

## Void 211

### Chapter 211 - Blitzing

In the lower areas of the Endless Snow Mountain, there was a variety of cave dwellings that housed the numerous beast packs and tribes that made their homes there.

Here, there was no such thing as a clan. Those tribes that stood at the peak of this level of the mountain were merely led by high-level 3rd class beings. But they weren't to be underestimated even if this was the case.

After all, if these tribes and packs gained enough strength, they'd be eligible to gain the backing of a beast clan that resided higher up the mountain. And if they were truly outstanding, they might even be noticed by a King Clan, the clans established or ruled by those Beast Kings.

This sort of reward was highly enticing. It was the reason why the immortal beauty of the mountain was often wrought with blood and violence. Only this way would they be able to grow to that level they all looked up to.

Naturally, these tribes had another duty as well. That duty was to monitor the slumbering Ancient Beasts below the mountain. They were the scouts that would allow those higher-rank clans to learn of the potential awakening of beasts they couldn't even fathom.

These beasts, well even the Beast King title was too lowly for their esteemed selves.

In one of these cave dwellings, a group of snow leopards had gathered together.

“Leader, the attacks on our tribe have not ceased even to this day. Every time the mysterious forces strike, they leave none alive. We have barely even been able to catch a whiff of their tail after this week.”

The one addressed as “Leader” frowned at the report. “What do you mean? Are you saying that even we, the great Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe, are unable to track these attackers?”

“Sir, even we don’t wish to admit it, but it’s the undeniable truth. Every time we hear news of an attack, we rush over to the branch where it happened. But by the time we arrived, there was nothing left but desolation.”

“Desolation?”

“Desolation. It’s the only word that can accurately describe the scenes. No corpses nor blood remained of our tribesmen, and the land where the branch was located would always be wrought with desolation.”

“What kind of terrifying foe have we offended? Have any of you made contact with anything unusual before the attacks began?”

The elders hesitated. They had also thought up to this point, but none of them could actually figure out what kind of being they had offended. Their tribe was relatively lowkey, and didn’t go out of their way to make enemies. It was an unusual thing for them to be targeted at all.

“Could the younger generation have offended some great being?”

“No, I doubt our attackers are some massive enemy that we cannot defeat. Otherwise, they’d have simply charged in without the need for these kinds of hit and run tactics.”

“Indeed, the enemy this time is incredibly cunning, and able to easily erase their traces. If we can just find their tail, we should be able to deal with the problem.”

“But how many more of our tribesmen do we have to lose before we do so?”

The Tribe Leader listened to their conversations with a contemplative look on his face. Sighing lightly, he came to a decision. “Next time they attack, I shall go take a look myself. However, we need to take countermeasures in case the enemy truly isn’t someone we can afford to offend. Be prepared to send a messenger to the Great Incarnate Snow Leopard clan. If we cannot deal with the problem ourselves, we shall submit ourselves to them in exchange for their help.”

“Leader!”

“We mustn’t!”

“We have remained independent to this point, how can we rely on external help? Leader, you were planning to reach the Beast King stage and raise our tribe to glory! We must not submit!”

“Enough!” The leader roared furiously. He let out another sigh before softly replying to the other members of the meeting. “What is the point of becoming a Beast King to bring the tribe glory if there’s no tribe left to bring glory to?”

His voice was soft and laced with helplessness, causing the other tribe members to reveal painful looks. In the end, they sighed as well. As the leader, he naturally had a greater burden to bear than

the rest of them. And he was also naturally much more prideful than them. It was engraved in his bones.

If such a leader was willing to put down his pride for the survival of the tribe, what more could they say? What more could they ask for in a leader?

Even they knew that the clan's situation was dire. Even if they spoke of grand ambition and even if they were ranked as a tribe, they weren't that much stronger than the smaller beast packs residing around them. They were only fortunate to have a high number of tribe members as well as a powerful leader. Their overall strength was still weak.

And with the recent string of attacks, at least 50% of their tribe had already been exterminated. It went to show just how weak the majority of their members truly were.

Their thoughts aligned and they came to a consensus. They would go all out in one final battle, and if they couldn't bear the consequences, they would submit as long as they could obtain revenge.

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Meanwhile, the ones who caused such suffering for the Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe were far away in an empty cave dwelling. A large piece of meat could be seen roasting atop a campfire between them.

“Who would've thought there was such an infrastructure that these beasts follow? Packs, tribes, clans, and even King clans. It's actually pretty similar to human society.”

“Mm, it is indeed much more intricate than I originally expected. But our attacks are also going much better than I originally thought.”

“Isn’t that because of your freakish teleportation? With what Master taught you during your first true lesson, you no longer leave any trace of spatial fluctuation when you move. They must not have been able to track us even in the slightest.”

“Perhaps I’m the one who contributed most to our escape, but your attacks were even more badass. What the hell was that move you used?”

Ruyue grinned at his question. That move was a new one she had only recently learned. It could be said that she gained a spark of insight from the avalanche a week ago.

The land was in a constant cycle of life and desolation. With her yin element giving her control over negative attributes, she was able to bring that desolation into the land itself.

She had used this new move to wreak havoc on those cave dwellings they found, erasing any thoughts of habitation for those who would stumble upon the areas in the future. Well, that was until the land reentered its cycle of life, once again giving birth to the beautiful greenery.

The two of them had been relatively smooth sailing ever since they decided to attack the snow leopards. It used to be difficult to find these cave dwellings where the snow leopards resided, but after a while, they understood the pattern.

There were always certain similarities between the areas inhabited by the snow leopard tribe. Whenever they found those clues, they’d charge and fight. Of course, they occasionally made mistakes and charged into the caves of different tribes, but it wasn’t a problem with Damien’s teleportation. Such mistakes were trivial.

As for the feelings of those snow leopards they had been attacking, they didn't care much. There was an inherent principle that all those existing underneath the system would follow.

The strong eat the weak.

Perhaps their advent against the snow leopards had started due to a sort of grudge they had with the pack that came to trouble them after the avalanche, but that grudge had long been dealt with. After all, that pack was the first they targeted and the first to die.

They didn't even have time to understand how it happened. With their ranks scattered to search for Damien and Ruyue, they didn't have the sufficient strength to pose a threat to the duo.

And with this, information about their encounter hadn't spread to the main tribe, which led to the current situation.

At the end of the day, the two of them were here for combat experience and levels. They just so happened to find a target with those snow leopards, so they capitalized on the opportunity.

As night fell upon the Endless Snow Mountain, the duo peacefully sat within their cave and watched the flickering flames of the campfire, anticipating the next big move they were planning to make.

Chapter 212 - Blitzing [2]

The mellow light rays of sunlight blanketed the Endless Snow Mountain as a new day dawned upon it. The illumination of these rays revealed a small cave-dwelling where two people were sitting idly.

"Is it time for us to make a move?"

“Mm, this should be the last one. Instead of attacking any one of their branches, we’ll charge straight for their main dwelling.”

“It’s going to be dangerous.”

“And? Danger is exactly what we want right now. We’ve done the proper research before we even started this crusade of ours. Those snow leopards are too prideful to accept patronage from a King clan, so we have no need to fear any interference.”

“Still, even without a Beast King joining the fray, we will still have to face a sea of 3rd class beasts. It won’t be an easy fight regardless.”

“True. We still don’t have the strength to decimate their ranks like we did when we were on the ground level. Instead, I think it’s better to keep blitzing.”

Ruyue nodded her head. This so-called blitzing strategy that they had been using since the start was incredibly effective. Without it, she doubted whether they’d have achieved such wash victories.

And without the interference of a 4th class, Damien’s presence gave them the ability to attack and retreat at will, which ensured their safety.

