

## Void 1261

Chapter 1261 Ambush [12]

The Marionette Lord's eyes widened.

They naturally felt the suppression of their Demonic Providence, but they could not understand how it was done.

Though, there wasn't any time to think about it.

Iris' approach was faster than fast. The Marionette Lord's expression didn't change much, but the slight glint of panic in their eyes was definitely satisfying to see.

Iris' arm turned into a blade, coated with the energy of creation that would slaughter the enemy. In less than a second, she'd already approached and cut forward, her arm just inches away from finishing it all.

'This is the end.' She thought inwardly.

However, in that final moment, the Marionette Lord changed.

A twisted smile lit up their face.

And...

BOOOOOOM!

Iris halted her movements abruptly and rapidly retreated, but she couldn't avoid the impact.

SHING! SHING! SHING! SHING!

Four slashes struck her body, tearing through her limbs and the sides of her torso and creating large, mutilated gashes that covered Iris' pristine figure in blood.

"Hehehehe~"

The Marionette Lord's laugh was like the twinkling sound of wind chimes haunting a dreary night.

Iris watched in horror as their body went metamorphosed into something hideous.

'The information was wrong.'

This person was absolutely capable of defending themselves and fighting directly.

The Marionette Lord's body was always changing. They never maintained a single form or even a specific gender or age, they would always morph between countless different appearances with seemingly no limit.

Right, this person could change their body into "anything" or "anyone."

But nobody realized the extent of this ability. No, the Marionette Lord had never shown it even once.

As of this moment, they made their debut.

Massive bone apparitions like the legs of a spider jutted out of their back, their arms were blades made of flesh and blood, and even their legs had sharpened into tools of slaughter.

Their body no longer held many "human" components. It was a complete battle machine.

And now that someone had provoked that form out of them, they were not going to hold back.

"Hehehehehe~!"

The Marionette Lord giggled giddily. Their body disappeared and reappeared like instant transmission and appeared behind Iris.

SHING! SHING! SHING!

"ARGH!"

Iris groaned in pain as three blade slashes cut into her back.

She didn't even have time to think of a counterattack before she was forced to duck down and avoid being decapitated by one of the being's legs.

'This...!'

She was astonished.

Iris was pushed back without any chances to move outside of the Marionette Lord's control. They used the arm blades to cause lasting wounds while spinning their body impossibly to use their legs to deal fatal injuries.

Moreover, the bone spider legs jutting out of their back were perfect for control. They extended and retracted at will and forced Iris to remain within a certain area, disallowing her escape from the barrage.

"Khhh...!"

She couldn't fight back at all.

No matter what she tried, it was futile.

The powers of creation she'd just begun to learn weren't good enough to deal with an assault like this.

After all, she was still somewhat of a novice. Her comprehension and status as a Divinity allowed her to comprehend things far faster than a regular person, but she wasn't anywhere near the level of the Marionette Lord.

The strongest under the Inhuman Emperor.

That title wasn't an exaggeration.

In fact, the Marionette Lord was right about as powerful as a Nox Emperor. The Inhuman Emperor had tried to convince them to become one several times, but they'd refused.

Why?

Because being a Lord was more fun.

Just like the Inhuman Emperor, all they wanted to do was enjoy the entertainment that toying with enemies could bring them.

Whether that be her own fellows or enemies from the universe, they really didn't care.

Their approaching Iris wasn't due to any grand reason either.

With Iris' status and the fact that she was weakened now, she was a perfect target.

To bring the universe's strongest to her knees, begging for mercy, wasn't that scene just beautiful?

"Hehehehe!"

The Marionette Lord couldn't stop giggling.

The more of Iris' blood that splattered on their face and body, the more of her blood painted the air, the more ecstatic they became.

Their attacks were ruthless. They barely ever tried to kill. They were meant to torture Iris to a slow death.

'Dammit!'

Iris tried to find a solution, but there were none.

This was an enemy on the level she was supposed to be at. Tricks and deception held no weight against them.

Still, Iris had to try.

**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!**

Projectiles filled the air between the duo, forcing the Marionette Lord back.

However, at the same time, the Marionette Lord's bone spikes extended and stabbed into Iris' body, dragging her right back to their original position.

'This defense...!'

It was incredible.

As the explosions died down, Iris saw it clearly. The Marionette Lord's body changed once again, turning into a mesh of black spikes without any humanoid resemblance at all.

They were like a massive insect, or a homunculus made specifically to kill.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Iris sent forth stars and planets, galaxies and universes of energy to buy herself some space.

She was a ranged fighter. The only reason she risked pushing up on the Marionette Lord was because they weren't supposed to have the ability to fight back.

After all, considering the latter's ability to protect themselves from her ranged onslaughts, she felt she had no choice but to push in.

Yet, it was all a ruse.

The Marionette Lord was someone whose actions couldn't be distinguished. The truths and falsities they presented were all twisted.

Perhaps this entire battle was a trap meant to lead Iris into close combat with them, so they could toy with her until the last moment!

Blood went everywhere.

At some point, Iris realized that her left arm was unusable. The nerves and systems had been damaged too far.

Her legs were also limply following her as she flew through the air, unable to move as she pleased anymore.

'They're crippling me slowly.'

It was absolutely intentional. The fact that she still had her right arm, the fact that she still had her head, it was absolutely intentional.

Nothing in this battle was due to luck. The only variable was her awakening Creation, but it seemed that wasn't enough to disrupt the Marionette Lord's scheming.

'It's impossible.'

Iris realized early.

She didn't have foresight, but her perception was practically precognitive.

She could see where this fight would go. No matter what she tried, she'd just feel the depths of futility and suffer until death.

There was only one solution.

'An extreme risk.'

The last resort she'd planned to use against a Nox Emperor, the very effect of the bug she'd eaten moments prior.

It seemed she'd have to use its effects early.

She had to be decisive here.

'Didn't he say he'd faced death already?'

If he could do it, she could too.

And as if the heavens were answering her will...

"IRIS!"

A voice boomed from the distance.

She turned her head just in time to see Damien teleporting towards her as fast as he could.

The look on his face was full of worry and panic. It was as if he realized her plans before she even started acting on them.

But that only made her smile.

'Right, if it's you, I believe it will succeed.'

He was her last hope.

As she felt her right arm fall limp, Iris turned back to the Marionette Lord with extremely fierce eyes.

"I won't let you do as you please, bitch."

With a grin on her face, she suddenly altered her body position.

Within her body, she used all of her remaining Divine Energy to "create" something.

A corridor to her soul.



And...

SHIK!

She perfectly placed herself in the path of the Marionette Lord's bone spike.

It impaled her chest, but instead of coming out of her back, it was forced through the tunnel and traveled into the ethereal.

The bone spike slammed into her soul.

Iris felt a massive shock.

But...

A translucent barrier appeared around her soul. It condensed into a string that shot through the bone spike and, within a fraction of an instant, connected Iris' soul with the Marionette Lord's.

Any impact she took would be shared between them.

The Soul Pairing Beetle. Its original function was to connect two lives and make it so the attacking party would be enslaved to the consumer.

If the consumer's soul was injured, the injury would transfer to the aggressor's. In the case of death, it would cripple the latter while using the remaining energy to preserve the former's soul.

But Iris wasn't planning on waiting for that uncertain moment.

She acted immediately.

This time, the Marionette Lord's eyes truly widened.

Their expression twisted into one of horror.

"YOU...!"

"STOP THAT NOW!"

Their usual demeanor completely vanished. They roared, their voice transmuting into countless different beastly forms as they lost control over their abilities.

They couldn't believe what was happening, but it was too late to regret.

Finally, the Marionette Lord met someone crazier than them.

"IRIS, NO!"

Damien's roar filled the air.

Iris looked at him without a single care. She didn't regret anything, because she believed he'd take care of the rest.

So she did it without hesitation.

As she mouthed a farewell to the man so desperately trying to save her, she acted on her will.

