

Void 1181

Chapter 1181 Beast Emperor Star [1]

The place Zara and Alea went to after reaching the Beast Domain, the place that held "that thing" they'd been searching for, was also the place that could save Beast Emperor Star.

That place was a hidden realm, but it was incorrect to label it as such. It was far too complex for such a definition.

That place was like an alternate reality. It was a place that held secrets far beyond what the universe contained.

But it couldn't be accessed by just anyone.

Zara and Alea were special. Not only because of their connection with each other and the Divine Emperor, but because of their unknown mothers.

The beast bloodlines they held were far more potent than the usual bloodline, which allowed their growth and facilitated their improvement through their opposing lineage.

If it wasn't for those strong bloodlines, they would've been consumed by their Demonic Providences from the start.

Nevertheless, they made it to this point through countless struggles and managed to gain the right to enter that world.

And through it, they learned a great deal about themselves.

Currently, they sat side by side, cross-legged and deep in meditation.

In their minds, shadows of figures roamed around them, each of them holding significance to their lives.

Zara was calm as she watched them move.

They seemed motionless yet active, unable to move on as if they were waiting for someone to find them.

These shadows were calling to her, telling her it was her time to join them.

But she refused.

They did not receive her emotions well.

They raged and screamed, they condemned her for abandoning them, they cried out in agony as her choice cut off their paths.

However, she did not budge.

'These people...'

These shadows of the past were not meant to leave here.

Unless the people they were waiting for came, they would be trapped here for eternity.

Unfortunately, she was not their hope.

She was here for only one person.

The shadow of a woman, far away yet closer than anyone else, sat alone and withheld the extreme feelings in her heart.

That woman stood out.

She didn't seem to want to pass her will to the next generation. She seemed to be hiding from it, as if doing so would cause a change she did not wish to see.

But...

'I came here for answers. I will not leave without them.'

Zara approached that woman silently and sat beside her.

"Must it be so?"

The voice was ethereal, laced with darkness, barely existent.

"It must. Otherwise, I will never reach the heights I wish to see."

Zara answered it earnestly.

This wasn't a matter of righteousness or anything of the sort. This was a selfish road she took for the sake of her ambition.

"Is it not better to remain idle? Will life not be more peaceful in comfort?"

"It will not."

Zara almost scoffed at the hilarity of the question.

"Life is not so forgiving. The second you believe you have attained comfort, it will bring misfortune as if to remind you of its cruelty. Unless you have the power and determination to stand against that fate, what can you do besides accept misfortune and suffer?"

The universe was dying. Without power, one would only become a number amongst the trillions or quadrillions of common people who had already lost their lives and families to this war.

She had no desire to be one of those people.

And more than anything...

"The horizons he sees are too far above the ones I can imagine. I don't want to fade into mediocrity while he leaves me for those horizons. I will never be useless again."

Damien Void.

That man was her only family before she met Alea, and despite the blood relation she held with her half-sister, he was still the one she viewed as family first and foremost.

That man was not just an older brother to her, but a father figure. He was the one who brought her out of the darkness, gave her purpose, and guided her into becoming the strong woman she was today.

She knew he wanted the best for her. He would be satisfied as long as she was happy.

But she did not want to disappoint his expectations.

She wanted to become someone he could be proud of.

And for that...

"Mother, please stop hesitating. This strength, I will not allow it to consume me."

The shadow woman flinched.

She shakily turned her head to the woman sitting next to her, the woman who she didn't get the chance to see grow.

"I cannot see you hurt..."

"Pain is also a part of life. It will come regardless of what we wish, but I will overcome it all. Then, what is pain other than a stepping stone for my growth?"

It was hard to see it.

No, it couldn't be seen, but it could be felt.

A tear streamed down the cheek of that shadow.

It was terrible.

As a mother, to see her daughter at such a level, unknowing of what she went through to reach it...

Pride was definitely present, but it hurt more than anything else.

"I am sorry. I am truly sorry..."

She could only apologize.

She had no control over life and death. Their separation was a matter of inevitability.

But she felt extreme sorrow at the current state of things. She regretted leaving her daughter behind more than anything else.

However, Zara didn't feel the same.

She smiled warmly, an expression rare to see on her face.

"There is no need to be. I have people around me who care for me and support me. I will not falter or fold, no matter what is thrown at me. So..."

She stood up and held her arm out.

"...watch over me from now on. I will show you the woman I have become, and the one I seek to be."

The shadow glanced at her hand hesitantly.

A sigh left her mouth.

"It seems...I cannot change the flow of Fate."

She reached her hand out and carefully held onto Zara's.

"My daughter, no matter what happens from this point forth, do not lose yourself. Please, do not lose yourself."

Zara nodded seriously, and before she could say anything else, the shadow before her disappeared.

It coiled around her arm and expanded to cover her entire body before sinking into her skin and becoming a part of her.

VOOM!

Her bloodline suddenly burst with power.

The uncontrollable Demonic Providence that had forced her to teeter on the edge of insanity for so long was suppressed directly by a looming darkness engulfed in flames.

It was a heaven-defying process, but it happened in a mere instant.

When Zara opened her eyes again, that space no longer existed.

Those shadows returned to the darkness, awaiting the day their rightful heirs appeared.

She looked to her side, noticing Alea, who was also soon to awaken.

And she looked to her front, where nothing existed besides a single podium.

This place...

This place was the Divine Beast Sanctuary, the cemetery that held their spirits when they passed.

This was the place where her mother's soul waited for an eternity for her to appear, and this place...

...it was the answer to many of the problems that had been plaguing her.

Chapter 1182 Beast Emperor Star [2]

What Alea went through was similar to Zara.

The woman she met in that space was different, the things she symbolized were different, but their conversation was similar.

Unlike Zara, the space she entered was white, filled with souls of purity. And unlike Zara, the woman she met was the brightest and most noticeable being in that space.

Yet, who would've expected it?

Despite being polar opposites in both personality and power, the way these two women thought was almost identical.

Alea didn't have such a strong connection to Damien.

She felt interest in him that she originally assumed was love, but as time passed, she realized she was wrong.

She was drawn to him because of something else, something unexplainable. It was a factor that was entirely related to her origin, the very thing she was currently chasing.

Therefore, her motivations were different from Zara's.

She didn't see those horizons through Damien, she only became aware of them after traveling with her half-sister for so long.

But now that she was aware of them, how could she ignore their presence?

The ambition in her heart was growing by the day. It wasn't quite as firm, but she was confident she would reach that point eventually.

So having this encounter was imperative for her.

When she opened her eyes after receiving her mother's blessing, she felt like a changed woman.

The part of her that remained immature until now, clinging to the comfort she'd become used to on Apeiron, completely vanished.

It wasn't like she was going to change her personality. She enjoyed life far more acting the way she did.

But she refused to let her mindset and thoughts be clouded by immaturity anymore. It was growth she desperately needed.

When both sisters woke up and glanced at each other, they realized something else,

The push and pull of their mysterious connection was far greater than it once was.

It felt like the calm before the storm, the rushing of waves before a tsunami.

As long as they found that final trigger after this reaction reached its peak, they would encounter something magisterial.

"Wow..."

Alea couldn't think of a better word to describe this moment.

Zara also nodded in agreement.

She fully encapsulated their emotions with her breathless word.

"There's a lot to do now," Zara said with a wry smile.

"Is there, though?" Alea asked.

"Yeah, there is," Zara responded immediately.

It looked like they didn't have to do much. As long as they stayed close and diligently trained, the things they desired would come to them, but that didn't give them an excuse to slack off.

