

# Void 851

## Chapter 851 Growth [3]

Spending time with Xue'er was something Damien rarely got to do, but now that he had a modicum of time, he could finally spend a few days appeasing the grievance of this little sister that he'd been neglecting for so long.

While it was a shame that he couldn't take her out of Theavel to enjoy the sights of Grand Heavens Boundary, he did his best to make up for this by providing Xue'er an experience like she'd never felt before.

Using Void Mana and his absolute control over the Sanctuary's laws, Damien could essentially do anything as long as it wasn't at the level of resurrecting the dead.

As such, building a few amusement park rides, a movie theater, and other novel entertainment areas wasn't a problem at all.

For Damien, the definition of fun was his memories of earth, those days when he could game and watch tv as much as he wanted, when he could go out and experience the beautiful nightlife of his home city and enjoy weekends with his friends.

He couldn't give Xue'er the exact same experience she would've had as a regular girl on earth, but it wasn't hard to emulate it.

Besides, Xue'er was quite the popular lass among her peers. She had no small number of friends that eventually joined her and Damien on their escapades.

From appeasing Xue'er, Damien randomly found himself satisfying the whims of an entire horde of children.

He looked over at Xue'er, only for her to flash him a fox-like smile.

'I've been tricked.'

He smiled wryly when he realized it. Xue'er was a teenager after all.

Without much ability to resist, Damien spent the next three days with the group of children that rapidly grew with the passing of time. At the end, he even threw something akin to a mini-rave for the brats.

If there was one thing Damien learned, it was that children and mana did NOT mix well together. These kids had endless energy and endless curiosity that they had the mental capacity to actually satisfy,

It was like giving a steroid and cocaine smoothie to someone with ADHD.

Nevertheless, the seemingly endless headache eventually found its conclusion. 3 days and 3 nights later, Damien finally tucked Xue'er into bed and walked out to a peaceful scenery devoid of parties and raves.

'Theave's sky needs some stars.'

The starless sky had been bothering Damien for years, but his current circumstance didn't allow him to fix it.

When he returned to the Real Plane, he could eventually solve this problem, but before he did that, there were still a few things left to do on the Wild Continent.

'It's been over a month since the second batch arrived. I don't know if a third batch was sent afterwards, but with how much time has passed, everyone should be properly herded by now.'

For a phenomenon as prominent as a Void Corridor, it was obvious that both the Nox and Heaven's Army would send powerful experts. It was likely that there were even 9th revolution masters present within the Void Corridor.

Honestly, it would've been far easier for Damien to pick apart the Nox forces while they were separated so he could avoid the eyes of those extreme peak experts, but his circumstances didn't allow such an easy route.

He was trapped in the Sky Emperor's palace until Xinyue finally completed the trial, after all.

'No matter. I'll make do with what I have. Besides, even though my level has been constantly improving, my strength seems to have stagnated.'

Damien's actual strength had seen no drastic changes in the 2 years he'd been in the Void Corridor. For Damien, who progressed at an ungodly speed, 2 years of stagnation felt fatal.

However, what he gained in return for this stagnation was a sea of fragmented memories.

He'd devoured so many remnant souls that the remaining dead emperors created such an unflattering nickname for him. While these remnants didn't have the full memories of their living selves, they at least had enough recollection to define their egos.

As such, Damien was able to learn much about the power structure of the forgotten era, the territories that were most valued at the time, and even a large majority of the heroic experts whose names would've been passed through the generations if not for the complete erasure of information about the distant past.

Along with these truths...

'Grand Heavens Boundary...used to be far bigger.'

There were currently 7 inhabitable Sectors remaining in Grand Heavens Boundary.

However, in the vestiges of the past...

'Where did the other 11 Sectors vanish to?'

Grand Heavens Boundary used to be a massive universe more than double its current size. It was home to an infinite number of races, most of which Damien had never seen or even heard of before, and hosted a mana density that was unfathomable in current society,

90% of those ancient races had gone extinct.

The mana density weakened to around half of its former glory,

And 11 Sectors vanished into thin air.

'At first, I wanted to believe that the Sectors are merely what we know as the Abyss that exists outside of Eien, but it isn't so simple.'

The Abyss was the Abyss. It wasn't an area that came into existence due to the result of an ancient war.

If one circled Eien until they reached the Elven Domain, they would clearly be able to tell the difference between the Dead Zone that the Elven Domain had become and the Abyss that stood parallel to it.

So then, what happened to those 11 Sectors?

Even if the Abyss wasn't directly the answer to this question, it was definitely related.

Damien's thought to explore the Abyss became firmer, but now wasn't the time for it.

'After I escape the Void Corridor, there are still several matters to solve within the universe. The Bloodlock Clan should start chasing me soon, the Grand Assembly will start within a year, and there are still several traitors polluting Heaven's Army and even the upper echelons of the universe. Until at least a majority of these problems are solved, I cannot leave the universe behind so easily.'

Damien didn't care much for those living in the universe. He had no interest in acting for the greater good.

What he wanted to save wasn't the universe's people, but the universe itself, this place that allowed him to exist and grow.

'I'll be able to see Rose and Ruyue again at the Grand Assembly, so staying until then is a must.'

Damien sighed longingly.

This separation from his wives was the longest he'd experienced thus far, and though he reaffirmed his love for them every time they were apart, the feeling he got this time was different.

'I don't want to continue like this.'

He would eventually have to leave his wives again even after he reunited with them. This was the fate he shouldered as he walked the path he walked. However, he refused to be separated from them indefinitely.

'Production is almost finished...'

Damien's eyes widened. His gaze pierced Theavel's atmosphere and observed the Void where only a single sun and moon resided.

However, clear fluctuations of hot and cold could be felt from the celestial bodies that opposed them.

For some reason...

...it made one feel as if the sun and moon were being refined.

Chapter 852 Growth [4]

The second night turned to day marked the completion of Damien's routine checks through Theavel.

'It looks like the five continents have formed a relationship of nonaggression since the world leaders are a tight-knit group. When it comes to major conflict, Theavel will probably never experience it. Though, that's to be expected.'

As the first world in the Sanctuary's budding universe, Theavel was the most stable. It was formed from only people who had some sort of personal connection to Damien and those who served them.

However, as the universe grew, this kind of harmony naturally wouldn't last.

'Until then, this place will remain peaceful, which...isn't bad as long as the Sanctuary hasn't bloomed into a true universe.'

When that day finally came, it was still unknown whether the current atmosphere could prevail.

'Putting aside future prospects, I never expected Elitra to have such administrative potential.'

Damien had been visiting the Sanctuary far more frequently since he entered the Void Corridor, but he still never interfered with its politics. At the same time, he did everything in his power to avoid Elitra, who seemed to have an uncanny ability to sense his presence when he was near.

With the combination of these factors, Damien never got to see Elitra's talent firsthand. At least, not until last night.

'I'll have to ask Elvira to put her in a higher position so she can fully make use of her potential. When the Sanctuary grows in the future, she should be able to manage multiple worlds and keep them in order.'



Damien smiled wholeheartedly. Finally, he found a use for that useless maid. He almost wanted to cry imagining the scene of her being too busy to pay him any mind.

'After the army gets accustomed to the squad formations I learned from Heaven's Army and Tyler, I can start taking them out into Eien for training. This is the best way to rapidly raise their level.'

Unfortunately, the army he was raising was raised in an ivory tower. He absolutely needed them to experience the cruelty of reality before they became useful.

'Hm, maybe I've become a bit heartless, but it can't be helped. For their sakes and for the universe's sake, they must grow as fast as possible.'

