

Void 301

Chapter 301 Kidnapping [1]

Saying it was easy, but actually putting it into action was much more difficult.

Damien had received an in-depth explanation on the inner workings and layout of the demon city Acier from Demon King Lucius, but this information wasn't enough to guarantee his success.

There were many factors blocking his path forward.

The main one, and the factor that was the most out of his control, was the massive restriction on his teleportation ability.

If he was as he was in the outside world, it would've been a simple matter to teleport into the Demon King's Castle, grab the Demon King, and teleport out, entering the Sanctuary before anyone could regain their senses.

Honestly, thinking about how easy the mission would've been in such a scenario made Damien's head hurt, so he decided to stop thinking about it altogether. What mattered was that such ease was impossible.

As he continued to use teleportation for movement within the Trial World, he had begun to slowly comprehend the restricted space around him, making it easier to move.

But as it was a restriction stemming from the comprehension of a true Demigod, even with Damien's understanding he wasn't able to increase the distance he could freely move by much.

But, he had managed to increase from his original one-meter teleportation to around three meters, which wasn't too bad.

Whether this change would actually help him at all in the coming operation was yet to be known.

In Damien's opinion, infiltrating was the easiest part. With the societal structure of the Trial World, the Demon race was incredibly arrogant, thinking that no human would dare enter their territory.

As such, even if Damien walked through the streets with his head held high, he didn't think anyone would question it.

That is, as long as he possessed the aura of a Demon, which he could easily replicate by slightly stimulating his new Demonic Bloodline.

From what the Demon King Lucius had said, it seemed news of the concurrent losses of the Demon forces in recent days was also suppressed, most likely due to the Apostles' pride.

There was no way they'd allow the lower Demons, who viewed them as gods amongst men, to understand that they had suffered multiple crushing defeats to outside forces. It was a heavy loss of face that they couldn't endure.

This only served to make infiltration easier.

And Damien didn't take much time to decide to act on his assumptions.

Since the Apostles had seen him through the record crystal planted on the Demon Generals he had fought before the battle with the Commanders' army, he first took the chance to change his form.

Due to his newfound familiarity with his bloodlines, Damien had much better control over how he facilitated them. He was now able to take specific parts of his bloodline abilities and use them at will instead of being forced to draw out all their power at once.

For instance, he could now call out his wings alone and use them for simple movement purposes without having to call forth his full Dragon Transformation.

It was a development that made the utility of his bloodlines much more effective, so they didn't only work as improved combat forms.

So, when Damien exited the Sanctuary, he looked like a completely different person.

His height remained the same, but he now had long flowing white hair and pale snow-like skin. His most defining feature was his eyes, but even they had changed. His sclera were entirely black from his Demonic Bloodline, while his pupils were now vertical slits.

Although he still appeared incredibly unique, it was hard to draw a connection between his current self and the Damien people had seen before unless they were aware of his bloodline abilities.

‘Good. Due to the fact that I’m only merging the appearances from both bloodlines instead of their power, there’s no consumption of vitality and stamina. If I really wanted to, I could stay in this appearance indefinitely.’

Damien smiled wryly at the thought. He could clearly imagine the scene of Rose beating his ass and forcing him to change back to normal even if he did make such a decision.

‘It’s time to move.’

Damien was still closest to Darknorth, while demon city Acier was close to Astoria. The travel time alone would take many hours.

Two pitch-black wings appeared from Damien’s back the second he had this thought. With a single flap, he had already moved hundreds of meters.

Like this, the many hours of travel were largely cut down. It didn’t take long for Damien to reach the vicinity of the mountain where Acier was located.

Withdrawing his wings, Damien calmly walked to the mountain and circled it until he found a relatively hidden walkway. This was the true entrance to the city that only demons were aware of.

And as he expected, he didn't meet any resistance. The demons patrolling the path simply cast him odd or envious looks as he brushed past them, but sensing his aura, they didn't dare get close.

"Who is this gigolo?"

"I've never seen a bastard like him before."

"Shh! Don't talk too loud. Didn't you sense his aura? He has to at least be a General!"

"Brother, I owe you my life! From this moment on, I will never betray you!"

"So you would've betrayed me earlier?!"

"Hehe!"

Damien smiled at their hushed conversations as he observed the scenery around him. While the mountain did indeed have a gloomy and cold aura, the actual environment was nice.

There was beautiful foliage lining the mountain path that climbed towards the city, showing unique plants and flowers that were suited to growing in these gloomy conditions.

Even when he entered Acier, he retained his surprise. Unlike the demon city he was imagining on his way here, the actual thing wasn't anything special.

'This place is just a regular city, except the residents are demons...'

Damien suddenly remembered how even in the 3000 Beast Mountain Range, the beasts had formed clans and alliances, building cities and living relatively proper lives.

Unless they were on the ground level or they hadn't yet developed their sentience, most of the beasts actually preferred a neater lifestyle.

If so, why couldn't demons be the same?

Up to this point, Damien had only met their commanding officers and their army. Those were the Demons who had been totally indoctrinated and corrupted by their power and ideologies.

But these regular demons? They were no different than the human mortals who lived in the cities down below. They lived their lives like normal people, mostly unaware of the overall situation.

'I've been too biased against them because of their connection with the Nox.'

The entire Demon race had been forcefully corrupted 10,000 years ago, and their descendants were born into this corruption. They worshipped the Nox as the Demon God without even the slightest knowledge of the truth.

Could they be blamed for this? Damien suddenly felt a headache coming on.

Ignorance was a sin. He knew that, but did that mean he could calmly call for the execution of innocents because of their unwitting association?

He wasn't a good man, but he wouldn't go out of his way to do evil either.

He didn't need to concern himself with these commonfolk. His job was to wipe clean the Captains, Generals, Commanders, and Kings among them. As for what happened to the rest of them; that wasn't his problem.

Sighing lightly, he continued his leisurely stroll down the street, his sight set on the mountain peak where the Demon King Castles stood.

Chapter 302 Kidnapping [2]

In his talk with the Demon King Lucius, Damien had learned a great deal about the Demons' current situation.

Basically, these mortal Demons were sheep to be herded and separated based on how much they could provide.

Although these Demons were born with the Nox corruption within them, not every Demon had the qualifications to receive the power of the Demon God.

The way it worked was simple. Every 10 years, the Demons above the age of 16 and below the age of 26 were to gather together for a sort of right of passage.

During that right, the present demons would be bathed in the Demon God's power. It was from this point where things changed.

For some, that power would simply flow through them and disappear back into the earth. These demons would then have their memories wiped before they were sent back to Acier to continue their normal lives.

As for the rest, there were a few paths they could take. The strength a demon received from the Demon God's baptism was dependent on their affinity with the Demon God's strength.

Essentially, there was no concept of leveling for their race. The lucky ones would straight promote to the Demon General level of strength; while the rest would become Captains.

And depending on how much of the Baptism they could actually absorb, even within these classifications there were differences in strength.

But the ones who actually adapted to this process and promoted ranks were the lucky ones.

90% of the Demons remaining would enter a strange realm between acceptance and rejection. Their bodies didn't completely reject the power like those who remained mortal, but they didn't accept the power and allow those demons to straight promote.

This tug of war taking place in the body of someone who had no strength at all naturally led to adverse consequences, birthing the abominations that Damien had come into contact with so many times.

But because every demon who survived the right of passage had their memory wiped, news of the creation process for abominations never spread. The demons simply believed that the right of passage was a trial of strength, and those who didn't return had died with honor.

In Damien's opinion, this was an extremely reckless and self-sacrificing method to do things, but he understood why it was so. The Nox never cared about the lives of the demons it controlled. They were merely tools it needed to interfere with the Primordial Undying Tree's plans.

And with the high fertility rate that mortal demons had, there was no need for the Nox to ever worry about running out of specimens.

And due to this method of herding, the structure of Acier was similar to a class system, with 5 levels representing the status one held.

The first layer was by far the largest, containing the thousands of mortal Demons that existed within the city. The rest of the layers followed the layout of the army.

