

# Void 981

Chapter 981 Holy Light Realm [1]

Dawn was felt differently in Luxurion.

Due to the Sky Castle's special location and existence, it didn't orbit a sun, nor did it have any moons in its own orbit.

Both of these celestial bodies would cloud Luxurion's stainless image with their light, so the castle itself was built with several regulations to guarantee that such bodies would never enter or be born in its vicinity.

Time in Luxurion was defined by an interesting system implemented by Angels who frequented the castle, utilizing Fate Lines and Light Laws to create a special mechanism that provided a falsified sense of day and night that actually originated from the air itself rather than a specific light source.

The system was realistic to the point where one would only notice its existence if one took the time to truly perceive the starry sky outside.

Nevertheless, this realism was exactly what made residing in Luxurion comfortable.

On this particular dawn, the castle was bustling far more than usual. Almost a thousand geniuses made their way to the first banquet hall with those experts who brought them to the Assembly.



As the number of incoming parties thinned, three figures walked into the hall and walked onto the elevated stage that had been prepared beforehand.

All three of them were beautiful blonde-haired Angels, though only a single one was female. Of the two men, one was a familiar figure, the Angel named Luciel who led the Heavenly Clan.

He panned his gaze across the experts below and smiled charismatically.

"It makes me proud to see how our universe's people can put aside their personal biases and unite as one in times of crisis. I am honored to stand before those of you here, and those who will later arrive, and host this Grand Assembly," he started.

"Due to the nature of this gathering, I will not give any lengthy speeches at this time. After all, I don't think any of us would want to hear me repeat my self-righteous spiel over and over again..."

"...today, we have gathered for the opening of the Holy Light Realm. This event is for geniuses under 200 years of age only, and the only rule is that killing is not allowed. Within the Holy Light Realm, there are countless peak treasures offered by the experts of our beautiful universe as well as our own Heavenly Clan. These treasures are yours for the taking, however...beware the dangers of the realm, and beware each other over all."

Luciel wrapped up his speech quickly, just as unwilling to drag it out as everyone else, and smiled when he felt the anticipation radiating from the geniuses in the crowd.

He exchanged nods with his two companions and turned around, his back facing the crowd.



His hands became blurs as they moved into several complex formations. His mana swirled through the air, connecting with the mana exerted by the other two Angels until it finally materialized as a beautiful compass-like array that flew into the air and rotated fiercely.

VOOM!

Along with a strong pulse of vitality-filled mana, a pure white portal opened at the end of the hall behind the three Angels.

Finally, Luciel turned back to the crowd with a smile.

"Geniuses, enter at your own discretion! Remember, you can enter at any time, but once you leave, you will be disqualified! Now, go forth and meet your fortuitous chances; grow and bloom into heroes who will protect our universe!"

Immediately a wave of geniuses flooded the area, rushing into the secret realm as fast as they could to monopolize the opportunities within.

The three Angels left the stage, allowing the crowd to pass. Luciel's gaze panned over the crowd once more as he made his exit, and just before his figure disappeared into the corridors of Luxurion...a mysterious smile illuminated his face.



Standing at the back of the crowd, Damien twitched slightly. His eyes shot over to the receding figures of the Angels, his expression hardening.

'That guy...knows me?'

He frowned to himself as he tried to think of a connection between him and the Heavenly Clan, but there was none at all.

In fact, the only connection they had was through Parsiel who befriended the Human Domain's forces, though this was something neither the Heavenly Clan nor Damien knew quite yet.

Damien shook off the thought after realizing there was no reasonable answer with the information he knew, instead turning to Elena. I think you should take a look at

"You ready?" he asked.

"Ready? I've been ready for a while now. You're the one who suddenly got absorbed in your thoughts," Elena quipped back with a teasing smile.

Damien shook his head wryly. "I had a good reason for it this ti— never mind, let's just go."

The duo waved goodbye to the two mentors who were watching over them from afar and flew into the air, joining the crowd of geniuses rushing into the portal.



A grin lit up Damien's face.

'This is going to be fun. To think this plan was something Elena came up with...'

His eyes were bright with a light of genuine amusement for the first time in a very long time.

He couldn't wait to see the looks on those geezers' faces when it was over.

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The Holy Light Realm, as its name suggested, was a hidden realm related to Light and Life Laws. It was formed on the remains of a destroyed Mystic Realm, using its residual energy to create a completely new environment.

The inside of the Holy Light Realm was mainly a collection of forests with a few plains separating them. These forests oozed with strong vitality that empowered the plants and animals within, mutating them into greater species.

In the far north of the realm was a stunning pyramid made of sandstone-like material that shone in the artificial sunlight.



In the far south was another pyramid, made of pure gold and radiating an even stronger aura than its opposite.

When Damien and Elena materialized in the realm, they were merely a few steps from the gold pyramid. They could see every detail of its figure clearly, including the line of geniuses racing through its doors.

"Do you want this one, or should I take it?" Elena asked. Her tone was clear and cool, lacking its usual playfulness.

"You can have it if you want. I'm more interested in the rest of the realm," Damien responded with a shrug.

When Elena got serious, bantering with her was pointless. Let alone going in one ear and out the other, extraneous words would never enter her ears at all.

Elena nodded, acknowledging his words as she began to walk away.

"Then I'll start here. Don't forget to keep in contact. We should keep track of each other's progress while we aren't together."

Damien nodded with a wry smile as he watched her leave when suddenly...



Whoosh!

A breeze brushed past his face, and a pair of soft lips quickly met his.

By the time he processed it, Elena was already gone, disappeared into the golden pyramid.

His smile warmed up considerably in that single instant.

'I see you still remember your husband, huh.' He remarked inwardly as he turned around.

'Now then, let's get started. There's a lot of work to be done.'

Chapter 982 Holy Light Realm [2]

Damien flashed through the secret realm rapidly, mentally mapping out its topography. It was a relatively large realm, around twice the size of an average continent, but this distance was still easy for Damien to cover within a day.

'Aside from the two pyramids, there are a lot of subterranean tunnels that lead to unknown locations, as well as hidden groves with even more hidden secret paths. Comparing the size of the realm to the density of treasures, it really is a place where opportunity is always at one's doorstep.'

Damien came to a stop, his body several thousand feet above the continent.



'The pyramids obviously hold the greatest rewards, but they'll also have the most difficult challenges. It's not worth challenging the period if the goal is monopolization. It'd be much easier to just—'

"—ah, an opportunity!"

Damien clapped in delight as he set his sights on a target.

His body vanished, reappearing soundlessly on the ground below. He walked a few steps to the right, one backward, and three more forward before stomping his foot against the ground.

Rumble!

A small tremor swept through the earth. The ground within a few feet of Damien vanished, dropping him into the subterranean world.

'It should be around here...'

Damien walked a bit and felt the coarse walls around him before his senses finally picked up what he was looking for.

'Found you.'



BOOM!

His fist slammed into the earthen wall to his right with immense force, sending clouds of dust flying through the tunnel.

However...

'Only some cracks? As expected of a secret realm of the Angel Race.'

Evidently, certain areas had been fortified several times to keep the things hidden within safe, but Damien wasn't perturbed.

'If it's cracked in one, it'll shatter in five.'

He brought his fist back once more, this time covering it in a dense layer of compacted mana.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

RUMBLE!



Just as he promised, he slammed his fist into the wall four more times, targeting the exact same spot until the wall lost its integrity and collapsed.

Damien stepped through the rubble and into the small room beyond. There, he found a podium about as high as his waist, atop which floated some sort of grimoire that held a mystical aura.

