

# Void 1561

Chapter 1561 Abandoned [3]

Gluttony was a curious one.

He thought Envy just didn't have much contact with him, but after seeing Lust's memories, he realized that it wasn't just Envy.

As mentioned before, Gluttony was always just "there."

He was there when the team was created, and he was there when it was crippled. He was there through their every battle, and all the while, he never changed.

Silent, unchanging, inhuman.

That was the way even his own comrades thought of him. That was why they treated him as a mascot.

How could they not?

They'd tried many times to bring even a bit of personality out of him, but they'd been able to do nothing.

Gluttony was an impenetrable fortress.

And because of that, Lust was also slightly curious about what went on in his head.

Gluttony obviously didn't give consent for Damien to read him, but the assumed consent from those around him was enough.

Plus, as he approached, Gluttony remained calm.

'This is a guy who doesn't know how to hold back his hostility.'

Gluttony was an instinctive beast. He attacked anything he was hostile against and would never stop until it died.

'But he's never shown hostility towards me.'

When they were fighting, Gluttony only attacked to protect his comrades.

Other than that, he just stood and watched the events unfold.

Was he tortured with them?

How did he respond to it?

And...why was he like this in the first place?

To learn it all, Damien put his hand on Gluttony's forehead and sent his mana into his body.

'That existence...reveal it to me.'

WHOOSH!

All of a sudden, the scene changed.

Blackness was the first thing Damien saw.

A blackness that shouldn't have existed, yet one that was completely familiar.

'How am I...'

Damien's eyes widened.

'Why am I in the Void?'

He'd experienced it with his own body, so he knew he couldn't be mistaken.

He was inside the Void, nonexistent as if he was a part of its mass rather than a visitor.

And as he watched, the Void changed, turning into the Heavenly World itself.

A fleck of its power fell to the surface and touched a baby who was only just born. This wasn't a rare phenomenon, however, it was rare for any of those children to ever actually respond to it.

For the most part, the Void's power was simply too much even at the smallest levels, and most of it returned itself to the environment during the child's development period.

For some, a portion of it would be ingested and would later manifest itself as talent unlike anything others had seen before.

Ruyue's affinity with Yin could be explained through this phenomenon.

However, on the off chance that a child could truly inherit the potential of that fleck of Void...

Well, Damien would happen. A small connection would appear and bloom. The Void would be attracted to that connection and would continuously stick to that individual. And eventually, if they could meet its expectations, it would offer them the opportunity to become Absolute.

That wasn't what happened in the scene Damien saw.

In that scene, another unique situation took place.

A child's body reacted to the fleck of Void. However, it was not able to properly absorb it.

That child's body convoluted itself trying to adapt to the power flowing through it. It changed, morphing internally until its systems had begun to mimic the Void itself.

However, in the end, it failed.

The adaptations it made became defective, and the Void never truly clung to that child.

It was just a coincidence that created a monster.

That child was Gluttony. From birth, he'd been robbed of everything.

His mind was absent of anything, a reflection of nothingness.

While his body could absorb anything, a reflection of all things.

The two concepts of the Void that Damien once mastered had manifested themselves in their own ways, but those ways had turned Gluttony into something of a puppet.

A puppet that eventually came under the control of Malevalon Straea.

Gluttony was planted in the 4 Evils by Malevalon and acted as his substitute to monitor the group's behavior.

He developed a connection to his group for unknown reasons that even Damien couldn't see, for it was an instinctive response rather than something that came from the mind.

That was an unforeseen circumstance. It impeded his ability to watch over them properly.

Gluttony could not talk, because his body did not give him that capability. He could not think, so he could not communicate through mana.

However, he would protect himself and those who he instinctively connected with. He would do as he was told.

He couldn't physically report anything, but using Gluttony, who nobody would ever suspect, Malevalon was always able to keep his own eyes on the group through a variety of means.

It had been a while since Malevalon planned to get rid of the 4 Evils. He just didn't get the chance to do it because they were always finding a way to be useful.

Their loss against Damien was a perfect excuse to terminate them.

At least, the three of them.

Gluttony was never included in it. He was never sent to be tortured or even reprimanded for his participation in the battle.

Gluttony was always supposed to stay in Straea and do Malevalon's bidding.

However, he left with the 4 Evils, following his instinct.

'Malevalon...isn't looking for him.'

Was it that Malevalon decided Gluttony wasn't worth the effort, or did he have plans to come back for him at a later time?

Was he being stored as a trump card? If so, wasn't it good for Damien to remove all of Malevalon's influence from the puppet-

like man as soon as possible?

The answer to all of those questions was yes.

Malevalon gave up on Gluttony, but the systems in his body assured that he could always be brought back if the need for his skills arose.

He was something of a trump card, but not one Malevalon totally cared about.

Yet...

'...if there are systems in Gluttony's body that are connected to Malevalon directly...'

Didn't that mean Damien could trace those systems before destroying them to find out information about Malevalon?

'It absolutely does.'

Damien dug deeper into Gluttony's existence.

Knowing that this man was a puppet of the Void, knowing that his everything was completely a mess because of it, Damien felt some sympathy.

He truly hadn't been able to live his life at all, simply existing at the level of power he mysteriously gained at being and working for others.

Damien almost wanted to take Gluttony in and help him regain his sense of self, but he knew the man would be more comfortable with his own comrades.

When Damien reached a level where he could freely control the Void, it wouldn't be too late to find him and help him.

Nevertheless, as Damien dug and dug, he found several layers of foreign mana within Gluttony's body.

Again, it wasn't unfamiliar. This mana very obviously belonged to Malevalon Straea.

Damien removed layer by layer, taking the time to unravel them as he did so.

Only after fifteen of such layers of protections and spyware were removed did Damien find a connection that visually transmitted information.

Through that, he could find Malevalon.

Or so he thought.

But when Damien pushed his way through that connection using Existence and saw what was on the other end, it was not a live feed, but a single memory.

The last thing the line had seen, the last time it was made to relay information.

And in that short memory that was no more than a few seconds long...

'FUCK!'

Malevalon Straea walked through a Dimensional Crack.

He had abandoned the Heavenly World entirely.

Chapter 1562 Danger [1]

'This fucking...'

Damien frowned immediately.

The picture of Malevalon leaving gave him mixed feelings.

There was no way for him to understand it.

Straea hadn't lost yet, had they? What was the purpose of abandoning his clan?

Malevalon absolutely could have continued fighting, but for some reason, he chose to retreat instead.

'Or is it really a retreat?'

The Sacred Abyss Universe had a lot of unexplored opportunities. It was a cosmos of its own, after all.

For someone like Malevalon, who'd already given up his humanity and chosen to serve the Dark God, it was a place where he could grow into someone greater than his current self.

'And if he reaches that point, then the Straea Clan loses its value.'

Straea was an influence that was considered big in the Heavenly World's standards, but from what was happening, it looked like Malevalon's opinions had changed when he saw the Foreign Nobility.

That man believed that there was no force greater than the Dark God, but that didn't stop him from wanting to become second only to him in all of history.

The influence that Malevalon could build at that point would be far better than Straea could ever be.



And if those people of Straea could be used as sacrifices to fuel the birth of that new influence, then he would happily use them.

Even his own brother, the person most people believed to be the last person in the world whom Malevalon trusted was abandoned, left on the battlefield to fight off his enemies.

'I have to see it for myself.'

