

# Void 441

## Chapter 441 Binding [1]

A soundless clash in a timeless world.

This was the result of the two sword techniques meeting for the first time.

Long Chen's formless Void Sword emanated profound intent, making even Xue Feng feel like there was a sword pressed against his neck. As for Xue Feng's Limitless Blade, it was equally formless, splitting the world in two without a sound.

The grey world crumbled upon impact, sliced into thousands of pieces. Even though it was an ethereal construct, those swords still managed to cut it.

Time began moving again. The frozen and colorless bodies of the remaining individuals in the room gained life once more, however they stood still as if they were still in stasis.

The clash that took place while they were in stasis took place inside something similar to an Ethereal Dimension. Even though it mirrored the physical plane, it wasn't actually located there.

But the Sword Aura from the clash leaked through even the barriers of that dimension, filling the room with a chilling blade light. That profound aura was what caused all those present to direct their gazes onto the swordmaster duo. Even Huo Lingtian and Ding Hai paused their fight to do so.

"Haa...Haa..."

Xue Feng crumbled to his knees, stabbing his sword into the ground and leaning on it so he didn't keel over.

Long Chen's figure staggered down from the sky above. However, the man managed to stay on his feet.

The duo glared into each other's eyes. Their expressions were frozen and indifferent. And as they did so...

Spurt!

A fountain of blood leaked from Xue Feng's side. There, a massive gash opened within seconds, exposing his rib cage to the world.

But despite his injuries, Xue Feng didn't fall completely. Instead, he looked up at Long Chen and grinned.

Seeing this, Long Chen grinned back. His teeth were bloodied as if he was bitterly struggling to hold himself back from coughing blood.

"Keuk...! Even though my sword managed to reach you, its power was cut down by so much." Xue Feng spoke with a wry smile.

Long Chen shook his head. "If you could see the state of my internal organs right now, you wouldn't be looking down on your blade so much. To cut the Void Sword is not a feat to be ashamed of."

Xue Feng nodded. "Same to you. However, it seems I have come out on the losing end of this clash. My internals have been badly injured as well...well, you can see their state if you just look through this massive hole."

Long Chen's gaze inadvertently followed Xue Feng's eyes, landing on the gash in Xue Feng's side.

"Pfft...hahahaha!"

Long Chen let out a boisterous laugh. "Even in this state, you're still in the mood to joke. It looks like the rumors about you being a block-headed training maniac were wrong."

"It's not that they're wrong, I'm only this happy whenever I'm training."

"Oh? You're regarding our match as training?"

Xue Feng's grin widened. "Yeah, training to defeat that sword of yours. Although through this loss, we have become sworn brothers, your position as the older brother isn't safe, you know?"

"Hahahahaha! I see, so that's what this was about! Very well then, little brother of mine. If you think you have what it takes to snatch my position, try as hard as you can to do so. Just know I won't go easy on you."

p Long Chen held out his hand. Xue Feng looked at it for a second and grinned wildly. "As expected of an older brother I've acknowledged. If you went easy on me, I'd be the first to kill you."

He grabbed Long Chen's hand strongly and pulled himself off the floor. At the same time, he waved his hand and took out a pile of healing pills to ingest.

"Tch. In the end, I wasn't able to grab the Empyrean Dragon Sword for myself." Xue Feng sighed in lament. However, he was inwardly smiling.

'This trip...was not wasted. I can already think of hundreds of ways to improve my sword after a single clash. The position of older brother will be mine sooner or later.'

As Xue Feng's injuries slowly healed, the clash between Huo Lingtian and Ding Hai also ended. However, the two of them were severely injured.

Even though everyone was focused on the battle between Long Chen and Xue Feng, it wasn't like the other fight happening in the room was any less fierce.

It was just that a battle between sword cultivators was like a dance of blades. Regardless of how inexperienced one was, to witness a clash with such pure battle intent and Sword Aura was a spectacular display for any bystander who could actually follow the flow of the fight.

Huo Lingtian glanced sideways at Long Chen. Even though he said he was injured, his complexion and aura were still valiant as if nothing had happened to him. Seeing his condition, Huo Lingtian began to hesitate.

'As it is now, I will need an entire day to heal, even with the assistance of healing pills. However, there isn't enough time left in the secret realm for me to do so. To fight that monster when I'm not in peak condition...'

The Jade Heavenly Palace and Celestial Star Palace weren't on bad terms, but their rivalry was extremely strong. These two sects had almost equal power, so the spot of number one was always in fierce contention between the two.

But they didn't have any blood feuds. Huo Lingtian was sure that Long Chen wouldn't kill him even if he lost, but his own negligence might lead to his downfall.

With such a damaged body, his meridians might not be able to sustain themselves if he overdrove his mana.

Huo Lingtian sighed. Despite how much he lusted after the Empyrean Dragon Sword, it wasn't worth crippling himself over.

"This is as far as I go." He finally said. "However, just because you have obtained the right to the Empyrean Dragon Sword, do not get conceited. Taming it is a far more challenging task."

Long Chen cupped just fists toward Huo Lingtian. Even though they didn't have any grudges, it wasn't often that someone would encourage their rivals. Long Chen respected the man's upright character.

'This is how a disciple of Jade Heavenly Palace should be. Those bastards that usually make acquaintance with our Great Clans are just scum who don't amount to anything.'

Long Chen inwardly sneered, and then turned his attention to the last two people in the room.

"What are you looking at me for? I'll always support Brother Chen!" Ling'er smiled gently. From the beginning, she was only here to cheer him on. She had no desire for a bulky sword like the Empyrean Dragon Sword.

As for Xue Yue, she simply shrugged her shoulders and looked away. She was no longer interested in what happened.

Seeing how everyone in the room had consented to his succession, Long Chen turned around and walked up the set of stairs at the end of the room.

Long Chen soon made his way up the stairs, arriving in a small room with only a single glass coffin in the middle.

'Empyrean Dragon Sword...'

Unexpectedly, there was no sword in the coffin. Instead, there was only the hilt of what looked like a sword that had been long shattered in battle:

But Long Chen wasn't fazed by it. Instead, he smiled with pride.

'Finally. You, who once belonged to my ancestor, will return to our Long Clan's hands. No, you will return to I, Long Chen's, hand.'

He lifted the coffin's lid and grabbed the broken sword handle. And in the next instant, his world was dyed golden.

Chapter 442 Binding [2]

"Haa, that took way longer than expected. But, the task is finally complete, and it's not like I didn't gain anything."

Damien clenched his fists with a smile. An astonishing amount of mana was running through his veins and pumping in his Mana Heart.

'My mana capacity only reached 50000 through years of hard work, yet, I've increased it to 80000 in a few days. Well, I guess that's the benefit of devouring 8,000 years of those Nox bastards' effort.'

Damien grinned as he thought about it. He might not have the strength to face them directly, but ruining their plans always put a pep in his step.

'Phew, anyway, now that I'm done with this, it's time for you to fulfill your end of the bargain, right?' Damien asked with a face that looked like a hungry loan shark's.

[Your expression is worrisome.]

'What's wrong with my expression? Also, didn't you say you have no personality?'

[Since Damien Void has completed his end of the contract, we shall do the same. Prepare for binding.]

Damien glared at the World Core in suspicion but shook it off in the end. 'No way, right? Yeah, there's no way of fooling myself into thinking I didn't hear anything. But I also feel like if I heard anything, something very unfortunate would happen to me. Right, see no evil, hear no evil.'

[A wise decision.]

'Hm?'

[Please extend a contractual mana thread.]



Damien glared at the World Core once more, but still did as it said. Just like when he was binding earth, a thread of mana shot from his finger and rushed toward the World Core.

But unlike when he bound Earth, Damien was now far more familiar with his abilities as a Celestial. This Contractual Mana Thread was actually one of the base abilities he gained when he became a Celestial, which was why he was able to instinctually use it last time he came across a World Core.

This time, however, was wholly intentional.

The mana thread shot at a rapid speed toward the World Core but was forced to stop in the middle. A mana thread from the World Core had impacted it and wrapped around it.

The two threads of mana mingled and swam around each other as if they were alive, until finally, they merged into one.

Damien's senses were immediately blown out. He could only see bright white light, and his ears were ringing heavily.

Hissss!

