

Void 1551

Chapter 1551 Ambition [3]

Compared to her sistersno, compared to most people in the world, Ruyue's situation was unique.

It could be said that she had the same independent attitude as Elena, yet the same desire as Rose.

But weren't those two things contradictory?

In Ruyue's case, no.

Ruyue in particular wasn't really fazed by the notice of deployment.

It didn't mean anything to her.

Unlike Rose, she didn't harbor any feelings against the outside world. However, unlike Elena, she didn't have any particular desire to experience it either.

Her situation was a bit special.

Ruyue experienced a Cosmic Rebirth quite unlike anything her sisters experienced.

She didn't tell them about it because she didn't want to worry them, but it was a moment she'd never forget.

At that time, within the barrier of law, she met a version of herself that she'd never seen before.

She looked roughly the same, just a bit more mature. The ice-cold expression on her face, however, was exactly the same.

That version of herself, she originally thought it was an illusion, but her opinions began to change as that Ruyue walked her through the path she was taking.

Absolute Yin.

It was an extreme power. In a sense, it was half of Existence.

Damien was able to control Existence to the level he could exclusively because of his physique. If not for it, he would've been just like Dante or The Unrecorded, left stuck at a certain point and never able to progress again.

What about Ruyue?

Just like the other two, she didn't have a physique or anything aiding her.

But unlike them, she didn't have an inherent connection to Existence born from an extreme level of practice either.

She was taking a path that was massive from the start, challenging Existence with its sheer existence.

It wasn't a path that could be walked without consequences.

That day, Ruyue saw her life end.

She saw herself change until she had no emotion left. She watched as her laws influenced her mind and soul to the point where she could no longer see the light anymore.

That version of her lived for thousands upon thousands of years. She experienced so much and rose to a position not much lower than someone absolutely in control over the world.

But in the process, she sacrificed everything.

Because she didn't feel anything.

She drowned in her own power.

That Ruyue was merely a shell of a person, a carrier of law that had no personality of its own.

Her indifference drove a wedge between her and the sisters she cherished. It made her abandon the family Damien introduced her to, and in the end, it led to her abandoning even him.

The only thing Ruyue had was strength.

The world was colorless. Life didn't have any meaning. But in the end, Ruyue truly became an embodiment of Absolute Yin.

Just as her Divinity promised her she would.

Ruyue was forced to answer the question of whether she wanted to risk such a future or not.

Did she want to throw away the path she'd been following for so long because of the consequences that lay at the end of it?

Did she want to continue forward knowing that her emotions would die as she got stronger?

The answer to both questions was no.

Then, what did she end up doing?

To this day, Ruyue's emotions had been numbing.

Her icy face was all anyone in the palace had seen, an expression of indifference that truly didn't take anything or anyone into account.

To some, Ruyue felt more like a doll than a person.

She'd follow the same routine, training to increase her power, and she would do nothing else.

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Of course, Rose and the rest could understand her situation. After so long, they'd learned to read Ruyue's emotions without having to see her facial expression.

Claire and Serena also eventually learned about Ruyue's personality. They understood that despite the way she presented herself on the outside, she had a lot of emotion within that she just didn't express.

Right, she had a lot of emotions.

Rose and Ruyue had a lot more in common than either of them realized.

In fact, Ruyue's emotions towards Damien weren't much different from Rose's. They were just a bit less dependent, but that didn't mean either of them was wrong.

It was just that Ruyue knew how to contain her emotions a lot better than Rose did.

When Damien returned to the palace, she allowed her emotions to run wild and cherished the time she had with him. She loved as hard as possible for as long as possible, and when Damien inevitably left again, she closed her heart off, letting her feelings simmer until they could be released again.

Ruyue kept her heart sealed and allowed those emotions to exist within, but she would never show others how she was feeling.

That day in the barrier of law, Ruyue had to make a choice.

But she did not agree with the binary question she'd been asked.

She refused to pick one of the answers presented to her, and instead made another sacrifice.

She traded the emotions that weren't essential for the ones she didn't want to lose.

While color would fade from her world, while everything else about life would be bland

She would still be able to pursue Absolute Yin.

And the emotions she held towards Damien, towards her sisters, and towards her family; the feelings she absolutely didn't want to lose would remain untouched.

Perhaps there were consequences to this decision. She may not ever get the chance to reach the heights she could've reached if she didn't preserve these feelings.

But that didn't matter to her. In the first place, Ruyue didn't chase the peak.

She chased power so she could protect herself, so she'd never end up in a situation like her childhood ever again.

The world was dull to her. Power was the same. But the deployment notice did have some color, since it was her dear husband who'd created it.

Perhaps she wouldn't gain much from this excursion, but she'd be helping him by killing his enemies, so she really didn't mind.

That was pretty much half of the reason she'd been training, anyway.

The world would continue to lose color no matter what she did.

But it was fine as long as the colors returned where it really mattered.

This was the permanent sacrifice Ruyue had made, whether out of ambition or pride.

And it was a sacrifice she'd accepted wholeheartedly.

However

Was her pessimism backed by reality, or was it just a reflection of the indifference she was cursed with?

Was it truly impossible for her world to regain color?

lightsvel The answer was unknown for now, but there was one fact that would never change.

No matter how much one thought one knew about the world, no matter how dull and bland the world could seem at times

It would always surprise its inhabitants with things they'd never expect.

It was truly a place of miracles, so who was Ruyue to say that anything was impossible?

Right now, there was no way for her to understand it. But maybe, just maybe, the world would one day show her something that made her reevaluate everything.

But that

That was a story for another time.

Chapter 1552 Ambition [4]

Rose, Ruyue, and Elena were all unique people. They'd spent a lot of time together, and naturally, they'd influenced each other; but none of them ever deviated from the paths they decided to walk.

Perhaps they moved at different speeds. While Rose was still desperate for love, Elena was content with it. While Rose was content with power, Elena couldn't get enough of it.

However, their strengths and differences always managed to balance out somehow. This was the nature of the dynamic they'd created after spending the majority of their lives together.

Then, how did Iris fit into it all?

She was inherently different from her sisters. Putting aside the fact that she was already a high-rank Demigod on her way to challenge Godhood, she was over ten thousand years old and far more mature.

It had only been a few hundred years since they had come to the palace, with the time dilation included of course.

To her, that didn't really mean anything.

She'd lived for hundreds of years hundreds of times. This period of training was just like any other for her.

Iris and Damien's relationship was like a mix of what he had with his other wives.

Love and affection combined with independence and space. They craved each other, but they didn't get in each other's way.

Damien represented something in Iris' life that she'd never had before. Not just in the sense of being a man she was interested in, but in most other aspects as well.

She wanted to keep him for as long as possible, and while the method she used to do so was to act submissive, she wasn't really a submissive person.

It was just that there hadn't been a time yet that she truly craved him enough to act dominantly.

She cherished the adventures they'd had together in the Ancient Battlefield. Those experiences would last her a lifetime.

Plus, Damien came back here and there to show them he still cared. She didn't really need more than that.

He had his ambitions. If he could complete them in a few hundred years and spend the rest of his life with her? What complaint did she have to make?

Nevertheless, Iris was also assigned a battle with an enemy.

