

Void 1831

Chapter 1831 Confrontation [11]

The instant Damien finished consuming the storm, Chaos charged. The lightning that blocked his way was removed, so it had to take this opportunity to eliminate the threat to its life.

Chaos, in reality, didn't have a personality. It had an arrogance formed by its life as a supreme concept, but any sort of emotion or personality he showed was just an act.

As a Spiritual God, the only "emotions" he could show were those that related to the concept. Even then, rather than being true emotions, those were just another manifestation of Chaos.

The ego of the Spiritual God had little to no control over its actions. It was merely born as a byproduct of the creation of a physical form. However, there was one time that any being could show true emotion regardless of whether they were allowed or not.

When their lives were threatened, even beings who didn't know fear would at least feel a sense of self-preservation. Unless they were specifically trained to dull this sense, it was impossible for anyone to avoid it.

For the first time in its life, Chaos felt real emotion. It felt a desire to live that forced it to kill the man in front of it.

The curiosity it had about his name was not small. That name held immense value that Damien himself was clearly not aware of. It needed to know if Damien was in any way related to "that person," but it could no longer fulfill that desire.

The black and red energy of chaos ran rampant, sparking into the atmosphere in a form similar to the lightning that struck moments ago. It moved in close, but not nearly close enough for hand-to-hand combat. It stopped its movements within just a few feet of Damien and rapidly retreated, holding its hand out and releasing power.

A huge red dome was formed with Damien at its center. When Chaos closed its fist, the dome pulsed, releasing waves of power that bore into Damien's body.

"Infection" was what Chaos was most familiar with. At some point, anyone would turn into a chaotic being when injected with enough of the energy.

It wanted to use its energy to convert even a single fingernail of Damien's so that it had something to latch onto when attacking continuously.

However, the light-covered Damien no longer had any openings.

He overgeared himself for the sole purpose of slaughtering and devouring Chaos. It wasn't that he evened the playing field. He shattered it and gave himself an absolute advantage.

The pulse of Chaos couldn't penetrate his skin in the slightest.

'That's not to say that Chaos can't damage me anymore, but I won't fall to casual attacks.'

More importantly, when Damien decided to attack...

BOOOOOM!

To use Existence in a place where nothing existed was impossible. However, its presence created such a violent reaction that it could be used as the perfect weapon.

Damien merely exerted the energy of Existence where Chaos stood and the realm broke apart, becoming a field of black lightning. That lightning was no longer controlled by a face of Nonexistence. As Damien devoured its face, he wouldn't be affected by it either.

However, for Chaos, being inside of a zone where Existence and Nonexistence clashed was like being thrown into a meat grinder.

His physical body was instantly torn apart. The energy form that truly represented him escaped, but Damien was already in the process of chasing it.

Existence made Chaos look weak, but it was not weak by any means.

"I will not die so easily!" It roared.

Its energy body solidified into a humanoid form and gathered all of the power in its surroundings.

Chaotic energy and Nonexistence became one, creating a huge black and red wave that swallowed everything in the vicinity.

"Die!"

The wave crashed towards Damien from every direction. Before getting close, though, they were stopped by an invisible force.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Black lightning exploded out from every place of contact like deadly fireworks. The entire environment, including the Dragon Lord's mansion, was reduced to nothingness. On the flat plain only inhabited by energy, Damien faced that enormous wall of chaos. He looked beyond it with a frown.

'Is it trying to flee?'

If a Spiritual God's instinct was self-preservation, then it was natural to flee. Chaos encountered a force it knew nothing about that opposed everything it stood for. Even without seeing what Damien could do while wielding that force, the correct decision was to escape and return when he had more knowledge.

Unfortunately, this was not a battle that Chaos could avoid.

With a flash of light, Damien canceled distance and arrived near where he sensed the concept's energy mass.

BOOM!

He was not the one who attacked. Sensing the changes in the fabric of the island, Chaos preemptively attacked.

Its power coiled into the form of a dragon and breathed flames of chaos onto Damien. He immediately put up a shield to block it, but at that same moment, black lightning flashed behind him.

BOOM!

The fabric of the island shattered again. From the center of the explosive catastrophe, hundreds and thousands of rotting black arms reached out and grabbed at Damien. He was forced to push away, feeling a serious deathly aura from them. Only, as he was focused on those arms, Chaos took him by surprise with an attack that was guaranteed to make contact.

After all, it grabbed the back of Damien's head in its hands and released its energy without restriction.

"Khhh...!"

He gritted his teeth and endured the pain. At this distance, Damien couldn't protect himself from the invasion of Chaos. He was just barely ready for it because he'd devoured a fragment of its power before, but it still wasn't enough.

The red and black energy flooded his spiritual world and soul. The piece in his soul was instantly devoured, but his mind was still forced to endure. The energy aimed for his memories, altering them and filling him with aggression. It wanted to tear him apart from the inside. The goal wasn't to kill him immediately, but to control him so that he could be killed in a single instant.

The shining light on Damien's body became brighter as he forcefully expelled the energy. Rather than moving away, he grabbed the Spiritual God and made sure he couldn't run away. The energy of devouring flooded out of Damien's palms and crawled up Chaos' arms.

"This...! This is...! So you are truly--"

BOOM!

Chaos detonated his arms and ran away. His words weren't meant for Damien, but for himself. He felt the force that wanted to consume him vividly. With that alone, he made the decision that fighting simply wasn't worth it.

See, Spiritual Gods became stronger as the faith people had in them increased.

Chaos definitely had a good following, but he was never expecting Damien's intervention. The plan he created himself was failing him. After all, over the past two days, countless chaos worshippers had been captured, and numerous more were forced to go into hiding to avoid persecution.

It was originally meant to be a front, but the chaos worshippers didn't know that yet. As they ceased their activities and stopped praying, Chaos had been temporarily weakened.

If it wanted to become strong enough to face Damien in his current form, then it needed to gather faith and cause chaos. It needed to become stronger.

Damien was bound to chase it, so battle was inevitable. However, before it started again, Chaos was going to become an entity that even the Damien who wielded a mysterious power could not stand against. Because anyone who was related to "that person" could not be left alive.

Chapter 1832 Confrontation [12]

Once he transformed, fighting the Dragon Lord felt like a game.

He had patterns that were easier to read. Breath attacks, claw attacks, bites, and tail swipes were the majority of his movements. His back spikes and gust abilities didn't work as well if Damien didn't aim to get behind him, so they were made ineffective the moment Damien adapted to his strategies.

This was a fight between a rising genius and an Area Lord, but it looked more like the start of a dragon slayer's journey. The crowd was enamored by each and every moment, and though the Temple Masters knew that this event was fated to end in tragedy, even they couldn't help but be impressed by the show.

Damien was extremely fast. When he adopted a fighting style less like that of a Supreme, embracing his skill rather than his raw power, he was able to create something majestic on the battlefield.

His origin was war and battle. It was such an integral part of his life, so he'd grown into someone who performed best when he was not in control of absolute power.

When using Existence or Nonexistence, battles became more boring. Though there were many intellectually fascinating things happening, the fights were more between people's minds than their bodies.