He sucked in a deep breath and circulated his mana through his circuits. The Mana Heart revved into action as well, quelling and compartmentalizing the massive amount of mana that had just entered his body.

'This feeling...is far greater than when I bound Earth.'

Whether in terms of size, population, power level, or age, the Cloud Plane trumped Earth in all of them. It was only natural that he was granted far more when he bound it.

'It isn't just mana capacity. My proficiency in Dimensional Magic has also rapidly improved. With this much understanding of the concept, I should be able to put into practice a few more of the theoretical moves I've thought up.'

As he was adjusting his body back to perfect condition, Damien suddenly had a thought.

'Right, now that the Nox mana has been removed, you can sense them again, right?'

[Affirmative. Without interference, we have regained the ability to locate foreign invaders.]

Damien grinned. 'Good. Do that right now and tell me how many there are.'

The World Core went silent. At the same time, an invisible pulse of mana spread from its body. It was truly the World's mana. If Damien hadn't just become the Star Master of this world, he most definitely wouldn't have been able to sense it.

As he marveled at the World Core's capabilities, the mana pulse returned to the World Core's body. The scan had been completed.

[Current number of foreign invaders in the world has been tallied. 50,003 natural Nox species have been detected. 10,352,794 converted inhabitants detected.]

Damien frowned. 50,003 was a truly odd number. But as someone who had experienced the Forgotten War, he understood that number easily.

'50,000 of those are mindless lackeys up to 3rd class. The number of peak 3rd class among them is unknown, since even at that point the Nox don't gain intelligence. As for the remaining 3...'

They were definitely 4th class Nox who were overseeing operations in this world. If they weren't present, perhaps those inferior Nox would've already rampaged and massacred millions of people.

'More than that, 50,000 isn't actually that big of a number in comparison to what they used to send. And if it's only three 4th class Nox, it makes sense why they weren't able to subdue the World Core yet. Still, it really is true that they use cannon fodder to conserve their forces.'

Over ten million people living in this world had become slaves to the Nox due to their greed. In a world where tens of billions of people lived, ten million wasn't necessarily a large number.

But still, that was ten million people.

If the Nox could corrupt this many people from every inhabitable world in the universe, wouldn't they have enough forces to wipe out their enemies without even mobilizing their own troops?

It made him shudder to think about it. But at the same time, his eyes turned cold.

'Ten million people. If I give this information to the experts, I'll be indirectly responsible for the deaths of millions. Is it worth it?'

But it was nothing more than an intrusive thought. It was absolutely worth it to rid the Cloud Plane of traitors. If that wasn't done, they would be heavily affected during the coming war.

'I need to return to Apeiron and Earth to do the same. I can't allow any traitors to attack us from the back when we're fighting a war against a species like the Nox.'

'World Core, please give me the locations where you've located the traitors. If it's possible, provide the names of the clans and sects they're affiliated with. I need this information to be compiled in one place.'

[Affirmative. Information can be sent through the Contractual Link. If the Master desires, we can deposit the information into his spiritual world directly.]

Damien nodded. 'Good, do just that. Hmm, being a Star Master sure is convenient. It's a shame that my current spiritual world isn't strong enough to scour the entirety of the Cloud Plane using my status. Perhaps I can do it, but not for more than a single second...'

"Argh!"

His thoughts were cut off by a sudden sharp pain in his skull. He clutched his head and fell to his knees, gritting his teeth as hard as he could to endure the pain.

It was only several minutes later when the pain finally stopped. 'Damn World Core, you could at least give me some warning before starting the transfer!'

[The transfer has started. The transfer has been completed.]

'Tch!' Damien scoffed. 'Actually, calling you World Core will get confusing when I bind more of your kind. Hmm, since this is the Cloud Plane, I'll name you Yun. In the same way, I'll name Earth, Gaia. Things will be much simpler this way.'

[Accepting alias, "Yun."]

Since the World Core was emotionless, it didn't really care what it was called. Damien truly was naming it out of convenience, since Yun was far shorter to say than World Core.

After the naming situation was taken care of, Damien dove straight into his spiritual world and began perusing the information he had just received from the World Core.

"This..." he muttered in concern. He flipped through the figurative pages of names he had just received.  
"This is far worse than I thought."

Chapter 443 Binding [3]

Flash!

The second Long Chen touched the Empyrean Dragon Sword, his vision was engulfed in a sea of gold. It felt like he'd go blind in an instant if he kept staring at it.

But just as soon as that sea of gold appeared, it started condensing until it formed tens of thousands of needles that hovered in the sky.

"This..."

Before Long Chen could marvel at the sight, the needles rushed toward his body. He hurried to dodge, but his body wasn't listening to his command.

'I refuse to accept that I'll die so pathetically!' Long Chen roared inwardly. He furiously struggled against the suppression he was feeling, rousing all his mana and even emitting a fierce Sword Aura that tried to break his shackles.

But it was all for naught. The chains holding him in place were made of a material he couldn't begin to fathom. So with no other choice, he faced the coming catastrophe head-on.

"Come!"

As if responding to his provocation, the needles moved with the speed of wind. The first two needles appeared in front of his eyes within a second and pierced through them directly.

"ARGH!" Long Chen groaned in pain. Blood leaked from his eyes. It was obvious that he had been blinded in one strike.

But as if that wasn't enough for him, Long Chen continued to roar. "Do you think taking my sight is enough to stop me?! Come! If you don't kill me now, you'll be the one to die in the future!"

He didn't know who was attacking him, nor did he care. He engraved the humiliation he was feeling right now in his heart as he endured the pain in his eyes. He wasn't a coward by any means. Either he'd die here, or he'd come back when he had enough power and kill whoever did this to him.

The needles raged to life. Two at a time, they flashed in front of his face and stabbed deep into his eyes. As time passed, there was no longer any delay between when a pair of needles stabbed him and when the next pair arrived to do the same.

"AHHHHHHH!"

Long Chen's piercing roars of pain were enough to shake the world. It was as if the Heavens had acknowledged his pain, causing the world to mourn with him.

But even as natural phenomena continued to accompany his torture, it didn't pause for a second. Tens, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, the needles didn't stop until there weren't any remaining in the air.

"Ack...haa..." Long Chen struggled to breathe. He couldn't even move his head anymore. When he spread his awareness, he understood why.

As tens of thousands of needles pierced his eyes, they slowly conglomerated and merged. Now, what was left in his head was no longer small enough to be considered a needle.

Two massive stakes extended a foot from the front of his head, piercing through his eyes and cleanly exiting out the back. From how it looked, even Long Chen's brain and skull had been pierced through.

But that was wrong. After all, he was still conscious and thinking even after the process ended.

Clang! Clang!

The sound of metal falling to the ground filled his ears. The ethereal chains that held him down had released him from their shackles.

'This...even if it's done now, what's the use?' Long Chen muttered annoyedly. It wasn't a short process for tens of thousands of needles to pierce his eyes, so he had already somewhat adapted to the pain.



And even if he was blind, he could use his awareness to see the area around him. For now, at least, it wasn't that big of a problem.

But for a cultivator, losing their eyes wasn't something they could easily come back from. For most, it was a crippling injury that would destroy their ambitions for strength.

But was Long Chen the type to give up? He was already thinking of dozens of ways to heal his eyes. If it wasn't for the adrenaline desperately pumping through his blood at the moment, perhaps he wouldn't have been sane enough to even do so.

'Fuck it.'

Long Chen cursed inwardly. He reached up and grabbed the stakes in his eyes.

It was his final act of defiance before accepting his new circumstances.

"AAAAAARGH!"

The stakes didn't move at the pace he wished for them to. Even though they had no sentience of their own, they seemed to move in a way that would cause him to experience the most possible pain.

Inch by inch, the stakes were slowly pulled out. The ethereal golden light that formed them was now colored in red blood and bits of mush left over from Long Chen's eyes.

"FUCK! JUST COME OUT ALREADY!"

Long Chen roared one final time. He yanked them with all his strength, once again exerting mana to strengthen himself. And finally, with a gruesome popping sound, the stakes left his head.

"Haa...haa...agh!"

It seemed the next thing that was supposed to happen was blood dripping to the ground from Long Chen's empty eye sockets, but that situation never got to see the light of day.

