

Void 341

Chapter 341 Dinner Party [3]

The dining hall was littered with the collapsed bodies of those who had entered it only a few hours prior. Silence enveloped it as the sound of liquor pouring down the throat of the 6 left standing passed.

Qing Tan was feeling incredibly nauseous. Her mana was no longer listening to her and her body felt like it was shutting down. It was a feeling similar to what she felt when she stared at the painting. It was like her soul was being sucked out.

'I'm done for...'

She lamented as the 1000th glass of liquor was raised to her lips. She was barely even conscious enough to think anymore, and she could vaguely feel an unknown force trying to take something away from her.

But if that thing was taken, she'd surely die. This much she was aware of.

But there wasn't anything she could do. That inviolable force pushed the glass of liquor to her mouth and forced it down her throat.

'Ahh...it was fun while it lasted...at least with this I'll be...'

Just as she was accepting her death, her thoughts came to a halt. Slowly but surely, she felt her mental faculties returning to her.

'This is...!'

Unexpectedly, the 1000th glass of liquor wasn't the same as the ones before. It was cool and refreshing. She had already gotten tired of the previous liquor's taste after having so much of it.

The mana-infused alcohol poured through her body and infused itself into her very being. With every drop that was absorbed, her state of mind saw a slight improvement.

The waning life auras of the three who were about to succumb had gradually been restored and their vitality was even slightly increasingly

"Ha! Looks like it's over!" Damien excitedly shouted.

And the sound came from his throat. He didn't have to send a mental transmission to speak. His arms were now free of control as well, and the restriction keeping him on his seat was removed.

Damien stood up and stretched his body. Walking over to the other side of the table, he strongly patted Qing Tan on her back.

"Damn! That was nerve-racking! Why'd you have to worry us so much?" He spoke in a cheerful tone.

Qing Tan was still in a daze. After accepting her death, the last thing she expected to happen was for her to be healed and even given some benefits.

Damien's slaps were hard, and woke her up from that daze. "Hey! Don't hit so hard! Can't you show some consideration for a lady?"

"Who is the lady? All I see is my friend who needed a pat on the back!"

"Hmph! So you don't even see me as a woman? I can't say I'm not offended." Qing Tan pouted.

Damien quirked his brow at her unusual behavior. Unlike what she was like normally, she seemed a bit fragile. She was showing a side of her that she had never shown to Feng Qing'er and him even after all this time in the Trial World.

Damien smiled. In this state, he would finally be able to tease Qing Tan!

This girl always had a strong wall around her. Even if she was always acting playful and naughty, she was actually the most guarded person that Damien knew. Naturally, she must've had a lot of secrets for her to erect such a wall, but Damien didn't care about them.

His friend is was his friend. If she wanted to share then she could, but if she didn't then that was that.

But with her looking so delicate right now, Damien couldn't resist the urge to tease her. Even if he didn't care about her secrets, he wanted to get a reaction out of her, which he had never succeeded in doing to date.

Damien strongly put his hand down on the table and leaned forward, his face only a few inches away from Qing Tan's. At this distance, he could feel her breathing on his face.

Staring straight into her starry black eyes, he spoke in a low voice. "So? What would you do if I decided to see you as a woman?"

Qing Tan stared into his mysterious pupils as well. Her breathing quickened and her face became rosy. She was thanking the heavens that his eyes were so unique, otherwise, she wouldn't be able to hold herself back from looking at his lips.

"H-hmph! That's enough of that. If you want to tease someone, go tease Qing'er. She's the most fun one to tease anyway."

Qing Tan weakly pushed him away as she spoke.

But Damien was relentless in his pursuit. "But I want to tease you, though?"

He didn't budge at all, instead moving closer to her. Their noses were already touching.

Qing Tan's half-closed eyes looked at him limpidly. Her lips parted and closed over and over again as she tried to find something to say.

Qing Tan was a rare beauty to begin with. Her face was perfectly proportioned and her eyes seemed to suck in the soul of anyone who gazed into them for too long. The rosy blush that had covered her face at the moment only served to accentuate that beauty. Even compared to the most beautiful women Damien had seen in his life, Qing Tan was definitely amongst the top.

Damien was pretty numb to beauty after spending so much time around the likes of Rose, Elena, and Ruyue, but seeing that blush on Qing Tan's face, he couldn't help but become conscious of her. If he just moved forward a little bit more he could...

"That's enough!"

At that moment, Feng Qing'er came to the rescue! She grabbed Qing Tan's arm and pulled her away from the devil's clutches before anything could happen. After that, she hugged Qing Tan into her bosom like a mother protecting her chick.

"Hmph! You rascal! Don't think you can do anything to her while I'm around! Besides, don't you already have a woman?! Greedy bastard!"

"Tch!"

Damien clicked his tongue at his fun being ruined, but inwardly, he was smiling brilliantly.

‘Hahaha! Not only did I get to see Qing’er screaming like a little girl, but I also got to see Qing Tan blushing! What a good day it is!’

Qing Tan, that Qing Tan whose expression never showed her weakness to anyone, the one who would never eat a loss in a game of teasing. He had made her blush! And not just blush, he felt that if he truly decided to make a move at that moment, she wouldn’t have resisted.

‘Another win for this Young Master.’

Damien grinned in satisfaction. But soon after, he circulated his Void Essence and got rid of the residual effects of the 1000 glasses of alcohol he had just drunk.

‘Phew! I was only a bit tipsy just now, but I became damn horny! If Qing’er didn’t interfere, I really might’ve...’

He shuddered slightly. Although he was still proud of himself for getting a reaction out of Qing Tan, he noted that he needed to be more careful about getting drunk in the future.

If he was this horny from just being tipsy, then what would happen if he got drunk?

‘Damn...’ Damien sighed inwardly. ‘I really need to get laid.’

Chapter 342 Dinner Party [4]

Not long after Damien, the rest of the 6 also removed the alcohol's effects from their systems. Qing Tan returned to her previous indifferent face, but she still wouldn't look him in the eye.

'Did I go overboard?'

Damien wondered as he thought about the awkward atmosphere between them. But in the end, he shook off the thought. What was done was done. If he needed to apologize he'd do it when they were in a more appropriate setting.

"It looks like the number has been cut down to a tenth of what it originally was." He muttered.

From the start, this must've been the goal. What made Damien sigh was the fact that the six who survived were the ones at the head of the table.

With how things were laid out, it didn't seem like much of a surprise that the six of them would be the last ones standing.

Three of them were 4th class existences, so even if they were at a disadvantage in every other field they could still use the sheer amount of mana they had to brute force their way to success.

As for the other three, Damien and Feng Qing'er had extremely powerful purification forces in their bodies. As for Qing Tan, her affinity towards anything related to darkness was so great that it was scary. Resisting the effects of toxic substances wouldn't be as hard for her as it was for others.

'Haa...if it was preordained for us to be the last ones standing at the end, what was the point of going through all the trouble to kill everyone?'

Why were the other 55 even brought to this dining hall besides to die? Damien didn't know. The inheritance site simply seemed to thirst for blood.

As Damien was lost in thought, the scenery of the dining hall slowly began to change.

The long dining table and all the seats disappeared, except for the seat at the head of the table. All the doors vanished off the walls and the room became a sealed space.

Abruptly, Damien felt his body become covered in spatial fluctuations. Although he wasn't transported very far, he was still in a different portion of the dining hall.

