

# Void 1371

Chapter 1371 Mercenary [4]

One month went by fast.

That one month included travel time, but with Damien's speed, it only took around three days to reach the Yunix Principality.

Afterwards, accomplishing the mission was easy.

He spent most of the time relaxing and enjoying the sights of the principality's main cities. As for the work he had to do, with Absolute Perception backing him, what did he have to worry about?

By the time a month passed, he had more than enough information to report back, and when he gave it to Sebastian, he learned that he actually did more than what was expected from him.

He didn't care, though. He was here to work, so he would work properly.

That mentality allowed him to do mission after mission without rest.

After the first information-gathering mission, where he found out the plots and schemes within the Yunix Principality, the second task he was given was to suppress those very forces stirring up trouble.

He fought and killed, solved the conflict, and came back within three months.

The next year was spent doing similar things all around the Eastern Region.

He solved conflict after conflict and brought peace to the common people. He didn't realize it until around 6 months after his first few missions, but there was a central organization driving most of the plots he'd stopped.

By the time he was halfway through his second year as a mercenary, he was fighting them with all his power. He went through Demigod after Demigod, killing and stealing the core of their existences to strengthen his own power.

Until finally, he found their leader and took his head.

He was a high-rank Demigod. The organization itself was only mildly influential in the large scheme of things, which was why Damien was dispatched to deal with them rather than Gods from the Veritas Clan, but it was sufficient practice for him.

He also ended up with a reputation in the Eastern Region.

The name Damien Grey was never mentioned, because he didn't give it out easily. The only ones who knew it were influences loyal to the Veritas Clan, who made sure they wouldn't spill his information carelessly.

As for his title, there wasn't one specific thing they called him.

He came and went like a passing breeze, he solved things with great power and force like a great mountain, and he was righteous like a spirit of nature.

He held the mantle of a hero in the eyes of the people.

But for mercenaries and people more involved in the world of practitioners?

He was more like a demon.

The people didn't see the scenes he left in his wake.

The utter destruction was menacing, to say the least.

His enemies were either mutilated or killed so cleanly that it felt like nonsense.

The environment was always in tatters, to the point where one had to wonder if a natural disaster passed through the area.

But for some reason, the destroyed environment maintained its vitality and would always heal back to normal within a few days or weeks.

Nobody had seen his methods and lived, but just the speculations one could make from what he left behind made him someone nobody could mess with.

His status among those who worked for the Veritas Clan was the highest it could be already, and the missions he got assigned became increasingly complex.

From small matters like before, Damien got involved in more important conflicts.

He was sent to spy on the Kyushu Federation a few times, and he was even sent to facilitate relations with the Vega Clan to the north.

The connections he could make for personal gain weren't many, but the ones he made were ones that would help him immensely in the future.

His reputation and status were already what he wanted them to be by the third year.

But he encountered another problem.

It was within himself.

Existence was a law that wasn't a law. It was only classified as a law because there was really nothing else to call it.

Damien could control Existence to an extent. He could do things like perceive the world or touch the ethereal aspects of life that other people couldn't see.

However, he couldn't actively move Existence to his will.

He couldn't control a mana that represented the concept.

Why?

The more he encountered the problem, the more he thought about it.

Why hadn't he made any progress in his Authorities since he got to the Heavenly World?

Why hadn't he been able to do anything as he wanted to no matter how hard he tried?

'There's a method.'

He knew there was.

'There's definitely a mana that represents Existence. It's similar to Void Energy, but only one side of it. It exists, but I can't find it.'

He didn't know how to find it or how to control it.

He needed to find that method.

So he searched, and searched, and searched.

He went through the Eastern Region specifically with this thought in mind. His missions became a secondary priority, because if he couldn't get stronger, nothing else mattered.

He even tried the opposite and calmed down, taking a break from it all.

Damien went to the Sanctuary every few months and spent time with his wives and family. He helped them in their endeavors and guided them as they made their way towards Divinity.

Elvira was also someone he met often. Whether for comfort or for business, she was someone he could always turn to.

This problem, however, couldn't be solved with rest or effort.

He needed an opportunity.

And thus, the fourth year arrived.

After he worked in the shadows for so long, he was finally given a mission in the light.

"The younger generation of the Veritas Clan will be entering a secret realm soon. It will be attended by the future experts of the Kyushu Federation, Vega Clan, and Straea Clan as well. Your job is to go with them and make sure they don't die."

The one who spoke was Sebastian. Damien was still taking missions in The Den, but the atmosphere was a bit different than before.

It was subtle, but everyone avoided him. He was the only one sitting at the bar, and nobody dared to approach him.

"Is it that easy?" Damien asked.

"Ease is relative. The Straea Clan will definitely aim for their lives, and nobody can predict the movements of the Kyushu Federation."

Damien nodded. He'd done enough reconnaissance in the Southeastern Region to understand how convoluted the interests of that place were.

"On top of that, the secret realm itself is incredibly dangerous. It's the most important training location in our Eastern Region, so you can imagine the kinds of risks and rewards that are present there."

Damien nodded again. If three other great clans were coming to a secret realm in the Eastern Region, it meant the Veritas Clan was forced to share in order to protect their assets.

Such a big pie couldn't be eaten alone, after all.

"When is it?"

"They'll leave in ten days."

"Understood. So should I head straight to the Veritas Clan?"

"That would be ideal."

"Hmm..."

Damien stood up and turned around.

'It's almost over.'

There was just one year left until he could go to Void Palace.

'And this will probably be the most important factor in securing the Veritas Clan's support.'

If he could properly protect their younger generation, they'd owe him a favor beyond what his mercenary position begot.

'Good.'

Damien left The Den and made his way to the Veritas Clan.

'Come to think of it, this is my first visit.'

'Let's see what a great clan of the Heavenly World really looks like.'

Chapter 1372 Mercenary [5]

The Veritas Clan.

It didn't exist somewhere one would expect a great clan's estate to be. It wasn't directly in the center of the Eastern Region, nor was it somewhere on the edges as if putting the entire region in its shadow.

Instead, the Veritas Principality, which was essentially just a clan estate that was too big to be called as such, was around 50 billion kilometers south of the central area of the Eastern Region.

It wasn't a location that had much significance at first glance, but if one was able to peer into the truth of the world, one would soon come to understand the decision to build the heart of the cardinal region here.

This specific location was where the fate lines converged. It was where all things were birthed and where they'd return upon death. It was a location close to Samsara, yet one that absolutely denied the concept.

Veritas, a word that meant "Truth" in a language long forgotten, at least in most people's perception.

But just as much as it meant truth, it held another meaning.

"Reality."

The Veritas Clan was one that existed to protect reality as it stood. They would not allow it to be shattered by others' machinations, and they would not allow its law to be broken regardless of the consequences.

They existed within reality and melded with it. Rather than normal practitioners who sought to leave its bounds, they wanted to strengthen those bounds and become its embodiment.

It was a strange way of thinking, one Damien couldn't understand, but he respected it.

After all, in the end, they were a just influence.

In the four years he'd spent working for them, he learned a lot about how they operated and why they were able to maintain the position of a great clan for tens or even hundreds of millions of years.

The generations changed, the beliefs of those living changed, and the world changed through innovation and conflict, but their core ideologies always remained constant.

