

Void 421

Chapter 421 Finally [1]

Damien was currently experiencing heaven.

Nevermind Ruyue's soft body being tightly pressed against his own, nevermind the feeling of strength he felt from his improvements recently, just existing in the space around him felt so heavenly it was almost orgasmic.

He didn't have a chance to appreciate it before, since he was continuously busy with other things. Even while moving around the rubble of the mountain range, he had subconsciously ignored the feeling.

Yet, when he flashed away with Ruyue, appearing thousands of kilometers away in an instant, he almost couldn't control himself.

It had been over a year and a half since Damien had been able to properly utilize his teleportation. Whether it be the Myriad Illusion Veil, 3000 Beast Mountain Range, or Primordial Undying Realm, they all had some sort of spatial suppression that didn't allow him to use his ability to its full potential.

But since all three were connected through Alaric, it wasn't surprising for them to share similar restrictions.

Now, though...Damien's perception expanded insanely. His awareness covered tens of thousands of kilometers of land. And until a few thousand kilometers away, his awareness was much sharper than it used to be.

He felt like it had become a spiderweb. The tactile sensation he felt, allowing him to "feel" everything around him firsthand instead of simply "seeing," it made his usage of spatial transportation far more fluid.

It was to the point where he could continuously jump thousands of kilometers without making Ruyue feel nauseous or disoriented at all.

He smiled beside himself. The amount of time he has spent consciously training his space element in this time didn't amount to much, but the passive training he was forced to do by the spatial suppression had boosted his abilities more than he could've ever hoped for.

'If it's like this, it shouldn't even take a day to reach the Empyrean Dragon Realm.'

With Ruyue as his trusty compass and travel partner and the beautiful folds of space as his vehicle, the journey he was on now was sure to be an enjoyable one.

The location of the Empyrean Dragon Realm was a large empty plain to the east of the Central Continent, a few thousand kilometers away from the Jade Heavenly Palace.

Due to the movements of the tectonic plates under the continent, as well as a myriad of more fantastical phenomena that had happened in the thousands of years since the fall of the ancient sect, the center of the continent had been shifted so much.

But regardless, the true center of the Cloud Plane as a whole was never changing.

On this plain, a vast amount of people had gathered. The 100 geniuses who filled the quotas of the 5 Great Sects, the 40 from the 4 Great Clans, and a huge number of others as well.

The Empyrean Dragon Realm opening was, after all, a central event on the level of the Nexus Event in Apeiron. It wasn't something that the Great Sects and Clans could monopolize, lest they lose public sentiment.

Therefore, a large number of mid-sized and small clans along the continent were granted 5 spots for their geniuses. Even major powers from other continents, such as the Shen Estate of the Southern Continent that Damien and Long Chen had assisted on their first mission, had gathered as well.

But these numbers only made up the minority. If the amount that came from major powers numbered in the hundreds, the number of rogue cultivators who had arrived was well into the thousands.

These rogue cultivators would often flock to secret realm openings and forbidden zone expeditions like moths, looking for the fortuitous encounters that could possibly turn them into major powerhouses of their own. It was the hope and dream of every practitioner under Heaven to become an unmatched expert.

But of course, the Great Sects wouldn't simply allow others to clog the secret realm and take away opportunities that could fall into the hands of their disciples. The rogue cultivators that were here would have to go through a strict process upon exiting of the secret realm.

A portion of their gains within would be confiscated by the major powers, most of the time including their rarest treasures. It was for this reason that every rogue cultivator present was fidgeting restlessly. Even if it was bound to happen, they would try to fool the eyes of these experts nonetheless.

Nobody wanted to be robbed of what was rightfully theirs, but the secret realm was simply too precious to pass up just because of these restrictions.

Situations like these were the reason Damien had originally joined the Celestial Star Palace. Individual strength wasn't always enough to keep one afloat within this chaotic world. Having a strong backer was equally important.

Apart from the rogue cultivators, segregating themselves as if they didn't want to associate with the former group at all, were the geniuses from major powers who had gathered.

The scions of the Four Great Clans and many other mid-sized clans were grouped together, idly chattering while waiting for the secret realm to open. Those from the Five Great Sects, however, were different.

Indeed, the five ruling sects didn't always shirk politics. The internal battles among them would get especially fierce during times of competition like this. But they had an image to maintain.

Unlike the Four Great Clans who were always veiled in internal and external strife, vying for as much power as they could get, the five sects put themselves above worldly matters. This kind of political power was something they easily trumped with strength alone, so the word games and petty tricks that the scions of those clans were partaking in didn't interest their disciples at all.

Among the group from the Supreme Fairy Paradise stood a pair of women, one blue and one pink. Just the dichotomy of their appearances was enough to draw attention to them.

Their titles, however, did so even more.

One stood with a playful smile on her face that never seemed to fade. The other was cool and indifferent. Yet, neither was able to fully conceal the hidden excitement behind their facades.

Rose looked around eagerly. Rather than searching by appearance, she was observing the colored strings of karma that tied so many of these people to each other.

However, the red string tied to her that she was looking for was too far away for her eyes to locate properly.

'These people are so interesting.' Rose commented inwardly. Even though she was a bit disappointed by the absence of the one she was looking for, observing these important and even common people was always a hobby of hers.

After all, she could see what others couldn't.

The red strings that tied together people who were pretending to be at each other's throats, the blue strings that tied together supposed friends. Human relationships were so interesting, especially when she had the ability to see through their true nature while simultaneously watching the shows that were put on for the public.

'Oho! The sixth young master of the Shi Clan is actually together with the 4th young master of the Xue Clan! If the public found out, there'd probably be outrage!'

Rose smiled slyly. This world definitely wasn't one that accepted such relationships. It seems she would be gaining a great amount of dirt on the powers she had offended in the past year. Just this was enough to make coming here worth it.

'This Xue Clan is truly something. Not only the Shi Clan, but the Wang Clan, Han Clan, Peng Family...it's like they're selling their geniuses off as prostitutes.'

Rose thought about it more. Of the clans she had dealings with, the Xue Clan was definitely one of the most convoluted. Their patriarch's greed for power had reached a point where it'd be more apt to say he was destroying the clan than helping it grow.

'Now that I think about it, wasn't the little princess of the Xue Clan an abandoned young miss who fled to the Celestial Star Palace? With her talent, she should be among the geniuses they brought...'

She turned her attention to the Celestial Star Palace, but couldn't spot anyone with the signature white hair that all those in the Xue Clan possessed.

'Wait, there's only eighteen of them. Don't tell me...'

She smiled slyly. 'That has to be it. Although I'm reaching this conclusion in the most illogical manner possible, if it's that husband of mine, then I don't doubt it in the slightest.'

Rose almost grinned outright, but she stopped herself. Her smile was too powerful, and it'd be annoying if the young masters who saw that smile came over to bother her while she was busy thinking.

But, the world didn't revolve around her wishes. Even without her doing anything at all, the situation she wanted to happen least appeared without suspense.

"My lady, you are looking especially beautiful today." A soothing voice came from her left. There stood a handsome man with black hair and eyes.

They were eyes that made a great deal of the ladies around her swoon, but to Rose, they looked like the eyes of the snake.

"Wang bastard, we meet again. Though, I would've preferred it if you had died in a ditch somewhere in the time we hadn't seen each other."

Her tone was as cold as it could get, but the first young master of the Wang Clan, Wang Tianhe, didn't seem to care at all.

"My lady's words are as cruel as always. What to do? I don't think my heart can take it anymore. Perhaps if you allowed me to treat you to dinner, my pain would be alleviated slightly."

Rose almost gagged. "For what? With your disgusting personality, you're probably scheming to drop an aphrodisiac in my food and then rape me, aren't you? It seems your younger brother's lesson didn't translate for you. If you want to end up like him so badly, I don't mind making it happen."

Wang Tianhe's face twitched. Remembering the state his younger brother was in due to the woman in front of him, he almost lost his composure.

That trash didn't deserve to be someone from the Wang Clan. Not only had he embarrassed himself by trying to pull a similar trick to what Rose had just accused him of scheming, but he had also failed miserably and suffered horrible consequences for it.

The shame that was brought to the Wang Clan after that event was something they couldn't ignore. In fact, most of the people in his clan wanted nothing more than to kill Rose where she stood.

'But what's the use in that? If she died, I'd lose out on such a good toy, and one that I've been chasing for so long too. I can't let my efforts go to waste now, can I?'

Wang Tianhe quickly regained his composure and tried to approach Rose, but she backed away with every step he took.

"Don't even dare get within 500 feet of me. According to my dear husband, that's how far people like you should stay away from school zones, whatever that means."

Rose chortled inwardly, thinking of the joke Damien had made back then. But it was truly apt when using such a phrase describing Wang Tianhe.

