

# Void 1281

## Chapter 1281 Cosmic Rebirth [2]

It was quiet, or rather, it would have been if not for the roaring Heavenly Order above.

Everyone was waiting for the first person to move, and nobody wanted to be the person who set off the domino that would escalate into a full-scale war in seconds.

Tang Lingzi and Alucard stood at the forefront of the Grand Heavens Boundary side along with the strongest of their forces, people just a single level below Immortal Blood Asura and the Nox Emperors, watching and waiting.

'This is troublesome...' Tang Lingzi thought.

The problem here was that the other side had Immortal Blood Asura and the Karmic Emperor, both of whom were stronger than anyone they had.

'Our numbers are also less than theirs, so we do not have the freedom to ally against a single enemy.'

There were no tactics in Demigod warfare of this scale.

Demigods were independent creatures, and though they'd work together to plot and scheme and would when it was necessary, in the midst of chaos, they had the same flaw as the Nox.

Rather than get in each other's ways by interfering in each other's battles, they'd rather choose opponents for themselves and leave the rest to others.

At the current moment, most of the Demigods on both sides were doing exactly that.

It was mostly those on the allied side.

After all, most of them were going to have to take at least two opponents by themselves.

Tang Lingzi frowned, and Alucard did the same from beside her.

They had the same thought.

Regardless, they had to fight.

So it was better to take the initiative.

Tang Lingzi acted first.

She shot forward with extreme speed as her fingers extended into claws. Before anyone noticed, she'd grabbed a Nox Lord by the throat and clenched her fist, bursting his neck.

It started from there.

Everyone here was a Divinity. They reacted within the second. Following Tang Lingzi's lead, Alucard raised his arm.

"CHARGE!"

He commanded the forces behind him and slammed into the closest Nox Lord, killing him instantly as well.

The two instant deaths from the enemy side energized the allied forces, and with no thoughts of death in their minds, they charged at the Nox.

A battle of untold proportions broke out.

Perhaps they weren't as numerous as those on the unnamed world, but the force they emitted as they fought far exceeded them.

If this battle was taken to the lower universe, it would have destroyed several worlds in that single instant, creating widespread destruction with massive consequences.

Alucard, Tang Lingzi, and the rest of the strong Demigods moved past the first line of Nox after their initial move and each targeted groups of stronger enemies.

They only struck those at the front for the sake of appearance. Their real targets were those they'd have to expend great amounts of effort to fight.

Those behind them took care of the masses

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Explosions and impacts ran rampant. Destruction was everywhere, and the eruptions of mana combined into a storm that flowed into the sky and made space itself tremble.

B-B-BOOOOOOOOM!

At that moment, the Heavenly Order reacted.

While its effects were mostly contained within the barrier of law, making it so the surrounding Divinities couldn't understand its true terror, it sent a bolt of lightning outside of those bounds for the first time.

The lightning had no specific target. It didn't differentiate between friend and foe.

No, it wasn't even trying to kill anyone, but as it crashed down on the ground below, it sent out a shockwave that tore through both sides, allies and opposition.

Everyone watched it in horror, but looking away from battle for even a single second was equivalent to suicide. Instead of paying attention to its aftereffects, they continued to fight with a new sense of wariness for the entity.

Beyond their perception, the mana storm formed by their collisions was absorbed by the Heavenly Order, increasing its size subtly.

This didn't extend its lifespan, only its power.

Basically, it only increased Damien's suffering!

But it also presented an opportunity for him.

The seconds crawled by extremely slowly.

Within every instance of time, thousands of strikes were traded between each individual combatant, which amounted to a massive amount of energy and damage being expended and dealt.

And the death toll stacked up so rapidly that it was impossible to imagine that these were Divinities dying.

Both sides lost hundreds, and while it looked like the war would come to an end extremely soon, that was just a mirage.

Those battles taking place further away from the barrier of law, where Tang Lingzi and the rest were fighting, would not end so easily.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

As the one who taught Zara how to fight, Tang Lingzi's style was similar to hers.

She dodged and weaved her enemies, and attacked their weaknesses when she got a chance. She was extremely frontal, not letting them escape her grasp, and used her body itself as a weapon.

She had four Nox Lords in front of her.

Their number made it difficult, but she was confident in winning.

'Those two haven't moved yet.'

She had a portion of her awareness separated, watching Immortal Blood Asura and the Karmic Emperor in case they decided to act.

But so far, neither had left their positions in the sky.

Immortal Blood Asura wasn't a complex man. He tried to make himself seem complex, but his thoughts were extremely easy to read.

He was too focused on Damien to even care about the war anymore, so obviously he didn't interfere.

As for the Karmic Emperor...

'...almost.'

He was busy as well.

Unseen threads tangled Immortal Blood Asura in a spider web he couldn't sense. His thoughts and actions, which he always believed his own free will, were almost under the control of the man he vowed to never fall prey to.

The Karmic Emperor's main goal was to control this card which would be the start of many plans he'd made long ago.

With the rest of his energy, he was also attracting more and more Nox to the area.

The forces he'd been hiding for this very moment when Immortal Blood Asura became his, it was time to bring them out.

But no matter how explosive the war was, it didn't hold a candle to what was going on within the barrier of law.

Damien was undergoing a dual tribulation of mind and body.

Funnily enough, his soul was untouched even though it should have been the main character of his Cosmic Rebirth. He'd already reached a level of Divinity with it when he merged with the Void.

Now, his body needed to be brought to the same level, and he as an individual had to define the Divinity he was going to base his entire existence around from this point forth.



It was an extremely involved process.

However...

'It's not enough.'

Damien could never get completely into the rhythm of rebirth.

The energy of the Heavenly Order was barraging his body with greater intensity every second, but the energy usage made it expend its energy far faster than it normally would have.

'The solution...'

'...he said it would come from the outside.'

Damien could only hope support came fast.

And the support he didn't know the identity of...

Well, it was already on its way.

Just as much as he wanted them to arrive as soon as possible, they were moving at their fastest speed to reach his position.

The time for them to come together was approaching.

Once it finally came...

Damien would truly begin Cosmic Rebirth.

Divinity was just a single step away.

Chapter 1282 Cosmic Rebirth [3]

With the outside world's chaos clear, one could take time to focus on what was happening within the barrier of law.

The process started similarly to Universe Baptism.

Damien's mind and body were disconnected and forced into trials of their own, but unlike others, his soul remained untouched.

Therefore, despite being disconnected from it, he didn't lose touch with reality.

It was strange, but it allowed Damien to keep track of the Heavenly Order's changes, which was the only reason he even needed to focus on the outside world in the first place.

Lightning struck his body continuously.

This lightning came from the Heavenly Order and was far beyond anything he'd experienced in the past.

It was pure, sure, but that was only one aspect of it.

The laws contained within the lightning were astonishing. It was definitely similar to Universal Law, but far more complex and complete, leaving no room for inconsistencies such as those Damien took advantage of when he was in Grand Heavens Boundary.

Nevertheless, the process itself was something he'd long been used to.

His body was broken down and reconstructed over and over again, and as it underwent this change, its league was taken to a new level.

This was only the first step.

Because Cosmic Rebirth was something completely different for Damien when compared to others.

When his soul transformed, he realized the true potential of the Void Physique.

He'd unlocked a portion of its capabilities through death, and that was what allowed him to fight and survive on the Ancient Battlefield, but the entire weight of its existence was prohibited to him by his lacking physical state.

