

# The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin

## chapter 16-20

(To be continued) The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin Chapter 16: The Emperor's Tour (3)

The situation concluded relatively early.

The demonic beast that appeared was the 'Big Snail', a giant snail-type mid-level beast that inhabited the desolate forest in the west. They secreted highly concentrated acidic fluids capable of melting and polluting skin upon contact. If left unattended, they could release a foul stench in the area, so early suppression was crucial.

Under the command of Duke Vert, a purification operation was carried out, successfully eradicating the Big Snails and preventing the spread of contamination. The imperial army's support as additional forces made completion smoother.

"I'm not as agile as I used to be," Emperor Dione said with a down-to-earth smile as he sheathed his sword.

"We have subdued the demonic beasts, Your Majesty, so perhaps it's time for you to retreat to the rear now."

"I know that without your prodding. By the way, has the imperial princess evacuated safely?"

His concern for his daughter's safety came belatedly, but the knights informed him that she had safely made it to the rear.

"That's a relief. Let's go straight away then."

While fire mages took care of the remains, the Emperor headed to the rear where the princess awaited.

"You've worked hard, Father."

Princess Arin was the first to run up and greet him as he arrived at the rear camp.

“Luckily you’re safe.”

Fortunately, it seemed she had waited quietly without issue.

“.....!”

Their eyes met as the princess lifted her head.

Her gaze was filled with even more intense contempt than before.

Instead of camaraderie, animosity had only deepened.

The course of events had moved contrary to her father’s hope, but it was better this way rather than clinging to a rotten lifeline.

As the commotion settled, the sun had shifted to the western edge of the horizon.

“Why don’t you return to Belias? I have already sent a message to the estate managers to prepare for your restful stay.”

My father wanted to guide the Emperor to a place of safety, but the Emperor seemed unwilling, coincidentally.

“Hmm, is that really necessary? I’ve decided to spend the night here at this rear camp instead.”

“But, Your Majesty, even though that may be...”

“I don’t particularly wish to enjoy luxurious treatment all the way out here. In an emergency, I should fight as a knight, should I not? Besides, there are matters I wish to discuss with you.”

Though it was a camp near the border guard, it was unquestionably on the front lines.

It was unprecedented and dangerous for the Emperor to spend a night on the front.

Yet, knowing the Emperor had another purpose in mind, my father promptly ordered the preparation of royal lodgings.

Princess Arin stood gazing blankly at the dwelling taking shape.

Was the princess, too, going to stay here?

Well, it wasn't my concern.

Once the Emperor's tour was over, there would be no need for us to remain.

It might be best to end my encounters with the princess here.

With no additional reports, I naturally returned to the camp with the other knights.

\* \* \*

"It's been a long time since we've shared a drink together, Willius."

Drinking on the front lines was strictly prohibited and subject to harsh military law, yet there are those above such laws.

Though a glass of wine was poured, the Duke had yet to take a sip.

"Sian, was it? Your son... for such a young age, he's quite respectable."

The Emperor's earnest praise elicited no reaction from the Duke.

"He has much to learn. I'm grateful for your kind view."

"Much to learn..."

The Emperor heartily emptied his glass and then asked with a significant smile, "Does the boy intend to follow the will of the house...?"

The Duke did not respond immediately.

"We shall wait and see. Even if he wishes it, it's not something that can be achieved through desire alone."

The Emperor filled his glass with a carefree smile.

“Indeed, before being a guardian of the continent, aren’t you someone’s father? It would be strange if a parent didn’t worry about their child. I’m the same...”

Silence fell briefly.

The Emperor’s somber look settled in, and the mood darkened naturally.

After emptying another glass, the Emperor began the real conversation.

“Assassination events have occurred across the empire, targeting certain nobles. Pervasive and indiscriminate...”

“Is there a common link?”

“A link? Yes. Each assassinated noble was a corrupt official deep in sin. Their bodies were found gruesomely dismembered...”

“Tch!”

The Duke’s eyes visibly wavered, able to infer the culprits from these two facts alone.

“Couldn’t it be the followers of the [Dark Mist](#)...?”

“It’s still conjecture. But the imperial court is nearly sure of their involvement. Who else but them would conceive such deeds?”

This was known as noble hunting.

There was only one group willing to undertake such insane acts.

“Then we should soon form an investigative team to begin the pursuit, should we not?”

“Pursuit? Well, yes, we must. They are causing chaos in the land, after all...”

However, the Emperor seemed more interested in something else.

While rolling his glass, his complex feelings were apparent.

“How do you view the Fifth Princess’s position?”

The mention was somewhat out of the blue.

“To be frank, doesn’t she have no bearing on the throne? I understand she lacks supportive factions...”

“To lack a supportive faction means she could be easily exploited anywhere.”

“!”

The Duke grasped the Emperor’s implication immediately.

“Are there movements to link Princess Arin with those villains?”

The Emperor nodded without a word.

This was the distant position from the throne.

Yet, it was an ideal excuse for political manipulation.

Presently, the Emperor was watching intently, or such a movement would be futile, but the fact that there was awareness showed how complex the empire’s situation was.

Likely, if there was any actual action, it involved the forces of the current Queen’s side, the Nephilis Ducal House.

“What sin could the young girl have committed? Yet, as long as I’m here, there shouldn’t be any significant problems.”

The Emperor took another drink.

The Duke knew how much anxiety the Emperor held for some potential.

“I have a request, not as an emperor but as a friend.”

“Speak, Your Majesty.”

