

# Void 391

## Chapter 391 Summoning [1]

A sweet and refreshing taste filled Damien's mouth as soon as he bit into the fruit, but he didn't have any time to focus on it.

Along with that taste, a torrent of mana mixed with another mysterious essence entered his body and flooded his Mana Circuit. He closed his eyes and instinctually entered a meditative position to begin digesting the energy.

When Damien sat down, the still Primordial Undying Realm seemed to gain movement again. Dozens of covetous eyes landed on his unprotected body.

But even before their thoughts finished formulating, the stray branches of the Primordial Undying Tree moved with one mind. They formed a barrier around Damien's body and pulled him down into the base of the tree.

It was as if he merged with the tree itself.

Now, if one looked carefully enough, one could see a faint shadow of Damien's body engraved in the tree's trunk.

Bang!

A brave soul launched an attack at the trunk. The greed in his eyes was overwhelming. But before the attack could even land, the Primordial Undying Tree's branches moved into action. The attack was swiftly blocked, and at the same time, a group of branches rapidly moved out and pierced that man's body.

It was a clear warning. If they wanted to reach Damien and try to steal the essence currently circulating through his body, they'd need to get through the tree itself first.

Seeing this, Ruyue breathed out a sigh of relief. Finally, things were coming to an end.

‘It doesn’t seem like there’s anything else I need to do for now. Until he exits seclusion and the secret realm allows our exit, I guess I can just relax here.’

Ruyue looked around one more time. Feng Qing’er and Lunaria were still on the east and south direction of the tree, and the geniuses below them had resumed the fight for the red fruits.

‘Hmm? But where’s that Qing Tan person?’ Ruyue wondered inwardly, but she soon let go of that thought. Other people’s business had nothing to do with her.

For now, she would just enjoy these moments of peace before things picked up again when they left the realm.

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Although hundreds of kilometers of the jungle around the Primordial Undying Tree had been razed, there was still a great deal of flora left untouched outside that range.

Inside the wild area that was there, a shadow emerged from the darkness.

Thump!

A dead body emerged from that shadow, followed by the person who carried it here.

“Goddamnit. What the hell did I do to get stuck with such an idiot brother?”

The woman who came out of the shadow complained while rubbing her forehead. The ring on her hand flashed and a small pill appeared in her hand.

Walking up to the dead body, she shoved the pill in his mouth. “I know you’re still awake, bastard. Eat this and recuperate already. We still have work to do.”

“Ugh...” A groan left the man on the floor’s mouth. Apparently, he wasn’t dead at all. But considering the condition of his body, he might as well have been.

“Fuck. Fine, I’ll help you circulate it. But I swear to god the next time I see you pull some bullshit like that I’ll kill you with my own hands. How dare you try to summon Ira?!”

“Mmgh...no...choice...” Hun Fang squeezed out. His voice was still hoarse, but as the pill’s healing properties circulated through his body, he was slowly gaining the ability to speak.

“What do you mean, no choice?! You had the choice to just leave things be! Even if you’re competitive, this is too much!” The woman yelled furiously.

“Not...competitive...need...mission...” Hun Fang replied shakily.

“Ugh...mission this, mission that! I know it’s important, but not as important as your life! Did you ever think of the consequences of what you were doing?! What would happen to me if you died?!”

Hun Fang’s body jolted when he heard her cries. He could feel her warm tears dripping onto his skin.

“I’m...sorry...”

He couldn’t think of anything better to say. Because everything she had said was right. It was just, things were too complicated for him to think like she did.

If he failed here, even if he lived, he was destined to die. And if he died, she’d die as well. But if he died in battle while attempting to clear the mission, she might have a chance to live.

When Behemoth's physical strength couldn't crush Damien, he already knew he would lose the battle. Behemoth was already one of his most powerful summons, one that could kill most people at his level in a few punches.

But he kept fighting. Not for the purple fruit, but for her sake. Because he couldn't even imagine the consequences if he returned back empty-handed.

'But I can't tell her that. I'm sure she already understands it all, but saying it out loud is just forcing us to accept reality.'

They were tools. That was their whole role in the grand scheme of things. They were tools that would be thrown away if they couldn't fulfill their purpose.

As he thought about it, he lamented the fact that someone as strong as Damien appeared. When they left this realm, both he and his sister were fated for death.

Hot tears began to stream down the side of his face. He gritted his teeth in unwillingness.

"Idiot brother..." Her words came with a green lump that appeared in his vision. "I got a green fruit, and I stole a few red fruits on my way over here. Even if it isn't as effective as the purple one, it should be enough right?"

Hun Fang looked at Qing Tan, who was looking at him with a sad smile on her face. In the end, he also found himself smiling.

"Enough. It's enough." The words came out much more fluidly. The hideous burn wounds on his body had already healed a great deal. All that was left was to take care of the internal injuries.

'I was able to regain some mana in the healing process....it should be enough.'

"Heed my call. Come forth, Alice."

It wasn't a domineering name like the other summons he had called forth recently. From the space in front of him, a small fairy surrounded by a green halo appeared.

Kyu!

When she saw his body condition, she let out a squeal of fright and immediately entered his body. A green aura soon enveloped him and began mending all his hidden injuries.

Within minutes, Hun Fang was able to sit upright again without pain.

"Haha, no matter how many times I see it, I can't get used to Alice's insane healing capabilities." He chuckled.

"Yeah, it's a shame it can't be used in battle though." Qing Tan quipped in response, thinking of a certain monster.

She sighed to herself. Things were going to get complicated soon. So complicated that she didn't know what their next meeting would look like.

She looked into the sky with melancholy plastered on her face.

'I'm glad I was able to meet someone like you in this life. You, even if you don't realize it, are an ideal for what I want to live my life like. If one day we are able to meet again after we leave this place, I hope we do so as friends instead of enemies.'

Sighing to herself, she handed the fruits over to Hun Fang. There was still plenty of work for them to do.

## Chapter 392 Summoning [2]

Within the infinite blackness where two Demigods had been trapped for countless years, an uproarious laughter could be heard.

“KAKAKAKA! Finally, finally, it has come time. Old Fool, how long have we been idling here chatting and playing these games with each other? Finally, it has come time to end it all.”

The malevolent voice seemed especially excited today. He had been waiting for the day to come for too long, to the point where he almost believed it would never happen.

“You Old Ghost, don’t you think you’re too excited? Do you truly think things will go as you wish them to? For 100,000 years I have been keeping you in check. It’s more than enough time for me to understand you fully. You cannot hide your nervousness from me.”

“Nervousness? You must’ve gone blind from all these years in the blackness. While you have been forced to use your power to seal me here, I have had the freedom to interfere with things as I please. Where does your confidence come from? Is it because, after all these thousands of years, you finally managed to find a genius who could meet your expectations?”

“Meet? That boy far surpassed my expectations. But that matters not. Old Ghost, we have known each other for far too long for you to think so lowly of me.”

“Tch! You’ve always been like this. You’ve always hoped for something to go your way even after everything I’ve done. Did you forget? Did you forget how you obtained your power? Did you forget the events that took place before you were able to seal me? Just because you made some small success, you shouldn’t believe everything is over.”

“It’s the same to you. Regardless of what you’ve done, it is but a small success in my eyes. Even if you truly manage to escape this seal, you will die by my hands.”

