

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 231

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Chapter 231. Conviction and Doubt (1)

The situation was a chaotic mess, impossible to make heads or tails of. However, there was one common thought that crossed people's minds at the moment: The knights wielding golden swords were out of their minds. Although they claimed to follow the emperor's commands, their eyes lacked any sign of self-awareness. The knights were somewhat better off than others. The most incomprehensible of all was undoubtedly the emperor himself. Look at his sturdy and robust figure. Who would have believed that this was the same man who, until this morning, lay sick in bed? It was almost as if he were being controlled by some unknown power. There was simply no other explanation for the emperor's current state.

"What should we do?"

"It's the emperor's order! We must go and support him immediately!"

"But, even so..."

Some knights were at a loss, merely glancing at each other and expressing various doubts. Jereon approached them, observing the situation.

"Your swords lack radiance."

Most knights who inherited the power of the Holy Sword were either knights of salvation or veteran knights of the imperial army, recognized for their skills. Those who had not received that power were simply ordinary knights whose combat prowess was significantly lesser.

"Come back, Jake!"

"What's wrong, Barmer! Why don't you listen to my orders?"

"Come to me at once, Marinell!"

Some nobles were shouting and screaming, so much that their guardians—knights who came with the nobles to the assembly—were now clashing swords, intending to take down the assassins. Strictly speaking, these knights were supposed to prioritize their lord's commands over the emperor's.

For a noble, it was infuriating to see a knight who should be so loyal as to live and die by their word ignore them completely. Of course, the swords of these knights also radiated the dazzling light of the Holy Sword.

“What are you doing?!” shouted a knight of salvation engaging an assassin, noticing the hesitant knights.

“We are knights of salvation, charged with purifying evil from this land and maintaining peace! Shouldn’t we immediately subdue those troublemakers who hinder the establishment of a new order?”

In response, a knight of the imperial army raised his voice just as fervently.

“The emperor’s command has been given! Why do you hesitate?”

“But the emperor just this morning...”

“Do not harbor doubts! We need only trust in the emperor’s words and follow his commands! Take up your swords with firm conviction, knights!”

Inspired by these words, some of the previously hesitant knights now enthusiastically took up their arms and charged forward. Yet, even this display seemed only to discomfort Jereon.

“Is this what you call the power of conviction?”

Blind obedience, without a shadow of doubt or question—could there be any difference between this and being a puppet? This could never be called a proper order.

“Lord Jereon, what should we do?” asked his subordinates, who had rushed over, seeking his instructions.

Thankfully, some knights, including his subordinates, still harbored doubts about the situation and refrained from rash actions.

“Let’s conduct an experiment,” Jereon suggested, turning to look at them.

At the mention of an unexpected ‘experiment,’ the knights showed their perplexity.

“I won’t force you. However, I plan to approach those assassins now and fight alongside them. Only those of you who wish to follow me should do so.”

The knights grimaced in response.

“What do you mean? Join forces with the assassins? Why would you do such a thing?”

“Perhaps to maximize that feeling rising in your head right now,” Jereon posited.

The knight blinked, not comprehending.

“Right now, we need to question, not conviction. Why must we fight these assassins? Why are they doing this? If we keep asking these questions...”

Jereon drew his sword with determined eyes.

“...we may get closer to the truth of this situation.”

His gaze was intent, as if he was determined to resolve a question that had been haunting him for decades.

* * *

As the knights who wielded the full power of the Holy Sword clashed with the assassins, Sian immediately took action, charging towards Aschel without delay.

Who would want to enter such a fierce skirmish? Aware that there was no role for him, Arin shifted his focus to confront the figure he had to face.

...

Emperor Dione met Arin’s gaze with solemn composure, his heavy presence making her hands shake as she held her sword.

Why did this have to happen? How had it come to be that Arin had to face her beloved and respected father, the emperor, in battle?

In an attempt to banish such foolish thoughts, Arin shook her head sharply.

The emperor was not in a normal state.

He must be moving not by his own power but by some artificially infused strength. Before things got worse, she had to calm him down, and she was certain that she was the only one who could do so.

“Watch my back, Resmus!”

“Understood, Your Highness!”

With a determined shout, Arin charged towards the emperor.

* * *

The swords clashed—her attack, sincere and devoid of hesitation, was blocked by the emperor without difficulty. Arin continued her assault with a series of strikes, but the emperor effortlessly deflected them without even moving his foot.

It wasn't magic or the power of the Holy Sword. It was the emperor's inherent strength, pure and simple, that allowed him to withstand a battle that was two against one.

"What are you doing, Arin?"

As they created some distance, Arin voiced her confusion and doubt.

"I should be asking you that! Were you not still bedridden this morning, Your Majesty? Unless you have been hiding your strength all this time, how is it possible for you to show such power now?"

"If strength is lacking, even at the cost of my life, I must muster it, for it is the destiny of an emperor."

The emperor's response was resolute. He argued that if he did not stand, the empire and, by extension, the entire continent would be thrown into turmoil. To prevent that, he had no choice but to rise, even if it meant collapsing on the spot.

(To be continued)

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Chapter 232: Convictions and Doubts (2)

"Is this really the power of a human?!"

Schultz, having experienced the power of the Holy Sword for the first time, found it completely unbelievable.

Was this truly the force wielded by the divine armaments?

The strength was incomparable to any adversary he had faced before.

Of course, the strength didn't come solely from the Holy Sword.

The knights Schultz currently faced were among the Imperial elite,

and for a former mercenary swordsman to stand against them was near impossible from the start.

Even if he managed to fend off their attacks somehow,

-Whoosh!

There seemed absolutely no chance for a counterstrike.

Had he not reflexively ducked just now, his head would have been cleaved in twain.

If he didn't keep his wits about him, he'd soon find himself standing at heaven's gates.

He hastily increased the distance between them to reassess his stance, but

"I won't let you escape!"

The knight of the Holy Sword would not allow him even that brief reprieve as he followed intently.

-Clang!

Brian intervened, holding the knight at bay.

With sword skills comparable to a high-tier knight, Brian furiously pressed his adversary.

This prompted the knight to retreat momentarily.

"Are you alright?"

"Ah, still managing!"

"Hold on just a bit longer! His Lordship will clear things up soon!"

"I will do my best..."

Schultz was frankly not confident.

But it wasn't as though he could just sit on the ground and give up.

With the heavy heart of someone eating bitter mustard out of obligation, Schultz again raised his sword.

Brian, too, although he spoke thus, was aware that the situation was direr than expected.

The inexorable assault of the Holy Sword's knights, members of Mist were steadily pushed back as the encirclement tightened around them. For a moment, Brian considered calling for Sian's support, but immediately dismissed the thought.

He was a knight sworn to Sian.

It was his duty to protect his liege, not to burden him with requests for aid.

To fight to the best of his ability without distracting Sian was the best course of action.

As he steeled his resolve for his lord and gripped his sword,

"...?"

Suddenly, a group of knights emerged before Brian.

From their armor, they seemed to be part of the Imperial forces, but some appeared to be unaffiliated mercenaries.

Before he could make sense of this unexpected arrival, they soon engaged in combat with the opposing knights.

"Protect the assassins!"

They appeared to be reinforcements sent to cover the assassins.

Brian and Schultz, unable to grasp the situation, watched as Jereon approached.

"Judging by your appearance, you're not affiliated with those dark allies."

"Why are you assisting us?"

"Does the reason matter? Just think of us as reinforcements that have come to aid you."

Jereon shrugged as if it were no big deal.

"Those opposing the new order shall be eliminated!"

Conversely, the knights of the Holy Sword showed no concern for facing their own as adversaries.

Instead, they declared them enemies too and continued their attacks, leading the opposing forces to question their motives.

“What in the world is causing you to behave this way?”

“We are the knights protecting the Empire and the continent by His Imperial Majesty’s command. You, on the other hand, why are you acting against His Imperial Majesty’s orders...!”

“His Imperial Majesty has collapsed!”

Suddenly, urgent news echoed, causing a stir among the knights.

Their gazes turned in unison towards a specific direction.

The image of the Emperor, regal and commanding, had vanished.

Instead, the frail figure of the Emperor lay in the princess’s arms, unable to even open his eyes.

“Please help His Majesty! Hurry!”

Arin pleaded as she supported the Emperor.

The Emperor was soon evacuated from the scene, shielded by another knight and attendants.

People were confused by the rapid development of events.

However, the knights stayed resolute; their mission was to cut down those who opposed the new order.

“How can one not have doubts after seeing this?”

Jereon shook his head disapprovingly, then resumed his fight with the knights.

The situation had rapidly shifted.

But this shift was most unfavorable for the owner of the Holy Sword.

A smile formed on my face at the sight of his darkening complexion.

“It seems you’ve become quite pale.”

“...!”

“Things are not going as you intended, right?”

His frown turned into a forced smile as he replied,

“This is most perplexing. The future Boris and I saw was not like this, and unforeseen things keep unfolding...”

Support from the Imperial forces and unknown mercenaries, the Emperor’s departure.

None of this had been part of his plan.

“But it doesn’t matter. No matter how things progress, the end is preordained. In the end, everything will return to the natural order, and I will be the one to have the last laugh!”

A future that is set in stone.

Unchangeable.

He remained confident that he would ultimately be the one smiling.

I sighed naturally.

How consistent can he be?

It would almost be pitiable if it weren’t so frustrating.

“Do you truly believe the future is fixed?”

“It must be; it’s a future that cannot be changed.”

“It is said that even the flutter of a butterfly’s wings can cause a storm across the seas. A small change can alter the entire future. Do you not understand this, brother?”

“The future predicted by the prophecy isn’t so fragile it can be swayed by a mere flutter.”

He stammered over his words as he answered.

I shook my head with a look of pity,

“It’s always been like that for you, hasn’t it? Instead of confronting challenges yourself, you’ve always relied on others. You’ve risen to power not by your own merits but with the aid of others.”

Aschel could not deny it.

“Maybe this time, you should rely on yourself. Who knows? Your change might alter the predestined future...”

But I knew all too well that such change was impossible.

Human nature does not change, even in the face of death’s shadow.

I had no expectation that his character would change in such a short time.

Aschel’s lips moved aimlessly, unable to formulate a response.

-Gleaming

Suddenly, a brighter golden glow emanated from the Ceyram I held in my hand.

“...?”

Aschel and I were both taken aback, silently watching the light.

“Yes! This is it!”

Aschel reacted first.

“It doesn’t matter how the middle plays out! The future that lies at the end remains unchanged!”

He swung the Holy Sword high above his head while striking down.

-Whoosh!

Once again, the gleam of the Holy Sword soared into the air.

All the knights enhanced by that light swung their swords with renewed brightness.

“Uwaaaah!”

Empowered, the knights roared triumphantly.

Assassins recoiled against the intensified might, while knights pressed harder.

-Clang!

He wielded his sword as if to show off to me.

“...!”

I grimaced as I parried his strike, noticing the strength was distinctly more profound.

Someone, invisible to the eye, had bolstered the Holy Sword's power, increasing its might.

“Can you see, Sian? This is the power of conviction! It's not something you can overcome with petty doubts!”