“If, just if, I were to die before you... could you discreetly escort that child away? Let her live simply as an ordinary person, unrelated to the imperial household.”

The Emperor, fearing the impending storm after his demise, thought it unlikely the young princess would survive it.

He wished for her peaceful life as a father more than as an emperor.

“I shall heed the Emperor’s command.”

Without a moment’s hesitation, the Duke accepted his request.

“I’m such an inadequate emperor. If I had my way, those dark villains would kill every fool in the imperial court.”

The Emperor revealed his intense inner thoughts, slightly drunk.

The Duke was forced to think as well.

Why had they appeared at this period?

Those not appointed by the gods among them.

The god of the Dark Mist, Aer, and his followers, the Mist, the continent’s premier assassin guild.

After a period of invisibility, their reappearance meant there was a reason.

Whatever the reason, it would bring significant changes to the continent’s precarious balance.

Though it would likely not be for the better...

“The Mist...”

The Duke gazed somberly into his wine.

The enigmatic figure he had encountered in the valley the night before vividly haunted him.

\* \* \*

The sun was setting when dark clouds suddenly gathered.

– Patter-patter

Soon after, heavy rain began to pour from the black sky.

-Boom!

Thunder rolled ominously.

While most people would burrow under their blankets, my body was very twitchy.

Just as rain brought out certain creatures from the earth, there were beasts that emerged only on rainy days here.

Damp from rain-soaked earth, sticky beasts full of moisture would appear, and I couldn't resist tasting their blood.

Despite their more repulsive appearance compared to other beasts, they had health benefits and should not be dismissed.

"I won't be too long since missing a day of exercise can disrupt the flow."

After changing, I donned a black raincoat hanging on a pillar.

Securing Ceyram within my attire, I was about to leave the tent when...

-Tread-tread

Suddenly, unfamiliar footsteps approached.

Given their direction and echo, they were clearly heading toward my tent.

I focused on the leading footsteps. They were unfamiliar but recognizable from recent interaction.

Demure yet assertive; noble rather than knight; child rather than adult; female rather than male.

".....!"

Only when those mysterious steps reached my tent did I identify them.

The tent opened, and a red brooch symbolic of royal status was the first to catch my eye.

Slowly lifting my head, I faced an unexpected night visitor.

"Where are you off to...?"

It was Princess Arin, who should have been at the rear camp.

“Who has come...?”

Startled by the sudden visitor, Emily peeked out.

She wouldn't have recognized the princess's face, but upon seeing the brooch on her chest, her expression turned to utter shock.

“Pr-Pr-Princess!?”

A cry somewhere between a scream and a cheer.

To make matters worse, at my side, a black mist began to emerge.

[Good morning, Master~]

She's got some nerve calling it morning.

[Huh? Master, why are you so stiff?]

Casually stretching, she poked at my motionless body.

The moment she noticed the princess at the door, she clasped her mouth in an unexpected shock.

[Master, do you fancy this kind of... taste?]

Ignoring the worthless chatter.

“Sorry for coming suddenly. I was told I could find you here...”

“Are you looking for me?”

“Yes. If you're not too busy, can we talk?”

Her request for a sudden conversation was somewhat baffling.

Outside, she was escorted by several guards.

This is suddenly attracting a lot of eyes...

If I leave now to exercise, it'll only raise suspicions.



It seems I'll have to postpone tonight's training.

"Please come in, Princess."

With a slightly reluctant face, I welcomed her.

(To be continued)

## **FOOTNOTES:**

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin Chapter 17. The Emperor's Tour (4)

Emperor Dionne Severus of the Usiph Empire had two wives.

The first was the former Empress, now deceased, 'Diana Quizzel', and the second, the current Empress and the actual power behind the empire, 'Cassandra Nephelis'.

From the former Empress, a first prince and a second princess were born, and from the current Empress, a third prince and a fourth prince.

But what about the fifth princess?

To the public, she was known to be born from a fallen duke's family.

However, amongst the nobles central to the court, there was no one who did not know that she was born of a concubine.

Even thought to be the daughter of some nameless commoner...

Although the Emperor personally took her in and named her a princess, compared to her four siblings, she could never receive the same treatment.

One throne and the four children between it.

As a base-born from a concubine, she could never earnestly partake in such ferocious battles.

She was just a princess in name, an empty shell devoid of any real power.

At a glimpse, she may seem powerless, but honestly, what could a woman all on her own accomplish?

She was utterly unable to help herself and even failed to build the slightest support network to protect her.

In the end, she was expelled from the palace due to a civil conflict and eventually passed away quietly from an illness without any significant resurgence—such was the dismal past life of this princess.

Truly an unfortunate princess.

It was a fitting phrase, no matter who coined it.

Though she may now live in peace with an innocent face, tears of blood will fall from those clear eyes in a few years.

“How long have you lived here?”

“About a month.”

“Alone?”

“I live with a maid.”

“I see...”

Our conversation was repeatedly cut short by my indifferent one-word answers.

As I did, the princess’s gaze grew increasingly anxious, and the piercing look from Emily through the barrier shadow grew sharper.

“I should apologize for what happened this afternoon. As a princess, I feel I presented such an unbecoming appearance. As you said, if I can’t be of help, at least I shouldn’t be a hindrance...”

“There’s no need for concern. I, too, apologize for any impolite remarks I may have made towards you, Your Highness.”

As I stood to bow, she awkwardly followed suit and then settled back into her seat.

“Um, well, so...”

The princess hesitated, unsure whether to speak or not.

I decided to silently wait.

