

VOID EVOLUTION SYSTEM

Chapter 4

Expansive.

The scenery inside the dungeon could best be described this way. When Damien entered the gate, all he could see was a huge cave system that spanned the distance of several miles, its end at a point he couldn't even see.

“Alright, folks, we should only be seeing first-class beasts that are at most level 20 around this floor, so be prepared to take them out. Even if they're weak we still have to stay vigilant in case something unexpected happens.”

Once Jin gave the order, the team began moving, with Damien following at a slight distance behind them.

As time passed, the raid continued without a hitch. With beasts being at the maximum of level 20, the attack squad, which is comprised of many first classes whose levels average around 30, weren't having any issues, especially with Elena present.

Whenever they met a beast that seemed like they would need to team up to kill, she would charge forward with her sword and start slashing in a seemingly reckless manner.

After all, no matter how refined her fighting style was, its base principle was her ability to constantly heal herself and replenish stamina. With this, no beast near or even slightly above her level was her match.

However, even with this assurance, the team continued forward vigilantly. The most dangerous aspect of weaker dungeons like this one wasn't always the beasts.

Around 2 years after the World Awakening, when humanity was finally beginning to completely adapt to mana and the changes it brought, they discovered something that changed their entire viewpoint of its capabilities.

When an advance party from a nameless guild was exploring one of their dungeons, they came across other humanoid species.

Naturally, they attempted communication before wantonly attacking and accidentally discovered that they were no longer speaking any languages that existed on Earth.

As it turns out, the introduction of mana and the system that follows it grants all beings under its influence with a shared language.

As the inhabitants of Earth use English as their universal language, this new language wasn't introduced until they came into contact with other intelligent species.

When the members of this guild began speaking to the humanoid individuals, they learned that the dungeon they were in was actually connected to another world called 'Lahor'.

As other guilds also began meeting intelligent races in dungeons, they learned of the existence of countless other worlds.

As it was explained by the denizens of some of those other worlds, gates are phenomena that only appear in worlds that are newly awakened to mana.

After a world has adapted to and assimilated with mana, dungeons are structures that naturally spawn; however, a world that hasn't fully assimilated with mana doesn't have the structural integrity to hold constructs born from mana, such as dungeons, without collapsing. Due to this, gates appear and connect to dungeons in various other worlds.

In one dungeon, connected to a world called the 'Cloud Plane', Earthlings met humans that treat the system as something akin to the 'heavens', and rather than leveling up, they consider it as 'cultivation'.

Through these countless interactions with other world denizens, the citizens of Earth learned many things, especially the fact that these otherworld denizens are barred entry to Earth through the gates.

It seemed to have something to do with the concept of 'balance'. However, because humanity has only lived with mana and the system for 6 years, they weren't able to completely understand these more complex theories.

Several hours passed, and the dungeon seemed to have been mostly cleared. The group decided to take a break before commencing their final sweep. During this break, Elena naturally went to Damien to check on him and chat for a while.

In another area of the dungeon, Jin stood with a hateful look in his eyes. 'Dammit. That woman should be mine! Why does she keep looking at that trash instead of me?'

Throughout the entire time they were raiding the dungeon, Jin was constantly trying to show his strength and valor to impress Elena, but she acted like he didn't exist. As the only son of a wealthy and influential father, Jin was never treated with indifference like what Elena shows him.

'But that only makes me want her more.' Jin looked over at Elena, who was chatting and laughing with Damien, showing a completely different personality than she did with others as envy began to cloud his mind.

'All I have to do I get rid of that trash. If that hindrance is gone, then there's nothing stopping her from becoming my woman. Hehehe, anything can happen inside a dungeon, right? If a weak porter dies because a beast just "happens" to break through the lines...'

His expression twisted as his thoughts continued, and a malevolent aura started to spread, only to be retracted immediately after. 'Damien was it? Well, I guess I'll let you have her for now since it'll be the last conversation you ever have.'