'Hm? No blood?' Long Chen shakily raised his arm and touched his eyelid, pushing it up slightly. And completely unexpected to him, there was something filling his eye socket.

'My eyes were destroyed. I can see the mush they turned into through my awareness. If so, what is this?'

He suddenly noticed that his eyelids were closed. Slowly but surely, they fluttered open on his command.

Whoosh!

The world entered Long Chen's eyes, but it was a completely different world than what he had ever seen before.

Elemental essences and ambient mana flowed through the air in front of him, denoted in the different colors that represented them. When he looked at the cave wall to his side, his vision suddenly expanded, piercing through it and seeing the scene that was behind.

'This is...!'

It wasn't just that much. He could feel his Sword Aura far more clearly than he ever had before. And more importantly, he could clearly understand the fundamental workings of many mysteries he couldn't solve in the past.

Long Chen opened his status in that instant. He didn't believe that this was some coincidence. And as he expected, there was a new section he had never seen before.

Trait(s): [Draconic Eyes]

A trait. Something that only beasts usually possessed, with a rare few humans inheriting them as well. Even when humans usually had special eyes, they were categorized as constitutions rather than traits.

Long Chen's blood raged as he read the name of his new trait. The suffering and humiliation he had just gone through, unexpectedly it was an opportunity rather than a misfortune.

Bzzz!

He felt something trembling on the ground below. As he looked down, the two golden stakes he pulled from his eyes merged together. The light that covered their physical form disappeared at the same time.

A large greatsword appeared before his eyes. Its length was greater than 2 meters, its girth just as massive. Its handle had an ornate design that was to be expected of an Ancient Sect like the one that birthed it.

'Empyrean Dragon Sword.'

It was a sword that started from nothing. It was purchased as a normal B-rank artifact in the Armament Pavilion of the Empyrean Dragon Sect. Yet, over time, it slowly began to reveal its glory in the hands of its master.

Long Tiandi, the Founding Ancestor of the Long Clan.

It was rumored within the Long Clan that their Founding Ancestor had long ascended to the Heavenly World, the Land of Gods. What he left behind for his descendants was his prized sword and most trusted companion.

And now, that sword had finally found the place where it belonged once more.

Long Chen grabbed the hilt of the sword tightly. His scarlet red eyes shone brightly, the vertical slits decorating them contracting in glee.

'Accompany me from now on.' He spoke to the sword in his hand. 'Together, we shall reign above all. Even the rumored Heavenly World will not be a match for us.'

Bzzzt!

The sword let out an excited whir, crackling with golden Sword Aura. Seeing its excited reaction, Long Chen smiled.

'Now then, it's time for me to leave this realm.'

Chapter 444 Binding [4]

Long Chen exited the mystical cave at a leisurely pace. When he once again arrived at the staircase leading to it, he only saw three people remaining.

Su Ling'er, Xue Feng, and Xue Yue.

"It seems the other two left." Long Chen commented casually.

"It can't be helped." Xue Feng responded in kind. "They would've gone green with envy if they stayed to see you now."

His gaze was directed at the ornate sword in Long Chen's hand. It was only a second later when he finally looked up at the latter's face.

Shiver!

It wasn't just Xue Feng. Even Su Ling'er, who loved Long Chen with all her heart, couldn't help but shiver in front of his gaze.

"You've grown stronger again." Xue Feng gritted his teeth and muttered, clutching his sword hilt.

"What did you expect? I conquered the unconquerable, after all." Long Chen replied with a smirk.

"Right, right. You're suffering from success. But, don't think a godly weapon will stop me from taking your position."

"Ha! You think I need Draggy's help to defeat you? Pathetic!"

"Draggy?" Xue Feng muttered in confusion.

Long Chen raised his brow. "What? That's what I named the Empyrean Dragon Sword. It has a nice ring to it, don't you think?"

It was in that instant that Su Ling'er overcame her instinctual fear. After all, there wasn't a single person in the world who could duplicate the terrible naming sense of her husband.

"Pfft...!"

"Hahahahaha!"

Even Xue Feng couldn't help but laugh. Such a domineering sword, a Demigod-ranked artifact, was degraded by a name like Draggy.

Roar!

A grieving roar faintly echoed from the Empyrean Dragon Sword.

"What? Even you agree with them? Let me tell you, from now on you're called Draggy. There's no going back."

Roar!

The Empyrean Dragon Sword vibrated and struggled against his grip, attempting to escape.

"Is it so bad that you want to revoke my ownership?! Fine, fine! I'll change it! Ling'er, my darling, please help me name this little pretentious bastard."

Ling'er giggled to herself. "Hmm, since he is your sword, how about naming him Xiao Long? Or maybe Xiao Chen?"

Xue Feng clicked his tongue. "This girl is too infatuated with you. Name it something bold! Domineering! Like Draco! Or Supreme Heaven Emperor!"

The three others in the room cringed. Even Xue Yue couldn't hold herself back from doing the same.

This side of her glorious and handsome cousin, she never wanted to see it again.

But at the same time, she felt an immense jealousy bubbling up in her heart.

'He's never this enthusiastic when he talks to me. No, he's not like this with anyone else. It's only that Long bastard. Should I kill him? No, if I kill him, Feng Feng will lose all his cheerfulness again. What should I do then?'



Long Chen suddenly felt a chill down his spine. But when he looked at the source, he only saw an innocent Xue Yue staring off into space.

He shook his head with a wry smile. 'I must be imagining things.'

He went back to the topic of naming the sword. Although it was irksome, he would be troubled if the sword refused to accept him because of his poor naming sense.

And as if hearing his pleas, a voice descended from the Heavens.

"Young Padawan, you are still too naive! The key to having shitty naming sense is knowing which word to shorten! Draggy? What is that bullshit? Instead, you should name that sword Empyrea."

Long Chen's eyes widened. The Empyrean Dragon Sword buzzed in agreement with its new name. Since it turned out that everyone around it was terrible at naming, it could at least accept this name that sounded far better than the rest.

Of course, even swords could have selective hearing. Empyrea casually pretended that it didn't hear the reasoning behind why such a name was chosen.

Meanwhile, Long Chen's attention was focused elsewhere. That voice, it was far too familiar to him.

"You damn whiny brat! Stop hiding in the shadows and show yourself!"

,m Damien laughed casually. "What do you mean, show myself? Bitch, I'm not even over there right now. Next time we meet isn't too far away, though, since I'll see you when we exit this realm."

Damien's voice began to fade away. "Alright, I have some stuff to do here, I just couldn't stop myself from joining in on the fun when I saw it.

"Also, you should always remember. The "Boss" between us will never be you. Brat Xue Feng, listen up. I beat that kid Long Chen senseless, so I'm his boss. Therefore, I'm your boss too. If you feel indignant, just fight me and see for yourself our difference."

Damien's voice faded away completely, leaving the stunned four people in the inheritance site to their own devices.

Long Chen gritted his teeth in annoyance. He could practically hear Damien's mocking grin in his words. That face looked so damn punchable right now, it was a shame that no matter how he spread his awareness, Long Chen couldn't find Damien's location.

"Dumbass, why are you searching for me? I already told you I'm not there." Damien's voice resurfaced.

"Bastard, I thought you said you were busy!" Long Chen replied in embarrassment. This bastard was really an expert at making him lose face.

"Hahahahahaha!" Damien laughed uproariously upon seeing Long Chen's expression. "If you need to shit, then shit. Your face looks so ugly right now because you're holding it back."

"Aaaargh! You damn asshole, don't let me catch you when we leave this secret realm!"

"Dumbass, didn't I already tell you I'm meeting up with you when we leave? Did you lose your hearing when your eyes became fancy!"

"Keuk...!" Long Chen shut his mouth. He realized that no matter how he responded, the result would be him getting slapped in the face.

"Alright, alright. I'll leave for real now. Enjoy your time in these last few hours before you leave. Also, I can kind of see everything now even if I don't wish to, so until I get this thing under control, keep your horniness to a minimum. As a fellow possessor of dragon blood, I can totally understand your struggles."

Su Ling'er's face turned beet red in an instant. She sent an indignant glare at Long Chen, who, in return, glared into empty space hoping to find the goddamn bastard who kept pissing him off.

