

Void 1821

Chapter 1821 Confrontation [1]

'Eximus.'

According to the brown-haired man's story, that person named Eximus was the most terrifying existence from ten million years ago.

He was a follower of Chaos, someone who inherited the power of an Ancient Spiritual God and used it to wreak havoc on the world. During that time, the three temples almost went up in flames due to his actions.

'To think there's a Spiritual God on this island.' Spiritual Gods were similar to spirits in that they were physical manifestations of nature. Only, Spiritual Gods could only be created through blind faith. They were incredibly rare entities. No more than three had been created in the entirety of the True Void Universe's history. Even Damien only knew about them because he read the Heavenly World's existence.

In this plane, Chaos was something both worshiped and feared. It was trapped at the center of the earth with no hope of escaping, which was good for Damien.

'Facing an actual Spiritual God would be insane. Interesting, sure, but insane nonetheless.'

Luckily, the one who escaped was not Chaos, but its Apostle.

Eximus' containment unit was hidden from all eyes. Its location was likely only known by the Prison Master at this point, but Damien couldn't ask him for obvious reasons.

'Then, four days is perfect. Perfectly shitty, that is.'

In four days, he had to find the containment unit, find Eximus' traces, find Eximus, and then fight him?

Before the Dragon Lord died to his clone, he had to kill the apostle of a Spiritual God?

'Beautiful. Really.'

Damien was oh so happy about his circumstances, but he really couldn't complain since he was the one who got himself into this mess.

Immediately after leaving the Eternal Sanctum, he began his search.

There was no more investigation.

Now, the primary concern on all sides was confrontation.

While Damien was struggling, Damien was also struggling.

'I would really be struggling if it still took a toll on my mind to live through two bodies at once.'

Experiencing parallel timelines at once was enough to shatter anyone's mind, but Damien wasn't just used to it now. He could do it without any side effects.

As his main body focused on the conflict in the shadows, the clone handled things out in the open.

The tournament started in full swing. The first two days were meant to weed out anyone who wasn't necessary. The third day was for the quarter-finals, while the semi-finals and finals would be held on the fourth day.

There were four matches taking place in the stadium at the same time. They were king-of-the-hill style knockout matches where one was required to obtain a certain number of wins to pass. If one obtained that number and continued winning, then they'd be excused from the rest of the round after twenty victories.

There were too many participants, after all. These first two days were used for culling the masses and drawing out only the strongest of them.

Of course, Damien was dominating his podium with ease.

The "Temple Masters" prepared a special procedure to take the Chaos Faction members into custody. As long as they were eliminated from the competition inside of the arena, they'd be teleported directly to the Eternal Sanctum and imprisoned until it was decided how many of them would stay and how many would be repurposed.

It was swift and easy. From the outside perspective, it was indeed a genius method to quell the disturbances in the world.

'But, those guys are going to meet the Prison Master, and he's going to be forced to let them go.'

Everything was just a show prepared to precede the main event. In these first few rounds of the tournament, Damien could do nothing but comply.

"On the fourth platform, we have another perfect finisher! Damien Void has won twenty times in a row!"

An announcer's voice accompanied the death of the twentieth. Damien didn't think much of it as he was escorted into a connected tunnel amidst the cheers of the crowd.

'At the moment, my job is the boring one.'

The main body was taking care of the more exciting things, though even he was just running around.

'Seriously, I forgot how annoying it was to get information without Existence.'

Well, even before that he could devour people. It had been a very long time since Damien was forced to put in legwork for information's sake.

Still, everything seemed to be lining up properly. The deadline was approaching incredibly fast, but Damien was moving at the same pace. Logically, everything would work out.

'More importantly, the other temples are acting strange.'

The man Quill and the woman Yanui whom he'd met a week prior were acting very differently than they did during that meeting. Rather than the confident and competitive attitudes they held at that time, they were showing a hesitation that didn't make sense.

'I guess there's a lot of stuff going on behind the scenes that doesn't relate to the overarching plot that I've been following.'

It made sense, but it wasn't his problem. He merely needed to do what he did best so they didn't find themselves in even more trouble.

'But before that...'

The person leading him disappeared a while back. He'd been walking through the tunnel while indulging in his thoughts, but it was getting a bit annoying at this point.

"If you guys are going to hide yourselves, can't you at least do it properly? The quality of assassins in this realm isn't that high, huh."

His gaze suddenly shot to the ceiling. His eyes glowed slightly, and a group of twelve was immediately revealed.

He could see the panicked expressions on their faces as they tried to figure out how they were spotted, but that was also not a matter of his concern.

He grinned as he was able to find something fun to do even in this body.

"Come at me, you bastards. I was just thinking that I needed to devour someone soon."

Nonexistence was an especially difficult concept to use offensively. Its effectiveness dropped significantly when focused on more than one person. In a fight where multiple opponents concentrated on a single target, it was usually always fated to be the target's loss.

They may have lost their cover, but the assassins didn't lose their heads because of it.

At the end of the day, there were twelve of them and only one of him. The person they'd been ordered to kill would still end up dead no matter what he did.

That was a very dangerous train of thought for a group that stood against Damien Void.

After all, he had the same thoughts as they did.

Now that his targets were clear, they'd die no matter what they tried.

And through their oh-so-noble sacrifice, he was going to learn even more about the plots and schemes surrounding him.

Really, they should have been honored to die by his hands!

A domain formed around his body and enveloped the entire area. A spiderweb appeared in a single second before solidifying into impenetrable cages that separated each enemy from the rest.

And as Damien pushed his hand down...

The rest didn't need to be mentioned.

For these small fries who did not even have names, the result was never fated to be anything else.

Chapter 1822 Confrontation [2]

"Hmm..."

Naturally, memories were currently being read.

The Eternal Sanctum boosted Damien's power to an incredible level. Once he finished comprehending the things he learned from its structure, he filled all of the gaps that previously allowed people like Kura to stand against him. Twelve came and twelve died, but not in the simple reviveable way that most people died in this realm. Those assassins met a poor end because Damien needed information. Unfortunately, they would not be returning to life.

'At a base level, it looks like the Temple Masters, huh.'

Assuming that Damien didn't know anything, then regardless of whether he had a mind-reading ability or astute observation skills, the conclusion he'd come to was that the Temple Masters ordered for his assassination.

Was it because he was outshining their participants?

Well, since Damien didn't have enough time to properly learn the personalities of those from the other two temples, it would be quite easy to convince him so. The previous attack he experienced served that purpose as well, though it was mainly meant to keep him from learning anything unnecessary.

Even their memories lined up. The Water and Fire Temple Masters personally called for each of them and offered great rewards for Damien's head.

'What a scheme.'

If Damien didn't know better, then all of the signs would have led to those two. His ire would be directed there according to the wishes of the mastermind.

'But why?'

Why did he want Damien to go against the Temple Masters?

