

Void 1571

Chapter 1571 Monster [1]

Claire fled the battlefield because she wanted to try and control her transformation.

It was an impossible endeavor, but that didn't mean she didn't want to try.

Claire's beautiful amethyst-purple eyes morphed, becoming somewhat draconic. Her pupils became slits, and her body snapped into place, its anatomical structure changing.

The skin of a human that she wore didn't change much. Other than her eyes, there weren't many external changes.

Her internal body, on the other hand, was no longer human in the slightest.

However, the most noticeable change was in her aura.

Claire was like her grandfather and father. She'd been instilled with values of peace since she was young, and though the world corrupted those values, she tried to gain them back when she matured.

Her aura was gentle, welcoming, and heartwarming. She was like a hearth that made anyone feel like they were at home, like they could relax and be at peace.

This aura caused people to trust her automatically. When Dante disappeared, she was able to take the reigns of the palace precisely because of this aura and this demeanor of hers.

It was all gone now.

Replaced by those reptilian eyes, Claire's aura had turned a bloody red and black color resembling destruction.

Her mind clouded over. She fought the battle for control valiantly, but she didn't have the qualifications to defeat the demon within her. Not even as a Supreme God.

After all, the entities who used her as a vessel, the dark creature and the corrupted World Core, were both Unrecorded in another cosmos.

They were not beings she could resist.

Click!

It wasn't a real sound, but a representation. Claire's rationality was effectively lost.

Her fight didn't last more than a second. Her fierce struggle didn't get her anywhere. Her body was no longer hers.

She stood up straight, but if one looked closely one could see a strange hunch in her back posture.

She looked unnatural, like a parasite pretending to be a human.

And though she had been taken over, she did not do anything in particular.

There was no life nearby.

Claire specifically got hundreds of kilometers away from both Malefice Straea and Erwin Ellowyn. She made sure that nobody else was near her before she turned.

Why?

Because the beings possessing her body didn't have complete sentience.

Perhaps their true forms were extremely sentient and smart. If not, they wouldn't have been able to abuse a connection to another cosmos at all.

However, if they wanted to take over Claire's body, they still couldn't use it as their own.

That was Dante's contribution. He was never able to truly destroy those beings, but he could at least protect Claire's mind from being shattered when they were released.

As such, the current Claire was a beast of instinct.

If anything or anyone appeared in her vicinity, she would make sure it died.

But until then, she would remain in stasis, searching for a place where chaos could be let loose.

It wasn't a perfect plan. It wasn't even a good one. But in the short span of time she had, it was the best she could do.

To risk herself and herself only, to make sure nobody else would get hurt as she let her power free for the first time in a long time.

For now, at least, Claire was succeeding.

It was quiet around Claire. Perhaps if someone entered her vicinity, the true nature of her current form could be revealed, but with the current situation, she was essentially out of commission.

Her summons, on the other hand, were putting in the work expected from them.

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

The dragon swept its tail through the air in a way similar to the snake, but its speed and power far surpassed its fellow.

The tail slammed into Malefice, giving him no opportunities to dodge.

"ARGH!"

The Straea God let out a loud groan of pain as his body was sent flying back.

The dragon opened its mouth, charging a ball of energy that was rapidly shot at the flailing man.

XIU!

The ball cut through the air, its energy elongating into a beam of sorts.

Malefice put up his defenses and tried to correct his body position, but he wasn't able to do so in time.

BOOOOOOOM!

Another massive attack struck him square in the chest. More blood was coughed out of his mouth, and if one could see the state of his internals, it became very obvious that he was not in a good state anymore.

BANG!

His body slammed into the ground, creating a huge crater.

As he pulled himself out of it, the dragon had already approached.

It didn't give him a single second of time.

"DAMMIT!"

His arm flew into the air wildly without any grace. His fingers curled in as if he was grabbing something, and he pulled his arm in ferociously.

It was a move he was saving for a final fatal attack against Claire, but that wasn't going to happen anymore.

What was the point of saving it if he was going to die before he could use it?

If one looked back at Malefice's fight with Claire, one would realize that he didn't actually try to attack her many times.

Even when he did, he was mainly doing so to distract her from what was going on in other places.

All of Malefice's nonfatal attacks, the very attacks that turned Claire's summons into statues that floated in the air...

Those attacks weren't as simple as they seemed.

WHOOOOOOOSH!

A huge roar of winds slammed against the ground as an even greater force was propelled towards it.

Malefice took control over the nearest darkness and threw it at the dragon wantonly.

And the darkness responded.

Suddenly, a statuesque serpent, roughly five hundred kilometers long, descended rapidly, catching fire as it rubbed against the atmosphere.

The man-made comet made it to the dragon as the dragon targeted Malefice, catching it by surprise.

And though it managed to avoid the physical impact...

That was only the start of it.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Malefice's darkness had completely overtaken the serpent. It was already dead, turned into a bomb that Malefice could use whenever he needed it.

It was unfortunate that it didn't meet its destined enemy, but it was used properly nevertheless.

Darkness exploded forth, creating a massive egg around the dragon. The egg of darkness squished and moved like a school of fish swimming through the air, compressing itself as it tried to swallow the dragon as well.

Black splotches appeared all over its golden scales, connecting to each other and forming a web that couldn't be escaped by normal means.

In most cases, nothing could escape this net.

No being had the power to remove Malefice's control. As long as his darkness covered enough of their bodies, it was impossible for them to resist enslavement.

However, as a bright golden Godly aura covered the dragon, and as a bloodlust beyond any other was released into the world, Malefice was forced to accept that his usual means wouldn't work this time.

The cards Claire had been hiding...

It was best to say that after fighting the dragon for a few minutes and seeing out of his peripheral as Erwin tried to fight the other two, Malefice completely understood why Claire was regarded as an expert leagues better than him.

He understood why his brother decided to retreat to the Sacred Abyss Universe and participate in the war against the Heavenly World as a true member of the Foreign Races.

Because unless he had power that far surpassed what his base human form could achieve...

...how was he meant to win against monsters like these?

Chapter 1572 Monster [2]

BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The battle that was once mentioned for not having many explosions had now joined the rest of the pack.

As Grand Duke Famas' power reached its potential, his every movement started to cause problems.

If he was in the Heavenly World instead of the Heavenly God Plane, the folds of reality would've been straining themselves to even hope to contain his presence.

The Grand Duke, a man whose power was completely opposite to his personality, was a close combat fighter.

He used his fists more than he used weapons or ranged attacks, which, in most cases, was fine.

After all, as long as he could reach his enemy, he could kill them with just a few punches. He didn't need more than a single moment of opportunity to end everything.

This battle had already been underway for several minutes at this point. The power of the Grand Duke's fists was imprinted into the world.

However, facing Serena, his disadvantage rapidly showed itself.

He hadn't even been able to hit her once yet.

The Grand Duke was a powerful man. It was a bit of a shame that he was being underrepresented like this, but what could he do?

He couldn't even get close to her.

Xiu! Xiu! Xiu! Xiu!

Four needles filled with the law of time whizzed past his body, while one managed to puncture his shoulder and push through.

His skin immediately withered away, making his left arm unusable.

Luckily, he managed to avoid soul injury, so without minding the loss of his arm, he continued to push forward.

BANG!

He threw a punch with his right. Space and time collapsed under the pressure of his fist, and a gap formed in Serena's permanent defense.

Without wasting a second, he pushed forward through it and prepared himself to attack again.

'Good.'

Serena wasn't surprised.

She'd led him into this trap.

The longer she and Famas fought, the more she realized her advantages.

He didn't know what she could do.

It was a bit insulting, but when they'd fought in the past, she was nowhere near the level necessary for him to take note of her presence.