'Hmm, what is this supposed to be?'

He unceremoniously snatched it off its pedestal and flipped through it. Feeling nothing particularly special from the book, he simply tossed it into his spatial storage and moved on.

'That's one of...I don't even know how many.'

A wild grin spread on his face.

'This subterranean world is good. I guess the geniuses were presumed to have a maximum of 1st revolution strength, so the fortification only accounts for this much. It's a shame for those other guys who have to deal with a bunch of nonsense to get these treasures, but hey, if I got them first, were they ever meant for others in the first place?'

Without a moment wasted, his body shot through the tunnels of the subterranean world, stopping occasionally to break through the walls and steal the treasures they hid.



He didn't even bother checking what the treasures were before throwing them in storage, purely moving with the goal of grabbing as much as he possibly could.

As he snatched the 10th treasure and moved roughly a fourth of the way through the observable tunnel system, a thought popped into his mind.

'Those old ghosts outside...are probably panicking right now, right?'

After all—

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"—he is blatantly robbing us! This is unacceptable!"

The shout was one of many that formed a cacophony of complaints in the first banquet hall. I think you should take a look at

It was one thing if he was just stealing treasures. Those treasures he took were merely Chaos-rank artifacts that were slightly stronger than their peers.



The problem was...these artifacts were provided by the experts viewing the Holy Light Realm from the outside! He wasn't just stealing miscellaneous treasures, he was basically slapping them in the face!

"Everyone, please calm down," said Luciel, who returned upon noticing the commotion.

"Remember, we all agreed to set this event with the loosest rules possible. His actions still fall within the realm of what's acceptable. If you wish to stop him, you can only wait for your own geniuses to fight against him and steal them."

"Are you backing that genius?!" A gruff man yelled angrily.

"How could I? He is not a member of our Heavenly Clan. I am merely enacting the rules we collectively set. At this time, are you not the ones going back on your word?"

"Khh..."

The man gritted his teeth and shot a hateful glare at Luciel, but didn't retaliate.

The Angel was correct. The rules for the hunt, as well as several other events, had been corroborated by most of the experts that would be attending the Grand Assembly.



Luxurion's involvement was kept undisclosed, as was every detail about the main conference, but at least these smaller activities were spread to most forces, which was why people like the Director and Commander Huo already knew of the event's existence when they arrived.

The fact that Damien and Elena didn't know could only be attributed to the fact that the Angel Race somewhat disregarded smaller forces like the Ancient God Clan and distant forces like the Golden Dragon Clan.

Nevertheless, the few words from Luciel quieted the dissenting experts, but he didn't clear their grievances.

He had no motive to do so.

As he said, he wasn't backing Damien, merely enforcing the rules.

The outwardly loud voices maintained their loudness, but expressed it through mana. Several communication artifacts were withdrawn at once, and within the secret realm, around 30 geniuses received the same message.

Suppress and eliminate Damien Void!

Their orders were accompanied by projections of Damien's appearance, as well as rough estimates of his location.



These thirty geniuses, all spread in different parts of the secret realm, turned their attention to one location at the same time.

Among them were two who were already together, a man roughly 25 years in age and a little girl no more than 16.

"Senior brother, are we going?" The girl asked, tugging the man's sleeve."

"Hmm...do you want to?" He asked without much emotion.

"I do!" The girl immediately responded. "Senior brother, I can feel that something fun will happen where Master told us to go. Maybe we'll find a load of treasure!"

The man didn't respond, gazing into the distance with an unreadable expression on his face.

'Damien Void...where have I heard that name before?'

His nose twitched slightly.

'This scent...is this his path?'



The man's eyes narrowed, a barely discernible light of interest alighting within them.

'I must see it for myself.'

He stood up from the tree he was leaning against and began walking in the direction specified in the message.

"Xiao Yue, let's go."

"Mm!"

The little girl happily hummed as she happily followed him from behind.

Just like the two of them, none of the geniuses tasked with attacking Damien turned down the task.

Whether it was due to interest, competitive spirit, or even just greed for treasure, thirty geniuses congregated just a few tens of kilometers east of the sandstone pyramid.

As for their target...

Chapter 983 Blade [1]



"Nice, a total of 35 treasures! That's much more than I was expecting to get down here."

Damien nodded in satisfaction while tossing the 35th treasure into storage with the rest.

'This subterranean vein has been cleared, but I only traveled in a straight line for a few thousand kilometers. I should've made it around halfway through the realm in distance, but nowhere near that in the actual area covered.'

35 treasures in a single vein was a great harvest, but it also meant that other similar veins would have plenty of treasures as well.

When Damien was mapping the realm, his All-Seeing Eyes saw the subterranean tunnels as a massively interconnected system, but his experience showed differently.

'That can only mean there are powerful illusory walls that I can't see through unless I actively use the All-Seeing Eyes. If I can uncover the fakes and make use of the entire hidden system, I can gain an absolute advantage against the competition.'

Damien was only able to take a single step forward before—

BOOOOOOM!

—the ceiling collapsed inward, revealing tens of meters of the subterranean tunnel to the world above.



Damien looked up into the open air with intrigue, tilting his head when nothing else happened.

"Aha, are you perhaps scared?" He commented, shaking his head lightly as he pressed off the ground and leaped out of the tunnel and onto the solid ground of the surface.

"I knew I'd get ganged up on, but I didn't expect it to happen on day one! Let's see... there are thirty of you? Mm, I guess five of those elders outside are respectable people."

A smile lit up his face as he felt the slight twitches of alarm that came from the surroundings.

"I bet you're wondering, 'How did he find us?!' or maybe even, 'he must be bluffing,' but I assure you I'm not. Want proof? Then..."

Bang!

Damien flicked his finger, forcing space to implode in an empty area around 10 meters away.

"Keuk! You...!"



A man was thrown out of the empty air, slightly roughed up by the previous attack. He immediately spat a few words of grievance before making distance and warily watching Damien's movements.

"I think that guy was the second best among you in terms of concealment techniques, so the rest of you have no chance. Just come out and fight me all together."

Damien's originally ineffective taunts became super effective as if he had a type advantage. 27 geniuses joined the first man, surrounding Damien in the large clearing he was currently standing in.

Damien's eyes lingered on the distant horizon for a second before he turned his attention to the gathered geniuses.

"Hmm, mostly late-stage 4th class and...a few in the middle stages? What are you guys even doing here?"

Damien immediately scoffed after reading their power levels, snapping his finger and wrapping the 8 mid-stage 4th class geniuses in his mana.

"Go play games elsewhere."

His mana tightened around them, and with a flash of light, they disappeared from the area entirely.

"You...what did you do to Asia?!" A young man yelled, pointing his sword at Damien.



"Do you expect me to know who Asia is?" Damien replied offhandedly.

"You just made her vanish!" The man practically screeched in annoyance.

"Oh, this is a current grudge. My bad, I thought you were an old enemy's pupil or something. If she was one of those who just disappeared, she's probably in this secret realm somewhere. As for her safety...well, that depends on her, doesn't it?" Damien remarked tauntingly.

"I'll kill you!" The young man roared, charging at Damien without a second of hesitation.

"Haa, seriously. Were you listening to anything I said?"

Damien watched as the man approached with his sword outstretched.

He put a finger out into the air.

Clink!

The sword stabbed against it and halted in its tracks. Within a second of the young man forcing it forward...



Shatter!

It broke into countless shards that fell powerlessly to the ground.

"My sword—!" The young man cried out. "What did you do to it, you demon?!"

"Brother, I quite literally did nothing at all. If you were half as smart as your peers, you'd realize how dumb the shit you just said is," Damien replied with a deadpan expression.