This was different. Though their minds were still their main weapons, they used their bodies just as much. The Nonexistence they controlled was exhibited through their every movement, through the swings of their swords and claws, and through the fantastic abilities they used.

Damien was employing the Void Sword Art again. It had eight forms that had been developed over the course of his lifetime. Unlike anything else, these techniques were unique to him in every way. Despite having to use them with Nonexistence alone rather than their original laws, he was able to flawlessly display their power.

'Void Sword Art Fourth Step: Spatial Collapse'

Collapsing space in the Land of Nothingness was impossible, but collapsing its reality was not. Damien targeted the very fabric that held the realm together and forced it to twist into a massive spatial distortion that swallowed the Dragon Lord's body.

The sky became the ground and the ground became the sky. The faces of the crowd turned into a mosaic of colors with no distinct features, warping the Dragon Lord's perception of the world.

The gravitational pull that the attack created froze his body, and as the cracks tried to cut through his scales, he roared in power.

His aura encompassed the entire distortion and flattened it to the ground.

BOOOOM!

The entire arena shook. The ground shattered into millions of pieces only to regenerate in the next second.

The Dragon Lord's body moved like a snake as he charged towards Damien. His claw extended, wrapped in the same black flames that he used before.

However, Damien was already counterattacking.

'Sixth Form: Dimensional Severance'

It was timed perfectly. The sword swung down in a straight line just before the dragon approached. As his claw swiped out, he saw that thin black line splitting the middle of his vision. BOOOOOOOOOM!

Two attacks landed at the same time. Damien was thrown backward by the force of the claw, but he landed his feet on the arena wall and pushed back into battle.

The Dragon Lord, on the other hand, was met with a near-perfect sword strike to his snout. It deleted the defensive properties of his scales and shattered his nose and jaw. His head was thrown into the air and his stance was broken, giving the mobilized Damien another opportunity to attack.

'His underbelly looks like a weak spot, but it's nothing like that.'

Just as he covered the weakness of his massive blind spot, he was prepared for people to target his soft underbelly. The moment he was thrown into the air and it was exposed to light, the entire area turned molten.

Damien was charging straight for it, but he could not touch it. Almost like he made a sacrifice to gain greater power, the Dragon Lord found a way to gain an absolute counter ability on this part of his body.

If Damien even so much as touched it, he would face a force greater than anything the Dragon Lord himself could exhibit.

Luckily, he wasn't aiming for the underbelly in the first place.

'If he gained so much power in that area, then there must be an Achilles' heel somewhere.'

It was a rule of law. Equivalent exchange wasn't a concept many people paid attention to in the True Void Universe, but it was definitely a system that could match their own if one found the right use for it.

The Dragon Lord wasn't from the same cosmos. He used different laws that abided by a different set of principles. What was impossible for Damien as a denizen of the True Void Universe was easily achievable for him.

In the same way, however, Damien had clear advantages over the Dragon Lord. The True Void Universe had a very direct scaling that was guided by the system. People were encouraged to go beyond what the system was willing to provide, but its aid couldn't be denied.

Because the system was guiding them to get stronger, allowing them to kill and kill for progress instead of forcing them to focus for ages to reach their goals, people had more room for creativity.

Attacks that abided by the laws but twisted them, laws that morphed and changed based on the achievements of the people who used them, these were the advantages of the True Void Universe.

Damien rapidly teleported just as he reached the dragon's underbelly, propelling himself high into the sky.

'Void Sword Art Sixth Step: Worldbreaker'

The weight of his sword pulled him back down to the earth. The Dragon Lord saw him and prepared his back spikes, but Damien wasn't afraid of them. When Worldbreaker was gaining even more power due to its momentum, back spikes weren't enough to stop it.

Like a meteor crashing into the ground, Damien tore through the air and slammed into the Dragon Lord's neck.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

His body was instantly forced to the ground. His neck made a disgusting crunching sound as several bones were broken. The back spikes shattered one by one, and Damien controlled their essence to add to his attack power.

The ground shattered once more, dropping Damien and the Dragon Lord into a pit below the arena. The floor tried to repair itself, but it no longer had that kind of capability.

The Dragon Lord was releasing ample amounts of energy to combat Damien's technique, while Worldbreaker itself was releasing waves that slammed against the arena barrier and struck fear into the onlooking crowd.

'It's time.'

They had been fighting for some time now. Damien could feel the Dragon Lord's energy becoming wilder and wilder.

'At this point, the bomb will go off whether I like it or not.'

Damien glanced up at the Temple Masters. Through a transmission that only they could hear, he sent them five words that made their eyes go wide.

Regardless, he wasn't going to let Chaos have its way. If the bomb was going to go off no matter what he did...

...then he was going to be the one to set it off.

He looked at the Dragon Lord who was struggling below him. To the crowd, it looked like he was still defending against the effects of Worldbreaker, but that had already passed.

At this point, the Dragon Lord was leaking energy at increasing intensities, and Damien's oppressive energy was the only thing keeping it from combusting.

He already won this battle. The internal injuries the Area Lord had sustained were catching up to him, especially now that Damien had released the chains that kept him alive.

The arena was wild with cheers, shaking the entire city.

But the rumbling happening now was only partially their fault.

With one last glance, Damien stabbed his sword into the open flesh he revealed with Worldbreaker.

And the Dragon Lord dutifully fulfilled his fate as a living nuclear bomb.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Chapter 1833 Confrontation [13]

Chaos was running. It was running for the nearest settlement it could find. It needed to cause chaos. It needed to incite people to embrace disorder and his own power.

It couldn't fight against Damien. it realized that no matter what it did, Damien had become an entity that it couldn't touch.

The power of Existence could not be underestimated. In a realm where nothing was allowed to exist, a force like that was inviolable.

Existence and Nonexistence were never meant to clash in the first place. If they were placed in each other's environments, they would be instantly stronger than anything else. When placed together in the Void, they were equal.

Using the two forces one after another was possible for the most skilled Supremes, but using them as one was almost impossible, as was the task of putting them together.

To reach the level of Absolute...there were so many people in the Land of Nothingness, but how many had left?

How many of those who left were able to achieve power higher than that point?

Damien had never interacted with an Absolute, nor had he ever heard of an Absolute existing before. He didn't doubt that they did, but their numbers were so few that it was better if they were believed to be the product of storytelling.

Bringing Existence into the Land of Nothingness was supposed to be impossible. There was only one Void Physique in the infinite cosmos, or it wouldn't have been possible for even Damien.

Since he achieved something so impossible and gained more control over Nonexistence because of it, how was Chaos supposed to stand against him?

Spiritual Gods were extremely powerful entities. In most cases, the longer they lived, the more powerful they became.

They could never be truly killed as they would return as long as people continued to believe in their concept. They wielded power that went against the laws of nature because they were embodiments of the laws of nature.

Chaos was no different. Until now, nobody had ever been able to touch a single fleck of his energy body.

But Damien...

Damien wasn't just able to touch it. He was able to manhandle it as he pleased, and if his mysterious energy managed to touch any piece of that energy, it would be abolished.