While she had a vendetta against him, he was only focused on Dante.

The only reason the Grand Duke knew who she was was because she was married to Dante. As for her power, her intelligence, her fighting style, her anything, really...

The Grand Duke was simply unaware.

All he knew was that he had to be wary of her because she had reached his level.

Since she used Time Laws, Famas assumed that he knew the extent of her power. Everyone who used time as their main law fought the same.

But, just like everything else he "thought" he knew, that was simply incorrect.

It was perfect for her. The Grand Duke could be a terrifying enemy, especially in an environment where his power could be used at its full potential.

However, she had the opportunity to rid him of that environment and lull him into a false sense of security.

She could win this battle without even allowing him to show the world why he was a Grand Duke.

And the instant she understood the possibility, she immediately went to work to turn it into a reality.

The Grand Duke may have shattered spacetime, but he had not shattered Serena's barrier. She consciously removed it so he could be kept under that illusion.

And as he approached to attack again, she watched him carefully, slowly closing her barrier around him as he reached the point of no return.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

The Grand Duke slammed his fist out again, once again causing intense damage to the laws that upheld the Heavenly God Plane.

And the moment his force was mere centimeters away from her, Serena made her move.

Time laws were more unique compared to their peers. Regardless of their level, it seemed like the method to directly use them to attack never changed.

After all, while time was incomprehensible to many proper and out of reach to even more, it was relatively simple in the way it actually worked.

It flowed calmly, providing a backbone for everything.

Sure, blasts of time could be shot out as Serena had been doing thus far, but if she wanted to deal a truly lethal blow, could she do the same?

No.

Naturally, she had to put some more effort into it.

The attack she had in mind was already prepared by the time the Grand Duke reached her. Since the time to release it had come...

VOOOOOOOOOM!

Grand Duke Famas' fingers snapped backward as they were forced to freeze in place. Their excess momentum compounded into Famas' wrist and shattered it into pieces.

The atmosphere changed subtly. Well, it was only subtle for a moment.

And then everything went dark.

Space still existed. Movement was still possible.

But time was no longer a factor.

In the surrounding hundred thousand kilometer area, the concept of time itself had been completely removed, swallowed by Serena.

What did that mean for others?

It meant that no change could ever be real. Without time flowing to cement and define change, it couldn't occur.

Grand Duke Famas gathered himself and tried to attack again.

His fist did the same as always. Its impact still shattered the world as it did before.

However, even after he succeeded in striking Serena, she stood there as if nothing was wrong.

Her body was impacted by the force, and for a second, it looked like her chest was going to cave in.

But it never happened. "Reality" didn't respond in a "real" way.

The "change" the Grand Duke had wrought upon the world was reverted.

'This...'

The Grand Duke's eyes narrowed.

He retreated backward several hundred meters, only to see himself rubber-banded back to his original position.

He tried to exert as much of his power as possible to break the suppression. It simply wasn't possible, because this effect did not come from something being forced onto him, but from something being taken away.

There wasn't a way to use his power to overcome this situation. Not unless he could somehow create his own flow of time to counteract Serena's abyss.

Grand Duke Famas was an intimidating guy. He really was.

If one heard the stories of what he was doing back in the day when Dante and the rest were still growing, one might even relate him to the Saint Emperor in some ways.

Of course, he didn't have the latter's heroism or purpose, but in terms of strength, the two were equally terrifying to those below them.

That was why it was a shame. No matter what he wanted to do, Serena wasn't going to allow him to showcase even a speck of his power.

She removed his everything with a single move.

The only reason she let him get so close at all...

"...was so I could do this."

She placed her hand on the man's forehead. He naturally tried to move, but he sprung back into place as if he was begging her to do whatever she wanted.

A scar that had long healed but one that she'd never forget...

A scar that Grand Duke Famas gave her in the past...it was time for her to return it to him in kind

Chapter 1573 Monster [3]

Time. It was a law that many idealized, but not one many had the opportunity of coming into contact with.

Damien had a chance to take this law to the peak, and for a time, he was extremely interested in its function. However, as his power grew and became broader, he became somewhat trapped within the existing conventions of the law.

Serena was different.

Or rather, Serena was normal in that aspect.

For most people in this world, there was only one element. One law that they'd spend their entire lives trying to comprehend.

They'd dig as deep as possible, and when they realized that there was nothing left to dig, they'd use the dirt they'd collected to create something entirely new out of the law's existing form.

It was the beauty of training. An endless process that not only improved oneself, but contributed greatly to the world and allowed one to leave a mark that could never be erased.

Then, how could time be taken beyond its existing limits?

Time was an extremely rigid law. Its effects could impact anything and everything, but the actual effects that it could have were limited to just a few options.

When Serena first tried to overcome the law, she found that her best course was to study the "absence" of time.

The result had already been made clear. She learned how to contain the Time Laws within an area inside her body, effectively erasing them from the world.

However, that was only one step. That was a power Serena was able to begin developing as a Demigod and complete perfectly around the time she ascended to True Godhood.

She was a Supreme God now.

The entire length of her Godhood had been spent studying other things.

As for what those were...?

Firstly, of course, her ability to touch the soul. She could regress someone's power, regress their soul to a state when they were a mortal, and age their soul to the point where it could no longer hold itself together properly.

This was a power that made her better than the majority of the world. She had a superiority that they couldn't stand against.

However, there were still those people who were stronger than her, and those who she needed to use more power against.

For those people, she developed something special.

It was a power she called the "manifestation of the unseen."

And as she grabbed Grand Duke Famas by his head, manhandling him as if he was worth nothing, this was the exact power she used.

The world split into six, then twelve, then a hundred and forty-four. Countless iterations of the world were formed and laid next to each other in a neat blanket that only Serena and the Grand Duke could see.

Manifestation of the unseen. It was more about those things that "weren't experienced" rather than things that couldn't be seen.

Every iteration of reality that presented itself in that moment was different.

In some, Famas completely overpowered Serena and killed her. In others, their confrontation didn't exist at all.

Every parallel timeline, every "what if" that existed in the world was manifested by Serena's power, and she looked through them like a window shopper considering a purchase.

There was a nuance to this power. A certain finesse was necessary to properly utilize it.

Serena spent tens of thousands of years mastering that finesse even after her power was solidified, and as someone who possessed such skill...

She could immediately pick out the "unseen" that she wanted to manifest into reality.

Her hand reached forward. The Grand Duke watched as she plucked a string of parallel reality out of the blanket and held it up to his eyes.

"See this?" She said, making sure he comprehended her words.

He was stuck. Even if he wanted to move, he couldn't.

He was forced to watch as she humiliated him.

"I hope you've taken a good enough look. After all, this..."

She pushed the string against his forehead, and it disappeared into his body.

"...is going to be you from now on."

The Grand Duke's eyes rolled back into his head.

Flashes of memory that he didn't recognize began to imprint themselves into his soul, overriding what currently existed.

In those memories, Famas had never been a Foreign Noble. His soul, which had been created in the Sacred Abyss Universe, was incarnated into a regular commoner of that plane.

That version of him lived his entire life alone, and while he always looked at practitioners and dreamed of becoming one, of having power, he never had the chance to achieve that dream.

He was just a regular person.

And unlike the True Void Universe, there was no such thing as equal opportunity in the Sacred Abyss.

Only those chosen by the Dark God were allowed strong power. As for those who reached it without him...

The Gehenna Tribe's tragic fate was enough to explain what would happen, right?

A completely new Famas, one who could not attach the title of Grand Duke to his name, was born into this place.

"That which remained unseen," the essence of a parallel reality, imprinted itself on existence and overrode everything else.

Famas' entire Legend was changed in that moment.