With his perception, he could see the difference clearly. The dining hall had been split into six sections, one for each remaining contestant. Each section was a separate space, hence the spatial fluctuations he had sensed.

'Looks like the final trial is also an individual one.' He thought inwardly as he examined his space. Unfortunately, there was nothing special at all.

Damien sat down in meditation and cooled down his mind. The prior events had been too stimulating, and he needed to get back to a focused state.

As he did so, yet another change occurred. The ground split open and a long coffin was erected from below.

Damien stood up and inspected it. 'There's nothing out of the ordinary about it, but this coffin doesn't have a lid. It's sealed shut.'

Damien wondered what he was supposed to do, but went with the most practical option. He put his hand on the top of the coffin and infused his mana into it.

Click!

As if to prove he made the right choice, the lid of the coffin slightly separated from the body, giving him room to pry it open.

Voom!

A powerful aura suddenly filled the space around Damien.

'Even though the coffin is still closed, the aura of whoever is within is still so fierce! What kind of figure could it be?'

Damien was starting to get curious. Considering that he was in an inheritance site, there was no way the owner of the coffin was a simple person.

Without waiting any longer, he pried open the lid.

Boom!

The aura became exponentially powerful once the coffin lid was removed. Damien felt like he was hit by a truck due to the sheer pressure of the aura.

Swoosh!

Something emerged from the coffin and blasted towards Damien's face.

"Woah!"

He immediately teleported away, but the unknown item chased after him just as fast.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

The air around him was cut open as the unknown object pursued him. He didn't know what it was, but he knew that if it hit him, he'd be easily injured.

'It's not so easy to cut through my skin...what is this thing?'

Damien melded into the spatial layers and tried to observe the attacking object. But when he tried to do so...

Whoosh!

"What the hell?!"

The object chased him into the spatial layers. Unless one was a space practitioner, it should be impossible to even perceive the spatial layers. Regardless of how powerful one was, this fact remained true.

Even if powerful experts could perceive the existence of the spatial layers, and could perceive people who traveled through them, they couldn't enter or perceive the spatial layers themselves.

But Damien was currently experiencing a situation where even the spatial layers weren't safe. The unknown object darted after him no matter how much he teleported. It entered and exited the spatial layers freely as if it was a fish in water.

“I can’t run!”

Damien coated his fist in Void Flames and punched out.

Boom!

The object pierced through the space between his knuckles and cleaved his hand in two.

“Fuck!”

Damien’s hand rapidly healed, but he had already been caught off guard. Before he was even able to throw another fist forward, the object had impossibly changed its trajectory and arrived directly in front of his chest.

The object continued forward trying to run him through, but Damien instantly activated his dragon bloodline and transformed.

Clang!

A dull sound rang out as the object impacted his scales. Although it was still able to pierce through, it took a great deal of effort.

And in that moment that it slowed down, Damien was finally able to see its appearance.

It was clear, almost transparent. It looked like it had been carved out of glass. But unlike delicate glass, its body was sturdy enough to clash with Damien's dragon scales and even overcome them.

It was roughly 1.5 meters long from head to toe. The guard was shaped like a dragon soaring through the sky, and it had a single-edged blade that was shaped much more uniquely than the blades Damien had seen in the past.

It was truly a beautiful sword that made Damien covet it, but he wasn't given much time to admire it as he pleased.

After all, the sword was earnestly trying to kill him at the moment.

'I see. Is this the trial? To tame such a ferocious sword...what great timing!'

His sword had broken only recently in his battle against Polius. The most shameful part was that it had broken under the stress of his own attack.

It was his own fault. He had a blade that could grow as long as it devoured other swords, but he had never properly fed it.

Looking at the blade in front of him, Damien felt an undeniable urge to obtain it.

“Don’t worry. I’ll conquer you soon. And unlike what I did with the last one, I’ll treat you right. So, quiet down and obediently become mine!”

Chapter 343 Dominate [1]

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The sound of metal clashing against metal rang out within the sealed space Damien was currently inside of as he butted heads with the translucent sword.

After he dragonized, the fight became much more even. The sword now needed to actually put in effort to get through his defenses.

Damien dashed through the spatial layers like an assassin, chasing the sword’s tail as it fled from him. He reached out his hand to grab it, but it teleported away.

Flash!

He teleported right after it, but the sword was ready for him. It abruptly turned and slashed through the air, aiming to slice through his neck in a single blow.

Damien leaned his body to the side and narrowly avoided the slash, using that moment when the sword was in front of him to reach out and grab its hilt.

Skree!

The air screeched as the sword was forced to halt from Damien's grasp. But it didn't stay idle. It moved rampantly to try to escape him and loosen his grasp.

"Ha! As if I'm going to let you get away!"

Seeing the sword's efforts, Damien strengthened his grasp. But the sword, just like him, could easily move through space. One second he was holding it, and in the next, it had already vanished.

But Damien wasn't surprised by the situation. They had been playing this cat and mouse game for over an hour already, where they would take turns attacking and defending. Due to the fact that both could proficiently make use of space element, neither was able to get the upper hand.

'If I could read its spatial movements, things would be much easier, but I'm always just a second too late.'

The sword wasn't a human, after all. The spatial fluctuations emitting from it registered as if they happened at a different frequency. Damien needed prolonged contact with the sword to understand that frequency and read it, but the sword didn't allow him the time.

The sword, however, could perfectly read Damien's movements. It had clearly accompanied a human spatial practitioner as its owner before, so it was long accustomed to the way humans used space.

Damien shook off his thoughts and gave chase again. The only way to capture the sword was to continue this until he could get a hold of it.

The situation was too odd, the sword had a limited moveset since it was an object, but its sharpness, durability, and spatial ability were enough to supplement that.

And while the sword was trying to kill him, he was trying to subdue it. Due to this, Damien was always in a passive position.

When he caught up to the sword again, the same situation repeated itself. The clanging of impact rang out as the sword attacked him, and Damien's hands moved rapidly to grab at its hilt.

'If I could grab the blade, things would be much easier. But that thing is too sharp. Even my dragon scales will be cut through if it exerts enough force. Dragon scales are good enough for passive defense, but they can't help me subdue the sword. I need to switch things up.'

Damien recalled his Dragon Transformation and stimulated his second bloodline. The sword immediately saw the opening and charged towards the space between his eyebrows.

Damien's visage quickly changed again. His hair turned white and pitch black runes formed on his skin.

'I don't need to multiply my attack power, so let's focus all the runes on defense. Congregate most of the strength towards my arms and my vital points. The other areas can be healed fine with regeneration.'

The runes moved to his command and centered around the points he mentioned. At that same time, the sword reached its target. It was just centimeters away from piercing through Damien's forehead, however...

Clang!

A set of pitch black runes gathered at the point of contact, causing the blade to fail its penetration. But this situation had happened before. Instead of giving up, the blade continued to push, looking to break through Damien's defense.

"Not this time."

Damien grinned. He raised his arms and directly grabbed onto the sword's blade.

Screeech!

The sword screeched loudly as it tried to wriggle free of his grip, but with the exponential enhancement on Damien's defense caused by the runes, it couldn't penetrate his skin anymore.

Damien closed his eyes and focused. Without caring for the sword's will, he endlessly poured his mana into it.

Voom!

He and the sword were already extremely compatible. It was probably the reason he got paired with it in the first place. So when he poured his mana into it, an astounding resonance occurred.