See, from start to finish, Damien just accidentally found himself involved in these matters. He was just acting as the "big red button" that set off the nuke known as the Dragon Lord. Damien himself shouldn't have held any value to the true perpetrator, Eximus. Was he trying to make the Temple Masters suffer more by using him to ruin their reputations? Or did he just want to make the tournament more exciting from the perspective of an all-knowing observer?

Damien got the feeling that the only real reason for involving him had to be emotional.

'But I can't say for certain since he wasn't directly involved in anything. He did leave me a nice present, though.'

With his questions out of the way, Damien smiled as he walked away from the site as if nothing happened. He would play along with the schemes in the tournament for now, just so he could figure out why they were being plotted in the first place.

However, he wouldn't need to do it for long.

After all, those twelve were also corrupted with the control skill to shut their mouths. They had a trace of Chaos inside of them, and when Damien devoured it...

...it was only natural for him to receive a piece of its memories, right?

'That guy named Eximus might be elusive, but catching him just became far easier.'

Damien now had a rough idea of where the containment unit was. While his main body tracked it down, all he had to do was play the waiting game.

He hummed to himself and left the stadium, waiting for the second day of competition to arrive.

It did, and it passed just as easily. There were no new attacks. Damien had a slight silent confrontation with the Temple Masters before the round started, perfectly acting out his role as someone aiming for revenge. Though nothing about that attack was publicized, it would still be dangerous for them to act immediately. Damien's name was gaining prominence, and he was rapidly becoming people's favorite competitor due to his dominance and story.

He was an underdog who was still building his badge to the gold level but he was defeating everyone so overwhelmingly, so it was only natural for them to cheer him on. Damien was kept safe from assassination attempts by their cheers, and as if it was inconsequential, he casually finished his matches and returned to his room, practicing for what came next.

So, the third day of the tournament dawned. Damien approached the stage, prepared for his first match against a real competitor. At this point, he was facing Yanui and Quill was facing another Chaos follower. Tomorrow, he would fight the winner of that match and then have his showdown with the Dragon Lord.

That was the original plan.

But...what was this?

"It seems we have a change in the roster!"

As Damien stood on the stage alone, the announcer did his job and announced some sudden news.

"According to the Water Temple, the original competitor, Yanui, was defeated by another temple member just yesterday! They chose to wager Yanui's participation slot, and with the agreement of the three Temple Masters, their match commenced! It may seem rushed, but this participant has sufficiently proved her strength through a bracket similar to what our remaining competitors have experienced so far!"

Amidst the murmurs of the crowd, large projections appeared, showing a woman fighting several tens of opponents one after another and defeating them.

As they watched the woman display her power, the announcer welcomed her on stage.

"Now, introducing our newest challenger: Kura!"

So there was a reason why Damien had a wry expression on his face since earlier. The person who walked up the stairs and met him on the battle stage was someone he knew not too well, but someone he had a sinking feeling that he would re-encounter. She grinned, looking him in the eye.

"Shall we have a rematch?"

He smiled in return.

If it was like this, then he wasn't going to complain.

"I was looking to test how much I've improved, so this is perfect."

The person Damien fought when he first came to this island, she had clearly become far stronger in the time that they hadn't seen each other. A rematch that mattered to only a single person, but still one that Damien couldn't help but look forward to, began on the tournament stage.

And, as if important events were meant to happen concurrently, Damien arrived at the place he saw in Chaos' memory fragment.

He found himself in an underground cavern. It was almost impossible to reach because one had to practically swim in the Sea of Nothingness to reach it, but Damien somehow survived.

There was only one thing in the cavern. A pure white box with no entrance or exit that held one of the worst prisoners known to this island's people.

As Damien gathered more knowledge on Chaos itself, he understood what kind of entity its apostle was.

The Eternal Sanctum had nothing on this single box. Damien prodded it with Nonexistence in every way possible, but he couldn't find even a single way to enter naturally.

Still, there was somehow a menacing red and black aura emanating from it. That aura was the mark of Eximus and the proof that the person Damien was searching for was beyond those white walls.

'Once again, I have to resort to cheating.'

He didn't like it, but he still had to use it. The Void's energy wrapped around his body, and like he did not exist in the first place, he phased through the cube's walls and arrived inside.

Damien could finally meet the person who used others to commit every serious crime in the island's recent history.

Chapter 1823 Confrontation [3]

It was an exciting match, sure, but the result was still as expected. Damien had grown unreasonably in the past few weeks, to the point where nobody on the island could keep up with his progress.

Kura got much better than she was when they first fought. The weaknesses in her defensive fighting style hadn't yet been fixed, but she'd properly created a framework for the solution. She presented it in battle against Damien, and it alone was enough to make his previous strategy unviable.

Unfortunately, his web had become much more sophisticated. And, it wasn't just for setting up a final attack either. The web itself was an attack and defense mechanism that could easily capture opponents and weave them into a situation that they couldn't escape.

Nevertheless, it was a fun battle. Damien had been bored for the past two days, practically watching his other body's point-of-view like a television show for entertainment, but he had to focus his attention on fighting Kura.

It was by far the most interesting of the battles thus far. Even the battle that came after, with Quill and the last Chaos Faction member, was overlooked as people excitedly awaited Damien's showing in the rest of the competition.

Behind the scenes, in a waiting room for the surviving competitors, Kura found Damien again.

"You were just a brat a few weeks ago. What the hell happened?" She asked, approaching with a grin.

"What can I say? I'm something of a genius," Damien responded cockily.

He was glad that she wasn't taking her loss too seriously.

Kura was one of the few people on this island who had the potential to move to the fourth island soon. He didn't want to be the one inhibiting her path.

"You may be a genius, but I'm nothing to laugh at either. Just wait. One of these days, I'm going to catch up to you!" "Sure, but I'll already be back home by the time that happens."

Kura clicked her tongue and rolled her eyes. She didn't take his banter seriously. His tone was too obviously sarcastic. Regardless, it did somehow feel like he wasn't lying at all.

"Ah, right."

Kura's eyes widened slightly as she remembered why she had come here in the first place.

"Have you heard the news?"

Damien shook his head.

Kura sighed. "Right, you wouldn't be so calm if you had. Something strange is going on behind the scenes. I don't know why, but it's like they're trying to rush you into a fight against the Area Lord."

"Hm? What do you mean by that?"

Damien made a sound of interest as she captured his full attention.

Kura's story started with how she herself ended up in the tournament.

Originally, she challenged Yanui several times for the tournament spot. She won more than she lost, but she was forbidden from killing her opponent since she was already slotted to participate in the tournament.

Essentially, by challenging Damien and losing, Kura lost her chance to participate.

She tried and tried and eventually gave up, but the temple's officials approached her not even a day prior and proposed her a deal, asking if she wanted to take Yanui's spot.

She, of course, agreed. She was even more tempted by the tournament after hearing that her new rival was also participating. She went and challenged Yanui again, won, and was granted the spot.

"It's just suspicious because it was too easy. Yanui may be weaker than me, but it's only marginal. I shouldn't be able to beat her so one-sidedly."

"Hm..."