Though, that enemy was not a Demigod, but a God.

Damien had high hopes for her.

Back when they were in the Ancient Battlefield and getting to know each other, he'd entered her soul and seen everything she held dear.

He knew about the fear that held her back for most of her life, and just the same he knew about the dreams she'd always held dear.

Iris, like Elena, loved chasing the peak.

And once she gained access to Creation, once she got closer to the peak, that desire became much, much stronger.

Iris was emotionally simple compared to her sisters.

She knew her likes and dislikes well as she had millennia to figure it out.

There was a lot she was still learning about herself, but at least at the base level, the years she'd spent weren't spent in vain.

She saw the world a lot more clearly now.

'Perhaps I should do it some more?'

It wasn't bad to go into the outside world. She definitely had the power to defend herself, and she didn't think it would be difficult to defeat an entry-level God with her current abilities.

If so

'Well, it has been getting boring at the palace.'

Staying in one place was her speciality, but she didn't want to do it like this.

'Mm. I think that would be fun.'

There were eight Cardinal Regions in this world.

Of them, three were occupied by the palace's allies, two by the palace itself, one by the enemy, and two by people who thought it was better to stay uninvolved with the world.

That didn't leave many options for her, but Iris was not the open to finding possibilities where they didn't exist.

'The Northeastern Region, then. I quite like the scenery there.'

She smiled, nodding to herself.

Iris didn't mind staying at the palace and training for a while longer, but since Damien gave her a reason to see the outside world, she thought it would've been a shame if she didn't make the most of the outing.

The plans in her mind were quite imaginative, putting it kindly.

More bluntly, she was thinking something insane.

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lightsvl m But wasn't it insane thinking that got all of them where they were in the first place?

Whether it was Rose, Elena, Ruyue, or even Damien, all of them were doing things that others would call crazy.

And they did so with confidence, disallowing anyone from telling them that their thinking was wrong.

This was precisely the reason why they were able to mesh so well, and more so, it was the reason why all of them could gain approval from an entity like the Void.

After all, what was life without a little bit of craziness?

The answer to that surely wasn't something any of them wanted to know.

Soon enough, not only the four of Damien's wives, but several hundred people from Void Palace made their move.

They spread out in all directions, headed to the specific points where they were assigned.

Waiting for them there were opponents who wanted nothing more than to slaughter them.

In the face of those opponents, they would not cower.

They would show the might of Void Palace, so that their enemies could learn fear.

They would act precisely without leaving any room for errors, so once they had all flawlessly completed their missions, their enemy would be no more than a bug waiting to be crushed.

Among those dispatched were the 16 Swords in their totality, and even those like Claire and Serena.

After all, Straea didn't just provoke them with weak and minor forces.

Malefice Straea himself was standing on a mountain peak awaiting his opponent.

Malevalon was, at least to the knowledge of outsiders, alone within his manor, waiting to see whether his forces would achieve victory or fall in defeat.

Of course, that could only be assumed, because none of them knew about the presence of countless Foreign Races living beneath the Northern Region.

But Damien knew.

And Damien wasn't just going to let those nobles do as they pleased.

He was already moving in order to stop them from succeeding in their plans, and along the way

He was running the combat circuit on his own, killing several Gods who weren't matched with opponents.

Though, it had been a considerable amount of time since Damien started fighting alone.

Shouldn't he have had some company?

Within the next few days, the entire world was covered in an aura of war.

Battles raged on all over, mostly in places where others couldn't be harmed, but spanning such lengths that they were visible from faraway cities.

The highest class of society, the commoners, and even beggars and wanderers who had no connections told stories about those battles.

And among them, of the few that truly stood out

Perhaps it was courteous to name the exploits of Damien's wives first.

After all, not only was this the first time they were really showing themselves to the world

this was also the first time the world would be forced to etch their names into history.

And when it came to those

There would be many, many more in the future.

Chapter 1553 Combat Circuit [1]

Damien was quite kind to his wives. He definitely thrust them into unexpected situations with his choice to deploy them, but it was never meant to harm them.

Instead, it was meant to push them forward. He hadn't been able to see them much, but he did spend several years with them in the time dilation during his last visit to the palace.

Some of them told him directly what they were feeling, while others hid it, not wanting to trouble him.

But no matter what route they chose, they couldn't hide their hearts from their own husband,

Damien understood what they each craved and what they needed the most.

Ruyue didn't tell him what was happening to her, but he could see it.

Her demeanor had changed quite noticeably, after all.

He respected her decision. After all, if Ruyue thought her sacrifice was necessary, then who was he to tell her she was wrong?

The fact that she'd made compromises for his sake and for the sake of their family was more than enough for him.

However, was Ruyue truly okay with letting her entire world go?

Damien remembered the version of her that blossomed during their adventures together in the Cloud Plane.

She was happy, expressive, and completely different from the ice-cold woman he'd met originally.

She'd returned to that ice-cold state, but she'd done it by choice and nature. It wasn't necessarily a cover that hid her insecurity anymore.

Still, Damien knew Ruyue. He knew the kind of person she was around him, and he didn't want that side of her to slowly be killed.

If she wanted the power of Absolute Yin, that was fine.

But as long as he had any say in the matter, that power would not be allowed to take away things that were rightfully hers.

Nevertheless, it wasn't yet time for her to realize any of that.

Currently, Ruyue stood on a frozen lake in the middle of a tundra.

This place was in the Eastern Region, surprisingly enough considering the climate. It could be called a forbidden zone, but it really wasn't one.

It was at least three steps below a forbidden zone in danger, and when Ruyue was brought into this environment, that changed even more.

Though, she wasn't the one who picked it.

Rather, a group of over ten Demigods had chosen this place as their battleground.

The Divinities of Straea weren't given a totally specific order.

They were told to spread out throughout the world and wait. If anyone appeared near them, kill without mercy.

The Divinities roughly understood that they'd be facing enemies, but they didn't know exactly who those enemies would be.

This group of ten had grouped together specifically because they all had similar powers. Those powers would work even better in an environment where they had the advantage, so naturally, a tundra was perfect.

They were practitioners of Ice Laws after all.

Did Damien just want to get Ruyue out of the house or did he really mean for there to be a challenge here?

Ruyue was honestly indifferent to this task already, but it still made her curious.

After all, even if there were ten of them...

WHOOOOOOOOSH!

A huge breeze blew through the tundra.

It seemed like a natural event, something caused by the harsh environment that this location was.

However, it was anything but.

The ten Demigods from Straea were not weak people. None of them were below middle rank, and three of them were even high rank.

Yet, not a single one sensed Ruyue's approach.

Her pure white clothes were like a reflection of the surrounding snow. Her skin, and her piercing gold eyes made her seem like an embodiment of the tundra itself.

Her steps did not taint the purity of the atmosphere. Rather, every step she took made the land feel more sacred than ever before.

But the Divinity she carried was not one of hope or holiness.

It was not a thing others could worship. Only something they could fear.

She represented destruction.

Death. Mayhem. Murder. Madness.

If someone tested her patience, they would die.

If someone touched her people, they would die.

She walked down from the sky, her visage clearing up within the forming blizzard.