His mind still remembered the memories he held before the transition. Of course Serena would force him to remember it. This was meant to be painful, after all.

But it didn't matter if he remembered.

Because his soul was now a commoner's, and he could not regain the power he held in the past.

Famas' body aged severely within a few seconds. He was around eighty in appearance now, and his vitality reflected that well.

He and Serena were already outside of the Heavenly God Plane. Just moments ago, he'd lost all qualifications to enter it.

The duo floated to the ground under Serena's control.

Famas' feet touched, and he instantly fell to his knees.

'My body...'

Two sets of memories clashed in his head, bringing him endless pain.

His body was ruined by age. It did not work nearly the same as it used to. Hell, in his current state, even walking was a problem.

His joints were bad.

It was such a mortal problem that it was incomprehensible to him.

But this was his reality now.

"You have 2 years of lifespan remaining. I've made sure of it," Serena said to the unresponsive man.

"Use those two years in any way you desire. I don't care what you do with the rest of your life."

Serena flew into the air.

She had to leave Famas' vicinity because her mere presence was enough to suffocate the current him.

But if she wasn't conscious of it herself, she never would've realized. Famas was still on the ground, unmoving like a statue as he tried to come to terms with his current situation.

Serena knew. To someone like Famas who'd been born into power and chasing power his whole life, for someone who valued power more than anything else, this was the absolute worst possible punishment.

And that was the exact reason she created a power like this.

To those who were stronger than her, nothing mattered more than power.

So not only would she strip them of their power, she would leave them to live and experience powerlessness for themselves as people even they didn't remember themselves being.

Without identity, without strength, what was fama?

What was anyone?

"I truly hope you take this time to think about it. Maybe when you realize that everything is the result of your own actions, I'll be able to see something fun."

They were not words of condolence or advice, but pure vocalized spite.

'That's enough.'

Serena was getting bored of talking to someone who didn't show any response.

And she didn't want to think about the past anymore.

'I need to find Claire.'

This battle was over, but the one that was taking place over there...

Chapter 1574 Monster [4]

Serena found a more secluded location nearby before re-entering the Heavenly God Plane to find Claire and Malefice.

She absolutely could've gone straight there in the real world, but she would be able to travel far faster in that plane.

Plus, she wasn't that far away.

The Heavenly God Plane was much less expansive than the Heavenly World since it usually only showed enough space to contain all the battles taking place within.

There were a lot of Gods fighting right now, including Hugo, Persia, and the 16 Swords, but they were all roughly around the same place.

Malefice and his main subordinates had all moved together, after all.

Nevertheless, it wasn't hard for Serena to find the location. Claire's summons weren't exactly quiet.

And when she arrived, the first feeling that set in was confusion.

'This is...?'

It wasn't what she was expecting at all.

When she finally recognized the three summons in front of her, her expression changed.

That was when the second feeling set in.

Concern.

Dante, Serena, Hugo, and Persia all knew about Claire's peculiarity. It wasn't just the one time during their youth that she went berserk.

They'd experienced it personally, and they'd been there when Dante finally figured out how to seal the demons.

However, if the manifestations of those seals were here, then where was Claire...?

BOOOOOM!

The dragon summoned a huge ball of flaming light, which struck Malefice straight in the chest and threw him into the ground.

He slammed into the earth, and his body was embedded several inches inside of it. It didn't look like he would be getting up again.

As for Erwin Ellowyn...

The treatment he was getting was horrible.

Serena recognized him too, since Claire had shown them all pictures of the people from her past, so she didn't jump in to help or anything.

Merely...

The monkey and the tiger acting together was a bit overkill regardless of who their enemy was.

Erwin Ellowyn's power had been locked by the monkey's sealing power, and together, the two summons were torturing him slowly.

They cut him up slowly. Every time they attacked, they'd slice an inch-thick segment of his body and then wait. Only after he felt the pain of the cut would they administer another.

Erwin had come here because he'd followed the money. Straea had offered him many benefits for going against his grand-niece, and he happily agreed.

Claire was the last remaining vestige of his shameful past. If she could die, then it was better for him. He could finally get rid of that memory and clear his current bottleneck.

Was he expecting this situation at all?

Of course not.

He was being violated, humiliated.

It looked like he was a mortal being toyed with by Gods. Considering that he was also a Supreme God, the strength of his enemies could only be unfathomable.

Erwin was going to die soon. There was nothing he could do to stop it. Eventually, his head would be presented to Claire on a stake.

But...Claire, where was she?

'She's still in danger.'

Since her seals were released, her enemies obviously wouldn't be able to do anything to her. The danger in this situation was Claire herself.

She was not only a danger to others. If she couldn't be brought back under control in time, her own body would be slowly corrupted and destroyed by that power.

'I have to find her.'

Serena spread her awareness and immediately rushed in the direction where she found Claire's aura.

It took her a minute to find her, but it wasn't that hard. Claire hadn't moved since the start of her transformation.

Every bit of will inside her was used to make sure she wouldn't encounter others.

But that...

That didn't matter if others encountered her.

"Claire...!"

Serena yelled out, announcing her presence. She was aware that she was putting herself in danger, but she had to check and see how far Claire had gone.

If there was no response at all, then she was too far gone. Only Dante would be able to fix her.

If her bloodlust concentrated on the newly discovered target...

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

'...then she'll attack wantonly until she's completely worn out.'

Serena used her power to contain the explosion as much as possible, dodging everything she couldn't disperse.

'There's good news and bad news.'

Claire had locked on to her.

This meant that Serena was in danger, sure, but it also meant that Claire could still be saved. As long as her power was properly exhausted, she would have the chance to wrestle control back from the beings who currently had her body.

However, to exhaust Claire's power...

'I'll try my best. If only...'

If only Dante were here, right?

That seemed to be the common thought among people who'd fought by his side.

It was a little funny how much he and his son had in common. It was almost as if they were the same person, just born in two different generations.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Claire's fighting style had changed completely, but the foundation was still creation.

Now, Claire was using a power more similar to Iris, where she controlled the nonliving side of Creation.

Serena had to move a lot more than she did when she was dealing with Famas. She zipped through the atmosphere, expertly controlling her barrier to disperse the majority of Claire's rampant mana.

This fight was not one where her goal was to kill the enemy. That was a huge problem for Serena, whose whole power existed to decimate her foes.

'Contain, not kill.'

It was a lesson she'd had to learn in the past as well.

But as long as she used her power properly, it was still more than possible.

'But until that becomes possible...'

She glanced at Claire, who was staring back at her with those reptilian eyes.

'...I'll have to fight.'

It had been a very long time since she and Claire last fought. And at that time, they'd vowed to never fight again after establishing a solid relationship as sister-wives.

BOOOOOOOOOOOM!!

Another massive explosion rang out, covering both Claire and Serena and hiding them from view.

That was the last thing Damien saw.

The projection that Erwin Ellowyn set up to follow Claire was cut off.

Whether it was by the force of the explosion, because Erwin himself died, or because Claire and Serena moved too far out of range, Damien didn't know.

The clone of Grand Duke Famas disappeared as the man himself was turned into a regular human.

It was unexpected, even though Famas' fight with Serena was also being broadcast to this place.

Three Grand Dukes and fifteen Dukes.

While this number was still quite impossible for Damien to approach...

He didn't have much of a choice anymore.

The situation had changed. It wasn't his mother against her enemies anymore. He couldn't just trust her to come out on top.

The ones fighting were his mother and his aunt.

And from the looks of it, something was horribly wrong.

'I need to get there.'

He couldn't stay trapped and stuck in the background anymore.

It was time for him to enter the fight as well.

Chapter 1575 Escape [1]

Damien hadn't done anything until now. It was only natural for him to fade into the background.

