

Chapter 4 - "The Planting of a Seed"

In an opulently decorated hall of splendid tapestries and beautiful carvings, filled with radiant colors of reds, oranges, and golds, sat an imposing figure upon a majestic throne of attuned spirit stones.

Donning a robe of the most expensive beasts' skins and a crown as splendid as sanguine sakura petals, the man was the spitting image of regality and authority.

The Crimson Petaled Emperor stared down his retainers and numerous noblemen with a suffocating gaze as they discussed the situation of conquering the Alrich empire, causing unease for all present.

The war had been heated, and millions upon millions of lives had been lost, however, that was trivial to someone as the Crimson Petaled Emperor. Having ruled for millennia, forged his own empire, and brought annihilation on other empires of even greater scale than this Alrich Empire, the cultivators lost were nothing more than hand-pickings. The conquest was merely a peripheral matter to him.

"My Sovereign." One of the city lords said as he pressed his head to the floor in a kowtow.

With the imperious wave of a hand that caused the essence saturating the air to swirl and tumble, the city lord was allowed to voice his report in the Emperor's presence.

"The Alrich Empire is showing surprising resistance due to their heaven's prodigy having uncovered an artifact from the ancient tomb that we're contesting. By now, the war appears as decisive, and within a few years, the Alrich Empire will cease to be. However, with their so-called prodigy, we'll lose a great deal of our auxiliary army as we have sent no cultivator to deal with him..." The city lord explained.

For a few seconds, there was only silence. But with the tapping of a finger on the throne of spirit stone that sent tumultuous waves of energy out in every direction, another figure suddenly appeared next to the kneeling city lord.

"Emperor - you've summoned me." The figure said, revealing to be a handsome young man clad in jet-black robes.

However, instead of the city lord who was basically eating the ground in a show of respect and subservience, the newly arrived figure only bowed slightly to show respect, clearly showing that this man was of no ordinary stature.

"Do you wish for me to handle this... 'prodigy'?" The young man asked, the disregard of the Alrich Empire's prodigy clear in his voice.

The emperor simply nodded, not uttering a word.

The surrounding nobles didn't know why he rarely ever spoke, if it was from simple disdain or boredom, no one here had ever gained that knowledge. However, it seemed more than enough for the handsome man clad in black robes as he suddenly disappeared in a puff of smoke, just as quickly as he had appeared.

Next, a nobleman stepped forth to take the city lord's place on the ground. This man was of a lot higher status, but like the city lord, he had to kowtow whenever wanting to speak with the empire's highest authority and power.

"The frontier conflict on the outskirts of the newly discovered continent against the demonic and draconic savages has reached a standstill. Neither our nor their armies are showing any cha-" The nobleman explained until he was suddenly cut off by an immense pressure that caused him to choke on his own words.

Had he angered the emperor? Was this his end? He a man of unprecedented power and authority that ruled over hundreds of millions of lives, a nobleman, sentenced to death just like that, for a slight of word.

The only consolation he could find was in the fact that he at least wouldn't be the first to be sentenced to death like that if that was the case...

The Crimson Petaled Emperor ruled with an absolute and ruthless iron fist, the reason why not a single sane soul would want to offend or displease him.

"Leave." The Emperor proclaimed, causing everybody within the hall to shudder with worry.

He usually never spoke, but when he did, it meant there was something significant enough that happened to make him; which was something that nobody wanted to have something to do with, regardless of being good or bad for them.

Disappearing like the wind, every nobleman, retainer, servant, and guard left the opulent halls of the emperor's palace.

In the now suffocatingly silent colossal halls, the Emperor got to his feet.

"You can come out now - my love." He said with a calm and surprisingly tender voice contrasting his seemingly unapproachable demeanor.

Appearing as if she had always been there, a stunning beauty that could bring about the fall of nations, and *has*, walked into the embrace of her husband.

"Harrumph! - you've been playing politics the last few weeks, but you haven't even come to see me..." She grumbled unhappily even though she pushed herself joyfully into the caressing hands of the previously imposing man.

"I'm sorry my love, but unfortunately such is the life of an emperor." He spoke with his smooth and enthralling voice.

"Humph - you keep saying that and we only get to meet at times like these..." She mumbled in his chest.

"So you've also sensed it?" He asked curiously, a smile creasing his lips.

"Yes, but only very faintly," She nodded. "What do you think it was?"

"It would appear that some higher being has meddled with our world, I still faintly sense the presence of its mark somewhere far off in the distance. I believe that we might already have set our sights in the same direction as to where it happened - The land of the demon and the dragon descendants."

"A higher being? Other than you, there's only the fake gods and the leaders of those savages; what higher being?" She asked incredulously.

"Not of this world, one above." He whispered simply.

"Pff - husband, there you go again with those wild tales, " She said exasperated. "You spent more than half your life in the pursuit of this world's mysteries and secrets, but you barely have anything to show for it."

"That might be true, but this world holds a lot more than meets the eye, and I intend to find out exactly what." He said, cupping her cheek.

"And this anomaly might just be the key for that..." He smiled and bend down to kiss her full lips.

Walking through a heavenly domain overlooking the lands of the world below, a figure decked in unostentatious blue and white robes could be seen strolling calmly across the heavenly body of a palace with his hands behind his back.

Long flowing azure-blue hair spilled down and over his shoulders, a beautiful white crown of horns protruding from his head, and with an angelic face to match, he seemed as divine and godly as one could be.

However, he was anything but.

Looking from high above, this self-proclaimed false god gazed down upon his mindless and righteous zealots ruining and laying waste to the blasphemous nations of the world and all the *heretics* populating them.

-Or rather than heretics; 'all those who opposed this *god*'.