"Haha! I see, I see. What an interesting way to teleport. However, now that I understand it, don't think you can run anymore."

The sword was still struggling earnestly, but Damien had locked the space around it. This time, he had no plans of letting it escape. The resonance he had just had with the sword allowed him to understand a bit more about it, so he could accurately pinpoint the "frequency" it used for spatial movement.

The sword no longer had a path of retreat. Damien quickly moved one of his hands and firmly grabbed its hilt.

The sword let out a frightening aura. It was the same aura he had felt when he first opened the coffin. Damien's muscles bulged as he tried hard to contain it.

"Obey me!"

He roared as he continuously poured mana into the sword. Even though its will was rejecting him, its body was much more honest.

Damien was by far the most suitable candidate to wield it that the sword had ever seen. This much was a fact. However, it was a being who had achieved sentience. It wasn't just going to hand itself over to him because of his affinity.

If he didn't have the strength to control it, the ability to wield it properly, the character to be compatible with it, and the potential to lead it to greater heights, why would it choose him as its master? It was wholly illogical.

So the will of the sword resisted to the bitter end even though its sword body happily accepted his mana. As more and more mana entered the sword, its resistance began to weaken.

Whoosh!

The winds in the secluded space whipped and whirled as the resonance between Damien and the sword increased. With every passing second, their auras seemed to merge and become one.

'My sword aura...'

From the beginning, Damien never used sword aura by itself. He had been infusing it with his spatial mana and creating skills related to space from the start. And with time, his sword aura had been influenced by this fusion and had incorporated spatial properties within it.

When this sword aura met with a sword that had similar properties, it saw a massive increase in its purity. Now, even Damien was feeling the same affinity with the sword that it felt towards him.

Their game of cat and mouse had ended. The sword in Damien's hand was now silent as it basked in the feeling of resonance as he did.

And when the winds died down, the only thing left was Damien standing quietly in the secluded space.

Chapter 344 Dominate [2]

"Hm? Where's the sword?"

When Damien opened his eyes, he noticed that the sword wasn't in his hand anymore.

'Did it try to escape again?'

But he knew that wasn't right. Unlike before, he could feel a clear connection to the sword. The problem was, the connection told him that the sword was still in his hand.

Damien gripped his fist and noticed that there was indeed something in his hand, but his eyes couldn't perceive it at all.

"Oho?"

There was an easy solution, though. He poured mana into his eyes and let their abilities get enhanced. Soon, he was able to see what he couldn't before.

"You're an interesting guy, aren't you...don't tell me you're shy?"

Damien spoke teasingly to the sword in his hand. The sword was actually doing something that looked to him like it was hiding. It hid itself within the spatial layers, and its body became entirely transparent. Due to the fact that the spatial layers were also relatively transparent, Damien hadn't seen it.

Vroom!

The sword vibrated slightly and transmitted an indignant feeling to him, causing Damien to smile.

'Didn't something similar happen a bit back? Why are all the semi-sentient things I have always acting indignant? And why is it always so cute?'

As if realizing that Damien was thinking about it, the Void Flame popped into the air without his prompting and wrapped around the sword.

The tongues of flame flicked wildly as if excited to meet a new companion.

“You’re my sword now, so you should act with pride. Why are you cowering like a little girl? No, wait, even the little girl I know is brave enough to fight a Demon King. Do you really want to be less manly than a little girl?”

Damien egged the sword, and with his constant teasing, it finally revealed itself again.

‘All jokes aside, it truly is a beautiful sword. And it’s just as deadly.’

Damien was proud of his new possession. Especially considering that it also had spatial properties, he had to thank the inheritance site for giving him such a treasure.

‘Well, now it’s confirmed that the one controlling the inheritance site is sentient. Otherwise, there’s no way it’d choose this speed to test me.’

Damien stopped thinking about the inheritance site and looked at the sword again.

“Do you have a name?”

Whir...

“No? What kind of owner doesn’t name his sword?”

Whir...

“Why do you look so sad? If you want a name then I’ll give you one. My first sword was named Devourer, so how about Devourer 2?”

Vroom!

A frightening aura came out of the sword as it tried to struggle free of Damien’s grip and attack him.

“I’m kidding, I’m kidding. Hmm, with your translucent body, I would want to name you Bladeless, but that name is taken.”

Whir?

“Wanna see? Alright, let me show you the tricks of the master you’ll be spending the rest of your life with.”

Damien prepped himself and poured his mana into the sword. He precisely executed bladeless, causing a massive chunk of the secluded space to disappear into the void.

Whirrr!

The sword made an excited sound, causing Damien to puff out his chest.

“I know, I’m amazing as fuck. Anyway, let’s get back to the naming thing. How about Phantasm?”

Whir...

“Yeah, that’s too long. Then...Mirror’s Edge?”

Boom!

Damien almost got slapped in the face by the blade when he said it. Even he had to admit that it was a pretty cringe name.

“Fine, fine. I thought my naming sense was pretty good though...I mean, my skill names are all badass.”

The blade vibrated again as if telling him to hurry up. Damien fell into thought as he tried to come up with a domineering enough name for the sword to like.

'I could take the easy way out and call it the Void Sword...but once it finds out about the Void Flames, the Void Physique, my Void Essence, my last name...fuck there's too many things named Void...anyway, once it finds out about all those things it'll probably try to sever our connection immediately. If so...'

"How about Mirage?"

Whirrr!

The sword vibrated to show its excitement. Evidently, it liked the name.

"Sigh, I didn't want to use Mirage since that name is already taken, but there's nothing wrong with paying homage, right?"

Whir?

"You wouldn't get it. Well, anyway, now that you have a name, it seems our business here is settled."

Damien nodded and looked around the space. Even though he had finished taming the sword, there weren't any changes.

With nothing else to do, he went to check the coffin and see if there was anything else in there. The blade had attacked him the second the lid opened, so he didn't have time to inspect it.

'This must be its previous owner. As expected of a man who could tame such a sword. Even in death, he gives off such a fierce aura.'

The coffin did indeed have a corpse in it. It was well preserved and even the skin hadn't rotted yet. The corpse was of a man who looked in his mid-30s with long silver hair and a relatively handsome face.

Even though he was dead, his body was emanating killing intent. It was extremely powerful, but it wasn't enough to affect Damien.

After all, Damien's own killing intent was equally massive. It was built on the corpses of tens of thousands of beasts.

'Besides his body, there doesn't seem to be anything else here...'

"Since you are the previous owner of this blade that I've claimed, I'll show you respect as my senior. I hope your soul has found peace in reincarnation."

Damien lightly bowed to the corpse and sent his Void Flames out, cremating it within seconds. But he had a basic amount of respect. He didn't let his flames consume the corpse's essence.

Whir...

Mirage seemed forlorn as it watched its previous master fade away, but Damien didn't say anything. He might've tamed the sword, but he wasn't familiar enough with it to interfere in these kinds of matters.

He had no idea how long the sword and its previous owner were together, but judging by the desolate aura surrounding it, he could tell that their relationship wasn't simple.

He could only give the sword space so it could mourn. It was a sentient being, unlike his previous sword. He had to treat it as such.

Leaving the sword alone, Damien wandered around the secluded space and curiously looked at the spatial isolation barrier that was separating him from the others.

'Surprisingly, it isn't that different from the spatial lock I experienced back in the Myriad Illusion Veil. Except, this one doesn't prevent me from teleporting inside of it, only from teleporting out.'

