

# Void 881

## Chapter 881 Quest [1]

A golden chariot landed in a world painted in platinum.

This was none other than the Ancient God Clan's Hidden World. Located within the folds of space roughly 30 million kilometers away from Eien, this world had remained undiscovered for over a hundred thousand years, no matter what kind of illustrious existence passed through the area.

The world was similar to the concept of Elysium. It was a truly beautiful sight, filled with brilliant color and various strange structures Damien had never seen before.

But when it came to architecture, he was a bit jaded. At this point, after visiting so many worlds and experiencing their cultures, he'd come to a realization.

Regardless, it all served the same purpose, didn't it?

Architecture was a large part of culture, but all cultures were rooted in other cultures. When it came to the universal scale, even hidden clans like the Ancient God Clan could be influenced by others.

Particularly if they'd been raised by an outside force from the beginning.

'Even though there's a lot of unnecessary nonsense added, these structures basically mimic Earth. However...'

When the Ancient God Clan was formed, humans didn't even exist on Earth yet.

'Well, it's probably that old bastard's doing.'

Damien waved off the thought, instead activating his eyes and peering into the folds of reality, clearly following the countless intricate linear patterns that interweaved in the air and created the grand formation that concealed this world.

'This kind of workmanship, is it even possible for a Demogod?' He wondered.

Powerful Demigods could easily create phenomena on a world scale, but this type of grand formation was different. The amount of effort and skill that went into this creation was far more impressive than its scale or power.

As Damien continued to observe the formation, Xinyue and Elize led him through the clan, headed for the main building situated in the southeastern hemisphere of the world. The trio was flanked by the remaining elders who entered the Void Corridor, however, each and every one of them was silent at the moment.

After all, of them, not a single one approved Damien's continued existence. It was merely due to Elize and Xinyue's order that they stayed their hand.

This group eventually made their way through the shining metallic world and entered the main building, traversing the halls until they came upon a humble dining room, in which a table was already set for them.

"Please take your seats. The Lord will be with you in a moment." A nearby maid stated, flicking her fingers and causing all the seats at the table to pull out.

The invited guests took their seats, with Damien at the foot of the table. Xinyue and Elize separated from him, taking their seats nearest to the head of the table.

Just as they finished arranging themselves, a beautiful woman appeared in the room. With her beautiful snow-white hair and skin and her piercing light blue eyes, she was almost like a version of Xinyue that had already reached her prime and sat stably there.

"Mother."

""Clan Head.""

The Ancient God Clan members stood up and bowed with respect as she entered.

Damien watched them in amusement, not bothering to follow their example.

The woman glanced at him for a second before waving her hand, ordering the elders and Xinyue to take their seats.

"Xinyue, you seem to have brought something interesting." She commented after taking her seat at the head of the table.

Damien glanced at her, but chose not to speak. As he was in someone else's territory at the moment, he at least had to give them a chance before he responded in kind.

'Still, what an attitude to have towards a guest.' Damien thought sarcastically as he watched Xinyue explain his existence to her mother.

As the story progressed, the white-haired woman's expression crumpled further and further, and when it finally got to the point where Elize got involved, all of the other elders were immediately dismissed from the room.

Damien sat and watched her try to rationalize his existence in real-time. Her expression changed at least 16 times within a single second as she decided how to deal with him, and the number of times her killing intent spiked was roughly half of that.

'It doesn't look like I'm as welcome as Xinyue and Elize expected. Then again, this woman could also be the problem.'

Damien stopped paying attention to them and spread his awareness, blanketing the entire world in his perception.

From what he understood about the Ancient God Clan, it wasn't an inherently matriarchal or patriarchal clan. Instead, they had two clan heads, one from each gender, who ruled together.

This woman was one of them, and though she wasn't Xinyue's birth mother, she was being called "Mother" all the same.

Damien was looking for her "Father."

He wanted to have a conversation with the Ancient God Clan, and that didn't seem like something he could achieve with this woman.

After all, despite his continued presence in the room, she had yet to acknowledge him besides her small provocation when she first entered.

'Haa, stuck-up people exist everywhere. I'm too old to be dealing with this shit, especially when it's coming from a Demigod who should be old enough to know better.'

Damien knew that searching for a Demigod with his awareness was futile, but he still did so in hopes that the second Demigod of the clan would notice his intentions.

And as he wished, within a single second, a strange fluctuation decorated the corner of his perception.

He glanced sideways at Xinyue and her mother, and seeing as how that woman was still trying to find ways to show her superiority, he gave up on it.

He didn't even bother to listen to the details of their conversation.

He simply...left.

"You...!"

An exclamation followed his disappearing figure as the woman shot to her feet and flared her aura, but just as she did...

Kacha!

A second aura fluctuation broke her pressure.

Her eyes sharpened. She gritted her teeth in frustration, but she didn't move, glaring daggers into Damien's soul as he disappeared.

When he materialized again, Damien found himself at the edge of what seemed like a forest that was made entirely of a platinum metallic substance.

A man stood within. His figure wasn't robust and was instead more feminine, especially when it came to his facial features, but his beauty couldn't be denied.

This man was the type of person who could make people fall in love with him by merely walking down the street.

"So you are the successor prophesized by future generations?" The man asked, moving his perception along Damien's body

Damien shrugged in response. "That's what it looks like. I also only learned of this a bit ago, so it's not like I can give you answers you don't already have."

The man nodded with a slight smile. "However, isn't this quite a strange way to carry yourself in this situation? I am either a hostile Demigod or a subordinate, and you are currently treating me like neither."

"Then, what do you want me to act like?" Damien asked.

The man paused and shook his head wryly. "It is not important."

"I have observed your bloodline, and I can say with confidence that you are the one prophesized by the ancestors. Such a unique bloodline identity is not something a regular genius can possess."

The man turned around to face Damien, closing the fan in his hand matter-of-factly.

"I am Di, the primary head of this Ancient God Clan. Today, I shall decide whether you are worthy of the mantle you have been gifted."

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"I am Di, the primary head of this Ancient God Clan. Today, I shall decide whether you are worthy of the mantle you have been gifted."

Damien furrowed his brows upon hearing those words. Quite a dreadful feeling filled his body.

"Clan Head Di, since you're treating me with sincerity, I'll do the same with you." He began.

"Currently, my time is extremely limited. I do not have the luxury to take three hundred different trials to gain the acceptance of the Ancient God Clan and its people." He continued, looking directly into Di's eyes.

"I will not complain about the treatment I've received here, nor will I complain about the main trial you give me, however, I will not go through any trial for anyone who doubts my strength or potential."

"Frankly speaking, I really don't care about the Ancient God Clan enough to put that much effort into you guys."

Damien finished his words on such a note, unwavering and steady.

He wasn't lying at all.

Ever since he came to the Divine Realm, Damien had been facing trial after trial, all arranged by people who wanted to see his potential and help him because of it.

There wasn't inherently a problem with this, but Damien was tired of it. He couldn't stand constantly moving at the whims of other people to prove himself.

After all, he knew his strength better than anyone else.

Even before he entered the Void Corridor, he was able to fight against late-stage 4th-class enemies without much trouble. At that time, his ability was capped here because the nine revolutions of extreme peak 4th class each produce a great level of power that anyone under that level would be hard-pressed to compete with.

Now...?

Now that he'd digested all of the boons he received in the Void Corridor, including the heavenly vine's lifeblood...?

Now, he was sitting comfortably at level 399, just barely reaching the cusp of the extreme peak level.

He wasn't quite there yet, but he didn't doubt that anyone in their first or second revolution would have a difficult time dealing with him.

He had just hit 30. On the universal scale, there were barely any geniuses who could match his current achievements.

When it was taken into account that he hadn't even been leveling for 15 years yet, that number became zero.

Needless to say, Damien understood his current worth, and he was no longer prone to act along with the wills of others if he didn't have to.

Besides, when it came to new forces...