Ridiculous.

The man who wouldn't give others the slightest shred of trust was now talking about conviction.

But perhaps that's convenient when others believe in him.

Still, such power gained is merely trivial to me.

However,

“Ugh!”

“Be careful, Schultz!”

It seemed the others couldn't cope as well.

Unable to halt the relentless knights, the members of Mist could barely maintain formation.

I moved swiftly to aid them,

“Where are you going, Sian!”

-Clang!

I was obstructed by the crazed owner of the Holy Sword.

“It's not them you need to protect. It should be yourself!”

Annoyed, I narrowed my eyes without realizing.

“To protect myself, I should use all means necessary! Even if it involves relying on others! That's what life is all about!”

Revolted.

There's no point in discussing this now.

The very same person who ruthlessly uses others for success, then discards them without a second thought.

While I too engage in this charade as a means to an end,

I'm different from you.

Unable to restrain my rising emotions, a tremendous force threatened to surge from within me.

'Do you hear me, Sian?'

Without warning, a familiar voice echoed in my head.

It was Hastia's voice for sure.

I reflexively responded with mental sympathy.

'What is it now, all of a sudden?'

'I'm awfully sorry for the sudden message, especially given how critical the situation is! However, I desperately needed to convey this!'

Critical situation?

What, you've been watching me from somewhere now?

Wasn't she in my spatial realm until just recently?

I suppose if Brian is here, there's no reason she wouldn't be elsewhere...

'Soon, Lord Lunev will provide support!'

What? Who?

Did I mishear?

'What are you talking about? You're with Lunev right now?'

'Yes! But unfortunately, I cannot convey Lord Lunev's voice at the moment...!'

This troublesome junior must have stirred up trouble again.

Despite my stern warning not to meddle in Imperial affairs, she seems to have inserted herself into matters.

I was wondering why she was so obedient, but here she is, meddling once again...

-Wisps

Suddenly, mist rose from Ceyram in my hand.

This wasn't a response to my will.

"What are you doing, Ceyram?"

[I didn't do this.]

Ceyram quickly responded, denying any involvement.

Perhaps that fool of a god is interfering from somewhere, but I should at least feel his energy if that were the case.

Yet, there was no trace of Aer's energy, nor anything similar.

Instead, an entirely new energy filled the air...

-Clang! Clang! Clang!

The pleasant sound of clashing swords carried by the wind.

I naturally turned my gaze.

In mere seconds, the assassins who had been on the defensive suddenly regained momentum, overpowering the knights.

Not just the assassins but also...

"Hyaap!"

Brian and the unidentified man suddenly drew strength, their swords glowing almost at their peak with surging magic.

[Our master is indeed fortunate, huh?]

"What?"

[To think he'd receive help even from that fool.]

“What are you talking about? Talk sense!”

Impatient, I urged Ceyram for an explanation.

[Marser Remiharam.]

“...?”

[He’s near here.]

For a split second, my mind went blank.

What’s near here?

(To be continued)

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Chapter 233: Conviction and Doubts (3)

As the fog of Soul Stones spread throughout, emanating a dark aura, it signified that Lunev’s power had been successfully transferred to Sian. However, there was no time for a sigh of relief. Hastia looked around with a gaze filled with concern.

-Koo-goong

The subspace where unsettling roars of instability echoed as though it were on the verge of collapse. Had it only been 10 minutes since they entered this place? During that brief period, spatial rifts appeared and disappeared repeatedly, and as they did, the owners of the Holy Book and the Demon Book drew even more magic power in their efforts to overpower each other.

Was that all?

In the Imperial Palace, the standoff between the owners of the Holy Sword and the Demon Sword was intensifying, with reinforcements being sent to bolster their strength.

They had both reached their limits, and now, the end seemed inevitable.

“I must admit, you didn’t come across the Demon Book by chance. Lunev, you are indeed worthy of handling the scriptures of the gods.”

“Don’t praise me recklessly. It’s nothing but uncomfortable getting it from you.”

The only person she wished to be praised by in this world was just one person.

“Yet no matter what you do, nothing will change. Even if you manage to annihilate this subspace, the predetermined conclusion will remain unaltered.”

“Change can begin. Starting with the disappearance of this subspace, we can gradually alter your future.”

Despite Boris’s repeated demagoguery, Lunev remained unperturbed.

However, circumstances weren’t flowing in her favor.

“Hey, my lady. Can you hold on?”

Remiharam asked casually as he checked on her condition.

“Shouldn’t you rather focus on creating more rifts than asking such questions?”

“Lady, your magic power is waning. If this continues, it won’t be the space that breaks, but your body.”

“If I scrape the bottom of the barrel to draw power, that’s enough.”

Unconcerned, Lunev released even more of her remaining magic power.

“This should be sufficient. The subspace of the Holy Book is already too damaged to function properly. We can withdraw now without any issue.”

“Leaving any possibility unaccounted for isn’t my style. Once I’ve started something, I need to see it through.”

Lunev’s determination was only heightened by Remiharam’s worry.

Realizing his pointless words, Remiharam shook his head in resignation and refocused on what needed to be done.

Boris was also in a bad situation.

He glanced at the Holy Book even as he struggled to mend the widening rifts.

Phrases written on the spread pages were appearing and disappearing, suggesting that the future dictated by the Holy Book was continuously changing.

“Why?”

The appearance of the owner of the Demon Book was already something not foretold in the prophecy.

Fortunately, the last bit of the prophecy, the ultimate future, remained unaltered.

In the end, regardless of the process, he was convinced he would be the one to laugh last.

Holding onto this solitary belief, he attempted to dismiss all the doubts that sprung into his mind when suddenly...

“.....!?”

Boris's face hardened like stone.

The future written in the Holy Book had changed once again.

Not the ending – the middle steps towards the predetermined ending had shifted.

“How... Why...!”

His face, already hardened, began to contort with emotion.

His wildly darting eyes, his trembling hands.

Unable to accept the reality presented to him, he was visibly struggling against the urge to deny it.

-Whack!

Finally, Boris slapped the Holy Book closed as it emitted mana and abruptly created a gate, disappearing somewhere.

“.....?”

Was it an escape in realization of imminent defeat, or a tactical retreat to conserve strength? The situation was unclear.

-Thud

With no opponent to confront, Lunev slumped powerlessly to the ground.

“Lunev!” Hastia cried out, rushing to support her.

“Pant... Pant...”

The aftereffects of dredging up even the bottommost magic power were immeasurable, and it was practically impossible for her to even keep breathing, much less remain conscious.

‘How could it have reached this point...’

It was an incredible testament to her mental strength and her singular desire to be of help to Sian.

To Hastia, it was more than admirable; it was astounding.

-Kwa-gwang!

But they had no time to feel that wonder. The space was collapsing around them.

The owner gone, the subspace of the Holy Book steadily headed towards annihilation.

If they remained there, they would be consumed by the destruction.

Hastia had to find a way out quickly, but she lacked the ability to open a gate.

“The gate...!”

Knowing this, Lunev barely lifted her hand, but even that small gesture failed to manifest mana or a gate, and her hand fell back powerlessly.

In her current state, it was impossible for her to find the strength to open a gate.

Lost on what to do, Hastia’s eyes fell on the Demon Book that had slipped from Lunev’s grasp.

‘If only I could transfer my magic power to Lunev...’

In the current situation, her power was unnecessary.

Why not pass it on to her instead?

Unsure but willing to try anything, Hastia placed her hand on the Demon Book.

-Giing

A surge of mana flowed from her fingertips into the Demon Book, which responded with a burst of blue light.

“You’ve done well, ladies. I’ll take it from here.”

Using the transferred mana, Remiharam created a gate and shifted them out of that place.

The subspace of the Holy Book soon crumbled with a tremendous roar and vanished completely.

* * *

My body felt lighter, my vigor rising.

It was as if I was wearing clothes tailored for me.

Was this the reason why that foolish god told me to seek the Demon Book?

The power fit me so well, I could declare there was no better-suited strength for me.

It wasn't just me; others were affected too.

The members who possessed the power of the mist didn't need to be mentioned, and even unrelated knights and mercenaries seemed engrossed in the surging strength, their morale visibly boosted.

I still don't understand.

Why did the power of the Demon Book appear so arbitrarily?

Where exactly were Hastia and Lunev...?

-Whoosh!

Out of nowhere, behind me, a white gate sliced through the air.

Clearly, it wasn't one of my creation.

I was not particularly fond of the unsettling aura drifting in from across this strange space, but soon familiar faces emerged.

Hastia, who had just sent me a mental signal, and Lunev, supported by her as she struggled to walk.

".....?"

I was taken aback by the puzzling situation.

"Hastia!"

“Lunev!”

Brian and Lunev’s knight also rushed towards them.

As the two attended to Lunev’s condition, Hastia’s anxious gaze turned towards me.

‘Si, Sir Sian, this is, uh, you see...’

“Just give me a brief explanation.”

My curt response caused Hastia’s eyes to flicker nervously.

She soon summarized the events that had transpired with Lunev.

For the record, I’m not currently watching Hastia’s uncertain expression, nor the about-to-collapse Lunev.

Then what am I looking at?

I stared directly behind Lunev, where a man with long black hair resembling Ceyram’s fluttered.

Of course, it wasn’t a human being.

Apart from not being human, it seemed only I could see him.

Even with such a suspicious presence so close, not a single person turned an eye towards him.

“.....”

He too just looked at me, without opening his mouth to say anything.

If I could gather anything from his gaze, it would be that he wasn’t treating me as an enemy.

But it wasn’t friendly either.

It was as if he had a lot to say but chose not to for now.

I interpreted it that way.

He gazed at me and then gave a subtle nod, as if to send a silent signal.

At the same moment, Lunev grabbed my hand.

“Haa...”

She was in such a state that even breathing seemed difficult.

I bent down as if to whisper something in return, bringing our faces naturally closer.

“I think I know what you’re going to say...”

Barely raising her head, she whispered to me.

“Why did you come to the Imperial City? Who told you to help? You’re going to say something about that tree, right?”

I couldn’t deny it so I remained silent.

“You’ve always acted selfishly. And there’s no rule that says I shouldn’t do the same. I’m only doing what I want to do.”

It wasn’t the time for plain words of ‘well done’ or ‘poorly done’.

I didn’t have the right.

And frankly, I wasn’t sure what to say.

Understanding this, Lunev grasped my hand even tighter.

“But after doing so much...”

Her voice became fainter by the moment.

Yet even if her voice became as faint as an ant’s breath,

“You’ll look at me too, right?”

Her words would always be clear to me.

“When I open my eyes again, you must be the first thing I see. Or else...”

She paused, leaving her sentence unfinished.

I didn’t rush her and waited patiently.

“I might really cry.”

A sudden thought struck me.

At times she was more indifferent than me, colder, and less humane,
yet at this moment, she seemed the most human.

After those words, Lunev lost consciousness and buried her face in my chest.

I felt her intense warmth.

Without her saying a word, I knew how hard she had worked for me.

I gently held Lunev, then handed her to Brian.

“Keep her safe. No matter what...”

