

# Void 821

Chapter 821 Domino [1]

Eien's massive size didn't need to be mentioned multiple times to be realized. Even in width, it was greater in size than the area of many planets.

With this kind of space, especially with half of the battlefield sunken in the Abyss, it was natural for there to be countless pockets of space that remained undiscovered by Heaven's Army.

An aged figure sat like a monk in one of these spatial pockets.

For the first time in many hundreds of years, his eyes opened.

"The Heavenly Demon Candidate has lost his claim."

The man's ancient voice echoed through the small cave he occupied, slightly cracking the walls.

"This place is no longer suitable."

With the second instance of speech, the cave collapsed entirely.

The old man reappeared in the void of Eien, easily flicking away the spatial collapse caused by his actions.

"The 9th revolution nears the end of its cycle and the Path of Godhood opens its doors. Before this event, I cannot move."

The old man took out a strange black and red talisman, burning it in the next instant.

"Let the juniors fight amongst themselves. Those who die merely weren't worthy of their Providence."

His gaze pierced the bounds of reality, traveling millions of kilometers in the distance.

"A familiar scent..."

He shook his head to regain focus.

Regardless of the matters of existence, he could not and would not interfere.

It was close.

He could feel the welcoming embrace of Divinity on the horizon.

"The day that I, Jahad, reach Divinity..."

His body moved millions of miles in an instant, not through spatial teleportation, but through pure force of movement.

His gaze panned the surroundings before his body moved, disappearing into a new spatial pocket in which he would stay for a few hundred more years.

In his wake, only a single phrase was left resounding through the empty Abyss.

"...that day will be the end of existence."

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A black and red talisman burned.

Rather, multiple burned in many different locations across the Blood-Drenched Wilderness and nearby areas.

The Heavenly Demon Body no longer has an owner.

As the Demonic Providence's commandments allow, the person who kills the Heavenly Demon Candidate's killer will inherit the Heavenly Demon Body.

These two messages came together to every Nox Stronghold and camp within several million kilometers.

Suddenly, many eyes turned to the Blood-Drenched Wilderness.

Just who was the Heavenly Demon Candidate's killer?

Rapid investigations only brought back uncertainty, as if the killer vanished into thin air.

This was especially alarming for those in other territories. To hide oneself so well required a specific level of skill that only existed in extreme peak masters.

It was best to wait.

After all, weren't there two Nox Strongholds in the Blood-Drenched Wilderness aside from the one the Heavenly Demon Candidate controlled?

Those two strongholds would be the perfect lure, and at the same time, the killer's response to these strongholds' existence would reveal much about their personality and strength.

However, before these things could be ascertained, the two Nox Strongholds needed to be pushed into action.

And if it was instigators one was looking for...

...Eien was a place where they thrived and a place where they gathered.

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Pressure was an extremely strong force, especially when coming from a powerful entity.

The pressure and tension caused by the black and red talisman were already high since only the strongest experts were permitted to use them.

However, immediately after this pressure appeared, countless forces in the surrounding areas exerted their own power on the Blood-Drenched Wilderness as well.

At first, it was just Nox forces, yet, once Heaven's Army learned of the situation, they also pushed their forces to war.

It wasn't just a matter of revealing the Heavenly Demon Candidate's killer, who became an extremely important target of protection for Heaven's Army, but also capitalizing on the current frenzy to push the war forward.

After all, the higher-ups of Heaven's Army also weren't happy with the level of politics on the battlefield. In a war of this size, such petty struggles couldn't be allowed.

Eien's massive size was the main problem. With how thinly the army was spread, it was impossible to exert total control over it. This control needed to be spread amongst guild branch managers and others of their same level, but these were the exact people who caused discord to spread through the warzone.

If the flames of war blazed brightly once more, the space for petty squabbles decreased heavily, and people would be forced to remember their allegiance.

The two Nox Strongholds were both in full preparation mode.

One stronghold had 100 late-stage 4th classes, while the other had over 500. The destroyed stronghold was only so weak because it was new.

The Heavenly Demon Candidate was scheduled to begin his advent from this stronghold, but it was destroyed before he even got a chance.

And in the end, the man himself died a pitiful death without even being able to leave his last words.

The other two strongholds didn't have any plans to follow him to purgatory.

"Prepare for war! Before those humans can invade us, we must conquer them! Drink their blood, eat their flesh, and dominate them without fail!"

A grey-skinned man stood on a platform above an army of millions. His aura radiated strongly, filling his troops with a strong sense of loyalty.

After all, this man wasn't originally part of their forces.

He was sent from elsewhere, only joining them in the last few days.

But this man...

Was an extreme peak 4th class master at the 4th revolution, a true Commander!

RAAAAAAAAAAH!

The furious warcry of those troops rang out powerfully.

Their numbers covered countless thousands of kilometers.

The forces of two strongholds together were marching under this man's lead.

And their destination...

They made a beeline for Grand Heavens Boundary's half of Eien.

Just as the man said, they would initiate war before war enveloped them.

And he...

'I will acquire the Heavenly Demon Body and truly become invincible! Hahahaha!'

The Nox Commander grinned wickedly from behind his massive army.

The estimated time of their first encounter with the enemy...



Was a mere three days.

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'So it's finally starting.'

Damien sat in a bed within Sanctuary's guild branch and chewed on a stalk of grass. Ximen Wuhen sat silently on a chair to the side.

The duo had been waiting aimlessly for almost an entire week now, but it seemed that Damien's forethought was spot on this time.

'The situation in the Blood-Drenched Wilderness was already a powder keg waiting to blow, but who would've thought it was to this degree.'

Damien smiled as he thought back to the message he received a few hours earlier.

A guild summon was issued. Tomorrow morning, all forces were to gather and march towards the Abyss to crush the Nox army.

'This is a joint operation that's being led by the three guild branch heads, but many more forces are joining than expected. These smaller forces and squads have been sitting around waiting for an opportunity to rise, and they finally found one.'

Damien glanced out the window at the dreary scenery of the Blood-Drenched Wilderness.

'I wonder how these individualistic forces will collide in a major operation like this. Honestly, it's a bit too hopeful to believe they'll cooperate perfectly, but I'll hope regardless.'

It wouldn't be long before tomorrow came.

'I guess this will be my true introduction to war.'

The part of foot soldier would be played for now, but when the time was right...

'I'll dominate everything and write my own legend.'

Chapter 822 Domino [2]

The distinction between night and day in Eien was strange, but the night did eventually pass.

Although, the darkness of night wasn't necessarily a concept existing in a flat plane like Eien.

The sun and moon hung in the sky, but they only ever remained on the Grand Heavens Boundary half of Eien, given that the Abyss would consume them instantly if they crossed into its territory.

This strange situation led to both celestial bodies existing together at one time. The distinction between night and day was determined by which celestial body was closer to the earth at a given point in time, as the two rotated around each others' axes.

There were a true sun and moon dedicated to Eien, but since they traveled around the ring lengthwise, seeing them was a once in a countless hundred years experience.

When they met at the two extremes poles of Eien, mystical phenomena were said to occur.

'One of these days, I'll have to go see those phenomena for myself.' Damien thought to himself as he exited his room.

His eyes widened in the next moment.

'Wow, they really did a lot overnight.'

The vast stretch of land that connected the three major guilds leading the war effort in this sector of Eien was now filled with various tents and facilities, meant to sort and organize the army before they were sent to war.

Today's effort was large-scale, and the soldiers were meant to act like true soldiers. To verify that no kinks would hinder the army's success, various security checks and tests had to be taken before a soldier could be properly entered into the forming army.

Damien passed through these checks with ease. He merely showed off his Life and Death Laws a bit and his strength and talent were proven. As for his identity, a strange formation scanned him to reveal that he was truly a human without an ounce of Nox Mana in his system.

