

Void 1841

Chapter 1841 Harmony [6]

'Has anyone else perceived these concepts like this?'

It was a question Damien asked himself multiple times while he was with Existence. It was such a unique experience that he really couldn't imagine someone else doing the same.

But...he had the subtle understanding that this was his path to becoming Absolute, so hadn't at least one other person experienced the same thing?

He only had such thoughts because he didn't understand how much of an outlier he was. Living beings simply weren't meant to perceive the emotions of these concepts. Before Damien came, these emotions were hidden and vague. He was the one who came along and gave them deeper meaning, bolstering the concepts in the process.

However, even the primal emotions felt by Nonexistence before his arrival weren't privy to anyone else.

The minds of living beings weren't equipped to define such concepts as Existence and Nonexistence. Putting them into simple terms and comprehending them was already something that only the best of the best could do. To truly understand their metaphorical hearts?

If anyone else was forced to bear the brunt of those emotions, their minds would break. No matter who or what they were, this result would remain the same.

Was it the Void Physique's aid? It was normal for the Void Physique to give Damien opportunities barred from others. Its influence was the very reason why he grew at the rate he did, especially during his younger years.

When he had that thought, two concepts within him rebelled, as if to tell him that wasn't the case. They who perceived the Void as their parent knew that he possessed its blessing, and they could confidently say that such blessings were not the cause of his success.

No, it was something more primal, something within Damien, that gave him such a supreme ability of communication.

'Something within me...'

Perhaps they were referring to a talent like his comprehension ability, but Damien felt differently. When they said it was something within him, it felt like they were referring to his soul. 'Status'

[Status]

[Damien Void]

Title(s): [••••••••, Apostle of the Void, Evolver, Heaven's Wrath, Supreme Genius]

He focused on a single line. Everything else disappeared.

'The final mystery.'

The one thing that never solved itself no matter how much time passed. Damien forgot about it after so many years. His status was irrelevant, so he never needed to check it either.

That single title that remained an array of dots; what the hell was it?

How could it be possible for that title to remain redacted even when Damien had both Existence and Nonexistence under his control?

It was impossible for the title to be related to the Void. he could sense that it was below that level at the very least. But...

'Is it something I inherited or something I was naturally born with?'

He didn't have a way of telling what it could be. His other titles either had slight effects or no effect. At this point in his life, they were nothing more than remembrances of times long passed.

'It'll become significant at some point.'

His gut told him that it would become significant in his relationship with Existence and Nonexistence. Nevertheless, that was a problem for later.

Damien was definitely glad that he remembered the title. Now, he could work towards it. It wouldn't just be sitting and rotting as it had been thus far.

He stayed in the realm of Existence for a bit. The concept didn't want him to leave just yet, and he didn't mind spending more time with it.

Eventually, he had to leave. It wasn't a sad parting, as Existence would always be with him, but it was still filled with emotion.

This was the period when Existence would flourish the most. It would make the most out of its new emotions before settling into itself.

Damien was excited to see how things progressed from this point forth. However, to do so, he first needed to escape the Land of Nothingness. His mind returned to the blackness. Nonexistence cradled him, bringing him back to his body without causing harm. As his two sides came together, he once again left the waters and returned to the fourth island.

He instantly heard people rushing in from behind him. Clearly, the ten people who lived on this island were all alerted to his departure from the waters. They, who heard from the woman that he returned for a second dip, were flabbergasted by the fact that he had returned in one piece.

How was he not converted into nothingness?

It was a question that all of them wanted to ask, but the Elder stopped them before they could approach him.

Damien stood up, slightly nodding to him in thanks.

Both he and the Elder could tell that he was no longer the same person he entered the waters as. There was a different kind of aura about him, one that was less inviting and made everyone around him feel like they were required to bow.

It was the essence of a ruler. It was a sign that Damien finally dropped his biases.

To be Absolute was not to abandon humanity. Damien's own path to that level relied on the very humanity that he held so close.

However, being human wasn't what Damien originally interpreted it as either. He didn't have to hold biases and perceptions that valued humanity over all else. He didn't have to put humanity on a pedestal and ignore everything else.

All he needed to do was keep his core properties, the pieces of him that allowed him to be compassionate or kind. To empathize with both concepts and people was not human. It was beyond the level a human could reach, but it was still very reminiscent of the meaning of humanity.

'It's always a good moment when you find a path.'

To see the way forward and confidently walk without fearing the darkness was a beautiful feeling. In the end, his destination was in front of him. All he needed to do to reach it was walk.

He had been in this position many times before, but it felt fresh no matter how many times he experienced it. Whether he was a young sapling just starting to grow or an old tree preparing to reach its final form, the feeling of finding the way forward would always make him smile.

Damien remained on the third island for quite some time. He formed his own small hut away from the society existing there and focused on training Nonexistence. In the meantime, several people arrived on the fourth island.

Those like Kura were already close to graduating from the third island when he arrived. The pipeline that was frozen on the first and second islands continued from the third to the fourth. Over ten people arrived. Some of them went through the rituals and some didn't. Regardless, none of them escaped the waters of nothingness while Damien was there.

It was about three years if he had to quantify it. During that time, he expanded his imagination and communicated with Nonexistence. Through this training, he was able to significantly increase its level.

He only needed one final push to attain the heights he strived for.

And that...

Clearly, it was waiting for him on the fifth and final island.

Chapter 1842 Fifth Island [1]

Damien prepared to leave without telling anyone. He rarely made contact with the people of the island, though that first woman and the Elder would visit him from time to time.

They never gave him their names, which made it obvious that they wanted to maintain distance as well. It was likely because they knew that he was going to leave the island soon, so they didn't want to get attached.

Nevertheless, those two had helped Damien immensely during his stay here, so he at least wanted to do something for them as well.

He first approached the Elder. He was a quiet man, but also quite considerate. He was the one who showed Damien the most care. Perhaps it was because he viewed everyone here as his grandchildren, but his attitude was unexpectedly warm.

He helped Damien establish his privacy, and every once in a while, he'd bring with him gifts of incense or other similar objects to help Damien calm his mind for training.

The Elder wasn't someone he could directly help. If he tried, he would be refused.

Then, to help him discreetly...

The Elder was content with what he had. His people were happy and they had everything they wanted. If they wanted more, they could just manifest it on their own.

How was Damien to help him?

The most he could do was support the Elder's wish for peace. He didn't want people to come to this island to meaninglessly die anymore.

'Hmm...the island's structure can't be changed, but...'

If more people paid attention to the rituals, then perhaps there would be a change in the death rate.

Damien subtly interfered with the island itself. Through his connection with Nonexistence, he influenced the atmosphere in such a way that those who arrived here would feel more inclined to listen to its population.

He wasn't going to influence their decisions entirely, but he made it so that it was more appealing to follow the Elder and his people for just a few moments than to jump straight into the waters of nothingness.

