. I’ve already spoken very plainly today. If you want me to withdraw my armies, that’s not going to happen.”

The aura in the cabin of the boat immediately became extremely tense.

“Is there anything else? Speak.” Linley was quite casual.

Bebe added, “Right, if there’s anything you want, hurry up and talk. I’m about to go lead my rat wave army to go take over a huge swathe of land.”

Zassler’s cold, gloomy gaze swept towards the people in the room. He let out a few insidious chuckles, but didn’t speak.

The cabin was silent for a while.

“Fine then.” Heidens sighed. “Our Radiant Church can make one final concession. We can offer the land which we control to your Baruch Kingdom and let you administer it.”

“Oh?” Linley was a bit surprised.

What was Heidens intending? Why was he allowing Linley to take over the entire Anarchic Lands?

“We are willing to do this as well.” Affleck said.

Linley glanced at Heidens, then at Affleck. He mused to himself, “What are these two church leaders planning?”

Heidens looked at Linley. “Our request is very simple. As long as you are willing to agree to allow our Radiant Church to preach openly throughout your empire and won’t suppress our religion at all, we’ll be satisfied.”

“Preach? Not suppress them at all?” Linley frowned.

Affleck nodded as well. “Our request is the same. Allow our Cult of Shadows to openly preach, and do not suppress it at all.”

Linley laughed.

He now understood their intentions. The Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church greatly valued the power of faith. Compared to that, they didn’t care too much about who ruled over a particular territory.

What was truly the most important was that the faith power had to be maintained.

“Linley, the spread of our religions in your empire in the Anarchic Lands won’t affect your governance much. You should be able to accept this, right?” Affleck said persuasively.

Heidens just quietly watched Linley, waiting for Linley’s answer.

“You’ll allow me to unify it, and you’ll just proselytize?” Linley looked at the two.

“Right.” Heidens immediately nodded. “This is the greatest concession we can make. Linley, if you are willing to agree, then our two sides can become friends, and we can forget about everything which has happened in the past.”

If Linley were to agree, then the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would definitely have to give Linley face in the future. In the future, Linley would be as free and unrestrained in the Yulan continent as a fish in water.

But...

They had forgotten that Linley didn't care about dominance. In his heart, the only thing he had was the self-confidence and desire to reach the pinnacle of training, his love towards his family and friends, and an oath he had etched into his heart.

The oath he had sworn when Grandpa Doehring had died, and he had left the city of Hess!

The oath that he would destroy the Radiant Church entirely, and pull it up by its roots!

His father had died. His mother had died. Grandpa Doehring had died!

“Become friends? Become friends with the Radiant Church?” Linley laughed coldly in his heart. “The Anarchic Lands? If I could have my father, mother, and Grandpa Doehring come back to life, I'd be willing to give up the entire Anarchic Lands, and even all of my own power!!!!”

Linley's emotions began to swell.

“Become friends? Let you continue to preach?” The rage in Linley's heart was rising, but his face remained as calm as ever.

Within the quiet cabin, everyone stared at Linley, waiting for Linley's reply.

Allowing Linley to unify the Anarchic Lands while the two churches continued to preach was the bottom line for these two churches. If Linley was to refuse, then he really would have infuriated these two churches.

The Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows all looked expectantly. Linley's lips curved upwards slightly. “In my domains, all religions shall be forbidden. If I find one, I'll destroy one!”

The faces of Heidens, Affleck, Fallen Leaf, O'Casey, and the others instantly changed.

“Did you hear me clearly enough?” Linley looked at them. “That is my response!”

“Hmph!” Praetor Osenno and the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, suddenly rose to their feet, staring coldly at Linley.

This time, Heidens and Affleck didn't stop them.

“Linley, this is the bottom line of our Church, and is the bottom line of the Lord. Do you know... what the result will be if you challenge our Lord's bottom line?” Heidens' face was calm.

Affleck also looked coldly at Linley.

Instantly, the temperature in the cabin dropped by dozens of degrees. The tension was so thick, it had congealed. Most likely, if anyone not at the Saint level were to come over, they wouldn't be able to even breathe.

“Bang!” Linley slapped the armrest on his chair, his eyes cold as he swept the people present. “What, you want to threaten me?”

The Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were silent, but their intentions were clear.

They were indeed threatening him.

“Heidens, have you forgotten the agreement we made twelve years ago?” Linley stared coldly at the two sides.

According to their agreement, Saints were not permitted to engage in worldly battles. But if Saints did not get involved, there was no way they would be able to stop the rat swarms. Thus, once they shed all pretense of cordiality, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would definitely send Saints to stop the rat swarms.

Another part of the agreement was that within twenty years, the Radiant Church was not permitted to actively attack Linley.

“Linley, you go too far.” Heidens said in a low voice.

Affleck also said, “Linley, a man should know when to take a step back.”

“Shameless. Shameless!” Linley stood up, laughing while shaking his head. “I’ve never seen people as shameless as you lot. When your armies attacked my territory, you charged all the way to the magicite mines, but I didn’t interfere, because I held to our agreement.”

“But you?”

Linley’s mocking gaze swept the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch. “You people are the leaders of two major religions. As soon as the battle starts and you know you are about to lose, you are immediately going to interfere. And you say that I go too far? As far as I can see, you people are utterly shameless, shameless!”

Linley’s words made the expressions on the faces of both the Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows turn exceedingly ugly. They were all people of high status. Naturally, they wouldn’t be able to take Linley’s satirizing mockery well.