They helped the common people and made sure they could live stably. Those influences under them who were loyal and just were given benefits that made it impossible for them to even think about turning traitors. The quality of life was amazing, to the point where, if someone tried to overthrow the Veritas Clan, the entire Eastern Region would rise up to make sure they never succeeded.

Was there a way to not respect a clan who'd created relationships like those?

When Damien arrived at the Veritas Principality, he was instantly greeted by a wall so high even he couldn't see where it ended.

This wall had gates every hundred million miles or so to facilitate entry and exit into the region. Several guards, both Demigods and lower existences, guarded every inch of it day in and day out, making it an impenetrable fortress.



Damien was granted entry relatively easily since his reputation was known and news of his arrival was sent to the gates beforehand.

Once he was in the principality, he headed to the location Sebastian told him about without wasting any time.

'The Veritas Clan's main estate should be in the middle of this place. I thought that's where I'd be going, but I guess I was wrong.'

He'd been in the Heavenly World for a few years now, and while he was still relatively naive about the cardinal regions beyond the eastern side of the world, he was more than just knowledgeable about the Eastern Region itself.

He had become a key player in their operations, someone with enough importance to know secrets the Veritas Clan would never tell outsiders.

With Yulia's backing and friendship as well, he was practically a member of their clan already.

But even he couldn't gain access to the main estate.

'I heard the Veritas Clan keeps a record of all the knowledge in the world there. It's a physical representation of reality itself, an almost impossible concept that exists somehow.'

The Sapientia Clan focused on information and wisdom, but they couldn't even come close to what the Veritas Clan was hiding.

'Even regular members of the clan can't enter there. Unless it's the patriarch, the grand elders, or someone who has received unanimous permission from the council, that ground is off-limits.'

The main lineage of the Veritas Clan wasn't an exception to this rule. Fairness beyond all else. This was how the Veritas Clan rose to their grand position from the start.

'Though, Yulia doesn't seem to have a problem going there. Well, everyone else has a problem with it, but she does it anyway.'

Yulia Veritas was an outlier that nobody could control. Her true strength, her motives, and everything else about her were too hidden for people to make guesses.

But her loyalty to Veritas was absolute, so while people raised a fuss about her actions, nobody actually tried to stop her.

'What a nice position.'

It was basically where Damien wanted to be in the future. She was someone with the same standing as the Patriarch without any of the responsibilities. She was a free spirit to the core.

Damien wondered what the same position in Void Palace would look like as he reached the destination in question.

He was the first one there, but eventually, people arrived to join him.

It was three at first. A man with a bushy beard and a barbarian-like appearance, a woman who was the complete opposite of him, elegant and graceful, and another man who was dressed like a scholar from ancient times.

They approached Damien with the barbarian at the head and introduced themselves.

"You're Damien Grey, right?" The barbarian said.

"I've heard too much about ya to not say hi! You can call me Harutos. I don't really care about status or anything like that, but for the sake of introductions, I'm the Sixth Elder of the Veritas Clan."

Damien shook the grinning barbarian's hand with a cordial smile and returned his greeting.

In quick succession, the other two introduced themselves too.

The woman was named Regalia Veritas, and the scholarly man was called Telarius Veritas. They were the Seventh and Eighth Elders respectively, and along with him, they were in charge of protecting the geniuses of the clan.

"They sent four of us, but there's supposed to be six geniuses going to this secret realm. I guess the Grand Elders will be coming too?" Regalia wondered aloud.

The Veritas Clan had 24 Elders and 8 Grand Elders. While the Elders were all high-rank Demigods with great power, the Grand Elders were True Gods beyond imagination.

For them to be acting...

"The Young Master and Young Lady are participating in this expedition."

Telarius spoke to confirm Damien's thoughts.

Protection targets that Demigods didn't have the power to protect properly. They would be joining this expedition.

'Grand Elders, huh...'

If True Gods were participating as mere protectors...

'...this secret realm will probably be much more interesting than expected.'

And by interesting, naturally, he meant dangerous.

As he glanced into the sky and watched the spirit ship that held those illustrious characters approach, he contained his thoughts.

'A nagging feeling.'

It filled his heart.

And it only grew more prominent as the spirit ship approached.

He knew what his intuition was telling him, and he refused to ignore it.

'I might have to use it this time.'

He frowned, and stepped forward with the other three elders.

'Haa, and I thought I could hide for a little longer.'

#### Chapter 1373 Mercenary [6]

The spirit ship came from the main estate of the Veritas Clan. The Grand Elders directly left from there and picked up each party one by one, giving them adequate time to get acquainted with each other.

The Veritas Clan's Patriarch, Julian Veritas, only had two children. They were the Young Master and Young Lady mentioned before.

The rest of the geniuses of the clan came from collateral lines or were picked up from the outside, but the Veritas Clan didn't treat them any differently.

Their fairness principle applied everywhere. As long as one had talent and ability, one could do anything.

There wasn't even a real "Veritas Main Family." The family of the Clan Head was considered as such, but the Clan Head was always chosen fairly through competition whenever the time came for the previous head to step down.

Nevertheless, the Young Master and Young Lady of the clan in this generation were still put on a pedestal above the rest. Not because of their status, but because of their ability.

When Damien and the rest entered the spirit ship, they were immediately greeted by the Grand Elders, whom they respectfully greeted back.

Afterward, they were separated and taken to the geniuses they were meant to guard.

'Right, this is how it should be.'

Rather than just having a few elders focus on central targets, each genius had a powerful protector that couldn't be looked down upon.

Only, Damien was the only one who didn't have true status in the Veritas Clan, so he did feel a bit strange.

He didn't plan to shirk his duties, though.

He put away thoughts about the talented youths and focused on the woman in front of him, the genius he'd be protecting.

"Hello!" She greeted him optimistically when they first saw each other.

"My name is Celeste Veritas. Please take care of me!"

She bowed respectfully and looked at him with shining eyes, as if expecting him to introduce himself with the same enthusiasm.

"Hmm...I'm Damien Grey. I don't know if you've heard of me, but I'm confident in my abilities, so don't worry about anything else and focus on your opportunities in the secret realm. I won't let you die."

Was it a bit too direct? The expression on Celeste's face became a bit awkward for a moment before she regained her usual positive demeanor.

There wasn't much else for them to say to each other. It was a three-day journey to get to the secret realm from the nearest teleportation gate, and while most of the geniuses spent time talking to each other, Celeste had a habit of bothering Damien instead.

'Haa...what an energetic individual.'

She reminded him of the past Damien. The one who had endless energy and will to do whatever they wished.

'But why is she clinging onto me? Is it just a whim, or...?'

He did notice a strange atmosphere among the geniuses, as if they were avoiding Celeste.

A few of them did try to make conversation with her, including the Young Master and Young Lady, but after just a few minutes, they left awkwardly and didn't approach again.

'Either her position in the clan is strange, or something else is going on. I don't know, and I don't plan to get involved unless they try something.'

He knew the Veritas Clan's reputation, but he didn't put it past them to attack their own if the need came.

After all, there wasn't such thing as a major clan without conflict.

'Even if they plan to do something, it'll happen in the secret realm, so I should focus on that now.'

Damien still didn't know much about where they were going, but just a few hours ago he was given a jade slip describing it.