Chaos was opposed to Existence. Unlike Nonexistence, it wasn't directly opposed in such a way that neither of them could do anything to each other. Rather, a Spiritual God of Chaos was a special entity that would never be allowed to exist in Existence.

It was the opposite of the order that governed reality. Chaos was an important part of Existence, but it was never allowed to overshadow Order.

Damien was now the archnemesis that Chaos never wanted to meet, and he was chasing it like there was no tomorrow.

After all, there really wasn't a tomorrow.

The clone's battle was coming to an end. Damien had to catch it within the next few minutes, or everything would collapse.

Still, he wasn't afraid.

'My previous doubt wasn't unwarranted. If I was abiding by the rules of the realm, this fight would have gone differently.'

He had to admit that he wasn't technically a match for Chaos. It made him feel wrong to cheat for the win like this, but he did what was necessary.

That was how he comforted himself. Rather than following ethics uselessly and fighting a losing battle, he preferred to end things quickly by using everything at his disposal.

'And though it still makes all of this feel pointless, I already did it, so there's no point in complaining.'

He was experiencing the joy of a relatively even fight with his other body. Wasn't it fine to experience absolute domination in this one?

Chaos was definitely fast. Without a physical body to inhibit its movements, it really wasn't a force that could be stopped through ordinary means.

Unfortunately, Damien's entire problem was that his means weren't ordinary in the slightest.

'How could that person have a descendant? I thought...'

Chaos was focused on the wrong things. So absorbed in its thoughts and its search for somewhere to enhance its myth, it didn't even notice Damien's approach.

Or perhaps it could be attributed to the fact that his energy was currently untrackable in this realm?

Regardless, Damien appeared behind Chaos at an unknown time and followed him, seeing what it was up to. When he found nothing particularly interesting about the Spiritual God's rambling, he locked down the area. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

It wasn't discreet in the slightest. A large area around Chaos was suddenly filled with an immovable wall of black lightning explosions. The Spiritual God turned around in fear, finally registering Damien's presence.

"What the hell are you?!" It screamed furiously.

"How is this possible?!"

It wasn't fair. It wasn't fair in the slightest! Why did someone like him have to exist?! Why did he have to come to this realm at the worst possible timing?!

Chaos was reminded of an individual who came to the Land of Nothingness billions of years ago. He remembered the last time he suffered from an extremely similar situation.

Back then, the person in question was not bothered by the cycle of all things and chose to seal him rather than kill him. The person in front of Chaos now was clearly not planning to do the same.

It couldn't fight back. It couldn't resist. For the second time in its life, Chaos felt what it was like to be on the receiving end of that kind of treatment.

Damien had the chance to humiliate the Spiritual God, but he chose not to. He did understand its sentiments, after all.

He shook his head, resolved to end things quickly and without complication.

"It might seem unfair to you, but...do me a favor and die for the sake of everyone else's wellbeing."

Damien held his hand out. Chaos immediately felt the aura of death around him.

'No.'

This wasn't it.

'No. No. No.'

This wasn't how it was supposed to end.

'No. No. NO!'

It had no choice but to die here, but it couldn't allow this person to leave the realm and become Absolute. Another face of Chaos would be born in the future, and for its sake, Damien needed to die now.

"AAHHHHHHH!"

Chaos screamed as if it was fed up with its circumstances.

"Fine. Fine. FINE! If I must die, then I must die! However, I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO LIVE AS YOU PLEASE!"

Chaos had the resolve and the reason.

Its entire plan was centered around a moment like this, but Chaos never expected that it would land itself in the same exact situation.

With no options and no hope, with only one fate awaiting it, Chaos detonated its very core as a Spiritual God. If it was going to die, then Damien was going to die as well.

For the sole purpose of achieving that goal, it used every possible ounce of power it could muster from both its current form and the form that was still stuck in the depths of the earth.

And the explosion created by such a massive outpouring of force...

...was large enough to turn the entire third island into a wasteland. BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Chapter 1834 Resolution [1]

The explosion was a mixture of black and red, the signature colors of chaos. However, it was also very similar to the colors that represented the Dragon Lord.

The instant the bomb went off, Damien used all of his power to contain it within a certain area. He gritted his teeth and fought against it, but, as expected, in this body, he had to deal with Chaos' full power.

From the crowd's perspective, the Dragon Lord was putting up his final struggle. He was releasing everything he possibly had to destroy Damien and win the battle.

Damien would have been glad if it was just that much. The explosion wasn't something he could deal with alone. He started sweating just from the few seconds that he spent containing it, but it was still expanding ever so slightly with every passing instant.

Still, Damien gritted his teeth and held on. The defining factor right now was not his own effort, but the actions of his main body.

Unfortunately, he was too focused on his current situation to pay attention to what was happening on that side, so he instead had to rely on something else entirely.

VOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Damien was pushed back as the explosion became exponentially larger. The force alone shattered the arena barrier, and a huge sound filled the entire city of Terra.

People couldn't take it as part of the fight anymore. Looking at Damien, he wasn't just blocking the Dragon Lord's attack.

No, he was fighting for his life in that arena.

Chaos ensued just as planned. The citizens panicked and rapidly tried to evacuate the arena, climbing over each other to reach the exits.

The rumbling soon spread from the arena and into the city itself. Cracks spread through the streets and buildings shook as their foundations were damaged. A widespread panic was ensuing.

Damien's entire hope for quelling this problem before it truly became a calamity was based on the five words he had spoken before.

"Act now or die trying."

They were words meant for only three people. It wasn't a threat, but instead an attack aimed to remind them of their original purpose.

They were cursed now, but they still had their original egos. Just like the Prison Master, they could make the conscious choice to disobey orders and be punished.

Perhaps they would face permanent death, but in return, they would gain this society peace for many generations to come.

Was it worth the sacrifice in their eyes? That was Damien's question. He pushed through his own struggles and held onto the explosion. It had expanded into the stands already, consuming a large portion of the arena.

'Three seconds.'

In three seconds, Damien would lose control over the force and it would run rampant. However, that was more than enough time.

Suddenly, the load Damien bore became lighter. His eyes widened slightly as he glanced to his left and right. A smile forced on his face when he understood what happened.

With blood leaking from their lips, eyes, and pores, the three Temple Masters were standing alongside him, using their remaining power to bring the explosive force down.

Outside, a few buildings had already collapsed. The people were wrapped in chaos, but there weren't severe casualties yet. Yes, thousands died, but they would all revive soon enough. As long as the force of the bomb was contained, they would not face eternal death. "We will not survive for long!" The Earth Temple Master roared.

"Use all of your power! Before we disappear, we must remove this force from our realm!"

The other Temple Masters nodded heavily. Damien, on the other hand, was less concerned.

After all, his mental burden was released so he was once again able to experience his split-screen life. On the other side, his body, filled with the power of Existence, removed Chaos' explosive force from the world entirely.

He held his arm out and summoned a blob of red mass from the middle of the energy storm. "I told you already. Die so everyone else can live. Even if it's a form like this, I won't let you survive and plant seeds for your successor to grow from."

The red mass screeched in an extremely high-pitched tone. It was definitely speaking, but Damien couldn't understand it.