There was no need for a long explanation, so I instructed him succinctly.

“I will heed the young master’s command!”

Brian swiftly wrapped her in his cloak, cradling her comfortably.

With no desire to linger on unneeded emotions, I was about to turn away when,
-Cling!

The owner of the Holy Sword, clearly displeased by this scene, rushed forward,
brandishing his sword.

Apparently, the time had come.

Time to put an end to this long trial.

I turned my eyes slightly and spoke in a low tone.

“3 minutes. I will give you precisely 3 minutes.”

“.....?”

“During those 3 minutes, please remove those eye-sore masts emitting dazzling lights
from my sight, including your brother.”

Thinking he had misheard, Aschel frowned.

“You remain confident until the very end. If you truly wish for me to do so, you should
plead on your knees with genuine humility...”

“It’s not a request.”

It was time to shatter his petty illusions.

“It’s not even a warning.”

The moment for our intimate confession had come at last.

“This is an order I bestow upon you, brother, and it’s also mercy.”

“I will no longer be swayed by your nonsensical talk!”

Aschel swung his sword filled with earnest intent, but,

-Ting!

His sword couldn’t reach me.

In less than a second, the Holy Sword rose high into the air and crashed to the ground powerlessly.

After about 5 seconds of silence,

I locked eyes with Aschel and spoke softly.

“Ten seconds have passed.”

(To be continued)

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Chapter 234: Second Coming (1)

It was a brief moment, lasting just over two minutes.

In that short span of time, people’s thoughts shifted constantly.

Impressive.

More than impressive, it was utterly overwhelming.

So overwhelming, it was heartbreaking.

Heartbreaking, and then...

Deeply pitiable.

Sympathetic and sorrowful gazes from the multitude were directed at the owner of the Holy Sword.

– Clang!

It had reached a point where counting the number of times became an embarrassment.

The Holy Sword, which should pioneer the path of salvation with its holy light, had slipped from its owner's grasp and clattered to the ground too many times to count.

Even with rapid consecutive strikes,

Even wielding it powerfully imbued with the light's magic,

Even cooperating with other knights blessed by the power of the Holy Sword,

And even then,

“Execution of Justice!”

The owner of the Holy Sword had performed a divine secret technique that only they could utilize, but still,

– Clang!

All efforts were in vain.

Although all Sian had done was lazily swing his sword,

The Holy Sword had repeatedly been knocked out of its owner's hand by those casual swings.

It was a wall that didn't need any explanation.

Sian had reduced Aschel to such an oppressive defeat that the Holy Sword seemed no more useful than a random tree branch beside the road, so much so that it was almost akin to domestication.

“2 minutes and 30 seconds have passed. There's now only 30 seconds left for you, my brother.”

Utter indifference.

As steady and unyielding as a rock that doesn't erode under the sharpest waves,

Sian's eyes did not waver.

Even the time Sian had allowed was now less than 30 seconds remaining.

Aschel's body and mind were increasingly enveloped in anxiety and impatience.

Although he racked his brain for a solution as quickly as possible,

'Damn it!'

Now, nothing came to mind.

"O Holy Sword! Grant me greater strength...!"

All that he could cling onto were the desperate hands wrapped tightly around the Holy Sword.

Even as the sword emitted a radiance and expelled its power in response to his pleas, it was far insufficient to oppose Sian.

"It's not enough! I demand a stronger power, Durandal!"

The pathetic figure of the savior cried out, clutching the Holy Sword and begging for power.

Most of the onlookers furrowed their brows, shaking their heads at the sight.

"Can you see?"

Sian, who had been silently counting the time, finally posed the question.

"Do you see these numerous gazes directed at you? They're not filled with steadfast belief, but riddled with incomprehensible doubts."

Now, even the knights inheriting the power of the Holy Sword had ceased combat, instead watching the confrontation between the two men.

"You too must realize it by now. If you seek to preserve your life, now's the time to show your back and flee..."

Aschel gnashed his teeth, unable to form a proper retort.

"If you flee, you might survive. However, people will then remember you as the owner of the Holy Sword who ran away in the face of a shameful mist."

"...!"

“However, if you continue to stand against me, at least the dignity of a savior would be remembered as the pitiful owner of the Holy Sword. What is your desire?”

“I, I must ask such an obvious thing! I am the eldest son of the House of Vert, the guardian of the continent, and the high owner of the Holy Sword! Even if fighting with you rends my body to tens of pieces, I will defend this place to the end, Sian!”

Was this an unexpected answer?

Sian appeared dumbfounded, tilting his head ruefully.

“Do you know, brother?”

“What are you trying to say?”

“Despite your words, your eyes clearly show that you have no desire to do so.”

Taken aback, Aschel’s mouth hung open in disbelief.

“Your eyes are distinctly revealing that you want to run away desperately. I’d like to advise you to face yourself honestly right now...”

Shaking off three minutes of stillness, Sian finally stepped toward Aschel.

“Unfortunately, the three minutes are up.”

The time granted as a gesture of mercy had ended. Now, all that remained for the owner of the Holy Sword was,

The merciless time of judgment.

“You said you would keep your position even if ripped into tens of pieces?”

Slowly, step by step.

The presence embodying all the world’s sins was approaching him.

Aschel could not control his trembling body; it halted in its tracks.

“You think too highly of me. Did you really believe I’d only rend your body to a mere tens of pieces?”

Sian sneered with disdain.

After a brief moment of silence, Sian’s face turned stern.

“Ten thousands of pieces! Only when it’s torn such that no one can remember who you were, is there any point!”

A smile more devilish and much more vile than seven years ago.

It was a smile that a human could not fully confront, chilling to the bone.

“Brother, you will now feel tens of thousands of agonies! Not a single one will be easy! People will witness you chopped finely down to your fingers and feel compassion. Then they’ll share the story – of a Holy Sword’s owner who met a miserable end, unable to withstand the power of the Cursed Sword.”

Close at hand, the distance between them had narrowed to just a step.

In fear and terror, Aschel sensed his quickening breath.

The corners of Sian’s mouth lifted even higher.

“And they will remember you as the fake savior who boasted of establishing a new order with inept power.”

“...!”

“And I will watch that hope-filled future with a smile.”

With those words, Sian raised his demon-swarmed Cursed Sword high.

Aschel saw it then.

In exactly one second, his whole body would mercilessly be cleaved by the cruel blade of the Cursed Sword.

It was a sheerly insurmountable domain that he could neither block nor avoid.

Imagining his own future being torn into thousands, tens of thousands of pieces, Aschel internally cried out for salvation.

– Bang!

With a profound sound piercing through the ground, a cloud of dust dispersed around.

Ceyram had come close to Aschel—just a span’s distance from his eyes, yet

“...!”

It was merely close, not touching.

Strictly speaking, it wasn't that it hadn't touched, it couldn't touch.

What currently met with Ceyram's swordpoint was,

"A lance?"

The lance emitted a light similar to the radiance produced by the Holy Sword.

It was not thrown by someone nor summoned by magic.

The origin of this lance was none other than the sky.

As if sent from the heavens to save the owner of the Holy Sword, it thoroughly blocked the path between Sian and Ceyram.

At this, Sian casually looked up.

There was more to come from the sky than this lance alone,

Following the long shaft of the lance with his gaze, at the other end, a massive hand clutching the lance came into view, and beyond that hand,

"....."

A towering knight was standing there, resplendent in shining golden armor.

* * *

The central healing house in the imperial capital.

There wasn't time to transfer the fallen emperor all the way to the royal palace, so he was taken to the closest healing house for the moment.

The emperor, struggling for breath, and the healers frantically trying to save him.

Arin watched them, clutching at her heart anxiously.

"Why on earth did His Majesty come to possess the power of the Holy Sword?"

Arin didn't know that the emperor had acquired the power of the Holy Sword.

It was hard to imagine that the emperor would have asked for it voluntarily.

Arin was certain that in her absence, some other member of the royal family must have been behind this.

“Make way!”

Suddenly, the quiet healing house became noisy, and a familiar voice could be heard.

-Bang!

The second princess, Violet Severus, burst into the room which had been shut tight to maintain the emperor's stability.

“.....!”

Her eyes trembled violently upon seeing the emperor's condition, as if she had not expected this situation at all.

With a fury flaring in her eyes, she glared at Arin.

“What exactly did you do, Arin?”

With an emotional encounter with her sister who had been missing for a week, Violet now seemed intent on shifting the blame for the current situation onto Arin.

Caught off guard, Arin only blinked.

“Wielding a sword at His Majesty! Are you even part of the royal family? How could you let His Majesty come to this...”

“Stop your nonsense!”

Violet flinched at Arin's resolute counter.

“You knew, didn't you? That His Majesty had received the power of the Holy Sword!”

“.....!”

“Speak if you have a mouth!”

“I, I didn't know!”

A hesitant denial is as good as an admission.

With a confident look in her eyes, Arin eventually seized Violet by the shoulders.

“How could you carry out such an absurd act on our ailing father! Were you truly considering the best for our royal family and empire? Before we are princesses, we are the children of His Majesty! How can you, as his child, to His Majesty...”

“I was a victim too!”

Cornered, Violet screamed after shaking off Arin’s hands.

“Aschel tricked me, casting illusions over our father! I didn’t know! I simply thought His Majesty wanted it on his own will so I agreed!”

“Illusions?”

“.....!”

Violet hastily covered her mouth.

“What did you just say? Who cast what upon whom?”

As Violet grimaced out of frustration, she let out a deep sigh.

“It’s not just you who cares for the empire, Arin. I, too, am worried about the safety and future of this country as a princess.”

“Hmm?”

“I have also been passionately following in the footsteps of our highly respected father, ensuring I do not tarnish the name of the royal family! Don’t look at me with such disdain!”

Violet, as if venting her frustration, opened her heart sincerely.

Arin felt a strange sensation upon witnessing Violet’s candid demeanor for the first time.

“Just as you followed that man Sian, I also followed him! If there’s a responsibility to bear for it...”

Violet’s lips quivered visibly as she strived to continue.

“Then as a princess! I will proudly stand accountable!”

She turned her body after those words.

“Where are you going?”

“If you’re curious, follow me.”

Leaving an indifferent reply, Violet left the healing house abruptly.

Momentarily hesitating on what to do, Arin glanced back at the emperor then clenched her eyes shut.

“Take care of His Majesty for me, Resmus!”

Arin chose to follow Violet, asking Resmus to watch the emperor as she rushed to catch up with her sister.

Violet didn't care if Arin followed or not, her focus solely dedicated to her own duties as she moved on.

The destination of her determined steps was none other than the royal palace, specifically the path leading underground.

* * *

-Bang!

Boris, who flung open the door abruptly, managed to suppress his breath that had risen to his jaw.

He had expended far more magical power than expected in the spatial void.

As the aftermath grew stronger, his body could hardly stay upright.

He barely lifted his head.

Before his eyes was,

“Have you arrived, Professor Boris?”

It was none other than Mia.

“You're sweating a lot. Did you run into some difficult task?”

“Why, why are you here, Mia?”

With his usual impassive expression, Mia replied.