Since he'd gotten rid of Celeste and found peace in his own room now, he could finally take a look at it.

'What? It's unnamed?'

That was his first thought.

It was always just referred to as "the secret realm" or something along those lines, never specifically named.

'That's lame. But considering the contents, let's call it the Forbidden Secret Realm.'

It wasn't a good name by any means, but it was better than nothing. Plus, since when was Damien good at naming things?

'It makes sense why the surrounding forces, even allies like the Vega Clan, made a fuss about this place.'

It was an environment he found familiar.

It was a secret realm, but he understood its mechanics at a glance.

'This is just like the First Dungeon.'

According to the information, the Forbidden Secret Realm was a birthplace of Gods.

Every beast and creature in the place had some sort of Divine Bloodline, whether it be Godbeast blood or something of similar strength,

Every plant and material was heavenly and could be used to craft countless artifacts and treasures that couldn't be comprehended by a common practitioner.

It was basically a land of only treasures.

However, it had its own mechanics.

'Everyone can only bring out one thing?'

No matter where the treasures were hidden, even if they were placed in an alternate reality, they'd disappear once one left the secret realm, leaving only one behind.

There were mechanisms through which one could gain the chance to take out two or three, but never more than a number under five.

'Plus, to even get your hands on something good and keep it is difficult in its own right.'

This was that type of secret realm.

Every treasure would be accompanied by dozens of more dangers, and even the treasures the Veritas Clan knew of were contained within roughly a fifth of the secret realm's surface.

'The rest is unexplored. Not just by the Veritas, but by all of them. The entire battle has taken place in this fifth of the secret realm for as long as it has existed.'

There were boundary steles blocking off the rest of it from those who entered, and even the power of a True God wasn't enough to break them.

'How fun.'



Damien started getting a sense for the kind of encounters he would have in that place and the things he needed to watch out for.

'It's quite novel when I think about it.'

'This time, I'm not the genius exploring the secret realm.'

He'd grown past that point.

Rather than the one adventuring for opportunities, he was the one protecting that person from the shadows.

'It's quite novel when I think about it.'

He'd experienced the former side of things, but he'd never been in this position before.

He'd never even considered it, because, to him, he was still counted as a young genius.

'But these people don't know.'

Except for Yulia, nobody knew.

He was still in his 70s.

Each and every person at his level was at least a few thousand years old.

No, even disregarding them, most of the so-called geniuses in this place were older than him as well.

But who could guess that?

His altered appearance didn't let people easily guess his age, and with his power level that rivaled high-rank Demigods easily, who could ever imagine that he was only a few decades old?

Even Yulia took several years to finally come to terms with this fact.

But, that was also beside the point. Since he was in this position, he'd gladly accept it. It was more fun experiencing new things from this perspective, after all.

And with three days passing in a flash, the group finally arrived.

Dozens of spirit ships decorated the skies around a seemingly empty mountain range.

This was the location where the gate would spawn.

Sometime in the next few days, they would enter that place.

The Forbidden Secret Realm.

Chapter 1374 Forbidden Secret Realm [1]

There were four main groups who arrived at the Forbidden Secret Realm, but they weren't the only ones.

Aside from the four great clans who were participating, several smaller influences from the Eastern Region were given the chance to prove their worth through this expedition.

Their younger generations would experience trials and triumphs, and when they came out, they'd become people worthy of representing the Veritas Clan as its vassals.

Whatever rewards they gained inside were theirs alone. The Veritas Clan would never interfere and try to take a reward by force, but many chose to offer their gains to them regardless.

Otherwise, if the Veritas Clan truly desired something another party gained in the secret realm, they'd pay for it properly and give the clan in question a rise in status matching their achievement.

Because of this system, the smaller influences were all eager to have their geniuses show their mettle and prevail. They lined up around the area as the anticipation for the coming event rose.

The four major clans of the Eastern Region were also participating. They didn't require much status since they were already at the greatest height they could reach, but with their loyalty, it was only granted that they'd enter and try to aid the Veritas Clan to their greatest capacity.

Nevertheless, when the geniuses and their protectors exited their spirit ships and reached the ground below, the main players whom everyone focused their attention on naturally came from four influences.

The Veritas Clan, the Vega Clan, the Kyushu Federation, and the Straea Clan.

Of them, two were allied, while the other two were individual wolves hungry for a piece of the delicious meat known as the Forbidden Secret Realm.

Each of the four had six geniuses who were given the right to participate. They faced off in a mental battle the second they met each other, their auras both concealed and openly provoking their opponents.

Damien watched as the more well-known geniuses approached each other and began a battle of words. He watched as the more high-spirited ones challenged each other and raved at the opportunity to battle.

'Ah, youth.'

He smiled slightly. He remembered the days when he was in that position, a young genius who wanted to challenge the world.

Standing as someone who had been on top of the world before, all these small things seemed novel to him. Whether it was the mind games of those who were intelligent or the aura battles of those who weren't, they all reminded him of experiences from the past that shaped him into what he was today.

'There are a lot of secret realms throughout the cosmos, and they're pretty much the main challenge for the younger generation who wants to grow, but there's a reason for that. No matter what other method there is, this one is always the best.'

Even the Dimensional Leaderboard relied on secret realms of its creation to raise the geniuses of the lower universe.

Was there a better method?

The geniuses would be forced to challenge themselves with real-life experiences, and because most secret realms had restrictions, they would be able to do so against people of their own level without being impeded by people they didn't have a chance to defeat.

'The fall of most geniuses happens because of that. People who don't want to see them grow cut them down before they can. And unlike the usual secret realm...'

This one didn't have much of a power restriction.

It only had a limit for the number of people who could enter at each stage.

For instance, there were Godly protectors next to the Young Master and Young Lady of the Veritas Clan, along with the top geniuses of the other clans, a total of eight across all four great clans.

That was the maximum number of Gods allowed by the secret realm. If another God tried to enter after them, they would either be suppressed down to the Demigod level or just banned from entering the secret realm at all.

'We waited for two days in the spirit ships before descending, so I can only assume the secret realm will open soon...'

He glanced over at Celeste, the woman he was protecting this time around.

'She's not like the rest. I understand why she'd be excluded on the spirit ship since that's exclusively amongst the Veritas Clan members, but even here, she's not interacting with anyone.'

It was a little confusing from his perspective. Celeste was an energetic person. She always found time to annoy him with her overly positive attitude, and she didn't seem to have a bad personality that would drive people away from her.

But when she was around people of her own generation she never showed that side of her. It wasn't that she became cold and ruthless, it was more like she put on the guise of a weak and vulnerable individual without the confidence to approach others.

'Is she someone who likes to toy with others?'

He didn't really care about her habits, but he needed to know her general demeanor if he wanted to plan for the future.

From what he'd seen so far, she didn't overtly go looking for trouble, but she seemed like someone trouble would be attracted to regardless.

'Hmm...'

Damien shrugged.

'At this point, it's already useless to speculate. After all...'

He glanced at the sky.

Some others sensed it too.

Space was fluctuating imperceptibly. With every passing second, its chaos became more pronounced until even the weakest among them could clearly feel the changes.

'It's time.'

As if it was waiting for Damien's declaration, the entrance to the Forbidden Secret Realm ripped open.

