

Void 991

Chapter 991 Arrival [1]

'Life Chains.'

The second Elena returned to her physical body, she attacked.

Without any specific target in mind, she wildly flung chains of life mana through the surroundings, blasting the air apart and destroying the rock below.

[SKREEEE!]

[AHHHHHH!]

[HUMAN, STOP!]

Ethereal shrieks rang out. There was no physical presence, nor did Elena feel any impact when she struck these entities, but their screams were enough to alert her to their presence.

'Explode.'

She slammed her foot on the ground, shooting a pulse of mana into the earth and allowing it to spread thinly before exploding outward.

The rocky ground broke apart, waves of Life Mana flowing out of it and filling the entire space with a thick vital aura that, to these demonic spirits, was a curse.

"Hmph. You disgusting things. You actually dare attempt to steal my body?!" Elena roared.

She could feel the demonic aura in her veins, a clear sign that they tried to corrupt her into one of them while her mind was gone. If she hadn't come back in time, her body would've truly become their possession.

At that point, the worst possible scenario she could think of would likely be only one of the terrible things they did with their newly acquired physical presence.

On the other hand, since she was able to come out in time, these demonic spirits served as the perfect targets to test her new offensive strength!

'This is great! My base attack power is almost twice as strong as it used to be, and my Law Concepts are all now backed by the ferocity of Transcended Death. My mana has moved a step further in being the bane of dark energies.'

Elena's sharp gaze cut through the dark space, locating the hundreds of demonic spirits that swirled around her cautiously, no longer daring to approach after seeing their brethren slaughtered like chickens.

"Hmph."

Elena harrumphed, not bothering with them any longer. She paid her final respects to the Transcended Death Shrine and walked to the end of the dark space, punching a hole in the wall and entering a new corridor within the depths of the pyramid.

'I couldn't see it at all before. Could it be that only those who can comprehend the shrine can use this path?'

Elena realized quickly that she was nowhere near the original route she was taking before she fell into the dark space.

She was at least several hundred meters deeper into the earth, and the structure of the pyramid around her was far more decrepit and unkempt, with various small creatures skittering through the corridors and nondescript overgrown flora infecting the walls.

'I don't think we were supposed to come down here.' Elena thought wryly,

As far as the temple hieroglyphs told, the greatest treasures of the Tomb of Ayakashi resided at its very peak, so all those other geniuses were ascending with all their strength to this very moment.

Who would've thought the pyramid was actually hiding such a large portion of its body underneath the earth?

Even if those geniuses knew of this, they wouldn't be able to reach this place unless they had a similar experience to her.

Which meant...

'Let's see what kind of treasures the Angel Race was chasing in the original Mystic Realm.'

Elena moved with purpose, killing demonic spirits and avoiding the tomb's traps with as much efficiency as she could produce.

And slowly but surely, she made her way to the very central point of the tomb.

The true burial site of the demonic spirits.

A starship docked at the entrance of Luxurion.

The experts who were focused on the geniuses in the Holy Light Realm didn't notice it immediately, but as soon as one caught sight of the crest on its side, all the rest turned their attention as well.

This phenomenon became especially pronounced when Luciel personally went out to greet the incoming guests.

A portion of the starship's body turned holographic, revealing those inside.

The first to step out was a beautifully handsome man with striking red eyes, the king of demons, Lucifer. I think you should take a look at

He was followed by Parsiel, his angelic counterpart, and the Royal Demon Clan's elders and geniuses.

"Lucifer, Parsiel, it has been a while. Have you been well?" Luciel said with a smile, welcoming the duo.

"Clan Head," Parsiel said as he bowed in respect.

Meanwhile, Lucifer returned Luciel's smile and shook the man's hand.

"It has indeed been a while. Have you been ruling your clan properly, dear brother?"

Luciel's eyes narrowed slightly.

"I would prefer if you didn't say anything that could cause misunderstandings."

"Hm? Misunderstandings? But there is nothing but truth in my words."

"You—"

Luciel's words suddenly halted as his attention was drawn back to the starship.

Suddenly, the air stilled as a thick and viscous aura filled it.

It wasn't an exerted aura, but the natural aura of strength that existed around a strong Demigod.

An old man stepped out of the ship. His appearance was that of a wise sage, but his eyes held the domineering light of a war emperor.

Flanking him were five elders, including three more Demigods, as well as five younger geniuses, three women, one man, and...a little girl roughly 10 years old.

And among them, there wasn't a single unfamiliar face.

"They are...?" Luciel asked curiously, turning to Lucifer, who shrugged.

"Don't ask me. They're your subordinate's guests."

"Parsiel?"

"Yes, Clan Head. As you know, I left years ago to contact forces I believed would aid us in the coming battles. These are—"

"Parsiel, there is no need for you to introduce us. We are more than capable of speaking for ourselves," the old man at the head of the group interrupted.

He walked up to Luciel, facing the Angel directly without a hint of disturbance in his eyes or aura.

"I am Tian Yang, the Void Old Immortal. We from the Human Domain appreciate your invitation to this grand event."

His words were sincere, but the undertone behind them was slightly taunting, just barely laced with mockery that normal people couldn't sense.

"Hmm...." Luciel hummed, glancing over the group.

"The forces of the Human Domain indeed should not be neglected. The achievements of your ancestors are worthy of respect."

"Hmph, haven't you heard that the new generation always surpasses the old? I'd advise you not to look down on us."

The one who spoke was the female among the two Demigods, Tang Lingzi.

She and the Drunken Old Immortal stepped up, silently supporting Tian Yang with their presence.

Luciel showed no change of expression as he guided the group into the main hall, however, the same couldn't be said about the experts watching the interaction from afar.

The Human Domain.

It was widely looked down upon and regarded as the weakest of Grand Heavens Boundary's remaining sectors. Nobody present believed the Human Domain would show its face at this assembly...

...and they surely didn't expect them to show it so fiercely.

To make their first introduction by flaunting three powerful Demigods wasn't a courtesy, but a taunt.

They were practically screaming in the ears of these experts:

"You think the Human Domain is trash? Then come test our fists and prove it!"

Chapter 992 Arrival [2]

Tian Yang lead his group through the halls of Luxurion, standing side by side with Luciel as they entered the first banquet hall.

The hall was filled with a pregnant silence as those within cast a variety of gazes at the group.

Gazes filled with disdain, with mockery, with interest, and even those with just a hint of fear targeted the Human Domain's people, almost as if testing their grit.

"Hmph."

Tian Yang snorted lightly, diapering the invisible pressure as he walked through the crowd, followed by the rest who didn't lose confident and upright postures once.

In all honesty, the experts in this hall were not solely good people. A large portion of them were greedy and self-centered, uncaring for the fates of those who didn't benefit them.

To these people, the Human Domain represented an unknown threat. No matter how much they were looked down upon, the tales of their past deeds were enough to make these people wary.

After all, the Human Domain may have fallen, but its people were clearly still standing strong.

However, they were forced to hold back their desire to humiliate these people and establish dominance early.

Because the Human Domain forces didn't arrive alone, they arrived along with the Royal Demon Clan and were personally invited by a member of the Heavenly Clan!

This kind of silent support was hard to read, as it wasn't known how far those large influences would go to protect the ones they were backing.

Therefore, they needed to observe the situation until they had a proper understanding of how these powers were operating before doing anything.

This led to a silence unbroken as Tian Yang and his group reached the front of the hall while Luciel calmly and smilingly filled them in on what had happened thus far at the Grand Assembly.