'These checks are good. Since they're done only before battle, though, it's a bit easier for traitors to slip through the cracks.'

Damien's eyes narrowed. He couldn't see it from where he stood, but he could definitely smell the scent of Nox Mana coming from various locations in the vast campsite.

'I'll take care of them in the chaos. Before that, I should go meet the unit I've been assigned to.'

Damien was given a cavalry position, a place where he could stand at the forefront of the battle. He didn't know if it was Priscilla's meddling or the generals' impression of his skills that landed him the position, but he didn't care either way.

'Cavalry usually ride horses, right? How does that work here?'

It didn't take long to find out.

Damien arrived at the Roaring Dragon Cavalry Unit to which he was assigned and was immediately flabbergasted.

'These are...tron bikes?!

More specifically, they were personal starships built for peak mobility. It was merely that their form happened to resemble the light cycles from a certain intellectual property popular on Earth.

'Since they're starships, they can definitely race through the stars. In other words...light cycle pod racers!'

Damien's old nerd habits from his teenage years bubbled to the surface when he saw the beautiful machines. He couldn't help but walk over and admire them...

Without touching, of course.

'It's basic human decency to look but not touch with such expensive vehicles.'

"You like what you see?"

A voice sounded from behind Damien, causing him to turn around. The visage of a large and densely built middle-aged man was revealed to his eyes.

His skin was a dark bronze color but his hair was pure white. This dichotomy, however, couldn't take its role as his most prominent feature.

That position went to the horrific scar that started on his forehead and disappeared within the collar of his shirt.

"My name is Ezio, and I'm the leader of this here Roaring Dragon Cavalry. It's a pleasure to meet you, new recruit."

Ezio flashed a large smile as he spoke.

Damien was almost blinded by its light.

'What a friendly guy.'

"I'm Damien Void. I look forward to working with you." He replied in kind.

"Hahaha! Good! Damien, let me give you some tips on controlling these babies, and then we'll take a few laps to acclimate you to the ride. Once we get to the battlefield, there is no more room for mistakes."

Ezio's face was incredibly solemn by the time his words ended. Damien nodded with the same seriousness, completely understanding the importance of the small training he'd receive before they departed.

Any variable was a negative variable in an organized war like this.

Ezio grinned. "Don't be so serious. Now is the time to get out all your laughs and enjoy yourself. After all, who knows if we'll be able to return?"

Damien smiled wryly. This guy could really talk about death in such a casual manner. He obviously wasn't someone simple.

"Then, instructor, I look forward to our lesson." He said.

"Haha! You're looking forward to a lot today, aye?"

"Haha..." Damien laughed awkwardly. He was just trying to be polite, but, well, his "being polite" skill was miles below level 0.

'Haa, let's just focus on these badass bikes and forget it.'

Damien looked over at the storage of bikes. There were more than 400 in the warehouse, but only a little over a hundred would be used.

The Roaring Dragon Cavalry was the only one allowed to use this equipment, after all.

"Take your pick. Whichever bike calls out to you, choose it without hesitation! The bond between man and machine is the most important part of riding!"

With Ezio's words of encouragement, Damien entered the warehouse and strolled through the rows of machines.

They were all equally precious, but they all had minor differences.

'The ones who have owners...I can feel it clearly. I thought it was just a saying, but could there truly be such thing as a "bond between man and machine?"'

Damien frowned. If so, he ironically wasn't feeling it at all.

After five minutes of perusing, his opinion still remained the same.

None of these bikes were for him.

There was just...something missing.



Damien caught a glint in the corner of his eye.

No, something called out to him.

It wasn't far, but it wasn't within the warehouse.

Damien immediately followed that slight sensation he felt until he arrived behind the warehouse at what seemed to be a junkyard.

'Is it that...?' He questioned inwardly.

Among the rusted metal and spare parts, there was one particular piece of machinery that was covered by a thick black cloth.

"Aha, so you've felt its call as well," Ezio said as he arrived nearby.

"What is under that cloth?" Damien asked curiously.

Ezio smiled. He moved forward and grabbed the cloth himself, pulling it away to reveal what was underneath.

"This is both the strongest and most unreliable machine in our inventory."

It was a sleek black color. Purple and red stripes decorated its surface, giving it a minimalistic yet impactful design.

"She's had multiple riders in the past, but none have been able to tame her. In the end, she was left out here, unused."

It radiated the aura of an untamed bull, yet held the same grace as a prancing gazelle. Its mere existence seemed to be a symbol of status and authority.

"Honestly, even we aren't aware of her origins. She's been in the warehouse since before any of us Roaring Dragon guys were given access to it."

VROOM!

The bike roared on its own as if it knew it was being praised.

"Her name is Atalanatis, and it's said that she will not allow those she doesn't approve to even touch her."

Ezio grinned and looked at Damien.

"So how is it? Would you like to give it a try?"

Yeah, this was it.

This was exactly what he was looking for.

He didn't know what it was, but this bike had that certain something he craved.

Damien grinned.

'No matter what, I'll make you mine.'

Chapter 823 Domino [3]

VROOOOOOOOM!

"HAHAHAHAHAHA!"

The twin roars of a booming engine and a raucous man resounded together for countless kilometers.

WHOOSH!

A blur of black zipped past those spectating the track, moving at speeds so high that even the eyes of many practitioners couldn't catch up to it.

It had already been five minutes since this fiasco started, and at this point, it was drawing far too much attention from uninvolved parties to continue.

"That's enough! Come on back!"

Ezio's voice cut through the crowd's cheers and entered the driver's ears.

The extreme speeds of the vehicle he was driving slowed almost instantaneously, and the machine cut through the air as if defying the laws of physics to drift until it parked mere meters away from Ezio.

"Hahahaha!"

Even after dismounting the vehicle, the driver was laughing.

How could he not?

'This thing is fucking awesome!'

It had been a long time since Damien had such novel fun.

"Not only did you tame Atalantis in minutes, you even grew into a professional rider in the same span of time! Tell me, you're not the hidden son of some old monster, are you?" Ezio teased with a grin as he slung his arm over Damien's shoulder.

"Ha...haha...how could that be...? If I was really some powerful person, why would I choose to be a foot soldier here?" Damien responded awkwardly.

'It's not like I completely lied...my young master benefits won't activate until I reach the Heavenly World.'

Damien shook his head with a smile.

"Is my riding up to par? I don't want to hold everyone back when we get to battle."

Ezio rolled his eyes. "Don't go fishing for compliments just because I gave you a few! Hell, with your skills, you could even be the captain of your own unit, let alone a small member of mine!"

"Don't joke, captain. I don't have nearly the leadership ability for that."

"Hahaha! Kid, you're a good one! Come, let us meet with the rest of the brothers and prepare to set off."

Damien put his hand out and pushed a pulse of mana into his bike. Once the bike received his mana, it turned into a purple card slightly larger than a playing card for Damien to store on his body.

"Tch, I'm jealous."

"I would be too."

Damien smiled as he put the card away. Really, this bike was everything a man could ever dream of.

Horsepower wasn't even a worthy term for it with its speed that far outstripped that of sound. Its design was sleek, it sounded beautiful, it had countless conveniences for its rider, and it even had an anti-theft system of its own that killed those who tried to steal it.

If it wasn't a man's dream, then just what was?

'Actually taming it was annoying, though.'

To the outside world, Damien merely touched the bike's surface for a few minutes and it accepted him. However, in reality, he fought a fierce battle against the bike's system to earn its approval.

'The mana currents it emits for self-defense are pure and attributeless, but the way they snake up one's mana system to attack them is shocking. It almost moves as if it has free will, though it hasn't developed even a sliver of consciousness yet.'

The fact that its abilities were a pure wonder of technology and mana engineering made its existence even greater.

'But it's name...'

The bike was clearly named after the Greek goddess, Atalanta, who was deemed the fastest goddess in mythology, however, Damien wasn't a fan of the name.