Damien didn't know much of that information, for he didn't know much about Malevalon Straea. He was able to infer a lot from the memories of those who had interacted with him, but it was impossible to understand the man's thoughts without finding out directly.

"Tch."

Damien clicked his tongue.

He had to rush, but he wasn't one to go back on a promise.

[Heal]

The skill still had the same name, but its effects had become monstrous with time.

It was cast on both Lust and Envy. As for Gluttony...well, he had never lost his power in the first place. He just hadn't found a reason to use it yet.

The two women immediately felt the difference. Their bodies warmed up beautifully, and a gentle force washed through them, cleansing their internals of all ailments.

The shattered Divinities they held were slowly put back together, and while their power didn't instantly return, "mana" didn't feel unfamiliar anymore.

In just five or ten years, they could probably gain back a majority of their power. The rest could be slowly regained with time.

Nevertheless, the weight on their shoulders caused by the neverending issues that spawned in their bodies was gone. They felt lighter than they had in a very long time.

It was enough to make even Lust want to thank Damien, but...

"...where did he go?"

"He left. Disappeared the same way he came," Wrath responded, answering her doubts.

"I see..."

He came and went like a storm, bringing storm-like actions along with him.

Of the 4 Evils, there were now two with the qualifications to become Gods again, one who still had his power, and one who had gained an extreme motivation to return to his peak.

Their stories would likely go untold. In the grand scheme of things, they likely wouldn't make much of an impact.

But their stories would still be imprinted on the world, written in its Legend.

And who could tell, looking at them now?

Perhaps they would eventually return to the world with gusto, proving their worth to all.

That was still to be seen.

Damien would've been curious about it in normal times, but he had to put his curiosity aside for now.

He arrived in Straea territory within the day, and infiltrated the main manor without a problem.

It was practically empty. There was still staff roaming about, taking care of their duties, but none of the people who originally lived here were still here.

Where they went...?

It was a variety of places. Some were on the battlefield, others were in hiding, and others more were already dead.

However, they were not the ones Damien was concerned with.

And this manor was not his end goal.

His eyes went to the ground. Far below his feet was the Dimensional Crack that Malevalon escaped through. The same Dimensional Crack that brought the Foreign Nobility to the Heavenly World.

'The entrance...'

He already knew. Horacio and the others had all taken it to leave for the outside.

Damien rushed through the halls, teleporting where he could until he reached the hidden location that would teleport him to the underground area.

This was a different entrance than the one that Malevalon used with Grand Duke Famas, but Damien didn't know about that system.

Nevertheless, within minutes of his arrival, Damien had already found his way to the hidden principality.

And...

BANG!

His fist slammed against an invisible wall.

There was around ten feet of the cave that remained outside the wall, but everything else, including the hidden Principality, the Foreign Nobles, and the Dimensional Crack, was inside.

Damien pressed his hand to it and tried to use Existence to break it down, but this was the second time he'd seen something of this kind.

'It's made of Existence as well.'

It was an Existence stronger than the one Damien currently had in his hands.

He couldn't break through it. At least, not without spending several days trying to comprehend and solve it.

'Do I have that time?'

He didn't know. If he only looked at the war situation, then he most definitely did.

However, at times like this, there were always—

Danger.

Everything else halted.

In Damien's mind, a sound of danger drowned out all else.

It wasn't a danger to his own life.

Nor was it danger targeting his women.

This wasn't danger that he sensed through the Void.

No, it was something that originated from the depths of his blood.

'Mom.'

Danger was approaching his mother.

She was a God. A God that was stronger than most others.

However, she now had danger approaching her that threw Damien's senses into chaos.

'She's going to die.'

If he didn't do anything, she would die.

'I have to—'

"Going somewhere?"

A voice drew his attention.

A man walked out from the shadows, his skin grey and his eyes filled with mockery.

"You have gone to such lengths to visit us, so why leave so fast?"

Damien's eyes narrowed.

'Grand Duke. No, not just a Grand Duke...'

All of the Foreign Nobility in this place.

They had him surrounded before he even realized what was happening.

'It was a trap.'

He didn't know how they predicted he'd come here, but they'd laid out an elaborate trap while they were waiting for him.

And now...

'Either I find a way out of here as soon as possible...'

He could no longer teleport. The barrier of Foreign Existence had expanded to cover him as well. He was trapped inside until he could disperse it.

'...or mom dies.'

It was a situation Damien didn't even think to expect. It came out of nowhere, and now, in a single move, he'd been put into a state of do-or-die.

Four Grand Dukes, all of whom had power similar to Malevalon Straea.

Fifteen Dukes, roughly the same strength as Duke Horacio.

The rest were fodder that didn't matter, but those nineteen people had more than enough power to make Damien suffer.

And as Damien tried his best to think of a way to escape...

...Claire found herself in a foreseen yet unexpected situation.

#### Chapter 1563 Danger [2]

It wasn't as if something unexpected approached Claire and put her in danger. She only entered a situation that she'd been ready to enter for a long time.

Just like everyone else in the palace, Claire, Serena, Hugo, and Persia also dispatched themselves to take care of the enemies from Straea.

While Hugo and Persia led the 16 Swords to fight against Malefice Straea's most powerful and loyal Gods, Claire and Serena confronted Malefice himself.

They were the most powerful people in the entire palace, so it was only right for them to take on the fight themselves.

Malefice was second only to Malevalon, and with Malevalon gone, he was now the highest authority of the Straea Clan. As long as he died, the rest would lose their morale and reason to fight.

It wasn't like danger instantly revealed itself to the two women.

They, Damien's mother and aunt, confidently approached the battle.

Together, the two of them were an unstoppable force. They didn't need to worry about a mere Malefice Straea.

But their opinions changed when the battle began.

BOOM!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Rock pillars several meters long and hundreds of meters high shot out of the ground, only to be instantly destroyed by an explosive force.

Claire gritted her teeth and retreated. Using her power of Creation, she blocked all of the force being thrown at her.

The battle had only just kicked off. She arrived in the vicinity, and before Serena could even come to back her up, Malefice attacked as if he'd been waiting for this very moment for years.

The Heavenly God Plane enveloped her. The surrounding environment changed, becoming something completely unlike the Heavenly World.

This was a true battle of Gods. It could not be sustained within the Heavenly World.

To ensure that they could fight at their strongest, and to ensure that they could end it without either being able to escape, they fought in the Heavenly God Plane.

Here, they could not be touched by anyone other than another God of equal caliber.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Explosions of darkness filled the sky and the earth. The entire environment was flooded with a liquid that felt like oil but had far different properties.



Malefice caught her by surprise, so Claire wasn't able to immediately respond.

However, she wasn't unfamiliar with the man's abilities.

When Claire and Dante were growing up and making names for themselves, the Straea Clan was also in the process of rising.

They'd clashed against Straea more times than they could count, and as the years passed, the enmity between their two groups only heightened.

As such, the palace always kept records of the Straea Clan to make sure people wouldn't be surprised if they were to ever find themselves in a confrontation with its members.

The particular power that Malefice used was only granted to the upper echelons of the clan. It was created by Malevalon himself, and though it was a human invention, it held the same power as a law.