It wasn't like Damien was afraid of the consequences. Despite being surrounded by a force it was impossible for him to beat, he was never afraid of confronting them.

However, he still held his anger back. Even as he saw his mother get injured and lose herself, he held his anger back.

Because he couldn't say for certain whether the others would be safe or not if he decided to directly attack the people around him.

They had him in a precarious situation where they controlled everything.

At least, that was how it started.

The current situation in the field was completely outside of their expectations

None of them showed it, but the instant Grand Duke Famas became just Famas, they'd put their guards up.

There usually weren't so many people this powerful.

In other cosmos, a Grand Duke was an inviolable force. Even if several of their peak Gods appeared at once, they wouldn't be able to stand up to a single Foreign Grand Duke.

The True Void Universe was a completely different ball game.

Serena was already so powerful, but Claire had suddenly achieved a level that even surpassed the Grand Dukes. She was just a step below Unrecorded, at least, by the perception of those who watched her.

For the last scene to appear on the projection to be Claire and Serena fighting while everyone sent by them was dead or dying...

Naturally, the Foreign Nobles felt a certain way about it.

However, they had Damien locked away, and that was their main priority.

The plans Grand Duke Famas made were all thrown out the window.

He'd been given the lead of this entire operation, but look what happened.

He was consumed by his own emotions and died while chasing a dream that was never possible. It could be considered a side effect of his power, but the usually calm Grand Duke was always on the edge of breaking.

That edge just couldn't hold him anymore, and when he saw perfection approaching, he became hasty and lost it all.

The chain of command specified that if Famas went off the rails, Grand Duke Maveth would take control.

And while he had been silently allowing his comrade to do as he pleased, he was never a fan of the way they were doing things.

Maveth respected the hierarchy established among them. Not because he respected the others at his level, but because it was what the Dark God ordained.

But Famas was gone.

And Maveth had been making preparations for this moment for a very long time.

"Move."

Maveth said only one word, but all of the Foreign Nobles understood what he meant.

There was no need to wait and give Damien more time to think.

There was no need to obsess over those from Void Palace. They'd die when their time came.

Right now, they only had one goal.

To eliminate the anomaly in front of them.

Before Damien could act on his thoughts, the nobles around him attacked.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

A huge explosion rang out, causing ripples in the Existence barrier.

Damien had already teleported away.

'I guess there's no need to think more.'

Since it had come to this, then it had come to this.

Damien's thoughts completely cleared out. His entire mind was focused on the current goal, escaping.

Grand Duke Klaus appeared behind him before he knew what was happening, sending a fist into his back.

Damien barely felt it when it was only a few millimeters away. He didn't have time to block or dodge, however...

BOOOOOOOOOM!

The explosive force of the punch shot through the location where Damien was as if he wasn't there.

His body had turned ethereal at the final moment. He just barely managed to keep himself unharmed.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

The Dukes, Counts, and Viscounts knew they couldn't play a major role in this battle, but that didn't mean they were useless.

Without even caring where Damien actually was, they peppered the sky and ground with attacks to limit the amount of space he had to move around.

'Is that everything?'

Of course it wasn't.

Even more useless numbers were added to the equation, just in case their presence inhibited Damien even a little bit.

The Foreign Vanguard was also present within the hidden principality. The five types of manufactured beasts used by the Foreign Races to invade the world, hundreds of thousands of them swarmed the ground below, creating a dark blanket across the entire hidden principality.

Originally, they'd been brought here for a simple reason. Their presence caused the corruption to spread faster, which worked towards the main goal of the Dark God, conquest.

Now, they'd been repurposed. Not that Damien cared either way.

'There are only three I have to pay attention to.'

The others needed to be kept in mind, but not actively watched.

'And the main goal isn't to win the battle.'

The main goal was to escape and find a way to his mother so he could mediate her current circumstances.

'I don't know what's happening to her, but if Aunt had to fight, then it can't be good. If she's been possessed or something similar, then the concept of order is the perfect solution.'

If his mother had some sort of long-term problem that he didn't know about, then this was his opportunity to help her permanently fix it.

'Okay.'

Damien rapidly turned to the side, narrowly avoiding another projectile.

His own energy blazed outward, pushing away the malakh around him.

It was not mana, nor was it malakh.

It was a mixture of both, a combination of the two forms of energy used by the conjoined cosmos.

Damien flicked his hand up. The malakh around him halted and turned around, targeting the people who originally brought it into the world.

BOOOOOOOM!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

A Viscount died just there, forcing the rest to pull back and focus on hiding while then attacked.

The Dukes pushed forward to protect them, but even they were just at the same level as Damien. He wasn't going to let them outdo him.

His attacks were accurate and formless. He didn't focus on form, instead focusing everything on what went into the attacks.

As such, form-wise, all he released were waves of energy.

However, each wave was equipped with something magical, a mixture of laws unlike what anyone else could create.

Damien whizzed around, and for a second, it looked like he'd be able to turn this situation into something advantageous.

Against the Dukes, Counts, and Viscounts, at least, he could hold his own without a problem.

But even if it was Damien, there were limits.

He wasn't yet at a level where he could avoid them.

With three Grand Dukes, three Supreme Gods trying to kill him...

It would've been strange if Damien could make it out without some suffering.

Grand Duke Maveth stood on the ground, watching as the battle raged on.

And he snapped his finger while Damien was occupied.

He didn't sense the attack, nor did he feel it until it had already happened.

Blood spurted into the air.

This was the start of Damien's torturous attempt to escape.

Chapter 1576 Escape [2]

Searing pain attacked him first.

Grand Duke Maveth was a unique case where two abilities manifested in one person. On top of his regular abilities, which he had yet to reveal, he had the power to heighten the pain sensitivity of his victims.

Every time his attacks struck, the victim's pain would be squared.

With a single attack, Damien was caught in the cycle, already feeling pain at twice the normal rate.

Which was why he could feel it at all.

His arm had been taken off with that attack. It was already regrowing, and with Damien's tolerance, losing an arm for a moment didn't mean much at all.

However, he felt the sear as his nerves tried to send signals to an arm that wasn't there. He even felt the phantom pain after his arm healed.

'Dangerous.'

Damien made a mental note to watch for Maveth's attacks. If the pain amplification got too high, his perception would be limited by the nervous responses being shot through his body.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Damien continued his defensive strategy. He took control of the malakh around him, sent attacks back to those who attacked him, and used his own mana to create chaos in his vicinity so others couldn't easily approach him.

The entire time, Damien remained connected to his Existence, connected to reality, feeling the Existence barrier around him.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

"Khhhh...!"

Damien gritted his teeth.

'I can't lose focus.'

He had to split his attention between the battlefield and the barrier.

With the Sanctuary locked away and separated from him, he couldn't summon Alexander or Damian to aid him. He was on his own, forced to take the entire burden with his singular main body.

Damien spun around, accurately gauging his situation.

'The main attackers are Klaus and Maveth.'

Grand Duke Lance had disappeared into the shadows. He was likely waiting for the perfect moment to land a fatal blow.

'Maveth has pain amplification and...'

BOOOOOOOOOM!

'...force control.'

The power was similar to Damien's in that it manifested as a formless wave.

It was hard to sense and even harder to see, but when it struck, it could hit one with the force of a million suns.

Unlike Damien's power, Maveth's waves were consistent. The power contained within was always the same, and only the amount of force changed.

However, it was a powerful ability that also contained some aspects of spatial control.

Maveth could summon force from anywhere. He didn't just have to shoot it out of his body.

For instance, the attacks aimed at Damien right now...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

...were spawning directly on him, giving him no more than a flash of a second to dodge.

Unfortunately, that amount of time wasn't enough when there were tens of force explosions taking place just inches away from each other all around Damien.