"It's not just about us anymore, right?"

Alea's eyes widened slightly. A wry smile formed on her face as well.

"I guess not. Responsibility sucks."

"It sucks, but it means we're growing, so we can only accept it."

Alea nodded.

The time for running was over.

She stood up, as did Zara, and together, they walked to that singular podium that joined them in this blank space.

On it were two bracelets and a strange prism.

"These are for us?" Alea voiced curiously, picking one of the bracelets up.

"It should be the last gift they left us," Zara said, taking the other one.

"And that thing..."

The prism, a physical manifestation of their responsibility.

"This is our saving grace."

It felt like destiny when Rose first brought it up.

The fact that this thing was in the Divine Beast Sanctuary that Zara and Alea learned about through their bloodline memories, the fact that it was in a place only they knew the location of...

The Dimensional Prism. It was a fragment of this alternate reality.

"Now that we have it, Beast Emperor Star can finally be saved. It feels nice knowing we played such an important role," Alea said.

Zara glanced out into the distance.

"Mm, it's just..."

"...I hope we aren't too late."

With the events that had transpired both in the strange realm of souls and during the trials they endured to reach that place, it was inevitable for them to wish to take a moment to look back on everything and reflect.

However, they didn't have time.

"Let's get out of here."

It was time to return to the cruelty of reality.

It was time to face it head-on.

"You ready?" Zara asked.

Alea smiled.

"Of course."

These two sisters who only knew each other for a few years, for some reason, they felt like they'd known each other for an eternity.

Together, they left that realm.

And together, they would change reality.

Until it mirrored the version of it they wished to see.

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

A massive explosion rocked the world. The crater it created was enough to massacre hundreds of thousands in a single instant.

They were only lucky they'd already evacuated the common populace before things escalated so.

"Beta Squad, move to the west and hold them back! Delta, you guys support me here!"

Rose's words boomed through their communication network as she desperately supported the battle, but as she was on the frontline, it was hard for her to take complete control.

"Alpha, what's the situation with the Golden Dragon Clan?!"

BOOM!

Rose rapidly dodged another explosion and pushed her mana forth.

Reality changed to her preferences, the world itself altering its environment to provide natural shelter.

She gazed up into the sky with hardened eyes.

It was covered in blackness.

A blackness created by dozens of millions of Nox beings that suddenly invaded their world.

They appeared in a single instant. She thought all the pocket dimensions were already gone, but she was sorely mistaken.

There was still one more, waiting for the perfect moment to completely eradicate the Beast Domain.

Led by a force of three Supremes and a large number of Executioners and High Commanders, this final wave of Nox beings descended on them before anyone could prepare, and hit them harder than they could have ever expected.

'DAMMIT!'

"Alpha, report!"

She yelled again, but the radio silence was only making her more nervous.

On the other side of the world, Su Ren stood in the Golden Dragon Estate with the squad he commanded.

His expression was desolate, but he had to maintain lucidity right now.

"This is Alpha..." he said, his voice shaking noticeably.

"The Golden Dragon Clan..."

He didn't want to say it, but he had no choice.

They had to know.

"The Golden Dragon Clan has been exterminated."

His words traveled to countless parts of the world.

Everyone was silent. Their hearts fell instantly.

The things they'd been moving to protect...

...were they really gone?

On the western edge of Beast Emperor Star, Astoria, Hedrick, and the squad controlled by them, made up of the Golden Dragon Clan's elite forces...

They raged.

They raged unable to accept the news.

Because as of this moment, they were the last survivors of their clan.

They were the final remnants of the Fate Star's progeny.

Astoria's eyes were red.

Golden mana roared through the air as she took control of the atmosphere and eliminated wave after wave of enemies.

The tears streaming down her cheeks were burned away by the heat of battle, but her thoughts were so chaotic she could barely continue fighting.

Why...?!

Just how did things turn out this way?!

Chapter 1183 Beast Emperor Star [3]

It started but a day ago.

Evacuation procedures began several weeks prior, but with the massive population of Beast Emperor Star, even Damien's improved teleportation array system could only do so much.

Everything was going according to plan.

Regular citizens were being moved to safety as fast as possible, and those who decided to stay and fight were being trained as efficiently as possible for the wars that would come in the future.

But nobody expected the Nox to come so soon.

They'd been focusing on Soul World with such ferocity that it was hard to imagine they still had forces to spare on their small resistance.

In fact, it wasn't wrong to think this way at all.

For several months, the level of invasion was extremely manageable, to the point where their guards were naturally lowered.

But that was probably what the Nox were aiming for from the start.

They never planned to leave a single world alone.

Especially not one with as much significance as the Fate Star.

How did they do it?

Astoria's ability to read the flow of Fate should've given them ample time to prepare for such an invasion, but she didn't feel anything out of the ordinary before the day of.

They still hadn't found the reason, but if one had to assume, they had some mechanism in their hidden dimension that cut them out of the flow of Fate that could be read.

So when they finally showed themselves, it was impossible to react.

They aimed for two places first.

The training grounds of regular soldiers, and the teleportation array.

Damien's precautions allowed the teleportation array to fend off the invading forces despite not having as many experts nearby, which luckily allowed them to save most of the common people, but the regular soldiers weren't so lucky.

They were mentally prepared to face such a large number of enemies. It was hard not to be when one saw its scale so many times before this moment happened.

But they weren't trained enough yet.

They tried their best to fight, but the Nox overpowered them within a few hours and started a massacre.

Naturally, the Judgement Order and Golden Dragon Clan responded in kind.

They spread their forces across the world for battle. The Golden Dragon Clan's squad, led by Hedrick and Astoria, went to the training camps to help with defense, while Long Chen and Aishia led their squads to support the teleportation array.

Rose and the rest went to their positions and held out the best they could, but it was hard to cope with the enemy's numbers with their small force.

Especially now that Xue Fang was no longer in the Judgement Order.

Tian Yang and the Golden Dragon Emperor were in the Golden Dragon Palace depths, in a place too secure for even a Supreme to reach, so not much thought was put into the Golden Dragon Estate, since the reserve forces and imperial guard were still present there, but this was a lapse in judgement.

Not one that could be prevented either.

Who would've thought such a thing would happen?

It only took a few hours for Rose and the rest to cope with the situation and start moving properly, but by the time she sent Su Ren to support the Golden Dragon Estate...

...they were already gone.

Every individual present there, from the non-combatants, to the imperial guard, to the children, they were nothing more than corpses on the ground.

'The women have been violated and the rest have been tortured. How could they accomplish this in such a short period of time?'

The answer was—

'—they couldn't.'

Su Ren was forced to be objective. He couldn't allow his emotions to sway him even in the face of such an atrocity.

He inspected the corpses seriously and came to a conclusion.

'It is impossible to inflict wounds like these in a matter of 2 hours.'

"This is Alpha. Judging by the scene, the enemies in the Golden Dragon Estate are able to use Time Laws. How should we proceed?"

He gave the report as he saw it and waited for orders, because he couldn't be sure he could handle this alone.

The other side was silent for a moment. His communication was transmitted to everyone, not just Rose, and they all came to the same conclusion.

For him to say such a thing, the scene he saw must've been terrible. The things that happened...

"Can you do it?"

Rose spoke before the remaining Golden Dragons could do anything reckless.

"I cannot be certain. There may be a Supreme among them."

The location of the three Supremes that led the attack was already confirmed.

Hedrick was fighting one, while two other Supremes from the Golden Dragon Clan were holding off the others.

"Do you have evidence?" Rose asked.