“Kekeke! It seems you’ve gone senile with age. All this time, you’ve been wasting power, not gaining it. Especially with you using your Divine Essence as fuel to create fruits for those kids. Meanwhile, I’ve done nothing but grow more powerful. The second I escape from your seal, you are destined for death.”

The Old Fool sighed. It was no use trying to talk to this arrogant demon. After all, in the span of 100,000 years, they had already repeated this conversation multiple times.

‘But nothing ever came out of it.’

Whether it was him or the Old Ghost, neither of them was able to get the upper hand over the other one. Their stalemate wasn't anywhere near as simple as it seemed.

'But this time is different. If it's that boy...no, even without him things are different. However, I'm afraid it's true that I cannot contain that demon for much longer.'

The Old Fool looked at the vast empty space around him melancholically.

'How can it be? After so many years, it seems I've grown attached to this empty scenery.'

The Old Fool sighed once more. His mana began to move.

'I guess I should make some preparations. Things will get loud soon. Child, I hope you can digest my gift properly before it's too late.'

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Inside a certain Trial World, an Ancient Temple stood by its lonesome in the middle of a forest. Out of that temple's gates, three figures emerged.

"It's time."

The one leading them muttered under his breath. It had been a total of 6 months since they had entered the temple. In that time, their auras had become far more powerful than they were before.

"Haa...I really don't want to do this. Why does my life have to end in such a pitiful way?" The woman among them sighed.

"Haha! I feel the same! My utmost wish was to die in battle, die with honor, but it seems that such a dream is impossible." The third man said.

Eden sighed as he listened to them. 6 months ago, they believed there was a chance to perform the ritual without sacrificing themselves. But, as they came closer to the promised time, they realized how naive their thoughts were.

“It must be done. It may be different from the freedom we wished for, but it is freedom nonetheless. Besides, even if we aren’t alive to see it, our revenge will still take place.”

The other two nodded. There was one thing Lucius got wrong about them.

He had believed that the other 3 Demon Kings were content with their lives, that they had submitted under the rule of the Demon God.

But not once was that the case.

The three of them were selfish. They weren’t like Lucius, who desired to take vengeance for his race. But regardless, they still desired vengeance.

For themselves, for the lives they could’ve had but were robbed from them due to the Demon God. They wanted vengeance.

The three Demon Kings flew through the Trial World and arrived at the direct center of the realm. The area was an empty plain where no life was present.

“We have long resolved ourselves for what is to come, so I doubt any extra words need to be said,” Eden said. His gaze was as placid as ever even though his life was on the line.

Eliza harrumphed and turned her head. A slight tear formed on the side of her eyes. But the resolve within them didn’t shake. Meanwhile, Granheim was still grinning as usual. If it wasn’t for the shaking of his hands, one wouldn’t even realize his fear.

The three Demon Kings spread out in a triangular formation. With one last nod, they began pouring out their mana.



Torrents of inky black mana mixed together, forming a triangular formation on the ground. As if responding to the formation, Heaven and Earth were dyed red.

Blood. Seas of blood formed from the thousands upon thousands of people who had died within this Trial World over the tens of thousands of years that it had been present. All that blood congregated and formed clouds in the sky surrounding the formation.

“Now,” Eden said firmly. One of his hands moved, piercing his own chest.

Poof!

A spray of blood mist exited his body and mouth, entering the eye of the formation. Eliza and Granheim mirrored his actions, causing the size of the phenomenon to increase.

The bloody clouds in the sky began to churn, forming a funnel that touched down in the center of the formation.

“”With Heaven and Earth as witness, Our Blood as the foundation, and the Blood of All as tribute, We humbly call upon the Ancestor’s presence.””

VOOM!

The three Demon Kings chanted together, causing a powerful reaction from the tri-pointed formation. The bloody funnel continued to pour into the formation’s eye, causing the clouds in the sky to slowly clear.

The blood within the bodies of the three Demon Kings reacted as well, constantly pouring out of their wounds and entering the formation. Their life force dwindled at an astonishing rate.

The formation shined with splendor. A domineering roar came from within.

The Demon Kings smiled. Finally, their revenge would be completed. Finally, they'd gain freedom after 10,000 years in slavery.

As more and more blood entered the formation, and the energy under Heaven and Earth did the same, the furious roars coming from within began to gain clarity.

And finally, those roars turned into a voice.

[My Children, you've played your parts well.]

Chapter 393 Summoning [3]

[My Children, you've played your parts well.]

It was an odd choice of words. This was Eden's first thought when he heard them. But at the same time, he couldn't confidently claim to fathom the thought process of an old ancestor that had been dead for untold millennia.

""Your unworthy descendants greet you, Ancestor.""

The three Demon Kings fell to their knees instinctively upon feeling the terrifying pressure that accompanied that voice. Their blood boiled in excitement at their success.

[Mm. It has been too long since I've smelled the scent of the world. But the work has yet to be completed...]

Eden furrowed his brows. He could feel it. Something was wrong. Something was out of place about this whole situation.

In the first place, even with all their preparations, they had never expected the ritual to be a success so easily.

The essence of the ritual was simple. To sacrifice the blood and souls of those who had died within the Trial World to summon the soul of their Ancestor. It was a ritual that had been engraved in their minds since long ago.

But regardless of how many thousands had died, even if that number was in the tens or hundreds of thousands, could the blood of ten thousand mortals be compared to a single drop of a God's blood?

Eden didn't think so. After being confined by the Demon God, who was only a Demigod, for so long, he knew that the power of a True God would be something far beyond his imagination.

So why had the ritual been so successful? And why was their Ancestor so dismissive of their presence?

Eden could feel it. His life force had begun fading at a far more rapid pace after the voice from the formation fell onto his ears.

He knew that chances of survival after performing the ritual were rare, but when was he ever one to give up?

'My life above all things. Isn't this the principle I've lived by until this day? Isn't this the reason why I chose to be subjugated instead of killed? Why am I so eager to throw my life away now?'

As he continued thinking, he found that his mind was far more muddled than he knew. With every hint of clarity he achieved, he would find ten times more the amount of fog.

'The Ancestral Ritual...when did I learn it?'

The thought was sudden. Almost to the point where Eden doubted it came from his own mind.

'The thought of revenge, since when did I hold such desires?'

He was a logical man. Revenge against a Demigod? He would never even dream of it. Unless an even stronger being came into the picture, he would live content with what he had.

‘What is happening to me?’

He couldn’t understand it. His sudden contemplative state came out of nowhere as well. His Ancestor had just been summoned, so shouldn’t he be speaking to him?

‘Ancestor? Did our small Demon Race ever produce a God?’

Their Demon Race wasn’t small in the past, sure, but it wasn’t massive either. It was a regular-sized clan where only a single Demigod had ever been produced. They had never heard tales of a true Demon God born from their midst.

‘Then, who was I trying to summon?’

Eden suddenly began doubting himself. He doubted the thoughts that had been in his head all this time. He doubted the reason why he chose his current course of action.

‘Wait...’

He had a terrifying thought. He didn’t dare to entertain such a thought, but was forced to face reality.

‘Why does the Ancestor’s voice...sound familiar?’

[You have always been a clever one, dear Eden.]

The voice from the formation spread once more, shocking Eden out of his thoughts. The contents of that voice’s words, though, were even more shocking.

‘He knew?!’

[Of course I knew. Why else did you decide to summon me? Think, for how long have you been planning such actions? How long have you been collecting the blood of those within the Trial World?]

Without a choice, Eden fell into thought again. How long had he been planning his actions? For close to the 10,000 years that he had been trapped here. It was the same for the second question.