Were the Water Temple's people trying to sacrifice Kura after understanding what the end of this tournament entailed? If so, then did Yanui have some kind of importance that Kura lacked?

Damien asked, and he got the response he was looking for.

"Yeah, Yanui is the Temple Master's daughter. That's why I'm saying it's weird. She always gets preferential treatment, but now they want to be fair? It doesn't make sense."

"It also doesn't make sense how that situation is pushing my fight with the Area Lord," Damien chimed in.

Kura grinned sheepishly, realizing that she'd once again gotten off-topic.

"I brought it up because something similar is happening in the Fire Temple too. Apparently, that guy Quill disappeared after his match. Nobody knows where he went, but he's already been replaced. And, the most important part..."

"...your match against his replacement is happening in an hour."

"What?"

Now, Damien was really paying attention.

As Kura said, they were absolutely plotting to bring the match between him and the Dragon Lord closer. 'Damn.'

He could guess why.

'My main body's movements were noticed.'

Someone was working against the grand scheme, so they were obviously going to try to make his struggle futile.

The main body was already meeting Eximus, so hypothetically it wouldn't affect the plan, but...

'Tch. It's annoying being the clone body.'

He quite literally could do nothing but wait, follow the tournament, and stall until the main body finished all of the important matters.

For now...

"Thanks for telling me."

"No problem. I like honest competition, so this is rubbing me the wrong way too."

He thanked Kura and left the waiting room. An hour was not much time at all. While it passed, he watched his main body's perspective. His frown got deeper and deeper until he heard his name being called to the stage.

He walked up as he had done several times before. No matter how he got used to the cheers of the crowd, they always felt disgusting when he thought about the fact that they were all being deceived into willingly walking into their deathbeds. The other name that was called was unknown. It wasn't worth mentioning, and there wasn't a single bit of justification accompanying the entrance of a new competitor like there was with Kura.

The only thing the announcer said was that Quill had withdrawn with a mysterious injury and someone had been sent to replace him.

If that person was like Kura, a worthy competitor, then there wouldn't have been anything particularly special about it besides the fact that the fight had been moved forward by a day.

The person who stood against him was not like Kura at all.

'...what is this?'

While the announcer spoke to the audience, Damien addressed his opponent.

"Why are you doing this?"

The man standing across from him was quivering in fear. He was clearly unskilled and unworthy of this stage, so why was he here?

"I..." he responded shakily.

"I have no choice."

Damien looked into that man's eyes.

Right, those were not the eyes of a competitor. They were the eyes of a hostage.

He sighed to himself.

'In the end, the powers at hand have too much authority. Even if I try to destroy the tournament at this point, they'll still find a way to turn this entire city into ash.'

The match started. Damien resigned himself to facing the Dragon Lord no more than a few hours from the time this match ended.

After all, it had become impossible for him to lose.

'Main body. I hope you're fast enough.'

Because at this point, the parallel timelines were getting eerily close to converging.

And that was not a good thing in the slightest.

Chapter 1824 Confrontation [4]

Damien's first thought was that he was looking at an apostate monk of some sort. The man had no hair on his head and a uniform like the ones monks wore. There were several piercings in his face, large circular indents that formed a strange symmetry. His ears were long and he had huge gauges that were nearly falling out of his thin earlobes.

The man's eyes were pitch-black like those of a demon, and the red and black energy that radiated off of him was not intentional, just uncontrolled.

"Are you Eximus?" Damien asked.

"I am he," the monk responded.

"Alright. Die then."

Damien tapped his foot and spread his domain. It was simple, right? Now that he found the main perpetrator, all he had to do was kill him to unravel his plot.

Of course it was never going to be that simple. Damien rushed their interaction because he knew that.

The second his territory covered Eximus, he sighed.

"As expected. A fake."

"If it was expected, then why did you attack?"

"Because it's easier to find out where your real body is after you're dead."

Damien answered without much thought, spending more time glancing around the containment unit.

"Did you think this would trap me?"

Deductive reasoning was a great skill. Since Damien knew how to use it, he could instantly understand the shoddy last-minute trap that had been laid out for him.

"Perhaps. Perhaps not. I have only recently learned of your existence and interference, so I apologize for not being able to show you proper hospitality."

Damien rolled his eyes.

Basically, Damien's visit to the Prison Master was enough to tip Eximus off to his movements. It was annoyingly cunning for his enemy to figure out his intentions off of that much, but it didn't change anything.

The containment facility may have been impenetrable at one point, but Eximus clearly found a way out at some point. Its shattered security was only hastily repaired for the sake of trapping Damien, so escaping it would be even easier.

"It should take you some time, no? I did not prepare all of this to hinder you. Rather, I wish to converse with the only person who has realized my existence and actions in the past millions of years."

Damien glanced back at Eximus, who sat on the floor of the white cube with a calm smile on his face. His eyes were closed, but they curved in such a way to support the rest of his expression.

It was going to take around an hour for him to escape. That was an inconsequential amount of time in the current situation, and if Damien could gain something from conversing with Eximus in this way, then he didn't mind.

In the end, he now knew what the man looked like and how his aura felt. Finding him was no longer a problem.

"What do you want to say?" he asked, his tone not friendly in the slightest.

"It is more about what I wish to ask," Eximus responded.

"You..."

His eyes opened just slightly.

"Why do you oppose Chaos?"

Damien frowned.

"Why are you asking stupid questions? I don't like it, so I fight against it. Do I need a better reason?"

"I suppose not," Eximus said.

"And, like you, my reasoning for following Chaos is simple. Unlike your so-called 'Order,' Chaos helps those in need and provides comfort. It does not shirk away from the struggles of man."

'I guess he wants to convert me?'

Damien didn't really care, but the man could yap all he wanted to. He wasn't going to stop him.

"You know, before Chaos found me, I was but a humble farmer. I lived a good life with my wife and my daughter, worshiping the Order you defend. However, when my daughter grew up and I supported her wish to become a challenger, do you know what your Order did? It killed her. It left her without even a corpse to bury."

'Ooh, a revenge plot.'

"The Three Temples have always been corrupted organizations. They hide the truth about this world, convincing the entire world that it is nothing more than a game. This world is not a game, and they are not its masters. What right do they have to act like they are worth more than others? What right do they have to sacrifice the lives of others without batting an eye?!"

Damien raised his brow.

This island's history didn't give him all of the details, but there definitely wasn't anything like that. Rather, the temples were always the ones preventing the people of the island from dying meaninglessly. "How did your daughter die?"

"She was sacrificed! That day, I swore revenge on the temples, but I had no method to attain it. I was born to a father and mother who were born to a father and mother who first came to this realm. Without ever attempting to perceive the Nothingness, I was practically no different from a mortal. Even if I desired power, I squandered my talent in my youth. It was only when Chaos found me that things changed. It gave me hope, and it gave me justice!"

'Casual evasion.'

Not to mention, the calm and mysterious front he put up was completely gone. What was left was a man with his eyes wide and filled with the color red, rambling on about the benefits of Chaos

He looked more like an addict than a terrifying villain.