Just like Swords and Weapon Laws, the "Law of the Dark Star" that Malevalon developed was considered a Human Law. It was a dark and mysterious power that others couldn't fathom, but to the people of Straea, it was the easiest possible thing to comprehend,

The Law of the Dark Star was, in essence, Darkness Law. However, it was mixed with certain celestial elements to give it a twist that others wouldn't expect, and as time went on, it was corrupted by the properties of malakh, setting it apart from the normal mana-based techniques that everyone else used.

Malevalon and Malefice were skilled in the Law of the Dark Star beyond anyone else, since they were its creators.

Malevalon might have ran, but Malefice wasn't the same.

He knew his brother was going to leave.

Malevalon didn't tell him, but judging by his behavior over the past few weeks, Malefice was able to tell.

Still, he decided to stay behind and fight, because unlike his brother, he truly would do anything for Straea.

Malevalon used Straea as a stepping stone. He seemed like he would do anything for its sake, however, he was really just acting for his own benefit.

When the clan couldn't help him anymore, he stopped caring about the clan.

Malefice put so much more into Straea than Malevalon ever did.

He was the one who raised the Gods who were loyal to their clan. He was the one who created a system to provide them with a constant source of talent. He was the one who handled the economic and political needs of the clan.

In almost every way, the Straea Clan actually belonged to Malefice, but he never wanted to be the one everyone looked to for leadership.

That was a job his brother was more suitable for.

Since they were in this situation now, he was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Either he took control or the clan got destroyed.

It wasn't a choice he'd made yet, but the frustration he felt because of it all...

Who would he release it on?

Naturally, it was the first enemy he saw, and unfortunately, that was Claire.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Darkness blasted through the air like a rain of ink.

The sea of darkness below was Malefice's domain. Claire couldn't touch the ground if she wanted to keep fighting an even battle.

The explosions that were being thrown around weren't particularly harmful, but they were meant to probe her power so Malefice could determine the best way for him to fight.

He was primarily an assassin. He liked attacking from the shadows. However, he wasn't bad at fighting directly. It just wasn't his preferred style.

Well, when it came to Malefice's preferences, the method that killed the enemy most efficiently was the one he'd want to use.

Claire knew that well, so she was giving him nothing.

She used the most basic Material Creation to fight him, using powers that even regular elementalists could use. Still, with Claire's power as its base, even these simple defenses held great power.

Claire's Creation Law was far more developed than Iris'. While the two women used the same power, it hardly bore any resemblance.

Iris never confronted Claire for advice on her power. It wasn't just because of pride, but because of their individual takes on the law.

While Iris focused more on material creation, taking it to its heights to create stars and galaxies...

Claire raised her arm.

BOOOOOOM!

A massive shadow appeared and covered the ground, however, it never stepped foot into the sea of darkness.

ROAAAAAAR!

A terrifying call from a beast over a thousand kilometers long. It wasn't a beast that had appeared here without notice.

It was a beast that had been "created."

Claire's speciality was not in the creation of materials. Claire focused on the creation of living organisms.

The best way to understand her power was to think of her as a summoner.

The beasts she summoned were not merely physical entities, but full true Godly Beings that had their own Laws and abilities.

Every single one of them had been formed with years of effort, and with the power they'd been bestowed, they gave Claire access to a wide variety of powers.

She rarely fought in close combat, which made her completely the opposite of Malefice Straea.

And as the two faced each other on the battlefield, one backed by a massive Godbeast and the other backed by a million-

kilometer sea of darkness, they didn't look too unmatched.

But...

How long would that image of fairness be able to maintain itself?

#### Chapter 1564 Danger [3]

There were twelve beasts under Claire's control.

Over her several millions of years of life, she'd only ever made twelve who'd become permanent companions. All others were only ever meant to live for a single battle.

The twelve of them had their own names, ancient and in a tongue that was no longer spoken, however, after experiencing life on Earth, Claire had changed their names to coincide with the twelve zodiacs.

It was something of a memento of her time as a human.

The beast she summoned this time was the snake.

It was once an earthly beast, but as she grew, it evolved as well until it was like a manifestation of Apophis.

It was a true world serpent, able to fly in the sky and maneuver like a dragon, yet keeping its main form as a snake.

Its true form could wrap around the entire Heavenly World, but it was quite inconvenient to move around like that, so it kept its smallest possible form.

Yet, even that was hundreds of kilometers long.

Malefice saw it spawn from thin air.

He continued to attack as he had been, but subtly made distance to observe the creature.

"Go see what he can do, but don't push too hard yet."

Claire ordered the serpent forward, but also held it back.

Serena still hadn't arrived yet. She didn't want to do anything drastic until she was absolutely assured of her advantage.

Claire was no longer young. She wasn't someone who acted wildly no matter what the situation was, and she had far too much to lose.

For her to even return to the battlefield at all was already an extraneous circumstance, but for the sake of her husband, her son, and her people, she did so without hesitation.

Under her watchful gaze, the serpent slithered through the sky and approached Malefice.

Its movements seemed slow, but it didn't take more than a second for it to both arrive and start attacking.

The snake swung its tail. Despite the massive size of its body, it moved at an impossible rate.

The air exploded under its force, but as the tail continued to move unobstructed, the air's destruction became an additive force to its destructive power.

BOOOOOOOM!

It swept by Malefice's position with extreme power. Space trembled as countless cracks were formed in this film. Reality itself trembled as the Heavenly God Plane absorbed the latent power and disallowed it from going out of control.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

His darkness formed spikes that shot through the sky and stabbed into the snake's scales.

Unfortunately for him, the serpent wasn't so weak as to be pierced by such a light attack.

Malefice was small in comparison to the serpent, which was his advantage.

His maneuverability combined with his power meant that beasts of this size would actually suffer against him.

It wasn't his first time fighting an enormous beast. He already had the strategy to defeat them.

Malefice flew up above the serpent and charged his mana.

A star formed above his head, burning with a halo of white around its dark core.

It rapidly expanded to the size of a sun, and as if he didn't need to put any effort in to create such a mass, he swung his arm and casually threw it at the serpent.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

It exploded into a rain of light, letting loose the laws contained within.

Darkness was a law that most people used in the same way, to corrode and corrupt.

It was the easiest use of the law, after all, and it could be taken to the highest level without a problem.

However, it wasn't the only way darkness could be used.

Malefice's darkness could be most accurately described as a law with the ability to "suppress" and "swallow."

He used it as an aggressive force as well, but that wasn't where its strengths were.

As the darkness struck the sky serpent, it didn't gain any visible wounds.

It didn't seem to be affected at all, however, the darkness latched onto its body and refused to let go, coating it like an armor.

ROOOAAAAAAR!

The snake roared as it sensed its enemy's hostility.

Its mouth opened, and its massive fangs dripped what was, to a human, an ocean of venom.

VOOOOOOOM!

A darkness different from Malefice's appeared in the snake's maw and coated that venom, forming into needles filled with it.

As if it was shooting a breath attack, the snake aimed at Malefice and fired.

XIU! XIU! XIU! XIU!

They cut through the sky and cut the sky itself.

Malefice flew rapidly and dodged them, however, they were not as simple as mere projectiles.

They turned on a point and followed him like there were no laws they had to obey.



BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Malefice let his darkness loose, throwing several blasts at the needles.

The two forms of darkness fought each other, but in the end, the serpent's darkness did not submit.

The needles continued to chase, forcing Malefice to take a defensive stance.

'Hmm...'

Watching from the rear, Claire narrowed her eyes.

It looked like the serpent had the advantage, but she didn't think the same.