Eyrrisea Luminus shattered her soul.

And the entire world was filled with light.

Chapter 1262 Title [1]

Damien could only watch helplessly.

It shouldn't have gone this way.

He killed the Strength Lord and he killed the Venom Lord. He gained power from them and approached in time to help with the battle with the Marionette Lord.

So why...?

Why did Iris have to do that?!

He saw it from the top of a faraway mountain. The moment when she made that decision, he rushed without a single thought in his head.

The only thing he could do was try to push forward.

But it didn't work.

Despite all odds, it didn't work.

He wasn't just teleporting. He used Flash Step to move forward in space and backward in time, so by all logic, the movement should've undone itself by the time he got there and he should've had the opportunity to save Iris and fight together.

But it was futile.

No matter how far back he went in time, their movements didn't change.

Because Iris set up a Personal Reality, their "time" was separated from Damien's, and with just Rudimentary Existence Law, he couldn't affect any timeline without limitations,

So he could only watch.

The entire world moved in slow motion.

His emotions boiled over, filling his empty head with a mesh of chaotic colors.

He didn't care what he had to do, nor did he care what he had to sacrifice.

As long as he could save Iris, he would do anything.

Why was the world against him?

He was so close, yet so far away, unable to bridge the gap regardless of any power or authority he possessed.

So he could only watch.

He could only feel the fluctuations of Iris' soul shattering into pieces, and the fluctuation of that impact traveling into the Marionette Lord's body and forcing them to feel it too.

"NO!"

He roared out mindlessly.

By the time it happened, he was already upon them.

The Marionette Lord was already struggling.

The impact they took was severe. With Iris' soul shattering under the influence of the Soul Pairing Beetle, the Marionette Lord's soul was crippled beyond belief.

Their power was disconnected. They could no longer access their Demonic Providence, nor did their Divinity hold any value.

In essence, the Marionette Lord was reduced to a regular mortal until they could find a way to piece together their soul.

So, when they saw Damien arriving, they couldn't say anything.

They could only look at him in panic and hatred as he attacked.

No, they didn't care about that. Since they were going to die anyway, they threw away all their regrets...

...and grinned.

Perhaps they would die, but they achieved what they wanted.

They got to see Damien despair.

And that was their win.

Regardless of what happened from this point forth.

"DIE!"

Damien roared again. He didn't care what he said or did, he just knew he wanted the Marionette Lord gone.

Void Mana raged through the atmosphere. Rudimentary Existence Law ran rampant and destroyed everything.

It was a silent event, but one more terrifying than anything grand.

Heaven and Earth, and all beings between them, were obliterated in a several thousand kilometer radius. The Marionette Lord, whose soul was crippled, was blown away without the ability to say or do anything, and even several Demigods not involved in the battle whatsoever were swept into oblivion by his rage.

Damien didn't care.

He didn't care if they were enemies or allies.

He wrapped Iris' body in his arms and roared, refusing to accept the circumstances.

Without hesitation, he took her and teleported into a nearby cave abode, gently laying her down and sending his mana into her body.

He had to save her.

There was no other future in his mind besides the one where she lived.

Void Mana traveled through her circuits and gave him a comprehensive view of her state.

'Her body is fine. These injuries can be healed easily, but...'

Her soul was in pieces.

'Luckily, it's not gone yet.'

The fact that it hadn't dispersed meant saving her was still possible. There was definitely a method.

He used the energy of the Void the way he always did, trying to pull the pieces of her soul together, but it didn't work.

The power he possessed wasn't enough to save her.

But, in that moment of desperation, something happened.

A glistening glass-like piece of soul took hold of Damien's mana and traveled through its connection into his body, similar to how the damage was transferred to the Marionette Lord.

That piece of Iris' soul...

'This is her last hope.'

Damien realized instantly.

He slumped against the wall powerlessly.

'Seriously...why does this woman trust me so much?'

Damien's emotions calmed down enough for him to think rationally.

Because of that piece of soul, he realized that Iris didn't completely give up hope, nor did she plan to die here.

She put everything on him, trusting him to bring her back.

He smiled wryly.

Despite the situation, his heart was touched. He wanted to cry, but tears did not form.

'How...?'

How was he supposed to do it?

Void Mana didn't work. Rudimentary Existence Law didn't work. Nothing he could do worked.

So what did she expect from him?

No, how was he to fulfill her expectations?

Damien had barely ever felt like this before.

The people he cared about were never put in situations like this. He never had to despair over their survival, because he trusted they would make it through.

This time it was different.

This time, logic said it was impossible. Reasoning said it was impossible. Natural law said it was impossible.

Only he, as the person who defied these fundamental concepts, could make it possible, but if he didn't know how, then what?

"...what do I do?"



"You cannot save her."

At a time unknown, a figure appeared in the cave alongside Damien and Iris, but he didn't react to it despite recognizing its presence.

"I refuse to do nothing. There has to be a way."

"There is, however, not for the current. Only Mother has the power to reverse this fate."

Damien's eyes narrowed.

If the Void could do it but he couldn't...

"I understand."

Iris' soul was shattered beyond belief. The pieces of her soul couldn't be aligned because the available pieces were not all there was.

Damien controlled Rudimentary Existence Law, not true Existence Law.

And the pieces of Iris' soul that disappeared couldn't be controlled through Existence Law in the first place.

This was a force of Nonexistence. It was a realm Damien had yet to even come close to exploring.

Therefore, he simply didn't have the power to—

"Did you say the Void can fix this...?"

"Yes, Mother has no bounds. This matter is trivial before its power."

"I see..."

Damien frowned.

There was a way.

But...he couldn't just use it wantonly.

"Could you give us some space?"

The Ancient Sovereign gazed at him without a change of expression, but he seemed to understand Damien's intent.

"Orion's descendant is important to me as well. I shall aid you in soothing the Heavens if you act."

With that last word, he disappeared from the cave entirely, leaving Damien and Iris alone.

Damien looked down at her.

He'd already healed her body.

She was truly a sleeping beauty. She looked so peaceful it was almost a shame to interrupt her sleep.

But this slumber couldn't be eternal.

Not anymore now that Iris had become someone important to Damien.

He closed his eyes and felt the soul fragment that entered his heart moments prior.

And without hesitation, he connected his own soul to its form.

Chapter 1263 Title [2]

Damien's soul left his body and traveled to a different plane.

He found himself in a garden, his appearance the exact same as his physical form and his body just as corporeal.

There were beautiful flowers and plants everywhere, organized in a beautiful gradient from deep purple to sparkling green, planted in a circle around a marveled gazebo.

Damien was currently on one of two paths that led to the gazebo. He walked forward slowly and steadily, enjoying the vibrant breeze that swept around him.

It felt like there were spirits everywhere, joyously dancing and playing through the garden. The scent of nature and natural beauty was intoxicating, to the point where one would never wish to leave its peace.

It was truly an ideal scenery. This kind of simplistic beauty was rare to see in a place where everyone focused on grand structures and domineering appearances, but Damien felt like his kind of beauty was better.

Because it was beautiful on its own. It didn't need to try.

The scenery wasn't the only thing that carried such an air.

Damien wasn't the only one here, after all.

She was sitting in the gazebo alone, quietly sipping tea with utmost grace as she enjoyed the peace around her.

Her hair was light blue, like the faded color of the sky, and her image was like a goddess descended to the mortal world.

Damien paused his steps to watch her. She was like a part of the environment, a piece of its beauty that was integral to its atmosphere.

But she was different.

Unlike before, he couldn't see the two sides of her anymore.

There was only one appearance remaining.

Strangely enough, her beauty was somewhat diminished compared to the outside world, but it wasn't a bad thing at all.

Rather than a goddess, she was like a fairy.

She felt more approachable, more "real."

It was like she became someone Damien could reach, when before she was someone he could only gaze at in awe.

"Huu..."

Damien took a deep breath and steadied himself, walking down the path and up the steps of the gazebo.