Thousands of Captains in the 4th layer, hundreds of Generals in the 3rd, the 4 Demon Kings in the 2nd, and the Apostles living within the pantheon in the 1st layer.

It was a system that clearly indicated the hierarchy. Even though the Demon Kings were the Demons' strongest force, they merely resided in the second layer.

With Damien's strength, he didn't even need to worry about the first three layers. The only Demons that could pose a threat to him were at the very top of the pyramid.

So he continued thinking about the oddities of this pitiful Demon race as he strolled through their ranks.

After leaving the 5th layer, Damien had used vector control to refract the light around him and become invisible. He didn't think the Apostles would be monitoring the area, but he decided to be safe.

And without suspense, whether it be Demon Captain or Demon General, none of them were able to even sense that something was wrong.

Soon enough, Damien arrived near the peak of the mountain. At this juncture, he switched his approach.

While vector control manipulated natural forces, it still used mana to do so. Damien didn't have the confidence to say that traces of said mana wouldn't be discovered as he moved from this point on.

Instead, Damien turned to his Demonic Bloodline. It was a bloodline that contained a rich energy of darkness. He hadn't grasped many of the mysteries of this bloodline, but since it was related to darkness, the concealment aspects were the easiest to grasp.

Since he already had experience from being spiritually connected to Zara, Damien was able to maneuver around this bloodline ability with ease.

His body was shrouded in a layer of darkness before melding into the environment. Similar to a spatial ability, it was like Damien was currently present in a separate plane from the real world.

Damien cautiously approached the 4 parallel castles that stood imposingly in front of him before directing his gaze at the one on the far right. Slowly creeping towards it, he came to a sudden halt.

‘Something isn’t right...’

Damien furrowed his brows. His danger sense was telling him that taking a single step further would result in heavy consequences.

Being careful not to let the scent of mana leave his body, Damien slowly guided his mana into his eyes.

And that was when he saw it.

A massive shimmering golden dome that encompassed the entire periphery of the castle. It was barely an inch away from Damien’s body, making him break into a cold sweat.

‘Damn, not only would I have been discovered, but I probably would’ve also been targeted by the barrier’s defensive mechanisms. That’s literally the worst-case scenario.’

He knew he couldn’t continue forward without alerting all four Demon Kings as well as the Apostles’ spies located within their castles. But he still needed to somehow make contact with Demon King Lucius.

‘It’s been smooth sailing so far, to the point where me being wary of these Demons feels embarrassing. But of course, nothing will go completely perfect.’

Damien pondered. He didn’t have a method to contact the Demon King, and when they met, there was no way to receive one.

After all, the Demon King had been a mere projection at the time. And since he didn’t want news of their motives leaking, he hadn’t even told his Generals what his purpose was. They only knew to set up the meeting between the Demon King and Damien.

‘Ah, right! I can just ask her!’

He had a nice little maid waiting for him within the Sanctuary, who just so happened to be the daughter of the Demon King.

‘That sounds like the plot of an isekai...’

Thinking something nonsensical, Damien vanished into the Sanctuary. As expected, Elitra had plenty of methods to contact her father on hand. When Damien returned to his former position, there was a paper talisman in his grasp.

‘Mm, I knew it. Having a maid is far better than not having one!’

Damien grinned, pouring some mana into the talisman.

“Hello?”

A solemn voice soon responded from the paper. Damien’s grin widened when he heard it.

“Father-in-law, your son-in-law has come to pay his respects!”

Chapter 303 Kidnapping [3]

“Little brat, don’t joke with me. You moved so early? I thought it’d take far longer before you built up the courage to come.”

The Demon King’s voice sounded especially annoyed by the words ‘father-in-law’, bringing Damien endless amusement.

“Haha, what can I say? Junior was far too excited to gain father-in-law’s approval, so I couldn’t help myself.”

“Sigh, still in the mood to joke? Well, it matters not. Tell me, where are you right now?”

“Hmm, I’m outside your house, though there’s this big shiny wall in my way!”

“Can you take the situation seriously at all? Don’t you understand the implications of what you are doing right now? Also, how can you use mana so freely to communicate when you’re in the presence of so many higher beings? Those old farts have probably already sensed you.”

“Hahaha, I mean is it so necessary to take the situation seriously? In my opinion, things will work out pretty smoothly. Even if they don’t, escaping is something I pride myself in. As for those other Demon Kings, I don’t think we have to worry about them right now. While my concealment can’t be considered heaven-defying, it should at least keep my mana from leaking and being sensed.”

“Fine, fine. It’s not like my life is about to be in your hands or anything. It’s not like I need some kind of assurance to trust a stranger I only met for a few minutes a month ago. Bastard, if something happens I swear on my name that I’ll be the first to kill you.”

“Yeah, yeah. Anyway, how am I supposed to get in? Even if the others haven’t noticed me yet, they will the instant I step through this barrier.”

“That’s fine. I’ll make an opening for you, so grasp it as you see fit.”

“Understood. I’ll see you in a bit.”

“Stop acting so familiar with me.”

Damien put away the communication talisman after he finished speaking. Although he only showed playfulness to the Demon King, his face was incredibly serious.

He had used the communication talisman because he really had no other way to proceed forward from where he was, but he wasn’t assured at all about whether or not he had been discovered.

As he had said, he had no confidence in his concealment. He wasn’t using vector control or any of the abilities he had confidence in. His Demonic Bloodline was new and he was essentially using the situation as an experiment to test its capabilities.

Damien patiently waited without moving an inch, scanning the surroundings like a hawk trying to notice the opening the Demon King was preparing for him.

Many minutes later, he noticed a young woman in a maid uniform hastily leaving the castle.

‘As expected, this guy is a true maid appreciator.’

Since this little maid was the only one around, Damien kept his focus on her movements. As he watched, she scampered off to the side where a large garden was located. Incidentally, this garden was in line with the barrier around the mansion.

Damien narrowed his eyes. It was too much of a coincidence when considering both her timing and location. Thinking so, he made his way to the area she had reached.

It wasn't long before the maid started happily plucking some flowers and carefully placing them in a few vases she brought with her. From an outsider's perspective, she was so focused on her task that she lost track of her surroundings.

As she moved, she finally reached the edge of the medicine garden, and in that instant, her body brushed past the barrier, leaving her half inside and half outside the barrier's width.

"Who goes there?!"

An alarmed shout came from the side of the castle. Near a dozen fully armored guards surrounded the area in an instant, blocking off any potential trespassers. Their auras flared out and covered the surroundings, putting a heavy pressure on the poor maid caught in its center.

"Ah!"

The maid exclaimed when she saw the situation. Sweat began to trickle down her brows.

“E-esteemed sirs! I live in this castle! I am not a trespasser!”

“Girl, what are you doing alerting the barrier? If you truly live within the castle, you should know that no residents are allowed to leave the castle grounds unless ordered!”

“Esteemed sirs, this little one made no move to leave the castle grounds! This is all a misunderstanding!”

“And what could we possibly be misunderstanding?! Us being alerted clearly means that you attempted to breach the barrier. There is no other reason needed!”

The guards began to move forward, drawing their weapons and pointing them at the maid.

“Sir! It was but an accident! I simply came to the flower garden to pick some of these Moon’s Glimmer Lillies, but my body must have accidentally passed through the barrier! I was too focused and didn’t notice, this humble one is incredibly sorry!”

The maid’s knees hit the ground as she began to prostrate, not daring to raise her forehead up off the ground.

The head of the guards glared at the maid suspiciously, but seeing how tears were starting to well up in her eyes, his brows furrowed.

Looking around, the guard noticed tens of vases filled with Moon's Glimmer Lillies neatly arranged on the side, and even the maid's body was covered in dirt and the scent of flowers.

Thinking carefully, there was no reason for a simple maid to try and sneak out of the castle. The guards knew that even if it was them who tried to do so, the only outcome would be death.

As for the maids and servants, they were specifically picked or groomed to have no attachments to the outside world. Most of them were orphaned due to their parents not surviving the Demon God's Baptism.

The guard finally relented, admonishing the maid before calling for a retreat. Once the troop was finally out of sight, the maid heaved a sigh of relief.