Damien smiled slightly. Hadn't he just received a semi-large force for himself?

He had to wonder what the empty inside of the Void Corridor looked like.

Nevertheless, Di looked at Damien quietly as he finished his words. Even though he didn't show any hostility, the strength of his gaze made Damien feel like his soul was being sucked out.

He stood his ground and endured for an entire five minutes before Di retracted his gaze.

"Very well," Di said. "It is normal for supreme geniuses to have their own pride."

"Boy, let me tell you this. The current Ancient God Clan has no interest in being controlled by you, just as you have no interest in controlling it. However, as we are bound by fate, this is not an outcome that can be avoided."

"Our clan was built on the foundation of that promise we made to the founder. If we renege it now due to our pride, won't our clan suffer the consequences?"

Di sighed and put his hand on Damien's shoulder.

"This clan already belongs to you. In truth, regardless of what tricks we use, the fact that you've stepped into this world means you've already claimed ownership of our clan."

He waved his hand, removing the facades of the world for Damien.

Reality didn't change at all, but for someone with All-Seeing Eyes, the veil of reality meant nothing.

"So that's how it is..." Damien muttered as he observed what Di showed him.

'The grand formation isn't just a concealment formation, but a sort of ethereal prison that houses the Ancient God Clan.'

It wasn't a physical prison, but rather, a prison of soul. The souls of the Ancient God Clan members were intrinsically connected to the grand formation, and they were entrapped by its laws.

If someone gained control over this formation, controlling the life and death of the Ancient God Clan became possible with a single thought.

Even if the one that needed to die was a Demigod.

Damien flicked his finger in the air and watched the force of his mana resonate through the grand formation.

"This..." he muttered under his breath.

"...belongs to you." Di finished his words.

"The moment you stepped into this world, the grand formation transferred control of its mechanisms to you. Ran likely sensed this as well, which is why she chose to antagonize you previously."

"A little stupid to antagonize someone who controls your life," Damien scoffed.

Then again, he knew clearly that Di wasn't lying.

After Di removed the veil covering his eyes, he could feel the instinctive control he held over the formation.

In the end, he sighed to himself.

'Even if I can't obtain their approval, they'll be forced to follow me, but that will negatively impact the performance they display on the battlefield. Regardless, I have to do something to earn the trust of the clan.'

Not a menial task to gain Di or Ran's approval, but a true quest that could grant him the submission of any and all Ancient God Clan members in existence.

He shared his thoughts with Di, who quirked his brow in surprise.

"Are you certain?" He asked.

"I am," Damien responded.

Di nodded.

"Then I shall give you a task, however, the reason for this task's difficulty is a bit strange." He said slowly.

Di pulled up several holographic projections displaying a portion of the universe that Damien had never seen before.

"The Ancient God Clan has three ancient artifacts that double as the lifeblood of our clan." He began.

"The first is the Mist-Piercing Mirror, the heavenly artifact that allows us to control the spread of our bloodline and prevent outsiders from tainting our clan's lineage."

"As we've learned in recent days, it doesn't seem to work on those that the mirror approves of." Di finished with a smile.

"The second treasure is the Alteron Star Cruiser, a star destroyer-class battleship that was gifted to us several tens of thousands of years ago."

"Unfortunately, the Alteron Star Cruiser was destroyed in war 10,000 years ago."

"The final treasure..." Di said while flipping the holograms in the air, his voice turning far more solemn than before.

The image of a strange nondescript bead appeared on the screen.

"The final treasure is the Genesis Bead, our clan's true lifeblood and the origin of our All-Seeing Eyes trait."

As Damien looked through the various images he was provided, he got the gist of what he had to do.

To say he wasn't excited by the prospect wasn't a lie.

See, this was the type of trial he didn't mind taking at all.

"The Genesis Bead is currently on Beast Emperor Star in the hands of the Golden Dragon Godbeast Clan. Your task is to go to the Beast Domain and retrieve the Genesis Bead using whatever means necessary."

Di glanced at Damien with an imperceptible smile.

"What do you think? Can you do it?"

Damien grinned. It was just as he expected.

A new place he'd never been, new treasures for him to plunder, and new enemies to boost his progress.

There was only one word that needed to come out of his mouth at this time, and he spoke it with absolute confidence.

"Absolutely."

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"Absolutely."

Damien's direct and bold response made Di smile. It was clear that the young genius had no scruples about taking on such a dangerous task, despite the seeming impossibility.

If anything, he could definitely respect Damien's courage and mentality.

"This jade slip contains all the information you'll need for this mission, including the general structure of the Beast Domain and the kind of forces and phenomena you should expect there." Di continued, passing a jade slip to Damien.

"This task will be difficult, and you will likely fail, however, if you can make it to Beast Emperor Star and negotiate with the Golden Dragon Clan, even if the negotiations fail, I will accept it as a success."

Damien raised his brow curiously.

"Isn't that a bit counterintuitive?" He asked.

He didn't understand why he'd been given a mission objective that wasn't even required to complete the mission, especially on a mission with the significance of this one.

Di didn't let him stay curious for too long.

"This time, you will have a strict time limit to complete this task. If it cannot be done in three months, it is meaningless either way. Far more important events will begin at that time, making us lose our final opportunity to regain our treasure for many years to come."

Damien looked at Di with a look that told him to continue, disinclined to beg for more information.

Di shook his head with a smile seeing Damien's strange behavior but indulged the young genius anyway.

"In 3 months, an event called the Grand Assembly will begin. This is a pivotal point for the Great War, therefore it is something everyone with some prominence in the universe must attend. Even you, Damien Void, as a peak genius of the universe, are required to show your face there."

Bang!

An explosion went off in Damien's head.

Grand Assembly...?

Weren't those the two words he'd been trying to hear for so long now?

The event where the Human Domain would join the rest of the universe in planning a final counterattack to end the war completely, the event that acted as Damien's greatest connection to the Human Domain, the place where he'd be able to reunite with all those he left behind all those years ago...

'Finally!'

His eyes lit up in excitement.

Thinking of his wives, his friends, his master, and his other comrades from the Human Domain, he truly fell into a bout of reminiscence.

Ever since he arrived in the Divine Realm, he'd been too focused on moving forward at his fastest speeds to consider meeting them again, but with the prospect in front of him so blatantly, his anticipation for the event 3 months later shot through the roof.

'I can't allow my current issues to interfere with the reunion I've been waiting so long for. Before the Grand Assembly, I at least need to make sure the Bloodlock Clan is suppressed to an extent.'

Damien didn't know who would be sent after him, but there was no doubt that someone was already following his trail and aiming to kill him.

That person needed to die, and anyone closely associated with them needed to die as well.

In the worst-case scenario, Immortal Blood Asura himself would become Damien's enemy rather than those below him, but since he was also bound by the restrictions on Demigods, this was likely a better scenario than Damien being constantly pursued by gravel.

Damien's eyes sharpened, flaring with determination.

'This time, I'll cut off any manageable loose ends. Anything or anyone that stands in my way...will die!'

A spark he felt like he'd lost some time ago revitalized, and as night fell, Damien left the Ancient God Clan's Hidden World without alerting anyone.

Only three people noticed his departure.

Di smiled to himself, reminiscing on the past. The similarities Damien showed to that person were uncanny, to the point where Di almost believed he was a direct reincarnation.

As for Ran, even she couldn't deny this fact. Complicated emotions swirled through her eyes, her thoughts unknown to anyone but her.

Besides these two, only Xinyue was somewhat appear of Damien's departure, even though she couldn't directly sense it. She stared into the night sky with complicated emotions that differed from Ran's.

The Ancient God Clan...

Would it really bow its head before a young genius like Damien?

In the end, only time would tell.

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The Beast Domain was a vast sector with combat power ranking in the top 4 of all sectors. The Beast Domain's nature was feral, and even the ambient mana carried some of these wild tendencies.

In the eyes of more ruthless experts, the Beast Domain was the perfect training ground for both young and old geniuses, as it was a place where one could slaughter without remorse.