Meanwhile, completely unnoticed due to the extremely prominent presence of those from the Human Domain, another force entered the first banquet hall of Luxurion.

They were the Sapphire Soul Clan, a mid-sized force in Soul World that was led by a council of 9 Supremes and only a single Demigod Ancestor.

They were already prepared for a lukewarm reception. They didn't have much status, and were lucky to even be allowed into the first portion of the Grand Assembly, a blessing they only received from being a subordinate sect of Nirvana Soul Palace, one of the strongest Spirit Race forces.

However, the reception they received wasn't just lukewarm, it was colder than ice.

Not a single expert in the hall noticed their entrance.

Their eyes turned to the center of attention, the reason for this humiliation that they were silently suffering.

A small group that didn't look remarkable at all.

Upon further observation and learning the identities of those people, the head of the group, a Supreme named Thael's eyes narrowed slyly.

'The Human Domain is a relic of the past, but they still have a strong reputation. If our disciples can defeat their geniuses, our reputation will rise immensely.'

The Sapphire Soul Sect's ultimate goal was to escape the shadow of their mother sect. This Grand Assembly, in their eyes, was the perfect place to start working towards this goal.

"Gumhar, take your fellow disciples and test those Human Domain geniuses. If you think you can beat them, crush them thoroughly."

His sound transmission entered the ears of the sect's top disciple, Gumhar, who nodded with a vicious grin.

"Understood, Master."

He motioned for the four behind him to follow him and pushed his way through the crowd, his actions finally alerting others to the Sapphire Soul Sect's presence.

Though Gumhar was being extremely rude to those he didn't have the status to offend, nobody stopped his charge.

How could these experts not guess his intentions?

Since they couldn't probe the Human Domain on their own, why would they stop someone from doing it for them?

Gumhar made it to the front of the crowd soon enough, and immediately stomped his foot on the ground.

"I won't accept this!" He roared.

Tian Yang, Lucifer, and their groups turned their attention to Gumhar at once, bored looks on their faces.

Gumhar felt a bead of sweat forming on his temple, but he quickly ignored it. He knew how important his role was!

Besides, he really did want to conquer the Human Domain's geniuses.

Especially the three women among them, each a peerless beauty.

"The Human Domain is just a pathetic relic! You people should be embarrassed showing your faces here! If the Human Domain wants to help in the war, you should just send some beauties to entertain our hardworking soldiers! Is there anything else you're good for?!"

His taunting shouts echoed through the walls, provoking many reactions from the crowd, but none at all from the Human Domain.

Or rather, there was one.

Four of the younger geniuses and the two elders who weren't yet Demigods immediately scurried away from a certain woman, who stood with a bright smile on her beautiful face.

She clapped her hands happily.

"You're right! Our Human Domain can definitely provide several beauties for those brave soldiers on the frontlines!" She exclaimed, eagerly supporting Gumhar's words.

"Y-yeah!" He stammered, feeling a little strange. "It's good that you know your place!" I think you should take a look at

"Yup!" The beauty continued.

"Then, here's the first! Does anyone wish to purchase her services?"

Gumhar was forced to gulp as he heard the words, following her finger to find the beauty she was referring to with anticipation written all over his face...

'Hm? Where is she pointing?'

...until he was forced back to reality.

The woman's finger was pointing at...him?

"Why is everyone looking at me like that?"

He glanced around, looking to Thael in confusion, only to see his elder's pale and horror-struck expression.

"What's going on? Guys...?"

Gumhar turned around, facing his four comrades.

Four figures frozen in ice, their faces still twisted in the mocking expressions they held moments prior.

Gumhar's face twisted in shock.

"W-w-what?!" He exclaimed, stepping back several steps.

Only...was his chest supposed to move like that...?

'It...can't...be...'

He shakily looked down.

And indeed, entering his vision was a pair of voluptuous breasts.

"N-no! This is fake!"

He fell to the floor and crawled backward, his eyes falling on a happily smiling pink-haired beauty.

"What do you think?" She said. "Is this satisfactory?"

"Kahak...!"

Gumhar immediately coughed blood, which looked strange coming from a Spirit, and fainted, unable to accept his new and improved body.

It was so quick that even these experts would've missed it if they weren't paying attention.

The pink-haired beauty imposed an illusion on Gumhar so strong that it nearly became reality, and within a second, the white-haired beauty next to her froze the remaining four geniuses on a molecular level, killing them instantly.

"Hmph."

The white-haired woman scoffed scornfully and turned away, not bothering with the situation anymore.

Meanwhile, her companion directed her attention to the crowd itself, especially the petrified elder standing at its rear.

"Now then, does anyone else have a problem with us being here?"

Her words were met with silence, and with that display of power acting as an early introduction, the geniuses of the Human Domain walked together and approached the portal to the Holy Light Realm.

Rose Adelaide, level 380, Weaver of Reality.

Xue Ruyue, level 380, Yin Spirit Queen.

Long Chen, level 390, Draconic Sword Emperor.

Xue Fang, level 360, Iceblade Grandmaster.

Reva, level ???, ???.

Together, the five stepped onto the universal stage.

It was time to show the entirety of Grand Heavens Boundary what it meant to be from the Human Domain.

Somewhere in the Holy Light Realm, Damien's body twitched.

"Something" within was showing itself, reminding him of its eternal existence in his heart.

It was a little wisp of soul that connected him to a single person.

'Ruyue...'

Chapter 993 Goals [1]

'They've finally come.'

Damien's heart was practically beating out of his chest, but he kept an outwardly calm facade.

He was currently with Xue'er deep within the Holy Light Tomb. It was the location he decided to use to both train her and acclimate her to danger, and though he could use the All-Seeing Eyes to find the shortest route to the center and easily snatch the tomb's treasures for himself, he didn't do so.

Instead, he used the same ability to find the longest and most grueling route to the center, and unapologetically pushed Xue'er along that route.

As she encountered traps and illusions, her mental strength and battle sense would improve.

But it would take a lot of suffering before she could reach that point.

The current Xue'er was covered head to toe in small scratches and dried blood from wounds Damien healed long ago.

Though the threat they posed was gone, she still clearly remembered the sensation of pain that came along with them.

It was scary.

The outside world she'd heard so much about was just as cruel as those in Theavel made it out to be.

Yet, while it may have been unexpected from Xue'er, who grew up sheltered by Damien, she was a girl with her own ambitions and dreams.

A single nightmare still haunted her every once in a while. It depicted the scenes of her childhood, where she watched those in her village die brutally, where she almost joined them in the underworld.

It was a memory that Damien saved her from, but she always thought back to what would have happened if he wasn't there.

As he heard the terrible stories of those who were saved from Calypto, and even those from the 3000 Beast Mountain Range, she realized that she wasn't alone in her struggle.

People all over the universe were suffering, and the only way they could save themselves was to become stronger.

It was that realization that pushed her to beg Elvira to teach her until the latter finally succumbed, and it was the same deep-seated idea that pushed her to receive Damien's training regardless of how harsh it was.

As her older brother and mentor, Damien could clearly see the fiery glimmer in her eyes, and thus, he didn't stop her from acting as she pleased, merely staying behind her and making sure she would never face death head-on.

'I know this state very well. This is the same state that allowed me to survive through the First Dungeon. I don't know where she found it, but what she's acting on is "desperation."'

He wanted to ask where such a desperate desire for power came from, but he withheld the question. When she was ready to tell him, she would.

'This kind of desire by itself is extremely dangerous, especially for a growing teenager. She needs me here silently supporting her to balance that desperation with warmth. Otherwise, she might end up like I did.'