Being a ruler was too troublesome. Damien wasn't used to worrying about other people's affairs to such an extent, and it was taking a slight toll on him.

He was lucky to have Elvira and the rest. Without their help, Theavel would've absolutely turned into a lawless land or a dictatorship by now.

'Nevertheless, now that morning's come, it's time to go.'

Damien flashed away, appearing near a meditating Xinyue and bringing her along with him.

After saying his final goodbyes to the Sanctuarians, he vanished from the realm, returning to the Sky Emperor's Palace.

"Haa, it's refreshing to leave without doing all the long goodbyes. I guess I should keep visiting frequently to avoid that." Damien sighed, stretching his body.

"Hm? Why are you so silent?" He asked when he noticed Xinyue's strange mood.

She'd been in the Sanctuary with him for the past few days, and while she got to see many endearing sides of his personality, she also slowly got to understand what kind of role he held in that strange world.

He was a ruler.

The world itself was a place that could easily be destroyed with the force of the Ancient God Clan, but it had a strange set of world laws that didn't conform to the universal standard that Xinyue knew, which endlessly confused her.

How could such a world exist?

And how did this man become its ruler?

The questions piling up in her head only became more extensive as she spent more time with him, but she knew that she couldn't let him go until she figured out the secret behind his eyes.

As such, she was forced into a passive position where she didn't quite know how to face the man in front of her.

She didn't want to be submissive, but she also knew that she couldn't keep her same prideful attitude.

Seeing her choose not to answer his question, Damien shrugged and turned his back.

"Old man, I'll be taking my spoils now! What are you planning to do?" He yelled into the air.

"I will stay." The ancient voice of the Sky Emperor's remnant soul rang out in response.

"Are you sure? It's going to be an especially bumpy ride for you if you decide to accompany me." Damien reiterated.

But the Sky Emperor didn't leave any room for doubt.

"I have thought over this decision for many months already. My true self died long ago, and my current existence is far too pitiful. If I have to be extinguished regardless, I'd rather witness a miracle before I go."

Damien grinned. "Whatever you say."

Bang!

He stomped his foot into the Sky Emperor Palace's floor. A web of hairline cracks spread from the point of impact, soon transforming into bright golden lines that crossed the floor and formed a strange pattern that encompassed the whole palace.

"All that's left to do is your part," Damien said.

"Mm." The Sky Emperor affirmed. His aura flared into the surroundings for a brief instant, and the golden formation was dyed red.

In that moment, the Sky Emperor officially relinquished his control over the palace.

Damien dripped his blood onto the red-lined floor, causing the formation to pulsate.

Voom!

A wave of mana spread through the air. It was vast and complete, a mana that resembled the sky.

Voom!

A second wave of mana spread. It was dark and untraceable, containing traces of countless different laws.

This was Damien's mana. Once it finished spreading through the palace...

'I finally gained my own God Rank artifact.'

Damien grinned. Ever since he saw Long Chen acquire the Empyrean Dragon Sword back when he was in the Cloud Plane, Damien had been desiring a God Rank treasure himself,

He didn't need a sword, he didn't need armor, he didn't need supportive treasures. Damien somewhat lamented his self-sustainability when he realized how useless most treasures were to him.

But this palace was different. It was both a residence and a fortress with heavy offensive and defensive power. Rather than a palace, it was better to call this structure a top-grade starship disguised as a palace.

To hold a vessel with the same power level as the Nox's star destroyer in his hands, how could Damien not be excited?

'And coincidentally enough, the perfect targets to test this thing's power on are readily available in this realm.'

"Well then, no need to hesitate."

Damien pushed his mana into the palace formation.

RUMBLE!

The earth rumbled. The palace's foundation began to lift off of the ground, tearing apart from the earth below.

It didn't feel like a clean process at all. The shaking was intense to the point where it felt like the whole palace would collapse, it was hard to imagine that these walls could handle such fierce shockwaves.

However, as expected of a God Rank artifact, there were no problems with its structural integrity.

The rumbling gradually calmed down as the palace further detached from the ground, and in a matter of minutes...

The ancient treasure that had been forced into stagnancy for so long finally moved once more.

A golden palace flew through the sky. It's destination...?

Naturally, it was anywhere the Nox were present.

Chapter 853 Attack [1]

Over a month had passed since the second round of entrants made their way into the Void Corridor. In this time, a number of things had happened.

For one, several experts from both sides saw rapid increases in strength. Most of this strength came from the abundant resources of the Wild Continent, many of which had efficacy rivaling direct leveling fruits.

However, there was a strange phenomenon that occurred when they tried to enter Legacy Tombs to attain ancient inheritances.

Regardless of which tomb it was, which allegiance the ancient expert had, they'd only open their inheritances to humans. These humans felt incredibly blessed, as, besides the Legacy Tombs that only accepted humans, the rest didn't have inheritances at all!

Compared to the great rumors about Void Corridors, reality was extremely disappointing.

Though, why did it seem less like the realm was trash and more like it was raided beforehand?

Nevertheless, this possibility was so unfathomable that it wasn't given any thought. Rather than focusing on the mystery of the inheritances, the two sides realized it was more beneficial to compete for resources.

As such, scuffles started both between opposing forces and those on the same side. A fierce melee broke out for several days before the leaders of both forces quelled their troops and brought order to the realm.

After all, the secondary goal that all people held in coming to the Wild Continent was exterminating the enemy. How could they tolerate internal conflict at such a time?

By the time the second week rolled around, the conflict evolved into several full-scale battles between Heaven's Army and the Nox Army.

Countless people on both sides died, but these deaths were usually limited to ground troops and those under the late stages of 4th class. On a battlefield of experts such as this one, they were nothing more than cannon fodder.

Deaths among those above that level were far more disastrous. Each one meant a substantial loss of battle power, and while several experts from both sides died, the Nox currently held the advantage.

They simply had too many experts. There were several tens of thousands of late-stage 4th class denizens in the Void Corridor, along with a few thousand extreme peak masters, however, the Nox had at least thousands more troops at both levels.



Heaven's Army was fighting an uphill battle, but since when were they not? They endured as they always did and fought for the sake of their lives and their homeland.

Currently, the two sides were at an involuntary ceasefire.

3 days ago, a mystical scent started to permeate the Wild Continent. This scent could instantly revitalize one's body. The Nox and Grand Heavens Boundary denizens had completely different physiques, but the effect of the scent remained the same throughout.

This could only mean it was a heavenly material. Resources under the level of heavenly materials simply didn't have overarching effects that didn't vary from person to person.

On another note, the only benefit humanity's birth physique had over other races was the fact that they had high compatibility with all resources, a product of their high adaptability.

Nevertheless, the emergence of a heavenly material was a major event. It wasn't something that could be approached carelessly, as any small factor could potentially ruin the blooming process of such a precious material.

As such, both sides recalled their forces and began slowly preparing for the birth phenomenon to show itself so they could charge to the heavenly material's location and claim it.

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In a land of darkness somewhere on the Wild Continent, a scene resembling hell presented itself to all present,

Countless feral and mindless black beings were chained together in a massive pit, their numbers reaching the tens of millions. They tried to climb over each other and even devour each other, but the muzzles and chains keeping them down didn't allow them to act rowdy.

This pit stood at the forefront of the Nox base camp, holding the Lesser Nox beings who had been brought into the realm.

Past the pit was a large structure that looked like a cross between a palace and a temple. This was the residence of the Nox Army's leader, a Supreme at the 9th revolution.

This structure was surrounded by a plethora of smaller structures that housed the rest of the Higher Nox population, however, at the moment, most of the important members of the Nox Army were at the Supreme's residence.