[Think, when did you learn about the Ancestral Ritual.]

Well, that was an easier question. Of course...

‘...Huh?’

When did he learn about the Ancestral Ritual? No matter how much he thought about it, he couldn’t find a clear time. In fact, he instinctually felt that he learned about it as a child, but for what reason would such a cruel and heartless ritual be taught to children?

Despite being a race of Demons, they were by no means heartless. Although they tended to be belligerent at times, they still cared for their young and wished to preserve their innocence for as long as possible.

‘Don’t tell me...’

Eden realized it. The fear he had been avoiding could very likely be the truth.

‘It was all...meaningless.’

Eden’s heart sank. His expression became dull. Everything he had worked for until this point was meaningless.

No, it had meaning. The problem was that it had no meaning to him.

This path, it wasn't chosen by his own hands.

[Kakaka! Eden, my child, you've always been a smart one. Those other two may have power, but they lack the decisiveness of a leader. That was something that only you and Lucius possessed. But Lucius, that fool, was too noble. Regardless of my power, I couldn't imprint a suggestion in his head without him noticing. And if he noticed, then what was the point?]

Eden's eyes widened.

'Lucius...'

Out of all the Demon Kings, Lucius was the only one Eden was envious of.

'You had a wife you loved and a daughter that symbolized that love. You had subordinates that followed you with loyalty born of respect and admiration. You had the drive to find a way to leave this wretched place. Those things...even if I didn't desire them, I was envious that you were able to have them.'

That was Lucius' "power". It was a power that Eden couldn't gain, no matter how hard he tried. It was because his temperament didn't allow for such things. He was too indifferent to value people in any way other than as tools.

He knew this. He didn't mind this aspect of himself. In fact, he found it preferable. But it blocked his path towards gaining some of the things he wanted to gain.

In the end, it was those aspects that Lucius held that allowed him to find a path of escape in the end, even if it took 10,000 years. Meanwhile, Eden was...

'I'm being used as a pawn. From the start, I was being used as a pawn. Everything I've done from the start, it was not of my own will, even if I thought it so.'

[So you've realized?]

The voice from the formation held a tinge of mockery as it spoke.

[That old fogey would have noticed immediately if I had acted more brazenly, so I was left with only this method. Besides, if I had been forceful, a smart child like you might have had thoughts of rebellion. And we can't have that, can we?]

He couldn't deny it anymore. Eden's dull eyes had lost any hope of living, but a flame sprouted in his heart. A true flame of vengeance that he had never felt before.

But it was meaningless. Even throughout the conversation, his life force had been draining at an incredible rate. He was already on the verge of death.

'No, that was the point of this conversation in the first place. He forced me to submerge myself in thought so that I couldn't deactivate the formation before it was too late.'

Eden looked up. The two other Demon Kings were already husks on the floor, their mana completely drained.

'Dead. Everyone except for me is dead.'

Eden closed his eyes. The life he has clung onto so desperately for all these years was vanishing in vain.

'Lucius...I hope you can avenge us.'

Eden's life force dwindled down to the last drop, and his life finally ended. In that final moment, there was only one thought in his head.

'Demon God, I pray you will one day feel my pain.'

Chapter 394 Summoning [4]

The Primordial Undying Realm was shaped in a circular formation.

8 Trial Worlds sat in the 4 cardinal and 4 ordinal directions surrounding the main realm where the Primordial Undying Tree stood. Anchoring these 8 small realms to the main realm were extremely thick chains of mana.

If one looked at the order of the trials, one would notice that it followed this pattern. The void in which the Trial of Self was conducted was within that mana anchor, which was also used to transport the geniuses to the main realm.

It was a truly efficient system.

Within all 8 of these Trial Worlds, similar scenes were taking place.

The Nether Spirit Tribe elders that Ruyue and Lunaria had faced previously sat in a circle around an ancient formation that stood in the deepest ruins of the tribal land.

The Flame Tyrant Clan, a clan of giant beings made entirely of molten rock who inhabited another Trial World stood in a strange pattern around an active volcano.

The Dark Elf Clan who inhabited yet another Trial World were performing similar actions as the other two.

In all 8 Trial Worlds, the races who had been corrupted by Nox mana were making their own preparations, following the will of their leaders to enact a certain ritual.

They each had their own unique locations and actions, each having a ritual specific to their clans, but there was a single thing that each and every one of them shared.

“With Heaven and Earth as witness, Our Blood as the foundation, and the Blood of All as tribute, We humbly call upon the Ancestor’s presence.”



Those words were shared among them. Not only the words, but also the timing.

As if they had planned it beforehand, the timing of each and every ritual was the exact same, and those words were said in unison across the boundaries of space.

If one stood in the void and watched the events taking place, perhaps they'd be able to hear that unified chant pierce the heavens.

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Surrounded by an unruly jungle on all sides, Hun Fang opened his eyes.

"Mmnggh...finally healed."

Although the pills Qing Tan had fed him had healed him to a certain extent, they were still supplements at the end of the day. He needed to take time and rest before achieving peak condition.

His mana also needed to be regenerated.

But after an entire 3 days of effort, he had finally finished recuperating from his injuries.

"Tch! 3 days, huh. That Damien fellow is really something."

Three days was far more time than it usually took him to heal after a battle, even when he was facing his most fearsome opponents.

His abilities had never been so thoroughly countered before.

'Actually, if it wasn't for the pills that Tan'er fed me, it would've taken far longer. I was on the brink of death this time.'

He wanted to lament his weakness, but he really had no time for idle thoughts. Feeling a weight on his lap, he directed his attention downwards.

There, he saw a peacefully sleeping Qing Tan. He inadvertently smiled before noticing the faint trails of tears that still coated her face. His smile soon turned into a sad one.

‘Damn girl...if your big brother wasn’t so weak, perhaps you wouldn’t have to struggle like this.’

How desperately he wanted to make a world where she could live peacefully, how nice would it be if he could do so? But he was weak. He had been weak from the start, and he was weak now. The only thing he could do was keep her alive.

‘That’s right. Keep living. Keep living and struggling, and perhaps one day, we’ll find our way out of this mess.’

But now wasn’t the time for that. Even if that time came, it was far far away.

Hun Fang’s eyes hardened. A green fruit and three red fruits appeared in the air in front of him.

“Haa...I just have to say the words and my job here is done, right? Damn, I’ve gotten used to chanting because of my summons, but it’s still embarrassing no matter how many times I do it.”

Hun Fang closed his eyes. Murky grey mana emanated from his mana and filled the atmosphere, forming a large incorporeal formation around him.

At the same time, he gently moved Qing Tan’s sleeping body out of the formation’s range.

“Tan’er, don’t pretend to be asleep even now. Do you think you can fool this brother of yours? If I see you peeking, you know what’ll happen.”

Qing Tan's closed eyes opened. Her face was clearly pouting. "I'm already an adult! Why can't I see the shit those bastards are making you do?!"

"Oh? You're an adult? An adult woman who still needs lap pillows from her big brother to sleep, I've never seen one of those before!"

"You...! Hmph! I'm not talking to you anymore!"

"Hey, hey! How can you be so cruel?! Our Tan'er is truly a big girl now, isn't she? I saw how you were acting during the struggle earlier. So mature!" Hun Fang quipped. A sly smile formed on his face.

"Oya~ I can't believe my little sister has grown up into a woman already! I even saw her gazing at a man with forlorn eyes earlier! As a big brother, how can I not be hurt?"