A large, swirling, galaxy-like portal formed where the space tore, opening the way to heaven.

No words needed to be said. This wasn't the first time the secret realm had opened and it wouldn't be the last.

Those who were impatient rushed ahead instantly, and those who were cautious waited a bit longer before entering, but regardless of their nature, they all entered within a minute.

As for Damien and Celeste...

"Shall we go?" She said in a peppy tone.

"I'm just here to protect you, so do as you please," Damien responded stately.

"Tch, you're no fun."

Celeste pouted a bit, but it was just for show. She'd already begun moving towards the portal.

Damien pulled out the small jade token he was given, one connected to a similar token Celeste held. This would allow him to be teleported to the same location as her without fail, since everyone would be spread out randomly when they entered the realm.

And as she walked in, he walked in as well.

Under the familiar feeling of reality itself twisting and morphing into something entirely different, he arrived in a new plane.

And he immediately felt it.

'This...'

He took in a deep breath of the air.

His eyes narrowed.

His heart pounded.

'There's something here.'

There was definitely something in the secret realm that was related to him, something absolutely critical.

He didn't know what it was, but since he was here, he wouldn't leave without finding it.

He smiled to himself.

'I knew it wouldn't be a normal secret realm expedition, but I didn't expect that there'd be something like this.'

The mysterious treasures of the most important secret realm in the Eastern Region...

Just what did they have to offer?

## Chapter 1375 Forbidden Secret Realm [2]

Damien glanced around at his surroundings.

The first thing he saw was Celeste, who was just a few feet away. Unlike him, she'd been affected by the spatial transmission and was currently regaining her composure.

After that, it was the environment itself.

They were in a large jungle, or maybe it was more apt to call it a rainforest?

It was filled with verdant greenery lush enough to be considered overgrown. The color green that spread in every direction was almost too vibrant to be real, and the sky was blotted out by the densely packed vegetation.

The roars, chirps, and buzzing of beasts came from all over the place, courtesy of the flourishing ecosystem within this place.

And from the auras that came from those sounds...

"...everything around here has reached Divinity."

It wasn't Damien who spoke, but Celeste. She also sensed everything around her after regaining her senses, and she immediately went on alert.

"It's not quite Divinity," Damien responded.

"It's similar, but they didn't reach the Divine level normally. It's more like they're mortals with the strength of a Divinity."



Divinity was something special. Regardless of whether it was something grand like Damien's Hegemon God or something basic like a single element Divinity, it wasn't something that could be achieved easily.

That wasn't to say none of the beasts in this secret realm had the capacity to reach that point, but an entire ecosystem of Divinities who slaughtered and ate each other just wasn't possible.

But for them to reach a power level similar to what a Demigod had without actually gaining Divinity, while it seemed more improbable, was actually far easier.

Damien knew how beasts worked more than anyone else, since he was basically one of them for a while. He understood how easy it was to kill, eat, and evolve until one reached an unimaginable level.

'I wonder what the intelligence standard is.'

If they all had high intelligence, things could be far more dangerous than he was expecting.

'But it's not my job to figure all this out.'

After the first tidbit of information he gave, he didn't say anything else.

This was Celeste's time to shine. If he played too large of a role here, it would stunt her growth rather than aid it.

So he quietly watched as she slowly gathered information about her surroundings and set out to explore the secret realm.

For now, Damien's job was easy. He already knew how this went.

Celeste fought against beasts, struggled, almost died, and grew. She never got injured or endangered to the extent that would require Damien to intervene, so as the days passed, he quietly faded into the background and watched her grow.

Of course, not helping her didn't mean he wasn't making his own observations about the secret realm and Celeste herself over this period.

'Surprisingly enough, we're pretty close to the boundary steles. I was expecting everyone to arrive far away, since there haven't been many real attempts to break past the steles, but I guess there was something more to it.'

The aura he had been sensing since he first got here was coming from beyond the steles, so his attention kept going in that direction.

'It's unfortunate, but I won't be able to get there in the near future.'

The time they had in this place wasn't actually guaranteed. The Forbidden Secret Realm opened when it pleased and closed when it pleased. When the time came for it to disappear from the world again, it would simply eject every foreign entity back into the Heavenly World as if they were flies in front of its power.

'It might be as little as six months, and it might be so long that the situation outside has become something unimaginable.'

Damien shook his head.

'There's no point dawdling on it. Worst case scenario, I force my way out. More importantly, that woman...'

Celeste was a Demigod in her own right. From what Damien could sense from her soul, her Divinity was also something related to stars, as if her destiny always led to the celestial.

'The power she uses mimics the natural elements, but isn't actually a part of their order. She's an anomaly amongst anomalies.'

Normal people definitely couldn't sense it, but he was different.

There wasn't anyone with a greater connection to the celestial than he did.

After all, he was the owner of an entire universe.

'From what I can gather, it isn't like the power of my Celestial class, or anything like Ruyue's old moon affinity. Rather than drawing power from the stars, it's like her entire body has become chaos from which the stars can be born.'

He didn't know how to properly explain it, but it was definitely interesting.

Her growth was incredibly linear, as if the cosmos itself wanted her to grow fast. The stronger she got, the more chaotic her soul became, yet the more ordered her power was.

'This woman is special.'

She was still a "young genius." She was around 100 years old, and she'd been sheltered in the Veritas Clan for the majority of her life.

'The treatment she receives outside might be because of her unique physique. I don't know if they can read it as well as I can, but there's no way the Gods of the Veritas Clan didn't notice the oddity of her existence.'

Whatever the case was, the Celeste he was seeing now wasn't like the sides she showed in the outside world.

He was sure she'd already forgotten about his presence.

Because she truly looked in her element.

She wasn't hiding anything or putting up a front. She wasn't being reserved or overly outgoing. She was just being herself, absolutely enjoying the feeling of strength filling her every bone.

'In a way, she's similar to me.'

Damien smiled.

Months passed without him having to intervene in her adventures.

Celeste found a variety of treasures, some of which she discarded and some of which she consumed directly. She even found a beast companion, a small black snake that didn't seem like anything special but had a unique aura about it.

She was doing well, and Damien was having fun watching her growth.

However, good times could never last.

'Hostile presences.'

They were surrounded by them constantly, but these were different.

These were human.

Celeste's eyes turned in that direction with a ferocious glint.

'There's no way another group would approach with good intentions.'

Those individualistic and prideful geniuses moving as a group?

Laughable!

Without a question, Celeste raised her guard and jumped into a nearby tree. She withdrew a bow from her spatial ring and got in position to fire.

The group slowly arrived in the vicinity, and Celeste hid her presence to an extreme degree that impressed even Damien.

The two of them watched as the group below split up and searched the area. When they realized Celeste was nowhere to be found, they reconvened in the clearing.

"The target isn't here," the leader among them said.

"Should we leave?" Another asked him.

"No."

The leader's response was instant without an ounce of hesitation.

"Remember our orders. If we can't accomplish our mission, we'll be killed or brutally tortured. This is the only chance for us."

His eyes hardened and his teeth gritted. The expressions of his men became equally solemn as they reflected on their position.

There was only one hope for their survival.

And the leader knew it well.

"The future of Veritas must fall today."

Chapter 1376 Targeted [1]

The group that arrived in search of Celeste consisted of only one person who was recognizable.