Once the baptism of lightning raised his league to the appropriate level, the Void would take over and do its job as well.

However, for that to happen, the Heavenly Order needed to remain as it was.

Damien tried his best to take his attention off of it.

He couldn't do anything about it.

He didn't have the power nor the means to interfere in the Heavenly Order in his current state, so worrying about it would only hinder his progress.

Instead, he had to trust what Dante said.

Someone or something would arrive to support him, and when that entity came, his problem would be solved.

Instead of waiting for them, Damien had more important things to do.

He needed to overcome the mental trial.

Once again, he was thrown into a world of his own imagination.

The experiences he had during his life flashed through his mind, along with several questions.

How did he make it here?

Did he accomplish what he wanted to accomplish?

What did he want to accomplish in the first place?

Were his goals worth the effort?

What set him apart from the rest?

Why did he deserve ascension?

Why did he deserve talent?

They barraged him from every side, trying their best to force him into a state of uncertainty.

However, the current Damien couldn't be fazed by these questions.

He was a genius because he was one. The things he desired were worthy of their status because he said so.

Damien's beliefs had changed massively.

He'd become arrogant, so to say.

But this wasn't arrogance without backing. His arrogance came from the absolute confidence he had developed through countless experiences.

He had come to accept many things.

When he was younger, he was a man plagued by countless troubles, both external and internal.

He doubted himself. He doubted his strength, he doubted his mind, he doubted his worth, and he refused to acknowledge himself.

In the first place, that was his greatest problem.

He failed to see reality because he was forcing himself to view it through a lens that didn't have the capability of seeing him for who he truly was.

But not anymore.

Damien understood that there were many unfair things in this world. Some people would be forced into utmost suffering that ruined the innocence and purity they held, while others would be corrupted by the bliss of life and never experience a day of suffering until they died.

This was just reality.

It was just fate.

When Damien was young, he lived in a world where changing fate was nigh impossible.

No matter how much he worked or tried, without talent, without connections, without status, it was impossible to get what he wanted.

Or so he thought.

But even before the World Awakening, Earth was never that kind of place.

Effort would eventually be rewarded. As long as one kept pursuing their desires and endured all the suffering that came along with such ambition, they would reach it eventually.

But who was willing to wait?

In a life that lasted less than one hundred years, who was willing to slave away for half or even more of it for the sake of that slim hope for success?

He was not one of those people.

He said he tried his best, but he never did.

He relied on others to clean up after him, he blamed others for messes he made...he acted like Ran did when he met her last.

Perhaps that was the reason for his sudden burst of anger.

She reminded him too much of his past self.

The version of him that waited for a lucky chance to grace him without actually striving for it at all.

He didn't deserve it.

Yet, it was still granted to him.

Because of his talent and connections, he was granted talent in the new world where fate became nothing more than a concept to be conquered and stepped on.

Wasn't he just a hypocrite?

Thoughts like those accumulated, and when they were piled on top of his existing insecurity and trauma, they truly blinded him from reality.

The moment he freed himself of those restraints, the world regained its color.

Instead of wondering about why others were given chances he wished for, or why others were suffering while he was able to climb higher, he focused on himself and improved.

His envy would only become a stepping stone for those who worked harder than him, and his pity would only attract ire from those who had less.

He didn't have the right to those emotions.

Whether he wanted to take the chances he wanted with his own hands or help those who were less fortunate than him, whether he wanted to be a devil or a saint, he first needed to reach a point where he was qualified to play those roles.

Power.

He used to see it as his goal, but it was no longer such.

Power was a means to an end.

Chasing the peak mindlessly only gave way to flimsy determination. When one reached the peak, they would lose all sanity after realizing there was nothing left for them.

So there was no need to question himself.

Once he gained those qualifications, the desires he held would become reality. The uncertainty would become fact.

Needlessly asking questions to feel altruistic or to feel like he was growing when he was, in reality, doing nothing at all was pointless.

Damien Void was not that kind of person.

He was self-assured. He believed in his values almost to the point of lunacy.

And with that kind of belief, questioning himself became irrelevant.



The trials of mind were meant to grant people this level of surety.

They were meant to reaffirm one's beliefs so that when they ascended to Divinity, they would never encounter a situation where their Divinity broke down from their uncertainty.

And it was a test. To see whether or not their values were strong enough to match their league.

Damien passed these trials before they even started.

The only reason he even had to undergo them was so that the universe could understand this fact.

He would not bend.

He would not fold.

For he was eternal.

This was the creed he lived by.

And even if the Heavens themselves tried to bring him down, he would never change his mind.

Chapter 1283 Cosmic Rebirth [4]

Clearing the trial of mind meant nothing to Damien. His mental state wasn't elevated and his league didn't change at all.

But that was a precursor to the true trial.

He had to do one more thing in his mind before he could truly move on.

He had to decide.

Damien followed many paths that all diverged into one, but that single path far outstripped the scope of reality.

So then, what was it?

'What is my Divinity?'

It was necessary to define Divinity here.

From the perspective of a lower existence, it was a new level, it was Godhood.

But that wasn't true at all.

True Godhood was a step that could not be achieved easily, nor seen in the lower universe.

Establishing Divinity was the halfway point. It was the first step into a new world that would be just as treacherous as the path taken to reach it.

Divinity could best be described as a reflection of oneself.

It was a sky-cleaving tower made of everything an individual represented.

Their values, the way they treated those around them and those further away.

Their morals, their definition of right and wrong, good and evil.

Their image, the way they presented themselves to the world and wished to be perceived.

Their mindset, the things that drove them and their determination to reach those things.

These were only some of the elements that would create a Divinity.

Anything and everything one infused into their Divinity would make it a level more secure, but the caveat was that these things would be cemented in stone.

It was impossible to take back the things one carved into their Divinity. It was impossible to change beyond their limits.

Someone like Immortal Blood Asura would always be cruel and merciless. There would never be a day when he turned over a new leaf and could be seen in a new light.

If he wished to make that transition from the bottom of his heart, the Divinity he spent so much time building would shatter, and he would be forced to piece it back together with new values strong enough to replace the missing pieces.

The so-called "tower" used to represent Divinity had a base made of law. This law would become one's everything after ascension, and all other paths would be closed off.

Therefore, choosing the law was important, but most didn't struggle as they only focused on one from the start.

'The person I am and the person I wish to become...'

That was what Divinity represented.

It was the acknowledgement of those beliefs by reality itself, and once it was created, reality itself would watch over the practitioner to see if they would truly live up to the expectations they placed on themselves.

There was no way to half-ass the formation of a Divinity.

It also absolutely couldn't be rushed.

Damien had a more difficult time than most when he tried to choose what his Divinity would be.

The most basic instinct in his body told him there was no need to choose. He could just put everything into it and make it an adaptive mechanism that would reform to what he needed in the future.

This was the strategy he used when creating most long-term systems like the Ananta Matrix.

However, this was not an option for the current him.

He had to choose.

If he couldn't make the choice, he would not ascend.

'What do I want...?'

Damien had always been chasing the Void, but that wasn't an option here. How could reality acknowledge a Divinity based on something above it?

He had the option of choosing Existence itself as the base, but he was greedy.

He didn't want to leave out the space for the Nonexistence that he would eventually comprehend.

'My title...'

The titles given to people like Immortal Blood Asura or Tian Yang, the Void Old Immortal, were only partially determined by the public.

The concepts they placed in their Divinity were represented in their titles more than anything else.