'He's stalling.'

Malefice was not fighting at his best. He could definitely do better than this, since the serpent wasn't one of Claire's strongest summons.

The problem was that Claire didn't know why.

'The Law of the Dark Star...no matter how much we try to research it, we can never find much.'

It was one of Straea's most guarded secrets. The palace had tried many times to discover the truth behind it, but they'd never once succeeded.

Still, Claire's instincts told her that there was something wrong with this fight. It was a feeling that provoked her to attack with her fullest power immediately to end the battle as soon as possible, which, in normal cases, went against her best judgement.

'Hmm...'

To wait or to fight...

She chose to wait.

"Push harder."

The serpent immediately registered her order.

Its slow attack style completely changed, and in response, Malefice was forced to change as well.

The sky was immediately lit up by the extremely high-speed clash.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Malefice continued to dodge for the most part. Every once in a while when he saw an opportunity, he threw some darkness at the serpent to add to the armor that was beginning to encase its entire body.

'Is it time...?'

He wanted to end this fight as much as the next person, but he was currently working with other people.

His fight with Claire wasn't just a way for him to vent the anger in his heart.

Currently, Grand Duke Famas was confronting Damien Void, the main target of the Foreign Nobility.

Malefice wasn't like his brother. He didn't necessarily have a contract or loyalty to the Foreign Races.

However, if he wanted to survive past this ordeal and keep Straea alive as well, he needed to benefit from them.

The Foreign Nobility was the only long-term ally Straea had.

And since they wanted Damien, since he had a feud with Damien's parents and family...

He was willing to hold back and prolong this battle.

When he got the signal he was waiting for, the darkness he spread could finally serve its purpose.

And Claire Ellowyn...

...could be "swallowed."

Chapter 1565 Danger [4]

Currently, there were far too many people around Damien for him to be comfortable.

The Foreign Nobility had yet to attack, but there was no way Damien would believe they didn't have the intention to.

'They want me dead.'

This, Damien knew for a fact.

He had Duke Horacio's memories. He knew exactly how the Dark God had ordered them to find the "anomaly," and he knew that he was that very anomaly.

Duke Horacio had lived for...well, it wasn't that clear.

His memories were covered in a fog, not because they were locked, but because even Horacio's own existence couldn't particularly remember what it had experienced.

There was something strange happening within the bodies and souls of the Foreign Nobility themselves, but that wasn't something Damien could currently learn the answer to.

All he knew was that Duke Horacio had accompanied the Dark God's forces to raid several cosmos, and that the process of eliminating anomalies was practically streamlined.

'Corner them, eliminate all variables, and destroy without mercy.'

Anomalies weren't always people. Sometimes they were objects with great power or even concepts and laws themselves.

In all cases, the best way to remove anomalies and create room for the Dark God's interference was to isolate them from anything that could help them and force them into a situation where they couldn't resist.

This way, there wouldn't be any risks associated with the moves either.

Damien glanced around.

'Grand Dukes Famas, Klaus, Lance, and Maveth.'

They took each cardinal direction and kept Damien surrounded.

Even they were aware that Viscounts and Counts didn't stand a chance against him. The Dukes could probably contain him properly, but why would they risk it after they already lost Horacio?

Damien's power didn't make sense. When they were facing someone they couldn't understand, their first and only instinct was to make sure that person had no openings to exploit whatsoever.

And they did so perfectly.

Damien stood in the middle of their encirclement and tried to figure out a way out, but with the Existence barrier and his enemies teaming up to keep him contained, there was really nothing he could do.

'Unless I can kill them all and escape...'

It just wasn't possible.

The Grand Dukes were Gods stronger than Claire and Malefice. Damien was at the level of a Duke, sure, but even several Dukes together couldn't fight them.

The established hierarchy among the Foreign Nobility was absolute and unchanging.

'But it's not like I can give up here.'

Letting them have their way simply wasn't an option.

'Then I should just—'

BANG!

"Khhh!"

Damien gritted his teeth and grabbed his wrist, or rather, the stump where his hand was a second ago.

"Don't do anything stupid."

Grand Duke Klaus mocked him with a smile. His arm was still outstretched with two fingers pointed forward.

A mere flick, a motion Damien couldn't sense, was able to instantly destroy a piece of his body.

'They can read me.'

Damien didn't care about his hand. He didn't regrow it, just for safety, but he wasn't too worried about the damage.

What concerned him was the fact that Klaus had sent him a warning shot the instant he had the thought to fight.

"What do you want from me?"

Damien growled, pretending to be uninformed. It was only half an act, since he still couldn't figure out why they were stalling.

"What we want...well, obviously it is your life. If you are wondering why we aren't attacking..."

Grand Duke Famas looked around.

"...do we have a need to?" He questioned.

"You are a unique entity even among the anomalies we have seen in the past. Isn't it okay for us to entertain our curiosity a bit before you die?"

Famas was assured of Damien's defeat. He talked big, acting arrogant, but he wasn't actually as overconfident as he seemed.

This situation...actually wasn't a first.

This had happened once before, but at that time, it was a different Void.

Dante had been surrounded after he'd been deemed an anomaly, and the overconfidence of the Foreign Nobility gave him the opportunity to escape.

That day, Grand Duke Famas suffered a terrible defeat, and the Foreign Nobles were forced to stand down as the Straea Clan and the Divine Order took over and finally captured Dante in the Celestial Prison.

The prison turned Dante into a cripple who could no longer be a threat to the grand plan. He was meant to be killed eventually, but before that happened, the Celestial Prison itself was stolen.

And the thief was none other than his son.

Famas wasn't stuck in his ways. He learned from his mistakes, and because he refused to let his confidence blind him, he made sure that the plot against Damien was far more elaborate.

He was only being contained for now, because before they moved to kill him, they needed assurance that he wouldn't be able to escape.

Assurance in the form of a hostage.

Claire Ellowyn, his mother. If they had her in their possession, would he still be able to fight and resist?

Wouldn't he be prepared to give his life so she could live?

He would.

The Grand Duke wasn't wrong about that.

But he severely underestimated Damien's mentality despite all of his preparation.

See, Damien wasn't a man who would give up when he was forced into a corner.

He wasn't a coward who would accept the worst-case scenario no matter how bad things got.

They could put his mother in danger. They could take her hostage if they wanted to.

But why would he trust them to let her go after he died?

"Oh? Has it been established?"

Grand Duke Famas suddenly spoke, attracting Damien's attention.

Snap!

He snapped his fingers, summoning a mana projection in the air in front of Damien.

"I'm sure you were curious, so I made sure you'd be able to see for yourself."

As the projection cleared up and formed the picture being transmitted to it, Damien's eyes narrowed.

There she was.

His mother fighting against Malefice Straea.

She had three beasts in front of her, each serving a different purpose. Meanwhile, her enemy was zipping around like a sentient comet and fighting all three of them without breaking a sweat.



The battle was raging on quite spectacularly, but that wasn't Damien's focus.

The projection he was seeing...

It couldn't be Malefice Straea's work.

'There's someone else there.'

Another enemy in the vicinity.

'Someone she can't sense.'

Danger.

Huu...

Damien's breath was loud. In the silence of this place, it resounded and echoed as if to make everyone acknowledge its presence.

But that was the only reaction he showed.

He closed his eyes and steadied himself.

With every second that the projection continued, Damien got angrier.