Since they didn’t have much planning left to do, Damien wordlessly grabbed Ruyue’s waist and began teleporting to the location of the Turbulent Blizzard Leopards’ main branch.

And it didn't take long for them to arrive. In fact, they had intentionally chosen a cave dwelling that wasn't too close or too far so they'd be able to move with convenience.

Once they arrived, they had no need to set any pretenses. Instead, they directly released their auras from outside the cave dwelling to lure out their opponents.

"Who?!"

An enraged shout resounded from within the cave dwelling. A group of 10 snow leopards soon emerged and glared at the duo.

"What do you two think you are doing?" A male voice came from the snow leopard at the front.

"What are we doing? We're naturally challenging your clan." Damien responded.

"Ha! With just the two of you? It seems you look down on the might of our clan!" The snow leopards could clearly feel that these two were roughly the same level as them since their auras were in full burst.

Were they stupid? There were a large number of individuals with similar strength within the tribe, and these two dared to charge in alone? However, Damien's next words wiped the disdainful smirks directly off their faces.

"We have destroyed so many of your branches without you even having the ability to see our tails. Is that not enough to show our qualifications?"



“Courting death!”

The snow leopards were thoroughly enraged. Any number of provocations could have been thrown at them without them even having a change of expression, but Damien had directly gone for the throat.

The Turbulent Blizzard Leopards were extremely tight-knit. Even if they lived separated and spread out, they all cared for their tribesmen. However, the rapid deaths of almost half of those who lived outside the tribe were a travesty that affected them all.

And now that someone had come to their door claiming to have caused such a travesty, how could they remain calm?

The whites of their eyes were filled with red blood vessels as their rage made their blood boil. Without even caring to confirm the veracity of the statement, the group of 10 leopards shot towards Damien and Ruyue with ferocity.

However, before they could even reach their targets, a booming voice rang in their ears like a clap of thunder.

“Halt!”

The snow leopards froze before turning towards the cave dwelling and kneeling in reverence. From within, a snow leopard much larger than the rest walked out.

Its fur was just as pristine and white as the rest, but numerous scars could be seen on its body, signifying the tough battles it had survived throughout its life. Most notable was the deep scar that ran across its eye and all the way down its face.

This was the tribe leader of the Turbulent Blizzard Leopards.

“You two claim to be the ones who have been massacring my tribesmen?” His deep voice was infused with mana, granting a sort of natural suppression to his atmosphere.

“And if we are?”

“Do you have any proof of your claims?”

Although he understood the feelings of his tribesmen who wanted to directly attack, he couldn't be so rash. If they weren't the ones who committed the crime, they could possibly have been sent to probe their tribe by other tribes.

And if they were the ones who did it, he had to be cautious of their unknown means. No irrational person would charge into a tiger's den without a plan, especially if they had just killed the tiger's cubs.

Damien grinned at the question before flicking his gaze towards Ruyue. Rolling her eyes, she lifted her arm.

“Desolation.”

The word seemed to carry an ancient ripple that spread through the surroundings. The snow below Ruyue's feet showed signs of melting and the shrubbery and trees around them began to wilt.

The spread of desolation continued for only a second before Ruyue stopped, but it was enough. The tribe leader's eyes sharpened and his gaze become dark.

He had heard the reports from his tribesmen, and he had even gone to the site of one of the attacks before. He was well aware of the desolation that was left in their wake.

And seeing it be performed in front of him, he wasn't stupid enough to not know what it meant.

"So it was truly you."

Damien didn't say a word, watching the tribe leader silently. An awkward stillness enveloped the area.

However, the next event was unexpected by even the snow leopards in the surroundings.

"Why?"

A hoarse voice exited the tribe leader's throat as he glared at the duo hatefully.

“Why did you do this? Why has such misfortune fallen upon my clan? At least grant me this one answer before everything devolves into chaos.” His eyes were already red from grief as he choked out his words.

The surrounding snow leopards also had mournful expressions on their faces as they heard the crazed manner in which their tribe leader spoke.

Damien and Ruyue watched this scene expressionlessly.

“Because you are weak.”

“Because you are weak you were preyed upon. Because you are weak, you were unable to retaliate. Because you are weak, we stand before you today without fear. Such is the price of being weak in this world.”

The tribe leader silently listened to Damien speak, his eyes becoming even redder. The sound of his teeth gritting together was almost audible.

“Isn’t this the way the world has always worked? The weak are devoured while the strong become stronger. Even for those innocent souls who wish to see none of it, it is necessary to survive. Even if we don’t wish to see that innocence tainted, it’s the only way for them to stay alive. This is the lifelong battle all life forms face if they desire power.”

Ruyue watched him intently as he spoke. Even if he didn’t show any indication, she was well aware she was part of the innocent souls he had been speaking about.

On that night in the forest, she had unintentionally poured her heart out to him. He had seen the struggles in her heart.

Ruyue never wanted to become strong. She used to be content as long as she could live happily within her clan. But the situation forced her to gain strength. It forced her to become a different person.

Damien's words might have been cruel, and their actions towards the Turbulent Blizzard Leopards even crueler, but she had witnessed reality. His words resonated in her heart.

And hearing how deeply he was seemingly moved by his own words, she couldn't imagine what he had been through. He was even younger than her by a year, but his grit and tenacity outstripped her by miles.

Unknowing of Ruyue's thoughts, Damien continued his speech.

"The ruthlessness and decisiveness that one needs to have can only be birthed through various life or death experiences. And if one doesn't have it, they will die. In this regard, I must thank you. Because I had almost lost that ruthlessness that allowed me to survive and stand here today."

Damien spoke from his heart. He wasn't even answering the tribe leader's question anymore, he was simply venting his grievances. Perhaps, the tribe leader's question had sparked something within him.

He was becoming weak to the temptations of the outside world. To love, to happiness, to relaxation, to adventure.

Of course, he had no intention to stop. He loved Rose even more now that they had been separated for so long, he loved his mother who he had done so much to save, and he loved...

Well, the rest wasn't necessary to state.

Adventure was also something deep within his core. He thirsted to explore the myriad worlds within the universe and experience them like he was doing now. There was no way he'd give that up.

But he needed to maintain a healthy balance. He couldn't forget the qualities that brought him to where he was today. He couldn't forget the person that had been forged in the world of blood that was the dungeon.

These emotions flooded out of him as he spoke to no one in particular, but all those in the vicinity could feel them.

Even those snow leopards. No matter how much they resented Damien and Ruyue, they couldn't find it in them to retort his words. Because his words were the most primal truth that everyone knew, even if they refused to admit it.

Staring at the youth in front of him intently, the tribe leader sighed.

"I see."

His anger had subsided a bit due to the youth's emotions. Even he resonated with those emotions. But even if his anger had subsided, the blood debt incurred between Damien and his tribe wasn't something that could be solved with just a few words.

Two men, one human and one beast, gazed at each other in mutual understanding and respect.

And then, dense killing intent flowed into the atmosphere and soared through the heavens.

Chapter 213 - Fight [1]

Dense killing intent flowed through the atmosphere as Damien and the tribe leader glared at each other.

Taking a slight glance at Ruyue, he saw her nodding back at him. She understood his intentions clearly.

‘I’ll take the big boss, you finish off the goons.’

Panning her gaze across the scene in front of her, she saw ten 3rd class snow leopards staring back at her. Seeing this, she pursed her lips.

‘This guy is really making me do all the hard work.’

Still, she shook her head with a smile and prepared for combat.

In the next instant, thunderous booms rang out in the surroundings as Damien and the tribe leader shot towards each other at full speed.

Bang!

The sharp claws of the tribe leader met Damien's outstretched fist, causing the ground around them to crack and splinter. Drones of mana poured out and clashed along with their impact, causing both of them to fly back.

