Void 58

Chapter 58

After their match, Damien and Katherine rested for a few hours before returning to the arena to watch the other matches of the day.

Ethan's match had the most obvious outcome. His physical strength was almost unmatched, allowing him to brute force his way through his opponents. Since his team wasn't fighting supreme geniuses, there was no need for strategy.

It was an age-old saying that no schemes or trickery matter in the face of absolute strength.

It was unknown if the same strategy would be used against stronger opponents, but that didn't matter. The most shocking match was that of the twins.

Damien never paid too much attention to the others that had joined from the academy, but it seemed he had to do so starting now. The twins were up against a team with two supreme geniuses just like them, but they outmaneuvered their opponents easily.

While the male twin, Eren, was extremely adept at calculation and prediction, the female twin, Ara, was like a battle goddess. When they two were put together, they were truly terrifying.

The days passed quickly as many participants were eliminated. Out of the 50 supreme geniuses that were present at the start of the tournament, only half were remaining.

Besides getting matched up against each other, there were also plenty of cases where their arrogance cost them the win. Being titled as a supreme genius only outlined one's talent and current strength.

Using Evan, who Katherine demolished in the Survival Games, as an example, it was clear that intellect wasn't present in every genius.

Team 2's next match took place on the 4th day of the event. And just like Ethan did previously, they decided to brute strength their way through it. The terrain was a rocky flatland, and with Damien's elemental affinities, he wasn't disadvantaged in the slightest.

He charged through the opposing team and directly reached the monolith, cracking it open. Following this, Katherine used her propulsion technique to rapidly arrive at the code and memorize it before heading back to their monolith.

Both rounds played out the same way, leaving the opposing team with an irrefutable loss, but a weakness was finally discovered in team 2. With the lack of plant life, Eva became a liability who couldn't help in the slightest during the round.

None of the remaining participants were dumb enough to let this slight detail go. Team 2 was a variable and arguably one of the strongest competitors for them. If they could find even the slightest misstep to use against them, they would.

"Nature affinity has always been something our kind has prided themselves on, but it has its obvious weak points," Ara said as they watched team 2 exit the battle stage.

"Indeed," Eren responded. "If we get the city terrain, it'd be the most ideal setup for us. Even if Damien decided to use his spatial abilities, he would be severely limited by the environment. Our greatest threat would be the illusions."

The twins continued discussing. They had also won both of their matches and gained the right to proceed, but there was still the final 75 that needed to be eliminated before the next round started. There was no guarantee that any of them would be seeded, so they made ample preparations.

Damien, Katherine, and Eva were holding a similar conversation. "At this point, our greatest threat is the twins. The other teams are strong, but their intellect doesn't hold a candle to that Eren's." Katherine said.

Eva nodded. "Even before they left the elven domain for the academy, they were always lauded as some of the most talented from our generation. If there's anyone we need to be careful of, it's them."

Damien was silent, but he still agreed with them. They needed to plan out how to defeat the brain of those twins.

Soon, the week ended and the seeded teams were chosen at random. The announcer went up on the stage and used the simplest method, pulling strips of paper out of a sealed box. There was no method to cheat with the mana technology that was inlaid into the box.

As expected, neither team 2 nor the twins were seeded, however, Ethan's team got lucky enough to enter the pick. Damien was happy about this though. He had no interest in facing Ethan in this kind of strategy game.

He wanted to have a rematch where they fight each other with their full strength without any motive other than knocking the other party out.

Using the same format as the previous week, the matches continued for 3 days. It seemed like everyone else noticed the difference in strength between a certain two teams and the rest of the bunch, so they weren't picked to fight until the final day.

It was the final fight of the second round. Damien and Katherine versus Eren and Ara. The terrain had already been announced as the city, so Eva was cast out of the picture.

Besides her, nobody even remembered the name of the twins' third teammate. He had been largely useless anyway, just riding the coattails of his teammates. Even if he made it to the third round, he was destined to be eliminated at the start.

The match between these two groups was especially intense.

The first round went to the twins, who used insane strategies to win. Ara went straight for Damien and kept him occupied with a riveting fight while Eren went for the monolith. His affinity was earth, but rather than using it conventionally, he created golems and similar constructs to act as a puppet master.