"Don't tease me!" Qing Tan yelled. A prominent blush crept up her cheeks. However, Hun Fang ignored her words and kept pestering.

In the end, Qing Tan stormed away, annoyed.

Hun Fang smiled lightly. 'Well, no matter how old you get, you're still my baby sister.'

He was glad. Glad that even after all they'd been through, she was still able to act like a spoiled little girl in front of him.

Honestly, seeing how cold and indifferent she could be when she was serious, he had become a little scared that the environment around her was affecting her negatively.

In fact, even her playfulness had been disappearing recently.

Hun Fang's gaze turned towards the Primordial Undying Tree. Although he couldn't see it with his own eyes, he felt like the person he was looking for would be able to feel his gaze.

‘Although we are enemies by fate, I thank you for allowing my little Tan’er to regain a part of herself. For that, I am indebted to you.’

After lightly bowing in that direction, his attention turned back to the formation that had been completed during the time he had wasted.

“Haa...let’s get to work then.”

The 5 fruits around Hun Fang floated into the air, revolving around the core of the formation. The grey mana that permeated the atmosphere began to gather and solidify.

Dark clouds covered the Primordial Undying Realm as greenish-white essence leaked from the fruits. Although the amount was far less than what would come if he used the purple fruit, it was enough to substitute what was needed.

Looking at the formation that was nearing completion, Hun Fang nodded solemnly.

‘To all those who will end up feeling the consequences of my actions today, I apologize in advance. My sister’s life is worth far more than yours could ever be.’

“With Heaven and Earth as witness, the Fruits of the Primordial Undying Tree as the foundation, and the world itself as tribute, I humbly invite His Eminence to this land.”

## Chapter 395 Sacrifice [1]

As soon as Damien's body merged with the Primordial Undying Tree, the torrent of energy flooding into him became ferocious.

It charged through his Mana Circuits like a horde of raging bulls, threatening to destroy his internals with its sheer quantity and density.

Damien gritted his teeth and endured. He had expected the amount of energy in the purple fruit to be immense, but this kind of volatile movement was completely out of his expectations.

After all, the essence he had gained from the Primordial Undying Tree previously was incredibly gentle.

But none of that mattered now. From his Mana Circuits, the energy found its way into his Mana Heart and even entered the Void Flame that was resting within. It perforated through his body, soon exiting his circuits and merging with his physical body as well.

'Devour.'

Damien mobilized his most useful skill. Although he had now gained a degree of control over Void Essence, the properties of Devour weren't something he could emulate.

Not only did Devour steal traits from others and make them his own, but it also optimized his growth to perfectly suit his needs. No matter how much control and ability he has, this kind of precision was impossible because of human error.

But the Void Physique didn't have that same risk of human error. It could complete these tasks incredibly easily. As he became further in tune with Void Essence, he slowly realized how insane his Void Physique actually was.

The energy from the Primordial Undying Fruit continued to perforate through his body, eventually merging with every part of him. Even the parts of himself that he couldn't see personally, like the area where his mana was stored.

It was at this time that a second essence infiltrated his body. Since he had been warned beforehand, he didn't panic when he saw it. It was simply the Primordial Undying Tree helping him digest its essence.

As if feeling the essence's intent, the Void Essence used through devour surrounded it and merged into it. These two essences began working together to perfectly mold Damien's body with the energy of the purple fruit.

'Ha! It's like the process became automated. At this rate, I just have to sit back and watch as it takes place.' Damien inwardly marveled.

But unlike what he expected, he wasn't given the opportunity to be lazy.

[The Primordial Undying Tree wishes to tell you a story.]

The notification was abrupt, both in appearance and content. Damien didn't know what kind of story this old tree wanted to show him. But he didn't think such a being would do anything without meaning, so he quietly accepted.

His vision turned black.

When he opened his eyes again, the first thing he felt was that his body wasn't his own. It was larger and more robust, while being rugged and scarred from battle.

'This is...'

[The Primordial Undying Tree urges you to watch.]

Damien stopped thinking and focused on the scene around him. His eyes widened in shock the second he did so.

He didn't even realize how he was able to calmly think without realizing what was happening in his surroundings. It was a battle of untold proportions.

Divine spirits and Godbeasts flew through the air regularly, completely unlike their almost extinct status today. On the ground. Countless races stood side by side facing an enemy.

As for the enemy, it was just as he expected it to be. The Nox. Black dragons corrupted by Nox mana fought against the Divine Dragons on the resistance side, humans turned their backs on each other for easy power, it was a conglomeration of betrayals.

And in the center of it were the Nox themselves. Mindless beings stained in the color of ink zipped through the battlefield and claimed thousands of lives in an instant. Their desire seemed to be for nothing other than blood.

The body Damien was currently inhabiting was that of an elf. A 4th class elf who, although he might've been a figure of power in his own world, was nothing more than another soldier on this battlefield.

His arms moved on their own. A plain-looking arrow was knocked on an articulate bow made of wood that still emitted vitality. The bowstring was pulled back as mana raged from his body. In the next instant, he fired.

BOOM!

The arrow flew straight and steady without any deviation from its original path. Within a few seconds, it had already flown hundreds of kilometers into the enemy camp, piercing the ground with heavy impact and causing a massive explosion.

Blots of ink spread in the air as the bodies of Nox soldiers and Devil Worshipers were blown to shreds. Before the explosion even died down, another arrow had been fired.

Sweat trickled down the elf's brow.

'I can only give so much support. Luckily for me, they are only sending their soldiers at 3rd class or below. But the fact that I, as a 4th class, must be deployed to deal with them is shameful to our alliance.'

Despite his thoughts, he kept firing arrows. He didn't stop until he couldn't see any more enemies in front of him.

'This wave is finished, but how many has it been already? My mana will be depleted soon.'

As Damien looked around through the eyes of that elf, he noticed the sheer scale of the battle. The number of corpses littering the ground numbered far greater than he could count.

'Is this number in the hundreds of thousands? Maybe even the millions? That's fucking insane.'

He had lived a life surrounded by blood, but seeing this many corpses piled up in a single place still shook him.

'What kind of place is this?'

He had seen records of the battle with the Nox 10,000 years ago, but something like this wasn't included in that at all.

This wasn't a war, it was more like a final struggle against an unbeatable opponent.

The looks on the faces of those who lived were dull. They clung to survival, but didn't have any hope of living to see the next day. Even the elf warrior that Damien was inhabiting was the same.

'The second they mobilize 4th class existences, the people here will be massacred'

It didn't take long for him to realize it. Including the elf warrior, 10 4th classes had been mobilized on the alliance side, while none had been seen from the Nox.

It was due to the sheer difference in numbers.

Some of the elf's memories entered Damien's mind as he shared the man's body.

The alliance was made up of millions of troops from various different races. But when compared to the Nox, even these numbers were minuscule.

Because even in this battle alone, the Nox were able to mobilize troops numbering in the millions. And due to the fact that a great deal of those troops were other races who were corrupted by their own greed, the Nox were able to conserve their own forces.



In a drawn-out war, they had the absolute advantage. It wasn't even fair to consider it a close fight.

'We've held on until now, but how long will it last?'

The elf's thoughts were negative, but the flames in his eyes never vanished. He had people to protect, an entire race worth of them. But in the bottom of his heart, he knew it.

'I'm...tired.'