It was only after taking tens of steps that they managed to stabilize themselves. In their first clash, neither was able to obtain an advantage.

With a solemn gaze, Damien vanished from his position before arriving at the tribe leader's side, sending a punch towards his ribs.

But the tribe leader wasn't a leopard known for speed for no reason. He swiftly maneuvered his body to turn at an impossible angle before swiping his claw back towards Damien.

Vanishing once again, Damien appeared at the opposite side of the tribe leader's body, grabbing the air in front of him and making a twisting motion.

Space followed his command, twisting and distorting around the tribe leader, causing a massive pressure to land on his shoulders.

Roar!

A furious roar left his throat. The deep snow underneath their feet shot upwards and formed a blizzard around the two, before the snow suddenly melted and sharpened into shards of ice that orbited the tribe leader. Damien watched those shards intently. Any one of them could cause severe damage if he let them hit his vitals.



The second the blizzard covered Damien and the tribe leader's figures and isolated their battle, the others in the area snapped out of their dazes.

While the tribe leader takes care of the boy, they'll take care of the girl. With such thoughts in mind, they grouped together and pounced towards Ruyue.

Similar blizzards to that of the tribe leader formed around them and compacted, turning into thick white armor that encased their figures. If one were to look at these leopards now, they'd think they were sculptures rather than true living beings.

Ruyue glared into the massive blizzard when she saw this sight. This guy truly didn't let her off easy, making her deal with the crowd. After all, even if he called them goons, they were genuine 3rd class beings.

A shining white spear appeared in her hands its aura coupling with her own and multiplying. Once again, dense killing intent filled the atmosphere.

Although Ruyue couldn't compare with Damien, it had been almost 2 weeks since they had entered the 3000 Beast Mountain Range and she had her fair share of bloody battles during that time.

Damien made it explicitly clear that he wouldn't be helping her brave all dangers, and she also agreed. The killing intent she had formed was proof of her hard work.

Suddenly, the space behind her trembled and a massive moon appeared. Lunar energy coated the atmosphere, forming a dense fog.

Ruyue charged, locating her first target. The fog in the atmosphere not only served to separate her enemies, but also confused their senses. When she appeared behind the snow leopard, it was a second too late in realizing the danger.

She swung her spear in a sweeping motion, aiming for the leopard's legs. The moment it made contact, bloody gashes were formed in its wake.

Roar!

The leopard finally realized what was going on and turned to face her, immediately sending a blast of icy wind in her direction. But Ruyue wasn't confused like it was. She immediately reacted, bursting to the right with trails of blue fire coating the ground below her.

She once again appeared next to the leopard, stabbing into its side. Yin natured mana coated her spear tip as it thrust into the leopard.

When the mana entered the leopard's body, it was as if it truly became a statue. Not every member of the Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe was able to form the snow armor, and this one happened to be one of those.

Without its protection, Ruyue's mana thoroughly infiltrated its body and wreaked havoc within. The leopard convulsed with fear evident in its eyes before falling limp on the ground.

Luckily, the remaining crowd was mostly made up of those at lower levels than her. There were only 3 that she had to stay wary of. So before those 3 were able to regroup, she had to finish off the rest.

With a slight grin on her face, she located her next prey and stalked it.

Meanwhile, the battle within the tribe leader's blizzard was becoming more and more fierce. The space within some areas was twisted and bent, while others were rapidly mending. Two flashes of light continuously clashed and retreated without giving the other side any openings.

Even until this point, neither side had used any massive attacks, instead opting to use physical strength to compete. After all, although they had grudges, their battle had also allowed them to form a sort of respect.

Due to this respect, they had no desire to humiliate or torture the other party.

Fists clashed against claws, kicks connected to ribs, fangs clamped down on anything they could grab hold of. The battle was brutal yet simple.

Boom!

Once again, Damien's foot shot out like a whip and impacted the tribe leader's face, throwing him to the side. Damien immediately appeared before him and slammed his fist down.

The tribe leader's head impacted the thickly condensed snow on the ground and caused a major indent. When he stood up again, he could no longer stand straight. A massive gash was present on his head, and even pieces of his skull could be seen.

"What is wrong with you?" Damien asked between labored breaths.

“What do you mean?” The tribe leader responded.

“You know damn well what I mean. This can’t be the limits of your strength, and no matter how much you respect me, I refuse to believe you’ve set aside your thoughts of vengeance for the sake of this battle.”

A grin appeared on the tribe leader’s face. With his current injuries, it looked terrifying. “And why should I tell you that? The only thing you need to know is that I will perish with my clan. Do not think of ending this battle before one of us is dead.”

“One of us? Did you become blind after that last hit?”

Damien’s words might’ve been harsh, but they contained undeniable truth. Unlike the tribe leader, Damien had a high-level regeneration skill. No matter how many injuries he had piled up during the fight, they had all been healed. And they would continue to heal as long as he had mana.

Damien couldn’t understand where the tribe leader got his confidence from. It was already clear who the winner of this fight was.

But the tribe leader didn’t stop grinning. “Come, if you are so confident, then let’s end this farce.”

Chapter 214 - Fight [2]

Sighing lightly, Damien decided not to think about it anymore. In any case, he had the capabilities to flee no matter what the tribe leader had planned, so he might as well just continue the fight.

Without hesitating, he once again flashed forward, and the resounding booms of their impacts continued to ring out in the blizzard.

Outside the blizzard area, Ruyue had already finished off the majority of the snow leopards. The only ones she had remaining were the three mid-level 3rd class leopards that she had been wary of since the start.

However, a problem had occurred. She simply wasn't fast enough, and she had underestimated the intelligence of these leopards.

The level difference between her and them wasn't actually that large, and they had been able to regroup faster than she had anticipated. Although she had isolated them diligently, her fog wasn't as effective on them.

At the moment, she was standing head to head with all three of them as they circled around her with rage coating their expressions.

Their dense killing intent that eclipsed hers was pressuring down on her, attempting to break her mind.

These three could be considered elder-level figures in the tribe, and the deaths of their tribesmen weren't something they would stomach. Especially with such a perilous situation, they had no desire to let the offender off lightly.

They wanted to make her feel the pain and despair of their tribesmen. They wanted her to be covered in blood before she succumbed to the throes of death.

With this in mind, they had been trying to break her mind and fighting spirit before actually breaking her body, but they hadn't made progress.

“You are truly bold for charging into the tribe with just the two of you. Did you think your measly strength was enough to contend with us?”

“You should just give up and allow us to imprison you, maybe that way you can face a less severe punishment.”

“Indeed, a human woman is something many in our tribe would love to taste. You should think carefully about what will happen if you don’t submit.”

Listening to their constant jeers, Ruyue simply smirked. “Did you think you were scary or something? Just a bunch of old kittens meowing won’t be enough to make me shudder in fear.”

The full moon was still hanging strong in the sky, and the pristine white spear was still clenched in her hands. Blue flames coated its blade, making it look even more lethal.

Truthfully, these elders were also wary. The fact that all the rest in the area had died without their notice was enough for them to no longer disdain their opponent. Even they didn’t fully believe their mocking words.

“Where do you get your confidence from? Is it perhaps that little boyfriend of yours that’s fighting the tribe leader?”

“Hahaha, there’s no way. If she was so confident in that kid, she’d truly be an idiot.”

“We just need to wait for the tribe leader to emerge with that kid’s head and we’ll see how she breaks down.”

A frown slowly appeared on Ruyue’s face. She trusted Damien with her life, especially after all they had experienced together. And she wasn’t dumb enough to judge him by his level.

He had numerous tricks up his sleeve, as well as an esoteric affinity and an insane physical body. She didn’t believe for one second that he’d lose to a normal opponent.