Sighing, Damien realized that there was nothing he could do besides wait. Although he had the strength to break past the barrier with his own comprehension, the restrictive will of the inheritance site obviously wouldn't allow that.

And so, he sat quietly and played with the Void Flame to pass the time, waiting for the others to finish their trials.

In a hidden part of the inheritance site, a lone will watched the proceedings.

“Ohoho...unexpectedly that boy was the one to finish first. Between him and that effeminate one, which is the better choice?”

It lightly spoke to itself and pondered. Soon, it would be time for it to make a move.

“Finally, after so many years I can taste freedom...”

The will smiled wickedly as it faded into the background.

Chapter 345 Dominate [3]

The secluded spaces within the empty dining hall were all filled with different scenery.

While Damien sat silently and meditated in wait, the others continued trying to subdue their weapons.

Currently, Feng Qing'er was within a space filled with flames. But in front of her own Reincarnation Flames, they couldn't do any damage at all.

The massive greatsword in front of her was standing like an obedient pet, not daring to get closer. It was the effect of something similar to bloodline suppression.

“Good girl. From now on, you and I will be partners, okay?” Feng Qing’er spoke softly.

She had fallen in love with the sword as soon as she saw it, and the sword seemed to feel the same, judging by how docile it was acting.

The problem was, she had to coax the sword endlessly to allow her to form a connection with it. Even though it wanted to be with her, or was quite loyal to its previous master.

This was the reason why Damien managed to finish subduing his sword first.

“Come, come. Don’t be scared. We’ll go see your Master together and ask for permission, okay?”

Feng Qing’er was feeling incredibly awkward. It was like she was luring an innocent little girl into a wolf’s den. But she couldn’t find any better words to use.

Slowly but surely, she was able to gain the sword’s trust. And after a few more hours of coaxing, she was finally able to form a connection.

“Haha! My little girl, Big Sister promises she’ll treat you well!”

She cuddled the sword as if it was her long-lost lover. Compared to the struggles others were going through, she basically took a walk in the park.

In a separate secluded space, Demon Queen Eliza was in an awkward predicament. Her hands and feet were bound, and her movements were restrained.

Pah!

“Argh! You damn weapon! Release me this instant!”

She roared furiously. Behind her back, there was a long whip. It was the same whip that bound her.

But the whip had an odd ability to split into multiple tentacle-like branches. While six of those branches sealed her movements, the others were smacking her relentlessly.

Pah! Pah! Pah!

“I’m an exalted Demon King, dammit! Why am I always being humiliated?!”

She pushed her mana and tried to escape the binding, but she couldn’t move no matter how hard she tried. The weapon was a Chaos rank artifact after all, and it wasn’t at the bottom of the spectrum. Its power wasn’t too much inferior to a 4th class, especially when it wasn’t being wielded by a lower class being.

Eliza was being humiliated by her weapon constantly, but her enraged bellows couldn't reach the ears of the others in the area. They were all busy with their own tasks.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Massive explosions rang out one after another. An axe larger than the average human man curved through the air and made heavy impact on the fist that chased after it.

"Hahaha! Good good good! Give me more!"

Demon King Granheim had blood staining his fists, but the grin on his face never changed. In fact, it grew wilder the more he got hit.

"Hahaha! Hit me, fool! Let's see which one of us is stronger!"

Boom!

The axe furiously swung again, impacting Granheim's arms with so much force that the floor beneath him shattered to pieces.

It had already accepted this man as its master, but they didn't form a contract yet. They were the same type. Instead of following the normal procedure, they fought and fought just for the sake of fighting.

The secluded space had already been ruined by them, and the coffin of the axe's previous owner had been smashed to bits.

But the axe didn't seem to care. Unlike the other weapons, the only things it cared for were blood and battle. Since it found another owner who could provide it with such, why would it care about the last?

Every weapon that had been presented to the 6 remaining participants was different, whether it be in type or personality. And each one matched their master well.

Of them, Qing Tan was having the most unique experience.

A pair of twin daggers was clinging to her like a desperate boyfriend that just heard they were about to break up.

"Listen~ my fighting style doesn't really rely on weapons. How am I supposed to use you properly?"

The daggers dropped sadly, but they refused to let go of her. It had been like this since the beginning.

Qing Tan sighed. Although she used to use daggers, she was recently finding that her fighting style was better fit to stand in the back lines and command troops.

Her Shadow army catered to this, as did her domain. Neither were attacks that required her to fight up front.

If that was it, though, she would've rejected the weapons more firmly. Even she had to admit she was tempted by Chaos rank artifacts.

Thinking back to when she was fighting Demon Captains when they first entered the Trial World, or when she was giving free lessons to Proto, she suddenly realized something.

'Cutting flesh feels kind of good...doesn't it?'

It was extremely satisfying to cut apart her opponents. And for the sake of when she needed to give free lessons to others in the future, a pair of daggers would indeed prove useful.

"Hmm...okay, then. I'll accept you. But you better have the right qualifications to be my weapons."

Qing Tan's gaze became bitingly cold. The temperature in the surrounding area seemed to drop below freezing. The dark aura that oozed out of her body would traumatize any normal existence below her level, breaking their minds in an instant.

But the daggers didn't show any signs of fear. They were trembling, sure, but it didn't seem like horror was the right emotion to describe what they were emitting.

No, it was more like pleasure. The daggers greedily absorbed Qing Tan's frightening aura, giving off a wicked light that lost in no way.

Qing Tan raised her brow in interest. "Oh? With how pathetic you were acting, I seemed to have gotten the wrong opinion about you guys. It seems you are my kind of weapon."

The daggers excitedly whirled before entering Qing Tan's grasp. They sucked her mana until full and finally formed the connection they had been hoping for since the beginning.

"Good." Qing Tan smiled. "A good teacher needs to have the appropriate tools for the job."

The will observing the inheritance site took in all these scenes at once. It also included the scene of Demon King Eden. He stood silently in the midst of a quiet secluded space. The sleek saber in his hand was trembling in fear. Rather than taming it, it was more accurate to say that he forcefully dominated.

"Neither of them is a bad option, but that one seems too dangerous..." the will muttered to itself.

"There's a higher power in his body. If I act recklessly, I might be the one who gets harmed in the end. It's better to choose the boy. He is younger and has more future potential as well."

The will nodded to itself after coming to a decision. In the next instant, it vanished from its spot and soundlessly appeared above Damien.

With none the wiser, the formless will crept towards Damien's meditating body and shot into the space between his eyebrows.

The secluded space remained quiet throughout, with no signs that anything out of the ordinary had happened at all.

Chapter 346 Dominate [4]

The will soon arrived in Damien's spiritual world. It was situated on a large floating landmass.

"Not bad. Not bad. His spiritual continent is already this big at his strength level. This is truly a good body."

The will grinned to itself and shot into the landmass, sinking into the ground. It spread its spiritual intent and began coloring the landmass in its aura.

"He should have noticed by now. Let's see if he can do anything to stop me. Hahahaha!"

As the will expected, a spiritual avatar of Damien soon arrived in the area.

"Who is it? Come out for this Young Master!" He shouted into the void.

“Boy, you’re quite arrogant, aren’t you? To dare talk in such a tone in front of me, you must be eager to die.” The will responded.

Damien frowned. “And who the hell are you? Don’t you know where we are? In this space, I am the master!”