## Chapter 396 Sacrifice [2]

Time passed quickly. After that first battle ended, Damien followed that elf into countless other battlefields.

In what seemed like an instant, 10 years had passed.

"This is getting out of hand! We've been doing everything we can to resist all these years, but their forces never seem to die out! It's hopeless!" An elder of the alliance shouted in rage and helplessness.

And those around him couldn't help but agree. Currently, they were in a meeting to strategize for a pivotal battle, one that could determine their fates, but none of them had hope.

"It doesn't matter. Even if it's a battle of futility, we still have to fight. What, are you planning to die a dog's death? Or maybe you are thinking of turning yourself over to those scum who have murdered our families and people?! Even if I'm fated to die, I'll take a thousand of those Nox with me to the underworld!"

The elf shouted in response. His eyes were burning, an almost palpable pressure radiating from them.

"Haa...it's not that we don't share the sentiment, but what does it matter? Haven't you heard the news? This time, they even plan to mobilize a Demigod."

Over the past ten years, the scale of the battles had increased. It was no longer just the mindless 3rd class Nox that were being sent to war. The 4th class beings of their race were also fighting.

"I don't understand how there can be such a difference. Whether it be 1st, 2nd, or 3rd class, those Nox are simply mindless beasts who act on their desire to kill. How is it that, after achieving 4th class, they can gain such a degree of intelligence?! It isn't possible for such rapid growth to happen naturally." Another elder sighed.

It was a strange thing. Every 4th class Nox they had met had spiritual intelligence on par with or even greater than their own. And it wasn't as if it was a gradual process by which they gained intelligence like beast races, it was instant.

Even after decades of war, they had yet to understand fully what the Nox actually were, or how their species functioned. It was said that information was the greatest weapon in warfare, but the information they had was scarce.

On the other hand, the Nox could gain as much information as they wanted through the defectors that were constantly joining their side.

"I don't care. This kind of talk is useless. We're only lowering our own morale and making it easier for those bastards to slaughter us! So what if they send a Demigod?! If you are all too afraid to confront him, then I'll do it myself!" The elf proclaimed brazenly.

"Nonsense!"

"What the hell are you saying?!"

"Do you even understand the implications of a Demigod?!"

"And so what if I understand it?! Does that mean I should just sit still and accept my death?! Hmph! You are all pathetic! You don't deserve to be called leaders of this alliance."

"You...!"

"Enough!"

A new voice entered the fray. It was the voice of an old man who sat quietly in the corner of the room. His eyes were focused on the elf, unwavering and stern.

"Do you mean what you said?" He asked solemnly. "I know you. I've heard of your feats on the battlefield. You are infinitely close to entering the realm of Godhood yourself, so if it's you, you might be able to stall that Demigod for a period of time. So I ask again, are you confident in carrying out your words?"

The elf stared back at the old man with the same unwavering eyes.

"I am."

"You might die. No, you will surely die. Can you still say for sure that you will carry out your duty without fail?"

"I can."

The old man looked into the elf's eyes as if trying to peer into his soul. In the end, he sighed.

"Very well. I'll leave the task to you."

"Elder!"

"That's a Demigod, for god's sake! Even if he is almost at that realm himself, the difference isn't something that can be overcome without Divinity!"

"Do you think I don't know that?!" The elder growled back. The fury in his voice silenced all opposition.

"The Nox aren't the only ones with Demigods on their side. Our Demigods have been stuck in the Ancient Battlefield staving off the main forces of the Nox this entire time. It was the only reason we were able to survive this long.

"However, upon hearing that the Nox have mobilized one of their own, they have sent us aid as well. As long as we can hold out until that Demigod arrives, we can survive this ordeal!"

The elder's words brought some light back into the eyes of those alliance leaders.

"Right, if we have a Demigod on our side...!"

"It might be possible!"

The elf's eyes were also wide when he heard the news. Inwardly, he let out a sigh of relief.

The meeting soon ended, and all the gathered forces went their separate ways to prepare for the battle that was on the horizon.

Night fell upon the alliance camp. On the roof of a small building, the elf sat and stared at the two moons that decorated the night sky.

Countless memories flashed through his mind. Children playing happily with the spirits that gravitated towards them, families smiling and enjoying their days, they were scenes he saw constantly in his homeland before the start of the war.

But there was one scene that played on repeat, standing out even amongst the vast array of memories in his mind.

A beautiful woman with light blonde hair, her presence seemed to be one with nature. She stood in front of the World Tree with a warm smile on her face.

"Come back safely."

Those were the last words he had heard from her. After that, his life had been a constant hell.

"Elvira...I wonder how you are doing now? Perhaps you've already moved on and found another love..."

My life is destined to end in tragedy, so I truly hope you have. He wanted to say those words, but he couldn't get them out of his throat.

He clutched the jade pendant that had hung around his neck from the start of the war until now. Just like those two moons in the sky, they were so close yet infinitely far apart.

'You told me not to be a hero, but in the end, I couldn't stop myself...' He sighed lightly.

Being only a few hours away from guaranteed death, he oddly didn't feel dissatisfied at all.

He had lived a good life, all things considered. The first few hundred years were filled with happiness and joy.

And even though he had spent almost 25 years on the battlefield now, he didn't regret his decision to join the war.

Because those happy smiles that he used to see on a daily basis, those families that would cherish each other and live in peace, that woman who shouldered the responsibility of all elves with a smile on her face...

As long as he was here, their smiles could never be taken from them by the cruelty he had witnessed from the enemy.

He stood up and stretched his tired body. His ambition was far greater than he had let on at the meeting.

Even if he was fated to die today, he would make sure to save as many lives as he could before he did so.

And maybe he could take down a Demigod while he was at it.

Chapter 397 Sacrifice [3]

Battle was raging in full force.

Being a pivotal battle that had the potential to be a turning point in this futile war, the alliance had brought out many of its hidden cards.

And the scale of the battle could no longer be contained on ground.

Multiple massive explosions rang out from all sides. Thousands of 4th-class existences fought with their lives on the line. In that atmosphere, it was impossible for the terrain to stay undamaged.

It started small, with craters and cracks littering the ground. But as damage piled up over days and days of fighting, it couldn't stay so simple.

BOOOOOM!

Unable to bear the force of the battle, the world it was taking place on cracked in half. The World Core collapsed without its outer shell, causing a massive explosion that sent shockwaves through the starry sky.

Hundreds of 4th classes and 3rd classes numbering even greater perished with the world. Only those who were able to use spatial transmission equipment to leave the blast range were able to keep their lives.

It was a truly hellish battle. Even after the world exploded, it didn't end. The setting was simply changed to a battle within the starry sky, where such environmental damage wouldn't be a problem.

But there was a single part of the battlefield that all eyes watched. Regardless of which side won the battle, the results there would decide it all.

A single elf with an ornate bow in hand stood tall. His proud back seemed to carry the weight of the world. His aura radiated determination and power. But considering the opponent in front of him, his momentum wasn't able to go far.

It was another man, his skin black like ink. His stature was massive, being 10 meters tall with equally broad shoulders. He didn't radiate aura or have powerful momentum. One would simply think he was a giant who never even leveled up once. That is, if they didn't know his status.

A true Demigod, a man who had attained Divinity. He wasn't the type of man that mortals like them could fathom.

But that elf stood in front of him without any fear on his face.

"You could have ascended after shedding your mortality, so why did you decide to stay?" He asked.

The Demigod looked at the ant in front of him curiously. "Is that the last thing you desire to know before death?"