“Why did you come to the front lines?”

“I wanted to gain a variety of experiences before enrolling in the academy.”

“Weren’t you scared?”

“I am overcoming it.”

The tent grew quiet with a heavy silence.

Unable to bear it any longer, I broke the silence.

“What do you wish to say?”

“Huh?”

“You didn’t come to inquire about my personal matters, did you?”

“No! I just wanted to ask you about yourself, that’s why I came!”

“Do you speak of inquiring about me?”

[Our master is quite popular, isn’t he?]

Ceyram, lying on the bed and watching closely, remarked sardonically.

“Y-yes. Ever since I first saw you at the defensive line, I felt you were very different. Unlike me, you seemed so mature.”

“For someone who thinks so, you seemed to view me quite unfavorably...”

“Ah, for that, I apologize! It seems my envious feelings were inadvertently showing.”

By now I had a good idea of why the princess had come.

Personal consultation.

The intent was for peers of the opposite sex to talk and get to know each other better.

It was rather abrupt...

Putting aside my own situation, the fact that she would seek out a conversation with a young man she just met today, late at night, was strange.

Does the princess lack company to such a degree?

“Unfortunately, I don’t believe there is anything I can share with Your Highness. I find it difficult to speak of my personal concerns, and I am not as mature as you may think.”

Even if I felt a moment of pity for her, I’m too busy dealing with my own life to have the luxury of counseling someone else’s. If she cannot be of help, then even if she is of imperial blood, to me, she’s no more significant than a pebble by the road.

[Sigh, what should we do with our naive master?]

Ceyram let out a weary sarcastic response, and Emily’s gaze felt even sharper, though I gave no sign of it.

My business is mine alone, not theirs to concern.

“Why do you think that way?”

Her tone changed abruptly.

“Do you also despise me for being a mere shell of a princess?”

“You misunderstand.”

“No, I can tell by your tone. You want to end this conversation quickly and send me away. Even if I was wrong to come visit you so abruptly, to be honest, it feels quite unpleasant.”

Her gaze settled on me like a sharply honed blade.

“I see. From your perspective, I’m just someone who cannot be of any help.”

“Why would you think that?”

“I know best about myself. I’ve realized it through countless experiences since birth. No one ever tried to show their best side to me because I was a princess.”

I could only respond with silence.

Because I am no different from those she’s encountered,

It was unnecessary to persist with excuses.

With a sigh, the princess rose from her seat.

“Sorry to take your time. I thought at least we could talk, but I was mistaken. You’re nothing like your brother, Asher.”

...What?

For a moment, I doubted my ears.

“What did you just say?”

“I said you seem totally different from Asher. Even if you’re siblings, you wouldn’t necessarily be alike.”

Why?

Why is that bastard’s name being mentioned by the princess?

Unable to control my expression, the princess recoiled in surprise.

“Why do you look at me like that?”

“Asher... I mean, how do you know my elder brother?”

I asked quietly, collecting my thoughts.

“Last year, during a visit to the Royal Academy, I happened to meet him. He’s the [eldest son of Duke](#) Vert, who is acquainted with Father. I was naturally introduced to him...”

The atmosphere turned heavy.

My stomach churned, and it was hard to breathe.

I had only heard a name, and yet my emotions surged uncontrollably.

Calm down. What about when you actually confront him?

If I don't get a grip now, I might really rip him to shreds on the spot.

You must control yourself.

Wouldn't it be pointless to give him such a trivial and uninteresting demise?

My raging inner turmoil slowly calmed.

Lifting my face quietly, I spoke again with a calm demeanor.

"Is that so? I am sorry I could not present myself in a manner befitting him."

"Right! You should try to be a bit more like him! After all, Asher sincerely advised me!"

...?

Who would give advice?

"...Are you saying my elder brother gave you sincere advice?"

"That's right! Despite what others said, he told me not to waver and continue being a dignified and upright princess! He urged me to be a princess that could truly benefit the empire!"

I couldn't believe it.

That supreme opportunist gave heartfelt advice? I know his true nature better than anyone.

He was the sort of devil who showed absolutely no interest, either kind or malicious, in anyone he deemed of no significance to him.

He only began to pay attention to me after my graduation from the academy.

Back when I was deemed incompetent, we were practically strangers for all the attention he gave.

For that man to offer advice to a princess—no, to a young princess?

Among all the imperial family, the fifth princess had the most insignificant and frail power.

She barely existed in the eyes of power-holders, so much so, that I would expect him to overlook her with nothing more than a formal greeting.

Honestly, I wanted to believe it was a lie...

But I couldn't see any sign of falsehood in the pure eyes of this naïve princess.

“...”,

Taken aback by my unexpected silence, the princess wavered, unsure what to do.

I'll repeat, that man never does anything without reason.

If he offered heartfelt advice to the young princess, it was because he saw value in doing so.

He would not have spoken such words simply to offer pleasant platitudes.

And if it was a year ago, then it wouldn't have affected me at that time either.

Which means this very encounter may as well have occurred in my past life.

Become a princess of real value to the empire...

What an unsuitable thing for him to gab about.

The situation remains unchanged.

The naïve princess ultimately holds no value for me.

It makes no difference whose hands she's in or how she's manipulated.

But if Asher's the one pulling the strings...

Then that changes everything.

Now that I'm aware, I'll delve into the minutest details and thoroughly ruin any plans he may have.

-Ziing-

After creating a mana sphere the size of a pea on my fingertip, I flicked it away.

