

Void 1331

Chapter 1331 Final Battle [1]

Time passed swiftly. As the universe gradually gained the ability to stand on its own feet, Alexander's presence within it diminished.

The war continued to rage on. Large and small battles destroyed parts of the Infernal Realm, but the Nox were being continuously pushed back. The war zone was shifting into Hephaestus, and as the dwarven domain had already been largely destroyed by the Nox's efforts to plunder World Cores, the actual damage caused by the war itself was mostly lessened.

Though, since the reason was that Hephaestus was already ruined, it wasn't necessarily something to be proud of.

Nevertheless, things were going well for Grand Heavens Boundary now that the Nox Demigods were gone. Despite the great damage that it took in the past few decades that left it a shell of its previous self, it was more than enough for the people who stayed alive.

The common population who couldn't fight was being protected within the borders of the Human Domain and the Divine Realm, and the warriors and soldiers felt a suffocating feeling in their hearts as they realized that the end was approaching.

The total number of Nox had been cut down severely by the countless battles in the past.

They were now holed up in the old Heaven's Army headquarters and the areas around it, playing more defensively than ever before.

Now was the time to strike.

Now was the time to end the war.

The Demigods had been gone for roughly a decade now, which meant the results of their battle would become clear soon.

So before they returned, things in the universe needed to be settled. Otherwise, in the case where the Nox side won, the chances of victory would completely evaporate.

Currently, a meeting was going on. It was a meeting like any other, and those present with a say in it were the same characters who'd been leading the war for the past decade.

Rose, Ruyue, and Elena, who'd risen to the peak of Supremes and represented the pride of the younger generation stood at the head.

Tian Yang and the Golden Dragon Emperor, two advisors who were already respected within the older generation and the only two "Demigods" still in the lower universe, had positions with the same weight as their identities.

The core members of the Judgement Order like Su Ren and Long Chen, strategists like Luciel, Elyssia Bloodlock, and several other well-known individuals also sat at the main table, including Yong An, who was an unexpected face to most.

Along with them, there were several military advisors and generals in the room to spectate and pass their decisions along at the fastest speed possible.

These were the universe's most trusted people, those who would not betray them no matter what.

Because even in this time when the universe wasn't losing so badly, people still turned traitor for one reason or another.

The topic of this meeting was the final counterattack. They were making plans on how to move their forces to completely corral and kill the Nox left in the universe.

With Yong An's support, understanding their movements was simple. With the brains of those like Rose and Luciel, creating strategies was also easy, and with the wisdom and experience of those like Tian Yang, any flaws in the plan could be directly picked apart and fixed.

After warring for so long, the synergy between these people had grown to an unprecedented level, so such meetings were really more for the sake of appearance than anything else.

Their confidence had to be made known to the lower-level troops, after all.

The meeting proceeded extremely smoothly. Before some of the spectators even realized it had started, it was over.

And despite the speed, nobody could say they rushed things.

Their plans were far, far too concrete for such a statement to be true.

As the various forces left to carry out their duties to prepare for the scheduled battle, Yong An stood up with some slight hesitation in his heart.

'I won't get killed, right...?'

Thinking about the conversation he had with Alexander a bit ago, he figured things would be fine, but he was still scared.

Damien could see Rose, Ruyue, and Elena the way he did because they were his wives. However, to anyone else, they were far too fearsome to just approach.

The feats they accomplished in this war were magisterial. They, as part of the younger generation, most of whom were still just a part of the universe's forces and not key figures like they were expected to be, had become so integral to the war effort that anyone in existence, whether it be the strongest experts or the most common farmers, knew their names.

Their legends were adored by all, they were the role models that children growing up in this era aspired to be, and to people who'd fought side by side with them, they were people who absolutely couldn't be offended.

Because when they got serious, they were terrifying.

Nevertheless, Yong An made a promise to his friend, so he had to do something.

He approached them before they left the meeting room and asked them for a moment of their time, waiting for those unrelated to vacate the premises before he spoke again.

With just the four of them in the room, Rose took the opportunity to speak first.

"Was there something? If it isn't important, you know what will happen."

Yong An smiled wryly.

"I understand why you don't trust me, but please try to hear me out on this one."

Their relationship was...rocky. Yes, he was of great help, and yes, he was Damien's friend, at least, according to him, but the three women couldn't easily drop their guards with anyone.

This included most of the Judgement Order.

Their attitudes were completely understandable, so despite the grievances in his heart, Yong An naturally didn't question them on it.

But this time...well, if they continued to hold their prejudice, he'd die before he was able to give them the good news.

Still, he steeled himself and looked into their eyes.

"I will make a Mana Oath first. I, Yong An, swear that everything I say from this point forth is absolutely true. If I lie, may the heavens strike me down."

He started with assurance even though Damien already told him it wouldn't work.

As Damien was in the Void, something like a Mana Oath wouldn't be able to sense his presence, so if Yong An spoke wrong, it would still strike him down despite him speaking the truth.

But he did it anyway as a show of faith.

After taking a deep breath, he continued on to the main point.

"Damien Void..."

"...is still alive."

VOOOOOOM!

Yong An's eyes bulged. The air in the room cooled down to subzero temperatures in an instant, and something invisible was grabbing his neck with such force that it felt like his trachea was going to be crushed.

"What did you say?"

Ruyue spoke first.

All three of their eyes were absolutely cold.

Damien's name was a taboo. Everyone knew it. The second it was mentioned, the moods of these three women would become horrifying.

They had yet to accept his death, but after a decade of fighting without seeing a hint of him, they couldn't help but fear the worst.

In order to push that fear down and maintain hope, they did not allow themselves to think about the matter of his life or death, because if they did, their mentalities would break down.

They treated themselves like widows, because it was the only way to survive.

But...

Yong An, this Nox being, suddenly came and said he was alive?

What was his goal?

Why now?

No matter what, it was better to kill him first. They couldn't allow themselves to be shaken at this time.

Yong An could see all those thoughts in their eyes. He could feel their cold killing intent encroaching on his soul.

This kind of fear, he hadn't felt it since the last time he saw the Saint Emperor.

"W-wait...! I can...explain!"

He squeezed the word out in a panic.

He had to save his life somehow.

Rose glanced at Ruyue for a moment, and the force crushing Yong An's neck lessened enough for him to speak.

"Haa...haa...haa..."

"If you cannot give a satisfying answer, you will die here."

Yong An nodded, catching his breath.

"I have evidence. I was told as long as I say it, you will not question me anymore."

He knew what he had to say, but...

'...will this really work?'

Under their scrutinizing gazes, his face turned a shade of red one wouldn't expect possible with the Nox's natural skin tone.

'I have no choice.'

He steeled himself again.

Even if it wasn't his dark history, it would become his dark history the moment he said it.

It didn't matter.

He had to save his life.

So, as he gathered up every little bit of courage in his body, he yelled out confidently.

"AHHH, MY EYE! THE PAIN IN MY RIGHT EYE! EVERYONE, LEAVE ME BEFORE THE DEMON SEALED IN MY RIGHT EYE, AND THE DARK DEMONIC FLAME SEALED IN MY RIGHT ARM, BECOME UNCONTAINABLE! I, DAMIEN VOID, AM THE ANCIENT GOD OF THE WORLD! I AM INDOMITABLE!"

"..."

"..."

"..."

The silence was incredibly loud.

And Yong An wanted to die.

Actually, it would be better if they just killed him now.

He was fine with that.