There was another seat there, as if this fairy had been waiting for his presence.

Damien sat down quietly, not wanting to disrupt her peace.

Besides, he didn't know what to say.

"You've come."

Luckily, she started the conversation for him.

She opened her eyes and smiled warmly as she gazed upon him, her eyes happily shifting between the colors of the rainbow.

"Of course I have. There was never a chance I wouldn't," Damien responded, his tone somewhat awkward.

"Is there something on your mind?"

Iris was calm, tranquil like a spring breeze. It was as if she didn't understand her current situation, but Damien knew she understood more than anyone.

He furrowed his brows as he tried to form an answer.

"I have too many things on my mind, but most of them can be handled once we can talk face-to-face again."

"Face to face? An amusing saying, isn't it?"

"Now isn't the time for this."

Damien sighed.

"Why did you entrust this to me? Can't you value your own life?" He asked, somewhat defeated.

But Iris only smiled.

"Of course I value my life. However, what I did was necessary. As for why I trust you...does there need to be a complex reason? Of anyone I have ever known, I have never felt this way about anyone else. My trust is only natural."

"..."

Damien couldn't lie.

His heart definitely skipped a beat.

But...

"There is a way," he said.

"However, it's not something I can do without your permission."

Iris raised her brow.

"And that is?"

Damien couldn't see it, because she hid it better than anyone else.

Her heart was far more erratic than his. She had to keep up this calm exterior, or else she wouldn't be able to speak through her embarrassment.

After all, Damien entered her soul, and she allowed it.

Damien wasn't aware of it because he had yet to reach Divinity, but frankly speaking, there was no greater symbol of trust than allowing someone to enter one's soul.

It required a level of intimacy that couldn't normally be possessed.

Her feelings were already clear with her acceptance, but she couldn't let him know that, right?

She smiled and smiled, because if she didn't at least smile, she wouldn't be able to stop herself from giggling.

It was far more fun to see Damien in that embarrassed position, where he stammered over his words awkwardly, unable to say it outright.

How could he?

He was about to suggest something absurd.

The Ancient Sovereign said it clearly. Only the Void itself could bring Iris back to the land of the living.

And though Damien couldn't control the Void...

He remembered something Lynn Carter told him before.

He remembered something that happened to Rose, Ruyue, Elena, and to an extent, even Astoria.

A "title."

The Void's acknowledgement.

If Iris could receive the [Void Daughter] title, the Void would make sure she'd live.

This was a fact proven through several experiences had by Damien's current wives.

But...

The [Void Daughter] title couldn't just be handed out through romantic intimacy. If that was it, Iris would've already had it.

No, they had to take it a step further.

'How the hell am I supposed to say that? "Give me the innocence you've been protecting for ten thousand years and I can heal you?" How the fuck am I supposed to say that without being branded a supreme pervert?'

Damien was racking his brain for any way to break it to her without being brash.

He wanted to say it in a way that considered her feelings, and he wanted her to decide whether or not she wanted to do it of her own volition, not because she didn't have another choice.

As he thought and thought and thought, he failed to realize Iris' face getting redder and redder.

The blush she'd been hiding, the embarrassment she'd concealed, how could she ever hide it anymore?!

This was her soul space.

Whether it be thoughts or actions, words said or unsaid, they'd all be laid bare before her.

So...

Well, she naturally understood what Damien was thinking right now.



They had to consummate the love they hadn't even professed to each other for her to live?

Rather than Damien being a "supreme pervert," that title was more fitting for the mysterious force behind him!

'Ahhh, what do I do?!'

Iris wanted to bury her head in a hole out of pure embarrassment. There was no way for her to easily accept the facts, despite knowing they were truth.

"Um...so well...here's the thing, right..."

...but, when Damien started talking and trying to explain it, her worries melted away.

"Pfft...!"

She couldn't stop herself from laughing.

Seriously, how was she supposed to take the situation seriously when he was acting like that?

Without even trying, he could make her smile like this.

Iris had never been tempted to engage in romance of any form. Her life was far separated from the concept, but that didn't mean she didn't dream of it.

It had been over ten thousand years since she was born into this world, and she'd never felt like this before.

Because, frankly...

'I want to.'

She couldn't think of anyone else she'd rather give her innocence to.

No, out of anyone in existence, she couldn't think of anyone else who'd made her feel as comfortable as him.

If it was Damien...

'...then, perhaps it's not something to be afraid of...?'

Instead, the feeling in her heart was completely different.

It was a faint sense of anticipation and excitement.

And that only made her embarrassment far, far harder to ignore.

Chapter 1264 Title [3]

Iris smiled again.

She couldn't stop smiling ever since Damien came to her soul space.

It was something even she herself couldn't fathom.

'Was I always this easy?'

To think she'd cave so easily! Even she didn't expect how quickly her thoughts shifted from hesitation to acceptance.

'No, it's not that.'

This was entirely Damien's fault.

Her interest in him began during their first meeting. He was the first person to ever look directly into her eyes and remain unaffected, which naturally drew her to him.

When they were together in the Severed World, while the persona she created disallowed them from interacting much, Iris saw him with his wives and saw how he acted regularly as well.

Strangely, instead of the fact that he was a man with many wives repulsing her, the care he had for them despite their number and the fact that he was always putting them above himself drew her towards him even more.

Iris, in the end, was a person born within nonconventional standards. It wasn't strange at all in Grand Heavens Boundary for a man to have multiple wives. Even common farmers would gather two or three wives so they could sire a larger number of descendants.

How did it go from there?

Iris was always secretly watching Damien for her own plans, but the attraction she held towards him wasn't excluded because she had other motives.

Seeing his diligence, seeing his willingness to suffer alone so everyone else could live, seeing his confidence and determination to tackle the impossible as if the word held no meaning to him...

It all culminated into an emotion she didn't quite have the ability to describe.

And that's when they met on the Ancient Battlefield.

Here, the boundary of status between them was completely gone. For over a year, they interacted as equals and gradually became closer.

The feelings in her heart gained weight, and as the feelings in his grew, they refused to hide themselves.

An opportunity like this was never something she expected.

But she also knew how abominable her ability to express herself was.

If it wasn't a chance like this, when would she ever be able to tell him how she felt?

When would she ever get a chance to carve a place for herself in his heart?

"I'm willing..."

She muttered, barely discernibly, before Damien could even finish his explanation.

"H-huh?"

Damien made a strange exclamation in response.

"Did I hear that right?"

He genuinely couldn't believe his ears.

But through all her shyness and embarrassment, Iris shakily nodded her head.

"I'm willing...to do...'that'..."

Damien's eyes widened into saucers.

"You mean..."

How could he not understand?

Rather, he knew Iris had some special feelings for him long ago, but it took him a while to accept it.

Disregarding her position, which made it unbelievable in its own right, Damien hadn't thought about romance in a very long time.

He was content with what he had.

Or at least...he thought he was.

But the answer he gave Orion, the decision to leave it to fate, made it clear he was not.

Somehow, Iris had snuck her way into his heart as well, and he wasn't someone to run from his feelings anymore.

If it was anyone, this woman was the best. Whether it be character, talent, compatibility, or anything else, he couldn't think of anyone who'd connected with him like Iris.

There were many "what ifs" from the past, but none of them could ever become real. None of them were ever like this.

So...

If she wasn't hesitating, why should he?

Damien reached over the table, his face just inches away from hers.

He stared deep into her eyes and asked one more time.

"Are you certain? Once we do this, I'll never let you escape."

Iris smiled, closing the gap between them with ease.

"I'm the one who should be saying that to you, playboy."

In the peace of the sunlit garden, hidden in Iris' soul space where only the two of them existed, their lips connected.

And though neither of them knew it, their bodies in the outside world followed their actions.

Damien guided her naturally. He kissed down her neck, slowly easing her into the mood, taking into consideration the fact that this was her first experience.

The minutes flew by as Iris experienced a heaven like no other. With bliss filling her body, shame did the same.