Damien ignored the rest of what he said and asked another question.

"What was your daughter's name?"

Eximus twitched slightly.

"Someone like you who defends Order does not deserve to know her name."

"Okay. You can continue, then."

Damien's attitude was becoming unbearable, but Eximus decided to bear with it and continue.

"Chaos allowed me to partake in a journey of power. That was when I realized it. The Order of this world is fake! It is an illusion! Chaos was always supposed to be its true ruler! Within Chaos, everything I sought and everything those like me seek is present! You, how can you not seek the beauty of Chaos?!"

Damien nodded.

"Sure."

He was focused on escaping the prison, so being somewhat distracted was understandable. However, time and time again Damien responded with such a standoffish tone that Eximus could hardly stand it anymore. "You... Your arrogance will not be tolerated," he growled.

"What can you do about it? You're literally a projection. You have no power."

"However, my main body—!"

"I really don't care. It's not even my fault in the first place. When you spout bullshit like that, how is anyone supposed to pretend like they care?"

Damien's words didn't strike as hard as the genuine sincerity within them. He wasn't usually one to rile up his opponents, but this time, he really couldn't help it.

Who was Eximus pretending to be? Did he want to cosplay as a hero or a lunatic? He was like someone who never actually had a normal conversation with anyone or a chance to get his story straight. Chaos' Apostle?

Damien really didn't give a shit.

It would be more entertaining if he fought Chaos itself. The man in front of him...?

This man was just pathetic.

Chapter 1825 Confrontation [5]

Whatever Eximus' story was in the past, it was clear that he had been too corrupted by Chaos for any of that to matter. The entire story about his daughter had to be a lie since he didn't know anything about it, and the rest of his reasoning was just nonsense from the start.

"So, the gist of it is that you think the world order is wrong and you want to bring chaos. Cool. Who cares?" Damien said, turning to face Eximus.

"Basically, you're an easily influenceable person who was corrupted by Chaos and used as a vessel to do everything you've done. In fact, I'm starting to realize why I didn't recognize you as a projection from the start."

Damien scoffed. "You're all that's left of Eximus' ego. The body has already been taken over by Chaos."

It made sense. Eximus may have been feared in the past, but that was when he still had a proper state of mind. He was probably able to commit countless atrocities under the banner of Chaos, serving it as his God.

However, with the passing of time and the containment in this isolated space, that version of Eximus vanished. From the start, he was only chosen because it was easy to mold his beliefs. Chaos abandoned him when he ran out of use, stole his body, and used it to plot out everything that Damien had been chasing so far.

To say he had been thoroughly fooled was wrong, but he hadn't grasped the entire picture from what he investigated.

Nevertheless, it didn't change much.

"Eximus, you're a pathetic guy, you know that? You're one of those people who has delusions of grandeur without a single ounce of ambition. Some fortune landed in your hands and you suddenly became bold, but that's not who you are and that was never who you were."

Damien walked towards the monk, whose entire demeanor changed when Damien started talking.

His insecurity even from their previous conversation was enough to prove everything Damien said correct, but his current state was the final nail in the coffin.

At the end of the day, the reputation Eximus built for himself was constructed on a foundation of lies.

All of his deeds were also the doing of Chaos and Chaos alone.

Nothing and nobody had terrorized this island like Chaos had. It was as if the Spiritual God wanted to make sure that its record and reputation were never surpassed.

So, though Damien only said it jokingly...

'I guess I really am being led around by Chaos. I should be prepared to fight a Spiritual God, not a madman.'

Damien was given a reason to hurry and find a way out of the containment unit. If he was tracking Chaos, then it was definitely going to be more difficult than he originally expected. However, since the body still belonged to Eximus, it at least wasn't impossible anymore. "Wait! What are you doing?! Do you know who I am?! I am Eximus! Eximus, the ruler of Chaos!"

The projected ego clawed at Damien's legs, trying to grab his attention. Damien only sighed and ignored it.

'Technically speaking, he's also a victim, but if he didn't have a tendency towards madness from the start, then he never would have been chosen.'

A slight wisp of Nonexistence left Damien's body and took hold of the projected ego. At this point, it was fine for Eximus to disappear and pay the price for his sins.

As for Damien...

'This is complicated.'

He didn't have enough time to check whether Chaos had possessed Eximus in its full form or not. If it had, then he was nowhere near equipped to fight it without using the Void too much and offending the Land of Nothingness itself.

He liked his chances more if Chaos had only partially escaped its seal in a weakened state, but was it safe for him to move without guaranteeing it?

Damien had killed many people in this realm and he'd seen many more die. It didn't affect him just as any other death didn't, but he had a deep understanding of the consequences of dying in this realm.

Everyone would forget him. Every trace of him left in the True Void Universe would disappear. His family, friends, and cosmos would be left as easy prey for the Dark God.

Was it worth risking that future for a society filled with people he didn't know? What if he lost his life over a whim and everything ended?

'Still...'

Still, he was never the type of person to run away from a bad situation.

'Even if I put aside my original reasoning and abandon thoughts of helping this island's people, fighting a Spiritual God is still a useful experience.'

If he won, it would yield him boons that were guaranteed to be extremely helpful to his training.

'And more importantly, Spiritual Gods are just a step below us.'

Fighting a true Spiritual God would be good practice for his fight against the Dark God. It was worth struggling if it made that fight easier.

Damien gripped his fists.

Never in his life had he been concerned about the stakes. He always moved first with confidence that he could destroy everything in his path and come out successful.

Being an adult, being someone with the weight and responsibility of the world on his shoulders, he couldn't just charge ahead like that anymore.

He had to think out his decisions and move methodically. He had to stay focused on only the goal at hand and do only things that would work towards said goal.

He couldn't have that same attitude of walking the line between life and death with a smile on his face anymore.

'But I can't forget it.'

Even if he became a truly untouchable entity, he could never forget that part of him that was absolutely confident in everything he did.

'It's not a matter of chance in this fight.'

Especially when Nonexistence was his chosen combat method, chance didn't exist.

As long as he had the mind to compete against the Spiritual God, he could take it down.

'Okay.'

He placed his hand on the containment unit and let a pulse of power run through it. With that motion alone, the containment unit shattered.

'I've done enough thinking. I just have to flawlessly execute now.'

He had to kill Chaos.

Neither doubt nor uncertainty would stop him anymore.

Not after he'd come this far.

And so, a night passed. The artificial sun signaled the start of a new day, and more importantly, the start of a huge event on the third island. The crowd was already packed into the arena. Hundreds of thousands of people watched in person, while millions more watched through broadcasts. The announcements had already passed. The anticipation levels in the stadium were too high for the announcers to interrupt. They merely introduced the two people who were preparing to fight and got ready to make the call.

Damien and the Dragon Lord looked at each other from across the battleground.

The final moment to decide whether this event would end in blessing or catastrophe had come.

Chapter 1826 Confrontation [6]

Really, the arena couldn't be defined better by anything other than the crowd's cheers.