He was a disgusting individual. The type of person Rose absolutely abhorred. If it wasn't for not wanting to trouble her sect by completely falling out with the Wang Family, or more specifically, the Great Clans that backed it, she would've killed him long ago.

But it wasn't simply his character or misdeeds. When Rose looked at Wang Tianhe, she couldn't see the handsome appearance that others saw at all.

What she saw was a bundle of pitch-black karmic strings, tainted by the disgusting scent of death. And behind those karmic strings were those snake-like eyes that couldn't hide their feelings from her at all.

'Not only is he scum, but he's also a traitor of humanity. If only I had enough power, I'd wipe the entire Wang Clan off the face of the earth.'

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Wang Tianhe flinched. Truthfully, he didn't even register the disgust on Rose's face, or maybe he would've understood how far she'd seen through him. The second he heard the words "dear husband" come out of her mouth, his brain short-circuited.

It wasn't just him. Plenty of people who had chased Rose in the past had similar reactions. Hidden killing intent sprouted in their hearts towards the man who had taken the beauty they had their eyes on.

They had been chasing a married woman all this time? It was a tremendous loss of face. Although stealing someone's bride because they were weaker than you was a common occurrence in the martial world, it wasn't something done openly.

The act of doing so was collectively looked down upon by society. If one did so blatantly, they'd definitely lose their standing in the hearts and minds of those around them, becoming trash amongst trash like Wang Ming, the second young master of the Wang Clan.

Those men quickly shifted their attention to Elena. But as soon as they did, Rose pulled Elena close to her.

"My dear second sister, how can you allow me to deal with this trash on my own? As sisters who share a husband, we should unite against external pressure!"

Elena rolled her eyes. Although she was thankful for Rose's help, she was worried about the pressure Damien would face when he arrived.

Unlike Rose, she didn't have the same blind faith in Damien. She simply didn't get the opportunity to see how far Damien's prowess always towered over his peers, so it couldn't be helped.

"Husband, you say? And where is this husband of yours? I'd truly love to meet him." Wang Tianhe spoke with an imperceptible smile. Once again, he was quick to recover from the blows Rose kept throwing at him.

"You don't have to worry about that. You'll definitely see him soon. Actually, there's a 10/10 chance that you'll be killed by him as well. I'm truly looking forward to it."

"Hahaha. I as well can't help but be excited to meet the glorious husband of my lady. After all, someone who could steal the hearts of the two Heavenly Fairies of the Supreme Fairy Paradise can't be a normal person. How embarrassing would it be if he couldn't match up to my expectations? Though, I doubt that'd happen, right?"

Rose snorted. "Your expectations don't matter for shit. Why would my husband be bothered by the words of some trash on the side of the street?"

"Hahahahaha!"

A sudden uproarious laughter filled the air. The surprising thing was, it didn't come from anyone present. Rather, it descended from the sky like heavy rain.

"This is the kind of demeanor a wife of mine should have! Why should she care about the barking of some neighborhood dog who doesn't know the existence of wolves?"

In the sky above the crowd, two individuals materialized. A mystical young man and a white-haired beauty, their appearances alone being enough to cause waves in the crowd below.

Ba-dum!

Rose's heartbeat was almost palpable. The second she heard the voice she could only dream about for so many days on end, she wholly stopped caring about the situation around her. When she looked up into the sky, she couldn't help but swoon.

'How the hell...how the hell could this man become even more handsome?!'

Damien and Ruyue might not have realized it, since they had been together the whole time and surrounded by people who didn't care about their physical appearances, but they had grown far more attractive during their time in the secret realm.

Damien especially, had gotten the supreme treatment of the Primordial Undying Tree, having his body reconstructed by its essence.

His hair shone with a soft luster as it reflected the sunlight, the silver streaks within twinkling like stars. His eyes, after their evolution, gave off a profound aura that seemed to suck one's soul deeper into that swirling pattern of amethyst and red.

His skin had become fairer and far smoother, emanating a rich vitality that seemed to calm one down with a single whiff.

His chiseled face had become more defined, his featured being perfected. Even under the black Celestial Star Palace robes he was wearing, the faint outline of his muscles was enough to cause many young women in the crowd to have their noses bleed.

Rose no longer cared for Wang Tianhe's provocation at all. In fact, she totally forgot his existence. Her body rose into the sky and flew towards Damien's descending figure at maddening speeds.

Damien wasn't in a much better state. The second he saw that single speck of pink among the crowd, his eyes zoomed in and focused wholly on her position. Seeing the pink mass that was about to collide with his body at full speed, he smiled apologetically at Ruyue.

But Ruyue didn't mind at all. In fact, she heavily sympathized with what Rose was feeling. She was also forced to endure a year of separation. Even if that year was filled with excitement that made her forget her longing, the second she saw the man she was longing for, it all poured out like a tsunami.

So she quickly separated herself from Damien and hovered in the air a few feet away, allowing space for the couple to enjoy their reunion.

Bang!

The impact finally happened. Rose barreled into Damien's arms, wrapping herself around his body like a koala. She dug her face into his neck and took a deep whiff of his scent, as if wanting to firmly engrave it into her memory, never to be forgotten again.

And Damien was the same. He spread his arms and caught her, wrapping his arms around her shoulders and hugging her deeply. He hurried his face in her hair and closed his eyes.

Finally. It had been so long. So long since the last time they saw each other.

Back then, he had left her so unjustly. Due to his own insecurities, he had left her alone in this strange new world without thinking about her safety or how his decisions affected her at all.

Finally. Finally, he would be able to right his wrongs from back then. Finally, he would be able to spend time with her as he should. Finally, he would be able to treat her as his wife with his whole heart, never to let her suffer again.

"My dear Rose..."

He had so much he wanted to say to her. In the day or so it took for him to teleport from the 3000 Beast Mountain Range to here, he had ruminated over the love-filled words he could say to commemorate their reunion so many times that even Ruyue started to get tired of his sappy speeches.

But now that the moment was upon him, he couldn't get any of those words out of his throat. None of them seemed to be enough to express what he wanted to express. These kinds of feelings, words alone weren't enough to describe them.

So he packed all his feelings into those three words, hoping that she would understand his intent.

And Rose, who was she? The Child of Destiny who could see the inner thoughts of those around her as clear as day, even if Damien could block her ability with his own eyes just as easily, why would he do such a thing to his own wife?

The tone of his words made many in the crowd below inadvertently look at the two with warm eyes. The sentiments he conveyed were clear even to them. But for Rose, it was even clearer. She understood exactly what he was conveying, even more so than he truly conveyed with his words.

She couldn't stop the tears from flowing down her cheeks.

Indeed, she was an understanding wife. Back then, Damien had his own problems to deal with. The fact that he had come to speak to her about those problems alone was enough for her.

The Damien she had met back then, the one she had fallen in love with, he was broken. Even though he always put up a strong front, even with the power he had that surpassed all of his peers, he was broken and incomplete. He was always plagued by his inner thoughts, unable to fully enjoy his life.

As his wife, as the woman he loved and the one who loved him just as much, how could she be okay knowing that he was suffering so much inside?

The fact that she couldn't help him at all, the fact that even though he was able to tell her about his problems, he wasn't able to rely on her help to solve them, it truly hurt.

Because she wanted to become the person that could help him bear his burdens, the same way he helped her.

The words he spoke, even if he was simply endearingly calling her name, she could feel his emotion. How apologetic he was, how much he wanted to make it up to her, how much he had been thinking of her during their time apart, how much his love for her was overflowing at this moment of reunion.

She could feel it all. And it was gratifying. It felt like finally, finally, she had earned her place in his heart. Finally, she could become someone he trusted and relied on with his everything. Finally, she had been acknowledged.

And so, she couldn't stop her tears from flowing, no matter how much she wanted to.

Elena watched them with a smile. It was a mix between a sad smile and one filled with joy. She couldn't decide which emotion she felt more strongly.

'When he's done with her, it'll be your turn. Hide that sadness in your smile. He's been missing you too, and he has a lot he's been wanting to say to you. Trust me, I had to bear with him when he was stressing over how to break the subject to you.'

When Elena looked up, she saw the white-haired beauty that had arrived with Damien looking at her with a warm smile. Seeing that smile, a faint hope appeared in Elena's heart.

Ruyue nodded in the air as if to confirm her thoughts, forcing the hope in Elena's heart to grow without her permission. She didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

They were just words from a stranger. They shouldn't mean much, right? So why was she feeling so giddy?

'By the way, in the future I'll be your second sister, since technically I came first. So don't forget it, dear little sister of mine.'

Elena's eyes widened. Seeing the playful yet slightly competitive expression on Ruyue's face, she almost couldn't stop herself from bursting into a fit of giggles.

The atmosphere that had been filled with tense excitement for the opening of the secret realm had suddenly been painted pink by the arrival of one man.

The focus of the crowd became fixed on the enamoring romance between this man and woman in the sky, a variety of emotions and thoughts flashing through their minds.