But contrary to his expectation...

"You may leave now."

...Rose spoke up.

Naturally, Yong An ran away with his tail between his legs as fast as possible to get away from the embarrassment he wished he didn't have to remember.

He ran away so fast...that he didn't catch the hints of tears forming in the eyes of those three women.

Chapter 1332 Final Battle [2]

Damien was a spiritual god in the eyes of those who called Grand Heavens Boundary their home.

His deeds had been widely publicized, and the fact that he was the reason their universe was able to gain proper footing in this war was known to all.

Nobody viewed him as anything less than a god. Any slander about him would lead to an immediate beating, or even execution in some places.

It was a fanatic belief that would be harmful in most cases, but was absolutely necessary for keeping the universe's people hopeful in the current times.

Therefore, the perception of Damien right now was a little twisted.

His life prior to the First Dungeon was buried. His story, in the eyes of most, began in Apeiron.

No, that was irrelevant.

Even putting that aside, there were only four people who knew.

Claire Watson, Rose, Ruyue, and Elena.

Only they knew of his dark history.

Only they knew of the time he spent as a child before mana even existed, the time that even he himself still to this day considered his weakness.

Damien's dark history...

To hear it from the mouth of someone like Yong An meant one of two things.

Either the three of them spilled the truth, or Damien himself told him.

And the three of them were very clear on what they had and hadn't done.

They stood in that meeting room alone. Rose had already distorted reality so they were essentially existing in a separate plane that no other being could detect or peer into.

"That...did that just happen?"

Elena spoke first, her voice quivering.

"It did..." Rose replied.

"..."

Ruyue was silent.

"Ha..."

"Hahaha..."

They didn't know what to think.

No, their minds were completely blank.

But in their hearts, they understood.

Tears streamed down their faces without them even realizing it.

They were shell-shocked.

But it was true.

"That bastard...that bastard...!" Elena stuttered.

"He's...still alive."

Rose said the words they'd all been avoiding ever since that day when Ruyue's soul connection broke.

It took several minutes before they could even move.

They hugged each other and cried.

The feelings in their hearts were indescribable.

How could one define what it felt like to realize someone one thought was dead for so long was still alive and well?

Sadness, joy, ecstasy, pure and unadulterated liberation, euphoria, excitement, agitation, and more than anything else, a sense of relief that made them feel like all of their worries disappeared.

The knot in their hearts, the knot in their souls, that didn't allow them to truly be themselves for so long was gone.

That knot not only affected their mentalities, but even their strength. The main reason they hadn't been able to ascend to Divinity was precisely due to this knot.

They were fighting this war for survival, and they were fighting this war for revenge.

But frankly, they didn't know what they'd do when it ended.

Because the light in their lives was already gone. He was not here anymore, so they didn't have anything to strive for.

Some people moved on after their partners died, some people found happiness again because even their loved ones would want that for them.

However, they weren't like those people. Their emotions of love were gone from the moment Damien left. They would not be happy again without him, and if it wasn't for each other's presence, they would have collapsed long ago.

But he was alive.

Damien was alive.

Since Yong An delivered the news, he was likely in a situation where he couldn't see them directly, but that didn't matter at all.

Because he was alive.

And that was all they could ever hope for.

They stood in that meeting room for hours celebrating amongst themselves.

'He's alive.'

That phrase which had already been repeated so many times was still repeating over and over again in their heads.

They couldn't help themselves but to celebrate. They couldn't help themselves but to smile. This feeling of liberation brought by his ethereal presence wasn't something they could easily calm down.

But one thing was certain.

In this final battle, they would perform far better than ever before in anticipation of his return, and...

Rose calmed herself first. There was something more important than even the final battle right now.

"We need to tell Zara."

As fast as possible, they needed to tell her.

Before she could do anything reckless again!

Ever since that day, their lives had changed.

That battle was a turning point in many lives, but none of them were quite like theirs.

That day, they achieved the impossible, and as a result, they reached a state neither of them expected.

They became one.

And they learned the truth of their existence.

At first, it was difficult.

Living together as one, trying to unify their thoughts, it was a difficult thing to do.

However, they eventually managed, because just as much as they diverged, they came together.

They were equal and opposite.

Their names were Zara and Alea, and together, they represented the perfect harmony between Yin and Yang.

When Beast Emperor Star was brought to the Divine Realm, Zara and Alea were left in a space outside reality for a very long time.

Even when they returned, only Rose, Ruyue, and Elena were made aware of their continued existence in their new state.

They became a secret trump card for the Grand Heavens Boundary armies, and their contributions were no less than the three women who stood at the head of those armies.

But their state was definitely strange.

Ruyue was the biggest help to them.

Lily and Mei, the twins who inhabited the same body due to their special constitution, were in a state similar to theirs.

When Zara and Alea merged, they didn't engulf each other at all. They controlled their new body together, and they could either split control and work together or take individual control of their physical vessel as they decided.

Their situation was similar to the Twin Spirit Body that Lily and Mei possessed, but the cause and meaning behind their dual consciousness were completely different, and the way it functioned was also not nearly the same.

However, the similarities allowed them to adapt far faster, and they learned to balance their egos far better because of Lily and Mei's help.

They were doing well.

However, tragedy struck them as it did everyone else.

They, who were now jointly connected to Damien through the companion contract Zara signed in the past, felt his death more viscerally than anyone else.

And Zara broke down.

She hid herself in the depths of their joint consciousness and Alea was forced to take the reigns for several years as she submerged herself in darkness.

And when she came back, it was like she'd lost all hope.

She went on a rampage. She forcefully took over their body and recklessly challenged the Nox time after time.

It was only when Rose and the girls finally managed to get back in touch with her that she somewhat calmed down.

Still, she hadn't been able to cope with Damien's death as well as everyone else.

She, who had been ethereally connected to him for the majority of her life, felt a void in her soul that couldn't be ignored.

So even the girls couldn't control her all the time.

She was now about to be in another reckless situation.

Before the final war started and she lost the chance to do something like this again, she was going to rush the Nox again.

She did not want to leave this war alive.

Not if she couldn't live with Damien.

Chapter 1333 Final Battle [3]

Alea couldn't do anything.

When they merged, their memories merged as well. Just as Zara experienced her life, she was instilled with the same feelings for Damien that Zara had.

So she could understand her sister's feelings.

However, she couldn't support her actions.

It was troubling sharing the same body with someone who couldn't get their thoughts in order, and Zara's overwhelming emotions made it hard to seize back control.

Plus, there was another problem.

They were now one being.

If Zara was caged away for her own safety and saw her mental state deteriorate further, those effects would rebound and injure them both.

So how could Alea help her sister?

It was impossible.

She had to vent these emotions somehow, and there was nobody who could set her on the right path.

Or at least, that was how it was.

Until that day.

It was only a week before the final war was supposed to start. The meeting between the high executives had just come to an end, and within the same day, Rose found their location through the vast information network she'd set up over time.

When the three women visited at once, Alea already knew something special was happening.

But when they shared the news they'd just learned and assured its veracity, her excitement peaked.

Zara's mind was engulfed in darkness.

If one looked into it, they'd find a sea of blackness, in which Zara sat in fetal position, hiding away from the world.

What controlled her was her desire to kill and her desire to die.

But those words cut through the darkness.

"Damien is alive."

Those words that she'd been praying to hear for years finally graced her ears, and even the slight hope that it was true brought her into the light.

She heard the whole story from the girls.