The sphere dispersed into dust, forming an invisible magical barrier around the princess and me.

“What did you just do?”

“Nothing important. Pay it no mind.”

I cast an anti-eavesdropping barrier to ensure our impending conversation remained unheard by anyone else. To those beyond the barrier, even the sound of an ant breathing would be inaudible.

“So, a princess who benefits the empire?”

“Yes, I don’t want to live like a puppet. I want to help the nation and its people as a princess.”

“Then I must boldly ask. Does Your Highness have any interest in the throne?”

Stunned by the question, she recoiled.

“What are you saying? The throne? I have no such ambition...”

“So I will ask again. If you have no interest in the throne, how exactly do you plan to serve the nation and its people?”

The princess’s face flushed deeply with embarrassment.

“I don’t wish to be an empress! There’s no chance! I know it’s hard being young, but if I try, I’m sure, even as a princess, I can...”

“How pitiful.”

“What?”

“Do you not understand the reality of the empire? You intend to contribute as a princess? You think it’ll be tough because you’re young? Do you believe



anything will change in ten, twenty years? With that attitude, you couldn't even save a beggar on the street."

Doubt and trembling, her frail belief crumbled pitifully.

Knowing yet denying.

Regardless, there was a need to thoroughly ensure she understood her circumstances.

Whether woman or child, leniency would only be toxic.

Firstly, it was necessary for the princess to deeply engrain her position.

Tiny dewdrops formed at the corners of her eyes.

"So what should I do...? How should I live to be of help to the empire?"

"Isn't it simple?"

"...?"

"Become the empress."

She froze as if struck by petrification magic.

These weren't empty words thrown about in jest.

Where there's a will and power, anything is possible for humans.

A beggar might one day draw the holy sword and become a hero, and an emperor who ruled the world might be overthrown by a revolution and become destitute.

If she could become an empress, she would indeed be valuable to me, wouldn't she?

-Ding! Ding! Ding!

Just then, a familiar sound filled the air.

With three bell tolls, focus returned to the princess's eyes.

Simultaneously, guards stationed outside the barriers rushed in.

“Your Highness, we must evacuate immediately!”

I promptly dispelled the anti-eavesdropping magic.

“Is it a beast attack?”

“It seems so. We must head to the rear camp quickly...”

-Boom!

A signal indicating the emergence of magical beasts resounded.

The sound was so close and so loud that people instinctively covered their ears.

It sounded near the encampment.

A tremendous beast’s roar followed, sending powerful vibrations through the ground.

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTE:

## **The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 18**

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin Chapter 18

Chapter 18: The Emperor’s Tour (5)

“Report the situation!”

Hearing the sound of fireworks, Duke Vert rushed out of the tent.

Guard Knight Yulken immediately ran over to start reporting.

“Monsters have appeared near the camp! We estimate their numbers to be at least the size of one unit!”

“Which monsters have appeared?”

“Mostly mid-to-lower class monsters including slimes, swamp toads, and moss golems, but from the demonic energy we’re sensing now, it seems likely...”

“Looks like some higher-class monsters have shown up as well.”

Following the Duke, Emperor Dione himself made an appearance.

The Emperor had already completed his full armament, including his sword.

“Monsters have an incredible sense of smell. It seems they’ve detected the appearance of a truly special feast.”

The Emperor’s face was slightly reddened, perhaps due to the influence of the alcohol.

“Do not overexert yourself, Your Majesty! We should evacuate outside the defense line immediately...!”

The Duke urged caution, but the Emperor paid him no heed.

Instead, he raised his hand high and cast a spell.

“May the brilliant light of guidance illuminate the darkness...”

A large sphere materialized over the Emperor’s palm.

The sphere soared into the sky and brightly lit up the area limited by the storm, making it easier for the knights to arm themselves.

“I’m still in good shape.”

A sense of leisure overflowed from the Emperor’s face.

-Thump! Thump!

A mysterious vibration was felt from beneath the ground, reminiscent of the footsteps of a giant creature.

“Although it was said in jest, isn’t it rare for monsters to come all the way to a human encampment?”

“It’s not just rare, it’s almost unheard of.”

Monster subjugation usually took place near the entrance of the Limia Valley or within its surrounding areas.

If they crossed the set boundary line, it was judged that they would impact human territories, and at that moment, a subjugation operation would commence.

The place where the Duke and the Emperor stood now was a rear camp near the defense line.

Though slightly distanced from the camp near the valley where monsters had emerged, it would be fair to say this was the first time monsters had directly infiltrated the human encampment.

“All troops, complete armaments and head to the camp immediately. Non-combatant forces should evacuate outside the defense line quickly!”

At the Duke’s command, the knights moved in unison.

There was no time to waste in reaching the camp, which might already be engaged in combat.

Above all, the Duke’s son was still there.

“Isn’t your son over there?”

Knowing this, the Emperor asked casually, but the Duke did not show it.

“One must be able to protect oneself. What we must focus on right now is not my son but the monsters, Your Majesty.”

Impressed by the Duke’s steadfast demeanor, the Emperor clicked his tongue.

“Truly a man of steel.”

Nevertheless, he also issued orders to the knights of the Imperial army.

“Hear me, Imperial Army! From this moment, join with the knights on the frontline and begin the operation to subjugate the monsters! Show no mercy and leave not a single monster alive!”

The Emperor, too, had finished preparations to lead the soldiers in monster subjugation.

“Right, I must see to the princess’s evacuation...”

“Your Imperial Majesty!”

A knight from the Imperial army hurried over with an urgent expression.