The Beast Domain's, a place synonymous with killing to the point where those residing within termed it the Slaughter Domain instead.

The Beast Domain was populated by several tens of thousands of smaller worlds with minor influences and populations, but there were only around 12 that had any significance.

On one of these 12 worlds, in a nondescript inn somewhere in the largest city, a cloaked figure sat quietly behind a mug of spirit lager. Their ears were perked as they listened to the surrounding conversations and gathered information.

This inn was particularly known to be a gathering place for informants, so the amount and quality of news one received were both questionable.

"Did you hear? The royal family is holding a marriage tournament for their youngest lady! The strongest competitor will get to marry the Slaughter Domain's little princess!" A man said.

"Hah? Little princess! Don't joke with me! Everyone knows that the little princess is a demon beyond all others! There's a reason the Emperor decided to marry her off so easily despite her status!" Someone responded.

The man shrank down as many judgemental gazes landed on him, but soon recovered.

"Hmph! Do you think I don't know that? Actually, even the Emperor is aware of how difficult his daughter is, so for this tournament, he put out the best rewards possible!"

At the mention of rewards, the atmosphere in the inn slightly shifted. Even though nobody moved, it was clear that the number of ears on the man had severely increased.

He puffed his chest in pride, raising his voice as he gained the confidence to speak.

"Even the 10th place winner can gain several resources and direct leveling fruits to aid their practice! The second and third place winners get to pick a treasure from the royal treasury along with their resources, and for first place..."

The man paused for emphasis, feeling several auras heighten in anticipation from the words he'd already spoken.

With a smug smile, he yelled, "The first place winner will be given official status and power in the royal family, and as a token of sincerity, they will receive a legendary treasure, the Genesis Bead, to help them in their future endeavors!"

Bang!

Several tables collapsed into dust, several people stood up in shock. The fact that the Genesis Bead was mentioned here, what were the chances?

"How sure are you of this information? If you lie to us, your end will not be peaceful." A burly man with an intimidating aura said, standing up and grabbing the handle of his axe.

However, the original speaker was unfazed. He reached into his shirt pocket and grabbed an emblem, thrusting it into the air for all to see.

"Actually, I have been hired by the royal family themselves to spread this news! The credibility absolutely cannot be doubted!"

As the crowd's gazes went to the emblem, a few shocked gasps rang out.

Indeed, the man was holding an official emblem of the royal family, making it clear that his words were backed by theirs.

And within seconds of him proving the validity of his words...

The inn erupted in chaos.

Chapter 884 Undercurrents [2]

As hundreds of people swarmed out of the inn with the intent of reaching Beast Emperor Star as fast as possible, an almost imperceptible shadow made its way through their ranks, leaving the inn and eventually making its way to a nearby forest.

After walking for a bit, the figure came across a sleek air bike that was parked not far away.

They inserted their mana and took off, submerging into their thoughts.

'The Genesis Bead is a peak treasure of Life. I must attain it at all costs.'

There were several rumors about the Genesis Bead, with some more outrageous ones even claiming it was related to the origin of the universe. Its effects were actually unknown, but if one thing was certain, it was the fact that the Genesis Bead was a treasure not many could match.

'What could provoke them to put out such a heavenly treasure for a competition as simple and lawless as this? It will undoubtedly cause chaos!'

There was no possible scenario where the competition was allowed to occur without interruptions. In fact, there was a higher chance of the ceremony getting ruined than the little princess getting married.

'But I must still attend. The Genesis Bead is too important.'

As the figure flashed through the air, their cloak fluttered in the wind, revealing hints of the woman underneath.

She was a beauty that could be described in no way other than divine. No matter which part of her body one focused on, any word that wasn't "perfection" would feel blasphemous.

This woman was beautiful to the point where she could genuinely provoke reverence from those weaker beings who witnessed her.

Yet, even with such an appearance, her hands were filled with callouses from endless battle. Her ocean-blue eyes were burning with a fearsome determination that not many in the universe could match.

'The Genesis Bead will be mine.' She declared inwardly as she left the world's atmosphere.

Even if all else was vague, she would achieve her goals.

Of this, she could swear on her pride as a Valkyrie!

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On the other side of the universe, Hidden Death Valley was in a frenzy.

A storm had just left the premises, after all.

Arthur Bloodlock was truly a merciless and cruel individual. The second he stepped into the institute, he flared his aura as a Supreme and immediately suppressed all those that couldn't resist him.

He tore through the academy in search of clues about his son, but he found nothing.

After all, Reavus Bloodlock wasn't a good person at all.

The number of people he'd offended was vast, and the number of people who hated him but couldn't retaliate due to status was even greater.

Were there students willing to help with the investigation?

Even though most of them knew nothing at all, they refused to cooperate all the same.

Under the academy's protection, they didn't have to be afraid of the Bloodlock Clan's influence, not unless there was a Bloodlock genius attending the academy.

But now that Reavus was dead, why did they need to care?

As they expected, Alucard thoroughly suppressed Arthur whenever he tried to cross the line, guaranteeing the safety of his students.

However, this didn't mean the search was unsuccessful.

Relating the Heavenly King to the murderer named Damien wasn't difficult considering the former's deeds in the Celestial Realm.

At that point, Arthur narrowed his investigation to only those Emperors and Paragons at the peak of the academy.

However, how could these prideful geniuses with backing no weaker than Blood Asura Holy Land submit easily? With Arthur's forceful methods, they were more inclined to ignore him regardless.

Arthur was almost consumed by his rage at that point. To have so many ants disrespecting him like this wasn't something he'd ever accept!

Merely, Hidden Death Valley was one of the rare few influences in the universe that the Bloodlock Clan couldn't match up to.

Luckily, the academy was still an academy. There was no such thing as unity between sect members, at least not at a definite level.

While Reavus Bloodlock had been killed, there were still forces aligned with the Bloodlock Clan in the institute.

Specifically, those Wellspring Family geniuses who were too weak to ever compete with those at the Paragon level.

From them, Arthur was able to easily get the information he wanted.

About the man who ruthlessly crippled the Wellspring Family Heir, killed several Bloodlock Clan and Wellspring Family members, and tortured Reavus to death, Arthur finally got a clue.

'Damien Void!' He roared inwardly as he left the academy. 'I will slaughter you!'

The man's crimes were far worse than he expected. He'd repeatedly slapped Blood Asura Holy Land across the face without care, sullyng their reputation with his existence.

This was a man who absolutely had to die.

With this thought in mind, Arthur shot through the universe, using several cross-sector teleportation arrays to reach Eien in the shortest amount of time possible.

If there was a place best suited for hiding from one's enemies, it was Eien. With its vastness and culture, nobody would care who one offended until that trouble came back to bite them.

'Dammit! Dammit! Dammit!' Arthur raged inwardly.

Despite being in Eien for several days, he couldn't find a single clue about the man named Damien Void!  
It's like he didn't exist at all!

Rather than him, it seemed everyone wanted to tell him about some Golden Palace Master who shook the world a few days ago, but this didn't matter at all to Arthur!

'Has he left Eien?' He wondered.

If Damien was strong enough to kill Reavus so one-sidedly, there was no way he'd be in Eien as a regular foot soldier.

If he wasn't here...

'I'm sure we have a subsidiary force here. I shall visit them for information.'

What would Arthur's reaction be like when he found out that Asuran Gate was destroyed thoroughly after evidence of their collusion with the Nox leaked from the Void Corridor expedition?

Well, it wasn't pretty at all.

The already ruined headquarters of Asuran Gate was reduced to dust by Arthur's rage.

It was infuriating.

It was truly infuriating!

How could it be that a weakling not even at the extreme peak of 4th class could lead him on so pathetically?!

From Eien, there was absolutely no trail of Damien's next location.

Even those who knew him when he was on Eien assumed he died in the Void Corridor due to his rapid and silent exit.