"Scary! Too scary! Next time, I can't come to this flower garden anymore."

The maid crouched down and hugged her knees. A few silent tears dripped from her eyes. She was only a mortal, and the pressure those guards had exuded made her body feel like it was going to be crushed in an instant.

It was only many minutes later when she finally managed to compose herself.

"I can't let the Lord see me like this. But I wonder if he will like my gift?"

Smiling to herself, the maid wiped the residue of tears off her face and gathered up the lilies she had plucked. Finally, she walked back to the castle and entered inside.

“Hmph. It looks like she was telling the truth.”

Not far away, the guard captain hid in the shadows and watched the maid’s actions. There was no way he’d loosen his suspicion simply based on her claims.

But after observing her actions once the danger had passed, the guard captain was finally convinced. There was no way a mortal could act well enough to fool his senses.

Thinking about how his time was wasted on a false alarm, the guard captain harrumphed once more before leaving the area. He needed to go find some servants who he could vent his frustrations on.

Unfortunately for the guard captain, however, he had failed to notice the slight squirming of the maid’s shadow as she had entered the castle.

Chapter 304 Kidnapping [4]

Damien entered the castle without hiccups. Honestly speaking, all the credit belonged to this maid.

Although Damien had to time his entrance into the barrier to perfectly match the maid’s movements when she brushed it, that wasn’t actually a hard task for him.

To his eyes, the unhurried movements of a mortal could be watched by the microsecond. It was like he was watching the scene in super slow motion, so he didn't have a difficult time at all.

After he entered the barrier, he mimicked the technique Zara used to stay within his shadow. However, because he wasn't proficient, it wasn't nearly as smooth.

For one, he couldn't expand the shadow into a massive subspace as Zara could, so he was forced to squeeze into the already existing space within the shadow, causing it to move awkwardly.

At this point, Damien felt it wouldn't be long before he was discovered by the hawkish gazes of the guards. But the maid had suddenly prostrated herself, covering his movements as all attention became focused on her.

With the way the situation had been unfolding, her movements felt natural, but Damien knew there couldn't be such a convenient coincidence.

He almost wanted to use his All-Seeing Eyes to pry into the secrets of this seemingly harmless maid, but the situation didn't allow him to do so. Plus, the fact that she was able to sense his movements meant she was strong. He didn't want to risk offending someone who could slap him to death with a single palm if they got pissed off.

After entering the castle, Damien stayed within the maid's shadow without moving needlessly. Although he didn't know where she was headed, considering what he had deduced so far, he felt it was best to stick with her.

And as he thought, the maid slowly reached a single room that stood alone on the top floor of the mansion. Once she reached the door, she hesitantly knocked.

“Lord, I’ve brought a gift for you.”

A faint blush colored her face as she spoke. When Damien looked around, he noticed a few other maids in the hallway glancing at her in disdain.

“Enter.”

A deep voice came from within the study. The maid opened the door at his instruction and quickly entered, closing the door behind her.

When she entered, the first thing she saw was an imposing man sitting quietly at his desk, gazing at the soft moonlight that entered the study through the single window.

Her breath stopped short as she tried to immortalize the scene within her memory. Damien almost felt like he had to leave before she pounced on the Demon King.

He had no interest in voyeurism.

But after a few moments, the maid finally managed to raise her voice and speak.

“Lord! I picked some Moon’s Glimmer Lillies for you! I know they are your favorite!”

“Mm, you may leave them here. Thank you for your hard work.”

“Anything for you, my Lord.”

The maid gently placed the lilies down on a nearby table before excusing herself from the room. After serving him for so many years, she knew that her Lord was currently too preoccupied to focus on other things.

Once she left, Demon King Lucius slowly raised his gaze towards a certain spot in the room.

“This place is isolated from prying eyes. Why are you still trying to act mysterious around me, O son-in-law of mine?”

“Ahaha, as expected of my dear father-in-law. Perceptive as always!” Damien laughed lightly as he came out from the shadows.

Demon King Lucius rolled his eyes before suddenly snickering. “Brat, your appearance right now is truly...special.”

“Ugh, don’t talk about it. It’s all for a just cause, so the embarrassment can be endured!” Damien proclaimed righteously as he massaged his forehead.

“Alright. Now that you’re here, what’s your plan? Escaping won’t be nearly as easy as infiltrating.” The Demon King immediately went into serious matters after his bit of teasing.

“I’m also aware of that, but I can manage. Don’t worry about that. Oh right, before we leave, is there anyone you want to bring with you? For example, a certain maid that seems to be head over heels for you.”

“Boy, don’t go too far. I raised that little girl from birth. She’s nothing more than a daughter to me.”

“I’m sure she’d be distraught if she ever heard that.”

“Leave my personal matters alone. Why are you asking about others? It’d be hard enough to get a single person out of here, let alone a group.”

“I have my methods. As for my reason, you should clearly understand it.”

Demon King Lucius sighed. Once he disappeared from his castle, hell would break loose. The servants and guards who resided here would inevitably be slaughtered in the aftermath.

Of course he understood, but he didn't actually think there was any proper solution. He was already bearing so much pain in his heart, so he simply accepted that bearing more pain was a necessity.

"If you truly considered that little maid like a daughter, then you shouldn't be so hasty in leaving her as a sacrifice. If I say I have a method, I naturally have one. I understand you can't trust me, but this is for my sake as much as it is for yours."

"How so?"

"I mean, if I can make her father happy and bring the people she cares about to safety, won't my little maid be even more obedient in the future? It's the perfect plan!"

"Tch!"

The Demon King couldn't help but scoff. The worst part was, he was right! Lucius knew damn well that if Damien could actually accomplish what he said, Elitra's gratefulness and worship towards him would skyrocket.

"Whatever. Even I'll be forced to owe you a favor if you can truly do such a thing. Very well, I shall gather everyone in one place."

It didn't take long at all for a group of close to 50 people to gather near Demon King Lucius's study. These people all had curious expressions on their faces as they looked at him.

But he could clearly see the reverence they had towards Lucius. It was so great that it would be impossible to fake.

“Sigh. It seems I can do nothing now but resign myself to fate. Boy, I leave us all in your care.”

For the first time, Damien put on a solemn expression.

“Leave it to me.”

Without even explaining to the gathered individuals what was happening, Damien spread his mana to cover the crowd. Since Lucius wasn’t resisting, these servants didn’t resist either.

As the mana around them began to fill with the essence of space, the area around them started distorting. Soon, they began disappearing from the hall in groups of 10.

In a few seconds, only Demon King Lucius and the maid from before were left.

“Stop resisting my mana, you freaks. When you are both teleported to that place, things will truly start to get fun. I’ll project a live feed so you can watch what’s happening here from safety. Also, your strength will be sealed in that place until I arrive there with you, so bear with it. Maybe try resisting it as well? I want to see whether my World Principles or your 4th class strength is stronger.”

With one final grin, Damien teleported Demon King Lucius and that maid to the Sanctuary.

Taking a deep breath, he gazed around to assess the current situation.

The remaining hundreds of guards and servants in the palace were already charging at him with fiendish looks in their eyes.

Alarms were blaring everywhere.

Powerful auras began to converge on his location.

‘Things will start for real now.’

Damien’s thoughts raced as he flashed away from his position as if he never existed there in the first place.

Chapter 305 Converging [1]

In the city of Astoria, not far from the demon city Acier, a large congregation of people had been arriving over the past few days.

Even the ordinary mortals living within the city walls could clearly feel the storm brewing on the horizon, only, they had no idea why such a storm suddenly arrived.

But they didn't question it. Firstly, the individuals in question were far too powerful for these mortals to dare speak up, but it was more due to a second reason.

After all, at the head of the congregation of individuals was a woman who they had complete faith in. It was due to her efforts that the city had survived the siege of abominations it faced close to a month ago.

"We haven't made much progress in the past month, but at least we now know the location of the demons' base. Dammit! It was so close! How did we miss it for so long?!"