But even those who hated seeing the current reunion, the ones who wanted Damien dead so he would no longer be a wall in the path of their conquest, even they decided to keep quiet in the face of such heartfelt emotions.

But not everyone had the same kind of tact.

Wang Tianhe growled through gritted teeth. "So you're the so-called husband? Now that I've seen you in person, I guess you aren't much."

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"So you're the so-called husband? Now that I've seen you in person, I guess you aren't much."

Damien's eyes turned cold. In an instant, he appeared before Wang Tianhe, the latter's neck in his grasp.

"Why do you think yourself to be important enough to interrupt my reunion with my lovely wife? I left you traitors in the crowd alone because I wanted to spend some time with Rose before getting my hands dirty, but it seems you didn't savor the opportunity I gave you."

Damien grabbed Wang Tianhe's wrist and pulled. It wasn't a glamorous motion, in fact, it was slow enough that even a mortal would be able to follow it, yet, along with his pull, Wang Tianhe's entire arm was ripped from his body.

"Argh!"

Wang Tianhe gritted his teeth in pain he tried to rouse his mana to escape, but he suddenly found that his mana didn't respond to him.

"Pathetic. Your own mana has been abandoned by you long ago, so why would it listen to your command? It's a shame that it's been forced to stay inside your body with that trash you've injected yourself with. Allow me to free it from its shackles.

Pitch-black essence leaked from Damien's fingertips and entered Wang Tianhe's body. It snakes through his meridians, wrapping around the pure mana within and guiding it toward his heart.

"Devour."

A black hole was formed in Wang Tianhe's heart. Its suction forced pulled in all the pure mana that had been gathered, leaving only the corrupted Nox mana remaining inside the man's meridians.

"Disgusting. You actually dared to pursue my wife with this kind of pathetic strength? Even if I wasn't here to put you in your place. A single slap from her would be enough to kill you. Do you think yourself worthy of my queen?!"

The only option Wang Tianhe had left in retaliation was to use his corrupted mana, but with so many 4th class existences present, such a move would be the death of the Wang Clan.

"Boy, you dare?!" A booming voice rang out. A massive aura encompassed the area, causing a suffocating pressure to descend on all those present.

Damien snorted. "Finally someone of note has arrived. A dog son would definitely be raised by a dog father, so it isn't too surprising that you're the same as him."

The middle-aged man who was standing in the air ferociously glared at Damien. "Since his arm can be reattached, I can forgive this single transgression. As my son was pursuing your wife, I can understand why you'd need to vent your fury. However, don't go too far. Young men should learn when to advance and retreat."

Damien placidly looked at the middle-aged man. When it came to his aura, he was undoubtedly a 4th class, but Damien couldn't feel any of the awe or majesty 4th class existences used to carry anymore.

'The gap...has decreased this much.'

He turned his attention back to Wang Tianhe, only to catch the latter smirking at him. What will you do now? Even if you're more powerful than me, you'll still be humiliated by the power of the Wang Clan. That was what his gaze seemed to say.

"I don't know where you got your confidence from to look at the man who has your life in his hands like that, but from the looks of it, it seems you haven't understood a thing."

Since his left hand was occupied holding Wang Tianhe by the throat, he had to settle for the latter's right leg instead of going for another arm.

Rrriip!

A disgusting ripping sound rang out as the leg was sloppily ripped from the body, accompanied by Wang Tianhe's pained screech.

Hissss!

The crowd collectively sucked in a cold breath. Whether it be the action itself or the connotations behind it, both were equally insane.

The fact of the matter was, Damien didn't use any mana at all. To rip apart the body of a top genius of the Central Continent, he had only used physical strength. And he did so while being completely unaffected by the aura or psychological pressure of a 4th class being bearing down on him, uncaring of the consequences of his actions.

How domineering!

But Wang Chen didn't seem to think so. "You brat that doesn't know how high the heavens are! Allow me to teach you a lesson today!"

Wang Chen's body blurred, appearing behind Damien in an instant. A fierce palm strike careened toward his back.

But by the time the attack landed, Damien and Wang Tianhe had vanished.

"Spatial cultivator!" Wang Chen realized through gritted teeth. Even if he hadn't used his full strength, he had used enough strength to cripple someone even on Long Chen's level. Yet, Damien had flawlessly escaped his attack.

"Old fart, you think too highly of yourself. Even amongst 4th class existences, you aren't much. In fact, I have an entry-level 4th-class subordinate that's far more powerful than you. Anyway, that doesn't matter. If losing face is what you're so afraid of, I'll allow you to lose even more."

Damien turned his attention to Wang Tianhe. "This is going to hurt a bit, but try to keep your screams down. Last time I did this to someone, my eardrums almost burst."

"Wha— AHHHHHHH!"

Before Wang Tianhe could even question what was happening, his body disappeared, reappearing a few feet below its original position.

But considering that they were on the ground, a few feet drop had far more substantial meaning.

Wang Tianhe's lower body was forced to occupy the same space that the molecules of the earth were already occupying. The pain of his very molecular structure being altered and fused with the earth almost drove Wang Tianhe insane.

But that wasn't all that happened. Logically speaking, it was impossible for two sets of molecules to inhabit the same space, superimposing upon each other. While in Elitra's case, her legs fused with the ground entirely, Wang Tianhe wasn't so lucky.

Bang!

The ground below exploded, sending streaks of blood and chunks of flesh flying into the air. If the molecules that were forced to superimpose on each other couldn't fuse, the structures they made up would simply explode, ridding the problem entirely.

"AHHHHHHHHH! FATHER, HELP ME!" Wang Tianhe cried pitifully. From the waist down, his body no longer existed. His intestines leaked from the hole in his waist like snakes jumping out of a can.

"BRAT, YOU DARE?!"

Wang Chen didn't hold anything back. This time, he charged with the true power of a 4th class existence.

Damien still gazed at his incoming figure placidly. 'I can see him.'

Although it was blurry, he could still read his opponent's movements. He could read the movement of a genuine 4th class existence. If he wanted to, he could even dodge the incoming strike with relative ease, but there was no need to show all his cards at the moment.

After all, he had no way of knowing whether these traitors could contact the enemy, making them aware of his strength. Damien didn't have any desire to die early because the Nox became aware of the threat he would pose to them in the future.

"Old man, haven't you watched long enough? Do you plan on letting me die here?"

"Ohoho!" An intrigued laughter responded to his words. Wang Chen's momentum was immediately slowed. "How could I not enjoy the show? A certain rebellious disciple of mine was showing me how much he'd grown while he was gone. I couldn't just interrupt him, could I"

Pah!

Tian Yang's sagely form appeared in the air before Wang Chen. A light slap landed on the latter's head, forcing his body into the ground.

"Now, now. A fight between juniors is occurring, us old folk should just sit back and watch, shouldn't we?"

Wang Chen gritted his teeth. Out of all people, it had to be Tian Yang who stopped him. Whether in terms of status or power, he wasn't even close to matching up.

"Senior, your disciple is killing my son. How could this be called a mere spar?!" He still protested pitifully. He didn't care about face anymore.

Wang Tianhe was the hope of the Wang Clan. For their plans to proceed smoothly, he was integral.

Yet, he was about to die a dog's death.

Damien sneered. "Old fart, listen well. This is the fate of those who dare target my women."

Damien was done toying with his prey. The last demonstration should've been enough to warn those watching.

Bang!

Wang Tianhe's head exploded. All it took was a single slap.

"AHHHHHHH! MY SON!"

Wang Chen roared. Out of nowhere, 5 4th class existences appeared behind his back.

"Even if it's you, you will not be able to stop me today! That brat must die!" Wang Chen growled at Tian Yang.

Tian Yang smiled. "Brat, it seems you've angered him. What will you do now?"

Damien snorted. "Old man, you have eyes too, even if they aren't as good as mine. For these kinds of traitors, there is no mercy at all."

And just like with Wang Chen, 5 4th class existences appeared behind Damien's back.

Chapter 424 Dogs [2]

There were two things Damien learned through his altercation with Wang Chen.

Firstly, even someone at the 4th class who had received a power boost from the Nox wasn't able to perceive the Void Essence he had quietly injected into Wang Tianhe's body.

This meant that although he still had to hide his Void Physique publicly, using its abilities in a veiled manner was still viable unless he was facing a genuine Demigod.

Secondly, if a 4th class appeared out of thin air, nobody would question it even if they couldn't sense the mana fluctuations, even the more powerful 4th class existences around.

Firstly, this meant reaching 4th class allowed some kind of great maneuverability or power that Damien didn't know about yet. Something that could allow all 4th classes to move unseen. Secondly, it meant he could summon his 4th class helpers from the Sanctuary without fear of revealing its existence.

'Even if I reveal the fact that they're serving me here and now, it won't affect my future plans. After all, nobody would expect these exhaled 4th-class existences to be following me around endlessly. And even if they did, they wouldn't expect something like the Sanctuary to exist. Most likely, they'll plot while using some means to block the method by which Wang Chen's helpers arrived, which won't hinder me at all.'