They were explosive. Their voices and the stomping of their feet shook the entire city of Terra where the arena was located. Compared to the previous days, they were much more plentiful. This final match was one they'd been anticipating, after all.

Damien was a new star who rose like a rocket, dominating the competition. Meanwhile, the Dragon Lord was a seasoned veteran who had experienced countless battles.

Everyone wanted to see how the new and the old clashed. And, more importantly, this was the first time in history that a fight against an Area Lord was being publicized.

Not only would Damien fight him in front of everyone, but he'd do it in a place where their energy manifested into the physical plane, giving the common people a chance to actually understand how the battle was progressing.

The exciting event drew millions into the arena. Its size had to be expanded just to accommodate them, and even then, the area outside was swarmed by those who wanted to watch on the big screens.

Damien faced the Dragon Lord in this climate. The frown on his face looked like one of extreme concentration, but he really was just unhappy with the situation at hand.

His voice entered the Area Lord's mind.

"Are you prepared for this?"

He didn't say anything that could trigger the curse, but it was enough for the Dragon Lord to learn that Damien knew what was going to happen.

He glanced at Damien with a strange expression.

"I am not," he responded.

"And I am not able to entertain you at this time."

The announcers were no more than flies at this point. The way they riled up the crowd and prepared the stage made it difficult for Damien to delay.

In fact, they were already in the process of starting the match.

He looked into the Dragon Lord's eyes, trying to find any semblance of fighting spirit. However, he only found the hollow emptiness of someone who had already resigned to fate.

"Now, the moment you've all been waiting for! Let the final battle between Damien Void and the Dragon Lord..."

"If there is one thing I do wish to say..." The Dragon Lord's voice cut through the announcer's words.

"...begin!"

"...I'm sorry."

BOOM!

The first impact was loud. The sounds that would otherwise be nonexistent were recreated by the arena's systems.

In that moment, two things happened. Half of the arena was covered in a sea of black flames. At the same time, a metallic defense structure took hold of the other half, preventing the fire's spread.

RAAAAAA!

The crowd immediately broke out into cheers, but Damien was no longer paying attention to him. His entire focus was on the Dragon Lord in front of him.

'The goal is not to win.'

No, it was something much harder. To stall and stall and stall until he had no choice but to win; that was Damien's goal for this battle.

His eyes went to the black flames.

'Is this his trait?'

He could feel the flames corroding his own defensive layer at every point of contact. They had a sort of ethereal burn that could be felt in the soul, and though they burned nothing in the environment, they were deadly against Nonexistence itself.

Damien and the Dragon Lord both stayed planted within their territories. For the first few seconds, they analyzed the interaction between their energies at the center of the arena.

To say that one of them had an inherent advantage was wrong. The Dragon Lord's theme was to burn the enemy's energy and existence, leaving them with nothing more than an empty vessel. Meanwhile, Damien trapped his enemies and cut through them in a single blow like an assassin, ending them quickly.

Their strategies and energies were inherently too different to be directly compared. So, in a match like this, they were forced to find more creative ways to face each other.

'My web won't work the same way against him.'

It was pointless to try and trap someone who was able to melt the cage. To leave the complicated things in the background and simplify, the current match was like one between a metal elemental and a flame elemental. That couldn't be allowed.

Especially when the key to his plan was landing the final blow at the exact timing that he wanted to, he needed to eliminate the variables caused by the usual method of combat.

'Minimize and compress.'

Damien's thought process ended with the conclusion that he couldn't fight this battle at range.

As people in this realm were rarely able to mobilize enough power while moving, battles were carried out in the way Damien was already used to. The casters themselves would stay in position and let their abilities do the moving.

If Damien could attain mobility, he would already have an advantage that others didn't possess. The Dragon Lord wouldn't be able to predict it, right?

VOOOOM!

A huge wave of fire crashed down onto the metal construct. The concepts within were all related to banishment.

Defense, fortitude, and ambition were all targeted at the same time.

Damien was forced to respond by increasing the tenacity of his web. The defense aspect was meant to break the physical factors protecting Damien. While he was busy trying to fix them, the banishment of fortitude and ambition would heavily affect his mental state.

'He's smart.'

Ambition wasn't something people usually targeted, but it was just as important as more obvious targets like fighting spirit.

Ambition was the core concept that drove a practitioner. If it was taken away, they would lose a lot more than they realized.

To truly take away someone's ambition, the caster had to have dominance over their enemy. They had to prove that the weight of their own ambition overshadowed that of those they faced, and when that difference was made true, the opponent would crumble.

It was a brave move to try a stunt like that from the start, but Damien figured it was more of a probe than anything.

The Dragon Lord didn't put any real effort into banishing the concept. He only wanted to see what attitude Damien responded with.

And currently, he was of the mind to defend as best as he possibly could until he grasped the concept that he was trying to bring into reality.

'A form. A familiar form that I can use to bring the elusive things into the light.'

He pondered on it for but a few seconds. There were only a few things that could fit the criteria for the form he had in mind, so thinking was useless.

Only, to actually turn his current domain into a weapon that could be wielded...

'...is going to be extremely difficult.'

Nevertheless, it was better for him. Because his job was to hold the Dragon Lord back, his current defensive strategy was perfect for that goal.

He only needed to bring that concept into reality when the time was right.

And, conveniently enough...

...it seemed the main body had also arrived at his designated battleground.

Chapter 1827 Confrontation [7]

The scene was set at the top of an active volcano. Quite an inconvenient battle environment for most people, but nothing major for the two in question. This place was just barely past the Dragon Lord's manor. That place remained at the foot of this volcano because the terrifying flames were enough to burn even an expert in Nonexistence.

These flames were the basis of the Dragon Lord's power, and they were a perfect tool to use if one wanted to see one's enemy suffer.

Maybe that was why Chaos waited here. It wasn't difficult for Damien to find him after leaving the containment unit. He made his aura clear to the only person who recognized his existence, calling him to their battleground in something like a show of courtesy.

He waited at the top of that volcano for Damien to arrive, and without time to stall, Damien did exactly that.

When he approached, the figure he saw was the same one he met in the containment unit. The monk's body was clearly the same as his ego, but there was something very obviously different about him.

Chaos was not a human. As a being born from emotions and energy, its only humanoid feature was its preference for the human form. Occupying Eximus' body, it looked like a poor imitation of a man and at the same time the ideal of a very specific type of person. It was a contradictory appearance that matched the contradictory force of chaos itself.

"I have been waiting for you."

A voice deep and booming greeted Damien. It felt like a dark mountain whose oppressing pressure made it inhabitable to only the cruelest and most desperate creatures.

"You...this is not your true form, is it?"

Chaos immediately saw through his disguise, but Damien didn't think it was because he could read the Void. Rather, he must've given himself away when he made contact with the Dragon Lord.

"Was that one little clue enough for you? Seriously, I guess you pick some things up after scheming for millions of years," he said, gazing at the Spiritual God with a look of subtle disdain.

His disguise lifted naturally. Damien was feeling cramped in another body, anyway. It was better for him to show himself before their battle.