The ten Demigods she was sent to face finally noticed her presence. They went on alert and immediately summoned their mana to attack.

Their orders were clear. Anyone who approached needed to die. Other questions didn't need to be asked.

But Ruyue's mentality was the same.

VOOOOOOM!

Ten Demigods held a whole lot of mana between them. As they exerted their power, the surrounding snow and ice came completely under their control.

Using their laws to manipulate the ice's properties, to make it deadly to Divinities, they shot countless attacks at the mysterious person in the sky, aiming to get rid of them in one go.

Ruyue looked at the approaching storm without a change in expression.

There was no need to waste time understanding what these people could do.

Absolute Yin.

A power she risked everything to obtain.

If it wasn't leagues above its peers, then why would it be deserving of such a price?

SHING!

Like a sword slicing through air, a crisp sound cut through the atmosphere.

The Demigods on the ground collectively made sounds of surprise as they realized that their mana no longer followed their orders.

It had been frozen.

Their attacks no longer followed their orders.

They had been frozen.

Their bodies...no longer followed their orders.

Their souls had been entrapped within a cage of Absolute Yin.

To fight was to exert effort. To exert effort was to care.

Ruyue, who no longer had the ability to care, no longer had the ability to fight.

Her only choice was domination.

Ice was one of the most basic aspects of Yin. It was the most accessible, and also her own starting place in the larger law that she only started to truly understand later on.

Ice was very dear to her, despite being so basic.

So when it came to maneuvering ice, Ruyue had expertise above anyone else.

VOOOOOOM!

Another explosion of mana, this time from her own body.

RUMBLE!

The entire earth shook. It was as if an earthquake had suddenly shot through the area, but that was an incorrect assumption.

It was a hardly noticeable vibration in the grand scheme of things. It wasn't as if the phenomenon made itself known to everyone, but anyone who managed to sense it immediately knew what it alluded to.

Those ten Demigods were not a part of that group.

For the ground under them was already unstable due to their extreme manipulation of the elements. For the blizzard raging around them overstimulated their senses and threw them off.

Ruyue had taken control over everything.

As long as it was Yin and existed within a range of ten thousand kilometers, it was now Ruyue's weapon.

And with that calamity's worth of Yin in her possession...

Ruyue made her move.

The white blanket of the tundra suddenly changed.

It became bumpier, lined with hills and mountains of snow and ice that didn't exist before.

Not many people would ever know of what happened here.

But maybe one day far in the future, someone would dig into one of those mountains and find something unexplainable.

The sight of ten perfectly preserved Demigods encased in ice.

Chapter 1554 Combat Circuit [2]

The four women who were married to Damien left the palace at roughly the same time, but they arrived at their given destinations at different times.

Originally, Ruyue and Rose were meant to go together, but when she noticed how favorable the location she was given was to her, Ruyue went alone, leaving Rose without any particular assignment.

Now, this was done out of care. Ruyue knew that Rose had no interest in these matters, so she took over, allowing her sister to stay away from battle.

Plus, since she was confident in her power, she felt that it would be unnecessary for both of them to take the time to make the trip.

It could be considered a side effect of the transformation Ruyue was undergoing, but she failed to take Rose's opinion into account.

She unilaterally decided on the practicality of the situation and ignored the emotional aspects related to it. She didn't have an awareness of those emotional aspects anymore, after all.

However, Rose had a bit of an awakening in recent days. Her views were still the same, but unlike before, she did want to leave the palace.

What was she meant to do?

Every Demigod group had been assigned to people from the palace army to help them train.

There were a few unassigned targets, but they were all Gods. Either Damien would take care of them personally, or other Gods would take care of them once they finished their assigned missions.

Rose suddenly found herself in a strange position where she didn't really have a reason to leave the palace anymore but still wanted to.

Finding a reason...

Truthfully, it wasn't something she needed to do. It wasn't like her movements were being restricted. If she wanted to leave the palace, all she had to do was walk out.

But the step she was trying to take was a big one.

She'd lived for a long time without ever considering finding a goal for herself or some sort of hobby. She knew what she wanted, but at the same time, she felt like she could do more.

This feeling motivated her to try something she'd never tried before, to try exploring the world purely out of the desire for self-discovery.

However, it wasn't easy to take that step.

Damien's deployment order was an excuse she could use to get herself out of the house. Everything else could come after she'd finished her mission.

Without a mission, the motivation she'd built up began to crumble.

Ruyue acted out of consideration, sure, but she failed to realize that Rose's situation wasn't the same as before.

And because of that, she'd almost ruined her sister's opportunity.

Luckily, there were still people at the palace willing to help.

In Rose's case, it was Claire.

Rose had forged a relationship with her mother-in-law that others couldn't comprehend.

They were similar in many ways, and their husbands were equally similar.

Claire was someone who could relate to Rose perfectly and provide her guidance as someone older and wiser.

If there was anyone who could see Rose's internal struggle happening in real time, it was her.

The deployment order was final. There really wasn't a place for Rose to intervene anymore since her place had been taken.

Claire couldn't really give Rose the exact same motivation that Damien had managed to give her.

But it wasn't a problem to do something different to obtain the same results.

There was one other matter within the palace that held the same importance as the war with Straea.

Dante Void.

When Damien came last time and fed his father the Harmony Fruit, he didn't stay to see what would happen afterward.

He knew his mother would take care of his father better than anyone else could. Even before he brought the fruit, she'd been tending to him every day to make sure he could be comfortable.

Dante was still trapped in his mind. That had yet to change.

However, saying that there was no change would be a lie.

Twitching.

Subtle yet impactful, Dante's body would twitch every few days.

He had never been so responsive before.

His eyelids would twitch occasionally, and his eyes themselves frequently moved around. His body was less responsive, but even it would occasionally show signs of life; a huge improvement from the state Dante had shown until now.

He still didn't react to external stimuli, but the signs indicating that he was slowly regaining his connection with his body meant everything to Claire, Serena, and the rest.

The Harmony Fruit was truly able to provide them with a miracle.

Yet, it wasn't enough.

At this rate, Dante wouldn't wake up for hundreds or even thousands of years. It was enough to make anyone lose hope. Anyone except for Claire and Serena.

The two took Damien's success with the Harmony Fruit quite seriously. It was no more than a rumor that had been spoken of a few times and recorded in history, but it had shown them such a beautiful result.

As such, the two women sunk themselves in the history books, looking for something else that could provide a similar effect, something that could accelerate Dante's healing process.

And while most clues led to nothing, there were a few worth investigating.

Squads had already been made for these searches. Of the five leads that were worth following, four were already being actively chased.

The team for the fifth was just recently getting ready to leave, but...

Wasn't it okay to hand their job to someone else?

Rose's power existed to protect.

If she got into a perilous situation, it wasn't hard for her to hide herself and escape.

Rather, when it came to concealment, Rose's ability to mimic reality made her second only to Damien himself.

She didn't need a team to go with her, and the forbidden zone she was getting sent to was quite the beautiful place.

In Claire's eyes, the situation that originally brought Rose down was actually perfect for her.

Because rather than sending her to war, sending her on an adventure was far more valuable to her growth.

Rose was a little iffy about it when Claire first told her, but it didn't take long for her to warm up to the idea.

