

Void 61

Chapter 61

Boom!

The audience's attention was stolen by a massive explosion. On one of the screens in front of them, they saw a spectacular sight.

Within the area of the capture point, massive tentacles made of pure darkness thrashed around, kicking up clouds of dust and stone.

Constant small explosions rang out as the competitors attempted to circumvent the tentacles, but their efforts didn't beget any gains.

The caster of the massive tentacles obviously wouldn't have the mana capacity to uphold them for a long time, so he'd cast them in bursts whenever he needed them.

When they weren't active, he'd send out spikes of darkness and explosive balls that corroded everything they touched.

The darkness element was different from Zara's shadow element. Darkness element was best known for its ability to corrode, curse, and even summon undead if one had the talent. It was an element that was widely looked down upon due to its eerie nature and the vileness of some of its users.

After all, necromancy was a branch of darkness, and desecrating the corpses of the fallen was something many people saw as wicked. But this wasn't everyone. Just like nature or the system,

elements were never morally aligned. Their morality depended wholly on the user, leading many to choose against discriminating.

On the opposite end of the spectrum was the light element, which specialized in healing, purification, speed, and burst attacks. The light element was the main reason beast meat became consumable by other species.

Its purification qualities allowed the mana to be cleansed of harmful properties that cause mutation. Light element users usually became priest classes or something similar but it wasn't their only option.

Take Elena for example. Although she did have the ability to heal, she chose a more offensive route for her abilities. She prioritized speed and endless stamina while her attack power was also great.

Then came the shadow element. It was widely acknowledged as being a sort of mix between the prior two elements. The qualities of both could be seen within it, as it specialized in speed, corrosion, and its specialty, concealment.

There was a theory that shadow ability users could potentially use both light and darkness elements if they became strong enough, but it was still not proven.

Back to the battle, the one controlling the darkness tentacles wasn't any supreme genius, rather it was a dark horse that had finally appeared.

It was unknown why he hid his darkness affinity, but perhaps it was due to the potential scorn he'd receive from the audience.

The boy looked like an elf, but his ears were distinctly shorter and his facial structure was entirely different. Judging by these qualities, it was clear he was a half-elf.

As he kept using his darkness, it was clear that his body wasn't strong. He never entered direct confrontation with his attackers and opted to take range and focus on crowd control.

Suddenly, a man shot out from the crowd of opponents with a flash, aiming to directly take out the half-elf even if it meant he'd go down too. He had a sinister look in his eyes, evidently displaying his disdain.

"You fiends who use darkness shouldn't be allowed to exist! Allow me to cleanse you!" The man shouted as flames burst from his body.

But the half-elf didn't panic. He'd been berated the same way many times throughout his life, so it no longer affected him.

"I have never once done anything evil in my life. If you wish to brand me as such simply due to the affinity I was born with, you are the true scourge."

A large clump of darkness coalesced in his hand to form a longbow before another clump became an arrow. He pulled back the bowstring as he calculated the trajectory it should take. Then, calmly staring down his opponent, he released the string.

The arrow ripped through the air before piercing into the man's shoulder. The shot had rung true.

"AGH!" The man screamed as his shoulder began to wither. Before he could make any more moves, he was slapped by a tentacle and flew hundreds of meters down the mountain.

The crowd cheered. This was an event attended by even 4th class beings. They did not doubt the character of the participants. Just for this one event, even the ones with prejudice would throw away their cares to enjoy the fun.

The King of the Hill event continued without a hitch for the rest of its duration before finally coming to an end. The results didn't even need to be mentioned.

Damien came in first, not being pushed out of his position on the capture point even once, while Katherine followed second and Ethan was third.

The rest of the rounds were mostly won by the remaining supreme geniuses, but the half-elf dark horse managed to cement himself a spot in the final 12 as well.

The competitors were once again teleported out. Damien didn't waste any time returning to the private room this time. Not even stopping to talk to Katherine. Entering the room, he sat down on the couch and covered his eyes with his hands.