The presence of a fourth Supreme would tip the scales completely.

They didn't have another Supreme to combat that hidden existence.

Su Ren's eyes narrowed as he frowned.

"None, but I can't ignore the possibility."

Rose's expression was dignified as she listened.

Su Ren's current fighting power was that of an Executioner. Unless it was truly a Supreme, he would be able to take the risk and engage, but if that powerful person was truly there, he would be killed regardless of his power.

She gritted her teeth.

As a leader, she had to make the decision that benefited the majority. She couldn't be swayed by her friendships or allies.

"Engage."

Her voice was strained, but she still forced the word out.

"We can't allow them to reach the bunker."

Su Ren sighed to himself.

"Understood. I will update every 10 minutes from now on. If my communications cut off, consider me dead."

He looked back at his squad, all of whom nodded with hardened faces.

They'd all been prepared to lose their lives from the start.

Without hesitation, they started moving towards the hidden enemy.

This situation was reminiscent of the Black Dragon invasion of the past.

If they reached the Demigods below and managed to invoke a response that sent them to the Ancient Battlefield, many things would be ruined.

To stop that from happening, to keep their main support system alive, they had no choice but to move.

Astoria listened to everything from her place on the battlefield.

There was nothing she could do.

Was there nothing she could do?

The more she heard, the more her rage boiled. Her hatred for the Nox reached a personal level that it never reached before.

Was there nothing she could do for her home besides act as a regular soldier?

Did she have to stay here, fighting against nine revolutions Nox beings who appeared as if they were infinite?

'No.'

She refused.

This was her home.

This was the Fate Star. It was the source of her power. It was the origin of everything she stood for.

'If Master was here, he wouldn't be reserved to the situation.'

If her Master was here, he'd create a miracle that led them to victory.

'I am his disciple.'

She was the Void Princess.

To be granted such a title...

'...Master must have believed in my potential.'

If her Master who could do anything believed in her enough to pass her this mantle...

'...I will not disappoint those expectations.'

With burning tears streaming down her face and burning rage filling her heart and soul, she would create the miracle that saved this world.

Chapter 1184 Beast Emperor Star [4]

Astoria glanced around desperately.

On all sides, she could only see the gruesome sights of battle. Enemies and allies alike were turned into bloody messes that decorated the cold ground, and the air of insanity that wafted along with the scent of blood was revolting.

She didn't want to see any more of this.

It didn't matter how many times this scene showed itself before her, she never got used to it.

"Sister, cover me!" She yelled.

Hedrick wasn't her only remaining sibling.

The First Prince was still off-world, his location unknown, while the first and second princesses remained in the Golden Dragon Estate, helping it stabilize after the prior conflict.

The 2nd princess, Tessia Golden, was in the Golden Dragon Estate until the last time she was seen.

With the currently unfolding events, her fate was unknown.

However, Elizabeth Golden was on the front lines with her brother and sister, fighting to protect her home.

After being useless in the last invasion, she refused to face such tragedy again and trained to become a combatant, and so far, she'd shown promising results.

When she heard Astoria's call, she finished off the enemies in front of her and retreated rapidly so she could pay attention to her sister's situation.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Astoria was a great fighter. She wasn't able to use space offensively, but the power she gained from its support allowed her to wield fate in ways none thought possible.

Flashes of golden light followed her every movement, incinerating the Nox she passed and attacked.

"Cover for you? Are you planning to do something stupid?" Elizabeth asked cautiously.

With what just happened, none of them were in the right state of mind, but they couldn't fall prey to that weakness. The second they did, the enemy would seize that opening and end them all!

However, Astoria was just as aware of this as her sister.

"I have no plans to act recklessly," she responded solemnly.

"But I want to change this. I can't let this go on."

Elizabeth frowned in worry.

"Do you have a plan?"

Astoria shook her head, dodging and weaving her enemies and continuing her assault.

"I don't, but I'm sure I will find one if I have the time to try."

It was hard to trust words like those, ones that sounded like they sprouted from idealism, but Elizabeth couldn't be so certain in this moment.

Because Astoria's power made her ideals attainable through impossible means.

If she actually could wield that power like she did back then, if she could alter Fate itself to their benefit...

"How long do you need?"

"I can't say."

Elizabeth spread her awareness to take account of the situation.

"Hedrick won't be able to move for a long time. If we are lacking your strength, I can at most buy 10 minutes. Are you confident?"

"..."

Astoria didn't immediately respond.

"10 minutes...I'm not sure if I can do it, but..."

She didn't have a choice.

"If 10 minutes is all I have, I'll make it work in 10 minutes."

Elizabeth nodded.

"Very well. I'll trust you then."

She turned her attention back to the battle.

'I can no longer hold back.'

If she wanted to control the situation, she had to burst forth with all her power even if it meant leaving her defenseless once her mana ran out.

She looked up at Astoria, who had turned into a golden light trail in the sky, and smiled wryly.

'I hope you can truly accomplish something with the time you have. Otherwise...'

Otherwise, perhaps her legacy would end here.

Golden mana ran wild in the surroundings.

The Golden Dragon Clan's First Princess.

With such a title, she couldn't lose to her younger sister, right?

"Come!"

Her voice boomed through the atmosphere.

10 minutes...

From now on, she would do everything she possibly could to buy that time.

Even if that meant sacrificing her life.

The tears didn't stop.

Astoria was firm now, her will unshakeable, but the tears didn't stop.

Because she knew what the consequences of failure were.

In the time since the Black Dragon invasion, Astoria's status in the clan went from "devil princess" to "greatest hope."

She understood what her sister was doing.

If it meant Astoria could live on and continue the legacy of the Golden Dragon Clan, the rest of its members didn't care if they died.

They would do so happily for her.

'I can't...'

She couldn't let it happen.

She refused!

Her body tore through the stratosphere. As she stood above the world, she concentrated her power and formed a golden ball of light around her.

What was she to do from here?

When it came to Fate, it wasn't something she could control just because she wanted to.

The only thing she could do was earnestly plead for change and hope her prayers would be answered.

She dug into her heart and found her connection with the world, with the Fate Star.

Her eyes shone with a golden hue as a strange symbol formed itself on her forehead, a scale of light.

'Please...' she prayed.

'Please help us!'

Fate was a cruel mistress.

She watched the world with indifferent eyes and guided its flow uncaring of those she harmed or helped.

Her job was to be an observer, not a player.

However, Astoria was the one who held power over her existence.

Astoria's trait, enhanced by the Void, had the power to change the play with the strings she held.

She didn't know what she wanted.

All she wished for was salvation.

But what form it would come in...?

She couldn't predict it, nor did she know if it would even come.

But she diligently prayed.

As her comrades made sure nothing could affect her, she prayed and deepened her connection with Fate, using everything in her power to will something to change.

It was nothing more than a desperate cry for help.

However...

When the one crying was a lone princess to her Mother Empress, the chance of her cries being answered was far greater than anyone else.

One minute passed, then two, then three.

Five minutes passed without anything changing.

The situation on the ground only became worse.

Elizabeth did everything she could.

She pushed her mana to its limits and slaughtered dozens of thousands of Nox beings every second, but they kept coming like an unending wave.

She didn't have much time left.

But she didn't give up.

She swung her sword until her arms could no longer move, then she swung her sword some more.

"AGH!"

She cried out in pain as a blade pierced her stomach, but at the same time, she used that opportunity to slash the head of the one who impaled her.

Her arms were covered in cuts and gashes, but every single one represented an enemy she felled.