And the angrier he got, the calmer his mind was.

There were only two questions he continued to ask himself. Two questions that ignored the concepts of "possibility" and "impossibility" in favor of rage.

Those two concepts didn't matter to Damien anymore.

Impossibility only existed if he allowed it to.

So there was really only one thing that mattered.

When was the last time he found himself as cornered as this?

And...

Just how long would he allow this to continue?

Chapter 1566 Danger [5]

It was quiet around Damien. His situation had yet to erupt into something uncontrollable, mainly because he was controlling himself.

However, it wouldn't be long before it erupted, and when that happened...

Well, the consequences of offending Damien didn't need to be mentioned, did they?

Currently, Claire was the one in a more serious predicament.

As the battle progressed and Malefice revealed more of his power, she was forced to call out two more summons to both protect herself and attack.

Along with the Snake, the Horse and the Rat had also been summoned.

The snake's fighting power was a bit weaker than the rest. It mainly focused on containing enemies within a certain area and cornering them.

The horse was its perfect support. A beast that had mighty physical power, the horse's legs could produce power that could shatter stars with ease.

As for the rat, he was a king of his people. His power came from neither attack nor defense, but from numbers.

The rat's body was made up of trillions upon trillions of smaller rats. They could move as a swarm through any environment, able to survive in even the harshest conditions, and they would not stop until their goal had been achieved.

They didn't care if they died, nor did they care about their fellows. The only thing that mattered was Claire's order.

The rats had an extremely high reproduction rate, higher than almost any other animal. As such, no matter how many of them died, more would always be available to replace them.

The rats usually didn't come out, since Claire never had the need to destroy large populations or areas.

However, they were not being used to attack this time.

The massive horse, which was winged like a Pegasus yet not a Pegasus at all, clopped through the air confidently, rapidly approaching Malefice with the speed of lightning.

BANG!

It whipped its body to the side and kicked him fiercely.

Malefice blocked with his arms. He was sent flying back by the momentum, but he wasn't injured.

VOOM!

His power swirled to life.

He pushed his arm forward, setting up a defense against the horse that was already charging again.

XIU! XIU! XIU!

He narrowly avoided the snake's projectiles, and before they could turn around to aim at him again, he shot several waves of darkness out to destroy them.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

They exploded in the air, raining venom into the sea of darkness below.

Meanwhile, the horse arrived and slammed into the barrier he'd previously set up.

The mana shattered instantly, but the horse's momentum had also been completely destroyed.

WHOOOOSH!

Malefice stepped on the air and rushed past the horse. As he skimmed its massive body, he extended his finger to just barely touch it.

A line of darkness followed his movements, attaching itself to the horse that turned around to attack him.

Flying higher into the sky, Malefice charged up another dark star, throwing it downward without aiming at anything in particular.

BOOOOOOOOM!

The dark light produced by its eruption blinded the horse's vision for just a moment.

The darkness splattered outward and hit the snake.

At this point, only its eyes remained uncovered.

Malefice narrowed his eyes.

He flicked his hand forward, collecting his mana together.

A line of energy shot from his finger, flying past the snake and the horse. It headed for Claire directly, attacking the summoner rather than the summons.

With three of her main beasts out, Claire had a lot more room to observe the battlefield from the back line. She didn't miss the tiny sliver of energy shooting towards her, but she also didn't trust it in the slightest.

"Rat."

WHOOOOOOOSH!

It wasn't a sound of wind. More like waves crashing against each other.

They appeared from nowhere and multiplied instantaneously.

Like zombies in a world apocalypse, they crawled over each other and formed a massive wall around Claire.

XIUUUU!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The line of energy split into three and slammed into the rat wall.

The three points exploded into masses of blackness that warbled and fluctuated strangely.

Millions of rats were immediately trapped within the blackness, and as it registered targets within its grasp, it transformed into three black boxes that felt oddly similar to Damien's Dimensional Cage.

The concept was the same.

The Law of the Dark Star managed to combine darkness and space in such a way that it could create an improved version of the Dimensional Cage, which, in the techniques of the Straea Clan, was known as the Dark World.

It entrapped its subjects in eternal darkness as space compressed around them and squished them into a paste.

If it hit Claire...

Nevertheless, she sensed the danger before the attack was even close to her, and she acted accordingly.

'Horse and rat aren't enough.'

On top of that, the serpent was no longer responding to commands.

The instant Malefice's darkness covered its eyes, it became frozen in the sky like a statue. Claire could sense its life fluctuations, but its connection with the outside world had been completely cut off.

'Those three...it's not time yet.'

There were three summons among the three who absolutely could not be summoned.

Because the chaos that would be wrought onto the world with their mere presence was not something Claire could easily let loose.

As for the others...

The Rabbit simply wasn't suited for combat. It was a healer. The Ox and Goat wouldn't be of much use in this situation, while the rooster was also not a combat summon.

'In the end, there are only two.'

Claire's power was extremely limiting.

She'd made it that way on purpose, because the things she did when she didn't have a limit went against the Heavenly Order.

If she continued on that path, the world would be brought to ruin.

She may have been a user of Creation, but there was a reason Damien was born with an affinity for Destruction.

His father was a monster, and his mother...

She was a monster that only his father could stop.

The 12 summons who were now Zodiacs were her limiters.

Without them...

"Dog, Pig."

She called them out, and they naturally appeared.

One was a massive shadowhound that seemed to have come from the depths of hell. As for the other...

It was just a regular-looking pig.

"You know what to do."

Claire didn't need to give them orders. They were some of the more intelligent beasts in her collection.

AWOOOOOOOO!

The shadow hound let out a howl, a war cry, and instantly shot into battle alongside the horse.

As for the pig, it remained beside Claire, its expression unchanging.

"Do you think you'll have to use me?"

It spoke. Odd coming from a pig, but not so much considering Claire blessed it with sentience.

"I do not know. I am making preparations just in case."

The pig glanced at her.



It had been with Claire the longest. It was created before she even knew how to create biological matter through pure happenstance.

And despite how long it had traveled together with her...

...Claire had only ever used its power twice.

It didn't know why it had been called out at a time like this, especially when this battle didn't necessarily seem like one she would lose.

But since it was here...

'...she thinks she might die.'

It was true.

Claire wasn't assured of her survival.

Not necessarily because of Malefice Straea, though.

'She hasn't come.'

Serena Krone, her sister and the person who was supposed to be fighting this battle with her.

She was late.

And if she, who ruled over time itself, was late by even a second...

Then something had gone horribly wrong already.

Chapter 1567 Danger [6]

Serena and Claire left the palace at the same time.

They took different paths for one reason only.

Serena felt something odd in the folds of time.

She was someone far more connected to time itself than anyone else in the world. To her, time was an extension of her own body.

Every single instance when someone in this world manipulated the law of time, she sensed it. That included when Damien used it.

However, what she sensed this time was not merely someone using time laws.

She felt the presence of an "existence" who bent the spacetime itself.

There weren't many people who could do so without trying. Whether it was a friend or a foe, Serena had to find out what they were up to.

As such, she planned to briefly observe the target before meeting back with Claire and fighting Malefice.

That, of course, didn't end up happening.

Half of it was because Malefice drew Claire into the Heavenly God Plane before she could wait for Serena to arrive.

And the other half...

As Serena approached the area where that being was, she immediately felt danger.

