

Void 1061

Chapter 1061 Severed World [3]

Space travel was always a fun thing for Damien.

Not only did it present plenty of time to focus on training and relaxation, it gave Damien an opportunity to traverse the starry sky and bind as many stars and worlds as possible.

The Celestial Class was always one that involved conquering, something Damien didn't do often. He never even utilized the World Force he received from these actions, for no reason other than the fact that the other skills in his arsenal were more efficient in many situations.

However, World Force was still an incredibly important power. Part of Damien's great comprehensive ability that only improved over time was the result of World Force passively boosting him.

After all, World Force was quite literally a product of world laws and the ability to move them. When he was comprehending the laws of the universe, the presence of this strength in his body gave him a deeper connectivity to reality itself, bringing him closer to those truths at an inherent level.

Therefore, despite his outward neglect of it, he never forgot about the power or ceased attempting to improve it.

The journey to the Severed World in the Giant Domain from Prismatic Sun Holy Land was a 6-month trip without the use of teleportation arrays, but with Damien's power combined with the use of these arrays, this time was cut drastically.

The starship carrying Damien's group arrived at a plane floating in the starry sky after 3 weeks of flight. It was a continent that looked like it had been torn out of its original world, and at the very center of its underside, the rounded bottom of a shining World Core could be seen jutting out of the rock.

"Whew, it really is something special," Damien commented as he first laid his eyes on it.

If the entrance was already on such a strange plane, the sub-universe itself definitely wouldn't disappoint.

The starship descended onto the edge of the continent, in what was clearly a well-built docking area.

"Ready?" Damien said, turning back to Rose, Elena, and Ruyue.

"Ready and excited," Rose replied happily, speaking for the trio.

Damien nodded and turned back, watching through the glass as the starship touched ground.

A portion of its side became holographic, opening the way for Damien's group to finally land on the continent.

But...

'Why does this feel more like a vacation spot than a death zone?'

Damien was a bit baffled by the jovial atmosphere. The docking area was truly built up, filled with various facilities and shops for the adventurous practitioners who were coming and going from the Severed World.

'It's a little funny how trivially these people treat their lives.' Damien thought to himself as he led his group through the area, following signage and maps to make his way to the entrance.

His hypocrisy was something to note, considering how he was planning to do something far more dangerous than these regular experts, but that was beside the point.

As those of Stone Giant Holy Land mentioned, the Severed World wasn't monopolized by any one force. This docking area, or rather, this entire facility that extended for several tens of kilometers, was a method of checks and balances the great influences of the Giant Domain jointly built to add a sense of order to the wild land, making sure that nobody would act out of line.

And the entrance to the Severed World was located at the very center of it all, guarded by several layers of security.

Of course, none were prohibited or restricted in any way. These measures were merely to guarantee civility outside the entrance and account for those entering so their fates could be reported back to the influences they belonged to.

Damien and the girls went through these procedures, noting their names and affiliations on a sheet of mana-laced paper that documented their mana signature.

Afterward, they finally made it where they wanted to be.

Was it surprising how many people there were, or was it just a testament to the number of experts in the universe?

Past the hallways that hid it was a huge open area. It was circular in shape and filled with nature, as if everything in the expansive facility was built around it.

And in fact, it was!

The same shimmering curtain of space Damien saw in his vision was now presented in front of his eyes. It was roughly 500 meters long and extended into the air as far as the eye could see.

Though the entire atrium was filled with experts, this portion of space was empty, every single person intent on avoiding it.

Because it was well-known that entering that area before one was ready was a death wish.

Damien and the girls spent a few minutes walking around and listening in on the conversations around them for information.

The Severed World's 4 layers. Each had its own name and represented unique ecosystems with its own dangers.

From the mouths of these experts who had either been inside already or had been planning for months to do exactly that, only the first and second layers were really explored.

They were called Ghost King's Valley and the Perilous Sanctuary.

The two remaining layers also had names, but other than these names, they were largely unknown.

Nobody dared to explore them thoroughly, after all.

Nevertheless, before they could even focus on these, they had to get through the easy part!

Damien already knew most of what was being said from Iris' information, but he wanted to hear it from people who had seen it as well. They were far more trustworthy than some words of unknown origin.

But after listening to them, he had no choice but to be impressed with Iris' abilities once again.

Whoever she got information from knew far more than most of these practitioners!

There was no point dragging it any longer.

'Let's try to be done with this before the ceasefire ends. I want to visit Mom and ask her some things...'

He shook his head and threw away the thought. After checking with the girls one more time, he moved towards the shimmering space.

It was time to enter the Severed World!

The entrance to the sub-universe was definitely not normal.

It was a spatial transportation, that much was certain, but several processes took place the second one stepped into its influence.

Damien felt it, the girls felt it, and anyone else who entered the crack likely felt it even more.

The feeling of being constricted and restrained.

Ethereal shackles gripped one's soul and suppressed one's legend.

It was said that one's strength would be capped at 2nd class when they were in the Severed World, but that wasn't the entire truth.

No, rather than being capped, it was better to say their strength was reverted!

Damien gritted his teeth in pain as his Legend left him.

World Force, Void Breathing, and any other skills he gained through the influence of his classes were locked behind countless walls of restriction.

Now, Damien was no more than a small Vector Controller, nearly the same state he was in when he entered Apeiron for the first time!

Chapter 1062 Severed World [4]

Whoosh!

A calm wind blew through the air, unobstructed.

Four pairs of feet touched ground on this rocky plain, their eyes darting around to assess the situation.

There was nothing behind them.

A cliff that dropped into a void of blackness marked the edge of the world. The only way one could go was forward.

1000 kilometers away, the faint outline of a misty rainforest could barely be made out through the fog that obstructed it, and though the cliff behind the group only meant death, the one before them was their first hurdle.

Ghost King's Crevice.

Covered in a layer of ghostly fog that contained countless evil spirits and demons, this crevice spanned almost a thousand kilometers, a distance impossible to fly over with the strength restriction.

'According to the jade slip, it's almost impossible to cross the crevice without the help of a guide, but before we look for one...'

Damien followed what the girls had begun doing a second ago and sent his senses inward, trying to understand the state of his body.

'My physical strength hasn't been affected as much, but my body is definitely weaker. The real problem is my mana...'

Damien flicked his finger, summoning a wisp of amethyst magic power with a wry smile.

'Void Mana wasn't a thing back then, and neither was Void Essence. The Sanctuary is...also restricted. Damn.'

He finally understood what entering a sub-universe meant. Its laws had suppressed his own to the extent that he no longer had the power to utilize his connection with the Sanctuary!

'If there's one thing I can always rely on, though, it's the Void.'

Naturally, this force that surpassed the true universe also couldn't be hindered by a less complete one. Void Breathing might've been blocked, but if Damien spent some time acclimating, he was sure he could accomplish something similar.

'Haa, at the end of the day, the core of my power is now Vector Control. I need to be careful from now on, since I wasn't able to uncover the full potential of this class at all back then.'

Damien concluded his thoughts and raised his head.

"How's it look?"

"Not great, but also a little interesting," Elena replied.

The other two also nodded. They were definitely thrown off by this development, but it wasn't entirely a bad thing.

After all, was this not a way for them to fix some of their past mistakes and perfect their strength?

"The most important thing now is to find a guide. The Ghost King's Crevice is an illusory maze that I don't think I'll be able to see through with my current perception. If we make a mistake and end up encountering the Ghost King..."

Rose let her words trail off. The Ghost King's Crevice's namesake was a terrifying existence that represented unavoidable death. Wariness was utterly important when traversing his domain.