“Watch your mouth.” Osenno sneered.

Linley’s eyes flashed with cold light. The entire hall was suddenly filled with violet light, and Osenno was so terrified that he instantly transformed into four doppelgangers and retreated at high speed.

“Ah!” “Ah!” Two successive, agonized screams.

The bodies of the two Four-Winged Angels who were standing behind Osenno suddenly were simultaneously sliced into two pieces. Their bodies collapsed, staining the floor with their blood.

The second level of the ‘Tempos of the Wind’ attack: the combination of the ‘Spatial Freezing’ and the ‘Spatial Folding’ concepts!

Osenno clutched his chest, staring at Linley in astonishment.

“Osenno, with the little bit of power that you have, don’t yammer and shout in front of me.” Linley locked onto Osenno with his cold gaze. “I don’t even need to transform to kill someone like you!”

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 46: A Falling Out

Osenno felt extremely astonished in his heart. “So...so fast!” Just then, all four of his doppelgangers had been struck at virtually the same time. If he hadn’t hurriedly used two of the Angel Saints as shields, he probably would’ve been killed by Linley in one blow.

Actually, in human form, Linley wasn’t much stronger than Osenno.

The main thing was that Linley had just hit him with a sneak attack. Given Bloodviolet’s speed, Osenno barely had any time to react before Linley’s sword arrived in front of him. If Osenno had been prepared, he wouldn’t have cut such a sorry shape.

“Linley, what do you mean by this!” Heidens cold voice snapped out.

At the same time, Heidens and Fallen Leaf both stood up as well. On the Cult of Shadows’ side, Affleck, O’Casey, and Cramerson stood up as well, all staring coldly at Linley. The leaders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, the two major religions of the Yulan continent, had a common enemy....

Linley!

Seeing the look in the eyes of Heidens, Affleck, Fallen Leaf, and the others, Linley actually felt a hint of joy in his heart.

“Grandpa Doehring, can you see this?”

Twenty years!

When he had left the city of Hess and entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, it had been year 10000 of the Yulan calendar. At that time, Linley was twenty years old. At that time, Linley had sworn that he would definitely destroy the Radiant Church and break its roots. But he knew...he had to take it a step at a time.

The Radiant Church valued the power of faith.

It had now lost a third of the Holy Union, and only had a population of four or five hundred million. Two hundred million of them came from the Radiant Church’s lands in the Anarchic Lands. If Linley unified that area and forbade proselytizing...

This would be an unimaginable blow to the Radiant Church.

“In the past, in my eyes, the Radiant Church was such a huge entity. But now...” Linley glanced at Osenno, who was still clutching his bloody chest. “Even the Praetor, Osenno, is far from being a match for me.” Linley murmured to himself, “Grandpa Doehring, just watch. Soon. Soon, the day will arrive when I destroy the entire Radiant Church and uproot it entirely. I only need one more step!”

In Linley’s heart, Doehring Cowart held a very high status.

Ever since he was young, he had been taught by Doehring Cowart. Doehring Cowart had been entirely selfless. Whether it be in magic training or in the Straight Chisel School, Doehring Cowart had taught Linley everything. And when they had encountered a crisis, Grandpa Doehring had consumed his own spiritual energy to rescue Linley.

Linley had been waiting a long time to deliver this vicious blow to the Radiant Church.

And now, the Radiant Church had thrown itself on his spear? How could Linley show any mercy?

“What?” Linley glanced at the group of people in the cabin. “You want to take action?” Just as Heidens and Affleck were about to speak, Linley’s body suddenly became covered with deep azure draconic scales, and the robe he wore exploded outward, the scraps of cloth blasting out like arrows.

The experts of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows easily blocked these scraps of cloth which had blasted everywhere.

Linley’s icy draconic tail swung about behind him, humming as it ripped through the air. Linley’s dark golden eyes swept the people in front of him. “If you want action, I’m ready to oblige!”

“I’m waiting as well.” Barker’s deep voice rang out, and at the same time, his body immediately began to transform as well, suddenly swelling in size as he expanded to three meters in height. His skin had turned green, and those green veins popping out on top of his muscles, the size of a snake, were terrifying to behold.

Those white, marble-like slabs of armor quickly appeared from his skin, covering Barker’s entire body.

Supreme Warrior Saint – Undying Warrior!

“Heh heh.” An insidious laugh rang out, and Zassler’s hooded gaze swept the people present. “I, Zassler, ever since reaching the Saint-level, haven’t had a good fight. Radiant Church...the ‘kindness’ you showed me in the past, I am going to ‘repay’ you for, right now.”

“Harhar! Fighting? Can’t leave me, Bebe, out of it.” Bebe floated next to Linley.

The situation in the cabin had immediately gone from bad to worse.

The Holy Emperor Heidens and the Dark Patriarch Affleck glanced at each other. They had known early on that although Linley’s side had four powerful experts, in terms of strength, Zassler had just reached the Saint-level and probably wouldn’t be able to threaten the likes of Heidens and Affleck yet.

But Barker was an Undying Warrior Saint. He would be a bit harder to handle.

That Bebe was no less of a threat than Barker.

But the greatest threat...was Linley. Not only was he a Dragonblood Warrior Saint, he also had a terrifying high level of understanding of the Laws. Almost all of the previous Supreme Warriors had a very low grasp of the Laws, and not a single one had reached Linley’s level of understanding.

He was the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in history!