'I need to get out of the house.'

Regardless of the reason, she couldn't stay cooped up anymore. Not if she wanted to better herself.

It would be dangerous. It would be hard. It would be excruciating at times.

But those moments could never outweigh the beauty that such adventures held.

Rose learned that personally in the past, traveling the world with Damien.

Perhaps she wasn't following the same path as everyone else.

Perhaps her motivations and desires didn't make sense to others.

But they were her own, and she didn't want to abandon them just because they were unconventional.

Despite her relative disinterest in it all, Rose was quite excited as she left the palace.

With Claire cheering her on from behind and with everyone else silently supporting her happiness, Rose made her way to the Western Region.

The land of Dragons that no other had ever visited...

She was going to try and find her way in.

Chapter 1555 Combat Circuit [3]

Rose didn't care for battle, Ruyue did it out of necessity, and Iris was experienced enough to view it as a sport.

The only one among them who really enjoyed battle to its fullest was Elena.

She was also the only one who had any particular excitement for the war itself, rather than just the things that came along with the deployment notice.

Elena had multiple purposes for leaving the palace, but fighting Straea was one of the main ones.

This was where Rose and Ruyue differed heavily. Even Iris wasn't so much interested in the war as she was in the side quest she'd given herself recently.

Obviously, they all knew that the war was important. When Straea was gone, Void Palace would be able to expand its rule far more than ever before. Moreover, with all internal enemies gone, they could properly focus on the Foreign Races.

However, they just weren't strong enough to make a real difference. The true powers in this world were all Gods. Without the strength to fight against them, their worth was only a little better than dirt. What was the point of being overly involved with a war like that?

Even if their goal was to help Damien or help the palace, there were better ways than joining the war.

Nevertheless, Elena loved to fight. Straea was a perfect test dummy, an influence that could constantly provide her with strong enemies to test herself against.

Since Damien had given her a gift, assigning her a group of

Demigods to fight and leaving the door open for her to fight more, she naturally wouldn't decline his good intentions.

'As for the Valkyries...'

She didn't have any clues, and she didn't know where to start looking. It was more of a problem to think about it than to try and solve it for now, so she left it in the back of her mind.

'If I find something, I can put my full attention into it. Until then, there's no point in obsessing over something that won't get me anywhere!

Despite what she said, Elena continued pondering the matter of her heritage until she reached the site of her battle.

Unlike Ruyue, she didn't approach quietly.

The group of what was meant to be ten or so Demigods was no longer just that much.

Apparently, a few incidents in the past few days led to Demigods forming larger groups as they feared extermination.

Twenty-five Divinities stood against Elena now. Ten of them were high-rank Demigods, while the other fifteen were middle-rank. 'Well, this might be a bit...'

"How's everyone doing, gentlemen?"

Elena's approach was an unexpected one, but the people she faced didn't act like those Ruyue encountered.

Rather, they looked at her in confusion, questioning if this single woman was really planning to challenge all of them.

It just didn't seem possible.

And with how awkwardly Elena had entered the area, could anyone make the assumption that she was trying to attack?

'It's not like it's my fault!

It wasn't her fault she got carried away by thoughts and forgot to make a cool entrance. Not everything needed to be made into a show, right?

Still, since they reacted so strangely to her presence, she figured she might as well exploit the opportunity.

"I'm going to need all of you to die. Thanks." Read most accurately at no.(v).el...

Transcended Death. It had a lot of flaws, but it was a Divinity Elena had been comprehending since before it was even a Divinity.

As a result, she had a lot more control over it than most people did their Divinities before they ascended to Godhood.

Transcended Death, when Elena first discovered it, was meant to be Life that conquered Death.

It was a way to live longer, and it was a way to control Death through Life.

However, it had evolved past that point with time.

Transcended Death not only meant using Life to transcend Death.

It now meant Elena could transcend Death through even Death itself.

WHOOOOOOOSH!

Similar to Ruyue's strategy, Elena sent a rush of wind at her targets.

As if to juxtapose the pure white winds of the tundra, the winds Elena released were pure black in color.

It was a deathly wind, and as it blew over the group of twenty-five before her, they all became wary.

"She's attacking."

It wasn't a cry of surprise, but a calm statement.

The deathly mist was dangerous. It messed with their senses and confused them. However, the fact that their opponent was only a single person who wasn't stronger than their average fighter changed everything.

They didn't need to be overly wary of such an enemy:

Instead, as long as they worked together, defeating her would be a piece of cake.

...or so they thought.

The deathly mist felt like it was made of Death Laws, which would make most people fall into a trap they couldn't escape from.

See, when people encountered Death Laws, their instinct was to protect their bodies with a shell of mana, making sure that the death couldn't actually touch them.

Without the physical touch, Death Laws that weren't used by an expert would be far less effective, and if the mana barrier was thick enough, it could completely repel them.

However, Life Laws were different. Life Laws didn't need physical touch. They were able to affect things just by being near them.

There was also a method to protect against this kind of attack, and it was just as obvious as using a shell to block mana out.

However, if it wasn't used, what was the point of its simplicity?

The twenty-five Demigods got into formation, entering a state where none of them would ever be unguarded.

Elena prowled in the darkness, watching their every move.

'They're good!

They'd effectively removed her chance to stealthily take them down one by one.

'But it's not enough!

The current Elena wasn't someone who needed to use tricks like that.

'Yggdrasil!

It was a move that she'd used plenty of times in the past.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

Tendrils of thick wood burst out of the earth and weaved themselves together into a massive tree.

The tree extended its roots for thousands of kilometers within a few seconds, putting the entire area inside a domain of law.

'Nice!

That was more than enough setup.

With Yggdrasil and the deathly mist working together, there wasn't really much she actually needed to do.

As long as those Demigods weren't allowed to leave the radius of those two forces for a prolonged period of time, all of their life force would eventually be sucked away and plundered.

But such a slow style of fighting just wasn't Elena's style.

She'd kill her enemies before her passives could.

'Alright. With everything set up, I should be good to start testing!'

Elena was fighting this battle not only for experience and enjoyment, but to test the attacks and techniques she'd created during her time in seclusion.

When she first saw twenty-five people waiting for her, she was a bit intimidated.

However, the instant she realized that more enemies just meant more chances to test her attacks, Elena's expression lit up.

This battle would be great fun for her.

But for her enemies...

Well, they had definitely seen better days. That much could never be argued. bender
Chapter 1556 Combat Circuit [4]

Within the fog, a group of men raised their weapons.

They didn't attack needlessly, but their mana had been spread through the air to make sure nothing could enter their attack radius without being sensed.

Elena knew this.

She stayed outside and trailed in the mist, concealing herself from their senses.

Only, she couldn't attack carelessly.

Just a few moments ago, she assured herself that she didn't need to hide away and attack anymore. She had the power to fight from the front without fear.

However, if she wanted to use these men as test subjects, she needed to be a bit more sneaky.

BANG!

The roots of Yggdrasil flew out of the ground and attacked the group.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Flashes of mana lit up the black deathly mist, turning it into a colorful swarm of energy.

Unlike Ruyue's group, these men didn't all use the same element, so their formation was a bit more chaotic. That didn't mean that they were weak, though.