He was the leader. The man who controlled the rest was one of the geniuses who appeared with the Straea Clan group. Other than him, the rest were all people who shouldn't have been in the secret realm at all.

'These people...'

Celeste's eyes narrowed as she watched them.

Her presence was hidden enough for them to not notice her, and as they made their way through the atmosphere looking for traces of her, she followed them and observed.

She already figured out that they were from the Straea Clan, and it didn't take a genius to realize that they used some unscrupulous means to find a way into the secret realm.

'They aren't talking enough.'

She hadn't acted yet because she was waiting for them to reveal something of use, but the most they did was report on her traces.

'I left more traces in other directions on purpose to distract them, but...'

She was able to split them up as she hoped. The only problem was the lack of information.

'They're targeting the whole clan. That's all I know.'

And in a sense, that was all she needed to know.

When combined with the knowledge that the Straea Clan was involved, there wasn't much more that needed to be said.

'Then, just kill.'

She gave up on gathering intel and drew her bow.

'There are twelve total.'

She felt the wind and closed her eyes. Vision was irrelevant right now.

Her senses became one with the atmosphere, and the positions of those she wanted to see became clear to her, clearer than they ever could be with physical senses.

The brushing wind, the way the foliage moved as they stepped through it, the position of the surrounding trees relative to both her and them...

She took them all in, and as she stood with her bowstring drawn, a set of three arrows gradually materialized in their rightful place.

They were white, shining like the moon, and ethereal like moonlight.

They were weightless, but Celeste could clearly feel their weight on her fingers.

And as she let go of the bowstring, they flew true.

Shik!

Shik!

Shik!

Three arrows flew on three separate paths and struck three different targets.

One went clean through a man's head and came out the other side before dispersing into the atmosphere as if it never existed, another went through a man's heart and dropped him before he even knew what was going on, while the last struck a man in the shoulder and slammed him into a nearby tree.

By the time the three arrows hit their targets, another three were already whizzing through the air.

Shik!

Shik!

They hit the same three targets. The first two alternated their targeted areas on their original targets, leaving both with injuries in their heads and hearts, while the last hit the man's other shoulder and pinned him to the tree, restricting his movements.

"ARGH!"

The third man was finally given a chance to scream out in pain.

The first two died instantly. The arrows weren't regular wooden weapons, after all. They were made of pure mana and laced with the strange laws that were born from Celeste's physique.

Not only did they cut the connection between an individual and their mana, but they also corroded their souls with its power until those souls were absorbed and turned into arrows of their own.

Celeste called them banishing arrows, because those who were killed by them would be banished from existence entirely.

Bows were generally looked down upon by the majority, since there usually wasn't a case where a practitioner would meet an arrow they couldn't dodge, but what happened when those same arrows were put in the hands of someone who knew how to use them?



It was a scene like this.

The roars of the man Celeste left alive resounded through the rainforest, drawing the others in his group towards him.

As attention focused on him and people searched the surroundings for the shooter, Celeste moved with the dexterity of a true native of this ecosystem and rushed to a different location, from which she drew her bow again.

Xiu! Xiu! Xiu! Xiu! Xiu!

Nine arrows were fired in quick succession. They split up and targeted six people in a similar pattern to the ones before.

Celeste switched locations again and repeated this pattern one more time before putting away her bow.

At this point, the group was well aware that there was someone targeting them, and they were too alert to fall for another ambush.

But that was still according to Celeste's plan. She never used a bow as her weapon anyway.

Instead, she'd been able to maim and injure a majority of the group within the first few seconds. That damage would gradually worsen due to the qualities of the arrows, which left her in a situation where one against twelve didn't seem so difficult anymore.

Twin daggers appeared to replace her bow, and using the tree branches as footholds, she launched into the crowd and began her dance.

"ARGH!"

"AGH!"

"HEUK!"

Sounds of pain were the only thing that followed.

She didn't fight like anyone Damien had seen before.

Her every movement was calculated, but there was no rigidity at all. It was smooth and flexible, yet extremely erratic.

Sometimes she'd be in the air, hidden daggers made of mana raining down on her enemies. Sometimes she'd be on the ground facing them head-on, but even then she always had something following her back to take them by surprise.

She never stayed in one place for too long. Even if she successfully broke the enemy's guard and had the opportunity to make a fatal move, she didn't. Instead, she'd leap away and inflict more sustained damage while focusing on those around her, never giving them an opportunity.

In no time at all, a group of twelve was taken down to two.

The man pinned to the tree who watched in horror as his comrades fell one by one, and Felix Straea, the genius from the Straea Clan.

"You...!"

He wanted to exclaim something, but he didn't know what to say. He couldn't predict the woman in front of him at all, and none of her information matched what he'd just seen.

He opened his mouth again, but before he could say a word, his eyes shook.

There she was.

Directly in front of him.

Three slashes of light appeared in the air.

Three guttural sounds rang out.

Felix's eyes widened as pain suddenly racked his entire body. Both of his legs were broken in that instant, and a shallow cut was formed on his neck.

It was purposeful.

As if Celeste was telling him she could kill him whenever she wanted to, but was choosing not to.

If she just pushed a little further with that last slice...

He didn't even want to think about it, but if his life was spared, it could only be for one reason.

"Tell me," Celeste said.

"Where are the rest of your people?"

She didn't need to know the reasoning or anything like that. Those questions could be answered later.

But right now, the rest of the Veritas Clan geniuses were also being attacked.

Regrouping with them and forming a united front was her top priority.

From the skies above, Damien watched her with a smile.

'Nice.' He thought.

'This woman has a good head on her shoulders.'

## Chapter 1377 Targeted [2]

Damien glanced down at the body in his hands.

'This guy was a high-rank Demigod.'

There was no way geniuses would be sent alone for a mission like the one that they were on. There was a contingency plan in the form of a high-rank Demigod that was more powerful than any of those Damien had met from the Veritas Clan group.

'If it's like this for them too, it'll be trouble.'

The geniuses were at roughly the same level. They could fight in single combat and the outcome would be unknown, but when the enemy was in a group of ten or more and supported by such a strong Divinity, the outcome would obviously be different.

'Hmm...'

He kept forgetting, but the young geniuses were Demigods as well.

'I guess this is where the massive gap between Divinities comes into play.'

Because in front of people like the corpse in his hand, people like Celeste wouldn't stand a single chance.

'She's moving in the right direction, though. Since she's been hiding her strength so thoroughly, she's the only one who can help the others.'

Celeste was definitely at a much higher level than her peers. The reason she was able to toy with Felix Straea and his group was exactly this, and since she had Damien watching her back, she had the freedom to act as she pleased.

As for the others...

'Their protectors are strong, but not strong enough.'

And the two Gods in the group...

'...are probably fighting stronger Gods.'

It was a troublesome situation.

The Veritas Clan was relatively careless in the way they handled the secret realm because its restrictions had been inviolable for so long. It wasn't their fault, but it was a mistake nonetheless.

Since the Straea Clan found a way to circumvent the realm restriction, the problem was probably much, much worse than Damien and Celeste were thinking it was.

'If so, we need to move asap.'

He glanced down at the ground, where Celeste was just finishing up her interrogation. She'd gotten a decent amount of information from the dying Straea Clan genius, but it wasn't nearly enough to make a difference.