Essentially, he eliminated the rush that clouded most people's judgements, allowing them to rationally consider their options.

Perhaps his aid would go unnoticed and nothing would change. Perhaps the rituals would eventually become commonplace and more Supremes would rise from the ashes.

Whatever the case, there was no way to know until much later.

Damien did bid the Elder farewell, returning to him a gift before going to find that woman.

She was interesting. Though she was content with her life on the island, she had more of a desire to leave than others. It wasn't enough to be called ambition, but it was still something.

When Damien found her, the offer he made was simple.

"Do you want to leave this island?"

If he aided her in her journey through the waters of nothingness, she would clear the trial with ease. As someone who'd submerged himself multiple times in the past few years, he could confidently assure that.

She believed it as well. Watching him felt like watching the growth of a beast. He relentlessly pushed himself to get stronger, and the results were clear enough. Someone like him could absolutely give her freedom from this boring life.

However...

Was she prepared to take it?

This was the first time she truly considered the possibility of escaping this realm.

And the main emotion she felt radiated so deeply that Damien could sense it from a mile away.

'Fear.'

Pure fear of the world she didn't know.

"I apologize, but I will have to reject your offer."

She came to a conclusion quickly.

This was her home now. It had been her home for millions of years at the very least. After such a long time, what would it feel like to return to the very moment from when she left?

Everything would be unfamiliar. She hardly remembered her previous life. Rather than going back to people who still cared about her that she didn't know anymore and a world that knew her but was unfamiliar to her eyes, she preferred to remain in this situation.

She was content. That was enough. She didn't strive for anything more, despite the dreams that occasionally plagued her. Damien looked into her eyes and read her emotions. She was feeling something he never took the time to consider.

Right, he had barely been here for a few years. For most people, it had been eons. How would he feel about returning if he had been here for millions of years, building relationships with people who also could not return to their own worlds?

To them, their old families and friends were distant and painful memories. Their current environments had become their reality. 'I can't agree with it, but I can accept it.'

He knew that he would never lose his desire to return home. Time didn't change anything about that. However, these people's lives were different from his. They made their own choices and followed paths that were right for them.

In the end, he accepted her feelings and offered her a more material gift. After all, the changes he made to the island could be considered a gift to both her and the Elder. Once people stopped dying so frequently, he didn't doubt that both of them would be much happier.

He bid her farewell, never learning her name even at the very end, and walked to the shore of the island.

The time had come to move on. Unlike the people who resolved to live their lives in this realm, he had no hesitation in his heart.

With a single step, a step that was so much lighter for him than them, he crossed into his final hurdle.

'The fifth island...'

Damien sighed in admiration.

'...it's definitely the coolest one.'

The beach he stood on was the only undeveloped part of the land he could see. Everything else was a sprawling metroplex of unbelievable proportions. 'But that also means that there are more people here than anywhere else.'

Right, this was the final roadblock before escape. The other islands may have consumed large amounts of experts, but this one was their true grave.

After all, the task on this island was a nightmare for most.

'Simply put, it's about purity.'

To reach a level of purity in one's Nonexistence that met the realm's standards was the only goal. Once that goal was met, the light of Nonexistence would return them to whence they came, ending their time in this realm.

It was easy, right?

Wrong. To Damien, it was a task of extreme simplicity. From the beginning, he had been focused on keeping his Nonexistence pure. Though it didn't meet the island's standard, his starting point was high.

For most, this island was the worst possible place to be.

Because most of the people in this realm absorbed its energy to grow.

Their entire journeys over the past four islands were devalued, because along the way, they ruined their chances to graduate from the fifth island.

The Graveyard of Supremes was this island's nickname.

But, in reality, it was their greatest helper thus far.

Damien knew this from the moment he saw that the task was purification. He went straight into the first city he saw without a single pause in his steps.

'Finally, the end is in sight.'

Chapter 1843 Fifth Island [2]

Just like the first island, there were no guidelines on the fifth.

The only information these future Supremes learned was that they needed to purify their Nonexistence. Other than that, they were on their own.

So, from Damien's perspective, what needed to be done to achieve that level of purification?

'I really don't know.'

Purifying Nonexistence wasn't necessarily a thing that could be done. It took whatever form it took based on one's experiences. Damien's Nonexistence was pure because he'd never polluted it in the first place.

But, for those who made it this far with a polluted concept, the situation was different.

They had to establish methods to purify Nonexistence before attempting it.

It wasn't much different from forming a Divinity. The people in this realm had to find out what Nonexistence meant to them. After establishing that in their core, they could chase it. Their efforts would pay off and the influence that external energy had on them would be decreased.

That was why this island was the hardest of the five.

Damien already established that Nonexistence wasn't just a concept to him. The way he interacted with it as if it was a living being with its own emotions and the lessons he learned from its faces in the process had already defined his "Divinity" in that sense.

What about others? For those who didn't receive the same enlightenment as him, it was impossible to define a concept like Nonexistence and personalize it.

'But this is the ideal environment to do it.'

This island was unique in that it wasn't polluted by any kind of aura. When people died, they wouldn't leave behind stains on the environment as they did on the other islands.

These experts had the benefit of being able to die as they pleased because they would not lose their energy in the process. This way, they could test and test and test without worrying about their strength depreciating.

Damien smiled. He had been staying away from death for that exact reason, but the freedom this island gave him allowed him to drop that worry. If he was able to die continuously, he would be able to practice like never before.

He first entered a city just to see what the atmosphere was like only to learn that it was mostly desolate.

The people here didn't have an interest in social lives. None of them gave up like the people of the third island.

At almost all times of all days, they were busy training, focusing on themselves.

Occasionally, there would be festivals and gatherings, but none of them were currently happening. As such, rather than focusing on the people, he decided to first find a place for himself to stay for the next few years.

He wasn't joking when he said that there wasn't a single inch of unclaimed land. The entire island was turned into a sprawling city to save space and contain all of the people living there.

It was a little funny to think that all of these experts were practically living in studio apartments, but that was beside the point.

Damien didn't want to go through the annoying processes of finding a place to live within the city. It was a general rule of thumb that if one found empty space, one could claim it. He chose that method instead.

Spending some time exploring the island was a good practice for him. Over the next few months, he met some of its people and interacted with them, learning more about the culture of this island.

And, more importantly, he found that it was impossible to claim any space. The beaches were kept empty on purpose as they were places where newcomers landed, and even the mountains and volcanoes were covered in claimed properties.

How was Damien meant to find a quiet place to practice?

He knew that his movements weren't going to be quiet. No, he was planning to die many times in the pursuit of his goals, so he needed the space to properly do so.

'The land isn't an option. The sea isn't an option. Then, I'm left with the sky, right?'

Damien was curious about why aerial architecture wasn't considered more often. In such an overcrowded place, wasn't it obvious to think outside of the box?