And now that he'd shown himself, it was better for their battle to begin as soon as possible.

"You look like you wish to fight, however, I will not entertain you," Chaos suddenly said.

"What?" Damien responded in surprise.

"As I said, I will not entertain your instinct for battle. Not until you have answered one question of mine."

Damien naturally frowned. What kind of development was this? And why the hell did Chaos think he would go along with it?

"You can ask your questions if you win. Do you think you can stop me from attacking when I want to?"

BOOM!

"Perhaps not, but I can assure you that you will not be able to touch me."

Chaos reappeared in a completely different place, unaffected by Damien's sudden strike.

"Though battle does indeed interest me, I must know..."

Chaos looked over at Damien. In that moment, he felt the world change.

The skies turned red and Eximus' physical form was usurped by an energy being made of black and red light. Two vague eyes and a mouth formed on that being's face, twisted horribly.

"Where did you receive your surname?"

BOOM!

Damien attacked without realizing it. In this environment, with Chaos running rampant, a similar effect was produced to what the battle arena intentionally did. Nonexistence was manifested, and all things came to light. A large explosion took a chunk out of the volcano, and by the time its sound traveled to where Damien was previously standing, he was already charging at the enemy.

He didn't understand the question, nor did he wonder why it was relevant. The sheer aura that the Spiritual God released when he spoke those words put Damien's mind into battle mode, destroying any other thoughts.

A dangerous entity. Damien already knew that Chaos was going to be one, but he didn't expect the gap between them to be so wide.

Uncountable years of experience, uncountable years of worship; together they culminated into a spiritual being with power that completely surpassed the bounds of the third island.

Damien couldn't give a being like that even a fraction of a second of time. No, he had to kill it by pressuring it and giving it not a single opportunity to resist. Otherwise, he would be the one dying here.

Chaos once again reacted casually, appearing elsewhere before it could take any damage. Damien was originally planning to face it with Nonexistence, but he realized that the force would be useless against this entity.

Half of Chaos' being was Nonexistence itself. The other half was the human emotion and reverence for the concept that led to its creation. If Damien wanted to use Nonexistence, then he had to morph his own energy until it was perfectly aligned with Order.

He was already following a similar path, but this wasn't like the battle with the Dragon Lord. On this field, Damien didn't have anywhere near the amount of freedom necessary to experiment in the middle of battle.

And, while the Damien over there was stalling, this iteration of him had to end this battle as soon as possible.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

He chased Chaos' movements with pure physical speed. He punched with enough force to disrupt the atmosphere, unintentionally using it as another attack method.

Chaos dodged and weaved, always staying within Damien's range as if to tell him that it was impossible for him to do anything.

The smile on his face affirmed that, and his words even more so.

"I told you. We will not fight until you have answered my question. Tell me from where you received that surname."

Damien ignored the words again and remained on the attack, but he didn't fail to hear them this time.

'My surname?'

The "Void" surname?

Why was that being mentioned now?

It was a name Damien received from his father, and his father was a hero who rose from meager circumstances to become the greatest man the cosmos had ever seen. Their surname only became something worth talking about in his father's generation, so why was there an ancient Spiritual God mentioning it like it was something important?

Damien had no way of knowing what kind of answer Chaos was even looking for, so rather than focusing on it, he attacked harder. Chaos had yet to do anything but dodge. Still, Damien could feel how dangerous the enemy was. It was as if the moment he attacked would be Damien's end.

With that feeling in mind, he wanted to use the opponent's current arrogance against him and do some damage before his opponent decided to return fire, but...

'Nonexistence won't work, and physical attacks were futile from the start. Then...is "that" my only option?'

It wasn't something he wanted to do in this realm, but if he was willing to gamble with his life on the line, then he could try it.

And if it was the only way to defeat Chaos, then it didn't matter in the first place.

Damien's life was already on the line.

'But it's too soon to make that decision. I'll test the waters some more first, and if it really turns out that there isn't another viable solution...'

...then he'd pull out a card he was really hoping he didn't have to use here.

Chapter 1828 Confrontation [8]

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The clash in the arena grew fiercer by the second. When Damien was forced to stop playing defensively, the crowd absolutely fell in love with the scene they were lucky enough to witness.

Damien and the Dragon Lord were no longer stationary, nor were the bounds of their territories so easy to distinguish. Black flames littered the ground, but rising out of those flames like snakes whose only goal was to devour them was none other than Damien's metallic web.

He fragmented it and spread it further, scattering concepts throughout the arena. With this separation, the flames were no longer able to easily melt the metal. More importantly, Damien could attack the flames as well.

He focused more on the Dragon Lord's energy than the man himself, but that was when the Dragon Lord proved why he was titled as such.

In the end, he was not a man, but a dragon. He could not use the majority of his bloodline abilities without mana, but there was still one thing left inviolable.

Physical strength.

Whether he'd been informed that Damien had a powerful dragon aura beforehand or decided to save that move for later, he didn't release his bloodline suppression.

He charged at Damien with black flames surrounding his fists and punched out.

Damien didn't try to meet the punches head-on from the beginning. He crossed his arms and blocked to test their might, allowing his body to fly back and crash into the arena wall.

'It's the same strategy.'

Instead of letting his flames do all the work, the Dragon Lord was equipping them as gauntlets and taking them to the prey. There wasn't much of a difference between that and normal fighting. If Damien wanted to do the same, he just had to grab one of the many metal spikes on the ground and use it as a sword.

But that wasn't his end goal.

'He's taking the base concept of the domain and replicating it in a mobile form. Rather than that, I want to take everything my domain has to offer and manifest it in a weaponized form.'

Say Damien used the same strategy. In that case, the most he could do was create blades of confinement or fatal strike. He couldn't create a blade to confine, attack, and detect weaknesses all at the same time. Still, watching the Dragon Lord maneuver his energy was definitely helpful.

The public sentiment wasn't entirely wrong. Though Damien wasn't weak enough to be called a real underdog, he was indeed a newcomer. He didn't have the millions of years of practical combat experience that his opponents possessed. He had been using raw power to overcome them this entire time.

This was a match with the world at stake, but it was still an extremely useful learning experience for Damien.

'I can take his punches.'

There was no need to run. Maybe the Dragon Lord could swallow the Nonexistence used in Damien's territory, but he was confident that the man couldn't touch the version of the concept that existed in his soul.

In that split second when Damien was in the wall, the Dragon Lord approached as if his plan was always to turn him into a meat pancake. He slammed his fist out again, but Damien responded only by doing the same.

BOOOOOM!

The spectators went wild as a huge collision took place just below them. The entire arena wall shattered into pieces, revealing the many facilities that existed under the stands. However, Damien and the Dragon Lord weren't there anymore.

They had moved to the other side of the arena already.

Within that single explosion were two impacts. The first canceled the Dragon Lord's momentum and crushed the wall, while the second threw the Dragon Lord just as he'd thrown Damien.