Damien could feel his soul bleeding from the terrible longing he felt for his women, but now wasn't the time to be selfish.

'They are here as representatives of the Human Domain, which means they're here with something to prove. Hmm, if the Human Domain is planning to re-enter the universal scene, I need to choose the perfect timing to reveal my affiliation.'

If he outright claimed himself a part of the Human Domain, his light would overshadow them and have the opposite effect of what he desired.

If he waited until Rose, Ruyue, and the rest proved themselves, and then swooped in at the end as a cherry on top, the Human Domain would be held in legends as a sector that retained its ability to create countless geniuses even while in its worst state.

'Good. I can train Xue'er without worry and leave the situation outside to them. Now that Ruyue is close and the soul connection is active again, I'll be able to tell if they're ever in mortal danger.'

Damien flicked his finger slightly, sending a ball of white light into Xue'er's body, healing her injuries and replenishing her stamina.

"Haa...haa...thanks, big brother," she said as she stabilized herself.

"It's fine to take breaks, you know. We have months to train to our hearts' content," Damien said gently, expressing his worry.

However, Xue'er shook her head in refusal.

"Now that I'm older, I don't want to be weak anymore. The Aunties and Uncles all told me that big brother had to go through terrible things to become powerful. If I also have to endure terrible things to be like big brother, then I'll do it."

She said it firmly without any sign of the childish immaturity she usually carried.

Damien felt a slight pain in his heart, realizing that she was going to start growing up soon, but he quickly shook off the feeling.

'Xue'er, don't worry. Big brother will always be rooting for you.'

Damien silently sent his encouragement to the brave girl who pushed forward with a will of steel. I think you should take a look at

And at the same time, he wished good fortune upon those from his homeland who were currently fighting for its sake.

The Holy Light Realm's situation became more complicated with every passing day, but the plan was still the same.

Only, the end goal was no longer Damien's domination over the universe's geniuses, but the Human Domain's domination over the entire rest of the universe.

Whoosh!

Five people surfaced in the Holy Light Realm.

Bang!

Immediately, an explosion wrapped around them.

"Hmph!" Ruyue harrumphed and tossed up a barrier of special ice that blocked the explosive force entirely.

She exchanged nods with the three adults behind her and took down the barrier.

Xiu!

Long Chen shot out like a ballistic missile, the Empyrean Dragon Sword in his hands sweeping in a wide arc in front of him.

Shiiiiing!

An extremely crisp sound rang through the air, and immediately, the world was severed in two.

Trees, beasts, and all geniuses in the path of his swing were bisected. The geniuses were immediately transferred out of the secret realm and healed, while the atmosphere suddenly quieted down.

"Take them down!"

A shout suddenly reverberated, bringing the geniuses in the surroundings to their senses.

The group that just entered...was a threat!

Roughly 40 geniuses dropped their hostility for each other and acted as one to take down the newly appeared enemy.

But this...

This was exactly what the Human Domain group wanted.

Rose grinned deviously.

"Alright, it's time to start the slaughterfest! Whoever gets the most kills gets a random box of their choosing! Ah, except you, Reva. You just stay behind us and relax for now."

"Random box?" Xue Fang's attention was immediately piqued.

"Don't get excited yet," Long Chen said before he could continue.

"Right," Ruyue agreed. "Rose, you can't just offer a random box without telling us which grade."

Rose smirked smugly.

"Hmph, do you think I'd snuff you guys? Since this is a few month-long event, we'll split it in three. The winner after a week will get a gold box, the winner after a month will get a diamond box, and the final winner will get a mythrill box!"

Everyone's eyes narrowed as one.

"She's finally bringing out a mythrill box, huh? I was wondering what she was saving it for," Xue Fang muttered.

And at the same time, his expression got serious.

If there was a mythrill box at stake...

...not a single one of them could afford to slack off.

Chapter 994 Goals [2]

The experts in the first banquet hall were all stoic characters in their daily lives, but in the past two days, they'd been forced to show a wide range of emotions.

In fact, at this point, the experts had split into various cliques, mostly of forces who were already affiliated, or those from the same domain. However, the Human Domain only sent a single group to represent themselves, rather than multiple groups from strong influences.

While the murmuring of the crowd leaned towards shaming the domain for having only a few worthy geniuses to showcase, Tian Yang and the rest didn't let the crowd bother them at all.

After all, why would they care for the opinions of those speaking without a single hint of knowledge?

They alone understood the true capabilities of their domain, and this knowledge bestowed them with supreme confidence.

Of course, not all the experts held such bias. There were a few who took the time to greet Tian Yang's group and introduce themselves. These were mainly those without strong affiliations that forced them to pick a side, such as the Ancient God Clan.

And of course, the very familiar Director Alucard and Commander Huo.

There was only one influence in the universe that could claim to be completely unbiased, and that influence was none other than Hidden Death Valley of Death Emperor Star.

"It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance," the Director said amiably, nodding in greeting as he approached.

"Oh?" Tian Yang uttered with a slight smile. "Could you be Alucard?"

"Have we met before?" The Director asked in slight confusion.

Tian Yang shook his head in amusement. "Perhaps you do not recognize this version of me, but perhaps you have some faint memory of a man named Yang Tian?"

"Yang Tian..." the Director echoed before his eyes suddenly widened.

"Crazy Bastard Yang Tian?!"

"The one and only!"

"Hahahaha!" The Director laughed boisterously. "How could this be? I thought you died in the Ancient Mythical Realm all those millennia ago!"

Tian Yang smiled warmly as his old acquaintance slapped his shoulder happily.

"Mm, I also thought I was dead, but instead, when I awoke, I had returned to my home in the Human Domain. Quite the strange circumstance, wasn't it?"

"In this universe? Not as rare as one would believe it."

"Isn't that true."

Tian Yang's youth took place in a time when the Human Domain wasn't so utterly disconnected from the wider universe. Back then, while the divide existed, it was far easier to find safe passage through the destroyed space if one was willing to risk their life for the chance.

Tian Yang held a secret that nobody in the Human Domain knew.

Under his wise and sagely exterior was a man who, in his youth, was a mad barbarian enough to where his universally bestowed title was Crazy Bastard!

Not many he knew back then were still alive now, and of those who were, only Alucard who he just revealed his identity to could make the connection between him and his past.

Tian Yang and Alucard began to jovially converse, catching up on the details of each other's lives, while Tang Lingzi and Albeus entertained the other influences who came to greet the Human Domain.

Suddenly, a wave of gasps spread through the crowd.

Tian Yang's attention was attracted to the front of the hall, and his smile immediately widened into a haughty grin.

With no warning, tens of geniuses started dropping out of the secret realm portal every minute, collapsing to the floor and writhing as they readjusted to being alive.

On the screens in the air above them, the advent of four geniuses was displayed clearly to all. I think you should take a look at

They took the four cardinal directions for themselves, moving forward without pause and destroying anything in their paths.

To the south was a dark icy hellscape. The souls of the dead wandered the air and corrupted any genius they came across, while the ice below froze their bodies and minds for eternity.

To the west was another icy land, but far purer and brighter than its counterpart. It was flat, as all obstructions in the path were sliced to nothingness, and the razor-sharp sword aura in the air razed everything that touched it.

To the north was an atmosphere with no change, but perhaps that was the most terrifying part. Despite the land of death and destruction the north had become, not a single person could see a hint of it through its peaceful appearance.