"Well, if you don't wish to answer any other questions, then it'd be the last thing you answer before death as well. Choose wisely."

"Hahahaha! What a bold child. With you standing in front of me like this, you clearly understand your situation. Yet, you still have the nerve to talk about killing me? How interesting!"

"Yes, I understand my situation clearly. But it seems you aren't the same. I wonder if anyone will miss you when you're gone?"

The Demigod frowned. Taking the words of an ant seriously wasn't something he would ever do, but being looked down on by someone so much weaker than him wasn't something he would tolerate.

"A single slap. That is all it will take to kill you. Allow me to enlighten you on the difference between one who has achieved Divinity and one who hasn't."

The Demigod raised his hand lightly and waved it. There wasn't a trace of mana in his movements, but it still gave off an aura of Godhood that the elf couldn't comprehend.

Whoosh! BOOOOOOM!

The whipping of spatial wind due to the force of his hand was the first sound to be heard. In the next instant, a continent-sized crater was indented in a nearby planet.

Shock.

Although they had expected the difference between mortals and Gods to be vast, not a single person expected it to be to such a degree. After all, Demigods never had a reason to show their true strength.

It wasn't just the fact that he could cause continental destruction from such distance that shocked them. It was the fact that he could do it seemingly without even mobilizing a hint of mana.

The elf gripped his bow until blood leaked from his palms. This situation...he didn't know if it would go at all how they had planned it.

But at the same time, it was a somewhat expected outcome. That was a Divinity in front of him. He expected nothing less.

'I wanted to at least preserve my life for a little while before finishing things, but it seems that won't be possible.'

The elf resolved himself once again. Soon, the blood and mana in his body began burning. He drew his bow and knocked an arrow even as his life force depleted at an astonishing rate.



Blood-red essence mixed in with his naturally green mana as the arrow fired. Even when compared to his full power, this arrow was far greater.

BANG!

It reached the Demigod before an instant could pass, exploding on his chest and knocking him back.

But the elf didn't stop firing. He chased the Demigod's body and continuously shot arrows using his blood vitality to increase his power.

But he could see it.

Those arrows weren't actually doing any damage to the Demigod's body. And if it wasn't for the latter's arrogance, they wouldn't have even been able to reach him.

But that didn't stop the elf.

His original goal was never to kill. All he was doing was stalling for time.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Even though space itself was a void where sound couldn't travel, mana was different. Sound could easily travel through the volatile mana that resided in the starry sky.

And perhaps because of its volatile nature, the sound of those impacts was especially glaring.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Arrows kept firing and impacting the Demigod's body. Meanwhile, the Demigod himself watched on with interest.

It wasn't like he cared for the task he was assigned. In fact, it was below him to even be sent to a battlefield like this one. But there was such an entertaining ant in front of him, he wanted to see how far his opponent would go before realizing the futility of his actions.

It was a simple curiosity towards a lesser being.

BOOOM!

The Demigod's rocket-like body fell into the atmosphere of a nearby planet. Within seconds, it impacted the ground, sending a shockwave into the earth that caused mountains to rise and seas to dry.

But oddly enough, a single organism managed to survive the impact.

It was a tree thousands of kilometers away. A massive tree that emanated rich vitality and had a gait that pierced the heavens.

BANG!

An arrow pierced the world's atmosphere like a bloody shooting star, accurately pinpointing the fallen body of the Demigod and attempting to pierce it.

But just like every other attempt, it ended in futility.

The elf soon appeared in the air. Blood leaked from his pores like rivers, his skin was dried and cracked and his eyes were so bloodshot that they looked as if they were on the verge of exploding.

The Demigod smiled when he saw it. Standing up, he patted himself down to get rid of the debris that had covered him during the altercation.

"You don't look so good." He commented casually, observing the surrounding environment.

The elf didn't respond. Or rather, he couldn't. His body was in no condition for him to make extraneous movements.

Instead, he simply knocked another arrow.

#### Chapter 398 Sacrifice [4]

Had he stalled long enough?

That was the only thought going through the elf's head. It was like his own body condition hadn't registered in his mind at all.

It had only been a few minutes, but a few minutes meant a great deal with the speed of battle that beings at their level could reach.

He didn't know the location of the Ancient Battlefield where the alliance Demigods were, but he didn't think it was so far away that a Divinity couldn't reach here by now.

But the fact that nobody had come to stop him meant that something had gone wrong. It meant that, perhaps, they wouldn't be getting the reinforcement they had placed all their hopes in.

'Which means it's up to me.'

His body condition was terrible. Even the outward appearance didn't do it justice. Actually, if it wasn't for his astonishing vitality as an elf, he'd have already succumbed to his wounds.

'I don't have much blood vitality left to sacrifice. If I do any more, I won't have the strength to fire another arrow.'

Looking at the causal gait of the Demigod in front of him, it was only natural for him to lose hope. But he refused to do so. That simply wasn't his style.

As he gazed upon the surrounding hundreds of kilometers of destruction, his eyes landed on the single tree that had withstood the impact of their battle.

The aura that tree was radiating, it was at a similar level to that of the man he was facing.

'If I could acquire the aid of that tree, I might be able to solve this problem.'

His figure flashed away. He was taking a gamble. While the Demigod was still distracted by his curiosity, he would find a way to end things.

His remaining blood vitality was used to boost his speed. When he arrived at the trunk of that tree, he placed his hand on it and sent his awareness within, attempting to communicate.

But all he got in response were incoherent feelings of curiosity and anguish.

'Its spiritual intelligence hasn't matured yet. At most, it is on par with a three or four-year-old child.'

What kind of miraculous tree could enter Godhood without developing its intelligence at all? Or maybe it was due to the rapid pace at which it achieved Divinity that the Heavens limited its consciousness. Whatever it was, it didn't matter to him.

'DAMMIT!'

His gamble ended in failure. He didn't have the time to coax the tree into following his will, and he couldn't negotiate with it since it couldn't even understand his words.

'I must find a way.'

He couldn't give up here. He thought of everything he was trying to protect, the memories of his life flashed before his eyes.

He was already a dead man. His body collapsed against the trunk of the tree. And as he did so, there was one regret that trumped all others.

It wasn't that he couldn't be a hero, it wasn't that he couldn't protect everyone. If that was all, then he needed not to regret. To hold off a Demigod for as long as he did was already a heaven-defying feat that had been achieved through both sacrifice and luck.

The thing he regretted most was dying in vain. Even with all the effort he put in, he died a dog's death.

'If one day I am able to reincarnate, I hope I won't live the same kind of life I did this time.'

He drew his last breath. His feelings of futility and anguish resonated with the will of the great tree he died leaning on.

And a miraculous phenomenon took place.

But was it right to call it a miracle?

That tree that had barely developed spiritual intelligence felt sympathy for the first time in its life. And perhaps it was due to an elf's inherent affinity towards nature, but the brave elf warrior's spirit seemed to merge into the tree.

His soul wasn't allowed to dissipate on death. It was sucked into the tree, resonating deeper and deeper with the tree's own spiritual intelligence, until they became one and the same.

He opened his eyes again. Or rather, he was once again able to see.

But things were different. He felt an unbridled level of power running through his body, but he wasn't able to properly mobilize it.

'W-what is happening...?'

He clearly remembered dying. But the scenery he could "see" around him was the same as what he saw upon death. No, he could even see his own dead body being covered in roots and vines and dragged into the ground.