As for Xue Feng, he was still speechless at the whole situation. It felt like his valiant and badass impression of Damien was being devalued with every word the latter spoke.

Unbeknownst to and uncaring for the conflicted feelings of those he left behind, Damien quietly vanished from the area.

Back in the Central Area, Damien grinned in pleasure. 'This is how it should be. I've always been an only child, so I never understood this joy. Bullying a younger sibling is truly a joyous thing to do.'

And with that, he stood up. His conversation with the World Core had finally come to an end, and so had his final adventure within the Cloud Plane.

From now on, he needed to start treasuring every moment of happiness he could.

After all, the flames of war were rapidly engulfing the universe, and it wouldn't be long until it spread to this tiny corner where Damien and his loved ones resided.

Chapter 445 Grievance [1]

The Empyrean Dragon Realm expedition had finally come to an end. Some had prospered while some gained nothing at all, but with a time limit of only a single week, it wasn't surprising that many weren't able to encounter the fortune they were hoping for.

Even the likes of Xue Feng and Huo Lingtian came out with nothing in the end, but their wills didn't diminish. Even if they didn't make any material gain, the experience was worth its weight in gold.

It was always good to know how high the heavens were. Too much conceit might've blinded them to their true standing, making them arrogant beyond their means.

The temporary abodes outside the Empyrean Dragon Realm were engulfed in a lively atmosphere. At least, most of them were.

Considering the nature of this expedition, not many major powers suffered serious damage to their forces. Even if disciples died, there weren't enough dead for it to matter at all. As for those peak geniuses, it was impossible for them to be slain in such a place.

The Xue Clan, however, carried a chilling atmosphere that dropped the surrounding temperature by multiple degrees.

The clan elders gritted their teeth in frustration.

It wasn't just a simple matter of their disciples dying in the secret realm, it was the fact that all but two were exterminated. It was quite obvious that someone was targeting their clan.

'It must be that bitch princess.' The Second Elder growled inwardly. Even if the Clan Head didn't put her strength in his eyes, it wasn't the same for the rest of the elders.

The Clan Head had a tendency to be biased against women due to the nature of the Xue Clan before his reign. Not only that, he had an even stronger bias toward his firstborn daughter, who abandoned the clan for her own benefit.

This bias had blinded him to reality. The little princess was a disciple of one of the most powerful experts in the Cloud Plane, Tian Yang. Even though Shangguan Yu was acknowledged as the strongest, that was only because the two of them had never actually fought before.

The disciple of such a man would never be weak. One just had to look at the show that man's second disciple put on when he first showed himself to the world.

'The second she exits the secret realm, kill without mercy! Don't allow Tian Yang to act before us!' The Second Elder sent a sound transmission to the rest.

Multiple nods of affirmation followed his order. Besides the First Elder, all the rest were going to join him in this.

And just as they finished speaking about it, the familiar uneasy feeling of spatial fluctuations started emanating from the clearing ahead.

Voom!

The gate to the Empyrean Dragon Realm opened without suspense, teleporting dozens of disciples and rogue cultivators out at the same time. Since it was forceful teleportation, there was no rhyme or reason to the order they came out in.

And once around 200 people had been ejected, a black-haired man appeared in the crowd.

Long Chen opened his eyes and rubbed his temples. 'Teleportation will always be a pain. It is at times like these when I envy spatial cultivators the most.'

His gaze turned to the sky where the Celestial Star Palace's floating castle stood proudly. At the same time, his awareness spread through the crowd to find Ling'er and Xue Feng.

'Hmm, it looks like they have yet to arrive. I'll wait for them before I go. Besides, I think I'll get to witness a fun show if I stay here.'

Long Chen smirked. Even from so many meters away, he could clearly feel the Xue Clan's bloodlust as if they were standing right next to him.

'Is this another ability of my eyes? Or maybe it comes from Empyrea itself. From what I can tell, nobody else can feel it, even though it's so obvious.'

Long Chen shook his head and moved off to the side. 'That woman is truly an ice princess. There's nobody else who would dare slaughter the Xue Clan's geniuses so easily. I wonder, how many did she manage to kill?'

Xue Feng and Xue Yue soon appeared within Long Chen's awareness, however, Long Chen didn't go over to them immediately.

'Brother Xue, I think it's best you come over here for now and watch the show. I have a feeling that your Xue Clan won't last much longer.'

A mental transmission entered Xue Feng's head. Hearing it, his eyes hardened.

p 'Brother Long, even if I'm not fond of the clan, they are still my family. Please don't make such distasteful jokes.'

'I'm not joking, though? It seems your little princess has caused quite a scene in the secret realm, though I don't know how big exactly it is.'

Xue Feng furrowed his brows. With everything that happened with the Empyrean Dragon Sword, he had already forgotten about the task assigned to him by the Xue Clan.

'Mm, since Xue Yue and I weren't involved, it is plausible that she has killed every other clan member that came with us. How troublesome...'

Xue Feng was stuck between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, was the man he acknowledged as his own brother, and on the other was the clan who raised him since birth.

Even if he hated the inner workings and politics of the clan, he still had a sense of filial piety. If it wasn't for this, his decision would've come much easier.

But he knew Long Chen's personality by now. If Long Chen was saying it'd be dangerous to return to the Xue Clan at the moment, it meant that the clan was probably facing catastrophe.

A catastrophe they brought upon themselves, at that.

'Father is still in the clan, and no matter what, I cannot abandon him. However, with his loyalty, I'm sure he would follow the Xue Clan in life and death.'



Without thinking further, Xue Feng pulled out a communication jade slip, similar to the transmission talisman that Tian Yang had given Damien and Ruyue. As for who he was calling, of course, it was the First Elder.

'Father, are you there?'

An aged voice came from the other side. 'My son, it's good that you came out safely. Now, this one time, be obedient and listen to your father. Flee from here and never look back. No matter what you see or hear, never turn back.'

Xue Feng's heart skipped a beat. 'Father!'

'Don't say anything. Even if you know, don't say anything.'

'Father, is it worth it to be like this towards a clan that never cared for you at all?!'

'What do you mean by that? Of course the clan has taken great care of me. It's just...the era of the previous Matriarch and our indomitable rule is over. Haa, if only we could return to that era, how great would that be?'

Xue Feng's eyes were bloodshot. Even though the words they said didn't amount to much, the emotions behind them were becoming too much for him to handle. He was practically roaring into the communication jade slip already.

'Father! The previous Matriarch is already dead! Even if you wish to repay her grace, you shouldn't do so in a clan that has been so far corrupted! The way to repay her grace is by living on and building a proper Xue Clan from the rubble of the one that will fall!'

'...'

The First Elder didn't reply. Within the Ice Palace of the Xue Clan, he sat silently and stared at the ceiling.

'How funny. In this situation, it is supposed to be our Xue Clan that stands tall and demands revenge for being offended, yet, I am already admitting defeat.'

It wasn't the little princess he was afraid of. Even if she was more powerful than everyone in their younger generation, how could she compare to experienced 4th class beings like the elders?

The one he was wary of was the man she arrived with. That man had casually deployed five existences that were greater than most of the elders of the clan. Only the First Elder and the Clan Head had the power to stand alone against even one of them.

If the five of them were to siege the Xue Clan, it was guaranteed that most of their older generation would die. The Xue Clan would be finished from that moment on.

'Ahh, it's an unavoidable fate. When Yebai overthrew the previous Matriarch, I was powerless to do anything. She forced me to live on and accumulate strength as I did so. That stupid woman, did she know that this day would come eventually?'

He thought back to the words his son had spoken just moments prior. To live past the catastrophe the Xue Clan would face and to rebuild it anew once it was over.

That offer...sounded incredibly enticing.

'Shan'er, perhaps this is why you wanted me to live? Ah, but I have become an old man by now, so I'm sure you wouldn't want to hear me calling you so endearingly. I still remember how the Clan Elders back then were beaten by you for being overly frivolous.'

The First Elder smiled. It was a smile filled with sorrow and longing.

And as soon as that smile vanished from his face, he vanished as well, disappearing from the Xue Clan's ice abode as if he was never there in the first place.

Chapter 446 Grievance [2]

Within the Central Area of the Empyrean Dragon Realm, Damien slowly opened his eyes.

'It's about time to leave, huh.'