She couldn't believe the sounds she was making, but to Damien's ears, those moans were a grace of the supreme, the most beautiful sound to ever grace his ears.

Clothes became nothing more than boundaries that were no longer necessary. As they bared themselves to each other, Damien couldn't help but marvel at the perfection of Iris' body.

From her breasts to her waist and everything in between, from the beautifully curved valley to the thighs that protected it, and everything else...

"You're...perfect."

He said it breathlessly.

Iris turned her head to the side in shame.

She could say the same about him, but she was afraid her mind would explode the second she did.

The only sounds she could make were hums and moans as Damien explored her body. With the passing of minutes, her arousal grew, and she could no longer wait.

The moment came.

The moment of their connection, in body and in soul.

Iris' mind entered another dimension. The ecstasy that followed the pain was something even greater than she could ever imagine, and that was taking into account everything that had happened thus far.

She had a feeling.

In her mind, she realized it well.

From this point forward, she would never be able to extricate herself from his warmth.

And that...

'...that is the best feeling in the world.'

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Unbeknownst to the two lovers sharing their bliss in a hidden place of peace, a commotion began in the outside world.

As their connection grew, and as the [Void Daughter] title began to manifest in Iris' body, her soul changed immensely.

The pieces that vanished into nonexistence were forcefully pulled back into reality, and as they came together to form a whole, Iris' very soul went through an unbelievable transformation.

It was an act against reality.

With this move, Damien completely went against Heaven's will.

And naturally, it raged at his insolence.

Terrifying lightning that could incinerate Divinities with ease manifested in the sky above the Ancient Battlefield. Divine Beasts created from the elements writhed in the air, furiously attempting to reach the fateful pair and obliterate their existence.

However, they were all blocked by a barrier that even the Heavens couldn't penetrate.

Standing above the secluded cave, calmly drifting in the sky like a willow, was one man.

'Mother's reflection and Orion's descendant...'

That figure smiled.

'It seems This One has begun to understand, child.'

His eyes no longer gazed at some point unknown, but at the sky above, where his enemy lie.



'The future you spoke of, that beautiful picture you painted...'

Until Damien and Iris finished their business, he would stand guard. Not just because of their identities, and not just because of their relationship, but because of his own will.

'...This One also wishes to see it. Not as a muddled amalgamation, but in its true form.'

For that, he would follow the man who would one day become his Father.

Under his protection, Damien and Iris enjoyed their peace.

And quicker than anyone could imagine, 6 months flew by.

Chapter 1265 Emotions [1]

6 months Damien spent in Iris' soul space.

It wasn't 6 months spent exclusively on "physical" relations. It could be considered time spent to deepen their bond now that their feelings were clear.

But Damien couldn't spend all his time here, nor could Iris be distracted by him forever.

After all, her soul was still healing. She needed to focus on supporting its growth if she wanted to truly harness its potential when she returned to the real plane.

Iris' soul went through a qualitative change. Though it was the same soul, its form was so different that, to Iris, it felt like a completely new soul had been housed in her body.

It held power she had yet to comprehend, and her already monstrous talent would soon become absolutely incomprehensible.

To acclimate to it, she would need a year or two at the very least.

Damien opened his eyes in the real plane and smiled.

The past half year was great. It was satisfying, peaceful, and fulfilling, a break he'd desperately needed for over a decade now.

He felt refreshed, but now that he was back here, feeling the air of the Ancient Battlefield on his skin...

'...I'm angry.'

He was extremely furious.

To think the Nox dared to target him and the ones he loved.

It wasn't strange from them. Obviously they would've done it at some point. However, the fact that it had such a great impact brought him back to reality.

'I got too content with my growth. I was okay knowing I could kill most of the people here, but that isn't enough.'

His real enemies were still too strong. His real enemies could still slap him to death even with all his growth.

"Can you watch over her for me?" He asked into the air.

"There will be no problem."

A voice responded.

It was the Ancient Sovereign, who had been protecting them thus far.

He would still need to. The wrath of the Heavens didn't lessen in the time that passed. News of the strange phenomena encompassing this area had already spread throughout the Ancient Battlefield, but the Ancient Sovereign's presence kept all prying eyes away.

Even the Nox Emperors couldn't stand up to him, so why would anyone else try?

'It would be nice if I could bring him into the battle, but that's impossible.'

The Ancient Sovereign would never interfere in worldly affairs without a good reason. And as a person without connections to the mortal world, finding a reason to move him was nigh impossible.

Damien had to do the work himself.

'Though, I prefer it this way.'

The solution to all problems was strength.

Damien looked at Iris lovingly. He pulled several items out of his subspace and created a beautiful living space for her, including a bed, a blanket, and a temperature regulation system created through arrays, to give her body a comfortable environment while her soul healed.

Once she was settled in, she truly was a sleeping beauty. She had a kind of radiance that was hard to resist.

'Well, to me, they're all like that.'

Wasn't that why he worked so hard to protect them?

Their radiance was what made him whole.

'But if I want to make sure they stay safe, this isn't enough.'

He didn't have anything to worry about now that he had the Ancient Sovereign's promise. Orion would likely also come here to help protect Iris' body while she healed.

So...

'I need to ascend.'

Damien clenched his fist.

Iris wasn't the only one who gained from their consummation.

He got something he never expected to see so early.

'Assemble.'

He flicked his finger and sent mana into the air.

With his precise command, it changed shape and transmuted into multiple physical constructs, which were then put together before a final product dropped into his hand.

'It's been a while since I saw one of these.'

Damien grinned.

He was currently holding an earthen hot weapon, a true firearm that didn't have any connection to mana and was purely powered by force and heat.

And it was formed through his own power.

The power of Creation.

'Wow.'

Damien threw the gun away and let it disperse into mana again.

This phenomenon hadn't happened many times before. He didn't gain Yin from Ruyue or Illusion from Rose.

He couldn't quite explain why he could only gain affinities and the likes on certain occasions, but if he had to rationalize it, it was likely due to his position.

When he was close to the element, or when it was the rational next step in his progression, he'd gain it. Otherwise, it was impossible for him to form a connection with it during the "act."

But that was beside the point. He truly didn't care about the "how" or "why." Since he had it, he would use it to its full potential.

And with Creation, this was especially the case. Now that this force was under his control, he could feel it.

He was just a single step away from Divinity.

If he wanted to end this battle, if he wanted to get revenge, and if he wanted to accomplish his goals, he had to ascend to Divinity as soon as possible.

The only answer was battle.

Damien set out immediately after giving Iris one last look.

'Before she comes back, I'll also be at that level.'

He had at least two years and at most five. It was more than enough time.

Damien's advent on the battlefield this time wasn't going to be like last time.

He was going back to his roots. He was going to become the warmonger he was in the past, a slaughterer on the battlefield.

And he was extremely excited for that.

He was eagerly anticipating the expressions of those in this place when they realized his existence.

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Of course, Damien and Iris weren't the only ones on the Ancient Battlefield. While they were moving outside the bounds of the true war, it progressed without them.

The current number of combatants had gone down severely.

There were roughly 5000 Nox Demigods remaining, while the Grand Heavens Boundary forces were reduced to roughly 3000.

It wasn't a great ratio, however, it was far better than it was at the start.

Most traitors had been killed, and while the remaining Lords were all powerhouses, all the remaining allied Demigods were as well.

The battlefield had shrunk considerably. The massive space was now much, much smaller, but it was still expansive enough for one to spend several days traveling without meeting another living being.

Nevertheless, the situation was no longer stale.

The bases that existed at the start of the war were far past the boundary now, so all participants were forced to either fight or hide in caves.

It reached a point where the climax was approaching.

It was almost time for the central area to become the main battlefield.

When that happened, there would be no running or hiding. The remaining forces would have no choice but to fight until only one side remained.

Nevertheless, that was a story for the future.

As of now, a year passed since Damien set out on the battlefield.

And rumors about his existence began to spread.