“I failed to kill Sian Vert. That's why I was contemplating what to do next when I heard someone was curious about this place. So I returned.”

“Cur, curious person? What are you talking about?”

Sensing a threat, Boris quickly turned his head.

However, he couldn't turn fully.

Near Boris's neck, which had turned halfway, was a black blade, very close by.

Cold sweat began to trickle down as a familiar voice echoed in his ears.

"You said you looked forward to seeing who would first distort their face, didn't you?"

".....!"

"How do you feel about becoming disfigured first, Professor Boris?"

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 235

Chapter 235: Second Coming (2)

The sun appeared, dispelling the cloud-laden sky.

The light reflected off the golden armor irritated my eyes.

What could it be?

For three seconds, that question cycled through my head countless times.

I knew of no knight within this continent's borders that wore such armor.

In fact, it was questionable whether they could even be called a knight.

To my eyes, this being didn't seem human at all.

I wondered if everyone around me shared this thought about the being before us.

A god.

Or perhaps, a knight of the gods.

A knight commissioned by the divine appeared from the heavens.

To save the owner of the holy sword from the master of the demonic sword.

“...!”

A tremor ran through my hand clutching the Ceyram.

It wasn't my hand that was shaking.

The tremor came purely from the Ceyram.

The anxious heart of its mistress was palpable through the vibrating handle.

This was a first.

Had she ever felt such trepidation in the face of something?

I can affirm that this was not a usual emotional disturbance that Ceyram might display as easily as having a meal.

Ceyram was on full alert against the towering knight before us.

[These crazy fools...!]

Fear could be felt in the trembling voice.

As nothing would change by standing still, I immediately harnessed the power of the mist.

“Fog Blade: Eight Scatterings Blossoms!”

This secret technique of the Fog Blade could even rip through the tough hides of superior demons.

There had never been an entity undivided by this technique.

However,

“...!”

The silent surroundings echoed with the distinct sound of metal clashing exactly eight times.

In that time, Ceyram hadn't touched the armor even once throughout the eight strokes of the sword.

The immense knight, who seemed to take ages just to raise an arm, had managed to discern and parry all my swordplay.

“ ... ”

Finally, the knight's gaze found me.

Within the golden helmet, a dazzling white brilliance shone from their eyes.

Maybe it was my imagination, but it felt as though they were looking down on me as if I were insignificant.

A wave of anger rose within me, and I immediately prepared the next secret technique.

However,

-Sshwakk!

The knight launched a counterattack first.

The speed rivaled that of a head of the family.

I ceased the technique and retreated hastily.

-Koogung!

The sound that reverberated as the spear struck the ground resembled thunder.

Indeed, it might just as well have been lightning.

Had I not dodged the strike, I would have suffered damage equal to being struck by lightning.

“Phew...”

A sigh escaped and heat surged through my body.

With the heat rose a boiling rage.

So, now even the supposedly high and mighty divines have intervened to save the devil in disguise as a savior?

Fury spread.

What possible worth does that detestable creature have that these lengths are taken to protect him?

Well, it doesn't matter.

He is someone who must be completely erased from my world.

If there's an obstacle in achieving that,

Even if it's a god, I will simply kill them.

With this resolve, I tried to unleash the full power of Ceyram, however,

“...?”

Ceyram didn't respond for some reason.

“What are you doing, Ceyram?”

[...]

In such a situation, she wouldn't normally fall silent, let alone asleep.

She was definitely awake, but for some reason, she wasn't responding or even harnessing any power to my calls.

Instead,

-Swirl

The giant knight, having repositioned his spear, didn't approach me but instead Aschel, placing a hand on his head.

Aschel, without any resistance or response, accepted the knight's touch as though receiving a baptism.

-Feeying

Where the knight's hand and Aschel's head met, light emanated.

Engulfed by the mystifying light, his face contorted to ecstasy and then,

“...!”

Together with the light, he disappeared without a trace.

He had escaped.

Boldly, in front of my eyes.

Confused and incredulous, I stood there for a moment watching the knight who had aided Aschel's escape.

The knight glanced back at me once more before,

-Shiiiiing

Disappearing in the same radiance of light.

* * *

Even moving a single finger could mean the severing of his head.

Boris carefully manifested mana smaller than a fingernail in his hand, unseen by her.

However,

“Aaagh!”

Boris fell forward with a scream, and the mana vanished instantly.

Thick blood welled up from the stabbed shoulder.

“No, no, no. That won't do. Trying to cast a spell now, are we? It's clearly my turn...”

Silica bent down to meet the fallen Boris's gaze.

“After all, what were you up to that left you so tired and beaten? Who's been tormenting our despicable, nauseating teacher Boris?”

Boris struggled with pain, unable to even muster a reply.

“Well, why does that matter? The real issue is that right now, I have the upper hand. The chance to really screw you over.”

Struggling to raise his head, Boris caught sight of Mia standing five paces away.

“M-Mia, why in the world would you?”

In an all-too-calm manner, Mia said,

“I've come to realize the nightmares weren't just nightmares. I also learned to whom those pleading voices in them were directed. Knowing that, there's no reason for me to stay by Boris's side anymore.”

Before Boris could pleasurably respond, he yelped in pain again.

“Now’s not the time for sermons, Boris.”

Silica stomped on the wound.

A white book tumbled out of Boris’s grasp amidst his writhing—the holy book Hiscrea.

In haste, Boris reached for it.

Upon flipping through it and finding what he was looking for, his eyes started trembling with desperation.

“Mia said you and Aschel had quite an interesting plan formulated here. Something beyond your own ability to control, apparently. I was curious to what that was, so I came.”

After a pause, Mia retrieved something from a corner of the room.

A small box perfectly blending gold and silver.

“Leaving chances can backfire, you know? Hence, it must be dealt with thoroughly. Ensuring you have no options left.”

Mia passed the box to Silica with an indifferent expression.

It looked like a box that might hold a gem.

Attempting to open it, Silica found it was sealed by magic and looked back at Boris.

“It’s locked with a complex ritual. Is it some kind of present for me?”

At mention of a present, Boris snorted.

Then, letting out a deep sigh, he spoke despondently.

“There’s no point pleading for my life now. Do as you wish; kill me, tear me apart, throw me in boiling lava. The future has already changed.”

His resigned tone was strangely refreshing.

“All processes leading to the preordained end of this world have shifted on account of you and your precious heir, changing the path set by me and Aschel. It’s beyond our control now. The ones against a new order on this continent have begun their return. I wonder, at this moment, against whom might Sian Vert be crossing swords...”

With such a haunting question, Boris continued to speak.

“Curious about what’s in the box? I would advise against opening it. Even the banished god you serve wouldn’t recommend it. It’s a calamity you cannot possibly handle, let alone Sian Vert himself!”

With a distorted laughter, Boris slumped down like a lifeless puppet.

-Thud

Annoyed, Silica slapped his face violently.

“Teacher Boris was always full of poise. This new side of you, it’s quite refreshing.”

Observing the entire scene, Mia shared her own detached feelings.

“There’s little choice to be had. When all paths are closed and no escape can be seen, it’s only human to contort in desperation.”

Cocking her sword as if to finish him off, Silica hesitated.

-Step-step

Suddenly, footsteps approached from the still-open door.

Alert to the presence, Silica turned to look.

Not one, but two sets of footfalls.

The newcomers stepped through the door.

“...!”

The women who entered were visibly stunned by the scene.

Violet and Arin.

Imperial princesses of the empire.

“W-What is this?”

Blood was scattered on the floor, Boris was collapsed beside.

And standing tall before them, Silica.

“Mist!”

Instinctively, Arin trembled, drawing her sword.

“Stand back, sister!”

Pushed back by Arin, Violet looked stunned.

“That woman is part of the Mist that kidnapped me!”

Drawing her weapon tentatively, a smile crept across Silica’s face.

“Where did Sian, who promised to show his true nature, go? And what brings you here?”

“It’s I who should ask! While Sian fought other knights, what exactly were you doing, Lady Silica?”

“Since there was no need for me to be there, I simply wasn’t. Sian alone could have managed that situation, after all.”

Though she sent others just in case, she trusted Sian’s capability, unworried by the turnout.

“Instead, I’m here resolving a different matter. And unexpectedly, I’ve run into you. Turns out, it’s not an entirely unwelcome situation for me.”

Originally targeting Arin, Silica found the turn of events rather serendipitous.

After setting the box down beside her, Silica approached the princesses.

Feeling threatened, Arin stepped back but swiftly changed tactics and lunged forward.

“Hah!”

-Shuuk

With only a twist of her shoulder, Silica dodged Arin’s strike.

Arin didn’t stop there; she spun and attacked with a series of blows.

“...!”

Impressively fierce swings.

A few hairs from Silica’s head fluttered in the air.

To keep her from counterattacking, Arin pressed on without pausing.

-Click-click-click

Suddenly, Violet, who had been watching from behind, surged forward.

“...?”

Confused by the sudden charge, Violet lunged not at Silica or Arin, but towards the floor.

“If I only have that...”

Her desperate gaze fixed on,

“We can undo it all!”

The box Silica had placed on the ground.

(Continues in the next chapter)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 236

Chapter 236. Reappearance (3)

How wonderful would it be if everything in the world went according to my will?

However, the world is not always so pliant as to flow exactly as planned.

Isn't it possible that even the most carefully prepared plans can go askew?

With such thoughts in mind, Violet had once asked Aschel this question:

“I'm not trying to jinx it, but what would you do if all these plans you've prepared fail to work out?”

To which Aschel replied,

“I have never planned for failure, no matter what I undertake. I have always believed in success.”

As if the world itself was made for him, Aschel had smoothly achieved everything he planned and carried out thus far.

That was until he came into contact with Sian.

“Anyone listening would think you’ve never faced failure. Are you going to say there wasn’t a failure with the trouble involving your cute youngest sibling?”

“Such a naughty thing to say. I won’t deny it completely. There is some truth to what you’re saying, Your Highness. Just as much as I prepare, my sibling will also prepare many things for me. But no matter the process, I will be the one who laughs last.”

His expression looked very much as if he was looking forward to that preparation.

“Still, you never can be sure with people’s affairs, right? What would you do if, in the end, it’s your sibling who laughs, not you?” Violet pressed, but Aschel remained unshaken.

Rather, he spoke calmly as if he fully anticipated such a situation.

“It won’t happen, but it shouldn’t happen, but if a situation arises where it’s not me but Sian who laughs last...”

“...?”

“Then, I’ll have to reset it. Back to the very beginning where no one can laugh....”

Violet remembered Aschel’s words the most among all the countless memories and events.

And in Aschel’s hand at the time he said those words,

“...!”

Was the very box that Violet was desperately trying to grasp now.

-Snap!

“Aah!”

With the pain of her wrist being crushed, Violet screamed.

Beneath someone’s foot mercilessly stepping on her delicate hand was none other than Mia.

“It’s strange. I don’t recall ever saying it was something that could reverse things?”

Holding the box, Mia looked down indifferently at Violet.

Violet, despite the tears from the pain, did not cease her hand gestures towards the box.

“Sister!”

Arin cried out in surprise, but being lax in front of the head of Mist was akin to arrogance.