The twenty-five of them had ample time to prepare before anyone arrived to challenge them. They'd become familiar with each other, and for the sake of their formation, they'd learned to arrange themselves in a way where they didn't interfere with each other as they fought.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

The vitality-filled roots of Yggdrasil weren't easy to destroy. Any time they were broken apart, they'd rebuild themselves and continue their attacks.

They were burned by flame practitioners, frozen by ice practitioners, cut apart by those who used wind, and scorched by lightning.

Still, Elena let them continue their fruitless attack.

Yggdrasil was only a distraction, after all.

BANG!

Suddenly, a hidden root sprung up from underneath one of the Demigods, wrapping itself around his waist.

"AHHHHH!"

He yelled as he was launched into the air. Those around him turned to look at him, but before they could help, they were attacked specifically by Yggdrasil.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

The three people who had the chance to aid their fellow were immediately forced to focus on their own well-being.

BOOM!

Meanwhile, the Demigod in the sky destroyed the root that held him and stabilized himself in the air.

He looked around, trying to find the woman who was attacking them, but she found him before he could find her.

"Hello!"

Elena smiled.

She was right behind him. He didn't realize it until she spoke.

It was already too late for him.

She grabbed his skull in a similar fashion to how Damien grabbed Duke Horacio, and just like her husband, she pushed heaps of mana into her enemy's body.

VOOOOOOOOOM!

The result was completely different.

Elena used Life Laws and some Death Laws. She didn't have the ability to attack someone's mind.

However, her power could do far scarier things to someone's body.

CRACK! CRUNCH!

As her mana flowed through the man's internals, he started morphing.

His bones snapped out of place and elongated. His muscles became bigger and more grotesque. His human appearance completely disappeared, replaced with that of a monster.

Bones jutted out of his back to create wings and out of his head to create horns. Blood covered his torso, thickening until it became an impenetrable armor.

Life Laws didn't only encompass the ethereal aspects of the concept. It wasn't just about siphoning vitality and creating manifestations of life.

Elena could effectively turn biological matter into whatever she wanted it to be.

And in this situation, she chose a monstrosity.

OOOOOOOOOH!

The monster that was once a man howled. It was a sound of agony and madness as the man's mind was corrupted by the pain he suffered.

Though his mind was still his own...

"Go."

...he could no longer control his body.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

The man slammed down into the ground, returning to his peers. However, he was no longer their ally.

OOOOOOOOOH!

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

The Ishtar he landed, his bones elongated by several tens of feet, turning into spider legs that cut into his surroundings and skewered anything they could touch.

Eight of the twenty-five Demigods were impaled by his bone spikes, and as if that wasn't enough, the instant he pierced them, he sucked them dry.

Their vitality became his own, empowering the slaughter of his remaining former allies.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Chaos ensued once more.

Rather than chasing their main enemy, the Straea Demigods were forced to focus on their own ally.

He caused immense damage. After those eight people died, it became even easier for him to kill.

However, after those eight were killed, the others stopped ignoring him and focused all their power on him.

BANG!

With the convoluted body structure that he now held breaking down with every second, and with attacks peppering him from all sides, the transmuted man exploded into a shower of blood and bits as Elena watched from the sky.

'It's good for temporary use, but I guess you need to spend some time on it if you want to make a homunculus or chimera that can be used more than once.'

It was good knowledge for her, who never really experimented on humans before.

'Now then...'

There was more to do.

Transmutation was the most basic move. Once she gained Divinity and her control rose, it was the first thing she figured out she could do.

And with it, she was able to turn twenty-five into fifteen.

'Maybe wide-area attacks aren't the move right now.'

If she killed them off too fast, she wouldn't be able to test as many things.

'If I want to kill them one by one...'

First off, she needed to test how her powers of transmutation worked on her own body.

'The perfect battle form.'

She'd already theorized it. She never tested it on herself because she didn't want to risk transforming without being able to control it, but she didn't have that worry anymore.

When she turned that man into a monster, she was able to carefully and precisely manipulate every part of the transformation.

She knew she could change herself back to normal if she wished for it.

Therefore, there was nothing left to worry about.

BANG!

It was the sound of Yggdrasil being torn apart.

The tree used the vitality of the surrounding land to support its power, so it couldn't be destroyed so easily, but it still needed time to channel that power.

With its trunk damaged and its roots destroyed, it needed to recover before it could attack again.

The fifteen remaining enemies turned their eyes to the sky as the deathly mist began to clear, finally getting a clear picture of Elena.

However, she was no longer the Elena they saw when she first arrived.

Just like the being that had attacked them earlier, she looked like a monster.

But her form was far more refined.

Like a beautiful demon whose only purpose for existence was to reap the lives of others, she was covered in a blackness that couldn't be explained.

Her bone wings were graceful, not gruesome. Her horns were ornate as if she was demonic royalty.

Her body was optimized for combat in a way they couldn't understand, because the majority of the changes took place internally.

They looked at her and she looked at them.

For a split second, only silence reigned in the atmosphere.

And then...

Both parties attacked.

The silence was the first thing to be destroyed.

Chapter 1557 Combat Circuit [5]

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

Elena shot into the ground with speed far exceeding what the monstrosity she created before could replicate.

This transformation was like the next level of the abilities she started to develop when she was just a girl.

The desire she once had to be an infinite combatant who never got tired, this was the peak of it that she could accomplish at her current level.

Stamina didn't exist in her mind when she was in this form. Exhaustion was the same.

Power was not a problem, because her current physical strength could even rival Damien to an extent.

The current Elena was truly a monster. If it wasn't for her beautiful appearance, nobody would have ever believed she was a human.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

She immediately went to work, disarming the people around her.

Her hands flicked forth, and miniature explosions of vitality overran the hands of those in her immediate vicinity, causing them to explode.

Naturally, those people dropped their weapons.

SHIK!

Elena's hand turned into a claw and stabbed through the neck of the man to her right.

BANG!

He immediately lit his body on fire with law to try to injure her. His life may have been reaching an end with her move, but that didn't mean he would just allow her to kill him.

WHOOOOOSH!

The flames enveloped Elena, turning her into a torch and a clear target for the rest.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

It wasn't Elena this time.

Countless attacks flooded her position as she was revealed to them all.

'Damn!'

She dodged and weaved as much as she could, but it was impossible to avoid everything.

BANG!

A hit to her right side flung her left into the path of another.

BOOM!

It hit her straight in the chest, forcing her to cough up blood as she took several steps back.

The fire around her wasn't a problem. Her skin was like a layer of scales, not allowing the high temperatures to actually affect her internal body.

However, the physical impacts she took still caused damage.

'[Heal].'

It wasn't the same [Heal] skill that Damien used, but the effect was right about the same.

Elena's blood returned to her body and her injuries disappeared. She stomped on the ground, slamming into the air as the enemies approached her.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

A third test, but one that didn't matter as much.

It was more of a curiosity than anything else.

Could Life Laws on their own be used offensively?

Elena knew she could overload people with vitality and force their bodies to expel it to compensate. This action would usually cause internal explosions and severe injury.

The problem was that if she wanted to affect more than a single body part, she needed to precisely calculate how much vitality it would take to overload the individual she was targeting. Otherwise, she would just be healing them.