Damien chased him as he flew, using his raw fists to combat the Area Lord's energy.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

He wanted to feel how those fists and that energy coalesced. As they struck against his bare skin, he directly felt the interaction between them and how they changed when they came in contact with an object. 'This is good.'

The Dragon Lord was showing him everything he shouldn't do. He didn't have to do nearly as much experimentation and hypothesizing when so many paths were closed off just because of the way the Dragon Lord used his mana.

Damien paid close attention to it. He noticed that the Dragon Lord hadn't taken any damage so far, which was a good thing, but it wasn't going to stay that way.

Regardless of skill level, this match was rigged against him. No matter what, he was going to win. If he took too long and made it seem like he couldn't complete the job, then someone else would take it into their own hands to make the Area Lord explode.

Damien needed to both do damage and keep his enemy from taking too much damage.

'It's complicated, but it's not impossible.'

All he needed was a weapon.

'Concentrate.'

BOOOOM!

Damien threw a powerful punch and pushed the Dragon Lord away from him.

'Minimize and compress. That holds true. The energy will not run rampant regardless of what happens, but to contain a myriad of concepts, I just need a myriad of faces.'

A weapon with infinite faces, something that could hold every individual concept and empower them to create the same effect as the entire territory...

Didn't Damien already have the perfect weapon?

He couldn't access the original because it was in reality, but he could make a copy using the powers of this realm.

As the crowd watched on, Damien pushed his arm out as if he was grabbing something. His hand wrapped around an invisible sword handle, and suddenly, the sunlight started refracting and creating caustics on the ground around him.

"Something" had been formed.

And that "something" was none other than Mirage, a translucent sword made of an almost glass-like material. That sword had all of the characteristics necessary for containing the power of Nonexistence.

'It's been beside me for almost my entire life. I'm glad I was able to find another purpose for it at this stage.'

The metal spikes and web fragments scattered around the arena rose into the air and turned into shining lights that coalesced inside Mirage.

The translucent sword became one of light for a brief moment, and by the time it faded and returned to its original appearance, it had truly become a weapon of Nonexistence.

'With this...'

Damien looked down at the sword with a grin.

'...everything becomes possible.'

He shot forward and raised it into the air. He smiled even wider when he thought about what he was about to do.

It was a true moment of reminiscence, a meeting between past and present.

'Void Sword Art First Step: Bladeless'

WHOOOOOOSH!

A huge gust of wind filled the arena. Nobody could understand what was happening. Space couldn't be collapsed or torn in this realm where space did not exist and was only perceived. However, somehow, through some esoteric means, Damien created something that looked awfully similar to a tear in space.

And as it enveloped the area where the Dragon Lord was standing...

...the first drop of blood was drawn in this battle.

Chapter 1829 Confrontation [9]

Trying to fight Chaos was reminiscent of futility itself.

Chaos was a force of disorder. The unique circumstances surrounding its birth allowed it to ignore conventional laws, so it had power beyond what Damien had seen in his life.

Rather than being incredibly powerful, its nature of bending reality made it incredibly difficult to face.

The laws of Nonexistence were twisted whenever they came close to the being. Nature itself rebelled against its natural order and twisted into something unrecognizable just because the Spiritual God existed in its vicinity.

Facing such a being, Damien realized that everything he tried was going to be futile.

He genuinely couldn't do anything in this state. For the first time, he'd met an enemy that was like this.

Usually, it was only a power gap separating Damien from his enemies. As long as he reached their level, they were no longer terrifying. Chaos was different in that there technically was not a level of power in

the Land of Nothingness. Everyone started and finished with the power to control Nonexistence. To become stronger, one had to understand how to use the power one possessed properly. In that sense, Chaos and Damien were at the same level. The problem was that Chaos was an entity born from the folds of this space. Unlike the children who were birthed in the Land of Nothingness, it was birthed from Nothingness itself after it mingled with the emotions of the populace.

Damien could try and try as much as he wanted, but no matter how he shaped or formed it, Nonexistence would not be able to harm Chaos.

His eyes narrowed as he accepted this conclusion. Even if it was bad for the current him, the knowledge that such a thing was possible was still a good thing to have. Sometimes, using the opposing force was necessary. 'It pisses me off that I have to do this. It literally hasn't done anything yet.'

When it came to Nonexistence, there was only one force that could be called true opposition. And to access it...

Damien frowned as he gazed at the black and red energy form in Eximus' body.

'It pisses me off that I have to do this. It literally hasn't done anything yet.'

Chaos was standing there smiling as if nothing Damien did mattered. It had no intention to attack or fight. After all, even if it weren't for its question, why would it fight?

All it needed to do was stay alive and all of its plans would come to fruition. Damien was the one who urgently needed to kill it so that the control skill affecting the island's strongest people could be dispelled.

Damien had to provoke it into a fight and kill it. He could try giving it an answer to its question, but why would he give away possibly sensitive information? In the end, he would learn the reasoning behind the question once he devoured Chaos. There was no need to entertain it.

Then, to provoke it into a fight, he needed to injure it.

That was why the colorless energy around him suddenly turned pitch-black.

Damien covered himself in Void Energy and cut his connection with the Land of Nothingness. He reached beyond the veil and pulled out a force that diametrically opposed everything about this realm's existence.

For the first time, Existence met the Land of Nothingness. The realm was very obviously not happy with that.

RUMBLE!

The skies were suddenly filled with black clouds as the redness caused by Chaos was swallowed and spit out. Pitch-black lightning struck the ground all around the volcano, deleting it entirely and leaving only a lake of lava in its place. "You...! What have you done?!" Chaos screamed. It rapidly contained its presence and backed away, trying to avoid the rampant lightning. Its attitude changed immediately once it realized what Damien was trying to do, but it was unable to stop it.

It didn't care if the enemy died here, but the storm had the power to kill even the Spiritual God. It urgently wanted Damien to stop his madness.

Unfortunately, its words fell on deaf ears in a literal sense as Damien's hearing was too consumed by the sound of a raging Nothingness to register Chaos' screaming. Damien frowned.

He could feel the Nonexistence he connected with clearly in his heart. Though it didn't like that he was using Existence, it also wasn't opposed as it knew that Damien's resolve was real.

The force trying to strike him down and erase his existence was a different face of the concept.

It never had just one ego. It was a collection of an uncountable number of nameless faces, all with their own personalities and preferences. Every single interpretation of Nonexistence had its own face.

He claimed one for himself, but he had now offended another. This rage, this pure power of extinction, was the perception of Nonexistence that his own form of the concept hated most.

'Well, I was never planning to die here, so...'

A fork of black lightning flew on a direct path to Damien and arrived in an instant. Rather than dodging, he held his hand out to catch it.

BOOOOOM!

A huge sound shattered the surrounding rock as Damien wrapped his fingers around the energy.

His eyes glowed as he looked down on it.

He was currently surrounded by Void Energy. What did a mere Nonexistence think it had the power to do?

Damien looked up at the clouds and put energy into his hand. Using the strand of lightning as a leash, he dragged the clouds closer and closer.