The general area was empty of all other people. No, it was empty of all life in general. The environment was so quiet that no sane person could ever believe it was safe.

There was only a single man standing there. He was familiar to some, but to those of the Heavenly World, he was a stranger.

But, he was not someone Serena had never seen before.

'Famas.'

With ashen-grey skin proudly displayed and an aura unmistakable for anyone else, Grand Duke Famas was standing there as if he was waiting for her.

How, when he was currently supposed to be with Damien...?

How, when he was supposed to be transmitting the scene of Claire and Malefice's battle...?

How was he here?

Damien had yet to realize it. It would hardly matter if he did, considering that all of the other Foreign Nobles were surrounding him.

The Grand Duke Famas who existed in the hidden Principality was only a clone.

His real body was here, happily awaiting the moment when he could completely ruin the family that Dante Void left in this world.

"Famas," Serena said, not hiding her approach.

It didn't matter even if she tried, since she wouldn't be able to escape his perception.

"I didn't think you would come back here after what happened last time. Your face looks...different from before. I guess that's what it takes to hide those scars."

Grand Duke Famas' eyes flickered in her direction.

"Scars...they are signs of battle, medals of honor. However, that is only for barbarians. I may have hidden those scars, but you must remember, girl..."

VOOOOOOOOOM!

His aura boomed to life.

"...you are not the one who gave them to me."

Serena's eyes narrowed.

'This attitude...he wants war.'

Damien had been saying it, but now that Famas was here, it was unequivocally true.

The Foreign Races were once again trying to conquer this plane.

"I assume you're here for me?" Serena asked.

"If not you, then who?" Famas responded coldly.

"I see...and your overall plan?"

"Funny."

"Tch."

Serena wasn't stupid enough to think she would gain any information through the question, but she was at least certain of one thing.

'If the Grand Dukes are moving, then Artemis has shut down.'

Artemis, the name for the worldwide barrier magic cast by Dante Void to keep the Sacred Abyss Universe and True Void Universe apart. It was an extremely complex spatial mechanism that morphed Existence itself to achieve its purpose, but it seemed it had lost its function.

Grand Duke Famas finally turned to face Serena directly.

"The debt between me and that man cannot be solved with the death of a mere woman like you," he said, sneering slightly.

"And it is a shame that he will not be able to see what has happened to his clan in the time he was gone."

Despite his words, he already had malakh in his hands. He clearly didn't come here just to chat.

"Do not fret. Before I send him to meet you in the next life, I will make sure he can see your remains with his own eyes. Though, I cannot say if he will recognize you after this."

He immediately attacked.

Malakh went flying through the air, enclosing the two of them within a space of his own creation.

And after making sure Serena could not escape, he centered his body in the world, creating a connection with the Heavenly God Plane.

"Come," he said, his voice colder than ice.

"Fight valiantly before you die."

Serena said nothing.

This situation was already set. She could escape, but if she let Grand Duke Famas roam free, a far greater disaster would befall the Heavenly World.

She had to fight.

And compared to when she was younger, she didn't think she was as disadvantaged against this man anymore.

Grand Dukes were dangerous, but one had to remember Serena's current position.

Dante Void and Malevalon Straea were outliers.

Aside from them...

She and Claire were the most powerful people in this world.

That was true without a doubt.

Serena took a deep breath and released her mana, following Grand Duke Famas in connecting herself with the world.

Her mana and his malakh clashed in the space between them, and a connection with the Heavenly God Plane was formed.

The souls of the two Gods were transported to a new place.

As it was, it didn't look much different from the outside world.

That was because the Heavenly God Plane would replicate the surrounding environment to support the battles taking place within.

As for the true face of this plane...

None had ever seen it.

Nevertheless, a battle between two great forces began, one far away from the battle where Serena was originally meant to be.

\*\*\*

Originally, it seemed like the entire plot the Foreign Races created was meant to target Damien himself.

That was partially true. Damien was their primary target and the only one they truly had a mission to eliminate.

However, he was not their only target.

In fact, the feud between the Foreign Races and Void Palace began long, long ago. Back then, it was Dante Void and his party who fought against them and pushed them back.

Claire, Serena, Hugo, and Persia were all hated by the Foreign Nobility. At least one powerful noble had a vendetta against each of them.

Currently, it wasn't just Claire and Serena being targeted.

The Straea Clan acted as a proxy for the Foreign Nobles who had to focus on Damien. Both Hugo and Persia were currently stuck in troublesome predicaments of their own as well.

This was a plot to eliminate Damien Void just as much as it was a plot to destroy Void Palace entirely.

And as more projections appeared before Damien to show him exactly what his family was going through, this fact became abundantly clear to him.

The answers to the questions he'd asked himself; he already knew them.

It had been a very, very long time since the last time he'd been this cornered, if ever at all.

And he wasn't going to just sit back and let it happen.

The rage in his body was growing unbearable.

It was getting harder to stop himself from making reckless decisions.

There was really only one straw left. The second it snapped...

Damien would truly lose all regard for rationality.

Chapter 1568 Danger [7]

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!



The longer their fight continued, the more disadvantaged Malefice seemed to be.

He was hardly able to attack at this point, and was mostly dodging as the dog, the horse, and the rat continuously pushed him further and further.

The sea of darkness he created was hardly useful at first glance. However, that was only at first glance.

Every attack Malefice performed was powered by that sea, and as it continued to exist without being inhibited, Malefice's power only grew stronger.

The explosions that rung out were mainly caused by him.

The Law of the Dark Star swarmed the air, turning it into something of Malefice's domain.

He was fighting against multiple enemies, all of whom had great power. It was difficult for him, but Malefice was someone who benefitted from prolonged battles.

As his darkness flooded the atmosphere more and more, it splashed into all of Claire's summons, and their states started to look a lot like the serpent's.

Their movements were slowed, which made it far easier for Malefice to attack Claire herself.

XIU! XIU! XIU!

Three needles of darkness flew toward her at untold speed.

Malefice took some notes from the snake's techniques, filling his darkness with a power of corrosion to combine two separate strikes into one.

The needles hit the rat wall with extreme force, piercing through with ease.

The rats were incredibly dexterous and had a relatively high defense, however, they were far more equipped to deal with blunt impacts than piercing strikes.

Tens of rats died as the needles shot through their defense, but the main person who needed to be careful was still Claire.

She raised her hand, creating several walls of hard obsidian-like rock in front of her.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

Their momentum was slowed with every wall they broke through, but they continued to push as if they didn't have enough momentum to lose.

Claire put her focus on those attacks, and using that opportunity, Malefice got behind her and struck again.

BANG!

It was the first time he'd come close enough to give her no time to react.

A punch, filled with the energy of the Dark Star, slammed into her back.

"Khhh...!"

Claire held her groan of pain back as she turned around and swept her arm through the air.

Malefice didn't retreat. Instead, he dodged and twisted his body, giving himself the chance to counter.

BOOM!

Malefice's fists weren't weak by any means. It was actually the opposite.

The Law of the Dark Star allowed him to control weight to an extent. When he struck with his fists, he made sure they weighed as much as a dying star.

Claire's back was hit directly with that kind of force.

She was a God as well, so the damage she took wasn't fatal, but it wasn't small either.

That kind of force hit her soul directly. It hurt more than anything, and while it crippled her fighting potential to an extent, she didn't allow Malefice to realize that.

Claire was a summoner. She rarely fought in close combat.