Just as he declared before leaving, he was going to make an impact that couldn't be ignored.

He was going to strike fear into the Nox's hearts.

And he was going to become the bane of their existence.

It was that simple.

Chapter 1266 Emotions [2]

Two years of constant battle.

That's what Damien would've liked to call it, but it was more like two years of running around looking for people to kill, with a few interludes of actually killing them.

Though, that was just in his perception.

In two years, Damien slaughtered hundreds of Demigods. With the current numbers dwindling, that wasn't just "a few interludes," was it?

As he gained prominence on the battlefield and learned more about what happened in the time he was gone, he moved in accordance to his will and took out several great threats that the allied forces were wary of.

'They gave me so many titles because of that. God Killer, Divine Reaper...basically, they call me any and all things to say they're scared without actually saying they're scared.'

Their fear was granted. It was impossible for Damien to hide his league from their eyes, so the fact that he was a lower existence that could slaughter Demigods had spread far and wide.

His existence defied the basic rule that all of these Demigods enjoyed: the fact that they were qualitatively better than any lower existence.

That very fact was why most of them decided to stay in the lower universe. Since it was no longer absolute fact, how could they not be worried?

However, Damien simply didn't care.

Their feelings had nothing to do with his goal.

'Plus, those guys who are actually scared right now are cowards who don't matter.'



They weren't like Iris, who refused ascension due to personal trauma, or Alucard, who did so because he wanted to foster the next generation.

They were just cowards who were unwilling to be at the bottom of the barrel again.

'Which is even stupider. Demigods will be Demigods no matter where they are. Do they think everyone in the Heavenly World is born a Divinity, or are they just that insecure about their talent?'

Damien shrugged it off. It wasn't his problem, anyway. He always planned to ascend, though, nowadays he realized he'd have to set it off for later than he originally plotted.

'Doesn't matter anyway. Even if I go back to the lower universe, I have a way to get to the Heavenly World.'

He almost forgot about it because of how subtle the memory became with time, but once his rise to Divinity got closer, it popped back into his mind.

The Celestial Realm on Death Emperor Star.

That was the place where he first met his father, and back then, the entire realm was granted to him as his territory.

The fact that his father could leave a hologram there meant that realm had some kind of connection to the Heavenly World.

As long as he could use it properly, he was confident in finding his way there even if the path of ascension was closed off to him.

'But that's a matter for another time.'

The Ancient Battlefield's progression wasn't completely unrelated to him. Of those Demigods who died, there were several he knew or knew of.

Such as the 12 Zodiacs of Hidden Death Valley.

'I heard half of them died, and the rest only survived due to luck.'

Aside from them, someone he hadn't met in person but had ties to also passed.

The so-called Plant Goddess of Eden.

'They say her lover, a demon named Arturo, sacrificed himself for her survival, but she couldn't accept it and combusted her soul to get vengeance on those that caused their tragic fate.'

It was a true shame.

'And the worst part...they couldn't even touch the main enemy.'

Something not publicized, but inferred by Damien.

For two Demigods to die in such a tragic way, two as strong as them, there was only one reason he could think of.

'They were manipulated by the Karmic Emperor.'

He was paying serious attention to that issue for precisely this reason.

'He must've gotten much stronger to do something like that. I need to hurry.'

Frankly, Damien hadn't made much progress.

He'd gained a lot more power, but power was relatively irrelevant at this point.

'I need to find the path to Destruction. That's the key.'

He was searching for it through slaughter and destruction.

It was a bit stupid, but funnily enough, there was no better method.

'I guess I just have to keep going until I find it.'

Damien sighed.

At least he was having fun.

The Demonic Providences of the Nox Race were each unique. Even the ones that held similarities had different conditions of use. Damien was having fun experiencing them all as he fought, so he didn't mind the amount of effort he had to expend.

'Maybe I should— hm?'

It wasn't the first time Damien sensed something interesting on the horizon and it wouldn't be the last.

Without hesitation, he moved towards it.

Battle was ongoing.

Naturally, it was his place to interfere!

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There were two people fighting against six. Their disparage was severe, much worse than when Damien and Iris fought earlier.

After all, these two were not supreme geniuses.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Explosions went wild through the environment. The battle was already coming to an end, but the outcome wasn't favorable in the slightest.

Two Demigods on the enemy side had been killed, bringing their total number down to four, but the two on the allied side were at the end of their rope as well.

There was too much going on around them.

They were caught unprepared by this massive group. They were fated to die from the start.

But they refused.

The man of the two furrowed his brows.

'This cannot go on. Even if I die, she must survive.'

If there was a silver lining, it was their distribution. The two of them had their backs facing a mountain. They weren't surrounded, but facing four from the same side.

That left a path for escape.

BANG!

"ARGH!"

The man groaned in pain as his side was run through with a spear.

He stood in front of his woman nonetheless, disallowing any attacks from reaching her.

"GO!" He roared.

"No! I will not leave you here!" She yelled back, flaring her mana to return to battle.

However, he was more stubborn than her.

Despite how reserved he usually was, in times like this, his stubbornness couldn't be outdone.

He turned his back to the enemy.

"Ran, I will not let you die here."

"Di..."

Ran muttered, tears forming in her eyes.

But it was too late. He was already smiling so warmly.

BOOOOOOOM!

His mana roared.

With a massive burst of Divine Energy, he attacked her with a gentle force, throwing her several thousand kilometers away before she could complain.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

At the same time, tens of attacks landed on his back, tearing through his flesh and bones.

"Khhh...!"

He gritted his teeth and turned back to them.

"I know you're eager, but now is not the time. Instead of chasing her, how about staying here with me?"

"DI, NO!"

Ran yelled out from the distance. She was already rushing back with all her power, but could she get there within the second?

The answer was a flat "no."

Di made sure of it.

Before his enemies could realize his movements and retreat, he took the same action as many heroes had before him.

He exploded his mana.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

"DI...!"

Ran screamed out as she was thrown back by the shockwaves.

The enemies were wrapped in his energy and incinerated into nothingness.

And a figure arrived above them with a frown on his face.

'Dammit. I'm too late...'

Damien sighed to himself.

He couldn't stop Di from dying, but he came in time to deal with the aftermath.

'Another friend has left this world...'

'I promise. I will never let your sacrifice go in vain.'

Chapter 1267 Emotions [3]

Damien descended to the earth.

His first move was sending a wave of Rudimentary Existence Law towards the area Di exploded, making sure the enemies were dead.

In the same movement, he teleported to Ran and pushed her to the ground, forcing his mana into her body and giving her no choice but to comply.

"LET GO OF ME! LET GO NOW!" She roared, mania in her eyes.

However, Damien did not.

He circulated his mana through her circuits and calmed her Divine Energy.

"Did you think I'd just let you die here?"

Right, she was just moments away from following her husband to the grave.

But Damien stopped her.

And for that, she was enraged beyond belief.

"LET GO! LET GO BEFORE I KILL YOU, DAMIEN VOID!"

Damien sighed.

"Do you think that's possible? You've already subordinated yourself to me. You cannot hurt me."

"THAT DOES NOT MATTER! UNHAND ME THIS INSTANT!"

'It looks like she never planned to hurt me. Is she trying to trigger a restriction and kill herself using a roundabout method?'

Damien sighed again.

Frankly, he wasn't expecting an event like this either.

He wasn't close to Di or Ran, but they were vassals who'd been prepared for him by his father's people in the past.



Because of their intertwined fate, he assumed they'd be protected in the same way his wives were.

But he was wrong.

His wives got absolute protection from death, but even they could be harmed to the extreme.

As for close friends and allies, their protection wasn't nearly absolute, but their growth would be boosted and without any extraneous circumstances, their lives wouldn't be in danger.

But...

Well, Di and Ran didn't meet any of the qualifications.

From the start, they did not willingly subordinate themselves, nor did they accept his rule once they conceded.