For once, Damien also agreed that an expert's help was necessary. His All-Seeing Eyes were also far less powerful than they used to be.

He led the group through the rocky plain and towards the crevice's edge. There were several stalls set up here, filled with guides waiting for new customers to approach.

Damien scanned them with a frown. None of them looked particularly extraordinary, but perhaps it was their lack of presence that set them apart.

As he pondered on which of these guides to choose, he felt something tapping on his leg.

"Hm?" he muttered, his eyes widening alertly.

When he looked down, however, what he saw was a little old man, roughly 3 feet tall, with an old wooden cane in his hand.

'Ah, my perception.' Damien realized as he looked at the man inquisitively.

"Can I help you?" he asked.

"Oh no, but I can surely help ya, old boy," the old man replied smugly.

"Yer new here, no? This old man is the best guide in the area. Forget those amateurs and hire me!"

Damien and the girls looked between each other in confusion.

Were the guides supposed to be so proactive?

"Yer thinkin' I'm untrustworthy, no? But there ain't a single trustworthy soul in this place, so do it matter?" the old man said again, a sticky expression on his face.

Rose opened her mouth to reply, when suddenly, a large brown-skinned man approached behind the old man.

"Oi, Bertram, you fart! Stop scamming newbies and come over here! We have work to do!" He yelled, grabbing the old man by the back of his cloak and lifting him up.

"Ah?!" The old man exclaimed angrily. "Who do ya think ya are, bastard?! This is honest work! Put me down!"

"Honest work, my ass! What kinda newbie do you think can handle your stupid ass paths?!" The man spat back.

"Hmph, just because yer bald ass couldn't handle it don't mean no one else can! Let me go!"

The old man, Bertram, swung his tiny fists at his captor, who also didn't let him go.

As the two men squabbled and the bigger man dragged Bertram away, Damien suddenly stepped forward.

"Wait," he said, stepping in front of the large man, "do you mind letting him go? I want to hire him," he said.

""Huh?!"" both men exclaimed in unison.

"Hey, did you not hear what I just said? If you go with him, you're just gonna get yourself killed!" the big man said incredulously.

"And?" Damien replied with a shrug.

"It's my own decision. What's your problem with it?"

"You...! Haa, never mind. Everyone who comes here is fucked in the head."

The big man let go of the old man's cloak and dropped him to the floor, scratching his head as he gave Damien one last look as if he were looking at a dead person.

"You said it yourself! You can't blame anyone else when you get torn to shreds out there!"

Damien smiled and nodded, sending the grumpy man off.

He looked back at Bertram with the same smile.

"So what's your rate?"

"One Black Card and I'll get you to the best part of the Perilous Sanctuary!"

"Black Card? You're quite expensive."

"Kek, old boy, don't you know that experience is priceless?"

"Haha, I guess that's true."

Damien fumbled around in his spatial storage for a bit until he found some of the currency he obtained back when he first came to the Divine Realm, forking over a Black Card without a fuss.

"I hope you can deliver on your word," he said as he handed it over.

"Keke, ya don't have to worry about nothin' when yer with me!" Bertram responded confidently.

Damien smiled without a word.

According to the brown-skinned man, this Bertram was someone who scammed newbies and led them to their deaths.

But Damien wasn't sure this was true.

Because with the disappearance of many of his skills, many others returned.

One of which being his danger sense, the instinct that pointed him towards lucky chances and opportunities, the same one that saved him countless times in the First Dungeon.

And this sense was blaring right now. It was telling Damien that this little old man was the absolute best person to be their guide.

Though it had been a long time since this sense was overshadowed by his great perceptive ability, he still remembered what it had done for him.

Now that it was back in action, he was going to abuse it as much as possible!

Chapter 1063 Ghost King's Crevice [1]

The entrance to Ghost King's Crevice simply didn't exist.

Many had attempted to reshape the land for convenience in the years this sub-universe had existed, but none of their solutions managed to remain present as time passed.

Because the Impulse Wave was a truly destructive event. It tore the world apart and rebuilt it from scratch, remodeling the scenery in its natural form without the manmade changes that influenced it.

The strangest thing was...the Impulse Wave killed everything in the realm until the very edge of Ghost King's Crevice. Unless one was deep underground or in the safe area before the crevice, death was inevitable and instant.

Nevertheless, because of this unpredictable phenomenon, attempts to terraform the land ceased thousands of years ago.

The only way to enter the crevice was to descend its steep wall.

"The Ghostly Wind strikes once an hour. For the 10 minutes it blows, the undead and netherworld spirits in the ravine go crazy and attack everything in sight. If ya wanna make yer way down, we should go now. Since that bald bastard is back, the Ghostly Wind must've just passed."

Bertram, the little old man Damien hired as a guide, explained the crevice's ecosystem to the group as he led them past the stalls filled with guides and to the cliff's edge.

"Falling from here with ya strength capped is an easy death, old boy. Ya won't find a more peaceful way to die after this," he remarked with a grin, fearlessly standing at the very edge of the land.

Damien raised his brow as he took a peek over it.

The drop was an unknown distance, as fog covered the sight of what lay beyond roughly 300 meters down, but it could be imagined how deep it was from the aura of emptiness one felt when gazing into it.

Damien in particular had plenty of experience falling through unnecessarily deep holes, and despite the fact that he could likely teleport himself to safety if he happened to fall, he didn't want to risk it.

If there was a restriction he didn't know of at the bottom, he was in for a world of pain.

"So how do you suggest we get down this thing?" he asked, looking curiously at Bertram.

"Well, isn't that simple?" the old man responded with a grin. "I'm the greatest guide alive!"

Bertram kneeled down and took a 3-foot-long steel rod-like object out of his spatial storage and stabbed it into the cliff wall below. Afterward, he took out another circular device and simply...tossed it into the abyss.

He stood up and put his hand over his eyes, watching its trajectory before nodding.

"Spot on as always."

Damien and the girls had no clue what was happening and could only watch with strange expressions as he hopped onto the narrow rod and kicked its sides, causing it to expand into a platform large enough to hold their group.

"Hop on quickly! If ya miss it, ya miss it!" He exclaimed, ushering them forward.

Damien shrugged and followed his instructions, and the girls did the same after seeing that his weight didn't affect the platform at all.

They once again looked at Bertram in confusion, just in time to see him snap his fingers.

"Good! We're dropping! Don't move until ya hit solid ground!"

"Dro—"

Damien's eyes widened.

The floor gave out below his feet.

"—pping?!"

His senses went alert as he began falling through the air, the others not far above him.

'Fuck! What a great intuition!' Damien exclaimed inwardly, dreading the drop to come.

However...

"Huh?"

His expression changed as he noticed that his body was actually...falling in slow motion?

No, it was like he was being lowered by a pulley system, yet far smoother.

"That device...can levitate people?!" He said excitedly.

Yeah, he could fly, but levitation like this was something different!

'The home decor possibilities are limitless!'

The thought process of a newly engaged man was really something.

The smooth descent the group experienced didn't have any value to him from a technical standpoint. His mind was filled with ideas of various applications of aesthetic levitation, at least, until they made it past the 300-meter mark.

The Netherworld Fog enveloped them, sending shivers down their spines.

The aura of death was suffocating, and very faintly, they could feel the screams of tortured souls boring into their souls.

"Hmph."

Elena released her Life Mana and formed a barrier around the group, shielding them from the deathly aura, but she no longer had the power to protect their souls.

Damien glanced at her with a smile before snapping his fingers and creating a spatial wall around her barrier, filling it with vector points that reflected any fluctuation that impacted it.