He was American, after all.

Between Atlanta and Atlantis, there was no need for an Atalantis.

'Your name...'

Damien felt the card in his pocket. He felt the slim connection he created with the machine.

His heart and soul intertwined with the machinery.

His eyes gleamed.

'...Jack Black.'

'...'

Damien could swear he felt the bike deflate in disappointment.

He almost snorted.

'I'm kidding, I'm kidding. I can't change the bike's original name because that would be an insult to the creator. Since he wished to name his creation after a God, I can only abide by his will. However, I don't feel like saying that long name whenever I need you, so I'll just call you Blackie from now on.'

Damien smiled a very concerning smile as he squeezed the purple card until the voice of rejection from within stopped.



"Hm? Is everything okay?" Ezio asked.

"Everything's fine. Perfect, in fact." Damien responded.

"Well, good then! It's time for us to meet the boys!"

Damien and Ezio finally arrived at their final location, a small campground a few hundred meters away where a group of around twenty were merrily chatting and laughing.

"Oi! Who told you idiots you could rest?!"

Ezio immediately charged over when he saw them, slamming his fist down on the nearest man's head.

"Run! The captain's back!" Someone shouted.

"It's too late for that, dumbass!" Someone else replied.

Bonk!

The furious bonk of a bottle bouncing off the fleeing man's head rang out, sending a shiver down the rest's spines.

As the man fell to the ground with his butt sticking in the air, Ezio turned around with red eyes and an evil grin.

"Who else wants some?"

"..."

Everyone remained silent.

"..."

The silence continued.

"Run!"

Everyone scattered.

"You fuckers! If I don't catch you today, drinks are on me tonight!"

RAAAAAAAAH!

Roars of approval came from the distance as the men ran away from the now-charging Ezio.

As for Damien, he watched from the sidelines with a wry expression on his face.

'Well this is...an interesting group of people.'

Damien grinned.

If anything, he wouldn't get bored traveling with them.

And really, if he thought about it...

That was all that mattered.

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Time rushed by.

Damien was introduced to the squad, all of whom had been caught by Ezio, and while they wanted to invite him to drink with them, time didn't allow such a thing.

The checks and security measures ended within the first few hours of the day. A few hours after that, the army was completely organized.

Millions had been separated into countless different divisions and trees, connecting further and further as one went higher up the power ladder.

And once these two essential steps had been completed, there was no more need to stay in the camp.

The march began.

Day one was the harshest.

The entire length of the march could be added up to at least 500,000 kilometers. If they wanted to meet the Nox Army before they could invade the Grand Heavens Boundary half of Eien, they needed to move around 200,000 kilometers a day!

To people of Damien's level, 200,000 kilometers was chump change, however, for the 3rd class beings who enlisted, it was absolute torture.

People collapsed like flies, and no matter how hard the medical division worked, it was impossible to save everyone.

In the Blood-Drenched Wilderness, the migration of these powerful practitioners was no different than the migration of mortals on a manaless world.

Even with their strength, they couldn't avoid deaths during the journey.

On the first day alone, 5,000 died.

And that toll only grew with every new day that passed.

Chapter 824 Domino [4]

Compared to the rest of the army, the Roaring Dragon Cavalry was particularly lucky.

Unlike the other cavalry units, they didn't use beast mounts. Since their mounts were entirely electronic, they didn't need rest.

They only needed their rider's mana to recharge to peak condition.

As such, a position on the Roaring Dragon Cavalry actually became an extremely coveted role. People would approach the group every few hours in hopes of earning a chance.

Naturally, they were all turned away.

When Damien asked Ezio his reasoning, the latter's response was simple.

"We can't afford liabilities or burdens at this time."

So then, why was Damien sent to this cavalry?

'It was Priscilla's connection after all.'

That was what he concluded by the time the second day rolled around. Even with his skills, it was impossible for him to be assigned to such a prestigious unit without credibility.

The hints were too various to be coincidental, and though Ezio was a master of hiding his emotions behind a friendly smile, his buddies weren't so skilled.

'These guys are acting kind, but they're obviously unresigned on the inside.'

It didn't matter how good of a driver Damien was. If he couldn't cooperate properly with the rest of the cavalry, he was useless.

Ironically, his expertise would rather be a hindrance than a help.

'Then I'll just have to prove my worth.'

Damien never moved for the sake of others, nor did he care what others thought about him.

But that didn't mean he wanted to be perceived negatively by those he respected.

Soldiers like those who surrounded Ezio were honorable and great. They were the heroes protecting the universe from invasion.

This by itself was enough to earn Damien's respect, let alone their amiability and general charisma.

Damien didn't have any plans of being a side character during this war, but before he made any major moves...

'I will absolutely not disrupt their flow.'

He hated people who thought themselves heroes and acted without care for the consequences of their actions in a serious situation like this.

He wouldn't become one, regardless of his goals.

Throughout the entire three-day journey to the battlefield, Damien kept mostly to himself. He didn't socialize not because of the pressure, but because he was more focused on other matters.

Familiarizing himself with his own power, with Blackie's power, and with the interactions between the cavalry members. This was how he kept himself busy.

'I can't know their battle habits through observation alone, but I can at least get a gist of how they handle themselves and their positions. If I couple this with their status information that the All-Seeing Eyes show me, it should be enough.'

Those three days passed far faster than one would expect from such a grueling march.

The atmosphere was tense, but lighthearted undertones did permeate the army.

Today would be the final day of many of their lives.



If so, what was the purpose of living it so strictly?

At least, this was how things remained until the vast plain where the battle would be held came into sight.

Tension rose.

The ambiance changed.

"Heaven's Army" appeared on the warfront.

Countless thousands of kilometers away was a sea of blackness drenched in killing intent, the Nox Army.

Jean, Rilia, and Geralt, the three guild branch leaders, stood at the front of the army with cold eyes.

"I sense a troubling aura," Rilia commented.

The two men beside her nodded grimly.

"This is an unforeseen circumstance. It seems that they've managed to attract a Commander-level Nox to their cause." Geralt added, confirming Rilia's thoughts.

"Can you fight him?" Jean asked.

Rilia shot him a glance. "The rumors about me are largely blown out of proportion. Against a 4th revolution expert, I alone am not nearly enough."

"Then the three of us together..."

"Yes, this is the only option."

Jean's eyes hardened at Rilia's revelation.

If the three of them had to work together against the Commander, how would they deal with the countless late-stage 4th class Nox in the army?

"We cannot recklessly call for war," Geralt said with a frown.

"You are right, however, I doubt a Nox army will kindly receive our delegation. We have no choice but to improvise."

"But the foot soldiers..."

"We can only hope that the late-stage Nox can be held back by the stronger units."

"Haa...it seems we truly have no choice."

Jean gave in quickly. His morals couldn't overcome his desire for victory.

Despite his somewhat greedy nature, he truly did care about the war effort.

"Let's move."

Rilia's voice was an inviolable commandment.

Facing the black tide that was slowly approaching from the distance, Heaven's Army moved as well.

It was a slow and deliberate movement. Every single one of their steps contained grand momentum, momentum that layered like waves every time another step was taken.

By the time they arrived within a few kilometers of the enemy, they sounded like a stampede of ferocious beasts.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Three stomps marked the halting of their movement.

This moment was also when they finally took in the full scale of the enemy's forces.

Millions were not large enough to describe the sheer number of existences.

A majority of them were weak and mindless slaves, but that didn't change the impossible number they made up.

""BY HEAVEN'S WILL! EXTERMINATE THE ENEMY!""

Their unhesitant roars shook space itself. The challenge in front of them was just one of many. As soldiers of Heaven's Army, they would absolutely make the universe proud.

But the Nox army remained unfazed.

"Hohoho! What a show you've put on for me!"

A voice came from behind the sea of black.