“I’ll use Oracular Magic. I should be able to tie down Linley. With Fallen Leaf joining forces with me, it should be possible for us to defeat him.” Heidens secretly calculated. The power of Oracular Magic wasn’t something which Osenno’s ‘Doppelganger Technique’ could match.

Heidens and Affleck understood what the other was thinking from that glance alone.

“Ha, haha.” Heidens let out three laughs. By prearranged signal, Fallen Leaf and Osenno immediately made their moves.

“Bang!”

The ceiling to the ship cabin exploded, and ten shadows burst out towards the sky like arrows. The ship instantly shuddered, and the sailors below immediately jumped into the river and started swimming for the shore.

As they swam, they raised their heads up to stare at the sky.

They were the warriors of the Baruch Kingdom. They had been invited here, and they knew that one of the persons discussing matters in the cabin was the spiritual pillar of support for the entire Baruch Kingdom. Linley.

“Ah, is that, the legendary phoenix?” A sailor’s mouth flapped open in astonishment.

High in the mid-air, an enormous flying creature with a wingspan of over a hundred meters had appeared, its entire body covered with fire. Black feathers covered its entire body, and its noble, crested head was covered with black feathers as well. This black flying creature appeared very noble. This was a Saint-level magical beast, the legendary ‘Hellfire Phoenix’!

Hellfire Phoenix – A darkness and fire dual-element Saint-level magical beast.

In mid-air, this Hellfire Phoenix covered the boundless skies like an enormous black cloud. The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, was standing on the back of the Hellfire Phoenix, staring coldly at Linley who was standing in mid-air.

“Roaaaaar.” A terrifying howl.

A massive black dragon with physical wings which was more than a hundred meters long flew over. The black colored dragon’s eyes burned like coals, and it emanated a suffocating aura of power. The Dark Patriarch, Affleck, was standing on the head of this Saint-level Black Dragon.

The Cult of Shadows had hidden two Saint-level magical beasts not too far away. Both of them had now shown themselves.

As for the Radiant Church, they had a Saint-level magical beast as well.

A beautiful silver light shone off its draconic scales which covered its entire body. Under the sun, this silver dragon seemed so beautiful and graceful. Amongst dragons, Silver Dragons were often praised as the most graceful and noble of dragons, and rightfully so. But this massive, hundred meter long Silver Dragon actually had two heads.

Mutant Saint-level magical beast – Saint-level Two-Headed Silver Dragon!

Lord Fallen Leaf’s skinny body was standing atop the body of this Saint-level Two-Headed Silver Dragon.

“Wow.” The sailors on the shore felt their hearts constrict tightly. Good Heavens. Three massive Saint-level magical beasts had appeared out of nowhere, and more importantly...there were so many people standing in mid-air as well.

These were all Saint-level combatants.

“So many Saints, and Saint-level magical beasts as well. Even if I die today, it will have been worth seeing this.” A sailor stared in awe at the scene and mumbled to himself.

At this moment, the feeling these sailors had when they stared at these Saint-level experts and Saint-level magical beasts was the same feeling when Linley had when he had watched those two Saints fight when he

was a child. In their eyes, these massive dragons and mighty Saints were far and high above them and above all mortals.

“Look. That’s the Dragonblood Warrior, our Lord Linley.” Many sailors saw the Dragonformed Linley. Their eyes were filled with worship as they stared at him, as well as a hint of pride. They were proud to be citizens of the Baruch Kingdom.

“Lord Linley seems to be about to engage in battle with those Saints. They have so many people.” The sailors slowly began to come to their senses.

“Lord Linley will definitely win.” A sailor said firmly, his eyes filled with veneration towards Linley.

In the air above Liuyan River, Linley, Barker, Zassler, and Bebe were floating there. Zassler was currently mumbling the words to a spell, and soon, three illusionary flashes of light appeared behind Zassler, as three great Saint-level departed souls descended.

Two of them were skeletons, but their bones gleamed like diamonds while flashing with dazzling light. These were Saint-level Skeleton Kings! As for the other one, it was a powerful looking monstrosity dressed in a tattered long robe. It was a powerful Ancient Wight who had reached the Saint-level.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows weren’t worried at all. Against these Saint-level departed souls, the ordinary Angel Saints and Fallen Angel Saints would be enough.

“Linley, all we want to do is preach. You can still rule over the Anarchic Lands. I hope that at this moment of no return, you’ll reconsider.” Although he said this, Heidens had already brought a precious treasure of the Radiant Sovereign to his hands; the ‘Original Scripture’ which the Lord had given them.

A soft, holy light appeared in front of Heidens.

“Reconsider my ass.” Bebe knew exactly how Linley was feeling.

Unifying the Anarchic Lands was a small matter. Destroying the Radiant Church, that was what mattered.

“Stop dreaming. The Anarchic Lands belongs to me. Nobody is permitted to influence it. As for you...” Linley’s empty hands curled into fists. “How about you roll back to your own domains. Otherwise...we’ll talk with our fists!”

Heidens and Affleck couldn’t help but be enraged.

An enraged bird cry came forth from the massive Hellfire Phoenix as well, and then it spoke in the human tongue. “You detestable human.” And then, a bolt of pure black flame shot out towards Linley.

“Crackle crackle.” The black flames surrounded Linley.

His body faintly covered with a layer of battle-qi, Linley wasn’t damaged at all. Linley’s dark golden eyes stared coldly and remorselessly at these people. “You attacked me first!” As he spoke, Linley suddenly moved at high speed.