He was correct in that aspect, but he underestimated the difficulty of taking ownership of the Land of Nothingness' sky. 'I guess this is my first training method.'

As it turned out, the sky was barely different from the sea. It was made of pure Nonexistence. Though it allowed people to traverse through it if they had enough power, it was still murky and undesirable terrain.

If Damien wanted to build in the sky, he needed to first conquer it.

That was when his training began. He gave up on finding accommodations and flew into the air on his own. His connection with Nonexistence allowed him to stay in the airspace without being inhibited.

To do more than that, naturally he needed to practice.

He started by sitting down in the sky and meditating, becoming one with the atmosphere.

Slowly, he released his territory and expanded it to cover more and more space. It started as just a platform to support his weight, but he was eventually able to encompass several thousands of square feet for himself.

What started as nothing more than a foundation became more and more robust with time. Building vertically was more difficult than building horizontally, but it was also a task he completed with enough effort.

Damien didn't need much. He built a small cottage on the side where he could rest while keeping the rest of the space flat and turning it into a training ground.

His actions drew a lot of attention. The people living under him were quite curious about why there was a shadow over their homes now, and the people who saw it from a distance couldn't hold back their curiosity.

The denizens of this island began to approach Damien. Some of them were hostile, but most held an attitude of curiosity.

They wanted to know how he made it all possible. They wanted to learn from his accomplishments and achieve more like scientists hungry for a new find.

The fifth island was filled with people who had been on a dreary search for answers for far too long to still have passion. Damien's presence reignited the spark they felt when they first arrived in the Land of Nothingness.

For these people who had been living stale lives without progress for so long, the appearance of a newcomer who refused to think like them was a blessing.

Because, maybe by watching that newcomer execute his wild plans, they could find their own paths as well.

Just like the third, the fifth was a place that Damien liked a lot.

And, since the plan was to spend a decent amount of time here, he decided that it would be a good idea to become familiar with the residents. Damien's house in the sky became something of a meeting place for the people in a matter of one year. It expanded rapidly, making room for others to train and try things without fear of repercussions.

The sky became synonymous with prosperity and experimentation.

It all happened within a year. And frankly, even Damien was confused about this rapid development.

The year passed by in a breeze. Damien hardly recognized the time. He was so focused on his one improvement that he barely even understood the kind of stir he'd caused.

Naturally, he knew that people were coming to his sky island. He also knew that they were interested in him, as they would approach him whenever he wasn't training to talk about Nonexistence.

However, to him, they were just visitors. Their conversations were short, and though he welcomed others to stay in the sky with him, he didn't interact with them needlessly.

He was focused more on training than them, and they knew that as well.

The people of the island were respectful. They maintained boundaries when necessary because they knew how important it was to not lose a single moment. After all, every single one of them was a top expert. Most of them had near-perfect control over Nonexistence, which was the root of their problems.

They learned how to deal with polluted essence. Their perfection was muddled by that impurity. To completely abolish themselves and start over from scratch with a completely new type of Nonexistence was a daunting task that nobody wanted to undertake.

Instead, they tried to find enlightenment within their perfection and improve from where they stood.

It wasn't an unworthy strategy, but it was definitely inefficient.

As Damien spoke to them, he learned that a lack of knowledge and a lack of familiarity with Nonexistence in its pure form was their main issue. It didn't cost him much to help, so he shared his perspective as someone with high purity freely.

That was what set him apart from the rest. The people nearing the end of their journeys were adamant about keeping their secrets to themselves. The rise of other Supremes who could leave this realm and return home meant the rise of competition in the real world. Why would they help their future enemies?

Damien's opinion differed just as much as everything else. He believed that these people had potential and that they would be worthy subordinates if they were allowed to help.

Plus, by helping them, he was helping himself. He learned from their practice and they learned from him. In this symbiotic environment, people were finding themselves growing at a rate they couldn't have imagined previously.

But what interested Damien most was "information."

There were two people who came to see him more often than others. The first was a man named Doc and the second was a woman who called herself Syx. The two of them were weaker than Damien by a large margin, but they were also willing to put their pride down and ask questions.

The most common method to learn was by watching silently from the sidelines. These two ignored all conventions and approached him like students to their teacher.

Their eagerness to learn gave him an eagerness to teach, but the reason he thought of them now was more the stories they'd tell him. They spent many years on this island and knew about its history.

"They say that there's a Fragment of True Nothingness hidden here. It's in the form of a crown somewhere, and if someone claims it, they'll immediately surpass all requirements of the trial. It's apparently the other half of a crown that exists in reality, but it hasn't been found yet. Personally, I think it has to be a hoax."

They were words he heard from Syx. Words of a treasure hidden in the Land of Nothingness. To others, it felt like a fairytale made by people who couldn't find a way off the island, but Damien thought otherwise.

The other half of that crown...

'...isn't it my Emperor's Crown?'

The Emperor's Crown was a manifestation of Existence in physical form and the mark of its emperor. Damien didn't originally think there was a reason for Nonexistence to have one too, but it made a lot of sense.

Their origins, their abilities, their personalities; everything about the two possessed an air of duality. It was only natural for the crown to have a sibling as well.

'But it's good for me if they're treating it as something useless.'

As the owner of the Emperor's Crown, Damien knew that it was nothing of the sort.

The Emperor's Crown was the reason his control over Existence peaked. Because of that crown, the Mist had a place to reside and help him control the laws of the world, and the six concepts of Existence could be brought together without him needing to do anything.

It was like the bow that was tied around a Christmas gift, the final piece of the puzzle that made everything function properly.

Damien was enticed by those rumors.

'I never thought it would be a problem, but now that I know about something like this, I can't let it go.'

He didn't know when it happened, but Damien became a perfectionist at some point. At every step, he made sure to keep duality in mind. He acted to maintain harmony, because the coexistence of all laws and concepts in his body was the most important aspect of his strength.

If he returned without that crown, what would happen?

Damien didn't even want to slightly risk losing everything because he chose to be lazy at a time like this.

'Then, to find the crown that nobody has ever seen...'

Naturally, this mystery was going to be harder to solve than that of Death's Hold or the third island's schemes.

From the beginning, both of those were known to an extent by the public. They only missed a few details or were hindered before finding the whole truth. Damien merely had to follow their tracks until he reached the place they couldn't.

This was different.

On this island, after billions upon billions of years, nobody had found even a single trace of the crown. Its existence was spread through rumors, and even the one who started those rumors had no idea where it actually was.

It was more like he was coerced into making the crown known to the world by the realm itself.

So, Damien had to tread a path that nobody had ever tread before. 'Immediately, that eliminates the entire fifth island.'

Whether above or underground, the people had surely searched every inch before deciding that the crown wasn't real.

'Once again, I'm left with only two options.'