In that final moment, Arthur was once again presented with a final strand of hope in the form of a cloaked figure surrounded by ominous black mana.

"Damien Void, I can tell you his location," the figure proclaimed indifferently, letting loose a bit of their aura and making it clear to Arthur that he couldn't match them at all.

This person was already on the cusp of Divinity.

Arthur's eyes sharpened. He could feel the breath of the Nox on this person's body even though it wasn't inherently mixed into their mana.

'A traitor.' He realized instantly.

However, he didn't push this person away.

In this world, there was no such thing as eternal enemies, only eternal benefits.

If this man could truly provide the information he wanted, Arthur didn't even mind sheltering him and giving him an identity in the universe.

Nevertheless, he held out his hand as a sign of cooperation.

"Tell me everything you know about that man, and you will be rewarded handsomely."

The shadowy figure seemed to grin maliciously, though it might have been an illusion created by their aura.

They reached out a wrinkled hand and shook Arthur's.

"Haha, cooperation is a simple task. That Damien Void is our enemy as well. If you wish to know his precise location and information about his skillset, all you need to do is..."

A conversation began from there.

It was a conversation that could possibly sentence the entirety of Blood Asura Holy Land to purgatory.

However, it was being carried out regardless.

All for the sake of the death of a single man.

Chapter 885 Undercurrents [3]

From Soul World where Damien was originally situated, the Beast Domain was a considerable distance.

It was adjacent to Eden, however, actually reaching the Beast Domain took far more effort than just traveling through Eden.

After all, the border was filled with ferocious wild energy, a cosmic phenomenon that acted as a natural defense line on the border of the Beast Domain.

This defense line was the main reason the Nox hadn't immediately taken care of the Beast Domain's forces and instead chose to focus their efforts on Soul World after the destruction of Eden.

While it wouldn't have been too much of a problem for Damien to brute force his way through this defense with the Breath of Nothingness, he was currently prioritizing efficiency.

For others, making their way halfway around the universe to enter the Beast Domain was far too taxing, however, to Damien, it was light work.

With the help of cross-sector teleportation arrays and his own spatial abilities, the journey that should've originally taken several months was completed in a matter of days.

Currently, Damien stood in line at a cross-sector teleportation array at the edge of the Divine Realm, the final one he needed to take before he reached his destination.

'Lines are the worst.' He thought with a sigh.

Even with the exorbitant price that long-distance travel begot, the number of people willing to use these formations, especially in the current circumstance, was high. It wasn't uncommon for a family to use every penny of their accumulated wealth for the sake of a new life in the Divine Realm, even if that life was brutal.

After all, war was encompassing every border domain recently. As Damien traveled, he realized that the other territories of Eien were facing extreme pressure, far beyond what he was capable of aiding them with.

If anything, his work in the Void Corridor had bought a few months of respite, but with the Grand Assembly fast approaching, it wasn't certain that the Nox would continue following their current slow-conquering strategy.

Nevertheless, for the common people, it looked like the outer domains were dying. Nobody wanted to remain in these sectors after hearing about what happened to Eden and the Elven Domain.

This caused the beginning of a mass migration that'd been rising to prominence in the past few years.

With the current trajectory, it seemed like the outer sectors would all be abandoned within a decade, even if the war ended before then.

'Whatever, it's not my problem. For now, the Divine Realm is indeed the safest option for these people, so it isn't my place to tell them otherwise.'

Besides, Damien was too irked with other matters at the moment to care about other people.

'Status'

[Status]

[Damien Void]

???

Male - Age 30

Level 399 - [Voidbringer] - [Celestial]

Experience value: 1,500/1,000,000

Title(s): [●●●●●●, Bearer of the Void Physique, Evolver]

Affinities: Spacetime, Samsara, ???

Physique: Void Physique

Magic Power: 500000

STR: 10000

AGI: 10000

DEF: 10000

INT: 10000

DEX: 10000

Skills: [Dimensional Magic Level 9], [Transcendent Regeneration Level Max], [Void Art Level 6], [Devour Level 8], [Dragon Transformation], [Demon Transformation], [Awareness], [Celestial Authority], [Reality Shift Level 1], [Sea God's Descendent], [Void], [Spacetime Intent], [Samsara Intent]

Trait(s): [All-Seeing Eyes Level 8], [Dragon's Breath], [Ananta Matrix], [Storm], [Void Essence], [Void Flames], [Heal]

It was annoying.

He had already jumped over 150 levels in the years he spent in the Celestial Realm, Eien, and the Wild Continent, but other than that number jumping, nothing special happened to the rest.

His mana capacity value was by far the most useless. The 500,000 units displayed were the limit of what he could house in his body, but with the Ananta Matrix and Void Physique, the concept of mana capacity simply never existed for Damien.

Aside from that, stats comprehensively increased to 10,000, a marking that he was on the cusp of his first revolution, but raising it by even one more point was more difficult than ascending the heavens.

At least, for normal people.

Damien's physical stats had always been a mess. The system stopped being able to calculate his true power level back in the First Dungeon before he'd even reached 2nd class and had been playing a game of catch-up ever since, an unsuccessful one at that.

At this point, the system was merely showing him values for the sake of showing him values. In reality, he was well aware that his strength already surpassed a normal 1st or 2nd revolution master.

Damien was far too used to his bugged status for its values alone to bother him, but this time it was different.

'Now that I'm at this level, I can feel it. The existence of "legends," that is.'

League and Legend, two words that the system loved to use when Damien was still an ant. The first one was merely one's state of existence. As one grew in power, the league of their soul and body would improve until they eventually shed the mortal coil and ascended to Divinity.

However, Legends were far more incomprehensible. Even for Damien, who had devoured the memories of several masters, the existence of this esoteric remained vague.

Until now.

It wasn't that he gained something, rather, the continued elevation of his league allowed him to perceive things that simply couldn't be perceived by the senses of someone who hadn't reached this point yet.

There was no doubt Damien could've digested the information properly long ago, but in the end, he wasn't quite free from the universe's influence yet.

"One's Legend...is the foundation of Divinity." He muttered to himself.

In some inexplicable way, Legends were the foundation of everything the system showed him.

Damien could only vaguely sense it at the moment, but if he had to put the feeling into words, he could only put it one way:

Legends define one's existence.

If League merely describes the level of one's existence, Legends are the building blocks of that level.

Other than this, Damien truly couldn't comprehend more.

'It's not a matter of my own skill, but a matter of universal law. I need to further my comprehension of the Void so I can be free of such restrictions in the future.'

It irked Damien that he couldn't properly view his progress through the system or utilize its only function properly, but he also knew that this was likely a benefit for him, as it forced him to define himself without aid, something that led to far greater returns even though the process was grueling.

What Damien didn't know, however, was that even this thought process of his was boosting him subconsciously.

He finally arrived at the cross-sector teleportation array and paid his fare. His body soon disappeared along with all those heading to the Beast Domain as well, none the wiser to the strange changes taking place within him.

That strange space where his elements were personified, no, Damien's soul was experiencing growth.

His "League" was morphing into something different.

After all, he was slowly reaching that tipping point.

To fully understand the concept of legends...

This was the requirement for one to truly begin the nine revolutions of extreme peak 4th class.

Chapter 886 Undercurrents [4]

'Phew, finally here.' Damien thought to himself as he stepped through the other side of the teleportation array. Even within the reception building, one could clearly feel the turbid air of the Beast Domain on their skin.

'Beast Emperor Star is this Sector's central star and the home of its royal family. I can't just approach Beast Emperor Star from the start and try for the Genesis Bead. I don't know anything about the Beast Domain.'

In normal times, Damien could spend some time gathering information before making a move so he didn't encounter any harrowing unknown variables like in Calypto, but with a three-month deadline on his tail, such action was naturally impossible.

Still, rapidly gaining information was something Damien had several convenient abilities for.