But that didn't mean she couldn't.

She swept her arms to the side. Two swords spawned in her hands as she pushed off the air and charged at Malefice.

Shing! Shing! Shing! Shing!

Her swords cut through the air with such precision that one could see the atmosphere itself get sliced.

Pushing Malefice and giving him no room to back out of the confrontation, Claire's swords were like two individual beings of their own.

'Strong.'

She may have taken a backseat when Dante Void and his son were messing the world up, but that didn't mean she didn't have the ability to do the same.

Merely, she chose not to.

Now that she was showing her power, it became clear why she was regarded so highly in this world.

Malefice dodged and dodged. His body went right and left and spun in impossible ways, but he couldn't avoid all of Claire's attacks.

"Tch."

He clicked his tongue as the two swords slashed into his shoulders. The pain didn't affect him, but his arms were effectively ruined for at least a few seconds.

BANG!

He charged mana into his body and released it forward.

The move didn't have much attack power, but it created a great deal of momentum that pushed him back and outside of Claire's range.

However, Claire didn't bother to chase him. She'd already achieved her purpose.

Malefice wouldn't be able to throw any more of those heavy punches. Not for a while, at least.

Which meant that, during this period, Claire would be safe from any close combat attacks.

'Good.'

She wasn't losing.

The uncomfortable feeling in her heart didn't go away, but she didn't think it was coming from Malefice anymore.

'Then...'

If Malefice wasn't the enemy who made her feel danger, then someone else was in the Heavenly God Plane watching them, waiting for the time to strike.

The Heavenly God Plane was called as such because it really was a massive plane of existence. All battlefields within were connected, and while it was rare, it wasn't impossible for people who entered from different places to encounter each other.

If someone had been waiting in the Heavenly God Plane for them to arrive, if they had been watching this fight the entire time...

'...they are far more dangerous than Malefice.'

Because Claire hadn't even begun to sense them.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

The battle continued to rage on.

She and Malefice were relatively equal in standing. Malefice had been injured several times by Claire and her summons, and Claire...

Well, her summons were slowly beginning to refuse her orders.

Rather, they were unable to do anything.

The horse followed the serpent, then the dog followed the horse. The blackness that Malefice spread through every corner of the battlefield stuck to them and slowed them, encasing them in stone.

The rats were able to live on due to their numbers, however, Claire's attack power had been turned into nothing as her other summons were frozen into statues.

"It may be necessary to bring 'him' out," the Pig said from beside her.

Its body had the ability to turn ethereal, so it was the only summon completely unaffected by the so-called Medusa effect.

Malefice hadn't even realized its presence on the battlefield. Claire was the only one who could perceive it.

"If I release him..."

"...then you will never be able to go back to peace. Yes."

"Is it truly necessary?"

Claire liked her life. She liked being a mother, she was proud of her son, and her husband was getting better every single day.

The stable and joyful family life that she'd yearned for was almost possible. It was just barely out of reach.

Right now...

Did she want to give up peace right now, at the very last moment?

"I really don't want to."

However...

Malefice retreated several hundred kilometers back.

It seemed like he was separating himself from the battle, but really...

'There's someone else.'

The person Claire had only just realized the existence of had revealed their existence.

'...I have no choice.'

As that person's visage became clearer, Claire had to accept reality.

If she wanted to win this battle, then she had to sacrifice herself.

There simply wasn't another option.

Chapter 1569 Danger [8]

The different levels of Godhood were relatively difficult to quantify.

As one entered the final stage of power, the differences between people became more obvious.

Every God was unique. Nobody could reach this level by using the common laws and concepts that everybody else used.

Each and every one had their own speciality, and because of that, the way they ranked up differed.

It was hard to put a universal term on the different levels of Godhood, but people had obviously tried many times.

Ceaseless research and an unbelievable amount of testing and effort created a system that most could acknowledge, even if it was impossible for it to be completely accurate.

Lesser Gods were those who had just ascended to Godhood. People like the two Damien fought when he was still working for Veritas were at this level.

They had Godly power and connections to the Heavenly God Plane, but power-wise, they were far worse than any of their peers.

True Gods were those who had gone past this level. They were roughly at the level of a peak Foreign Race Count or a lower-tier Duke, and already had a grip over their power.

True Gods were the real start of Godhood. This was where they began exploring Legends and the Soul to an extreme that people below their level simply couldn't comprehend.

Above them were Highgods. This was the level Duke Horacio was at, and the level Damien could fight at. These Gods had not only control over their power, but a level of experience that others couldn't match,

Highgods were usually more focused on a single concept within their law than the entire law itself, because they could take those concepts to the extreme and even make them surpass themselves.



That was the ultimate purpose of a God. To take a law beyond itself, to make the Heavenly Order adopt changes based on their comprehensions.

Finally, above all others were the Supreme Gods. Claire, Serena, Malefice, Malevalon, and the Grand Dukes. All of them were somewhere within this level.

The concepts they'd taken interest in would automatically become far stronger. Their mere presence was enough to twist the laws of the world, and they had already gone beyond what even Highgods could imagine.

Rather than external goals, they focused more on themselves.

Because there was nothing defined after the level of a Supreme God.

The only people who had ever exceeded that level, at least of those who existed in the two cosmos in the current day, were Dante and the Dark God.

They were the Unrecorded.

It was not the title of one man, but a title given to all those who surpassed the existing levels of power.

The Unrecorded were called as such because nobody else could figure out their power or their goals. No matter how close one got to that level, no matter how much research was done on the minds, bodies, and souls of these beings, nothing about them could be comprehended by those who had not reached their level.

Nobody had ever seen the Unrecorded fight each other. However, fights between Supreme Gods, while rare, weren't nonexistent.

The main Supreme Gods who ruled the world rarely showed their power on the battlefield, but they were not the only Supremes in the world.

There were a number of them who hid themselves from society or simply didn't desire status the same way others did. These Gods were the ones who tended to show others what a Supreme could do.

However, currently, those same leaders who refused to show their power were the ones putting their all on the line.

Claire fought valiantly in a fight that didn't seem like it would end any time soon, but the situation was different for Serena.

She thought it to herself before she even started fighting.

She wasn't weaker than a Grand Duke anymore.

VOOOOOM!

There weren't as many explosions in this battle as there were in that one.

After all, Serena used time as her main law.

Countless projectiles shot through the air as they did in most battles, but before they could come close to Serena, they were trapped in a field of her creation.

It existed in a ten-foot radius around her body. A barrier of time that forced any attack that entered its folds to return to a time before its creation.

When it came to defense, there weren't many who could keep up with her. This field was the extent of her research and training over her span as a God. It was the very thing that allowed her to be so connected with the Time Laws that ruled the world, a constantly activated defense that never left her open.

And just because she focused on defense didn't mean she was unable to attack properly.

XIU! XIU! XIU!

Bubbles of time, able to change one's age at a level beyond mere physical difference, whizzed through the battlefield, assaulting Duke Famas.

He moved his body quite agilely for someone who liked to act as unconcerned as him.

His speciality wasn't speed, but power, however, Serena's attacks needed to be avoided.

If his soul was touched by a power that could change its age, it could be extremely detrimental to him.

After all, not only would his soul aging make him weaker, his soul gaining youth would erase a great deal of his achievements.

It was a terrifying power indeed. Despite talking as if he was much more powerful than her, Grand Duke Famas was forced to accept that this wouldn't be an easy battle to win.