And finally, to the east was a path that truly represented the concept of destruction. The land was torn and sundered, golden dragons of sword aura streaked through the air and devoured any enemy they found.

The one thing all these paths had in common was the fact that at their ends, one could faintly hear the sounds of continued slaughter, making it evident that those who carved them were nowhere near done with their domineering killing spree.

And of course, they were all created by Human Domain geniuses.

This...

'What is this...?' Many experts thought as one.

Was this the so-called decrepit and declined Human Domain?

If this was the trash Human Domain, what did that make them, the people whose geniuses were being crushed like ants?

The negative stigmas surrounding the Human Domain were already crumbling with every second, but neither those geniuses in the secret realm nor Tian Yang and the elders in Luxurion planned to stop here.

Just like anyone else, they had no desire to stay in the shadows of the past.

Whether it be at the genesis of the universe or the very ends of time when creation returned to nothingness, the Human Domain would remain a legendary existence to all.

That was the ultimate goal.

It was a large space, far too large to fit within the bounds of the Tomb of Ayakashi.

The walls were made of weathered dark brown bricks that were covered in damp green moss and vines that snaked around like they were alive. The ground was lined with ancient letterings and hieroglyphs depicting various symbolisms that were long lost in the annals of time.

Chains spanned the ceiling and draped down several feet, clanging against each other as they were swayed by the mysterious wind that wrapped around the space and filled the already eerie atmosphere with disharmonious melodies that sang songs of death.

The entire area showed signs of extreme debilitation except for the very center, where a massive stele stood by its lonesome.

This was the central point of the Tomb of Ayakashi, the very room that held the ancient secrets hidden within the tomb.

And as Elena stared into its darkness, she firmed her will.

'The aura in this place is not natural. It's coming mainly from that stele, but there are strong pulses of it coming from several other areas. I'm afraid this tomb—'

—was already in the process of breaking down.

She covered her body in powerful vital aura and Light Laws, warding off all evil as she stepped into the unknown.

A single display in the first banquet hall went dark.

From this point forward, Elena was truly on her own.

Chapter 995 Shadow [1]

Tap!

Tap!

Tap!

Elena's steps echoed through the damp and empty space as she made her way to the stele in the middle. Her thoughts were slow as if matching the quiet atmosphere around her.

'This place is odd and radiates an extremely disconcerting feeling, but I can't sense what's actually wrong.'

She expected to be dragged into battle or a mental struggle as soon as she entered, but it was strange how peaceful the space truly was.

'It almost makes me want to take down my defenses...'

Elena frowned lightly as she realized her thoughts were becoming irrational.

'It seems too subtle to be everything this place has to offer. If I can overcome it by just realizing that it's happening, it isn't worthy of being an effect of the main tomb.'

There were two possibilities for the current peace.

The first was that the tomb was doing its job properly and all the demonic spirits were properly sealed within the stele, unable to make trouble.

But how could such a good thing exist?

'The second scenario is that...'

Elena reached the stele and carefully placed her hand on its surface, sending a pulse of Life mana into its surface.

Hong!

The stele reverberated, and a set of ancient letterings appeared on its surface.

These words were from an archaic language unknown to Elena or anyone alive in the current era, but they shared similarities with the current universal language, almost like it was a predecessor.

"Heaven. Spirit. Body. End."

Elena voiced the four words she could comprehend from the tablet. They were spread apart with context connecting each to the next.

'Unfortunately, these words could mean anything if I try to fill in the blanks. The fact that this is a tomb of demonic spirits should be the greatest clue to the meaning of these phrases...'

Elena sighed. Her knowledge of ancient history was negligible since most of said knowledge had been erased from the universe. She had no idea what could've been going through the people who etched these words' minds.

But she could feel that they put their souls into their art, etching these words with all their power and wisdom.

'Thus, even at the end of times, these words will remain.'

She removed her hand from the stele and glanced around the tomb, her eyes hardening.

'There isn't any sign of a formation on the stele, nor is there any evil aura contained within. Most likely...'

The spirits that had yet to decay and cease existence were loose, spread out within the tomb.

"If they're on the level of the previous spirits, it won't be too hard to exterminate them. The problem is what happens if they manage to possess the geniuses in the tomb.'

In that case, Elena didn't know enough about souls to save those geniuses or exterminate the demons who controlled them.

'For now, let's move.'

Elena glanced at the stele and quickly wrapped her mana around it.

In the next instant, it disappeared.

'This new spatial ring is far better than the usual stuff. That guy is really...'

She smiled as she shook her head. The spatial ring was given to her by Damien after he saw her old one. It was connected to the Sanctuary, which meant its storage space was almost infinite, and its attractive power was great, so objects rooted in the ground could be directly pocketed if she so desired them.

Unlike a normal spatial ring that merely had an internal space that the user could access, this ring could produce its own spatial field to wrap and transport objects, which was what made it so magical.

After taking the stele, Elena quickly left the main tomb...

Bang!

...or at least, she tried.

An explosion collapsed the tomb's entrance, trapping her inside until she could get through the pile of rubble.

"Who?!" She yelled, her eyes sharpening.

She summoned her mana and let it wrap around her body protectively in case she needed to attack.

And she scanned the surroundings, her gaze taking every inch of the space into account.

She gritted her teeth in realization.

'That's right. Before I entered, I had already sensed the stele's aura...and the auras from the environment itself.'

She smiled ironically.

'I guess the confusion was worthy of being an effect of the main tomb after all.'

Even after she realized it, it still affected her and made her lose any sense of danger.

And because of this, she spent too much time studying the stele and completely forgot the matter of demonic spirits for a second.

Whooooosh!

A strong wind blew through the space, its origin unknown.

Elena felt the growing auras in the darkness around her, she could feel those eerie voices from the shrine area returning.

'As expected, demonic spirits.'

Tap!

She took a step back, projecting light mana into the air in front of her.

'Fuck.'

Her face paled.

That wasn't darkness at all.

That was—

The darkness morphed. It rippled like waves, and high in the air near the chains hanging from the ceiling, something like a face formed.

'Run?'

She glanced at the exit.

'I'll need 5 minutes to get through the rubble.'

Her eyes went back to the shadow looming over her, just in time to see its "eyes" and "mouth" curve into a twisted smiling expression.

'I have to fight.'

Shing!

Bang!

She withdrew her sword and shot into the air, meeting the shadow face-to-face. Her sword slashed through the air in a clean arc, sending a wave of Light and Life into the shadow's body.

Whoom!

An odd hollow whoosh resounded as the slash disappeared into the shadow, its connection with Elena cut entirely.

"Right..." she muttered.

Demonic spirits were ethereal beings. It was their greatest strength, but also the reason they couldn't leave the tomb without possessing a body.

'And for this mass of demonic spirits, I've become the perfect body.'

The body of an individual who, with nothing but her own strength, made it to the very center of the Tomb of Ayakashi.

If not her, then who?

WHOOSH!

Elena's eyes suddenly widened. She twisted her body sideways, just in time for a massive wave of shadow to slam against her side.

BANG!

She shot backward and crashed into the dense walls of the tomb, coughing a mouthful of blood as she pulled herself out of the cracks.

Ptui!

She spit out another mouthful of blood as she stared back at the shadow that was still smiling at her with that same creepy expression.

'This...is troublesome.'

Her mentality went through a change.

Her mind entered a state where the battle in front of her was the only thing that mattered in life.

Because she made the realization that if she didn't win here, she'd die and become a puppet to their will.

Her sword shone with beautiful white light.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

BOOM!