Within an instant, a man appeared across from the three branch managers.

"I didn't expect to receive such a welcome. How can I repay you but give you the most blissful deaths in existence?"

The man smiled wickedly as he spoke. It was clear that he was here for war. He didn't care about any sort of banter, sophistry, or politics.

Rilia gritted her teeth. This type of person who put their own will over any benefits was the hardest to deal with. In fact, it was almost impossible to reason with them.

"Humans! Hand over the killer of the Heavenly Demon Candidate and I, the great Aarish, shall spare your pathetic lives!"

The words he spouted were utter nonsense.

How were they supposed to hand over someone whose identity still hadn't been uncovered?

Rilia looked to her left.

Jean nodded solemnly,

Her head turned right.

Geralt's bloodthirsty gaze never moved from the Nox Commander named Aarish.

"Huu..."

She could feel the breath of desire from the army behind her.

The thick killing intent they formed, and the even thicker hatred for the Nox that they held was suffocating.

She felt like she'd get swallowed by their momentum if she didn't catch herself.

That's when she realized it.

Once their reins were released, nothing would stop their march.

In that case...

She closed her eyes and steeled her mind. She ignored the provocative remarks of the Nox Commander before her.

And finally...

"CHAAAAAAAARGE!"

She roared with all her might.

And dropped those reins.

In the next instant...

B-B-B-BOOOOM!

The horses truly rampaged.

## Chapter 825 War [1]

The dark maroon earth spanned for as far as the eye could see and even further. Countless millions of miles of space were filled with silence for so many years, however, today that silence was broken.

There were two battlefields currently in the Blood-Drenched Wilderness. Both of these battlefields were equally ferocious, but there were vast differences between them.

The first battlefield was filled with only mindless Lesser Nox and 3rd-class soldiers. These millions upon millions of forces clashed without any rhyme or reason, purely fighting until one side completely exterminated the other.

The second battlefield was far more tactical. All 4th class and above soldiers were stationed here, and together, they followed the commands of their superiors to wage war in a far more standardized manner.

"Squads 1-10, charge from the front! Squads 11-50, circle to the sides and limit their movement! Never lose our momentum!"

Commands were transferred down the line from the very top of the army. These commands were executed as perfectly as possible, all squads aiming for complete victory.

The 50 different troops of foot soldiers did as they were ordered, rushing forward to clash with the Nox. The booming sounds of explosions filled the air as the two sides collided.



However, these foot soldiers weren't meant to cause damage. Rather, they were a distraction, a deterrence, and a defense. With their thick lines holding back and caging the Nox, it was hard for the enemy army to move as they pleased, even with the vast flat land they occupied.

"Calvary squads, move now!"

Countless beasts rose into the air. These beasts carried all cavalry units besides the Roaring Dragon Unit.

As their fierce roads filled the sky, the battlefield immediately became more chaotic:

The striking power of a 4th class soldier wasn't to be underestimated. Even the weakest of them could affect land on a continental scale.

When they were placed in such a small close quarters battle like this, they weren't able to show their whole power without harming or interfering with those around them:

This was the main caveat of power from an organized power's perspective. The stronger one was, the less they'd cooperate with others, as their personal power began to resemble an army alone.

However, just as there were problems, there were solutions.

Thousands of 4th-class Nox attacked the lines of foot soldiers before them, showering them with terrible attacks of blackness and corrosion, but of these attacks, not many made it through the defense.

"Hold steady!"

This roar condensed the thoughts and feelings of these frontline troops into two words. Their mana combined into one to create an impregnable fortress...

...at least, for a period of time.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

BANG! BANG!

When the cavalry units appeared on the battlefield, the foot soldiers immediately retreated. In the next moment, the trembling and shaking of space became severe enough that it could be seen with the naked eye.

The fierce aerial bombardment caused a strict separation between the Nox and Heaven's Army, and at the same time, it drew the first blood in this battle.

"Ack!" A Nox cried out in pain as his chest was pierced by a red beam of light. Before he could even melt and rebirth, he was struck again and completely evaporated.

"Roaring Dragon Cavalry, on me!"

Ezio's shout rang through the ears of his squad members. It was finally their time to move.

Zoom! Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!

Suddenly, a number of strange starships peeled off from the main army and moved around the edges of the battlefield.

Their roars were loud, but their auras were heavily concealed. In this chaotic battlefield, who could pay attention to a little extra noise?

In fact, despite the sound of the engines, it was impossible to hear the airbikes in the current cacophony.

"We've been ordered to flank the enemy and take out a group of their experts. These beings are all late-stage Nox beings with Demonic Providence, so we must act with utmost safety! Damien, since you're new, don't participate in this first battle. Observe us, and if you truly think you've found a good opportunity, take it. Let's test your mettle!"

"Yes, sir!"

Damien and the rest responded sternly as they followed Ezio's command. With the speed of their bikes, they made it to the enemy's flank within a few minutes.

The squad halted. Ezio placed an isolation barrier around them, and for safety, Damien also secretly cloaked them in One With Dimension.

"You see that big guy over there?" Ezio said while pointing at a certain Nox who stood at a height of several meters.

"That's our target. He is a late-stage Nox with the Demonic Providence of Gigantification. His individual strength is already high, but everyone under him is also powerful. To strike the first critical blow to the Nox Army, we must take them out!"

Damien looked over after listening to Ezio's speech and scanned the group of around 30 Higher Nox.

'All late-stage. It would be nice if I could see their Demonic Providence on their status windows too, but I guess that's asking for too much.'

Damien remained quiet as the squad began to move once more. Ezio listed off a number of formations and plans that Damien had no knowledge of as they did so, but it seemed fine since everyone else was on board.

Within seconds, the assault began.

BOOM!

A beam of light shot from Ezio's airbike. Like a needle piercing through reality, it concentrated to a point and shot between the giant Nox's eyebrows.

"Hm?"

The Nox turned around, sending the attack. However, it was too late.

His massive cycloptic eye widened in shock.

The beam went in the front of his forehead and came out the back.

He collapsed to his knees.

"Khh...enemy attack!"

He immediately roared to alert his comrades, who moved to surround him thereafter.

The Roaring Dragon Cavalry finished their first fly-by at this time as well, returning to their starting position.

Damien sat at their back in confusion.

'Why didn't they capitalize on the surprise factor to deal a critical blow?'

Only the single attack was fired, and by the time it was over, the enemy was alerted and the target wasn't even dead.

'Wait...'

As the squad moved again, Damien noticed something.

A few of their members were missing.

'Aha...'

So that's how it was.

Damien began to understand how the Roaring Dragon Cavalry operated.

'Reckless within the bounds of safety, eh?'

He smiled.

Now that he knew their approach, he could also contribute.

But before that, it was time to let the plan play out in full.

Just as Damien's thoughts reached their close, the group reappeared in the giant's vicinity.

"Now!"

Ezio's shout was accompanied by the roars of engines.

"Roaring Dragon Cavalry, let them know fear!"

RAAAAAAAH!

The cavalry charged.

Damien's eyes widened.

So this was a bloodbath.

Even early stage 4th class Nox were being slain like chickens and dogs.

'But...'

Damien quirked his head.

'...doesn't this make my job so much easier?'

Without waiting a single second longer, he charged into the battlefield.

While everyone else focused on the external threats, he would cleanse the army from the inside and provide support.



At least, until he was caught.

Damien grinned.

'Let the cat and mouse game...begin!'

Chapter 826 War [2]

The Roaring Dragon Cavalry was truly a unit to be envied. Everywhere they moved, death followed, and regardless of how reckless and chaotic their approach seemed, they were in perfect harmony to the point where one questioned how many hundreds of years of practice it took to become so synchronized.

Boom!

A group of three Nox fighting a member of the cavalry suddenly had their heads blown off. An airbike sped by without stopping, and just as it stopped, the original fighter stuck his spear to the side without hesitation.