"As you know, our primary goal in this secret realm is to cripple one man. The rest of Heaven's Army is merely a group of ants we must crush before achieving our goal." The Supreme stated, panning his gaze over his subordinates.

"Has anyone found information about that man yet?"

Despite the Supreme's prompting, nobody spoke up. Despite spending a month gathering intel through several scuffles and battles, they hadn't caught a hint of the man's existence.

The Supreme's eyes turned cold. "You are all powerful experts, yet you can't find a single boy?"

"Sir Theon, it isn't that we haven't found him, but rather that he hadn't appeared at all. It is almost as if he is purposefully evading our forces." A High Commander said quietly.

"Expand on that." The Supreme said.

"Yes, sir. We received confirmation from the Envoy that the boy entered the Void Corridor, so we can be sure that he is present somewhere on the Wild Continent. However, we have scoured every inch of the continent in the past month and we have yet to find traces of him. It is likely that he took refuge within an inheritance site and hid there." The High Commander responded.

The Supreme furrowed his brows. It wasn't an impossible theory. After all, the boy they were chasing was a human. He had access to the inheritances that all others were barred from.

"Hmph, does he truly think he can hide from us? Even if he managed to perceive the threat of our presence, to think he would be such a coward." He scoffed.

"However, Sir Theon, what if it was merely happenstance? Even if the target's strength is weak, we should still be prudent. No small character can garner the attention of the Emperors."

The Supreme glanced at the High Commander and nodded. "You are right. Heighten surveillance of Heaven's Army and fortify the campsite. If he has the guts to confront us, we shall face him with our full force."

The Supreme's decision went into effect before the meeting even ended. As soon as they finished speaking about the topic, the Supreme's orders were carried out.

At the same time, they moved on to discussions about the heavenly material.

However, Sir Theon, the Supreme, still had his mind on the previous topic.

Their current goal was both unheard of and demeaning. For a Supreme like him to be tasked with crippling, not even killing but merely crippling, a rising genius who wasn't even at the late stage of 4th class yet, had such a situation ever occurred in the past?

The reason Theon accepted the order willingly was because he was curious. He also had ambitions, and as someone with huge ambitions, meeting the man who could cause an Emperor to act so out of character was imperative.

Even as his subordinates discussed how to deal with the Supreme of Heaven's Army, the question remained in his mind:

'Just who is Damien Void?'

BOOOOOOOM!

Chapter 854 Attack [2]

'Just who is Damien Void?'

BOOOOOOOM!

Sir Theon's thought was instantly proceeded by the sound of a muffled explosion.

He stood up, his eyes narrowing. He looked past the bounds of his residence to see...

A golden palace hovered in the sky. Behind it, a golden ring of mana formed like a halo. Currently, this golden ring was emitting furious light that transformed into a rain of swords that plunged into the earth below, absolutely demolishing the Lesser Nox pit in its totality.

With a single explosion, several hundred thousand Lesser Nox were incinerated to the point of no return. And even as the Supreme watched, the palace started charging for a second attack.

"Presumptuous!"

He slammed his hand down on the table, and without him needing to speak again, the High Commanders in the room moved.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The air exploded as several powerful auras flared into the atmosphere. The High Commanders shot through the air and reached the golden palace in an instant.

"Who is so brave to charge into our camp!"

"Hmph! Who cares? Destroy this atrocious structure!"

The High Commanders galvanized their mana, causing a black tide to form in the air and crash down on the palace, enveloping it entirely.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Within the murky black waters, several deadly attacks were hidden. The palace found itself barraged by countless profound Nox Laws, the scent of death corroding its surface.

"Break for me!"

A High Commander shouted as he pushed his mana. He formed a strange shape with his hands, forcing his mana to follow.

"Death Spiral!"

A cyclone shot from his body and charged at the palace. While it looked like a simple attack that even a 2nd class could pull off, it actually hid a profound mystery of death, the concept of vicissitude, within.

This concept was especially useful for structural damage, as it spread corrosion on a more intrinsic level and even damaged the lifespan of materials, making them brittle and easily broken.

BOOOOM!

The spiral collided with the palace wall, pushing into its surface like a massive black drill. Sparks flew in all directions and a smoke cloud formed, bringing color to the darkness.

This ferocious attack was one of many. At least 10 attacks with the same level of force struck the palace in unison, bombarding it and forcing it into a state of inaction.

It was a domineering scene with no witnesses.

However, when the black tide cleared away, the palace stood unblemished.

"What...?!" a High Commander exclaimed.

Hearing it, a small grin spread on the face of a certain purple-eyed genius.

"Since your assault was unsuccessful, it's my turn now!"

The palace's golden light shined once again, sending a flurry of attacks back at the High Commanders and the earth below.

Xiu! Xiu! Xiu!

Each golden sword projection was terrifyingly sharp and powerful, forcing the High Commanders to acknowledge them.

And while they were stuck dealing with the attacks, the rest of the sword rain went unhindered as it crashed into the earth.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOOOOOOM!

"Who dares?!"



A roar resounded through the air. It was followed by the appearance of several hundred Higher Nox at the extreme peak of the 4th class who swarmed the ground below and shielded the camp from the sword rain.

Within the golden palace, Damien's grin only widened.

"Good, good! Send as many as you can, and then send your Supreme as the cherry on top! Hahahaha!"

His borderline maniacal laughter alarmed those who could hear him, specifically, the crowd of three women who resided in the palace with him.

That's right, the number of females in Damien's party increased by two in the time it took to find and reach the Nox base camp. Though, only one of them was corporeal.

Nevertheless, the three women had varying expressions on their faces. Alice maintained an attitude of curiosity when she woke up in such a mystical environment with an unfamiliar man. Alexandra was far warier, and especially in the current situation, she was panicking for her life.

As for Xinyue, she showed no expression at all. After leaving the Sanctuary, it was like she became a blank slate.

Damien didn't pay any mind to these women. How could they hold any importance when he was currently controlling a badass star weapon?!

'This is every man's dream!' He exclaimed inwardly as he stared into the various holographic screens that showed him the outside world.

'This is ducking awesome!'

He slammed his hand down on a certain formation node. The structure of the palace went through a subtle change as a row of cannons unveiled themselves from the multiple spires of the structure.

"Fire!"

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

A rain of cannon fire joined the rain of swords. Despite the number of High Commanders increasing, the effect of their existence didn't increase at all.

They were forced down by the palace's weaponry, unable to even focus on protecting the camp below them.

Explosions became so commonplace that the air felt strange without ash in it. The hellish landscape became a true hell as the Nox who couldn't defend themselves were removed from the reincarnation cycle.

Damien's eyes twinkled.

The palace was showing its true greatness at this very moment.

What he was pulling now, perhaps even a Supreme couldn't do.

The amount of damage he was doing to the Nox's experts was negligible, but the rest of their army...?

It was impossible for those several tens of millions of troops to survive if the palace was allowed to continue its tyranny.

This was the product of God Rank defense. Even a Supreme would fall under the strikes of another Supreme.

The palace, however...

BOOOOOOOOOM!

A world-crushing aura surfaced on the horizon. Sir Theon's figure stood in front of the sun and, despite his size, he seemed to eclipse it entirely.

"Bold fool who dares to attack my camp, face the consequences of your actions!"

Sir Theon slammed his hands together and moved his mana.

"Demonic Needle!"

Above his head, a needle materialized. It was several hundred kilometers in length, but its very tip was sharp to a microscopic degree.

As Sir Theon threw his arm forward, the needle moved at impossible speeds. It appeared before the castle in an instant and drilled into its surface.