'This is...!'

The second he sent his awareness through his body, he was able to grasp the situation.

'Ha...hahaha...to think it would end up like this...'

He had...become the tree that he was trying to seek aid from only moments ago. Not too far away, that Demigod was looking at him with interest.

'But perhaps he doesn't know what happened here. This situation is too strange for one to grasp so easily.'

He waited patiently as the Demigod made his way over to the tree and looked at the corpse that was being dragged into it.

"You were quite the interesting man. Not giving up hope even in the final moments of your life, I must give you my respect for that."

He spoke indifferently. The elf hated that casual indifference that didn't seem to put anything in its eyes.

'But if it's now...'

He couldn't kill the Demigod. He didn't have enough control over his new body's strength to do that. Not to mention, his soul hadn't completely settled and been accepted by this body yet.

'But...if it's that, then it might be possible.'

It was a secret technique that all 4th classes in the alliance were forced to learn. It was so that, when they died, their legacies would still be left for future generations to continue the war.

It was a technique created by a genius spatial master, one that allowed one to create a small world to store their legacies.

But he would use it for a different purpose.

The vitality of the great tree suddenly flared. Waves of spatial essence and pure mana flooded the atmosphere to the point when it was palpable.

The Demigod's eyes widened in shock, but it was too late for him to act.

After all, this power was on the same level as his. He didn't have the absolute advantage anymore.

A hole opened in the trunk of the tree, radiating pure white light that aimed to eradicate all evil. And in the next instant, that Demigod was sucked in.

'Hahaha...let your own arrogance be your downfall, scum bastard.'

The realm he was forming had yet to be completed, but the rampant spatial tears and molding that contained traces of Divinity within them were able to tear apart the Nox Demigod's body.

The fact that he had been forced into an incorporeal space also helped a lot in the process.

And due to the fact that both beings were now on similar levels, their souls were stuck in a stalemate.

'The fact that the process is automated after it has been started is probably the most groundbreaking part of the technique. It's the reason why even non-spatial practitioners like me can use it, and the reason why I can hold out against this scum bastard without diverting my attention.'

Due to their current circumstances, no words could be exchanged between them. It was likely that the Nox Demigod was still unaware that his opponent was the elf who he had been playing with until recently.

And so their stalemate continued.

Until the secret realm within the tree finished forming.

And a separate space was formed to confine their battle.

Chapter 399 Sacrifice [5]

"..."

Damien was speechless. The events he had witnessed were simply too shocking.

The war was already enough information to overload his brain, especially after spending 10 years in the body of a person who was fighting in it.

'But to think that the Primordial Undying Tree was actually an elf at one point.'

It was a riveting story that ended in a noble sacrifice. It was a war from 100,000 years ago that was left out of history.

'I thought the threat that the Nox pose now was already immense, but who would've thought that it was so much worse in the past...?'

He couldn't even imagine it. If the forces that the Nox possessed 100,000 years ago descended on the current universe...



It was guaranteed annihilation.

After the scene in which the elf senior sealed the Nox Demigod, the playback didn't end. Damien was shown what the elf senior saw through his awareness afterwards.

With the awareness of a Demigod, it wasn't hard to see the results of the battle that had been taking place when he died. In the end, the alliance's Demigod never appeared, but it wasn't their loss either.

Because the Nox race's Demigod never returned to the battlefield, their morale began to drop, which allowed the alliance to pull ahead.

The battle ended in their victory even though they had sustained many losses. It served as a turning point in the war, one which brought hope to the despairing alliance.

Unfortunately, when the alliance heads tried to find traces of the elf warrior, they were unable to find anything. His body had been absorbed into the great tree, and the traces of battle between him and the Nox Demigod were only present hundreds of kilometers away.

'How...how did that war end?' Damien wondered. Although the result was obvious since the universe was still not within the Nox's control, he wanted to know it in more detail.

More specifically, he wanted to know why records of that war had been lost to time.

100,000 years was a vast amount of time that he couldn't understand at all, but with the methods of people at the power levels of the alliance heads, and even the Demigods on the alliance side, storing records that could withstand the tests of time was extremely plausible.

But in the end, there was nobody who could answer his question. Even the elf senior had been stuck on the Cloud Plane, unable to see what happened outside of its vicinity.

'Senior...your name. What's your name?'

Damien couldn't help but ask. From the very depths of his being, he could feel a bubbling respect for the man.

The man who had sacrificed himself for his noble cause, and had even kept fighting after his death.

[The Primordial Undying Tree sighs. It says that after so many years, its name has been long forgotten.]

'Whether or not it is forgotten doesn't matter. As long as I'm alive, I will carry your legacy with me. I will make sure you are not forgotten by history as you are now. This much I can promise you.'

[...]

[Alaric. Alaric Alfheim was my name.]

Damien's eyes widened. It wasn't a message delivered by a system window that he saw. It was the voice of the man whose story he had just witnessed.

The Primordial Undying Tree, no, Alaric Alfheim had just spoken to him for the first time.

'Senior, rest assured I will remember it well.'

[...]

Alaric didn't respond. Even as they spoke the memories he was showing Damien didn't end.

When Alaric merged with the great tree, it wasn't the Primordial Undying Tree yet. Hell, it wasn't even a World Tree.

It was simply a great tree of immense size and enormous vitality that had managed to reach the Demigod realm over time.

But that enormous vitality obviously wasn't normal. It was the characteristic that allowed the great tree to become something even greater. And with Alaric's consciousness guiding its evolution, the process was greatly sped up.

10,000 years after he became the great tree, it had spread its wings even further and become a World Tree.

The enormous vitality leaking from it brought prosperity to the land, reviving the desolate atmosphere left by the battle that had taken place there many millennia ago.

Within another 5,000 years, mountains rose and rovers split. The groundwork of the 3000 Beast Mountain Range was formed.

And due to the heavenly conditions of the area, many beasts gravitated towards it.

Finally, an entire 20,000 years after the battle with the Nox Demigod, the World Tree evolved further and became the Primordial Undying Tree that was known today.

He created a subtree within the secret realm he had formed to seal the Nox Demigod, and he used this subtree as a hope to nurture future generations.

It was how the first Primordial Undying Realm opened.

Alaric used his vast consciousness to open the entrance on a different world every time. As long as the world was relatively close by, such a feat was within his means.

But it wasn't easy. Due to the effort he had to put in, the secret realm could only be opened every 10,000 years.

The problem was, he wasn't the only one inhabiting the secret realm. Every time the realm opened, the Nox Demigod would use the geniuses who entered as chess pieces to fight him.

In the end, many races were forcefully or willingly corrupted by him, becoming the ones that were known today.

Damien watched it all happen. Although the memories were played speedily and with gaps so that his mind could handle the stress of such a vast time period, he could still feel the essence of 90,000 years that had passed.

It was only 90,000 because not long before the 8th opening of the Primordial Undying Realm, something interesting happened.

The war with the Nox began anew. Worlds were ravaged and countless corpses littered the universe. In this hectic atmosphere, a certain group of elves fled from their world.

'This is...the memory I saw last time when I absorbed the lotus in my spiritual world.' Damien realized.

Of course the faces of those people would be blurred. He realized now that the reason wasn't that something was being hidden from him, it was just that because it was being watched from such a vast distance, those faces weren't clear to Alaric in the first place.

But he knew that they were elves. And he could clearly feel the connection he had with them even though his body had been discarded for a new one.