Bang!

A furious Nox being slammed into the outstretched spear, unable to stop in time. The Nox impaled itself, and if that wasn't humiliating enough, it was then swung around like a hammer to kill its peers until it died completely.

In another section of the battlefield, two airbikes flew through the air as if partaking in a mating ritual. They spiraled up and dove down, seemingly ignoring the war below them entirely.

"Take care of the crazy ones first!" A Nox being shouted.

The roaring dragon cavalry was too strong. However, their strength came from machines. As long as their machines could be broken...

A group of over ten late-stage Nox shot into the air to confront those two. They kept their distance and carefully circled the pair.

"Fire!"

Just as the Nox gave the order to attack, the two Roaring Dragon Cavalry members grinned at each other.

"See you on the other side."

"Hell yeah. If you die first, I'm taking Jenny for myself!"

"Hahaha, in your dreams!"

The two spread their arms and dropped off their airbikes, seemingly to avoid dying in the following explosion.

The Nox didn't care about these drivers at all. They immediately went for the airbikes, seizing control of them.

"Report to the Commander and await his instruction!" The head Nox said.

"Yes, si—h-huh?" His subordinate's face paled in the midst of his affirmation.

"What is it?!" The Nox asked.

"I...I can't control this thing!"

Those were the last words heard from the subordinate. In the next instant, his body was dragged along by a rogue airbike on a journey unlike any other!

"AHHHHHHH!" He screamed in fear as the world blurred around him. Before long, only a single target stood out in his vision.

'Ufta!'

Ufta was the name of the Nox giant. At this rate, the only possible means of survival for this subordinate Nox was Ufta.

He dragged the airbike's handles, desperately trying to swerve in the giant's direction. The action was actually far simpler than expected.

From the distance, Ufta noticed the incoming airbike.

His singular eye narrowed. Rather than human breath, he smelled his own people.

His mind immediately went into confusion.

As someone whose form mirrored a cyclops, his vision wasn't his best aspect. Rather, he usually used his sense of smell more than anything else. With his nose, he could differentiate a concoction of a thousand smells into its base components easily.

The sight of an airbike mixed with the smell of the Nox was jarring, making Ufta hesitate for a second, but it wasn't much time.

Whether it was a Nox or a Human, it was best to kill first and think later.

He pulled his fist back as if loading a cannon. When the airbike was still several meters away, he'd already let loose his punch.

'Smash!'

"Wait! Wait! Wait!"

The subordinate Nox's futile shouts received no ears. The claws of death seemed to suffocate him as that fist got nearer and nearer to him.

In the last second...

"Save our comrade!"

VROOOM!

An airbike shot forward. It was sleek black, but left purple and red streaks in its wake.

It moved so fast that its presence could only be determined by the sound its speed produced.

Damien solemnly focused on his flight path. He swerved through countless Nox and shot under the loose airbike.

The world seemed to move in slow motion.

Damien crossed under the airbike.

He brushed his hand across its surface.

The bike began to dematerialize.

A card fell into Damien's hand.

The eyes of every Roaring Dragon Cavalry member widened at once.

And at the same time, they furiously retreated.

All in a spark of an instant as Damien was under that airbike, these events occurred.

Before the instant could even end, Damien was already several meters away.

What was left in the air was a subordinate Nox flying forward with the momentum of the airbike...

...and a giant's fist that was already too far into its motion to stop.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

A terrifying shockwave spread as the fist moved forward, but without the airbike to take its impact, the force spread into the Nox Army in the surroundings.

They never expected an attack from within their own lines. With a Commander presiding over the battle, it was impossible for the Nox to act as wantonly as usual.

This drop in their usual cautiousness was fatal.

The giant, Ufta's punch instantly killed several hundred 4th class Nox who'd yet to enter the late stages. Even many late-stage 4th-class Nox were injured in the process.

"GOOD!" Ezio accidentally exclaimed far louder than he'd meant to. It was almost to the point of being a roar itself.

He couldn't help it.

His blood was boiling.

The original plan obviously didn't involve Damien, and even without his interference, a similar result would've come about.

However, Damien's quick thinking and willingness to take risks allowed them to achieve an even greater result without sacrificing an airbike as the original plan provoked.

"Everyone charge! Don't waste this opportunity!"

The Nox were confused by the sudden attack, and now that Ufta was also in a disoriented state, it was the perfect time to carpet bomb and slaughter.

Therefore, that's exactly what they did.

The Roaring Dragon Cavalry clearly displayed why they were so renowned. Ufta was slain rapidly once the Nox's strong defense line was broken. With the Roaring Dragon Squad coming together to fight him, who had no support, it was a minor task. After finishing it, they eliminated hundreds of Nox within a minute, and before anyone could catch their tail, they'd already retreated.



"Hahaha! Damien, you damn dog! You didn't tell me you were so good!" Ezio exclaimed over their transmission channel.

"Haha, if I didn't prove it now, when would I have the option?" Damien responded with a smile. He took his time to enjoy the compliments of his fellow squad members as they rendezvoused a distance away from the battlefield.

It didn't take much to earn their respect. Since Damien was truly a skilled fighter rather than a random newbie, there was absolutely no reason to hold prejudice against him.

As such, the Roaring Dragon Cavalry's further strategies always included Damien.

The squad was amazing, this much became far more apparent when their current atmosphere was compared to the rest of the army.

The Roaring Dragon Cavalry's support would definitely cause waves that supported the frontline, but until then...

It was a brutal battle.

Thousands, hundreds of thousands died rapidly.

When the two armies were compared, they weren't that different in strength. It was difficult for either side to gain an absolute advantage, but with the Nox having more troops, it was obvious who'd win if the fight was drawn out.

Something needed to be done.

The three guild branch managers took it upon themselves to be this "something."

If they could kill Aarish, the Nox Commander, the tides would shift greatly in their favor.

However, for them to kill a 4th revolution master, regardless of their combined strength, was a deathly task.

Chapter 827 War [3]

"We must confront him as soon as possible! If he is taken down, the rest of the work is easy."

"No, the Nox do not have the same emotions as we do. Morale is not a problem for the majority of their forces, so taking down the Commander will not have the desired effect if done immediately. Rather, we must plan to take everything down in one fell swoop!"

"Haa..."

Jean sighed as he listened to the other two branch managers argue. Even if they knew how to proceed, they didn't know what method to use.

There were various benefits to both of their methods, however, depending on the battle situation, both could end up producing negligible effects.

'The Roaring Dragon Cavalry is pushing the back line, which has made the frontline unstable as well. As long as we continue on this path, we will win, even if we suffer disastrous losses in the process...'

But, of course, that was impossible. Needlessly sacrificing troops would do more harm than good in the long run.

'Then, the only real benefit of taking down the Commander is morale and assurance for our side. If that's the case, then it's better to act as soon as possible.'

The Nox wouldn't feel much at the loss of their Commander, but Heaven's Army would benefit immensely if the man died. After all, his mere presence was a variable on the battlefield. As long as the troops had to be wary of him, their combat effectiveness would be lowered to an extent.

'We can't rely on the Roaring Dragon Cavalry too much. If our advantages become so clear, it's obvious who the Commander will target.'

"We should attack now."

Jean finally spoke, cutting into the discussion. The two snapped their heads to look at him with two very different expressions.

"Haa...let me explain my reasoning..."

After Jean explained his thought process, Rilia's gaze softened considerably. Her brow furrowed as she gave his ideas some thought.

"It is true that we cannot predict the Nox reaction to the Commander's death. The Nox are too strange and varied of a species, almost like humans in the variety of their beliefs."

Despite her words, Rilia still hesitated. Regardless of what they said, it was still a 4th revolution expert they were planning to face.

'Shit.'

"Fine, let's do it."

The steeled her resolve as she spoke, knowing that she signed up for this kind of situation from the beginning.