Bzzzzzt!

The sparks that flew from the collision sparked flames that burned even the atmosphere itself, the mere shockwaves were enough to plunge the earth below into chaos.

In fact, Sir Theon's attack likely killed more Nox than any single one of Damien's.

"We're dead! We're really dead this time!" Alexandra exclaimed.

"Big brother, are we going to die?!" Alice exclaimed.

"Who's your big brother, you damn hag?! You're thousands of years older than me!" Damien scoffed.

He couldn't fault the women for being scared, but...

The needle finally dissipated after causing immense environmental damage and even sweeping away several extreme peak Nox masters.

The dust cloud and sparks settled, revealing the palace's condition.

Sir Theon's eyes widened.

Anyone who could see it could only stare at it in bafflement.

In the place where the needle struck...

There was only a small chip in the palace's defense.

Chapter 855 Retreat [1]

'This...'

Sir Theon's eyes widened in shock as the dust cleared.

His attack, even if it didn't contain his full power, was only able to cause a tiny chip in the palace wall?

Just what kind of material was this treasure made of?!

"Hahahaha!"

Damien's raucous laughter resounded through the air. Looking at the Supreme's expression, how could he not be jubilant?

"Try again, try three times, try as much as you want! You won't be able to do anything! Hahahaha!"

Damien was more than pleased with the castle.

And now that he'd tested its power...

'It's time to retreat.'

Going against the Nox Army alone was laughable. Even if the golden palace was a God Rank artifact, it was still being controlled by Damien.

In terms of attack power, he couldn't truly damage any of these extreme peak experts, let alone a Supreme. The only true "God Ranked" ability that the golden palace had at the moment was its physical defense.

As such, Damien never planned to bank on this reckless attack. It was a taunt, a show of dominance to humiliate these scum who dared to invade his universe.

'But...maybe I should cause a little bit more damage before I leave.' He thought with a smirk.

'Let's get a bit creative, shall we?'

He pushed his mana. The pitch-black hue of Void Mana permeated the golden palace and corrupted its formations. Damien's irises swirled with power as he tweaked his mana intricately to mimic and mirror the golden palace's functions.

Afterward, he superimposed the Void Mana system onto the existing one.

Voom!

A wave of power spread.

Damien grinned.

'Now, let's get started for real.'

He threw his hand out and commanded the golden palace. The formation whirred to life.

Outside, the golden halo that backed the palace began to change in shape and color. It formed a crown that rotated around the castle's spires, black and bedazzled with several precious jewels.

'Fire.'

The black crown shined with brilliant light. Light rays flew from its surface in all directions, covering Heaven and Earth.

XIUUUUU!

Each beam was like a concentrated death ray. Any troops under the extreme peak of 4th class that were caught in a beam were incinerated in an instant.

Even late-stage beings were slain like chickens and pigs.



"Dammit! Am I a joke to you?!"

Sir Theon's furious roar eclipsed the terrifying roars of the palace. He slammed his hands together and galvanized his mana.

The atmosphere changed.

The blackness got deeper, almost as if it was a living abyss.

A sticky feeling spread through the air like the webs of a spider.

Sir Theon's eyes were stained pitch black.

His fury disappeared from his face, replaced with only indifference.

Damien's eyes widened.

'This...'

This was a Demonic Providence, an extremely powerful one at that.

'Even if the palace can hypothetically walk away from an attack like that, I have no desire to risk it.'

Damien's eyes hardened. By the flow of mana in the atmosphere, it would take another second for the Supreme to finish casting his skill.

'Then this is my final chance.'

Damien formed a number of seals with his hands and pushed his foot into the floor below. The crown above the palace rotated once more and hovered above the palace.

In an instant, it detached itself from the palace structure and flew as an independent object.

'Go.'

"Demon God Summoning!"

Two attacks were fired at once.

A massive black crown crashed into the ground, spreading a wave of death that spanned several tens of thousands of kilometers.

A pair of eyes opened in the abyss. A maw that could swallow stars with ease opened and attempted to swallow the golden palace.

'Mister Supreme, I'll see you later.' Damien thought to himself.

He stomped his foot once more.

The golden palace's formation activated.

And...

A large-scale teleportation took place.

The entire palace vanished several million kilometers into the distance, far beyond the perception of anyone present.

RAAAAAAAAAA!

A demonic god roared in fury after losing its prey.

Sir Theon clutched his chest and spat out a mouthful of blood, his face becoming noticeably paler.

He gritted his teeth and stared into the distance, hatred and fury blazing in his eyes.

'I do not know who you are, but I will make sure that your entire bloodline is wiped from existence, even if I must die to do so!'

Sir Theon eventually returned to the earth and entered his residence.

He wouldn't be seen again for many days.

Just like that, the sudden and deadly assault on the Nox Army came to an end.

The final death toll...

On the attacker side, none at all.

As for the Nox...the number was over 4 million.

A majority of their Lesser Nox force and even a large portion of their Higher Nox experts were killed.

The worst part was, the Nox didn't even know who their attacker was.

Even though they didn't lose any of their key forces...

The assault was their complete defeat.

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No matter how hard one tried, on a battlefield where intelligence agents were everywhere, it was impossible to hide news for long.

The rumor that the Nox Army had been assaulted by a mystical golden palace and lost a large portion of their forces was verified 2 days after the event.

The entirety of Heaven's Army was abuzz with chatter about the event.

Just who was the mysterious expert who dared to do such a thing?

In the end, were they allies, or merely passing helpers?

And most of all...

Would Asuran Gate let this go?

Within the Asuran Gate base camp, a man sat at his desk, veins bulging from his forehead as if to iterate his fury.

"Who is this audacious fool?!"

Lucas Streem cursed in frustration, slamming his fist down on his desk.

This Void Corridor was an amazing opportunity for him.

If he could distinguish himself here, there was a chance for him to be pulled out of this hellish battlefield and sent to train in the main clan!

This was something every Asuran Gate member wished for, yet it was almost impossible to achieve.

Now that Lucas had come across an opportunity to make this impossible possible, how could he not be furious?

"How dare he steal my spotlight?!"

His blazing eyes glared past the bounds of his tent.

"You, and you! Find information on that golden palace within 2 days. If I don't hear back..."

The two men guarding his tent jumped and shivered in fear.

""Yes, sir!""

They didn't dare disobey. They could only lament that they were forced to accomplish this impossible task.

Because they knew the consequence of failing.

Lucas Streem wasn't the type to threaten one's life. He understood that pride went a long way in this society.

He was a man who used one's connections against them. Loved ones, friends, family, anybody who could die to motivate a soldier would die.

Such a man was currently harboring an almost possessive hatred for an unknown enemy.

And funnily enough, this enemy was an ally.

Just how would Damien react if he realized that he unintentionally made both Supremes on the Wild Continent despise him?

Perhaps the wry expression on his face wouldn't vanish for several years.

Chapter 856 Retreat [2]

Somewhere in the Wild Continent, a golden palace emerged from the void and took rest on the earth below.

The palace was large on its own, but when placed in the mountain range where it currently found itself, it didn't look too magnificent at all.

Within his personal quarters, Damien sat quietly with his eyes closed. A white and black swirl of mana circled his body and pulsated, growing denser and purer with every passing second.



"Huu..."

Damien exhaled a light breath and opened his eyes.

'Samsara Intent is still difficult. Using it in battle has become smoother, but creating a moveset using Samsara Intent is more taxing than expected...'

Damien frowned. When he first started comprehending space, he used his sword as a medium to project his mana with ease. Using a medium to create a move set and comprehend a concept was far easier than doing so without one.