A fiery red beauty complained as she gazed into the horizon with an annoyed look. Her eyes were focused on a mountain a few tens of kilometers away.

"Hmm~ it's not like the residents of the Trial World have any information. They are too weak! Those idiot demons also didn't seem to be able to speak, that's why it took so much effort for us to finally learn something. This month has been so boring~!"

A second beauty driveled exaggeratedly. Qing tan was genuinely frustrated, though. She had only met and traveled with Damien for a few days, but the amount of fun she was able to have in those few days trumped the entire rest of her time in the Trial World.

"I'll find that bastard and beat him up! Beat him! Let's see how he excludes me next time!"

"What next time? After the Trial World ends, I doubt you'll get to see him very often." Feng Qing'er scoffed.

“Who cares~? If he hides from me, I’ll just have to find him! That’s easy!”

“If it was so easy, then why haven’t you found him yet? Don’t try to pretend like you haven’t been searching for him since we separated.”

“Hmph!”

Feng Qing’er rolled her eyes, not wanting to deal with Qing Tan’s antics anymore. They had now been traveling together for enough time that Feng Qing’er had a general grasp on how to deal with her.

“We should finally be able to move soon. It looks like almost everyone has shown up.”

Feng Qing’er’s gaze shifted to a square within Astoria. Within it, there were around 40 geniuses gathered together.

It was all of the geniuses Feng Qing’er had contact with from their group. Around twenty from Astoria and 20 from Darknorth. The rest had either died or were in unknown places.

For the past month, Feng Qing’er had been tirelessly moving for the sake of finding Acier and bringing these geniuses together. And now, it was finally time.

“But still~ a full frontal assault is a bit much, no? Do you really think they can hold up?” Qing Tan asked curiously,

Even more than Feng Qing'er, she was well aware of the standard of these geniuses. They could deal with Captains just fine, but they had to group up to fight Generals, let alone Commanders who could easily wipe them out if they used their dark material.

“It's fine. I never expected much from them anyway. But, we need more people if we're going to take out a bulk of the demons' numbers.”

“Hmm. I guess it works? I didn't know Miss Queen was fond of using others as meat shields!”

“Isn't that a bit harsh? They should be honored to take part in a raid like this one. Besides, meat shield isn't the proper word. The enemies we'll be facing are far worse than the ones they will after all.”

“I guess so~.”

Feng Qing'er sighed. She didn't know what Damien was planning to do, but she figured that he also had some business in Acier, especially since he had decided to separate from them after meeting with the Demon King.

For some reason, thinking about him facing dangers alone made her feel stifled. She knew Damien wasn't a righteous person, but he was still doing so much. Meanwhile, all she could do was carry her righteous sentiments without being able to act on them.

It was this sense of falling behind that drove her to act so brazenly. Well, that was a part of it. There was another reason as well.

After she achieved Nirvana and was reborn with Reincarnation Flames, something within her had been triggered. She felt a strange sense of repulsion and disgust whenever she saw those demons.

It was like her bloodline was rejecting their existence. It seethed with hatred and vengeance. But she didn't know how demons who had been trapped in this Primordial Undying Realm for thousands of years could stimulate the blood of her ancestors.

Feng Qing'er wanted to get to the bottom of why she was feeling such things. And the only way to do so was to go to Acier.

'Actually, he might know something about it.'

Her thoughts landed on Damien again. He didn't even try to deny the fact that he was still hiding some of his knowledge about the demons' situation from them. She felt that whatever the information he was hiding was, it was also the key to why her ancestors bore such hatred for the demons.

'Next time I see him, I'll milk that information out of him no matter what.'

Feng Qing'er had a confident grin on her face as she thought of it. That fellow had taken advantage of her so many times when they first met, yet he barely paid her any mind once they entered the Trial World. She would let him see how she'd deal with him when all of this was over.

A woman's mind was a strange thing. Although Feng Qing'er wanted to ignore him and just blast him to shreds like she would do with any other man who dared to act presumptuous around her, she couldn't bring herself to do so.

His shamelessness and annoying personality aside, his strength was indeed the real deal. And when he got serious, she had personally seen how he discarded his previous attitude.

In the end, her interactions with her had made her more curious about him than she was angry at his prior actions, and this fact only served to make her even angrier.

'Damn! Focus on the task ahead, Qing'er! Hmph! I'll tell Luna about everything that's happened here once we meet again. Even if he can take me, let's see how he takes us sisters when we work together!'

Smiling lightly, she once again focused on the mountain in the distance.

Feng Qing'er's eyes sharpened. Turning to Qing Tan, she gave her orders. "It looks like everyone's here. Gather them and tell them to get ready. We'll leave as soon as they are."

Feng Qing'er stood up from her position and moved to the city walls.

Later today, she would lead this group to siege the demon city Acier and let the blood of demons flow through the land.

Chapter 306 Converging [2]

“Alright, listen here! Since I’ve told you the reason I gathered you before asking you to come here, I don’t think I need to reiterate myself.”

Feng Qing’er stood on a platform and looked down on the gathered geniuses. They would soon set out for Acier.

“We have one goal and one goal only: Kill! I know many of you have your own reasons for joining this mission, but that hardly matters to me. As long as you properly do what you’ve been told to do, everything else is up to you!

“Let me set some ground rules. I won’t give you many orders and I won’t force you to act against your will, but greater benefits will go to those who contribute more! You can stay at the lowest levels if you so please, all I need is for you to kill until you can’t kill anymore!

“It should be common sense, but no mortals should be harmed during the siege. Even if you kill them, you won’t get any benefits or contribution points anyway, so there’s no point even if you don’t have the basic decency to allow mortals to live.

“That’s it! Now, let’s march!”

“”March!””

The geniuses' cries reverberated through the outskirts of Astoria. Although Feng Qing'er's speech wasn't morale-boosting or encouraging at all, it was enough to get their blood boiling.

Kill!

It was a simple order, but one that awakened the most primal instincts of these geniuses. They had been raised in proper environments and they had been fostered well, sure, but in the end, there was no denying the core truth behind their existence.

They were beasts!

Until they developed intelligence, their instincts were as such.

Kill! Eat! Evolve!

Hearing Feng Qing'er's speech made them recall those days before they could even properly learn the Beast Transformation Art. When they were ruled by their instincts and relied on wanton slaughter to grow.

The march to Acier wasn't long since they were already in Astoria, and a few hours wasn't enough to quench their fighting spirit. Once they arrived, Feng Qing'er led them to a familiar path that Damien had walked only a few hours prior.

Night had fallen, and the mountainside was quiet. The citizens in the first layer of Acier had mostly gone to sleep already.

“Keuk...!”

A muffled scream rang out before it was immediately quelled. Concentrated fire needles shot from Feng Qing’er’s fingers and silenced every guard they came across.

“I’ve scanned with my awareness just now. It seems like everyone residing here is without cultivation. For our battle, we must climb higher.”

The geniuses nodded in unison while secretly marveling at Feng Qing’er’s expert flame control. From what they had heard in the outside world, this woman was brazen and bold, never making moves silently. Every time she acted, she would set the world ablaze.

But seeing her now, it was like she was a completely different person from the one whose reputation they’d heard. She was quiet and concise, leaving no room for error.

It seemed she had grown immensely over the past few months.

The group slowly made their way past the first layer and continued climbing the mountain. Not long after, they reached the next layer.

“This place seems to be structured like a barracks. Although it isn’t strong, there is definitely the aura of mana seeping through the area. For those who want to pick off Captains, this is where you stop.”

Feng Qing’er accurately understood the distinction between layers as she felt the mana in the atmosphere and gave her orders. Soon, a group of twenty geniuses split off from the main group.

These were the geniuses who had stayed in Astoria while Feng Qing’er and Qing Tan continued forward with Damien. Having seen the Generals fight, they had no confidence in going against them. They were scared.

As for the rest, they came mainly from Darknorth. Although Darknorth had suffered plenty of losses due to the Generals and Captains who attacked, these geniuses had already fought them before, and didn’t hold the same fear in their hearts as the others.

They had confidence that this time, they’d be able to perform even better than they did back then.