There were a lot of words that could be used to describe her, and not all of them were pleasant, but "coward" certainly wasn't on that list.

Geralt nodded.

Jean nodded.

The three branch managers exited their tent and flew into the air.

"Aarish, come fight us!" Jean bellowed. His mana raged into the surroundings, kicking up a whirlwind with its pressure.

A second aura joined him from far away. The grey-skinned Commander's visage became clear soon after.

"Hahahaha! I didn't expect you would have the guts to challenge me! What, all three of you are coming together?" He exclaimed mockingly as he approached,

"Take it as a measure of our sincerity," Jean replied calmly, backing away.

Aarish grinned. "If you want to lure me away from the battlefield, you'll have to exert some effort first!"

His body turned into a black blur, appearing in front of Jean in an instant. Energy coalesced on his palm and condensed into an ethereal ball, which he pushed out furiously.

BOOM!

Space shattered and the entire sky seemed to explode with light. The force of the explosion immediately threw the three branch leaders into the air, however, they were able to put their defenses up in time to avoid injury.

"We can't focus on anyone else right now! Kill him and let's deal with the consequences later!" Geralt yelled.

He pulled his body back like a bowstring, stepping on the air as if it was material. The muscles in his body bulged with power as they sent a terrifying force down into his foot until...

Bang!

He launched with the speed of a comet to meet Aarish where he stood.

"Filthy Nox, taste my blade!"

A massive great axe appeared in Geralt's hands. He swung down as he moved, reaching the apex of the swing at the exact same moment he arrived in front of the enemy.

SLASH!

The sound of the axe cutting through the air could be heard from several kilometers away. It collided with Aarish's body and tore him apart, sending two halves flying in different directions.

Geralt's eyes narrowed. In the next second, they widened as he rapidly made distance.

BOOM!

BOOOOOOOM!

The two halves exploded into terrific shockwaves that reverberated through the air.

Crash!

Geralt's mana defense broke. The shockwave slammed into his body and rattled his organs, sending him flying back, injured.

Ptui!

Geralt spit out the blood pooling in his mouth and gritted his teeth.

'I knew it would be difficult to fight someone at the 4th revolution, but I didn't think it would be to this extent!'

Even if it was only a single attack, it was more than enough for Geralt to gauge the strength difference between him and the enemy.

It was massive.

The 9 revolutions weren't merely termed revolutions for nothing.

As the steps leading to the Path of Godhood, each revolution accounted for a massive jump in power, almost as if one was leaping in class rather than stages.

Geralt glanced back at his two comrades who'd yet to move. They returned his glance with grim expressions.

Truly, it would be impossible if the three of them didn't work together.

"Have you finished your moment of realization yet?"



A reading voice came from the void not far away. The Nox Commander Aarish stepped into reality with a smug smile on his face.

"Forget about killing me, you can't even catch me! Hahahaha!"

Rilia's staff immediately went into the air. The bright blue gem at its head shined with splendor as she cast a territorial magic spell.

'Absolute Suppression of the Sea.'

Under the sea, all beings were suppressed. No matter one's strength, one would inevitably reach a point where one could no longer continue deeper.

This was the everlasting mystery of the oceans, and a concept that Rilia mirrored in her spells.

A fierce current of water appeared in the air and encircled the battlefield. A thick suppression accompanied it, pushing down on space and nearly forcing it to compress.

Aarish smiled lightly. "You think you can suppress me with this much? Pathetic."

His hand flew out. He made a fist as if he was grabbing something, and the incorporeal space between his fingers solidified into a spear.

'Void Spear.'

Aarish threw the spear lightly, and at first, it didn't look like it was moving at all.

However, it appeared before Geralt and Rilia instantaneously as if teleporting.

'Run wild.'

Black mana came from within the spear and corrupted its nigh-transparent form. Within a spark of a second, the spear bloomed into a blossoming lotus of blackness. Tendrils of mana shot out in all directions like fireworks, flying as far as they could before turning into a series of explosions that polluted the entire battlefield.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"Ahhhh—!"

A shriek was cut off before it could finish. It was accompanied by all those around it, voices of those whose lives were incinerated like waste when a single drop of the explosions' mana touched them.

"DAMMIT!" Geralt roared. His eyes turned red as he recklessly charged.

"FOCUS ON US, YOU SCUM!"

Yet, instead of aiming for Aarish as he originally seemed to do, he slammed his axe into the ground with all his strength.

BOOM!

'Sacred Protector of the Holy Mountain.'

The skill's name was long, but its effects matched its length. A golden barrier of light spread from Geralt's axe as he wielded it. The barrier spread for several hundreds of thousands of kilometers, separating Aarish from the main battlefield.

However, the three branch managers were trapped alongside him.

"Ahahaha! This entire ordeal is so amusing! It seems you've trapped yourselves in this barrier with me. Doesn't that mean...there's nowhere left for you to run?"

A perverse grin spread on Aarish's face as his mana raged forth.

"Come, then! Let me see how you struggle before becoming my food!"

Chapter 828 War [4]

RUMBLE!

BOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The sounds were harrowing just by themselves, the people of Heaven's Army absolutely couldn't imagine the type of battle that was taking place beyond the barrier.

The previous event was terrifying. Countless thousands had died from the explosions, but there was no time to mourn them.

Now that the branch managers were fighting the main Commander, the rest of them needed to eliminate the enemy before they came back.

"Squad 1, support Squad 13 on the left! Squad 20, move west and meet up with Squad 6! Work together to suppress the enemy and follow the Roaring Dragon Cavalry!"

Orders were still being given out by high-ranking officials, and they were still being followed as best as possible. The various squads moved with vigor and fervor, desperate to survive the battle and become stronger so they could save their universe.

With every universe denizen that died, a Nox would die too. Even if it was a hopeless situation, these soldiers would rather detonate themselves than allow another Nox to live on.

At least, most of them.

"S-senior brother, you...!" A man crouched, bloodied on the ground. A hole had been punctured in his heart just moments prior.

"Hahaha, little Long, the reason is simple. It is impossible for us to win against the strength of the great Lords! If we do not succumb, we will die! Little Long, if you had just joined me back then..." the man trailed off, looking at his dying friend with pity.

However, the dying man merely spat blood on his old friend's boots.

"I will...never...turn traitor."

No matter how choppy his sentence was, he ended it firmly.

And in the next moment...

"Well said!"

Shing!

A crisp sound floated through the air, and the traitor's head floated into the air with it.

The dying man looked up at the killer with weak eyes. A smile hung on his face.

Even if he died, it was great to see that the traitorous scum got his ending as well.

Suddenly, a bright white light covered his body.

The blood pumping through his veins boiled as his heart pumped once more.

The wound...was closing.

The man's shocked expression was frozen on his face like it was a still frame. By the time he managed to look up at his savior...

The man was already gone.

'Hero...'

The thought stuck in the newly revived man's mind. In fact, it was a thought that reverberated through the army.

This was the Heretic Executioner's 5th round of cleanup. In the past hour of war, he'd already taken care of tens of traitors who'd snuck their way into the army.

The man was praised in the hearts of many as a hero, but he himself didn't feel any joy.

'There's too many.'

His brows furrowed as he moved, decapitating yet another traitor.

'If this number is present in an army of only the Blood-Drenched Wilderness' forces, how many exist in Eien as a whole...?'

And even more concerning, what if there were stronger ones?

Damien gritted his teeth. He hated traitors even more than the Nox. He hated people who gave up without even trying, succumbing to a fate that they could change with their own hands if they just put in the effort.

It was deplorable, disgusting, and absolutely scummy.

'The Roaring Dragon Cavalry has been mostly maintaining the backline and pressuring the enemy, but the frontline isn't doing so hot. If we don't provide ai—hm?'

Damien's attention went upward. He suddenly felt a strange fluctuation coming from the sky.

