

Void 71

Chapter 71

Damien sighed once again. He always figured there was something special about his father. There was no way a man with such a temperament could have been born into a mana-less society like earth. Yet, he had no clue where to get the answers.

‘Well, that comes later.’

“I’m glad I got to see this version of the past, but it couldn’t be further from the truth. If you want to force me to stay and break my will, it’s impossible with just this much.” Damien spoke to nobody in particular.

Yet the world still reacted to his words. The comfy house he lived in as a child, the streets outside, and even his father that was smiling at him sadly started to disappear into flecks of light.

“I pray you never falter in your journey.” With his last words said, his father entirely disappeared. Damien was now alone in a world of white.

Something akin to a projector screen appeared before him, showing his true past.

It didn’t even start during high school, as his middle school life was riddled with bullying and ridicule. His father had already disappeared by this time, and his mother was never home.

His first year of high school was the peak of this cycle of bad luck, though. That bus ride was filled with silence other than the occasional bullying he would face.

Bryce was never his friend, rather he was a kid who did everything in his power to make Damien miserable.

When Elena got on the bus, rather than encouraging him, Bryce had screamed out for everyone to hear that he had a crush on her. That was the incident that killed his thoughts of romance.

His first year of high school was terrible. He never had friends, he flunked many of his classes, and he walked home not because of club activities, but because he could no longer stand the harassment.

When he got home, his mother was never there. She was working 3 to 4 jobs at a time and never had the time for him. It had gotten so bad that he began to cut himself just to feel something other than depression.

It was halfway through this period of depression that he had formally met Elena. It was a rather normal meeting at a bus stop rather than him heroically saving her.

However, that single meeting changed his life. She filled his world with smiles and showed him a different perspective on life. He realized how much effort his mother had put into giving him a healthy life. And he stopped harming himself.

Then, the world awakening came, leaving his mother in a coma before he could ever thank her for all her work. His life changed once again as he had no time to think about anything other than making sure she and himself survived. And finally, a few years later, he fell.

Although Damien's backstory wasn't tragic and filled with death, it was something that could mentally traumatize any child on earth. Damien developed trust issues, he stopped having the ability to share his problems, and he never allowed himself to receive support.

Only after seeing the ideal future presented to him by the trial did he notice how much those years affected him. He still carried those trust issues and the many other scars he received back then.

Though his body wasn't scarred due to his regeneration, he could still feel the cold blade he ran across his skin back then.

The scenes on the projector ended, leaving Damien alone in the empty white room. He closed his eyes as he thought back to what he just experienced.

It took him some time, but he managed to collect his thoughts. 'Looks like my strength isn't the only thing I need to improve.'

He actually appreciated this trial. It had shown him many flaws in himself that he wasn't self-aware enough to notice. It also reminded him of a few memories that had been subconsciously suppressed.

When Damien opened his eyes again, he was back within that miniature throne hall. Next to him was a passed-out Katherine, seemingly going through the same trial.

And indeed, that was exactly what she was going through. Katherine had been seeing scenes of her childhood.

Her father was an emperor, so it was only natural for him to have a harem. He had around 100 wives that he married for various reasons, whether it be love or benefit.

In reality, this harem was toxic, constantly fighting and scheming for his attention, but in the world she was in, they were extremely harmonious.

Katherine had a sister that she used to love dearly, but as time went on, this sister of hers drifted away. She became fake and took after her mother, plotting against her siblings for the throne.

Seeing the ugliness that's birthed in people when they're overcome by greed for status was one of the main reasons Katherine left the palace to become an adventurer.

However, none of that existed in this world. Her sister was her best friend, and rather than go alone, she would adventure together with her sister, enjoying the sights of the world as they grew older.

And finally, her mother. Her mother dies mysteriously when Katherine was 12 years old, and nobody was ever able to find out the cause of her death, but Katherine knew. Her mother had been killed by one of the other harem members.

Katherine's mother was widely known to be the emperor's favorite wife. He was also the first woman he ever married and did it purely out of love. This was also one of the main reasons the emperor favored Katherine so much.

In this world, her dead mother was alive and well, able to be a true parent to her daughter.

Even though Katherine possessed an illusion affinity, she didn't have an immunity like Damien. She was truly susceptible to losing her ego within this perfect world.

And not just susceptible, it almost happened. She was drowned in the pleasure of the peaceful life she had where she didn't lose anyone or anything. She went on an adventure and met Damien, becoming partners.

They went on countless quests together and over many years, sprouted a budding romance. They got married in the imperial capital, with her mother standing witness and blessing the marriage.

Katherine had everything she could ask for, but it couldn't stay that way. She had obligations in the real world, she had people she cared about that were waiting for her. Her pupils began throbbing.

Although they weren't the same as Damien's, they had their own uniqueness that helped her break out of the situation. Rather than the calm approach Damien took, Katherine directly broke the illusion with force. She raged at the fact that she was shown something like this, she hated that she almost fell prey to this mundane life.

She imposed her illusions onto the one she was stuck in, using the pressure to make quick advancements and insights, before the illusion cracked like glass.

Just like Damien, she was left in the white room. She was shown her past where her mother died, where her father couldn't provide her with too much lest she be killed off as well, where her sister betrayed her in pursuit of power.

She saw everything once again as tears began flowing from her eyes. She couldn't take it anymore, she needed to see someone she trusted, someone she cared for. She hadn't felt this vulnerable since the day her mom had died.

When the white room faded, the first thing she saw was Damien. Without any words, she leapt into his arms and cried. She cried until she had no more tears left. Truthfully, Damien had also woken up

with tears streaking down his face. The only reason he didn't completely break down was that he had done so in front of his parents before he left his dream.

Damien didn't blame Katherine in the slightest for her behavior, patting her back as she calmed herself down.

"Are you okay, Katherine?" He said in a soft voice. He didn't want to startle her after she had just returned to normal.

She raised her head to look at him with hazy eyes. Slowly, the fog of her disguise melted away, revealing her true face to Damien in all its glory. Although he had been looking at this face since the first time they met, there was something different about it when she chose to show him herself.

Her lips parted as she spoke. "No more Katherine Hart. My name is Rose. Rose Adelaire."

Then, she leaned her head forward as her lips connected with his.