When Immortal Blood Asura created his, he infused the concepts of "Immortal" and "Blood," signifying his desire to be eternal through the power of blood.

Tian Yang only chose the word "Void," not symbolizing the Void itself, but the void of space, the most powerful manifestation of the law.

Damien also needed to choose.

Existence, Nonexistence, Void, Reality...

He'd used so many terms throughout his life grander than anything a newly ascended Demigod should've been wishing for, but it wasn't enough for him.

He wanted to give himself a starting point worthy of the end he would eventually reach.

To find that—

"Khhh...!"

Damien's mind was snapped out of its trance.

'The Heavenly Order...!'

Its energy was sputtering out.

There were only a few seconds left before it dispersed completely.

'Dammit!'

Damien withdrew himself from his mind and forced the Universal Law in his body to react.

'My body's state is...this is not optimal at all.'

His body was halfway through its lightning baptism. Its current state was so strangely disproportionate that trying to use it at all would be suicide.

However, Damien had no choice.

If he didn't, his entire Cosmic Rebirth would be stunted!

'COME...ON!'

He forced his mana to move.

The fluctuations of Universal Law filled the space, flying up towards the dispersing white thunderclouds and filling them with energy.

'It's not enough!'

At most, Damien's power could maintain them in their current weakened state. To make them functional again was completely impossible.

'DAMN!'

He didn't have a choice.

He mobilized his Void Mana until it slammed into the surrounding barrier of law.

'Devour!'

He consumed it in tiny bits, just small enough that those outside wouldn't notice.

But those tiny bits held such highly compressed Heavenly Law power that they were more than enough to aid him.

Those devoured fragments were combined with his Universal Law to add energy to the Heavenly Order. The Heavenly Order then reused those fragments to fill the spaces in the barrier of law, creating an infinite cycle.

However, this cycle was being maintained with the Heavenly Order's energy and was only supported by Damien, so he didn't have to expend as much energy to keep it active.

'This is impossible.'

He knew it well before, but confronting it directly made the truth far more obvious.

There was no way for him to win this battle.

'Whoever you are...'

Damien gritted his teeth.

'...please come soon!'

Every millisecond felt like years.

Damien's body broke down in several places. Blood pooled in his mouth as it was forced up his esophagus from the destruction of his stomach.

His mana circuits were strained to the limit, and though the Ananta Matrix had improved significantly in recent days, it was almost destroyed with only three seconds of sustaining the Heavenly Order.

Damien was on his last breath.

If he was in his usual state, he might've been able to do more, but he was essentially crippled in this strange middle point of his ascension.

Help needed to arrive as soon as possible.

For the first time in several decades, Damien hoped for someone to save him.

And that someone...

VOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

...was already here.

The Heavenly Order suddenly swelled violently.

The clouds didn't just return to their previous state, they doubled in size and power equally.

The gears in the sky started to turn again.

Lightning once again rained down on Damien, practically destroying his body down to a single drop of blood and throwing his consciousness back into the mental space.



He only felt it for a single instant, but he was certain.

'This is...it's finally working properly!'

The Heavenly Order was no longer a gas-powered engine, but a solar-powered machine that would constantly refuel itself and operate until it was no longer needed!

Damien's eyes would have widened into saucers if he could still access his body.

'Haha, solar-powered, huh...?'

It was quite a funny analogy.

There was indeed a sun shining on this Heavenly Order, a sun not quite shaped like a sun.

And this sun...

BOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Two figures appeared in the outside world, spreading their aura across the battlefield and instantly freezing all beings in the vicinity with their pressure.

One shining bright as a sun, and the other like her polar opposite, a dark moon, they made a combination that could only be described as terror-inducing.

"Protect me?"

"No problem."

They exchanged words like nobody else mattered, and ignoring anything else, one of them flew up into the sky.

She spread her arms out and summoned it forth.

A storm of Universal Law that barraged the Heavenly Order with energy.

After almost 4 years away, she was back.

Eyrrisea Luminus had finally returned to the stage!

Chapter 1284 Cosmic Rebirth [5]

Roughly two hours prior...

In a secluded area of the Ancient Battlefield, only three presences remained.

No matter how much the battlefield shrunk from the deaths of Divinities, this spot seemed to always be included in the circle despite being on its edge, an extremely strange phenomenon.

This was the place Iris had been resting for the past three years to recover from her soul injury.

The Ancient Sovereign and Orion Luminus were the only visitors she'd had, but she spent most of her time alone.

Though, it wasn't a lonely stay.

Iris had a newfound passion for progress, and a reason why she had to leave as soon as possible. She put her everything into recovery and improvement, and if one compared the person she was now to the person she was when Damien left...

Making such a comparison was completely useless. They could barely be regarded as the same person.

"Huu..."

Iris sent her senses through her body and soul.

'I'm almost there.'

Her soul injury healed majorly with every day, and her recovery period ended after 2 years, but she didn't immediately leave her seclusion.

She'd received a great gift from Damien, and she couldn't leave it to rot.

She'd spent the past year and a half or so completely focused on comprehending Creation and acclimating to her new soul, reaching a level she never could have imagined in the past.

No, she had to wonder if this level of growth was even allowed for Demigods who refused ascension.

'Half a year. In another half a year, I'll be unparalleled.'

That was also the end of the time the Ancient Sovereign promised to protect her.

She was planning to return to comprehension and stop wasting time the second she finished gaining a cumulative understanding of her current state, however...

The usually quiet area was anything but right now.

'If the Ancient Sovereign acted, there'd be no sound. That means...Ancestor?'

Iris stood up and made her way out of the cave to see what was happening.

And to her surprise and expectation at the same time, a fierce battle was taking place.

Orion was fighting an unidentified woman from the Nox Race. The strangest part was—

'—Ancestor is being...pushed back?!'

Iris could barely hold her astonishment.

The number of people who could do so in the entire Ancient Battlefield could be counted on one hand, but this woman was not one of them.

As she watched, the two went back and forth exchanging attacks. With just a bit of observation, it became clear that this was more of a spar than a real life-or-death match.

The woman never aimed for Orion's fatal points, and in return, he also avoided injuring her too deeply.

They were fighting for entertainment, nothing more.

The fight continued for a decent while. Iris watched and used it as a learning opportunity, increasing her knowledge of fighting through them.

However, it eventually came to an end.

"You are a good opponent," Orion said with a smile, extending his hand.

The woman looked down at it indifferently before shaking it.

"Mm, I never expected to fight a Primal Sovereign in this life. It was a pleasure for me as well."

"It's a shame we have to end it here, but I guess you came on business?"

"Right. Your friend over there would not have left me alone if I came to cause conflict."

The woman glanced at the Ancient Sovereign before penning her gaze down to Iris' location.

Iris raised a brow curiously as the woman made her way there.

'She's here for me?'

She was naturally confused.

She had no idea who this woman was, nor did she have any connection to the Nox.

However, when they stood face to face, she felt a strange sense of familiarity from the Nox woman.

"Is there something you want from me?" Iris asked, somewhat cautiously.

The woman nodded without hesitation.

"Right, there's somewhere we need to go."

"Pardon?"

"Ah, introductions and the likes. It seems my social skills have become rusty in those tens of thousands of years."

The woman, her black hair blowing in the wind and her eyes shining like rubies, smirked slightly as she spoke again.

"I was once known as the Death Emperor of the Nox Race, but those days are behind us. You may call me Tiamat, and..."

"Well, you could say I'm indebted to your husband, and I've come here to ask you to help me save him."