'That is...'

The blackness of the abyss and the space of Grand Heavens Boundary seemed to be...merging?

'That can't be good.'

Damien's frown deepened.

He returned to formation with the Roaring Dragon Cavalry and took a backseat in the battle for a few moments as he observed space and tried to understand what was happening.



'The root cause is...'

"Over there."

He traced the origin of the fluctuations that were disrupting space, leading him past the golden barrier separating the Nox Commander from the main army.

'The space on Eien is so strong. Even Demigods can fight here without totally collapsing the atmosphere and causing a phenomenon like this. This is the same reason why Eien is called a desolate land without opportunity, since it's nigh-impossible for circumstance to alter the environment...'

Whatever was happening, Damien didn't have enough knowledge of Eien to interfere or even understand. All he knew was that he definitely didn't like it.

'I'll have to keep my eye on that as I fight. We need to clean up as much as we can before cracks start to form!'

At that point, everyone would die.

Damien's eyes narrowed. He spread his awareness to take stock of the entire battlefield.

To the side, the fierce and wild clash between the Lesser Nox and 3rd class beings continued. It looked as though the number on Heaven's Army's side had already been reduced by around 100,000. As for the Nox...

'There's too many of them. It's impossible to tell how many have died.'

That alone qualified the secondary battlefield as Heaven's Army's disadvantage.

The main battlefield was far more stable. The death toll on both sides remained relatively equal, but that still wasn't a good thing.

Sacrificing every single troop they had for the sake of this battle wasn't worth it at all.

'All I can do is try my best...right?'

Just as Damien was going to return his focus to the battlefield, he was stopped by yet another realization.

'For space to be disrupted to this degree, the attacks within the barrier can't merely be utilizing other Laws. This kind of convolution can only be achieved by manipulating space itself.'

There was a spatial expert beyond the barrier, the only question was which side they were on.

'It's definitely not the Iron Fortress or Sanctuary guild branch managers. I caught a glimpse of their attacks before the barrier formed, so I can guess their affinities quite easily...'

Between the Hope Organization branch manager and the Nox Commander...

'I really hope it's the former.'

At the end of the day, it didn't matter.

It was said that the Sanctuary branch manager was the strongest of the three. As long as her strength wasn't hindered...

'I'll take the gamble.'

"Captain, I received an order directly from the branch manager! I'll be separating from the squad for now!" He shouted.

"Haha, no worries! Come back to us when you're free. Your presence is always welcome!"

In classic Ezio fashion, the man responded as if Damien was a retiring coworker rather than a comrade in war.

Damien smiled.

He really wished he could spend more time with a cozy and tight-knit group like this one.

Sadly, he didn't have that kind of freedom.

Damien swerved his airbike and veered away from the cavalry unit, dismounting the machine only after getting several thousand kilometers from the battlefield.

Here, the only traces of war were the fierce sounds and mana fluctuations, as well as a domineering golden barrier.

Damien placed his hand on it.

"Woah!"

He slipped through unhindered.

"..."

Shaking his head in incredulity, Damien pushed his hand out.

"Why" he could enter the barrier didn't matter. All that mattered was that he'd done it.

Now...

'Dimensional Prison: Celestial Lock.'

A spatial fluctuation traveled the entire length of the barrier and even further.

In the next instant...

Space locked, and a mountainous suppression bore down on all those existing within it.

Chapter 829 War [5]

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Terrible explosions rocked the air, shaking space and even causing it to shatter in certain areas. Massive collisions took place countless times every second, making it impossible for any organism to survive within a several thousand-kilometer radius of the battlefield.

Bang!

A great axe swung through the air, attempting to bisect its enemy completely, but the current enemy was simply too snake-like. Every time the axe came near him, he'd turn into a puff of smoke and reappear several kilometers away.

The same thing happened this time. The grey-skinned man's body faded as if it never existed. However, when he reappeared, there were an array of surprises waiting for him.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Spheres of strange water surrounded his body, shooting out tendrils like iron wires to confine him in a single spot.

If this attack was merely water alone, it would've been impossible to suppress the man who could escape from far worse unscathed, but Rilia was prepared.

Every water affinity expert would evolve as they grew in strength, developing their own quality of water that matched their fighting style. Some would have poisonous water mana, while others had water that could heal. Rilia's specialty was suppression, and she'd been working to incorporate the qualities of gravity into her mana since a very young age.

When she attacked with the intent of forcing an enemy into a corner, there was nigh-anything that could stop her.

A heavy suppression bore down on Aarish's shoulders like a mountain. For the first time during this fight...he gritted his teeth.

'How troublesome.'

His eyes scanned the three enemies in front of him. Individually, he could kill each of them without much trouble, however, it was different when they combined their power.

They couldn't kill him with personal strength, but they could definitely prevent him from landing fatal hits on each other.

The three-point defense they created was almost impossible for him to penetrate with simple moves.

However, the reason he gritted his teeth wasn't pain, but annoyance.

'I have come here to find the Heavenly Demon Candidate's killer, but the search has been too inconclusive. These three beings are the only ones capable of killing the previous candidate, however, their mana signatures do not match the traces left at the scene...'

Aarish narrowed his eyes, twisting his body at an impossible angle to dodge a massive bloody axe that once again aimed to chop him into pieces.

'The third has yet to act.'

Aarish hid within the folds of space and observed his opponents.

'I must get rid of that woman first.'

The woman with the power of suppression was the most troublesome enemy, as her aid allowed the other two to attack freely. Without her, they would barely even be able to touch him.

His body flashed away, appearing behind Rilia in an instant.

"Die, peasant."

His arm slashed through the air, a thick and murky death mana covering his hand as it approached Rilia's neck.

The hair on her body raised in foreshadowing of danger. Her senses pricked up, ringing alarm bells in her head.



She spun around with widened eyes and raised her staff, erecting a makeshift mana barrier to protect her from the surprise attack.

Shing!

Shatter!

Pieces of the mana barrier fluttered to the ground. The second Aarish's hand passed through the flimsy barrier, it was broken into countless pieces.

"Kak...!"

A mouthful of blood flew from Rilia's mouth as she was sent flying. Aarish's eyes locked onto her like a predator, his body appearing at her position within the same instant.

"You will be the first to die."

"Not so fast."

Clash!

Just as he went to deliver the final blow, his outstretched hand collided with something metallic. A large claymore had blocked his path.

As for the wielder of said weapon...

"So you have finally decided to step in!"

Aarish exclaimed with excitement as Jean's visage was revealed.

"What a masochistic monster, anticipating your own death with such fervor," Jean commented in disgust.

"Kekeke, but who said I would be the one dying today?"

"I did!"

Geralt's booming voice came from behind. He stood with his great axe coated in gold aura. His eyes glowed like sunbeams as he roared into the sky.

"WAR GOD'S FURY!"

The axe came swinging down. Before it even reached halfway through its swing, the ground caved in from its pressure.

By the time it sliced into the earth...

BOOOOOOM!

A wave of golden mana roared through the environment, cutting a massive gorge into the Blood-Drenched Wilderness as it moved to eclipse all those in its path, including the other two guild masters.

Jean's eyes narrowed. In the split second Aarish was distracted by the incoming attack, he grabbed Rilia's arm and threw her out of the blast radius.

In the next moment, he jumped back and readied his sword.

"Hahaha! What is your role? Preventing my escape? Worry not, for I have no such plans!" Aarish exclaimed arrogantly.

It was clear that he'd mistaken the reason for Jean's actions, but that was even better for them.

The Nox Commander stuck his hand out in front of him, as if motioning the wave to stop.

ROOOOAAAAAAR!

The wave soon encompassed him. On both sides of his body, the massive gorge continued forming, the slash leaving behind an abyss thousands of kilometers deep.

Aarish, on the other hand, completely avoided the effect of the attack.