They met peace after another hundred meters of descent with these barriers in place, attracting a shocked gaze from Bertram.

The descent into Ghost King's Crevice was slow on purpose. Meeting the Netherworld Fog and experiencing the stress it caused was a baptism, a hazing for newbies entering the zone. It was meant to give them an idea of how dangerous the journey would be and make them aware of the importance of following orders.

Experts who had spent so long developing themselves tended to have individualistic attitudes that didn't bend to the whims of others, but if they wanted to survive, and if the guides wanted to build a reputation that'd get them more jobs, they needed to do what they were told!

A situation like this was rare. It was clear Damien's group hadn't done the extensive preparation most did from their attitudes, but their skills were enough to compensate for it.

A group like this...with them, maybe Bertram could finally get rid of his "scammer" status!

His routes weren't deathly, they were truly the best.

But the best routes could only be traversed by the best groups.

It was that simple.

Thud!

Damien's feet landed on solid ground after 5 minutes of calm descent. As expected, the circular platform Bertram put down earlier had expanded into a landing zone that supported the levitation effect.

Damien spread his awareness immediately without leaving its bounds, scanning the crevice.

Unfortunately...

'Of course there's a restriction.'

The Netherworld Fog didn't allow his perception to spread more than ten feet away from his body.

'At this length, I won't be able to detect threats before it's too late. Crossing a distance of ten feet is instant even for 2nd class beings.'

"What're ya doin' standin' around? Come out already!"

Bertram's voice pulled him out of his thoughts. The old man and the girls were already off the platform and waiting for him, making him a bit embarrassed.

'Haa, whatever.' Damien sighed inwardly. He walked off the platform and joined them while accepting the inevitability of the restriction, instead looking towards the walls.

'Danger is everywhere, huh.'

The first struggle of the Ghost King's Crevice: Human-Faced Spiders.

They were deep black and blended in with the shadows, the only indication of their existence the faint sight of the smiling human faces on their abdomens that poked out of the shadows.

Human-Faced Spiders had natural venom strong enough to permanently paralyze a 3rd class, let alone a 2nd class.

And what made them terrible was the fact that they weren't individualistic, they were pack animals.

If one attacked, at least 10 others were lying in wait for the perfect opportunity.

Bertram especially warned them about the danger the spiders posed while leading them along the crevice's wall without going deeper in.

"We're gonna trek a few kilometers to reach the entrance point into the fog. Rest yer minds now before it's too late."

Damien and the girls nodded, accepting the millionth warning Bertram had given them in the past 10 minutes and continued following him, but...

...was it just them, or did it feel a little windy?

Chapter 1064 Ghost King's Crevice [2]

Bertram's face immediately paled.

"Follow me and run!"

He said no more and moved his tiny legs at an impossible pace, running faster than most normal-sized people!

Damien and the girls were alerted by his sudden actions but didn't ask questions.

Now wasn't the time to be overconfident. If a guide who regularly traversed this place was acting like that, there had to be a good reason.

The group ran after Bertram and matched his pace. He ran parallel to the cliff wall, not daring to go more than 10 feet from it.

Whoosh!

A chilling wind flowed through the ravine and became fiercer with every passing instant, barraging the group with the same evil sensation they felt in the Netherworld Fog heightened to a new level.

"Damn! What's happening?!" Damien asked while watching the growing fog and blocking the Ghostly Wind.

"I don't know either! The Ghostly Wind is back too early! We needa find a cave before it's too late!"
Bertram responded without breaking his stride.

"Do you have a location in mind?!" Damien asked again.

"I do, but it's too far away! There ain't many safe places around here!"

"Tch!"

Damien clicked his tongue and concentrated his awareness forward, evading the Netherworld Fog to send it as far as possible.

'He's right. There are no caves for another 500 meters, and with the way the fog is growing...'

OOOOOOOOOOOH!

A deathly howl reverberated off the walls and broke through the defenses of any who heard it.

"Damn!" Bertram exclaimed as his body jerked to a stop.

Damien and the rest were also stunned by the effect of that roar, but rather than this, their worry was elsewhere!

From within the dense fog only a few tens of meters away, countless undead auras were emerging.

By the time Damien and the rest rid themselves of their stunned state, the undead were already charging!

Perhaps they underestimated Ghost King's Crevice beforehand, because they definitely weren't expecting anything like a horde of tens of thousands of undead.

Damien gritted his teeth and looked at Bertram, whose eyes were stern unlike they'd been to this point.

"The plan?"

"What plan? We needa fight our way through and find shelter! The undeads won't attack the caves since that's Human-Faced Spider territory!"

"Then don't we have to face the spiders?"

"Would you rather fight an army of undead?!"

"Fair enough."

Damien looked at the girls with a wry smile.

"Everyone ready? Let's try to conserve as much mana as possible, but in the worst-case scenario, I have plenty of recovery elixirs in my spatial storage. The goal now is survival!"

It had been a long time since a number in the tens of thousands meant death for them, but again, Damien wasn't in the mood to be arrogant.

Usually, the guy who got overconfident and disregarded the advice of those familiar with these environments was the first to die, and Damien didn't plan to die until he'd punched his father in the face!

He and the girls stood in formation around the non-combatant, Bertram, and summoned their mana.

"Lead us to where we need to go. We'll take care of the fighting until then," Damien said.

"I got it! Let's go!"

Their conversation ended just in time. Bertram got free from his negative state and began running again, a moving turtle shell formed by Damien's group protecting him along the way.

And protect they did.

The undead started their assault the second the group started moving.

An army of skeletons and ghouls approached from every angle, climbing over each other in a frenzy to devour the flesh of the living.

Damien took the Twin Moons in his hands and charged mana into the crystals that embedded themselves in his wrists. Shots of spatial mana spread through the air, exploding into spatial ruptures that devoured tens of undead at a time.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Explosions tore through the environment in front of Damien, clearing the path forward. At the same time, a barrier of Vector Points appeared before his body, moving with him like a riot shield.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Flashes of light slammed against the barrier before disobeying the laws of physics and making complete turns to attack their senders.

'Luckily, I set it up early. In a situation like this, there's always mages!' Damien exclaimed as his eyes darted from side to side and noted the position of every enemy he had to eliminate.

'But damn, these things take up so much mana!'

Damien obtained the Twin Moons when he was approaching his Baptism, and compared to that time, his mana capacity had dropped several hundred thousand units. Every shot from Freya and Hel drained a massive chunk of his mana, making it impossible to fire more than a few hundred before running dry.

And to think just days ago, a few hundred shots from these weapons was nothing more than an opening move for him!

BANG!

A hole tore open in space, giving way to a black vortex that flew behind Damien's head like a halo. It flew into the air above him and expanded, sucking in every bit of mana in the surroundings to replenish him.

'Good. This still works.'

He'd prepared elixirs for the girls, but elixirs weren't enough to sustain his mana abuse.

Along with this alternative usage of Devour, there was one more thing Damien wanted to try to sustain himself.

'Demon Transformation.'

His body changed into demon form, his hair white and his skin white as snow. He almost grinned, thinking he'd outwitted the universal law, but how could it be that simple?

The laws didn't absolutely restrict his body like they did his soul, but it wasn't going to give him such an obvious advantage easily!

The transformation Damien underwent was partial and many of his bloodline abilities were locked, but for now, the ability he wanted to use was still available.

'Enhance.'

The Blood Runes on his body shone with blue light and his mana absorption rate and ability were enhanced exponentially.

Damien nodded, his eyes solemn.

'Good. 100 meters down, 400 to go!'

He said it like it was easy, but the number of undead was, no pun intended, unholy.