This skill was something he hadn't brought out this far, catching the team off guard and allowing him to win the first round.

The second round, however, went to team 2. Using a more intricate version of their first strategy, Damien and Katherine managed to trick the twins into making a slight mistake that cost them the win.

The audience was in cheers the entire time. This match was by far the most entertaining of those that took place, making it obvious why it was left for last. It was the final round of their match and everything was on the line. The team that lost would lose everything.

Damien was currently in a meeting with his other two teammates.

"Alright. This is it, let's execute what we've been working towards this whole time."

When the round began, Damien immediately teleported towards the enemy monolith. It wasn't time to hide his spatial affinity anymore. Halfway there, he met Ara once again, but she didn't attempt to stop him.

Rather, they both kept rushing towards the other side's monolith. This last round wasn't one of strength nor strategy, it was purely reliant on speed. It was a race to see who could read and input the other's code faster.

Damien rushed to the monolith and quickly opened it, memorizing the code. All that was left was to reach his home base. Since warping was too much of a cheat, he decided to normally teleport back.

There was no excitement in taking the easy way out.

As Damien made his way back, Ara also reached the monolith. She activated her bracelet and opened it, but didn't immediately go for the code. First, she launched a plethora of attacks at its structure to make sure it was truth and not an illusion.

This was all the confirmation she needed. Illusions were still made up of mana after all. If she let out a constant barrage on the boundary of the illusion, it'd show at least the slightest fluctuation.

As she went to read the code, she silently celebrated. There was one final hidden card that would easily win her this match. The truth was, she and her twin brother shared a telepathic connection.

Their closeness had been a result of this. Ever since their birth they could hear and read each other's thoughts. As they grew up, they became two sides of the same coin. As long as Ara read the code, Eren could immediately input it into the monolith.

Sharing her excitement, Eren waited patiently with his hands at the monolith, ready to input the code immediately. He failed to notice the small vines that started creeping out of the cracks in the floor.

As both sides raced to the finish, everyone outside watched with bated breaths. This kind of showdown was far from what they expected to happen this round. One team had the smartest brain in the tournament, while the other had the strongest brawn.

For it to come down to speed made the results of the match even more unpredictable. Even Ethan didn't know what to think as he watched.

'From the way things are going, it seems the twins are going to win, but with how confident Damien sounded last time we talked, there should be something I'm missing, right?"

After he had been seeded, he went and had a conversation with Damien. The two had already scheduled their match in the top 12, so it'd be a shame if one of them didn't make it. Furthermore, the two ended up sparring to help each other improve.

'Well, he seems to be someone I could be great friends with, and none of my friends are average people. Let's see what he has up his sleeve.'

Ara had already reached the monolith. As she read the code, she saw Damien appear in the room. She couldn't help but grin. It was truly a tight match, but they were guaranteed to win now.

Eren received the code through their link and immediately moved to type it in when his body abruptly stiffened. 'What's happening to me?' No matter how much he tried, he couldn't move. An affinity that controlled nature sounded like something peace-loving elves would have, but that wasn't necessarily true.

Poison could also be made naturally. From within the shadows of the room, a figure emerged. This was Eva, who had been lying in wait all this time.

"You know," she said, "it's not good to underestimate your opponents."

On the other side of the city, Ara also stiffened for a second. But they weren't out of options yet. Even as Damien approached, she tried her best to convey the code to their third teammate in hopes of pulling off a game-winner, but her hope didn't last long.

She suddenly found Damien in front of the monolith that was suddenly a few inches in front of its earlier position, and the code in its surface was completely different.

"A backup plan of a backup plan," Damien said. "We could never be too careful when it came to someone with intellect on par with you two."

The reason the monolith could withstand her attacks without fluctuation was that at that time, it wasn't an illusion. It was only in the final moment before she arrived in front of it that Katherine slightly shifted its position and code to fool her.

Before Ara's helpless eyes, Damien punched in the code of their monolith, effectively winning the game.

The second round of the Nexus Event had ended just like that.