Blood pooled in her mouth and on the ground below her, yet she kept moving forward without hesitation.

'Astoria...you must...survive...!'

8 minutes passed.

Unfortunately, Elizabeth was reaching the limits of her mana.

'I'm afraid...10 minutes...won't be possible.'

She didn't stop attacking, but the wry smile on her face represented her thoughts.

She knew she was going to die here.

There was no possibility of survival.

Shik!

A spear dug into her chest, just barely missing her heart. Impaled on its tip, she lost her movement capability and became a sitting target.

"ELIZABETH!"

Hedrick's roar filled the air.

Elizabeth looked up at her brother, who could hardly spare enough attention to pay attention to her while battling the strongest of the attacking enemies.

And a smile lit up her face.

"Live...on..."

"SISTER, YOU CAN'T!"

Hedrick was desperate to help, but he could do nothing.

There was already a blade rushing towards her neck.

And unless the Supreme he faced decided to stop fighting this instant, he couldn't save her.

9 minutes passed.

Everyone watched their own battlegrounds with a variety of expressions.

Families were being separated. Men watched their closest brothers die before them, women watched their husbands and children slaughtered to protect them, while others stood alone and sacrificed their lives to protect these families from harm.

The brutality, nobody saw it clearer than Astoria.

And that moment, when the blade made contact with her sister's neck, engraved itself in her mind.

"NO!"

She screamed out.

Everything in her being roared.

And...

A barely noticeable pulse of light emanated from the world.

BOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Smoke covered the training area.

"Something" dropped from the sky.

And when the clouds finally cleared...

"Again?"

A man's voice rang out.

"These annoying Nox bastards. Why do they have to keep pulling bullshit like this?"

With the sword edge of a Nox being gripped in his left hand and Elizabeth Golden in his right, he scanned his gaze around the battlefield.

With his fiery red hair flapping in the wind, he sighed.

"I guess you never learn, huh."

He stomped his foot on the ground,

BOOOOOOOOM!

A shockwave spread that instant, decimating the enemies in his vicinity.

"This universe...is not yours to swallow."

Chapter 1185 Beast Emperor Star [5]

"These annoying Nox bastards. Why do they have to keep pulling bullshit like this?"

A red-haired man appeared from thin air as if he'd been waiting for his cue.

"I guess you never learn, huh."

All eyes turned to him.

"This universe...is not yours to swallow."

And he vanished again.

His speed was untouchable.

In but a single second, he made his way through the entire battlefield and pulled every powerful enemy into a group.

Once he was done, he flew up into the air and held his arm out.

"Feel the weight of your sins."

VOOOOOOM!

Every Nox he touched spontaneously combusted. Black and red flames danced around their bodies in proportion to the weight of their sins and burned them to cinders.

Cries of agony filled the air.

These flames didn't just target the physical, but the ethereal, this was pain they felt in their souls.

And the Supreme Hedrick was fighting wasn't excluded.

"AAHHHHHHH!" He roared as his body was engulfed in a wall of flames ten times his size.

Hedrick backed off warily, his eyes filled with bafflement.

"Don't worry about it," the red-haired man said.

"These flames only harm evil. It won't affect you even if you walk into them right now."

The strange yet familiar man spoke with certainty.

Alexander, who appeared once before to save Rose and her group, showed his face again.

But this time, his role wasn't so significant.

He glanced into the atmosphere.

"Hmm, they should be here in a few minutes, so I guess my job is to just take care of the most important parts."

His body flashed away amidst the silent battlefield.

There were still enemies remaining, but even they were frozen in shock.

Elizabeth Golden was in the greatest stupor.

Just a second ago, she felt the cold embrace of death grabbing hold of her.

But now, she was...fine?

That man not only saved her, but used a strange white light to heal the injuries on her body.

That man...

...just who was he?

'Now isn't the time to be dwelling on such trivial facts.'

She was certain.

'Astoria's plan...it worked.'

"Men, raise your swords!" She yelled with every ounce of her being.

"Victory is ours!"

Her words served as a wake-up call.

Right, with such an immense turn, where the majority of the powerful enemies were eliminated...

"VICTORY IS OURS!"

"VICTORY IS OURS!"

"VICTORY IS OURS!"

Their blood boiled with relief and excitement.

They picked up their swords and faced the enemy.

This time, they would not be beaten back like dogs.

This time, they would obliterate those who dared step foot on their land!

Alexander moved from battlefield to battlefield after that.

But instead of completely solving the problem, he did the bare minimum necessary before moving on.

Long Chen and Aishia, Rose, Ruyue, and Elena, and the squads led by them and their fellow leaders all met him and received his aid.

Their individual situations were quelled to a point where their current forces could handle them.

Perfectly.

Exactly to that level with no deviation, almost like the work of a god.

Alexander didn't wait for their thanks or questions. After settling those situations, he moved to the Golden Dragon Estate, his eyes cold.

'There isn't much time left.'

He had to rush.

Because out of all these battles, perhaps the least intense one was the most important.

Deep in the Golden Dragon Estate, only a few hundred meters from the hidden bunker where Tian Tang and the Golden Dragon Emperor were, a battle was taking place.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Bursts of black mana covered the air, and were just as soon slashed away by arcs of grey light.

"You are good, but this is not nearly enough to stop me!"

A Nox being with draconic horns and a mad grin on his face raced through the air like a comet, his fist outstretching into a heavy punch that landed on Su Ren's blade.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

"KEUK...!"

Su Ren coughed several mouthfuls of blood as he was thrown back.

He regained balance in the air and planted his feet on the ground, digging them into the ground to halt his momentum.

The corpses of his squad were already decorating the earth. He was the last one left.

They barely made it in time, but as they'd expected, the enemy this time was a Supreme.

Su Ren couldn't fight him alone.

He never had that kind of power.

However...

"DAMMIT!"

He roared and slashed his twin blades through the air, their paths like twisting dragons as they enhanced each other's power and created a whirlwind of power that roared towards the enemy.

This power was not his.

It was the power granted to him by the sacrifices of his comrades.

They combined their mana upon death to both seal the Supreme's Time Laws and boost Su Ren's strength as much as possible.

The amount of agony they must've gone through to do so...

He refused to let their efforts go to waste!

"YOU WILL DIE HERE!"

He didn't care about his injuries.

His team was willing to end their own lives to give him a chance. He wouldn't let a little pain stop him now.

He approached the Supreme in but an instant, his swords flurrying into motion.

Even for a Supreme, they were hard to track.

'What a tough guy!'

That Supreme, named Drago, was considerably talented in physical combat, but even he was having trouble dodging all of Su Ren's strikes.

They were impossible to predict. The paths of his two blades interlapped in a way where they hid each other's true intentions, and that dangerous mana he wielded was dangerous for any Nox being they could reach.

"Khhh!"

Drago winced through his teeth as cuts piled up on his body.

"Human, you are good, however..."

He grinned madly, spreading his arms and leaving himself open.

Clang!

"...your skill means nothing in front of absolute power!"

BOOM!

Su Ren's blade struck his chest with the sound of metal clashing against metal. In that moment when the shock traveled up his arm and stunned him, the Nox named Drago slammed his fist into Su Ren's skull.

Crack!

His bones definitely shattered that time,

It was hard to think with his vision blurring like so. The world started spinning ever so slightly, but it was more than enough to impede his perception.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

He didn't get the chance to reorient himself. Drago approached in that split second and let loose a barrage of blows that each held power that felt nuclear.

Su Ren's bones shattered and shattered. Even the pieces that survived were shattered further into dust.