And this time, he wasn't alone in his struggle.

Elena and Ruyue stood to Bertram's side and back, holding off the undead with Damien. Meanwhile, Rose stood to Bertram's other side and cast her Illusion Magic on the cliff wall, hiding their presence from the Human-Faced Spiders.

While Rose was only acting on intuition, she didn't realize that she held the most important role in the group.

The Netherworld Fog was rising and the Ghostly Wind was reaching its peak, far ahead of its regular schedule for no known reason.

It was an incredibly rare situation, but it had happened before.

And in those instances, it wasn't the undead that caused the most casualties, but the spiders!'

The spiders went into a frenzy whenever the fog acted strangely, and what would adventurers do when the only safe zones in the crevice were suddenly turned into death pits filled with maniac spiders?

The answer was: nothing!

They could only die!

With luck and skill aiding their charge forward, the group continued moving against the undead tide, bent on overcoming the hurdles they faced.

In the back of their minds, they knew it. This trouble was severe, but...

It was only the start of their grand adventure!

Chapter 1065 Ghost King's Crevice [3]

Waves of mana burst through the side of the ravine as Damien's group fought their way through the undead horde.

The Netherworld Fog had grown to the point where it was impossible to see anything even a few feet ahead of them, and from this abyss of smoke, a never-ending stream of undead harassed them without pause.

It was a horrifying sight to see. The massive number these undead represented could only be approximated by gazing into the deep tsunami-like shadow approaching through the fog.

Damien's side was still going strong. While their numbers were large, it was lucky that these creatures were all in the 2nd class as well, otherwise, a siege like this would have immediately ended them.

He still had the Twin Moons out, not changing his strategy to deal with enemies and only focusing on keeping the path clear and waiting for Bertram's instruction.

The real spectacle was on Ruyue and Elena's sides.

Ruyue was also a force of Yin, or rather, she was a controller of Yin with far greater status than small undead like these. She didn't use ice or her own abilities, instead choosing a far more brutal approach that conserved her mana.

RAAAAAAH!

A ghoulish howl filled the air as countless mutilated corpses rose from the ground in a flurry of grey mana. They meshed together strangely, forming an army of new beings out of those who died!

However, this new group of undead wasn't an enemy, but a product of Ruyue's machinations!

She controlled the Death aspect of Yin, spreading her influence into the surroundings. She wasn't summoning her own undead, but reutilizing the Death Mana in the surroundings to revive them under her command!

Actually, Ruyue's 2nd class didn't have such capabilities. The class she earned upon reaching level 50 was called Daughter of the Moon. It was focused on her Moon affinity, which later merged into her base Yin affinity, and ice. It was also the origin of her spear art.

However, Ruyue's affinity with Yin had always been extreme. The reason she was so limited in the past was because she wasn't able to realize it.

Her new understanding, combined with her long-existing talent, allowed her to connect with Death Mana, albeit at a very subtle level.

She abused this to create a horde to fight against the horde, taking a new replenishing supplement almost every minute!

While Ruyue and Damien had to get creative with their powersets to find ways to counter the army, Elena didn't share their worries.

When she hit 3rd class, her fighting style experienced a huge change.

However, before that, the path she pursued was the limitless warrior, the path of a Valkyrie who never lost steam in the midst of battle!

The Life and Light Laws that had transformed into more ethereal concepts were reverted back to their foundation, where their only purpose was to sustain Elena infinitely!

And she was making sure they did exactly that.

Huge pulses of pure golden-white and greenish-white mana surrounded her body in a furious vortex as she slashed out with Yggdrasil's branch and swept away wave after wave of undead.

Those who attacked Elena were mainly Netherworld Spirits, a ghostly race that absolutely abhorred life.

Elena's powerful life aura made her an immediate target, but at the same time, Netherworld Spirits were the undead species most susceptible to her blade.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Three explosions rang out as one, coming from all three open sides around Bertram.

Damien, Ruyue, and Elena all let out a massive flux of power, blowing away another wave of undead.

The cave Bertram was leading them to was only a few tens of meters away.

Just a little bit more and they'd reach it.

They pushed.

BOOOOOOM!

Damien gritted his teeth and poured out most of his mana in a single compressed blast from Hel's barrel, a true implosion of space that tore even the Netherworld Fog out of their path.

At the same time, Ruyue slammed her foot into the ground and sent out a ripple of mana, molding her undead army into a huge chimera golem that tore into the undead horde and broke their waves.

And Elena, she covered their backs so perfectly that her effort almost went unnoticed. There wasn't a single undead that could approach within 10 feet of the group without being exploded and purified by waves of Light Mana.

"Get goin! It's right there!" Bertram exclaimed, blood rushing to his head in excitement.

50 meters...

40 meters...

30 meters...

At a certain point, the Netherworld Fog started to fade out naturally, and even the undead stopped approaching with such ferocity.

Before they knew it, a shadow covered their bodies.

It was only then they realized they were finally safe.

"Phew...!"

Damien exhaled a sigh of relief. He stretched his body and spread his awareness again, still not losing his wariness.

"Hm? This is..."

He realized almost immediately that they weren't alone in this cave.

There were roughly 50 other adventurous practitioners present. Half of them were huddled together in their own small groups, while the rest stayed in each other's vicinity like a huge expedition group.

Their conversations revolved around the strange timing of this undead wave and the hair's width they all survived by, but they all ceased the second Damien and the rest entered the cave.

The adventurers all watched the group in scrutiny, assessing the new survivors who'd shown up in this place.

Damien and the girls, however, paid them no mind.

'Let's just get what we need to do done. Conflict with others is just wasting time.' Damien thought to himself, finding an open space and sitting down.

The girls followed his actions, while Bertram carefully scanned the cave walls and jotted a few things down on a small notepad.

"This place is usually the best since the spider bastards in this cave aren't as hostile as the rest, but who knows what's happenin' now!" He exclaimed sighingly as he took a seat near Damien.

"Old boy, Human-Faced Spiders only have one weakness: their eyes. Don't forget that."

Damien nodded, glancing at the ceiling with a frown.

'He can't be speaking for no reason, but if he thinks something will happen, why enter the cave in the first place?'

He shook his head, throwing away the thought.

'No, a moment of respite is better than nothing. We've burned through over a hundred mana elixirs in the past 15 minutes. This strategy lets us tear through obstacles, but it's too inefficient to last the whole expedition...'

Damien furrowed his brows in thought, pondering over different ways for them to save mana but still move with the same speed. Meanwhile, the attention of the groups around them seemed to fade.

At least, for the most part.

Two groups in particular had their eyes on Damien and the girls for different reasons.

The first sat in a dark corner of the cave, outside the perception of most.

Unlike the rest, they were hidden by a thick veil of mana. Of course, this wasn't a strange thing to do in a place like the Severed World, but in their case, it was definitely malicious.

Because behind that barrier, four people sat in a meditative posture, unmoving like stone buddhas.

Their bodies were covered in Human-Faced Spiders, the venom from these beasts flowing freely through their systems.

But they didn't reject it, no, they accepted it wholeheartedly to further their training.

However, their lack of reaction seemed to anger the spiders around them, an anger that spread from spider to spider and alerted every creature living in the cave.

Their perceptions were joined together in a single web that translated their thoughts and allowed them to share vision, and through it, they reached a consensus.

The new arrivals, Damien's group...

...were exactly the people they'd been looking for.

Chapter 1066 Ghost King's Crevice [4]

The second group was far less ominous.

They were in the light both metaphorically and physically, sitting near the middle of the cave and only around ten feet away from Damien and the rest.