Plus, why did he have to bother with what Chaos said?

Without an ounce of expression in his eyes, he closed his fist and squashed the red mass. Before its pieces could leave his reach, a black energy consumed them and brought their essence back into Damien's body.

From that moment, the island was free of a Spiritual God's influence. The energy he let spread into the world was still there, but the active techniques he used were immediately dispelled.

In other words, the control skill that was the foundation of Chaos' entire plan was undone. The Temple Masters were fighting through severe pain in order to mobilize their power and contain the explosion until then, but it all vanished in a single second.

They felt the phantom pain shooting through them, a product of their confusion, but they couldn't deny that they were not being subjected to the negative effects of the curse anymore.

There was no time to sit down and ponder upon it. With their newfound freedom, the three used everything in their power to support Damien.

Four people worked together in an arena that was no longer crowded to protect the city that didn't know of their efforts from a calamity that they still didn't understand.

Their powers combined and molded into one as they focused on the same goal, and bit by bit, the explosion's power was contained.

The black and red ball of chaotic energy retreated further and further until it disappeared entirely, leaving behind only the entirely charred body of the person who was rigged with the explosive in the first place. 'The Dragon Lord...' He was a good opponent. Whether he was dead or alive was uncertain at this time. Those who wished to know his fate would only be able to determine if he was eternally killed in a week's time.

For now, they could only kill his present body and offer him an opportunity to revive, as healing was impossible.

Damien spread his being through Nonexistence and looked at the city beyond the arena.

It was in tatters. While he was busy containing the explosion, it managed to deal a considerable amount of damage to the population.

This event would likely form a scar that never healed on the third island's society. However, if Chaos' plans truly came to fruition, then it would have been much, much worse than just a scar.

Damien smiled to himself just slightly.

'It's a really a good feeling when everything goes according to plan.' This event came frighteningly close to ending in tragedy, but everything Damien hoped for happened. Existence destroyed Chaos and the Temple Masters helped him in stopping the bomb. However, while everything had been mostly settled with these two events, there was still one thing left for Damien to do. And for that purpose, while his clone body accompanied the Temple Masters to take care of the aftermath, the main body took a direct route to the Eternal Sanctum just one more time.

Chapter 1835 Resolution [2]

Chaos' self-destruction was insane, truly.

When facing it personally, Damien could guarantee that he wouldn't have been able to do anything if he wasn't breaking the realm's laws. Genuinely, the only reason he was able to contain that force on his own was because of Existence.

Still, he did it and he did it easily, planting a permanent memory of his face in Chaos' mind. The current iteration of the Spiritual God was dead. Damien was planning to check his original containment unit to scatter any remaining traces of him as well.

However, the third island had been too far entrenched in the cycle of order and chaos. Eventually, people would once again feel discontent with peace and the creation of a new Spiritual God would begin.

Damien only made sure that the Spiritual God who was born would remember what happened to its predecessor and hide itself. The rest was up to the temples and their masters to figure out.

There really wasn't a need for Damien to go to the Eternal Sanctum. The Prison Master was free of his chains at last, so he didn't have to worry about the escaped Chaos Faction members.

In fact, when he arrived at the prison, the Area Lord was already gone. It was clear that he'd gone to chase them from the moment he realized that he was free.

He just wasn't a fan of the island's methods.

He couldn't find a better solution to the problem, as none had been able to utilize Nonexistence to eternally kill another in any situation. While he was using Existence, though, he was going to make the problem much smaller.

That way, it would take at least another few billion years for chaos to take hold once again.

He entered the prison while its warden was away. Its prisoners did not react to his presence, likely because they'd seen many strange visitors recently.

Were they expecting what Damien was planning to do? Definitely not. If they were, then they wouldn't have been so calm.

'Hmm... I can't keep wantonly breaking the realm laws. I may have eaten that one face of Nonexistence, but it won't be fun if I keep offending the concept.'

In the end, he didn't want Nonexistence as a whole to see him as an enemy, nor did he want to dominate it through force.

As such, this was the last thing he could do before putting Existence away.

From the beginning, he was able to distinguish between the good and the bad people in the prison. There was a decent percentage of the population that was reformed by the system. They wanted to leave and resume their peaceful lives in places far separated from the things they did in the past.

The prison was too much for them. It tortured them until they broke, and when they broke, they became rational humans again.

Now, the system was still flawed. The number of those who went insane and only kept themselves alive through their desires for vengeance and blood was far, far higher. Those people were the roots of Chaos.

If it weren't for the fact that their souls were already atrocious before they were placed in the prison, then Damien could absolutely call their punishment cruel and unusual.

A certain level of degeneracy was necessary to hold a grudge for such a long time without ever-changing, and just like Chaos, those people were terrible for the island's ecosystem.

Thus, as Damien positioned himself as judge, jury, and executioner, he deemed that they deserved to die.

His senses spread and registered every single person in the prison. They were then sorted and categorized. Nothing more needed to be explained.

Damien carried out their sentences right then and there. Leaving a note for the Prison Master when he returned about the reformed prisoners who remained, he left the Eternal Sanctum entirely.

Finally, he returned to Terra and met up with his clone body. 'Now that I think about it, I technically used Existence and Nonexistence at the same time.'

He only pulled it off because he had two bodies, but it was still a considerable accomplishment.

And, more importantly in the current moment, as the two of them merged together, his badge glowed and changed.

It went straight to the platinum level and then ascended once more, disappearing into flecks of white light. 'Good.'

He could now leave the island whenever he wanted. That moment was pretty much now, but he couldn't quite go.

He pulled his clone body away quickly, but he was actually in the middle of a meeting with the three Temple Masters. Now that they'd merged, he was the one who had to take care of it.

Mostly, it was only for them to thank him. While Damien went to the Eternal Sanctum, Damien explained everything to the Temple Masters. They finally learned that Chaos itself was the cause of everything, and though he didn't explain how, he made it clear that Chaos was gone for the time being.

The city was brought back to its original state after only a few hours. Reversing change was easy in a place where change itself was not meant to happen.

The damage to the population was still evident, but the Temple Masters were experienced in dealing with public affairs. They broadcasted a message across the entire island and truthfully revealed that Chaos was the cause of everything.

They told of the massive plan that was set into motion because it was destroyed before ever coming to fruition. And, they framed Damien as a great hero, giving the people a figure to rally around so they could maintain hope.

Of course, Damien was leaving soon, but it was fine as long as his actions inspired someone else to take his place. Until then, he was sure that the Temple Masters would be able to handle any troubles that arose.

This incident taught them a lot. They proved themselves as people who truly cared for their populace. That was enough to guarantee that they would change for the better.

Damien had some slight attachments to this island, but he was not sad about leaving it behind. He was happy with what he'd experienced thus far and he was ready to move on.

After staying for a few more days to oversee the peacekeeping efforts, he bid farewell to the few people he'd become acquainted with before approaching the shore.

Now, he could officially say that he was more than halfway done with the trials of this land.

And from his experiences on the third island, he was sure that the hardest had already passed.

'Yeah, I'm not doing that again.'