He had the motivation to continue fighting, as did he the mana, but with a body like this, how could he?!

"RAAAAAAAAAAH!"

He roared. It was guttural with such a broken body, but he roared.

If he couldn't use his body, his mana would have to do!

It manifested outside of him. He closed his eyes and used his awareness to see instead.

The manifestation he created was a Blade God, a mirror of the epithet he was granted.

"I...WILL NOT...FALL!"

His role was the most important.

If the Golden Dragon Emperor's slumber was interrupted, the final piece supporting Beast Emperor Star would crumble.

At that point, it wouldn't matter what they did.

Because the world itself would crumble!

This was Su Ren's last struggle.

He could only put his everything into it and hope it was enough to take down the enemy.

But...

"Phew...!"

A relieved sigh rang out.

"It looks like I'm not too late."

A familiar red-haired man appeared again, ready to save the day.

With so many encounters like this, one had to wonder...

This man named Alexander...

...was he an envoy of Fate itself?

Chapter 1186 Beast Emperor Star [6]

Was he a good luck charm or something?

With Alexander's interference, the situation calmed down extremely.

The war was still raging on, and people were still dying as they were before, but the atmosphere completely changed,

These soldiers who were at the edge of sanity just a moment ago saw a ray of hope in his existence, and their reinvigorated selves fought with such fervor that it almost seemed unrealistic.

The change in momentum also helped Rose a great deal. The orders she gave were received properly, and those fighting no longer felt overwhelmed by the enemy.

But she knew better than anyone.

'It won't end so easily.'

Even if that man took care of the most important problems, the rest were still there.

'And we do not need to be coddled by a stranger.'

Yes, he was their savior in the past and now, but Rose had no intention of relying on a being of unknown origins.

This problem would be solved by them.

And when it was over, they could thank him for his help and send him on his way.

There was only one man she was comfortable relying on.

And that was not him!

"Everyone, focus! There are still High Commanders and Executioners hiding in their ranks! Do not drop your guards and die meaninglessly!"

Right, it wasn't nearly over yet.

If they didn't finish fast, regardless of what Alexander did, their losses would be far too severe to call this a victory.

Rose was a commander.

Just like she was forced to make the choice to send Su Ren to his possible death, she had to make the choice to disregard Alexander and act like his help never came.

Because if she didn't, those under her wouldn't perform to their peak capabilities.

It was exhausting, but it was her job.

And this ruined world, no, this almost ruined world...

She wouldn't allow it to fall.

No matter what!

"Haaap...!"

In the sky above Beast Emperor Star, Astoria suddenly opened her eyes and inhaled a deep breath.

Something definitely happened, but she wasn't sure of what it was.

Fate had answered her call, this much she was sure of.

It was a mystical feeling. What she felt in that cocoon couldn't be explained in words.

But...

Something changed.

Not just in the outside world, but in herself.

Those elusive strings of Fate that could only be moved through desperation in the past...

Why did it feel like they would move if she just plucked them with her fingers?

'I am Astoria Golden.'

She didn't have any reason to reaffirm her identity, but it came to her mind naturally.

'I am the Void Princess.'

She started to understand something,

This title meant more than she ever expected.

The horizons it opened for her were far more than just this.

This was just the very tip of the iceberg, not even everything above the water.

'No, I can figure that out later. Now...'

What happened?

She didn't want to look outside and see her sister dead.

But, the golden light ball that encapsulated her body was already gone.

With her perception blurry from overexertion of mana, she sensed the world for the first time since she came out of the cocoon.

" ... "

She was silent for a moment.

She couldn't see anything, but she seemed to vaguely sense something.

Was she mistaken?

Or did it feel like...

"...Master?"

Flash!

Two beings appeared in the starry sky.

Their entrance was sudden and most unexpected.

"We're finally here!"

"Hmm..."

Alea was especially excited about their arrival, but Zara didn't know what to think.

The Divine Beast Sanctuary was at least a 10-day journey from Beast Emperor Star, and that was using a starship to move.

Their starship, however, was destroyed upon entry into the cemetery.

With them utilizing only their bodies, it should've taken at least a month.

Yet...

'We were moving through deep space, and suddenly, Beast Emperor Star appeared in front of us.'

It only took three days total.

That was how events unfolded. There were no intense spatial fluctuations nor was there any sort of indication of interference at all, but they mystically reached their destination in record time.

There was no doubt that they'd been pulled here by something.

But...what was it?

'It's almost like...'

"Fate," Alea muttered.

Zara glanced at her without a word.

"Let's not sit here too long. It doesn't look good down there."

Alea nodded and the two moved immediately. There wasn't any time to marvel at the circumstances.

Because to save the world, they were needed more than anyone else.

Right, this world's salvation was not Alexander. As he said, his role was to keep things stable until they arrived.

The true salvation lay in their hands.

Zara and Alea descended into the atmosphere and almost immediately met with Astoria, who was sitting above the stratosphere in confusion.

"Little sister!" Zara exclaimed.

Damien's disciple wasn't unfamiliar to her, and naturally, she welcomed her into the family.

Astoria's eyes were hazy, but hearing the special means of address that few in this world could call her, her vision cleared.

"Z-Zara...?" She questioned hesitantly.

"It's me," Zara said, grabbing her hand.

"You...you guys are back! Did you..."

"We got it."

Zara swept her arm through the air and grabbed the Dimensional Prism out of her spatial storage.

"This is it...?" Astoria asked.

"Mm, this is it. With this, Beast Emperor Star will survive."

"Ah!"

Astoria exclaimed in shock. Even she didn't know exactly what it did, but this was the device her seniors and comrades put their faith in, so seeing it was definitely shocking.

"Return to the surface and notify everyone. We'll be using it immediately."

Astoria nodded vehemently and flashed away. Her body moved with such speed that it shattered the air, a measure of her current excitement.

"Now, as she gets everyone ready..."

Zara looked at the object in her hand.

The Dimensional Prism, an object with reality-shattering capabilities. It was an item that "should not exist."

Its function was simple.

It could create a temporary mirrored reality that could contain reality itself, and more than that, even if it was slight, it had the ability to alter it.

It should've never been possible even for the greatest of experts.

Yet, this treasure made it so.

It was a countermeasure made by over a hundred Demigods in times so ancient they were no longer recorded in history for this very situation, for a moment when the universe could no longer survive the brunt of the Nox's attacks.

It had yet to be found for a single reason.

Nobody worthy of entering the Divine Beast Sanctuary had been born.

But Zara and Alea broke that chain. Their special existences through their mothers, the Divine Emperor, and the Void put them in a position none had reached prior to them.

"Are you ready?" Zara said, glancing at her sister.

"You ask me too often. Can't you read my thoughts?" Alea responded smilingly.

"If I've learned one thing for Damien, it's that effect is always important."

"How corny."

In the midst of this calamitous situation, the two sisters were absolutely calm.

Not because they didn't understand the gravity of it all, but because they were confident in fixing it.

"Then, let's go."

They placed their hands on the prism together and infused their mana.

And, for the first time in the entire history of existence...

A glorious reaction took place.

Chapter 1187 Beast Emperor Star [7]

Astoria was like a certain historical figure in the way she rushed around the world.

Her joyous cries reached every end of the star.

"They have returned!"

She didn't need to say more than that.

Even the common soldiers knew that there was something they were waiting for, a path to victory.

And judging by the way their leaders' faces lit up, it was clear that moment had arrived.

From the western plains where Long Chen and Aishia stood over a pile of corpses, to where Rose and the girls were fighting fiercely against the most densely packed section of the wave, to the depths of the Golden Dragon Estate where Alexander was healing the unconscious Su Ren's broken body, her cries spread.