But it didn’t stop her from worrying. Even if she knew he would win, she couldn’t stop her heart from beating faster until she could see it for herself.

Suddenly, she sensed movement in the torrential blizzard that had been raging for the entire battle, covering up Damien and the tribe leader’s battle.

Slowly but surely, the snowy veil began to deteriorate and thin. Ruyue and the elders were able to vaguely see the outline of two figures standing upright within.

The ground around them was cracked and suffered, with various indents many feet in depth surrounding them. The snow had been both melted and frozen to form a sheet of sleet that they stood on. The entire scene, while devastated, was much less serious than they expected.

After all, a serious clash of powers would have left at least the entire ground below them in a state of mayhem.

When the snow finally cleared, the vague scene was revealed in full. Damien stood tall in front of the tribe leader, staring at him intently.

Blood covered his body and dripped onto the sleet below, but his complexion was still rosy. He clearly didn't suffer too much in the long run.

Meanwhile, the tribe leader was covered in bloody scars, and even his head was cracked open in multiple places. His eyes were dim and fatigued, but still stared at Damien fearlessly.

The entire scene was frozen. Everyone stared at that single spot without moving in the slightest.

"It looks like...I've lost." The tribe leader croaked. His hazy eyes slowly began to shut, disappointment evident within them.

At that moment, the stillness of the atmosphere seemingly multiplied. Even the plants and trees stopped fluttering.

Suddenly, a powerful pressure enveloped the area. The stillness was immediately broken as a thunderclap-like voice boomed in the air.

"Who dares attack a tribe under my, Incarnate Snow Beast King's, protection?!"

Hearing the roar, the disappointment in the tribe leader's eyes faded, replaced by delight.

'Ah...with this, I can die in peace.'



The life force in his body withered away and he collapsed on the ground, just as the owner of that pressure made his appearance.

The man who arrived domineeringly wasn't as grand as his voice. He was actually quite skinny and looked a bit frail. His black hair was rough and rugged, flowing down his back, and his eyes were like blue crystals of ice within their sockets.

However, nobody would be fooled by the man's appearance. After all, the terrifying pressure emanating from his body was enough to show what kind of power his within that tiny frame.

Damien looked up at the figure in the air gravely.

"So this is what you were aiming for, you old bastard." He gnashed his teeth.

From what they had learned, the Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe was too prideful to submit themselves to a Beast King. In fact, it was one of the main reasons why they chose to target the clan in the first place.

But unexpected to all, in the face of exterminating danger, the tribe leader had actually lowered his head and pledged fealty.

Otherwise, there was no way the current situation would be taking place.

'I guess that's why I admired him in the first place, but still...'

The respect Damien had for the tribe leader came from the fact that he was a leader who truly cared about the well-being of his people.

Damien had seen so many corrupt old guys back on earth who only cared for their own self-interests that such a tribe leader was someone he felt he had to tip his hat to.

But this final trump card that the tribe leader had thrust upon him before his death...

‘Fuck, I guess you got the last laugh.’

For the first time, Damien was facing a situation that he couldn’t see a way out of.

Chapter 215 - Beast King [1]

“Who dares attack a tribe under my, Incarnate Snow Beast King’s, protection?!”

The voice boomed in their ears like a clap of thunder, forcing those present out of their daze from the previous circumstances.

The elders and tribe members of the Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe had fallen into despair for a second. Their tribe leader had died in front of them, leaving them with no chance of survival.

But the arrival of the Beast King put a glimmer of hope in their eyes. Perhaps they would have to submit themselves to a greater power, something they had always avoided before, but none of that mattered anymore.

Their tribe leader was their hope and pillar. With his death, they had no aspirations to become a King clan anymore. And besides that, submitting didn't sound so bad if they could get revenge.

Revenge that had evaded them with the death of their tribe leader.

In direct contrast to the feelings of the Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe, Damien and Ruyue had ugly looks on their faces.

This was a Beast King, a genuine 4th class being. The pressure that was enveloping the atmosphere at the moment, although weaker than Tian Yang's, was more than anything they could hope to produce on their own.

Looking at each other, they could feel the helplessness in their eyes. The difference between ranks was simply that large.

Especially between 3rd and 4th class, the difference was akin to a bottomless chasm. After all, 4th class beings, no matter how weak they were, would all be individuals who had touched upon the laws of the world.

A simple affinity or element couldn't compare.

Their eyes landed on the Beast King floating in the air once again. Running away from peak 3rd classes was possible no matter how many there were, but it was different for a 4th class.

Damien gritted his teeth. No matter what, this wouldn't be his grave. He had no plans of dying before he even got the chance to apologize to Rose.

A trace of ruthlessness flashed across his eyes.

‘If it’s like that, then all I can do is fight.’

While Damien and Ruyue were going through a myriad of emotions, the Beast King was calmly observing them as well.

‘These two kids are the ones causing so much trouble?’

With his status, he didn’t necessarily desire to have a massive number of clans and tribes under him, but it didn’t mean he didn’t enjoy it.

Especially when those tribes were of the leopard species like him. He wanted to gather them all together and form a massive unrivaled force.

Of these leopards, the Turbulent Blizzard Leopards were one branch that had a high growth potential, so he had been trying to coax them to his side for a while now.

It could be imagined his surprise when they sent a notice of voluntary submission, with the only condition being his aid one time. And so, he rushed down to provide aid only to find two humans facing the entire leopard clan.

Not only that, but also the tribe leader dead on the ground.

He furrowed his brows at the sight. It should be easier than walking to crush these two like ants, but for some reason, he had the feeling that things wouldn't go the way he wished.

Still, that wasn't something to bother with right now. In the first place, he had no grudge with these mysterious humans. Whether or not his interference actually bore fruit, he didn't care. As long as he made a move, the Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe would be submitted under him.

Concluding his thoughts, he once again looked towards the two humans in front of him.

"Do you two understand the consequences of what you have done?" His tone was domineering, infused with the mana of a Beast King.

Still, Damien didn't cower. Even with the massive pressure on his shoulders, his knees refused to buckle.

"Regardless of consequences, what's done is done."

Seeing his fearless attitude, the Beast King didn't know whether to praise his courage or disdain his idiocy. Still, from the short exchange, he was aware that words wouldn't be able to move this kid.

"Very well. If death is your wish, then I shall grant it to you."

The Beast King didn't move from his spot. Instead, he pushed his arm out and threw a simple punch.

Boom!

The air shattered at the point of contact and rushing winds billowed. Before Damien even understood what was happening, his body was flung backwards.

‘What the hell?!’

He tried to stabilize himself in the air, but in the next instant, a shadow appeared before him and struck down.

Boom!

Another fierce impact rang out, and when the crowd looked over, they saw Damien’s figure embedded in the snow.

\*Cough\*

A mouthful of blood unintentionally burst from his lips. When Damien clutched his chest, he could feel that it had slightly caved in.

Before he was able to regain his bearings, the shadow once again appeared before him, this time swiftly kicking him straight in his jaw.

The force of the impact snapped his head up, forcing his body to fly into the air. The shadow arrived in front of him and let out a flurry of punches.

Damien's body was like a rag doll. He was thrown back and forth without the ability to resist, his blood staining the white snow beneath him. With every punch, his chest caved in, his ribs broke, his blood splashed, it was unbearable.

But his high-level regeneration continuously repaired his broken body. This way, no matter how much he was beaten, he was never gravely injured to the point of no repair.

It seemed as though the Beast King had already noticed his regeneration and was timing his attacks to accommodate it. If that was truly the case...it was terrifying.

But Damien had no time to think. Every time he was struck, he did his best to control his mana and counterattack, but his mana was diffused before it even left his body.