The sky or the sea. One of those two unfriendly places that attempted to kill anyone who disturbed them had to be investigated.

No, both of them had to be investigated. At this point, Damien couldn't leave it alone. He would use this quest to thoroughly understand everything about this mysterious realm.

'Let's start with the sea.'

It was an easy decision to make. Because everyone knew what the sea was capable of. Everyone knew the consequences of stepping foot in those waters.

The sky...

The sky usually wasn't seen as a hostile place. Damien built this learning zone in the sky, so its connotation was actually the opposite.

However, his instincts screamed otherwise.

They told him directly, giving him no chance to argue: 'If I push the bounds of the sky, then I will experience true hell.'

Chapter 1845 The Crown's Shadow [1]

The Sea of Nothingness was notorious for killing future Supremes.

It never approached them purposefully. Its only job was to separate the five islands so they couldn't be easily traversed by those who weren't worthy. However, it was still the main cause of True Death in this realm. Whenever an expert gave up on everything, regardless of which island they were on, the Sea of Nothingness was their escape.

As such, the connotation behind the large body of water was terrible. After all, its force was pure nothingness that could swallow anything. Who in their right mind would approach such an entity willingly?

Well, it was up for question whether he was in his right mind or not, but Damien approached it without fear.

He looked out into the waters for a moment, wondering how they were different from the lakes on the fourth island.

But, hesitation wasn't a very familiar concept to him. Even when standing in front of guaranteed death, he showed no fear.

It was a good thing that nobody was around. Damien hovered his foot over the sea like someone preparing to take their own life, but it would have been troublesome if someone tried to stop him.

His goal was not death, but exploration.

This grand sea had to hold some kind of secret. It couldn't exist just to separate islands, because as Damien learned through his experiences in this realm, Nonexistence never acted without reason.

Everything had some sort of meaning, even if it was difficult to find.

Damien dipped his toes in the water. He didn't immediately submerge himself, but just having a single inch of his body in the water was enough.

He touched what should not have been touched.

Damien fiercely resisted from the very first moment. He brandished his own form of Nonexistence, countering what the sea threw at him.

The aura of pure nothingness enveloped him. It, like a horde of wraiths, attacked his body and tried to take him down to the very bottom, a place where nobody and nothing would find him.

Damien fiercely resisted from the very first moment. He brandished his own form of Nonexistence, countering what the sea threw at him.

In terms of sheer power, he lost easily. However, the Sea of Nothingness was stagnant. Its laws and concepts were set from the beginning. It did not have thoughts and merely acted on its programming. Damien had the versatility of complex thought and a wide range of concepts at his disposal. With his level of purity and strength, the Sea of Nothingness was not an absolute power. He could use tricks to overwhelm it.

A silent battle began as the sea attacked Damien. He focused on defending, putting more and more of his body into its water.

When he was submerged to his hips, he was finally confident in reading and defending against the water body. 'Let's do this.'

Damien didn't act without thinking. Regardless, he wasn't able to explore deep into the sea or reach places far separated from land. He simply didn't have the energy to fight so fiercely for so long against an inviolable force.

Instead, since he was originally searching for a treasure on the fifth island, he used his abilities to scan the shore for several days before choosing a place to submerge.

He looked for hidden caves or cavities on the border between land and sea. He double-checked to see which ones were accessible from land and which ones were not. There were many cave systems that seemed to originally be disconnected from the underground routes but were connected by excavation teams searching for treasure in the past.

When it came to areas that had never been explored, there was only one. Damien could tell that someone tried. There was a tunnel that led straight to this large cave that halted just before connecting.

From a preliminary scan, Damien assumed that they originally did connect to the cavern, but were forced to immediately patch the connection for some reason.

'The path had only been traversed a few times before I went. It's likely that the original creators didn't tell anyone about their discovery when they returned to land.'

Either that or they died before they could spread the news of whatever was down there.

Damien didn't take the underground route because of that risk. He chose to approach through the natural entrance so that he would at least be prepared for whatever they encountered before seeing it himself.

With confidence in his defense, he plunged into the Sea of Nothingness, diving deeper and deeper as if it were just a normal ocean.

He didn't want to spend too much time completely submerged in the water, though. He rushed to reach the entrance, which was roughly a kilometer below the surface. Seeing the crack in the island's foundation, he swam through it and followed the path.

It was a narrow fit. Damien's robust body could hardly make it through the terrain he was trying to cross, but he forced his way through. Eventually, he reached something both positive and negative.

'Waterfall.'

Damien smiled wryly as his body was suddenly engulfed in the current and flung off the edge of a cliff. Luckily, the waterfall meant he'd finally entered a cavern that wasn't submerged, so he rapidly gathered his senses and slowly lowered himself to the nearest piece of dry land he could find.

'Phew.'

He treated it like it was no big deal, but fighting against pure Nonexistence was extremely difficult. His own force was practically apologizing to him the entire way since it couldn't interfere with the natural rules of this realm. Basically, he didn't have any help. He had to consciously combat every single concept of that sea for the roughly thirty minutes it took for him to swim here.

'I understand why it's considered a death trap.'

He didn't doubt that the strongest people in this realm could also fight against the sea if they wanted to. But, whether it was him or them, they would eventually be consumed by it if they didn't leave in time.

Damien took his thoughts off of the water and focused on the cavern in front of him.

He was a little skeptical at first, but that feeling was already gone. 'There is definitely something down here, even if it isn't the crown.'

It was like that treasure was calling out to him. It was making its presence known as if it never intended to hide in the first place.

A treasure with such a desire for human connection... usually all of such treasures were rapidly claimed and passed down through society.

However, if this one was still here despite its desperation, then it could only mean one thing.

'Something is preventing people from reaching it.'

There was originally a possibility that the first explorers who found this place were scared away by a natural phenomenon like the waterfall Damien had been transported by.

That possibility was naturally taken off the board. Damien approached closer and closer to the aura that called for his help. He took slow and methodical steps that made no sound to avoid alerting whatever waited for him inside.

Only, when he saw the being he was treating so cautiously for the first time...

...the only expression on his face was one of confusion.

Chapter 1846 The Crown's Shadow [2]

It was surely a being of pure Nonexistence, but he couldn't tell if it was supposed to be terrifying or welcoming.

Its physical form was relatively undefined as it was a being made of pure shadow, but it was lacking an air of intimidation. Rather, the owl-like creature perched on the rock, calmly plucking its shadowy feathers, was a little cute in Damien's eyes.

Did that mean it was safe to approach it? Probably not, but Damien did it anyway. If he had to fight, then nothing would change even if he hesitated and came back later.

He walked into the separated cave where the owl was. It immediately snapped its head in his direction and tilted it in curiosity. The creature instantly noticed that Damien didn't have any innate hostility or greed. His attitude was more one of curiosity and necessary caution.