After leaving the peripheral world where the teleportation array was located, Damien teleported until he found the nearest large world, entering its atmosphere and setting down in its biggest city, a place called Greenwood.

'It should be...aha, there's one.'

Damien's awareness caught sight of the specific building he was looking for, and before anyone could even notice his presence, he disappeared and arrived in front of it.

This place was none other than the local information guild.

'In terms of money, I pretty much have an endless supply at this point. The number of currency cards in those Void Corridor inheritances was even greater than the number of techniques, so even if I wanted to retire and live as a world emperor for the rest of my life, I'd be set. But...'

Just because he had money didn't mean he wanted to spend it on useless things. If there ever came a need to use a large amount of money, it was smart to have as much as possible. Even aside from the worst-case scenario, there was also the possibility that he'd need to kickstart the Sanctuary's economy with his own fortune, something impossible unless his personal wealth was unholy.

Nevertheless, with this thought in mind, Damien made a simple request at the information guild.

After learning from them who the most evil and strongest practitioner in the area was, Damien left directly.

The so-called Evil Witch Doctor was an expert at the late-stage 4th class, one of the strongest beings in the current world that had no extreme peak masters.

However, by the time tomorrow came, the Evil Witch Doctor would be no more.

Within a few hours of receiving the information, Damien had already killed and devoured the human-formed beast.

Just like that, information on the Beast Domain filled his head.

'This witch doctor was a truly evil guy, but it seems he had connections to a greater influence on Beast Emperor Star. This is good. If it wasn't for that connection, his knowledge would be way too shallow to be useful.'

Damien sifted through the witch doctor's memories, internalizing all the important events that had been taking place in the Beast Domain recently.

'The Black Dragon Clan seems to fiercely oppose the ruling Golden Dragon Clan at every step. This witch doctor was also someone serving them. It seems like they're the main contenders of the royal family, and also the main oppressor of most forces in this sector.'

From what he could tell, a large portion of the major events and catastrophes that had taken place in the Beast Domain were related to the Black Dragon Clan.

For the sake of his mission, it was looking like he'd also be forced to oppose said clan.

'The little princess' marriage ceremony...looks like I'll have to crash that event. Well, it doesn't look like she wants to get married either, so it should be fine, right?'

It wasn't like he wanted to make enemies with the Golden Dragon Clan, but he also didn't want to enter another fake marriage for the sake of his goals. He already felt guilty for how he left Leona with such a vague rejection.

'Either way, I guess I should head to the vicinity of Beast Emperor Star for now.'

Damien now had a general grasp on the situation, and now that such an important step was completed, he directly left the large world and traveled towards the center of the Beast Domain.

'This place is way more exciting than the other sectors. Even when I'm just traveling normally like this, it's hard to go a full ten thousand kilometers without witnessing a battle.'

The main difference between the Beast Domain and its counterparts was the ratio of practitioners to common people, a difference that became obvious as Damien traveled.

It wasn't once or twice that he was almost dragged into a battle for no reason, though, he managed to avoid most of them.

Even now, he could feel the fluctuations of battle not far in front of him.

Two streaks of light shot through the starry sky, followed by a horde of 4th class beings radiating heavy killing intent.

Damien's brow raised as he watched the proceedings. He didn't know who was in that first light ray, but they were definitely someone important.

'Hm? Coming to me?'

He suddenly noticed that the direction those light rays were fleeing was directly in line with his own.

He smiled to himself. 'Then, let's see what your intentions are.'

He stood still without acknowledging the approaching chaos until it arrived before him. Two light rays suddenly materialized into people, one boy and one girl.

"Sir, please help us!" The girl said, her eyes filled with panic.

"What are you doing?! If you stop now, they'll catch us!" The boy shouted, grabbing the girl's arm and trying to drag her away.

However, it was far too late. Within an instant, several black shadows surrounded the trio and blocked their every escape route.

The boy's eyes hardened. He gritted his teeth as if making a decision.

Meanwhile, the girl didn't seem to lose faith in the strange man they'd just run into.

"Sir, please help us solve this trouble. If you do, I promise we will reward you handsomely!" She pleaded, practically kneeling before him.

"Hmm..."

Damien looked down at her indifferently. However, inwardly, he was practically cheesing.

As he observed this girl, he noticed some similarities to a certain portrait in the memories he'd just recently devoured.

Really, he couldn't believe his luck.

After all, wasn't this girl none other than the Golden Dragon Clan's little princess?

Damien didn't think such a coincidence could exist in reality, but as someone who studied the flow of the universe, he could somewhat understand what led this specific event to take place.

Glancing between the princess and her pursuers, Damien made an easy decision.

"Well, it's not much trouble to stomp out some gravel, but I hope your compensation can satisfy me," he said lightly.

"Hah?" The boy suddenly exclaimed, snapping his head towards Damien. "We're all about to die and you're still in the mood to brag?! Useless people like you should just shut up and not interfere with matters that don't conceuuugh...!"

The boy's words slurred as a crisp slap made contact with his face, flinging a few of his teeth out of his mouth.

"You...!" He exclaimed.

"You shut up and watch, idiot," Damien finished.

He was already 30 years old.

He deigned to argue with children.

He truly...

'Okay, fuck that, that's a lie. After I'm done with these idiots, I'll take care of that prick and teach him a lesson in place of his parents.'

Damien grinned.

He was really such a righteous person.

Setting people on the right path was his duty in life!

And even if he had to use...not-so-happy means to help them, it was fine!

After all, he was a benevolent and magnanimous soul who could never do any wrong!

...right?

Chapter 887 Golden Dragon [1]

"You...! How dare you hit me?! I am the fou—!"

The boy pointed at Damien and yelled without a care for the current situation, holding his reddened face, however, before he could finish, he was promptly shut up by the girl by his side.

"Sir, please don't mind him! Here is a spatial ring with some resources as a sign of our faith. If you can solve our problem, I promise I will give you several times these rewards," She said quickly.

Damien accepted the spatial ring with ease, putting up an invisible shield that blocked the pursuers from coming closer.

"Make sure to keep your word," he said lightly.

He flared his mana imperceptibly, subtly taking control of the surrounding space. At the level of his opponents, they couldn't even sense his interference.

For a second, he had a thought.

'Should I play it weak and struggle a bit to reap more rewards?'

But he didn't give this thought any consideration.

If he was weaker and in need of resources, this method would definitely be best for him.

However, in Damien's current state, connections were more important than power. To make the greatest impact on this so-called demonic little princess, he needed to show an appropriate amount of strength.

'If I can meet her father through this method, it'll expedite my plans a great deal.'

Unfortunately, the Genesis Bead was in a complicated position right now. If he simply took it through the usual method, he'd become the enemy of the entire Beast Domain and the number of pests that would come to bother him was far more than he bothered to care about.

He needed to find a way to get not just the Golden Dragon Clan's backing, but their full and absolute support.

Becoming their son-in-law absolutely wasn't possible, so the only option was to prove his worth.

'Let's get this over with.'

It had only been a minute since his first contact with the little princess and her boy toy, but one minute was a great deal of time for experts in battle.

The entire time, those pursuers had been attacking Damien's invisible barrier, but since their attacks were being swallowed and banished to nonexistence and because Damien had isolated sound within the barrier so his conversation wouldn't get interrupted, it almost looked like they were simply standing around in wait.

"Duck for a second."

"Hm? Ah—!"

Damien grabbed the little princess and boy's heads and pushed them down to their knees without waiting for their answers.

'Spacetime Severence.'

Ding!

A pulse spread from Damien's body, imperceptible and profound. There was no heaven-shaking phenomenon or beautiful destruction of universal law, merely a single ding as if a bell rang.

Damien released the two kids soon after.

"Who do you think you are?!" The boy exclaimed once more.

In his life, he'd never been treated so roughly. If it wasn't for the little princess clearly disallowing him from taking action, he absolutely would've fought this man!

How old could he be? From his looks and aura, he wasn't even above 40 years of age!