She cut contact with them and disappeared because she didn't want to be near warmth. If she felt warmth, she was afraid she'd forget her rage.

However, the girls never lost track of her. They had always been silently watching over her to make sure her recklessness never truly led her to death.

Now that the time had come to share the good news, they came instantly and made sure Zara would be back in her right mind.

And for the first time in almost five years, Zara and Alea returned to their original harmony.

The girls filled them in on the plans made earlier that day, and understanding Zara's state because they experienced it before they came here, they left her alone.

Zara and Alea took this time to find a secluded place so they could finally talk again.

"..."

"..."

It was silent at first.

Alea didn't know how to start the conversation. She didn't know what to say to her sister now.

She could feel the overflowing happiness coming from her other half, and while she felt happiness as well, her personal feelings towards Damien weren't the same as Zara's.

Alea had a time when she was obsessed with him.

There was a "scent" coming from him that made him undeniably attractive, and if he even touched her, her body would react strangely.

But that scent wasn't a matter of her own emotions. Rather, it was a rebound from Damien's connection with Zara.

Once that truth was revealed, she started to feel a bit uncomfortable about him. It wasn't anything he did, since he always tried his best to reject her without abandoning her. She was just embarrassed when she thought about how she acted in the past.

So when she thought about Damien, he felt more estranged than he was to most others.

She was glad he survived, and she thought it was a shame when he died, but because she couldn't empathize with Zara's connection to him, she didn't know how to start a conversation about him.

However, there was no need for her to do so.

"...I'm sorry."

Zara spoke first.

"I was too rash. I can't do anything but apologize."

She wasn't necessarily sorry for her actions. She would have done so regardless. But she was definitely apologetic for dragging Alea into her mess.

"It's fine."

Alea thought she'd be angry, but she surprisingly wasn't.

Rather, she was happy for her sister. She was just relieved that her mental state wasn't so negative anymore.

"Do you want to talk about it?" She asked.

Zara hesitated for a moment.

"I...didn't know what emotions were before I met him."

She had to share this story even though Alea already knew it.

"I was just a cub, terrified and distrusting of the world. Because of him, I was able to obtain freedom, become strong, and grow into an actual person. It would have been impossible if not for him."

"When I saw him build relationships with other people, I felt strange. When I came to learn that that emotion was jealousy, I became curious about why I felt that way, and slowly, I began to understand emotions."

"The one called love more than anything else. That feeling, I don't think I'll ever be able to feel it for anyone but him."

"Not even me?"

"It's different."

Alea smiled internally.

She understood well.

Zara wasn't talking about romantic love. No, with the relationship they'd had since young, if Zara felt romantic feelings towards Damien, it would be rather strange and uncomfortable.

He was her support system. He was like a father, a brother, and even a mother to her. She never knew what "family" truly meant until she met him. Even the wolf pack that raised her before the First Dungeon's wyvern started covering her was just a group she stayed with.

When she met Damien, her entire life changed.

At some point, he became her entire reason for existence.

She tried several times to change that.

It wasn't just once or twice. She always wanted to learn to live for herself, because that was what Damien wanted for her too.

He always pushed her to strive for happiness without him, so that she could always live happily even in the instance where he wasn't there.

But what was the problem?

No matter what she did, she always found that she couldn't find happiness unless he was at least somewhat involved in her life.

The world was a scary place. It was a cold place. When he went to No Return Pass and the Abyss, Zara lived so he would be proud of her when he was back.

When he died, what was there to look forward to?

It was unhealthy in a sense, but that was her happiness. That was how she wanted to live.

Even Alea's presence didn't change that.

She was finally able to find herself again when she learned of his survival.

'Haa, this girl...'

Alea sighed in acceptance. There was really nothing she could do.

'At this point, there's only one solution. That bastard better not die no matter what. If nothing else, then for my sister's sake.'

For now, there was no point stressing about it.

Zara was able to put her story out into the world, and she was able to get those feelings off of her chest.

She cried, she celebrated, and she regained her sense of self.

So she was finally ready.

"They said the final battle will be in 2 weeks, right?" She said.

Upon getting Alea's confirmation, she made a decision for the both of them, one that Alea was fully accepting of.

"Let's participate properly this time. Instead of charging recklessly, we'll do something he can look forward to when he comes back."

As Damien expected, telling them through a third party was the best choice.

Each and every one of them was invigorated by the news, and in preparation for the future to come where they could reunite, they did their best while prioritizing their lives.

The day of the final battle was approaching.

And as the involved parties gathered, the air in Grand Heavens Boundary was suffocating.

This was it.

Not just the last stand of the universe or the Nox, but the end of this cycle that had destroyed universe after universe for billions of years.

Chapter 1334 Final Battle [4]

Forces were gathering.

The stage of the final battle was naturally on Hephaestus. With such a large number of troops moving back and forth to plan, it was impossible to hide the fact that a large-scale war was going to take place soon.

Rose and the rest planned for this. The day they made their plans, they used the long-distance teleportation array system to set up a perimeter around Hephaestus so the Nox couldn't escape beforehand.

It was one of their best cards to this day.

The Nox had tried several times to gain access to it. If they were able to, they'd gain an advantage that even the universe's current advantage couldn't overcome.

However, the arrays were just made that well. No matter what they did, it was impossible for them to even activate them. Whether it be a Nox or a traitor, none of them could be verified by the array's systems, and even when they hid amongst crowds of regular people, they'd be ousted and captured instantly,

There were a few times when they managed to bypass this seemingly impregnable defense. Around four years ago, using a disruption in the spatial layers to trick the array system, a large number of Nox troops succeeded in entering and almost took the universe by storm.

Countless troops were distributed as fast as possible to guard the most important array locations in case the Nox emerged there, and the Grand Heavens Boundary forces were on high alert for several hours at a level of tenseness they hadn't reached in months at that time.

The result?

The Nox never even exited the spatial layers.

Damien specifically made the arrays to disallow anyone who wasn't permitted from reaching their destination. If the array was activated forcefully or through any means other than natural activation, its innate defense systems would activate to identify "who" had illegally used them.

The spatial corridor connecting the arrays would widen, and the rate of teleportation would be slowed to what was essentially a stop. Information on the intruders would be transmitted to Luciel, who had the head token that gave him priority control over the arrays, and he would be able to judge whether to allow the transmission to continue or to take preventative measures.

When the Nox were the ones using the portal, there was really no need to think about it.

He activated the highest level of protection, and the spatial corridor directly shattered into bits, forcing the Nox to endure spatial storms and chaotic waves of unstable spacetime until their bodies were evaporated from existence.

Nobody would've thought Damien could create such a mystical array system. It was truly impregnable, and for each flaw, a separate defense system was in place to correct it.

The universe managed to stay protected that way and maintained the advantage they held with control of the array system, and even in the current situation, it allowed them to form a cage and decide the location and flow of the final battle without the Nox being able to stop them at all.

It was already here.

The universe's forces stood on standby throughout Hephaestus, and the various commanders in charge of them were almost done giving their heroic speeches to raise the army's spirits.

The only advantage the Nox had now was numbers.

But the universe made up for their smaller number with elite soldiers who could fight against crowds individually if the need arose.

And when the various plans made by the highest authorities were also taken into account...

"...there's no way we can lose."

Rose looked to her sides.

Elena and Ruyue, Zara and Alea, Tian Yang and the Golden Dragon Emperor, the members of the Judgement Order...

Everyone was here, and everyone was ready.

