

Void 77

Chapter 77

“Show yourself!”

The trio’s vigilance was once again raised, but the olden voice assured them of its intentions.

“Fear not, children. I am but a remnant soul left in this temple, waiting patiently for someone to receive this legacy.”

Even with this, the three didn’t let down their guard. Still, they gave the voice a chance to continue. The effect the depictions along the walls left on them was big enough for them to do so.

The illusory form of an old man appeared out of thin air, its existence shaky and broken. When Damien looked at this old man’s facial features, he immediately turned back to the painting. “You are...!”

The old man smiled. “Yes, that is me at the end of that painting, or at least that was the real me. My name is Kurt Galloway, and I was once a leader of the human race.”

Damien was shocked. Kurt Galloway was a name he had nearly forgotten but always stayed within the recesses of his memory. After all, if it wasn’t for him, Damien would have long been dead within the dungeon.

Although he couldn’t be assured about the truthfulness of the old man’s words, Damien did become slightly more respectful.

“Can you tell us why you appeared in front of us, senior?”

Kurt smiled. “It is quite simple really. I just wanted to tell you a bit more about these depictions and give you a small warning about what you will face when you enter through that door. Now tell me, did you notice anything off about the paintings?”

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Damien nodded. “I noticed that the creatures in the paintings, which I assume are the Nox, are deformed grotesquely, and that form wouldn’t be effective in battle. Not only that, something feels off about these events, as if they were mixed together in a way they weren’t meant to be.”

Kurt’s smile grew. “Indeed, the depiction of the Nox in these paintings is subjective, but it’s obvious that the artist was biased when drawing a race that wiped half of the world’s population not once, but multiple times.

“As for your second assumption, it also tied back to what I just mentioned. The Nox’s invasion on this planet didn’t simply start 1000 years ago, rather that was when it was finally ended. The very first invasion of Nox was almost 10,000 years ago.”

This piece of information shocked Damien and Rose to their cores. What kind of a timespan was 10,000 years? They couldn’t even fathom living for that long.

“I understand your doubt, but that is only a part of the lifespan a demigod is granted. The only ones who survived every era until 1000 years ago were them.

“Those first scenes you see with the chaotic world full of strife was society 10,000 years ago. The following panels until the first war ended took 2000 years to occur. I was born 3,000 years after that, and the war resumed 2,000 years after I was born.

pa nda nov el “My parents were of noble lineage, so they easily achieved 4th class. During those 2,000 years, I gained strength normally, but when the Nox descended once more, they took everything I loved from me.”

Kurt’s face twisted in rage. “My family, my wife, even my infant child wasn’t spared. After that, I ceaselessly pursued revenge, slaughtering the Nox until I managed to reach demigod level.

“It all culminated in that final panel you saw. Before the various demigods of the world hatched their schemes and sacrificed themselves, they put their power together to turn a small planet into a secret realm and I used my spatial abilities to transport that realm onto the continent.

The trio was once again shocked. It was no wonder that life thrived in the realm and intelligent species existed, it was once its own true world.

“Since we knew we were going to die, we put our legacies into this world for the later generation. And to not make the general public suspicious, we allowed those 4th classes to do the same.

“And then, it all ended. When I sacrificed myself, I split this part of my soul to reside within the secret realm, only awakening when a new generation enters. Since I had managed to leave the Nox with only a single demigod, they retreated and haven’t returned until they regain their forces.

“It was an elaborate plan that made them assume we still had demigods alive within the world. And like that, it’s been 1000 years.”

Although Kurt had summarized the events that took place, the pain in his voice was all too clear. They could feel his unwillingness, but also the relief he felt when the Nox retreated. However, Kurt wasn't done.

"It was only after my true body had died that I learned of this, but the Nox have been proliferating through the universe for thousands of years. Their purpose is unknown, and all they do when they dock on a new planet is driving its denizens to extinction.

"My only hope for the three of you that have made it to this temple successfully is that you don't allow Apeiron to fall to those creatures. I'm aware that asking you to eliminate the Nox is not a task you can handle, but I hope you can at least do this small amount."

Damien and Rose nodded immediately, and Zara followed after seeing their affirmation. For Damien, he owed his life to Kurt. Protecting a single world wasn't too much to ask, especially since he could escape if he was going to die.

Rose was different. This world was her home, so she felt that it was only natural that she protects it. Everything she cared about was in this world.