It flew into the air and hovered there for a moment. Deciding that it wasn't enough, the owl flapped its wings and charged at Damien. He didn't move, as its trajectory was not combative. The owl flew in circles around him as if it were wondering what a person like him was doing here.

'Is this thing like the mist?'

The concept of mist on Existence's side was also a playful entity. It wasn't immediately hostile to anyone, but if it sensed negative energy in the souls of those who approached it, it would not respond kindly.

The mist led Damien where he needed to go when he was approaching the Emperor's Crown. If this owl was also a concept and a guide...

'...do I have to entertain it as well?'

Just as he asked the question, the owl swooped down and landed on his shoulder. It made a strange sound as it turned its head to look at him. "Relax, I'll go. You don't have to scream."

The owl bounced happily.

"What are you up to?" Damien asked, not expecting any kind of answer.

The owl cooed, seemingly displeased with his questioning. It raised a wing as if to point forward, cooing incessantly.

"Relax, I'll go. You don't have to scream."

The owl bounced happily.

Damien didn't expect it to be so expressive, nor did he expect it to be friendly. If the so-called guardian of the treasure was a playful creature like this, then why were people scared away?

'Did it take a liking to me?'

Damien shrugged. The owl seemed to like the motion as it happily rid his shoulder up and down like it was on a rollercoaster. He ignored it temporarily and followed its directions, moving through the cave. He was forced to break apart the ledge where the owl was originally perched to move deeper into the system. After a few turns in a strangely complex maze of tunnels, he reached another cave that seemed to be his final destination.

The owl hopped off of his shoulder and flew to the end of the cave, landing on a metallic treasure chest that was waiting there.

'Why is something like this here?'

It was an awfully human way to store a treasure. Naturally occurring treasures weren't wrapped up so cleanly. Usually, they'd just be sitting wherever they appeared, waiting for someone to grab them.

With many questions in mind, Damien undid the latches and opened the chest.

Inside, there was a single book.

[Records of the Absolute]

Its title was intriguing. Damien picked it up carefully, but it was in pristine condition despite the look of wear. The pages were firmly bound and unaffected by the time that ruined the book's cover.

Flipping through it, he read the story. Or rather, it was more of a biography.

'It starts a random cosmos somewhere in the Void.'

That was where the author of this book first met the person known as the Absolute.

It was the author's home cosmos. At the time, he was a Supreme God who was just touching upon Existence.

He realized the existence of the Void, and in his own words, that was the only reason why he was able to perceive that man at all.

He walked the realm casually, as if he had nothing on his mind at all. Everywhere he went, reality itself was morphed, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.

The man didn't seem to care. He continued on his mindless stroll with the same empty smile on his face.

Witnessing the repercussions of that man's presence in his cosmos, the author felt obligated to approach him and ask.

"Why are you doing this?"

The man glanced at him. The smile on his face changed ever so slightly as he responded.

"I do not, for I am not. Young one, are these changes not the result of your own actions?"

It didn't make sense to him at the time. That strange man continued walking, changing the realm as he went.

And one day, he once again disappeared.

Time passed and the changes he made became permanent. That which seemed destructive at first made way for new blessings to spawn. Because of the man, the author's cosmos flourished to a new extent.

But, the author was continuously plagued by that single sentence. For years and years, as he progressed through his comprehensions and mastered Existence, he kept thinking about what that man could have possibly meant.

Because the longer he trained, the more he realized how amazing that man was. He was a true Absolute, a person whose presence alone was enough to morph entire cosmos.

But, his presence was also unrecognizable and nonexistent.

It was through the existence of the Absolute that the author recognized Nonexistence for the first time. It was due to that man's influence that he finally entered this realm.

Those words...

An Absolute was a being without meaning if not perceived. An Absolute was no different from the Void itself. Therefore, it was because the author perceived his existence that the cosmos was allowed to change permanently and achieve growth.

If not, what would have happened?

The author spent his entire life attempting to understand the Absolute. He felt that only after he did so could he truly reach his potential.

But, no matter how much time passed and no matter how much stronger the author became, he could never understand that man.

He questioned why that man even chose to speak to him. He wondered if there was supposed to be some sort of deeper meaning behind those words. However, he died without ever being able to find out the truth.

This was not a record of the Absolute, but a record of the author's obsession with the man he deemed Absolute.

And, in the end, there was never a proper solution to his problem.

'The words of an Absolute...he tried so hard to give them meaning, but he was simply never able to perceive it.'

The mind of someone who was able to traverse the Void was simply too different from that of anyone else. An Absolute could not be read or measured. Perhaps those words were never even spoken. They may have just flowed due to the man's perception. Reality was changing when the Absolute walked by, so who was to say that the form the man saw was even real?

In the end, the record seemed to be a useless book. The perspective was from an unreliable narrator and there wasn't anything definite about the author's encounter with the Absolute.

Nevertheless, if what the author perceived was true, then it was very exciting news for Damien. After all, the author of this book confirmed the existence of at least one person who had reached the heights that Damien was aiming for.

How could his blood not boil at such a revelation?

Chapter 1847 The Crown's Shadow [3]

The cavern was filled with good things.

The confirmation of an Absolute was good. It meant that the path Damien was treading truly was possible.

He wasn't a person defined by doubts. At this stage in his life, doubt hardly existed at all.

However, that was one thing he'd always doubted. To truly reach the Void and not only touch upon it but conquer it; was it even possible?

Standing equal to it was one thing, but to surpass it seemed completely unbelievable. Despite never outwardly questioning it or showing signs of doubt, it concerned him deeply.

The fact that someone else already accomplished it, reaching a level beyond any means, was a huge affirmation for him.

And that wasn't the only thing the book offered. The author never revealed his name, but his insights were quite interesting. Because he spent his entire life chasing the image of a single Absolute, the way he perceived both Existence and Nonexistence was different from anything a normal person could develop.

As Damien had never seen an Absolute, even he wasn't privy to this kind of interpretation.

If he studied it properly and digested the knowledge, it could possibly define his path to reaching that level even more, making his path to the peak smoother.

This was the book's real value. The author never realized that he was already on the right path because he focused too much on another person instead of looking within himself. However, with his wisdom at hand, Damien would be able to attain everything he couldn't.

It was set on following him, though he still couldn't say why.

Finally, and most importantly, the owl that refused to leave Damien's side.

He walked back to the entrance of the cavern and ascended the waterfall, fighting against the current to escape through the same method he entered with. The owl naturally disappeared when he entered the water, but he found it returned to his shoulder the instant he returned to land.

It was set on following him, though he still couldn't say why.

'Has it discovered something in me?'

Even the mist needed to be persuaded. This owl merely saw him and immediately decided that it was not going to be hostile.

'Or is the owl something that came later? What if those people encountered something else entirely?'

If so, then where was that danger?