Damien disappeared and reappeared near her as she cut the throats of the last two men left alive.

"What did he say?" He asked.

"Only general direction," Celeste responded.

"That's enough. Guide me and we'll get there in time."

She glanced at him strangely, but nodded regardless.

The first was the location of Rebecca Veritas and Hugo Veritas, who were traveling together. They were the ones protected by Harutos and Regalia Veritas, the Sixth and Seventh Elders of the clan.

They were towards the west, a location closer to the barrier stele but still not close enough for it to be relevant.

Damien didn't need much more information other than direction. He grabbed Celeste with his mana and pulled her along as he moved through the spatial layers, providing her cover so she didn't get affected by the teleportation.

"What's your true level?" Damien asked as they moved.

"I'm not sure," Celeste responded succinctly.

Damien nodded. He figured this was the case from the way she fought. She didn't seem to use laws as much as she should have, but her laws were so deeply ingrained in her attacks that she could fight like a mortal and still show the combat power of a Divinity.

It was an inherent thing. Celeste herself didn't have much control over those laws, but they would support her as they were needed, so her not knowing her actual strength made some sense.

"Did you see anyone that could be a threat?"

The next question was the important one. Even if she didn't know her power, she definitely had the instincts of a hunter.

"No."

Her response was just as simple, but it was enough.

"Good. Handle things on the ground while I help the protectors. We'll reconvene when both battles are over."

With that sentence, Damien vanished from Celeste's vision, and suddenly, her blurred surroundings became filled with the sound of weapons clashing and mana being thrown around.

She was already on the battlefield, conveniently placed on a tree branch above the commotion.

'That man...'

She shook her head.

He was more than she expected, but she could ask him about that later. For now, she had a task to accomplish, and she would complete it without fail.

As expected, the two Veritas geniuses were surrounded by over twenty enemies, battered and bloodied as they desperately fought back.

Despite their state, their protectors were nowhere in sight.

'If so...'

Celeste drew her bow.

She had to give them an opening to exploit. After that, she could intervene as she was needed.

Ten arrows whizzed into the air as one. They synchronized their movements and danced through the environment like a flock of birds making their way towards their prey.

The battle below was fated to change from that point.

As for what was happening in the sky...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

It couldn't be heard from the rainforest due to the natural barrier created by the canopy, but the high-rank Demigods were having quite the battle above said canopy.

There were two of them on the enemy side, while there was only one remaining from Veritas.

As Damien approached, he first took a second to understand the situation.

'Regalia died. It was probably an ambush. Harutos has been holding them off on his own since then, but he won't be able to end this battle.'

The most he could do was stall them, but that was fine.

He stalled long enough.

Help had arrived in the most unexpected form.

A shadow appeared behind one of the enemy Demigods before anyone knew what was happening.

The state of their battle beforehand didn't even matter, because the second that shadow showed itself, it was already over.



A hand was placed on the enemy Demigod's back.

BANG!

A pulse of mana flowed through his body and invaded his soul.

Both crumbled to dust in an instant and were swallowed by a terrifying black energy not long after.

High-rank Demigods.

They weren't a match for Damien anymore.

It wasn't because he grew in power. No, his power growth had actually stagnated.

It was because he finally got used to the Heavenly World's "flow."

He understood its mana and he understood how its fate moved. With that wisdom, he could accurately mobilize his own mana in a way no other Demigod could imagine.

And his power was no longer restricted by the laws of the newfound world.

Rather than growing, he reached the level he had been at since the day he devoured the Saint Emperor.

He turned to the last remaining enemy in the sky.

"It's your turn."

That man's fate wasn't much better than his ally's. He was torn to shreds within three seconds of combat and his body was devoured by an unknown force.

Damien glanced over at Harutos, who was speechlessly standing around and trying to process what just happened, before looking at the ground, where Celeste was once again in the process of finishing up her battle.

'Not bad.'

The scale was different, but she was almost keeping up with him. It was impressive to say the least.

'I almost want to take her as a disciple, but that's a matter for another time.'

He had the memories of those men he'd killed, so he knew where the rest of the Veritas Clan's members were being attacked.

"Harutos, help them finish up on the ground and wait at this location. If I'm not there in five minutes, use this to hide the group until the secret realm ends."

He threw a token at the man that contained both the location he had in mind and an array formation he specifically made for concealment and protection long ago.

Harutos nodded subconsciously, and by the time he realized what he'd agreed to, Damien was already gone.

His thoughts were similar to Celeste's.

Damien Grey was definitely a greater man than any of them realized.

And perhaps he would be the key to saving the Veritas Clan from tragedy!

Chapter 1378 True Gods [1]

Damien went after Telarius and his accompanied genius first.

He was the last Demigod among them. The ones remaining from that point would be Gods.

'Can I take them?'

Damien was confident that he was stronger than most Demigods, but what about Gods?

Despite working closely with people related to them, he hadn't actually come into direct conflict with a God before. He didn't know exactly how their power worked, nor did he know about the nuances that made Gods what they were.

'Either way, I have to do it.'

He wouldn't know if he had to act until he got there, but even if he didn't, it would be good for him to see what he'd been wanting to see since he got to the Heavenly World.

'True Godhood.'

He continued thinking about it as he saved Telarius and the young genius he was protecting.

He went through the motions and didn't pay them much attention, simply sending them towards Harutos and Celeste.

To be titled a God was massive. Especially to Damien, who grew up on Earth. His perception of that level was beings who were all-powerful, people who were above people.

Seeing them living in society and acting as regular leaders, Damien couldn't imagine them being the same people who were idolized and turned into mythological figures in his homeworld.

But there had to be something.

He refused to believe the cosmos would title people True Gods without the justification to use such a term.

He knew where they were.

And he knew the opponents they would be facing.

So he went there without hesitation, his curiosity reaching an absolute peak.

He could feel the world rumbling from hundreds of millions of miles away. It wasn't a physical vibration, but a reaction in the mana that made up all things.

'It's resonating.'

These weren't random vibrations created through battle. It wasn't chaotic or disordered by the disruptive force that offensive mana was.

Rather, it was harmonizing and resonating with the few people that existed at that far distance.

Damien hid himself in the folds of reality. He used the Authority of Existence to absolutely cloak himself to the greatest of his capacity.

And after taking a few minutes to prepare to the best of his abilities, Damien moved closer until he could finally see them.

There were four of them in the sky. Unlike with the Demigods, Gods weren't a disposable force. They couldn't throw numbers at the problem to solve it.

So the Gods sent by the Straea Clan numbered the same as those they were facing, but they were strong enough to make sure the Grand Elders of the Veritas Clan wouldn't survive past today.

The four of them stood in the sky facing each other. They weren't making any special moves, but the mana was still acting as if they'd been fighting for a great deal of time.

In the rainforest below, the Young Master and Young Lady of the Veritas Clan, Romulus Veritas and Reva Veritas, were back to back, fighting a group far greater than any of the other geniuses.

'They don't look too injured.'

The battle should've been ongoing for several minutes already, but despite being surrounded by over fifty enemies, the two didn't have any injuries besides some surface-level cuts and scratches.

'I'll send a clone down, but I don't need to do anything unless the situation starts devolving.'