Silica did not miss the opportunity and ruthlessly kicked into Arin’s abdomen.

-Thunk!

Caught off guard in an instant, Arin fell,

And Silica, reconsidering the thought of slashing her throat, instead grabbed her sword and thrust it down into her shoulder.

“...!”

Unable to even let out a groan, Arin fell straight to the ground.

As she fell, she reached out a longing hand towards Violet.

But that hand could not reach, and her trembling figure on the floor was truly pitiable.

“It’s truly a tearful display of affection.”

Silica sneered, as if to mock the sight.

However, she was also puzzled.

Reverse everything?

Was something that powerful really contained within that box?

It seemed to be a last resort prepared for some reason, but even Boris had warned that it was better left unopened, hadn’t he?

A sense of unease began to gnaw at her.

“Hand me that box, Mia.”

Mia passed the box indifferently.

Silica took the box, narrowing her eyes and examined it closely.

It looked incredibly ordinary on the outside.

But unlike when she first saw it, there was now a strange and yet familiar aura emanating from within.

It wasn't magical power at all.

Nor was it a power radiated by divine armaments like holy swords or scriptures.

This aura felt very similar to the presence of a deity itself, much like what Silica occasionally felt when facing Aer....

“...!”

Realizing something, Silica's eyes suddenly flashed wide.

“Hey Mia.”

“Yes?”

Caught off guard by the sudden change in atmosphere, Mia was also slightly perplexed.

“Have you ever seen the bearer of the holy sword and scripture do anything with this box?”

“No, I haven't seen anything directly. But....”

Mia explained a series of situations she had witnessed to Silica.

After hearing the explanation, Silica

“....”

Looking blank momentarily, she suddenly

-Swoosh!

Rushed to Boris, who was lying in a corner, grabbed him by the scruff of his neck, and yanked him up.

“What on earth have you done?!”

Boris, his face battered, grinned weakly before speaking softly.

“We had to prepare a lot to surpass your vaunted heir. That box is our last bastion. Something we don't want to open ourselves....”

-Boom!

Suddenly, a tremendous roar and vibration shook the surroundings.

As if a powerful thunderbolt had struck nearby.

While everyone was still in a daze, Boris did not stop his sinister chuckle.

“It seems the reincarnation has begun.”

“...?”

“It’s all over now. You can’t change it. That future we, the creations spawned from the supreme beings, can never alter...!”

-Thunk!

With a satisfying smack, Boris’s face distorted once again.

That twisted face soon slumped lifelessly, and Boris fell to the floor like a scattering of leaves.

Silica looked back at the box.

‘It’s dangerous.’

Her assassin’s instincts, honed over decades, were warning her.

She still didn’t know exactly what the box was, but she was certain that leaving it unopened was a significant threat to the future.

Especially for Sian.

As someone who prioritized the successor’s safety above all else,

She couldn’t bring herself not to destroy the box.

Silica then closed her eyes and released all the power of mist that she had kept dormant within her.

* * *

-Whoosh

The chilling wind that grazed my skin only intensified my current state of desolation.

Before my empty gaze was a void of nothingness.

For a moment, I tilted my head to the sky, reflecting on everything up to this point.

What am I doing here?

I came here to thwart the head of Mist's plan to kill Princess Arin for my awakening and, furthermore, to crumble the petty plans of those who prattle about a new order.

In order to do this, I rescued Princess Arin from her dimensional prison, fought a bloody battle with the head of Mist, and crossed swords with the owner of the holy sword.

The descendant of the former owner of Ceyram?

The knights of the holy sword?

Honestly, if their efforts to overcome me were anything, they were notably creative.

They truly highlighted their endeavours prepared to surpass me, and I couldn't say I was in a bad mood about it.

Eventually, no matter what plans you make or schemes you devise, you can't beat me.

After making him realize this important fact, I wanted to allow him to fully enjoy the greatest suffering I could inflict in his state of despair.

Thus, I intended to conclude the malicious ties that spanned past and present lives.

But he fled.

It wasn't a release; it was a clear flight.

He escaped in front of me, protected by those exalted beings.

"Ha..."

I couldn't help but laugh.

It was certainly not a laugh born of positivity.

Swear words that I didn't fully realize kept spilling out amid my laughter.

[Hey, master.]

A somewhat calmer Ceyram quietly called out to me.

[Looks like he now considers you someone that must be completely eradicated.]

“Who? Who’s he?”

Ceyram, for some reason, didn’t answer.

I wasn’t particularly in the mood to press further.

After all, I still felt the trembling that hadn’t quite subsided being transmitted through the sword.

“What is going on here?”

“Why? Why am I suddenly holding a sword?”

“What the hell have we been doing?”

The knights who had been freed from the brainwashing of the holy sword were gradually coming to their senses.

No longer could the power of the holy sword be felt from their blades.

This meant, in other words, that the true owner of that power had fled to a very far-off place.

Oh.

This is frustrating.

That his life thread was tenacious was a fact I’d known for a while.

But I didn’t expect him to be this desperate.

The object of my long-sought revenge had fled from before my eyes, and I could only watch.

Those who haven’t experienced it firsthand would never understand what I’m feeling now.

The rage surges far more than when I was betrayed by him.

-Swoosh

Suddenly, I felt an unfamiliar sensation in my other hand.

‘Are you alright, Lord Sian?’

Hastia had come near, her eyes filled with worry, looking at me.

Upon feeling her soft touch, my soaring temper cooled, ever so slightly.

“Are you okay, young master?”

Then, Brian followed, rushing up.

Mounted on his back, still not awakened from her sleep, was a snugly curled-up Lunev.

“Phew...”

With a deep sigh, I finally felt a bit more settled.

Natural thoughts about what I needed to do next began to fill my mind.

I decided to tell Princess Arin to take care of the situation and then...!

Unintentionally, I looked around sharply.

“Why, what’s wrong, young master?”

“Where’s the princess?”

“Huh?”

“Where is Princess Arin?”

‘The, the princess just left the scene with His Majesty the Emperor!’

Hastia answered my question.

Princess Arin was nowhere to be seen.

The situation hadn’t ended yet.

Meaning, Mist’s sword was still unsheathed, aiming for her neck.

“Where did she go?”

‘Tha, that direction was probably...!’

Hastia was tracing the direction calmly when her eyes suddenly froze.

‘...!’

As her gaze halted, the trembling began to spread to the hand she was holding.

This was unquestionably a tremor of fear.

Whether she had sensed some ill omen or not, she was now shaking uncontrollably with fear and terror.

“What? What’s wrong with you?”

But Hastia was only stammering without replying, her lips flapping.

Out of a possible concern, I looked in the direction Hastia was staring at.

Her eyes were fixated on none other than the imperial palace.

Looking at the sensation alone, it seemed as though something extremely dangerous had appeared there.

“...!”

A familiar signal suddenly went off in my head.

It was the summoning signal employing mental resonance from the head.

And that direction was none other than,

“The imperial palace underground?”

The underground of the imperial palace.

“...!”

The members who had received the signal, too, started to leave their positions one after another.

Apparently, even they had not expected such a signal, their faces all showing perplexed worry.

A summoning to the imperial palace? And not just to some empty house or front door, but to the underground?

As Hastia’s gaze and the summons overlapped, my unease only grew.

For a moment, preparing to take the members to the summoning location,

“Going there is not advisable.”

A strange voice I had never heard before now blocked my path.

“It would be better to leave this place as far from here as possible right now. If you want to prolong your life, even just a little.”

Following the voice, my gaze naturally shifted.

Where my sharp eyes turned was none other than to Lunev, mounted on Brian’s back.

To be more precise, it was aimed at the black-haired man standing behind her.

“What do you mean by that?”

“Aren’t you duller than we thought, old friend? Can’t you feel the fear of the lady next to you?”

The lady’s fear?

It took me about a second to understand.

Upon realization, the mist arose and Ceyram appeared.

[.....]

Without any words or explanations, Ceyram just looked sharply at the black-haired man.

Then suddenly turned to look at me and said,

[Do what you want.]

With that, she disappeared back into the sword.

The man, too, indicating there would be no more words, simply turned his head.

“Yo, young master? Whom are you speaking to...?”

Confused by the situation, Brian asked, his eyes blinking bewilderedly.

I looked at them for a moment,

“I’ll be back soon. Stay put until I return!”

I created a dimensional gate and forcibly pushed them through it.

Brian and Hastia were both caught off guard, unable to ask anything, and Hastia’s eyes were still filled with fear.

After sending them to the dimensional space, I immediately raced towards where the head had sent the signal.

“An invader!”

When I brushed past the members who had left earlier and even the knights who tried to block me, I arrived at the underground of the imperial palace.

As I first stepped on the cold stone floor, I was greeted by the pungent smell of blood.

It wasn't a very pleasant scent.

I fought the rising anxiety and quickly headed towards the source of the smell.

The spot where Kellin was once confined and killed.

Without hesitation, I opened the door and entered, and in that moment,

“...?”

I began to doubt my eyes.

Boris was discarded in the corner like rubbish.

Princess Arin was leaning against the wall bleeding, with Violet close by her side.

Mia stood stunned, not knowing what to make of it all.

That scene alone was enough to surprise, but what truly shook me,

Was the specter just ten paces ahead, bloodied and pinned in the air,

“...!”

The figure of the head.

(Continues in the next part)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 237

Chapter 237: Reincarnation (4)

The accident had momentarily come to a halt.

Was it because I was confronted with a sight I neither had nor ever thought I would see?

The bloodstained, dilapidated figure of the clan leader.

To me, it was an unfamiliar sight.

I even suspected for a second—was the clan leader in disguise? Or was some madman impersonating as the clan leader?

But no.

That was undeniably the clan leader.

Silica Nigrity, the leader of Mist and my only teacher, was lying before me, on the brink of death.

[.....!]

The rough tremor in my right hand woke my stalled thoughts.

Ceyram, trembling far more violently than before.

It was shaking almost uncontrollably.

It wasn't because of the blood-drenched clan leader.

Right in front of the suspended clan leader,
another unidentified person, emitting a pale white light, was present.

Eerie.

Their whole body was so white as if covered in snow, an incredibly eerie sight.

Well, that's the white part, but...

Repulsive.

Looking at them was nauseating, enough to evoke a gag reflex.

I wonder why this world contains such an existence.

What is this?

Obviously, it's not a person.

Nor is it a weapon soul like Ceyram or Durandal.

It feels like the very existence of something supreme...

[Lumen, Lumen Del!]

Ceyram provided the answer for me.

Lumen Del? Is that the name of the repulsive-faced being before me?

Curious.

As far as I know, there could only be one being worthy of the name Lumen Del in this world.

Could it be referring to Lumen Del, the god of light, whom even the other gods recognize as supreme?

Well actually, that's not what's important right now.

What's truly crucial is,

regardless of who the owner of that repulsive face is,

that creature had brought the clan leader to this state.

I quickly glanced over to confirm the clan leader's condition.

He was unconscious and breathing steadily.

He didn't seem to have suffered any fatal wounds.

So, what should I do in this situation?