He glanced around at the others, who showed clear hesitation after seeing his defensive ability. With a sigh, he turned his attention to the sky.

"If you're going to send people after me, send the ones that actually have balls! Also, how badly are you treating these kids for the destruction of a single treasure to make them hesitate so strongly?! Stop being so stingy, you damn old farts!"

He shook his head in disappointment, unaware of the storm his provocation had just incited and turned back to the geniuses.

"If you want to fight, I'll entertain you, but be warned that your treasures will definitely break when they touch my body."



"I...I'll forfeit! I'm sorry, Master!"

The first to flee was the man Damien dragged out of hiding first. It was to be expected from a man who specialized in concealment.

But his cowardice started a chain reaction.

Sabotaging other geniuses in the secret realm went without saying, but to do so at their own expense was nothing more than foolishness!

One by one, the geniuses cleared out, either saying a few words and fleeing or directly apologizing before leaving with their heads held high.

Damien watched them go wryly before finally turning his attention back to the horizon.

"Then, what about you?" He said to nobody in particular.

"Naturally, I have come to test your skills," a response came from the void.

A man materialized in the distance.



He had a chiseled and handsome face, the definition of traditional male attractiveness. His eyes were sharp like blades, his irises painted in a beautiful sakura pink color, unlike anything Damien had seen before. His hair was long and black as midnight, similar to Damien, but his build was far more robust, that of a man who rigorously trained his body every day.

There were two blades strapped to his back, one pitch black and the other shining platinum, mirroring the Twin Moons.

Despite the distance separating them, Damien could feel the mysterious aura coming from the man, as if he was severed from the Real Plane by a field of unknown intent.

"You are?" He asked, his tone that of an equal rather than a superior.

The man nodded, cupping his hands and offering a slight bow of introduction.

"My name is Su Ren. I have spent my whole life sharpening my blade and searching for challenges. You can consider me a wandering blademaker seeking advice," he said firmly, neither arrogant nor submissive.

Damien nodded and returned the gesture. "Damien Void. I guess I'm something of a jack of all trades, but I specialize in physical strength and law comprehension."

"Those are quite the grand specialties," Su Ren commented, drawing his blades.



"I guess they are. Whether I'm just bragging or not, why don't you come find out for yourself?" Damien quipped back.

Su Ren's lips curled slightly.

"That is exactly what I came here to do."

BANG!

Chapter 984 Blade [2]

The first banquet hall that only calmed down a few minutes ago was once again thrown into an uproar, and it wasn't just a meager 30 dissenting voices this time.

Damien's provocation only struck those specific 30, but his words actually had an unknown splash effect that hit almost 100 elders for one simple reason:

"How dare a young brat act so arrogant to his elders?!"

The Director and Commander Huo watched, unknowing of whether to laugh or cry as this very statement was echoed over and over again while these elders contacted their best disciples and placed targets on Damien's back.



In this situation, what could the two of them do? These elders wouldn't calm down if they used force and status to suppress them, and that bottled-up resentment would become an even greater blade aimed at Damien's throat.

The only real solution was for Damien to utterly crush their geniuses. If that happened, force and status could be used with justification, and these elders wouldn't be able to act no matter how hard they wanted to.

In fact, this was usually the strategy used by larger forces to support their most promising young geniuses.

As the commotion grew, a voice echoed through the hall.

"Gentlemen, I will not stop you from targeting that genius, but I advise you to be patient," Luciel said with a mysterious smile.

"Why should we listen to you?! You are clearly biased towards that young brat!" an elder shouted out.

Oh, am I?" Luciel replied with the same calm expression. "I wonder, will you feel the same after observing the current situation?"

He directed their attention back to the various screens displaying the secret realm's situation, particularly the one that followed Damien.



"What do you—"

"Wait, that is—"

"Shh, don't say anything! Don't you know who his master is...?"

Two elders were quieted instantly before they could say anything they regretted, and with the reminder of the last, all those watching the screens suddenly understood what was happening.

Their eyes no longer lingered on Damien, but focused earnestly on the man facing him.

Luciel's eyes curved into crescents as he watched the immediate shift in their attitudes.

"Let us observe for now. I'm sure you all understand...right?"

His words were met with silence...

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...a complete contradiction to the atmosphere of the secret realm.



BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

A set of dual blades crossed over each other to block the attack of a single sword that slammed into their intersecting point.

The air exploded upon their collision, adding to the atrocious melody of explosive impacts that reverberated through this specific portion of the secret realm.

'Void Sword Art First Step: Bladeless'

Mirage turned into a haze as the atmosphere was torn apart by spatial gashes. Damien pressed forward and attacked ferociously, leaving not a single opening for his opponent.

"As expected, you're good!" Su Ren exclaimed as he twisted his body impossibly and avoided the terrifying strength of Bladeless.

His white blade rose upward along Mirage's edge while the black blade slanted downward to break Damien's stance.

"Woah!"



Damien stepped back and leaned his body, just barely avoiding the blade slashing at his face.

"Haha, how fun!"

He laughed boisterously and twisted his waist, gathering momentum as he held Mirage up parallel to the ground.

'Void Sword Art Second Step: Horizon Break'

Clang!

Unlike the usual dull thump heard after Horizon Break, the atmosphere rang with the sound of metals clashing.

Su Ren stood with a swirl of grey mana covering his white sword. In the finest layers of space, Damien could just vaguely see this mana suppressing the spatial rupture created by his attack.

"Oh, that's some interesting mana," Damien complimented with a grin.

"I am aware. After all, I created it myself."



Su Ren shot forward like a speeding bullet, that mysterious grey mana swirling into a storm around him as he slashed his blades together as one.

The only word to possibly describe that slash was "perfection."

Perfection in form, in technique, in movement, in internal regulation, in mana control—

Merely, perfection.

'Pure Force, 73rd iteration, Dual Slash.'

Damien's eyes widened.

999 Dimensional Cages rose around him in a single instant. In the next, a horrifying wave of mana crashed into his defenses.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

One by one, the spatial fields were shattered and sentenced to oblivion. 999 became 100 soon enough, and Damien was forced to teleport over a kilometer to the right to avoid the mana storm.



'Hoo, that one would've hurt.' he thought to himself, his eyes hardening.

He lifted his hand and wiped a drop of blood from the cut on his lip.

'What a fresh feeling.'

Su Ren proved himself to be a complete subversion of Damien's expectations of this secret realm. Not only was he powerful, he was extremely adept at utilizing his power.

Even now, seeing the way he calmly watched Damien from the distance, it was clear that he expected his opponent to easily dodge the previous attack.

'Or rather, it was a test, and I lived up to his expectations...'

'...though, he's only reciprocating what he's being given, so I can't say anything.'

"Alright then!" Damien exclaimed.

"It's time to go a bit harder."



'Dimension Shift.'

The world bisected. Its two halves, split by a fine line, slid against each other like the lifeless halves of a body.

Within the severed world, only Damien existed. All other beings were trapped by the dimensions of reality...

...or at least, that was the usual scenario.

However, in this very moment, Su Ren stood filled with vitality and life in this world lacking any. The field Damien sensed before, the pure natural materialization of his blade intent, cut him away from the dimension itself, allowing him to exist uniquely in almost any environment.

Damien's grin widened ferociously.

'Samsara Intent: Frozen Wheel.'

'Spacetime Severance.'

'Void Breathing Second Technique: Absolute Mastery'



Rapid fire, without pause, before Su Ren could comprehend the situation; all of these descriptions accurately portrayed the speed at which these three domineering abilities were launched.

