

Void 66

Chapter 66

After that eventful night, an entire month passed without much drama.

The hordes of people who crowded the arena slowly dwindled as everyone went back to their mundane lives.

Only the top 50 remained within the arena, as it was more convenient to have them gathered before the secret realm opening. They would also be given ample information regarding what to expect.

For this purpose, they received small jade slips that were apparently information storage artifacts. Unlike spatial rings, these jade slips couldn't store physical objects, but they could store memories and information that can later be viewed by others.

Before checking his jade slip and gathering information, Damien took a quick look at the items he received as the reward from the tournament. Just like artifacts, potions of high enough rank would also be quantified by the system.

[Earring of Concealment]

[An earring forged by a master craftsman that holds the ability to conceal the user's presence completely. No footstep will make a sound and the user will not be noticed unless they will it.]

[Added effect- Increases mana capacity by 250]

Damien felt the description was a bit lackluster, but equipped the earring anyway. His previous one was simply for decoration, so it wouldn't hinder him either way. Only when he equipped it did he realize that the description was apt.

His steps were lighter than any feather and he felt that his whole presence had been erased. He quickly walked up behind Ethan and grabbed his shoulder, terrifying him in the process. It seemed that unless he was standing directly in front of someone, they wouldn't be able to sense his presence at all.

[Permanent Stat Boost Potion]

[A potion created by a master alchemist. It has the ability to permanently raise a single physical stat by 25 points. Due to the effects of the potion, it may only be used once every 5 years. If taken before this cooldown, the potion will have no effect.]

Damien thought for a second. His physical stats were already high enough, but it wouldn't hurt to have more. The only problem was that the potion would only raise a single stat. He decided to save it for later once he had time to properly think it over.

Finally, he checked the Elixir. Unlike the other two item names that carried the same light blue color as the rest of the holographic system window, the Elixir was titled in shining purple.

[Elixir]

[A miraculous medicine that cannot be forged by anyone alive on the current planet in the present time. It has the effect of healing any ailment, disease, illness, or injury to a large extent. Even if one is on the brink of death, one can be brought to their peak by this potion. On mortals, this potion shows even more exaggerated effects.]

Damien smiled. 'I don't know what it means by exaggerated effects, but I'm sure it's a good thing.' He let out a light chuckle as he imagined his mother waking up with super strength.

After he was finished with that, he decided to get informed on the secret realm he would soon be entering.

Damien learned a great deal about the Eternal Secret Realm through the jade slip. Though it was called a secret realm, it truly was its own world. It had various ecosystems and inhabitants that lived their own lives. 50 people was a negligible amount compared to the total population of the secret realm.

Most of this population was made up of beasts, however, unlike on Apeiron, a majority of these beasts would be 3rd class. 2nd class and 4th class beasts were also present in smaller numbers while 1st class beasts weren't even counted. They were insignificant in the scheme of things.

These beasts were scattered throughout this small world and would pose a great deal of danger to the participants, but that was the point. Without danger, there was no pressure to motivate growth.

However, this didn't mean they were being sent to die. The jade slips contained information on the known locations of 4th class beasts to avoid. Although the secret realm wasn't opened every 10 years with the Nexus Event, it was opened every 100 years as its own separate event.

Another fact about the secret realm was that it didn't have the structural integrity to house demigods, making 4th class the peak of strength.

The information they were provided was gathered during the 10 openings since the Great War ended.

Besides beasts, these were also intelligent species. There was a rumor that someone spotted a fairy race and various subspecies of other races such as moon elves. The most dangerous of these indigenous races were the barbarian race.

The barbarian race prioritized strength over everything and held others in contempt due to their use of magic instead of physical might.

Barbarians were especially hostile against outsiders and possessed an uncanny ability to differentiate those who entered the secret realm from its original inhabitants.

Not much else had been documented about their race besides the fact that the participants should be wary of them.

The environments of the small world were also filled with hazards. Massive poisonous swamps that could easily kill 2nd classes, active volcanic regions whose temperatures could melt flesh like nothing, and many more places could be found.

Though it was considered a small world due to its status as a secret realm and lack of access to the outside, its ecosystems were much more varied than the continent.

The secret realm was home to countless treasures that matched or even outclassed the number of dangers.