Damien didn't encounter it at all, which confused him, but that was not his primary concern at the moment.

The owl was not harmful, after all. It actually seemed to have a deep desire to aid him.

'Clearly, the sea wasn't going to be the answer from the start. For something like the shadow of the Emperor's Crown, only the most dangerous place is worthy to house it.'

The sky was uncharted territory. At most, people used it to travel. Nobody was willing to pry too deeply into its secrets.

At least the sea's deadliness was nearby and known. Enough people had ended their lives in that sea for its reputation to spread far and wide.

The sky was an unknown danger. It was an unknown danger that every single practitioner in this realm understood was more terrifying than the sea.

Why?

'I'm about to find out.'

At this point, Damien didn't believe that there was anything new for Nonexistence to show him. From Death's Hold to the Spiritual God of Chaos to the waters of nothingness, Damien had explored everything Nonexistence had to offer.

He understood it completely, which meant that nothing it could throw at him was meaningful.

Or so he thought until he breached the realm's sky.

It wasn't difficult. Not because he was powerful, but because he accidentally picked up something terrifying.

The instant they reached a barrier that was meant to be uncrossable, that owl left his shoulder and flew in front of him. VOoooooooooom!

A huge aura that even put pressure on Damien was released by the beast. It flapped its wings a single time, creating enough of an impact to completely shatter the barrier.

As if nothing happened, it then returned to his shoulder, cooing happily.

Damien shook for a moment.

'I change my mind. This guy is definitely the reason why the explorers before me ran away.'

The power he felt seemed inviolable. It was far beyond the level of his own Nonexistence.

But, he put it down for now. Again, he didn't need to concern himself with questions that he didn't need to answer.

Damien flew past the altitude of his abode and kept going. Like he was breaching a planet's atmosphere, he experienced thinner air and colder temperatures that worsened exponentially until he was in a dark vacuum.

He looked around, observing his surroundings and his own weightless body.

In that moment, he felt like he had abandoned everything.

He was no longer someone that "existed."

'Is that it? Is that how it ends for everyone?'

Was this infinite blackness the place where his ego was supposed to go when he died?

Strangely enough, there was no fear in Damien's heart. At this point in time, any who tried to challenge the sky would start to panic, trying to find a way back into the Land of Nothingness.

Damien did no such thing.

He sat there, pondering his state.

'As long as I am conscious here, I exist.'

His existence could not be denied. He was assured of that much. However, his surroundings were a place where people went when they ceased existing. There was absolute nothingness in this place, but for some reason, it was filled with so much character.

The records of every ego that was ever abolished into Nonexistence...

'...is this where it finds its faces?'

This realm of Nonexistence was more than just interesting to Damien. This appearance of being both nothing at all and everything at once was reminiscent of the Void.

Only, this nothingness was not everything. It was merely an overwhelming amount of emotion, character, and memory that seemed like "everything" to the human mind that couldn't grasp its true extent. Damien stayed within, calmly and quietly contemplating it. He tried to dissect its origin, but there was no such thing. This Nonexistence did not have faces, nor did it have any sort of intelligence.

It did not exist purely because Existence existed. In simpler terms, it was the purest essence of Nonexistence, untainted by even its own meaning.

This was the absolute power of erasure that no person could ever resist.

Hell, even Damien didn't know how he was resisting it at first. Only when he noticed the subtle black glow covering his body did he understand that this was also the work of his "guide."

That owl he picked up along the way...he could feel its essence leading him in a certain direction.

'It's really blocking all of the negative effects of this place while still allowing me to perceive it.'

The level of power necessary to accomplish such a feat...

It only showed him its cute side, but he couldn't ignore that it really was a petrifying creature. 'Well, as long as I don't piss it off, I'll be fine.'

Since the owl liked him, he didn't need to question it.

And since it was adamant about leading him through this nothingness...

...then he could do nothing but follow, right?

Chapter 1848 The Crown's Shadow [4]

He felt blessed to be able to avoid such dangers easily, but he was given another reminder that this was not the product of his own power. He had yet to reach a level where he could comfortably touch the sky.

Damien put away stray thoughts. While he was being guided to his destination, he focused on the ever-changing nothingness around him.

This place was unique. If it weren't for the vanished egos around him, there wouldn't have been a way for him to actually understand that he was moving in any specific direction.

This vein of Nonexistence was untouched by his hands thus far, but it was also the closest to him. His ego personally experienced this space from the perspective of one who died. He felt the grasp of Nonexistence turning him into nothingness clearly back then.

Now that he'd found a way to experience that same feeling from a secure position, all of the thoughts he had back then turned into concrete comprehension that deepened his ability to control the facets of Nonexistence. The journey was both short and long. Naturally, there was no way to perceive time, so it could be said to have ended almost instantly.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming environment made every second feel like a year. Every single piece of that space took Damien ages to observe and understand, lengthening his perception.

Still, the end goal was never the space itself. It was the singular treasure contained in this deep nothingness. 'The Crown's Shadow.'

It was not necessarily a crown of its own. Damien was already wearing the crown after all.

It was the second half of an already complete structure, a piece of it that was always present but never seen.

As such, the second crown became a shadow of the first, unseen by those unworthy of its presence.

When Damien arrived at the crown, he was only able to see it because the owl highlighted it in its aura.

Its physical form was specifically designed to evade the sight of a Supreme, so it was only natural for Damien to miss it.

'If only I could use the Void...'

Not at this stage.

The Void would reveal these things to him easily. It would probably allow him to comprehend this space at a faster rate as well.

However, he couldn't use it. No matter how much he wanted to, he could not use its power.

The fourth island had to be the final time, because even then he only used it to check on his progress. Damien could tell after his encounter with the entity that it would be watching him closely from now on. If he wanted to cut corners and do things the easy way, it would remember his actions. Compared to his grand dream of ruling the Void, what was a little bit of effort? If he couldn't put in the work, then the Void would simply never accept him as its master.

At times like these, wishing for the Void was only meaningless complaining. From start to finish, Damien had no intention of receiving its help.

He was doing just fine on his own, wasn't he?

The careful steps he took on the four islands before this one, the methodical approach he took in comprehending Nonexistence; together, these two culminated into a foundation that caused even the owl to willingly choose him without a fuss.

The guide was supposed to be convinced by one's actions or achievements. In most cases, those achievements didn't reach the qualifications the guide was searching for, so one would need to prove their worth in the moment.

While following the owl, Damien determined that it was satisfied with what he'd accomplished thus far and chose him because he fulfilled its conditions beforehand. That was a product of entirely his own effort.

Just like this very moment.

Damien looked at the Crown's Shadow and extended his hand to touch it. For a moment, he felt another sense of absolute nothingness wash over him, but it was not hostile.

The shadow read his existence and confirmed the owl's presence. It ensured that he truly was worthy of its power, and when it sensed the Emperor's Crown that eternally sat atop Damien's head...