It gave off a feeling of fear as if it was greeting a higher form of itself.

The beating continued for many minutes as those below could only stand like statues and watch in awe.

Even Ruyue, no matter how much she urged her body to move, was unable to do so. It wasn't a product of fear or cowardice, rather it was as if the air around her had been locked to imprison her.

From the looks of it, the Beast King didn't plan to allow them even the slightest chance of escape.

Boom!

Damien's body shot through the air like a comet before crashing into the stone wall of the cave dwelling, completely shattering the rock.

It was at this time when the Beast King finally came to a halt. His frail body stood straight in the air like a spear, looking like it didn't even take a drop of sweat to give Damien such a beating.

When the smoke cleared, Damien's miserable figure could be seen. Once again, he was covered head to toe in blood, but his face was pale as a sheet of paper and his wounded body was healing much slower.

His chest was still slightly caved in and most of his ribs were broken. If one looked closely, one could even see the slight shine of his Mana Heart through his skin due to how severe his injuries were.

Still, his eyes hadn't lost their luster. Even after all of this, he glared at the Beast King without a shred of fear.

This kind of behavior struck fear into the hearts of those watching him.

What the hell was he doing? Obviously the Beast King was just toying with him earlier. Did he really want to provoke him?

Chapter 216 - Beast King [2]

The Incarnate Snow Beast King had originally planned to teach this boy a lesson. That was all he was doing through this beating.



Perhaps it could be considered as courage to refuse to bow down to someone of his power level, but there were some situations where such courage was useless.

It would only lead to an early death.

And so, he wanted this boy to realize the consequences of becoming too inflated, of facing a Beast King like him and still assuming he could still wriggle his way out of the situation.

But as time went on, he became a little annoyed and at the same time grew a slight admiration for the boy. Unlike the others, he could clearly see Damien's expression during the entire fight.

Not once had he shown even an ounce of resignation. Every time he was hit, he would glare at the Beast King without fear. This kind of attitude wasn't something just anyone could possess.

This kind of attitude was something birthed through endlessly toeing the line with death.

When he saw Damien glaring at him even though he was embedded in a wall and his regeneration was slowing down, he didn't know what to do.

Now, he didn't really feel like killing the boy. He was a seedling with too much potential to die over a small conflict like this.

As the Beast King was wondering how to proceed, Damien's thoughts were filled with unbridled fury.

When had he ever been in such a situation? He had never been forced into a corner like this even when facing the most hopeless battles in the past. There was never such a major gulf.

Truth be told, he was humiliated. He had already been forced to run away and hide from those assassins at the auction, and now he was once again forced by the circumstances in such close proximity.

It hadn't even been a month since the last encounter.

Damien wasn't an idiot. He understood the concept of knowing when to attack and retreat, but even if he understood it didn't mean he enjoyed it.

His pride wasn't obvious on the surface, but it festered and grew deep in his bones. Such pride disdained this situation. It disdained to become a cornered rat.

Damien's fury grew as he thought about the humiliation. The purple in his eyes slowly became polluted with red.

"Haa...haa..."

Each time he inhaled, small gusts of wind swirled around him, and when he exhaled, they were blown apart.

'I refuse. I refuse. I refuse.'

Faint cracking sounds were emitted from his body as his bones slowly restructured. His labored breaths became clear and unhurried.

‘I refuse this. I, Damien Void, refuse to be reduced to a mere punching bag for a higher existence.’

Damien’s internal body was going through a myriad of changes at the moment without his knowledge. The faint cracking sounds became more and more pronounced until even those bystanders could hear them clearly.

Boom!

Blood suddenly spurted out from his forehead as two protrusions grew from his skull. They were like spiked horns that curled and slowly wrapped around his head like a crown.

His eyes flickered constantly, his cross-shaped pupils becoming vertical slits of a reptile. His teeth and fingernails elongated into fangs and claws.

Damien suddenly felt like millions of ants were crawling around beneath his skin. The sensation was extremely uncomfortable, causing him to grit his teeth in strain.

Slowly but surely, his skin seemed to flip, revealing something akin to an inky black carapace, or rather, scales.

These scales inverted from his skin and covered his entire body, working their way up his neck and stopping at his chin, leaving his face uncovered.

Crack!

The cave wall he was embedded into began to crack and splinter, falling to the ground below.

Boom!

Blood once again splashed from Damien's body. This time, from his back. Once again, protrusions exited his scale-covered skin.

They were a pair of wings made entirely of bone, with a thin layer of black skin covering them. Their 10-foot wide wingspan caused the surrounding rocks to break away to make space to contain them.

If one looked closely, they'd be able to faintly feel a sense of incompleteness from these wings, as if they exited his body prematurely. In fact, even the crown-like bone horns adorning his head gave off the same feeling.

Boom!

The wings flapped once, impacting the stone wall and causing it to collapse completely. However, Damien didn't move. He was suspended in the air by the flapping of his massive wings.

His blood-red draconic eyes glared at the Beast King as killing intent thicker than anything he had shown before burst from his body.

Seeing this, the Beast King frowned. “Boy, do you understand what you’re about to do? Even if I had some positive feelings towards you, I won’t let you off if you willingly attack me.”

But Damien didn’t respond. He flapped his wings and vanished, appearing directly in front of the Beast King.

Raising his arm, he cocked it and threw a rapid punch, but before the punch even landed, he teleported to the Beast King’s back. Carrying the momentum forward, his punch finally landed with an even greater impact.

Boom!

Not even waiting to check the Beast King’s condition, he vanished and reappeared at the Beast King’s side, throwing another heated punch.

His fists became coated in mana that suddenly burst. On one side, there was a flash of black lightning that oddly warped the space around it, and on the other, a crimson flame that gave off immeasurable heat.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A series of punches continuously landed on the unmoving body of the Beast King. His seemingly indifferent attitude made one doubt the actual force behind the flurry of attacks, but the environment clearly showed its damage.

The ground was sundered entirely. The snow that was originally present had melted and turned into a small river that soon evaporated under the heat of Damien's fists. The ground itself had been caved in by the aftershocks of the numerous impacts.

Even the clouds in the sky weren't spared, being ripped to shreds by the tumultuous winds that were kicked up by Damien's sheer speed.

Luckily, the battle was taking place in the air, otherwise, things wouldn't have been so simple. Most likely, the entire area would have been annihilated, leading to another massive avalanche.

Under Damien's constant attacks, the Beast King stood indifferently, not an ounce of expression on his face. But inwardly, he was extremely surprised.

'I'm actually feeling...pain?'

Even if his body was outwardly frail, he was a beast. His body was naturally extremely strong, and it became even stronger through the tribulations by which he entered 4th class. To feel pain from the attacks of a lower being was unheard of.

Sure, Damien's attacks weren't actually damaging him, but he could feel the heat of those crimson flames very clearly within his body. He even got the faint feeling that his blood began boiling.

'I can't let this go on for much longer.'

Originally, he had planned to simply stay still and tank the attacks to crush Damien's fighting spirit, but if he let this go on for too long, signs of injury might begin showing on his skin.

It wouldn't be dangerous, but for a Beast King to be injured by a lower being, that too a human, wouldn't he lose a great deal of face?

Under this line of reasoning, he slowly raised his hand, intending to make a real move for the first time. When suddenly, he sensed something from the edge of his perception.

Throwing out a semi-heavy kick to throw Damien away, he turned his head in that direction.

“Which one of you Beast Kings is hiding in the corner right now? Since when did people of our status need to do such things?”

Chapter 217 - Beast King [3]

“Which one of you Beast Kings is hiding in the corner right now? Since when did people of our status need to do such things?”