BANG!

He finally got struck. The pain he felt was amplified to four times the normal amount, and the attack wasn't as simple as a severed arm.

Damien's chest caved in. His heart was pierced by a loose rib. Gritting his teeth, he held his scream and willed the Authority of Immortality to heal him quickly.

WHOOSH!

That was when Klaus appeared behind him again.

A massive swirl of malakh covered the two of them, and as Damien was thrown into a world of darkness, a single speck of light illuminated his vision.

'Dodge. I have to—'

VOOOOOOOM!

Klaus grabbed Damien in a bear hug and squeezed as tight as he could.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Damien immediately threw several needles of mana out of his back, but Klaus didn't let go.

The dot of light became brighter and bigger as it approached closer. Soon enough, the form of a spear flying faster than the speed of light became clear to Damien's eyes.

And it was aimed straight for his heart.

'Damn.'

Damien summoned spatial mana and attempted to teleport.

His body began to fade into the spatial layers, but exactly at that moment...

CRASH!

The spatial layers themselves shattered, leaving Damien stuck in the open.

'Force control!'

Maveth's power wasn't just useful in attacking other people. Its effects on the atmosphere could be just as devastating.

With Klaus holding him in place and Maveth blocking his escape, the massive spear that Lance threw was able to strike him without an inch of inaccuracy.

SHIK!

The spear stabbed through his chest.

Klaus immediately backed off.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

An explosion of dark light swallowed Damien whole.

His skin burned off and his flesh was seared. His bones began to melt, and as if that wasn't bad enough, Maveth saw this as the perfect opportunity.

BANG!

Another wave of force struck Damien.

BANG!

Then another.

BANG!

Then another again.

Suddenly, his pain had been amplified from four times the normal amount to sixty-five thousand times what any human should've ever been forced to feel.

Damien couldn't hold it back anymore.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

He screamed in agony. He couldn't even explain the absolute atrocity that was being committed on his body right now.

His mind went blank. He couldn't think about anything but the pain.

His body froze. His muscles locked up as they were bombarded with enough nervous stimulation to shatter any normal person's mental world into a million tiny pieces.

Damien held on by a string, forcing himself through the pain.

But that was not something his enemies would allow.

BOOM!

Klaus struck him from the back. He was a simpler battle type who had extreme speed and physical strength, but when his power was combined with his peers, he became a monster beyond monsters.

Lance's power was nuanced. He could "throw" anything at speeds incalculable to the human mind. As long as an object was flung by his arm, it could become a weapon stronger than any Godly artifact.

Those two were the main damage dealers.

And Maveth...he just watched from the back, constantly heightening Damien's pain and assuring that he would never find an opening to escape his torment.

Famas laid out a solid groundwork, but he was too emotional for his own good.

When someone who was cold and calculating like Maveth took charge, those preparations could be fully exploited, leading to a situation where even someone as great as Damien couldn't fight back.

Why was he so confident?

Despite knowing that it would end up like this, Damien was still more concerned with his mother and Aunt's situation than his own.

How was he able to approach the battle when he knew he'd experience so much suffering?

The answer was quite simple, actually.

He didn't consider it at all.

He didn't even think about losing, nor did he have a thought about any sort of pain he'd have to face.

Now, he was in it. He couldn't back out anymore, and the pain was already upon him.

However, he refused to fold.

With every passing second, as he felt the constant impacts tearing his body to shreds, Damien regained a tiny bit of rationality.

And with that rationality, he was able to seize control over the Existence in his possession.

All things were trivial in front of him.

All concepts were his to dominate and rule.

As long as he remembered that singular, extremely important fact...

Damien could do anything.

Even if that meant destroying a piece of Existence itself.

Chapter 1577 Escape [3]

It couldn't be overstated how little Damien understood his own power.

He'd been comprehending Existence concept by concept, and his general understanding of it was spectacular. If one asked him to showcase the concepts of Existence themselves, he could show them something wondrous. However, ironically enough, Damien, who valued freedom so much, was restricted in thought.

He simply could not foster an imagination wide enough to experience the full brevity of Existence.

Of course, Damien never stopped trying. His recent curiosity towards the different paths of life and the ways humans could change was related to his desire to expand his mentality.

His efforts were applaudable, but they just weren't enough. At least in terms of usages of his power in battle, it was impossible for Damien to understand them until he found himself in that precarious situation.

No matter how powerful he became, the fundamental rule of practitioners didn't change. Practical experience was always the most valuable.

Right now, Damien was experiencing something preposterous.

His pain had been amplified by over a million times as Maveth continued to attack him. That wasn't just the pain of a paper cut. The base force was already Godly strength. His body was in the process of being decimated.

It kept regenerating, somehow faster than Klaus and Lance could attack. Damien never truly died no matter how many times his heart and head exploded.

It was a troubling matter for his enemies, but what was it like for him?

Frankly, he couldn't even feel his body anymore.

When the pain reached a certain point, it just became numb. There was only a certain level that even Damien's evolved physique could handle.

And rather than inhibiting him, that numbness helped Damien. He, who had kept his rationality throughout it all, was suddenly given the freedom to act on that rationality. The pain wasn't shattering his thoughts anymore.

And that was when he realized it.

Wasn't pain just a concept...?

Wasn't everything around him just...

Mana, malakh, energy...

Humans, Foreign Races, living beings...

The earth, the winds, the heavens...

...wasn't it all just a bundle of forces under his control?

Wasn't reality something he could toy with as he saw fit?

It was hard for Damien to not underestimate himself.

He was incomprehensible, but he still judged himself by the standards others had set for this world.

It was normal, wasn't it?

That was exactly the problem.

Damien was not normal.

And perhaps...his failure to throw away all convention was the exact thing holding him back from his full potential. He had to realize at some point.

He was the one who would rule the world.

He was the person aiming to be Absolute.

The arrogance he thought he was suppressing was not arrogance, but confidence with obvious backing. He did not need to suppress himself and be humble, because if he really held all of that back, he would never think he had the capability to do things he actually could do easily.

A switch clicked in his mind.

All of the habits he'd drilled into himself to keep himself humble and aware of all possibilities were thrown away. Everything that could possibly limit him was forced back. He had a goal he needed to accomplish.

He had people he needed to save.

And he absolutely could not fall here.

'All of it...'

Damien's eyes flashed open.

'I want all of it gone!

VOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

A massive pulse of energy was released from his body. Everything went dead silent, as if all the sound in the surroundings had been swallowed up.

Malakh and mana, both were different forms of the same thing, and at the end of the day, both were energies that could only make up a fraction of Void Energy.

Damien's formless aura enveloped the entirety of the hidden Principality.

It had to be remembered that Existence was only half of what Damien needed. The main energy he used, the main power he chased, was not Existence alone.

Before his chaotic yet absolutely pure energy, both mana and malakh were forced to kneel.

All of the energy in the vicinity settled and dispersed.

In that moment of silence, Damien looked at Grand Dukes Maveth, Klaus, and Lance.

He looked at the Existence barrier that he once saw and believed to be greater than him.

'None of this matters!

None of it was real.

No danger could affect him.

'If I want to leave...'

Damien pushed his hand out. He allowed his mana to flow however it wanted to, uncaring of everything else around him.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The sound of explosions. It was muffled to the point where it was hardly audible.

The three Grand Dukes and their Noble lackeys continued to attack as they saw something strange happening around Damien. They weren't just going to sit back and allow him to do whatever he pleased.

However, there was a barrier around him.

A barrier of Existence.

After being trapped inside of one for so long, it would've been strange if Damien didn't learn how to recreate it for himself, right?

Whether it was force control or physical strength, malakh or mana, nothing could get through to the current Damien. The pain in his body vanished.