A massive tree filled with vitality grew in front of her, reaching the ceiling of the massive space.

She hopped onto its nearest branch and traversed its canopy until she was once again facing the shadow.

"Thanks for waiting," she said coldly.

"I'm good now, so come die whenever you're ready."

Chapter 996 Shadow [2]

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Explosions rang through the main tomb of Ayakashi as Elena and the massive demonic spirit fought fiercely.

Bursts of light flashed across the space as Elena moved through the spirit's body. They were earth-shaking and soul-rattling, but the infrastructure of the tomb didn't budge.

Xiu!

Elena shot back and pressed her sword forward, commanding the massive world tree behind her.

Rumble!

The earth shook, thousands of roots shooting into the air and slamming into the ground below, sending furious shockwaves of Life Mana into the shadow-like entity.

'It's not working. Attacking like this is a pointless waste of mana if I can't cause any damage.'

Her eyes sharpened.

'If I don't find a way to strike it soon, I need to find a way to run.'

She'd grown much since the past. She wanted to stop this threat before it could hurt anyone, but she wasn't willing to sacrifice her life to do so.

Swoosh!

She shot to the side, avoiding a wave of terrifying mana that arced toward her. Gritting her teeth, she slashed out and sent a beam of The two forces collided, and Elena borrowed the force to retreat further.

pure white mana into the attack.

Boom!

The two forces collided, and Elena borrowed the force to retreat further.

'Luckily, this thing still has to use mana to attack, so even if I can't hurt it, it can't hurt me either as long as I'm careful.'

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The spirit's attacks became fiercer. Not only did its mana improve in quality, the laws that supported it became far more complex, affecting reality at a deeper level.

'The demonic spirit's mana...what is it?' Elena wondered.

It was eerie like death, but contained more properties of darkness. It clearly represented a yin-attributed Law, but without knowing which one it was, Elena couldn't form a proper plan of action.

After all, she wasn't like Damien, whose mana capacity was nearly infinite. If she wanted to heal herself, she needed to expend a considerable amount of effort. Currently, she was facing an unknown and extremely strong opponent, which didn't leave her space to waste energy.

When she found the perfect time and method to kill this entity, she would strike with everything and slay it.

'To do that...'

She weaved through the darkness around her, entering the shadow's body once more.

Immediately, she was struck by its cruel and cold Laws.

Her perception went black. No matter how far she stretched her awareness, she couldn't see even a single centimeter in front of her.

Even her sense of touch was dulled, the sword shining with mana in her hand the only thing grounding her to reality.

'I am Elena Pierce.' She reminded herself constantly.

Her ego felt like it was slipping into oblivion. Her mind was submerged in a deep lake of nothingness, the whispering voices of death enchanting her to join them in their splendor.

"Whispering voices of...death?"

Voom!

Light shined through Elena's body and soul.

'That's it. This thing is using Death Laws!'

BOOM!

She wantonly released her mana into the surroundings, filling the air with vitality.

Though the mana still had no effect on the entity, it illuminated a path in the darkness, guiding Elena back to safety.

Whoosh!

She shot out of the spirit's body and was immediately confronted by an attack.

With her new knowledge of the Laws contained within, she expertly wielded her own Life Laws in a split second to disperse it.

ROOOOOOOH!

The sound that emanated from the clash was strange on its own, but the two attacks actually wrapped around each other like stars on a merging path, creating a beautiful picture of yin and yang.

Elena's eyes widened as she made space, her gaze focused on the middle point of those two forces.

What she saw was the interaction between life and death, a representation of Samsara.

'This isn't what I want.'

Her eyes widened at the thought that originated from deep in her subconscious.

"Right, that's not what I want," she reiterated, completely aware this time.

What she chased was not peace. What she chased was not life that acted as one half of a whole along with death.

She was chasing the source of Life itself.

Elena Pierce, an individual recognized by the Void and granted a connection with forces far above her station...

If she only wanted this much, she would have never been granted such an honor.

VOOM!

The essence of Life raged around her body.

"Life that Transcended Death" swirled into the air.

In the end, ethereal beings, just like all others, relied on mana.

Therefore, thoroughly crushing its mana would reveal an opening to strike.

"My goal has never been to chase a beautiful life. Ever since I gained the opportunity to enter this world...I have been moving with the intent to suppress any and all things."

Her declaration was to the universe itself.

Life that balanced death? The universe could keep that!

Elena Pierce was not a person who conformed to anyone's will, even if it was the Heavens themselves!

She pushed her mana and slammed her foot in the air as if it was solid, shooting into the air like a comet.

She put her sword away. It was just a tool, no longer strong enough to support her.

Her hands clapped together and her fingers twisted around each other, forming a symbol like an eye trapped in a pyramidal cage. As she slightly closed her eyes...

...her hands slowly pressed forward.

HONG!

The ring of an ancient bell resounded through the air.

The atmosphere was dyed white. No, a beam of white light shot into the skies of the Holy Light Realm like a beacon was lit atop the Tomb of Ayakashi. The beam pierced reality itself, shining through Luxurion in the outside world and immediately causing a stir.

The pure white light was brighter than brightness, purer than purity. Its existence was sacred in the world for the few seconds it blessed the eyes of those lucky enough to witness it before it died down.

However, just a few seconds was enough to create massive waves in many hearts. That sacrosanct beam represented something far greater than its appearance, after all.

Of the experts in the first banquet hall, Luciel's thoughts perfectly summed up those of his compatriots.

'This is truly...an era of geniuses.'

The Holy Light Realm was proving to be of far greater significance than anyone expected.

'It seems we'll have to make some changes.'

Luciel immediately left the area and called a meeting with his fellows in the Heavenly Clan.

Meanwhile, in the very center of the Tomb of Ayakashi, Elena's attack manifested.

A powerfully glowing heavenly ankh no smaller than the demonic spirit's titanic body shot toward it with impossible speed.

Black splotches almost like ink splashed into the air, coating the ankh.

Sizzzzzz!

The ink gutturally sizzled as the ankh's mana burned through it and sent it to oblivion.

The concept of Transcending Death thoroughly suppressed the demonic spirit's Laws, making its attacks completely ineffective.

And as the attack finally collided with the spirit's body, Elena went through a qualitative change.

The understanding of her ultimate goal was accompanied by the comprehension of another elusive concept.

Legends.

Because in that moment, Elena defined her own Legend. Even before Damien, she took a step towards forming her own Divinity.

At this moment, Elena had stepped into the extreme peak of 4th class.

Chapter 997 Shadow [3]

SKREEEEEEEE!

A soul-shattering screech pulled Elena back to reality, giving her no time to adjust to her gains.

'The consequence of breaking through during battle is being unable to grasp everything properly, but battle is also the best way to adapt to those gains.'

Elena cracked her neck as she watched the ankh and the demonic spirit's body fight each other fiercely.

The demonic spirit was clearly feeling pain, evident through its screeching and the lashing of its shadowy tentacles.

'It won't die.' Elena realized.

The ankh was powerful, but it was only the result of her preliminary understanding.

How could it be that easy to kill an entity formed by the merging of countless demonic spirits?

While she finally had a method to hurt the entity, she needed to put in far more work to rid it from existence.

VOOM!

Crash!

A pulse of dark mana reverberated through the air, and the ankh was finally shattered.

The demonic spirit's massive hollow eyes were slanted in anger, its mouth producing a multitude of teeth and tongues that seemed to be screaming in rage and humiliation,

'Its ego isn't complete.' Elena realized as she swerved to the side and slashed the air, cutting through a tentacle of darkness.