The shots she fired were not calculated.

Instead, they were pumped with as much vitality as Elena could produce in that short span of time and thrown wildly into the crowd.

They did cause explosions, but they didn't affect the environment. The energy flowed out and hit everyone nearby.

For the most part, it was ineffective. The majority of her enemies saw themselves getting a slight buff, while others didn't receive anything at all.

Just one person was hit directly by the blast, and he was surely overloaded.

His body ballooned into something inhuman, almost like a certain blueberry from media, and exploded into a blood mist.

It seemed to be the staple when Elena killed someone.

Nevertheless, the attack was mostly unsuccessful.

Including the man that just died and the man she'd killed earlier, her current form had only netted her three kills. It wasn't much, but she was trying to aim for individuals rather than the group, so it was expected.

'Twelve left.'

In her current form, if she wanted to, she could absolutely challenge them in close combat and win.

That was the assurance that she wanted to gain from this experiment, and since she had it, there was no reason to continue.

This was a test run, after all. It wasn't a battle for her to use her everything.

One by one, she was putting the pieces into motion and turning her strength into something it had never been before.

She was reaching her best state as the threat of true death became a real factor in her mind.

That feeling, chilling yet thrilling, invigorated her mind.

She couldn't get enough of it.

It wasn't as if her enemies were weak.

Of the twelve that were left, ten of them were the original high-

rank Demigods. Those men hadn't been injured severely by Yggdrasil or anything that followed its appearance.

They were the ones Elena could only fight against if she used her full power, and while she didn't do it intentionally, she eventually started saving them for later.

The two remaining middle-rank Demigods were at the back of the pack.

The deaths of their peers had reminded them of their mortality. They couldn't charge into battle confidently knowing that they were just cogs in the machine.

However, would Elena allow them to hide?

Of course not!

Until the two of them died, she couldn't focus on her dessert!

VOOOOOOOM!

A huge aura of life spread through the land.

Yggdrasil was finally back in action.

Its roots were already known by the enemy. Its recovery wasn't a surprise to them.

The ten high-rank Demigods immediately put up their defenses and started attacking to incapacitate the tree again.

As for the two behind them...

Frankly, the high-ranks couldn't care about them anymore.

And without their protection, the two of them didn't really stand any chance.

BOOM! BOOM!

Two roots of Yggdrasil spurted out from below them, aiming to grab them as they'd grabbed the man before.

One of the high-rank Demigods noticed and attacked backward, shooting bursts of high-intensity flame at the roots.

These flames were blue and contained properties of ice, both cooling and heating at the same time.

He remembered what had happened before.

That monstrosity was killed easily because there were a lot of them, but if two more appeared at this time, it would cause chaos.

He didn't want the roots to take the two middle-rank Demigods, but how was he supposed to stop it while also attacking Yggdrasil and protecting his allies?

He couldn't.

It was as simple as that.

And rather than having more threats to threaten their remaining forces...

...he'd much rather get rid of the weak links who made them subject to such threats.

"AHHHHHHHHH!"

Two agonizing screams rang out.

The blue flames enveloped not only the roots of the tree, but also the two men those roots were trying to grab.

Their skin was burned off instantly, and their insides cooled to dangerous temperatures.

Eventually...

BANG!

BANG!

He stopped hesitating and made the decisive move.

...those two middle-rank Demigods were burnt to a crisp and turned into nothing more than ash.

Ten remained.

Ten strong enough to defeat Elena on their own.

And facing them, Elena's eyes widened in concentration.

This was the main course but also the dessert.

This was where she'd truly allow her skills to shine.

'Rise.'

An army of her own, an army that she hadn't called in a very long time.

The warriors of Valhalla, those lost souls who swore their allegiance to her...

They appeared in the Heavenly World for the first time.

With bloodlust that simply couldn't be contained.

Chapter 1558 Combat Circuit [6]

Elena stopped pursuing her Valkyrie heritage in the sense of power when she put her whole heart into Transcended Death. At that time, the armies of Valhalla that she'd raised also became useless.

But she didn't want to completely throw them away. After all, they were incredibly useful and loyal to only her.

The main reason Elena hadn't used them in a long time was simply because her fighting style changed.

When she was young, she was a close combatant. As she grew, she slowly became someone who fought from the backlines. And as her Divinity formed, shaping her power to be truest to her, she gained the ability to do both without losing anything.

Her potential was maximized, and suddenly, she realized how to connect her Valkyrie heritage with the Transcended Death that she now prioritized.

This way, it could still become a piece of her power without inhibiting her.

It was difficult for the majority of her Valkyrie-related skills, but the Souls of Valhalla were completely different.

They accepted her power without any issues, as if they'd been born to control death from the start.

And they evolved.

Their pure white appearances were shifted into a mixture between darkness and light. Their empty souls now contained true vitality, and in a certain sense, they had been reborn.

They still used their signature weapons, but they weren't all close combatants anymore. They'd gained a variety of classes that could work together to achieve stupendous results.

Elena had never been able to actually test them. She'd enhanced them to the best of her current abilities, but they had never used those powers against enemies.

After all, the Souls of Valhalla were not living humans, so they did not respond well to simulations and other similar training methods.

This was truly their first time in this world, and facing ten high-rank Demigods in their first battle, their fighting spirits soared.

00000000OH!

It was a roar filled with spirit, completely different from that of the monstrosity Elena created before.

It was the combined chant of over ten thousand troops who'd appeared in this place. Ten thousand immortal soldiers who were more than ready to die endlessly for their Empress.

They charged without hesitation, understanding their orders without being told.

Suddenly, Elena found herself an observer in the battle she was supposed to be fighting.

'I expected them to have fun, but I didn't expect them to be like this!

These were soldiers she'd created a personal connection with over time.

When they originally found her, they were wandering souls without names or egos. That wasn't the case anymore.

Each of them remembered the name they held in the past. They regained their egos, and they consciously made the choice to serve Elena, acknowledging their current form.

These troops weren't puppets anymore. They were actual warriors of Valhalla who wanted nothing more than to see blood again after being reborn.

And the display they put on made that painfully obvious.

They outnumbered the enemy 1000 to 1. They were fragile, sure, but there was no way they'd actually disappear unless Elena decided they needed to cease existing.

And until she ran out of mana, they wouldn't stop attacking.

With ten thousand warriors flooding the area, the ten high-rank Demigods were rapidly separated from each other.

Each and every one of them was surrounded by a swarm of warriors who cut with their weapons, threw magical attacks filled with the power of Transcended Death, and did anything possible to draw their blood.

What made it worse was that nothing they did was able to stop the swarm.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Fire, water, ice, earth, lightning, blood, wind...

It didn't matter what law they used; the impact they could actually make was negligible.

When the Souls of Valhalla died, their corpses would become a ghostly fog that held its enemy's legs and trapped them in place.

The other souls would then crowd the area and use the opportunity to attack.

That was it, right?

Wrong.

The more one killed, the more stuck one would become.

And as more souls died and became fog, those who originally formed the fog would revive and return to battle.

It was unending. The situation was absolutely unsalvageable.

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Two of the high-rank Gods gave up and died after ten minutes of this constant torment.