'Hmph. Keep pretending. We'll see what happens after you're tortured by this group.' He thought maliciously.

But before he could even properly enjoy the gory scene in his head, he noticed something strange.

'They...aren't moving?'

The pursuers were all stationary as if they'd been frozen in time.

Haa...

A sigh resounded.

Shick!

A strange sound followed it.

All at once, the bodies of the pursuers split into two without a single exception.

"There. Now, for my reward..." Damien turned to the two with a smile on his face.

"I hope you can properly compensate me for my efforts."

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"Who are you?"

"What's your name?"

"Where are you from?"

"You're so strong! What level are you?"

"Hello? Why don't you answer me?"

"Hey? Mister? Mister?"

An endless stream of questions.

This was what Damien was met with after the ordeal ended.

He started to realize why this little girl was known as a devil emperor among the commonfolk. She was truly a little fox demon with endless curiosity and energy, annoying any and everyone she came in contact with to death!

'The mischievous glint in her eyes is bugging me. She reminds me of...She Who Shall Not Be Named...'

The devil princess' demeanor was extremely similar to a certain maid, but Damien knew that if he thought about her in the slightest, she'd somehow find out.

Therefore, he could only sigh and keep his thoughts to himself, quietly enduring the princess' existence as he led her back to Beast Emperor Star.

As he'd found out in the past few hours, the little princess's name was Astoria Golden, and the man next to her wasn't her boy toy, but rather her brother, the 4th prince of the Golden Dragon Clan, Titus Golden.

Damien originally thought this Titus character would try to cause trouble, but it seemed that the previous demonstration was enough to shut his mouth.

'Still, he has a flame in his eyes. If I didn't need the Golden Dragon Clan's cooperation right now...'

Nevertheless, killing him would have to wait until there was a proper opportunity.

The group of three moved swiftly with Astoria's navigation and Damien's teleportation. Within a few days, they'd arrived in the vicinity of Beast Emperor Star.

'Wow...' Damien exclaimed inwardly.

He'd seen countless mystical worlds, but every adventure seemed to bring him a new surprise.

In terms of size, Beast Emperor Star and Calypto were roughly the same, however, Beast Emperor Star was far more special than the original Calypto.

Golden clouds swam across its surface, painting the world in an auspicious air. This auspicious air didn't just stop at the world's atmosphere, but extended into the periphery for several thousand kilometers, manifesting as a beautiful cosmic phenomenon that even Damien was forced to be impressed by.

'The Golden Dragon Clan is interesting. It's said that Angels are the closest beings to fate in the universe, but this world far outstrips any angel I've met to this day.'

The concept of fate and the flow of the universe weren't quite the same, but they were concepts in the same vein. Since Damien was comprehending universal flow, he could also somewhat peer into the density of fate around him.

This ability wasn't very useful if he didn't want to use it as a treasure finder, but it still allowed Damien to gain a deeper understanding of the universe.

As he entertained his thoughts, Astoria and Titus led him through the auspicious clouds.

"These clouds are rumored to have been formed by our progenitor ancestor, the Golden Dragon Godbeast. Because of these clouds, Beast Emperor Star and the entire Beast Domain it represents have been able to remain standing through countless trying times," Astoria explained as they landed on the ground.

"It is said that anyone who passes through the clouds gains positive luck for several weeks afterward, but that's just a rumor," She continued as she began waking in a certain direction.

"While he isn't quite at the level of the Ancestor yet, my father is also a proper Godbeast. What do you think, don't you want to meet him?" She finished with a sly smile. She looked up at Damien's face in anticipation of the type of expression he'd make.

Unfortunately...

Tak!

She was only met with a flick to the forehead.

"In the first place, I came here to talk to your father. Come on and lead me to him already," Damien said indifferently.

Astoria's expression crumpled, but her determination flared.

It looked like she'd have to try far harder to get her new target to act now she wanted him to, but that was fine.

After all, she lived for the chase!

Chapter 888 Golden Dragon [2]

"Wait..." she suddenly spoke in realization, "you knew who I was this whole time?!"

With the way Damien had been acting, she thought he was some newcomer in the Beast Domain who'd never heard of or seen her, but that didn't seem to be true at all!

"I mean, I've only heard the reputation of the devil princess and seen a portrait of you, if that makes you feel any better," Damien responded.

"It doesn't!"

"Too bad then."

"Hmph!"

"Alright, stop harrumphing and lead me to your father already."

"I won't!" Astoria suddenly exclaimed, placing her hands on her hips defiantly.

"Is there a reason why or is this just a devil princess thing?" Damien asked with a frown.

"Uhm...both!" Astoria replied, sticking her tongue out cutely.

"Understood," Damien responded, "then..."

Two especially fierce sacks of rice went over Damien's shoulders.

"I'll find the palace myself. I'm sure you won't get off easily when your father finds out what happened. You want to try and escape punishment in front of me? Don't make me laugh," Damien scoffed sarcastically, ignoring Astoria's pounding on his back.

'Now then...'

He spread his awareness to find the Golden Dragon Clan's main palace, covering over a hundred thousand miles with his awareness.

Unfortunately, he seemed to be on the wrong side of the planet, evidently Astoria's arrangement, so he needed to teleport a good few times before the beautiful golden scenery of the Clan Estate revealed itself to his eyes.

"So this is the Golden Dragon Clan, aye? What a pretentious group," Damien muttered.

The sheer amount of gold that went into building the several hundred thousand kilometer-large estate ground was blinding. It was enough gold to make someone never want to see the color gold again in their lives.

Of course, most of the buildings and flora were untainted, but the entire estate ground was connected through a series of golden roads and trails, almost looking like the veins of a—

'That's exactly what it is.' Damien realized.

The fearsome and domineering dragon aura that clouded the air and even stimulated Damien's draconic bloodline didn't originate from any treasure, but from the strange road itself.

Damien was almost certain that the road was created using the remains of a true dragon, likely at the Godbeast level.

'The main palace is...'

Damien teleported to the air above the main palace and flared his aura, making his presence known.

"Package delivery! Did anyone here order a package?!" He yelled, his voice booming into the surroundings, backed by mana.

The following processes happened so rapidly that they were hardly worth mentioning.

Golden Dragon Clan guards surrounded Damien and pointed their weapons at him, only to immediately lower them when they saw who he was carrying with him.

Eventually, an imperious voice came from within the palace, inviting him in.

"Let him through."

Those three simple words, with no sign of emotional fluctuation at all, carried heavy power, not just in a literal sense.

Damien's gaze narrowed somewhat. From this alone, it was clear that the Golden Dragon Clan's Emperor was a shrewd person.

Only, was it shrewdness or indifference?

Damien teleported into the palace with the intention of finding out, following the aura traces until he made his way to the throne room.

Here, he was met by a congregation.

Several tens of Golden Dragon Clan Members, presumably people of the royal family, stood lined in rows on both sides of the hall, watching Damien as he walked through the door.

However, his eyes didn't leave the man seated on the throne.

'That's it. That's the real deal right there.

Long midnight black hair, sharp and divine golden eyes, a chiseled face, a robust body that was covered in an incredibly arrogant golden armor, everything about the man screamed "domineering!"

'This is what that brat Long Chen could've been if he followed my suggestions and became a cultivator in real life! I didn't think I'd ever get to see it in my lifetime!' Damien exclaimed inwardly, his spirit shedding cheers of joy.

Truly, the differences between this man and Long Chen, whether in appearance or aura, were not many at all.

"What is your purpose for coming here?" The man said, cutting straight to the chase.

Damien shrugged with a smile. "I found your stuff scattered in the starry sky, so as a good samaritan, I came to return it. Satisfied?"

Thump!

Thump!

Two dull sounds rang out as Astoria and Titus were dropped on their butts.

Whoosh!

They disappeared instantly, whisked away by a random clan member and kept far, far away from Damien.

However, this action didn't symbolize hostility, merely wariness.