“HAHAHAHA! You? Master? Kid, are you even aware of what’s happening right now? Do you even understand the situation you’re in? The younger generation is so foolish that it’s almost sad.”

Damien’s frown deepened. “Then why don’t you inform me? What’s the situation right now?”

The will sneered. “Kid, even if you knew, there’s nothing you can do to stop it. Well, it’s no harm in telling you since you won’t be around much longer. This body...I’m taking it as my own!”

Damien’s eyes widened in shock. “Possession?!”

“Right! It’s already too late for you to do anything! With such a minor spiritual continent, how can you oppose me?!”

The will began to laugh madly. Its aura had already permeated to the deepest depths of the spiritual continent, and it wouldn’t be long until it took it over completely.”

“Kid, allow me to tell you a story. There was once a man who yearned for adventure. He was a man who loved to indulge himself in following his desires. But what did others do? They shunned him. They disliked the fact that someone could live the unrestrained life that they all wanted but couldn’t achieve.

“But the man didn’t care about their scorn. He continued to live as he wanted and he did what he wished. He bedded the finest women and had all the riches he could ever imagine! What a life that man lived! But one day, he decided to enter a secret realm to explore. He wanted to obtain the secrets to immortality so his beautiful life wouldn’t be cut short by anyone.

“That secret realm wasn’t what it was advertised to be. It was full of monsters leagues more powerful than the man. What could he do? He could only serve those monsters like a dog so he wouldn’t get killed off with the rest.”

Damien listened to the intruder’s story quietly. He could feel his spiritual avatar becoming more and more transparent with the passing of time.

He spread his spiritual intent and tried to combat the mysterious force that had begun to pervade his spiritual continent, but it was all for naught. That force was far more powerful than the spiritual intent he could produce.

Meanwhile, the will continued its story.

“That man worked like a slave for years on end. He didn’t have any choice other than to endure. For him, who was so used to living freely in the small world he came from, this kind of life was unacceptable.

“So, one day he decided to revolt. But against those monsters, he was truly nothing. He died pointlessly and was forced to leave his life in the secret realm. But he was unresigned!

“His soul wandered the secret realm, unable to find peace. Soon, he stumbled upon an ancient temple that had been uninhabited for ages.

“He stayed in the temple and made it his home. After many many years, the temple accepted him and he became the one in charge of arbitrating its trials.

“But that also meant he lost his freedom once again. His soul became rooted to the temple, unable to escape the duty that had been forced on him. This temple was far stronger than the monsters he fought before, so he truly couldn’t escape.

“But he did his best to enact revenge. Any time new people entered the temple hoping to gain its inheritance, he would kill off as many as possible. Until this day, the temple remained uncleared for this reason.”

Damien could tell which direction the story would go. In the end, that remnant soul was degraded until it reached its current state, and now it was trying to possess a body so it could escape.

“Why me? There are more powerful people in the inheritance site right now, so why am I the one you’re possessing?” He asked while sighing in resignation. Even until now, nothing he did could get rid of the remnant soul trying to possess him.

“Isn’t that obvious? If I try to take one of those demons, I’ll just be forced back into slavery. As for the other two girls, they can’t compare to you. I only chose the best option!”

Damien sighed once again. "Can I at least see the true face of the one about to take over my body before I die? Otherwise, I don't think I can go in peace."

The remnant will found it an odd request, but it spread its spiritual intent and couldn't find anything wrong with the surroundings. Therefore, it decided to comply.

"Very well! Feast your eyes on this King!" The will showed Damien its true body. It was a semi-transparent body of an old man. Seeing Damien's almost faded spiritual avatar, it wasn't worried at all about anything going wrong.

However...

"That's it?"

Damien's voice rang out again. This time, it didn't come from the fading avatar.

"What?" The remnant will voiced its confusion, but soon found that its body was bound. "What the hell is this?!"

Damien's body soon emerged from the darkness. "I have to say...I'm truly disappointed."

Unlike the other spiritual avatar that looked on the verge of breaking, this one was extremely solid, not much different from a physical body.”

“You...!”

“I put up such a high level of defense just for the remnant will of some old fogey? Seriously, I’m a little pissed.

“When I first thought about it, body possession seemed to be the most likely end. After all, the trials were too easy and the inheritance was too rewarding. The thing is, I was expecting the soul of the inheritance site, or at least some old master that was extremely powerful.

“But it’s you? Not even a remnant soul, but a will? Your soul has been degraded to such a point but it doesn’t even seem like you realize it. It’s truly a shame. And here I thought I’d get some good nourishment for my spiritual world. Your spiritual intent is only enough to devour this tiny floating island? Seriously?”

Damien signed in exasperation. “Let me show you who you messed with before you die.”

Whoosh!

The veil of darkness around the floating landmass vanished. The starry sky above with those three stars shining brightly, the massive spiritual continent off to the side, and the light blue barrier of the Mind Prison they were currently inside of.

“This is...impossible! How can a brat like you have such a profound spiritual world?! I don’t believe it! Hahaha! You think this level of illusion can fool me?! Now that I’ve controlled your spiritual continent, you still dare pull tricks?! That’s it, brat. Kneel before me and die!”

The old man’s remnant will maddeningly shouted and mobilized all of his spiritual intent. However, he was only met with silence.

“Haa...I thought I’d gain something from this but it’s just some idiot. Whatever, I’m done talking. Just die.”

The sun that shone far away in the starry sky lit up with splendor, and a ray of light soon shot down. The entrance to the Mind Prison cracked open and the ray entered, incinerating the small floating island inside.

The remnant will’s hysterical screeches faded into the background as it was turned into pure spiritual intent for Damien to absorb. However, this much wasn’t even enough to fit between his teeth.

Damien sighed for the umpteenth time today and shook his head.

“What a waste of time.”

Leaving those words, he exited his spiritual world and arrived back in reality.

Chapter 347 3 Months [1]

When Damien exited his spiritual world, he immediately entered meditation to refine the remnant spiritual energy left by the old man's will.

'I had hypothesized that something like this was possible, but I never thought I could actually put it into reality.'

When he thought about it, he figured that this must be a relatively unique circumstance. That old man's soul had been degraded to the point where it wasn't even a soul anymore. It was just a remnant will.

And as a will, it was basically a bundle of spiritual energy that held a sliver of consciousness. What he had done was just eliminate that consciousness and take control of the ownerless spiritual energy.

If the old man still had a remnant soul remaining, he probably wouldn't be able to do the same thing. After all, a soul was far more complicated than anything he could fathom at the moment. Even his own soul injury had yet to heal.

Putting away his thoughts, Damien continued refining the spiritual energy and merging it with his own spiritual world, slightly increasing his mental power in the process.

'But in the end, that old man wasn't anything special. In the past, he may have been a peak 3rd class at most, and the ones who enslaved him were probably at 4th class...hm? What is this?'

Damien suddenly noticed a foreign energy signature within the old man's spiritual energy. When he investigated, he found a circular seal with mysterious patterns on its surface.

'It looks a little familiar...but not really.'

Damien pondered where he had seen a similar pattern before. He hadn't seen many seals in his life, since they weren't commonly used in Apeiron and he didn't do much research in the Cloud Plane. It didn't take long for him to find the memory.

'That's right! The seal me and Zara used to form our contract was somewhat similar. However, this one seems more ominous for some reason. If I follow that line of reason, shouldn't it be a slave seal?'