After having Dragonformed, and with the assistance of his insights into the wind, Linley’s speed was now far greater than Osenno’s.

There wasn’t even any wind sound to be heard. Space itself seemed to twist and distort, and Linley suddenly appeared next to the Hellfire Phoenix. The Hellfire Phoenix’s cart-sized eyes immediately radiated thin threads of black light at Linley.

The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, suddenly moved his six black wings and charged straight for Linley.

“Haha...” Linley let out a loud laugh. Putting the terrifying power of the Dragonblood Warriors on full display, while combining them with his understanding of the Laws, Linley’s power reached a transformative crescendo....

A soft wind seemed to gently waft past those black threads.

And then, Linley thrust his hands out like knives, using the incomparably massive strength of the Dragonblood Warriors to chop down at the Hellfire Phoenix. Although this blow carried enormous force, when Linley’s hand swung down, the entire nearby space seemed to be locked while at the same time folding and distorting.

Linley was nothing more than a blur.

Knowing things weren’t going well, the Hellfire Phoenix let out a few bird-cries of terror, while at the same time shrinking its body, vainly hoping to flee. Simultaneously, the Six-Winged Fallen Angel, Cramerson, let out an explosive shout as he pierced the black longsword in his hands towards Linley.

“Swish!”

Linley’s speed was simply too fast, especially after transforming. The Hellfire Phoenix didn’t have any chance to dodge, even after it shrank in size.

With a ‘swish’ sound, the Hellfire Phoenix, already down to a size of only ten meters, had its head directly split into two halves. A Saint-level magical beast died, just like that, after a single blow from the Dragonformed Linley.

This attack was the second level of the Tempos of the Wind technique, relying on the ‘Slow’ aspect’s ‘Spatial Freezing’ concept and the ‘Fast’ aspect’s ‘Spatial Folding’ concept, combined into one.

It was the most penetrative physical attack Linley currently was capable of.

“Swiiish.” Linley’s bladed palm swung right through the skull of the Hellfire Phoenix, and then, like steel claws, grabbed one side of the skull with each claw. The terrifying strength of the Dragonblood Warriors was put on full display as he suddenly, forcefully, ripped....

“SPLATTER!”

Blood blasted everywhere like rain, as the Hellfire Phoenix’s entire body was ripped into two halves, starting from that wound in its head.

“Swish!” The sword of the Six-Winged Fallen Angel, Cramerson, seemed to pierce through the void as it stabbed at Linley, but just as it was about to land on his body, the barely-visible ‘Pulseguard Defense’ around Linley’s body easily blocked the attack. This strike didn’t even touch Linley’s scales.

At this moment, Linley’s draconic claws were still holding onto half of the Hellfire Phoenix’s corpse, its blood still dripping down into the Liuyan River.

“What?!” Cramerson was shocked. His attack hadn’t even been able to break through the ‘Pulseguard Defense’.

Linley's dark golden eyes swung towards Cramerson, his lips curving upwards. "The next one...is you!" As he spoke, Linley let the two halves of the Saint-level Hellfire Phoenix drop from his hands. "Splash!" The corpse landed in the turbid waters of the Liuyan River.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 47: Downfall of Many Saints

The waters of Liuyan River roared. That massive corpse of the Hellfire Phoenix sank down into its waters, and the sailors above shuddered.

Raising their head up, their eyes were filled with a certain feeling as they looked at the demonic, godlike Linley – invincible, mighty!

“Lord Linley is so powerful.” The sailors were filled with awe.

Right at this moment, because Linley had killed the Hellfire Phoenix, a vicious battle exploded. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had begun to do battle with Linley!

“Rumble....” The frantic battle of so many Saints caused the flow of space itself to be disrupted. Wild, howling winds screamed everywhere, sand and rocks flew everywhere, and even the waters of Liuyan River rose in giant waves, as though stirred by a giant.

“What a terrifying Supreme Warrior.” Cramerson’s heart was terror-stricken. But then, a bestial roar. “Hooooowl!”

The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, raised his head up and roared furiously, and as he did, magic runes appeared from his forehead. His entire body began to emit insidious cold flames, and the temperature around him seemed to have dropped dramatically. In particular, his body also became covered with dark golden shining scales. This was the legendary ‘Dark Saint Armor’, very similar to the earth-style spell’s ‘Earthguard Armor’.

“No matter how loud you shout, you’ll still die.” Linley’s calm voice drifted out.

Linley’s scale-covered right fist was balled into a tight fist, and it seemed to pass through space itself as it attacked. Whenever that fist passed...space itself rippled and folded over itself. Cramerson’s black longsword, covered in cold flames, once more struck out, as fast as lightning.

The scale-covered fist and the cold, flaming black longsword intersected!

“Clang!”

A metallic ringing sound.

“Fallen Angels exist for battle. Do you think I’ll fear you?” Cramerson was full of confidence, but in an instant, Cramerson’s eyes, nose, lips, and ears all had blood pouring out, and his entire body collapsed from the heavens, powerless.

His body sank into the depths of the Liuyan River, and the river water carried it away.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 256 Layered Waves!

With one head-on clash, Cramerson’s internal organs had been shaken into mud.

“A Six-Winged Fallen Angel wants to fight with me in close quarters combat?” Linley’s dark golden eyes flashed with a hint of cold light. Linley was now a peak Dragonblood Warrior Saint. In physical strength and battle-qi alone, he was ten times stronger than ordinary Saints!