He shook his head to clear out any unnecessary thoughts. 'Being able to see everything is a pain in the ass, but I guess it can be useful at times too.'

Although he was fine when he was in the World Core's space, the second he arrived back on the surface, his brain was almost crushed by the amount of information flowing into it.

He could see the entire secret realm as if it was sitting on his palm. And when the portal to the outside world opened, he could see what was happening within several hundred kilometers out there as well.

Due to this, he was able to witness some rather interesting things.

'The Xue Clan is full of idiots, to the point where I don't even know how they've been able to survive this long. Or maybe it's just because they've never had to deal with this kind of situation that they survived.'

There weren't many people in the world that the Xue Clan couldn't afford to offend. As for the ones they truly couldn't, Xue Yebai was a pro at kissing ass, so they never had problems with them.

Ruyue was an outlier.

If Damien didn't exist, offending her wouldn't mean anything. She would've just been another genius who disappeared in the annals of time.

But there were no ifs in life. Just as the First Elder and Long Chen could sense the demise of the Xue Clan, so could he.

Well, since he was the one who would destroy it, that was only natural.

'But the Xue Clan isn't important. Either way they would have died, since that dickhead Xue Yebai has been colluding with the Wang Family and plenty of other Nox Worshipers. There's no way he didn't know what was going on.'

Xue Yebai was the perfect example of a man who would do anything for power. People like him were the most easily enticed by the Nox's methods.

What puzzled Damien, though, was why Xue Yebai didn't just directly accept the position of Apostle.

'Is he smarter than I thought he was?'

If Xue Yebai had rejected the Apostle position because he was afraid of the repercussions, his intelligence was greater than what Damien was giving him credit for.

Because the kinds of dealings he had with Nox-affiliated clans were things Damien could only find out about with the World Core's help. Otherwise, finding solid evidence to condemn him would've been nigh impossible.

'Well, it doesn't matter now. When we leave this place, I shall help Ruyue get her revenge. But before that, I should set up some countermeasures.'

Damien flashed away from the Central Area, arriving in the midst of the large crowd of geniuses in the outside world. Since Elena was already relaxing in the Sanctuary at the moment, he didn't have any worries until Rose and Ruyue came out.

A transmission talisman appeared in his hand. 'Old man, things are about to go down again.'

Tian Yang rolled his eyes within the Celestial Star Palace's abode. 'Good disciple, who is it this time?'

'Xue Clan.'

Tian Yang's eyes hardened. He sighed lightly before he spoke. 'She went ahead and did it, didn't she...'

'Yup. Not only did she do it, she did it so thoroughly that the elders are probably coughing blood right now. Only two survived.'

'I'm surprised she even let two go.'

'It's not that she let them go, it's just that she couldn't find them. Well, I don't think she'll have too much of a problem with those two. They aren't the same as the rest of the scum in the clan.'

Damien thought back to when he spectated Xue Feng and Xue Yue. It was a truly odd pairing.

One was straightforward and sook strength with all his heart, while the other was unreadable, but carried the air of a schemer like Shangguan Yu.

Damien was wary of Xue Yue due to this similarity, but he could vouch for Xue Feng. He couldn't let anything happen to his youngest brother by association now, could he?

Hearing his explanation, Tian Yang sighed even deeper. 'Fine. Since you are her spouse, you can of course help her with revenge. But as her master, shouldn't I watch from the side and only interfere if she's in a life-threatening situation?'

Damien shook his head. 'I'm afraid you don't have such luxury. Xue Yebai has involved himself in things he shouldn't have ever touched, you see.'

Tian Yang's eyes became fierce. 'Are you telling me...'

'No need to ask, it's exactly what you're thinking.'

'And the evidence?'

'I can't bring you physical evidence at the moment, but I can swear my life on this information.'

'It seems you're taking this quite seriously. You've grown a great deal from the young man I met a year ago.'

Damien smiled wryly. 'If I didn't grow, I'd be a pathetic little bitch. Old man, I'll be needing your help often in the future. Even if attacking the Xue Clan is done under the pretext of revenge, it won't be so simple for the rest. This world...it's far more corrupt than I originally thought it was.'

Tian Yang raised his brow in interest. Somehow, his disciple had gotten his hands on information that even he didn't know.

Even if he hadn't been paying too much attention to the secular world in recent times, it was still a strange thing for a young man like Damien to be more informed than him. Especially considering that Damien had been isolated from the rest of the Cloud Plane until quite literally a week ago.

A sudden nonsensical thought came to Tian Yang's mind. But no matter how impossible it seemed, he couldn't shake it off.

'Brat, tell me honestly. How did you learn this information?'

There was a slight tremble in Tian Yang's voice that wasn't present before. Hearing it, Damien's lips widened into a wild grin.



'Kekeke, old man, you seem to be excited about something. Mind telling me what it is?'

Tian Yang's face twitched in annoyance. 'Brat, now isn't the time to play tricks with me! Quickly tell me!'

Damien smiled and shook his head. This old man was a spatial cultivator as well, so he would naturally know about some secrets that others wouldn't be privy to.

And for a spatial cultivator, the kind of thing Damien had accomplished was the ultimate dream.

The Celestial class was rare. It was harder to obtain than a mortal trying to find a needle in a planetary haystack. And only a Celestial had the authority to bind a planet as easily as he could.

Damien puffed his chest in pride. There was no way he'd miss the opportunity to get one over on this damn old man.

'That's right. Old man, your disciple has officially become the Star Master of this world.'

Boom!

An explosion went off in Tian Yang's mind. No matter if he already assumed it, hearing it directly was a different matter altogether.

'Then, the information you told me...'

'Directly from the World Core.'

'Tch! Lucky bastard!'

'Old man, you shouldn't swear so much. You need to keep your dignity as an elder.'

'Who gives a shit about dignity as an elder?! Do you not understand how amazing of an opportunity you've gotten your hands on?! Becoming a Star Master is an utmost honor for any spatial practitioner!'

'Really? Hmm, I guess it didn't feel so special since this is my second time doing it.'

Tian Yang almost coughed blood in that instant. This disciple of his...needed a beating expeditiously.

Unfortunately, the playful banter of master and disciple was cut off before it could finish.

A familiar white-haired beauty had appeared within the crowd exiting the secret realm.

Chapter 447 Grievance [3]

"Kill!"

It was instant. The second that flowing white hair appeared among the crowd, the elders of the Xue Clan zipped forward to smite her.

Altogether, there were 12 4th class elders, excluding the First Elder, and they were all taking part in the charge.

However, they weren't the only ones waiting for this moment.

Damien's figure flashed away, appearing in the Xue Clan elders' path. His five 4th class subordinates appeared behind him at the same time.

"You know the deal, right?" He spoke jokingly.

The White Dragon King rolled his eyes. "Kill, kill, and kill some more, is it?"

Damien grinned. "You know me best."

The six of them split up. Each of Damien's helpers took two of the Xue Clan Elders and dragged them into combat.

It wasn't a matter of whether the elders wanted to engage them or not, it was a matter of survival. After all, the beasts of the 3000 Beast Mountain Range and the Demons of the Primordial Undying Realm were innately stronger than humans at the same level.

The problem was, there were still two elders left who slipped through the cracks and continued their charge.

But, of course, it wasn't by mistake that they were able to do so.

Damien grinned to himself. 'These guys are really tactful. They entangled the stronger elders, and left the two weakest ones to me. Are they perhaps testing my power? Very well, it's not like I'm afraid to show them.'

But just as Damien was about to charge at the two incoming elders, Ruyue appeared by his side.

"Well, I have a rough idea of what's happening. But this is my revenge, so don't you think I should participate as well? You take the left, I'll take the right."

Damien smirked at her words. As expected of his woman. He put his hands together and cracked his knuckles, doing the same with his neck right after.

"Deal."

With a single word, he vanished from his position and appeared mere centimeters away from the 11th Elder.

"Hi there!"

The 11th Elder's eyes widened in shock. He hurriedly raised his arms to block.

Bang!

Damien's fist landed only an instant later, causing the 11th Elder's bones to emit a guttural snapping sound.

"I'll be playing with you today, so don't disappoint me too much, 'kay?" Damien grinned mockingly.

He was incredibly excited. After all, this was his first fight since all the power boosts he gained from the Primordial Undying Fruit. And having an entry-level 4th class as his opponent was perfect.

