

Void 65

Chapter 65

When Damien re-entered the arena, the scenery was completely different. While the colosseum-style stands were still packed with hundreds of thousands of people, the actual floor was changed.

Previously, it was a large space with only the single massive lifted platform in the middle that equated the stage. Now, it was filled with decoration.

The stage itself now held 47 small elevated platforms dispersed around its perimeter, while the middle of the stage had 3 special platforms of different heights, though they were all larger than the other 47. The smallest of the three was bronze in color, the middle was silver, and the highest one was a pristine gold.

These were obviously meant for the top 3. Besides these platforms, 9 regal thrones sat side by side, each of which was decorated differently. As the participants hadn't arrived yet, it was natural that the leaders wouldn't make their appearance either, leaving the thrones empty for now.

The empty land was filled with majestic carpet and decorations that highlighted the stage. The ambiance truly changed when it was time for the ceremony.

Slowly, people started filing into the arena. Many tournament staff also entered, guiding each genius to their respective spot in accordance with their rank. The higher the rank, the closer to the middle of the stage they were situated.

Glancing around, Damien spotted Katherine looking at him in the distance. Just as he was about to wave and head over, he saw her harrumph and turn her head. Damien once again smiled wryly. 'You were the one clinging to me, so why am I the one receiving the harsh treatment?'

Even while complaining, Damien didn't bother her. He figured she needed space after that awkward encounter and he respected that. Once again scanning the area, he found Ethan. This time, he wasn't rejected as he walked forward.

The two greeted each other with a firm handshake and side hug before engaging in conversation.

"We'll be going to the secret realm after this, right? I honestly can't hold my anticipation." Ethan said with an excited grin.

Thinking about the coming adventure, Damien couldn't suppress his grin either. "I also can't wait. Adventuring the secret realm, adventuring the continent, and then adventuring the myriad worlds, just the thought makes my blood boil with excitement."

Ethan wasn't expecting Damien's ambition to be so grand, but thinking about the scenes Damien described, he had to agree. "Well, when you end up exploring in other worlds, make sure to call me. I can't miss out on such a fun adventure."

Damien replied with a smile. "How could I leave you behind? I need a personal punching bag for whenever I get bored."

"You!" Ethan exclaimed. The two stared at each other as if they were about to fight before they randomly broke into a fit of laughter.

"Sure sure, let's see who becomes who's punching bag at that point. If anything, you'll always be that Katherine girl's punching bag so I'll be able to have fun watching that show."

Damien rolled his eyes. “Yeah? Even if it’s like that at least I have her. Where is your girl at? Or can an ugly bastard like you never attract a woman to you?”

The truth is, Ethan was a pretty handsome guy in his own right. It was only when he stood next to Damien that he only looked slightly above average. Even now there were plenty of girls of all races within the crowd who were sending heart eyes and screaming his name.

Ethan scoffed. “Hmph! All the girls love me, it’s just that I’ve already got a fiancée, so I turn them away!”

“Alright, when I meet that fiancée of yours, I’ll make sure to tell her about how many women you always have trying to warm your bed. A good brother should always help his friend out.” Damien snickered.

The two continued bickering for many minutes like a pair of children before the ceremony started. By this point, the emperors had already arrived and the ceremony had already begun, yet these two paid it no mind as they tried to one-up each other.

It was lucky that they were seated relatively far away, so besides the leaders with their 4th class senses, nobody could hear their bickering. Though, it was pretty obvious if one just looked at them.

The beast empress smiled lightly and the beast emperor had a wild grin, thinking back to when he was the same age. The Adelaire emperor had a thoughtful look on his face as he watched this new side of Damien. It looked like he was performing some sort of evaluation.

The ceremony for the other 48 competitors was simple. Since there was no material reward for them, their name was simply stated along with their allegiance, if they possessed one. It was essentially a reward of exposure.

The ceremony continued for about an hour before it was time for the top 3. It was at this time that Damien and Ethan finally stopped their bickering, though they still glared at each other with battle-hungry grins.

“In 3rd place, Ethan Wolfgang from the Wolfgang clan in the Beast Domain! He will receive an SS rank artifact!”

Ethan walked up to the 3rd place podium as he stood proudly. As the audience cheered, the tournament staff approached him.

“Would you like a defensive or supportive artifact?”