He had such a high foundation to begin with, and Linley’s ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ and ‘Profound Truths of the Wind’ were both extremely powerful close-combat attacks as well.

When one’s base level of power and one’s mastery of the Laws both reached a very high level, the synthesis of the two would result in not even a person like Desri, someone who was very nearly at the Deity-level, to willingly engage in close combat with a Dragonformed Linley. Fighting in close quarters combat with a Supreme Warrior who had such a high mastery of the laws was asking for death.

“Don’t fight with him in close quarters!” Heidens shouted out loudly.

“Linley’s attacks are very strange. Everyone, be careful.” Osenno called out as well. He was currently fighting with the transformed Undying Warrior Saint, Barker.

As for the Dark Patriarch Affleck and Senior Judge O’Casey, their faces had both changed. The third pillar of their Cult, the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, had fallen, just like that. Standing atop the head of the Saint-level Black Dragon, Affleck’s hands suddenly became filled with a black crystal ball.

Affleck’s face was solemn, and his lips were moving slightly.

“Hrm?” Linley’s face changed.

“What is that?” Linley could clearly sense an invisible, insidious cold energy penetrate his body. His ‘Pulseguard Defense’ didn’t do anything against it at all, and that insidious force rapidly began to attack Linley’s brain.

Darkness style, forbidden-level spell: the Power of Evil!

This was a spell which the Dark Patriarch was only capable of utilizing with the assistance of their Cult’s treasure, the crystal ball which had come from the Divine Plane of Darkness. Once the enemy was struck by this ‘Power of Evil’, for a short period of time, their body would be totally under the control of the spell user. The duration of the control was linked with the strength of the spiritual energy of the spell user.

If it was used against a Grand Magus Saint, it might not be able to control him, but it would be enough to make the Grand Magus Saint feel dizzy and be unable to react for a moment.

Within the depths of his mind.

That boundless ocean of spiritual energy swirled. The mysterious, seven-colored gem was hovering in the midst of it. When that surge of evil power swept into the consciousness and attacked that boundless ocean of spiritual energy, that faint layer of azure light in the spiritual energy immediately counteracted.

Dark Patriarch Affleck’s eyes were cold, filled with a bizarre allure as he stared at Linley.

“Go. Kill that rat-type magical beast.” Affleck said softly.

“Wait. O’Casey, go kill him, quick.” Affleck’s face suddenly changed. Affleck could clearly sense that Linley’s spiritual energy was counter-attacking. Although Linley was still affected by the spell, the Power of Evil was not able to brainwash Linley’s soul at all.

O’Casey was wielding his two-meter long ‘Judge’s Blade’. The Judge’s Blade, covered with dark, cold light, moved in a strange rhythm as it chopped down towards Linley.

The Judge's Blade collided directly onto Linley's Pulseguard Defense.

In that moment...

"Bang!" Like a bubble being broken, the 'Pulseguard Defense', no longer being actively controlled by Linley due to the effects of the 'Power of Evil' spell, was actually split open. Only when the 'Pulseguard Defense' was being actively controlled by Linley was it capable of utilizing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the Earth' and be defensively powerful.

If the 'Pulseguard Defense' was not being controlled, it only had the simplest of vibrations and wasn't extremely powerful.

However...

Linley's draconic scales were different. No matter if Linley was conscious or not, the draconic scales were still draconic scales. A peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior Saint's scales were ridiculously defensive. In the past, the ancestors of the Baruch clan had relied on them to dominate the entire continent.

"Slash!" Like an ordinary knife chopping against marble, sparks flashed, but only a white scar appeared atop the draconic scales.

"One more chop will break through." O'Casey secretly said to himself. Just then, the Pulseguard Defense had cancelled out part of his attack. O'Casey's right hand turned into a blur, and the Judge's Blade once more came chopping down, aimed directly at the same location his earlier attack had landed.

"Crackle."

As though he had been set on fire, Linley's body suddenly once more became covered in deep azure battle-qi, and the battle-qi once more began to circulate in accordance with that mysterious, profound way. With a 'clang' sound, Linley's scale-covered hand suddenly grabbed the Judge's Blade.

Of course, there was still a thin layer of battle-qi between his hand and the Judge's Blade.

"You lost your chance." Linley's dark golden eyes stared at O'Casey.

O'Casey's face changed dramatically. "Not good!" He didn't even have a chance to pull out his Judge's Blade, and he immediately retreated backwards at high speed. As he flew back, a strange violet light flashed through the place where O'casey had just been.

This was the Bloodviolet sword! O'Casey's back was covered with cold sweat. He had nearly been chopped in half.

Linley glanced at the disposition of the battle. Right now, Bebe was currently battling that mysterious 'Lord Fallen Leaf'. Bebe wasn't able to kill Lord Fallen Leaf at all.

In terms of understanding of the Laws of Light, the leader of the Ascetics, Lord Fallen Leaf, had the deepest understanding in the Church.

In particular, he knew how to transform his body into a line of light, then fly about at 'light speed'. He was far faster than Olivier had been in the past. Even Bebe, the fastest person on Linley's side, was only able to be on par with Lord Fallen Leaf.

"Bebe, stop wasting time with that old bastard. Go kill the Angels first." Linley immediately ordered Bebe.

"Got it, Boss." Bebe, too, had begun to feel that this old man was hard to deal with.

Fallen Leaf simply didn't engage Bebe in close quarters combat as well. He relied on his terrifying speed to move about, and then, like a spider, emit line after line of silken white light which contained a terrifying amount of flaming light power, constantly using it to entangle Bebe.