This kind of strength...he no longer feared it.

Space twisted into an illusory blade in Damien's grasp. His figure once again disappeared, reappearing before the 11th Elder could regain his bearings.

'Let's test my cutting power first.'

'Void Sword Art First Form: Bladeless'

Ziu! BOOM!

A thin black line formed in space, shooting out like a bullet until it covered several kilometers of the sky. And the second it finished extending, it explosively expanded into a massive gash that swallowed the 11th Elder.

Damien shot into that gash after him. Finding the 11th Elder's figure in the shattered space, he took his stance once more.

'Void Sword Art Second Form: Horizon Break'

His sword was parallel to the ground, his arm pulled back like he was priming a bow. Mana gathered and coalesced around the blade as it sped forward.

Bang!

As if air was forced to compress and expand, a large bang sounded through the shattered space. What followed was...

"ARGH!"

A roar of pain. The 11th Elder was suddenly assaulted by blinding pain in his shoulder, but when he looked down, he noticed that he no longer had one.

'The power of horizon break has risen satisfactorily.' Damien nodded with a smile.

Looking at this man, who was supposed to have an entire class' worth of advantage on him, unable to fight back, Damien couldn't help but praise his own improvement.

But his eyes hardened in the next second. His body twisted at an unnatural angle, almost causing his bones to shatter.

An ice arrow grazed his cheek. If he was only a single second late, it would've pierced his skull without any resistance.

'Tch. A 4th class is still a 4th class after all. I have enough attack power to harm him, but my defense isn't enough to stay unharmed. I can't give him any more opportunities.'

'Void Sword Art Third Form: Dance of the Void'

Damien's figure turned illusory, multiplying endlessly. Tens, hundreds, thousands of phantom projections filled the shattered space.

The 11th Elder smirked. "Haha, brat. You think a mere illusion technique could fool me?!"

A thousand Damiens shook their heads in response. "No wonder you didn't talk before. The only thing that comes out of your mouth is bullshit."

The illusory phantoms danced through the shattered space. Their movements seemed random, but had an unpredictable and ever-changing flow within them.

Small blades of space continuously cut the 11th Elder's body as their dance continued. Thousands of Damiens attacked him at the same time from every direction, not even giving him a second to pinpoint the position of the main body.

This was the glory of Dance of the Void. The phantom illusions weren't just afterimages produced by his speed, they were spatial phenomena caused by his rapid movement through and manipulation of the spatial layers.

It could be said that none of them were real at all, or that all of them were the real Damien at the same time.



Calling the technique a mere illusion technique? It was at that moment when Damien realized that the 11th Elder wasn't a standard for 4th class beings.

Frankly, he was subpar.

Damien shook his head and continued his assault. This fake 4th class wasn't worth his time. If he couldn't even stand against the 3rd form of his sword art, then a single Dimensional Severance would be enough to end him.

And so, that's exactly what Damien chose to do.

His blade pointed to the Heavens, as if trying to gather the power of all things. Pitch-black Void Essence covered the blade, concealed by a heavy coating of spatial mana that lay on top of it.

However, that was nothing. Even after these ingredients had been layered on top of the blade, the attack seemed to get more and more powerful without new additions.

Dimensional Severance wasn't a simple vertical slash combined with Void Essence. If it was just that much, it wouldn't have the right to its name.

When Damien said Dimensional Severance was the epitome of his comprehension of space, it wasn't a joke. Because that was exactly what he used to fuel his blade.

"Distance," "Destruction," "Vectors," "Expansion," "Compression," and many more conceptual fragments that made up the foundation of the concept of space itself, all of his comprehension of these concepts was poured into his blade.

It was a truly ethereal feeling to do so. Even Damien didn't quite understand how he was able to. After all, Dimensional Severance was created in a bout of enlightenment, and he was still riding that enlightenment every time he used it.

If he ever managed to understand the foundation and workings of the attack itself, its power would far outstrip what he could show today.

But even what he had now was enough to split Heaven and Earth in two.

'Void Sword Art Fifth Form: Dimensional Severance'

A thin black line, no bigger than the width of a piece of paper, traveled through space at a snail's pace. The 11th Elder had a mocking grin on his face as he saw it, casually moving to the side to avoid the slash.

But, strangely enough, no matter how he moved, that vertical slash was always directly in front of him, approaching to split him into two halves.

The 12th Elder frowned. This kind of trick, was it enough to cause his death? He was a 4th class! No matter how much effort a 3rd class put into their attack, it didn't change the fact that they couldn't connect with the laws of the world yet.

With a mocking look in his eyes, the 11th Elder pushed his mana.

'I'll show you what it means to enter the 4th class.'

An icy chill spread through the air. No, the chill spread through space itself. The shattered space that was just beginning to fix itself was frozen into ice crystals that fell to the ground.

But those crystals didn't shatter. No, they impacted the ground and turned the area a few hundred kilometers around the duo into an icy desert.

"Utilizing laws isn't something mere elements can compete against. Freezing space, freezing time, I can do it all! What, do you think this tiny attack can faze me?!"

The 11th Elder held out his hand, causing the icy blue mana to rush toward Damien's Dimensional Severance. Even though it was an attack, it looked like the 11th Elder was building a construct, since space froze around the mana whenever it came into contact.

But none of that mattered. It only took an instant for the icy mana to collide with the slash of Dimensional Severance.

As it did so, Damien smirked. "Laws? I can use those too."

And as if to prove his words, the thin black line of Dimensional Severance cut through the icy blue mana like paper. Contrasting its snail's pace from before, it reached the 11th Elder before he could even comprehend what had happened.

And then, it split him in two.

Chapter 448 Grievance [4]

"Y-you...how could you...?!"

The 11th Elder, thoughts leaked through his mana, but before they could be completed, his two halves were completely severed, falling to the ground and turning into shards of shattered ice.

Damien cracked his knuckles and stretched. 'For my first fight against a 4th class, it was disappointing. Well, this guy probably only reached that level by piggybacking, so it isn't a surprise.'

Information on war wasn't the only thing Damien gained from Alaric. Living 10 years in the latter's body, he understood that the 4th class level wasn't always as glorious as it looked.

The thing that made 4th class special was the fact that one needed to pass through the Universe Baptism to reach it. This was a barrier that caused many aspiring existences to die before fulfilling their potential.

And of course, to break this barrier with one's own strength was what it meant to be a true 4th class. Those who did so were the ones who deserved such a title.

But there was another category as well. Since war needed great strength, the people of Alaric's time began boosting people to 4th class.

Pills, special treasures, even outside help. All of these things were allowed when one was subjected to the Universe Baptism. There wasn't some restriction that made the Baptism more difficult if someone else tried to help. The strength of a Baptism would vary from person to person, but that was the extent of that.

Because the universe was fair. It didn't care what methods one used. But at the same time, strength was something to be earned, not granted.

Even if the degree of Baptism was unchanging, the gains one received from it were never constant.

To overcome Baptism with one's own power means to monopolize all the strength the Baptism provides. It means getting more than just a glimpse at Laws, furthering progression through them at a rapid pace.

But if one passes the Baptism with the help of others, they wouldn't gain such benefits. Depending on the level of help, the benefits could be reduced to just a fraction of the insights one gained on one's own, or even one at all.

And at that point, there was no difference between breaking through to 3rd class or 4th class. It was just a jump in power without any qualitative change.

This was the kind of Baptism the 11th Elder must've gone through. There was no way to compare him to the other 4th class existences Damien had met. Hell, even Lucius, who was still at the entry-level himself, was leagues better than the 11th Elder.

'Still, utilizing Laws is such an interesting feeling.'

Damien twiddled his fingers, playing around with an illusory essence that danced through them. This essence was similar to the spatial mana he usually used, but at a far higher purity and density. The profundity of this essence wasn't something Damien had the qualifications to grasp yet.

Of course, it was mana born from Spatial Laws, rather than a simple affinity.

'It's a shame. If I could make this power mine and comprehend Laws at the 3rd class, I'd be invincible until someone at the White Dragon King or Elvira's level shows up. But, there's a reason why the Universe Baptism exists as a gateway to this power.'

A trail of blood leaked from Damien's lips as he smiled wryly. The power of Laws wasn't something he should be allowed to use.