A piece of mana separated from Damien's body and dropped to the ground indiscernibly, weaving through the harmonic ambient mana so the Gods wouldn't sense its presence.

As the clone reached the ground and started acting on the orders given to it, Damien refocused on the Gods.

'Why aren't they moving?'

They weren't speaking or battling, so it was a little confusing, but something was definitely happening.

'The harmonized mana is flowing in two different directions.'

The stream he was in moved towards the group from behind him. He was standing behind the Veritas Grand Elders, so it felt pure and without blemish, natural beyond nature.

However, he could sense it now that he was close.

The mana behind the Straea Clan Gods was flowing in the opposite direction, pushing towards them and clashing with the Veritas Gods' mana in the space between them.

'They're not the same type of mana, either. Here, it feels like the ambient mana of the world, but on that side, it's far more chaotic, almost similar to the Abyss.'

'I can't see it.'

He couldn't no matter what he tried.

'Why can't I see it?'

It wasn't due to his abilities. He had control over ethereal existence just as he did its physical counterpart. There should've been nothing in this world that could hide from his eyes unless the power difference was just that grand.

'Is that what it is?'

He didn't want it to be that simple. He didn't want it to be a mere difference in strength.

'Or maybe it's not a matter of strength at all.'

Maybe it was a matter of "league."

Perhaps his "state of existence" hadn't reached the required level.

'But I know I can do it.'

State of existence wasn't something that mattered to him anymore. The Void Physique had fully merged with him. There should have no longer been boundaries separating him from the peak of the universe.

'No. That's arrogance. Even if I've been acknowledged by the Void, I still have a ways to go before I can reach it.'

However, there was a way.

He had to become one with the world and use Absolute Perception. He had to strengthen the All-Seeing Eyes with Void Energy.

He had to do everything in his power to enhance his perception.

That was what he did.

His state of mind reached an entirely new level he'd never experienced before. He wasn't just viewing the world through its eyes, he had opened an eye that was never meant to be open.

He looked through the eyes of reality itself and peered into the secrets of those True Gods.

He experienced another world.

'Wow...'

He let out a breath of wonder.

'This is...'

'Law.'

Law. The power that governed the universe.

He was familiar with it. He was far closer to it than anyone else he'd met.

Until today.

Until he saw a God use their power.

He controlled laws like he was a part of them. He was able to see through the world's eye and assimilate himself with them.

However, these Gods were different.

They didn't have to control or assimilate with laws.

Laws actively obeyed their will.

The mana of the world acted like a servant waiting on its master.

They were true rulers, true possessors of "Authority" over laws.

It was a level Damien had imagined many times. He'd peeked at the peak when he spoke to the Void, it was just that he had no way to understand what that peak meant because he wasn't anywhere close to it yet.

This was the closest representation he'd seen before.

These Gods were above the Laws and used the Laws however they pleased. They could wield concepts as if they had no bounds and turn Laws into absolutely anything.

And as Damien watched, a thought came to mind.



'I...'

'I could do that too.'

Chapter 1379 True Gods [2]

It was an instinctual thought.

Damien suddenly felt like that place wasn't far away from him. He definitely didn't have the pure qualifications to go there, but he thought he could do it anyway.

He just had to make the eyes of reality his own.

If his current perceptive ability became the norm, and he was given the time to assimilate with the mana, that plane would be at his mercy.

He was confident.

But not now. Now, he only had the ability to see it and understand its nature.

Heavenly God Plane.

That was its name.

The Heavenly God Plane was something like an alternate reality. It only existed for Godly combat and couldn't be visited on any other occasion. It barely even existed in the first place, instead being like a reflection of reality.

Damien began to understand why Gods were so high above everyone as he explored it with his eyes.

They would automatically gain access to this place when their Divinity strengthened to a certain point. After that, if they even wanted to express their power against another God, they had to come here.

It wasn't necessarily a restriction. True Gods could show their power as they wanted and fight in the Heavenly World if they pleased, but because of how mana reacted to their very presence, it was difficult to do so.

Even if they didn't actively will it, all the mana in the surrounding few tens of millions of kilometers would be beckoned by their existence and become part of any attack they used.

In that situation, not just their targets, but millions or more innocent lives would be involved in their disputes.

There were few Gods that didn't care about the common people, and even fewer who held an utter disregard for the environment itself.

Therefore, they fought in the Heavenly God Plane.

Did they have a reason not to?

Even for the crueler Gods, the chance to show the absolute best of their ability and crush their opponent in every single way, something the Heavenly God Plane gave them, wasn't a chance they would give up just for the sake of showing their power to common mortals.

However, that wasn't to say that all battles between Gods took place in the Heavenly God Plane.

If two Gods of equal power fought hard enough for the Heavenly God Plane to stop accommodating them, if that battle was forced into the real world...

Situations like those were what allowed those beneath them to find a reason to worship Gods.

Situations like those were the source of myths and legends.

Anyway, the current forces in the Heavenly God Plane that Damien was observing were the two Gods from the Veritas Clan and the two Gods from the Straea Clan.

Their battle was blurry. He couldn't necessarily make them out until he gained the power to enter the Heavenly God Plane without restriction, but from his current perceptive ability watching from the outside in, he could at least see how the flow of law changed hands.

'The Veritas Grand Elders are holding out well, but they don't really have a chance.'

It was designed like that from the start. Their opponents were people hand-picked for the purpose of killing them. It was never an even battle.

It was the same on the ground. Romulus and Reva Veritas were struggling more as time passed. Fifty enemies had been culled down to thirty, and that number was slowly going down, but there were only two of them.

They didn't have the opportunity to rest and recuperate their mana. They were being pressed constantly, and because of the endless nature of their enemies' attacks, their mental states were being exhausted as well.

By the time they got the number down to half of what it started at, Damien's clone had already taken action.

It ran through Demigod after Demigod, killing, devouring, and moving to the next before the bodies even had a chance to drop to the ground.

One would expect a slaughter to end in a mountain of corpses and a river of blood, but when Damien acted, it was the opposite.

Not just those he killed, but those who lay on the ground after losing their lives earlier, were swallowed up by a swarm of blackness, leaving the battlefield cleaner than it was before the battle began.

But perhaps that was more terrifying, because even though they were being saved, the two future leaders of the Veritas Clan were terrified in their souls by the one doing so.

After all, while other Demigods couldn't sense the true nature of the Void, they could absolutely feel its terror when it bared its fangs so close to them.

The Damien on the ground controlled the situation relatively easily, and as he took the two Veritas geniuses into an isolated part of the Sanctuary temporarily, his main body in the sky acted as well.

'I'm not sure of their numbers, but the loss of two Gods will definitely hurt.'

Saving geniuses was the priority, but it was also important to preserve the combat power the clan currently had so those geniuses could be properly fostered.

He almost didn't want to get involved without absolute certainty, but at the same time...

'...I really can't help myself. I want to know what happens.'

He was not in the Heavenly God Plane.

Maybe the situation where a God's body in the real world was damaged while they were in the Heavenly God Plane was rare enough to be negligible in most cases, however...

'...I'm not "most cases."'

Damien was a unique existence who was already stronger than most other Demigods.

He didn't know.

But he really wanted to find out.

How much damage could he do to a True God?