Qing Tan snickered on the side. Were they stupid? Even until now, they didn’t acknowledge that the reason they didn’t suffer a total and crushing defeat was because of outside help.

She was ninety-nine percent certain that all of these geniuses would die here today due to their overconfidence, but it was whatever. If they chose to submerge themselves in ignorance, that had nothing to do with her.

“You can stay here, but don’t make any moves until we’ve reached our destinations. We don’t need our positions being exposed so early. Plus, if you act before the higher forces are occupied, they’re certain to come down here and kill you.”

The geniuses staying behind hurriedly nodded their heads.

Feng Qing'er paid them no attention as she once again continued up the mountain. She wasn't stupid enough to think those geniuses would listen to her just because she was speaking facts.

There were plenty who would be offered a path to heaven, but willingly chose to go to hell instead. Since that was the case, she didn't mind using their fear to keep them in check.

Even if some of them decided to ignore that fear, their peers would do the job in its place. If one went down, they all did. That was the mentality she instilled in them.

Without suspense, Feng Qing'er and her group reached the third layer. Those other 20 geniuses split up from Feng Qing'er and Qing Tan.

But unlike when they visited the second layer, their presence was immediately discovered.

"Who goes there?!"

"Is that the scent of humans? No, it's a bit different."

“Haha, who cares! It still smells tasty all the same!”

“Hahaha! I can’t disagree with you there!”

Many voices overlapped as many powerful auras converged on the location of the geniuses. Perhaps in that moment, they had been forced to realize the mistake they had made in coming here.

But by the time they realized it, Feng Qing’er and Qing Tan had already disappeared further up the mountain, and the owners of those auras had already reached their location.

Now, their only option was to fight or die.

The sounds of screams and explosions filled the atmosphere of the third layer. And soon after, the second layer followed as well. The geniuses’ fight against the demons had begun.

Meanwhile, Feng Qing’er and Qing Tan reached the fourth layer, but when they did, they were shocked by what they saw.

“Hahahaha! Is this what they call the elite forces of the demons?! Come come! You can’t even catch me, so how are you supposed to kill me? Hahahahaha!”

Rambunctious laughter and jeering shouts rang through the fourth layer as countless demons furiously chased a single man. He expertly weaved through their ranks, disappearing every time the demons thought they had finally caught him.

“Little bastard! You dare play games with this Queen?!”

“And what if I do?! For a mighty Demon King, you sure are weak as to not be able to kill a pitiful 3rd class like myself! Hahaha!”

A proud woman with an extremely seductive figure stood at the forefront of those demons. Her face held an extremely enraged expression, as if killing the man who was taunting her was the only thing that mattered in the world.

“Bastard! Taking advantage of this Queen and trying to flee?! You are courting death!”

“Why the hell would I want to take advantage of an old hag like you?! It’s you who was trying to sully a young and innocent soul like me!”

Feng Qing’er and Qing Tan looked at each other awkwardly. Although they couldn’t clearly see the figure of the man who was attracting the ire of every demon present, it wasn’t hard for them to figure out his identity.

With this kind of shameless taunting in the middle of battle, as well as the ability to easily enrage his opponents to this extent, only a single person came to their minds.

However, taking advantage? Sullyng his pure body? They had thought he would be embroiled in some serious life-threatening circumstances, but what the hell had he actually been up to during this time?!

Chapter 307 Escape [1]

Damien flashed away from the Demon King's Castle the instant he had taken Lucius and his trusted subordinates into the Sanctuary. He was of the mind to escape as soon as possible.

Although he was expecting the inevitable backlash that'd come with kidnapping the Demon King, he didn't think that the consequences would be so blaring.

After all, there were literal alarms blaring through the fourth layer constantly, attracting the attention of even those who had been cultivating in seclusion. Even if Damien wanted to be silent now, he didn't have the chance.

When Damien reappeared from the void, he was already outside of the castle, and soon he disappeared again and arrived in front of the barrier that was guarding it. He needed to leave it before the defensive functions it contained activated.

"Little boy, you are quite the clever one!"

However, just as he was about to step out of its reach, an alluring voice rang out from behind him, causing his body to involuntarily stop in its tracks.

'Fuck.'

Damien didn't even need to turn around to understand what had happened. There was only a single level of existence present who could force Damien's body to stop against his will;

"Sigh, which mighty Demon King has come to cause trouble for this Young Master?"

"Mm, it seems you have some sense to know this Queen's identity so early, but what qualifications do you have to know my name?"

"I mean, to be fair, I probably already know your name. I just need to attach that name to a face now."

"You still care to act rampantly in my presence? You're quite the bold one aren't you?"

Even until this point, Damien hadn't turned around. He was still gritting his teeth and helplessly watching the shimmering golden barrier as it became more and more corporeal.

'What to do, what to do...'

Damien's thoughts raced. Escaping from a Demon King would be difficult, but not impossible. However, he first needed to exit the barrier.

He roused his mana rapidly and threw a heavy punch towards the golden film.

Pang!

A dull sound emerged from the collision, but aside from a few ripples, there was no real pact.

“Boy, it’s futile to try breaking the barrier with your little strength. It was built to contain us, so how could someone like you have the qualifications to break it?”

“Whether I have the qualifications or not, that’s for me to decide.”

A fit of charming giggles came from behind him. The sound was heavenly, making Damien want to turn around and witness the face of one who could produce such a chime.

Suddenly, an alluring scent wafted past his nose. It was the scent of cherry blossoms mixed with roses, a similar scent to Rose’s natural body fragrance. In that instant, Damien felt his mind become entranced.

“Turn around.”

The words flowed like an inviolable command, and Damien’s body willingly followed it. When he turned around, he was finally able to see the person he had been talking to all this time.

She was tall for a woman, reaching Damien's nose in height. Her clothes were risqué, causing a large portion of her sensual body to be revealed to him.

Those slender legs and soft thighs made him want to dive at her and relish in their feel. Her bust was insane, and Damien knew very well there was no way for them to be fake. He could almost feel the feeling of those soft mounds being molded by his hands.

As for her face, it was a personification of the term 'jade beauty'. She was like a carving that a master created when he was enlightened on the meaning of perfection.

That was what Damien thought when he first laid eyes on this woman.

"Mm, as I thought you are quite bold. You aren't even bothering to hide your gaze on this Queen."

Damien's eyes were drawn to her lips as she spoke. With every movement, his desire to dominate this woman grew even fiercer.

"It can't be helped. Every man is weak to such a beauty."

Before he even realized it, words began to spill out of his mouth.

"You might say you are weak, but you look quite vigorous to me!" The Demon Queen responded.

Damien grinned. "Ah, pardon my little brother. He gets excited when he meets new people, you see."

"Indeed, I can see clearly. However, he looks a bit shy hiding behind so many walls. Why don't you let me meet him face to face?"

"I'd be honored. Should we change locations then?"

The Demon Queen smiled seductively, her gaze never leaving Damien's lower body. She had to admit that he was definitely well endowed.

As they spoke, more and more demons arrived in the area, surrounding Damien and the Demon Queen on all sides. However, they didn't dare to approach.

Instead, they stood back and watched the show with disdainful grins on their faces. They almost felt bad for the poor guy, falling into that seductress's clutches.

It would've been much easier for him if he had just obediently chosen to die by their hands.

"I'm curious though, why is it that you came so early? I wasn't expecting to meet interference from the three of you until much later."

Damien suddenly raised a question. The Demon Queen's gaze hardened for a second, but soon returned to its former playfulness.

"It seems you still maintained a shred of sanity. Well, it's not that I mind. The more you struggle, the better it is for me. I'll answer your question as a final goodwill. I had already sensed you when you first arrived, so I couldn't help but be curious. What kind of person would be so audacious as to trespass here? Now that I've seen you up close, I can say that I'm not disappointed in the slightest."

By this point, the Demon Queen had long approached him. Her body was pressed against his, her bodacious assets pressed firmly against his chest.

As his hazy eyes gazed down, he could feel her soft breaths tickling the skin near his lips. It was as if any second now, she would pounce on him and steal his lips.