As for how he did so, that was quite obvious. As the master of the world itself, how could he be restricted from utilizing its Laws?

The only constraint, besides the toll taken on his body, was the fact that these Laws could only be used while he was on a planet he had bound already.

At the moment, only the Cloud Plane and Earth fit this requirement. Though, Apeiron would soon join.

'After the Xue Clan is dealt with, it'll be time to start a witch hunt on this world. At that time, I'll head over to Apeiron and bind it, so that I can purge over there as well.'

Future plans were coming along steadily. As long as nothing interrupted him in the coming months, he'd be able to adequately prepare for the war that was around the corner.

But, counting on luck wasn't something Damien enjoyed doing. Rather than hoping his plans wouldn't be interrupted, he'd actively make sure to not allow himself to be interrupted.

'Hmm, but first, we should take care of the current problem.'

Damien spread his hands, allowing the Spatial Laws dancing around his fingers to spread into the atmosphere. Within seconds of him doing so, the shattered space he was currently inside repaired itself fully.

BOOOM!

A massive explosion rang out the second Damien reappeared in the world. His body became illusory, letting the shrapnel flying through the air pass right through him.

"Hey, hey! I know it's a hard fight, but watch where you're aiming!" He shouted into the dust cloud that had formed at his side.

A flash of pink shot out from within, arriving in front of him. "Sorry, sorry. It's a bit hard to control my power nowadays, you know?"

Damien rolled his eyes. "Yeah, right. You're the illusion freak who can turn physical objects ethereal. You're telling me it wasn't on purpose?"

Rose looked away innocently. "I have no idea what you're talking about. How was I supposed to know you were over here?"

Damien looked at her with a deadpan expression. She wasn't even trying to hide the grin on her face.

Seeing her act so cheekily, Damien nodded. "Alright, after the fight is over, it's punishment time."

"Oh? And how are you going to punish me?"

"Why don't you find out on your own?"

"Hmm, let me guess...you'll do me the same way you did Elena?"



Damien's eyes widened into saucers. This woman...he forgot how scary she could be.

But, if she already knew, there was no point in hiding it. "No, no, no. Trust me, I'll make sure to give you 10 times what Elena got."

"Is that a challenge?" Rose smirked. She looked him up and down as if asking him if he really had the ability to do what he said.

Damien grinned. "It's a promise. Also, watch out behind you."

Rose rolled her eyes. "That's nothing. Do you think your benevolent and amazing first wife has been lazing around for the past year?"

"So you haven't been? Last I checked, you were so obsessed with Earthen entertainment that you started making illusory TVs when you couldn't watch at home."

"Tch. We don't talk about that. Anyway, if you're so doubtful, then just watch me!"

As she spoke, a mountainous boulder appeared above her head, dwarfing her by tens of times. If that thing fell on her, she was guaranteed to be crushed to death.

But Rose didn't hesitate. She extended her arm gracefully, tapping the boulder gently as if it was just a marble.

But that action was enough. The boulder's outline turned hazy. And although it still dropped onto Rose's head, it passed through her body as if it was a simple projection.

Damien grinned in approval. Rose was always fast in improving, to the point where her speed shocked even him sometimes. To do something like this was the least he expected from her.

'It's not that she turned reality into illusion, it's more like she transported it into an ethereal Plane, separating it from reality as a whole. Does that count as an illusion affinity, or is Rose just a monster?'

Regardless of how she did it, what mattered was that she had done it flawlessly.

Damien sat down in the air. At some point, a chair had appeared below him.

'What a considerate wife.'

Rose smiled and turned around, returning to the battle at hand. As for Damien, he sat with his legs crossed, eagerly awaiting the battle his wives were planning to show him.

Chapter 449 Grievance [5]

A wall of ice sprung up from the ground around Ruyue the second she finished her small conversation with Damien.

From the second she decided to kill the geniuses of the Xue Clan in the secret realm, she was prepared for this moment.

And once Damien took the 11th Elder into the shattered space to fight, Ruyue immediately engaged the 12th Elder on her own.

Her figure flashed through the air, trails of blue flames following her path as she did so. She was moving so fast that she was almost illusory, but the 12th Elder's attacks still managed to reach her without any trouble at all.

The 12th Elder smirked. "Little slut, even after selling yourself to that trash, you still only have this much power. Frankly, I'm ashamed to say that you were ever part of our Xue Clan."

Ruyue rolled her eyes. "Yeah, yeah. Dumb bitches sure know how to talk. With that bastard Xue Yebai's personality, I assume the only reason a woman like you was able to become an Elder was by getting a train ran on you by all the other Elders of the clan. Am I right or am I right?"

The 12th Elder's face turned black. "Staying with lowborn scum like that man had really ruined your mouth. Slut, I won't let you die easy!"

"I can't argue that staying with a shameless rogue like him has changed my demeanor. But, your mouth was ruined too, was it not? Swallowing the kids of so many different people at once must have some kind of negative effect, not that I would know."

The 12th Elder almost coughed blood at Ruyue's provocations. The worst part was, she hadn't said anything false at all.

The 12th Elder was no longer in the mood for a battle of words. At first, she wanted to crush Ruyue mentally before killing her, but her plan completely backfired.

Instead, she roused her mana, causing the air around her to freeze. Blue runic patterns began to form in the air around her, dancing in the sky and turning even the wind into sparkling frozen dew drops.

"Ice Phoenix Divine Patterns!" The 12th Elder shouted. The runes immediately mobilized, surrounding Ruyue and trapping her in a frozen coffin.

Ruyue looked around indifferently. 'It's like a downgraded version of Luna's runes. Instead of carrying the Life properties of a true Ice Phoenix, this is purely ice. It's just a cheap copy using the same name.'

She had spent a year with Lunaria Snow, a true Ice Phoenix. In that time, she had learned plenty about Ice Phoenix Patterns. As such, dealing with a minor trick like this wasn't a problem for her.

Blue flames lit up Ruyue's palm as she imitated the 12th Elder's previous trick. Except, instead of runic patterns, Ruyue drew beastly figures in the sky with her iceflames.

Phoenixes, Dragons, even more common feline beasts like leopards appeared around her. As soon as she finished drawing them, they roared to life.

Roar!

The Iceflame Dragon let out a frightening roar filled with the aura of yin. It charged into the side of the coffin encasing Ruyue and exploded itself.

Boom!

Icy flames devoured the runic patterns creating the coffin. In that instant, Ruyue flicked her wrist. The remaining iceflame beasts around her charged into the opening created by the dragon and pried open the coffin, causing it to shatter and fall to the floor.

But escape didn't mean safety. The 12th Elder stood in the sky with arrogance. Behind her, thousands of ice runes danced around, forming the shape of cannons.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

As soon as Ruyue saw the light of day, she was forced to take on another barrage. Ice walls and beasts made of iceflame emerged continuously to protect her from the attack, but each construct she created could only block a single attack before being obliterated.

'If it goes on like this, I'm sure to lose. There's no way my mana capacity can compare to a 4th class. If it's like that...'

Ruyue spread her arms, emitting a lunar white essence that made her look like a holy saintess descended from heaven.

'Blood Moon.'

But the object that appeared behind her made her feel like more of a demon. A bloody red moon, not losing out in any way to the actual moon in the sky, radiated a chilling aura that repelled the attacks that were aimed at it.

'Empower.'

A beam of light left the moon and showered Ruyue's body. When the light faded, she was covered in a set of Valkyrie-esque armor, a shining white spear in hand.

Her figure appeared in front of the barrage of ice spears, confronting the coming onslaught head-on. Her two hands tightened around the spear shaft, making a large sweeping motion through the air in front of her.

'Moon Goddess Spear Arts First Form: Tide Formation'

An iridescent white mana covered the blade of her spear. Ruyue's movements suddenly became extremely fluid, as if she was following the flow of the world.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Even though the strength of the 12th Elder's attack far outstripped what Ruyue could directly fend off against, her spear seemed to think otherwise:

With the sound of clashing metal, Ruyue swam through the sky, sweeping her spear and expertly deflecting every shard of ice that entered her vicinity.

With every movement she made, her spear became more powerful. The ebb and flow of her movements became more defined. The force that was deflected through her graceful dance was coagulated and stored in the tip of her spear.

