

Void 68

Chapter 68

Although he was surrounded by darkness, Damien's vision wasn't inhibited in the slightest. His eyes truly made things convenient for him. It had already been an entire month since he entered the secret realm but he still hadn't left this area.

Pulling his sword out of the snake-like beast in front of him, Damien looked around. There was no longer a single living being in his vicinity. Most of the beasts within the gorge had been at 2nd class, and the only 3rd class he found was the giant snake he had just slain. The result was obviously a slaughter.

'The beasts within the gorge will no longer contribute to my growth, and I haven't found any with special traits yet either.' Damien thought to himself.

It was at times like these that he realized how special the dungeon he fell into truly was. Every floor boss gave him a new trait, even allowing him to acquire dragon's breath. Meanwhile, in the year he had spent in the outside world, he hadn't found a single beast with a unique trait he could devour.

It wasn't like he didn't find beasts with traits, as most beasts who had advanced their bloodlines enough had traits. He also devoured almost every beast he killed, so that wasn't the issue. Rather it was as if the traits weren't good enough for his body to absorb them.

As he was in his thoughts, he heard footsteps approaching him. Of course, he had brought Zara into the secret realm. If he was going to a place where he'd grow so much in power, it was only natural to bring her as well.

Besides, 6 months was too long for either of them to stay separated without the ability to communicate.

Since the two were relatively powerful, they rarely found the need to fight together anymore, instead opting to separately hunt so they could net gains. Perhaps when they started facing higher level 3rd classes they'd combine their power.

"Alright, since we've cleared this gorge, it's time for us to start making our way up the mountain," Damien said as he jumped onto Zara's back.

She had grown so big over the past year that he wouldn't be able to casually hop onto her back if he didn't have his physical stats. Though she usually made herself smaller, there wasn't a need for that when they were hunting.

Without further ado, the two flew out of the gorge. "Head to a place with more 3rd classes. It's the easiest way for us to level up."

Damien was already at level 81 after slaughtering the beasts in the gorge, but he felt this speed wasn't enough. At this rate, he'd only achieve 3rd class near the end of his time in the secret realm.

And although he didn't know how to exactly quantify Zara's progress, from her words it seemed she was also stuck at a bottleneck.

He was aiming for them to hit 3rd class or at least the peak of 2nd class by the end of the next two months. With this thought in mind, the two of them directly skipped the first cloud layer and started on the middle section of the mountain.

Katherine had also made ample progress in the past month. Unlike Damien, she started directly by climbing the mountain, leading to many more encounters with 3rd class beasts. She had already achieved level 90 at this time.

As she decapitated yet another beast, the red string she had been watching started to move. 'It seems he's started taking things more seriously. Well, you won't beat me to 3rd class anyway.'

Katherine rushed up the mountain, also opting to fly instead of travel on foot as she had been doing up until this point. She was already at the level of the first cloud layer but hadn't crossed it yet. She was competitive to the point where she waited until Damien exited the gorge to move past this layer.

Unlike the surface level, the middle portion of the mountain contained a healthy mix between 2nd and 3rd class beasts. The number of encounters one would have was significantly increased.

Besides the many legacy tombs one would find here, this was another reason why the Godspark mountain was one of the best places in the secret realm to be transported. With the way its population density was split, it was a perfect leveling zone.

Another month swiftly passed by as the three of them continued their climb.

At this time, Damien was in the middle of a fierce fight. In front of him was a massive flying hawk that looked like a Zapdos Pokémon. He already pulled his sword, but he was forced to rely more on ranged attacks. The fight had already been raging for around half an hour, but he wasn't able to take down the beast yet.

The beast had a constantly deployed lightning field around it, and although Damien had a relative immunity to lightning, he still sensed danger.

Slashing the air, Damien created multiple spatial tears and send them towards the beast as if they were flying blades. This was a new interpretation of 'Bladeless' he had created to attack from range. Along with this, he was sending superheated beams of plasma at the hawk.