Still, he might have to whip up a scheme or two to make it seem like his 4th class helpers had left his side in the future. Being underestimated made his life far easier, after all.

Damien's five subordinates looked around curiously.

"So this is the world outside the mountain range? It feels far easier to move around, and my power seems more fluid and easy to exert. However, the mana density is a bit..." the Fire Phoenix Matriarch commented lightly.

"Right. The mana density is poor to say the least. And the vitality of the earth is lacking as well. The only benefit is that the natural suppression of the mountain range is gone." The Ice Phoenix Matriarch agreed.

"Kid, you didn't just summon me for nothing, did you? I was busy teaching this old demon here a lesson." The White Dragon King spoke annoyedly.

Lucius scoffed. "Please. As if a mere lizard could harm me. You should be thanking him for saving your ass."

The last comment especially caused Damien to raise an eyebrow. "Father-in-Law, I didn't know you knew how to speak so crassly."

"Brat, my daughter isn't even your woman so why do you keep insisting on calling me father-in-law?!"

"Well, isn't it because it pisses you off so much? Your reactions are quite fun to watch, you know."

"Pfft! I know right! This old geezer is hilarious when he's angry!" The White Dragon King laughed rambunctiously.

Damien shook his head with a smile. "Anyway, you were right that I didn't call you out for nothing. Some old fart brought out 4th class existences to bully me. As my subordinates, how can you just stand still and watch?"

"Hmph! Since when we're we subordinates?" The Fire Phoenix Matriarch scoffed.

"Are you not?" Dameon quipped back.

"That's beside the point." The Fire Phoenix Matriarch coughed and looked away.

The White Dragon King rolled his eyes. "What we are doesn't matter. I finally have the chance to test the strength of those in the outside world, so why would I falter here? Brat, where are they?"

"Over there." Damien pointed at where Wang Chen and Tian Yang were standing.

"Ooooh! I call the old man!"

"That old man is my master. He'd probably beat your ass in seconds so I'd recommend not touching him."

"Tch. You're no fun. Fine then, it's those five weaklings standing behind the other weakling right? I don't know why you summoned all five of us. Just me is enough."

"No." A new voice entered the fray. It was Elvira, who had remained quiet until then. "Young Lord, please allow me to take care of them."

Damien raised his brow. "I can't say I don't understand your reasoning, but are you sure?"

Elvira cracked her knuckles. "Despite how I look, I'm not that much weaker than the White Dragon King. If we fought in physical strength alone, he'd only have a 20% chance of winning."

Damien's eyes widened. He looked at the White Dragon King for confirmation, only to see the latter turn his head away awkwardly.

"Brat, I'll warn you now. Even if she looks dainty and frail, don't let her fool you. This woman is a gorilla."

Elvira scoffed. "Since I have more important matters to take care of, I'll let it slide this time. When we get back, though, let's see how you run from me."

She vanished from her spot, reappearing behind one of Wang Chen's 4th class helpers. She grabbed the man by the top of his head and squeezed.

The other four sprung into action, but as if she was waiting for that moment, Elvira flicked her wrist. The earth was torn apart, giving way to massive vines that mirrored the ones Ruyue and Feng Qing'er had encountered in the Primordial Undying Realm.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The vines thrashed the four men, forcing them to go on the defensive. Elvira turned her attention back to the man in her grasp.

"Now, let's play, shall we?"

Boom!

A ferocious punch landed on his stomach, shooting him hundreds of meters into the air. Elvira's form flickered, leaving an afterimage as it appeared above him.

Bang!

Gripping her hands together as if she was going to hit a volleyball, Elvira slammed downward, causing the man's body to fold like an omelette as it shot down to the ground.

But just like before, Elvira didn't allow him to regain his bearings as he fell. She appeared next to him again, catching his neck and yanking him back, abruptly shifting his momentum and forcing his bones to collapse.

After that, what could only be called a one-sided beating occurred. Damien was able to truly understand how much of a gorilla woman Elvira was.

'How does she even hide such frightening strength in that tiny body?!' Damien wondered inwardly. But looking around, he realized something.

'Right, this is supposed to be a secret realm opening. My bad.'

"Hey, I know she can handle things alone, but I'd prefer if we could finish up as quickly as possible. I have to go attend to my wives, you know? I can't waste time on petty squabbles with these old geezers."

The White Dragon King grinned while Lucius rolled his eyes. The two Phoenix Matriarchs looked at the four men who were fending off Elvira's vines indifferently.

"Good!" The White Dragon King exclaimed. "I've been itching for a good fight!"

The four sprang into action. Flames and ice intertwined. Instead of repulsing each other, they actually mixed together to form an even deadlier attack.

The two men, even while being 4th classes, couldn't resist the onslaught of the two Phoenix Matriarchs working in tandem. Within ten minutes, only their charred and frozen corpses remained.

As for the White Dragon King, he went the pure physical strength route like Elvira. It seemed her display had invoked his competitive spirit. It was a comedic situation to Damien, but to his opponent, it was hell.

That 4th class was destined for death regardless, but somehow his death had become just as pitiful as the man Elvira was manhandling. The two of them didn't even have complete bodies by the time they died.

As for Lucius, his methods were far more elusive. Damien didn't understand exactly what he had done, but the corpse of the enemy he had taken on didn't have a single scratch on it.

'Even if he's at the entry-level of 4th class, that's only because his progress was stalled by the restrictions of the Primordial Undying Realm. It's obvious that the revenge-driven Lucius wouldn't allow such a setback to prevent him from getting stronger.' Damien realized.

'It seems I should stop looking down on him for being the weakest.'

What was supposed to be a riveting fight turned into a one-sided slaughter because of Damien's helpers. Those watching almost didn't believe their eyes, one could only imagine the shock Wang Chen received.

"Old fart, traitors like you have only a single fate waiting for you. Death without mercy. Whether it's you, your sons, the old ancestors of your clan, it doesn't matter. They'll all be wiped out the same way."

Wang Chen fell to the floor. Even until now, only his people and Damien knew what he meant when he kept calling them traitors. Damien didn't care to explain to insignificant people, so he never expanded on the topic.

But if he didn't use the power granted to him by the Nox, Wang Chen was well aware that he would die the same way his subordinates and son had.

'I don't want to die. Fuck the Wang Clan, fuck those so-called Lords who didn't even care to help me in such a dire situation. All that matters is that I live.'

To live even if it cost the lives of all he cared for. That was Wang Chen's resolve.

And as soon as he formed it, his body was coated in murky black mana.

Chapter 425 Empyrean Dragon Realm [1]

They often say that a tiger father doesn't raise a dog son, but there's another side to that saying. To raise a dog son, there must also be a dog father.

As inky black mana flared out and overtook Wang Chen's aura, this was the only thought that came to Damien's mind. To do such a thing was probably the stupidest course of action there was.

After all, they weren't in an isolated space, nor were the people involved in the current scuffles even close to the only ones around. For Wang Chen to openly flaunt his traitor status was worse than stupid.

The second that inky black mana appeared in the air, the expressions of those 4th class existences that were gathered simultaneously changed. Cold gazes congregated on Wang Chen.

And before he could even finish prepping whatever attack he was planning to pull, a horde of all-encompassing auras pressed down on his back and forced his knees to the ground.

"When the matter was a personal grudge, we had no right nor desire to intervene. However, Wang Chen, you have made a huge mistake this time."

A man who looked in his late 20s stepped into the air. His hair was so blonde it was closer to gold in color, and his eyes were a ruby red similar to Rose's. When Damien saw him, his instincts screamed danger.

'That is the Palace Master of the Jade Heavenly Palace. The current strongest active expert on the Cloud Plane.'

Tian Yang's mental transmission entered Damien's mind, causing his eyes to widen. He knew it was wrong to be fooled by looks after meeting people like Elvira and the Phoenix Matriarchs, these tens of thousands of year-old women who were still heaven-shaking beauties, but he still ended up making that mistake.

The Palace Master of the Jade Heavenly Palace. The first-ranked expert in the entirety of the Cloud Plane. He truly had an imposing air that matched those titles.

'Hm? Wait a second...didn't he say active experts?'

Damien noticed the discrepancy in Tian Yang's words, glaring at the latter suspiciously.

'And do you count as an active expert or not?'

Tian Yang smirked. 'This old man has long retired from the scene. If not, how could an insolent brat like you manage to become my disciple?'

'Tch. Pretentious old man, don't think I don't know how much you wanted to teach me. You can pretend all you want, but you'll never fool me.'

'Whatever you say.' Tian Yang rolled his eyes.

While the two were conversing, the Palace Master of the Jade Heavenly Palace arrived before Wang Chen.

Wang Chen felt a cold sweat pouring down his back.