Frozen Wheel, a technique similar to a domain. Damien established a dominion over a certain area and, within that area, used his And finally, a technique Damien was testing for the very first time; a technique that used the ethereal aspect of the Breath of influence to freeze the Wheel of Samsara, the cycle of life and death. This immediately disabled any sort of healing factor the enemy possessed and made sure the embrace of death was always lurking around them, breaking their mentality.

Spacetime Severance struck once the Wheel of Samsara was frozen, severing the bisected world once more, this time on a far more conceptual level. Spacetime Severance had one purpose and one purpose alone: to wipe all things from existence.

And finally, a technique Damien was testing for the very first time; a technique that used the ethereal aspect of the Breath of Nothingness to artificially enhance Damien in a single aspect, bringing him to what he hypothesized should be a state near absolute mastery, hence the name.

Absolute Mastery was a technique that could only be tested in combat, but Damien had been in a special situation where he couldn't find any opponents who could properly match him...

'...until now.'

Huu...



Damien took a deep breath and relished in the enlightening feeling filling his body.

And he kept his awareness trained on the man he was so thankful for, the man who would finally allow him to gain a relative understanding of his strength, and the man who, even after facing Spacetime Severance, stood completely unharmed.

Damien raised Mirage and pointed it at that man as he roared with fervor:

"COME!"

Chapter 985 Blade [3]

"COME!"

Damien's roar exploded through the atmosphere and sparked Su Ren's fighting spirit into a burning blaze.

He slammed his foot into the ground and shot forward like a comet. His blades moved before he even reached Damien, twirling around each other like twin snakes in a mysterious dance.

And suddenly, they were in Damien's face.



His eyes widened. It was too late for him to react. The strange sword dance wasn't an illusion technique, but an ethereal misdirection that Damien couldn't see through with his base abilities.

'Shit!'

Damien twisted his body so the attack would hit a more manageable area, but before he could finish his motion...

Clash!

His arm rose, completely instinctually, and wielded Mirage to expertly parry Su Ren's blades.

'Huh...?'

Damien's mouth opened slightly in astonishment. Without warning, he had become a spectator in his own body.

It was a situation similar to when he used Devour for the first time, only in this instance, he was fully conscious.

But in both, his body succumbed to instinct and became a beast.



Shing!

Mirage did an impossible maneuver, shifting from a parry directly into a pierce in a motion that would've normally shattered its user's wrist.

And in fact, it did exactly that.

Snap! Crack!

A series of grotesque noises emanated from his hand and wrist, but Transcendent Regeneration immediately went to work, healing the injury before the sword finished its movement.

Su Ren's eyes narrowed as he witnessed this, his body moving backward with his blades coming up to block Mirage.

'Something strange is happening with this man.'

Su Ren's thoughts were extremely strict at the moment, only appearing when they needed to. He was completely focused on the battle from the start, as Damien's physical strength and law comprehension were truly incredible.



However, this was different.

This wasn't the strength Damien showed, and most of all...

'His scent changed.'

Screech!

The unknown crystalline material of Mirage and the contradicting metals of Su Ren's dual blades scraped against each other as Su Ren parried the sword's path and pushed it to the side. The sparks created by the event were colorful, almost iridescent due to the magical nature of the blades.

'His previous scent was wild and untamed. His claim of being a jack of all trades was completely backed by this nature. However, the current scent is like that of Master's body, that of an expert of untold proportion...'

'...how intriguing. Master, you were right. Coming out to experience the world is the best way to train.'

Su Ren made an expression he only knew how to make in battle.

It was an expression often seen on Damien's face in the exact same circumstances:



A wild grin.

'This fight...can propel me to the next level!'

Su Ren's eyes shone with ferocity.

He finally decided. There was no need to continue suppressing himself.

BOOOOOOOM!

His mana raged into the atmosphere, dying the severed world grey. Oddly enough, this grey brought light to the world, returning it to its original face and filling it with a sharp and deadly blade aura. I think you should take a look at

Spark!

Sparks flew through the air as the invisible blade intent clashed against Damien's sword, which didn't stop its movements even after being pushed away.

Damien was also pushed back several steps by the sudden wave of mana, his body riddled with shallow cuts.



"Interesting, so you want to compete in domains," he said enthusiastically.

"Indeed. Due to the current circumstance, it is impossible for us to fight with our full strength. However, if it is just for a moment..."

"...then we should be able to hide it from their eyes." Damien finished.

The Holy Light Realm was just a secret realm in the end. The two of them had already fought long enough to understand that a collision of their full force would collapse the realm entirely.

Even disregarding this fact, their interaction was being watched by countless eyes. It was never a wise idea to reveal one's cards to those whose affiliations were unknown.

But just once.

Just once, they wanted to experience what it was like to fight without holding anything back.

'Come, Space-Time River.'



Damien canceled the Absolute Mastery state. He was satisfied with the preliminary test, even if it only lasted for a few seconds. Any further testing could be done at a later time, when he and Su Ren were in a safe environment.

Instead, he let go of all else and put his everything into Spacetime.

Spacetime was his lifeblood, his origin, and the concept he loved the most.

The Space-Time River was merely a copy, a tribute by him to the true peak entity of Spacetime.

But even a copy of such an existence couldn't be weak, lest it stain the name of the legendary original entity.

Voom!

An iridescent blue river of stars slowly revealed itself in the air above. It was several kilometers long, stretching into the distance, and its width was almost a hundred feet, a far cry from its past minuscule form.

"If you want to see the peak of my achievements thus far, this is what I will show you. The concept of Spacetime, the very fabric of reality that allows all things to exist. Face its truth, and tell me what you can glean," he uttered, a slight hint of reverence in his voice.



Su Ren nodded in admiration.

"Then I shall reciprocate. The peak of my achievements with the blade, the path I have followed that allowed me to create my own variation of mana and is guiding me to the very peak of existence, is in this very domain. It is the deepest truth of humanity, and reflects the deepest truths within oneself. Today, I will show you the ability to sever 'everything.'"

Two men faced each other, their stances far too different for them to be compared.

Damien stood tall with his hands behind his back. His body was illuminated by the light of the Space-Time River, painting him as a Celestial descended to the mortal world.

Meanwhile, Su Ren stood with his knees slightly bent, his center of gravity lowered to the earth. His stance was grounded and reflected that of an average mortal practicing the blade, yet held a hidden profundity that was simply indiscernible to almost all.

A pregnant silence descended on the atmosphere as the two men faced off with their auras, the spirits of the battle gods shining in their eyes.

Even in the first banquet hall, the same was taking place.

All those elders and experts held their breaths, no longer daring to speak out for fear of missing a single instant of this interaction.



Their battle was short and packed with constant back-and-forth action, and in that tiny speck of time, the two managed to showcase a level of law comprehension that seemed unfathomable for a genius.

Their words were reflected clearly to these experts.

Those two geniuses were going to do everything in their power to cast a veil over the eyes of onlookers when this final clash happened.

To see through that veil, even these old monsters and influential figures opened their eyes wide and focused.

Until finally, that moment happened.

Two opposing intents clashed beautifully and chaotically...

And the impossible was actualized.

Chapter 986 Blade [4]

How would one describe such a clash of Laws?

With more base-level Laws like the elemental Laws most people had affinities with, it was easier to describe even their conceptual states, since there were only a select number of concepts they could actually harness.



This was both due to the simplistic nature of the most basic foundational elements of the universe and the fact that, even when these elements harnessed higher Laws like Wood tapping into Life, it was only ever an emulation, not a true connection to the higher Laws.