That was why Damien never once tried to mobilize the Ancient God Clan. He didn't care to force them into submission, and it was essentially impossible when their leaders and young master were all hostile to him.

'Of them, Di was the only one who was somewhat supportive. It's a shame that he died.'

Damien was friends with Xinyue for a time, but her complete change in attitude upon learning his identity tore their relationship apart.

Let alone friendship, they'd hardly talked since back then, and when they did, it was strictly business.

Though, she couldn't hide her hostility even in those circumstances.

'So it really is something more ethereal. It's not just about being connected superficially.'

Damien started to understand why physical intimacy was required for the [Void Daughter] title to be passed on.

Perhaps many were willing to be in that kind of relationship with him, but he never saw other women like that. If someone was able to pull his heart to that extent, and the Void deemed them worthy, the title would appear naturally.

Nevertheless, that was completely unrelated.

Damien turned his attention back to Ran, who was still screaming and thrashing on the ground, trying to end her life.

He couldn't stand it anymore.

"What the hell are you doing?" He asked.

"WHAT?! WHAT AM I DOING?! WHAT ELSE IS THERE FOR ME TO DO?! THIS LIFE HAS LOST ITS MEANING!"

She was spouting utter nonsense.

"Are you a child?" Damien pressed.

"HOW DARE YOU LOOK DOWN ON ME?!"

Ran tried to use her mana to escape his grasp, but she could no longer overpower him.

Pah!

Her eyes widened in shock.

"D-did you just...?"

"Slap you? Yes, yes I did. Because you, who's supposed to be an old and wizened Divinity, are sitting here throwing a temper tantrum like a child. Who the fuck do you think you are?"

Damien couldn't stand her behavior. He never could, and would never be able to, but it was especially embarrassing right now.

"Do you not understand what just happened, you fucking idiot? Di sacrificed his life so you could live, so why the fuck are you trying to die like a dumbass?"

"You're telling me your life is pointless? On whose fucking word? The Nox still exist, so you still have purpose fighting them until the last breath to avenge him. Even putting aside petty revenge, did you forget about the **WHOLE FUCKING CLAN** waiting for you in Grand Heavens Boundary? What will happen to them when they lose their **ONLY TWO** Demigod Ancestors in a single breath?!"

Damien was utterly fed up with this woman.

He was pissed for multiple reasons, the most selfish of which being: this could've all been prevented.

If they just put down their pride and accepted him, this would've never happened.

What kind of reason did they have to reject him? Was he an unjust ruler?

No!

He hardly ever asked his forces to do anything, and he would never force them to do anything they weren't willing to.

So there was no real reason to reject his rule besides the fact that they couldn't accept an outsider being their lord.

He understood his thoughts were selfish, but they were his thoughts nonetheless. He hated that he had to deal with bullshit that could've been avoided so easily.

But the majority of his anger wasn't directed at Ran specifically. She'd just become an outlet for his bottled-up emotions.

So many of these Demigods acted like the pathetic young masters Damien had met throughout his travels, even though they were supposed to be the face of the universe, its strongest and most reliable force.

Damien had been active on the Ancient Battlefield for several years now, and besides Iris, Alucard, and the others he was associated with, he hadn't met a single worthy Divinity.

They were just cowards and stuck-up brats who had no shame.

Damien forced his mana a bit more, placing a restriction on Ran's Divine Energy.

"Idiotic bitch, if you try to die in any way, shape, or form, this restriction will activate and send you directly to me. You should be very clear on what I can do to you if you disobey me, so make sure to act nicely."

It wasn't just her own actions. If she was nearing death by any means, she would be teleported to him. He could read her memories to find the circumstances and decide how to proceed from there.

Damien let go of Ran's shoulders and got up, glancing at her in disgust.

"Go and live. I won't let you die until you've become a proper human being."

Damien turned around and walked away.

"Fuck, I came here with good intentions and it ended up like this. I can't believe Di put up with such a brat for so many thousands of years."

"How pathetic."

That was the last thing Ran heard before Damien's presence vanished from the surroundings.

She lay there on the ground, unmoving with a blank expression.

She had no idea what just happened.

But she could feel the restriction well. Damien wasn't joking. Its power was far beyond what she thought possible from him.

'If...if we just followed him...'

If such a strong person was their backing, if they could've called him for help before things went wrong...

"Ha...haha..."

Everything was pointless now.

But she couldn't die.

The deep humiliation engraved in her soul forced her to stay alive.

She didn't even think of her clan before Damien mentioned it.

She didn't even think about revenge.

The only thought in her mind was death. Her emotions boiled over and made her vision tunnel in on the single most pathetic option available to her.

She was supposed to be a Demigod...?

She was supposed to be someone others relied on...?

"Haha...how...pathetic."

She raised an arm over her eyes.

Tears trickled down the sides of her face.

It hurt.

It really fucking hurt.

But she couldn't blame anyone but herself.

If she was more mature, if she focused on comprehension instead of stupidly involving herself in mortal affairs, if she wasn't controlled by her emotions...

It didn't matter how many "ifs" she thought of. They all came down to a single thought.

This was a consequence of her own actions, and if she continued acting as she pleased, the consequences would be even greater than they already were.

So she cried.

In the middle of the Ancient Battlefield, realizing her mistakes and flaws, mourning the death of the only person who'd put up with her in this world, she cried.

'I'm...'

'...such an idiot.'

Chapter 1268 Old Enemy [1]

Damien knew he was being harsh, but it was necessary.

Someone like Ran couldn't learn through easy means.

She was entitled beyond belief. Her world revolved around her, and it was clear she never had to face the consequences of her actions.

If someone grew like that, they were bound to become a terrible person simply due to their ignorance. That was not bliss, but a ticking time bomb just waiting to explode.

And it exploded.

It exploded right in Ran's face and took the person she cared about most.

How was someone who never learned to cope with negativity to respond to a stimulus like that?

Ending everything was an easy choice. She was someone who would always pick the easy choice because she simply couldn't see the other choices at all.

Damien hated people like her. He hated people who lived in this cruel and cold world and somehow maintained the thought that they were above its rule.

It was a different kind of naivety from the pure innocence that children and others in similar positions possessed. Rather than something that should be protected while it lasted, it was something that needed to be crushed so those people could face reality.

Maybe Ran would hate him from this point forth.

Maybe she'd resent him for forcing her to live, but Damien didn't care.

In the first place, he was never doing it for her.

He was doing it for Di, the only person in the Ancient God Clan he respected.

He would've never wanted Ran to die with him. He would've wanted her to live on and find her own happiness, and he would've wanted her to continue his legacy in the clan so he was never forgotten.

Ran was his last lifeline, and she just wanted to throw all that away?

Damien abhorred that she was the one tasked with Di's last will, but that wasn't his decision to interfere in, so he did what he needed to make sure she lived.

'Worst case scenario, she tries to kill me later. But, even that's a positive. Whether it be hatred, guilt, or something more positive, they're all twisted emotions that give her a will to live.'

Positive reinforcement wasn't always the answer. Damien learned through countless experiences that facing the coldness of reality could be much more impactful on a person's psyche than positivity.

'I don't know if I'd use this method for people I actually care about, but...no, that's not the case. I definitely would.'

He just wouldn't do it directly.



Just like he'd made Astoria face reality back when he was teaching her, he would use some means to rid the people he nurtured of their naivety when the time came.

'Even Xue'er...'

"Haa...'

Damien sighed.

'I don't know if I'd be a good parent, but hopefully, I don't become a hated one.'

He'd just accepted Iris as his 4th wife. That was a number he never could've imagined back in his youth.

Now that such an event had happened, he started thinking about his future romantically again as well.

And having children was definitely something he wanted.

'Just...not right now.'

In this kind of world, having too many feelings was a sin.

He was afraid of what would happen if he had kids.

What if he ended up like his own father, unable to foster their growth or even have a say in their lives until they were too old to care?

He couldn't allow that.

His children wouldn't live like he did.

They'd live in a world he created for them, a world free of horror and cruelty.