His arms and legs grew back, and his organs returned to their normal positions as his chest returned to its regular position.

...nobody can stop me!'

Nothing could hold him. Not even Existence itself.

VOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Another huge pulse of energy ripped through the air.

The Grand Dukes were thrown back, while the Dukes and those beneath them found their malakh incapable of functioning.

A bright white light covered Damien's body, growing and growing until it was brighter than a supernova.

Light clashed against barrier, Existence clashed against Existence. The entire hidden Principality fiercely shook as it seemed like the cave could collapse at any time.

Crack!

It was a subtle sound that only Damien heard.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

It repeated itself as a small crack turned big, expanding across a large surface.

And eventually, when the cracks added up...

CRASH!

The entire structure collapsed.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

It came out of nowhere. The second the Existence barrier disappeared, all of the force it had absorbed was spread back into the environment. The entire hidden Principality was bombarded by its weight.

The Grand Dukes were forced to go on the defensive, and together with the Dukes, they provided cover for their entire group of over a hundred.

The Vanguard, on the other hand, weren't so lucky.

Hundreds of thousands became none as rampant energy and falling rocks claimed the lives of every artificially engineered soldier.

Chaos ensued in full, not giving anyone present time to do anything but survive.

But Damien...

He was not a part of that group.

The instant the barrier was destroyed under the weight of his partially completed Void Energy, he had disappeared millions of kilometers into the distance.

Only the Foreign Nobility were left to deal with the aftermath.

No words were exchanged. However, the intents of all involved parties were transmitted clearly.

The rage, humiliation, and annoyance of the Foreign Nobility...and the clear sentiment Damien left when he escaped.bender

This time, they'd won.

However, if he ever met them again...

He would make sure to finish what they'd started.

Chapter 1578 Chaos [1]

It was a curiosity, wasn't it? How was the connection inside Claire formed? What did it mean?

Despite living with it for so long, even Claire didn't have answers. Her situation wasn't a common thing in the cosmos, or even in all of existence.

The nature of the connection remained unknown, which meant the actual implications it had were the same. The best Claire and those around her could do was seal it off and make sure it didn't cause too much damage.

But it was still anomalous.

For instance, why did Claire's power change?

Why was it that the beings controlling her had an equal and opposite understanding of Claire's laws? She used Creation regardless of her form, but the types of Creation varied so much that it was almost like two completely different people.

When both sides were combined, an ultimate weapon would be born.

Was that the main purpose?

Serena didn't know, but as someone who'd fought Claire before, she felt the clear difference between her two sides.

She was relentless. Unlike the usual Claire, she was heavy on the attack and left no space for her enemy to do anything.

Serena had to fight back. She wasn't given another choice. However, to fight back...

How could she do that without aiming for the throat?

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Serena could dodge without a problem where she needed to. Since time and space shared a lot of similarities, she could maneuver in ways that mimicked teleportation.

Her barrier was also perfect against someone with a power like Claire's, since objects had a far easier lifespan to control than energy.

No matter what Claire used, no matter how powerful or mind-bending it was conceptually, Serena didn't have a problem keeping herself safe.

But she still couldn't find a way to take Claire down.

'I might have to kill her.'

In the worst case scenario, she would have to hope that Claire had brought the pig out in preparation.

'But it...can probably only use that power one more time.'

If Claire died here, there wouldn't be a next time. Was it worth the risk, or was there a better method?

'No.'

Neither.

'I'll have to play defensive and hope she can regain control when she starts running out of Divine Energy.'

How long that would take...?

Serena didn't know. It could be months or even years, considering how massive Claire's mana capacity was.

However, there was no other choice. She had to—

All of a sudden, an aura arrived on the horizon. It didn't have an owner. Nobody approached, but that aura clearly displayed itself in the Heavenly God Plane.

'That is...'

It was familiar. Of course it was.

Though he wasn't her biological son, she still saw him as one of her own. They'd only known each other for a small time, but she was already more than familiar with his aura and character.

Damien was here.

Not in the Heavenly God Plane, but in the real world.

And somehow...

'...just when did that boy get so strong?'

...he came with an aura almost rivaling theirs.

Serena didn't know what Damien was planning to do. She knew it was dangerous around Claire right now, but she had no way to transmit that information to him unless she left Claire alone here and returned to the real plane.

'I hope he can stay safe.'

And if he was going to create another miracle outside...

'...then I have to make sure Claire stays contained until he can work out a solution.'

The last person who was able to solve Claire's problem was her husband, Dante Void.

Her son was a spitting image of him in many ways, and even more of a genius.

It wasn't too far of a stretch to believe that he might be able to find the solution that she couldn't.

To keep Claire's occupied so it couldn't cause Damien trouble...

'...that is a far easier task than bringing her sanity back.'

If it was just that much, she could do it without a problem.

Time, after all...was something she could create at will.

Damien had indeed arrived outside.

It wasn't hard for him to find his mother since he was the one who originally received the reports about where each member of Straea had positioned themselves.

On top of that, the projection allowed him to pinpoint the exact location, so he didn't have to search around when he reached the place where the battle was supposed to happen.

Claire wasn't that far away. She stood in the air, alone and radiating such a field of thick energy that not even another God could easily approach her.

Malefice Straea was nowhere to be seen. It was the same with Erwin Ellowyn, who'd already died. The latter's real body dispersed into ash when he met his end in the Heavenly God Plane, as for the former...

Damien didn't care about any of that.

His mother was in a precarious state. He confirmed this suspicion the instant he arrived.

'This energy isn't hers.'

For the most part, the assumptions he'd made were all correct. Claire wasn't in the right state of mind right now. She was likely possessed by something.

'The cause...'

Damien would find out soon enough.

'Her soul is in the Heavenly God Plane, but I should still be able to read it.'

His perception changed. The human outline that Claire's body was disappeared. Her soul became clear to him as the ethereal superseded the physical.

Damien instantly saw what his mother hid.

It was something spectacular, especially in the eyes of a man who'd had more experience creating galaxies and universes than anyone.

The portal in Claire's soul was almost completely material. It worked as if it was being powered by strong spacetime laws, but there was nothing of the sort.

It existed purely because it existed. There was nothing that could explain it.

'Wow...'

That was a concept that meant a lot to Damien.

For something to exist without a basis, to exist just because it did...

Wasn't that exactly what he needed to make his power absolute?

'Putting that aside...'

The problem was easy to see when one had such a clear look at the soul.

There was a dark energy leaking through the portal and corrupting Claire's soul. It manifested with the will of those who produced it and possessed her, forcing her to act against her own will.

'The base of the problem is the two way connection between Mom and the otherworld.'

Damien couldn't just get rid of the portal, because just as much as it cursed her, it was a source of Claire's power.

Instead of completely removing it, what Damien needed to do to save his mother and permanently solve her problem was turn that two way connection into a single line, making it so that only Claire had control over what came through the portal.

'Easy, right?'

Not so much.

Because if Damien wanted control over that connection...

'...then I have to fight the beings on the other side.'

Damien put his focus into the portal, carefully maneuvering through Claire's soul so as to not damage or change anything.

And his battle begun.

A fight against beings that even his father could not defeat.

Chapter 1579 Chaos [2]

So what truly lay on the other side of the connection?

Claire had seen them, but even she didn't necessarily understand what they were.

She defined them as the World Core and the beast. There was no other way to word it, since that was all she was able to see.

However, as Damien entered the portal himself, he was able to see what others couldn't.

Those two entities were indeed as Claire saw them, but it was a bit more than that.

There weren't two entities at all. From the start, it was only one.

Claire's body hid a massive secret.

'It's not that she's connected to another world...'