How could it think about rejection?

If even that extremely picky Emperor's Crown chose an owner after so long, then what right did it have to disagree?

It seemed the person it chose was more than just adequate as well. He currently had the power of two faces of Nonexistence in his body, and the rest were willing to follow him as long as he just asked.

This was an unprecedented feat for a human to accomplish. Quite literally, Nonexistence had never been so close to another living being before. The shadow separated from the surrounding Nonexistence and slithered up Damien's arm. It made its way up his neck like a collection of black veins until it reached the top of his head and came together.

Nothing visibly changed in the Emperor's Crown, but if one was skilled enough, one would be able to see that it was now a combination of two separate entities.

The first was the proud and regal crown that Damien had been wearing until now, and the second was a dark entity with an unknown form that forced one to bow to the aura of an emperor.

They were equally domineering. They were opposites, but in the end, they were the same.

'True duality.'

It was something Damien had been striving to reach for his entire life. Now that he had both crowns...

'I feel like I've finally reached the cusp of it.'

Damien patted his chest. The owl understood his message and led him back to the surface.

He thought he would be confused without its help, but that was no longer the case.

Even he could now see a path in this expanse.

He could see the way home.

Damien came out of the sky like he was breaking through a powerful wave and taking his first breath in a long while. The owl came out of his body and returned to its usual pattern of flying around him and perching on his shoulder.

Without a word about what happened, he returned to his abode.

He didn't quite know how long he'd been gone. The people there likely wouldn't know either. They hardly kept track of time. However, Damien could tell that this was the end.

Perhaps he would spend a little longer digesting everything he'd learned, but...

'...it's finally time to go home.'

To return to the Heavenly World, to return to war, and to return to the Dark God.

That fated battle, that long-awaited spectacle was just over the horizon.

And after seeing what he'd accomplished during his time in this realm...

Damien was both extremely confident and extremely excited about that battle.

Chapter 1849 The Crown's Shadow [5]

Returning to his abode, Damien was greeted with a lot of stares.

'I must have been gone for some time.'

His assumption was entirely wrong. Since these experts were able to hide their emotions, they didn't show anything, but they were feeling something inexplicable from Damien.

If he was their equal before he left, he was clearly superior now. It was to the point where those who didn't speak to him as often were hesitant to even watch his training anymore.

He was an Emperor while they were merely nobles. That was the difference they felt.

It was almost disrespectful to thoughtlessly interfere with the training of someone like him.

None of them liked the feeling that invaded their hearts, but they couldn't deny it.

The few who did converse with him regularly came up and said a few words as they always did, but there was a subtle distance in their interaction that Damien felt clearly.

'I guess it isn't necessarily a bad thing.'

It would be a shame if there were hard feelings about his early departure. He only just came to this island and he'd already reached a level that the rest of them could only dream about.

It was better for him to disappear quietly. It was better if they assumed that he went and killed himself in the Sea of Nothingness, since that was easier to handle.

'Well, quietly may be impossible.'

The moment he escaped, a huge phenomenon would encompass all five islands. Damien heard of this from the first island, so it had to be true.

Rather than leaving quietly, it was more like he wanted to disguise the fact that he was the one leaving.

'This island...isn't it too pitiful?'

When it was naturally accepted that absorbing energy was the right method and there wasn't a way to go back and tell people it was wrong, was it right to blame these experts for their current situations?

Sure, it was partially their fault, but it wasn't enough of a blunder to turn this place into their grave.

The experts on this island had different personalities, goals, and interests, but each and every one of them was worthy of being a Supreme. Damien could tell that their journeys through the four islands before this one changed them all into decent people.

'It would be a missed opportunity if I left them all here to rot.'

The people of this land were all upright practitioners even if their pasts didn't assume the same. Perhaps it was stupid to say that all of them were good people, but he knew that they were all at least sane.

Plus, their talent was undeniable.

At the moment, he wasn't too much stronger than them, so it was impossible. When he became Absolute, that would change.

If he wanted to have a dominion over several cosmos, or if he wanted to be prepared for a potential threat that may appear, he needed subordinates, didn't he?

Who better than Supremes that he personally raised?

Bringing the Land of Nothingness into the limelight. It was a new goal that Damien established in that moment.

But, it wasn't attainable until he became Absolute, so his focus shifted to another way to improve the fifth island's condition.

'Let's do that.'

A project that he could consider a culmination of everything he'd learned. If he could pull it off, then he could guarantee that he was ready to leave.

That day, Damien left his abode again. Unbeknownst to those who inhabited that place with him, that was the last time they'd ever see him.

He found the tallest mountain in the realm and flew high above it. Using the mountain as a center point, he started building again.

But this time, it wasn't for his own sake.

As those who lived on the mountain watched, a massive floating island was formed above them. It appeared in a single instant, a landmass large enough to be called a mountain of its own. And, on its flat surface, there was a palace of crystals and purple gold. A palace with an insignia on the front that belonged to no known individual or clan.

The people of the mountain immediately flew up to investigate. They carefully entered the palace, knowing that the one who created it was incredibly powerful. However, instead of meeting him, they found themselves feeling a sensation like nothing they'd ever felt before.

"This...this...!"

A certain man exclaimed as he looked at his own hands. He returned his gaze to the interior of the palace. The massive staircase at the entrance branched off in both directions, and on the wall of the step where that happened, there was a message for all.

[Welcome to the Void Palace. This is a space for any and all practitioners who wish to improve. It will not and may not be claimed by anyone. Share with your fellows, progress through your journeys, and meet me in the real world.]

It was a message signed with a single word.

"Void..."

The man exhaled that name with an air of reverence. He could feel it clearly. This palace wasn't just any normal thing. Disregarding all of the complicated concepts in place to keep this place as a neutral zone and assure that it would never fall into the wrong hands, it only had one purpose.

'Passive purification.'

For the first time in his life, the man felt like he was seeing progress in his lifelong quest.

He could already tell that this place was going to become a haven of the fifth island soon enough.

VOOOM!

Suddenly, the man's head whipped to the side, his eyes peering through the palace's entrance.

Just as people started investigating the palace and realizing its worth, a massive flash of light appeared from the shoreline.

"Wow..."

How long had it been since the last time?

Somebody was ascending and escaping this realm.

And that flash of light...for some reason, it felt extremely warm.

Because that man knew, and everyone else would soon come to know.

That light was the first of many.

The fifth island was finally going to be revitalized. As for the person who created it...

He was content with leaving a small piece of himself for future generations.

Without regrets and without hesitation, he returned to the world from which he came.

He had a lot of work on his plate, after all.

See, that was what Damien thought was the end.

It made sense, right? Now that his adventures in the Land of Nothingness were over, it was time for him to focus on the events in the True Void Universe.