'Though...'

Damien shook his head.

He didn't need to think about it yet. If he kept doing so, his desire to see his wives again and become a father would only grow stronger.

'Ascending is my main priority. I have to remember that.'

"Huu..."

Damien exhaled deeply and centered himself.

'I should start heading for the center. The enemies in the outskirts aren't enough for me anymore, and...for some reason, I really want to see the people I trust.'

Those who were worthy of his respect and fighting with their everything to end this war victoriously, he wanted to see them and refresh his mind.

But...would things go as he wished?

He seemed to have forgotten after spending so much time unhindered.

He had enemies in this place.

And not all of them were as patient as the Saint Emperor.

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Somewhere several hundreds of millions of kilometers away from Damien's current position, two men stood surrounded by a river of blood and mountains of corpses.

"What did you say?"

One of them made an exclamation of shock upon hearing the information his fellow shared.

"It is just as I stated. A lower existence has arrived on the Ancient Battlefield and stirred up a storm."

Their conversation was naturally about Damien, the most interesting person on the plane at the moment.

But his specific identity was still up in the air...

"They call him by a variety of names, but those are only marks of their cowardice. The only concrete information our forces have been able to gather is a rough description of his appearance and power."

...well, not anymore.

The man held up his hand and summoned a projection. It was majorly nondescript, but the most important characteristics were represented.

A chiseled face, black hair that went past his shoulders, and...

"Those eyes..."

The second man's gaze sharpened.

Those purple eyes were not something just anyone could possess.

Rather, in the entirety of his existence, he'd only seen two people with those eyes.

One was the Void Emperor from the past, a man that had long disappeared into the Heavenly World, or at least that was how it was assumed.

And the other...

"Damien Void."

A blood-red aura filled the skies.

"That damned brat..."

Immortal Blood Asura gnashed his teeth.

He thought he'd seen the last of that man long ago, but by some odd means, he'd managed to survive not only the death land known as No Return Pass, but also a siege on Al'Katra that he was only able to learn about through the Karmic Emperor.

That thorn in his side that he'd tried to remove so many times was now standing amongst Demigods, slaughtering as he pleased.

"WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?!"

Immortal Blood Asura roared.

He rarely found roadblocks in his path. This wasn't luck, but something he made sure of by suppressing and killing any who opposed him.

But this one survived.

Like a rat, he scurried away and escaped every perilous situation he'd been put in.

'And now he is here...'

Immortal Blood Asura couldn't stand him.

The Divinity he'd built was based on his eternal conquest, his subjugation of any and all things.

Even now, rather than a traitor who submitted to the Nox, he was someone who stood on the same level as a Nox Emperor.

And yet...

'Why is that brat still alive?'

He couldn't understand it.

But there was one thing he knew.

This was not Grand Heavens Boundary. This was the Ancient Battlefield.

In this place, Damien could not escape, and Immortal Blood Asura didn't have to leave his revenge to external forces.

"Where is he now?" He asked coldly.

The Karmic Emperor smiled.

"His position is being tracked in real-time. Take this map and go."

Immortal Blood Asura nodded and glanced at the Nox Emperor icily.

"I do not know what you are planning, but it does not matter to me. This is not a matter of your influence. Remember that."

The Karmic Emperor's mysterious smile widened.

"I am well aware. Now, quickly finish him and come back. We have much to do before we leave this place."

"Hmph."

Immortal Blood Asura left without another word.

As the Karmic Emperor watched him leave, his smile turned into a toothy grin.

'While it is a shame to sacrifice a piece like that boy, it is necessary to completely tame the Immortal Blood Asura.'

He turned around and walked through the rivers of blood like he was taking a calm stroll through the park

'Damien Void, the man even the Saint Emperor failed to kill. I apologize, but...'

'This is the day of your death.'

## Chapter 1269 Old Enemy [2]

Another month passed relatively calmly.

The Karmic Emperor stopped moving so actively, and his forces withdrew as well.

The Soul Emperor and Saint Emperor hadn't made any moves even at this point, but their forces were still acting strangely.

They did attack the universe's forces, but not as ferociously as the Inhuman Emperor's faction.

The reason was simple.

While the Saint Emperor couldn't be explained with reason, the Soul Emperor was faithful to his creators.

Their goal was to steal the universe's life force and use it as a farm for resources, which came in the form of World Cores and Universal Cores.

However, what would happen when Grand Heavens Boundary fell?

It was essentially killing the golden goose.

The Soul Emperor wanted to ruin Grand Heavens Boundary, but he never planned to completely destroy it.

Because once it was on its last breath and had no other hope, its Universal Core would be the spark that birthed a new universe, a source of more resources for his Lords.

Therefore, while he tried to conserve his troops as much as possible and fought for appearance's sake only, his true allegiance was technically on their side.

That was the only way for him to survive the victory he was hoping for them to achieve while culling them enough to accomplish his goals.

It was a convoluted mentality, but one only fit for the Soul Emperor, a man who was ironically more soulless than anyone else.

Though this mentality held positives and negatives for the universe as a whole, it was quite unfortunate for Damien.

The Inhuman Emperor didn't have infinite manpower. His people were dying more than any other faction, and as their numbers dwindled, the number of Nox combatants roaming the battlefield diminished as well.

And he couldn't act himself to fix this problem, because the second he did, the Grand Heavens Boundary faction would band together as one and hide in a turtle shell to face him.

Even he couldn't take their full combined force alone.

He was on the dull side, sure, but his survivability was great enough for him to reach Emperor status despite his habits.

Nevertheless, the battlefield was quite calm, the opposite of what Damien wanted.

He spent the last month doing far more traveling than fighting, and he was definitely hoping for something interesting to happen soon.

It's just...

It happened on a normal day like any other.

The enemy hidden in the shadows came into the light.



And it wasn't nearly the kind of "interesting" he'd been hoping for.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

An explosion of blood mist enveloped his body.

Damien immediately teleported away and surveyed the environment for his enemy, but before he could find him...

BANG!

A strong impact struck him from behind, cracking his spine and sending him flying.

'Damn!'

Damien didn't expect to be surprise attacked here. No, he knew there were only a few beings capable of doing so, and he wasn't expecting to meet them already.

'The Inhuman Emperor...? Or maybe...no, this mana...'

He instantly understood who he was facing.

He stood up from the ground as his spine healed to its regular form, spitting blood out of his mouth.

"Immortal Blood Asura."

It wasn't a Nox Emperor at all, but a man equal to Iris, a man strong enough to be titled the universe's best.

As the blood mist cleared, his form was revealed.

That same old man who pushed Damien into danger at every opportunity, ridding him of the few moments of peace he tried to enjoy, that man was standing right in front of him.

"You noticed quick. However, no matter what you have become, you are nothing before me."

BANG!

Immortal Blood Asura attacked again without waiting for Damien to acclimate to the changing circumstances.

Terrifying crimson Divine Energy filled the air, and Damien took constant damage.

Mysterious forces invaded his body, and while the Void Physique cleansed it and the Ananta Matrix stored the pure Divine Energy, it was able to damage him in the split seconds before that could happen.

'Insane.'

Damien gritted his teeth as he endured the pain of his blood evaporating.

'This is insane.'

He pushed his hands forward and summoned Rudimentary Existence Law in a flash.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

The wall of law fluctuations he created for defense was shattered in a mere instant, and once again, his body was subjected to torment.

'Damn!'

His eyes narrowed to the extreme.

'He knows the difference between us, so he's toying with me before I die. He's just trying to milk his revenge for everything it's worth before slaughtering me mercilessly.'

Damien didn't stand a chance.

Immortal Blood Asura was on the level of a Nox Emperor.

Even when Iris was hindered by her inability to use Creation Laws, Damien still wasn't a match for her.

'And this is a man equal to her at her best.'

The enemy who'd been chasing him since he was barely a 4th class being. That enemy had finally come to settle their score.

No matter how much he wanted to fight, there was only one way to survive this encounter.