The scene of those elves being chased into the starry sky played out in front of Damien again, but this time, he was able to see how it ended.

In that moment, right before their inevitable deaths before they could reach the Cloud Plane, a massive portal appeared and sucked them in.

When they reappeared, they were already in the 3000 Beast Mountain Range.

Those elves, seeing that a World Tree had saved them, began worshipping Alaric and decided to set up their home at the base of his trunk.

And they named it Taesi, so that they would never forget their origins.

Taesi, meaning defector in the language of the elves.

#### Chapter 400 Sacrifice [6]

Within 10 years of the elves' arrival in the 3000 Beast Mountain Range, Alaric erected the Myriad Illusion Veil to protect them from outside forces and the ongoing war.

And due to his protection, the elven race was able to gain footing in the mountain range without being killed off by the beasts around them.

Over time, their population boomed and they experienced prosperity. Those who remembered the origin of their city became few and far between.

The final 10,000 years played out in front of Damien's eyes, but he was hardly paying attention. His mind was completely focused elsewhere.

Just now, due to Alaric manipulating the memories for Damien to safely digest, he was able to experience 100,000 years without actually experiencing 100,000 years.

Countless beings were born and died during that time. Landscape changed and became entirely different from what it once was. Even Alaric and the Nox Demigod changed immensely over such a vast period of time.

And within that atmosphere of change and chaos, only time and space remained constant, unchanging.

Damien's perception expanded. His mind became clear as a familiar yet unfamiliar essence flooded his senses.

'100,000 years passed in an instant. 100,000 years to some, but to me, a mere speck in the grand scheme of my life...'

His thoughts were incoherent and jumbled. He started many tangents without ever finishing them. But with every new insight he gained, his perception of that familiar essence became more and more complete.

He had learned too much in a short span of time. Alaric had taught him all the mysteries of the mountain range and secret realm that he had been dying to know.

Although he had many old questions that were left unanswered, and many new questions that sprouted from the information now held, he didn't concentrate on that right now.

He had plenty of time to figure it out after the current events ended.

Damien's mind was being rapidly encompassed by an ancient and desolate aura. It was the feeling that came with comprehending the essence of time.

And while it happened, his body also went through a myriad of changes.

His bones became denser and more flexible, his muscles were compacted, his internal organs were fortified dozens of times over.

His Mana Circuit wasn't left alone either. An extreme amount of pure essence flooded through them as the process of evolution continued. It was essence that even contained a trace of Divine Aura within it.

And due to it, his Mana Veins expanded and his Mana Heart became far more refined. The Ananta Matrix went through yet another evolution, even though it had only just evolved within the Trial World as well.

His body was being remolded into something entirely new. With the combination of Void Essence and Alaric's own Divine Essence, he was being perfected as if he was an art piece.

Waves of unbridled power emanated from his body. Even his level rose rapidly.

But he didn't even notice the change.

'Time...time...what an amazing concept.'

His understanding, when compared to something like space, was still minuscule, but he had received an opportunity that hardly anyone would ever be able to receive.

He already had immense talent in comprehension, and with the experience of 100,000 years, his comprehension of time increased at an extremely rapid rate.

Not to mention, he was able to gain insights while watching Alaric form the secret realm and put a time distortion on it.

The essence of time swirled around his body. When it met with the essence of space that constantly enveloped him, it seemed to dance and merge with it as if they were always one and the same.

'Right, on earth they would always say that space and time were one and the same. Although it's somewhat different with the introduction of mana, the scientific view of it still had some merit.'

Under Damien's control, the two essences mingled even closer. The formless essence around him began to churn, forming a separated space around Damien.

'With this...it should be possible.'

It was a sudden thought, but he acted on it instinctively.

Space and time flowed together to create a small stream around Damien's body. It flowed like water, but had the color of shimmering blue starlight.

'I can't do it yet with my current power and comprehension, but I can set a foundation so that I can easily accomplish it in the future.'

But a foundation to him wasn't the same as it was for others. If it wasn't for the fact that he was merged with the Primordial Undying Tree's trunk and within a separated space, the scenery around him would be total chaos.

The small stream in his hands caused a distortion of the surrounding kilometer of the area around him. Everything shattered, leaving only an empty void behind.

Within this void, chaotic flows of space and time ran rampant. But suddenly, it all came to a halt.

'I can't go any further. I have no control over this power yet, so even I could potentially be influenced by the chaotic space-time within this domain. Until I can isolate myself from its effects, I can't use it carelessly.' As he thought so, he slowly exited the trance he was in and sensed the state of his body.

'Haa...it seems like things are coming to an end.'

His evolution was almost finished. But the gifts provided by Alaric hadn't ended yet.

In that moment when he regained peace in both body and mind, his senses expanded and merged with those of the Primordial Undying Tree itself.

He could see it. Whether it was the 8 subrealms where the subjugated races were performing their rituals, the main realm where Hun Fang and Qing Tan were speaking to each other, or even the outside world where the elves were living their lives in peace.

He could see it all.

'What...the hell? Senior, I feel like you're helping me a bit too much.'



[Don't mind it. It has been a long time since I met a genius that I felt I could put my hopes in. Think of it as an investment.]

Damien nodded. 'I won't be so impolite as to refuse a gift that I desire so much. Instead, I will earnestly promise to live up to your expectations.'

Information, it was the thing he was lacking most. Yet, Alaric had provided him with just that.

'Qing Tan...Hun Fang...so it was like that.'

He wasn't mad about their betrayal. Even an idiot could understand their circumstances if he was allowed to witness their conversations. He only felt pity for the sibling duo in his heart.

'Never mind that. Senior, don't you think you have more important things to do than to be helping me?'

From the looks of it, the Nox Demigod was infinitely close to breaking out of his seal. Instead of putting a stop to that chaos, why was the senior focusing on him?

[No need. His breaking out of the seal isn't something I can prevent any longer. I've known this day was coming for thousands of years. What is more important is saving as many people as I can before he manages to do so. And you are my hope for that.]

Damien felt a searing pain on the back of his hand. There, a light green seal was being etched into his skin.

[With this seal, the elves out there will regard your words as law. Most likely, they'll subordinate themselves to you. I wish for you to take them into that space you created when you first entered this realm. Please take care of them in my stead.]

'Senior, what are you...?'

[Allow me to finish. I can at most buy you 30 minutes before battle breaks out with him. In that 30 minutes, you must save as many people as possible. Remember, do not be even a second late. Evacuate everyone to your Sanctuary before 30 minutes pass.]

'This...'

Damien's eyes hardened. He understood the implications of the senior's words. A battle between Demigods...it had the potential to destroy the entire Cloud Plane within a few hours.

'The Senior is trying to contain the battle within the Myriad Illusion Veil, but that means everyone here will inevitably die. The Sanctuary is a completely separated world from the Real Plane, so it is the only place that won't be affected by the battle.'

A heavy burden of responsibility had just been placed on his shoulders. Within 30 minutes, he has to save not only the elven race, but all those he could within the mountain range.

'With the distance I'll have to cover, even saving the clans of those I've allied with in the secret realm will take longer than 30 minutes. It seems I have to get a bit creative.'

Damien wasn't a saint nor a hero. In normal cases, he would be completely content with only taking the people he cared for and escaping the coming calamity.

But this time, he had no intention of denying the responsibility he was given, regardless of how burdening it might be.

Because the senior who had given him such a responsibility had borne and was continuing to bear a burden that was far greater than anything he could fathom.