It made sense the more he thought about it. The old man had said he was bound to the temple, unable to leave. If there was a slave seal planted on his consciousness, it was only natural that he would be trapped within the temple.

'But now that I've refined his spiritual energy, am I going to be the next target of this seal?'

Damien hurriedly sectioned off the slave seal and placed it inside his Mind Prison. Although it wasn't a guarantee, he at least had a stopgap in case what he thought of actually came to be.

'I should save refining this energy for later. I don't know if the slave seal will act up when all of it is gone. Also, studying this should be beneficial for me in the long run.'

He didn't like the concept of owning slaves, but a slave seal didn't have to be malicious if one didn't use it in such a way. For him, it was a preventative measure.

There were many people he now carried that he couldn't trust. Mainly the Demon forces within the Sanctuary. They were suppressed in that world, but if he ever wanted to make use of them, he would need to bring them into the real plane.

And if that was the case, he needed assurance.

'Especially for Elitra. That girl actually has a ton of talent that was suppressed by the Nihility Flame's antics. If I can use the slave seal to guarantee her loyalty and then bring her out to grow, she can be a strong ally in the future.'

As for the other demon forces, he wasn't sure since he hadn't interacted with them much.

'It's a shame that my strength is too low. I can't use this on the Demon King because he can easily break a seal I place on him as soon as the Sanctuary's restrictions are lifted. It's the same with his maid, who is most likely more powerful than me.'

For him to put them into use, he needed to observe them closely and get a good grasp on their personalities first. But Elitra was a good go-between.

The Demon King obviously cared for his daughter heavily. If he learned that Damien placed a slave seal on her, he'd probably go berserk.

But if need be, Damien could use that information to threaten Lucius.

'It all depends on the situation. I hope for successful cooperation, though, so let's hope I never have to reveal it to him.'

These were all future plans, though, so Damien didn't dwell on them much. He soon opened his eyes and stood up.

'With that old geezer gone, the Inheritance Site should start functioning properly again. Then again, is that something I want?'

The only reason the journey was so smooth so far was because that old man wanted to bring the most suitable host candidates to one place while also venting his frustration on the rest.

If the inheritance site went back to its proper goal of finding an inheritor, things might become much more complicated.

Damien sighed. But just as he was doing so, he felt the surrounding space begin to liquefy.

'Oho? Looks like the dining hall space is returning to normal.'

Just as he thought, he soon caught view of the other five who were in the hall with him. Each one was holding a different weapon in their hands.

“Demon Queen~ you look a little worse for wear! Do you want this Young Master to give you a massage?” Damien spoke with a grin.

Of the group, the Demon Queen was in the worst shape. She had bruises all over her body and her clothes were nearly shredded to pieces. Even now, the whip in her hand kept trying to slither up her dress into her forbidden area.

“Shut up!” The Demon Queen snapped. She wasn’t even in the mood to argue.

“A lustful woman met with a lustful weapon. Is this perhaps fate?” Feng Qing’er said slyly.

The three non-Demon Kings in the room all snickered at Eliza’s plight.

Damien was honestly starting to feel bad for the Demon Queen. She obviously had exalted status and power up until now, but after meeting Damien she seemed to have become pitiful.

But he didn’t care much for the pitiful Demon Queen. He turned his attention away from her to look at the one man who had always caused danger bells to ring in his head ever since they first met.

“Demon King Eden, it seems you’ve acquired something good. Should I be the first to congratulate you?”

Eden smiled indifferently. “No need. It looks like you’ve obtained nothing, but I’d be a fool if I believed my eyes, no?”

“The Demon King sure is wise. So? Now that the six of us are gathered here, what do you plan to do?” Damien’s eyes sharpened. He released his full aura all at once. Qing Tan and Feng Qing’er did the same.

Demon King Eden glanced at them for a moment before diverting his gaze. He looked up at the ceiling with a forlorn expression, as if his gaze could pierce through it and see the sky above.

“Haa...indeed. What do we do now?”

Chapter 348 3 Months [2]

Eden returned his gaze to the room, looking specifically at Damien.

“In truth, we never planned to fight you from the beginning.”

Damien’s eyes widened in shock. Of all the things he expected the Demon King to say, this was the last.

“From the start, my plan was to stay passive. The three of us are unlike Lucius. He’s probably already told you, but we’ve given up hope of ever escaping the clutches of that Demon God.”

“Is it okay for you to speak like that?” Damien questioned.

“Worry not. The influence of those two cannot interfere in the Inheritance sites. It is the greatest benefit that comes with them, especially for us.

“As I was saying before, we’ve given up hope. We have no plans of leaving this realm, or even fighting at all for that matter. After all, even if we can leave, what’s the point? For the past ten thousand years, those two Divinities have been trapped in a stalemate that doesn’t seem like it’ll end any time soon.

“If we make any move to leave the seclusion we usually keep ourselves in, we’ll inevitably become tools used in the conflict of those Divinities. The safest option for us is to stay stagnant. In fact, even our coming to this temple was due to the orders of the Apostles.

“However, they all died within this inheritance. It was to be expected with the arrogance they have bred over the years that they became careless, but not only did they die a dog’s death, they also brought the entire remaining force of the Demon Army down to hell with them.

“Surely, the Demon God felt the loss of so much power at once. If we leave this temple, we are basically walking into our deaths.”

Damien listened quietly as he spoke. He instinctively activated his All-Seeing Eyes for a reason even he didn’t know. But after he did, he felt a strong sensation that the Demon King wasn’t lying to him.

“If that’s how it is, then what do you plan to do now? Killing us would probably get you on the Demon God’s good side, and staying in the temple is even more restricting than staying in Acier. No matter how I look at it, your thoughts don’t make sense.”

The Demon King smiled. "You are a smart one. Indeed my plan might not make sense to you, but that is only because you aren't from this realm. Didn't I say it before? The influence of those two Divinities doesn't permeate the Inheritance Sites."

Damien frowned and thought about those words. 'The influence of the Divinities...influence...could it be?' He suddenly thought of something terrifying.

"It seems you've realized it," Eden affirmed. "The restriction keeping us stuck at the entry-level of 4th class isn't present here. Didn't you see the restrictive force that could even force us to follow its will? That force isn't on the level of a 4th class existence."

Damien nodded. He didn't know the power difference between the different levels of 4th class, but that restrictive force did indeed feel inviolable. From his perspective, being able to force even three 4th class existences to follow its will without struggling at all wasn't something any ordinary power could do. Even if it didn't reach the ranks of Divinity, it must've been infinitely close.

"What, then? You're planning to stay here and build power? Until you become a Divinity yourself? Do you think it's so simple to achieve Godhood?" Damien still didn't entirely believe it.

What kind of concept was Godhood? Would mere time and opportunity be enough to enter such a realm? He didn't think so. There must be special circumstances involved.

'Regardless of whether I can achieve Godhood or not, doesn't staying in a place where I'm not a slave to the whims of others sound better than staying in a place where I am? If I can achieve a level of power that allows me to combat the Demon God and regain total freedom, that's just an added benefit.

“Enduring for 10,000 years...only Lucius had the determination to do so. For the rest of us, it’s too much. After living the secluded lifestyle for so long, I’d rather continue it than return to being ambitious.”

“And the rest? Eliza can’t live without a dick inside of her every day, and it seems Granheim is the same but with battle. Do they support your decision?”

Eden looked at the other two Demon Kings, completely ignoring Damien’s insults. With the contents of the conversation, even Eliza ignored the jab.