"You, as a reputable leader of our Central Continent, have sold your soul to the enemy. You have become a traitor to all humanity. Do you understand the consequences of what you've done?" The Palace Master spoke slowly.

Wang Chen gritted his teeth, but didn't respond. He was trying hard to rouse his mana and flee, but it wasn't just the Palace Master who was pressuring him. He was facing the joint pressure of tens of existences that surpassed his level. Even his mana was moving sluggishly.

The Palace Master gave him a sideways glance. "It seems you have no intention to speak. Very well, I also do not have a habit of negotiating with traitors."

"I, Shangguan Yu, as the Palace Master of the Jade Heavenly Palace, shall execute the authority brought about by my position. Today, I shall sentence this traitor and everyone related to him to death! Do not leave a single one behind, whether it be a dog or a chicken, kill them all!"

""Yes, Palace Master!""

An array of shouts rang out. A slaughter began. No matter where they tried to run, those geniuses and elders of the Wang Clan were exterminated rapidly under the mass of assailants that followed the Palace Master's orders.

Shangguan Yu swiped his hand down casually, severing Wang Chen's head like he was killing a bug. It was effortless.

"Send word back to the sect. A force shall be created for the sake of wiping this scourge off of our Cloud Plane. The main family, branch families, anyone with even a drop of Wang blood inside their bodies, slaughter them all."

"Yes, Palace Master." The disciple next to him responded promptly and carried out his orders. Damien watched the whole show play out from the sidelines.

This was the truth of the world. Even though he felt it was a bit much to annihilate any and everyone related to the Wang Family, he could also understand why it was done.

It was just as he said. There was no mercy for traitors.

Damien glanced at the Palace Master.

[All-Seeing Eyes have been activated.]

[Status]

Shangguan Yu

'Hm?'

That was all he could say. But it wasn't like the Palace Master's name was helpful information at all, since the latter had already declared it only a few moments prior.

"What an interesting boy."

Damien looked up in shock, only to find those ruby-red eyes and that golden hair only inches away from his face.

His eyes hardened as he backed away. 'His reputation isn't groundless at all. This kind of power isn't something I can hope to see through at my level. He's a completely different breed compared to Wang Chen.'

"Now, now. How can you run away at a time like this? If you want to invade someone else's privacy, shouldn't you be prepared to have the same done to you?"

Damien clicked his tongue. "Yeah, my bad. But still, what's the harm in wanting to see how high the wall I need to climb is?"

"Oho? Tian Yang, you've truly found yourself an interesting disciple."

"Hahahaha! Isn't he? This brat has quite the annoying personality, but his talent is still amazing nonetheless." Tian Yang replied.

Damien rolled his eyes and teleported away, arriving next to Rose once more. He wanted nothing to do with Shangguan Yu.

That guy was an old fox on the level of Tian Yang. He didn't like the feeling of having to constantly have his guard up about what he did or said, lest it be used against him at a later time.

'I get the feeling that he's scheming something. Not something related to me or this event at all, just the fact that he's scheming something.'

It wasn't even a danger sense. Shangguan Yu just felt like someone whose every word was meant to lure you deeper into a trap, so that one day you'd be unable to escape his grasp.

It was a terrifying kind of person to have as an enemy, but an incredibly useful kind as an ally. Though, even as an ally, you'd always be forced to have your guard up.

'I can't see through him at all, whether it be his status or mana. Let's just hope he's an ally. If worst comes to worst, I'm not the one who has to deal with him. I don't have the power to meddle in that level of affairs.'

Damien shook off his thoughts. Since Tian Yang was occupying Shangguan Yu, he didn't have to worry about interacting with that old fox. It meant he could go back to focusing on what he actually came here for.

"My lovely wife, how was it? Your husband is way better than you expected, isn't he?" Damien stuck out his chest with pride.

Rose giggled. "Indeed, my dear husband has become an even greater man than he once was. How can I not be proud to be his wife?"

She latched into his arm with a smile. Even though their romantic moment had been interrupted, this kind of casual interaction was just as good. She simply wanted to savor the fact that they were back together.

But she suddenly remembered something. "Ah, how rude of me! I was so immersed in you that I forgot to greet the one you came with. So, is she my new sister?"

"Cough...perhaps..." Damien averted his eyes.

"Hm, hm..." Rose hummed contemplatively. "If it's her body, then she definitely meets the standard. As for her personality, I'll need to experience it to see for myself. Dear husband, how about you leave us alone for a bit so I can get to know my new sister better?"

Damien felt cold sweat leaking down his back. He felt that he was probably in a scarier situation than Wang Chen was before he got executed a bit ago.

But he couldn't do anything besides wish Ruyue and leave. Getting involved in this matter would just be asking for his death.

Instead, he turned his attention elsewhere. There was one more reunion he had been wanting to have.

Looking at the blue-haired beauty among the sea of fairies from the Supreme Fairy Paradise, he smiled.

But at that moment, a sudden disturbance took place in the mana in the atmosphere.

Nobody knew who said it, but as soon as the words came out, the previous tense and excited atmosphere returned in an instant. The matters of Damien and the Wang Clan left their minds entirely.

"The Empyrean Dragon Realm is opening!"

Chapter 426 Empyrean Dragon Realm [2]

Damien sighed at the unfortunate timing, but he figured it'd be weirder if the Empyrean Dragon Realm didn't open at a time like this.

After all, with how much rampant mana had been spread into the atmosphere during the previous matter with the Wang Clan, it was only natural that a mana-reactive gate like a secret realm entrance would be aroused.

Wild spatial fluctuations started to spread from the middle of the crowd. But since most people weren't skilled enough to feel those fluctuations, they weren't able to move away in time.

Although the geniuses from major powers were warned by their elders and hence left the area, many rogue cultivators were directly sucked into the forming spatial rift that had spawned.

Damien glanced at them through the folds of space. A few hundred had been sucked in, but only tens of them survived and successfully entered the secret realm. The others were either torn apart and killed by the unstable space or teleported randomly across the Central Continent.

'Haa, I guess I can consider myself lucky to be a spatial cultivator. Even if a situation like this occurs, nothing will happen to me.'

Soon, the spatial rift stabilized. The entrance to the secret realm truly opened, and had become safe enough for those who had come for it to flood into it.

Damien looked around, spotting Long Chen in the crowd. When he did, he couldn't help but grin.

'Little brat, it seems you've been busy while I was away. Look at you moving around with a beauty in each arm. And isn't that your master? I can't believe you had the gall to bag a Sect Elder.'

Damien's mental transmission entered Long Chen's head, almost causing him to stumble.

'I see you are just as crass as always. Hypocritical, too. Why didn't you tell me that the two Heavenly Fairies of the Supreme Fairy Paradise were your women? Not to mention the little princess of the Xue Clan. I thought I had a knack for making enemies, but now that I see you I don't dare to say I'm the best at it.'

'Enemies or stepping stones, it hasn't yet been decided what their position will be. Anyway, get in there and become more powerful. Next time we fight, the punishment will be calling me Boss for the rest of your life.'

Long Chen grinned wolfishly. 'Tch. Someone like Wang Tianhe doesn't represent my fighting prowess. If you think you can manhandle me like you did to him, then you're in for a great surprise when you taste my blade.'

Damien returned the same ferocious smile. 'Good! That's the kind of confidence any subordinate of mine should have. Very well then, I look forward to our meeting in the secret realm. Let's try not to kill each other this time though, okay?'

Long Chen gave one final nod before jumping into the secret realm entrance with the beauty by his side. Damien didn't know who she was, but considering how the other scions looked at her, she must've been someone with high status.

As for Xiao Xun, as an Elder of the Celestial Star Palace, let alone entering the secret realm, she couldn't even publicly show too much affection for Long Chen. If they didn't have something like Damien's trained eye, or Rose's insane ability, nobody would be able to tell the true nature of their relationship.

After his greeting to Long Chen, Damien's gaze turned towards a certain group of individuals with snow-white hair. Looking at them, he could only feel disdain in his heart.

'Isn't this a great way to start Ruyue's revenge against the Xue Clan? The fact that her most earnest wish is to kill the man who claims to be her father, what kind of hellish treatment did they put her through? Let's see how many of your geniuses can come out of this expedition alive.'

Finally, his gaze turned back to Elena. Although their reunion and the talk they needed to have couldn't happen because of the secret realm opening, it was simply delayed instead of cancelled. He had no plans of letting go of this opportunity.

He turned to Rose and Ruyue, who both nodded to him with smiles on their faces. It seemed the two of them were planning to explore the secret realm together as well.

Conveniently, or should he say, purposefully, giving him an opportunity to be alone with Elena.

He was truly grateful to have such understanding women. He once again resolved himself to reciprocate their trust in him a hundredfold and flashed away, appearing next to Elena.

He held his hand out in an exaggerated manner. "Now then, shall we go?"