Iris' eyes narrowed.

"There is no need to say more. Let us leave immediately."

Two women who'd been absent from the main stage for varying degrees of time had finally come together.

And considering the current situation...

...they could be considered the universe's hope.

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BOOOOOOOOOM!

The duo slammed down onto the ground and made an extremely flashy entrance, but they had no plans of milking attention.

They rapidly surveyed the battlefield with a sort of synergy nobody would expect from two people who met just a few hours prior.

"Protect me?" Iris asked.

"No problem," Tiamat replied smoothly.

Iris instantly saw what Tiamat meant when she said Damien needed her help.

The current situation was hard to explain, but to put it simply...

'That looks like Cosmic Rebirth, but it doesn't have the fluctuations of one at all.'

Essentially, it was flawed.

And who better was there than her to fill its flaws?

Iris ignored all the surrounding Demigods and flew into the sky, standing just outside the barrier of law.

She acted without wasting time.

Universal Law was incredibly restricted in the Ancient Battlefield, but it was different now.

Not only was the Heavenly Order giving it a great presence that empowered her, but Iris had also comprehended how to recreate a variation of Universal Law through Creation.

There was nothing holding her back anymore.

"YOU...!"

Immortal Blood Asura said what might as well have been his catchphrase at this point and rushed at her.

Whatever she was doing was helping Damien, and he was not someone who would allow that.

However...

BOOOOOOOM!

A massive storm of blackness obstructed his path and forced him to retreat.

Tiamat appeared before him with a cold expression.

"You will not interrupt."

She kicked downward, slamming her heel into Immortal Blood Asura's stomach. As he crashed down to the ground, her icy gaze turned to the last man in the sky.

"Are you a new one?"

The Karmic Emperor didn't respond.

No, he could not.

Despite not being very organized, the Nox did have a history of their own that the most advanced of them were aware of.

This face, this demeanor, this aura...

The Karmic Emperor knew who that was.

A woman who only appeared in legends.

A woman whose mere title could terrify any and every Nox in existence.



"D...Death Emperor..."

Tiamat raised her brow.

"It seems my name has not been forgotten in all this time. Or, were you there before it happened?"

She didn't care.

The Death Emperor was a title given to her for a single reason.

She was the personification of the concept.

Anyone who looked into her eyes would die. Anyone who crossed her path would die. Anyone who even scraped the bounds of her perception would die.

There was no escaping death when she was involved.

'...and for that, they allowed their fear to take control and sacrificed me.'

She was sealed not killed. This was partially because of her power, and partially because the one who sealed her understood her predicament.

But now she was free.

Now she had no more restrictions.

And now...

Killing intent filled the air with so much pressure that it solidified. Reality warped into a domain of absolute death purely due to its influence,

Her eyes gleamed with bloodthirst.

"...the time has come for revenge."

#### Chapter 1285 Cosmic Rebirth [6]

Long ago, in a nameless area of the Abyss, a Nox Being was born.

That being had no family, nor was she born from the Demon Abyss. The entirety of her existence was a mystery.

Therefore, she did not come under the control of a Nox Emperor during her early life.

She did not know that there were others like her. She was not aware of other existences in any way.

She was alone and so far separated that the only thing she shared with the Nox was heritage.

And, unlike the rest of her race, she was born with spirituality.

She had no sense of curiosity or desire. She remained in the place where she was born, quietly drifting with the Abyss as she pondered her existence.

And the Abyss embraced her, a lonely existence like it.

Its energy flowed through her body and changed it. She became stronger without knowing what strength was, her consciousness still limited to her naive state.

This strange phenomenon continued for an amount of time she couldn't quantify even in the present, but just like all things, her seclusion also had to come to an end.

She was discovered by a migrating Nox colony and taken in as one of theirs. Similar to Yong An, she met those who did not carry the negative traits of their race proudly, and learned among them for many years.

As her naivety went away and she developed a sense of individuality, as she grew past the limits of natural growth, she evolved into something greater.

Yet, before she could blossom, she was taken away from those who treated her well.

Rumors of her talent spread to Al'Katra, and forces under the Nox Emperor came to her colony to take her away.

From then on, her life was painful.

She was raised into a soldier, or at least, that was their goal when they took her.

Her and Yong An's situation wasn't uncommon. Many Nox children would be used the same way, but unlike the two of them, they were unable to extricate themselves or didn't have the desire to do so, later becoming part of the masses that would be killed during one of the Nox's many attempts at conquest.

She endured the torture thinking about her colony and protecting them. She allowed them to use her as a slave as long as her base values weren't compromised.

Until that day.

That day when she learned the truth.

Nox who could not be used were useless. Nox who did not remain controlled by their vices had to be purged.

And her colony was among those who were eradicated for the sake of unity.

She flew into a rage.

She killed and killed, escaping the slave camp and killing more.

As her bloodlust grew, she became a symbol of death, and through the countless tribulations she endured, her Demonic Providence awakened.

A providence of Death.

Her history was vague from this point.

Her memories of that time were blurry, but all she could remember was slaughter and violence, her vision filled with the color red.

She ascended to Divinity, she became a Nox Emperor, and when her life finally regained a semblance of stability, she woke up.

She was no longer the person she was when she turned mindless.

She could no longer feel those sympathetic or generous feelings that had been instilled in her since young.

And the people she hated the most were her own.

How was she supposed to move forward from there?

She only found two paths.

Either she once again sank into the depravity of slaughter, or she took the position she made for herself and changed the Nox from the inside out.

Naturally, she chose the latter.

She tried her best.

The title of Death Emperor wasn't a joke. Most Nox were terrified by the mere mention of her name, so forcing them to act as she desired was not a hard task.

However, she met opposition easily.

The Nox Emperors whose interests were touched by her choices were not willing to share their title with someone who would get in their way.

They worked together and made an elaborate plan to make her the public enemy of the universe. They sacrificed her to their so-called "enemies" for the sake of personal benefit.

And funnily enough, that generosity, that sympathy she was taught as a child...

It was shown to her by those "enemies," not her own people.

Her story was a long one. It could not be easily understood through such a vague summary, but she had long forgotten the events of the past.

She didn't care who she used to be, because, after countless millennia of isolation with her thoughts, she'd become a different person entirely.

She...did not have much purpose in this life.

The things she thought were her ambitions were the fragile wishes of a traumatized child. She lost them when she finally came to her senses.

So, what was she supposed to live for?

The answer she found for herself was revenge.

Revenge on those who put her in this situation, revenge on the Nox for abandoning her.

But, another answer was presented to her.

A man too young to even be called a man, a man who was just a boy when they first met. She never expected him to return to her with an answer.

It happened before Damien went to the Abyss.

He returned to the First Dungeon and asked her that question.

"What is your goal?"

The question she had no answer to.

"Revenge."

She answered, no other thoughts in mind.

But the man shook his head.

"That's not a goal. It's an eventuality, but it's not one you should put your whole life into. You're already strong enough to get revenge, so what do you plan to do once you've accomplished it?"

Frankly, it wasn't something she was expecting to hear.

Their meetings in the past had been cordial, but not friendly. She could always sense the hostility he held for the Nox.

But looking into his eyes, she saw someone different.

She saw someone who was looking at her, not the person he thought she was.

So she felt compelled to find an answer for him.

Yet, no matter how hard she tried, she could not.

Seeing her state, he shook his head and put his hand up to his face wryly.

