

## Void 44

### Chapter 44

By the time Damien woke up, the sun had already set. His eyes fluttered open and he realized he was resting on Zara, who had returned a few hours ago, rather than collapsed on the floor.

He learned from Zara that she had returned to the spot he was training after she finished her hunt, only to find pure devastation. Luckily, they had their link. Through this, Zara was able to locate Damien before her panic set in and also feel that he was safe.

As she recounted the events on her side, Damien smiled wryly. The moments before he fainted started replaying in his head. For the first time in almost 3 years, he had been completely and utterly defeated. There wasn't even a chance for him to win.

He had truly been humbled by the experience. Recently, he had begun slightly looking down on this world, as the only person he'd met who could match him even slightly was Katherine, but today proved to him that there were many hidden masters around the world.

Only after ruminating over this point for a while did Damien realize the slight weight on his chest. Grabbing the object, Damien found the token and note that was left for him. His eyes slowly widened as he read its contents.

'No wonder that old man took an interest in me. It turns out he's one of the higher-ups in the academy. Who would've thought that the elders would have such power.'

His wry smile grew as he put on a set of clothes and hopped on Zara's back.

As they took off, they flew over the site of Damien's last battle, leaving him extremely shocked. When Zara had said devastation, he thought she meant the gashes and craters from his assault, but he was sorely mistaken.

The whole area was like a wasteland where life couldn't grow anymore and craters littered the cracked earth. The living greenery only existed over a kilometer away from the crux of the battle. 'What the hell happened here? Because I for sure didn't cause this.'

Damien remembered the final lightning attack the old man had sent at him, but his memory blacked out after that. 'Did I pass out and force him to save me from his attack? If he caused all this destruction on his own, how strong is he really?'

But he truly couldn't be mad at the old man's appearance. Even if he was slightly humbled, he improved immensely through the fight, if it could even be called that.

He was much closer to the fluidity he had been seeking, and he even felt that he had slightly touched on something greater. However, no matter how much he tried to remember what that something was, he couldn't.

Slowly but surely, Damien and Zara reached their abode in the academy. What greeted them was the yelling of a certain girl.

"Hey! Where have you been for the past 4 weeks? I've been looking all over for you!"

Once again Damien was forced to smile wryly. The original plan was to be back in a week, but both he and Zara had gotten too into their training and forgotten the flow of time.

“Yeah, sorry about that. We were out training. So? How does the little princess want us to compensate her?” Damien teased.

Katherine blushed at his form of address but knew he wasn't serious. “Hmph! You owe me dinner and conversation for the next week! If you skimp me on this I might just move in and annoy you to death!”

Damien shook his head. This girl seemed intent on intruding on his property no matter what. Even in that short amount of time they'd met each other before they went their separate ways to train, she had forced him to give her his address.

Walking into the house with Katherine and Zara, Damien immediately plopped down on the couch. “Fine fine you can do whatever you want, but if you want to eat here you're cooking. I don't have that kind of skill.”

Katherine rolled her eyes but still went to the kitchen. She had been trained in various arts by her family, not just in combat. Her cooking skills were excellent. As she started cooking, Damien decided to rant about the encounter he had while training.

“You wouldn't believe what happened to me earlier. I actually got beat up by some random old man who's apparently from the academy. He just showed up out of nowhere and started beating me up!”

Katherine's eyes widened. Someone capable of beating Damien up had to be immensely strong. However, she didn't voice this opinion as she had already gotten a taste of his shamelessness earlier.

“So Mr.Perfect finally got his ass handed to him, huh. How's it feel? You gonna cry?”

“Why would I cry?” Damien responded with a grin. “That old man gave me access to the spatial training ground as a reward. Even that crazy guy thinks I’m awesome, see?”

Damien pulled out the token he had been given and waved it in her face to brag. Although he’d been humbled, change wasn’t something that happened in an instant.

Besides, shamelessness was a personality trait he possessed even before his fall. It was ingrained in his bones.

Rolling her eyes, Katherine looked up at the token Damien was holding before her eyes widened in shock and she dropped the knife she was holding. “Y-y-you bastard! Tell me right now what did that old man look like?”

Damien was confused by the sudden change in her behavior but obediently described the man’s appearance.

“Hmm, he was a middle-aged man with purple hair and red eyes, his build was kinda big, but he obviously can’t compare to me. Also, he used red lightning to attack. You should’ve seen his magic power. It seriously looked like a sea of blood.”

The more he talked, the more shocked Katherine became. She knew the identity of the man Damien had met but decided not to tell him. It’d be fun to see how he reacts when he finds out.

“He must be a pretty high-ranking elder then. Those tokens aren’t something just anyone can give out.”

Katherine lied with a straight face. She then continued cooking as if nothing happened as the two continued to banter and talk about various subjects.

Soon, the food was ready. Arriving at the table, Damien was genuinely surprised. It was beast meat and something that looked like rice with assorted vegetables. A simple but refined meal. Taking his first bite, he almost melted on the spot.

“Wow! You weren’t kidding about your cooking skills. This is wifey-level skill right here for sure! Someone needs to wife you up ASAP!” Damien sang his praises before quickly adding, “not me though.”

Katherine was happy with his praise and even slightly blushed at the talk of wifing her up, but hearing the last part of the sentence her mood immediately fell.

“Hmph hmph! Guess someone never wants to eat my cooking again. Zara, you come here. It’s all us girls now since a certain someone wants to be cheeky.”

Smirking at Damien, Zara pranced over to Katherine before getting comfortable at her side. Damien’s mouth was agape seeing this scene.

‘Why is Zara walking like a pretentious anime girl? Wait since when did she even learn how to walk like that? Is this the so-called ‘girl power’ that even spans the racial and communication barriers to team up against unsuspecting men like me?’

Quickly realizing that he’d get nowhere if he didn’t correct himself, Damien hurriedly responded. “Okay fine! I would love to marry you, oh beautiful Katherine. Now continue making me food, okay?”

Naturally, the food was his main objective. It was too good for him to be forced to stop eating it for such a small mistake.

“Good that you know! Oh, by the way, I don’t want to marry you so you can keep all that talk to yourself.” Katherine said with a smirk.

Damien was endlessly sighing in his heart. If she didn’t care in the first place, why did she have to bring it up? He guessed that this was an irrational woman thing that he’d never understand, only to pause his train of thought as two murderous glares landed on him.

Cold sweat drenched his body. ‘Devils. They’re truly devils who can read my mind.’ The whole situation was so bizarre to him, who was terrible at social contact, that he forgot that one of them could genuinely read his mind.

After that stunt, their dinner continued with more laughing and joking before Katherine left back to her abode. Before departing though, she had also left him a message.

“You should head over to the disciplinary building with that token right away. Something tells me that there’ll be an interesting surprise waiting for you there.”

Damien was put off by the suspicious and sly smile on her face but decided to heed her advice. He had an inkling of her status, so if she was saying it’d be a surprise, it’d definitely be worth it.

Since he had already gotten ample rest after he passed out, Damien couldn’t sleep. He decided to ruminate over his gains from the past 4 weeks before heading over with the token in the morning.

‘Sigh, what does that old man have planned for me this time?’