Damien's breath became ragged the longer they stayed in this position. Even as she spoke to him, the Demon Queen didn't stop teasing him, rubbing her lower body against his.

"Ahhh~"

Suddenly, a heavenly moan left her mouth as his raging dragon managed to slip into the space between her thighs.

"Naughty boy!" She quipped lightly. But she made no moves to adjust her position.

The flames in Damien's eyes became increasingly hot.

'There's no need to hold any pretenses, right? She's practically begging for it.'

Damien's thoughts ran wild. Damien's ears were filled with the pleasure-filled moans of the Demon Queen as her lower body rubbed back and forth against his raging dragon. His senses were filled with the feeling of that hidden valley and the clear liquid that continued to leak out of it.

He felt his last string of restraint threatening to break at any second. His dragon blood raged, telling him to embrace its lascivious nature. His demon blood reveled in the desire to conquer.

As the pleasure he felt continued to heighten, his consciousness became fuzzy.

'What else do I need in this world? This pleasure is more than enough. Yes, pleasure is all I need in life.'

When the thought passed through his head, multiple flashes went through his mind. Rose, Ruyue, and even Elena. Their faces and voices began to fade from his memory, being replaced by the feeling he was currently experiencing.

In that moment, a burst of mana erupted from a certain location in his mindspace. This mana continued to spread, creating a suction force that drew the incorporeal concepts within his mind into it.

Click!

The sound of a lock clicking resounded through his mind, and in an instant, his thoughts became clear.

Even as the Demon Queen arrived closer and closer to climax on his heated rod, Damien no longer felt any pleasure, nor did he feel the encroaching temptation that had been threatening to consume him only moments prior.

The Mind Prison he had created and neglected for so long had finally shown its fangs, ridding Damien of the mental corruption he had been forced under.

Damien felt a cold sweat run down his back, but he didn't show any signs on his face. His eyes remained hazy and he continued to act as he did moments prior.

'Fuck! It truly is a whole different world!'

Damien prided himself on the mental fortitude he built during his years of torture in the dungeon, but that mental fortitude had been torn to shreds like a piece of paper by the mana of this Demon Queen.

A 4th class was truly an existence that couldn't be defied by those lower than him. If it wasn't for the Mind Prison subconsciously activating due to the crisis he was in, he wouldn't have even been able to resist.

Rose, Ruyue, and all his emotional attachments would've been erased from his thoughts as he became a tool for this Demon Queen. He didn't doubt that he would die in her embrace after being used as her cauldron for a while.

Suddenly, an intense rage bubbled forth from the recesses of his mind. Back during the convention of wicked sects, he had also met a temptress who tried to use charm arts on him. Back then, he had made it clear how much he hated his thoughts and emotions being controlled by others.

Yet, here he was in a similar situation, but he was almost unable to resist.

His rage only became fiercer when his thoughts arrived at this point. He wanted nothing more than to tear the woman in front of him to shreds.

But he didn't have the power to do so.

'If so, there's only one other option left.'

A wicked grin surfaced on his face. If he couldn't kill ruthlessly, then the only option left was to humiliate!

Chapter 308 Escape [2]

Suddenly, Damien, who had been in a passive position as the Demon Queen harassed his body, became fierce.

His waist began to move, matching the Demon Queen's movements before accelerating further. His idle hands moved to her waist before traveling further down, tightly dripping her pliant cheeks.

"Ahh~! What are you doing~?"

The Demon Queen moaned in surprise, but it was too late for her to stop any further developments. Inevitably, her body had become weak as she was so close to climaxing.

Damien kept one hand on her dumplings while his other hand traveled up her body and grasped her equally pliant peaks, molding them into different shapes as he pleased.

His movements were by no means gentle. He roughly handled her body like it was nothing more than a toy.

"You! Don't go too far~!" The Demon Queen suddenly yelled, slightly coming to her senses.

But Damien had no plans to listen to her. He continued his movements, moving his waist even faster and becoming even rougher with his hands.

"I said stop!"

The Demon Queen finally realized something was wrong. By this point, he should've already been under her total control.

The way he suddenly started moving on his own was a perfect indication that he had succumbed to her pleasure, but as he got rougher and rougher, the Demon Queen could no longer ignore him.

Pah!

A crisp slap rang out. The surrounding demons could only watch the rippling of the Demon Queen's lower cheeks in awe.

The show they were receiving was simply too stimulating. While the Demon Queen was well known to be a seductress who used men as she pleased, they had never personally witnessed it as it was always done behind closed doors

.

But even then, they feared her reputation. Especially the men amongst them. Any man that fell into her grasp was guaranteed to die a dog's death after being humiliated, so almost all of them were spiteful. Yet, they didn't dare show their displeasure in fear of being her next prey.

But now, in front of their eyes, that terrifying Demon Queen was being played with like a common slut, and she had even been ruthlessly slapped! How could they not feel stimulated? It was to the point where they no longer had any thoughts of moving to help, instead being enraptured watching the scene in front of them.

In fact, even the women amongst them didn't move. After all, no small number of husbands and lovers had been stolen by the Demon Queen for her personal pleasure.

When the Demon Queen felt the sudden burning sensation on her rear and heard the sound of the slap, the sense of shame that she had been feeling after being handled so roughly multiplied manyfold.

She wanted to immediately rouse her mana and kill the man in front of her, but every time she tried to do so, the man would expertly hit her sensitive spots and disrupt her concentration.

Pah! Pah! Pah!

Three more crisp slaps rang out.

"Obediently sit and accept your punishment like the slut you are. So what if you're a Demon Queen? You know in your heart what your true desire is."

The Demon Queen's resistance wavered for a second. It was true that the pleasure she felt had been vastly heightened as the shame she felt increased. However, this only served to make her even more incensed.

Her face was boiling red in both anger and shame. Under such situations, she suddenly felt her soul leave her body.

A heavenly sensation of pleasure, unlike anything she felt when she simply sucked her previous men dry, assaulted her. Like a broken dam, streams of water continuously left her hidden valley.

The Demon Queen twitched in place as her body became limp. At that moment, Damien's figure flashed and appeared 10 feet away from where he previously was.

To be completely honest, he had been pent up for far too long. Since he had left the dungeon, he had always been in the company of world-class beauties, but he never actually acted on his desires.

But that didn't mean he didn't have them. With the countless sensual situations he had been in with both Rose and Ruyue, how could he not have thoughts on them? But he had always held himself back for one reason or another.

Now that the flames of desire had been forcefully stimulated by the Demon Queen's antics, they had burst in full force, leading to the current situation.

"Haa...haa..."

Damien's breathing was still rough, but he took the time while the Demon Queen was reveling in her climax to calm down. He knew that the battle he just fought was just one of many he would have to fight before he finally escaped this mountain.

And he also knew that dealing with the rest of the Demon Kings and Apostles wouldn't be nearly the same as what he had just done. Especially considering that they were mostly men...

‘Wow, suddenly I don’t feel that lustful anymore...’

By the time he managed to calm down, the Demon Queen had also slowly started to return to her senses.

The rest of the demons were the same. Cold sweat collectively rushed down their backs. A proverbial sea of cold sweat had drenched the fourth layer.

After all, wasn’t their death guaranteed once the Demon Queen came to her senses? At that time, wouldn’t they be punished for standing by and watching as she was humiliated?

A gloomy aura pervaded the fourth layer. The Demon Queen’s face alternated between red and white continuously as she silently stood amongst the crowd around her.

“You...”

A single word escaped her mouth. It was quiet, but in the silence that currently enveloped the area, it was extremely clear in everyone’s ears.

“You actually dared...you actually...haha...hahahaha...”

An eerie laughter escaped her lips. Her gaze finally raised off the ground. It was so cold that the surrounding demons felt their blood freeze when she panned her eyes across them.

When her gaze finally landed on Damien, he smiled back.

“What? Are you so eager for round 2 that you can’t wait for the crowd to disperse? If so, this Young Master will have to disappoint you. You see, I’m not particularly interested in slutty old bitches.”