'However, I don't want to make a new sword art.'

Damien wasn't a sword practitioner. He used the sword out of necessity when he first started out, and as he grew, it became one of his many viable attack methods.

If he were to return to the sword at this point in time, it'd harm him more than it helped him. Even if Damien knew he was a genius, he wouldn't recklessly bite off more than he could chew.

The sword path wasn't for him, and that was inviolable fact.

'Then...'

In terms of weapons, the only other one he had was the Twin Moons.

'A gun art?'

It wasn't unheard of, and it also provided an avenue wholly different from the sword path. If Spacetime and Samsara could be separated into sword and gun, maneuvering them in battle would also become much easier.

'The only problem is that I know nothing about professional gunplay.'

Damien shook his head and stood up, thinking that he needed to find a master on the outside to teach him once he returned to Eien.

'Actually, couldn't Priscilla provide one for me?'

Last time, even though she'd creeped him out, Priscilla had given Damien a great deal of help. And even if he didn't use her much, Ximen Wuhen wasn't a bad helper at all.

After the original battle, Damien took the opportunity to stuff her in the Sanctuary and keep her there. Of course, he would still bring her out if he ever needed help, merely...

'Priscilla's eyes can't be so sharp.'

It was fine if there were people who observed him from a distance, but such close-range observation that could unearth his secrets, especially when he was still growing with the help of the various things he earned from the Void Corridor and beyond, wasn't acceptable. He had decided long ago that Priscilla would only learn about the cards he wanted her to know, no more no less.

Ximen Wuhen had no method to escape the Sanctuary, and after staying there for two years, she learned to adapt and fit into Theavel's society.

In all honesty, Damien believed she would do far better as a minister in Theavel than anything she could accomplish under Priscilla.

Nevertheless, Damien didn't bring it up to the woman quite yet because her personality seemed to be a blank slate other than her loyalty for the High Commander, likely the result of some kind of mental manipulation.

'Whatever, it's not my business. For now, I should plan my path forward.'

It was unknown when the Void Corridor would reopen and force everyone out, but before then, the Nox needed to go.

'I could place faith in Heaven's Army, but according to Alexandra, the current force is led by a subsidiary faction of Blood Asura Holy Land. Interacting with them is dangerous, especially right now.'

It wasn't the worst-case scenario. Three months still hadn't passed since Damien's exit from the Celestial Realm, so there were still a few tens of days before the Bloodlock Clan learned about what he did to Reavus. However, revealing his location right now in any capacity was dangerous.

He still hadn't acquired the power he desired, the power that would allow him to fend off the extreme peak experts of the Bloodlock Clan.

'If Heaven's Army isn't viable, there are two routes I could take...'

The first route was more direct. It was for Damien to personally take action and make use of his familiarity with the Wild Continent to lead the Nox on a rat race that slowly whittled away their forces.

The second route, however...

'Can I enlist their help? With their dispositions, it will either be more straightforward than I could ever hope for or nigh impossible with no in-between.'

Regardless, if he got their help, Damien was confident in killing off the Supreme and decimating the Nox Army.

Several tens of thousands of extreme peak masters, just how big of a setback would the Nox face if they died?

It was a scene Damien desperately wanted to see.

As such...

'Fuck it, let's just try it out. Even if I can't defeat them, they can't kill me either.'

With that thought in mind, Damien's body flashed away from the golden palace, traveling several million miles in the distance before reaching a hidden alcove covered by wild vines and greenery.

"Old hag, come out!" Damien yelled.

His voice echoed through the alcove in an impossible manner, seemingly disappearing into a void that didn't exist.

Suddenly, the mana in the air swirled and took the form of an old lady not much taller than Damien's leg.

When her figure took physical form, she glanced over at Damien indifferently.

Then, her face changed,

"Brat, didn't I tell you not to address me the same way you do with those old ghosts?! I'm alive and well, you know! I'm still in my prime!"

Her eyes turned red and her teeth turned into jagged edges. She raised the cane in her hand and, without suspense, started relentlessly beating Damien over his head.

"Hey, hey! Okay, I'm sorry! Let me go, granny!"

"Granny?"

"Auntie?"

"Auntie?!"

"Big...sister...?"

"Brat, you're dead!"

"No, I'm too young and handsome to die!"

Damien ran in circles around the alcove as he tried his best to avoid the old lady's cane, though, it was an impossible goal in the first place.

Thwack!

Thwack!

Thwack!

Three strong wacks had him lying on the floor with a comically large bump on his head.

"Haa, Granny Liu, did you have to give me such a rough greeting? I'm a fragile man, you know?" He complained as he sat up and brushed off his injuries.

"Tch," Granny Liu scoffed, "you brat only looks for people when you need something. Don't try to play me like a fool because I'm old."

Damien chuckled awkwardly and looked away. Well...he couldn't necessarily prove her wrong.

'But if you're going to call yourself old, why are you beating me for saying it?!'

Wait, that wasn't the point right now!

"Granny, I need help! Please give me a trial!"

Granny Liu glanced at Damien and sighed, "What is it this time?"

Seeing her positive response, he grinned.

As expected, forming a good relationship with these people was a great idea.

When he first arrived in the Wild Continent, he'd met them by chance after raiding a great emperor's tomb. They were headed to find the inheritance as well, but strangely enough, rather than the inheritance, they just wanted a small portion of the resources he earned.

The resource they needed was called the Crystallized Ginseng, something Damien didn't need at all since it was a body-tempering resource.



He could've made a trade with them, but since he didn't need the resources and he was looking for a way to get rid of some of his stock, he simply gave them all the Crystallized Ginseng he'd found until that point.

His random act of grace ended up getting him in the good graces of this indigenous race that resided in the Wild Continent.

Damien grinned.

"I want to take care of some pests." He answered Granny Liu's question with confidence.

Because with their help, a mere Nox Army that only had a single supreme wouldn't be a problem anymore.

After all...

They were descendants of the Titan Race, the progenitors and ancestors of the Giant Race that existed in the Grand Heavens Boundary in the current era.

When it came to physical power...

Perhaps even the greatest Primal Sovereign wouldn't even be able to match their top experts.

## Chapter 857 Trials [1]

In Grand Heavens Boundary, the existence of the Titan Race was long forgotten. They had been extinct for several hundred thousand years, and even the giants who were birthed from them didn't have any records about them.

This was partly due to the sheer amount of time that passed and the disposition of Titans and Giants. In terms of written history, they were far worse than other races as they were disinclined to keep such records.

However, more than that was another reason. The Titan Race had been actively erased from history by experts of the past, and their descendants were banished into the Void Corridor so as to completely eliminate the possibility of Titans reappearing in the universe.

After all, the Titan Race was a race of traitors.

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The small alcove opened up around Damien and Granny Liu, giving way to a long earthen corridor that descended deeper below ground.

Damien followed Granny Liu through this corridor, watching as it opened up gradually and became a cave system that spanned several hundred thousand kilometers.

This place was the home of the Titans, if they could even be called that anymore.

Generations had passed since the first group of Titan descendants was banished to the Void Corridor. Even Granny Liu was in the 5th generation born after the migration.

As time passed and they were forced to inbreed to keep their people alive, rather than compounding, their bloodline continuously became more impure and thinned until the currently existing Titans were mere shells of their previous glory.

There was a reason the Titan Race was so feared. There was a reason they were only partially exterminated and banished instead of fully wiped out.

The Titan Race of the past had a true gift from heaven in terms of physical strength. Even the weakest Titan could demolish their peers with fists alone.

As if their strength wasn't enough, the universe also gifted them with divine bodies that were nigh indestructible.