Although Bebe was fast, he wasn't able to use his speed to his advantage.

"Fighting with this old bastard is like falling into a pit of mud." Bebe secretly cursed.

"Fighting with this big bastard is nothing more than wasting time." Osenno felt resigned as well.

Barker, one of the Undying Warrior Saints famed for defense, totally ignored Osenno as he chased after those weaker Angels. Only occasionally would he launch a sudden surprise attack against Osenno. Osenno's Doppelganger Technique was simply too weird, after all. It was hard for Barker to harm Osenno as well.

But Osenno simply couldn't deal any damage to the Undying Warrior, Barker.

"Hrmp. It looks like I've turned into the weak link." Zassler laughed coldly as he watched a large number of Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels charge towards him.

Those three Saint-level departed souls weren't bad, but they weren't at the level of Haydson. They were only good for dealing with these Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels. However...how could a Grand Magus Necromancer be so easy to deal with? The Wraith Call ability was only part of the arsenal of a necromancer, after all.

"Die." The Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels' eyes were filled with cold light. They attacked at the same time.

Zassler stood in mid-air calmly, his lips mumbling. And then, an invisible ripple burst forth from Zassler, spreading out in all directions. This invisible ripple was quite similar to the one which Desri had used to attack Lehman, or which the Saint-level Gold Dragon had used to attack Linley.

The difference was, the area was clearly much larger.

The two closest Fallen Angels and Radiant Angel felt this invisible spiritual energy suddenly charge towards them. Their bodies immediately trembled.

"Pierce!" "Pierce!" "Pierce!"

At that instant, those three Saint-level departed souls attacked, and pierced straight through the hearts of the two Fallen Angels and the Radiant Angel, shattering the heart to pieces. Three of the Angels died, just like that. When adding this number to the two Linley had killed at the start and the three which Bebe had killed earlier...only a single Radiant Angel was left, while three Fallen Angels remained.

Only a single person was not engaged in battle. The Holy Emperor, Heidens. Heidens was holding the Radiant Scriptures in his hands while chanting something. He had been chanting for a very long time...Linley felt a hint of worry in his heart.

"Desri and the others really are slow." Linley muttered, while at the same time he used Bloodviolet to easily chop through a thick Icy Tentacle.

Actually, Linley had been waiting during this entire battle...because he had immediately instructed Haeru to ask Desri and the others to come. As for those three Saint-level dragons, they were hidden in the distance. Only at the most critical moment would those three Saint-level dragons join the battle.

But now...

“Roaaaaaar!” The furious roar seemed to split the heavens, and a flash of lightning pierced through the skies. With a ‘whap’ sound, a Fallen Angel which hadn’t managed to dodge in time was smashed into meat paste. Not even a Dragonformed Linley could match the Saint-level Thunder Lizard for speed, much less a Fallen Angel!

The attack of the Thunder Lizard wasn’t enough to do anything to Linley.

But to kill a Fallen Angel in one blow? More than enough.

“Big brother, leave one for me!” A deep sound rang out, and the massive draconic tail of the Tyrant Wyrms flashed, slapping the fleeing Radiant Angel into a meat paste. At this moment...the rest of the Fallen Angels died as well. It was the Thunder Lizard who had killed them.

It was simply too terrifyingly fast.

“Whoosh!” An invisible ripple suddenly attacked out of nowhere.

“Careful!” Lord Fallen Leaf called out in alarm, but it was too late. This invisible ripple quickly struck all four of Osenno, and Osenno’s doppelgangers immediately dissipated, leaving only one behind.

This attack was the ultimate attack of the Saint-level Gold Dragon – Soul Shout!

“Haha!” A loud laugh as the Undying Warrior Barker, his massive greataxe in hand, chopped straight down at Osenno. His soul dazed, Osenno was in the midst of a nightmare and was totally unable to react.

“SLASH!”

Contrary to no one’s expectations, with a single chop of the greataxe, Osenno was split in half from the top of his skull.

At this time, Heidens finally finished chanting the words to his ultimate attack. His eyes became filled with a hint of coldness, and he pointed a finger at Linley as he gently said two words: “Life...Ripper!” An invisible surge of energy suddenly surrounded Linley.

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 48: Beirut

Necromantic Magic. Life Magic. Oracular Magic. All of them possessed their own mysteries.

The experts of the Four Higher Planes, however, knew very well that amongst the three, Oracular Magic was the most terrifying and most unpredictable of the three. The reason for this was that its attacks were simply too bizarre. Oracular Magic, after all, came from the Overgod of Fate, one of the four Overgods.

The Laws of Fate were derived from the Overgod, and the Oracular Magic which he passed down was unimaginably profound and mysterious.

“Not good!” Desri, Hayward, and Higginson’s group had finally arrived, but they heard the words which Heidens had just spoken: “Life... Ripper!”

An invisible energy suddenly enveloped Linley, and Linley suddenly froze, totally unable to move any further. This invisible, bizarre force ignored all barriers, directly striking against Linley’s consciousness and his soul. The most important thing was one’s soul!

If a person died, their soul could enter the Netherworld and be reborn.

But if one’s soul was destroyed, then even a Sovereign wouldn’t be able to save them.

The vast sea of consciousness, where that rainbow-colored semi-translucent gem swirled while surrounded by that faint azure light possessed by the Dragonblood Warriors. This invisible force struck here, and the azure light immediately caved in.

The invisible force was depleting, but the azure light was depleting as well.