She smiled.

"Shall we go, then?"

A small communicator appeared in her hand, and without hesitation, she gave the signal.

Luciel received it from the back lines.

HOooooooooooooooooong!

A horn blew with such force that its roar resounded through the entirety of Hephaestus.

That marked the beginning.

All forces moved to accomplish their given tasks.

And the final war began!

The scale was massive.

There were still billions of Nox remaining despite all the work that had been done to quell their numbers.

This was only the number that actively participated in the war.

When Damien was on Al'Katra, he eradicated several quintillions of Lesser Nox, yet, there were still trillions who remained in various parts of the Abyss and the boundaries of the universe.

Those were Lesser Nox who'd already been "conscripted" for the sake of the war and kept away for when they were needed, and they became pests the universe had to take care of.

Considering how much time had passed, they did a great job quelling said pests. Their numbers were far less than before, but they were still extreme.

Plus, that was just the Lesser Nox.

Those Higher Nox became warier with every passing day. They moved carefully, and rather than prioritizing their duties, they began to prioritize life. Even if they failed everything else, they made sure they'd survive.

However, they'd now been put in a situation where survival was impossible if they didn't win the war.

Under the command of their Supremes, they steeled their wills and developed a sort of blazing insanity.

If they didn't kill, they would die!

That was the mentality they entered the war with. That was a mentality that made combat far harder for the universe's forces than it would have normally been.

Still, the universe had its own cards.

Those Supremes couldn't actively interfere in the battles their weaker counterparts were fighting.

Whether it be Supremes, Executioners, or High Commanders, the universe made absolutely certain they would be too busy keeping themselves alive to help their race win this war!

Rose, Ruyue, Elena, and the rest split up. Each of them was an army of their own, so they were going to make sure all the Supremes were dead by the end of the battle.

For that to work, they had to deal with quite the number on their own.

At the moment, any one of them could be seen with at least 10 Supremes in their vicinity, trapped there through one method or another.

In Rose's case, it was something similar to a Personal Reality.

She couldn't control Creation, but that didn't matter.

Because her power of illusion had become something fantastical.

Illusion and reality, there was no need for her to differentiate between them. Reality was her illusion, and thus, anything she wished possible was possible.

Twelve Supremes surrounded her in a tight formation, warily watching her every move.

The reputation she'd built in the past decade wasn't a joke. They had a great numbers advantage and a relative strength advantage from an objective standpoint, but they didn't believe either of those things true.

Rose Adelaire, who was both the hidden leader of the current Grand Heavens Boundary and the successor of the Demon Sealing Pantheon, was not someone they could handle.

Yet, they had no choice.

For the fabric of reality itself was forcing them to stay within her range.

Rose smiled as she saw the fear on their faces.

"Originally, my will to fight was a bit cold, so I would have dragged this out somehow, but..."

Her eyes sharpened into daggers. She raised her hand into the air, summoning her mana into the atmosphere.

"...I have something far more important to do after this, so I'd appreciate if all of you just died without a fuss."

Chapter 1335 Final Battle [5]

Rose Adelaire.

Among Damien's wives, her origin was the least impressive.

She was a princess of a great Empire on Apeiron, sure, but that was the extent of it. The number of people in similar positions to her across the universe was in the millions, if not more.

Her affinities also weren't anything to brag about.

A wind affinity and an illusion affinity, while the latter was definitely rare, it wasn't all that special, at least not in the way it was usually perceived.

Because at the end of the day, illusions were just illusions. Higher caliber experts could see through them all with their perception abilities no matter what kind of strength was poured into them.

Elena was from Earth, but her origins were mysterious and connected to a race long extinct from Grand Heavens Boundary. As for Ruyue, while she also had common origins in the grand scheme of things, she was blessed with an absolute Yin affinity that destined her for greatness.

In comparison, Rose was nothing.

It was the same with her personality. She was always reserved and understanding. She never seemed to have strong opinions of her own, and even when she did, she never truly acted assertive enough for people to take her seriously.

Some people called her bland, some said she was just a shell of a person acting as if she had everything, but...

How could they know?

How could they know the kinds of thoughts in her heart?

If they were talking about the version of her who existed as a princess in Apeiron, they would be correct. That version of her was confused, and even after meeting Damien, it took a long time for that confusion to clear up.

Everyone seemed to have a role, and she desperately tried to find hers. Because of that, she allowed people to walk over her, and she maintained her position for the sake of balance in all things.

She only later realized that was the wrong path.

Whether it be in her mindset or her abilities, stability wasn't right for her.

She had to embrace chaos.

The Rose Adelaire that people couldn't see was a monster. She was someone with such a calculative mind that even old experts like Luciel would find themselves losing ground against her, and on the battlefield, she knew exactly how to end battles by forcing the enemies to endure the things they wanted to face the least.

Rose originally had a common destiny. She was meant to live in Apeiron for the rest of her life, not really achieving much more than that planet's expectations.

However, she changed that destiny with her own hands.

She took hold of her illusion affinity and found a path to make it far greater than it should have ever been, using properties similar to Ruyue's Yin, and she learned to read the future and absolutely understand the hearts of others by spending time observing them.

She took in everything around her and made it her own, and somehow, by her own efforts, she rose to a position indispensable to the universe.

She was someone others adored, and she was someone others wished to be.

But that didn't matter to her.

She never did it for the sake of anyone else.

She did it because she wanted to find her place. Not a role that she put herself in, and not some kind of position in other people's hearts, but the place that made her feel like she was at home in her own skin.

The answer she found through that pursuit was one present before her almost her entire life.

'Illusory Throne.'

She summoned it, the same throne she'd sat on since her days as a young girl who just wanted to experience adventure.

However, the weight of that throne couldn't be easily compared to anything else anymore,

This was her seat.

She was to be the empress of reality, someone who could control all things at her whim.

Yes, it was an unrealistic dream, but did that matter?

In the first place, if one wanted to stand by Damien's side, one had to have the ambitions to make those unrealistic aspirations into a reality.

Rose couldn't stop smiling.

She was in a good mood ever since she found out about Damien's survival, but something about today made her feel even more joyous than before.

In the past, even a single one of these Supremes would have been enough to make her feel terror. They would have looked at her like a piece of trash as they killed her with no consideration for her thoughts in the slightest.

But now?

Now they were standing around her and cowering in fear despite their numbers.

It was amusing, and it was fulfilling. It was a sight that validated the effort she put in until now, and made her fully commit to the effort she'd need to put in throughout the countless days to come.

A battle like this held profound meaning for the universe, but to her, it was just another stepping stone.

And as if she needed to prove her right to have such domineering thoughts, she acted quickly to eradicate the enemy.

There was no difference between reality and illusion. Reality itself was just an illusion brought about by a mixture of perception and law.

The true face of reality was nothing more than a bubble amidst the infinite beyond that nobody could understand.

Such a bubble, why did it need to be viewed as something grand?

In her eyes, the fabric of reality was just something to be weaved, something to be worn, and something to be manipulated.

The Nox Supremes around her tried to attack.

They weren't idiots who'd stand still and allow her to maintain an advantage over them.

However, even if they tried to attack, what could they do?

Reality itself was against them.

They were already trapped in the Empress' web.

Their own attacks became their enemies. Anything they sent would be multiplied and sent back without delay. The mana within their bodies refused to follow their commands, and the environment would constrict and contract to defy any expectations they had for it.

It was hard to describe such a fighting style in words, but it was a magnificent scene to witness.