They tried to resist his will and failed all the same. It had to be remembered that Chaos could only win against Damien because Nonexistence didn't work on him. He couldn't use the Void to attack yet, or else he would have been incinerated in a single second. The Void wouldn't help him solve problems where it was unnecessary. However, in moments like these, it didn't mind allowing him to shine.

The resisting clouds of Nonexistence were dragged to ground level. When they were just above his head, Damien slammed the leash into his own chest and pushed it into his soul.

The clouds had no choice but to follow. The face of Nonexistence that chose to challenge him was forced to be devoured, turned into food for another face.

"Are you insane?!"

Even Chaos couldn't believe what it was witnessing.

It had never encountered a force that had the power to kill it. Even the Ancient Gods who defeated him the first time could only seal him and hope that future generations would be able to finish what they started.

That fact allowed it to develop an unparalleled arrogance. It played around and acted whimsical with Damien because it genuinely felt not a single ounce of threat to its existence.

This was different. The storm alone had enough power to erase it, and the storm was only a byproduct of what Damien was originally trying to do. Damien was a real threat. The first one Chaos had ever met.

The instant the storm receded, Damien had to die.

That was what Chaos thought, but Damien had a bit of a different opinion.

His eyes were practically shining with light as he accepted the Godly power within him.

And, as he became a manifestation of Existence within the realm of Nothingness, he grinned.

With this kind of power, even Chaos itself had to tremble before him.

Chapter 1830 Confrontation [10]

WHOOOOOOSH!

By the time the wind died down, nobody had time to question how Damien possibly gained the ability to cut through space.

Unlike the mostly defensive stance that he took throughout this battle and the even playing field that he and the Dragon Lord seemed to be on, Damien instantly started dominating with Mirage in his hand.

He dashed like a comet, a beam of light that only turned back into a person when he was ready to strike. His sword was fast and domineering, full of powerful strikes that sent the Dragon Lord tumbling backward.

At the same time, he was able to exhibit snake-like properties with his movements, dodging around the Dragon Lord's counterattacks and striking vital points to stagger him instead.

There was no set form to Damien's swordsmanship. There wasn't anything like a pattern that could be followed, because Damien was never a swordsman. The sword he picked up out of necessity covered itself in aura to acknowledge his struggle, but he never progressed to the esoteric realms that people like Long Chen had reached.

His swordsmanship was originally just a brutish mess of stabs and slashes, but that changed along with his personality. The current Damien knew how to be on both sides of the coin, so he was more varied in how he maneuvered the sword.

Like always, he based his movements on the countless sword styles he'd seen in the past and created something wondrous out of it.

The crowd was left in awe. The Dragon Lord was still fighting back, but Damien could be said to have a complete monopoly over the battlefield right now. He was drawing blood with almost every strike. His concepts of Nonexistence pushed against the Dragon Lord's physical body and the energy he shielded himself with, cutting through like it was only pressing against butter.

It looked like Damien could aim for the kill whenever he wanted to. However, since when was that his goal?

The Dragon Lord could tell that he was not losing stamina properly. Compared to his number of injuries, their actual effect was minimal. Damien was definitely striking him with a lot of power. The pain he felt was not an illusion. However, was he being...healed?

No, that was not possible. Instead, it was more likely that Damien was using the confinement properties of his energy to keep the wounds mostly sealed.

Why?

Was he trying to stall, or...

'...no, the expression on his face is that of a madman.'

There was a light in that man's eyes that craved blood. He seemed like an honorable person when they first met, but he changed the moment he saw blood.

He clearly wanted to torture his opponent before killing. 'You may be strong, but I will not allow myself to be tormented!'

He had committed many sins in this life. His greatest was not done through his own volition, but he was still willing to take responsibility for being fooled.

He did not want to die and kill everyone here. He would not give this enemy the right to kill him so mercilessly either.

The Dragon Lord was disallowed from having a will to live. In order to make him accept death in the arena, he had been placed in such a state. However, Damien's vulgar actions formed a different kind of flame in his heart.

He was fine with dying and he did not want to live, but if he was going to die, then he would not do it like this.

Damien grinned as he saw the light in his opponent's eyes change.

'Good. This is working.'

He originally put on the guise of a madman in case his methods came into question. Rather than having the curse trigger because he was stalling, he preferred to justify his actions with something plausible.

'To trick your enemy you have to trick your friend type situation, right? But I got something unexpected out of it.'

The will to fight that was now present in those previously hollow eyes was a good thing. Damien was now set up to slaughter the Dragon Lord whenever he wanted to. If he meaninglessly tried to extend the fight when it looked so one-sided, nothing would work.

Since the Dragon Lord looked like he wanted to fight back, Damien had an excuse to keep going.

'The main body decided to cheat, so it shouldn't take much longer.'

Until then, he could have a proper fight with the Dragon Lord.

That man was no longer just taking hits.

Rather, Damien was forced to jump back as a wave of power spread from the Area Lord's body.

The atmosphere turned red with the color of blood. The Dragon Lord's body morphed, becoming larger and larger until it filled up almost the whole arena.

ROOOAAAAAR!

A red dragon, a true incarnation of fire, appeared and aimed its hostility at Damien.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Damien's eyes widened as he was suddenly assailed by balls of fire that were more akin to stars than dragon's breath.

He jumped into the air and continuously dodged, but he couldn't stop the tips of his clothes from catching fire.

'So, Dragon Lord. Makes sense.'

He didn't have to question the name anymore.

This Area Lord had been in the Land of Nothingness to transform the very core of his origin into a part of this realm.

He was still a red dragon, strong and proud. However, any and all abilities of his bloodline were now laced with Nonexistence and compatible with the realm's laws.

'Yeah, this is the kind of boss battle I was looking forward to.'

BOOOOOM!

WHOOOOOSH!

The raging flames encompassed nearly the entire arena, but Damien's acute eyesight found him a path.

He dashed, his path like a spark of lightning striking towards the ground, and approached the massive creature.

WHOOOOOSH!

The claws of a dragon swung out with the intent of turning his body into a paste, but Damien was prepared for it. Years of teleporting made it incredibly easy for him to mimic his former main ability in short-distance situations.

Flash!

Damien was gone in one second and back in the next, standing on the dragon's back.

He pushed his sword down, but the sound he heard was not the one he wanted to receive.

CLANG!

As metal clashed against scales, massive spikes jutted out from the Dragon Lord's back. Damien was forced to jump again to avoid being impaled, but that was exactly what the dragon wanted.

He couldn't attack someone on his back, but he had been alive long enough to develop solutions to such obvious problems.

He flapped his wings in a strange pattern. Creating a draft of wind that flowed up onto his back and formed a jet that propelled anything there into the sky. The scaly thorns were drawn by the gust and became projectiles that aimed for Damien.

He observed the entire situation with a grin on his face. For the first time, the crowd's cheers didn't seem so ominous.

Even he had to admit that, in this moment, he was having fun fighting.

But it was fated to end soon.

The moment the main body caught Chaos, the Dragon Lord would also die.

So, he had to make the most out of this fight while it lasted.