They looked into the sky in unison.

The light in their eyes burned the same regardless of location.

Hidden from everyone else's perception, Alexander smiled.

"Mm, that's how things were supposed to go. I guess it's my time to disappear again."

His expression was a bit wry, but what could he do?

He was just a—

'Haha, does this happen to everyone? Well, it's not like my position is a bad one.'

He only came to fulfill his role.

Since it was over, his presence was no longer needed.

'I hope I won't have to come out for a long time, but who knows? There are still things that need to be done.'

He glanced down at Su Ren and laid his body back carefully.

"You'll be fine once you wake up, but..."

"...isn't it a bit of a shame to just leave like this?"

He turned his attention to the thick stone door that separated him from the two remaining Demigods in this world.

His heartbeat was somewhat erratic, but he stood up and moved despite his hesitation.

It wasn't hard to get through the door. He had more than enough ability to phase through its defenses.

And the scene inside became clear.

Nobody had seen this.

When Tian Yang realized what his close friend had done, he ordered this area to enter a lockdown so nobody could enter and see his state.

For good reason.

The current Golden Dragon Emperor looked nothing like his usual valiant and undaunted form.

He was wilted like a dying flower. His body was weak and looked like it would break with a single push.

His energy was constantly being siphoned by the world for its survival. Even his Divinity wasn't safe from this pull.

"Haa..."

It was a hard sight to see.

Tian Yang was sitting cross-legged next to him, his hand on the Golden Dragon Emperor's forehead.

'Are you facilitating the energy transfer...? No, you're using your own energy to maintain his life force. As always...'

Alexander shook his head.

At this rate, both of them would die by the time the world was saved. Their energy had been pushed to its limits.

'It's a miracle they could even survive this long. To keep an entire planet, especially one like the Fate Star, intact with the power of two people alone...I can't believe they even dared to try something like this.'

He couldn't think of any other word to describe it besides "suicidal."

But...

'I guess that's the resolve you need to survive in this world.'

"Enough of this."

He spoke out loud, snapping himself out of his strange fate, and held his arm out again.

"Neither of you are allowed to die."

Mana flowed forth.

Was it right to call it mana?

"An energy" left his palm and wrapped around the two fractured Divinities.

"I can't do anything about the World Core, but that shouldn't be a problem with the Dimensional Prism in hand. Instead, I'll give you this..."

The energy pushed into their bodies and sunk into their skin.

Tian Yang woke up at this point, but he was unable to do anything to counter that energy.

It flowed into his body, through his systems, and into the Golden Dragon Emperor before forming a cycle that constantly strengthened as it moved between them.

"This isn't much, but it's a 'chance.' When you wake up again, you'll understand what it means."

That energy would do the rest on its own.

"Until we meet again."

The expression on his face was...complicated, but Alexander turned around nonetheless.

As he'd mentioned before, his purpose here was accomplished.

Without a word or a single sound, he vanished into the air.

Like a phantom that never existed in the first place.

Those who witnessed his presence or received his grace were forced to wonder who he was.

But the mystery behind his existence couldn't be revealed to them so easily, if at all.

All they needed to know was that he was here as their guardian angel.

A being descended to the lower planes to assist them.

By the will of their greatest supporter.

Precisely 2 seconds after Alexander's disappearance...

It happened in but an instant.

If one was observing from the starry sky, it would have played out as such:

Zara and Alea's mana combined inside the Dimensional Prism, and a scan ran over their bodies as if it was gauging their worth.

The second it acknowledged them as the rightful users of its power, a blue geometric barrier spread from their position in the sky and encapsulated the world in a single instant.

And then...

It disappeared.

The entirety of Beast Emperor Star vanished from the starry sky.

No matter how much longer one watched, they wouldn't see it return.

Unless...

Unless one turned one's attention past the bounds of the Beast Domain.

In a nondescript area of the Divine Realm, roughly near the border of the Human Domain, a world appeared from thin air.

This was none other than Beast Emperor Star.

But if the observer saw it as a simple teleportation effect, they would be sorely mistaken.

Something magisterial happened when that world was sucked into the Dimensional Prism.

Zara and Alea made sure of it.

In that single instant, they were Gods with power nearing absolute.

They spread destruction with a single wave of their hands, eradicating all Nox presence from the world.

And in the next move, they targeted the very center of the world and reformed its World Core.

The reality-altering power of this prism wasn't a joke.

Both creation and destruction were under their complete control.

However, it was still impossible to control the cycle of life and death.

Those who died remained dead, but those who lived were granted salvation.

The once-crumbling Beast Emperor Star regained its light and its life. The Golden Dragon Emperor was disconnected from its systems and saved. The war that took so many innocent and heroic lives ended in an instant.

And the world itself was moved out of its precarious position, becoming a part of the Divine Realm's systems with none the wiser, not even those who resided in this very system.

It was a miracle among miracles.

Or could it be the workings of Fate?

In the minutes that passed after the event, nobody on the surface of the world could make out the truth.

No, they hardly even realized the war was over.

How could they?

After such a drawn-out conflict, for it to be over in but a single second, how could anyone accept this?

But unknown to them, it took far longer than that.

The time they spent in the Dimensional Prism wasn't something they could comprehend.

It was better to say they were "frozen in time" after Zara and Alea pulled them into that treasure.

That's why they didn't realize.

That's why it didn't sink in for them.

For a treasure like this...

...it was impossible to wield its power without consequences.

Chapter 1188 Beast Emperor Star [8]

"Time" was a commodity that couldn't be bought with money, yet was dearly desired by all.

Usually, with how the universe's situation had been deteriorating, it was impossible to find "time."

Yet, that's exactly what the forces of Beast Emperor Star were soon to gain.

Rose desperately wanted to check on Zara and Alea, but she needed to lead the clean-up procedures so she could gain access to the "time" they'd earned through their desperate struggle.

Clean-up. It was a nice way of putting it, but it was a grueling process.

To collect the corpses of allies and prepare a proper burial for them, to get rid of the corruption of the Nox that spread as they increased their presence in the world, to bring medical attention to those who needed it...

'There's so much to do it almost makes me want to quit.'

Rest was a luxury Rose didn't have access to. This was the fate of a leader.

Until those under her could rest, she couldn't even dream of it.

Other than the most important tasks, there was still much to be done logistically.

They needed to tally their losses and plan for the future, and they needed to understand their current circumstances.

They had to make contact with Luciel and fill him in on the situation, and they needed to fix as much of the damages as they could.

There was simply too much to do.

But no matter how fast she moved, Rose couldn't get her mind off the two women who saved them all.

Where were they now?

They hadn't come down to the surface yet, which made her extremely worried.

She couldn't feel their presence at all, whether through regular means or extraneous ones.

It dawned on her before anyone else.

The consequences of their actions, that is.

Eliminating tens of millions of beings and reconstructing a World Core, even disregarding the spatial displacement of an entire world, these two tasks could not be accomplished easily.

"It'll be okay."

Rose returned her attention to reality when she felt a hand on her shoulder.

Turning her head, she saw Elena and Ruyue looking at her with expressions of understanding.

"Trust them. I'm sure they wouldn't do anything they weren't confident in."

Consequences.

She'd faced them, as had they all.

Every action was accompanied by them, whether good or bad, and at their level, it was impossible to move without accepting them first.

"So trust them," Elena reiterated.

"No matter what they're going through, they'll come back to us. If they couldn't do that much, they wouldn't be the women we know, right?"