Elena looked at him up and down. Even though he's changed so much in the time they were apart, both when he was pushed into the dungeon and on their time in the Cloud Plane, the Damien she knew and the one she had fallen so head over heels for was still present somewhere in there.

Just the fact that he had finally come to her earnestly like this was enough to affirm her of this fact.

She grabbed his outstretched hand gracefully. "With such an amazing guide leading me, how could I refuse?"

The two of them flashed away. Damien entered the chaotic space of the spatial rift with Elena's hand in his.

'Interesting...my control over Dimensional Magic has improved to such a point.'

Since the previous spatial rift he entered was conjured by a Demigod, he didn't notice it. But now, his improvement was basically shoving itself in his face to see.

Within the chaotic space, he could see the outline of the entire Empyrean Dragon Sect. The spatial transmission formation had been laid out to cover the entire sect and transport them in randomly, but he didn't have to rely on such chance.

He felt how easy it was to wade through normal space when he left the 3000 Beast Mountain Range. With this kind of ability, choosing where the spatial transmission formation would spit them out was a piece of cake.

'Even then, I can't really tell which areas will be more beneficial compared to others. Since this time, I'm focusing on Elena's improvement rather than my own, I should just drop us somewhere near the main sect and allow fate to do the rest.'

He imprinted the map of the Empyrean Dragon Sect that he was seeing into his head. It would be useful later when he had to go to the sect's center to contact the World Core. After he was finished, he chose a relatively inconspicuous area and allowed the spatial transmission formation to do the rest.

The duo soon appeared in the middle of a small forest. It was just a normal forest, with average-sized trees and no beasts inhabiting it. But it was quite a refreshing sight to Damien, who had become so used to trees that were multiple kilometers in height.

Although the process of choosing a destination and memorizing the map took a decent amount of time, to Elena, it was just an instant. In the chaotic space, she couldn't feel the flow of time, nor could she understand what was happening. In the eyes of someone without a spatial affinity, the chaotic space was just an expanse of blackness, no different from flowing one's eyes.

But now that they touched ground again, she opened her eyes and spread her awareness, immediately putting up her guard.

Damien smiled. 'Alright. This is her adventure after all. I'll just take the back seat and act only when I'm needed. Other than that, simply enjoying her company is enough.'

The Empyrean Dragon Realm opening that had once caused him to feel so much excitement, to think that only a year later it'd be something he considered a walk in the park. His rate of improvement was shocking to say the least.

But he didn't mind it. 'If it's date locations we're talking about, what could be better than this?'

He grabbed Elena's hand once again and flashed away. If this was their first date, he'd make sure it was one she'd remember for the rest of their lives.

Chapter 427 Elena [1]

"So, where are we headed?"

Damien leisurely strolled through the small and peaceful forest while looking at Elena's back. His hands were intertwined behind his head, and if he knew how to whistle, he'd be doing that as well.

It was times like these when he missed his old clothes from Apeiron. Having pockets to dip his hands into would truly enhance his relaxation, but unfortunately, they had all been destroyed in one way or another, leaving him with only the Celestial Star Palace robes he was currently donning.

"How am I supposed to know that? For now, we should just figure out where we are and act accordingly. The Sect Master provided me with a map of the explored portions of the Empyrean Dragon Sect, so locating our position shouldn't be too hard." Elena spoke back in a perfunctory manner.

She didn't know why she was acting like this. Just like Rose had done less than an hour prior, she wanted to latch onto Damien and pour out her feelings, but she couldn't bring herself to do so.

It couldn't be helped. Just as much as she loved him, she resented him as well. The way he had treated her once they finally reunited, and how much his treatment of her worsened after that point...even before he had fallen, he had neglected her feelings for so many years.

It would've been more surprising if she didn't bear any grudges against him.

But it was more of a subconscious thing. Until this moment finally came when the two of them were alone together, even she didn't realize how deep of a grudge she was carrying. And so, she kept her words concise and to the point, so that she wouldn't have to deal with her inner struggle so much.

Damien smiled wryly at her behavior. It wasn't the first time he had tried to strike up a conversation since they started walking. It has already been a few hours, but all he got were business talks instead of anything meaningful.

'This is even harder than trying to talk to Lunaria.' He muttered inwardly. When it was Lunaria Snow, he could simply ignore her indifferent attitude because he didn't care enough for her to actually try to break her shell.

But it was different for Elena. Unlike Lunaria's naturally indifferent demeanor, Elena was acting this way because of his own mistakes. He didn't blame her at all for it, and he knew that giving up wasn't an option unless he wanted their relationship to continue its regression.

"Aiii, all this walking is starting to get boring. How long do we even have in this secret realm?"

Elena rolled her eyes. "Did they not tell you anything at the Celestial Star Palace?"

"Hm? Oh, I guess it's natural you don't know. I haven't been to that place in, like, a year and a half or so? It may be longer. Back when I left, there were still 9 months left until this secret realm opened, so the old man didn't bother with too much explanation."

Elena massaged her temples with a light frown on her face. The words Damien just said literally made no sense. The chronology was totally off. And seeing the confident smirk on his face, Elena knew he wasn't just saying random words to get her attention.

There was a story behind the messed up time he spoke of, and he was baiting her to ask about it.

'H-hmph! I won't crack with so little resistance.' She consoled herself inwardly, trying to quell her curiosity. She turned her attention to the map that appeared in her hand instead, trying to understand their location.

Damien peaked his head over her shoulder curiously. "I see, I see. It's not a bad map. Since this secret realm opens far more frequently than the one I just came out of, there's a lot more information on it. Plus, it won't be involved in so much bullshit so it's a lot safer. But, where we are now isn't marked on that map."

Elena's frown deepened. 'Endure. I must endure.'

"Anyway, I wonder if this place can match up to that one. If it's not, I guess I'll just have to finish my business here and then leave. Oh, but I don't know how long it'll take for the exit to appear. What a shame to be uninformed. If only there was someone around who could help me."

Elena's fuse broke. "Argh! Damn bastard, it's only a week, so you don't have to worry so much! Also, since when did you get so talkative? If you want to say something, just say it!"

Damien smirked triumphantly. "Hoohoo! Finally, the ice queen has lowered her guard! I won't waste the opportunity I've earned myself!"

"What ice queen? I'm just...just focused on the task ahead! Right, that's it." Elena countered.

"Oh? And what task might that be? I'm sure I already told you that this place isn't marked on that map."

"And how would you know that?"

"Well, because I'm the one who dropped us here. Why else?"

Elena didn't know when the last time she had such a strong urge to bite someone was. Since when did this bastard get so used to saying nonsensical things like they were normal?

"Fine, since you're the expert, why don't you tell me? Where exactly are we?"

"Oh? You're finally interested in what I have to say? But I'll have you know, that information won't be free."

"And what exactly should I pay you with? You don't seem like the type that's obsessed with money."

"Isn't that obvious? Pay me with time."

"Time?"

"That's right. For every piece of help you gain from me, I get an hour of your time. When it's over, you have to spend that much time with me uninterrupted."

Elena glanced at him sideways. Things weren't progressing how she thought they were supposed to.

'Isn't he just...asking me out?'

The thought felt even more nonsensical than Damien's recent behavior, considering how he'd been treating her for so long, but when she remembered what that white-haired girl had told her when they were outside, she couldn't just dismiss the idea anymore.

'Is he being shameless or romantic right now? Either way, it's not working too well for him...'

Elena almost laughed at his attempts. When she glanced over, she noticed Damien wasn't looking at her anymore. His face was turned to the side, a faint trace of rosiness rising on his cheeks.

'Dammit, I'm trying my hardest not to cringe right now. Where did these bullshit lines even come from, and who put them in my mouth?! I swear when I find that bastard I'll...'

"Pfft! Hahahahaha!"

Elena burst out laughing, unable to control it anymore. She clutched her stomach and fell to her knees. It was too much to continue walking when she was laughing so hard.

"Oi! Who the hell do you think you're laughing at?!" Damien shot in embarrassment.

"Who else is here besides me and you, dumbass? Pfft...! 'For every question I answer, I want you to spend an hour of time on me.' Ahahahahaha!"

p "That's it. I swear that if I don't get my revenge today, my name isn't Damien Void!"

"But your name really isn't Damien Void. Last time I checked, wasn't your name changed to Cringelord?"

"Oh, so that's how you want to play, huh. I see, I see. Then, I have no choice."

Damien raised his hands and wiggled his fingers. An evil smile crept up his face.

Without warning, he pounced on the fallen Elena, tackling her to the floor and tickling her sides.

"You fool! How dare you taunt someone who knows your greatest weakness!" He laughed maniacally as he continued tickling. From when they had first met until the day he had become trapped in the dungeon, Elena had never been able to overcome this weakness of hers.

It was the same reason why she rarely ever won an argument against him, since he had the ultimate trump card.