“What’s the matter?”

“I regret to report, Your Majesty, but the princess is currently at the camp!”

The Emperor’s and the Duke’s expressions changed dramatically.

“What do you mean? Why is the princess there?”

The princess should have been at the rear camp, and her sudden presence at the front was perplexing.

“Some 30 minutes ago, she left with her Guard Knights, saying she wanted to meet someone personally. It seems she might have gone while Your Majesty was in conversation...”

The Emperor was flabbergasted.

“Who would she meet in such a dangerous place...?”

“Kuaaack!”

A chilling scream assaulted their ears, as if the monsters were warning them not to waste time with unnecessary discussions.

Now was not the time to worry about his daughter’s safety.

The Emperor quickly composed himself and issued an order to the knight.

In the agony of his severed arm, Troll thrashed violently.

To forget pain with more pain.

Amidst the relentless downpour of the staff, the enchanting dance of the demonic sword continued.

(To be continued)

## **The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 19**

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin Chapter 19

Chapter 19: The Emperor's Tour (6)

– Thud!

The face of the troll, with its limbs severed, crashed down onto the ground.

“Ugh...”

Although it was still breathing, it was as good as dead.

I sat on the troll's head and cut through its neck.

– Ssssh!

The troll's body slumped like a rag, and a viscous green liquid flowed down my blade.

Despite the repulsive sight, I found myself absentmindedly licking it off.

“Ptoeey!”

Disgustingly bitter.

They say medicine is bitter to the mouth, but isn't this a bit too much?

An unnaturally sour smell filled my nostrils, with intermittent hints of pungency.

[Is that little taste enough for you? A man would lift the head up high and take a big gulp!]

The head was repulsive; I opted to slice the wrist instead, creating an apt hole.

The blood of the troll trickled down from the sunken opening.

I closed my eyes tightly and sucked the blood into my mouth.

– Glug glug

The sharp scent rising up my throat made my skin crawl.

This was much more than I had anticipated.

“Is it edible?”

[...?]

Surprised by the unexpectedly good taste, I sliced off the other arm of the troll in the same way.

Questioning whether I had misjudged earlier, I took another sip. The taste was indeed intricate, far different from the blood of lower beasts.

The troll’s wrist withered away in no time.

[You might as well be a devil...]

The expression of disdain on Ceyram’s face was quite a sight.

It was my first time tasting the blood of a troll, but it seemed my taste buds were growing increasingly deranged.

Enough of the blood, what remained was disposal...

– Patter patter patter

“The damn rain shows no sign of stopping.”

In this weather, without a fire mage, it would be difficult to burn the troll’s corpse.

[Why? Can't you just leave it and go?]

"No need to leave such risks behind. No point in leaving a trail of trouble."

While I was pondering a solution,

– Roar

A familiar sound echoed in my ears, reminiscent of a powerful stream of water.

It made me consider the vicinity...

[Why not just throw it in the water then?]

That was it.

The 'Blood River' must be nearby.

With the rain pouring for so long, the current would be fierce.

Whether it settles on the riverbed or flows to the demon world, the raging current will take care of it.

Resolved, I sliced the troll's corpse into pieces that were easier to carry.

"It'll be hard to carry it all in one trip; I'll have to make two or three trips."

I slung the massive legs as thick as pillars over my shoulders.

Just the legs alone were already taller than me.

Combine the weight of the two legs, and it would be over 100kg, but after consuming demon blood, this was nothing to me.

– CrAschel crAschel

Following the sound for about three minutes,

I arrived at a low cliff with a red river flowing below it.

As expected, the water level had risen significantly due to the heavy rain.



Without hesitation, I hurled the two legs down the cliff, and they were quickly swept away by the rapid current.

[You said it was good, isn't it a waste to throw them out after just one taste?]

"There's no way to keep it, what can I do? Once you taste it, that's the end."

I regretted it, but there was no choice.

One by one, I threw the remaining pieces into the Blood River.

A burning would have been just as effective at disposing of the body.

Somehow, disposing of the body felt more troublesome than catching it.

I took a seat on the cliff for a short rest.

The monster was dealt with, leaving other thoughts to arise naturally.

Ceyram asked with a smile as he noticed my somewhat absent-minded face.

[Are you thinking about that princess? Worrying maybe?]

"Not really."

[You said she could become the empress, and now you are indifferent? Were you serious about what you said?]

"Well, it wasn't an empty talk at least."

I thought it was a much more valuable statement than 'become a princess who can help the empire.'

[Planning to be a kingmaker?]

"Not at all. I merely set the direction. Everything else is up to that woman."

Whether she becomes an empress who rules the empire or sits on the street as a beggar, it was up to her.

However, now that I know Aschel has taken an interest, I will have to keep an eye on her over the long term.

Still, I don't believe she will repeat the fate of a tragic princess as long as I'm watching.

Enough time has passed that the reinforcements should have joined by now.

If I stay in the vicinity, I could naturally join them.

As I was about to stand up and return to camp,

“.....!”

An unfamiliar aura abruptly reached me, and my face instinctively turned in its direction.

My eyes flickered open and met a cliff somewhat higher than where I stood.

I felt like a starving predator abruptly turning toward the scent of prey.

I saw it.

In the swirling storm, a pair of brilliant purple, lustrous wings spread wide!

With sharp claws and a tail thrusting up as if a blade had been plunged in!

Unlike other beings that fed on the holy life force of the continent, it was a spiritual being that fed on the dark energy of the demon world!

“A, a dragon?”