Ethan didn't even hesitate to choose the supportive one. The tournament staff pulled out a silver plate with a shining golden bracelet on it before presenting it to Ethan. As he accepted it, he grinned. It seemed he was satisfied with his artifact.

“In 2nd place, Katherine Hart from the Hart clan in the Adelaire Empire! She will also receive an artifact as well as a permanent stat boost potion! These potions can only be created by the most experienced and talented alchemists that exist currently!”

Katherine repeated the same procedure as Ethan, standing on the silver platform with pride. When the staff approached her, she chose a defensive artifact.

She was then handed a glimmering platinum-colored chest armor and a bottle of liquid. Smiling, she glanced at Damien before pretending like she didn't do anything. Finally, it was Damien's turn.

“And finally, our winner for the 100th-anniversary Nexus Event, Damien Void! Although he is currently unaffiliated, he is a member of the adventurers guild as well as a resident of the Adelaire Empire! He will receive the previous two rewards as well as Elixir, the miraculous medicine that can heal all ailments and injuries!”

Damien stood on the highest golden platform with pride. He received a supportive artifact that was graciously shaped the same as his cross-shaped earring and the same potion as Katherine. Along with these two came a glowing reddish-gold potion in a pristine glass container.

This was the elixir that he had been chasing so desperately. He finally obtained the method to cure his mother. He immediately put his rewards away in his subspace to check later.

After a few closing words from the various leaders, the ceremony finally ended, finally closing the Nexus Event.

Night quickly fell and various parties were taking place in the vicinity of the massive arena. Crowds of people danced and celebrated without boundaries or misgivings as they threw their cares away.

Damien watched all this happen from atop the arena roof. It wasn't normally accessible, but he had no problems teleporting here. As he watched the masses below enjoy their time without responsibilities, he slowly laid down and gazed upon the stars.

‘Responsibilities, huh. Although it feels like a massive weight has been lifted from my shoulders after obtaining the Elixir, it doesn't feel like my responsibilities decreased. It's the same feeling I had back before I fell into the dungeon and before I faced that wolf and mutated.’

Damien reached his hand out, attempting to grab the stars. ‘Something is happening on earth. This intuition has never failed me, and the secret realm has been screaming opportunity, so this is the

only possible scenario. But I don't have the power to rush back. I can only pray that nothing happens to my mother before I can arrive.'

Damien closed his eyes, attempting to clear his mind. It was then that he felt someone arrive next to him.

"Aren't you supposed to be celebrating? You were first place in the Nexus Event, after all, everyone wants to party with you."

Smiling lightly, Damien responded. "And aren't you supposed to be avoiding me? Who knew that our friendly neighborhood battle princess was the shy type."

Katherine blushed and looked away. "About that, I'm sorry I clung to you like that while I was asleep. It must have been uncomfortable."

"Well, it's true that you were pretty heavy." Damien teased.

"Y-y-you!" Katherine stuttered before pouncing on Damien, repeatedly banging on his chest.

"Okay okay, I was just kidding," Damien relented. "Besides, do you really think I was uncomfortable? I don't think I could name a single straight man who would be uncomfortable with a beauty using him as a pillow."

Katherine paused for a second as her face once again became a bright shade of red. Slugging lightly, she slowly laid down. Since she had just pounced on him, she ended up laying on top of him with her head on his chest.

Damien raised his brow. This was definitely crossing a line that they'd both tried especially hard not to cross for the past few months, but he said nothing.

Putting his hands around her waist, he continued staring at the night sky.

A peaceful atmosphere permeated the air as the two stayed still in such a position. Neither spoke and neither could find words to even start a conversation. Both of them were too focused on their current position.

Suddenly, the calm sky was lit up with bright colors. Fireworks shot through the sky like shooting stars as the night was illuminated with various shapes.

Damien watched this scene as he spoke. "You're missing quite the show, you know?"

Katherine lightly nodded but didn't turn her head to watch. Instead, she buried herself deeper into Damien's chest.

Katherine then mumbled something under her breath. No matter how Damien tried to decipher what she said, he couldn't, but he knew.

Above the crowds of people emanating a pure aura of happiness and under the beautiful night sky lit with the color of the stars, Katherine had said something he would always wish he had heard, no matter how far in the future it'd be.