Now, that wasn't to say those connections couldn't be made, merely, it took an extremely high level of comprehension to truly elevate a base element in such an intrinsic way.

When comparing this relatively comprehensible structure to those of the true Higher Laws, it was like night and day.

The reason Higher Laws were elevated from the rest wasn't just due to their primordial existences, but due to their complexity.

In fact, these two factors were directly connected. Because Higher Laws were formed in the very first moments of the universe, they were responsible for maintaining far larger and more important facets of the universe's existence.

This, of course, meant the number of concepts within these Higher Laws far outstripped lower ones.

Spacetime was even higher than its individual parts, and when it came to something like the Space-Time River, it wasn't possible to describe its effects on reality without breaking down the very fundamental workings of the universe.



As for its opponent, it was even more complicated for an entirely different reason.

Weapon intents were a human contribution to the universe. The Laws that they represented were actually incorporated into the universe's original workings due to the success and widespread usage of such weapon intents.

Therefore, while the visible concepts within weapon intents were scarce and simple, their actual meaning on a universal scale was extraordinarily grand.

Only those like Su Ren, who reached extreme heights in their professions, could tap into these elusive meanings and utilize them, transforming weapon intent into a magisterial Law unlike anything seen before.

Such was the cause of Su Ren's special mana.

Nevertheless, Damien and Su Ren didn't move in the slightest.

On the screens showcasing the battle and in reality itself, they stood completely still.

But currently, a scene that could only be seen through their eyes, the eyes of those who had unearthed such profound concepts, was taking place.



The physical manifestation was like an enchanting dance performed by the most beautiful women to ever live.

The Space-Time River flowed freely through the air, unrestrained by any and all. Its waters looped and twirled, twisted and snaked through the air like a lithe and ethereal fairy above the mundane world.

Meanwhile, Su Ren's blade intent formed into an ethereal avatar that accompanied the river in its dance, its movements far more precise and ordered like a trained professional who had been dancing for countless years in practice.

They were equally otherworldly, yet their magnificence contrasted in the most perfect way, as if uniting Heaven and Earth in a sacrosanct ritual.

It wasn't a clash in any sense. It wasn't some world-breaking scene, nor was it impressive from an outside perspective.

It was almost embarrassing to watch.

Yet, for Damien and Su Ren, this experience was one they'd never give up.

They wished this dance would never end. They wished they could forever gaze upon this bewitching entwinement of cosmic forces and remain enraptured by its heavenly aura.



Yet, all things had to come to an end eventually.

A final blow containing their absolute everything, both delivered as promised.

But before today, neither of them knew that ferocious combat could be so divine.

No, what they just witnessed was a glimpse of what it meant to be truly divine.

'The peak...' I think you should take a look at

They had the same thought as they remained arrested many seconds after the fluctuations of their Laws died down.

All practitioners chased Divinity, but until they reached that final instance of Supremacy when Divinity was just a few steps away, it was impossible for them to ever understand what Divinity truly meant.

It wasn't a generalization, but an established truth of the universe that was formed after untold generations of practitioners lived and died.

Yet, today, two beings who both only recently stepped into the 9 revolutions before Divinity saw a hint of something they were never meant to see.



Damien and Su Ren, while they had no interaction with each other before today, were actually very similar, especially in their strong mental fortitude built through harrowing experiences.

For them to be frozen, unable to form coherent thoughts as they did everything they could to regain their lucidity, only further affirmed the absurdity of the situation.

The first banquet hall once again mirrored their emotions, as the air was stained in confusion.

Comprehending a unique Law was a rarity in itself. 99% of the universe's practitioners had affinities for base laws, and of those in the final 1%, an even smaller percentage managed to rise to prominence.

The strength of the experts in the hall didn't matter. Their inborn talent disallowed them from ever understanding what they witnessed.

There were five, however, who didn't share their feelings.

Four of them were Executioner level elders who specialized in weapon intents.

Though Su Ren's blade intent didn't exactly align with their practice methods, the vague vestiges of his unbelievable blade intent they were able to glean gave them unlimited new comprehensions. Without a single word, they left for their personal quarters to make the most of this blessing.



As for the final one, it was a beautiful woman who, coincidentally enough, almost married one of the geniuses pictured.

The only other spatial practitioner at the Grand Assembly for now, and the only other Celestial Damien had ever met, Leona, the Star Master of Azure Rain Star.

The path she chose was one of stagnation. She, like the Golden Dragon Emperor and many noble rulers, sacrificed her talent for her people and ruled Azure Rain Star without fully exploring the potential of the Celestial class.

She never thought she would improve again.

But somehow, every time she saw that man, she would experience a miracle.

The first time they met, his departure made her realize the depths her class could have, which she couldn't have done without meeting another Celestial.

And this time, she finally found a path to explore those depths.

The five of them were the main beneficiaries of the preceding event, aside from the two directly involved, but they weren't the only ones who gained something from it.

In fact, there was one more.



The Angel, Luciel.

His eyes maintained their unreadable light, and the smile on his face remained unchanged, but his thoughts were swirling chaotically.

'What was that? Although I could not sense their final attacks, the Holy Light Realm reacted extremely. Could it be...they alarmed the spirit with their power?'

The spirit of the Holy Light Realm was originally the artifact spirit of a God-ranked artifact that was transferred into the Holy Light Realm when it was created.

That spirit had accompanied several Demigods over tens of thousands of years of existence, and even the Angel Race's best geniuses were never able to attract its attention.

'The last time the spirit showed a reaction was...'

Luciel's eyes hardened.

'...when the Void Emperor made his first appearance.'

Chapter 987 Blade [5]



"Huu..."

"Huu..."

Two deep exhales resounded as one. Damien and Su Ren closed their eyes before slowly allowing them to flutter open, clear and unperturbed.

The two men stared at each other for a single moment before their faces broke into wide grins.

"That was amazing!" Damien exclaimed fervently.

"Indeed, I never thought I would witness such a sight in my life," Su Ren said, his voice steady and filled with reverence.

"Is that the height we aim for?"

Damien shook his head, an air of confidence surrounding his body. Nothing changed, but something about him felt different. He carried in his natural gait the slight aura of an emperor above the mortal world.

"No, we're aiming higher," he responded firmly.



Su Ren's eyes widened.

Indeed, he was not aiming for a glimpse of Divinity, his goal was to surpass the peak of everything.

A slight chuckle left his mouth.

"I cannot argue with that," he said in concession, straightening his back and continuing, "Allow me to reintroduce myself. My name is Su Ren. I belong to no faction and only hold loyalty to one Master. Though I rarely leave the mountain, I have been bestowed a title by the universe for my efforts: Blade God."

He walked up to Damien with his hand outstretched.

Damien looked down with a smile and firmly shook it.

"Damien Void. I don't have any crazy titles, just a few embarrassing ones, but it's an honor to make your acquaintance."

The two nodded at each other and let go of their grasps.

Damien stretched lightly and got reaccustomed to his own body.



He never left it in the first place, but the pull of that law collision was literally soul-snatching. The reason he and Su Ren ended up in such terrible states was because they were pulled into their law manifestations.

They simultaneously viewed the phenomenon from both internal and external perspectives, which was extremely taxing on the mind.

'After exerting myself so much, I only received what could barely be considered a glimpse of the Divine, and of that glimpse, what I could retain was...'

'...no, I think my retention was actually pretty satisfactory.'

He smiled inwardly as he clenched his fist, feeling the definitive change in his mana.

What he gained was a hint, just like Leona, of a path forward. He had too much to do at the Grand Assembly to act on it immediately, but the feeling fresh in his memory was currently being immortalized.