But Damien suddenly felt the need to raise a question. "But, why me?"

Kurt looked at him deeply, but he wasn't fazed by the vague question. Even if he was just a fragment of his old self, he still had enough of a connection to the secret realm to understand what Damien was asking.

“You see, all the legacies my true self left in the world were connected to each other,” Kurt said as a ring suddenly appeared floating in mid-air. With the appearance of this ring, Damien felt something in his inventory buzz.

It was a similar-looking obsidian black ring. Damien had taken it from the subspace in the dungeon assuming it was a treasure, but as time passed, he had forgotten its existence.

“Although you are not from this world, you are someone who can be considered my successor. When it comes to spatial affinity, I always had a quirk. It was impossible for me to not pick up those young kids and teach them about the paths to developing this esoteric affinity.

“Besides that, why shouldn’t it be you? From the way I see it, you’ve come from a world close to Apeiron, and unwillingly at that. The Nox is a threat to us all, so it’s natural I warn you about it.”

Damien understood. In return for all the help he would receive from Kurt, he was to protect this world. It was like an exchange. Although it seemed selfish, Damien didn’t mind it. It would be weirder if Kurt was completely magnanimous.

Rose, on the other hand, was baffled. ‘Another world? Dungeon? He came unwillingly?’ She couldn’t make heads or tails out of the situation.

Noticing this, Damien lightly grabbed her hand. “I’ll explain everything once this is over.”

Rose nodded, as there was nothing else she could do at the moment.

Suddenly, Kurt’s form began to waver. “It looks like my time is finally running out. Children, through that door there is a 3rd class member of the Nox.

“I had trapped him when I was still in my prime and forced him into stasis until someone arrived here. Only after you kill him will you be able to reap your rewards. I hope you are able to stay true to your promises.”

After giving them a few more tips, Kurt’s shadow faded completely, leaving them alone in an empty hall.

Before Damien could collect his thoughts, Rose grabbed his collar. “You have some explaining to do, bastard.”

Damien smiled wryly. It seemed Rose was angry he hid his origins from her. Even Zara was curious, as she had met him within the dungeon, not knowing who he was before that.

So, Damien went to a corner of the hall and sat, patting the ground next to him indicating Rose to join him. Except, she didn’t. It was Zara that curled up on the spot next to him.

Rose stormed up to him angrily and without another word, sat down directly on his lap. Putting her arms around his neck for balance, she stared into his eyes, her entire aura screaming, “go on, explain!”

Damien’s wry smile grew. Without wasting time, he recounted his story. From his childhood when his father disappeared to meeting Elena in high school, to the world awakening when his mother fell ill, and to the point when he was thrown into the dungeon to die.

From there, he sped up the pacing of his story, attempting to gloss over everything that happened in the dungeon. He succeeded for a bit, but when it got to the point where he met Zara, she intervened and told everything as it was.

About running from the wyvern, training in the subspace, Damien's fight against the wyvern where he allowed half his body to be burnt to a crisp without flinching, and more.

Zara seemed to find Damien's pain tolerance cool and heroic, so she talked about it in detail, but this made Rose realize how much Damien had downplayed the events before he met Zara.

Though she wanted to know what he went through, she didn't push him. If his tolerance had reached a point where he could take grievous injuries like they were nothing, she couldn't imagine the pain he endured.

Zara talked about how he was missing an arm and how he later regrew it, how they escaped to the surface, and much more. And then the story reached where they met Rose.

Rose was silent, taking time to collect her thoughts. She was slightly annoyed that he had hidden such important information from her but hearing his story, that feeling vanished.

Meanwhile, Damien was getting increasingly anxious the more time it took for Rose to speak. He didn't know why, but the thought of her abandoning him due to his origins, even if it was irrational, made him extremely uncomfortable.

After many minutes that felt like days to Damien, Rose looked back into his eyes. She could see the hint of anxiety he was trying to hide, and couldn't help but smile.

‘Since we first met, I’ve never seen him anxious, and this is what gets him there?’

Shaking her head slightly, Rose moved forward, once again connecting her lips with his.

The difference this time was that it wasn’t a kiss begging for intimacy or codependence, it was meant to assure Damien that her feelings hadn’t changed.

Damien could feel those emotions through her kiss. He understood what she wanted to convey. And with that, was there any other course of action? Of course not.

Without even the slightest hint of hesitation, Damien kissed her back.