The words echoed through the surroundings for a few moments with no response, when suddenly, space began to ripple and a figure stepped out.

“Haha, it wasn't like I was hiding on purpose, I was just a bit curious about this boy.”

A boisterous voice accompanied the figure as he slowly became clear. His hair was like a glowing white mane, his body was robust and filled with explosive power, and his eyes were silvery reptilian slits.

The Incarnate Snow Beast King's eyes narrowed at the sight of this man. “White Dragon King.”

“Haha, it seems that I’m still somewhat famous, huh. And here I thought my name would be forgotten while I was in seclusion.”

“How could that be? The White Dragon King has earned himself quite the reputation through his actions. Not only are you one of the strongest Kings on our mountain, but you also challenged the overlord and left unscathed. This kind of legend won’t just be forgotten with time.”

“You humor me, I’m not as great as you make it sound.” The White Dragon King smiled. Suddenly, his brows perked up in interest.

Roar!

A fearsome roar shook the surroundings, causing the attention of those present to finally leave the two Beast Kings in the sky. When they did, they noticed that a massive 10-kilometer-wide radius of the area had become completely barren of snow and flora.

In the air there stood a familiar man covered in black scales with bone wings and a crown protruding from his body. His blood-red eyes were especially fierce, and even contained a hint of mania as they stared at the Incarnate Snow Beast King.

Roar!

With another roar, he raised his arm, drawing attention to the massive object floating above him. If there was one way to describe it, it would be a second sun.



A mountainous ball of crimson gold flames hung in the air, melting even the air around it. The atmosphere that the ball of fire gave off was suffocating to all those that weren't Beast Kings.

The billowing aura radiating from Damien intensified dramatically as with another roar, he threw his arm forward and released the ball of flames towards the Incarnate Snow Beast King.

The Beast King's eyes narrowed at the sight. Suddenly, the snow around him began to bend and twist, channeling into rivers of white that surrounded him.

"Go."

Those white rivers quickly formed order and charged towards the huge sun. When the two made contact, heated steam filled the atmosphere with temperature enough to boil the skin of those 3rd class beings if they hadn't used mana to protect themselves.

Roar!

The ferocious roars didn't end. While the collision between the sun and snow continued, Damien's figure flashed and appeared behind the Beast King, clapping his hands together loudly.

Space began to distort, looking on the verge of shattering. If this was the outside world, perhaps it would have collapsed entirely. But in this environment filled with spatial suppression, Damien's spatial collapse wasn't able to achieve its intended effect.

But he didn't need to mind that. Even if the original mechanism was faulty, he had ways around it. With space already distorting from his previous attack, Damien manipulated the vectors in the area to further sow chaos.

The chaotic movement of the vectors heightened and caused the air to tremble. And when coupled with Damien's previous attempt to collapse space, finally achieved its purpose.

A massive black hole was formed, swallowing the Incarnate Snow Beast King whole. In that instant, the previous sun was also extinguished, causing silence to blanket the atmosphere.

But this silence didn't last long.

"Boy, don't go too far!"

A furious roar was heard from within the black hole as billowing waves of mana exited it. In the next instant, the blackness was directly shattered as if it was fragile glass. The Incarnate Snow Beast King appeared once again, looking clearly enraged by Damien's earlier move.

"Good good good! See how I deal with you now!"

The air around Damien solidified, trapping him in place just like with Ruyue. Even within this entrapment, his figure continuously writhed and thrashed around, looking like a wild beast.

The White Dragon King watched this scene with interest before sighing.

'Sigh, it looks like I was right. Although his bloodline is mixed with many other things, it is still a dragon bloodline at the end of the day.'

Besides that, he also noticed that Damien was a human. Or rather, he used to be a human. This meant that his dragon bloodline wasn't something attained at birth, but earned through battle.

Although dragons were prideful from birth, there was another quality about them that not many were aware of, due to their reclusive nature.

They were true spirits of battle.

All dragons were creatures who craved battle and worshipped the strong. Their pride also stemmed from this dichotomy.

And so, when the dragon race came upon beings who acquired their bloodlines through battle, they didn't look down on them or form vendettas.

Instead, they felt respect. But this respect was only given to those who proved themselves worthy of their bloodlines.

The reason the White Dragon King arrived in the first place was because he had sensed a weak dragon aura while he was cultivating. Ever since then, he had been quietly watching Damien to test whether he was to be killed or groomed.

And from his observation, he chose the latter. Damien hadn't shown all his cards in this time, and he was lacking a bit in the brains department, but his strength and will had impressed the White Dragon King.

His killing intent and ruthlessness in battle were also something that an undeserving party wouldn't possess. As a dragon, while he understood the purpose of schemes and even used them himself sometimes, he still disdained them.

For a person like Damien, it was evident just from a few days' observation that he held a similar viewpoint. So there was no way he had used foul means to acquire his bloodline.

The White Dragon King was also clearly aware of what was happening with Damien right now. He was like a young dragon who had just been born, he didn't understand how to fully control his bloodline.

With a dragon's pride, and perhaps coupled with Damien's own inherent pride, there was no way he could accept the humiliation of the Incarnate Snow Beast King. Such unwillingness led his bloodline to rage and send him into a frenzy.

At this moment, the best way to describe Damien was as a berserker. There were most likely no thoughts behind those eyes.

Sighing once again, the White Dragon King turned to the Incarnate Snow Beast King who was preparing to attack for real.

"Say, can you give me some face and let the boy off this time?"

The Incarnate Snow Beast King furrowed his brows. To be honest, while he was angry he wasn't actually that mad.

And the White Dragon King wasn't an existence he could offend with his power. Although he didn't have a massive force behind him, the White Dragon Elite Troop that he raised was feared by all.

He felt that the matter would end a bit too quickly and quietly if he simply gave in at this moment, but there wasn't much else he could do. Besides, fighting a kid so much weaker than him would be a blow to his pride.

"Fine. Since the White Dragon King seems to have an interest in this boy, I'll let him off. However, he still caused harm to a tribe that has come under my banner, so I require at least some sort of compensation."

Chapter 218 - Beast King [4]

The White Dragon King's eyes narrowed. 'This guy would've been better off being born as a fox than a leopard.'

He knew very well that the Incarnate Snow Beast King didn't care about this small tribe at all, but he still asked for reparations.

First off, he would be able to at least somewhat quell the tribe's fury and show that he is thinking about them, which would guarantee their loyalty, especially if he shared some of the wealth he gained with them.

He would also be able to save face and avoid beating someone weaker than him, which would've left a slight stain on his reputation.

And most of all, he'd be able to gain something from the White Dragon King. No matter how reclusive the king was, he was still one of the peak experts in the Endless Snow Mountain, so anything he had would be a treasure.

But, the White Dragon King didn't mind much. This kind of mind was the reason the Incarnate Snow Beast King was able to survive and rule over a portion of the mountain even though he was only average among the Kings that reside here.

"Fine. Our White Dragon Grotto will make sure to send some gifts over to your Incarnate Snow Kingdom in the near future. I can assure you that you will be satisfied."

The Incarnate Snow Beast King beamed at his words. "Hahaha, if the White Dragon King says so, then I can only comply. If that's all, then I shall be heading back to my territory now."

Turning to the crowd of Turbulent Blizzard Leopards below, he once again spoke. "Although the matter of today didn't end the way you hoped, one should always understand how to endure and grow. Perhaps, if you become strong enough, you'll one day be able to achieve revenge with your own hands."

Without any more superfluous words, he turned into a streak of light and flew off into the horizon.

The White Dragon King clicked his tongue at the sight. This guy was truly scheming until the end. The promise of the tribe gaining revenge with their own hands would be enough to thoroughly motivate them. This kind of motivation would without a doubt lead them to contribute to his kingdom in return for rewards that could help them gain strength.