As Ruyue danced, she slowly inched closer to the 12th Elder, who was still in shock from what she was seeing. The fact that Ruyue was evading her onslaught so effortlessly made her endlessly aggrieved.

And so, she pushed her mana, fusing her comprehension of Ice Laws into her spears as they were shot.

But her movements were a second too late. Ruyue appeared before her, eyes closed and hands tightly gripped on her spear. Using the momentum she had built through her dance until this point, she swept her spear upward toward the 12th Elder's chin.

WHOOOSH!

It wasn't a simple matter of releasing the stored energy at the tip of her spear. Using the Blood Moon as an anchor, Ruyue drew the power of the moon itself, causing the earth below to become fluid.

A tsunami of earth rose with the motion of her spear, threatening to engulf the 12th Elder. As the name of her spear technique suggested, the first movement formed an unstoppable tide.

The 12th Elder gritted her teeth. "There's no way a brat like you can be so powerful!"

She spread her arms and gathered her mana, pushing it to the center of her chest. As soon as she did, a strong pulse spread with her as the epicenter.

"Absolute Zero!"

Voom!

Ruyue's tsunami was frozen in place in an instant. Even the raging mana gathered at the tip of her spear froze, falling to the ground like snowflakes.

"Keuk...!" Ruyue coughed a mouthful of blood and shot backward. Although the pulse of the 12th Elder's Absolute Zero didn't damage her much, the backlash of being unable to release the stored energy in her spear hit her hard.



But Ruyue didn't let out a single mutter of pain. She wiped the blood on the side of her mouth and took her stance once more.

"If a 4th class couldn't even do this much, I'd be immensely disappointed. Now, come. Prove to me that your body isn't the only reason you were promoted."

Chapter 450 Grievance [6]

'Moon Goddess Spear Art Second Form: Moonlight Serenade''',

The second her words fell, Ruyue swept back into action. Moonlight Serenade was a dance similar to Damien's Dance of the Void. In fact, the two were so similar it was strange.

Ruyue's figure turned illusory. Instead of blending with space, she blended in with the sky itself. Her spear became a shadow that looked like the blade of the reaper.

She appeared next to the 12th Elder in an instant, heavily swinging her spear to slash her opponent. However, the 12th Elder was no longer treating her as a casual opponent.

A small hexagon made of ice appeared where Ruyue's spear was going to strike, immediately offsetting all the force that she mobilized. At the same time, another small shard of ice shot toward Ruyue's stomach and pierced through.

Puff!

A spray of blood mist left the wound on Ruyue's stomach, freezing into crystallized blood shards the second it did. However, the 12th Elder wasn't showing any mercy. As the blood shards formed, their direction changed, following the previous ice shard and piercing through Ruyue's abdomen.

Spurt!

A fountain of blood threatened to spurt from the wound, but there was no way Ruyue would give the 12th Elder more ammo. She directly slapped her own stomach, forcing it to freeze over using her mana.

'My mobility will be limited with a wound like this. Looks like I can't use my spear anymore.'

Ruyue sighed to herself. She wanted to compete using ice and lunar techniques only. Perhaps it was a lingering desire to prove her worth that made her do so.

But a 4th class was a 4th class after all. Ruyue didn't have the freedom to hold onto such petty thoughts.

'Burst.'

Ruyue appeared back in front of the Blood Moon as if she teleported, but her spear remained in the air where she was once standing. A familiar lunar white glow emanated from its body as it hovered.

'Mei, can you help me out?' Ruyue spoke inwardly.

'Mm! Finally, I can show big sister how powerful I am!' An enthusiastic response greeted her, making her smile despite her current situation.

'Good, then. Let's show them the power we have when we fight together.'

A frightening black mana suddenly encompassed Ruyue's body and spear. Mixing with the lunar white mana of her Moon Affinity, she looked like a being who represented Yin and Yang.

'Death Goddess' Descent'

It was a variation of her original Moon Goddess' Descent that she created after bonding with Lily and Mei. Ruyue's shining white hair turned black, her irises and sclera followed the same pattern.

Deathly mana surrounded her body and turned into a rain of spears, joining Ruyue's main weapon on the frontlines.

'Moon Goddess Spear Art Third Form: Drifting Moon'

The hundreds of spears in the air began vibrating rapidly. A horrific screeching noise was emitted from their movements.

The 12th Elder frowned. Even she could feel a slight tinge of nausea formed by the sound impacting her eardrums. But before she could complain about it, the spears suddenly shot out like shooting stars.

They streaked through the sky, creating countless complex patterns as they did so. Without suspense, the 12th Elder was surrounded by Ruyue's barrage of spears.

Ziu! Ziu! Ziu!

The spears slashed through the air as if they had minds of their own. In response, hundreds of small hexagonal ice shards appeared around the 12th Elder to counter.

But the spear rain was nothing more than a diversion.

'Strike!'

Oh Ruyue's command, her main spear shot out of the crowd unnoticed. A beam of red moonlight shot from the Blood Moon behind her, covering its movements as it did so.

Bang!

The spear rapidly penetrated the 12th Elder's shoulder, finally drawing blood. But Ruyue wasn't content because of this.

'I aimed for the head. In that split second, she managed to dodge. Is overcoming the class barrier really something I can't do?'

Ruyue furrowed her brows. Although she was confident in winning this fight, she didn't think she could do so in a short amount of time. But as if the heavens were answering her worries...

"Yo! You look like you could use some help." A cheerful voice resounded from behind her. Hearing it, Ruyue's body subconsciously relaxed.

"Your speaking tone mirrors his so much that I almost mistook you for him. If you don't work on that, I might accidentally pounce on you one day." She joked.

Rose smirked at her words. "If you think you can take this big sister of yours, then feel free to try. But...I think you'll be the one that's defeated."

Ruyue shook her head wryly. In the week she spent with Rose, the thing she noticed that stood out the most was the latter's shamelessness. It almost trumped the most shameless person she knew, which was saying something.

"Forget about that for now. Let's take this bitch down together so we don't waste too much time. There's plenty left to do after this."

Rose raised her brow. "Hm? Aren't the others dealing with the more powerful ones? I don't think we have more work to do once she dies."

Ruyue shook her head in response. "No, that bastard of a Clan Head, Xue Yebai, still hasn't appeared yet. Even if I can't deal with him personally, I want to be there to see him fall."

"Understandable. Well then, we just have to kill this bitch quick, right?"

"Right."

Rose cracked her knuckles and grinned. "Good. I'll take support while you attack. Now that your big sister is here, you don't need to worry about dodging anymore."

Ruyue rolled her eyes. Rose's obsession with being the "big sister" really shone through in moments like this.

But that didn't matter. After all, Rose was indeed as reliable and understanding as a big sister should be. Knowing this, Ruyue clenched her fists and roused her mana.

"Let's get to it then."

'Drifting Moon Second Phase: Rotate'

Ruyue's spear pulled back and began rotating in the air. It soon turned into a blinding white disc that seemed like it could cut through anything.

The 12th Elder scoffed. Her fingers spread and tapped in the air. The icy mana around her coagulated into a small lotus flower that stood on her palm.

"Ice Lotus."

The ice lotus drifted through the air unhurried as if it wasn't an attack at all, but the effects it had on the surroundings told a different story.

The winds were frozen into a tunnel of ice, ambient mana turned into a raging blizzard that surrounded the lotus. The movements of Ruyue's spear were becoming slower and slower, forced to come to a halt by the raging Ice Laws contained in the lotus.

But at that time, Rose finally made her move. She waved her arm casually, but that casual movement carried a frightening amount of mana.

"Shoo."

With a single word, Rose released her mana. It dispersed into the atmosphere, creating a relatively anticlimactic effect. But before anyone could question her actions, the ice lotus became hazy.

"W-what did you do?!" The 12th Elder stammered, finally acknowledging the existence of her second opponent.

The ice lotus soon turned ethereal. The effects it had on the environment faded, and Ruyue's spear was able to move freely once more.

Seeing this, Rose grinned lightly. "Hehehe, don't worry about me. My second sister is the one who wants to play with you."

And confirming her words...

BOOOOOM!

Ruyue's spear made a blazing trail straight toward the 12th Elder's flabbergasted face.