Damien sent the Breath of Nothingness into his own spiritual world, severing the memory of the past battle and storing it in the Mind Prison so it would never fade.

'It's good that I have more control of the Mind Prison now. If it was back when I first made it, I would've forgotten that memory's existence entirely.'



As a consequence of removing that memory from the stream of memories existing in his head, he truly couldn't remember its contents, however, he still clearly understood what it represented and the fact that it was being stored in the Mind Prison, which represented an extreme level of mental strength.

'Now that that's been dealt with, Blade God, huh...so this is the level I'm at.'

Damien didn't comment on the grand title, as it didn't have anything to do with his relationship with Su Ren, but he surely knew what it meant.

How could he not? Anyone who'd ever seen the Dimensional Leaderboard would clearly remember the title that had been in the number one spot on that ranking for over a decade...

...and everyone who witnessed it would forever remember the day he was dethroned by the enemy.

'The Saint Emperor's son, I haven't had the chance to meet him yet, but he's supposed to be stronger than that guy?'

The Saint King never truly entered his eyes until this very moment.

'I should prepare for the worst.'



With that thought, Damien returned his attention to reality, where he suddenly became the only witness to an extremely comedic situation.

Currently, the domineering and stalwart Su Ren was helplessly collapsed on his knees with some kind of sloth-like animal wrapped around his head.

"Senior Brother, how could you do something so dangerous?!"

The sloth-like little girl cried out loud enough to scare all nearby beasts away. She hugged Su Ren's head as tight as she could and pounded on his back in anger.

"Xiao Yue, calm down already. It was not dangerous at all," Su Ren's muffled voice rang out, only making Xiao Yue angrier. I think you should take a look at

"Senior Brother, you are not alone in the mountain anymore! You have Xiao Yue now, and you can't leave me alone! I..."

Damien tuned out at that point. With an ironic expression on his face, he waited until her rant ended and Su Ren was finally able to pull her off of him.

He stood up and patted the first off his body before cupping his fist towards Damien.



"I'm sorry you had to witness that," he said, slightly embarrassed.

Damien shook his head.

"It's fine, I understand," he responded, memories of his little disciple and sister popping into his head. "I thought you were unaffiliated, though?"

"I am,"

"She calls you Senior Brother?"

"I have tried to stop her, but it has proved impossible."

"I totally get it."

Damien patted his new friend on the shoulder in solidarity. After all, he fell into the same trap when he met Xue'er and somehow ended up with a new sibling.

"So your name is Xiao Yue?" Damien asked, turning to the little girl.



"Hmph, only Senior Brother can call me Xiao Yue! It's 'Princess' Yue to you!"

She harrumphed.

Damien chuckled slightly. "Alright then, Xiao Yue, I have a little sister around your age. Would you like to meet her?"

"Why should I care about your little sister? This Princess only likes Senior Brother!"

"Xiao Yue, phrasing."

"Hmph!"

Su Ren shrugged helplessly.

"She's an orphan I found in a secret realm. I eventually sent her to a sect to grow, but now that she's seen me again, she refuses to let go. It's not what you're thinking."

"You sure?"



"100%."

Damien shrugged back and turned to Xiao Yue again.

"You know, our Xue'er is only at the peak of 3rd class right now. She's never met someone her age who is such a genius. Wouldn't it be cool if you could become her role model?" he spoke coaxingly.

"Hmmm..." she hummed, clearly moved.

"She might even call you Big Sister, and you can be to her what your Senior Brother is to you."

Xiao Yue's eyes immediately brightened.

"I can be like Senior Brother?!"

"Yup! But only if you can be a proper big sister. Do you think you can do it?"

"Of course I can! There's nothing this Princess can't do!"

"Great!" Damien exclaimed, winking at Su Ren as he received the man's silent thanks.



'I'm such a genius. The only thing that could possibly combat a teenage girl...is another teenage girl! Xue'er, I choose you!'

Damien snapped his finger, and his Xue'ermon spawned into the battlefield!

"Big brother? What's up?" she said, rubbing her eyes and adapting to the new environment.

"Ah, nothing," Damien responded, rubbing her head, "there's just someone I want you to meet."

"Hm?" Xue'er turned her attention in the direction Damien was indicating, and her eyes immediately narrowed.

"An enemy."

Chapter 988 Blade [6]

"Hi, my name is Xiao Yue, but you can just call me big sister!" Xiao Yue said, introducing herself to Xue'er.

Xue'er immediately turned back to Damien.



"Big brother, how could you betray me like this?!" She exclaimed, huffing and pouting as she glared at him hatefully.

"E-eh?!" Damien stammered.

"Who is this girl?!" Xue'er interrogated.

"Uh, she's my friend's little sister. I thought the two of you would be good friends..."

"Eh?"

Xue'er's brow quirked curiously.

"So you aren't selling me off?"

"Why the f— why would I ever do that?!" Damien declaimed, appalled by her wild assumption.

"But Uncle Bai said that if I don't practice hard, you'll sell me off..."

"He said WHAT?!"



Damien rubbed his temple and sighed defeatedly.

'That damn old man. Just what is he thinking saying something like that to a kid?'

Xue'er grew up in the Sanctuary, so she was quite naive to the reality of the outside world, which she'd only heard about in stories.

Because of her tragic past, Damien tried his best not to expose her to things like death and violence, but maybe sheltering her so much was a—

"Hehe~ just kidding!"

"Huh?"

Xue'er stuck her tongue out playfully.

"Actually, Uncle Bai told me to tell you that. He said you'd make a great expression if I did, and he was right! Hehehe~"

'Fuuuuuuuck, I'm going to kill that old man!'



Damien gave Xue'er a firm knock on the head before wryly turning to Su Ren and Xiao Yue.

"Brother."

Su Ren patted his new friend on the shoulder in solidarity. He now understood. This was truly a brother in arms.

Finally, someone who understood his pain!

As Damien experienced déjà vu from his current situation, Xue'er ran away to escape punishment and started chatting with Xiao Yue.

The conversation went something like:

"If you call me big sister, this princess will never mistreat you!"

"Hmph, why should you be the big sister? I'm taller than you, and prettier than you, so I should be the big sister!"

"But I'm stronger than you!"



"Grrr, but my brother is stronger than yours!"

"You're lying! Senior Brother is the strongest genius in the universe!"

"That's only because my big brother didn't want that spot. Your senior brother should be thanking him!"

"Hmph!"

"Hmph!"

It was enough to make a grown man lose his mind, which is why Damien and Su Ren left the girls to their own devices and switched their focus elsewhere.

"You said Xiao Yue is part of a sect, right? Which one?" Damien asked.

"The Divine Feather Sect," Su Ren replied, "My Master is close to their Sect Master, so I was able to leave her there comfortably."



"Hmm, Divine Feather Sect...if I'm remembering right, they're just under the Holy Land level. I'm sure they won't be too happy about this outcome," Damien muttered, glancing over at the girls who couldn't decide whether to argue or get along.

Su Ren shook his head in disagreement. "Xiao Yue's master is trustworthy. He likely only wished for her to witness a clash of greater forces. After all, looking at her level, would any sane person think she had a chance?"

Damien hummed in agreement. Just as Xue'er was 15 and at the peak of 3rd class, Xiao Yue was 16 and just recently passed her Universe Baptism. Her talent was immense, but her real strength wasn't enough to hurt a fly in the Holy Light Realm.

'That only goes to show how much they trust Su Ren...alright, it should be fine. I'll have to meet the Divine Feather Sect's group later.'