"It was only a hunch, but I guess I was right. You two really are the same type."

"You two...?"

"Haa, just a guy I know, don't worry about it. Anyway, you can't figure anything out, right?"

She had no choice but to nod her head.

"Then..."

A grin lit up the man's face.

"...how about you live for me?"

The conditions of her release from this sealed space that they'd agreed upon during their first meeting required her to pledge her obedience to him, but what he suggested was something different.

Not mindless obedience, but companionship. His promise was to be a Lord worth her loyalty, someone who could give meaning to her existence.

She didn't believe it.

She could not put her faith in a man who was barely a child compared to her.

Yet, he gave her an answer far better than anything she could find on her own.

So, she took a risk.

"Okay."

She agreed to his suggestion, and with a smile, that man who was supposed to be young and fragile...he did something even the greatest existences she knew couldn't do.

He directly freed her from her imprisonment within seconds.

Standing before her, he held out his hand.

"Introductions and the likes are important in moments like these, and your social skills seem pretty rusty so let's do some practice."

"My name is Damien Void. It's nice to meet you."

She looked at that hand strangely.



Her heart was icy as always, but there seemed to be a small chip on its surface that hadn't existed before.

She reached her hand out and grabbed his, her grip weak from years of disuse.

"I am Tiamat..."

She was Tiamat, the Empress of Death.

"...and it is a pleasure to meet you as well."

And finally, she found the light that would lead her out of this hellish existence.

Chapter 1286 Cosmic Rebirth [7]

BOOOOOOOOOM!

"Kahak...!"

The Karmic Emperor spit out blood as he was struck with an unknown force that he couldn't perceive.

Tiamat started attacking the second she declared her intent, and he realized one simple fact.

The only reason he was alive was because he wasn't alone.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Blood red waves shot at her from all directions as Immortal Blood Asura tried to block her vision.

But, who was she?

It had been a long time since she moved her limbs, but she'd regained a large portion of her old power.

Damien released her several years ago and left her to her own devices until now for that very purpose.

She'd been acclimating to her freedom for the sole purpose of revenge, because nothing could be accomplished until this demon was removed from her heart.

And now that she was here, what could a mere Karmic Emperor or Immortal Blood Asura do to her?

VOOOM!

Blackness emanated from her body and pushed away all ethereal forces that came near her.

Immortal Blood Asura's attempts to attack her backfired instantly, forcing him into an even worse position than he was already in.

He used most of his Divine Energy when he was chasing Damien.

Despite seeming like he had infinite mana, he was nowhere near the concept.

The mana he used on Damien himself of course wasn't much, because he didn't need an extreme amount to take on a lower existence.

Mana quantity wasn't what could kill Damien. The power of a Divinity's law was.

Therefore, the majority of his power was spent in...quite the embarrassing fashion.

It was uselessly expended on the unbreakable barrier Dante put up during his brief appearance in a fit of rage.

But, Immortal Blood Asura was only partially at fault.

After all, who could've predicted the appearance of someone like Tiamat?

She was too far disconnected from her race for her to still be included in their hivemind. No, in the first place, her anomalous existence excluded her from the concept.

She was a completely independent entity, and for the Nox, this made her even more dangerous than she already was!

'This cannot happen.'

The Karmic Emperor was clear on this. Her presence would ruin his plans, but that was the least important thing.

If he didn't escape, he'd lose his life here!

Of all the Nox Emperors, the Karmic Emperor had the least combat power.

Unlike the Marionette Lord, who could both do what he did and fight on their own, he was absolutely focused on controlling others and barely spent time on himself.

The best he could do was use the weight of his Divinity to overpower opponents, but Tiamat wasn't someone who could be felled by that strategy!

There was a reason he never entered the frontlines and only ever manipulated things from behind the scenes.

Even the cooperation he had with Immortal Blood Asura was based on a Mana Oath. If not for that, he likely would've been found out and killed by the puppet he was preparing long ago!

Nevertheless, now that they'd reached this point, he needed to find a route to escape.

The best one he saw was the man himself.

'Protect your master.'

He sent a command into Immortal Blood Asura's head.

It rooted itself in his subconscious, which was already corrupt with the Karmic Emperor's influence, and forced him to move along with its will.

BANG!

Tiamat shot forward, her fist like a burning comet of black as it pushed towards the Karmic Emperor, but before she could reach him, Immortal Blood Asura was already in front of her, taking the impact with his own energy.

WHOOOOOSH!

The winds whipped chaotically as the traitorous Demigod was thrown thousands of kilometers away with all the bones in his forearms shattered.

However, in that brief period of time, the Karmic Emperor also found his opportunity.

He searched through the crowds below for sacrifices, and found them soon enough.

Ten Demigods were thrown into the air between him and Tiamat before they even knew what was happening, and as the remaining force of her attack washed over them, they were turned into sorry versions of themselves in an instant.

Five of them were crushed into slabs of meat, all from the Grand Heavens Boundary side, while the five Nox Lords among them barely survived, their bodies combining as the Nox did.

But...the Karmic Emperor must've forgotten.

They were up against the Death Empress herself.

Such petty tricks held no meaning.

Tiamat swept her hand through the air with grace, and the waves of blackness that rushed through the air completely obliterated the fusing souls.

However, the inky material that made up their bodies remained intact, rushing towards her like they were being pulled by a vacuum.

'Devour.'

It wasn't the same as Damien's skill, but it had the same purpose.

The bodies of Nox she killed could be devoured into her own power, and...

'The new generation's Demonic Providence...as expected, it is lackluster.'

That was what made the Death Empress so terrifying.

Her Demonic Providence was constantly growing and evolving, and the only way to stop it was to completely erase the Nox from existence.

The providence of Death is what they knew it as, but it was much more than that.

Her providence was based on her name. It manifested as a voracious dragon of chaos, preying on all and spreading death to feed itself.

If she hadn't learned to reign in its force, she would've remained controlled by her instincts for her entire life.

But because she did, she became so powerful that hardly anyone could stand up to her.

The Karmic Emperor was trying to fight her with his tricks and schemes?

Laughable!

Though, he did have an impressive amount of vitality.

That was the only reason he was alive.

Tiamat's attacks were relaxed, and she was clearly playing with her food before devouring it whole, but even then, the Karmic Emperor wouldn't have been so unharmed without his immense life force.

He focused on self-protection more than learning how to fight, so that was granted.

Nevertheless, it wasn't enough to stand up to Tiamat, and he needed to find a way to escape.

He had been put into the position he and Immortal Blood Asura forced Damien into prior.

If he was here to see it, he would've been laughing so hard it hurt, but fortunately for him, he was now completely separated from the outside world.

With Iris not having to worry about being attacked anymore, she used creation to both make a place for her to stand and a defense system that could passively take care of anyone who approached her until Tiamat could arrive.

Her entire focus was on maintaining the Heavenly Order.

And that...

It was a task nobody else would've dared to take.

The Heavenly Order was gluttonous beyond belief. No matter how much Universal Law she used to sustain it, it always wanted more.

But Iris wasn't the same person she used to be.

Her newly reformed soul gave her mana capacity she never could've imagined in the past, and to make sure she didn't waste it, she completely reconstructed her mana utilization system to prioritize efficiency.

She was enough to support it.

And as long as things remained quiet, she would stay enough.

Still, the burden on her mind wasn't something to be easily ignored.

She also hoped Damien would come out as quickly as possible.

Yes, a part of it was because she would be freed from this duty and he would be strong enough to resolve the current situation...