Elena writhed on the ground, trying to escape his tickling. Although she looked like she was fated to lose, she had many years of planning to come up with countermeasures against him.

Now, she was prepared.

Chapter 428 Elena [2]

Elena's figure turned into a flash of light, reappearing several meters away and escaping Damien's clutches.

"Don't think...you can...stop me so easily...!" She growled between breaths. Before Damien could take her by surprise again, she immediately began her counterattack.

Her body bent back slightly, her left hand covered her face, and her right arm extended until it was pointing at the sky.

"Heed my call, O spirit of the world! For I have been named by the Void, I am the darkness itself! None shall stand in the way of my reign!"

Damien's face paled. "No...anything but this..." he backed away in fear.

Elena grinned. "Ah! The God of Destruction's left eye, and the Flames of Darkness I have sealed within my arm! They are reacting to an unknown presence! You, assassins who have come to fell me, reveal yourselves!"

Damien closed his ears. "Stop! Stop! Stop! No more, I beg you!"

Elena's grin widened. "Oh, my! What happened to you? Did you not like my little play?"

"You...how did you find out about that?" Damien stuttered.

"Kekekeke! Those assassins you were talking about, who do you think was actually there?"

Damien's face paled even further. A repressed memory appeared in his mind.

It was a young Damien, desperately attempting to explain himself to an equally young Elena who, strangely enough, had the same smirk on her face as the one in front of him.

"Vile. Truly vile." Damien shook his head. His eyes turned cold. "You know too much. My dark history...can never be revealed to the world."

He disappeared from his position, appearing in front of Elena before she could react and grabbing her arms, holding them above her head and pinning her to a nearby tree.

"Forgive me. I can't allow Rose or Ruyue to ever find about about the things you know. I have to shut you up here."

Damien went to deliver the final blow. There was a single spot on Elena's body that reacted even worse than it did when he tickled her sides. With a single poke, she would become completely incapacitated.

He grinned wildly and went in for the attack. But before he could finish, he was forced to abruptly stop himself.

"...kuhum...um, you aren't a kid anymore, huh..." He muttered awkwardly. He, of course, remembered the position of Elena's weak spot. It was just, the area that used to be a washboard had now become a voluptuous pair of breasts.

Elena's face reddened in embarrassment. She looked down at Damien's finger, which was hovering over the position of one of her most sensitive places.

"You...don't tell me you're scared?"

She didn't know where the words came from. She almost wanted to punch herself for saying them. After all, wasn't she supposed to be giving him the silent treatment?

But seeing him hesitate like this, she felt a sort of competitive urge rising within her that she couldn't suppress.

Damien, however, was feeling a completely different kind of urge. When he heard her words, he suddenly became aware of how provocative their current position was.

In a forest where there was only them alone, he had her pinned to a tree, only a few inches separating them. His hand was hovering so close to her towering peaks that if a sudden wind blew, he'd end up plunging it into that soft pillow of flesh.

"Scared? Why would I be scared? I just don't think you'll be able to take it."

The words that came out of his mouth matched her provocation. In the same way she couldn't stop herself, nor could he. This was how their relationship had always been. Once provoked, they would fight until one of them surrendered.

It was just...the current fight was completely unlike any of the other ones they'd had.

Damien looked down into Elena's eyes. That ocean-blue color seemed to shine in the sunlight above them.

"H-hmph!" She snorted. "If you're scared, just admit it. I won't lose to you this time."

He was at a loss for words. Should he fall for her provocation or should he maintain his distance? He really couldn't decide.

His goal when he entered this secret realm with Elena was to hash out all their previous problems and start anew. He wanted them to have a proper conversation about their past behavior and learn how to proceed from now on.

But now, it seemed that step had been entirely skipped. Judging from her behavior, he knew exactly what she wanted. And it wasn't like he didn't want it either.

But that conversation was still something that needed to happen at some point. So that they could properly move on, they needed to settle their past.

But as he was thinking, he suddenly felt something press into his outstretched hand. Unexpectedly, Elena had made the first move.

She shifted her body forward and filled the gap herself, not waiting for him to take action. When he looked back into her eyes, he could see the defiance hidden within.

He smiled wryly to himself. 'I see. Somewhere inside, I was still treating her as just a childhood friend. I wasn't quite able to overcome that barrier and take the next step, even if it was something I desired.'

But he has gone through too much to hesitate here. He had already resolved himself to take her as his woman, and he had already resolved himself to give her everything she wanted to make up for his faults in the past.

His hand no longer stayed idle. If she wanted to deliver herself to him, then he'd happily accept.

"Mmm..." Elena let out a quiet moan.

He moved slowly. It wasn't like he had experience doing such a thing before. Even when he had felt Rose's or Ruyue's breasts in the past, it had been wholly by accident.

He lightly squeezed the pillowy mound in his hand, reveling in the sensation it gave. He kneaded it just as gently. Within seconds, he could feel a faint protrusion brushing against his palm.

"Ahh~"

If you put a joystick in front of a man, it was his instinct to play with it. And when such a thing happened to Damien, he followed that instinct.

But, it was a little too hard to grasp it as it was now.

He moved his hand away and let it snake into Elena's robes. The feeling of her skin on his hand was entirely different than the sensation from before.

From her waist to her back, his hand took its time feeling her up until it reached a certain point on her upper back. Feeling the latch there, he fondled with it until it came undone.

"Ah..."

Elena gasped in surprise. She didn't know how the situation had turned out like this, but she didn't plan to stop it. Just as he enjoyed the sensation of her skin on his hand, she couldn't get enough of the euphoria she felt when he touched her.

Her chest felt breezy. Her bra dropped to the ground. But that breezy feeling didn't last long. A large and warm hand soon enveloped her freed breast, kneading it with care as if it was a priceless treasure.

"Ahhh~"

Damien's fingers pinched that bright pink cherry he had felt before. Now that there were no obstructions in his way, he felt like he had a lot more freedom in his movements.

But things were going too slow. Even until now, he couldn't see what he had been feeling all this time.

He removed his hand from pinning Elena's and grabbed the hem of her robe. And without suspense, the cloth covering her upper body gently fell around her waist.

Chapter 429 Elena [3]

"Wow..."

Damien didn't know what he was expecting, but when Elena's body was revealed in front of his eyes, he was breathless.

Her breasts weren't overly big, but he was always a believer that shape mattered more than size. Her breasts perfectly fit into his hands as if they were made for him from the beginning, so he had not a single thing to complain about.

His eyes were locked on their position. Feeling the heat in his gaze, Elena shyly brought her arms up to cover her exposed chest. It of course made her happy how invested Damien seemed to be in her body, but it was still shameful to be stared at so blatantly.

Damien's gaze panned down. Unfortunately, though, he had only undone the top portion of her robes, so the view below her toned stomach was blocked from his eyes. But what he was seeing now was more than he had ever thought he'd see from her.

A flood of memories inadvertently rushed through his mind. From the day he had met Elena to the day he had fallen into the dungeon. The countless memories they shared together and the moments when they had relied on nobody but each other.

He remembered the way she used to gaze at him, the way he ignored that gaze because he was too focused on the problems at hand. He wanted to go back in time and beat the shit out of his younger self for refusing a woman like Elena.

But the past was the past. His hand moved to her cheek as he stared into her eyes. They may not have been special in the same way Rose's or Ruyue's eyes were, but they were truly beautiful nonetheless.

"You...are you sure you want to do this?" He couldn't help but ask.

Looking at him, Elena smiled gently. Even in this kind of situation, he was showing so much consideration for her. She was heartened by it, but she was also a bit saddened that he was hesitating.

But if that was his feeling, it just meant that she needed to further prove her determination. She threw her arms around his neck and pulled him closer, clumsily planting her lips onto his.

Her first kiss. Just like that, it was gone.

Her movements were sloppy. She had never done anything like this before, and the things she had seen online were of no help in this situation.

Feeling the light tremble in her lips as she tried to lead, Damien understood that he could no longer hesitate. He immediately took control of the situation.

He led her through the process, slowly getting her acclimated to the feeling of her lips on his. Once she became more comfortable, he snaked his tongue into her mouth and gently pried open her teeth.

"Mm...!"

Elena made a sound of surprise, inadvertently giving in to his prodding. His tongue slid through the gap and intertwined with her own.

His hands didn't stay idle either. As Elena became more used to their kissing routine, he trailed his hand up her waist and once again began playing with her breasts, stimulating those pink protrusions whenever he got the chance.

"Mmm~"

Her continuous moans reverberated in his mouth as they kissed, making him want to hear them endlessly. His unoccupied hand soon traveled down past her waistline and took the opportunity to fondle her pliant ass.

"Mhmm~!"

Elena was almost overwhelmed by the sudden appearance of new stimulation. Being attacked on three sides at the same time, her innocence towards these kinds of matters began to show through.

But no matter what Damien did, she didn't reject. Even as his hand snuck into her panties and touched her directly, she only moaned harder to show her satisfaction.