Having created and forged his own religious empire, this man has sought all his life to escape the shackles of this forsaken world and ascend to an even higher existence.

And now, that a being of the higher realms has grazed this world for some reason, he finally saw an opportunity for exactly that. Eons have gone by, and he was struggling with the final vestiges of his life as they were reaching their end, but now presented with a possibility of finally ascending and reaching the legendary state of immortality, his vigor and ambition was reinvigorated.

Scrutinizing the continent of dragonkin and demonkin, his ancestral home, coincidentally also where the opportunity had appeared, he stopped.

"Whatever awaits beyond the veil, it will be mine!" He proclaimed, his facade of amenableness and wisdom shattering as it was replaced with a glint of madness.

On a massive planet in the higher realms, a continent laid in ruin, cities annihilated, and a colossal battlefield painted in crimson. Two figures could be seen standing in front of a grotesque and enormous object floating in the air.

The figures were two youths, barely looking like they were above sixteen, however, they were already both divine beauties. Twins, they were both practically identical, their luminescent purple robes, and silver hair matching perfectly.

Although at a glance, you would think them both girls, they were in fact a girl and boy twin pair. The fission of yin energy in their bodies upon having been born twins the reason for their perfectly matching soul signatures and divine appearances.

But in deep contrast to their cute and wholly innocent looks, they stood in a sea of corpses and blood. For numerous miles in every direction, dozens of millions lay dead and torn apart.

But the most chilling sight was the red mists streaming from the carnage to coalesce and culminate at the revolting abomination floating in the sky.

"It's almost done, " The male of the two twins said. "We should get moving to the next world. The [**Corpse Flower Cocoon**] should finish maturing after only about five or six more populations."

He indicated to the large floating entity.

"Urgh-- this is so booring! Did we seriously have to descend to the Higher Realms to mature the cocoon? I mean, this would've been done already if we just took a single city from the Divine Realms..." She pleaded childishly.

"-Sigh-" He sighed, the laziness his sister portrayed always so exhausting for him to deal with. "You know we can't just go around harvesting the Divine Realms without repercussions. Even here we can't be careless, and we really do need to go before the Celestials get notice of this... -Hey are you listening?!"

He stopped speaking, realizing that his sister was staring off into the distance with a glassy gaze. Stopping himself before he pulled his sister out of her trance, he could only grumble.

"Stupid divining martial spirit..."

His twin sister was currently in a trance induced by her martial spirit, one of the reasons why she was such a treasured jewel of their clan, even though she lacked in cultivation potential compared to her male counterpart.

With her eyes returning to their normal state, she looked excitedly at her grumbling twin.

"Bro - bro! You're not going to believe this!"

"Urgh... what is it Eri?" He said, clearly not sharing the enthusiasm of his sister.

"I've picked up on one of the seeds' transference!"

"Oh? Really now?" He asked, the previous annoyance now turning to interest.

This was exactly why she was so treasured by the clan as her martial spirit had the ability to divine on the actions of beings that had transcended beyond the Divine Realms, and even at such a young age.

If such a fact was known by the realms, every soul would come storming to their clan and they would be utterly annihilated.

Peeking into the workings of such beings was no trifling matter...

"We should report this to the elders, it would seem that your martial spirit has grown yet again."

"Cooome on! - I don't wanna go back now to those old geezers," She pleaded. "And we can check up on it ourselves. It's just on a world in the lower realms and-"

"You want to go all the way to the lower realms just to check a seed?" He cut her off. "There are millions of them everywhere, and one such as this one that only got sent to the lower realms must come from some of the weakest benefactors."

"Bu-" She tried to say.

"But even so," He continued, cutting off the protest that his sister was about to voice. "If it is found out we've done this, not only will it put the clan into a tight position but it will also mean that we will get reprimanded by the elders for this."

Remembering the reprimanded of the elders, the sister quickly shut up, pale-faced.

"Good." He finished, seeing that his sister finally wised up for once.

Redirecting his gaze back to the [**Corpse Flower Cocoon**] he smiled upon seeing the naked form of a figure in a fetal position floating around inside of it.

"We should get going, the [**Corpse Flower Cocoon**] isn't going to bloom on its own."

In the universe-spanning space of the realms, a man, riding through the cosmos on a nether beast, was leisurely meditating.

Cracking open an eye with brow risen in mild curiosity, the man hummed to himself.

"Hmm... Interesting~"

He was a rather opulent but dangerous-looking man, suited in a large and bulky dark armor.

Matching his darker-than-the-void-itself hair, the armor was a beautiful piece of awe and menace.

Like his armor and hair, his eyes were swirls of black that terrifyingly enough reminded of black holes. However, contrasting his appearance, his presence and aura were non-existent, as if the place he sat on the colossal beast floating through the cosmos was simply a blank void of space.

Patting the nether beast beneath him, he smiled.

"It would seem that the seeds have begun being transferred, should we watch the show on the sideline? I could use some entertainment of that tiresome bout of reclusion. Whatta you say, old pal?"

Responding to him as if the colossal void beast mount could understand his words, it crooned by opening its monstrous maw. The sound emitted was so powerful that it caused nearby space to shudder and shatter as the realms' spatial laws couldn't withstand a cosmic beast of such a level.

A nearby star even dimmed upon feeling the aftermath of the beast's discontent.

"Whaaat? - it will only prolong our journey by a millennium or two. It's not like Greater Planes are going anywhere..."

Letting out another croon of disapproval, that caused the nearby sun to dim even further and would probably cause the star's collapse in only a few dozen years as its equilibrium had been ruined, the man finally conceded.

"Alright - Alright, we will only watch for a few centuries..."

The beast wanted to protest further but gave up when remembering its master's carefree nature.

"I think, this time around, things will get quite interesting." He said staring listlessly off into space.