One large conflict in this realm was enough. From now on, Damien wanted to focus only on himself.

As he stepped onto the fourth island for the first time, he realized that the islands were supporting his thoughts.

After all, this island's test was exclusively reserved for individual participants. Its inhabitants were busy with their trials, leaving the island itself desolate.

The island catered to Damien a lot more than its predecessors. It was an island where one was required to bathe in the liquids of emptiness and have their bodies baptized. This process could take a very long time for some, and those who could not adapt would be forever entrapped in the darkness.

'So, pretty much, I'm not going to encounter another person for a while.'

Damien left the shores and immediately approached the lakes of emptiness. If it was about being accepted and molded by Nonexistence, he was confident that he could leave this island within an incense stick of time. He raised his foot to take his first step into the waters...

Chapter 1836 Harmony [1]

"Wait!"

A woman's voice stopped him. Damien turned around curiously. He could've sworn that this island didn't have anything like a population, but it seemed there were indeed people living on its shores.

The majority of the island was filled with black water everywhere. It was a shade lighter than the Sea of Nothingness, but barely to a noticeable extent. There were some small Eastern-style buildings in a few places, but they looked old and abandoned.

Seeing how the woman was approaching him, she didn't seem to carry bad intentions. As such, Damien decided to entertain her.

As long as he wasn't sent on another quest to save the island, it was fine, right?

"What is it?" he asked. His tone wasn't rude, but it properly conveyed his urgency.

"Ah," the woman said, "I did not mean to disturb you. However, there are certain rituals you must complete before stepping into the waters of nothingness. If you enter without completing them, your body might be rejected and erased."

"Rejected?" Damien echoed.

"Yes," the woman responded, nodding her head furiously.

"I will not deny who I am. I am a coward who faced the waters and could not find the resolve to enter, so I have lived on this island for many years and observed its challengers. It is certainly possible to succeed without partaking in the rituals, but those who do tend to gain much more security than their counterparts."

Damien's eyes narrowed as he scanned the woman up and down. As she said, she had the aura of someone who had been stuck in stasis for a very long time. It may have been fear that kept her away from the trial when she first came to the island, but it was now contentment. She was fine with her circumstances, therefore she did not wish for change. Though her heart was warm, the rest of her being seemed tired of existing.

'Is she trying to help me because I'm special, or is this something she's been doing for years?'

It was definitely the latter. Damien didn't even need to consider it. As he scanned the island seriously, he noticed that there were no more than ten living people in the small structures decorating the shore. Most of the structures were made for other purposes, likely to aid those who came to challenge the island.

"How long have you all been living here?"

"I stopped counting after one million. The Elder is the only one who still counts the time, so you may ask him if you are truly curious."

Damien nodded. He looked into her eyes and asked another question.

"Then, was compassion something you possessed from the start, or did you develop it after living here for an uncountable amount of time?" The woman smiled wryly.

"What I was before is no longer relevant. I am merely a guide for those who seek guidance."

"Hmm..."

It must have been painful. Thinking about her previous life took her out of the illusion that there was nothing beyond her quiet life on the island. Ambition was a beautiful thing for many people, but to some, it was the very thing they feared the most.

Damien was merely curious, as it seemed that most of the kinder and more thoughtful people he met in the Land of Nothingness developed those ideals after coming to this realm.

However, he wasn't going to push the issue. If she wanted to be a guide, then a guide was all she was.

"What are the rituals you were speaking of earlier? Is it anything troublesome?"

Damien asked quite bluntly as that was his main concern. His attitude made the woman smile slightly as she shook her head.

"No. They are not troublesome at all. It merely takes a bit of time."

Once people reached the fourth island, they were usually thirsty for success. The finish line seemed so close, so it was obvious that they didn't want to waste even a single second.

It was a little comedic, as all of the time in this realm was inconsequential. Regardless, everyone would be returned to the exact moment they left.

Just, it was more a matter of mindset.

To take it slow felt like torture to many of the people who had spent too many years to reach this point. They saw a simple task and wanted to tackle it head-on to get it over with and progress.

Damien also had that mentality until only a few seconds ago, didn't he?

Nevertheless, if time was all it took to reap more benefits from the waters of nothingness, then who was he to refuse?

The woman led him to the nearest house, which turned out to be a bathhouse. "First, please use these facilities to purify your body. I will prepare the next ritual as you do so."

The woman bowed and left him at the door. As she left, Damien went inside and started undressing.

The facility was nice. It was mostly made from wood, but the faucets from which the water was released looked oddly similar to those from Earth.

'Well, I guess that kind of thing translates.'

It was a little funny how so many different cosmos developed in extremely similar ways. All humans reached the same conclusions, even if they were separated by different environments and laws.

That fact made Damien a little happy as he entered the empty bathhouse and chose a place for himself.

As he turned the water on, he noticed that it was just as black as the natural waters of this world. The usual clear water that he knew and loved could not be found here.

Damien let it shower his body regardless. 'Just in case I didn't know...' he thought with a smile as he saw a poster on a nearby wall that displayed the proper methods to wash one's body.

It was next to a mirror, which was where his attention was focused.

How long had it been since Damien paid any mind to his own body?

He saw the person in the mirror and almost didn't recognize him.

"When did I become so...old?"

He didn't really look it. He didn't have any wrinkles or discoloration on his skin. He, to some extent, looked the same as he did when he was first entering his thirties.

But the look in his eyes, the maturity in his figure...

Rather than a young genius, he looked more like a wizened expert. The black water ran down his body, taking with it his sense of self while making him all the more aware of it.

To purify oneself in the Land of Nothingness meant something different. It meant erasing oneself and embracing emptiness.

Damien watched as his eyes became more peaceful and indifferent than ever before. His skin was already glowing, but it became softer, as if to erase the invisible scars that piled up over the course of tens of years of battle. The aura of an Absolute, the look of a Supreme Ruler...

Damien lacked these things because he liked to stay grounded. He kept his mind on earth so he never lost his human side.

However, as he looked into that mirror and saw himself as a Supreme for the first time, something changed.

The "human side" that Damien cherished so much...

What was it?

Why was it so significant?

And, if it was holding him back from reaching his full potential...

Why was he holding onto it so dearly?

Chapter 1837 Harmony [2]

What did it mean to be an Absolute, and was it possible to attain that level without giving everything up?

It was a question that Damien never considered asking himself. He always just thought that he could have everything because his path had been smooth thus far, but would it really be that way?

He could become a Supreme with that attitude, but would it be able to take him to the final level of power that stood beyond the reach of even people like the Dark God?

Now wasn't the time to be searching for answers, but Damien would have to keep the question in the back of his head until he found the solution he sought. Erasing oneself wasn't about losing one's ego. It was about putting down all material thoughts and worries, becoming one with the mind of Nonexistence.

Damien could do this easily. He had already been in that mind state before. All he needed to do was reach it a second time. He closed his eyes and focused. He put away everything about the Dark God and the Heavenly World. He put away thoughts of his friends, family, and his own future.

When his pupils saw light again, they were hollow, amethyst voids. Though Damien was still present, it was as if his mind was in the clouds watching his body from above.