The final 12 was where he would get serious. He wouldn't allow anyone to stand in his way. Now that the time had come, he once again reminded himself of his goals.

'My mother is still in the hospital. It's been 3 years since I left earth already, and I have no idea what's going on there.'

While thinking of his mother, he also remembered another figure that he hadn't thought about since his early days in the dungeon.

‘It’s been so hectic that I even forgot about Elena. She was always a good friend of mine, and if I’m being 100% honest with myself, there was a time where I felt much stronger feelings towards her.’

Suddenly, another figure flashed into his mind, but he quickly shook that off. He didn’t want to think about romance. Even saying those 3 words that people usually say to each other when they care for each other enough were words that he couldn’t get out of his mouth.

He didn’t know why that was. Even saying those words to his mother was something he only remembered doing a few times. It wasn’t just the feelings of cringe and embarrassment that held him back, there was something deeper.

This deeper feeling became even more pronounced after his fall. No matter how much he socialized and no matter how much he bantered, he could never get rid of this gnawing feeling.

‘What if they end up leaving me one day? What if they end up betraying me?’

He had made improvements due to Zara and Katherine, but he was still extremely underdeveloped emotionally. He spent his younger days getting bullied for various reasons. Not having a dad, his body that never changed from its stick-like figure, his awkward personality, and many more.

And after the World Awakening, he was forced to spend his days with the sole purpose of making money to support himself and his comatose mother.

‘Survival’

The word popped into Damien's mind again. As he reminisced on the past, he realized that his struggle for survival started even before it manifested in a literal sense. Maybe the fact that he was always struggling to survive in the unforgiving world was the reason he could so easily forge his will at the beginning of his journey.

His only thought for so long had been survival. Taking care of his mother and himself, and then staying alive. Where was there time for him to mature emotionally? It was more apt to say that any strong emotions he had were suppressed.

It was only in battle that he could fully express himself without care. Maybe this was the reason he became a battle maniac in the first place.

The freedom he felt when he put his life on the line and the excitement that pumped through his veins when he clashed blades with others, these feelings were euphoric and addictive to him.

It was fun. It brought him joy. He could barely spare a moment for rest and joy for many many years, so finding joy in fighting was something he relished. He wished to hold onto that feeling as long as he could.

Maybe once he won the tournament, once he explored the secret realm and obtained his 3rd class, once he finally found a surefire method to return to earth, and once he finally had his mother back, he would be able to relish in feelings of happiness and maybe even think about romance.

His thoughts came full circle as they got back on the right track. He had no idea why he suddenly became emotional, but he didn't mind.

Being someone who didn't have the ability to feel intense emotion and sadness, he also relished this feeling. It meant that no matter what he had become, he could still confidently say that he was himself. He was a being that cared about the consequences of his actions.

Uncovering his eyes, Damien noticed he wasn't alone anymore.

Katherine had long since entered the practice room, but sensing the forlorn aura around Damien, she stayed silent and simply watched. Zara stood at her side and did the same. Although they both wanted to comfort him, they felt that they didn't have the right to do so. Whatever was bothering him was out of their control.

'What is it that's making him act like this?' Katherine thought. During the many months they'd known each other and even seen each other on a daily basis, she had never witnessed Damien hold this kind of aura or expression.

However, before she could delve deeper into her thoughts, Damien stood up. Taking another look at him, he seemed back to normal. It'd be impossible to tell that he was depressed or even sad in the slightest only a few seconds ago.

"Are you okay?" Katherine asked worriedly. She respected his privacy, but that didn't mean she didn't want to understand him.

"Yeah, I was just thinking about some things. It doesn't matter now, what's important is that we're going to decide a winner soon." Damien smiled gently before patting her head.

Walking past a stunned Katherine, Damien continued to talk.

"Better not stay dazed for too long, I'll be waiting for you at the top."