It was the Devil Dragon, a rare behemoth-class monster of the demon world.

“.....”

Although it wasn't fully grown by its size, the overwhelming demonic energy it emitted left no doubt it was a Devil Dragon.

Why was it, a creature that lives in the deepest parts of the demon world, seen in the [Limea Valley](#)?

Had it been separated from its group?

Even if it had, there was no reason to come this far.

Did it come following my scent?

It didn't seem particularly aggressive, though.

My mind was cluttered with myriad thoughts.

Calm down.

There's no need to think too hard.

I just needed to do what I could and should do now.

The Devil Dragon.

Although a growing specimen, it still was a behemoth-class monster.

It would possess high-quality blood incomparable to that of superior monsters.

In that case...

[Why did you suddenly stop talking, my master?]

Ceyram tapped my still figure, which had become mute as if drugged with honey, but I didn't budge.

After my thoughts had cleared, I grasped Ceyram and whispered softly.

"Dark Mist 9th Form: Demonic Sword Manifestation..."

[Eh? What's going on all of a sudden!?!]

Before he got flustered, Ceyram turned into mist and was absorbed into my body with no time to be astonished.

Ceyram's shouts echoed, asking why, but I completely ignored him.

There was only one thought in my mind...

"I have to catch... no, I need to eat that dragon!"

\* \* \*

"Kuaaak!"

The menacing troll charged forward without fear.

It was met with the sacred light-filled blade of a guardian knight.

– Sssh

With the light's power imbued in the strike, the troll collapsed weakly.

The knights finished it off with a final blow, and the superior monster was dealt with easily.

“That’s the fifth one...”

The hunt was going smoothly, but Duke Velt’s face remained grim.

Five superior monsters encountered in a short period of time.

It couldn’t be a coincidence when these beings, who were usually seen maybe once a month, were encountered in such large numbers so quickly.

“We need to hurry, Willius.”

The emperor, too, felt the urgency.

As he thought of his daughter, who might be surrounded by monsters, there was no time for hesitation. He was just hoping she was safe when,

“.....!”

Footsteps, not from the front but from a side path, approached hastily.

It wasn’t a single person but several.

The knights, preparing to march forward, turned they attention, and beacon lights floating in the air revealed the owners of the footsteps.

“Arin?”

Among the knights of the imperial army bearing the empire’s insignia was a young girl at their center.

It was Princess Arin, whom everyone believed to be at the camp.

“Your Majesty, we greet you!”

The knights recognized the emperor and kneeled before him immediately.

A maid, who had been hiding among them, now came into view.

“Why is father here?”

Although she asked herself, Princess Arin soon realized the emperor, her father, had come to this place because of her.

As a princess and daughter, it was a grave fault to cause concern.

“I apologize, father!”

The princess knelt quickly and asked for forgiveness.

“It’s alright, as long as you are safe.”

The emperor consoled her, skipping any reprimands.

“.....”

As Emily stood awkwardly by, overwhelmed by the emperor’s presence, she could not help but feel an immense pressure. Unsure if it was rainwater or sweat pouring down her body, she tentatively tried to lift her head when,

Right in front of her, she came face to face with an unfamiliar person.

“Eek!”

It was none other than Duke Velt.

Startled, Emily fell backward.

“Weren’t you the maid with Sian?”

“Ye-Yes, Duke! I am Emily, serving Master Sian!”

Having seen her frequently at the manor, the duke surely recognized her face.

Yet curiously, the maid’s master was nowhere in sight.

An overwhelming anxiety gripped the duke, preventing him from continuing.

“We... We have to save him!”

The princess’s desperate plea focused everyone’s attention.

“Who are you talking about, my lady?”

“Master Sian! He sent us to safety and then disappeared, saying he would distract the monsters on his own! We have to go help him right away!”

Tears or raindrops shimmered in the corners of her eyes.

In her distress, she looked nothing like a princess but a scared young girl.

“.....”

Feeling shock and trepidation, Duke Velt’s right hand shook uncontrollably.

Taking over from the silent duke, the emperor asked,

“Which way did he flee?”

“We know the direction! If you command, we can go save that young master!”

The guardian knights who escorted the princess showed their determination to go back and rescue him.

“What are we waiting for, Willius? Shouldn’t we save your son?”

The duke remained silent.

Unable to stand it longer, the emperor was about to step in when,

“The operation continues as planned.”

It was a small voice, clear enough for everyone to hear.

Everyone, including the emperor, was astonished at that moment.

“Willius, are you serious?”

“Right now, dozens of lives at the camp are on the brink. I can’t deploy a large force to search for one uncertain individual, my own child. It’s enough that he escorted the princess to safety; he’s done his duty.”

Even the emperor couldn’t object to the cold decision of this guardian of the continent.

With the duke’s unwavering resolve confirmed, the emperor turned his head.

“Move out, all troops continue the operation!”

The knights resumed the march towards the camp.

As Arin watched the unfolding scene, she clasped her mouth in disbelief.

“Why? Why this...?”

Her life was tossed aside for the mere reason of her being a princess.

At that moment, there was nothing she could do to save him.

“Father! No matter how you think about it, this is wrong! We don’t have time! We need to save him now!”

Arin pleaded earnestly, but the emperor coldly turned away from her.

“What are you doing? Take the princess away.”

What came back was an indifferent command.

The harsh reality left her in despair.

The incompetence of doing nothing.

It seemed all too meaningless, to the point where she questioned her own existence.

‘You wouldn’t be able to save a beggar lying in the street in that state.’