He finished following the procedures on the wall and stepped out of the bathhouse, not giving himself a second look in the mirror. His body naturally dried itself as he summoned a new set of clothes and put them on.

As if she could sense that he was finished, the woman arrived in front of the bathhouse door right as Damien opened it, bowing slightly.

"I will now take you to the second ritual."

It was the second of two. Damien was taken into a separate house. On the wood mat floors, there was an array of candles surrounding something of an altar. It did not have anything on it other than a single black rose, picked from the garden outside of the building.

There was another person in the room, an elderly man who looked to be the person the woman was referring to earlier. Damien sat down in front of the altar with his legs crossed. Seeing that he was in position, the elderly man began to chant.

The candles flickered with his words. The atmosphere in the room changed as Damien's mind experienced a euphoric sensation. Were there drugs in the smoke? Damien couldn't tell, but he knew that his body wasn't being negatively impacted by anything.

Since he was already present, he quietly allowed the ritual to proceed, focusing on the man's chants to see if he could decipher anything.

'The structure is completely different from anything I can make out. The Existence and Nonexistence that this man experienced are too different from mine, so I cannot use my own knowledge to understand his.'

Still, Damien listened. He tried his best to understand the message and emotions carried in those words. Though he was still clueless by the time it ended, he was glad he did so.

It was a new experience. Perhaps it would help him in the future, and perhaps it wouldn't. Regardless, it was an experience that defined Damien's existence.

No more words were spoken after the ritual ended. As if they didn't want to break Damien's state of mind, the elderly man and the woman both remained silent. Even while leading him back to the waters of nothingness, the woman only used motion to convey her intent.

It seemed that Damien's preparations were over. He followed the woman's example and sat in a meditative stance on the lakeshore. He closed his eyes, feeling the nearby presences disappear.

As his mind drifted into the blackness, the liquid from the lake leaked out and created a puddle under him. More and more water came out, cocooning him in its grasp and dragging him into the main water body.

Both his mind and body were submerged in Nonexistence, and once again, he was shown a story that he had never seen before.

It depicted a man who wanted to be king. He fought hard for his entire life, winning the hearts of the subjects and getting closer to the throne. When he reached it, however, he found that he could not sit on that seat?

Why?

Did the people not like him? Was he not worthy?

No, he was both well-liked and worthy. The citizens would surely follow him in their most desperate times and listen to him when they needed advice.

However, nothing the man did proved that he was worthy of being king.

He had to find that which made him worthy. He had to turn those citizens into loyal subjects who would not complain even if he made drastic changes to their livelihoods.

If those citizens believed that the changes he made were for their own good, then they would not complain.

A trusted king had the ability to convince his people to follow his lead in both peace and hardship.

Did Damien have that?

This story was about him, though it was not about his journey to be king.

Unlike Nonexistence's story which he was forced to interpret on his own, this story practically screamed its meaning to him.

This was not his meeting with Nonexistence as it was for everyone else. At the moment, the one speaking to him was the Void itself.

It needed him to prove himself, but it would never tell him how.

That was for him to understand. If he couldn't even do that much, then he wasn't worth considering for the position of king in the first place.

He was that man. He wanted to be king, and he'd won the Void's heart. It was willing to follow him when he was in hardship, but it was not yet willing to fully submit itself to his whims.

It needed him to prove himself, but it would never tell him how.

That was for him to understand. If he couldn't even do that much, then he wasn't worth considering for the position of king in the first place.

'Right, the final goal has always been the Void.'

He had to focus hard on controlling Existence to the point where he barely used the Void's power. Afterward, he had to focus hard on controlling Nonexistence, so the same situation repeated itself.

This realm taught Damien a lot about Nonexistence, but it was also constantly reminding him that this was only a single step in his journey. It may have been one of the last ones, but did that matter if he fell halfway up the final stair?

From the very first moment when the Void Physique unlocked and saved him from his misery, his goal was to go above all existing laws and stand atop the pinnacle of all things. Was that why his mind was being plagued by thoughts of being Absolute recently?

Now that he had reached such a point in his training, the world itself was telling him to stay focused and never lose the grit that brought him this far.

All Damien had to do was confirm it.

'I will not be satisfied until I conquer the Void.'

It was the meaning of his name, wasn't it? It was the very dream his father had for him when he chose it, wasn't it?

The second he made that vow, his time in the waters of nothingness ended.

Nonexistence wanted to enter Damien's body and become one with him from the moment he entered the water. The Void was only holding it back so it could hear that promise from Damien himself.

Now that the Void was no longer inhibiting its path, Nonexistence flowed into Damien's body and soul instantly.

His very existence was being changed.

"Harmony" was finding a place for itself in his being.

Chapter 1838 Harmony [3]

The transformation wasn't meant to fully convert one's body into an entity of nothingness. To do so meant erasing everything other than the nothingness itself and would merely destroy any semblance of what a person was.

This procedure was designed so that Nonexistence could find its own place within the physical body and soul. It aided practitioners in reaching a state where their bodies could house both Existence and Nonexistence without drawbacks.

For those whose Existence was much stronger, it would take a much longer time to come out of the waters. One's body could refuse to adapt to the Nonexistence, and they could also be restricted by whatever they saw when they entered the lakes.

There were many factors that trapped hundreds of thousands of people in the darkness, refusing to let them go.

Damien was not one of those people. His Void Soul easily housed Nonexistence without needing to change, and his body was the same. In total, it only took three days for Damien to speak to the Void and then finish his transformation.

He was immediately ejected from the lake when that time came. His body returned to its previous position, cross-legged on the shore.

However, he did not stand up or exit his meditative state.

As he confirmed that he was moving towards the Void, his goals changed.

Of course, Damien was still using this realm to learn Nonexistence, but he had to take the external situation back into mind. The moment he left, his war with the Dark God would begin. He only had a little bit of time before he had to confront that man directly.

While he was in this realm where time didn't exist, he needed to get as strong as possible. That entailed not just training Nonexistence, but Existence as well.

Sitting on the shore, Damien summoned the energy of the Void again. As he swore on the third island, he could no longer use Existence in the Land of Nothingness, but that didn't stop him from connecting to it.

Problems would only arise if he manifested it externally.

What Damien wanted to do now was check on the relationship between his Existence and Nonexistence. Their individual levels were different. The goal was to balance them and make them equal in every aspect.

'It's actually more complex than I thought.'

Damien thought Existence would easily win as he'd spent more time with it, but he was wrong.

Existence had more strength. He knew how to use it with more proficiency and power.

However, his connection with Nonexistence was stronger. While it may not have been able to match Existence in raw strength, it was more willing to respond to Damien and exert his will.

He could tell that he had no more need to train in Existence, which meant that its current strength level was the metric he needed to use to improve Nonexistence.

In the same way, Nonexistence getting any closer to him would be inconsequential in terms of material benchmarks. If he wanted to improve it to match Existence, all he needed to do was continue training on this island and the fifth island before leaving.

But to get closer to Existence...

The unique environment was what allowed Damien to form a bond with Nonexistence. If not for Death's Hold, its origin, being housed in this realm, he wouldn't have ever realized that the concepts could display emotions in their own unique ways.