Meanwhile, Damien continued chatting and laughing with Elena, oblivious to the fact that he was being put to death by an arrogant young master.

“So? This dungeon seems to be pretty normal to me— I don’t see why the signature it gave off was so weird.”

“Hmm,” Elena pondered, “maybe it has multiple floors? If that’s the case, then there’s nothing to worry about since the gate will close once we clear this floor. But isn’t that good news for you? You get more money for less work.”

“Yeah, I guess so— anyway, it looks like that asshole is gathering everyone up again, so you should probably head over.”

When the attack squad began gathering, however, a thunderous roar resounded through the cavern. As heavy footsteps approached the group.

“Fuck!” Exclaimed Jin, “Just from its aura, I can tell that it’s probably a 1st class! Everyone get together and be ready to either fight or flee on my command!”

When the footsteps stopped, what was revealed was a massive tiger-like beast around 20 meters tall that had a fiery aura radiating from its body.

“It looks around level 50, a newly ascended 2nd class. If we work together, we should be able to kill it!” Jin yelled.

Damien retreated many meters as to not get caught in the crossfire as he watched the attack squad get into formation. The squad comprised of 2 tankers, 2 healers, a mage, and 3 damage dealers, including Elena and Jin.

The beast charged forward with a roar and shot flames from its mouth. As the tankers took the hit, the mage utilized his ice affinity to freeze the beast’s paws.

Elena and Jin charged. While Jin melded into the shadows and sliced at the beast’s tendons and other sensitive areas with his twin daggers, Elena confronted it head-on.

The tiger roared in anger and swung its paws at Elena while she deftly dodged and slashed at its neck. Time passed as the squad slowly chipped away at the beast, making it accumulate various gashes and wounds.

With Elena's ability, she was able to keep fighting even after most of the team had run out of mana or stamina.

With the mage letting out occasional ice spikes as his mana replenished and Jin limiting its movements by cutting its exposed tendons and ligaments, around 15 minutes later, she managed to land a fatal hit, letting the beast drop to the floor, dead.

With the comprehensive planning and experience they had, the team managed to finish the fight without any unexpected circumstances and were promptly healed by the healers. As everyone began catching their breaths, the entire cave began to rumble.

Everyone's faces immediately paled.

"The gate's closing! We need to get out of here!" Yelled one of the tankers as he ran with all his might.

Everyone else soon followed as even Damien had to continuously teleport to reach the gate. Being trapped in a dungeon usually meant death with no escape.

Once the gate closes, there is no connection left to Earth, so even if one manages to escape the dungeon, they're trapped in a completely different world.

As Damien ran, he looked around for Elena and noticed her falling behind.

"Elena! What are you doing?" Damien yelled before abruptly realizing the situation.

The gate closed out of nowhere, and as the one who did most of the work to kill the 2nd class beast, she must've used most of her mana. Without being given time to rest, she was basically on the verge of fainting.

"Fuck!" Damien cursed as he ran back to grab her. He put his arm around Elena's waist, which she subconsciously rejected before realizing it was him, then without pause began spamming his short-distance teleportation to flee.

As the gate came into sight, Damien felt his mana draining at a rapid rate, and his body began to break down. His blood churned and leaked through his pores, but he kept going.

He remembered his ominous feeling, and he remembered his resolve. And just as his internal organs were going to rupture, he made it out of the gate.

As he set Elena on the ground, he smiled. Although it felt a bit anti-climactic, he was glad he managed to get both of them out of the gate without issues.

And then, just as he was about to ask Elena, who had regained some vigor, how she was doing, he felt his body flying backward.

‘Huh? Backward? What’s going on?’ Damien thought as his mind failed to understand what caused such a bizarre situation. As reality sunk in, he began to panic.

He knew that what was behind him was a gate that was on the verge of closing, but he had no means to save himself.

His mana was overdrawn, his body was at its limit, and his consciousness was already weak.

As he felt the mana current of the gate graze his back, the last thing he saw was Elena's horrified expression and a certain bastard smiling at him and waving.

And then, everything went dark.