A statement she couldn’t counter, no matter how precisely it fit the situation.

A princess unable to save anyone; that was the current reality of ‘Arin Sebelrus’.

– Whoosh!

Suddenly, a gust of wind blew from somewhere.

Not only the princess but also the advancing knights bent down instinctively.

Along with the wind, the rain intensified, and a daunting shadow suddenly cast over the dark sky.

Arin slowly looked towards the direction the wind was coming from.

“.....!”

A mysterious creature filled her sight.

A noble figure with grand wings spread wide open, incomparable to ordinary monsters.

As everyone gazed up at this entity, the princess suddenly noticed a figure hanging from the tip of its extended foot.

“Si-Sian?”

Her heart teetered between shock and relief.

(To be continued)

Editor’s musings:

Sian is a foodie. And not a normal one at that.

## **The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 20**

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin Chapter 20

Chapter 20: The Strongest in the Demon Realm (1)

Dragons.



Offspring inheriting the blood of gods and the beings closest to the Creator.

They are noble creatures that are rarely seen in a lifetime, and a race that exudes an overwhelming presence that lowly creatures dare not approach.

“.....!”

All eyes on the ground turned toward the sky.

A violet dragon soaring gracefully through the stormy sky with its large wings fully spread.

Its serpentine body was long enough to wrap around an entire tent, and its four limbs, each equipped with sharp talons as if swords were embedded in them.

A black horn grew on its forehead, sending a chilling sense of dread to those who saw it. Knights, including the emperor and even the duke who had seen many battles at the front, were speechless with their eyes wide open and mouths agape.

“Look here, Willeus! No matter how I see it, that there can only be a dragon... right?”

“Correct. It looks like a young one still growing, but there’s no doubt it’s a Devil Dragon.”

“Are they seen often?”

“How could that be? This is the first time I have personally faced one from inside the outpost.”

Though many demon beasts lived in the Limea Gorge, there weren’t any dragons among them.

It was a rare occurrence for the shadow of a dragon, seen far in the demon realm’s skies, to cross over into the valley.

The Devil Dragon was flying at low altitude, clearly observed, circling around without leaving the area.

“Kieeek!”

The dragon seemed to be in some distress, emitting pained groans, suggesting it was not in a normal state.

As everyone puzzled over the situation, unable to move from their spots, the princess Arin pointed in a direction with a surprisingly clear voice.

“Look over there!”

Everyone’s gaze followed where her finger pointed—near the Devil Dragon’s ankle.

Soon enough, they spotted a familiar figure near the dragon’s right ankle.

Despite the limited visibility due to the storm, something resembling a small child was precariously hanging onto one of the dragon’s feet.

“.....?!”

The duke’s focus sharpened when he realized that the one hanging was none other than his son.

“Si, Sian?”

“That... isn’t that your son?”

When the other knights, including the emperor, recognized the figure, their eyes turned to the duke in unison.

“How on earth did he end up there...?”

He was supposed to have led the monsters away alone after ensuring the princess’s safety, yet, somehow, he was leisurely traveling through the turbulent night sky with a dragon.

The situation, inscrutable to all.

Despite the complexity of the matter, the duke quickly shook his head.

This was not the time to inquire about the circumstances.

What appeared before them was a formidable demon beast.

As it was his duty to eliminate all the emerging demons, he would have to kill it, even if it was a dragon.

The duke's right hand manifested an enormous amount of mana as he resolved his will.

"The sword of my conviction will soar to the heavens!"

Together with the incantation, a blue magic circle was drawn in the sky.

Five radiant swords materialized one by one.

The glimmering blades were all aimed at the Devil Dragon flying in the air.

\* \* \*

This is troubling.

Actually, more than troubling—it's a highly perplexing situation.

Below my suspended feet, over a hundred eyes were fixated upon me.

This is insane.

From the knights of the frontlines and the imperial guards, to the emperor and the duke at the center, to the corner where Emilie huddled, and the princess Arin with a face mixed with laughter and tears—everybody I should not have run into, I had met all at once.

[Hey! Why are you suddenly freezing like a statue? Aren't we going to catch that thing?]

"I'm going to get caught myself if I try catching it right now!"

Exactly 10 minutes ago.

After dispatching the troll's corpse at the Blood River, I encountered a dragon, the noblest of beings.

At first, I was a bit confused as to why it showed up here.

For a hefty demon beast from deep within the demon realm to appear in the frontline area was completely out of the ordinary; it could be considered unprecedented.

But that confusion was fleeting. Soon after grasping Ceyram, I charged towards the dragon.

It would be foolish not to seize the blood of a hefty demon beast when it's right in front of me.

A noble being?

They might be the race closest to the Creators, but not each individual is overwhelmingly strong.

Just as among humans there are strong warriors and weak cowards, not all dragons are mighty just because they are dragons.

Moreover, the dragon I was grappling with was still a maturing individual.

To struggle against a green dragon with no experience was out of the question.

The dragon initially seemed interested when I pounced with courage, but soon after, it took to flight in retreat.

An irresistible prey, I chased it, utilizing even my secret techniques barely holding onto its ankle...

Unfortunately, I ended up coincidentally encountering all these unwelcome individuals.

[What? Were you just standing still because you were worried about those down there?]

“Should I put on a show of hacking and slashing in broad sight?”

[Then what are you planning on doing? Are you just going to keep hovering around like this?]

Having reached as far as manifesting the magic sword and yet unable to end it, Ceyram was infuriated.