The origin of Existence was somewhere in the material plane, but Damien didn't have access to it. It would already be too late when he got there, so using the same method was out of the question.

'If I want to get creative and find a way to access it...'

All Damien needed was an entry point. If he could find one, then the rest was up to his own skill and abilities. Even if he failed, he could keep trying.

Oddly enough, Existence was far harder to reach than its nonexistent counterpart. While it was in the light, it was so unfathomably massive that it was practically unknown.

There was a clear image of Nonexistence, no matter how vague it was. To picture Existence personified... Damien just couldn't find a way to do it.

'It's a task too large for the human mind.'

No matter how strong he became, that would remain true. As long as he wasn't Absolute, he would not be able to truly comprehend the scale of Existence.

So, to find a more roundabout way to meet with its personification, Damien had to think outside of the box.

He opened his eyes slightly, looking at the waters in front of him.

'Maybe...'

It might have been the answer.

He stood up, preparing to step back into the waters of nothingness.

Almost like he was stuck in a time loop, a voice came from behind him.

"Wait!"

However, this time, he ignored it.

"You cannot go back! If you return, you will truly be consumed!"

It seemed the woman had seen a greedy practitioner die in the past and wanted to keep him from experiencing the same fate. But, Damien's greed was different.

Nonexistence was not the target of his avarice. It was merely a medium. He took a single step into the water and his entire body sunk deep below the surface.

"No!"

He could hear the woman's cry from beyond, but it also didn't mean anything to him. Her compassion was unwarranted.

The blackness consumed his mind and body. It was trying to turn him into a true manifestation of nothingness.

A pitch-black energy even deeper in color than the waters covered his physical form, making it impossible for Nonexistence to do as it pleased.

Meanwhile, Damien actually allowed his soul to continue the merger.

His entire being became one with the nothingness. His mind became its, and for a moment, he himself was a face of Nonexistence wandering in the Void.

His ego was hidden deep within his soul, protected from the force of erasure. His soul acted on the instinctive command he left for it, wandering and wandering until it found its target.

Light.

The only way to approach Existence in a form that nobody had ever seen before was to become the only concept that had ever seen it.

Damien, as Nonexistence itself, approached the light of Existence.

Thousands of faces followed him as he approached. When his actions were noticed, those thousands became millions and billions.

The entirety of the concept of Nonexistence rallied behind Damien's soul and approached the border that separated them from their sibling. They pleaded, making a case for him. The light of Existence seemed uninterested at first, ignoring the words and cries.

However, as they continued, even the concept that never knew anything other than indifference was forced to experience curiosity for the first time.

It was being approached in its purest form by a sentient being supported by its counterpart.

Almost begrudgingly, it opened a path.

Damien's soul was forcefully disconnected from Nonexistence as the concept pushed him into the arms of Existence. His ego came back to the light, and the first thing it saw...

The true face of the one known as "Existence."

Chapter 1839 Harmony [4]

What he saw was certainly not what he was expecting.

Though Nonexistence was always removed from living beings, its form was humanoid. Its desire to be recognized by the people of the world made it take a form that they would sympathize with.

Existence was different. It was recognized regardless of what form it took, and as it had no such desire to change its position, it never took a single defined form.

Damien's eyes landed on what could be considered a monstrosity. It was a combination of everything in the world. In one sense, it was a massive chimera of all that existed, a gruesome entity that was difficult to lay eyes on. In another sense, it was a being with no definite form that constantly shifted between the different aspects of Existence.

Sometimes it was fire, sometimes it was darkness. Sometimes it was a dragon, and sometimes it was nothing more than a single atom. It remained in this space that was also a manifestation of its form. As for why this space existed...?

Perhaps it didn't. Perhaps it was created for the sole purpose of giving Damien a chance, which was why Existence was unable to find a proper form for itself.

Or was it just indifferent?

Damien stood in that space with it, but it didn't acknowledge his presence in the slightest.

'I can't sense a hint of emotion from it.'

It had every emotion in its being as even they were a part of Existence, but it never displayed them on its own. It did not have its own feelings. How was Damien supposed to approach such an entity? None of his life experiences thus far taught him about an event like this one.

He didn't know when the last time he felt so overwhelmed by any being or concept was. It had been long enough that the feeling was new again. For a moment, it interfered with his thoughts, making him stand in sheer awe in front of Existence itself.

He wasn't able to easily exit that state on his own. He only regained his senses when he felt a slight push on his back.

'Hm?'

He turned around, but there was nothing there. Only the wide expanse that was this strange and formless realm.

'I see...'

Considering the location, there were only two things capable of interacting with him. One was the Existence in front of him, and the other...

'...so their relationship was never a hostile one.'

While the two concepts opposed each other naturally, they thrived in their harmony. Nonexistence was jealous of many of Existence's blessings, but it knew that the concept was valuable and didn't want it to change.

After all, its wish was never to replace Existence, but to be valued at the same level. It wanted to stand equal to its twin.

If that desire held any malice, then Damien would have sensed it. In this moment, he could feel Nonexistence's desire clearly. It did not want to benefit on its own. As it had submitted to him and trusted him with its wish, it wanted him to help Existence reach a similar state.

'They're like real siblings.' Damien thought to himself.

He felt as if Nonexistence was telling him that Existence still wanted to feel the emotions that it could. Only, it never had a sense of self. It needed Damien to help it attain that.

'Right, it displayed curiosity when I approached, didn't it?'

If curiosity was the first emotion it ever felt, then it would obviously want to understand how the rest felt as well.

'Am I...really interacting with the greatest concepts of all right now?'

It was hard to imagine that the thoughts he was having pertained to the concept of Existence itself. It felt more like he was trying to deal with an emotional teenager.

'It's odd, isn't it?'

Had anybody else experienced this? If they had, then they weren't here, so Damien had to ask himself the question.

It seemed like this was more of the perspective that an Absolute had. There was no distinction between concepts or people or nonliving things. They all had their own pulses and expressions. Damien stood in a position where he could view them all without bias. Existence was no different from anyone or anything else. In order to teach it how to express itself and develop a sense of self, did he really have to do anything that he hadn't already done?

Damien had raised children in the past. Not just August, but Zara and Xue'er before him as well. He had experience in teaching, and if he took away all of his biases and viewed Existence as nothing more than what it truly was, the task at hand became much less daunting.

'This is basically a confirmation of what I began to wonder when I met Grand Heavens Boundary.'

Just as humans were jealous of the vastness of the universe, the universe was in awe of the numerosity of existences within it.

He approached carefully, getting closer to the ever-changing chimera of Existence. It noticed his presence. He could feel its weight on his shoulders as it observed him.

However, he did not show fear. This pressure was natural, not intentional. He refused to treat the concept differently just because of its innate power.

Eventually, he stood right next to it, looking up at its form. Slowly, he raised his hand and touched it for the first time.

It flinched.

Existence itself flinched, confused. Damien's warm hand was not something unknown to it. As he touched it, it saw the moments in Existence that converged with his actions.

