

An Understated Dominance (Dustin Rhys)

Chapter 2678

Hera was scared out of her wits. The moment Dustin effortlessly deflected her attacks, the urge to retreat had already taken root. Her instincts screamed danger when she looked at him. He was someone she couldn't afford to provoke.

Still, she'd clung to the hope that with Zeus by her side, their combined strength might still secure victory.

But after witnessing him suffer a grievous wound and lose his arm in a single strike, panic consumed her entirely.

Hera's strength paled in comparison to Zeus'. If he couldn't survive a single strike, she would fare even worse.

When she saw Dustin raise his hand again, she no longer hesitated. She pushed off the ground and shot into the sky. Her form blurred into a streak of motion as she fled into the distance.

Survival was her only priority now. Zeus' fate wasn't her concern.

Dustin had ascended to the realm of terrestrial immortals. Unless the Supreme Leader himself took action, no one in the Hall of Gods could stand against Dustin.

"You think you can run?"

Dustin smiled faintly. He raised one hand above his head and swept it downward.

A bone-deep rumble split the sky. From above, a colossal golden palm suddenly passed through the clouds and descended on Hera with crushing inevitability.

The palm dwarfed mountains and valleys alike. Its presence swallowed daylight whole, leaving only shadow in its wake. Next to that colossal palm, she looked like a fly about to meet a flyswatter.

"What in the..."

Seeing the palm pressing down from above, Hera's face went pale with terror, and a chill ran down her spine. Even if she used all her strength, she knew it was impossible to escape the palm's overwhelming reach.

She let out a piercing scream as the golden palm closed around her. Silence followed immediately after. Moments later, the palm vanished.

Hera's body plummeted from the sky and slammed into the ground at the ancient temple gates. Her circulatory pathways were severed, her bones shattered completely, and blood poured from her nose and mouth. She lay there, barely clinging to life.

Though she was still breathing, she hung by the thinnest thread. Dustin had deliberately held back. Otherwise, the colossal golden palm's grip would have crushed her into pieces. Then again, looking at her now, there wasn't much difference.

The monks and guards at the ancient temple entrance stared in horror at her corpse-like form sprawled on the ground.

They had no idea what transpired inside the temple. Instead, they had only heard explosive sounds and felt waves of overwhelming pressure that kept them at bay.

When the explosions stopped, they witnessed Hera suddenly bolt into the sky in desperate flight. The next second, the colossal golden palm descended from the clouds and effortlessly captured her. By the time she hit the ground, she was half-dead and couldn't move even a finger.

Had a supreme master from the Regal Observatory intervened?

Nothing else could explain how the royal god Hera had been so easily defeated. At that thought, excitement stirred in their hearts. Maybe help had finally arrived.

Inside the ancient temple, Dustin turned his gaze toward Zeus, who was several dozen feet away.

Zeus had already lost an arm. Blood streamed from his nose and mouth, and his face was deathly pale. Though his injuries weren't as severe as Hera's, he too was gravely wounded.

"Impossible! How did you become so strong?" Zeus snarled through gritted teeth, rage and disbelief twisting his features.

Though he had suspected Dustin had achieved a breakthrough, the reality of facing that overwhelming power left him stunned. Just days ago, Dustin was still an ultimate grandmaster, not even a fully developed one.

How much time had actually passed? A week? Perhaps ten days at most?

In that short time, how could Dustin, who hadn't even perfected the ultimate grandmaster realm, suddenly transform into a peerless terrestrial immortal?

Zeus couldn't wrap his mind around it. He refused to accept it.

He had spent decades striving to break through from the peak of the ultimate grandmaster realm. Yet, Dustin had accomplished in mere days what Zeus couldn't achieve despite a lifetime of dedication.

What had happened?

"Am I that powerful?" Dustin smiled faintly. "I paid for it with my life."

During his breakthrough, his physical form had begun to collapse under the strain, and he almost died.

At the critical moment, a surge of vital energy had erupted from inside him, dragging him back from death's door. With that life force and the Dracan essence flowing through him, he had barely managed to break through.

Beyond his willingness to risk everything, the stars had aligned perfectly. Perhaps this was what Grace called great luck.

"I refuse to accept this! I won't stand for it! How can you break through? Why can't I?" Zeus erupted in a nearly mad roar.

He knew his fate was sealed. Even without his grievous injuries, facing a terrestrial immortal in his peak form would have been hopeless.

Hera's desperate escape attempt earlier told him everything he needed to know about his own chances.

Zeus knew he was going to die that day. He might as well vent his fury before the end.

"Maybe it's because you're ugly," Dustin said matter-of-factly.

"I'll kill you!" Zeus charged forward with a final roar. His form became a blur as he launched himself at Dustin.

Dustin simply raised one hand and made a grabbing motion through the air, freezing Zeus mid-flight, suspended and helpless.

Then, he turned to Grace beside him and asked calmly, "Live or die?"

"Die," she replied coldly.

"Very well."

He nodded and slowly closed his fist.

With a deafening crack, Zeus' body burst like an overinflated balloon, exploding in a shower of gore. There were no remains left of him.