They were also a group of two men and three women, however, the main group was only two men and two women, with the last being their guide.

They chatted and laughed together more closely than most other groups, and the one who clearly led them was a man with bright blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a crown-like head garment made of silver and sapphire colors.

He glanced not at the girls or Damien, but at Bertram with interest.

His eyes glimmered with interest, causing his party members to gain interest as well.

"Virgil, did you find something good again?" One of the women asked.

The man, Virgil, smiled in response.

"You could say so..."

"Sheesh, you always have to act mysterious," the other man said with a snort.

"Haha, what can you do? There's no such thing as certainty in these things."

"Hmph."

Their conversation continued, the topic dropped not long after it was brought up, but Virgil's attention never left Bertram for too long.

In the end, he couldn't bear it anymore. He stood up, intent on walking over and getting an answer to the question in his mind, but at that moment...

RUMBLE!

A tremor spread through the cave.

"W-wha—"

BANG!

A mana barrier in the corner of the cave was blasted open.

The four men inside couldn't even be seen within the mound of Human-Faced Spiders present there.

But those spiders were mad, extremely furious that they couldn't kill the prey they'd set their eyes on.

And the only way to appease this anger...was to kill!

SKREEEEEEEE!

A cacophonous melody of high-pitched screeches filled the cave, shaking its very foundation.

The adventurers in the cave instantly stood up and backed away, covering their ears.

In their eyes, the human faces on those spiders' abdomens began to writhe in horror and suffering, silently transmitting the message that they would be the next souls to add to these writhing faces.

Thud!

It was instant.

A single spider fell on the head of a practitioner in the 25-man expedition group and bit him. The venom instantly dropped him dead on the ground, starting a chain reaction of newly dead bodies decorating the cave floor.

"Dammit! This fucking mountain!" A man shouted in frustration, cutting through the spiders around him and backing away.

He soon realized that he was at the mouth of the cave, along with most of the rest of the cave's inhabitants.

Outside, the Netherworld Fog bloomed and an endless army of undead sat in wait to kill them, but inside, an army of insta-kill spiders was doing the exact same!

What was one to do in this death trap?!

"Fuck it, I'm done with this!" The man finally decided.

He looked to his group mates and gritted his teeth, bolting out of the cave and running back the way Damien and his group came.

Four others followed him out, their footsteps echoing out of focus as the remaining experts focused on the spider attack.

Damien and his group stood near the edge of the crowd, occupying an advantageous position where they didn't face the brunt of the spiders nor the absolute threat of the undead.

They observed and plotted, trying to figure out their next move, when suddenly Damien swung his body sideways.

Xiu!

A shot of purple liquid splashed onto the ground beside him, melting a deep hole into its surface.

'Poison?' Damien thought as he traced its source.

'There are...people back there?'

Damien once again dodged, this time taking a container out of storage and swiping up the poison that was shot at him.

The girls and Bertram were also alerted to the attack at this time.

Together, they watched as the poison melted through the container made to hold far, far more powerful materials!

'We can't face that right now.' Damien realized with a frown.

It was a physical poison so the Void Physique couldn't handle it and he didn't trust Transcendent Regeneration in its current state. [Heal] was also unavailable so he couldn't be sure of the girls' safety if they were hit.

'Damn! What now?!'

Either they stayed in the cave and attempted to fight the unknown enemy and the spiders, or they risked it and challenged the undead horde!

"Bertram, how sure are you of your skills?!" He asked hurriedly.

"100%!" The old man responded without missing a beat.

"Good, then we'll go!"

Could the timing have been more perfect?

At the exact moment Damien spoke, five new undead made their way out of the Netherworld Fog and waited outside the cave for helpless fleeing adventurers.

They were none other than the five who escaped a few seconds ago.

Damien gritted his teeth.

Their fates seemed obviously doomed in that horde, but he didn't change his decision.

He would take unending enemies over deadly poison any day!

Damien's eyes were extremely solemn. His pupils swirled as the All-Seeing Eyes activated. He waited for the perfect moment, setting up Vector Walls to deflect any incoming poison.

Two things happened to prompt his next word.

The first: the unknown poison began to melt through the Vector Walls like they were material objects.

And the second...

Well, the timing was perfect!

"Go!"

An opening appeared and he capitalized on it without wasting a second.

He ran out of the cave and back into the undead wave, Bertram and the girls not far from him.

"Hey! Let's not die!" He yelled.

"Don't worry about it!" Bertram yelled back.

The little old man increased his pace, taking the lead and running through the undead without a care for his life.

Or rather, he trusted Damien's group to have his back so they could all live.

'The path...the path...'

The truth was, Bertram never had a path, he had an instinct.

He knew where the best route to survive was, but this route was usually also the most dangerous if there was even a single misstep.

Bertram focused on this instinct right now in his moment of life and death and found that path, finally running into Ghost King's Valley, the name given to the flat ground at the bottom of Ghost King's Crevice.

"Follow them!"

As Damien left, another group also followed his footsteps, Virgil and his companions.

They even left their guide behind, as she didn't believe leaving the cave was the right option.

But Virgil's choice was to follow Bertram, because he knew that there was no better option than him!

These two groups soon disappeared into the opacity of the Netherworld Fog.

They were assaulted by the fog's properties at an exponential level compared to what they experienced at the edge, but they pushed forward.

Explosions filled the air around Bertram, clearing the undead away from him.

Those who couldn't see him could only follow the explosions and hope they were going in the right direction.

But Ghost King's Crevice was that type of place.

The second one left the protection of the edge, one's perception could no longer be trusted.

Because of this, these two groups didn't know at all.

The path to survival Bertram had found...

...directly came in contact with the Ghost King!

Chapter 1067 Ghost King's Crevice [5]

Twisting, winding pathways.

No, was there even anything like that?!

Didn't twisting, winding pathways at least have some semblance of direction?!

It became clear that Bertram didn't have anything like a set path he trusted once they began moving. His steps had no order, and the groups he led found themselves running so randomly they could've sworn they were just going in circles!

But Bertram's expression didn't relax in the slightest as he pushed forward. The undead horde faded into a blurry fog, the roars of battle became nothing more than a whisper, and every single pit of his attention honed in on the ethereal path that was forming itself in his eyes.

There was a question he always asked himself.

Why did he consider himself the perfect guide when he hadn't established a trusty route?

In his mind, anyone who trusted routes without question was an idiot, mediocre at best. Routes could be followed by anyone, so what was the point of a guide? If an adventurer was able to memorize the route for themselves, wouldn't the guide become irrelevant?

The Severed World was a place that was constantly changing, and it didn't receive too many recurring powerful guests who'd be able to do these things, but it had plenty of opportunists looking for their entrance into the guide scene so they could make quick money.

Which routes would they use?

Of course, they were the same routes trusted by the rest.

Bertram wanted to be different, and he had the ability to act on this desire. His instinct allowed him to see not only the safest path, but also the most beneficial one.

His reputation had been sullied over time not because the paths he took were bad, but because the adventurers who hired him never chose the safe path.

They wanted to chase benefits, and when he led them to those benefits, they died without fail.

That was just the kind of place the Severed World was!

Bertram could've solved his problem by removing the option to take the beneficial path, but what was the point of doing that when his goal from the start was to be different? Adventurous spirits would be adventurous regardless of what he did, therefore the choice remained in their hands.

For the first time in a long time, Bertram made his own decision; not to seek benefits, but to find the best path for survival!

The undead army grew larger with every second and the battle that raged on became hopeless. Even for Damien and his group, the usage of so many elixirs would definitely leave them endangered in the later layers.