Countless mothers and fathers brushing their children's hair, holding them close so they felt secure. These images were familiar as they were experiences that transcended race and species. Almost all living beings showed this kind of affection for their young.

But it felt different.

It was transmitted the emotions of both the parent and the child in that scenario, but it couldn't relate to those emotions at all. What it felt when Damien put it in the same situation was a subtle sense of discomfort and fear.

Why?

When the emotions it was meant to be feeling were so joyous, why did its own body feel fear?

Damien felt it too, but he wasn't discouraged. He removed his hand and spoke to the concept for the first time.

"You felt fear because all of this is unknown to you."

He knew that Existence could understand him, so he spoke to it without prejudice. His role was that of a teacher. Without worrying about his own ambitions, he was to teach Existence how to process the emotions it felt and differentiate them from the emotions of others. As for what it decided to do when it was finished learning...?

Damien naturally hoped that it would act according to his wishes, but he wasn't going to groom it for that purpose.

Nonexistence asked him sincerely to help its sibling, so that was what he came to do.

In the short time that he'd been here, Damien's mentality changed immensely. He viewed the situation in a way that nobody else could replicate.

But, then again, wasn't that the reason why he gained such an opportunity in the first place?

Existence and Nonexistence were concepts that changed along with the changes in the people, worlds, cosmos, and realities. Amidst all of that change, Damien was the only one who came along and gave them the chance to form their own independence and security. They only had the ability to think and process like humans because Damien viewed them without bias.

So, it was only natural that Existence would be willing to meet him.

And it was only natural that his endeavors in this specific aspect would always go his way.

Chapter 1840 Harmony [5]

Damien originally thought of Existence as a teenager who was still learning how to control their emotions, but as he interacted with it more, he learned that it was more like an abandoned puppy.

It felt extremely uncomfortable with any and all feelings. As it developed a sense of self, the emotions it experienced through others were separated from it by an invisible wall. Everything Damien did surpassed that wall and affected it directly.

Any and all things beyond the wall terrified Existence. It was experiencing the unknown and needed to overcome it to make progress.

So, that was where Damien started.

He chose simpler methods, deciding that he could use more complex things when it started to learn how to cope with having its own emotions.

As such, it started like adopting a puppy. That puppy had been left on the side of the road to fend for itself for months. Before that, it was abused by its owners. Now, it was completely untrusting of anything and everything. It acted aggressively to hide its fear, but subtly wanted to enjoy the affection it was being shown by the people who found it.

Perhaps the healing process would be long. Perhaps even several years later that puppy would jump at loud sounds or get scared when it was left alone, but it would eventually find true peace in a home where it was valued.

Like when it was just a puppy and its new family showed it that not everyone was bad, it just needed time to fully conquer its past trauma.

The "past trauma" for Existence was its isolation. It had to overcome the fears that came with expressing itself and giving itself physical form. It had to accept the vulnerabilities that it would develop as it gained emotions for itself.

Because this was a change that it also wanted to make. It noticed how the faces of Nonexistence rallied around Damien. Nonexistence, which had always cried sorrowfully at its disconnection from living beings, was joyously pushing one of those very living beings towards Existence.

It was curious about what Nonexistence had gained, and in its deepest depths, it also wanted to experience the same.

That was why it responded to Damien's efforts.

It felt fear, but even that fear was a joyous thing that wasn't possible before.

As Damien spent more time with it, teaching it slowly and getting it more comfortable with its presence, it learned and learned and learned.

The experiences of existences were like a guideline for it. Previously, it was only able to feel those things from the perspectives of others, but now it could view the same scenes and form its own emotions based on them.

Of course, it wasn't such an extreme change. Existence had to be indifferent to an extent. It was not allowed to interfere with reality. That would be the equivalent of a man tearing a hole in his own stomach to touch his liver. However, it was enough.

Existence's form began to change at some point. Its large and gruesome image was molded to match the way it viewed itself.

First, non-living entities and laws were removed from its form. Like Damien, it did not discriminate against these parts of its being. Merely, the form it wished to take was separated from them.

It did not prefer humans. That was not its reason to become humanoid. Unlike Nonexistence, Existence had a duty to treat every part of its being equally. The reason Existence eventually changed into a humanoid form was none other than Damien himself.

He was the one who taught it how to think for itself, how to interpret its own mysteries, and how to accept itself. He was, in the most human way possible, its "role model."

It was only natural for the concept to desire a form closer to him. Existence approached, completely different from the entity that he knew before.

Was it right to give Existence something similar to sentience? Its burden was so big that it needed a limited consciousness to cope with it. Now that Damien gave it the ability to think complexly, what would happen?

These were worries that Damien had while he was teaching it, but he was soon able to put them down. Existence showed him personally that it would be fine. It was smart in a sense. As it had access to all information, it was able to cross-reference and learn without Damien's help. Since it had a genuine interest, it spent a lot of time learning how to sympathize.

At the same time, it learned how to separate its consciousness from its duty. Just like Nonexistence, it formed faces. Some faces were unfeeling still, dedicating themselves to upholding Existence. Others were allowed to dream and possess emotions, allowing Existence to feel in the same way that Nonexistence did.

The two concepts were separated by their duties, but they were the exact same in every other aspect. As they were the two children of the Void, the two supreme concepts that were necessary for everything to function, they were as similar as they were different.

Time didn't pass, but it could be interpreted. If the amount of time Damien spent with Existence was forced to be quantified, it would likely be a period of thousands of years at the very least.

But, Damien didn't feel the weight of that time, so it was as if it didn't happen. To him, it had only been a short period and Existence had progressed by leaps and bounds.

When the concept gained the ability to "understand" itself, everything changed. It was so subtle that nobody noticed it, not even those who used Existence. However, nothing was the same anymore. Everything was more vibrant. Every emotion, every plant, every action was more pronounced than before. Legends could grow at a pace that was impossible in the past, and overall prosperity became far more attainable.

Only in a few thousand years would people be able to look back and understand that it was during this era when fortune spread across all cosmos. But, of course, none of the changes were as significant as what Damien himself experienced. When Existence materialized its humanoid form, it approached him on its own for the first time. Like a human rather than a concept, it embraced him, melting into his body.

As if to thank him for showing it a world that it didn't know, Existence submitted itself wholeheartedly.

Damien could feel it. The two concepts formed a state of almost complete harmony in his body. His soul twisted as its center was defined with a new symbol.

A broken infinity sign formed there, supported by both Existence and Nonexistence.

Subtly, Damien could tell that this infinity sign was truly everything.

The moment it was completed, he'd ascend to a realm that no man had ever seen. Damien looked down at his hands. Existence and Nonexistence intertwined but refused to merge within. They would not act together, not because they opposed each other, but because they were aware that Damien wasn't prepared to handle that kind of power yet.

'Still, they're both in agreement.'

Damien only needed to properly reach that level. The two concepts would guarantee everything that came after.

'Good.'

His goal had been achieved, and he gained even more than that out of this endeavor. With Existence and Nonexistence at an equal level of intimacy, he was able to leave the realm of Existence happily.

The Land of Nothingness...

Really, it was the best opportunity he'd received since the very beginning of his journey.