...but the true reason she hid in her mind was simply...well, she really, really, really wanted to see him again.

Chapter 1287 Cosmic Rebirth [8]

The meaning of Divinity.

Damien already understood it, but he kept pondering it once his worry diminished.

With Iris managing the Heavenly Order, not only did she gain a chance to grow, he was granted peace of mind.

Now, he could really take his time to think.

What did he want?

How did he want to be viewed?

How did he want to be represented?

His answers were all existent, but too vague to be classified as the building blocks of a Divinity.

'I'll save the law for last. Once I have something built, I can take more time to understand how and what to integrate.'

This was too important of a decision for him to make hastily, no matter how much he wanted to ascend.

If he couldn't find the answer here, he'd rather take his chances and cancel his ascension than ascend half-heartedly.

'Let's think.'



Damien allowed his memories to flow again.

He watched those days in the First Dungeon where he struggled and fell into the depths of insanity to survive, he watched his journey to heal through Apeiron and the Cloud Plane, he watched his first step onto the battlefield free of setbacks in the unnamed world, he watched the Fifth Primal Sovereign appear and show him what true power really was...

He watched his descent on the Divine Realm and the realizations he made, he watched his journey through Death Emperor Star and the relationships he gained, he watched his struggles on Calypto and revisited the lessons he learned...

His journeys were plenty and the lessons they instilled in him were even more numerous. They were what gave Damien the capability to define himself so easily in his current state.

So the first question: what did he want?

'That's...quite easy to answer.'

"I want security. I want control. I want to be someone who cannot be shaken unless I allow it, and I want the people I care about to stand at that peak with me."

It was a lofty wish, but that was what he'd been moving towards ever since he stopped seeing power as his entire life.

He didn't want to be threatened by unknowns everywhere he went. He wanted absolute control that didn't allow anything to remain unknown or even be unknown in the first place.

"Therefore, I also want knowledge. I want the knowledge of all things, so I will never be caught unaware again."

Omnipotence and omniscience. Weren't they the goals of anyone who could exist in a place where they were possible to reach?

Of course, life would become meaningless if these two concepts were absolute, and that's why Damien needed control.

So that he could reach a point above them and become an entity they could not bind. So he could experience the joys of life without being bogged down by the reality of being an absolute.

Usually, people didn't put such high ceilings on their Divinity. If they couldn't eventually achieve those goals, they would be ruined by their own ambition, so most people aimed for more realistic levels by their own perception.

But to Damien, there was no point in becoming Divine if one was just going to limit their own potential like that.

"The same standards I use to judge others should be used to judge myself. If I cannot fulfill the grand ambitions in my soul, then I am not deserving of the Divinity I am building. In the case of failure, the only person at blame is myself."

Right, the reason Damien could hold such an uncaring view of the world, where he did not pity those who were born to be weak and did not envy those who reached places he could only dream of was because he did not discriminate nor did he act like a hypocrite.

He didn't just make claims without having anything to back them.

His desire and mentality...

They were acknowledged by the Heavenly Order.

A change appeared in his soul.

A vague pyramid-like illusion formed. Above it was an eye that gave off a strange luster, entrapped within a manifestation of infinity.

This was the first sign of Divinity establishment.

'Then, the next question...'

How did he want to be viewed, and how did he plan to present himself to the world?

"I...don't care how I'm viewed. Whether I am a saint or a devil is not up to me to decide. I will always be Damien Void, and the meaning of that name will change depending on who is saying it. It has never been my decision how I'm viewed, and I have no desire to be viewed any type of way."

Damien was not a saint. He'd slaughtered quintillions of existence without so much as batting an eye.

But nor was he a demon. He helped countless people and saved countless lives whether intentionally or as a consequence of his actions.

To some, he was a savior. To some, he was a monster. To some, he was a friend. To some, he was an enemy.

What did he want them to think?

Since when did he pay any mind to their opinions anyway?

The only opinions he cared about were those of the people he cared about, and he had no intention of acting a certain way to influence their perception either.

He would always be himself, and that was why they enjoyed being in his presence, regardless of their relationship.

This was why he cared about them to the extent he did.

They were his anchors, and they were the people he could completely drop his guard around, acting however he pleased without needing to even think about unwarranted criticism.

Honestly, Damien didn't believe this answer was enough. It was too indifferent for it to manifest into his Divinity.

But he was wrong. Even that indifference was an answer of its own.

While it had no physical form like the previous parts, its presence could be felt, the subtle veil of warmth encompassing the rest.

'So then—'

Damien's thoughts came to an abrupt halt.

'It started with Space. It expanded with Fire and Lightning, and then was suppressed through Time. Life took root, and Death invaded. They then found each other and formed Samsara, as if following the example Space and Time set for them prior. Yet, they still felt a void. Water flowed through that void, earth formed around it, Wind wildly danced, Wood spread its influence, and Metals formed. Let free from their cage, Flames rampaged, Lightning struck down, and suddenly, the void was full of existence. When Creation and Destruction finally saw their children in harmony, they dawned, bringing forth True Reality...'

The aspect known as "Damien Void" was removed from the equation.

And a word came to mind.

A single word that described what happened when one tried to find where "Damien Void" fit into it all.

"Hegemon..."

That was his position.

The autarch of all things both existent and nonexistent, of all things that existed, exists, to would exist, and all things opposite them.

His title, the title he deemed fit for himself, who did not wish to be constrained to common beliefs, was simple.

Hegemon God Damien Void.

That was the man he was going to be.

That was what his Divinity would represent.

And to prove his qualifications, he stopped paying attention to convention.

"Everything" was being poured into his soul space to solidify his ever-forming Divinity.

Today marked the start of an event that would go down in history for the rest of time, the creation of a being that would be worshipped regardless of how many generations passed.

This was the first step in the path he created.

This was the dawn of an Absolute.

Chapter 1288 Cosmic Rebirth [9]

Slowly, quietly, imperceptibly, something took root within Damien.

His mind and soul were rising in status with every passing second, and as Damien threw away everything he knew for the sake of his ambitions, the stubborn Heavenly Order had no choice but to acknowledge him.

Perhaps there was no man worthier than him for Divinity.

The manifestations in his soul that symbolized the singular aspects of his forming Divinity blurred and began to merge as they were swamped with a myriad of other concepts.

And as the process began, Damien's mind went black. "Thought" was no longer possible for him.

He was floating in an endless abyss, but, it didn't seem as colorless as it was. It felt so full of everything that there was nothing that could possibly represent it but blackness.

He felt bliss in this abyss. He allowed it to embrace him, and he embraced it back.

And as his mind was swallowed by the unknown, his body underwent massive changes as well.

The lightning baptism came to an end, and instead of furiously striking down as it had been, the Heavenly Order became calm.

Waves of gentle energy washed over Damien's body with every passing second, and as its league was heightened in an ethereal way, another force took charge.

Damien always had the connection.

He could always feel that there was an ethereal body mirroring his own connected to him.

That was the Void Physique.

The Void Physique had been with him since before mana even existed on Earth. When he awakened along with everyone else, it was the thing that stood in his way and forced him to remain at the bottom of society.

However, it was also his savior.

It gave him access to Devour and allowed him to survive the First Dungeon, it gave him access to Void Essence and gave him the qualifications to comprehend the Void, and it was the main backer behind his talent and strength from start to finish.

His connection with the Void was now far deeper. His soul was bathed in its essence, and his mind held traces of its will.