A thick black cocoon covered him from head to toe, acting as a turtle shell to shield him from the impact.

However...

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Hairline cracks spread across the cocoon's surface from the pressure. Aarish glanced at these cracks with surprise.

"Oho! You are far stronger than expected, giant! However, it is still not enough!"

"...but we've known that since the beginning."

Jean's voice came from behind.

The man closed his eyes and swung his sword in a strange arc.

Shing!

The sword's blade traveled its arc, and as it reached its pinnacle, a miracle happened.

The extreme tip of the blade, the indescribably small point that signified the absolute end of the blade, barely came in contact with the golden mana wave.

Ding!

A sound like a bell being rung resounded.

All things froze for a second.

Aarish's eyes widened.

"Perfect Parry."

The words signified the completion of Jean's attack.

The golden wave that was furiously rushing past him a mere moment ago...

...defied all reason to change its course an entire 180 degrees, rushing to swallow Aarish for a second time.

'At this rate, my shield won't hold on...!'

Aarish made a quick decision. He put his hands together and gritted his teeth.

"Dammit! Damn this body! It does not matter. Even if I must use my power, I will kill the three of you today!"

His hands came together in a praying position and then separated by barely a few inches.

Clap!

Aarish brought his hands together and clapped once.

Space seemed to change.

It contracted endlessly into a point before expanding again, and then finally...

CLAP!

A second clap rang out.

This time, space itself popped.

WHOOOOOOOSH!

A massive suction force leaked from the portion of the chaotic void that'd been released. The entire golden wave of Geralt's War God's Fury attack was swallowed by this newly born black hole.

"Now, over there."

Aarish's gaze snapped towards Rilia, who'd gotten back up and was preparing for a major attack.

He grinned.

His fingers snapped.

Space popped a second time. A new black hole opened near Rilia's position.

And from that black hole, a massive wave of golden energy leaked like a tsunami, enveloping Rilia's body in an instant.

BOOOM!

Chapter 830 War [6]

BOOOM!

As soon as Rilia's body disappeared amidst the explosion, the two male branch managers charged with fury in their eyes.

Geralt's actual elemental affinity was unknown, but his unparalleled achievements in weapon arts were showcased clearly in this battle.



His axe rarely reached Aarish due to the latter's insane movement capability, but the fact that he was even able to pressure a spatial expert with pure weapon skills was amazing.

The fact that his axe existed wasn't something Aarish could ignore. There was a reason he dodged every attack instead of taking them head-on.

After all, even if he was far more powerful in terms of pure force and law comprehension, he didn't have an absolute advantage.

Geralt's axe could wound him if it was allowed to hit, so he naturally couldn't allow that to happen.

It was frustrating.

Geralt had always been able to solve his problems with his fists. He was a man who made it to his current position by walking the path of an Asura, littered with the blood and corpses of his enemies.

This was the first time he'd met an enemy he couldn't reach no matter how hard he tried.

But still, he gritted his teeth and kept fighting. His hope was that he'd be able to improve through this experience so that it never happened again.

Besides, at least this time, he had comrades by his side.

Jean's blade was as fast as light and just as incorporeal as well. It held a strange property that directly scorched Nox Mana and purified it, which made him a deadly force to normal Nox.

However, even his speed couldn't catch up to instant transmission. Even light needed a measure of time to travel from one point to the next.

This amount of time might've been negligible in any normal situation, but here where every fraction of a second counted, the minute loss of speed Jean experienced by using light as a medium rather than space was seriously affecting his battle capacity.

"Haa...haa...haa..."

'It has already been over an hour. For a fight between experts to last this long...if we cannot swiftly take him down, we will end up fighting until our mana reserves are depleted, and if that happens...'

Then they were goners. It was obvious who had the highest mana capacity among the four of them.

'We need to suppress his spatial movement. This is the main factor holding us back.'

Just as Jean, Geralt, and the currently incapacitated Rilia were unable to touch Aarish, Aarish was unable to seriously injure them.

They simply didn't give him the time.

'However, that means nothing if we cannot interfere with his teleportation. If only I had some slight comprehension of space, I could identify his location within the spatial layers, but it's impossible for us normal people!'

Spatial experts were both respected and feared once they reached a certain level. After all, when they achieved that milestone, it meant they were essentially untouchable.

As Jean lost himself in the impossibility of the situation, a change took place.

Rumble!

"Woah!"

Space suddenly became heavy and murky like molasses. The change was so sudden that even Aarish, who wouldn't normally be so affected by the situation, was directly forced out of the spatial layers.

The suppression itself wasn't strong, rather, it was something Aarish could normally shrug off without a second thought.

But in this situation, where space was his absolute weapon against these experts who couldn't interfere with it, how could he expect said weapon to revolt?

"Now!"

Jean didn't even take a second to consider the situation.

All he knew was that the enemy was unguarded.

His body moved slower than it should've, but the difference was marginal. He reached Aarish just a few fractions of a second later than he usually would've and swung his sword in a strange pattern.

'White Plum Sword Dance.'

The white plum tree was a strange tree that existed on Jean's homeworld. Many a sword practitioner would arrive at this tree's trunk every year to observe it's swaying leaves and try to comprehend the mysteries behind its existence.

Sadly, it was impossible...for all but one.

Jean was the first to comprehend the White Plum Tree's mystical sword dances, and in the coming days, he was forcefully made the last as well.

That world was destroyed by the Nox, and Jean was its final survivor.

The lifelong resentment of such a truth fused itself into the Plum Blossom Sword Dance, the final memoir of a fallen world.

HAAAA!

Jean let out a spirited shout as he pushed his sword with everything he had.

1 slash.

2 slashes.

4 slashes.

16 slashes.

256 slashes.

The number of sword movements exponentially increased with every spark of a second, and the compounded impact of these slashes continuously barraged Aarish's body.

"Khh...!"

The Nox Commander held back the blood in his mouth and desperately spread his awareness to find a way out of the situation, but it was looking impossible.

Jean's strange sword dance didn't just attack, but also suppressed. No matter what direction Aarish tried to escape in, he could sense a fatal blow waiting for him.

And even without this layer of suppression, Geralt was just waiting for his turn to take over and give his axe the bloody feast it'd been desiring this entire time.

If that wasn't bad enough...

Rilia's form became visible on the horizon. She was battered and bloody, and her clothes were ripped in multiple places, but she acted as if nothing happened as she raised her staff to join the battle.

"Dammit! Do you know who I am?!" Aarish shouted in a rage.

His eyes turned red, and the mana in his body began to boil.

"I am the son of the Void Lord! None of you peons are worthy of defeating me!"

Click!

Everything halted.

Jean's eyes widened. The aura on his sword was dispelled instantly by some mysterious force.

Aarish looked up with pitch-black eyes lacking any sort of sclera or pupils.

"Dominion."

Thick black smoke floated up from his mouth and formed a dome around him, Geralt, and Jean.

Standing on the outside, Rilia's face paled.

The power Aarish showcased wasn't power he should've had. The intensity of the laws was far too powerful for any 4th class to comprehend regardless of their level.

Rilia bit her lip in worry. 'This must be one of his final trump cards. If he is truly the son of a Lord-level character...I'm afraid it will be incredibly difficult for those two.'

She flew to the edge of the black barrier and slowly reached her hand out to grab it.

Pah!

A larger hand grabbed hers before it could reach its destination.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you."

Rilia's eyes widened. She slammed her staff in the direction of the voice, but the owner was long gone.

He stood calmly a few meters away with a wry smile on his face.

"Can you not look before you smack? Don't you know I just saved your life?"



Rilia's eyes widened.

The being who she couldn't sense wasn't an enemy, rather it was a young human man she'd never seen before.

Her eyes narrowed suspiciously.

This man...

"Why are you here when you're so weak?!"

...was definitely not someone who should've been interfering at this moment.