Rose looked at her blankly for a second before nodding.

Even if she didn't believe it, she had to try. She had to trust them.

She smiled slightly. It was strained, but it was still a smile.

"It's rare to see you taking up this job," she joked, easing the mood.

Elena rolled her eyes.

"You can be that person for everyone else, but we'll be those people for you. That's how it's always been and that's how it'll always be. Got a problem?"

Rose shook her head, her smile more genuine this time.

"Not at all."

Everyone had a support system. In this family, nobody would ever be abandoned.

Just like Elena and Ruyue refused to abandon her, the three of them refused to abandon their dear little sisters-in-law.

So, they maintained hope.

Hope that those two would come back arguing as they always did.

In a dark space, two bodies floated alone.

This place was not the reality they knew, nor the one they created within the Dimensional Prism. It was somewhere entirely different.

Their egos were nearly shattered. The actions they'd taken were far beyond their capabilities, after all.

The Dimensional Prism was made to be used as a final struggle, and it was not meant to be survived.

If used properly by a group of Demigods like those who created it, it could alter the entire flow of reality at their sacrifice.

But Zara and Alea, at their much weaker power level, utilized it, albeit at a scale small enough to maintain balance.

However, sacrifice was still necessary.

It was a miracle that life still flowed through their bodies.

Calling it "life" might not have been accurate.

Something was keeping them alive in a state of suspended animation, but it was not something as pure as life.

It was a dark energy, abyssal and murky, sticky like ink.

The energy of their Demonic Providences that they'd just learned to contain through the blessings they received from their mothers, this energy was now running rampant with nothing to stop it.

It formed two manifestations above their still bodies.

On Zara's side, it was a massive corrupted wolf. Its black wings, filled with feathers of a Fallen Angel, were dripping as if they were melting, and its body was seemingly made of sludge of the same kind.

Meanwhile, Alea's was somewhat more appealing. It was also a wolf, but its form could be made out more clearly.

They mirrored each other like manifestations of light and darkness.

But this was only trickery. Both were equally vile.

And their current goal was...

The possession of their host bodies!

Zara and Alea couldn't put up a single bit of resistance as their bodies were slowly corrupted.

At least, not consciously.

At that moment when the dark beings tried to take control of their minds, two more manifestations appeared in the void.

One was a black wolf with the wings of a Fallen Angel. It had beautiful silk-like fur, nine powerful tails, and a regal yet menacing appearance that would immediately strike fear into the hearts of those who saw it.

The other was its polar opposite, a silver wolf with an unequivocally angelic appearance. It did not have a multitude of tails nor did it have many especially unique characteristics, but its aura alone was so holy those who witnessed its form would kneel in reverence regardless of their beliefs.

The dark beings they opposed were like reflections of themselves, manifestations created from their visages.

However, mere manifestations could never match their true forms.

The two wolves, formed from the bloodlines of their host bodies, looked at each other and...smiled?

They were like old friends who met again after countless millennia.

They ignored the dark beings that were snarling at them like rabid dogs and approached each other.

They nuzzled each other like family, and then, as if agreed upon beforehand, they stood together with their mana interlaced.

A bright flash overtook the void, splitting it into equal parts light and darkness as if mirroring the formation of the universe.

But their goal was not to eradicate these evil spirits.

No, no matter how much they disliked it, these evil spirits were just as much a part of Zara and Alea as they were.

So their goal was only one.

To reign in these powers and make them a part of the sisters' arsenal.

"The time has finally come..."

"The vision he saw..."

They spoke as one.

"...let us put it into motion."

In this separated reality, far beyond the perception of any being living or dead, a massive event occurred.

For the sake of their survival, and under the guidance of Fate that predicted this event long ago, the two Divine Beasts from whom they inherited their blood conjoined their power.

Whether it was for better or worse...

...could only be found by Zara and Alea, long after the process came to an end.

Chapter 1189 Beast Emperor Star [9]

The relationship between the two sisters was convoluted from the start.

Their birth was not a mistake.

In reality, the Divine Emperor had a plan in conceiving them.

His relationship with the Nox had completely broken down by the time he made it to Apeiron. Because he didn't want to be their slave, he used the universe as a safehouse to get away from them and build a life for himself.

Unfortunately, they found him early and he wasn't able to establish the foundation he wished for, but he was able to leave two contingencies for revenge.

They were named Zara and Alwa.

Originally, they were supposed to be born at the same time, and at a point where his existence wouldn't be unknown to them.

He hoped to create a chance to strike the Nox through them, giving Nox lineage to universal denizens and giving them a chance to conquer the very power that oppressed them.

However, life was not kind to him.

Nothing he planned for took place as he wished. He died before he could see out his plans, and knowing her connection to him, the Nox targeted Zara's mother and forced her into the First Dungeon.

This part of the story had been unveiled to them by Damien years ago.

But what about the rest?

Zara and Alea were unconscious, hanging on the border between life and death, but this experience wasn't entirely bad for them.

Not only because of the work their mothers were doing to aid them, but because their minds entered a mysterious state.

They were connected.

And the history that evaded them for so long started to become clear.

Their mental avatars stood together in the mysterious space, two women standing before them.

They were polar opposites as Zara and Alea were, and despite their humanoid appearances, it was undeniable that they were the very Divine Beasts that they called their mothers.

There were no words exchanged.

The two sisters couldn't speak in their current state, and their mothers didn't have the capacity to explain everything while facilitating the massive procedure that was taking place outside.

Therefore, they transmitted their knowledge through other means. Specifically, through bloodline memories.

Zara felt her mind open to something mystical.

A massive black wolf surrounded by shadowy flames that held more similarity to darkness than fire stood among a lonely plain.

She didn't need much time to realize.

This wolf was her ancestor.

Knowledge of it began pouring into her head almost instantly.

Infernal Wolves.

They were a species descended from the Godbeast Fenrir, a wolf that was said to have devoured the stars themselves.

As its descendants, they possessed a high affinity for darkness and other concepts in the same vein, as well as monstrous physical strength that couldn't be compared to their peers.

As expected, they were an extremely rare race. There weren't more than ten of them ever born in the history of all worlds.

But...alone, this didn't mean much.

They were a powerful species, but at the end of the day, that was that.

Their true value lay elsewhere.

In Alea's mind, conversely to Zara, she saw a great holy wolf that could utilize the power of Heaven itself to its will.

This was her ancestry, the Celestial Wolf.

The Celestial Wolves were a species descended from the Godbeast Tianlang, a wolf who was born from a star and had a natural capacity to control worldly forces.

With their minds connected, Zara and Alea saw not only their own ancestry, but their counterparts as well.

Even from the Godbeasts their species were descended from, they were direct opposites in every way.

But, again, their differences were something they already knew.

However, these facts needed to be reiterated for them to understand their true purpose.

The Celestial and Infernal Wolf races were always intertwined in some way.

Anytime they showed themselves in the universe, they would do so together. One could never find them by themselves.

But why was that?

Zara and Alea's unnatural births, which separated them in different dimensions, made this truth unavailable to them, because to realize it, they required the connection of their birth.

At least, that's how it should've been if Damien never intervened.

When Damien contracted Zara, he became entwined in this connection. The Void within him influenced Zara and latched onto that connection, reinvigorating it when Zara finally came out of the First Dungeon.

It needed time to grow, but it was once again present.

Alea's strange feelings towards Damien when they got close to each other were caused by this very intervention.

Because what she should've felt towards Zara, the unmistakable pull towards her, was felt through Damien.

