

## Void 52

### Chapter 52

Damien's actions were hardly noticeable, but that didn't mean nobody saw him. Both his sneaky look towards Katherine and his slight movement to create distance were clear as day to those 4th class beings that were observing him.

This both amused them and piqued their curiosity. With their strength, it was normal that they could see through Katherine's disguise and witness the pink hair and ruby eyes under the black-haired brown-eyed facade, but for a boy that was still at 2nd class to do so was a different story.

Now, all their gazes were focused on Damien and even the Adelaire emperor's fierce gaze held a hint of admiration. But none of them brought it up. It was one thing for the boy who looked extremely close to her to notice, but her identity was hidden for a reason.

Meanwhile, Damien was silently praying that the matter would be glossed over. Although he previously said he had a clue about her status, he at most thought she'd be from one of the major clans of one of the empires, not a legitimate princess.

But it's not like it affected his view of their relationship. He didn't have respect for status. He only respected strength and character. If he likes her he'd like her regardless. Still, standing in front of her 4th class father made him act slightly more respectful.

"Boy, I know that little girl in your shadow seems awfully attached to you, but be aware that she can't participate in the tournament. How about you leave her with me instead?" The beast empress said, changing the topic.

Damien was caught off-guard. Leave Zara with a stranger? He would never even consider it. Even Zara was filled with apprehension at this thought.

Beasts evolved through their bloodlines which increased along with their strength. Every beast had the slightest amount of godbeast blood within them, and as they grew in class this bloodline became more potent.

They had 2 options for evolution. Either they follow the steps of their ancestors and become true godbeasts themselves through their bloodlines, or they assimilate other strong bloodlines to create their own new variation and carve their own path.

Each path had its own merits and demerits. While following the footsteps of their latent bloodlines was easier, it would limit their potential to the level their ancestors reached. Although they could progress farther it could be incredibly difficult to do so.

On the other hand, forging a unique bloodline was a terrifyingly difficult path in its own right. It would take much longer for a beast to evolve into a godbeast no matter how much they leveled up. However, their potential would be limitless. If they forged their path without stopping, they could possibly reach a peak above the peak.

Zara was a beast with an incredibly unique bloodline and Damien had sensed this even from their first meeting. His beast half also had the potential to make him into a godbeast, but Zara's bloodline wasn't helpful for that.

But that didn't mean that other beasts wouldn't covet her bloodline. He had seen a prime example of this through the wyvern on the 40th floor. It spent months chasing her for her bloodline, even throwing away its pride and leaving its nest to capture her.

Due to this, Damien couldn't help but become wary. He knew he couldn't do anything to these 4th class beings, but if any of them wanted to take Zara away from him for their own selfish intentions, he'd use his life to make sure it didn't happen.

After all, he'd designed a hidden function in his mana circuits specifically for a situation where he was fated to die either way.

Damien's body started leaning forward as he adopted a defensive posture and his feral bestial aura slightly radiated. If it was to protect Zara he didn't care enough to control his bestial instinct. His best fighting state was when it was in control.

Seeing this, the beast empress smiled helplessly. She realized that the boy in front of her knew the secrets of beast evolution and doubted her intentions.

She was also extremely surprised. She didn't sense it before but the boy seemed to be a demihuman. The curious thing was that he didn't radiate an aura of someone who was born a demihuman, but rather of a progenitor of whatever his bloodline was.

'An evolver?'

Once the thought struck her, she couldn't get it out of her head. If this boy was truly a human who achieved perfect evolution, his potential was much greater than she originally thought.

"Okay, no need to get protective. It was simply a suggestion. However, when this event ends, you should come visit us in the beast domain. We'd welcome you with open arms."

The others in the group couldn't hold back their shock. The only one who had an idea of what was going on was the beast emperor who shook his head with a helpless expression on his face. This wife of his always seemed to do whatever she wanted without consulting anyone about it.

Damien slightly relaxed realizing that he had accidentally revealed a secret of his. 'Well, no need to fret over it. She doesn't have any hostile intention so perhaps this could be another opportunity for me.'

As they continued interacting, the arena slowly filled up until maximum capacity. Not only that, the land surrounding the arena was packed for miles with a crowd of people. Suddenly, a booming voice rang out.

"Welcome everyone to the 100th-anniversary Nexus Event! There are plenty of exciting games that will have you sitting on the edge of your seat, so be prepared and be excited!"

The crowd roared with cheers and applause as the announcer continued.

"The comprehension event has already been concluded, so it's about time we move on to the main event! This year we have 3000 geniuses from across the world participating, so without further ado, let me introduce our first stage!"

Damien was a little confused, but his doubts were instantly answered by Malcolm who was standing beside him.

"The comprehension event is to weed out the weak people who won't stand a chance in the main competition. Why would those in this room who have already been declared as supreme geniuses need to go through that selection process?"

Nodding his head, Damien continued to listen to the announcer.

“For the 100th anniversary of the Nexus Event, our leaders have gone all out in the preparations! For our first event, a fan favorite and a classic, Survival Games!”

The audience roared once more. It seems survival games truly was a fan favorite. The screens around the arena lit up as scenes of mountains, rivers, deserts, and plains began displaying. There was even a region filled with lava.

“This is our arena for the first game! A small world filled with various terrain for our many participants to choose from!

“The rules are simple! This game will last for an entire week and the goal is to survive. The competitors will be given a bracelet artifact before they enter that will track their position at all times.

“Losing your bracelet means you’re disqualified and having someone else’s bracelet gains you a point, even if you got it by stealing from the person who originally disqualified them.

“Each day, the space within the small realm will shrink, so you don’t have to worry about a boring match where everyone stays hidden!

“Teaming is allowed, and cheating will not be disallowed unless it’s reported, so if you have that idea...don’t get caught!”

“Now, all our competitors come to the stage!”

As the announcer finished, Malcolm smiled. “This is your time. Go out there, shine bright, and make sure your name resounds across the entire continent.”

Bright fires were lit in everyone’s eyes. The thought of glory was enticing, and their whole purpose was to show their worth.

Down below, the 2950 normal participants were already in place. The only ones remaining were the 50 supreme geniuses in the penthouse.

While it may seem that the supreme geniuses will easily win and take all 50 top spots, that had never been the case. There was more to the event than just strength, and one’s wits and tactics were also put to the test.

Every decade, countless underdogs rise from the ranks of the normal competitors and claim their spots among the top 50 or even the top 10. It was these stories that motivated those that couldn’t be titled supreme geniuses to continue competing.

Damien entered a small teleport formation with the rest of the geniuses that took them directly to the center of the field. Once there, they were immediately handed their bracelets which they promptly put on.

Damien basked in the cheers of the audience. His blood pumped and his mana danced as his excitement grew for what was to come. A battle of strength, a battle of wits, a battle of status. Damien didn’t care for its form. As long as it was battle it made his blood boil.

He wasn't the only one feeling this. Katherine was standing by his side basking in the same emotions as the announcer spoke once again.

"Now, the time you've all been waiting for! Let the battle..."

The arena became silent as anticipation bubbled.

Damien suddenly felt a soft punch from his side. Looking over, he saw Katherine flashing him an enchanting smile.

"See you on the other side."

Damien smiled back as he felt the light of teleportation swallow him.

"That's right, let's see who wins at the end."

As the participants started disappearing from the platform, the announcer's words finally fell.

"Begin!"