Carry the clan leader on my back and leave the scene?

That would be unlikely, wouldn't it?

What I obviously have to do is...

Shred that repulsive face beyond recognition!

-Thud

The clan leader, previously suspended in the air, was thrown to the ground.

“.....”

The moment the owner of the repulsive face turned to look at me,

-Slash!

Without a second thought, I charged at the creature.

I swung my sword towards its lower half to sever its legs, but,

-Clang!

Two inches from its legs.

An invisible, flickering barrier blocked my blade.

It felt like a restrictive barrier, but it was extremely sturdy.

Concluding that a simple hit couldn't penetrate it, I took a step back for a moment.

At the same time, I adjusted my grip on Ceyram,

“Mist Sword: Sturdy Root of the Firmament!”

I quickly cast the mist sword technique.

Infusing the power of the risen mist into Ceyram, I thrust it straight into the creature's face.

-Crash!

With a clear sound, the creature's barrier began to split.

Like roots digging into the ground, the cracks spread, and just as I was about to insert the blade into the newly formed gap,

-Click

“.....!”

It was blocked.

I couldn't go further, stopped just one finger's width away from its bridge.

What stopped it?

A finger.

My blade was caught between its index and middle finger, frozen still.

“A dark sword indeed.”

The creature glanced at Ceyram with a side-eye and spoke.

“That must mean you, wielding this dark sword, represent the remnants of Aer.”

-Whoosh

With no intention of indulging in insignificant banter,

instead of the blocked Ceyram, I drove my fist through the gaping space.

-Thump!

It felt like punching a rock.

But it wasn't blocked.

I had precisely hit its left cheek as desired.

Under normal circumstances, it should have been blown back and pinned to the wall from the impact,

“.....”

But it stayed put.

Not only was there no recoil, but its eyebrow didn't so much as twitch.

“Curious.”

The creature spoke again.

“A creation modeled after our nature, yet you possess power that doesn't suit you.”

As it spoke, it grasped my wrist,

seeming to feel something, it began twisting it this way and that.

“Yes. This dynamic flow couldn’t possibly be that of a human. You, you’ve ingested the blood of a demonic beast.”

-Whoosh!

Suddenly, an immense force emanated from its body, pushing me away.

Along with Ceyram, I was repelled but immediately twisted my body in the air, regaining my balance and landing gracefully.

“Cough!”

Upon landing, a dry heave surged from within.

Repulsive.

Such a filthy repulsive power.

It wasn’t particularly strong or imposing, but even the touch made me incredibly uncomfortable.

Why?

Why do I need to feel this way?

Why should I be made to feel this by that oh-so-great god of light...!

“Disgusting.”

An involuntary scowl twisted my face, but it froze solid at that single word.

“How merely looking at you can evoke such revulsion. Your kind hasn’t changed one bit from the past. You’re a being that should not exist in this world.”

“.....”

“Very unfortunate that I can’t personally erase you with my hands. It truly pains me.”

What? Disgusted?

It seems the emotion I felt while facing that creature, that creature also felt through me.

Well, that can happen. It’s possible. But to this extent...

“It’s as if you’re not even human.”

Yes indeed. Now it had to go as far as to say that.

Why do those who regard me negatively always treat me like I'm not human?

But I am human.

I stand tall on this earth as a human, engaging in all this activity for that very reason,

Haha.

A hollow laugh escaped my lips.

[.....]

The tremor of Ceyram hadn't stopped yet.

Glancing up at the air, I asked Ceyram softly,

"Hey, Ceyram."

[.....Yes?]

Even with a slight delay, fortunately, it responded.

"Why are you trembling?"

[What?]

"Why are you trembling? Is that owner of the repulsive face such a scary existence to you?"

It was a very blunt question.

[You're kidding, right?]

The response was quite unexpected.

[Does it look like I'm trembling to you?]

It was a difficult assertion to refute.

Wasn't it trembling from the moment it sensed that person's presence before I did?

As the man who had previously criticized me for not sensing a lady's fear put it, the trembling was clearly born of terror and fear...

Ah.

Not really.

I seemed to have been mistaken.

She wasn't trembling.

She was just like me,

[I'm squirming out of disgust!]

She felt repulsed.

She was shivering from an indescribable repulsion.

[I told you, didn't I? That creature now fully considers you as a target to be eliminated.]

"That so."

[That is the one.]

Her voice still trembled.

Not with trembling born of fear or terror,

[The esteemed highest god Lumen Del himself has decided to erase you from this world!]

The trembling was coming from exhilaration.

[Our master has grown enough to be considered an outcast even by a god's standards, huh? Isn't that admirable? I'd love to pat your head madly with pride, but sadly, now is not the time, is it?]

Nearly mad with a truly proper sensation,

[I'm so disgusted that I have to crush it now!]

A pause from the forgotten true nature of the dark sword surged through my body with the sword.

[Do I need to keep myself under control, master? Or else, today, I really might go berserk! I might even devour you, it wouldn't be strange at all!]

Such a warning was probably pointless, because,

I'm not feeling much different from you right now.

Until I erase that creature from this world today, it seems I won't be able to leave this place.

"Dark Arts 9th Form: Dark Sword Manifestation."

I summoned all the remaining mist energy within me to unleash my power.

"....."

The creature's face scrunches as it perceives my energy.

"Don't act so insolent."

As it frowned, it revealed its annoyance.

"Although I must erase you, I don't want to sully my hands by doing it myself. There's no reason to give you the immense honor of finding rest because of me. I'd just upset my stomach further if I linger. Let's end our interaction here."

What an utterly repulsive thing to say.

Why does it sound like it's about to tuck its tail between its legs and run?

Aren't I here to prevent that very situation?

With resolve, I drew the mist's power to its peak and dashed towards it.

-Clang!

A familiar sensation.

The same unfamiliar feeling I felt just a few minutes earlier now coursed through my entire body.

A golden light barrier deflected Ceyram's blade.

Same as the barrier that had appeared before Aschel,

a similar barrier now settled in front of me, along with a knight in golden armor.

-Whoosh!

The moment I recognized the knight's presence, white light swiftly swept the area, engulfing the entire space.

As if my body was transferred to another dimension.

“I shall give you mercy instead.”

“.....!”

“The chance to realize your pathetic status...”

* * *

The trembling throughout my body wouldn't stop.

It was a strange feeling I had never experienced before.

For Arin, who had witnessed the entire process of how Silica, who had been holding a box in perfectly good shape, turned into a battered figure,

the thought of being able to do anything seemed impossible.

In the midst of all this, Sian, who somehow got wind of the situation, suddenly appeared.

Without any hesitation, he rushed towards the unidentified being and disappeared with the strange light.

“Get a hold of yourself, Arin!”

Violet had healed the gushing wound on Arin's shoulder, which had already neatly closed up.

“Th-thank you, Sister...”

Seemingly uncomfortable with being thanked after healing, Violet turned her head.

Arin, leaning against the wall, naturally shifted her gaze toward Silica.

Her whole body was smeared with blood, and she was visibly in critical condition.

As Mia rushed to administer healing light,

“Stop.”

Silica refused by shaking off her hand.

Instead,

-Thud!

“.....!”

Everyone present, Mia, Violet, and even Arin, except Silica, couldn't believe their eyes.

“Wh-what are you doing?”

Despite Mia's question, Silica ignored her.

-Thud! Thud! Thud!

Despite clearly being able to recover easily with simple healing, Silica kept stabbing herself with a sword, further worsening her condition.

“Stop it, teacher!”

Startled, Arin dragged her abnormal body over to restrain her.

“Cough!”

However, Silica had already declined into a severe state, coughing up blood repeatedly.

“Quickly use healing magic...!”

-Thwack

Silica aimed her blade at Arin's throat as she hastily tried to produce healing light.

“Don't do anything and just back off.”

“But...”

“Even in this state, I still have enough strength to kill the princess. I won't warn you twice, so please, just step back.”

Even as she pleaded with a longing in her voice, Silica continued to spit out blood.

“Why are you doing this? Are you trying to atone for your sins with your life now? This method is definitely not...!”

“Who's atoning for their sins?”

Silica scoffed as if it were nonsense.

“This isn’t an act of atoning for sins. So, there’s no need to look at me with those frail eyes, Princess Arin.”

A faint smile graced her blood-stained lips.

Just for a moment, she wasn’t a familiar assassin but the kind-hearted Silica, a teacher at the Royal Academy.

“It’s all for that child...”

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 238

Chapter 238: Sorrow (1)

Simply standing in this strange space brought a nauseous sensation swelling within him. Sian immediately realized that he was in a divine subspace. There was no need for speculation. There could be no other explanation.

Silent since the moment he was transported, his arms and legs would not stop trembling. Beyond the simple sickness of the stomach, strength would not fully return to his body. Sian took a step back in an attempt to regain his composure.

“You must be feeling quite out of place,” Lumen Del spoke calmly, observing Sian. “This is a holy subspace, created from my own divine energy. Any other creation but you would be overwhelmed with ecstasy merely by being here. But not you. That alone should tell you how much of a misfit you are in this world.”

Sian offered no retort.

“I acknowledge this: you have overcome all those who received my power and prophecy. The saint, the scriptures, and even the owner of the holy sword. However it happened, the fact that they were all brought down by you cannot be denied.”

Lumen Del seemed to recognize Sian more out of necessity than affirmation. It was a situation that should have been glorifying, to be acknowledged by a god, but Sian’s face only twisted with disdain.

“The very reason I have appeared before you is because of that. If my creations couldn’t deal with you, then I must step in myself. No matter how much you taint and shroud this world in mist, the order I have established will never change. Even if...”

Lumen Del slowly raised his hand, signaling the golden knight.

“...it means overturning this sullied world.”

At the subtle command, the knight lunged at Sian with the speed of lightning.

– Boom!

With a thunderous roar echoing, a fierce ripple spread out around them.

“Khuk!”

Overwhelmed by the sheer unmanageable force, Sian groaned under the crushing pressure.

“Realize this through my knight: the place of a creation! No matter how much you flail with the power of a god, in the end, before the essence of my being, you can do nothing!” Lumen Del turned away after his decree.

Just as he began to vanish, leaving only his knight and the vile mist behind, Sian called out, “Hey, Lumen Del.”

Lumen Del’s head turned back toward him, as if caught by a surprising and troubling statement. The hubris was staggering. For a mere creation to casually address the supreme dignity of a god.

It was an alien situation for Lumen Del, something he had never experienced in his eternal life.

“Without a Sword (霧劍): The Dance of the Black Blood (歌舞)!”

The incantation, slight yet resounding in his ears. In the blink of an eye, the golden knight that had stood imposingly before Sian was engulfed by black mist, scattering in all directions, followed by the gruesome sound of rending metal as the knight’s body split apart.

The dismembered body soon turned to dust, swirling helplessly away, and in the knight’s place stood Sian, striking a peculiar dance pose. Lumen Del was perplexed. Could such a sight be possible from a mere creation?

No.

This matched almost perfectly with the essence of their own kind, the gods. Among them, it resembled the power of someone who had been expelled from heaven in the past.