The demons around Damien immediately backed away when they heard his words. Was this guy’s will made of steel? He dared to continue provoking the Demon Queen even at this juncture?

The Demon Queen’s cold eyes suddenly lit aflame. A slut? She had been called it so many times that she didn’t care anymore. After all, it was the truth. She embraced that identity. So what if she reveled in pleasure? She knew all those who shamed her were secretly jealous of the lifestyle she lived.

However...

“What did you just call me?” Her chilling voice pervaded the air. The aura of a true 4th class existence flared and caused the surrounding air to become heavy. The pressure was so great that the demons closest to her were instantly crushed into meat paste.

“You’re talking to me?” However, Damien was unperturbed. “Of course, I called you a slutty old hag. Am I wrong? You’re at least 10,000 years old, aren’t you? Meanwhile, I’m like 22! If we use the phrase ‘a toad lusting after swan meat’ here, then wouldn’t I be the swan while you’re the toad?”

“Old hag...he called me an old hag...hahahaha...”

The Demon Queen stopped listening to him after she heard those two words. It was as if she has gone crazy, mumbling the same few words over and over again.

And looking at the flames in her eyes, it was clear that she was thoroughly enraged. It was to the point where none in the area could escape her anger.

“Little....LITTLE BASTARD! IF I DON’T KILL YOU TODAY, LET THE HEAVENS REDUCE ME TO ASH!”

Her aura flared even greater, causing the sky to tremble.

“Heed my command! The first person to catch him for me will be pardoned of the sins they accumulated today! As for the rest, a fate worse than death!”

The demons who heard her words immediately released their auras and charged at Damien. There was no way they’d let the slight glimmer of hope they were presented go.

Damien grinned widely at the scene.

“Good! Let’s see if any of you can even touch a single hair on my head!”

Damien flashed away continuously, avoiding the pursuit of the surrounding demons. All the while, he kept a part of his focus on the golden barrier separating him from escape.

He was happy that chaos was spreading. This was exactly what he needed. Now that things had reached this point, it was only a matter of time until he could find a way to break free.

Damien kept harassing the demons chasing him, taunting them endlessly and invoking their ire.

At some point, even the Demon Queen could no longer stand it, joining the chase.

And it wasn't long after she joined the fun when two familiar figures suddenly showed up at the edge of the barrier.

Chapter 309 Escape [3]

For mortals, 3 meters wasn't too short of a distance, but it wasn't too long either. Being able to teleport that far instantaneously would be incredibly convenient, if nothing else.

However, at Damien's level, it was different. For people like them, 3 meters was a distance that could be crossed in half a step. Due to this, his current limiter on teleportation was incredibly strenuous.

But that didn't mean it didn't have benefits. If it didn't, then Damien wouldn't have been abusing it all this time, opting to simply run instead.

Firstly, he was able to spam teleport much faster than he was able to take two steps. The reaction of his body when it came to teleporting was much more fluid for some reason.

Secondly, his maneuverability. Momentum was always something that needed to be taken into consideration when in battle. If Damien wanted to abruptly switch directions, he had to divert the force he had accumulated if he didn't want to snap his body.

Of course, vector control could be used to offset some of the momentum and make him far more agile than the normal person, but even then it was a conscious process he had to consider and calculate. It took precious time to do so.

But with teleportation, he didn't have the same issue.

He could change both direction, orientation, and position at will combined with the fact that his momentum could be carried over when he did so instead of halting like it would if he moved normally, it made him far more versatile on the battlefield.

It was also the main reason he could perfectly escape the Demon Queen's chase in this confined space.

She didn't have the same ability, but she was fast. Even if her abilities weren't geared towards speed, her natural ability due to her class level was far greater than anything Damien could achieve even with the stat boosts he had received from all the devouring he had done.

When Damien teleported away, she was able to reach him before he even finished materializing in the real world again. If it wasn't for his maneuverability, he felt her claws would've pierced his chest numerous times already.

As for the other demons who were chasing him, he didn't even put them in his eyes. Both he and the Demon Queen were moving too fast for them to even have a chance to catch up.

'I can't keep going like this.'

Damien thought as his eyes darted around. His awareness was spread to its limits for the sake of his teleportation, while his eyes were constantly scanning the surrounding barrier to try and find an opening.

Although he had plenty of mana capacity and mental strength, he knew he couldn't delay here for too long. There were two other Demon Kings as well as a legion of Apostles not far from his location, and he needed to be out of the mountain before they could converge.

If things reached that point, he'd have no choice but to hide in the Sanctuary without leaving enemy territory. And he didn't want to take that risk.

Boom!

Waves of demonic mana were emanating through the fourth layer as the hundreds of demons chasing Damien channeled their skills and spells and shot them at him full force.

The Demon Queen also wasn't sitting still while chasing him. Although he had managed to escape her charm, her mental strength was obviously far greater than his.

As she pursued him relentlessly and barraged him with physical attacks, waves of elusive mana impacted his mind, trying to foil his concentration.

Damien didn't allow any of this to get to him. His vector field was fully erected and in use, actively repelling all energy-based attacks that arrived in his vicinity. The magnitude and power of these attacks had been greatly increased when they returned to their original senders, causing large explosions to ring out through the fourth layer.

He couldn't block the mental attack, so he allowed his Mind Prison to do the work for him, offsetting a majority of its impact.

Still, a portion of it would always make it through his defenses. Although it wasn't much one at a time, he knew it'd have a dangerous impact on him once it accumulated.

Swathes of demons were dying left and right, but their numbers didn't seem to decrease at all. In fact, more and more demons poured into the area as time passed.

Suddenly, two familiar auras entered his detection range. When he concentrated his awareness, he noticed Feng Qing'er and Qing Tan dazedly watching his antics as he fled from the pursuit of the surrounding demons.

He suddenly had an idea.

“You two! It’s been so long! How have you been?”

Bang!

The Demon Queen’s axe kick landed where his head was, but he was already 3 meters behind her.

“Damien~!” Qing Tan responded smilingly. “You seem to be having a lot of fun!”

“Hahaha! I guess you could call it that. Anyway, Qing Tan, Qing’er, I need a favor!”

“Don’t call me so familiarly!” Feng Qing’er shouted.

“Oi! Your name is three syllables long! That’s too long to shout in a situation like this! It’s for convenience sake, okay?”

“Hmph!”

“What’d you need help with?” Qing Tan butted in before Feng Qing’er could continue.

Boom!

A burst of demonic mana covered a large area around Damien, making it so that even if he teleported, he wouldn't reach safety.

A large number of demons were caught up in the blast, instantly shriveling up into dry corpses. Damien immediately mobilized his vector field and warded off the foreign mana, manipulating the directional force to shoot it back into the surroundings to kill more demons.

"Hmm, what's the best way to put this? Ah, I got it! Qing Tan, raise hell!"

Qing Tan smiled cheerfully and clapped her hands. "This is why I like you so much! You know how to have fun!"

Qing Tan walked into the barrier unimpeded and spread her aura, causing the darkness beneath her feet to crawl through the ground like or was a wave of water.

"Rise!"

Tens of Shadow Generals and hundreds of Captains rose from her shadow at her command, emitting a strong bloodthirst that permeated the atmosphere.

“Put on a good show for me, please~!”

After Qing Tan’s words fell, the shadow army charged at the demons chasing after Damien, causing even further chaos than what he had already instilled.

And this was exactly what Damien wanted.

‘Although I don’t know much about barriers, I at least know the basics. For this barrier to independently sustain itself, it needs to have at least one barrier core. And even if it has multiple, as long as I can break one I can destabilize its foundation and find a way out.’

The easiest way to find the barrier cores was to just destroy everything and reveal them, but Damien didn’t have the luxury to do so while he was being chased by a Demon King. He could only rely on this roundabout strategy to achieve similar results.

As he had seen when Qing Tan walked into the barrier, it didn’t have a complete isolation effect. Those outside could enter, but those within couldn’t leave.

This way, no matter how many demons died, more could arrive to supplement their numbers. Damien needed the chaos within the fourth layer to intensify as much as it could so that the flaws within the barrier would become more obvious.