But Bertram couldn't pay attention to it.

He needed to find the way out of the Netherworld Fog as fast as possible!

He followed his instinctual path and Damien and the rest followed him without question. They went deeper and deeper into the valley, their minds exhausted from the constant slaughter yet completely alert from the threat of death.

And that's when he realized it.

Even if they got to the other side, wouldn't they still be in the domain of Human-Faced Spiders?

Was there a real way to survive?

He doubted it internally, but his instinct never lied, so he threw away his negativity.

If it was death either way, he'd rather try until the very last second than give up and accept it peacefully!

This was the mentality that all of them adopted in this seemingly hopeless situation.

Damien and the other practitioners were forced to accept the true greatness of the restriction placed on them.

For Damien at his original level, something like this undead horde could be dealt with in a single attack! 2nd class meant absolutely nothing in front of the 2nd revolution!

But now that he was back at this level, he lost almost everything that made him what he was today.

The adventures he had during 3rd class were his defining moments. What he was left with was a weak lightning affinity, the foundations of Void Sword Art, and vectors that he barely had an understanding of!

He had to think of ways to creatively utilize what he had to cover his weaknesses, but how could he do that? He barely had time to breathe!

The swirling vortex above his head shrunk to a point, but its pull became far greater. The amount of mana in Damien's body was impossible for him to contain and still growing. It was a state that would be dangerous in any other situation, but his saving grace here.

It was a real struggle for all those involved, a struggle that didn't pause once in the 15 minutes they'd been running. From the sounds around them, there was no hope that such respite would be granted to them any time soon.

However, unexpectedly, this notion was incorrect.

Bertram's eyes widened as he tripped over his foot and fell forward.

He stumbled through the chaotic mana around him until he finally stabilized himself...in heaven?

He turned around to look behind him just in time to see Damien and the girls pushing through a shimmering wall of black light and stumbling into the same empty space as him.

"Haa...Haa..."

"Huu..."

The group immediately plopped on the ground and gathered themselves without a word, resting their minds and bodies for the inevitable next battle.

"This is...!" Bertram exclaimed in realization.

Nothing needed to be said.

This black light barrier spanned roughly 500 meters of space and sat like an isolated world within Ghost King's Valley.

This kind of structure could only mean one thing.

A small respite accompanied by an even greater danger.

Damien and the girls silently agreed on this conclusion and thus wasted no time preparing.

Meanwhile, Bertram collapsed on his butt, sweating profusely.

'I'm dead. My time has come.' he murmured inwardly, accepting his fate.

'Maybe I wasn't cut out for this guide shit. I shoulda just listened to my Ma and stayed on the farm!'

What else could he do but wait for death?

The current location was—

"Puha!"

"Hey, don't push!"

"Let me in, dammit! They're coming!"

A group of four pushed their way through the barrier and fell to the ground, sandwiching each other in the process.

"Damn! Didn't you say we were going somewhere safe?!" a bald white man among them sneered, wincing as the massive gash on his leg acted up.

"Aren't we? This place looks pretty safe to me," the other man said, getting out of the pile their group had formed and standing up.

The two women in their group sat to the side and didn't speak, but they looked at their party leader, Virgil, as if he were an idiot.

"This place looks safe to you?! This place is the furthest thing from safe!" The bald man roared. Grabbing Virgil's shoulders powerfully for effect.

"You bastard, right now we're in the FUCKING GHOST KING'S LAIR!"

Virgil's face fell.

"You serious?"

He looked between his group members, he looked at the others around them that he just noticed the existence of, and he saw how every single one of them was looking at him like he was brainless.

He scratched his head awkwardly.

"...oh, that's my bad then..."

Chapter 1068 Ghost King's Crevice [6]

The silence that followed was loud.

Virgil looked around for help from anywhere, but in the end, he could only try to divert the topic and avoid it.

"Haha, anyway, who are you guys? It's our first time meeting, right?" He said, looking at Damien and the girls.

Damien looked him up and down strangely, turning his eyes to the rest of his people afterwards.

They were definitely an interesting group, holding such a dynamic even while realizing their situation.

They acted like youngsters who hadn't even hit 20 yet, but that couldn't be true, right?

Actually, it wasn't impossible for weaker people to enter the realm, since everyone's strength would be regressed the same. There were several advantages and disadvantages of both being weaker and stronger.

"You can call me Damien," Damien finally said, nodding at the group with a smile.

Rose and the girls introduced themselves as well, using the same succinct method as him.

"Nice to meet you all!" Virgil said energetically, bowing his head slightly.

"Since we've all ended up in this situation, shouldn't we work together to find a way out?" He suggested.

Damien raised his brow.

"Work together?"

"Yup! I'm sure our strength combined can deal some damage to that Ghost King, right?"

"Ha!"

Damien scoffed and rolled his eyes.

Did this kid enter the sub-universe without doing a single ounce of research?

The Ghost King wasn't an existence they could fight. From what had been gathered, he was at least at the peak of 3rd class, a level where he could squash them like ants!

"I'll pass on that offer for now. We'll let you know if we reconsider," Damien finally said, shaking his head.

The first strategy wasn't fighting, that much was certain.

He looked at the girls, seeing the agreement in their eyes.

They had a tacit agreement on what to do next.

Their hands interlocked with the ones next to them, and their mana flowed between the connection they all shared.

Space bent and refracted the light in the surroundings, an air of Yin spread and disguised the area in fog, the auras of life coming from their bodies vanished completely, and finally, an illusory domain wrapped all their previous defenses up into a tight package of concealment that many would be hard-pressed to see through.

Of course, Bertram wasn't left out either.

"W-where'd they go?!" Virgil exclaimed.

"Haa, you can't actually be this stupid. It has to be a bit. Don't tell me it's not," the bald man sighed in frustration.

"Calm down, Marcus! It was just a joke!" Virgil hurriedly replied.

"Yeah, well now isn't the time for that. Since they've hid, we—"

Marcus' words were cut off by a sudden tremor that spread through the ground.

His face went ghastly white.

"We have to hide!"

He looked to the two women in the group, who hurriedly used their magic to cover their group in several barriers that separated them from the outside world.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

At the same time, the booming thudding of footsteps rang out in the near distance, approaching closer with insane speed.

It came out of the shadows as if it was birthed by them.

It was a warrior with skin as pale as a corpse. It was dressed in the clothing of a barbarian, with red markings forming ominous patterns on its skin.

The bottom half of its face was covered in a thick beard and it had a mane of long and wild hair. Its eyes were nothing more than white slits, and on its neck, it wore a necklace made from the souls of those who invaded its domain.

'Holy shit.' Marcus thought, his body trembling in inherent fear.

The Ghost King! This was the Ghost King!

He held a massive staff in his hand like that of a village elder, but the bloody cleaver on his back was enough indication that he was nowhere near sagely!

The nine living souls hiding at the edge of his territory held their breaths, even Virgil's usually upbeat face solemn.

The ghoulish and deathly aura coming from the Ghost King was suffocating them through their defenses.

'Leave...just leave...!'

It was a thought shared by everyone in the group of four.

The Ghost King raised his head slightly.

Sniff!

Sniff!

His nose flared twice, and—

"You."

BOOM!

He moved, rapidly appearing at the barrier's edge and towering over the hiding spot of Virgil and his group.

"Come to me."

BANG!

His massive arm slammed down, shattering every barrier set up to keep him out in a second.

"Scatter!"

Upon Virgil's orders, the four spread in different directions, flying out and using the shockwave from the Ghost King's attack to boost them even further.

"We have to fight! Follow me!"

With battle starting, there was no more conflict within their group.