As Sian raised his head after the strain of the technique, his eyes met Lumen Del's distrustful gaze.

– Snap!

Without hesitation, Sian charged.

– Whoosh!

As before, Lumen Del blocked Sian's sword strike with just two fingers. The force behind the strike was markedly different, yet still trivial when compared against a god's hand.

“Let me ask you one thing as a creation, Lumen Del!”

Despite the cold, lethal smile, Sian pressed on.

“On what basis do you declare me filthy?”

“How dare you question my judgment, you audacious creation?”

Lumen Del sneered at him with disdain.

“Of course! We are your creations, after all! It is natural for us to think and question just like you!”

A slight tremor coursed through the fingers blocking Sian's strike, an unbelievable incident for Lumen Del.

“Is it just because you dislike me and Aer? Because you are the light, you refuse the dark mist enveloping us? Is there no grander reason?”

Sian pressed on, not holding back.

“Do you think it's just because of your personal dislike?”

Lumen Del's eyes widened slightly, but he did not deny Sian's question.

“Think what you will. I have no intention of enlightening or persuading you.”

“The solution is simple: I will just take you down!”

Lumen Del was speechless.

“If you won’t acknowledge me, I can just erase you and create a new order that will! Whether that’s replacing you with Aer or another deity! It doesn’t matter! Even if it means overturning this world!”

The audacity of a creature in the face of the supreme god was baffling. Despite the obvious outrage and murderous rage,

“How audacious.”

Lumen Del smiled.

“You are indeed a bold creature. That’s what makes dealing with you creations so enjoyable.”

His smile grew wider.

“I will give my creations one more chance. If you manage to subdue them again, I will personally pave the way for you! A way straight to me! Come, do whatever you like!”

The divine revelation to the successor of mist was a drastic contradiction to the order he had established. Yet to Lumen Del, Sian was more intriguing than any entity that had ever received his prophecy.

“When you come to me, I will bestow upon you despair! Soon enough, you will realize that you are nothing before me. When you are consumed by despair, the pleasure I will feel will be immense!”

A brief flicker of light in Lumen Del’s eyes, and his body began to fade to transparency.

“I hope that moment comes soon.”

With those final words, Lumen Del disappeared completely from Sian’s sight.

Alone, Sian whispered lowly, “Better watch your back...”

* * *

Humans are simple creatures. Gods, the archetypes of humans, are no different. They spare me for nothing more than a fleeting interest – an absurdity.

Without a word, in an instant, my entire strength drained away as if deflated.

“Ha...”

I let out an involuntary chuckle. What a treacherous road I have walked.

[You're laughing? After letting him slip away?]

From the emptiness behind me, Ceyram appeared back to back with me. I could sense her weariness through the chilling air that seemed to cool my overheated body.

"If you're unsatisfied, consume me and chase after him."

[I've had enough. You're too overripe for eating by now. Better to leave you be. Besides, right now I am...]

Ceyram sighed deeply.

[Tired... very tired.]

I glanced back at her, smirking. She mirrored my smirk.

[What will you do now? Can you handle what comes next? Greater challenges await, the likes of which you've never seen.]

"Now you show concern? Weren't you the one who promised to raise hell with me to the very end?"

As if unfazed, I grinned.

[Of course! I'll follow you to the bitter end! I'll enjoy every last moment! But...]

Her hand gently caressed my rough cheek, an unusual warmth I had never felt from her icy touch before.

[Can you truly withstand it all?]

The unexpected gentleness sent shivers through me.

[It's no longer child's play from here on out. Every step forward requires fighting to stay alive. Can you handle that?]

"Why start now with such sentiments?"

[Complaining when someone's worried about you now? Get up already! I have no desire to stay in this revolting space any longer.]

Aware that her concern was out of character, she promptly stood, shaking herself off. I followed suit and rose to my feet.

-Woosh

The subspace began to vanish in a brief shimmer of light, clearly about to return us to the palace dungeons below.

“Phew!”

I exhaled sharply upon returning. This place definitely felt more comfortable than that foul space we’d been in moments ago. Especially now, the dizzying scent of blood made me feel oddly at ease...

Wait.

What is this smell?

Sensing something amiss, I quickly surveyed my surroundings. Boris lay huddled in a corner, the Violet Princess and Arin hesitated with uncertainty, and Mia stood with a look of despair surrounded by Mist’s members.

But something was off.

Why was I facing this situation?

“What happened?”

I asked in a low voice, expecting anyone to answer.

But there was silence.

Neither Arin, who arrived before me, nor Mist’s men who showed up later, would tell me what had occurred.

“I’m asking you! What happened?!”

Unable to contain my frustration, I let out a piercing yell. My hands trembled uncontrollably.

What could it be?

I couldn’t comprehend the situation before me.

Had I seen it wrong?

No.

Everything was fine before being transported to the subspace.

There were injuries, yes, but nothing fatal,

So why?

Why now, in front of my eyes!

“Have you arrived, Sian?”

Was the chief, who was alive just a moment ago, now at death’s door?

“Please don’t shout... it’s painful...”

The chief, covered in blood, weakly gestured for me to come closer.

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 239

Chapter 239: Sorrow (2)

Echoes of footsteps on the stone floor filled the underground of the Imperial Palace. Knights from the royal family hurriedly gathered below upon hearing the news of the crisis. Even Resmus, who had been entrusted by Arin with the Emperor’s safety, rushed urgently to the scene. However, contrary to expectations, a quite unexpected situation was unfolding underground.

“.....?”

Unable to grasp the situation, the knights’ eyes wandered in confusion.

“Princess Arin!”

Resmus was the first to snap out of it and rushed over to Arin.

“Are you all right? Are you hurt anywhere?”

Arin’s face, different from a moment ago, was filled with a look of utter despair, with her gaze fixed firmly on Sian.

“What on earth happened? Just what is going on here.....”

“Resmus.”

Interrupting Resmus’s pressing questions, Arin spoke quietly.

“Take all the knights and leave this place.”

“What? But.....”

“It’s an order.”

Her indifferent yet assertive demeanor was uncharacteristic of her usual self.

“Please don’t interfere with the situation. The only thing I can do for Sian right now is to give him this space.....”

Resmus couldn’t help but feel bewildered.

“Do as Arin says.”

Violet added her voice to the plea, and left with no other choice, Resmus and the remaining knights reluctantly left the room. Even as they did, Arin’s eyes never strayed from Sian.

“May I ask something, Arin?”

Violet spoke to Arin, observing her fixed gaze on the man.

“How many times have you seen that kind of expression on his face?”

“It’s my first time too.”

Who could have imagined Sian, cold-hearted to the point of enraging the second-ranked, to bear such an expression of sorrow?

To Arin, that sight was bizarre yet incredibly heartbreaking.

—

Can walking ever feel this burdensome?

Even when a sword had pierced right next to my heart, or when I was being torn apart by demonic beasts, it was never this difficult.

As I finally reached the leader’s side, carrying my excessively heavy body, I collapsed helplessly to the ground as if surrendering all my guilt and weaknesses.

For now, I quietly observed the leader’s condition.

“What the...?”

Ceyram was the first to react, voicing his confusion.

The leader's body was more scarred than if it had been butchered by knives. Yet something was unusual. Amid the wounds engraved all over the leader's body, I saw a strange sight — a white radiance, in the midst of wounds where blood was oozing continuously.

It was an unfamiliar sheen I had never seen before.

"Lumen Del, that bastard...!"

At that, Ceyram exclaimed angrily.

But what's even more ridiculous, you know?

There's a blood-stained sword in the hand of the leader.

A sword stained with her own blood, no less.

Seeing this, I immediately understood.

The leader's dire state was her own doing.

"Ceyram, your angry shout can even reach here."

The leader spoke up with a faint smile.

I asked her with a resolute expression, devoid of humor.

"Isn't this a bit much, even for a surprise event?"

She didn't answer, but instead responded with a slight smile at the corner of her lips.

"I'll admit it: I'm shocked right now. I understand that you, as the leader, intend to reform me, but now is enough."

Instead of answering, the leader gently raised the corners of her mouth with a slight smile.

Desperate for more, I hastily invoked a healing light.

-Snap!

Just as I was about to place the generated healing light on the leader's body, someone grabbed my wrist. It was one of the Mist's members.

Caught off-guard, my body froze for a single second.

The leader is in this condition, and rather than doing something, they stopped me?

“Let go?”

I spoke, ready to tear off the hand that restrained me.

But far from obeying my command to release their grip, the other members began to hold down my hands, preventing me from exerting any force.

Their eyes were filled with the reluctant message that they didn't want to do this either.

“The leader commands it...”

One of the members spoke reluctantly.

Commands it?

Are they kidding me right now?

What kind of deranged leader would give such an insane order, to allow their own death!

Just as I was about to shake off their hands, which were saying nonsense,

“Do not catch the innocent members.”

The leader spoke up.

“I have ordered that nothing should be done.”

It was so absurd, I sighed and hung my head.

“What's the reason?”

I asked for the reason, but the leader, as well as the other members, remained silent.

No one would explain to me why this nonsensical situation was occurring.

“Silica has received a sentence.”

In the midst of this, Mia spoke up.

“A death sentence that we as humans cannot refuse...”

What sentence? What does that mean?

“Do you see Silica’s wounds?”

She pointed to the white radiance in the leader’s wounds.

“Boris once told me that the gods possess supreme powers to determine the destinies of their creatures.”

Powers?

“This radiance you see is proof of that. A human sentenced to death by a god cannot be healed and eventually dies, just like Silica is now.”

What?

I should understand what she’s saying, but why can’t I grasp a word of it?

Unable to be healed?

What does that even mean?

‘Before that, I will give you a small despair.’

The god of light’s parting words suddenly came back to me.

Despair.

Is this the despair he was talking about?

To take the leader away from me?

“Explain it to me, Ceyram.”

Feeling hollow, I turned to Ceyram.

“You should know about this situation, shouldn’t you? If it’s about this sentence or whatever, how can we overcome it?”

[...Within one minute...]

Ceyram finally spoke.

[Find and kill the god who pronounced the sentence.]

“ ... ”

[Then you might be able to save her.]

His response was as indifferent and cruel as it could be.

I couldn't help but laugh bitterly.

Kill her? Within one minute? A god?

Sure, if that god were right before me, I would kill him within a minute by any means possible.

But that god isn't in front of me, is he?

Then I should go looking!

Whether I dig through another dimension, or burst into the sky, anything is better than sitting here doing nothing...

-Snap

".....!"

With great effort, the leader raised her hand and grabbed my arm.

"Do not have any strange thoughts. Sit down and listen to my story. This will be your last lesson."

Her grip was weaker than a newborn's gesture.

I could have shaken it off at any moment, yet I could not bring myself to do it.

The leader's trembling hand no longer carried any sign of life's persistence.

"Do you remember what I told you before?"

The leader continued calmly, her expression unchanged.

"I told you that the world you desire cannot be achieved simply by wishful thinking and power alone..."

I remember clearly.

The leader had said that I needed a motivation.

So I thought that Princess Arin was the motivation the leader spoke of.

The leader seemed to awaken me by having me publicly kill Arin, whom I could not slay.