“They will follow my decision. As for whether or not they truly wish to do so, even I do not know. Nevertheless, I didn’t force them. They chose on their own.”

Once again, Damien felt the sensation that the Demon King wasn’t lying to him. It was extremely awkward to keep antagonizing him while feeling it, but Damien couldn’t let his guard down.

‘From the start, Eden has given me the feeling of a schemer. He doesn’t seem like someone who would be content with sitting back and watching things passively. Instead, he seems like the type that would guide everything to fall into place behind the scenes.’

The dangerous aura Eden gave off didn’t come from his power. It felt like a snake was slowly coiling around its prey, luring it into a trap that had been set long ago.

'I assume that this feeling comes from the All-Seeing Eyes. This lie detector function must be new. But still, there are plenty of ways to fool a lie detector. There's no way I'll believe it 100% when I haven't even experimented with it properly.'

But at the moment, Damien didn't have any reason to doubt Eden. Even if Eden had plans, they didn't involve him. As the man himself had said, if he left the temple, the Demon God would either kill him outright or use him as a pawn.

With the prideful nature of the Demon Kings, there's no way they'd accept that. So at least the part about them staying within the ancient temple should be true.

'He's a scheming person, but that isn't always a bad thing. What matters is who he's scheming against. As long as it isn't me or my companions, I shouldn't care. No, I should actually encourage it...'

For all he knew, Eden's schemes had played a part in making it so easy to destroy the Demons' forces. In just 9 months, the fully functioning army had been reduced to nothing.

And a large portion of it had been done by the Apostles' hands. Damien's interference might've just been the spark that led to Eden's plans coming to fruition.

'What a terrifying guy.'

It was the only way Damien could describe the man. Even if his conjectures were all proven wrong, just the fact that Eden could lead him to suspect such things was scary enough.

“Regardless of what you’re planning, it seems our interactions end here. Since you guys are planning to stay here, the three of us will leave. We’ve already achieved our goal and gotten some benefits as well, so there’s no point in staying.”

“And the treasures of the inheritance?” Eden questioned.

Damien grinned. “Keep them. Think of it as a peace offering from me. This time, we’ve managed to avoid becoming enemies. So let’s keep the trend next time as well.”

Eden smiled as well. “You’re quite the interesting kid. Very well. If fate permits it, let’s not meet again. However, if we do, let us do so as allies.”

Damien and Eden strongly shook hands and turned away from each other. Damien looked over to the end of the dining hall where a large gate had appeared at an unknown time.

It was strikingly similar to the gate they entered through when they first arrived at the temple. Even the runes on the doors were the same.

Although the view on the other side of the door was blocked by blinding light, Damien could see it clearly due to his All-Seeing Eyes being fully activated.

As he expected, it was a familiar forest that he had seen only a few days prior. Without another word, he walked through the exit and left the ancient temple, not even taking a second look at the Demon Kings.

Feng Qing'er and Qing Tan didn't say anything the entire time. They merely followed Damien out of the Ancient Temple as he left.

The dining hall regained its silence as three Demon Kings quietly watched them leave.

Chapter 349 3 Months [3]

"Was it a good idea to just let them go like that?"

Demon Queen Eliza's voice broke the silence that enveloped the dining hall.

"Why? Didn't you hear what I said?" Eden responded with a smile.

"Tch. It's been so many years, don't think I don't know your true nature by now. Just tell it to me straight instead of speaking in riddles."

The Demon King's smile became odd. "It's fine to let them go. In the end, their use has already passed. In the coming days, their interference will only become an unreliable variable instead of something helpful. As for what we do now, I didn't lie to the boy.

"There are only three months left until they leave this realm. Until that time, we wait patiently and grow our strength. Don't you know the nature of this realm? The Divinities will focus their gazes away from our world as those kids move on to further trials. Without His constant surveillance, we can perform the Ancestral Ritual without interference."

“The Ancestral Ritual...” Eliza shuddered just thinking about it.

A forbidden skill that even the peak powerhouses of the Demon Race didn’t dare to carelessly use back when they were still in their homeland. A skill that would cause seas of blood to flow freely.

“Is it the only option? Without sufficient strength, even we will die during the summoning process...” It was Eliza’s main worry. The reason she was still hesitant about Eden’s plan.

But Eden simply maintained his indifferent smile. “Whether we die or not, it is too early to decide. We have yet to prepare a sufficient number of sacrifices, but with the work of those outsiders, we’ve come far closer to the desired amount. After thousands of years of preparation, why think about backing out now?”

Eliza sighed. Indeed, they had been planning it for too long to stop now. It was a shame that she couldn’t get revenge on that little bastard who had wronged her so many times, but it couldn’t be helped.

Her pride wasn’t anywhere near as important as freedom. If she had to lay low and endure for only a bit longer until those brats left the Trial World, she would do so.

“Still, it seems that boy has some tact. To give up on the allure of an inheritance site so easily, it isn’t something just anyone can do. And from the way he spoke, it’s almost as if he has a way to deal with us if the situation took a turn for the worse.”

Demon King Eden's eyes sparkled with interest. "What a shame. If times were different, perhaps he would've been the best sustenance. But in the end, it's not something I can afford. Come, let us seize the true treasures of this inheritance and begin our preparation. Time waits for no man."

Eliza nodded and followed Eden further into the inheritance site. As for Granheim, he just followed them without a word. Of the things the two had been speaking about, he barely understood one, and that was the Ancestral Ritual that all demons learned about from childhood.

'Well, whatever. Following that sneaky guy means I can escape. Escape means I can fight a lot of strong people. Mm, that's good.'

Demon King Granheim smiled in satisfaction at his genius before hurriedly leaving to catch up to the other two.

"So? What just happened? Explain it clearly." Feng Qing'er chirped after leaving the inheritance site.

"We left behind so much good stuff! Since it's you who made the decision, I didn't say anything, but I still want an explanation!"

Damien smiled wryly. "Didn't you get something good already? It's not good to be too greedy."

"Oh, please. Look who's talking. I don't want to hear anything from you, Mister 'Got Too Greedy and Ended Up in a Coma for 3 Months.'"

"Kuhum...I have no idea what you're talking about. The reason I passed out was because my spine had been severely injured and the injury kept worsening as months passed."

"What?! Since when did you have a spine injury?!" Feng Qing'er yelled.

"From the beginning!" Damien spoke seriously. "It hurts like hell. My spine was shattered into pieces from carrying this team on my back."

"Bastard!"

Qing Tan giggled to the side while watching the two before interjecting. "That's nice and all, but are you going to keep diverting the subject?"

Damien coughed lightly again. "Fine, fine. Essentially, we and the Demon King have formed a temporary ceasefire."

"That's it?"

“Well, it’s a bit more than that but that’s the essence of it. What matters is that we have the next 3 months free of interference from Demons. We achieved White Stars from such a long time ago, so these 3 months are basically free days for us.”

“Oh, right! Even those Apostles died and I didn’t even realize it. Plan: Success!” Feng Qing’er pumped her fist in the air in celebration.

“Does it even count as a plan?” Damien quipped back. “From what you told me, you guys just coincidentally found an inheritance site and used a borrowed knife to kill.”

“H-hmph! All according to plan. You are just too much of a caveman to understand our genius.”

Damien shook his head with a smile. Indeed, being around these two was much more fun than spending his time isolated in his spiritual world. He missed the warm atmosphere that he had been lacking in those years he spent alone.