When the ancient experts took care of the Titan Race back then, they simply weren't able to kill every Titan, leading to Damien's meeting with their descendants in the current era.

These descendants termed themselves the Cloud Giant Race. They were somewhere between Titans and Giants, leaning more towards the former.

'But even if their current potential is heavily deteriorated, it's still greater than many of the people existing in the current universe.' Damien thought to himself.

Talking down about the Titans was easy when one wasn't aware of their strength.

Damien could only use their descendants to put them into perspective, but even then they were unfathomable.

'Just why did a race with such a close connection to the universe turn traitor?'

It was a curious twist of fate that didn't make sense to Damien at all. Especially since he'd met and interacted with the Cloud Giants, he couldn't understand their ancestors' intentions.

'There must be some plot.'

Were the Titans innocent?

Probably not.

But did that change Damien's opinion of the Cloud Giants?

It was a question that didn't even need asking.

The faults of the past generation were the faults of the past generation alone. If the current generation was clearly different, what was the use of persecuting them?

Such an action only needed to be taken if they decided to follow in their ancestors' footsteps.

Granny Liu led Damien through an array of tunnels for several minutes, her speed gradually increasing as they moved along.

Within a few minutes, they were racing through the tunnels faster than the speed of sound, using their residual mana to quell the sonic booms that were threatening to form behind them.

"Granny, where are we going?" Damien asked curiously. They must've been halfway to the very bottom of the Wild Continent by now. He couldn't think of a reason to go so far for a mere meeting.

Granny Liu glanced at him in exasperation. "Didn't you say you wanted to take a trial? Did you change your mind?"

Damien's eyes widened. "Nope! As expected, Granny Liu knows best!"

The Titans of the past were a curious race. They were incredibly independent and without many positive relationships with other races, but they had a single tradition that allowed cooperation. This was the so-called trial.

In Titan tradition, if a guest ever came with a request that required the race to move as a whole, they would be assigned an appropriate trial to complete. Only after proving themselves would they be granted aid.

The Cloud Giants adopted this tradition as well, however, they weren't necessarily able to carry out trials when no other intelligent life existed on the Wild Continent.

When Damien first learned of their tradition, it wasn't through them, but rather through the memories of one of the forgotten emperors that he devoured.

He didn't immediately confront them about it and instead chose to keep his chance for when he needed it more.

'Actually, the original plan was to use the trial to convince them to move to the Sanctuary, but I can find a different method for that.'

Actually, Damien had formed some greater ambitions recently, so it was good that he got a different opportunity to take the trial.

After all, besides requiring help from the Cloud Giants, Damien also wanted to experience the traditions of this forgotten ancient race.

Eventually, Granny Liu and Damien reached a point that seemed to be a central node of the underground tunnel system.

Here, an intense heat blazed, coloring the air a burning red color.

Standing in the center of this small open area, Granny Liu halted.

"Little monster, your request is a big one. To fight the Nox is one thing, but to slaughter a Supreme is another. Rather than a single trial, you will be given three. The first is endurance, the second is perseverance, and the final is morality. If you can pass all three trials, we will spare no effort to help you."

Damien looked at the heated floor curiously. 'The trials are more character-driven than expected. Considering the reputation of the Titans, I expected it to be something more belligerent.'

"Good. If it's just these three facets, I have confidence in passing." He responded to Granny Liu.

Granny Liu smiled an ominous smile. "If that is your decision, then let the first trial of endurance begin!"

"Huh? Granny, wai—!"

Before Damien could finish his sentence, Granny Liu rushed out of the open space, reentering the tunnel system and slamming her foot into the ground.

"Have a great time, boy!"

Those were the last words Damien heard before his vision was filled with red.

"Fuck! That's hot!"

Crack!

Rumble!

Before he could readjust to the heatwave, the ground below him cracked and shattered into countless pieces.

The lava pit that lay below was revealed to the world.

And as Damien tried to fly to avoid falling in...



He suddenly found that any sort of movement was restricted entirely.

'Ah, fuck. So this is what she meant by endurance.'

VOOM!

As Damien's wry smile grew, a wave of flames enveloped him and dragged him into the lava pit.

His body descended without a struggle and began to burn under the lava's surface.

And though Damien had experienced such a lava quenching once before...

'This still hurts like hell!'

Chapter 858 Trials [2]

The first trial was self-explanatory.

Damien's flesh and bones were sundered and burned until they couldn't be burned anymore.

And then they were burned some more.

Transcendent Regeneration kept him alive and his iron wall mentality didn't submit to such little pain, making this trial easy to pass.

It was even mildly enjoyable.

Damien enjoyed "sensation" a lot. The tactile sensation of pain made him feel like he was putting in effort to gain the strength he had, changing his view of it into something positive.

Even during battle, while getting injured was extremely detrimental, it only made Damien enjoy the fight more.

The battle maniac tendencies he had as a teenager had been thoroughly suppressed in the vicissitude of time, but they were still present somewhere in his heart.

He only really felt that insane, almost orgasmic drive for pain and death in training situations like this where he was stimulated to the max.

Nevertheless, Damien was able to hold back both pleasure and pain to complete the trial, staying in the lava pool for over 48 hours without pause.

When he resurfaced and regained his ability to move, he immediately followed Granny Liu to the next trial, the trial of perseverance.

Perseverance was difficult to test. In most cases, these kinds of trials would be composed of endless roads or other constructs that forced the participants to experience infinity.

The Cloud Giants seemed to have a more extreme version of this trial.

Perseverance in the face of infinity, in the face of an impossible wall, was possible to overcome as long as hope was present.

But perseverance could only be truly experienced in hopelessness.

The hopelessness felt when facing an impossible walk was sinking. It felt like thousands of pounds of weight were chained to one's ankles, dragging them to drown in the depths of the ocean.

However...what if this impossible wall was met with existing hopelessness?

What if one's family was slaughtered by a supreme expert, their homeworld destroyed by that expert's sect, their body crippled, their martial path cut off by lack of talent and guidance; what if all factors that could possibly go wrong went wrong at once?

Would one still be able to persevere even while knowing that getting anywhere was literally impossible?

This was the feeling Damien was made to experience.

In the face of true impossibility, what was the point of fighting spirit?

At that point, it was no longer a matter that had anything to do with the outside world.

It was a matter only pertaining to the individual.

It was pride.

Even if one was destined to achieve nothing, would they succumb to this nothingness, or would they relentlessly fight it until their last breath, even if it was just for the sake of saying they fought?

Damien didn't know if there was a correct answer to this question. He couldn't fault those who decided to throw away their personal desires for security.

In the end, their path wasn't wrong either.

He just couldn't do it.

Even if it was only for that final moment of realization when he was on his deathbed, even if it was only to comfort himself with the fact that he never gave up, at least he would die without regrets because he tried.

Life meant opportunity.

This was the realization Damien made when he completed the second trial.

He did so in less than 3 hours, a record that had never been surpassed in Titan history.

And now that those two trials were finished, Damien began the last.

This was both the simplest and most difficult trial.

Because the decision of whether or not one passed was entirely subjective.

Currently, Damien was stood before an array of massive individuals. Even the smallest one was 10 meters tall, with the largest one being over a kilometer in height, taking up the majority of the vast cavern in which they were situated.

Granny Liu, still shorter than short, stood on the side and watched the proceedings quietly.

"Damien Void, you have challenged our three trials and come out successful from the first two! Even if you fail here, you have still earned the right to make a request from our clan, albeit smaller than your original one!" The kilometer-tall giant said, his voice booming through the cavern.