Perhaps Virgil was a brainless fool in normal life, but if it was battle, he was a peerless genius!

It was this, combined with something more mystical, that drew these three to join his party despite his personality, and now was the time for him to prove their choice the right one!

Virgil launched himself into battle ahead of his peers, leading them without fear or hesitation.

"From the left, stun him!"

"Yes!"

The two women in the group were named Amber and Diana. They took the left together and raised their staffs, casting magic that struck the Ghost King in the form of a large purple Phoenix.

Bang!

"Hm?"

The Ghost King barely showed reaction. He turned to the girls and swept his arm out, using the reach of his massive staff to stack them from afar.

But at that moment, Virgil pounced, arriving behind the Ghost King and jumping up, slashing his sword in a complete circle to build power and slice the enemy's throat in a single move!

Screeeeech!

Sparks flew from the sword's path as it connected with the target. The Ghost King took no damage, but it was sure that he was offended by their actions.

Such mortals dared to attack him?!

Proposterous!

The group of four had a good party balance, with two fighters and two mages attacking together. Whenever Virgil needed support, Marcus could always be there to aid him, while Amber and Diana could give them overarching support from the back and attack when they saw a chance.

Damien observed them carefully, but spent more time dissecting the Ghost King's reactions to their onslaught.

'Hmm...isn't this a bit...game-like?'

He didn't know if it applied throughout the sub-universe, but the way the Ghost King was moving definitely had a pattern.

A close-up melee hit would be met with a stomp or swing, while a long-range attack was met with an attack from his great staff or mana.

The cleaver on his back showed no signs of coming out, indicating something like a second phase.

'I heard all the living beings in this realm are killed and revived whenever the Impulse Wave passes. Could the reason be...'

Damien frowned as the thought formed in his mind.

Was it a good thing or a bad thing?

The only way to find out was to face it directly.

'Well, I guess it gives the Severed World a more fun feel, which is strange to say with how this damn place has been assaulting us since we got here, but it is what it is.'

Virgil's group was able to hold out for a surprising amount of time without taking too much damage, long enough for Damien to gain a basic understanding of the Ghost King's attack patterns.

What better use was there for strange adventurers than bait?

Now that he knew what fish he was trying to catch, it was time to start reeling it in!

"Go."

A single word left Damien's lips.

And his shadow responded.

Chapter 1069 Ghost King's Crevice [7]

Whoosh!

A being rushed out of the hidden space created by Damien and his group and rapidly entered the battle.

It shot past Virgil and Marcus, directly approaching the Ghost King and leaping into the air.

AWOOOO!

A dark howl filled the air as the black flash finally took form. The massive maw of a bestial black wolf chomped down on the Ghost King's neck, its sharp teeth ripping through his skin.

The damage wasn't much, but it was the first drop of blood drawn from the creature since the start of the battle!

Damien grinned.

"Attagirl."

It had been a long time since she'd been able to leave the Sanctuary and her excitement was palpable. Zara knew how strong the opponent was, but she didn't care at all!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Rays of shadow cascaded down from her body and impacted the Ghost King, barraging him and covering his vision.

AWOOO!

She slammed down onto the ground and stomped her legs, freezing the ground and the Ghost King's legs.

"Now!"

Damien heard her call in his head and immediately pushed his foot into the ground.

He was gone in the next instant. His body rushed through space, Mirage entering his grasp as he swung it without mercy!

'Void Sword Art Fourth Form: Spatial Collapse'

BOOOOOOOOOM!

Space twisted into an agglomeration of layered mirrors, bending over each other and meshing until the scenery within was completely twisted.

Damien jumped back to avoid its spread, and when he landed, his shadow expanded again.

Zara returned to his side with a savage grin.

Because of her existence as a Nox being, she'd been hidden from the world for a very long time. Immortal Blood Asura had eyes everywhere, so to conceal his connection with the Nox, he had no choice but to keep her locked away in the Sanctuary.

But it was different now. When Damien was reverted to 2nd class, Zara felt the restriction through their soul connection as well. Because of this, she was forced out of the Sanctuary and reverted to her previous state as well.

This meant that not only did she find herself in Damien's shadow again, her superior bloodline was suppressed so she was able to appear and use her old mana again!

Damien had been waiting for an opportunity to bring her out, and the Ghost King provided the perfect timing!

"How's it feel to be back?" Damien asked, grinning at her as he watched the Ghost King break his spatial turbulence.

"Greater than you'd ever imagine," Zara responded.

Her strength might've been regressed, but her intelligence was still the same. She couldn't take human form anymore, but communication wasn't an issue at all.

Something similar must've happened with Lily and Mei who were contracted to Ruyue, otherwise, she wouldn't have been able to grasp Death Mana in her current state so easily.

The smile on Damien's face represented his feelings about this moment, but nothing more could be said.

"YOU. PUNY. MORTALS!"

The Ghost King's words were choppy, which made his rage even more visceral.

Pieces of broken space fell around him like shards of glass, and his attention was wholly focused on Damien and Zara.

After all, unlike Virgil's group, they actually posed a threat!

"Listen up. I dissected his patterns during the previous fight. Just pay attention to these things as you move..."

Damien used mental transmission to pack all the information he wanted to convey into a single second of contact, connecting with the four in his party, and without another moment of hesitation, he moved.

'I should keep him distracted first. He moves slow, but he hits hard.'

The only reason they were able to take action as they did was because the Ghost King was on the slower side both intellectually and physically, but his strength wasn't a joke.

'I don't know who else can handle—'

BANG!

The Ghost King's staff slammed towards Damien, who used Mirage to hold it back.

SCREEEEEEEECH!

Damien gritted his teeth as sparks from the collision flew into his face and burned him

"Khhh...!"

He pushed his feet deep into the earth and stabilized his vectors, increasing his weight exponentially, pushing back against the Ghost King with all his strength.

"Attack!"

They were waiting for his command.

At that moment, Damien flowed his mana into the Ghost King's staff, using it as a medium to penetrate his body.

The controlling of someone else's vectors was extremely difficult, but if it was just for a second...

The Ghost King froze.

Four being approached with immense speed.

Ruyue attacked first.

She raised her spear and swung it upward powerfully, letting loose an immense wave of cold Yin mana.

'Moon Goddess Spear Art Original First Form; Tide Formation.'

BANG!

The Ghost King's undefended back was struck by the wave and frozen in ice. The Yin fluctuations in his body were heightened to the extreme, which would have been a positive for him if not for—

Whoosh!

A streak of light shot past Ruyue.

'Pure Yang Flux.'

Elena slashed Yggdrasil's branch, combining her two elements into a flowing stream of absolute Yang.

Life and Light were both in direct opposition with the traits of undead. When they were combined together, and when their already disorderly fluctuations were entangled with those of their opposites...

BOOOOOOOOOOOM!

A huge explosion of chaotic mana burst on the Ghost King's back. The mana waves spread through Ruyue's ice and shattered it, emitting even greater pressure.

Despite the extreme physical defense the king of the undead possessed, the force of the explosion tore his skin open and burrowed into his muscles, putting a number of holes in his body.

It all happened in a second.

ROOOOOOAAAAAAAAR!

The Ghost King let out an ear-shattering roar as Damien's restraints wore off.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

He slammed his foot into the ground, spreading a terrifying wave of destructive mana.

"Keuk...!"

Damien took the brunt of the force. He was thrown back, blood flying out of his mouth.

The others were pushed away as well, suffering varying degrees of injuries.

Rose stood up, ignoring the blood pooling in her mouth as she summoned her mana and surrounded the Ghost King's head with it.