Even though I understood his agitation, if I made the dragon crash and ended its life here, I'd be taken straight to the royal capital.

Perhaps it would be better to act as if I've been kidnapped by the dragon?

Just as I was pondering this, a familiar blue light flickered far below.

– Wooong

A sophisticated magic circle for casting a high-level spell.

The caster was none other than my father.

Wait, isn't that spell a bit dangerous?

“The sword of my conviction will soar to the heavens!”

With the incantation, five glowing swords zoomed towards me—or rather, towards the Devil Dragon—at an incredible speed.

An 8-star grade light-attribute spell ‘Heaven’s Sword Rain’.

Knowing that his son was above, was he still unleashing such dangerous magic?

So, a dragon was, after all, a demon beast that needed to be dealt with?

He truly is the authentic guardian of the continent.

Sensing danger, the Devil Dragon agilely turned to evade.

– Thump!

However, the last sword, thrown in an unavoidable trajectory, struck the Devil Dragon’s leg.

“Kueeeek!”

With a scream, the Devil Dragon thrashed wildly.

“.....!”

Unable to withstand the aftermath, my grip on the dragon's ankle slipped away.

Having nothing left to hold onto, I became a mere vagrant in the air.

– Swoosh

In the midst of pain, the Devil Dragon, without a backward glance after seeing me fall, flew off into the distance.

Ah, I let my prey slip right before my eyes...

However, now wasn't the time to lament over the lost meal.

If I were to continue falling aimlessly, I'd be doomed to greet the reaper of hell.

Although knights below were rushing to catch me as I descended, they were clearly out of reach.

[What are you doing? Do you want to kiss the dirt? Fly already!]

“Do you think you could fly in this situation?”

[Then what? You're going to die this way? If you fall and die like this, expect to be killed by me twice!]

Would that mean dying three times including my previous life?

It might sound like a joke, but I knew the current situation was severely critical.

Yet, I couldn't use a secret technique in front of so many watching eyes.

As I closed my eyes briefly in contemplation,

– Kwaah

The sounds of a rushing river below caught my attention, and my eyes snapped open.

Directly underneath the spot where I was falling, a torrent with a crimson gleam.

It was a branch of the Blood River, where I had disposed of the troll's corpse.

A smile crept onto my face at the sight of the river.

“Is there no simple way of dying after all?”

[Hey, master! What are you thinking right now? Don't tell me you're planning on diving down there?]

“It's time I took a bath, isn't it? Don't think too poorly of it!”

[Are you crazy? You're planning to wash me in that filthy water now?]

Ceyram was erupting like a boiling volcano inside my head, but I ignored it all.

I believed the method churning in my mind was the best course of action available.

To prevent an awkward crash into the ground, I rotated my body several times and aimed for the heart of the Blood River.

– Plop!

Without delay, my small body experienced a dramatic encounter with the icy blood-stained waves.

\* \* \*

– Whoosh

Out of the blue, what appeared to be a young Devil Dragon flew past overhead at great speed.

Watching from the ground, 'Belcalion' tilted his head in curiosity.

“Devil Dragon flying over from that direction. Interesting.”

The direction from which the dragon came was the side of [Limea Valley](#).

“It looks somewhat injured. An immature dragon seems to have taken a wrong turn and got hurt quite badly.”

A middle-aged demon added, piquing Belcalion's interest.

“Hmm, is that so? A bit of arrogance is common among them, but it’s not every day you see dragons fleeing tail between their legs. Is there a formidable demon over there?”

“Well, if that was the case, chances are it wasn’t demons, but humans who did that.”

“Humans? Those creatures weaker than Hellhounds? Rogers, you’ve improved your sense of humor.”

Despite the sarcastic tone, the middle-aged demon remained unfazed.

“If they were weaker than Hellhounds, they wouldn’t have claimed those lands beyond us. Although they start the weakest and most insignificant, in terms of potential for growth, no species can compare to humans.”

“Oh! Rogers, you know more than I expected. Have you actually seen humans?”

“How could I have? I’ve lived here my whole life...”

“Then, making it seem like you know something...”

“I only spoke based on the history of the past.”

Belcalion pouted with deflated enthusiasm.

He turned his gaze away, intending to go on his way, but for some reason, his head kept turning back toward the direction of the gorge.

It was as if he was being drawn by a certain energy.

“Is there something bothering you?”

“No, it’s strange, but I feel a rather mysterious energy emanating from that gorge. As if it’s both unfamiliar and yet familiar.”

The middle-aged demon looked that way as well, but felt nothing.

“I don’t sense anything there...”

“I’m telling you I sense something! Just wait a minute!”



Belcalion continued to stare in the direction of the gorge, regardless of acknowledgment.

Even then, he strangely felt there would be something fun if he went there.

“Rogers, I’ll need to cancel our plans for a bit. Something urgent has come up on my end.”

“No worries, but please, just go and come back peacefully. If something infuriating happens, don’t go smashing everything up. It’d be terribly troublesome for me.”

Knowing that any attempt to dissuade him would be futile, the middle-aged demon merely issued a mild cautionary word.

However, even that seemed to merely flutter past the ears of Belcalion, who was pretending to listen.

His gaze remained fixated on the gorge, and his eyes even began to redden with excitement.

– Flap

Belcalion unfurled his black wings and took to the sky with high altitude.

He left without looking back, seemingly intent on something that had profoundly caught his attention.

“Please don’t cause any trouble... Your Majesty,” the middle-aged demon mumbled as he watched him fly away, hoping for a safe return.

(To be continued)