"For this trial, I shall ask you three questions. Once you have given your answers, the jury before you will discuss and come to a decision on whether or not you passed. Have you any questions?"

Damien looked up into the giant's eyes and shook his head in refusal.

He was concerned about this trial, especially since he was well aware that lying wouldn't work, but there was nothing he could do about it.

If his true thoughts couldn't convince these Cloud Giants, he didn't need their extended help.

There was no point trying to establish a long-term cooperative relationship with people who couldn't see eye to eye with him.

The kilometer-tall giant, the Head of the Cloud Giant Tribe, nodded his head, affirming Damien's willingness to continue.

He opened his mouth and asked the first question.

"There are 1,000,000 innocent civilians being held captive in an enemy camp, however, your mother has been kidnapped by a mysterious force that is colluding with the enemy. You can only save o—"

"My mother," Damien answered, cutting the Giant Leader off.

The giant raised his brow. "I have yet to finish my question, are you sure about your answer?"

Damien shook his head. "No need to ask. It doesn't matter how many randoms you add to the scenario. My mother's life is worth more than even the Heavens themselves."

Saving his mother was the first motivation he ever had on his path to strength. The determination to save his mother allowed him to survive so much tragedy and pain, how could her life be worth the same as rabble he'd never met before?

It might've been a cruel thought process, but it was honest.

In this trial, that was all that mattered.

The Giant Leader nodded his head without a change of expression.

"Then, onto the second question. You meet an enemy who has committed countless atrocities, however, he wishes to faithfully serve you and become one of your people. Would you accept him?"

Damien furrowed his brows.

"Am I allowed to ask questions?"

"Ask away." The Giant Leader responded.

"Am I answering from the perspective of the me who stands before you or a nondescript entity?"

The Giant Leader thought for a moment before answering, "Tell me what you, the Damien Void I meet now, would do in this situation."

Damien nodded. "Then, my answer is that it depends on his crimes."

"If his crimes are murder, treachery, or other violent atrocities, regardless of the scale, as long as I put a slave seal on him, I can control him at a whim and make sure he doesn't step out of line. If he has the capacity to commit such atrocities, he will be a useful subordinate, as sometimes such qualities are necessary."

"Otherwise?" The Giant Leader questioned.



"There are two alternate paths that don't differ much from the original. Regardless, I will put a slave seal on him and control him."

"However, if he has touched women, he will be punished by women. His punishment will wholly depend on what, depending on what the situation, either the women he assaulted or my female subordinates decide. Afterward, whether or not I accept him as a subordinate also depends on their opinions, as they are the ones whose performance will be affected if they are uncomfortable in his presence."

Damien's eyes sharpened.

"If he decided to stoop so low as to touch children, I'll personally place him in a hell of endless torture, and I'll personally make sure that he maintains sanity and reason for as long as he remains alive in that place. I cannot punish all those who commit such atrocities, but I'll never shy away from punishing one who is before me."

The Giant Leader nodded, the same indifferent look on his face as if Damien's answer meant nothing to him at all.

And now that they'd reached this point, he asked the final question.

"If the entire universe turned against you, including those you hold dear in your heart, would you still move with the same determination to save it?"

Chapter 859 Movements [1]

"If the entire universe turned against you, including those you hold dear in your heart, would you still move with the same determination to save it?"

"..."

Damien closed his eyes and thought over the question rather than answering instantly as he'd done before.

He'd never given any thought to a hypothetical where Rose, Ruyue, and all of his closest people betrayed him since he knew it was simply impossible.

However, now that the question was set in front of him as a hypothetical, he finally gave it the time of day.

In reality, this question went far deeper than morality.

This question could define one's sense of self, opening pathways to explore several other facets of one's ego.

Damien had three hearts outside of his body.

The first was Earth, his roots, his origin. Even if Damien didn't have any particular feelings for Earth, he knew how important the world was to him as a Celestial.

The second was Apeiron, the location where he experienced rebirth. The Damien Void who existed on Apeiron was a completely different being from the one who came from Earth. That was a Damien Void qualified to grow stronger.

And finally, the Cloud Plane, Damien's third external heart. The Cloud Plane was the world that allowed Damien to overcome his past and look towards his future, shedding his mental instability entirely.

Each of these worlds held great meaning in Damien's heart, and coincidentally enough, each was the birth world of one of his wives.

For everyone and everything he knew and loved to turn against him, these worlds would also do the same.

The people residing on their surfaces would follow their will, becoming his eternal enemies.

Even if he returned to his roots, he'd only be met with jeers.

No matter where he went, he'd either be shunned or attacked.

There was no such thing as safety, no such thing as solace...

At least, not within Grand Heavens Boundary.

Damien didn't doubt that, if he truly decided to join them, the Nox would accept him. They valued power over quite literally everything, and with their strange connection to the Void, they'd obviously want Damien on their side.

However, would the betrayal of the universe push Damien to the enemy side?

He tried to picture himself in that situation, where everyone he grew to love turned their backs on him one by one, betraying him and forcing him into a corner.

'It's painful.'

The first few times, it felt like his heart was being stabbed when he was met with their indifference.

But as time went on, his heart became void. His emotions became numb as he only expected betrayal and never longed for love.

He became colder, more indifferent, and less inclined to aid those in danger when he saw them.

Rather, he moved completely independently.

But...would he abandon the universe?

'No.'

It was simple to realize once he put the situation into perspective.

Because even if everyone else betrayed him, the universe never would.

It was an eternal ally with no way to voice its support.

It was his true roots, and the "flow" to which he'd been connected for several years.

Even if everyone in the universe died, as long as he saved its existence, its roots, it would still be able to regrow and rebirth itself.

So what did it matter if everyone betrayed him?

If they ever betrayed his expectations of them to such an extent, they simply weren't worth his emotions.

They weren't worthy of being the cause of his abandonment.

Damien looked up at the Giant Leader with flames in his eyes and gave his answer with utmost confidence.

"Yes. I would still save the universe even if everyone inside had to die first."

"Very well!" The Giant Leader exclaimed. "Since you have given the answers buried in your heart without a hint of intention to lie, we will return your sincerity with an absolutely truthful verdict!"

Boom!

The Giant Leader lightly tapped his foot on the ground, causing a massive wall of limestone to raise from the earth and separate Damien from the Giant Elders.

"They're discussing whether or not they should help you now. Regardless of their answer, know that you have passed the trials splendidly." Granny Liu walked up to Damien and said.

"Hm? Granny Liu, you're still here? You didn't tell me you were a big shot!" Damien responded in surprise.

"Tch, what do you know? This old lady once sat in that central seat, you know."

"Ehh?"

Damien's eyes widened in shock. There was no way this little old lady was trying to tell him that she was the previous leader of the Cloud Giant Race, right?

"Granny, quit kidding with me. If you're really some big person, how do you think the council will vote?"

Granny Liu glanced at the limestone barrier with furrowed brows.

"Those brats...well, it doesn't matter what they say. Either way, your request will be granted."

"Granted?"

"Granted."

Damien's eyes widened further. Why was Granny Liu so certain of the outcome?

At this time, Damien failed to realize that he'd left one important fact out of consideration.

The Cloud Giants were expelled to the Wild Continent because their ancestors supported the Nox. Even though they were direct descendants of the Titan bloodline, even they didn't have knowledge of why their ancestors chose betrayal.

All they knew was that they'd been punished for an eternity for sins they didn't commit.

There were many parties at fault for this. The Titans themselves, the forces that decided to exterminate them, and the Nox were all key reasons for the race's tragic fate.

Of them, the Titans and ancient experts were dead and gone. If the legacies of these experts survived, they existed in the outside world that the Cloud Giants couldn't access.