Shaking his head lightly, the White Dragon King turned to Damien and Ruyue, who were still trapped in the suppression the Incarnate Snow Beast King put them in.

Seeing how Damien was still furiously struggling, he clicked his tongue.

‘Hmm, I guess I’ll have to knock him unconscious first.’

A domineering aura left the White Dragon King’s body, causing those below to shiver in fear. This wasn’t his Beast King aura or even killing intent, but the pure aura suppression that originated from his bloodline.

He was, after all, a true dragon. He may as well have been the first person Damien had met who had the qualifications to call themselves a true dragon, but unfortunately, he wasn’t awake to realize it.

When the bloodline suppression impacted Damien, he suddenly froze in place. His transformation began to fluctuate before receding entirely back into his body. This kind of bloodline suppression was something he, as an individual with largely impure dragon bloodline, was unable to resist.

And with the White Dragon King continuously increasing the amount of pressure, Damien soon fell unconscious while frothing from the mouth.

With that out of the way, the White Dragon King grabbed Damien and hoisted him over his shoulder like a bag of rice.

“If I’m not wrong, you should be his companion?” He turned to Ruyue and ask.

Ruyue nodded but didn’t say anything else. In fact, her attention had been focused elsewhere the entire time.

Shortly after Damien's beating began, Ruyue was unable to endure watching him get thrown around like a rag doll. Instead, she had been pushing her negative mana in a bid to corrode the suppression around her.

And she had achieved mild success, merely, the suppression of a 4th class wasn't something she could easily dispel.

Now that the White Dragon King called out to her, she finally stopped her attempts. The whole ordeal was already over and whether they liked it or not, it seemed they would be going with this new Beast King.

Seeing her response, the White Dragon King lightly waved his hand and dispelled the suppression around her before covering her in his mana. Like this, he carried Damien on his shoulder and Ruyue with his mana before turning into a streak of light and shooting off into the distance like the Incarnate Snow Beast King.

The cave dwelling of the Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe finally regained peace once again. The silence in the air seemed almost palpable.

Even those neighboring tribes who had come to watch the show after feeling the fluctuations didn't make a sound.

A depressing atmosphere seemed to cover the leopard tribe at the moment. Each and every one of them was lamenting about how anticlimactic the previous events ended up being.

Finally, after some time, the elders of the tribe let out a collective sigh. "At the very least, we were able to see the bastard who killed the tribe leader be humiliated."



“Right. More than that, it seemed the tribe leader had some respect for him. And his words from before weren’t wrong. This all happened because we are weak.”

“We are weak. So we must take the opportunity we gained from Sir Incarnate Snow and become powerful. Powerful enough that nobody can ever step on our tribe again.”

Hearing the elders talk, the rest of the tribe members slowly felt a sliver of hope returning.

That’s right. As long as they were still alive, they could become stronger. And if they became stronger, they would no longer have to rely on outside powers to get what they want.

That way, even if such a situation occurred again in the future, they could deal with it as they wished instead of having no say in the matters like today.

While the tribe members slowly began to hopefully clamor, the elders looked at each other sorrowfully. Even if the tribe members didn’t know, they weren’t stupid enough not to realize.

That boy definitely had some sort of connection to the White Dragon King. That was an existence they’d never be able to touch no matter how strong they became.

And with the White Dragon King personally taking him in, perhaps the next time they met, none of them would hold a candle to him anymore.

Wryly smiling at each other, the elders shook their heads. No matter what, this was a matter for another day. For now, they had to get the tribe in order and make sure that the outside forces eyeing them wouldn’t gain any opportunities.

This was their responsibility. No matter what their personal thoughts were, they couldn't act on them. At this kind of time, they started to admire the tribe leader even more.

No matter what the circumstance, he always thought about the tribe first. If not for his foresight, perhaps they would've been exterminated today due to silly pride.

Once again sighing lightly, they returned to the cave dwelling with the rest of the tribe.

Chapter 219 - Next Stop [1]

The cool winds of the Endless Snow Mountain whipped through the air as the White Dragon King leisurely sped up the mountainside.

Well, it might have been leisurely to him, but to Ruyue, it was nightmarish. This kind of speed was something she would barely be able to touch even if she was exerting all her effort and mana, but it was achieved by the White Dragon King like it was nothing.

As they ascended the mountain, the winds became increasingly fierce, and while Ruyue was being protected by the White Dragon King's mana, Damien was being hit by them directly.

"Ngh..."

The harsh cold and impact that continued to harass his face slowly roused Damien's consciousness. At that moment, his eyes began to flutter open.

"Ah!"

And they were shut just as soon as that happened. After all, the speed coupled with the ferocious wind was enough to almost injure his eyes in that slight instant.

‘What the hell is going on?’

His memory was incredibly foggy after the fight with the Turbulent Blizzard Leopard tribe leader. Did he get captured? Was he being tortured? A myriad of questions swirled through his mind as he tried to understand the situation.

When he attempted to move, he only became more confused. ‘What the hell? Am I being pinned down by a log or something?’

He could feel something like a tree trunk bearing down on his waist. The only problem was, there didn’t seem to be ground underneath him.

Wanting to get to the bottom of the situation, Damien finally spread his awareness. And the first thing he saw was a massive face grinning at him from directly next to him.

“FUCK!”

A slightly girlish scream inadvertently left his mouth.

“Pffft!” From the side, the faint sounds of a woman’s giggles also filled the air, accompanied by the uproarious laughter of the man whose face Damien had just seen.

It didn't take an expert to realize it was Ruyue, though the identity of the man was still a mystery. Damien sighed in exasperation. Although he didn't understand the situation they were currently in, if Ruyue had the free time to laugh at his pathetic situation, then they shouldn't be in any danger.

Once he confidently spread his awareness once more, he was able to properly see his embarrassing posture, being carried like a sack of rice, but obviously he couldn't do anything about it.

Besides the fact that they were in the air and his mana was nearly drained, he couldn't escape the iron grip of that mysterious man.

With the knowledge that there was no immediate threat, Damien sunk into his consciousness and tried to sort out his blurred memories.

'Damn...I got curbstomped by that guy.'

The first thing that came back was the memory of getting ragdolled by the Incarnate Snow Beast King, and slowly but surely the rest came back to him.

The utter humiliation and rage he felt, the sudden transformation his body went through, the way he barraged the Beast King and achieved no results, and how he had been suppressed by the man who was currently holding him with only a bit of pressure.

Although the humiliation he felt was still present as he recalled these memories, the embarrassment and depression eclipsed it.

‘I’m still so weak.’

He had fought a few 4th classes before and even bore Tian Yang’s pressure, but he knew very well that in none of those instances did those beings ever take the situation seriously.

The first time was with Malcolm, and similarly to the situation now, he had blacked out. Only, he still didn’t know what had happened at that time. As for the second time, it was a small bout with Rose’s father, James. That one was even less serious, as besides testing his capabilities, the Adelaire Emperor barely lifted a finger.

Not once had he been in a situation where the 4th class being was antagonistic towards him, at least, not until today.

For the first time, he truly understood the gap between the two ranks. Sure, he had previously got a grasp of it through Tian Yang’s aura suppression, but it was different today. He thought that at least he’d have a chance to escape, at least he’d get a few moves in or cause even the smallest scratch, but no.

He had been manhandled, and even when his opponent stood still and allowed him to attack, he couldn’t inflict even the slightest of damage. He had even been kicked away like a little kid.

He couldn’t help but sigh at his predicament, but it wasn’t like it was his fault. How long had he been training? 4 years? 5 years? It was foolish to compare himself to these old monsters and expect to easily match them.