‘Has my mental age increased? Am I an old man now? Or is it just that my perception of time became wack in a space without time? I’ll just think of it as the latter...it’s more convenient that way.’

“So what are you girls planning to spend the next few months doing?” He asked out loud.

“Hmm~ relaxing? Teasing Qing’er? All kinds of things!” Qing Tan smiled happily. She voraciously gazed at Feng Qing’er’s breasts as she spoke.

Feng Qing'er instinctively covered her chest and shuddered. "I'm going to practice. I'll single-mindedly focus on practicing in seclusion with nobody else around! Don't come here!"

Feng Qing'er flicked her wrist and a flaming greatsword appeared in her grasp.

'I see. Familiarizing herself with her new weapon is a good use of the remaining time we have. I need to do the same if I can find some time in my schedule.'

"What about you, bastard?" Feng Qing'er spoke up.

"Why are you calling me a bastard?" Damien asked with a raised brow.

Feng Qing'er quirked her head cutely. "Um, I got used to it?"

"So you've been calling me a bastard so often that it stuck?" Damien said in a deadpan voice.

"Yup!"

"Should I be honored that you think of me so much or should I smack you for thinking of me as a bastard?"

“Shut up and answer the question!”

“Which one should I do? Shut up or answer the question?”

“Argh! You infuriating bastard!”

Damien smiled and looked at the sky. “Well, I’ll probably just sit around and do nothing.”

He was excited for the coming days. Although there were some twists and turns along the way, everything had lined up as he had hoped in the end.

‘The time element...how long have I been wishing to unlock it?’

He finally had his first real chance to comprehend time, and he sure as hell wasn’t going to waste it.

When Damien looked back at the girls, he found them staring at him with dead fish eyes.

“What?”

“Nothing. It’s kind of embarrassing to see you trying to act mysterious all of a sudden, that’s all.”

“Keuk...!”

Even though the demons had been wiped out, it seemed Damien still had to watch out for sneak attacks on all sides.

Chapter 350 3 Months [4]

Shimmering beams of artificial sunlight cascaded down through the clouds and bathed the land of the Trial World.

The chirping of birds and the low growls of beasts rang out intermittently as the world came alive.

On a certain mountain peak overlooking the world, Damien slowly opened his eyes.

‘Two months worth of progress...I can’t say whether it was good or bad.’

Two months had passed since the events of the Inheritance site, and after parting from Feng Qing’er and Qing Tan, Damien didn’t move at all from the spot where he sat.

He was immersed in his comprehension at almost all times, but when compared to the effort he put into it, the results were negligible.

Time. It was such an elusive concept. Even though it was put in the same vein as space, Damien found an incomparable wall between the two.

Comprehending space came so naturally that it was almost too easy. It was a smooth flow that Damien just had to feel and be guided by. Even if he just immersed himself in the feeling of the space around him, after enough time he'd walk away with some comprehension.

It just went to show how much talent he possessed in that field. For others, space as a concept was something they couldn't grasp even if they spent a lifetime of effort on it.

Feeling the space around them? What did that even mean? For one who didn't have an affinity for space, they wouldn't be able to feel any difference between space and the air around them.

But for spatial cultivators, it was a vast world. Even among them, Damien was at the peak of potential.

He only realized the struggles of others when he dipped his toes into the concept known as time.

It wasn't simple at all. His meditation had yielded him some results, but even still it wasn't enough to grant him the affinity he wished to unlock.

Every step he took in comprehending space would take a hundred, or even a thousand steps when comprehending time.

A journey of a few days became a journey that lasted years on end.

‘Time is relative. I’ve experienced it myself both in this Trial World and when I was trapped in my spiritual world. Only, what can I comprehend from relativity?’

Relativity was the concept he found himself immersed in most of the time. It resonated with him on a level deeper than anything else, as it was the thing he had experienced most.

He thought back to that night in the forest with Ruyue. At that time, he had a similar thought.

Time, for him back then, he didn’t have enough time to deal with the troubles in his immediate surroundings. He was forced to rush to the hidden convention of wicked path sects for his mission.

But what did that time mean for those he had left behind? For them, every second must’ve felt like an eternity. They were being stalked and hunted as prey by unknown beings, they were being herded like livestock.

While time was short for him, it was incredibly long for them. While he wished to get to his destination as soon as possible, they wished that time would slow and give them enough time to escape their predicament.

And what about the Trial World? Unlike a vague example like the previous one, the Trial World was subject to a literal distortion in time.

The time he spent within would be 3 times longer than the time outside. If a year and a half was spent inside, only 6 months would pass in the real world.

It was a truly bizarre concept. How could one affect time itself? This ever-present essence that ruled the world along with space. The difference between the two was in perception.

If space was a canyon, time was the river that flowed through it.

Finally, Damien thought of his time in the spiritual world. How long was it that he spent there? It was at least 5 years that he spent arduously bringing the thousands of floating continents together to reform his spiritual land.

But when he woke up, only three months had passed. Even when compared to the time dilation in the Trial World, this kind of difference was insane.

It was so disconcerting when Damien woke up that he almost couldn't believe how fast he adjusted. No, if it wasn't for the essence of the Primordial Undying Tree, it probably would've taken at least a month to get back on his feet.

The time he spent in his spiritual world actually aided his comprehension far more than he originally expected it would. Spending so many years in a space where the flow of time became nill, it helped him become more aware of the essence that flowed around him.

When combined with the atmosphere of the Trial World, where the essence of time was more prevalent than it was in the outside world, Damien was truly able to feel and experiment with that essence.

Only, he was never able to grasp that fundamental truth. He pondered and pondered, but he could never understand the link that made him keep thinking of these three instances over and over again.

‘I’m almost there. I can feel it. This is a bottleneck that I won’t be able to pass by just sitting and immersing myself in comprehension. A single spark. That’s all I need to finally unlock that affinity.’

The final wall separating him from his time affinity wasn’t something he could rush to break, otherwise, it might lead to a setback instead.

‘Patience. In the end, isn’t patience a concept related to time as well? Who knows, in the end it might help me out with finding that final spark of inspiration.’

He consoled himself lightly as he stood up. Without him even realizing it, another 15 days had passed.

‘Now that I’ve gotten into this mindset, I keep noticing the oddities and relativity of time around me at every corner. These little details that I wouldn’t have noticed before are like glaring beams of light for me now.’

Damien’s gaze panned over the mountainside below him. A soft wind drifted through the air and gently brushed across his face. A feeling of absolute peace and serenity suddenly enveloped him.

Damien found himself entering a profound state of mind.

The rapidly beating wings of bees that zipped through the air, the stretching body of a lion-like beast that had just awoken from its slumber.

The swaying of tree branches in the wind, the petals of a flower opening and closing as it sensed a threat approaching.

Suddenly, everything seemed to slow down.

The wings of that bee were beating at a pace that even a mortal could easily follow. That lion beast seemed to be paused in place as if it was posing for a portrait.

The branches of that tree seemed to halt, but its leaves were lightly trembling and fluttering even at this pace. The petals of that flower slowly unfurled as if mirroring the day when it first bloomed.

Standing atop the mountain peak, Damien took in all these scenes with a light smile dancing on his face. The rays of sunlight that illuminated the world seemed extra warm today.

‘Just a single step away.’

He lifted his foot and stepped forward. It was high time to leave this Trial World and face the trials of the Primordial Undying Realm once again.