The power of Oracular Magic still depended on the practitioner. If a Deity-level practitioner had cast it, Linley wouldn’t have been able to resist at all.

“Bang.” The azure light could no longer endure, and it shattered.

The invisible force, despite being reduced in strength by more than half, still struck against Linley’s soul. The sea of spiritual energy surrounding the rainbow-colored, semi-translucent gem simply couldn’t resist the profound, obscure force of the Oracular Magic. Finally, the attack made its way to that semi-translucent gem.

Rumble!

A tremor from his very soul. Even Linley’s body shuddered.

“Boss.” Bebe turned frantic.

That rainbow-colored half-translucent gem also had a faint layer of azure light covering it. When the invisible force attacked the ‘rainbow gem’, nobody noticed...the Coiling Dragon ring on Linley’s finger!

A dim, virtually unnoticeable stream of light flowed out of the Coiling Dragon ring, then vanished.

At the same moment...

It seemed as though the azure blue light covering the half-translucent gem suddenly received sufficient energy.

“Shudder...”

The azure light around the gem suddenly flashed. It was as though it had transformed into an azure sun in the midst of that sea of spiritual energy, and the azure light illuminated the entire sea. Beneath the glow of that azure sun, the force of the Oracular Magic, although still resisting for a while, slowly began to melt away like evaporating ice.

The azure light remained for a long time, but then it slowly faded away.

“How is that possible?!” Heidens’ face instantly turned an ashen pale. He stared at Linley with shock. He had used all of his force on this ultimate attack, but he still hadn’t been able to kill Linley. Linley hadn’t reached the level of Grand Magus Saint yet! And it would be hard to say if even an ordinary Grand Magus Saint could take this blow.

And then, Heidens spied Desri’s group coming from afar. He knew that things had just gotten worse. “They came as well!”

“Fallen Leaf, let’s go, quick.” Not hesitating at all, Heidens transformed into a ray of white light, immediately flying at high speed towards the west. The nearby Ascetic, Lord Fallen Leaf, also transformed into a beam of white light, flying westwards at high speed.

Both Desri and Bebe had their attention focused on Linley.

They didn’t have time to pay attention to Heidens or Fallen Leaf.

“Whew.” Linley let out a breath, then opened his eyes.

Although it took a long time to describe, in truth, the power of that Oracular Magic and its attack on Linley’s soul had only lasted for one or two seconds, but in those one or two seconds, Heidens and Fallen Leaf had disappeared into the western horizon. As for Affleck and O’Casey, they had fled with their magical beasts even before Heidens had fled.

“Boss, are you okay?” Bebe flew over, worried, his beady little eyes filled with fear.

Bebe was spiritually linked with Linley. Just then, he had sensed Linley’s soul shudder. It truly had been dangerous.

“Not bad. Not bad.” Linley was still filled with fear.

In his heart, Linley was puzzled as well. “Just then, I felt that the defensive energy which belonged to us Dragonblood Warriors was broken through by the Oracular Magic’s bizarre attack. But why was it that the defensive energy suddenly increased dramatically, easily breaking the Oracular Magic?”

Linley didn’t understand the reason.

But Linley knew very well that his soul had been shaken just then.

He knew...that just then, if he hadn’t been able to block the attack somehow, his soul probably would have shattered.

“Where’d they go?” Linley swept his gaze in the four directions, but Affleck, O’Casey, Heidens, and Fallen Leaf had fled far away. There was no way they could catch up now.

Desri flew over and said apologetically, “Linley, I came late. If you had been killed by Heidens’ Oracular Magic, I really would have...” Desri felt extremely guilty. He knew exactly how terrifying Oracular Magic was.

“I was over-confident.” Linley smiled mockingly at himself.

Linley believed that his soul’s defense was very strong. With the protection of his draconic scales and his Pulseguard Defense, he had believed the enemy wouldn’t be able to do anything to him.

But just then, he had nearly lost his life.

Fortunately, at the last moment, within his soul, the protective energy belonging to the Dragonblood Warrior’s lineage had suddenly skyrocketed by over a hundredfold, dissolving even the fierce power of the Oracular Magic.

“Those four bastards ran quickly enough.” Bebe said furiously.

Barker nodded, then said in his loud voice, “Lord Linley, it seems to me that the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows isn’t all that remarkable. Osenno just died as well, and that Cramerson also died. Quite a few Angels died as well. Their force has dropped tremendously. As I see it, given our current strength, it shouldn’t be hard for us to slaughter our way to the Radiant Church now.”

“Right.” Zassler laughed insidiously. “Lord Linley, they’ve already broken our original agreement. There’s no need for you to hold to it any longer either.”

Linley was moved.

In the past, he had been bound by the agreement that he could only go seek revenge by himself. But now, since the other side had already broken the agreement, then he could go lead his group to slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle. It wouldn’t be too hard to destroy the Radiant Church.

“Linley.” Desri hurriedly said. “To be fair, their two sides have indeed gone too far, and you don’t need to follow the agreement any longer either. But I must try and warn you not to go attack the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church.”

Linley frowned. “Mr. Desri, do you believe that in the future, if I led my little brother, Barker and his brothers, Bebe, Zassler, and the others...we wouldn’t be able to destroy the Sacred Isle? Right now, on the Sacred Isle, only Heidens, Fallen Leaf, and Lehman pose a threat.”

“That isn’t it.”

Desri shook his head. “You must understand, in the past, I belonged to the Radiant Church.”

Linley listened.