Because Rose did nothing.

She merely sat in the middle of that domain and watched them struggle from her imperial throne.

Yet, despite her inaction, the enemies who outnumbered her twelve to one and were supposed to have strength matching hers could not even approach her.

This was the position of an Empress, the position she'd desired and worked towards for so long.

And though she didn't know it, her power, the power over reality she'd established through illusions...

...was extremely reminiscent of Damien's power over Existence.

Scarily so.

A woman who was never fated to accomplish anything accomplished more than anything those around her could even dream of.

This was what it meant to fight against fate.

She didn't even know of Damien's new mission, but she was the one who was closest to walking the first steps on that path.

Perhaps that was why...?

No matter how much time passed or how they changed and grew, Rose was always at the top of the hierarchy between wives.

She was always the first wife who could represent the three of them with confidence.

And right now, she was the Grand Commander who oversaw this entire war.

"Hmm, I finished earlier than expected..."

Twelve Supremes couldn't last more than ten minutes against her.

Since she now found herself with a surplus of time...

"...should I go help, or...?"

She smiled as an idea came to mind.

"Yeah, let's do that instead."

She hadn't had fun in a very long time, so didn't she deserve a bit right now?

She was going to do something extremely amusing.

So amusing that even Damien, who was watching from beyond existence, was chuckling uncontrollably as he watched it happen!

Chapter 1336 Final Battle [6]

When did it become like this?

It felt like it was only days ago when everything seemed for naught. Back then, the Nox themselves were such a terrifying threat that they made everyone feel hopeless, and figures like Supremes were creatures who could kill anyone with a single slap.

Yet, those Supremes now...

It wasn't just for Rose.

Ruyue faced the ten Supremes that assaulted her and felt the same exact emotion.

Just like her sister-wife, she suddenly began to notice how easy this battle had become.

Her power over Yin was already on the cusp of Divinity. No, rather, it was already past that point. The only reason she and the others hadn't ascended was because of their mental barriers.

With those barriers now removed and their spirits freer than ever, it felt like everything had become insignificant.

Yin was a mysterious power. It encompassed half of the universe's energies, all those on the negative side.

This didn't inherently make those energies evil, but that was their nature. Whether they were positive or negative in perception was dependent wholly on how they presented themselves to the world.

In Ruyue's hands, the concepts of Yin showed their duality well. Those like ice were cold yet pure, filled with ruthlessness and an air of morality. However, those powers like death were just as cold but far more vile, cruel with the intent to subjugate any enemy.

These concepts worked amazingly in tandem, and Ruyue's control was far greater than anyone could imagine.

Ten Nox Supremes charged her from every direction unlike how Rose's opponents moved. They tried their best to give Ruyue no chances to attack, so they could kill her before they died.

However, their efforts were futile.

The main power of Yin was not in the laws that manifested under its umbrella, but rather its natural existence.

Yin was malleable, flexible, and an energy that usurped most other energies.

Ruyue's fighting style changed as she grew through the stages of the nine revolutions. As she realized the strengths of Yin, she stopped using other laws to showcase its power, realizing how inefficient that method was.

Rather, she used the enemy's attacks against them.

Any mana that made it to her vicinity was rebounded by a gentle flow. That mana would multiply in force through the most natural of motions and fire back at its owner to inflict damage.

She was the perfect monster of parrying. The most terrifying part about facing Ruyue was exactly that.

One couldn't trust their own strength to support them when she was the opponent.

However, she didn't just throw away her personal attack power to learn how to manipulate that of others.

Instead, she changed her style.

Ice and Death were still incredibly important to her arsenal, and with Lily and Mei growing alongside her, her control over the two laws was natural to the point of her being more of a spirit than a human.

She also learned more about the power of negative energy. That power was able to banish other energies from existence and control their equal and opposite forces to counter them.

This was an incredibly useful skill to have in battle, especially as the power level of the average practitioner rose and their laws became more complex.

Using a combination of all these powers made Ruyue an impregnable fortress.

She could stand still in the midst of a million enemies and manipulate the field of space around her with such precision that it felt like a million soldiers were fighting by her side.

So when 10 Supremes attacked...?

Naturally, they were attacked back by 10 Supremes.

The battle was a short one, taking no more than half an hour to conclude. By the end, all those Nox were in shreds with bodies that couldn't be recognized. They were torn apart to the point where Ruyue didn't even have to kill them a second time to prevent their natural regeneration.

Her steps felt lighter than ever.

Unlike her sisters, she wasn't one to show much emotion. She'd spent the last decade quietly, speaking no more than a few sentences and only when it was necessary.

It was a part of her personality, but it was also a method for her to cope with Damien's disappearance.

The soul connection was hers.

The other girls felt it because of their engagement rings, but they didn't understand what it was like to have a piece of their soul entrenched in his heart like that.

Even when Damien was too far away for her to be able to feel much through the connection, she was able to understand his state at all times, and because of that, she was always enveloped in a warm blanket that even she sometimes forgot about.

After having that blanket for years, to feel it disappear so suddenly was as if she was a mortal thrown into the void of space and forced to survive without any sort of protection.

That haunting feeling absolutely killed her spirit. Even now, while knowing Damien was alive somewhere, the fact that she couldn't feel his presence viscerally was painful.

Nevertheless, her feelings now didn't need to be explained much. While the three of them differed in many ways, their love for Damien was the same, as were their positive feelings in the past few weeks.

If Rose was a Grand Commander who ruled from the shadows, Ruyue was a Grand General who led troops into battle from the frontlines.

As she observed the battlefield after killing her enemies, she judged the best use of her time.

There was no need to help the strong allies, because they were all holding up fine on their own.

And the lesser forces...

Well, they were doing mostly fine on their own.

This war was set up in a way where losing was impossible.

In a sense, Ruyue didn't have to do anything. Since she'd finished her assigned task successfully, she could sit back and wait for the war to end if she really wanted to.

But that wasn't her creed.

Elena was the most righteous among them, and Ruyue was the most indifferent. The lives of others didn't hold any weight in her heart if she didn't care about them.

Still, the ones she cared about were good people.

They wouldn't want to see more death than necessary.

So if she could save even one more life while ending this war faster, she would do it.

Ruyue went straight to the lesser armies to aid them. She didn't do too much, because this was also an opportunity for those people to grow and feel their efforts validated, but she made sure they didn't die needlessly like what would have happened without a strong presence helping on the battlefield.

Meanwhile, most of the other battles were coming to an end as well.

Tian Yang, the Golden Dragon Emperor, Su Ren, Long Chen, and the rest finished killing the Supremes they were standing against within an hour, and as they moved towards other battlefields to provide their aid, it seemed like there was nothing more to say.

After so many grueling years of warfare, after so many needless sacrifices and heroic victories, they reached this point where the once unfathomable enemy was nothing more than prey for them to hunt.

Victory already belonged to the universe.

Chapter 1337 Final Battle [7]

Of Damien's wives, perhaps Elena had the most muted reaction, surprisingly enough.

It wasn't that she didn't feel happy about the news, but she was probably the one who held the most faith that he was still alive.

She never let go of even a shred of that hope.

Perhaps it was because of her closeness with Life Laws, but she always felt something off about Damien's "death."

Yes, their soul connection with him broke, as did Zara's companion contract, but there were too many clues that Damien still existed somewhere in some form.

Because without the hints of Damien that were spread throughout the universe, Grand Heavens Boundary would have fallen already.