However, these attacks only landed occasionally. The lightning field tore apart the beams of plasma and ignored the heat while the lightning hawk used its speed to evade the spatial tears. It wasn't all for naught, though.

From the other side, projectiles of ice were constantly shot out, attempting to weaken the hawk.

The ground was also frozen into permafrost as Zara turned the environment in her favor. The field of lightning slowly dwindled as the hawk took more damage. One of its legs had already been severed by a spatial tear while many small cuts existed on its body.

Suddenly, tens of tendrils emerged from the hawk's shadow in an attempt to bind it. In its efforts to combat the tendrils, it was subjected to 5 plasma beams that drilled through its body. As the hawk screeched in pain, the lightning field that protected it vanished.

It was time for a pure offensive.

From its left, Zara pounced, her whole body coated in icy armor. Her claws slashed out, forcing the hawk to dodge before her teeth sunk into its wing, promptly ripping it off. After taking the hawk's ability to fly and disabling its mobility, the rest of the fight was smooth sailing.

Another 5 minutes later, Damien teleported directly in front of the hawk and let out the fatal strike.

‘Void Sword Art 3rd Step: Spatial Collapse’

Space bent and twisted, leaving only a mangled corpse in its wake. As the experience piled in, Damien quickly devoured the corpse. Although it didn’t help him improve his physical stats, the essence went directly into a specific area in his body, leading him to gain new insights into the element.

Although he still had no idea what this part of his body was, he had discovered it when he was trying to gain an in-depth understanding of his Void Physique. It was both ever-present and ethereal, and all he knew about it was that it was the place his affinities stemmed from.

Looking at his status, Damien had a satisfied grin on his face. In the past month, he and Zara had solely focused on confronting 3rd class beasts, especially those with fiercer auras, leading to their immense improvement.

Zara’s ice was now strong enough to cause permafrost, as she did with the ground earlier, and while Damien didn’t have any significant improvements, his level had risen to 95. He was aiming to reach 3rd class within 2 months, but it seemed he wouldn’t even need that long.

Within another half a month at most, he’d reach that level.

On the other side of the mountain, Katherine was having even more significant improvements. In the past month, she had also been confronting only 3rd class beasts, increasing her combat prowess by large margins.

Her pain amplification illusions had once again been improved and her level was already at 99, the peak of 2nd class. She only needed to kill a few more beasts to reach her next class change.

Due to this, she had already started making her way towards Damien. It was imperative that the first thing she does when she achieves 3rd class was to brag about it to his face.

On her way, she spotted many beasts and slew them without much thought until something interesting caught her eye. One of the many strings she saw connecting to unknown places was actually close by, and its color was bright gold.

She knew what this color signified, as it was the color of Damien's string when they first met. It was a string that signified opportunity.

Following the path the string showed her, Katherine ended up in the middle of a large clearing. In front of her, she saw a large dilapidated stone slab with writing on its surface.

"While my death may be certain, my will and tenacity will never fade. To the next generation who is fated to see this message, partake in my trial, test thy will, and receive my legacy."

Although it was her first time seeing one in person, it wasn't hard to guess what this slab was. 'The entrance to a Legacy Tomb.'

She didn't think twice about entering, quickly moving forward, but she was forced to stop. Her eyes were throbbing, alerting her of hidden danger. Without another thought, she backed away.

'Whatever is inside of that tomb isn't something I can handle alone. I'll meet up with Damien and Zara before we try to do it together.'

Katherine didn't know why she was born with these eyes, but they had never led her astray. Whenever she followed the path they showed her, she'd end up immensely benefitting or evading looming danger.

This was the reason why Katherine had avoided the pursuit of the supremacist faction within the Adelaire empire while she was out adventuring alone, and also the reason why she decided to recruit Damien for the escort mission a year ago even though he was a total stranger.

At that time, her only thought was to reap the benefits her eyes showed her, she'd have never expected that she would develop such intimate feelings for him. Smiling at the thought, Katherine continued moving in Damien's direction.

'If that bastard doesn't man up and say something before we leave this realm, I swear on anything that I'll pounce on him.'