It was said that many of the peak experts from all races on Apeiron gathered within the secret realm during the end of the Great War to leave legacies for worthy successors of the future. They were aware that their deaths were approaching, perhaps looking to pass the mantle to someone else.

This speculation was created due to the discovery of structures titled 'Legacy Tombs'. These structures took all different shapes and sizes but shared similar qualities. They'd test those that entered them and judge their worthiness. If one could prove themselves during this test, they'd reap massive rewards.

Reading about this fact made many puzzle pieces click together for Damien. This whole time, he was wondering why everyone said there were treasures everywhere, and the picture painted in his mind was quite silly.

He imagined that he could randomly start digging and find an S rank artifact in the dirt or something.

Knowing that there was more of a structure to the acquisition of treasure reassured him that his time in the secret realm wouldn't be spent doing stupid things.

However, his dumb thoughts weren't completely wrong. There were indeed some treasures that were randomly strewn about within the realm, as they were remnants of battles that took place there in the past. Only, the number and quality of these were much lower.

After gaining the knowledge he required, Damien continued his days of rest before his entrance to the small world. On one of these days, he was called forth by the emperors who wished to ask him about his breath ability, but he kept his mouth shut.

After all, the only reason he could acquire traits from certain beasts he devoured was due to his Void Physique. He hadn't seen any mention of his physique in the records he had read, but he still

thought it best to conceal its existence. The fact that its abilities still weren't completely unlocked told him that it was a power he should save as a trump card.

That meeting wasn't worth mentioning. Since the emperors had already agreed not to pressure or antagonize him, it ended swiftly after his refusal. The only hitch was the constant stare he was getting from the Adelaire Emperor.

It wasn't ferocious or filled with killing intent like the stare he received when the two first met, but it was equally creepy. It felt like the emperor was staring into his soul, attempting to gauge all of his secrets.

The emperors chose to remain in the arena as well since their strength was necessary to open the secret realm. They all had many forces left guarding their empires and communication devices to receive news if something went wrong, so they weren't worried about their prolonged absence.

In other news, Damien and Katherine's relationship had made slight progress after the end of the Nexus Event.

The two still maintained a line that they didn't want to cross yet, but their closeness had been taken to a new level. They were together at almost all times, even training within each other's vicinity.

Not to mention, it wasn't rare to see them cuddling as if they were truly a couple.

Sometimes they'd end up falling asleep on the same bed as they did after their fight in the finals, with the only difference being a great lack of awkwardness. When they woke up, they'd simply say their good mornings and continue with their days.

The one who had the most headaches with this was Zara, who's as always stuck third-wheeling. Yet, whenever she brought up the topic, both of them would swiftly avoid it.

Zara had been spending time with the beast empress lately, as she had asked Damien for his permission. She also felt a connection to the empress that she wanted to figure out.

As everyone continued their peaceful daily lives, the month ended, and the time to open the secret realm dawned on them.

It was the first day of the next month and all 50 competitors who were granted access to the secret realm gathered. In front of them was a large field that, although empty, radiated an ancient aura.

The 9 leaders were standing in front of them. Without a word, magic power billowed as they channeled mana into the ground.

Voom!

A strange sound echoed through the air as the ground began to warp. Within half an hour, a massive hole had formed in the previously still grassland.

"Alright," said the Adelaire emperor, who had small beads of sweat trickling down his face. The amount of mana required to open the entrance was truly extravagant.

"To enter the secret realm, all you have to do is jump through this hole. The portal will lead you directly there. Keep in mind that you'll be separated when you enter and your locations will be random. Stay safe and stay cautious as you search for opportunities and gain power."

50 small tokens flew into the participants' hands. Then, with the permission of the leaders, they slowly walked forward until they reached the edge of the gaping hole.

“These tokens will directly teleport you out after 6 months. Remember, if you lose the token, you'll be stuck until the next time the secret realm opens, and if you die, the token will teleport your corpse out.”

Ignoring the competitors that were now showing slightly nervous expressions, he finished his speech.

“Now go on and explore. May fate bless you all with fortuitous encounters.”

Damien smiled. It seemed that most of his speech was directed towards a specific someone, but he wasn't going to comment on it. Turning to that someone, his smile grew wider.

“See you on the other side.”

Then, he jumped.