Her sisters also knew this, and she made sure to assure them constantly about it, but what could they do?

10 years was a long time.

The most glaring difference between Elena and the other two was time.

Unlike them, who lived the majority of their lives in a single time flow without much change, she had lived through several time distortions while she journeyed the universe on her own.

She understood just how short ten years could be, and she understood that ten years for them didn't mean ten years elsewhere.

Also, the Valkyrie secret realm where she learned about their race and gained the ability to access Valhalla was completely disconnected from the outside world.

As long as she was there, the people in the outside world would think she was dead, just like what happened to Damien.

It was a bit different, obviously, but Elena didn't know that, nor did she need to. At its base, her beliefs held enough truth for the real truth to be inconsequential.

Still, there was no way to explain this to someone who hadn't experienced it in a way that sounded reasonable.

At most, it would come off as a pathetic excuse, and it might even make Elena look like she was losing her mind.

She did try a few times, but it didn't stick. Rose and Ruyue were still viewing time from the perception of someone with a finite lifespan, while their lifespans were barely qualified to be titled as such anymore.

That didn't say anything about Rose or Ruyue, though. It wasn't like their loyalty or faith was any less than hers, it was just the difference in their experience that set them apart.

So when she saw how happy the two of them were when they learned the hopeful reality that stood before them, she was happy too.

Not only did her sisters find a path out of the darkness, but she could be absolutely certain about her assumptions and move with the same confidence she had when inferring them.

Transcended Death was that kind of law.

When Elena viewed her thoughts as the absolute truth regardless of right or wrong, when she held the power to turn those thoughts into truth even if they were false to begin with, Transcended Death would grow.

The peak of Life Laws that Elena saw was something like that.

It wasn't just to command life, but to force life's presence into places where it couldn't logically exist.

But...the peak of Life, wasn't it a bit lackluster compared to what the others were doing?

Elena had that thought once. She realized that life was merely something that existed within a cage of other concepts and wondered if pursuing its peak would truly bring her to the heights she wanted to see.

She pondered over it, dug deep into her laws, and tried to find a way to overcome the limitations of life.

And she found the answer she desired. She found a way to bring life beyond the boundaries of the fundamental laws.

Even without creation, even without death, even without any sort of support, she would create life. That life would become the root of everything, and thus it would become the origin of all concepts.

It was as if she stepped on a path towards the Void, and while she hadn't realized it yet, she had discovered something mystical in her pursuit of power.

The Void was a concept, but it was also an entity. Despite its existence beyond existence putting it in a position where sentience should've been barred for it, the Void was able to converse with people and make decisions of its own volition.

How was such a thing possible?

Wasn't it somehow connected to the laws of Life, which gave living beings the sentience that allowed them to grow?

It was an extremely mysterious path. It wasn't one anybody had even considered in the past, led alone walked.

With that path supporting her, she naturally grew to great heights that matched her sisters and obtained potential above what her laws could have originally presented her.

Life was an interesting law in many ways, and while Elena would've been extremely useful on the battlefield, Rose gave her another job.

Once the war horn was blown, she, along with Zara and Alea, left the universe entirely and sought out the Abyss.

After meeting with Yong An and his most elite experts. Elena and the Zara-Alea pair combined their power to search the entire Abyss for signs of life.

Their mission was far more non-confrontational than the ongoing war.

They were to find any remnants of the Nox left in the Abyss. If they were willing to join Yong An, they would be subjugated and spared, and if they weren't...

...it didn't need to be said. There was only one fate waiting for them.

Going to the Abyss originally entailed countless dangers and treacherous experiences, but that wasn't the case anymore.

While the three women focused on their jobs, Yong An could use his power over the Abyss to act as a guide.

Its dangers meant nothing to him. His sense of direction was perfect in this chaotic environment, and he had a degree of control over it that nobody else could compare to.

If they encountered some sort of extreme time dilation or dead zone, he could directly dispel it and bring the Abyss back to order.

He could also mobilize those chaotic traits to attack or displace them to utilize for other purposes, but these abilities weren't useful for the current task.

Though, the time dilations were somewhat helpful this time.

The universe's war wouldn't last long. It would at most rage on for a few days before a conclusion was reached.

Those few days in the universe had to amount to several years in the Abyss if Elena and the rest wanted to finish their task in time.

So they did precisely that.

They used the Abyss' traits to their advantage and traveled its entirety. Elena was able to sense the signs of life from countless hundreds of millions of kilometers away, the Zara-Alea pair could support her with their balance of laws and also act as an attack force, and Yong An could do the heavy lifting when it came to recruitment.

Their team makeup was perfect, even a bit over the top for their current goals, but it worked in their favor.

Whether the Nox were Supremes or the most common Classless beings, they could be dealt with all the same.

Both in the universe and outside of it, moves were being made to bring everything to an end.

It was overall positive. Nobody could deny that the universe had the upper hand now.

However, that didn't mean the Nox were willing to just die.

At least, not without taking massive heaps of the universe with them.

Chapter 1338 Final Battle [8]

In fact, the Nox understood that they were going to lose.

Perhaps those lower-level Nox without extremely developed intelligence still held thoughts of bravado, but all those at the head of the army who took over after the Demigods left were well aware of their current situation.

When Hephaestus was blocked off and escape became an impossible ask, they decided to let go of any will for survival they had and do the utmost damage to the enemy before they died.

If they were going to be killed regardless, wasn't it better to bring more people down with them instead of dying alone?

With this in mind, the Nox made two main moves while they were being slaughtered by the universe's forces.

Firstly, they used arrays they set up beforehand to destroy each and every world left in Hephaestus. Secondly, they turned their own bodies into explosives, so that every time one of them died, they would take at least 10 enemy troops with them.

For the people at the peak of the universe like Rose and the rest, this was an easy battle, but for the lower ranks, it was an absolute death zone.

Bloody and guts filled the starry sky no matter where one looked. The screams of Nox and humans could no longer be differentiated through the ringing in their ears, and if one took even a single moment to look at anything but the enemy in front of them, they'd die.

It was spine-chilling.

Or maybe that feeling came from elsewhere?

When Ruyue appeared on the greater battlefields, she was able to save most of the soldiers suffering from tragic fates against the Nox. The explosions caused by the enemy deaths were also quelled by her, which definitely helped with reducing the death toll.

However, the environment wasn't safe. Hephaestus was already ruined, but it was now a land of death without any habitable areas. Some of the impact even leaked into the Infernal Realm and caused natural disasters on the most periphery worlds, though it wasn't to the extent of destroying them.

The war raged on and on and on.

Regardless of whether they were feeling weary, joyous, or sorrowful, the forces of Grand Heavens Boundary fought to their last breath, doing everything in their power.

Because as the enemy's numbers decreased, they saw the end.

These were the last of them. When they finished these Nox off, the Nox would never return to the universe.

And that, to these people who had been forced to constantly endure the assaults of the invading race, was the most effective motivator in all of existence.

At this point, the universe could be considered a combination of only three Sectors.

The Human Domain that was still being protected like an impregnable fortress by Damien's mechanisms, the Infernal Realm which was half destroyed but still more than able to heal from its current state, and the Divine Realm, the main hub of the universe's activity.

As long as those three realms were preserved, as long as hope remained, Grand Heavens Boundary could return.

That was what they thought.

But, unfortunately, there was one factor they failed to consider.

'It's dying.'