"Since you've acted so straightforwardly, I will not be needlessly hostile to you. Tell me what you desire and I will make sure you can get it," the man said afterward.

Even if he acted like this, the past few days had been utter chaos for him.

He set up the marriage tournament for his daughter's hand and the Genesis Bead to draw out the forces hiding in the dark, but it seemed Astoria herself was far too against the concept of getting married to even consider this kind of plan.

How she managed to sneak away under a Demigod's nose? Even the Golden Dragon Emperor himself didn't know! Ever since she was young, Astoria seemed especially gifted at slipping away from situations where it should've been impossible for her to do so.

With the Black Dragon Clan's recent signs of aggressiveness, Astoria absolutely couldn't be allowed to roam as freely as she used to.

Therefore, the Golden Dragon Emperor truly was grateful to Damien for bringing her back.

"Unfortunately, I don't believe it'll be so easy for me to get what I want from you." Damien finally responded. "However...hold on, give me a second."

Damien halted his words and teleported away, appearing several tens of meters away at the entrance to the throne hall.

He swept his hand through the air like a crazy person, however, when his arm finished its arc...

"Astoria!"

"How?!"

Multiple exclamations rang out when the people in the room saw what Damien had caught.

The little princess that had been on the completely opposite side of the throne room a mere minute ago was now in Damien's grasp.

"Let me go! Why did you catch me?!" Astoria complained as she tried to escape from Damien's clutches.

"Hm? You think you can escape? As long as I'm here, you're not leaving this place until you tell your father what happened."

"I don't want to! Let me go! I want to play!"

"Play later. This is more important."

"Nothing is more important than playing!"

"Oh? Okay, let's play then. I'll 'play' with you the same way I 'played' with your brother."

Astoria's face suddenly paled. Her eyes robotically creaked as her gaze moved to her brother.

Despite being in the palace now, he still remained standing.

Not because he wanted to, but because sitting down would probably bust his ass into a million pieces!

Astoria absolutely didn't want to experience that!

"Fine, fine! Put me down! I'll stay!"

"Will you?"

"I will!"

"You definitely won't."

Damien ignored her pleas and brought her back to the front of the room, keeping her in his grasp so she couldn't escape.

"Now, properly explain to your father before you go anywhere," Damien commanded.

However, inwardly, his thoughts were elsewhere entirely.

The way this little girl was trying to escape...

Damien didn't think such a coincidence existed.

Somehow, in this place, he'd found a genius with spatial talent that was almost on the same level as his own!

Chapter 889 Golden Dragon [3]

Soon enough, the Golden Dragon Emperor was made aware of what truly happened in the starry sky.

As he guessed, Astoria ran away from home after hearing about the marriage tournament, however, unexpectedly for both of them, there were already several groups waiting in ambush for her.

If she hadn't been luckily saved by the 4th prince who was returning home from an excursion, she would've died before even leaving Beast Emperor Star.

Unfortunately for the duo, they were soon forced into the starry sky by several other groups and chased for thousands of kilometers on end, taking them through a domestic teleportation array and eventually landing them in the same territory of the Beast Domain that Damien was in.

"This is absolutely the work of the Black Dragon Clan! Father Emperor, we must take action!" The 4th prince exclaimed as the story came to an end.

The Golden Dragon Emperor nodded without a change of expression and said, "Mm, I will take proper measures to solve this problem. Anyone who dares to bully my family...can only die!"

He turned his attention to Damien next.

"Clear the room. I'd like to have a talk with this young man alone."

As the Golden Dragon Clan members left the throne room, they cast strange glances in Damien's direction, unknowing of how to feel about him.

After all, he was an outsider, but he was the princess' savior, and considering the relationship they'd shown so far, he had absolutely no ill intentions towards the princess.

It was still unknown whether they could trust him or not, but since the Emperor invited him for a private conversation, it at least meant that he had some importance.

"Brother, don't be too scared! My father is actually a really nice person, he's just too shy to show it!" Astoria whispered in Damien's ear as she passed by.

His eyes darted over to the Emperor just in time to see the slight twitch of the latter's eyelids, almost making him break out into laughter.

Thankfully, he was able to hold it until everyone left the room.

"Is something funny?" The Emperor asked.

"Nothing at all," Damien responded.

"Hmm..."

The Emperor furrowed his brows and scanned Damien's body with his eyes as if trying to extract all of his secrets.

"You have an interesting composition."

"I get that often."

"Do you?"

"No, but if you think about it, I really should."

The Emperor almost rolled his eyes from the sheer amount of sarcasm dripping in that statement but chose to ignore it for the sake of furthering their conversation.

"If I am not mistaken, you have come here for the Genesis Bead. Instead of fighting in the tournament, why have you chosen such a method to come in contact with me?" The Emperor questioned.

Damien shrugged lightly. "It just ended up like that. Your daughter ran up to me while I was minding my own business and paid me to deal with her pursuers. If you want to know why me...maybe your daughter sensed something?"

At first, Damien was also questioning why Astoria suddenly ran up to him. It was clear that she'd run a great distance, and he definitely wasn't the first expert she saw, but he was the one she chose.

However, he somewhat understood now.

After all, didn't the same thing happen to him?

Back in the first dungeon, when his spatial power was first reaching saturation, he also met a similar situation where he was pushed into a corner.

At that time, his spatial affinity was what led him to Kurt's subspace and allowed him to survive.

Wasn't Astoria experiencing the same thing?

Since she was a Golden Dragon, her physique and bloodline were far different from his own, which led to their affinities manifesting differently.

While Damien had to slowly build his body and acclimate himself to the spatial layers due to his human nature, Astoria had a naturally powerful body and the same powerful connection to space, which allowed her to unconsciously and imperceptibly travel through the spatial layers while avoiding the detection of even Demigods!

In some sense, Astoria's talent was even greater than Damien's, it was just that their area of expertise was clearly different.

When Damien explained this to the Golden Dragon Emperor, even he couldn't help but be surprised. After all, even rarer than those in the entire universe, spatial experts among the beast races were one in a hundred trillion!

"You have no notion of marrying my daughter, correct?" The Golden Dragon Emperor asked, almost rhetorically.

"Correct," Damien answered anyway.

"However, despite your grace and relationship with my daughter, I cannot simply give you the Genesis Bead. Now, it has become the central force driving the current plan." The Golden Dragon Emperor continued.

"The undercurrents of our Beast Domain have been roaring and raging in recent days. While we are able to hold off the Nox with our natural defenses and the accumulation of fate, this doesn't stop internal struggles from taking place."

"The Black Dragon Clan was originally a brother to our Golden Dragon Clan, but something changed 30 years ago, completely reversing the clan's attitude and identity. Since then, they have been secretly building connections and growing influence in the Beast Domain with the intent of usurping our throne and plundering our fate."

As the Golden Dragon Emperor's words came to an end, Damien sighed. It was obvious what was about to happen.

The Golden Dragon Emperor looked at Damien as he finished his words.

"The Genesis Bead and the marriage tournament as a whole are both lures to bring those hidden forces to the light. Through the Genesis Bead, the Black Dragon Clan gains an artifact that can be used as the lifeblood of their influence, and through Astoria, they gain access to the fate of the Golden Dragon Clan. When these two factors are put in one place, it is absolutely impossible for them to stay hidden."

The meaning was clear.

'Enter the tournament and win properly if you want it, and don't interrupt my plans while you get it.'

It was a stance that disregarded Damien entirely, but he didn't let it provoke him.

The Golden Dragon Emperor definitely wasn't such a brick-like man. Considering how Damien had yet to be kicked out of the palace, it seemed there was still room for negotiation.

Damien sighed and cracked his fingers.

"Alright, negotiation it is. Just know, I'm not some soft persimmon you can bully as you please!"

Negotiation always began with money, and in line with this belief, Damien first presented the wide array of funds he'd acquired in recent years.