As for the other eight...

'At least a few of them should be feeling it by now!

Their bodies became heavier, sluggish. Even without the ghostly fog, they felt like they were moving through molasses.

Their eyelids especially. It was hard to keep them up, and a sudden wave of exhaustion made five of the eight drop to their knees and succumb to the swarm around them.

They couldn't see it, but they were much skinnier now than they were when the battle first started.

Their ribs were poking through their chests, and their eyes were sunken in like zombies.

They'd never realized it because Elena never gave them a second to rest, but the reason she attacked so constantly was also for that exact reason.

The faster they expended energy, the faster they were drained.

And now that so much time had passed...

Wasn't it about now that the combined effects of Yggdrasil and the deathly mist should've started working their magic?

The life-siphoning effect may have been the most basic aspect of Life Laws, but its potential was extremely high.

Even at the highest levels of existence, people had vitality. Vitality actually became more important in Divinity and Godhood.

The ability to siphon it meant that not only could one slowly whittle away at and defeat their enemy, but one could weaken their Divinity by draining their vitality.

These high-rank Demigods were effectively middle-rank, while those deceased middle-rank Demigods had been suppressed to low-rank.

And since they'd never made moves to eliminate the siphoning effect from their bodies...

They were now feeling the effects of having no vitality to support them.

Those five who fell to their knees died immediately. They didn't have enough strength to survive against Elena when they weren't fighting back.

As for the last three, two of them managed to stay on their feet with sheer will, while the last was inching closer to death with every passing second.

"These three..."

The fact that they were still alive was genuinely impressive.

Even if it was Elena herself, if her vitality was being siphoned at an unrestricted rate, she'd be exhausted within an hour at most.

Her vitality was monstrous due to her Laws and Divinity. For people who were more normal in these aspects...even five minutes was too long to hope for.

'Damn!

There was no hope for any of them. If she even tapped them, they'd die on their own.

'I shouldn't have brought out the army. It just ended everything too fast!'

She scratched her head awkwardly as she watched those three

slowly drown in a sea of souls, turning into bloody splashes on the ground.

'I guess I have to find some more of them to practice on!

If anyone thought she was done here, they were severely underestimating the amount of time she had to hypothesize countless techniques.

'But it's fun!

Being out in the outside world was great.

And as long as she continued on like this...

...I don't think catching up to him will always just be a dream!

Chapter 1559 Abandoned [1]

Ruyue's victory, Elena's victory, neither were the first to happen.

The first victory actually happened in a place nobody could expect, a place where nobody was watching.

The first victory of the war took place when a group of Demigods from the palace whose names had been written in no history books arrived at their target location and eliminated those they were ordered to eliminate.

They didn't make a fuss over it. They didn't try to gain recognition. They completed their task and returned to the palace without another word.

That was the start of it.

All around the world, countless battles took place.

Void Palace and Straea had been at odds for too long for either side to hold back as they finally clashed head-to-head.

Sometimes they lost, sometimes they won. People on both sides died at a relatively consistent rate for the most part, but once the real experts of the palace made their entrance, the scales tipped in their favor.

All of these battles were taking place at relatively the same time.

There was something of a difference between their timing since it took different amounts of time to reach the battle locations, however, as they all took place within a week of each other, this period of time was considered a time of reckoning in the Heavenly World.

Nobody was safe.

Hundreds of cities and towns were destroyed. Even more people died.

And through it all, the conflict between the palace and the Straea Clan continued to heighten.

It was rare for people to live in an area where they couldn't feel the trembling of the earth.

It was as if the entire Heavenly World was shivering, wondering when the war between its denizens would finally be over.

Luckily for it, this war was taking place in the shortest span of time possible.

The way Straea set up this confrontation made it so it would all end fast.

Everyone was fighting at the same time, so the results of this war would come out by the end of the month.

However, because all the battles were taking place adjacently, reinforcing another group was simply impossible for the most part.

Damien had to move fast during this time. He was mediating everything and making sure everything would end with Void Palace's victory.

He'd already defeated five Gods from Straea. As he continued looking over the Straea groups, he realized that Duke Horacio was actually not like the rest.

He originally believed the Foreign Races had planted themselves within Straea to try and kill him, but that wasn't correct.

It was really only Horacio.

The rest...

Well, the rest had actually withdrawn.

When Horacio was converted, Damien completely removed the Sacred Abyss Universe's influence on him. As such, the Foreign Nobility believed he had died.

They didn't know he was still alive as Damien's slave.

Considering that a Duke had died, they realized that they had to be a bit more careful with Damien.

They had to send either a group of Dukes or a Grand Duke to stand against him.

And if they wanted to eliminate him completely, they first needed to separate him from everything that could protect him.

Damien was somewhat safe, but not completely.

He had a moment of respite as the Foreign Races regrouped, but a moment was only a moment.

They wanted him dead no matter what, which meant there was no way for him to escape the threat to his life unless they all died.

The war was, of course, Damien's main priority.

But there were a few more things he was paying attention to.

After all, the world was too big for the war to be the only thing happening.

Damien was currently far away from society, in a place that was made specifically so that others couldn't find it.

Here, there were four people who were hiding away, trying to avoid all conflict until they could return to their primes.

They were the 4 Evils.

Envy, whom Damien had met before, sparked something inside of him.

Was it compassion?

He went sure.

Whatever it was, it was a feeling that he never really entertained.

As such, he was curious about their group, about them who seemed to be headed towards reform.

Envy had already been home for several days. She'd already explained her encounter with Damien to her peers, and she'd already fed Wrath the fruit he'd given her.

Originally, there was a lot of confusion about how she'd returned.

It became evident that Damien knew where they were hiding, which was incredibly dangerous for them.

However, Envy placated their wariness.

If he wanted them dead, he never would have let her go.

He never would've given her the means to cure Wrath.

However, even she wasn't expecting him to visit.

He just appeared in their small hideout as if nothing was wrong.

And immediately, they all put up their guards.

Damien looked around.

Lust and Gluttony looked the same as before. Envy was looking healthier than she did when he saw her on Ice Luan Mountain, while Wrath's body was covered in bandages that he hid under his clothing.

"You guys are..."

He didn't want to say it, but it came out subconsciously.

"Never mind, don't worry about it."

He decided against saying the last word, since he didn't come here to form enmity with them.

"You..."

Wrath growled at him.

This entire situation was sudden and confusing. His instinctive reaction was to show hostility and try to establish dominance.

It was animalistic, but it made sense considering his circumstances.

"Relax," Damien said, not letting him say anymore.

"I'm not here to fight you. I'm here to offer you an opportunity."

"I don't want your goddamn—"

"Stop!"

Envy stood in front of Wrath and stopped him.

"Let's listen to him first. If he really says something preposterous, then we can talk about it then. Don't cause problems where you don't need to."

She was the only one who had accepted the situation for what it was.

A man with untold power was in front of them telling them he'd come bearing gifts.

This was a man who only she truly understood the heights of, a man who they absolutely couldn't offend.

Even if he came here to kill them, it wasn't as if they could do anything about it.

So what was the harm in listening to his offer?

"Tch."

Wrath clicked his tongue and looked away.

Envy was...

She was the only person he'd listen to.