Nobody really wondered where Alexander was during such an important battle. He had practically cemented himself as someone who would only appear in the absolute worst-case scenario, so rather, people were praying dearly that he didn't show up no matter what.

But, if one did try to see what he was doing while everyone else was fighting for the universe's survival, one would find him in a familiar location.

Death Emperor Star.

The world was practically abandoned at the moment. Besides the weakest of the students, who were sent to Luxurion for protection, the remainder went to the battlefield to contribute to the universe.

Therefore, whether it was Hidden Death Valley or the Death Emperor Star the academy resided on, they were empty of life.

So why was Alexander here...?

Naturally, it was to fulfill the fate of his main body.

Damien's path was set for a very long time. Even before he was born, Dante had filled the universe with lucky encounters that he would eventually discover. Those were meant to be the basis of his growth, so he could ascend to the Divine Realm as smoothly as possible.

But when was it?

Damien became a person who couldn't be controlled by something like that. Rather than paying attention to things like legacies and secret realms, he focused all his attention on practical situations and grew stronger and faster than anyone could ever predict.

It was great for him, and it made Dante proud, but it did leave many legacies rotting away in various corners of the universe.

Alexander was currently claiming them all and taking them into the Sanctuary.

He started in the Sea God's Realm, the place known as Aquazyl where he met Tephit and the others and participated in the Prominence War.

He'd promised to bring them to the Sanctuary at a later date, and he kept that promise now. However, instead of just taking a few clans, he took the entire realm into the Sanctuary and gave it its own space to exist, a far better future for them.

He then went on to explore every other inheritance left on Death Emperor Star.

There were so many that it was impossible to believe they were all created by Dante. They each worshipped a different entity on the same level as the Sea God, and each of those beings had different specialties that Damien would've been able to master if he visited them earlier.

Now that he had Existence under his control, they were inconsequential, but he couldn't help but marvel at their numerity.

It made him wonder.

How did Dante do it?

These mythical figures had existed at very different times in history, ranging from hundreds of millions of years ago to very recently ten thousand years in the past. There were even traces that some of those gods were active just centuries before Damien's birth.

Yet, they were all alter egos of Dante?

He couldn't make sense of it, and his father became an even more mystical figure than ever before in his mind.

The desire to uncover the secrets his father was hiding sprouted in his heart, and as he spent months in an altered time flow to claim each and every legacy without missing anything, he realized something more concerning than anything he was trying to do.

'The universe is dying.'

The truth he'd learned from the Second Primal Sovereign all those years ago.

He thought they'd avoided this tragic fate already. He thought that, with the Nox being eradicated like this, the universe would be able to return to its peak if it was just nurtured properly and given time.

'But I was wrong.'

In fact, he already understood how flimsy that hope was. He was viewing the past, present, and future from the Void even at this very moment.

He wanted to hold it for as long as possible, but it seemed there was no other path for the universe.

'It's good that I've finished this.'

He had just now finished sweeping up everything Death Emperor Star had to offer, and with the war set to rage on for a few more days, he had to begin without delay.

He looked out into the wider universe that he called home for so long with a forlorn smile.

'Let's wrap things up for real this time.'

Chapter 1339 Reunion [1]

The war wound down on its own.

The Nox population got smaller and smaller, until finally, under the hands of no man but a mere common soldier among the many within the ranks of the army, the last Nox fell.

Celebrations ran wild across the entire universe. For almost a month, Grand Heavens Boundary was enveloped in the joyous atmosphere of victory, and as the people celebrated, those in higher positions took care of the aftermath of the war to make sure they could bring everything to a proper conclusion.

However, all of them were in the dark about a fact that only one man knew.

'It's already too late. The universe will die no matter what we do.'

That was the discovery Damien made by looking at every potential future presented to him in the Void.

He created countless new potential futures as he tried to see if his interference could change the outcome, but he still found himself bound by fate.

He had yet to escape the shackles that deluded the Saint Emperor's mind.

It was an extremely unfortunate fate, but if there was nothing that could be done about it, he had to work to 12:43

save the universe in another way.

nothing that could be done about it, he had to work to save the universe in another way.

His voyage began there.

He first met with the universe's highest authorities, including Luciel and Alucard, who held control over its worlds, and told them his plan.

Through this conversation, they also realized his identity, but now wasn't the time for that conversation.

Hearing it from him, they understood it was an absolute truth that couldn't be denied.

Because Damien Void was that kind of person.

So he gained the authority to act as he pleased.

They also agreed with his plan to save as many as possible, and though they'd have to leave behind their current home, in a sense, they weren't leaving it behind at all.

Alexander started moving from there.

He went to Hephaestus and tried to find any World Core or intact world remaining, binding the few tens that he found and sending them into the Sanctuary.

Following that, he visited the Infernal Realm and did the same. There were only around 60,000 worlds left there, but it that was fine. Damien was glad at least that many survived.

The Human Domain was visited third.

A large portion of Grand Heavens Boundary's common populace was sent to the Sanctuary when he took the remaining worlds there in, and finally...

'This is the only part that'll be a bit troublesome.'

The Divine Realm didn't just contain the majority of the common populace, but also all of the universe's experts.

He knew Luciel and the rest had already worked to convince those people when he was busy with the other Sectors, but he was still a bit hesitant.

Nevertheless, he did what he needed to do.

Starting from the Dawn World he landed on when he first entered the Divine Realm, to Beast Emperor Star which was now residing on the border, all the way to Sky Castle Luxurion and Death Emperor Star which were far deeper into the realm, he took everything into the Sanctuary.

He met many people as Alexander during these travels, but he mostly avoided questions about his identity.

Even those who didn't know would come to know soon enough anyway.

But...

When he took Luxurion, he met the people he wanted to see most in this world.

Rose, Ruyue, and Elena were waiting there for him.

Having been filled in on what was happening by Luciel, they easily understood his identity.

They stood there when he appeared as if they'd been waiting for him.

And as he stood frozen...

Rose smiled.

"We'll talk later."

That was all she said.

The three of them used their rings to reach the Sanctuary on their own, leaving him stunned by himself.

'Hahaha...'

There was no rage in Rose's voice. Rather, it was an endearing tone he had been waiting to hear ever since the last time he saw them.

However, that scared him even more.

Because his heart skipped a beat.

Really, no matter how old he got, he couldn't control his emotions when it came to them.

He almost wanted to leave the Void right then and there and enter the Sanctuary to embrace them, but he had to finish his work first.

It was a strange feeling like he'd eaten far too much sugar. His heart was beating like a supercar engine as it tried to race out of his chest.

And determination to finish everything else as fast as possible filled his body.

The people of Grand Heavens Boundary didn't quite understand why they were being transported or where they were going, but they didn't have much of a choice but to listen.

It was a bit strange doing all of this without having to give 85 pages of justification first, but Damien didn't mind it at all.

Rather, this level of trust and power made his life far easier.

And when the entirety of Grand Heavens Boundary was taken into the Sanctuary...

Damien went to the Abyss.

There was only one stop left. One place he had to visit before he left this lower universe behind altogether.

But perhaps this was the most important visit of them all.

He went to the Abyss.

Even this place was empty.

Yong An and the rest were in the Sanctuary, and the fractured Universal Cores remaining here had all been used to boost the Sanctuary's Universal Core.

So why did Damien come here?

To this dull and desolate place that represented the encroaching darkness swallowing the light, what was there to do?

In fact, even Damien didn't know.

He came here without a plan, because his current strength still wasn't enough for him to easily find the person he wanted to meet.