This wasn't time for him to hold back.

He moved away from the Veritas Gods and approached behind the two from the Straea Clan.

As he felt earlier, the surrounding mana was far more chaotic and destructive than anything on the other side, but this was better for him.

Contrary to what the enemy would expect, this kind of mana only enhanced his force.

He crept up behind the two Gods and picked his target.

'That one seems to be causing the most trouble.'

The two were a man and a woman. Of them, the man was the stronger-looking one, but from what Damien saw in the Heavenly God Plane, the woman was the one contributing most to the battle.

'Then...'

He was directly behind her, but she couldn't sense him.

Was it because her mind was in a separate plane, or was his concealment just that good?

It was likely a combination of both, but Damien didn't spend much time thinking about it.

He raised his arms and hovered his hands beside both sides of her head.

He gathered Void Energy in his palms and transmuted it as he wanted.

Destruction, Death, and Lightning. Those were the three laws he infused along with the Authority of Existence that governed them all.

The black force that arced across his fingers was the epitome of chaos. It was a combination of all the most destructive forces in his arsenal, an attack only possible for him now that he'd become equipped with his power as a Demigod.

He flexed his fingers and took a deep breath.

His power coalesced.

It became harder to conceal his mana from the world.

The God he was targeting noticed his presence.

But he was already moving.

He slammed his hands sideways, crushing her head between them.

And once he made contact, he let loose all the force he gathered.

The result...

The result was something magisterial.

Chapter 1380 True Gods [3]

The Heavenly God Plane was an ethereal plane, which meant when Gods went there to battle, they'd leave their mortal shells behind in the real world.

It wasn't necessarily a bad thing. The soul of a True God was effectively their true body, so a physical shell could be considered a limiter for them.

However, it was still necessary, because until one reached the highest levels of True Godhood, one's soul wouldn't have the capacity to exist without a physical vessel for a long period of time.

After all, souls were fragile. No matter how much power they could output, what was the point if they could be shattered in one or two attacks?

There were several protections every God would take when they entered the Heavenly God Plane. Their physical bodies couldn't stay unguarded, and if they were injured, the damage would rebound onto their souls as well.

Therefore, whether it be through mana or physical materials, there were always layers upon layers blocking the physical bodies of Gods from any outside force.

However, in front of Damien, those defenses were paper-thin.

He already knew how to meld with the mana. When he moved, he did so in perfect synchronicity with the ambient energy to the point where even the Gods that were a few feet away from him couldn't sense his presence.

He already knew how to meld with the mana. When he moved, he did so in perfect synchronicity with the ambient energy to the point where even the Gods that were a few feet away from him couldn't sense his presence.

And when he attacked, using that extremely destructive force of blackness directly on the head of the enemy God...

The effects could be imagined.

First and foremost, a chaotic burst of mana from Damien's body disrupted the relatively even flow between the two sides that were facing each other.

The balance they'd created before entering the Heavenly God Plane was broken, and they were all thrown away from each other as the rebound struck them and pulled them out of the Heavenly God Plane.

It was relatively less harmful to the Veritas Gods since they weren't directly attacked, so once they woke up and took a second to stabilize their bodies, they didn't have many problems.

However, for the opposing Gods...

The man among them was thrown back several hundred kilometers by the waves of power emanating from the mysterious figure who attacked them.

He had several internal wounds, nothing too severe, but more than enough to stop him for a few seconds.

And the woman who got attacked, naturally she couldn't walk away easily.

The skin on her head was completely burned off and the muscles and bones beneath were scarred beyond belief.

Her body wasn't given the chance to move with Damien holding her in place, so all the force that landed on her was tanked directly without any external aid.

Because of that, she was riddled with internal wounds and even her mana was fiercely rebounding, causing constant damage to her organs.

Her soul wasn't in better shape. Because it received a portion of the physical body's injuries, it was crippled to an extent that made her no different than a Demigod.



She was dangerously wounded. Even as she screamed in agony and tried to tame the rampaging forces within her, she wasn't able to identify her enemy.

'Not bad.'

Damien already retreated before all of the above happenings took place. He was using a clone to maintain the female God's position so she would be hit with the maximum damage possible, and even then, that clone was soon torn apart by the energy naturally emanating from her.

'I knew I could do damage, but I didn't expect it to be this good.'

The Heavenly God Plane mechanic was a great way for Damien to cripple Godly enemies, at least if he just looked at this instance as an example.

However, he knew this wasn't true.

'If they were this fragile, they wouldn't be using the Heavenly God Plane in the first place. Either I'm even more of an anomaly than I thought, or...'

Damien's eyes narrowed.

'...these Gods are at the lowest ranks of their power level.'

The latter was far more probable.

Because if they weren't the lowest-rank Gods, not even the great clans like Veritas and Straea would be willing to use them as disposables for an operation like this one.

After all, even if the Straea Clan succeeded here, they'd have to answer for their crimes somehow. If they controlled the situation well, these Gods being sacrificed was the best way for them to avoid greater retaliation while maintaining the upper hand.

'That was probably their plan from the start. If these are just scapegoats, then...'

Damien marveled as he got a glimpse of how strong the strongest of Gods could be.

Though, he didn't get to maintain that attitude for long.

"Who goes there?!"

The male God among the enemies roared and let his mana loose.

The ambient mana was disrupted, and Damien's position was revealed to the world.

'As I thought, I can't hide from them when they're present in reality.'

Damien figured this would happen, but it was still part of his plan.

"You...are you the one who did this?" The man questioned.

"And what if I am?" Damien responded with a grin.

"Then you must die first."

The man charged towards Damien without hesitation.

At the same time, his female companion finally stopped suffering under the aftereffects of Damien's attack.

She managed to calm the chaos inside her body, however, the wounds on her head were not easily healed. Damien used Void Energy to support his attack, so her common Divine Energy wasn't enough to heal those scars.

Her muscles healed to an extent, and a grotesque covering of something similar to skin covered them, but she was now deformed and had lost sensation on a majority of her head.

She was livid to say the least.

She felt a thirst for blood beyond anything she'd ever felt before.

And as her male companion's yells rang out, telling her exactly who caused her current circumstances, her rage boiled over into something uncontrollable.

Both Gods were now charging at Damien with fervor, but he didn't panic.

Even this was part of his plan.

His eyes went to the Veritas Gods who were watching everything happen.

They were just about to start acting to protect him, since they remembered who he was and were thankful for his help, but he stopped them before they could.

"This is where your people are. Regroup with them and start a counterattack."

That was the mental transmission Damien sent to them. With it, he included both the location and situation so the two Gods could understand everything they'd missed while they were fighting.

"The two on the ground are fine too, so be sure to protect everyone. As for these two..."

He grinned to himself.

"...just leave them to me."

Without giving the Veritas Grand Elders a chance to respond, Damien vanished, teleporting while leaving enough traces of himself to keep the Straea Gods on his tail.

'Very good.'

This was perfect.

He was able to feel the power of Gods personally, he was able to gain several favors from the Veritas Clan, and more than anything else...

'...I found a great weapon to use against the boundary steles.'

He was able to get away from his duties as a protector because of his actions, and he didn't leave any loose ends that the Veritas group couldn't handle.

So now was his chance.

He was headed straight for the mysterious force that had been calling him since he got here.