He had already seen some results. The previous translucent barrier that he could only see when he poured mana into his All-Seeing Eyes was now shining bright gold. With this, he could clearly delineate its boundaries, which would help him narrow his search area.

Now that Qing Tan had joined the fray, and Feng Qing'er would soon join as well, he felt that it wouldn't be long before he'd be able to find the most critical flaws around.

Chapter 310 Escape [4]

The cracks in the earth caused by the raging battle expanded greatly with the addition of Qing Tan's shadow army. Large portions of rock constantly jumped from the ground and created showers of rubble that crushed some surrounding demons.

Soon after Qing Tan joined, Feng Qing'er did the same. She was able to understand Damien's purpose after taking a closer look at the situation.

Instead of targeting the demons, she flew into the air and spread her mana through the atmosphere, dying the sky red. Massive balls of flame and Phoenix phantoms rampaged through the fourth layer and caused mass destruction everywhere they went, tearing heaven and earth asunder.

The foundations of the Demon King Castle had already begun to crumble, and the large structure that used to stand imposingly atop the mountain peak imploded, causing clouds of dust and debris to cloud the area.

Damien's awareness suddenly found a spot of interest. While in normal circumstances, nobody would pay it any mind. It was just a slight gathering of mana that wasn't much different than the phenomenon a normal mana lamp would produce.

But once the environment was in shambles like it was now, such a gathering of mana was glaringly obvious. When Damien peered into the ground at that location using his All-Seeing Eyes, he was almost blinded by the brightness of the massive light ball that was present there.

‘It’s no wonder I never found the barrier core. It was being concealed by the numerous formations within the castle this entire time. Not only me, even the Demon Kings wouldn’t have sensed it with the power of those formations.’

He had to wonder how those formations even came into existence for them to have the ability to trick 4th class existences. Perhaps that was what Lucius was referring to when he said that the Demon God could only restrict him if he was directly taking action.

‘No matter, I need to target that area. Perhaps there are other barrier cores as well, but judging from the size of this one, it should have a significant impact on the structural integrity of the barrier if I break it.’

With a goal in mind, Damien focused his efforts on teleporting over to the barrier core, covertly leading the Demon Queen to its location as well.

‘With the physical power of a 4th class, it should be much easier to break this thing.’

“Come, come! Miss Demon Queen, how can you be so weak?!”

Damien repeatedly provoked the Demon Queen as he moved. Without suspense, her attacks became even fiercer.

It wasn't even due to the fact that he was provoking her. With how long she had lived, how could she fall for such childish provocations? It was the situation more than the words themselves that provoked her anger.

She was an exalted 4th class existence. She was a true master who had successfully endured her Universe Baptism and obtained acknowledgment.

The fact that a mere 3rd class ant was able to both constantly escape from her grasp, as well as have the energy and mind to provoke her and freely chat with his comrades as he did so, that was what provoked her ire.

It was the greatest shame she had ever felt. Even when she was forcefully corrupted by the Demon God, she didn't feel so much shame. After all, the Demon God was an exalted Demigod. To be enslaved by him was an honor, especially when he simply allowed her to live her indulgent lifestyle without interference.

But this time, it was different. The man in front of her was nothing more than a kid to her. Neither his status nor power was greater than here. He was inferior in every way. Yet, he had played with her body and then humiliated her in combat as well.

Her mana raged furiously as she put her all into attacking him. Her physical strength skyrocketed, causing her every step to cause miniature earthquakes through the ground.

But even then, he evaded her attacks like a loach.

'If it wasn't for this damn restriction...!'

It was the only thing she hated about her overall situation. Due to the restriction, her power had been capped at the extreme early stages of 4th class. If it wasn't for that, how could he evade her so well?

While the Universe Baptism made a 3rd class incomparable to a 4th class, it wasn't some miraculous thing that'd make someone all-powerful. The number of benefits one could digest depended wholly on their aptitude and ability.

Unfortunately, her gains didn't help her in this situation.

The Demon Queen's specialization was Charm Laws, so most of the benefits she gained went towards her mana and mental strength. But today, she had met a bastard who had perfectly countered the laws she was best at.

When it came to energy-based attacks, she had forgone everything to maximize the comprehension she had towards her primary law, so the only thing she could use was physical strength to combat Damien.

But with his loach-like movements and cockroach vitality, how could she easily kill him?

'Those damn bastards! Why aren't they interfering?!'

She didn't care one bit about those so-called Apostles. They weren't worth shit. What infuriated her was that the other two Demon Kings still hadn't made a move yet even after seeing her get humiliated to such an extent.

'No, I guess I should expect this from them. As a matter of fact, those two bastards are probably enjoying the show!'

She gritted her teeth in anger, but she couldn't do anything against those two. Because of this, she directed all of her anger and grievance towards Damien.

"Little bastard! Obediently die by this Queen's hand!"

With a furious shout, the Demon Queen poured all her mana into her fist and struck out. She didn't target Damien but instead created a massive shockwave impact that left no area around her unscathed.

She had seen how he deflected the force of impact whenever it was near him, and she had seen how he evaded if she got too close. This method was the best way to deal with him.

"Keuk!"

As she expected, Damien couldn't dodge in time. He coughed out a mouthful of blood and shot back, heavily impacting the opaque barrier. Another mouthful of blood left his mouth due to the force of the second impact.

The Demon Queen was feeling pleased with herself for finally landing a substantial hit on that bastard, but when she looked at his face, he still had the same roguish grin he had when he was playing with her earlier.

“What?” Her eyes widened at the realization.

Crack!

But before she could do anything else, a small cracking sound rang through the surroundings. It wasn't loud at all, but it seemed like every being within the barrier heard it clearly.

Crack! Crack!

The cracking sound spread and multiplied as if countless glass plates were shattering at the same time. When the Demon Queen finally located the source of the sound, she couldn't hide her shock.

“Barrier core! It's actually the barrier core!”

She finally realized why Damien was smiling like that. He had intentionally provoked her into using a full-strength attack when she was directly above the barrier core, then used his strange ability to divert the force towards the core instead of using it to defend.

It was only because of this that he had suffered from the impact. But even that was planned, as he had used the force to propel himself to the barrier.

“But you didn’t plan for everything. Did you seriously think just this was enough to shatter the barrier core?! It was created to keep us from escaping, so it will obviously hold up against our strength!”

The Demon Queen mockingly sneered at Damien.

Damien tilted his head in a confused manner. “Isn’t that obvious? I mean, even if the core was well hidden, there had to be precautions in case one of you actually found it. Let me ask you, if you were the one who created the barrier, what mechanism would you add for a situation where the mana of the one you were trying to restrain heavily impacted the barrier core?”

The Demon Queen’s eyes widened once again. The answer was obvious. If the prisoner showed signs of trying to escape the prison, they should naturally be punished.

A wave of fear swept over the Demon Queen in that instant. She was overwhelmed by the urge to flee.

“Of course, since you guys have been corrupted the barrier is mainly just for show. I doubt such a failsafe actually exists. Not like matters though. Thanks for getting distracted!”

Damien cheerfully continued talking as he extended his hand towards the barrier core. In the next instant, he clenched his fist.

“Collapse.”

Space shattered, causing the cracks on the core to widen and deepen. The internal structure of the core seemed to take a large blow.

“Qing’er! Qing Tan!”

“You don’t have to tell me!”

“Coming~!”

With two vastly different responses, a Phoenix phantom and multiple Shadow Generals attacked the core at once, breaking its final layer of resistance.

Under the eyes of everyone present, the barrier core broke into countless fragments. The opaque golden light film waned greatly until it looked extremely flimsy.

Damien grinned. His finger swept through the air and drew a straight vertical line.

“Dimensional Severance.”

The thin black sword line of Dimensional Severance silently sliced through the barrier like butter, causing a large gap to open on its surface.

Qing Tan and Feng Qing'er rushed over to Damien's side as this happened.

Looking at the astonished Demon Queen in the distance, Damien flashed a bright smile.

"Well then, see you later!"

And then, he disappeared through the crack.