No, the thing she assumed was a world wasn't anything of the sort.

'Her soul is linked directly to the core of an alternate cosmos.'

She was a practically living cosmos, something that should've been impossible.

'The problem is that she's never been able to actually access the majority of her power, so we can't tell why she was born with it in the first place.'

Claire had never seen that alternate cosmos. It wasn't because she wasn't powerful enough, but because "something" had hijacked her connection.

That being was the equivalent of a Supreme God in its universe. When it sensed the disturbance that was Claire's presence, it found an opportunity to become Unrecorded.

Somehow, using its understanding of laws, it was able to block Claire's connection and occupy it. Then, using it as a foundation, it parasitized Claire's soul for its own benefit.

It was massive.

Its true form was bulbous and hard to distinguish from a world. It had continents on its back and bodies of water that flowed off into the void. A myriad of life forms had been bred or migrated to this being's back, and for all intents and purposes, it was indeed functioning as a world.

Claire saw both a beast and a World Core. At first, one would believe that it was because the beast had a similar function to a World Core.

However, that wasn't the case. Instead, the beast had swallowed a World Core at some point in its life and was now in a sort of symbiotic relationship with it. They were two halves of the same being, bound in body and spirit.

'It's not an inherently evil being.'

If it was, then there were far more efficient ways to use the life on its back to increase its power.

'But its energy is malevolent.'

There were two ways this could happen. The first was that the law the being practiced was close with darkness. The second...

'...is that the beast commits evil even while acknowledging its wrongdoing.'

That one made more sense considering the effects it had on Claire.

'It's trying to break her and take her over. As for what it plans to do after that...'

Damien's eyes narrowed.

'...I can find out through its memories.'

Regardless of what kind of beast it was, it would die by his hand today.

Its strength...simply did not matter to him.

'It's not from here.'

It couldn't see him.

It couldn't interact with him because he was currently in a form that it couldn't perceive.

'But I can see it.'

And he could attack it as he pleased without an ounce of resistance.

Damien summoned his Existence.

He blocked the connection between Claire and the alternate cosmos completely so that the effects of the battle wouldn't backfire on her.

What Damien proceeded to do from that point forth could only be considered cheating.

He camped in the ethereal plane and peppered the beast's body with attack after attack. It was like a cataclysm had dawned for the beings living on its back.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The beast was instantly alerted, and it obviously spread it's senses to try and find where it was being attacked from.

It even let out an instinctive burst of energy to kill or disrupt any enemies in its immediate vicinity.

But nothing it did would work.

Because Damien wasn't actually there in the first place.

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

The situation changed in the Heavenly God Plane.

Claire's body suddenly jerked. Serena rapidly cancelled the attack she was about to throw and rushed towards her sister, catching her before she fell.

"Claire...?" She said worriedly.

No response.

But her vitality was still strong.

'She's...'

Claire's body slowly turned incorporeal as she vanished from the Heavenly God Plane and returned to the real world.

Serena immediately understood what was happening. Damien had succeeded somewhere, or he'd failed miserably.

Whatever the truth was, she needed to get to where Claire was expeditiously.

She hastily left the Heavenly God Plane as well. Her main body was still far away from Claire. She needed some time to get there.

That was the problem.

Even if "some time" was only a minute...

Nobody had stopped to check what happened to Malefice Straea, had they?

Damien's mind was too absorbed in Claire's situation, so he was left vulnerable in the outside world.

And that was when he approached him.

Malefice Straea had been ruined by the dragon. The attacks he received from Claire earlier inhibited his combat potential, and as the dragon who sealed bloodlust fought against him with all of its power, he was rapidly outclassed.

He'd been beaten and beaten again until he couldn't even recognize his body anymore. His soul was so weak that it would wither with a single gust of wind.

However, he was still alive.

His body was embedded in the ground and forgotten. He managed to barely leave the Heavenly God Plane in time to save himself from more damage.

But his injuries wouldn't heal themselves.

He was crippled for life. In his current state, he would slowly lose Divinity with time until he eventually rotted away in some corner of the world.

That was not how he wanted to die.

With how things were going now...

'...Straea is done.'

There was no hope for the Straea clan.

That was the last straw for Malefice.

Without Straea...

'...my life has no meaning.'

Everything he built up had been lost, and even his own kin was no longer on his side.

What reason did he have to maintain his life.

'The cause...'

The cause of all of this...

It all started with Void.

And it would all end with Void.

Malefice was already there. Damien didn't sense him, Claire wasn't mentally present, and there was nobody else there.

Malefice arrived behind Damien, only one goal in mind.

"Die."

He wanted that man dead.

His life was worthless, so he didn't care if he had to sacrifice it.

As long as that man ended up dead.

Malefice's mana disappeared into his body and concentrated in his very center.

His soul, his energy, and his everything concentrated into that single location, forming into a ball of existence that was Malefice Straea.

But this coagulation wasn't created to define him.

No, this was the sacrifice he made.

Using his entire self as payment, he created a force so massive that it could destroy galaxies.

And only a few feet away from Damien, he allowed that force to ignite.

And ignite it did.

So well, in fact, that the light it produced could be seen from billions of kilometers away.

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'But its energy is malevolent.'

There were two ways this could happen. The first was that the law the being practiced was close with darkness. The second...

'...is that the beast commits evil even while acknowledging its wrongdoing.'

That one made more sense considering the effects it had on Claire.

'It's trying to break her and take her over. As for what it plans to do after that...'

Damien's eyes narrowed.

'...I can find out through its memories.'

Regardless of what kind of beast it was, it would die by his hand today.

Its strength...simply did not matter to him.

'It's not from here.'

It couldn't see him.

It couldn't interact with him because he was currently in a form that it couldn't perceive.

'But I can see it.'

And he could attack it as he pleased without an ounce of resistance.

Damien summoned his Existence.

He blocked the connection between Claire and the alternate cosmos completely so that the effects of the battle wouldn't backfire on her.

What Damien proceeded to do from that point forth could only be considered cheating.

He camped in the ethereal plane and peppered the beast's body with attack after attack. It was like a cataclysm had dawned for the beings living on its back.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The beast was instantly alerted, and it obviously spread it's senses to try and find where it was being attacked from.

It even let out an instinctive burst of energy to kill or disrupt any enemies in its immediate vicinity.

But nothing it did would work.

Because Damien wasn't actually there in the first place.

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

The situation changed in the Heavenly God Plane.

Claire's body suddenly jerked. Serena rapidly cancelled the attack she was about to throw and rushed towards her sister, catching her before she fell.

"Claire...?" She said worriedly.

No response.

But her vitality was still strong.

'She's...'

Claire's body slowly turned incorporeal as she vanished from the Heavenly God Plane and returned to the real world.

Serena immediately understood what was happening. Damien had succeeded somewhere, or he'd failed miserably.

Whatever the truth was, she needed to get to where Claire was expeditiously.

She hastily left the Heavenly God Plane as well. Her main body was still far away from Claire. She needed some time to get there.

That was the problem.

Even if "some time" was only a minute...

Nobody had stopped to check what happened to Malefice Straea, had they?

Damien's mind was too absorbed in Claire's situation, so he was left vulnerable in the outside world.

And that was when he approached him.

Malefice Straea had been ruined by the dragon. The attacks he received from Claire earlier inhibited his combat potential, and as the dragon who sealed bloodlust fought against him with all of its power, he was rapidly outclassed.

He'd been beaten and beaten again until he couldn't even recognize his body anymore. His soul was so weak that it would wither with a single gust of wind.

However, he was still alive.

His body was embedded in the ground and forgotten. He managed to barely leave the Heavenly God Plane in time to save himself from more damage.

But his injuries wouldn't heal themselves.