She'd gone to such lengths to save him. He couldn't just stand here and argue with her when she clearly only had his best interests in mind.

Damien calmly waited for them to sort themselves out.

'Maybe I should stop teleporting places.'

He wondered if it was better to enter naturally so these interactions could take place as they were meant to.

'Nah, it's too troublesome.'

In the end, it was easier for him to just do things the way he wanted to.

Others would eventually accept it.

Nevertheless, with Wrath placated and the rest still watching him with the same wary expressions, he said his piece:

"Let me enter your minds."

That was his main purpose in coming here. He wanted to see what was going on in the minds of the other Evils, to see if Envy's change was consistent or unique to her.

"If I like what I see..."

He didn't come empty-handed.

He truly did bring them an opportunity. It was just a matter of whether they saw it as one or not.

"I'll return all of you to Divinity and heal your injuries."

The only caveat was that they'd have to lay down their arms and never act against the palace again.

Even as they listened to him, it seemed too good to be true.

But Damien never did things without purpose.

And when he'd already set a precedent of being willing to help...

It wasn't too much to just let him do what he wanted, right?

Chapter 1560 Abandoned [2]

"I'm not doing it."

The four were alone now. Damien had given them some space so they could calmly make their decisions.

"Wrath!" Envy exclaimed, looking at him like he was stupid.

"Why do you have to be so stubborn? All we have to do is this one thing and we can get everything we wished for. Our dreams don't have to stay dreams!"

She couldn't believe his decision. He'd said it the moment Damien left, and no matter how much she tried to convince him, he just didn't budge.

"I said I'm not doing it. I'm not letting that bastard into my brain." Wrath snarled.

He knew what the benefits were, and he knew that he was making the wrong choice.

But he just couldn't let it happen.

He didn't want Damien to have control over him.

He very clearly remembered what happened the last time he did that.

He'd been betrayed, thrown away, and forced to suffer torments that not even the worst criminals deserved.

But it was more than that.

Wrath was an emotional person. He usually acted out before he could think things through. However, he wasn't completely stupid.

He already knew that Damien didn't want them. If he did, he would've done something a lot more than this to try and get them on his side.

The way he looked at them was different.

Rather than living humans, he looked at them like experiments.

Damien wanted to see inside their minds. From Envy's explanation, it didn't seem like he did this intrusively.

However, that didn't change anything.

Damien wanted the information inside their heads. He wanted to see what was happening and why it was happening.

The idle curiosity that his actions represented was horrifying to someone like Wrath. The fact that his suffering and his memories would become food for someone else to merely satisfy their curiosity.

Wasn't he worth more than that?

He had pride too. It may have been stomped out countless times, but he didn't want to lose the smidgen of it that he still possessed.

It was the only thing keeping him sane.

Envy couldn't understand that feeling, because she'd already thrown her pride away for survival.

It wasn't like Wrath disproved of her decision, but that wasn't the one he made.

He wanted to preserve his dignity however he could, and if that meant he had to stay crippled, then so be it.

He would just rely on himself to return to his peak, and if that didn't work, then he'd accept his end knowing that he managed to maintain his integrity.

His deepest desires, the things he never let anyone see...

He just couldn't let a man like Damien get so deep into his psyche.

"Lust, what about you?" Envy asked with an exhausted sigh.

Lust glanced at her and Wrath, shaking her head.

"I'm doing it."

She didn't have many thoughts about it.

Regardless of the method, as long as she could get her power back, she'd do anything.

If selling herself to that man was the solution, then there was nothing else to be said.

Gluttony didn't say anything as usual. He was there, but even his own peers acted like he didn't exist.

After all, he was more of a mascot than an actual person.

He never spoke, and from the way his eyes never changed, it didn't seem like he ever had a single thought inside his head.

He would act on orders when he needed to, and he'd protect his comrades as well. But the motivations he held, the personality he had, anything about him other than his power was unknown to even the 4 Evils.

Gluttony was just there.

No matter what happened, he'd always be there.

That was why he still remained as part of their group.

"Wrath, is there really no way...?"

Envy wanted them all to stay together. Moreover, between her and Wrath...

Nevertheless, she didn't want Wrath to stay broken as the rest of them healed.

However...

"There isn't. I won't let it happen."

...she never had a chance from the start.

He simply wasn't going to change his stance.

Whoosh!

A slight breeze kicked up as Damien returned to the hideout.

He looked around, gauging their expressions.

"Then, two of you? Or is it three?"

Damien glanced at Gluttony.

"Just as bland as ever, eh?"

He acted strangely in their opinion, but it wasn't strange to Damien. He knew them quite well after seeing Envy's memories, after all.

In fact, among the people who were in this room, he was the only one who truly understood the things they'd been put through during the period they were tortured.

"It's just me and Gluttony. You've already read Envy's mind, so you don't need to do it again, right?" Lust said, her tone much more uncooperative than her words.

"Wrong," Damien responded.

"I need to see Envy's mind too. But it doesn't look like she has a problem with that."

Envy nodded, shaking slightly.

'As for the last one...'

Damien pretty much expected it from Wrath. That man wasn't the type to bend or break for anyone.

Even after everything Straea put him through, he stood strong like this and kept his pain inside.

It was his way of coping.

Damien couldn't judge him, for he was the same at a certain point in his life.

He absolutely knew what it was like to be at the lowest point, where one's pride was the only thing keeping one alive.

Therefore, he didn't plan to push Wrath into doing anything he didn't want to.

He respected the man's pride.

"Then, let's get it on with. I don't have much time, and I'm sure you guys don't want me sticking around too long either."

Envy and Lust.

Damien wanted to see their existences because he wanted to see how humans could change.

They were people very different from the ones he'd met. Was it because their true selves were being overshadowed by their circumstances, or had they truly changed?

Damien read Envy again to see how her interactions with her peers had changed since she returned from Ice Luan Mountain, and as he compared her memories against Lust's...

'Maybe I should change.'

He was always someone who killed first and asked questions later.

Maybe it was okay for him to start offering his enemies other routes.

Of course, that didn't mean he'd change where it counted most, but there were definitely some who could be redeemed, such as the 4 Evils.

Envy and Lust were different in many ways. The way they approached the situation they were in was different as well.

Still, they both had the same underlying sentiment.

They were done with their lives of needless evil.

It was simply too tiring.

Lust wanted to become someone for herself, so she could regain the confidence to be proud.

As for Envy, she wanted a life in the mountains, peaceful and unbothered by society.

She only wanted power for longevity and self-protection.

They would likely separate after he healed them, and they'd go on their own paths.

Lust would probably become a practitioner again, and due to the nature of her power, she'd probably commit a lot of evil deeds.

But Damien didn't care about that.

A practitioner was a practitioner. It was impossible to define them within the bounds of good and evil.

Lust did not want to become an enemy of the world anymore. Even if she did evil deeds, she would never cross the line ever again.

And that was what mattered most to Damien.

Yet, he still didn't receive the answer he wanted most.

That didn't exist in Envy or Lust. It didn't exist in Wrath, who watched Damien work from the corner with a permanent scowl on his face.

The person who Damien wanted to read the most was the one with the least presence in this room.

Gluttony.

Just what made him tick?