

Void 26

Chapter 26

Lush greenery in every direction. Tall trees with beautiful foliage, flowers of all colors, bushes, healthy grass lining the entirety of the ground, and most importantly, a bright blue sky. Clouds drifted calmly along the beautiful blue sky as a huge sun stood tall in the distance.

The warmth it gave off, the freshness of the mana in the air, the subtle wind brushing against his cheeks, these were the sensations Damien was taking in with bated breaths.

Even if he wanted to doubt whether or not he was still in the dungeon, the sights around him refused to let him do so. Without his knowledge, tears were running down his cheeks. Reality had finally set in. Damien had escaped from that hellish cycle of killing, devouring, evolving, and descending.

Standing beside him, Zara was also feeling intense emotions. The only thing she'd ever known was the walls of the giant caverns that made up the floors of the dungeon. When she was little, her parents would tell her stories of a world beyond those walls, but she always took them as fairytales.

Only when she met Damien did she realize that the place her parents had spoken about was real. As she gazed at the scenery around her in wonder, Zara felt like everything she had been through to get to this point was worth it. And when her gaze landed on the one who made it all possible, she felt unknown emotions overwhelming her.

The duo stood like that for many minutes, silently admiring the fresh air of Apeiron, before Damien decided to move. There were a few things he wanted to do when he got out of the dungeon, and this was one of them.

Spreading his mana sense, Damien found what he was looking for. He then began to run to that location. Though he could've reached it immediately by teleporting, Damien was too lost in the feeling of freedom that he didn't care for such trivial things.

Zara followed him happily, similarly basking in the sensation of fresh air as they reached the destination. A large flowing river. The water was clear enough to act as a mirror, and the mana within it allowed plenty of life to thrive.

Without thinking twice, Damien jumped in. Submerged in the cool water, Damien smiled. Maybe it hadn't mattered back when his only thoughts were on survival and escape, but now that he was free, he desperately felt the need for a bath.

It had been 2 years since he had taken one, and frankly, he stunk. Not just him, but Zara as well. There weren't many water sources in the dungeon, and most beasts satiated themselves with the blood of the fallen. This was why there weren't many proper ecosystems within the dungeon.

Although, Damien mused that there was most likely water on the lower floors, considering how plant life increased as he descended. Running his hands along his skin, Damien watched 2 years' worth of dirt and grime rub off, leaving smooth skin that looked like the work of an artist.

After washing himself completely, Damien left the water and looked at his reflection. There, he saw a man that bore barely any resemblance to Damien before his fall. He was just shy of 2 meters tall with hardened muscles that looked sculpted out of the finest minerals.

Although he wasn't abnormally muscled, every fiber of his being was optimized and loaded with power that one could sense with even the simplest glance. His body was basically perfection incarnate.

His face was just as chiseled. He had a sharp jawline and sword-like eyebrows. His nose and mouth were also proportioned just right. His hair was like a cascading midnight waterfall with streaks of silver akin to shooting stars.

However, his most jarring feature was his eyes. His irises were still a mix of his original deep amethyst and blood red, swirling in a yin-yang pattern, but now held tinges of gold that flowed like particles.

His pupils were not normal anymore either. They were shaped like a black cross that ran down the middle and towards the edges of his irises, almost like he was an anime character. These pupils were the effect of his All-Seeing Eyes.

He honestly looked like some sort of immortal cultivator.

The only stain on his appearance was his clothing, which consisted of what, at this point, was just a rag that covered his manhood.

With two years spent in that insane environment and the constant evolution of his body, how could Damien have retained his clothes? Even he hadn't put much importance on this fact until he looked at his reflection and realized it.

While Damien was admiring his appearance, Zara had also finished cleaning up. Although she also spent a moment admiring her appearance, she wasn't a narcissist like Damien so she was satisfied with a glance.

Sensing her thoughts, Damien frowned a bit. "How can you even call me a narcissist? I'm just objectively the most handsome man I've ever seen. Objectively, of course."

Zara rolled her eyes. With how serious he always was in the dungeon, she didn't expect him to become like this once they left, but perhaps it was only natural.

Most of Damien's personality traits after his fall had been based on anime characters and cultivation novel MCs in the first place. Otherwise, how could he be so 'calm and indifferent' by only using the will forged with the words of his father?

With his burning will for survival alone, he would've become feral long ago. So, he mimicked their temperaments and actions as a sort of guide. This was why sometimes he'd end up saying and thinking some relatively corny phrases and shouting at the heavens.

And weren't most of those characters narcissists too? Perhaps in front of crowds, Damien would continue being indifferent, as his social skills had become nonexistent in the past few years, but when he was alone with Zara, he'd naturally joke around.

Zara rolled her eyes at his thoughts and stared at him with a deadpan gaze. Damien attempted to justify himself for a few more minutes, but his resistance dwindled under her dead fish state that didn't change.

"Fine fine, you're no fun. Let's go find a town or something so we can relax a bit before we continue our journey."

With this, Zara hopped back into Damien's shadow, which had become her safe space, and Damien began teleporting in a straight line forward. He had no idea where he was and only had a rough outline of Apeiron, so he figured this was his best move.

Within an hour, Damien had exited the forest. He had seen a couple of small tribal settlements on his way out, but these weren't enough to provide him with the comfort he wanted, so he kept going.

Damien's mana capacity was insane for someone who just received their 2nd class, and his teleportation barely even took any mana at this point when it was within his awareness range. This was his starting skill and the key to his success, so it had grown alongside him to become a conventional skill for him to use.

When Damien exited the forest, he saw a vast plain filled with various hills and mountains. This area was straight out of a fantasy novel. This kind of natural beauty was rare back on Earth, especially after the mana awakening when humanity gained the ability to survive in harsher conditions.

Damien admired his surroundings as he continued teleporting, but he was getting a little bored. "Zara, come out. Let's race to the first city we see. Winner gets to make the loser do whatever they want for a week."

Zara hopped out of his shadow but didn't move, watching him with judging eyes.

"What? Okay fine no teleportation. But you're not allowed to fly either. Your wings give you an insane speed boost."

Zara begrudgingly nodded her head and took her stance. She couldn't help but wonder what she'd make Damien do for a week once she won, but she knew she couldn't let him win. He'd probably make her act as his mount or something.

"Alright, we start on go. 1, 2, 3, Go!"