'Conceal!'

A shimmering curtain formed from the mana.

The Ghost King's vision was impaired, the sight around him changing completely from Ghost King's Valley to a barren plain somewhere in the universe.

After the roar would come a powerful swing of his staff loaded with mana. This was already present in the information Damien gave them.

With his vision clouded, the Ghost King's swing became nonsense, a random attack with no particular target.

Zara took hold of the opening to cage the Ghost King in countless shadow chains, while Rose, Ruyue, and Elena began to approach again, a new course of attack already plotted in their minds.

A bit further away, Damien clutched his chest with a frown.

'I am not a fan of this slow healing.'

Transcendent Regeneration still existed, but taking the brunt of the force of a peak 3rd class being's attack did more than just sting.

Damien's internals were a mess, and they definitely weren't healing fast enough for him to keep taking hits like that.

He couldn't be counted out of the battle yet, but he definitely realized something important.

'I was damn lucky I didn't offend anyone powerful back then. That cocky dumbass me would've been killed without a single hope for survival!'

Chapter 1070 Ghost King's Crevice [8]

Damien didn't wait to jump back into combat.

He took the Twin Moons out for larger blasts, and even without them Vector Controller was originally a ranged class.

His ability to manipulate vectors was best put to use supporting the girls. He messed with the vectors of the Ghost King's attacks and empowered theirs, making the battle completely advantageous for them.

The only ones not doing any work were Bertram, who was useless in this situation, and Virgil's group, who could only watch in awe.

"Say, Diana, could you ever show this much power at 2nd class?" Marcus asked incredulously.

"Don't even joke about it. They're bonafide 3rd class practitioners with that kind of firepower," Diana responded wryly.

"Who the hell are they?"

Virgil asked the question everyone in their group was wondering about as the battle continued.

Even they were able to understand the Ghost King's mechanics over time.

Whenever he took large damage, he responded with a mana wave, which was followed by a sweeping physical attack. Whenever he wanted to make an attack, there was always a cue that could be traced.

For instance, if he stomped his feet, he would send mana through the ground and leave his torso open. If he raised his staff, he was planning to use larger mana-based attacks, but he would leave his back unguarded.

There were so many openings in his behavior that it was almost embarrassing that they couldn't spill blood, but it was because they couldn't spill blood that they couldn't find these openings in the first place!

Nevertheless, the battle went on for minutes on end.

Rose and Ruyue mostly stayed out of the Ghost King's reach and barraged it with attacks that hindered his movement and perception, while Zara and Elena stayed within his circle and worsened any wounds he'd already taken.

Damien's wounds healed after a few minutes of ranged combat, and he also joined them at the forefront, using Vector Control and spatial manipulation to harass the enemy and create new wounds on his body.

Their synergy was perfect. Without a single word exchanged between them, they understood their comrades' moves and thoughts with absolute precision and acted upon them without reservation.

A well-oiled machine? No, even something like that didn't work as seamlessly as they did.

Before anyone realized it, the Ghost King's armored skin had been ripped to pieces and most of his decaying muscles were displayed to the world. He had countless deep wounds on his chest and back, and blue blood oozed from several locations, dripping to the ground and forming a deep puddle.

Grrrrrr...

The Ghost King let out a barely discernible growl as he withstood the onslaught.

"Mortals. Good. Warriors."

"King. Must. Fight!"

VOOOOOOM!

Deep red mana covers the Ghost King's body in an aura of slaughter.

He raised his arm, disadvantaging himself and giving Damien the chance to bore another hole in his torso.

But he didn't care.

Grip!

His large hand gripped the hilt of his cleaver and unsheathed it from his back.

"Warriors. Fight!"

SHIIIIING!

It was instant, terrifyingly fast.

The cleaver cut through space, whipping furious winds into the air.

And the mana emitted from its blade obliterated everything in its path.

"Dodge!" Damien roared.

His danger senses were ringing. Even he couldn't take this attack!

He grabbed Elena, who was directly to his side, and teleported several tens of meters away. Zara used shadow teleportation to follow them, while Rose and Ruyue also pushed away with all their strength!

The cleaver light cut through 50 meters of earth, turning it into a massive crevice within the crevice. The brutal mana it held exploded through the atmosphere, turning everything within that radius to dust.

"This is...the second phase?!" Damien exclaimed.

Wasn't this too exaggerated of a transformation?!

"Old boy, we ain't come here to fight that thing! Let's escape!"

Bertram's voice suddenly boomed in his ear, making him turn around.

Right, since when was it necessary to defeat the Ghost King?

The other option was an army of infinite undead, but dealing with that was easier than dealing with a boss that could one-shot them!

"Great! Let's run!"

There was no need to be reckless right now.

Damien and the girls instantly bolted, picking Bertram up along the way and dashing out of the black light barrier that denoted the Ghost King's Lair.

The undead horde surrounded them immediately, but unlike what they expected, they didn't immediately get swarmed.

The few tens of undead nearby attacked, but once they cleared them, those outside a 20-foot range didn't approach.

"Haha, that's it!" Bertram exclaimed.

"The Ghostly Wind retreated so the undead won't attack so crazily, but it won't last 'cause you offended the Ghost King! We're gonna move fast!"

He zoomed forward with such speed outputted from his tiny legs that it could only be described as "skedaddling."

Damien and the girls rapidly chased after him, and as he said, they only had to clear the undead in their vicinity to be safe. They no longer had to abuse supplements to make it through!

At least, for a minute.

ROOOOOOOAAAAAAAAR!

"MORTALS! DIE!"

A booming bellow echoed through the entire Ghost King's Crevice, bouncing off the walls and spreading killing intent into every inch of its space.

Brutal rage seeped into the bones and spirits of every Netherworld creature in the ravine.

Their auras flared, their eyes were dyed red in frenzy, and they attacked without mercy.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

RAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

SKREEEEEEEEEEEE!

The ear-piercing sounds of these undead entering true a berserk state were deafening, and the effects were even clearer.

They didn't attack randomly. Every undead under the Ghost King's control attacked Damien's group specifically, even those hundreds of meters away!

"Go, go, go!" Bertram yelled as he pushed through the army.

"We're almost there!"

They moved and moved and moved. They abused their elixirs again and abused their heightening understanding of their abilities to counter the endless waves as best as they could.

It was suffocating.

They'd felt it so many times since they got here that it was becoming annoying; their own weakness, that is.

Even after realizing they underestimated the Severed World, they still underestimated the Severed World.

Every single second they spent here was a miniature apocalypse!

Damien lost track of time. His body moved like a machine, pushing forward thoughtlessly.

Skeletons, ghouls, spirits, liches, and any other undead that approached faded into a mosaic of enemies that needed to die.

And time passed in this numb state of constant action.

It was no more than 3 minutes in reality, but it felt like tens of eternities for them.

Until finally...

"Puah!"

Bertram let out a strong exhale.

The fog cleared.

In front of the group was another cliff wall, high enough to fade into the horizon when they turned their heads up to look at it.

Their feet unconsciously took them forward until they entered a cave in its surface, and the threat of Human-Faced Spiders started to seem insignificant.

There were only around a hundred of them in the cave, and once they were dealt with, it would take time for more spiders to fill their vacancy.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of undead crowded the cave entrance, craving the deaths of its inhabitants but unable to enter it.

Because no matter how enraged the Ghost King was, he couldn't anger the leader of the Human-Faced Spiders when he was so wounded.

Scaling the cliff was the easiest part with Bertram's expertise and equipment, which meant...

"Our time in this hellish valley has finally come to an end."

Damien's relieved sigh spoke for them all.