In a sense, he both muddled and supported their growth with his presence.

He only came to understand this after peeping into their origins when they fought on Apeiron, and when he did, he immediately extricated himself and left them alone together.

From that point on, it was only positive development.

The two women got closer and closer, and their power got stronger and stronger the more they worked together.

And eventually, they reached this point.

A point where their minds were connected as the truth flooded into their memories.

It was simple, really.

Harmony was a concept present everywhere in the universe, and considering the push and pull of the relationship between their species, a relationship that was a direct representation of yin and yang, the conclusion was evident.

Their power wasn't complete alone.

It would only be complete when both halves were in conjunction.

It was quite comical. The Divine Emperor didn't even realize what he was doing when he birthed them, only thinking about revenge, but he unknowingly created a miracle.

A Celestial Wolf and an Infernal Wolf who shared a bloodline connection through him...

The level of synergy they could possess far exceeded what their races were originally capable of.

But they hadn't reached that point yet.

Because there was still one last step for them to take.

Knowledge poured into their minds.

Techniques from their beast ancestry and truths from their Nox lineage melded into a single picture that encapsulated both of their minds.

And slowly, they were pulled together.

Unconsciously, their mental realms started to combine.

It was not a fusion that erased one and replaced it with the stronger of the two, but one that took the greatest of their strengths and established a perfect balance between them.

VOOM!

In the outside world, a mysterious phenomenon began.

The suppressed dark beings and the souls of their mothers watched as the bodies of these two women were covered by a film of light and pushed together.

Light and Darkness, didn't Damien comprehend them only recently?

They couldn't create the "space" in his galaxy unless they worked in tandem.

They were two sides of the same coin.

And Zara and Alea, who personified these elements, were the same.

From the start, they were never meant to be apart.

From the start, they were never meant to be "two."

In this separated reality, far beyond the perception of any being living or dead, a massive event occurred.

Zara and Alea merged into one.

To become the perfect self that they were always meant to be.

Chapter 1190 Soul World [1]

The situation in Soul World could be first defined with one sentence.

The first open betrayal of a major power.

It had been inferred since before the Beast Domain invasion that the Nox developed a way to counter Soul World's ambient mana, but the exact method was unknown until they actually broke into the Spirit Domain.

At that moment, people realized that what they thought was one was actually two!

The Nox had their own method to overcome the natural hurdle they faced. This method gave them the ability to traverse Soul World without being inhibited by the Sector, but they wouldn't receive any benefits either.

It was a method that had heavy restrictions on its use. Certain conditions had to be achieved, otherwise, they'd immediately lose their protection.

However, the second method covered for this weakness.

What else could it be?

Divine Soul Holy Land, the main influence that governed Soul World, sold themselves to the enemy.

With their support, not only could the Nox achieve the conditions for their personal method, but they also received the benefits that the Spirits felt in their home domain!

It was obvious how they used this gift.

Their invasion was unstoppable.

The frontline forces in Eien were unable to move due to the intense battles taking place on that front, which cut off a large number of the speedy reinforcements the domain could've gained.

And with the Spirits themselves lacking a central figure to guide them, they were forced to fight on their own, inefficiently in a way that could only hold off for so long.

Yet, strangely enough, the Soul World invasion wasn't progressing as fast as many thought it would.

It was quite incomprehensible.

Usually, whenever the Nox gained an advantage, their progress would hasten immensely. The Beast Domain was taken down within a year and a half, barring Beast Emperor Star, and the Giant Domain took even less time than that.

The Soul World invasion started while the Beast Domain's calamity was still ongoing and continued from that point forth, but even after so long, the Nox had only been able to take 30,000 worlds, roughly 20% of the domain's full size.

It was a war that continued through Damien's 4th year of imprisonment.

And the main players who allowed the domain's survival were just a few.

The Ancient God Clan, whose hidden world was located in this domain, naturally played a large part.

After losing the Genesis Bead, they expected to see negative development in their clan, but it didn't turn out like that at all.

Instead, they experienced explosive growth.

Di and Ran weren't able to see much of Damien after the Grand Assembly or during it, and Xinyue went out of her way to avoid him, but they couldn't deny that they were subordinated to him now.

Because after seeing everything he'd accomplished after leaving them, they stopped feeling so much rejection towards his presence.

That was the key.

Once they became important to "that man," once the Void recognized their status, like everyone else, it supported their growth so they could become a force Damien could utilize to its fullest.

He still wasn't aware of this, but they were.

And perhaps they wouldn't directly act on Damien's will for a decent while, but they never planned to ignore the strength he granted them.

Their clan population boomed and the power of their experts did as well, and with that strength, they directly confronted the war that came to them.

The border of Eien, through which several Nox slipped by in the chaos of the boundary's war, was guarded by them so the tragedy of the Giant Domain couldn't be replicated.

They were like a border guard, a first line of defense.

The Plant Races also played a role none expected from them.

Those who survived Eden's collapse migrated to the Divine Realm and Soul World, as these were the closest and safest domains for them.

The Plant Races in Soul World hid and cowered for many years. They acted like they were extinct, avoiding the war with all their power, running away from traumatic memories of the past.

However, when the war made its way to their doorstep, they united.

As if some mysterious force granted them the courage to move forward, they came out from the shadows and showcased the capabilities that once allowed them to rule their own Sector of the universe.

What they provided was technology and support.

The starships they used during their war and the mass-produced weaponry that boosted the capabilities of regular soldiers gave those still loyal to the universe a way to fight even if they didn't have much power of their own, and the supportive capabilities of their inherent abilities set up something that not many of the previous battlefields had access to.

A medical center.

A place where soldiers could be sent to be healed back to their full capabilities.

It was an obvious advantage that the universe should've set up earlier, but they simply didn't have enough healers.

Why else were the Elves and Plants targeted before anyone else?

Their weakness was definitely part of it, but as seen with the extinction of the Giants, the Nox moved with more thought than anyone could've predicted.

Nevertheless, these two provided a stage.

A stage that was occupied by the most unexpected of influences.

Nirvana Soul Holy Land.

They were the second strongest force in Soul World, but their reputation suffered immensely after the Grand Assembly.

After all, their subordinate sect, Sapphire Soul Palace, not only embarrassed themselves by provoking the Human Domain, but betrayed the universe in proceeding events.

However, they were not defined by those they ruled.

In the absence of Divine Soul Holy Land, that influence who closed their doors and remained silent throughout this war, they took the place of the central figure.

They gathered the loyal powers of Soul World under their banner, and once they had a chain of command established, the Spirits were finally able to gather their wits and fight back.

It was a surprisingly effective move.

And when it was made, people began to realize something.

The universe...

The universe wasn't actually as helpless as they thought, was it?

To hold out longer than the Beast Domain, longer than certain territories of Eien, longer than anyone else since this grand conflict began...

Not many could understand the reason immediately.

But it dawned on them soon enough.

Compared to those previous defeats, only one factor had changed.

There were still traitors, the enemies were acting fiercer than ever, but...

Heaven's Army hadn't intervened.

Even after a year and some time passed, Heaven's Army didn't send any official backup to support them.

Wasn't it strange?

The greatest existing force in the universe, made up of countless influences and rogue practitioners uniting together, was actually the hindrance that held the universe back.

A fundamental truth spread to the ears of any and everyone who maintained their loyalty in the midst of hopelessness.

That truth that had been hidden amongst the experts of the world became a universal truth.

Corruption.

Maybe the lower levels had been cleansed, but what did it matter?

The more time passed, the more the older generation fell into temptation.

And frankly...

It was disgusting.