But that only made him angrier.

While he had remained stuck at his current level, they had grown to the point where a girl he considered trivial in the past could now make him feel danger.

This rage acted like fuel for him.

Famas kept himself stable most of the time. He was a composed being that didn't allow others to see his emotions.

However, it wasn't that he was indifferent. That was no more than a facade.

Grand Duke Famas' power was fueled by emotion. The happier he was, the sadder he was, the angrier he was, the stronger he'd become.

He wasn't a fan of this power. It didn't match him at all.

Still, there was a reason he made it to Supreme Godhood with it as his foundation.

Even if he hated it, he was a genius at making it work.

The anger he felt towards himself and his circumstances for allowing his enemies to reach him, the anger he felt towards Serena and Void Palace for the events that had taken place in the past, the anticipation for a victory that would cleanse the shame he felt...

It all stacked up, enhancing Famas' power by manifold.

Serena watched it happen.

She remembered the past, the pain they'd experienced at the Grand Duke's hand before. When his emotions reached a peak, he became a true monster that still gave her nightmares to this day.

However, that nightmare was just a memory of the past.

Standing in front of him now, watching his power grow by the second...

...she didn't feel the same terror.

No, her thoughts were completely different.

'This is...surprisingly doable.'

She believed that she could win.

And she would make that happen as soon as she possibly could.

Because if a Grand Duke was sent for her, she couldn't even imagine what Claire was facing.

After all, when it came to monsters...

...was there really anyone as terrifying as Claire Ellowyn?

Chapter 1570 Danger [9]

Damien didn't know.

No matter what he learned, there was no way for him to understand his mother's strength.

After all, the records of the things she'd done back then had been erased from the world entirely. Even those who knew were forbidden to speak a word about it to others, lest their souls be taken by Samsara.

Claire made a sacrifice all the way back then. She sealed her power in return for silence, vowing to never bring it out again unless absolutely necessary.

And now that Dante was no longer able to calm her, it was unknown if anyone would be able to stop her if she truly let loose her power.

Nevertheless, because Damien didn't know, seeing his mother get injured was something he simply couldn't stand.

His body twitched.

He was absolutely prepared to do something stupider than anything he'd done in his life before by challenging the group of Gods around him.

After all, his mother's situation was getting worse.

As if Malefice wasn't enough, another person appeared in the vicinity, another enemy.

He was the person who set up the video feed that sent information back to the hidden Principality. Now that it had been modified to work without being directly controlled, he was also joining the battle.

Damien knew who he was through devoured existences. Claire knew who he was through experience.

His name was Erwin Ellowyn. Right, Ellowyn.

He was, by bloodline at least, Claire's great-uncle.

However, that connection had been destroyed a long time ago. Back then, before the Ellowyn Clan that Claire formed was ever a thing and they were just a large family in the Southern Region with a decent amount of influence, he, along with her grandfather, were the ones who led it.

They practiced Creation even at that time, but they kept their laws unknown to the public so they didn't cause too much havoc with their existence.

This was the tradition their family had upheld for generations. It wasn't just for others, but for themselves as well.

Hidden in the shadows, they were able to live peacefully and properly foster their gifts of creation.

Plus, they hid a secret only known to the Clan Patriarch that made it absolutely necessary for their existence to remain a secret.

There was never a problem. At least, before Erwin Ellowyn.

He had a different belief. He thought the clan's techniques needed to be broadcasted. Thinking about the status and benefits they could gain, he was overcome by greed.

As he clashed heads with the patriarch, he was slowly isolated from the power structure of the clan, practically abandoned.

That was when he lost all reasoning.

After a fierce fight, he killed the patriarch and ran off. His power corrupted, turning from Creation to Destruction, and with the battle wreaking havoc on so much of the surrounding landscape, it became impossible for the Ellowyn Clan to keep itself hidden.

The mere existence of a clan of Creation users was a goldmine to many. They were hunted, sold off, and used for a variety of means.

The majority of them were eventually executed, and the very few members that still remained were saved by Claire later on and brought to the palace to be incorporated into the new Ellowyn Clan.

If it wasn't for Dante, even that much wouldn't have been possible.

The almost complete extermination of the original Ellowyn Clan was entirely the doing of the man standing in front of Claire now.

And he was no longer someone corrupted by power. Over the years, he'd managed to control it and reach the Supreme God level through Destruction.

But he still didn't know.

He killed Claire's grandfather before he could ever know, and Claire's father died protecting her back while she escaped, leaving only her aware of the secrets hidden within her body.

The second he appeared, it was like a switch flipped inside Claire's mind. The enemy she'd never been able to find, the man who managed to disappear from space and time entirely...

He was now standing in front of her without any protection but his own power.

The monster she tried so hard to suppress...if it wasn't for him, it wouldn't have ever had the chance to escape in the first place.

And now that he'd become a trigger for its appearance...

All thoughts of peace she held were thrown out the window.

"Dragon. Tiger. Monkey."

She summoned all three at once.

And all three answered her command.

A massive golden dragon with an aura of absolute majesty, a white tiger just as massive surrounded by a ferocious blue light, and a humanoid monkey with a crown around his forehead, holding a staff made of gold.

Each represented a seal.

"Dragon, take that guy."

"Yes, Milady."

The dragon glowed golden and morphed into a humanoid form. It still had its horns and tail, along with scales covering its extremities and neck, but it mostly looked like a human man.



"Tiger, Monkey, take the other one."

The tiger transformed as well. It was a woman with beautiful white hair and piercing blue eyes. She looked the exact opposite of the dragon, perhaps because the two of them represented completely opposite concepts.

With their forms adjusted for combat effectiveness, the three of them shot forward towards their assigned targets.

The battle was about to become entirely different.

However, Claire didn't stay to witness it.

The instant her enemies were occupied by her summons, she rushed away from the battlefield as fast as possible.

She could feel it boiling up inside of her, a malevolent darkness unlike anything else that existed in this world.

Claire had...a special body. In a sense, she herself could be considered a type of portal.

She was born with a mysterious connection to another world. That world was completely outside the Heavenly World and had no connection to either the True Void Universe or the Sacred Abyss Universe.

It was completely inhabited by beasts, all of whom were far superior to all those except this plane's Godbeasts. Through them, Claire was able to gain the inspiration to create the twelve summons she relied on most.

However, the connection didn't just give her access to them. It gave them access to her.

The ruler of those beasts, a shadowy behemoth whose only features Claire had seen were its crimson-red eyes, had taken a special interest in her.

It used her connection to invade her mind, corrupting her with her darkness.

It wanted control over her body. It wanted to use her to create a portal that connected it to this world.

But if it was only this much, then Dante would have been able to cure her with his own power.

The real problem was that world itself.

Its existence had been slowly transferred into Claire's. The two overlapped until Claire essentially became a vessel of that world.

And though that granted her access to talent far beyond even the most talented geniuses...

...being influenced by an unknown world didn't come without its negatives.

Claire's body became the vessel for a monster, a rogue World Core who'd suddenly gained a chance to live as a human.

And that World Core was not a gentle existence.

The dragon sealed her bloodlust.

The tiger sealed her power.

And the monkey sealed her madness.

These three seals had now been released. Those things she'd kept locked away now flooded her mind again.

And the Claire Ellowyn that Damien and others had come to know well...

...vanished entirely, replaced by a being of chaos.