But now, the leader seemed to have a different idea in mind.

“Use me.”

There was no hesitation in the leader’s voice.

“You don’t need to despair. All the intense negative emotions you hold inside will become your strength. They will be the driving force to create the world you seek.”

“Why can’t you understand that to create the world I want, you have to be in it too!”

“What can I do? The current world won’t allow it...”

The leader, who had been gently caressing my face, suddenly embraced my neck.

“You are selfish and brazen, drowning in the unfounded pride that you can do everything by yourself. Yet I find myself unable to abandon you. You are my precious disciple and comrade with a shared purpose. That’s why I’ve made my choice: to give you everything.”

With those words, the leader pulled me into a tight embrace.

Then all the energy and power she harbored, from the darkness attribute magic to the power of the mist, and countless other sensations, transferred into me.

“I have given you everything. What you do with that power is up to you. Whether you lead Mist in my stead, or live only for yourself, do as you wish. Whichever path you choose, it won’t be easy...”

After completing the succession, the leader patted my back gently.

“Are you sad?”

It was the cruellest thing I had ever heard from the leader.

Unable to reply, I remained silent.

“Hold on to that emotion. Remember why I had to leave your side. If you continue to move forward without forgetting that reason.....”

“.....”

“You will surely be able to create the world you desire.”

Something that had flowed from the leader's face ran down my shoulder, down my back.

Whether it was blood or tears, I couldn't tell.

Maybe it was a mixture of both.

"So I'll cheer you on. As a teacher hoping for the happiness of my disciple."

A happy future?

I doubt the word happiness even fits for me, but for such a world to exist for me,

The leader must be there.

If the world were without her,

I would never call it a happy world.

"Please, live well. Sian....."

-Thud

As the leader's hand dropped from patting my back, and her faint breath no longer reached me, I realized.

Silica Nigrity, who had only looked at me and given me her everything, had now drifted away from me.

In other words, the being I could trust and rely upon,

Was gone.

"Ha....."

I let out a disheartened sigh and slowly lifted my head.

Honestly, I can't quite remember what happened after that.

Later, a member mentioned that all I did was wail.

A wail filled with bitter anger and sorrow, desperately echoing through the underground of the palace.

So desperate that no one dared to speak to me.

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 240

Chapter 240: Sorrow (3)

Surrounded by dense fog, the subspace of Sian was a realm disconnected from the outside world, leaving those unintentionally swept there unaware of the events unfolding outside or the challenges that had befallen Sian.

Brian's thoughts were in turmoil, consumed by complex emotions. Schultz silently kept watch beside a slumbering Lunev, while Hastia could only stare endlessly at the Soul Stone. None found the peace of mind to settle comfortably.

'Hastia was the most anxious among them. With trembling hands, she clutched the Soul Stone, praying fervently for Sian's safety.

'Why? Why is this happening?' The appearance of the knight in golden armor from the sky had immediately struck Hastia as unusual. The knight's exterior was unfamiliar, yet the energy he exuded was strikingly familiar—a sensation as an elf under the protection of the gods could not possibly ignore.

Knowing full well the nature of that energy, Hastia had no other choice but to hope and pray for Sian's well-being, 'Please, you have to be safe, Lord Sian!'

Meanwhile, Schultz stood by Lunev's side in a corner of the space. Having witnessed the entire series of events, his heart was filled with complex and subtle emotions. Why had he helped the others and fought against the knights of the royal palace? Was it for Lunev? For himself? He could not explain why he had risked his life so desperately, and he felt ashamed of himself.

"Please awaken safely, Lady Lunev," Schultz muttered, wishing she would soon rise to provide the answers to his pitiable self.

But then, suddenly...

"Stop that."

Schultz's gaze shifted towards the black book cradled by Lunev and reached out his hand to it, only to freeze at the sound of a sudden unfamiliar voice.

"Mere curiosity can invite sin. Best keep your hands off things that don't belong to you."

The voice caught the attention of not only Schultz but also Brian and Hastia, who turned their heads in response.

“Who’s there?”

“Me? Well, you could say I’m the attendant of the lady here who’s lost to slumber.”

Before them stood a strange man who was chuckling, apparently amused by the reactions he garnered—a man who had not been in the space just moments before.

Lunev, seemingly stirred by the exchange, made an uncomfortable moan in her sleep.

“Oh dear, it’d be a problem if she wakes up too soon,” he muttered, expecting her slumber to last longer. However, contrary to his expectations, Lunev began to stir, signaling her impending awakening.

Rushing to her side to check her condition, they realized with dismay that the one person who desperately wanted to be there upon her awakening was not present yet.

As they attended to Lunev, a distinct mist began to radiate from the Soul Stone in Hastia’s possession.

‘The Soul Stone?’

Then, in tandem with the Soul Stone’s activity, a gate opened within the space with echoing footsteps approaching. Sian had returned, keeping the promise he made. Brian rushed to greet him first.

“Lord Sian! You are safe...!”

Yet, the changed atmosphere halted Brian mid-sentence. Sian proceeded forward without a word or any reaction and abruptly collapsed in front of Lunev.

In the suddenly heavy air, Sian waited silently for Lunev to awaken. Finally, her eyes began to flutter open, and upon seeing Sian...

“Wow...”

A soft exclamation of disbelief escaped Lunev’s lips as she blinked, trying to grasp the reality of the situation.

“Is this a dream?”

“No,” Sian replied.

“Why are you here?”

“You said you wanted me to be the first thing you saw when you woke up, didn’t you?”

“I guess I did...”

Not believing Sian would actually be there, Lunev stared blankly into his eyes before suddenly reaching out to him.

“What are you doing?”

“Why aren’t you helping me up?”

Lunev directly requested assistance, perceiving an opportunity. Unlike his usual self, Sian, without any complaints, accepted her outstretched hands.

Lunev immediately wrapped her arms around Sian, who this time didn’t resist.

“I should feel ecstatic to the point where my heart races uncontrollably, but why can’t I?”

Sian didn’t answer. Yet the faint tremors spreading through his body spoke for him.

“So, something bad happened.”

Lunev held Sian’s body closer, patting his back soothingly.

“Don’t you need to resolve this issue? Is it okay to be here?”

“Don’t worry about it. I’ll handle it.”

Lunev softly cupped Sian’s face.

“How can I not be concerned? You have such a sorrowful look.”

“...”

“Did you really come to me, putting everything else aside? Wow, have I finally succeeded?”

While Lunev was genuinely elated, she couldn’t muster a radiant smile.

“Let’s go. I’ll be fine now.”

A single tear streaked down her cheek despite her contradictory words.

“Why are you crying?”

“Don’t get the wrong idea. These are tears of joy.”

Quickly wiping her tears, Lunev helped Sian to his feet.

“Go on now. We can’t be delayed here any longer. If I change my mind, it means trouble for you.”

Sian had nothing left to do here, and Lunev knew it.

Sian turned his gaze briefly towards Remiharam before confirming with Lunev.

“You’ll be alright on your own?”

“Yes,” she assured.

Sian then patted her head.

“I’m going.”

With a brief farewell, Sian prepared to open the gate. But just before leaving, he turned and approached Brian and Hastia, who were standing in silence.

“Just hold on to this for a moment.”

He handed over something to Brian, who was shocked.

“My lord! This is...?”

Sian had entrusted his cherished sword, the unique mageblade Ceyram, into Brian’s hands.

“Don’t make a fuss. It’s only for a while.”

“Understood...”

Sian sauntered away from the speechless Brian, opening the gate. As he was ready to depart, Hastia sent a worried mental inquiry his way.

‘Are you alright, Lord Sian?’

Sian paused, then simply responded.

‘No.’

And with that, he exited the space, leaving behind a profound silence.

Brian gingerly placed the mageblade on the ground where it began to emit a black mist, and soon Ceyram’s spirit emerged.

“Ah...”

Ceyram sighed deeply upon its appearance.

“What a sight to behold. That our infamous Ceyram could express such displeasure,” Remiharam remarked, watching with a cocked head.

“Shut your mouth unless you wish to be torn apart...” Ceyram hissed back, furious.

Remiharam cleared his throat and promptly averted his gaze. Ceyram muttered under its breath, “Such an insufferable woman.”

* * *

In some desolate plain of the Ushif Empire, a hill found itself bathed in the golden light of the evening sun. There stood Lumen Del, paragon of grandeur, caressing something in his hand—the Holy Sword Durandal.

“Why the sudden change of heart?” someone inquired.

“It’s nothing grand. Merely a whim,” Lumen Del replied nonchalantly.

“Will there be any regrets?” the voice prodded.

“Whether I’ll have regrets is not for me to determine, but for you,” Lumen Del retorted, plunging the Holy Sword into the ground.

“Ah...”

Durandal could not help but exult as it absorbed the divine energy granted to it.

“The beginning and the middle—it matters not how things evolve. What’s pivotal is who remains at the end. Ultimately, the one who can turn despair into a motive for growth will emerge victorious.”

With those words, Lumen Del began to disintegrate into dust, slowly fading away.

“I hope it will be you.”

Durandal observed the occurrence with reverent eyes, remaining in place until Lumen Del had completely vanished.

“Everything will follow the natural order,” Durandal then turned, sensing there was more to be done.

“Where am I?”

Aschel, the Holy Sword's master, had been unconscious but now finally awoke.

"How long do you plan to exhibit such a pitiful state?" Durandal scolded coldly.

Aschel stood up abruptly, regrouping himself hastily.

"Holy Sword, what is this situation?"

"Do you seriously require an explanation? You were defeated by the mageblade's master, and excruciatingly so. Had it not been for their mercy, your body would have been torn to shreds by this time," Durandal clarified with disdain.

"I was defeated?"

Aschel couldn't come to terms with the reality, and uncontrollable laughter leaked from his lips.

"Seven years ago, you made a promise to prove yourself by defeating the Successor of the Mist—by employing every means necessary."

Aschel could not muster a response to such a humiliating reminder.

"I did not favor your methods. Spreading my power to other humans, or collaborating with the owner of the Holy Scripture to create a being equivalent to the Successor of the Mist were not appealing to me. Therefore, I was skeptical of your potential success, a doubt that proved accurate."

"Holy Sword, if I could have another opportunity..."

"Opportunity?"

Durandal interrupted with seeming contempt.

"Opportunities are not mine to give. They are granted by them."

Durandal's gaze pierced Aschel with a severity that foretold death.

"Just once."

"...!"

"For reasons unknown, they have opted to give you one more chance."

Durandal picked up its own body, extending it once again to Aschel.

Engulfed in ecstasy, Aschel could hardly speak upon receiving the Holy Sword.

“They’ve even shared their own power for your cause.”

Power unfathomable compared to the past pulsed through Aschel, filling him with awe.

“We’ve discussed this with Boris before.”

Durandal implied for Aschel to continue their discussion.

“What if our human strengths are futile against the Successor of the Mist? The solution suggested was to exploit the powers of other races.”

“Other races?”

“Yes. For instance...”

Aschel wore a meaningful smile as he spoke slowly.

“The beings of the demonic world living across the ravine and their king.”

(To be continued)