However, the root of his power was first his body and the Void Physique connected to it.

He was still unaware of what the Void Physique truly was.

It was easy to say it was just a symbol of his status as the Void's Apostle, however, that wasn't all there was to it.

The Void Physique was its own monster.

Because of it, Damien didn't even realize the kind of uniqueness he had.

Most people only had a single elemental affinity. Some would have two, and barely anyone had three, but nobody could ever have more than that.

It was partially a matter of Universal Law, but the main reason was something else entirely.

The vessel of a sentient existence simply didn't have the capability of housing so many laws.

Laws were concepts that had an impact on the fundamental workings of the universe in some way, no matter how small it was.

For a sentient being to harness their power was already going against the laws of reality, but because they could grow stronger, they wouldn't be affected by the negatives of such an action.

Those with two affinities had more expansive vessels than the rest which allowed them to carry more, however, even they usually ended up focusing on only a single one.

Elena and Rose could be used as an example of this. Elena had Life and Light affinities, but she decided to reach the absolute peak of Life instead of following the path of a Valkyrie that required her to focus on Light. Meanwhile, Rose chose to focus on Illusion, throwing away her Wind affinity because it couldn't benefit her much.

Those with three laws didn't even need to be mentioned, because, in the entirety of the universe's existence, only a handful of them had been born.

At the end of the day, no matter how much talent one had, no matter how strong they got, they would be bound by the limits of their vessel.

Introducing more than that vessel allowed would cripple them, or, in the worst case, make them implode from the inside.

But...

Damien controlled a myriad of laws.

Even when taking only the fundamental laws into consideration, there were more than five within Elemental, Space, Time, Life, Death, Creation, and Destruction.

It was unreasonable. No matter how talented he was, he was still a human. By all logic, his body should've been a bloody puddle of mush drifting around somewhere in the starry sky.

But it was not.



It was a vessel more whole than anyone else's.

And that was precisely due to the Void Physique's influence.

It served as his vessel and allowed him to contain any and all things without worry, and as if that wasn't enough, it promoted absolute balance.

Instead of being overwhelmed by his laws, Damien controlled them as their sovereign. And, instead of being crippled when he tried to manipulate them as he desired, he could seamlessly merge them into their greatest forms.

All of this was because he was the bearer of the Void Physique. It had so much impact that the system itself decided it deserved a title of its own.

Still, its true worth was yet to be revealed.

Damien had yet to gain the qualifications.

At least, that was the case before now.

His soul was transformed, his mind was in the process of transformation, and finally...

His body also gained the qualifications to ascend.

The Mana Heart in the center of his chest dispersed into particles of energy and merged with his true heart, becoming a single entity with two faces.

The Ananta Matrix disappeared from his body entirely.

It wasn't gone, but it didn't need a physical form anymore.

It had reached a level of evolution where Damien could intuitively control mana perfectly without the assistance of a mana utilization system.

His Bloodline Core, a strange thing that was created when he racially ascended to something the universe had seen before, dissolved as well.

Even it was too low for what Damien's body was turning into.

Like ink in water, a blackness spread through his body and polluted every part.

Damien's blood changed. The aspects of existing species left him entirely. Whether it be his draconic side, his demonic side, or even his human side, it was all washed away as a more powerful force started flowing through his bloodstream.

Ba-dum! Ba-dum!

His heart thumped consistently.

The changes in his body from this point forth couldn't be explained.

It could only be said that he changed.

The "Void Physique" in its current definition disappeared.

Now, the "Void Physique" was just Damien's body in its most standard form.

His body and soul finally reached harmony.

Damien's current state was somewhat in limbo. He had yet to form his Divinity in finality, but he was far beyond the definition of a lower existence.

But it was right around the corner.

As his body and soul started to synergize, as his consciousness floated in the abyss, so many processes took place in one that his state became incomprehensible.

But it became clear.

The significance of the Void Physique, that is.

Chapter 1289 Cosmic Rebirth [10]

Most of the Void Physique's newly unlocked abilities, now that it was fully unsealed, were hidden until Damien could find them.

However, there were also several that amounted to direct changes in his body and soul.

The Void Physique wasn't just his body. It was everything that made him, the entire vessel his ego inhabited, including his soul.

That was why harmony was so important. With disharmony, he could only somewhat exceed the limits of reality while still being held back, disallowing him from reaching the level of Demigods like the Marionette Lord and Immortal Blood Asura.

Now that harmony was achieved, Damien's vessel could experience the full effects.

His soul space expanded and reached an almost impossible size. The hidden cavity in which his laws resided became visible to him whenever he wished to see and alter it.

His comprehension skills would be heightened immensely purely due to this change, even putting aside the changes in his spiritual world.

His soul state also gave him another ability, similar to the All-Seeing Eyes, but more intuitive.

It was a sort of absolute perception.

It didn't near omnipotence, of course, and it had nothing to do with his awareness of the surroundings. It was more like...he could learn everything about a person from a glance.

Whether it be their habits, their thoughts, their character, or anything else, it'd be revealed to him as if it was never hidden.

It was a mystical ability that appeared when his soul connected to the All-Seeing Eyes, and though Damien was still unable to see it, the eyes themselves had changed in both his body and in his status window.

Of the soul-based abilities, the one that was most basic yet most vital was likely "protection."

With the Void taking root in his vessel, his soul received absolute protection from harm similar to how the Void Physique protected his body from foreign energy.

This protection was much more far-reaching, however, and made sure nothing could perturb his soul unless it was far above his league and unstoppable.

Then, one also had to look at his body.

In truth, there weren't nearly as many changes to the body itself.

Once it was totally merged with the Void Physique, all of its uniqueness blended into his systems. His traits disappeared and became regular parts of his body, and the same process was mirrored by everything else.

It wasn't that they were leaving. If Damien wanted, he could still easily use [Storm] or [Heal], however, rather than being defined as "traits" they were now in a state where they simply existed as part of his body, just like his heart or lungs.

His blood became robust, his systems melted into his physique and became impenetrable, and, in essence, Damien gained an immortal body.

No matter how many times it was broken down, as long as his soul existed, his body could not be killed, and as long as his body existed, his soul could not be killed.

Whether or not he could die was still a question, though, because there was no guarantee he'd experience something like Nonexistence again if both body and soul were eradicated together.

But, while all these changes took place, Damien was in a completely different place.

To put it simply, he was drowning in his own Divinity.

It wasn't a dangerous thing. In fact, it was a necessary step for him to truly understand what he was creating.

Divinity was too ethereal of a concept. Most people tried to rationalize it while they built it, which led to the systems currently in place, but Damien didn't do that at all.

He threw everything inside of it, embracing its ethereal nature and choosing to approach it the same way.

His Divinity was truly a reflection of him, but at the same time, it wasn't anything of the sort.

It was like he created a Divinity for his future self, and his current self had to work hard to reach even the starting line to use it properly.

This was definitely holding him back in the short term. His growth rate would be slow, and he probably wouldn't grow at all for months or years at a time, but it was all worth the disadvantages.

Because once he reached the starting line, he'd be able to race like nobody ever was before him.

This Divinity...

Damien created a Divinity that, in terms of league, was only a single step below Godhood. It was quite insane to even consider.

'What is this...power?'

Damien wondered as he allowed his Divinity to entrap him.

It felt like mana, but it was far higher. It wasn't quite Divine Energy, but it was just as powerful.

'Is this...me?'

It was an energy.