Desri sighed. “The Radiant Church has endured for countless years. No matter what has happened or how great the waves or storms, the Radiant Church has never been destroyed. Do you know why?” Linley looked at Desri, puzzled.

Indeed. There had to be a reason why they had existed for such a long time.

“First of all, the Sacred Isle is definitely protected by the magical formation, ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’. Only someone with the power of a Deity can damage and destroy this formation.” Desri said.

Linley suddenly remembered that in the past, when he had been in the city of Fenlai, he had been imprisoned in the Radiant Temple due to his attempt to kill the King of Fenlai. That Radiant Temple was protected by a magical formation called the 'Glory of the Radiant Sovereign'. Supposedly, even Saints wouldn't be able to break through the walls of the Radiant Temple as a result.

This was the effect of this magic formation.

Even a Deity like Dylin had to strike it twice to break through it.

One could imagine how powerful this defense was!

"This 'Glory of the Radiant Sovereign' isn't just a magical formation; if the people inside it actively control and operate it, it can transform into an attack upon its enemies." Desri sighed. "Linley, if you slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle, perhaps you will be able to kill many people on the Sacred Isle, but you definitely won't be able to kill the people hiding within the Radiant Temple."

Linley frowned.

This was true. When the Radiant Temple in Fenlai had been destroyed, he had been in the middle of the temple himself.

"Fine. They can hide on their little island, then." Linley could only come to this decision. In his heart, Linley secretly thought to himself, "When in the future, my Profound Truths of the Wind and Profound Truths of the Earth reach their limits, perhaps I can pay a visit to the Sacred Isle and test out the power of that 'Glory of the Radiant Sovereign' magic formation."

Currently, Linley no longer feared the Radiant Church at all.

"Barker, make the arrangements to have the corpse of the Hellfire Phoenix processed. That Saint-level magicite core can't go to waste." Linley laughed.

"Yes, Lord." Barker laughed as well.

No matter what, they had won this battle. Linley's side had fought two sides, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, but in the end, they had won an absolute, dominating victory. Even Desri's side hadn't had to assist them.

This battle determined the final state of affairs in the Anarchic Lands.

The warriors of the Baruch Kingdom and the rat swarms, in their combined armies, appeared everywhere, and wherever they went, cities surrendered. Even some of the most die-hard adherents of the churches, under pressure from the rat swarms, collapsed and disappeared...and the Anarchic Lands became unified at an astonishing speed.

At the same time, the news of Linley's battle with the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows quickly spread across the world.

This news was also intentionally spread by the Baruch Kingdom. Linley's side had defeated two other sides at once. This caused Linley's status in the Yulan continent to skyrocket yet again, totally eclipsing that of the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch. His status was so high now that it was only lower than the War God and the High Priest.

The legend of Linley was sung throughout the Yulan continent.

As for the Anarchic Lands, countless people were filled with awe towards Linley. Many youths used Linley as their role model and began to train hard.

....

The Anarchic Lands. Baruch Kingdom. The royal palace.

Plumes of snow drifted from the skies. It was December now, and only a few days away from the Yulan festival. Linley, Delia, Zassler, Sasha, the other kids, the Barker brothers, Rebecca, Leena, Jenne, and Wharton were all here.

Rebecca and Leena. Rebecca was the more playful one, and ten years ago, she had gotten married to the loud, rambunctious Gates. As for the quieter Leena, she had eventually married Barker. Of the five Barker brothers, the other three had eventually gotten married as well. Only Jenne continued to live with some of her close friends in the royal capital, but she herself remained single.

“That was too fast. How long has it been? The entire Anarchic Lands has been unified.” Wharton laughed.

“Naturally.” Taylor was very proud. “My father’s really awesome.”

Seeing how Taylor was acting, Linley began to laugh. Rubbing Taylor’s head, Linley looked at Wharton. “Wharton, remember. All religious proselytizing is to be forbidden. If you allow them to preach, in the future, your grandchildren won’t be able to manage the kingdom effectively.”

“I know. In recent days, quite a few religious believers have been causing trouble.” Wharton sighed.

Churches were a major threat to any kingdom. Now that Linley’s side had unified the entire Anarchic Lands, the Baruch Kingdom would most likely have to change its name to the Baruch Empire.

Although Linley himself didn’t care about imperial power, he had to make considerations for the descendants of his clan.

“Linley, Bebe.” The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings suddenly appeared in the main hall in a flash. The people present all looked at the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings, and the eldest amongst them, Harry, opened his mouth and said in human tongues, “Linley, we’ve come to invite Bebe to make a trip with us to the Forest of Darkness.”

“Invite me?” Bebe was standing on the dinner table.

“Whose invitation?” Linley asked, puzzled.

“Our father.” The third of the Violet-Gold Rat Kings, Harvey, said proudly, “The King of the Forest of Darkness. The King of the entire Yulan continent, in fact. The most invincible, powerful person there is!” The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings were very proud.

The King of the Forest of Darkness? The King of the entire Yulan continent?

Linley felt secretly shocked, and wondered internally, “The King of the Forest of Darkness is the King of the entire Yulan continent? Can it be that he is even more powerful than the War God and the High Priest?”

Linley suddenly was moved and asked, “Might I ask, what is the name of your father?”

The second of the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings spoke this time: “Linley, you can refer to our father as...Lord Beirut!”

“Beirut!” Linley felt thunderclaps go off in his brain.

And Bebe, as well, stared at them, his eyes round as the moon.