'I need to run.'

Damien didn't hesitate.

He flashed away countless times, teleporting hundreds of millions of miles in a few seconds.

**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!**

Explosions followed him wherever he went.

It didn't matter how erratically he teleported, or how many times he changed directions, Immortal Blood Asura always found him instantly and tormented him with Blood Laws.

'What did he do?!'

Damien hadn't experienced this before. If there was one thing he prided himself on, it was his ability to escape unharmed from any situation.

Yet, Immortal Blood Asura was following him as if he could see the future.

Damien frowned deeply and a portion of his senses inward.

'There's nothing. The laws that invaded were dispersed and absorbed, and the Divine Energy has no markings on it because of that. There's no way for him to be tracking me, at least, not from the methods I know.'

He didn't have time to spare on the "why." He had to divert his attention towards a path to escape.

'There's nothing in the Ancient Battlefield. If he can track me like this, no cave or hideout could save me. And...'

'...I can't drag Iris into this either.'

He didn't have any bastions of hope. Just like that time with the Saint Emperor, he was on his own.

Watching Damien desperately try to survive, Immortal Blood Asura grinned.

"You can no longer escape me."

He knew of Damien's abilities better than anyone else.

Damien wasn't someone who could be tracked using seals or anything of the sort.

And since attaching a tracking mechanism to his body didn't work, Immortal Blood Asura chose a different method.

A method far simpler than Damien could predict.

It was back when he directly struck Damien's back.

Instead of placing a piece of himself on Damien, he took a piece of Damien for himself.

"Bloodhound, keep going."

An arrow of blood light rushed through the air, circling Damien's current position at all times.

It was the absolute best of his tracking abilities, and it would never fail.

Damien ran with all his power, and Immortal Blood Asura watched with a cruel smile the entire time.

"Run, run as far as you wish. No matter where you go..."

BOOOM!

Another bloody light bomb erupted on Damien's position.

"...I will always find you."

Chapter 1270 Old Enemy [3]

Immortal Blood Asura's declaration wasn't a joke.

No matter how far Damien ran, he was always a step behind, to the point where it was terrifying.

But in this situation, Damien really had no choice but to flee.

Nox Emperors were on a completely different level. They weren't people who could be compared to the masses.

It was hard to tell with just Iris' strength, but that was only because she was restricted.

In Grand Heavens Boundary, using Universal Law, she was basically invincible. She had the potential to return to that post once she got used to Creation, but she wasn't there yet, so Damien hadn't seen her peak.

The Nox Emperors had reached a level of Divinity others couldn't dream of. It was the peak of what one could accomplish in the lower universe unless they spent uncountable eons living like the Saint Emperor.

When Immortal Blood Asura was put on the same level as them, his power became clear.

Damien's abilities that could kill even those like the Strength Lord, who were considered closest to the Emperor level, didn't hold a candle to their existences.

He found out himself.

It wasn't as if Damien didn't try to fight back at all. Once he realized the futility of fleeing, he did try to strike Immortal Blood Asura and create a more favorable situation.

However, the result was clear.

Rudimentary Existence Law couldn't harm him, and of course, its individual parts were the same. Damien simply didn't stand a chance.

But unlike that time with the Saint Emperor, he was still alive and could handle Divine Energy.

He wasn't completely hopeless.

'There are two options on how to proceed.'

Damien swerved through the atmosphere. He used teleportation whenever he needed to make distance, but he didn't use it to throw off the opponent that wouldn't be affected by its surprise element anymore.

'Immortal Blood Asura is still in the mood to play, so either I find people to support me and take him down, or I find another method of escape.'

The former seemed like the best option, but that was only if one forgot his position. It would take a large number of Demigods to drag him down, and the losses they suffered would harm them in the long run.

Now, with the situation more stalemated than ever before, a loss of momentum and power wasn't something they could afford.

'Then, the second option...'

Before the enemy got serious, Damien needed to find a way out of this situation.

'Cave abodes won't work, and staying on the ground won't work either. I don't have time to conceal myself, and if I waste time on that, I might not get the chance to escape later.'

He had to save concealment as a last-ditch effort.

'That leaves me with two places.'

Either the heavens or the earth.

'Let's go up first.'

BOOM!

Damien abruptly halted his momentum and used Vector Control to redirect his force.

His body shot upward with untold speed, a move Immortal Blood Asura didn't predict.

However, he wasn't nonplussed.

"Hahaha, digging your own grave, I see!"

He knew what Damien was about to find out.

BANG!

Once Damien reached the top of the sky, he crashed into an invisible barrier.

'Damn!'

He used that collision to feel out its power. It was at a level far above anything he'd seen before, definitely not something even Immortal Blood Asura could break.

'Of course it's a simulated sky. This fucking place...'



He cursed as he rapidly changed his target.

If the heavens didn't work, he had to burrow into the earth.

'I haven't seen any signs of a subterranean world since I got here, but I'll definitely be able to buy some time if I go that way.'

He had an ability others didn't, after all.

WHOOOOOOOSH!

The winds wrapped around his body and turned into a burning flame as he rushed downward with all his power.

He used multiple abilities in tandem to increase both his weight and speed. If he were to land anywhere else with this kind of force, he'd have started an extinction event.

But the Ancient Battlefield wasn't so fragile.

Damien knew that well.

He was never aiming to do it this way from the start.

A sword appeared in his hand.

He hadn't used Mirage in over a decade, but during his stay in No Return Pass, he'd spent several years researching the art of forging so he could improve it.

Mirage was now a Demigod-rank weapon. Even if it was his current power, the sword could handle it.

'Just one burst. I need to use it all at once.'

Immortal Blood Asura was waiting for him below with a wide grin. It seemed he was preparing to confront Damien head-on and provide some serious mental trauma.

But Damien had other plans.

He gathered it all into his sword.

He was going to use something that shouldn't have been possible for the current him.

'One at a time...slowly, now...'

Pure Divine Energy circulated through the blade.

Everything he'd collected so far, from the Plague Lord, Strength Lord, Bow Lord, Venom Lord, Marionette Lord, Immortal Blood Asura, and everyone he fought during his two-year stay on the Ancient Battlefield gathered into his sword.

He was encased in its light.

He was a shooting star, a comet of unbelievable brightness that shot down like a sun about to collide with the world.

Even Immortal Blood Asura felt wary seeing that power, but he wasn't afraid. This was still within the realm of things he could deal with.

This clash was by no means subtle.

No, it attracted the attention of all beings on the battlefield.

From the corners of the world, those like the Ancient Sovereign and Saint Emperor turned their gazes to the familiar mana.

And from the center, those desperately fighting for their survival like Alucard and Tang Lingzi marveled at a mana they'd never expected to feel here.

A second trickled by, and the collision of two major powers was only sparks of time away.

That's when Damien swung it.

That sword filled with Divine Energy.

To use the eighth installment of the series he'd been building since his days in the First Dungeon.

"Huu..."

Damien took a deep breath.

Immortal Blood Asura's eyes widened in frenzy.

"COME, RAT!"

He pushed his class forward, wrapped in monstrous amounts of bloody Divine Energy.

"Old bastard, just die!"

Damien's sword connected.

In that moment, it was like Heaven and Earth collapsed into each other.

Reality twisted, becoming something it should have never been. The existing laws were pushed out of its bounds and replaced with only those Damien allowed.

The bright sword light covered the entire world. From one end of the Ancient Battlefield to the other, everyone saw it.

And when it finally burst, the impact was terrifying.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The mad sword energy rushed down like the heavens themselves had fallen.

A crevice dug hundreds of meters into the Ancient Battlefield's earth, cutting it cleanly into two parts.

Tens of Demigods were caught in the blast, torn to shreds without rhyme or reason.

And in the midst of it all were two people.

The man proclaimed Grand Heavens Boundary's strongest, and the man who aptly named this reality-warping sword.

'Void Sword Art Eighth Form: Collapsing Heavens'