She flashed forward at the speed of light and spun her body, loading her leg with power and kicking out heavily.

Bang!

Her foot collided with the ethereal spirit body like it was a material object. The mana of Transcended Death rippled through the darkness like the spotlight of a lighthouse in the deep seas.

Elena immediately felt the resistance of the spirit's Laws. The dark and deathly fluctuation of that unknown concept clashed against the mana of Life, slowly nibbling away at it until it could no longer hold its structure.

Still, this nibbling was gradual. Elena's attack still had its intended effect.

SKREEEE!

The demonic spirit screeched angrily and swept its massive arm at Elena, essentially sending a wave of mana that covered the skies in her direction.

However...

Shik!

The mana suddenly split in half, two streams coming from opposite directions with the same target.

Elena shot upward through the gap between them and grinned.

'The more injured it gets, the more its ego will destabilize.'

She confirmed her assumption with that attack.

From the ancient hieroglyphs on the wall, Elena learned of the individualistic and greedy nature of demonic spirits. For them to combine like this was for the sole purpose of survival, and now—

'—I only have a single body. In the end, all except one of them will be sentenced to death in this decrepit hall.'

It seemed the yin-yang effect of the previous attacks didn't just allow Elena to promote, it returned a piece of sentience to those demonic spirits.

'All the better for me.'

Elena flashed to the very edge of the room where Yggdrasil was located and landed on its branches.

Bang!

A holographic green shield covered the tree and blocked the spirit's continued attacks.

Crack!

'I only have a few seconds.'

Elena rushed to the center of the tree, a flat area where the trunk spread out into tens of thousands of branches.

She placed her hand on the solid wood and closed her eyes, sending a prayer and a hint of mana into its trunk.

And in response, a single branch snapped off the tree and landed before her.

'Nice.' She thought as she picked it up.

CRASH!

She left the tree just in time to see the barrier break.

With a wild expression decorating her face, she blasted through the mass of thousands of dark tentacles, using the branch of Yggdrasil as a sword to cut all things. I think you should take a look at

Shing!

It sliced through the deathly mana around it like a true blade, its seemingly feeble body acting with the same power as a heavenly material.

Elena's smile was like sunlight that illuminated the world.

She felt a sense of freedom that came with the enlightenment of her promotion. It allowed her to act without qualms, following her natural instincts to achieve exactly what she wanted.

And what she wanted was the death of this being.

Elena wasted no time. Armed with her new weapon, she entered the spirit's body once more.

Its Laws assaulted her as always, but the feeling was different this time.

It was almost like they were fragmented, originating from entirely different sources.

'Now that I know what to look for, this is a simple job!'

She was no longer facing a single extremely powerful demonic spirit, but a horde of weaker ones.

'So I just need to kill all of you before you can kill me...'

Elena swiped her branch of Yggdrasil through the air.

'Sounds fun.'

It was the beginning of a slaughter.

From the start, individual demonic spirits had no chance against her. This much was proven when she killed those that were in the shrine area.

It wasn't that her perceptive ability magically increased or anything of the sort. Instead, the mana of Transcended Death forcefully separated these beings, severing the threads that held them as one.

The fact that they were internally warring was only an added bonus.

Elena cut through demonic spirit after demonic spirit, Transcended Death filling the atmosphere. Thousands were felled at her hand before she finally ran out of mana and was forced to retreat.

"Haa...haa..."

'Its body is clearly getting smaller...' she noted as she gathered herself.

She immediately took shelter within Yggdrasil's powerful frame when she felt herself running out of steam, and at the current moment, the tree was holding back the demonic spirit army.

'Yggdrasil can maintain its existence without my aid, but its actual combat power isn't high. Its protection won't last long.'

The Valhalla Army didn't understand the concept of Transcended Death as it was a completely different vein of Life Laws from what the Valkyries studied, and it would take a considerable amount of time to teach them to use it, so they weren't a viable option...

'...and escape is no longer as beneficial as fighting. As long as I can find a way to rapidly replenish mana...'

She didn't have pills, nor did she have any outside help.

Elena gritted her teeth.

'Think of the long-term and just do.'

Without hesitation, she set her own body alight.

The smell of burning blood vitality curled through the air.

And as Elena's stamina and bodily strength weakened, her mana replenished itself, reaching a new high.

'I have to be as efficient as possible...!'

She shot out of Yggdrasil's protection, hiding her mana and using the darkness as cover to make her way towards the demonic spirits without being noticed.

Naturally, this wasn't possible.

But for a single second, the demonic spirits failed to realize Elena had left the world tree.

WHOOOOOOOSH!

A terrifying tornado erupted as Elena powerfully kicked off the ground, shattering the nearly-impregnable bricks below. Her body turned into a streak of pure white light that submerged into the darkness and burned like a candle in a lonely study.

500 spirits died on impact. 500 more died in the following second as Elena flared her mana, creating a myriad of symbols that represented eternal life and directly striking individual demonic spirits with their holy aura.

SKREEEEEE!

The cacophony of roars that followed was like a symphony in Elena's ears.

Her eyes sharpened.

'Let's end this.'

Chapter 998 Shadow [4]

Elena's battle was catastrophic, but the Tomb of Ayakashi itself was built so sturdily that not even a ripple of it made its way to the surface, projecting a calm aura over the tomb.

Unfortunately, those within weren't feeling the same calm.

Those who fell into traps and were unable to free themselves, those who were injured and weak...

...they found their bodies leaving their control as their consciousnesses were swallowed by a foreign entity.

In total, the number was only around 100. Compared to the tens of thousands of demonic spirits still in the central area with Elena, it was nothing.

However, these were 100 young geniuses of the universe.

Their potential and their importance weren't light.

Every single one of them was to become a pivotal force of the universe's strength.

But that future was no longer available to them.

Those targeted were at their weakest, which gave these demonic spirits an opportunity to completely take them over.

Their egos were erased, and their bodies became mere vessels.

Those 100 demonic spirits immediately left the Tomb of Ayakashi, easily avoiding the traps they spent countless millennia observing.

And finally, they made their way into the Holy Light Realm.

The group immediately split as the demonic spirits followed their individualistic instincts and separated to strengthen themselves...

BOOM!

Fearsome explosions filled the air in all parts of the Holy Light Realm with clouds of smoke.

It started from the east.

A man with shining black hair and domineering golden-red draconic eyes stared down a group of about ten demonic spirits with his brow raised.

"That's quite odd. I didn't expect to see something like this," he said casually, resting his massive greatsword on his shoulder.

The demonic spirits looked at each other and came to a consensus.

A dangerous enemy was in front of them, so they would work together just this once!

It seemed eons of isolation had some effect on their mentality after all.

They pounced as a group, strange mana erupting from their bodies.

It was a twisted mix of the original mana of the bodies' owners and the deathly mana of the demonic spirits, a result of the rapidity of their possession and proceeding combat.

Long Chen's eyes twinkled as he watched them.

"These entities are pure yin, right? Isn't this what you were looking for?" He said, glancing at his sword.

Brrr!

The sword purred in response.

"No, you can't have her. If you knew who her husband was, you would understand why she's untouchable."

Bang!

Ling Chen casually jumped back and avoided the strikes of his enemies as he continued his conversation.

Bzzt! Brrrr!

He sighed as he interpreted the sword's thoughts.

"Look at them. If they originate from this realm, do you think there will only be ten of them?"

Bzzt...?

"Yes, I'll hunt as many as I find."

Brrr?