"What's your plan now?" He asked, changing the topic. I think you should take a look at

"I only came to this realm to find worthy opponents, however, there are none other than you. Now, I will help Xiao Yue look for treasures." Su Ren said after a moment of thought.

"I see..."

Damien quickly summoned his mana and drew a map of the secret realm in the air, blocking off a certain area in the far corner near the golden pyramid.



"I recommend this area. There should be 50 or 60 Chaos-rank treasures and at least one God-rank artifact there. As for the rest of the realm, don't hope for much."

Su Ren's brow raised in intrigue. "Don't tell me you plan to..."

"Shhh...it's already been a few minutes since our battle ended. The forest is crowded with eyes."

"Hmph, why should I mind them? What can they do?"

"Haha, I mean, that's true. They only saw the aftermath of the battle rather than our actual combat, yet they're still too scared to approach. However, it's not just them watching, is it?"

"Fair enough."

Su Ren panned an indifferent gaze through the surrounding forest, causing several bushes to shake as those hiding within their leaves jerked.

"Then, I shall take my leave now. Let us meet again at a later date," he finally said, once more giving Damien a bow.

Damien returned it in kind with a smile. "Of course. Ah, but would you mind doing me a favor?"



"What is it?"

"Hmm, never mind."

Damien shook his head, dismissing what he was about to say.

Originally, he was going to ask Su Ren to take Xue'er along with him so she could get some real-world experience, but he immediately realized it was a stupid idea.

When was the last time Xue'er actually came to Grand Heavens Boundary?

She was born in a secret realm, and she was raised in an isolated world.

Damien brought her out with the singular thought to distract Xiao Yue and introduce Xue'er to a genius her age, but his actions were far deeper than that.

First off, he openly teleported a stranger into the Holy Light Realm through unknown means. The Sanctuary's existence was too improbable to be guessed, but those outside would definitely be curious about his methods.



He needed to think up a valid excuse, and while he did so...

He would give Xue'er the best possible first experience as a genius of the universe she could possibly have.

Damien and Su Ren wrapped up their conversation and pulled their respective children away from each other, bidding farewell and moving in opposite directions.

"Hmph, that Xiao Xiao is so annoying! Big brother, I don't need a friend like her," Xue'er complained as they left the area.

"Haha, you're saying that, but calling her by a nickname? Isn't that a bit hypocritical?"

"Nope! Actually, Auntie taught me that xiao means small in big brother's homeland, so I call her Xiao Xiao, because she's double small!"

"Pfft...! I don't think that's how that works, but let's roll with it anyway! Which auntie taught you that?"

"Auntie Elvira, of course!"

"Eh? Who would've thought!"



Damien was genuinely surprised. When did Elvira start studying up on Earth?

And it wasn't just to the level of knowing Damien's homeland of America, but the entirety of Earth.

After all, Damien wasn't Chinese, nor did he speak Chinese. It could be said that Elvira managed to become even more knowledgeable on his home planet than he was!

It was heartwarming to know that she'd been making these efforts without a single word to him, just as she did with everything else.

If it wasn't for Elvira, Theavel wouldn't have become what it currently was. She was his most trustworthy aid, and someone whose back he knew would always support him,

Wasn't that why she was the 1st of the 5 Emperors?

Damien happily conversed with Xue'er, learning more about Theavel from the perspective of its residents and learning more about what Xue'er had been up to in the time they hadn't been together.

Her progress was almost reality-breaking. She managed to reach the peak of 3rd class in only 2 years, not slowing down at all from when she was in the earlier stages of power.



'It's time...'

He couldn't delay it anymore.

'Xue'er needs to make her debut in Grand Heavens Boundary. Now that she's working towards her Baptism, I can't selfishly hold her back anymore.'

'It's time for her to enter the true battleground of geniuses.'

Chapter 989 Shrine [1]

Elena's original plan was simple, at least in its first stage.

The first step was to monopolize the treasures of the Holy Light Realm. Of course, the real meat of the plan came after this step ended, but it was essential for the days ahead to take hold of every treasure he possibly could.

However, Damien now had a secondary goal: to use this secret realm as a stage for Xue'er, and if possible, initiate her Baptism under the eyes of all those experts outside.

Xue'er needed to make a proper wave upon her introduction, or she wouldn't be taken seriously at all. The current Xue'er was naive and easily exploitable, something unacceptable if she wanted to survive without his umbrella shielding her from the rain.



It hurt him to even consider it, but he needed to expose her to the cruelty of reality while she was still under his complete protection, so that when the day came when she decided to leave and experience it on her own, he could have a semblance of confidence.

That day would surely come. As an extreme peak expert himself, Damien was perfectly clear on the importance of forging one's own way.

This was, in fact, the only way to grow in the extreme peak and beyond.

'If the path she picks is to follow me, I'm sure she'll grow fine and bloom magnificently, but how can it compare to what she could achieve on her own? I hate feeling like I'm making similar decisions to my old man, but it's not about me anymore.'

"Huu..."

He shelved the thought for now. That was a decision to be made in the far future, and for now, he only needed to focus on what he needed to do.

"Xue'er, since you've come out for the first time, do you want to have some fun?" he asked with a slight smile.

"Fun? What kind?" she questioned back.



"The kind where we blow a bunch of stuff up and steal even more!"

"Oooh, that's my favorite kind of fun!"

"Haha, as expected of my little sister!"

The demonic duo happily walked through the secret realm, plotting deviously along the way.

The advent of a little girl who acted like a mini Damien...

The universe was in for a treat, that much was for certain.

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The golden pyramid, as those geniuses learned as they entered it, was called the Tomb of Ayakashi.

According to the story told my the tomb's walls, it once sealed 100,000 demonic spirits and was erected opposite the Holy Light Tomb to weaken them until they eventually dispersed after countless years.



After all, these demonic spirits were once peak entities that tormented countless races, and they were far too ethereal for them to be killed easily.

Over time, several tens of thousands of them dispersed, returning to the heavens, but an unknown number of them were still sealed within the tomb, awaiting their eventual demise.

The trials of the tomb were plentiful, and mostly related to the concept of demonic spirits and illusions.

The geniuses who rushed in at the very beginning were still stuck in the first corridor of the tomb, unable to get past the tens of trials that existed within a few steps of each other.

The tomb was designed to never be infiltrated, and while the Holy Light Tomb was rebuilt by them, the Tomb of Ayakashi was the original tomb they encountered in the original mystic realm.

When the Angels raided it the first time, they spent an immense amount of time in preparation and avoided thousands of the trials and traps in the tomb, which meant they remained to this day, awaiting those who fell in their grasp.

It was silly in a sense. There were many traps, but they weren't unavoidable. As long as one took the correct path, one could avoid every single trap in the tomb and reach its center in an hour at most.

However, it was easier said than done. Unless one possessed the All-Seeing Eyes or a similar perception ability, it was impossible for them to see the swerving and patternless path they were meant to take.



Elena surpassed most geniuses in many facets, but perception wasn't one of them. Her perceptive ability could only be considered above average at best.

Her mental specialty was instead intuition. I think you should take a look at

Patterns were present everywhere. Once Elena experienced a situation enough times, she was able to intuitively understand the patterns and plot the best path forward.

Unfortunately, the Tomb of Ayakashi was made opposing order. To contain the most chaotic of spirits, only total chaos could be used.

Order was simply too predictable, something Elena's talent essentially proved.

When she first entered the tomb, she was able to traverse the path relatively easily by relying on her strong mental fortitude, however, upon moving 100 steps, the floor below her dropped out and she fell into a completely dark space.

She kept her eyes closed and her awareness spread thinly around her.