But that didn’t mean he would never reach their level. People like him Ruyue and Long Chen were all considered as heavenly geniuses for having reached their current level at their age.

And while the main roadblock for those attempting to ascend to 4th class was comprehension and connection with the elements, comprehension had always been a forte of his.

Otherwise, there was no way his skills would rise in level so fast and evolve. It would be utterly inconceivable to other people if they ever found out about his rate of progression.

‘That’s right. Their main advantage is time. And time is something I have plenty of.’

In the coming years, the universe would likely be enveloped in the flames of war, and before that, he needed to become much stronger than he was now. If not, he’d just end up cannon fodder.

But that was years away. If he could ascend so much in a few years’ time, he didn’t feel he’d have a problem continuing with this speed as long as he truly worked for it.

He just needed that drive if he wanted to gain that power.

Flames of determination sparked within Damien’s eyes. ‘One day, I’ll go back to that guy and beat him senseless. Let’s see how he cries at that time.’

When Damien came out of his thoughts, he realized that the ferocious winds had relatively calmed down. The speed at which they were moving had also slowed.

Thinking it was safe, he finally decided to open his eyes once more.

“...Eh?”

Only to find himself flying forward. Landing on the snowy ground once more, he realized that he had been thrown. And no matter how much he wanted to voice his dissatisfaction, in front of a man who could suppress him so easily, he couldn't get the words out of his mouth.

This was another thing that Damien hadn't thought about paying attention to until this moment.

Bloodline suppression.

Previously, his bloodline was too mixed and muddled for any single species to suppress him. Their species would just never have the domination within his bloodline for suppression to even take effect.

But now, it was different. From his transformation alone, he realized that the dominance of his dragon bloodline had far exceeded his expectations. And now, it was completely possible for him to be turned into nothing by higher dragons with purer bloodlines.

A booming voice that seemed loud even though it was spoken at normal volume snapped him out of his thoughts.

“We've arrived. Welcome to my White Dragon Grotto.”

Chapter 220 - Next Stop [2]

“We've arrived. Welcome to my White Dragon Grotto.”

“Eh?”

Damien could only muster a surprised sound when he heard the man speak. After all, even if he had his memories, he could only remember them as he was.

Basically, his memories were filled with an embarrassing rage-filled temper tantrum where everything was drowned out besides his desire to kill the Incarnate Snow Beast King. He was still entirely confused about the current situation.

Without any other choice, he shot a helpless look towards Ruyue, who wryly smiled at his behavior. Then, she gave a brief rundown of everything she knew over mana transmission.

‘I see, so this guy is the so-called White Dragon King...kind of pretentious to name this place after him but I guess at the same time it isn’t.’

Quickly standing up and brushing the snow off his clothes, Damien slightly bowed towards the White Dragon King. “I’ve embarrassed myself in front of Senior White Dragon.”

But the White Dragon King was never one to care about such niceties. He lightly waved off Damien’s apology and continued speaking. “Brat, don’t be mistaken in thinking that I saved you because I care or because I see value in you. It’s nothing like that.”

His gaze sharpened. “My White Dragon Grotto is a gathering place for all those with dragon bloodline, regardless of its purity. The only reason you were saved is because you happen to possess such a bloodline. Don’t go thinking you’re special or unique.”



Damien sighed lightly. He couldn't say that he didn't think he was special, but he didn't refute the White Dragon King. In situations like this, it would be stupid to expect that he would always be saved by a higher power. Damien couldn't help but admit that his move earlier was as foolish as it could get.

Seeing the slightly melancholic look on Damien's face, the White Dragon King smiled. "Although you definitely shoulder the blame for your actions, it wasn't entirely your fault. A part of it was due to the fact that you haven't fully tamed that bloodline of yours."

Spreading his arms, he smiled once more. "And that is the purpose of this White Dragon Grotto. To bring those fledglings who, by luck or skill, obtained the legacy of dragons, and to raise them into beings that can proudly proclaim their race."

He waved his arm slightly, motioning Damien and Ruyue to follow him, before walking forward and disappearing into the side of the mountain that was in front of them.

Glancing at each other for a second, the duo nodded before following after him.

In fact, the area they were standing at previously was only a barren area of the mountain that was simply a snowy wasteland. It was part of the reason for Damien's confusion when they landed.

When the White Dragon King literally walked into the side of the mountain, he couldn't help but be surprised. After all, if the area was an illusion, he should've seen through it. This could only mean that it was some sort of expertly crafted physical concealment.

Neither Damien nor Ruyue was able to make heads or tails of how it was done.

When they finally made their way through the wall, their ears were suddenly barraged by a myriad of ear-shattering and earth-shaking roars coming from all sides. None of them were directed at the duo, but the sheer collective sound of them all was enough to shatter the eardrums of those weaker.

After taking a second to get used to the roars, as well as to marvel at the fact that the barrier in the mountainside made it so none of it was audible from the outside, they finally got the chance to look around.

The area that should've been a cavern was actually open air, clearly receiving the warmth of sunlight and the fresh air of the outside world through some unknown means. As for its size, it was similar to a massive city, only, the area was built with countless arenas and barely any living quarters.

Each of these arenas was currently occupied by a myriad of dragons and draconic species, with some even looking relatively humanoid.

There were even a few that looked like genuine humans among the batches.

All of them were either watching the ongoing fights or partaking in them, and the fights themselves were clearly life or death.

Fatal wounds would pile up on the contestants until one of them inevitably died. And when death took them, their opponent would devour their body.

“This is the nature of White Dragon Grotto.” The voice of the White Dragon King snapped them out of their dazes.

“If you are expecting a quiet and peaceful nurturing ground, it’s best if you let me extract the bloodline of dragons from you, for you are unworthy of it.

“This is a place of death and cruelty. You fight and fight until you can’t fight anymore. If you win, you can absorb the bloodline of others and enhance your own, and if you die, you become food for others’ growth.

“Of course, we still keep the slightest bit of fairness to maintain order. Your opponents will be those in your same class range. Anyone above or below you is off-limits. This way, there will be no cowards among us who prey on the weak and fear the strong.”

Damien nodded as he followed the White Dragon King through the city. “You are not trying to build some kind of massive empire or sect, instead, you are grooming an elite force that can topple 1000 with 10.”

“Hahaha! I guess you could say it like that. Though, I’m not really the leader type. I just felt a bit of pity for those of dragon lineage who aspired to ascend to the ranks of true dragons. Due to this, I created an opportunity for them.

“But as I said, I am no saint nor leader. In another sense, you could consider me a vile being. I brought all the dragonkin to one place and forced them to fight for their stay.”

But Damien shook his head in denial. “As if. You say that like anyone here is reluctant to stay. Even just watching the atmosphere and thinking of the prospective rewards, my blood boils. And I have the most impure of dragon bloodlines. If these guys who have actually tasted the benefits of such an environment actually held thoughts of leaving, I’d truly disdain them.”

The White Dragon King grinned. “Good! That’s the kind of attitude you need to survive here at the White Dragon Grotto. Anyway, I’ll bring someone to settle you guys in. After all, you can’t have the

king acting as an attendant, hahaha! Also, while you're a member of our grotto, just call me Senior Bai or Leader Bai. This whole White Dragon King nonsense is a bit much."

Damien nodded with a smile, shooting a look of slight admiration towards the White Dragon King. It seemed that he had a lot of good luck when it came to the seniors he met on his journey. Malcolm, Tian Yang, Senior Bai, they were all his kinds of people. He felt like they were some of the easiest to get along with.

Once again shifting his gaze towards the various bloodbaths going on, he felt the excitement in the air, the fighting spirit that permeated the atmosphere, and the dragon aura that did the same.

If he had to be honest, it was intoxicating.