"Damn brat, can you learn to be less greedy? Being a dragon doesn't excuse this nonsense."

Brr...

Long Chen sighed in annoyance. The Empyrean Dragon Sword was just as gluttonous as it was domineering!

'I coaxed him for now, but he'll surely make a fuss later if I don't feed him properly.'

Long Chen shook his head and slashed the sword through the air. It seemed to be the most casual possible movement, but it was actually hiding a great deal of profound intent. I think you should take a look at

'A Single Claw To Dominate All.'

A simple slash that represented just one claw of a dragon, that tiny piece of its body holding the grand ability to destroy countless living beings with a single touch.

Splatter!

The demonic spirits' physical bodies were immediately torn to shreds, and unlike other geniuses, they remained in the realm, becoming fertilizer for the trees that would grow in the future.

Meanwhile, the demonic spirits rushed out of those bodies and fled madly, their every instinct screaming that death was near.

Though, running was never an option.

The Empyrean Dragon Sword suddenly began to glow, and a projection of a massive five-clawed golden dragon appeared in the air.

The dragon opened its mouth, and a suction force like a black hole filled the atmosphere.

One by one, the ten demonic spirits were directly swallowed by the dragon, who happily burped before returning to the sword.

"Hmph," Long Chen snorted. "What a waste of time."

He took a vial out of his spatial ring and downed a few pills, easily replenishing his mana and stamina.

This time, the Human Domain came wholly prepared.

Whether it be pills or artifacts, strength or mentality, the Human Domain's group arrived with it all in spades.

100 demonic spirits?

What did that mean to them?

Ignoring Long Chen's strange method, Ruyue was a literal ruler of yin, and Rose's entire path to power was based on controlling the ethereal and bringing it into reality!

Demonic spirits were nothing more than snacks to them!

As for Xue Fang, he didn't personally have a method to interact with the immaterial, but he did have a treasure that could imprison spirits!

After he killed the host bodies, he collected the demonic spirits, which was actually the most beneficial method in the long term!

The screens in the banquet hall were only Chaos-rank treasures. Their ability to project was just as much as the perception of a 4th class who had yet to step into the nine revolutions.

Originally, there was going to be a riot in the first banquet hall when those experts saw their geniuses dying without the realm's protection, however, it was Xue Fang's actions that gave physical presence to the demonic spirits themselves and allowed the experts to understand the situation!

Rather than a disaster that could've ruined the universe's chances at survival, the release of demonic spirits became an event for geniuses to rise.

And all of its gains...

...were granted to and monopolized by those of the Human Domain.

Each of them had a nigh-infinite supply of pills, and now that they'd been in the Holy Light Realm for an entire day, their kill count had rapidly risen into the hundreds.

Luckily for the poor geniuses who fell prey to their assault, the Holy Light Realm was filled with alluring treasures, and slaughter wasn't the only way for those four to prove themselves.

Eventually, they halted their killing spree for a single reason.

In Rose's own words:

"What better way is there to show these fools up than monopolizing all the treasures they were supposed to get?"

It was a genius plan.

And oddly enough, it was a plan proposed by two of Damien's wives on completely separate occasions.

One had to wonder...

Just who influenced them to think like that...?

The Holy Light Realm was originally planned to be an exciting event that lasted roughly 2 months.

This was because, frankly speaking, nobody expected the sheer number and power of the universe's geniuses.

Because each of the individuals that stood out so far were those who didn't show themselves on this grand stage often, if at all, the actual standard for geniuses was considerably lower than their level.

Therefore, a change was proposed.

And within a day, it was implemented.

Heaven and Earth rumbled...as the Holy Light Realm began to expand.

Chapter 999 Growth [1]

Rumble!

The ends of the Holy Light Realm were once represented by an illusion barrier that made the realm seem ever-expansive when it, in reality, was anything but.

However, this illusion shattered as a true scenery appeared in its place. The plane expanded exponentially until it was almost ten times its original size!

New structures appeared with new treasures hidden within, and new dangers populated the lands.

Every genius outside the two tombs felt the change directly as the earth under their feet stretched and cracked.

Their interest was piqued.

The Holy Light Realm was already explored to its maximum potential. It wasn't that there weren't treasures or new environments to find, but rather the fact that a select few geniuses established such a dominance that the rest had no motivation to compete with them.

The expanding realm represented a new frontier. Those who were already in the realm and those who were newly entering all had their eyes lit with a newborn fervor as they shot into the vast expanse to meet their destined chances.

Unlike the rest, however, Ruyue's eyes didn't explore on the new territories.

They were directed at the Holy Light Tomb, a contemplative expression on her face.

She and Rose anticipated the Grand Assembly not only for their own ambitions, but to meet the man who disappeared from their lives over two years ago.

And unlike Rose, Ruyue could feel him in her heart.

Literally.

She felt his calm and reassuring heartbeat, and she felt his presence in that magnificent sandstone tomb, but...

'Should I go?'

She didn't know whether or not to follow her instinct and find him immediately.

Among Damien's wives, Ruyue was always the coldest outwardly. Those she didn't care for wouldn't even be graced with a word from her.

And for someone with such an exterior, one wouldn't expect the warm and emotional internal struggle she was facing.

During her Baptism, she saw a vision.

A vision where she was forced to choose between her love and her power.

She almost failed due to her inability to make this choice, and in the end, she...

'Not yet.'

...didn't choose at all.

She could never abandon her love, the love that saved her from desolation, and she could never abandon her power that did the same.

Both were crucial aspects of her being, and only after realizing the dual importance they held could she move on to the next stage of Baptism.

Currently, she had to make the same choice, but with far less dire consequences.

And thus, she chose to pursue power.

'Because without power, I can't pursue my love.'

Her cold exterior could only be melted by the warmth in her heart, and in order to preserve that warmth, she would do anything necessary.

'Never again will I lose him so powerlessly.'

Rose never talked about that day, but Ruyue knew well that she felt the same.

They were devastated, and suddenly understood why Damien chose to follow the lonely path of a paragon genius.

Whoosh!

Ruyue pressed off her heels and glided through the air, heading deeper into the unknown that spawned in the south.

"Hmm..." she hummed, watching the geniuses on the ground below clear out as they discovered her presence.

'It's not worth spending time on them.'

As Rose said, there was no longer a point in continuing their killing spree. They originally expected the geniuses they were competing against to be stronger, which is why they planned for a month of fighting, but that plan fell through.

'No, it's only been delayed. Once more Holy Lands arrive, we'll meet the true peak of the universe.'

The Human Domain geniuses received a quick course on the structure and major influences of Grand Heavens Boundary on the way to Luxurion, and Parsiel made sure they overestimated their opponents as much as possible.

'If that Angel's words weren't propaganda, I need to reach level 399 rapidly.' I think you should take a look at

Ruyue moved several thousand kilometers within an hour, passing by several strange structures and monuments that made the expanded realm seem like an ancient ruined society.

Suddenly, her ears perked up.

"This sound...water...?"

Ruyue's eyes went to the horizon. The sound she heard was like water, but there was something strange about it, something that separated it from every other stream and river in the vicinity.

Flash!

Her body arrived at her target in an instant, and as she looked out into the mountain below, she found a mundanely beautiful scenery.

It was a house, roughly large enough for a family of four to live comfortably. It had two stories, but its design was quite unique even amongst the things Ruyue had seen.

It sat atop a lazy river that calmly twisted through the densely packed trees. Its floors almost hovered above the river, making it seem like the river was being produced by the house itself.

This structure could best be described as a fusion of water and land in a fashion that almost seemed ethereal and separate from reality.