That statement wasn't necessarily wrong, but his long yet short trip caused a few problems.

Damien returned to his isolated training room. He could tell from the air that time had not passed.

But, clearly, something had changed.

The universe rushed to read his existence. It was extremely confused by his current state, but it was forced to acknowledge what he'd achieved in only a single second.

Almost exactly when Damien appeared, he was swept away again.

But this time, he was not taken out of the True Void Universe.

Merely...

He was once again in a place that other people could not reach.

Chapter 1850 Records [1]

The space that Damien was in...could it be considered the counterside of the True Void Universe?

Glancing around, he noticed that his surroundings were the same. He was in the same isolated training area. He could sense Void Palace and the other grand structures all around the Heavenly World.

The key point that made it incredibly obvious that this was not the True Void Universe was the lack of life.

The only living being in this place was Damien himself.

'Something like this existed?'

Damien exited the isolated area and walked into the world. The first thing he noticed was the sky.

It didn't exist.

Instead, the sky was made up of flowing waves of blue energy that perpetually moved and maintained its energy.

'Ah...'

That was the model that Damien followed throughout his life. That was a direct representation of the way he wanted his own internal mana circuits to work. They were close to that level now. Damien didn't necessarily need to use his own energy anymore, so it was inconsequential, but his mana still was not infinite.

If there was a situation where the entire cosmos was stripped of its mana, Damien's capacity would once again become finite.

This was a representation of a level he had not been able to reach. As it graced his eyes, he inadvertently raised off of the ground and approached it.

The energy was unbothered by his presence. No, perhaps it was the one who called him here. As he put his arm out and touched it, his entire body shook.

He had suddenly established a connection to something magisterial. His eyes glowed with a massively blue light. His consciousness was ripped from his physical form as he was taken to a place where he could properly interact with it.

In that place, it entered a form that he was already aware of.

[Damien Void.]

A holographic blue window appeared before him.

'Ah...'

He was just as speechless after understanding. 'So you are...'

[Welcome to the Apeiron Records.]

It obviously wasn't its true name, but the fact that it acknowledged the only name Damien ever knew it by was enough confirmation that it was truly that entity.

The system that ruled over the True Void Universe, the reason why its people were able to progress through the stages of power without complications or doubt...

Was it this perpetual energy? Is this where it was the entire time, existing in this alternate True Void that others could not perceive?

For some reason, it was astounding. Damien, who had just come back from the Land of Nothingness, still found himself shell-shocked by this entity.

[You have achieved a state that this cosmos has never seen.]

The system clearly didn't have consciousness. It was able to interact with him within its parameters, which meant that this meeting was for a purpose.

As the system said, he was now in full control over both Existence and Nonexistence. To an extent, he was standing equal to the Void. This was a state that this cosmos had never seen, and a state celebrated by every cosmos lucky enough to birth an individual with such power.

[In lieu of your accomplishment, you have been granted the right to read the records.]

Damien's eyes widened.

The system was, as named, a record of all things. Persia's Encyclopedia did something similar to the system, but this entity acted on a completely different level. It was omniscient and omnipresent. To be granted a right to read those records...

'It is not absolute.'

He wouldn't be given free reign over the system. He could tell from the messages that this was a one-time opportunity.

'Then, rather than focusing on myself, I should think broader.'

Rather than focusing on the True Void Universe that he could read at any time, he wanted to focus on the system itself.

So...

"Show me those records."

The records of the system's origin. The records of its creator.

[Confirming access to Origin Record.]

[Partial access confirmed. Some information will be omitted.]

With those words, Damien was shown the very story he wanted to see.

He encountered no obstacles, almost as if the story was meant for him from the very beginning.

Once upon a time, in a world far, far away, two brothers were born. Their births took place only a few minutes apart, however, the way they were treated was different from their very first day alive.

The elder brother was showered with love. He was found to have an extremely rare talent during his birth, and all eyes had been on him from then.

The younger brother wasn't untalented, but compared to his elder brother, he was nothing special.

Others ignored him, but his elder brother didn't. He wasn't blinded by the attention he got. He cherished his younger brother and wanted to make sure that he was always happy.

However, his younger brother didn't appreciate his sentiments.

Every negative thing that happened to him was attributed to his elder brother. When a woman he loved decided to confess to his brother, he ignored the fact that his brother rejected her and threw her out of the house. He only cared about the fact that his brother had won again.

One day, a prophecy was revealed. It stated that a hero would be born who would save the world and even the universe itself. The two hero candidates were none other than these two brothers. But the elder brother didn't want it.

He didn't want to be the hero. He never wanted to remain stuck on this planet, and the stronger he got, the more he desired to see the skies and what lay beyond.

The title of a hero was just a burden to him, but it looked like it meant everything to his brother.

As such, he decided not to compete. He announced his withdrawal from candidacy and disappeared, finally making his way into the starry sky.

From that point on, he never saw his brother again. He hoped his brother was able to gain happiness in that small world where they were born, but he couldn't be there to experience it with him.

It wasn't just because of his ambitions, but because his brother would only ever feel negativity and hostility if he stayed. For years, he wandered the cosmos alone. He gained great power and a wealth of knowledge, eventually coming across a concept known as "Abyss."

It was everything and nothing at all. Existence and Nonexistence in one.

He chased that concept with everything he had, and as he got closer to reaching it, he distanced himself from everything else.

He only revisited his home world once. It was covered in statues of his brother and tales of a hero.

However, it wasn't all peaceful.

Since he was there in their hometown, he helped them kill a rogue dragon that was threatening to wipe them all out. On the same day, he also helped them design certain facilities that would increase the quality of living greatly.

He became a hero to that city, so they erected a statue of him to pay tribute.

It was the only one in the entire world, so it definitely felt special.

Nevertheless, that was the last time he interacted with reality under his birth name.

After that, he became the Worldwalker.

He eventually reached Existence and Nonexistence. Even longer after that, he combined them and became Absolute.

The Worldwalker started passing through the various cosmos within the Abyss and observing their cultures. Sometimes, he'd lend them a helping hand or create a treasure that would help the cosmos grow.

He was a wanderer at his core. He never wanted to stay in one place. The infinitely expanding Abyss filled with so many different cosmos with so many different peoples and cultures was his home, and within it, he found the greatest adventures.

Still, he was a mortal once. He perceived time, and eventually, he experienced an unparalleled sense of boredom and loneliness.

He decided that he had lived for long enough. He found a random newly budding cosmos as his final resting place, and he transformed it so that its people could live well.

That random cosmos was none other than the True Void. His final creation was the system.

After providing a route for this cosmos' people to grow more stably and without deviation, he established it.

And, amidst those people, he laid himself to rest.

'The Worldwalker...'

The origin of the system, and the first Absolute.

Their cosmos had been blessed by such a being. That was the reason for its oddities and its uniqueness.