Honestly speaking, Damien didn't even remember how currency cards were divided anymore. With such a massive heap of them that he rarely ever used, knowing was pointless. Besides, wouldn't people tell him how much they wanted him to pay?

If anyone tried to scam him, they'd simply die. There was no need to worry.

Nevertheless, while Damien didn't know the exact amount, he was sure that he as a single entity definitely had more money than some larger influences.

Yet, with such a sum presented before him, the Golden Dragon Emperor merely shook his head.

"Our beast races don't value currency the same way the rest of you do. This scrap metal has no meaning for us."

It was a bullshit response.

How would they even maintain an economy without money?!

The Golden Dragon Emperor was definitely just trying to make things hard for Damien.

But that was still fine.

Resources, artifacts, technique manuals, he had an abundance of them all.

Eventually, one of them had to succeed.

...right?

Chapter 890 Golden Dragon [4]

Wrong.

Damien practically emptied his entire inventory, but the Golden Dragon Emperor remained unimpressed throughout the entire showing.

It didn't matter even if Damien pulled out a rare Demigod inheritance that had been unseen for a hundred thousand years, in the Emperor's eyes, it was trash!

It became clear that material trade was going nowhere. Damien needed to provide something far more substantial than just resources.

A thought came to mind.

"What if...I become Astoria's tutor?" He suddenly said.

The Golden Dragon Emperor finally showed a change of expression, raising his brow in curiosity.

"Oh? Go on." He proclaimed with interest.

Actually, Damien was rationalizing it at the same time as the Emperor, so all he did was voice his thought process.

"I won't call myself the best spatial expert until I kill the Ancestral Sovereign, but I'm definitely up there near that peak. I specialize in spatial destruction, but I have experience with the other facets of space so I won't be constrained to teaching her by my own path..."

There were several more positives and negatives, but in the end, it came down to one thing.

"When it comes to talent, she's the only person I've seen who could genuinely match me, and I don't want to see that talent go to waste."

It'd happened too many times. Every spatial expert he'd met so far besides Tian Yang and perhaps Leona had wasted their talent due to the universe's skewed belief on how spatial experts should be.

This was something Damien wanted to see change, but even on a small scale, his existence hadn't been able to tip people's perception of spatial experts.

At least, in his own experience.

Unbeknownst to him, his presence was indeed subtly changing the stigma around spatial practitioners. For one, in the Human Domain as a whole, spatial experts had become incredibly respected and cherished.

But that was a story for another time.

"If you leave your daughter in my hands, I can guarantee that she won't continue wasting her affinity like she's been doing so far. I'll turn her into an expert you're proud of, and maybe fix her temperament a bit while I'm at it," Damien proclaimed confidently,

The Golden Dragon Emperor's eyes narrowed as he fell into thought.

Astoria was already a 4th class expert who rose through her Baptism using the techniques and skills of the Golden Dragon Clan that could subtly manipulate fate and mainly relied on the physical body.

However, now that he knew she had such a talent, could he really allow it to go unrefined?

It irked him that, as a Godbeast, he wasn't able to sense her affinity at all. It made him suspicious that this man could do it while he couldn't.

But there were several explanations that could rationalize this, including the fact that the Emperor had never done a comprehensive scan of Astoria's affinities, or that the affinity was only recently awakened in its truest form.

'Can I trust this man?'

For the first time in a long time, the Golden Dragon Emperor was facing a genius too great for him to control.

These kinds of existences could either massively boost the fate of an influence or collapse it entirely.

It was an incredible gamble.

However...

"I accept."

Astoria was the Golden Dragon Emperor's most cherished and doted-on child. She was also the child with the most potential among her 8 siblings.

Merely, with Astoria's temperament, she was never fit to be a ruler.

The Emperor couldn't correct her. It was too late for him to start being strict. She absolutely wouldn't take him seriously.

But in Damien's presence, that unruly princess had been completely suppressed.

'Maybe this is the kind of influence she needs in her life.'

This was the thought process that led to his decision.

He didn't even care if Damien could properly teach Astoria, as long as he didn't ruin her achievements, his influence and presence would definitely cause a positive change in her character by filling a hole in her heart that her blood brothers couldn't fill.

After all, they were too embroiled in competition for the throne to have time to care about Astoria who didn't matter to this battle at all.

"I wish for you to be Astoria's live-in tutor for the coming months. If your performance is satisfactory, I will grant you the Genesis Bead." The Emperor said.

Damien sighed

Hidden behind that proclamation was a very serious bit of fine print.

As a live-in tutor, wouldn't Damien be considered part of the Golden Dragon Emperor's camp?

He would definitely be asked to help solve the clan's current problem.

Luckily for him, he never expected things to be easy from the start.

If at least one world wasn't blown up by the time he left a sector, he simply wasn't Damien Void!

'Plus, I've always wanted a dragon. This Black Dragon Clan seems to have some interesting picks.'

"Good," he said, responding to the Emperor. "However, I have conditions."

"Speak."

"First, if it ever looks like my life is in danger, I will escape. If I can take Astoria with me, I will, but if I can't, you aren't to blame me." Damien started.

The Emperor glared at him for a moment, but conceded to his request. In the end, he couldn't expect Damien to sacrifice himself for people he barely knew.

"Secondly, I'm not doing this for free. The Genesis Bead is originally the Ancient God Clan's treasure, and I have no interest in stealing it from them. I want to visit your treasury and pick a few things for myself."

"You are working for the Ancient God Clan?" The Emperor asked.

"They're my subordinates," Damien responded.

"Hmm..." the Emperor muttered disbelievingly, however, for now, he would let it slide.

Boasting was only a crime when it was found false, after all.

"How many items do you wish to take from the treasury?"

"Five."

"One."

"Three."

"Three is fine."

"Three it is!"

"However, you must first swear a Mana Oath that the Genesis Bead will be left to the Ancient God Clan."

"That's easy."

Damien and the Emperor both nodded in satisfaction at the ease of their current negotiation. Since neither of them was trying to play tricks on the other, it was able to proceed without hiccups.

"I have one final request," Damien continued a few moments later, somewhat hesitating.

"What is it? At this point, is there a need to hesitate?" The Emperor questioned.

Damien firmed his eyes and nodded. "The last thing I wish for...is the unconditional support of the Golden Dragon Clan after this matter ends."

The Emperor's eyes turned cold in an instant.

"Are you aware of what you are asking for?" He asked icily.

"I do," Damien responded with the same firmness.

"Giving you the unconditional support of our clan is the same as putting my clan's fate in your hands. Do you think this is a privilege that can be given to just anyone?"

"I don't."

"And you still dare to request it?!"

"I do," Damien responded calmly.

"I'm aware that it's an outrageous request, so don't answer for now. Wait and see my potential for yourself. When this conflict comes to an end, I'm sure you'll make the decision that best benefits your people."

The Golden Dragon Emperor's expression slowly returned to its neutral state as he nodded and continued the conversation.

From that point on, both Damien and the Emperor acted like the final demand was never stated. They discussed the Black Dragon and Golden Dragon Clans, the history of the Beast Domain, the Nox invasion, and many more topics before the conversation finally came to an end and Damien was escorted to his living quarters.

However, unknown to Damien, the Emperor's opinion on his final demand wasn't as firm as he made it seem.

He'd seen it for himself.

A number of resources that could build a major influence just below the level of a Holy Land in an instant...representing the personal wealth of a single man.

And considering that they were strangers, there was definitely plenty more Damien was hiding.

'Not only that, he was confidently displaying his wealth before me without worrying about me oppressing him and stealing from him. He is clearly not naive, so his confidence must have some origin...'

Indeed, as Damien had said, it was best to observe him and judge his potential personally before coming to a decision.

'Someone whose fate I cannot read...I look forward to seeing what kind of influence he can have on Astoria.'

With that, the Emperor concluded his thoughts on the matter.

Now, he needed to continue preparations.

A beautiful ceremony of blood was going to take place soon enough.

And absolutely nothing could go wrong when it did.