Damien remembered when he faced the Envoy in Al'Katra. That man also used a strange "energy" he'd never seen before.

This wasn't that, of course, but in the same way, he found himself in possession of an energy that wasn't mana.

'Is this even possible?'

He couldn't deny that it was.

'Then, is this what I'll be using from now on?'

It seemed problematic at first glance. In a place where mana was the energy ambient in the atmosphere, wasn't it a terrible idea to use something else?

'No, this transmutes and can be transmuted.'

His spiritual body raised its hand. The energy around him easily changed form with just a single thought from him.

In one moment it was Void Essence, in the next it was mana, and for a second, he even replicated the strange energy the Envoy used.

'This...is this what it means to control existence?'

All energies that existed could be controlled by him, and his mana was simply a malleable energy that could become anything he wished for it to be.

'Hahaha...'

He resolved himself to do it properly this time, but it seemed he failed in the best way possible.

He made a Divinity that could alter itself. The base concepts would always remain the same, but he could change his nature as he pleased due to it.

'How amazing...'

Damien could somewhat understand the situation in the outside world.

As his Divinity became more defined, his senses slowly returned to his body one by one.

The Heavenly Order still existed and was still sending waves of energy cascading over his body, which meant his Rebirth was technically still in process.

'But, I don't think much else needs to change.'

Rather, he felt quite complete already.

He didn't feel the elation of growing stronger or the excitement of breaking the boundary to becoming a higher existence. He felt calm, as if his current state was natural.

As if this was how it was always meant to be.

'Then...'

The spiritual form Damien smiled happily.

'I should use this time that's been given to me.'

Since he still had time within the barrier until his Divinity took shape, he could use it as he pleased.

And until he left this place, he'd become as strong as possible.

So that nobody could threaten him.

'So that I can finally reach "his" level.'

He had a clear goal and a way to get there.



Now, all that was left was a silent road of comprehension and growth.

## Chapter 1290 Emergence [1]

The situation in the outside world was getting better and worse at the same time.

In the skies, Tiamat battled the Karmic Emperor and Immortal Blood Asura, pushing them back, but on the ground, the Grand Heavens Boundary forces were having difficulty holding off against their enemies.

BANG!

Tang Lingzi was doing her best.

She'd killed tens of enemies already, but the number only kept increasing.

Not only did more and more Nox Lords appear to replenish their waning forces, but the people behind her weren't fighting nearly as well as they were expected to.

The average Nox Lord was stronger than the average Grand Heavens Boundary Demigod.

And the reason behind it was fear.

The fear that was struck in their hearts by this battle, and more than anything, the cowardice that they already held.

Most of these Demigods did not refuse ascension because they had ambitions in the lower universe like Alucard and Tang Lingzi.

They rejected ascension because they were afraid of the Heavenly World. They did not want to go to a place where their worldviews would be shattered, where they realized the peak they reached was just one of many.

That fear led to unstable Divinity, something that could barely be called Divinity by the standards of those without fear.

And because the Nox Lords refused ascension to entertain their personal greed, not out of cowardice or any similar emotion, their Divinities, while corrupt, were stable.

It was a simple difference that didn't show itself in most situations, but now that they were in direct confrontation, it became glaring.

"Alucard!"

Tang Lingzi yelled out, and Alucard responded with action.

He turned around and slammed his arm through the air, sending a wave of Divine Energy rushing forward and splitting the heads of his enemies.

He ignored the ones he was already fighting and made his way back to the frontline.

Meanwhile, Tang Lingzi took over the fight he was already participating in. She was now facing over ten Nox Lords at once, but she refused to lose her momentum.

They didn't have a choice.

One of them had to support the weaker ones among their allies or they'd lose the war even if they won this battle

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Tang Lingzi could no longer prevent herself from being surrounded. Attacks came from all sides, and like an elephant in the circus, she had no choice but to dance in the ring they formed to stay alive.

'Dammit!'

She didn't know how to get out of this with what they currently had.

She was slowly accumulating injuries, and if she kept expending Divine Energy like this, she would find herself swamped soon.

She would die.

'How do I win?!'

It was hopeless.

Just like everything else, it was hopeless.

But...

'I refuse.'

Tang Lingzi did not have fear in her heart.

Her reason for refusing ascension was even more vain, in a sense.

There was someone in the Heavenly World, someone she adored at one point in her life.

But when they ascended, she realized that she was nowhere near talented enough to stand by their side.

She refused to go to that place until she gained those qualifications. Even if that person had forgotten her already, she refused to face them until she could stand in front of them proudly.

It wasn't a matter of love or affection, but pride.

Tang Lingzi had not reached the limits of her potential.

And she knew that there was a way for her to ascend after refusing.

She didn't know where it was, but "that person"

told her it existed, and she believed them more than she believed her own thoughts.

So until she could reach the place she wanted to be, until she could meet that person again, she refused to die!

"Keuk...!"

She spat out blood as a terrifying sword strike grazed her side and burned her skin.

She twirled and danced, dodging and evading as she took down her enemies, but there were just too many of them.

One died.

Another gash formed on her torso.

Two died.

Her neck was almost severed.

Three died.

Her left arm was crippled, lowering her attack power.

It had been like this the entire time.

If only she had more allies she could count on, if only the Demigods of Grand Heavens Boundary weren't so pathetic...!

Tang Lingzi's eyes widened.

She didn't see them at all.

She killed eight of the ten that surrounded her, but another three had entered the circle before she knew what was happening.

And just as she noticed their existence, another presence appeared behind her.

Just a few inches away.

SHIK!

A sword went through her chest.

Her life force began to dwindle.

'Is this...'

BOOOOOOOOM!

She flared her mana, forcing the Nox Lord who impaled her into the air. She stomped her foot into the ground and shot up in pursuit, barraging him with physical attacks before ripping his heart out of his chest.

She refused to just die.

She already knew what her fate was when that sword ran her through. Her Divinity started leaking out of the wound, so the chance of surviving was nil.

But if she was going to die, she was going to die proudly.

Not for anyone else, but for herself.

BOOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

She didn't explode her core yet. There was still more she could do before the need for that came.

She abandoned her post and ran towards the frontlines, allowing Alucard, who noticed her situation, to take over the battle for her.

She went on a slaughterfest, killing any and every weak Nox Lord she could find to cull their numbers for the remaining forces to deal with once she was gone.

And as her life force dwindled, she saw the battle situation slowly stabilizing.

She smiled wryly.

'It was nice while it lasted...'

She didn't want a sad death, so she didn't think sad thoughts.

It was a shame that she had to go like this, but at least she accomplished something.

Right...?

"Wrong."

A voice came from behind her.

She turned around and swept her claws out to kill the newcomer, but her wrist was caught in an immovable grip.

She looked up in surprise.

"Y-you are...!"

The woman standing there was not a Nox Lord.

She was far too powerful to even be mistaken for one.

She smiled at the dying Tang Lingzi brightly.

"I'm glad you were able to reconcile with death, however, I'm afraid I can't let you die here."

Tang Lingzi's mind was filled with confusion, but before she could ask any questions, a prismatic Divine Energy rushed through her body.

Her wounds were healed, her Divinity was contained, and it felt like she was being magically returned to the state she was in before the battle started.

As she marveled over her sudden return from the brink of death, the woman who healed her looked out on the battlefield with a grin.

"That strange thing up there doesn't need my support anymore, so..."

She raised herself into the air, allowing her mana to billow and her aura to pressure the enemy.

"...why don't I try out my new power?"