He was crippled for life. In his current state, he would slowly lose Divinity with time until he eventually rotted away in some corner of the world.

That was not how he wanted to die.

With how things were going now...

'...Straea is done.'

There was no hope for the Straea clan.

That was the last straw for Malefice.

Without Straea...

'...my life has no meaning.'

Everything he built up had been lost, and even his own kin was no longer on his side.

What reason did he have to maintain his life.

'The cause...'

The cause of all of this...

It all started with Void.

And it would all end with Void.

Malefice was already there. Damien didn't sense him, Claire wasn't mentally present, and there was nobody else there.

Malefice arrived behind Damien, only one goal in mind.

"Die."

He wanted that man dead.

His life was worthless, so he didn't care if he had to sacrifice it.

As long as that man ended up dead.

Malefice's mana disappeared into his body and concentrated in his very center.

His soul, his energy, and his everything concentrated into that single location, forming into a ball of existence that was Malefice Straea.

But this coagulation wasn't created to define him.

No, this was the sacrifice he made.

Using his entire self as payment, he created a force so massive that it could destroy galaxies.

And only a few feet away from Damien, he allowed that force to ignite.

And ignite it did.

So well, in fact, that the light it produced could be seen from billions of kilometers away.

Chapter 1580 Chaos [3]

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The explosion was truly incalculable. It contained the entirety of a Supreme God's Existence within it, so it had to be at least that big.

Malefice's law was based on darkness, but his final moments produced an unreasonable amount of light, enough to blind even the strongest experts.

The sound was also something that had to be mentioned.

Fierce, roaring winds behind any other. They roared like they were mourning the death of their closest person, like they wanted to destroy the world in their rage.

It was a true spectacle, and absolutely not something the Heavenly World could see often.

This was the true extent of a God's power in its rawest form.

To some, it was a beautiful moment. To others, it was a spectacle. Those caught inside were vaporized instantly, and only later would they be mourned by those they left behind.

Serena thought she was far away from Damien and Claire, but that turned out to not be the case, as even she was caught in the edge of the explosion.

'This...!'

Her eyes widened in immense surprise as she put up all the defenses she possibly could.

'If this came from where they are...'

Her instincts immediately kicked in.

'I have to get there.'

She pushed forward through the rampant energy that refused to stop raging in the atmosphere, using every drop of her power to push towards Damien and Claire.

Because if they were in the very center of all of this chaos...

Right, that was what it was.

Chaos.

Damien's attention was immediately brought back to reality in the split second that the explosion took to reach him.

He was forced to make a rapid decision without understanding the full extent of the situation he was in.

VOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Damien's Existence barrier went up and clashed against the explosive force in that small amount of space. The energy repelled off the barrier and collided with everything else that was happening, making the space around Damien extremely bright.

He could feel the force through the barrier. If he used a weaker force, he wouldn't be able to protect himself and his mother.

'Mom...

Speaking of, he'd completely taken his attention off of the battle happening in her soul.

Claire's body jerked and spawned in the air. Malevolent energy swirled around her as her appearance started to morph towards its possessed state.

Crack!

She thrashed, still unconscious.

'Dammit!'

Damien didn't have the mental capacity to speak or think.

If he left his mother's situation alone, the barrier he used to block her connection with the alternate cosmos would falter. The full force he'd exerted on the dark beast on the other side would rebound on her, and that would lead to the worst case scenario.

If Claire didn't leave her life, she'd be left vulnerable, and that being would not miss the chance to sieze her body permanently.

It was wary now that it had been attacked. It was waiting for the moment a flaw appeared so it could fight back.

Damien had no choice but to split his attention.

With half of his mind, he desperately sent blasts of Existence raining down on the dark beast, continuing the attack and maintaining the barrier.

With the other half of his mind, he maintained the barrier on the outside world, maneuvering it so that the outside force would naturally disperse itself.

'FUCK!'

It was straining enough doing one of these things. To do both at the same time...Damien felt like his mind was being ripped apart.

It had to be remembered that he'd just come from the hidden Principality. He may have taken away the pain he felt, but until he was Absolute, he couldn't will away the exhaustion caused by the overuse of his power.

He still vividly remembered that pain, and his body desperately wanted a break so it could recover.

However, he was now in an equally precarious situation.

"AHHHHHHHHH!"

Damien roared. With only half of his mind focused on it, the Existence barrier became flimsier. Streaks of energy made it through the cracks and struck him all over his body.

The Ananta Matrix worked in overdrive, cycling and circulating energy to the best of its ability. It absorbed everything hitting Damien and repurposed it to aid his release of power, but that didn't mean Damien didn't feel the impact they would've had.

On the other side, the situation hadn't changed much. The problem was that Damien wasn't attacking nearly as fast, and with the dark beast getting riled up, it wouldn't be long before its injuries started reflecting through the connection.

Damien had two barriers to uphold, one physical and one ethereal. To do so while he attacked the dark beast was...less than ideal, to say the least.

Still, he put his everything into it.

The suicide of a God in this manner caused a release of energy that couldn't be easily comprehended. The explosion that it created, the dome of light and chaotic energy, wouldn't disperse for a few days, weeks, or even months.

Damien would be fighting it for a very long time if it continued like this.

'An alternative...'

He needed to find one.

And as he searched, he found his answer in chaos.

It was the same force coming from both sides.

The chaotic explosion fueled by Malefice's Legend reeked of chaos. As for the dark beast, the malevolent energy it used was chaos itself.

Damien may have split his attention, but at a certain point, the two sides started to blend together.

'It's all just chaos.'

And chaos was a concept of Existence.

It was almost funny how fast things flowed into Damien's head when he finally got a grasp of what he was looking for.

Chaos. Now that he'd found it, comprehending it was like a breeze.

Its functionality, its purpose in the universe, all of it was easily understood and registered in his mind as the concept of chaos joined its peers in his repertoire of knowledge.

Perhaps it was because the concept was a direct opposite to order, which he'd already comprehended. His experience with the foundational laws made him exceptional at deciphering laws from their counterparts.

Whatever the reason, it all clicked in Damien's head at that moment.

This chaotic explosion that put the Heavenly World itself at risk...

His mother's lifelong curse...

To destroy both at the same time...

There was a solution.

A way to make both problems disappear from this world at the same time.

Damien's Existence barrier expanded.

In Claire's soul, it got larger until it encompassed the entire portal to the alternate cosmos. In the real world, it split into two and covered Damien and Claire individually.

'Mom, I'll be right back.'

Damien pushed his arm out.

He grabbed the essence of Malefice's self-explosion and released his mana infinitely.

It expanded and expanded, becoming a massive net that contained the entire blast radius within it.

Damien focused on the energy.

'I need to grab it and nothing else.'

Any and all matter, any living beings or natural landmarks, needed to stay excluded.

'Okay.'

He managed to do it since he'd already found the core.

And on Claire's soul's side...preparations had already been made.

VOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Damien's mana surged once more, the air warbled around him, and space itself manifested like a massive blob of water that moved and flexed like it was alive.

BANG!

It was not a force, but compression.

In a single instant, the explosive light compressed to a fifth of its size.

BANG!

Again, it got smaller.

BANG!

And again.

The sound resounded over and over again, getting more and more frequent until the entire explosion was contained within the palm of Damien's hand.

'This is it.'

He'd been careful not to mess anything up thus far, but this was the moment of truth.

He brought the two pieces of existence closer to him.

And he activated his power of chaos.

VOOOOOOOOOOM!

The warbling space droplet opened up. It's proverbial jaws stretched around Damien and the objects in his possession.

'It's going to be a bumpy ride.'

Damien closed his eyes.

WAP!

The space anomaly swallowed him whole.

...and everything went black.