Still, he came because he knew that person would come to him.

And he was right.

After wandering for just a short period, it appeared before him.

A rickety shack that looked like the most insignificant dwelling in the world, and the old man who quietly sat on its porch.

Damien walked up and sat on the chair that was waiting for him there as if it was natural.

"This is my newest creation. I haven't had much time, but I think this one is quite an improvement when compared to the rest. Let me introduce you to No. 111: The Sorrows of Farewell."

It didn't even feel like he was in Alexander's body anymore. As he took the spirit wine out and poured two glasses for himself and the old man, he felt his hands shaking slightly.

But he didn't make it known.

"You have grown much since the last time we met," the old man said with a smile as he took a sip of the wine.

"...and this, this is quite spectacular."

He closed his eyes and savored the taste.

"Did you have anything to ask?"

"No," Damien shook his head, "I just wanted to visit."

"I see...it seems you have learned something troublesome."

"Troublesome is a bit harsh."

The old man smiled.

"You are right. I cannot say I am not pleased with your attitude."

"However, there is nothing to be done."

"..."

Damien sighed.

"Yeah, I realized that too, and that's all the more reason to visit."

He didn't know what to say, and it didn't look like the old man had anything to say either.

But he still wanted to be here.

The two of them enjoyed their spirit wine together, and without anything else to do, Damien told the old man about his journey since the last time they met.

After all, while the old man knew about most of it, even he couldn't see the more recent events.

He told the story knowing it meant nothing, and the old man listened with a soft smile as if he were listening to his grandson talk about his dreams.

The atmosphere around them was a bit odd, filled with both positive and negative feelings.

Because they both knew.

No matter how causally they treated it, this would be their last conversation.

The old man was dying.

And Damien...had no choice but to accept it.

Chapter 1340 Reunion [2]

The old man meant more to Damien than even he realized.

After all, the guidance this old man gave him during his time in the Abyss, and the semi-frequent visits the old man made over the decade Damien spent traveling, were both integral in different ways.

The visits allowed him to keep his sanity. He wouldn't have gone insane in the Abyss by himself, but his mentality would've taken a hit.

The company he gained through the old man's presence when he was in a place more dreary than anywhere else was something he appreciated heavily.

The advice allowed him to reach his current heights. If it wasn't for the old man, he wouldn't have been able to understand the secrets of tethering so quickly.

Yes, he would have still died on Al'Katra regardless, but what about what came after?

Would he have been able to gain anything from his stay in Nonexistence?

Would he have been able to rapidly make progress on the Ancient Battlefield and carve a place for himself there?

Sure, Damien Void wasn't someone who could be inhibited by many things, but the speed at which he accomplished what he accomplished and reached his current stage of Divinity was deeply related to this old man.

They had been conversing for a while now, but their conversation lulled when they got past the small talk.

Damien was grateful to this old man for a lot of things.

So if he could, he wanted to do something for him.

The problem was that the old man refused, and fate itself didn't allow him to hold a say in this matter.

He poured them another glass of spirit wine and sat there, looking into the Abyss and swishing the drink in his cup.

The two of them sat in silence for a long time.

They had a mutual understanding of each other's position.

Damien realized this old man's identity only after he found himself in the Void. Once he had that knowledge, he couldn't just stay still. He had to talk to the old man at least one more time.

Because he would be gone soon.

Regardless of what Damien wished to happen, the old man would not last much longer.

The mood fell in a way he couldn't explain.

"Your steps are light," The old man suddenly said, but even then, Damien understood his meaning.

"What can you do? When you live a life like mine, walking wherever the wind guides you, your steps naturally become light," He replied with a sigh.

The old man looked into his eyes as if trying to peer into his soul.

"But...are your steps truly as light as you claim they are?"

Damien's face stiffened. His grip on the wine bottle trembled lightly before returning to normal. As if nothing happened, he calmly poured himself another glass while answering the old man.

"Old man, I have no idea what you're talking about. Does there exist anything in this universe that can add weight to my steps?"

"Perhaps not this one..." The old man responded with a mysterious smile on his face.

"To be free and unrestrained, isn't this the ultimate dream of every man? It is a mystical fantasy anyone can imagine, however, there is a reason it is known as a mere dream. To truly achieve such a lifestyle means having to struggle through tribulations unlike any other."

The old man took a sip of his wine, his gaze returning to the scene of the swirling Abyss before him.

"If you wish to carry a burden, it is no longer a burden. If you live as you please while accepting the struggles that come along with it, aren't you already free and unrestrained? What can restrain you if your beliefs are strong enough to oppose any force?"

"Young man, I have seen your struggle, and even if nobody else will, I shall acknowledge your effort. Your next destination is nothing like the scene you've become used to. People will no longer look at you

in reverence and fear. You will once again become a speck of dust among many. If you wish to endure that atmosphere once more...then do so after making sure you leave no regrets."

Damien sighed.

His gaze shifted to where the old man was looking, at the scene of the universe he called home...

Decaying while its people remained unawares.

Damien's gaze was placid.

He wanted to think his emotions towards this place had dulled. His women, his friends, his family, even the universe's remaining worlds, all of them had become part of the Sanctuary already. If so, what was there left for him to mourn?

But no matter how hard he tried to convince himself, he simply couldn't.

Especially with his current standing, seeing the Universe Core's decrepit state was painful, and even more painful was the realization that he couldn't stop its decay.

"You're a really troublesome old man, has anyone ever told you that?" He spoke exasperatedly.

"Kuahahaha! You say that as if there was ever another person who could talk to me!"

"And perhaps you're the only person I've ever been able to speak so freely to."

The old man's laughter stopped as Damien turned to look at him.

"Are you certain this is how you want to end things? Do you not feel unresigned?" Damien asked.

The old man smiled wryly. His eyes clouded over as if he had sunk himself in reminiscence.

"The fact that I can feel unresigned is enough to justify my ending. My existence is already against the Universe's Will, however ironic that may be. Is there a better way to end this bleak life than this?"

Damien bit his lip as complicated emotions filled his heart.

"Even if you can accept it, I cannot. What's the point of telling me to leave without any regrets if you already know that such a feat is impossible?"

But the old man shook his head in response.

"That is not your regret. Even if things proceed according to natural order, you will not regret it, only feel that it was a shame.

"Your steps are light, but the weight of the world rests on your shoulders. What harm is there in adding a single pebble on top of that? Even if you yourself do not feel the need to do it, please take it as this old man's last wish and at least try."

Damien sighed again. This old man had a talent for making him sigh.

"Old man, until the end you were a pain."

There was no response.

Damien didn't have to look over to know that the old man was no longer sitting at the table across from him.

He was silent, his expression unchanging, as he watched the Universal Core dull, its spirituality leaving it.

He didn't want to show weakness here.

The old man wouldn't want him to mourn.

"Until the end..."

Damien choked on his words.

His fist slammed into the table, turning it into fine powder in an instant.

"Very well. Because it is your will, I shall follow. In remembrance of the final wish of an old friend, I'll follow your words. But, old man..." Damien let his voice fade out, not bothering to finish his words.

The old man could no longer hear him anyway.

Damien turned away from the growing Abyss encroaching on what was once Grand Heavens Boundary. His eyes carved the image of this small and rickety, yet warm and comforting cabin into his memory for the final time.

And then, his figure vanished. The old cabin crumbled, following its owner even in death.

The only vestiges left of the old man's existence were the memories in Damien's mind.