Ruyue gracefully landed on the ground and walked up to the house, scanning it with her awareness.

'Nothing?'

She raised her brow as she carefully made her way up the stairs and into the structure itself.

Ding~! Ding~! Ding~!

Windchimes danced, sending beautiful melodies through the peaceful air.

Ruyue closed her eyes and appreciated this sense of calm as she stepped through the house's sliding glass entrance.

Swoosh!

Her eyes widened.

She felt like she entered an entirely new world.

Her mind was filled with a strange connection, as if she could feel the earth connecting to the seas, and the seas connecting to the sky.

Looking out the translucent walls of the house that gave a crystal clear view of the outside scenery, Ruyue felt like she was a part of the water and a part of the earth, a true staple of the environment.

Water and earth were both elements of yin, and though Ruyue never truly utilized either, she could still intrinsically connect to them at any moment.

With the house's mysterious effects, this connection was enhanced exponentially, and Ruyue's mind entered a plane she'd never seen before.

Yin, the Law she followed.

She always classified yin as dark and cold, but she failed to see its other face.

Yin was the picture of serenity. It was the most flexible law, able to bend anything towards nothingness.

Ruyue always chased strength above control because she had always felt the need for immediate power.

Neglecting control was never the answer.

Rather, as someone who followed the path of Yin, control should've been her utmost priority.

'Ah...'

Why didn't she realize it sooner?

No, she was just too focused on a decision she never needed to make in the first place and got distracted from the path forward.

Her strength didn't rise, nor did her comprehension suddenly expand.

However, her mind cleared.

She received what she needed most, assurance in and realization of herself.

Ruyue's eyes flashed with countless imageries as they rapidly cleared, the haze that clouded them disappearing entirely,

She once again looked out into the environment, and a small smile decorated her face, immortalizing her beauty in the painting-like scenery.

'Good. This is exciting.'

If this was the reward from the first interesting thing she found, she couldn't wait to see what came next.

Chapter 1000 Growth [2]

A week passed.

The Holy Light Realm quieted down considerably after its expansion. The size was greater than even some planets now, and the geniuses were able to spread out far enough to avoid each other and focus on their own growth.

And in this time, many more forces arrived.

For those in the Divine Realm, one week was enough to reach Luxurion regardless of how far they were. Now that such a time period had passed, the last of those forces made their arrival, and their geniuses also entered the Holy Light Realm.

Of course, excluding the bigger Holy Lands.

How could they arrive so early?

It was a matter of face, something extremely important to those large influences.

Nevertheless, there were now over ten thousand geniuses in the Holy Light Realm.

The experts in the first and second banquet halls watched these geniuses closely, taking note of those to be befriended and those to be nurtured.

And naturally, those who witnessed it were curious about what exactly happened to the Holy Light Realm.

Luciel's charming smile was quite wry as he explained:

"After reassessing the strength of these young geniuses, we realized that the Holy Light Realm isn't quite enough for them to fully display their gifts..."

His eyes lazily turned to the displays as he continued, "In fact, this is not the Holy Light Realm at all. That realm was originally created by the ancestors, and over time, we at the Heavenly Clan didn't just leave it alone."

"We built on what the ancestors started, and turned the Holy Light Realm into its own hidden world. This time, we merely took down the barriers and allowed access to the entire hidden world. Only..."

His smile shifted, once again becoming unreadable.

"...there may be many unexpected things on Holy Light Star..."

He let his words trail off, only making the surrounding experts more curious.

Tian Yang, who stood among them, observed the screens in interest.

'It's location...mm, it should be fine.'

He quietly used his inherent senses to locate Holy Light Star, properly giving himself insurance on his geniuses' safety.

While his means were unique, he was only one amongst many who used various methods to ensure that their geniuses would be protected.

After all, if Luciel himself was saying they would encounter the unknown with such a mysterious expression, there was bound to be something truly dangerous in that world.

Perhaps the only people who weren't experiencing the air of change were those in the two great tombs at the center of Holy Light Star, those who had yet to even realize the realm's changes.

Among them were three who held a special position compared to the rest, two of which were Damien and Xue'er.

Xue'er was at the peak of 3rd class, and to promote, she needed to define the Law she wanted to practice going forward.

What Damien found while watching her progress through the tomb was that Xue'er was genuinely a genius.

Whether it be in her use of mana or combat sense, she excelled far more than someone who remained sheltered for the majority of her life should.

It made him wonder:

'How the hell did Elvira train her?'

The only master Xue'er had until now was none other than the Elf Queen herself. She had a gentle demeanor, but she turned into a true demon in battle.

He could imagine the type of trainer she'd be, but he couldn't imagine Xue'er suffering through that type of training.

She proved him wrong in just a few minutes, and over the past week, she'd only managed to impress him further.

It had to be reiterated: Xue'er was still at the peak of 3rd class.

In this tomb made for 4th class beings, her ability to traverse, no matter how slow it was, was more than just the marking of a genius, but the marking of a true heaven-defying talent.

The only question that remained was posed just a few moments ago. I think you should take a look at

What Law did she study?

Xue'er's single affinity was to natural spirits, but there was no Law governing natural spirits.

In a certain sense, it could be said that Xue'er studied all of the base elemental Laws, but there had never been such a case of a single individual having over five affinities, let alone one that was greatly talented in all of them.

Even Damien only had three affinities. His ability to use any other elements came solely from the Void, not from his own body.

Xue'er was currently facing an illusion that guided her further and further away from the tomb's central area.

While Damien was well aware of this, he didn't make any moves to correct her.

'I can't say for certain about her affinities, but her perception is lower than average. She's able to instinctually understand many things, and the things she doesn't understand are taken care of by the spirits she utilizes. She hasn't actually trained her physical body's perceptive ability to the proper standard.'

In Damien's opinion, this perceptive disadvantage was exactly the thing preventing her from realizing her affinity and triggering her Baptism.

As for Xue'er herself...

"Hm? This isn't the way?"

She looked up into the empty air and tilted her head curiously.

"Then, where am I going?" She asked.

Bzzt!

A small light like a firefly materialized before her, dancing in the air as it pointed her through the halls around her.

"Ehh, aren't we going back the way we came?" She complained naively.

She genuinely couldn't tell which direction was right. At every turn, there were 6 new corridors leading to completely new routes, almost like a true labyrinth.

Xue'er was never a planner. Elvira tried many times to teach her tactics, but she couldn't digest the knowledge whatsoever.

But...did she really need to?

She asked herself a while ago and found her answer.

There was no need for her to worry about these things when they would never be worries for her...

Or at least, she thought.

Damien's insistance made her consider differently.

Therefore, instead of relying on the spirits' help to traverse the corridors of this labyrinth, she tried to do it on her own.

And of course, she failed miserably.

She finally accepted the spirits' help when they alerted her that she was nearly back at the entrance to the tomb.

In her attempt to use her own perception, she completely backtracked.

'I thought I was ready, but I was wrong.'

Xue'er was still a teenager in her growth phase. The only way for her to realize that she didn't know as much as she thought she did was to truly experience these new situations.

Even more than Damien, what Xue'er understood in the Holy Light Tomb was her own weakness.

'I need to change.'

She skipped happily behind the spirit that led her along, but the light in her eyes wasn't so naive.

She'd bled and she'd hurt, she'd felt the consequences of her actions many times since she entered the outside world again.

She was still a frog, but she was taking her first steps out of the well.

And now that she'd begun, she had no plan to ever stop climbing.