Now, intelligent life had returned to the Wild Continent in the form of outside adventurers, and half of those who came were Nox.

Of the three groups that the Cloud Giants resented, there was only one that they could currently act against.

And...what if their contributions somehow allowed them to exit this forsaken land?

Regardless, there were endless benefits for the Cloud Giants if they attacked the Nox.



There was no reason for them to refuse.

Merely...

Generations without leaving the turtle shell known as the Void Corridor had turned these once ferocious beings into great cowards.

Currently, the Giant Leader was facing a split opinion.

A majority of the elders wanted to remain in inaction. They didn't want to aggravate a situation they had no part in, as they had safety and security in their current state.

However, was this safety and security really worth it?

Was it not just a facade?

Even if they were a smaller number, there were still several elders who firmly believed that now was the time for action.

They had just cause in accepting the request of someone who ached their trials, they had a motive in slaughtering Nox, and they had more than enough power to spare.

Damien's trial answers weren't brought up in the conversation one time.

Before he even started answering, he'd passed the trial in many of these elders' eyes, including those who currently opposed his request.

His answers only led them to respect him and ponder his skewed yet curious mentality.

It was a personal curiosity that these elders didn't enter into their discussion.

Perhaps it was for this reason why the opinions were currently so split.

At this point, the weight of responsibility fell on the Giant Leader's shoulders.

His decision would be the Cloud Giants' decision.

So...would he succumb to pressure, or would he rise to the challenge?

Even the Giant Leader himself didn't know which route he'd choose.

## Chapter 860 Movements [2]

While Damien waited for the council of Cloud Giants to come to a decision, the world didn't stay in stasis with him.

Events in the outside world progressed at their usual pace without a single ounce of consideration for Damien's circumstances.

The first thing that happened, on the same day Damien first entered the Cloud Giants' Sanctuary, was the release of a bounty that subtly affected the tides of fate.

It was a bounty on a mysterious man and his golden palace. Anyone who was able to bring this man in would receive a hefty reward of resources and money, enough to set them straight for several years on end.

The strangeness of the bounty didn't come from the bounty itself, rather, it was the requesters.

There were two.

Lucas Streem of Asuran Gate and Sir Theon of the Nox Army.

Both sides offered copious rewards for that man's capture, forming the first instance where Nox and universe denizens unintentionally cooperated.

As the ceasefire between both sides was still ongoing until the heavenly material finally showed itself, the next few days became a widespread search for a single man rather than a war.

When Nox and universe denizens encountered each other, they actually avoided combat, something that'd never happened before.

Yet, despite several days passing, the man's traces couldn't be found anywhere.

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Somewhere in a forest on the Wild Continent, a party of five fought against several ferocious beasts at the extreme peak of 4th class.

The beasts in the Wild Continent were all mindless regardless of strength level, making it far more difficult to deal with them.

However, this team had great cohesion that allowed them to accomplish things that they absolutely couldn't do individually.

"Alexandra, now!" A man suddenly shouted.

"You got it, boss!" A woman shouted back as she jumped into the air and let loose a rain of rocky bullets onto the beast.

"Good! Tess, Braden, get it while it's distracted!"

"Got it!"

"No need to tell me!"

The two people charged in from both sides, controlling the beast's movements and forcing it into a corner,

The beast slowly accumulated injuries under the attacks of these three people until finally...

Haa!

The leader jumped into the air and sliced his sword powerfully, bisecting the beast into two even halves.

"Fuwah! That's so tiring!" The woman named Tess exclaimed as she crumpled onto the ground.

"Tch, you just love to complain. We've dealt with so much worse back in the Misty Wildlands, what does a little beast mean to us?" Braden responded noncommittally.

"Alright, alright, don't start arguing again, you two." The leader said with a sigh.

"Alice, can you heal us up?"

"On it, boss!"

Alice clapped her hands together and prayed, causing white and gold mana to descend from the sky and wash through the bodies of these five people, healing all of their minor injuries and even partially healing most major injuries.

"Haha, as expected of Alice! You can't find a better healer anywhere else!" Tess exclaimed in satisfaction.

"Hehe~" Alice giggled happily.

Her gaze turned to the horizon, a slight hint of worry surfacing in her eyes.

It had been many days since they separated and that man disappeared.

He wasn't dead, right?

She truly hoped he could survive this ordeal.

She personally saw his determination to fight against the enemy, and even though she was never too good at reading people, she thought he was a good man.

He saved her sister, after all.

Alexandra glanced over to find Alice sneaking a peak at her and sighed.

'Don't tell me she developed some positive feelings for that man in such a short period of time...?'

Unlike Alice, Alexandra was far warier about the interaction they'd had with that strange man. Aside from the power of his artifact, just the fact that he was willing to offend so many people was dangerous in and of itself.

Arcadia Guild had survived and grown into its current state because they'd been prudent as they rose, taking account of others' interests so as to not offend someone who couldn't be offended.

The reckless and belligerent approach of that man wasn't something Alexandra could fathom.

'Regardless, he is still my savior. If he didn't provide me with the appropriate materials and his mysterious healing power, I wouldn't be able to use my body at all right now. Even if I can't understand him, I will at least protect his identity for as long as I can.'

In fact, Alexandra and Alice's return to the Grand Heavens Boundary camp and reunion with the other members of Arcadia who'd come for the Void Corridor opening wasn't a coincidence.

It was something Damien had requested of them.

He didn't know how Heaven's Army would move with Asuran Gate controlling them, and he didn't need any unknown factor interfering with his movements.

Alexandra and Alice were currently acting as his eyes and ears in Heaven's Army. He could contact them through an unknown mental skill and exchange information as needed, but he hadn't cast anything like a slave seal on them.

'It's a trust test. If we fail, we'll likely die.'

Alexandra realized it early, and acted accordingly. Though, since this man wasn't truly an enemy of the universe, she didn't mind helping him.



'If anything, he is doing far more to combat the Nox than Asuran Gate. That Lucas man is not a good character in the slightest.'

She hadn't heard much since she'd only been present for a few days, but it was clear that Lucas Stroom was severely abusing his authority to oppress and control those beneath him.

Atop that, he even established unofficial cooperation with the Nox to find a man who, by all logic, should've been a distinguished guest of Heaven's Army.

Public sentiment was heavily skewed against Asuran Gate, but what could these people do?

They were too weak for their opinions to matter.

Subtly, a change of mentality took place in Heaven's Army.

If that mysterious man was leading them, would they be in a better situation?

He was bold in action, yet prudent. He knew when to attack and retreat to deal the greatest damage to the Nox while suffering the least losses.

And when he was placed side by side with Lucas Stroom, he seemed like the defender of justice that all people wished would lead them.

'The situation is becoming chaotic. If the army continued to subtly split like this, the Nox will gain a heavy advantage over us. Now that the heavenly material is on the verge of blooming, it seems the only possible path forward is a full head-on confrontation.'

Now that Damien had slaughtered a majority of the Nox's cannon fodder and ground troops, they would need to act fast and aggressively if they wanted to take victories against Heaven's Army.

The clash for the heavenly material would surely spiral out of control.

It wasn't a matter of "if," but a matter of "when."

'I hope you can do something about this situation. If you can truly pull our people out of despair...'

Well, then he might not be a bad leader at all.

Heaven's Army needed good people at the helm.

'If only he wasn't so reckless, wouldn't that be great?'

Alexandra sighed and shook her head.

For now, she should just stick to the task she was assigned.

As for how events would pan out in the future...?

It was useless to try predicting something that man was planning to interfere in.