The illusions impacted her mind constantly, showing her horrifying imagery both of those she knew and of general scenarios of tragedy.

They wanted to see her break, to see her succumb to their will and become their puppet.



She could hear their voices calling out to her.

"You are worthless," they said.

"You are destined to be useless," they said.

"You will die without accomplishing anything," they said.

"Unless you accept our presence."

She would've been swayed a few months ago.

Back when she was still doubting if she was doing things the right way, back when she was still traversing this cold world on her own, perhaps she would've entertained their voices a little.

But no more.

Meeting Damien was the trigger, but it wasn't the reason.



The reason was rather the blooming of her new title, something that would've happened with or without his involvement in the War of Beast Emperor Star.

With that event, Elena formed a direct connection with the universe's source of Life. She gained "validation" from the universe and the Void, these forces that silently encouraged her and told her to grow as she desired.

It was hard growing without a guiding influence. Damien had the Void that removed any need he had for one, but Elena had nothing but her own thoughts.

Thoughts that were now backed by Life in the same way Damien was backed by the Void.

Voom!

A powerful surge of Life Laws shot in all directions, centered on her body. The vigorous aura illuminated the darkness and tore the voices to shreds, disallowing them from nearing her.

Skeletons and crazed writings littered the ground. Far more disgusting objects joined them, but Elena paid them no mind.

She walked to the center of the dark space, where a dim glow lit a nondescript shrine surrounded by skeletons, still in the prostrated position they held until death.



"Transcended Death Shrine..." Elena muttered, reading off the text on the main tome.

Her eyes widened. Her pupils shrunk into dots as her eyes glazed over.

Elena's mind was transported to a new space, and her body...

Her body was left unattended in the resting place of demonic spirits.

What could possibly go wrong?

Chapter 990 Shrine [2]

Elena opened her eyes to a world of blackish-grey, almost ash-colored rock.

It was relatively flat, to the point where she could see the curve of the planet on the horizon, but there was a scarce amount of erected stone pillars and other structures formed over years of weathering.

As she stood there, Elena was forced to wonder:

'What does this have to do with the Transcended Death Shrine?'



Her expression was solemn as she walked through the dark world and tried to understand it.

'It isn't safe to leave my body alone in that unknown place. I need to get back as soon as possible, or I'll likely lose it forever.'

She remembered the prostrated figures she saw around the shrine and shuddered as she thought about ending up like them.

If they were her prospective future, her current situation was the cause of their strange deaths.

'If it was an illusion, at least the method of escaping would be more streamlined, but this is far too real to be an illusion. It's more like a separated reality, a space a level above secret realms.'

If she didn't remember her mind getting sucked into this world, she would've thought her avatar body was made of flesh and blood.

'That is the worst-case scenario already. If the environment is tangible, my spiritual world will take damage as if it's tangible as well. If my avatar breaks, my soul will collapse.'

Understanding the situation didn't take long once she set aside time to think, but finding her way out was a different story.

She'd been walking for what seemed like 2 hours or so and the scenery hadn't changed one bit.



An hour ago, she started paying attention to the protrusions and structures that occasionally presented themselves as well, but she soon realized there was no pattern among them.

'The answer is either in the heavens, underground, or not here at all.'

Of the three options, the underground seemed most unlikely.

Bang!

Elena stomped her foot on the ground, watching her spiritual intent spread through the earth and disperse.

'With my strength, entering the subterranean world would be impossible. If the shrine was a hostile entity, this would've made it obvious that the answer is underground, however...'

...was the shrine truly hostile?

The words "Transcended Death" didn't allude to evil, nor to darkness in any sense.



While transcending death seemed to be a battle with the concept of death, a constant effort to evade its embrace and live another day, the concept was far less related to death than the concept of life.

After all, who would desire to transcend death other than those obsessed with life?

Those who accepted death never moved to transcend it. They moved with other purposes, and eventually transcended the concept as a byproduct of their efforts.

In this case, rather than saying they transcended death, it was better to say they ascended to a higher state of life.

The concept of Transcended Death, at least in Elena's eyes as she internalized it, was an extremely different vein of Life Laws than what she specialized in.

It was Life that oppressed Death.

'The league of this concept is far higher than what I've been able to comprehend on my own. If it wasn't for the stacked enhancements of the Genesis Bead and my new title, I wouldn't have been able to sense it.'

She looked into the sky. It was dark and starless, just as bleak and desolate as the earth below.

If this world was not a test, but rather a physical manifestation of the concept engraved on the shrine...



Pah!

Elena jumped off the ground, but found that flying was disallowed entirely.

'Aha, so I'm right.'

With a smile, she wrapped her body in fluctuations of Life. Using the concepts of the Law as both a shield and a propeller, Elena lifted herself into the air. I think you should take a look at

The previous suppression immediately vanished.

'I knew it.'

The Transcended Death Shrine was never a hostile entity. Merely, it was too profound for the common man to understand, which eventually led those who tried to their deaths.

'If one stays on the ground, it's like embracing death. The longer it takes to realize the safety of the heavens, the closer one becomes to death, until they eventually embrace it willingly, prostrating to its manifestation in the shrine.'



The heavens could be called the birth giver of life, the arbiter of samsara, or as many other titles as one wanted to create.

Because the concept of the heavens and the concept of universal will were one and the same.

As Elena ascended the skies, the suppressive force pierced her defenses and entered her body, converting into strips of comprehension that she digested as soon as she received them.

The higher she went, the greater the reward she attained. By the time she could see the dark world's atmosphere in the near distance, she felt like she could almost grasp the true meaning of Transcended Death.

Unfortunately, her strength was merely at the peak of 4th class. She felt a wall blocking her from going any higher, a wall formed not only from her own exhaustion of mental strength, but also from the realm's refusal to grant her more.

'Eh? I guess the realm spirit is a bit salty?' She thought with a wry smile.

'Well, I can't blame it. If I was the spirit of a realm that had never been understood for several tens of thousands of years, I would also get arrogant.'

She shook her head and cleared her thoughts. Regardless of the realm's intentions, she was at her limit already.



'Transcended Death...you might view it as an all-powerful concept, but to me, it's just another step on my path to finding the source of Life. Even without your help, I will conquer it someday.'

Elena pressed her hand forward, flexing her fingers as she commanded the Life Mana within her.

'Shatter this. It is time to go.'

Voom!

Her mana burst forth and filled the atmosphere with vibrant white light.

The greatest gain Elena plundered from Transcended Death was simple.

Attack power.

The Life Laws she practiced until this point rarely had attacking moves, more focused on healing and vitality.

Transcended Death was a concept built on oppression, thus, Elena's Life Laws gained an oppressive quality when it was incorporated into them.



And using this oppressive quality, she pressed down on the atmosphere until it cracked, giving her leeway to reconnect to the Real Plane.

With one last bow of gratitude to the hidden realm spirit, Elena vanished, returning her mind to her physical body.

The realm went silent, and a few seconds later, a small brush of wind swirled into the air, revealing the figure of a young woman with eyes clearer than any spring.

She stared into the space where Elena disappeared, tilting her head curiously.

"Is she the one?" The girl asked.

She received no response, but remained unperturbed.

"I see. Then I will continue observing."

The girl took a few steps back, and her body merged into the realm, vanishing from perception.

She was the very realm spirit Elena noticed before she left the place.



However, unbeknownst to Elena, she wasn't a realm spirit at all,

Instead, she was a manifested spirit representing the concept of Transcended Death itself, almost like a sentient Law Concept.

Elena's meeting with this entity meant far more to her future training than she'd ever imagine.