Damien felt incredibly lucky that Elena was a novice like himself. Although she didn't notice it, his movements were extremely clumsy.

His member was rock hard already, threatening to burst out of his pants from the second this situation had started. Now that they were this far, he was infinitely close to embarrassing himself even though they hadn't arrived at the main course yet.

It seemed his hands couldn't stay still any longer. His finger slipped into Elena's sacred cave from the back, instantly taking their current activities to the next level.

"Ahhh~"

Elena separated her mouth from his and let out a heavenly moan. With the sudden intrusion on her most private area, she could no longer hold herself back.

But that moan...it snapped the last string of reasoning remaining in Damien's head. The second he heard it, the pair vanished from the secret realm where they had once been.

They reappeared in the Sanctuary, a hidden area of it that Damien had separated for his personal use.

When they landed, he had already dropped them in a position where he was on top of Elena, her back pressed against the ground.

He undressed her lower half immediately. But even as he did so, Elena did the same to him.

His body which had been forged and reconstructed countless times appeared before her eyes. His muscles were perfectly toned, not being overly large but carrying an undeniable amount of power within them.

Even from the day Damien had left the dungeon, his body had been nearing perfection in appearance. Now that he had been tempered by the Primordial Undying Tree, amongst many other lesser temperings, it was even more so at that level.

Elena's breaths became short and ragged as she ran her hands across his body. Damien wasn't any better. When Elena's gaze panned down, she could clearly see the raging dragon that was desperately trying to break free of its cage.

"Ahhh~!"

She let out a surprised moan. Before she realized it, Damien had once again continued his assault. His fingers were attacking her sacred cave aggressively, while his mouth was planted on one of her rosy buds.

Elena was overwhelmed by pleasure. The only thing she could do was wrap her arms around his head and bring him closer to her breasts, heightening the amount of pleasure she felt even further.

But this kind of pleasure...it had made Elena forget that it was her first time partaking in such activities. As if it had been suppressed for far too long, a dam broke within her.

"Ahhhhh~!"

A sudden sense of euphoria made her feel like she was floating on clouds. Her back arched, a piercing moan left her mouth, and a stream of clear liquid flowed from her sacred cave. Her mind left her body in that instant, dancing in the heavens alongside spirits and angels.

As she came down from the first climax she'd ever had in her life, only the sound of the two's rugged breathing filled the space they were in. They looked into each other's eyes, clearly seeing the desire they had for each other.

Should they stop, or should they continue? The question that both of them had asked themselves countless times before this point wasn't even in their minds anymore.

The border between friends and lovers, the one that had been plaguing their relationship for so long, it had been broken in a single instant.

Damien's head dropped, his lips once again meeting hers. His dragon was finally let free of the final barrier blocking its path.

Their lower bodies rubbed against each other ceaselessly. Until this point, Damien had only been providing pleasure without receiving it. Now that he was, it was a completely different type of heaven.

And after so much time spent in preparation, there was no more need to hold back. His dragon aligned with the entrance of Elena's sacred cave. And with one final push, it broke the last barrier that prevented its entry.

Within a hidden area of the Sanctuary, where none would ever reach but the two of them, only a woman's cries of pleasure and a man's heavy grunts could be heard for many hours to come.

Chapter 430 Elena [4]

The pitter-patter of water droplets impacting the ground illuminated the otherwise quiet atmosphere. In this place where even the sun couldn't reach, Damien stood under the falling water and washed his naked body.

"Haa..." he sighed lightly as he brushed his hands through his hair. The events of the previous night replayed in his head.

'I lost it.'

It wasn't like he put too much value in his chastity. As a man who already has three women accompanying him by his side, losing it was something that was bound to happen eventually.

It was just, the suddenness by which it happened left him in a state of shock. He almost couldn't believe that it had actually occurred.

But when he turned his gaze and looked through the clear partition separating the bathroom from the bedroom and saw Elena's naked form sleeping peacefully there, he couldn't find any way to deny it.

'To think my first was Elena. Can this be considered fate? Elena was my first love, and the first to love me. Even if our romance was stalled for a while, everything still came around full circle.'

It truly was a strange twist of fate. He once again felt disbelief at the whole situation.

But at the same time, a sense of guilt overwhelmed his mind.

'Rose...'

She was his first wife. She was the one who brought humanity and comfort back to his life when he was just a broken man who had escaped the dungeon.

If it wasn't for her consent, he would have never even dared to have thoughts about forming a harem. The reason Elena and Ruyue had been allowed into his life was her contribution.

So, shouldn't his virginity have been rightfully hers? As a minimum courtesy towards this woman who had done so much for him, he should at least show that much sincerity, right?

Yet, today he had even ruined that. His heart felt heavy thinking about it.

'Although I feel guilt towards Rose, I don't regret my actions at all. What a strange feeling.'

His heart was torn between these two women whom he equally loved. As it turned out, loving multiple women at once had this kind of downside.

'Well, it's no use thinking about it now. I'll be meeting Rose once I finish up with the World Core, so I can take my time to make it up to her. Right now, I should focus on what's in front of me.'

He poured mana into a slab on the wall next to him, causing the downpour of water to cease. Void Flames lit aflame his body soon after, evaporating the remaining water droplets on his skin.

He opened the door and left the bathroom, silently approaching the bed and crawling onto it, being careful not to disturb Elena's sleep.

"Mm..."

Elena muttered in her sleep. As if sensing his arrival, she shifted her position and straddled his body.

"This girl is going to be the death of me." He muttered. It had to be known that the two of them were still butt naked.

Her exposed breasts rubbed against his chest, those pink cherries extending from the stimulation. Her cave down below was rubbing against his thigh as well, giving his little brother no other choice but to stand up.

'Tch! Suppressing my libido for so many years really made it hard to control once I let it loose. One night's worth of fun really wasn't enough.'

His arm wrapped around Elena's waist and moved up. As he sank into thought, he unconsciously began fondling her breasts.

It really couldn't be helped. They fit so perfectly in his hand, he couldn't stop himself from playing with them. Besides, the sensation he got when he did so was so wonderful, why would he ever wish to stop?

"Mm..."

Elena muttered once again as she squirmed. Her body began rubbing against his at an increasing pace. Her lower body was especially active, her juicy thighs targeting his little brother as they rushed back and forth.

'Oh shit...it was her first time but it seems it turned her into a vixen.'

Damien groaned in pleasure. His hand moved away from Elena's breast and started playing with her sacred garden. He started his counterattack.

"Mmm~"

Elena moaned lightly. Her eyelids fluttered due to the pleasure.

'Still want to pretend? Okay then, let's see how much longer you can pretend.'

Since she was awake, Damien saw no reason to hold back. He flipped over and positioned himself on top of her, his mouth moving to her left breast. Meanwhile, he kept her right breast company with his unoccupied hand.

"Ahhhh~!"

Another three-pronged assault. Both breasts and her sacred cave were being attacked at the same time. Her eyes shot open and her back arched as she reveled in the pleasure she was feeling.

"Finally showing your true colors? Who knew you'd be so naughty under that shy facade." Damien said jokingly as he removed his mouth from her nipple.

Elena rolled her eyes in response. "Since when was I putting on a shy facade? It couldn't be helped since yesterday was my first time, but don't think I'll be the same today."

"Oho? Is that a challenge I'm hearing?"

"Do you dare take it? I won't go easy on you."

"Ha! You won't go easy on me? I was about to say the same thing to you!"

Not waiting for him to speak any further, Elena grabbed his head and pulled it towards herself, fiercely kissing him. She straddled his waist and flipped over, changing their position so that she was on top.

"Last night, you played with me to your heart's content. Don't you think it's my turn now?"

Her hand snaked down his toned abs, reaching behind her and gently grabbing the raging dragon that was poking at her butt.

"This fellow doesn't seem tired at all even after all the work he put in yesterday. Let's see how I punish him for his misbehavior."

Elena turned around with her head facing Damien's rod. Damien, on the other hand, suddenly found a dripping cave hovering over his face.

"Hahaha! If you're offering me such an enticing meal in the morning, I don't dare reject. Well then, it's time to dig in!"

Damien lifted his upper body off the bed and plunged his face into Elena's enrapturing flower. At the same time, Elena's head moved down, taking Damien's dragon into her mouth.

Just as before, they were both new to the act they were currently engaging in. But, their competitive spirits flared as they began to feel pleasure from each other's touch. And this competitive spirit only made them improve at an astonishing rate.

Their activities continued, with neither of them willing to back down. As they did, the scale of their game increased continuously.

From the bed to the floor, to the walls, to the shower, there wasn't a single place in the small hidden room that wasn't stained by their pleasure-filled auras.

And as if they had completely forgotten about the Empyrean Dragon Realm that they had originally come for, they spent a whole second day drowning in each other's bodies.

It seemed that their sensual competition wouldn't be ending any time soon.