

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin

Chapter 7

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Chapter 7. The Master of the Demon Sword (1)

It's been two weeks since my sister returned to the academy.

She visited merely to check in without any special purpose so she left right after seeing our father, who was stationed at the frontlines.

Still, she didn't come empty-handed. To Kranz, who lay ill, she brought a precious bear's gallbladder, wishing him a speedy recovery.

The gallbladder of a polar bear, coveted for its restorative properties...

Well, I received a gift as well... though...

"Ugh, the smell! I still can't get used to it!"

Emily clamped her nose shut as soon as she set down the plate.

A reddish liquid bubbled and brewed, its mere appearance enough to upset one's stomach.

But I, undaunted, picked up the spoon.

"Master, do you really find this tasty?"

"Do you think I'm eating this because it tastes good?"

"But still, even if Miss Ellis gave it to you as a gift... I'm sorry, Master! I'll step out for a moment!"

Overcome, Emily held her mouth and fled the dining room.

Alone, I began to empty the plate, suppressing my frustration.

The taste was tolerable, although the smell suggested otherwise.

Having eaten worse before, I didn't make a fuss like Emily had.

The gift from my sister was none other than the blood of a hellhound.

This demonic creature's essence hailed from the Limia Valley, a front-line region.

There's a superstition on the continent that consuming the blood of demonic creatures drastically enhances human physical abilities.

Though it's a superstition born from the rarity of such creatures and the robustness of frontier knights, astonishingly, it's not just a myth.

The strength of demonkind comes partly from their diet—eating these creatures, just as we would eat cows or pigs.

However, the nutrients in demonic beasts, like hellhounds, are so rich and bountiful that even a small amount can bring immense growth.

That's the main reason I wish to go to the frontier—to consume the flesh and blood of these creatures and enhance my physical strength.

From my past life and now, this was the shortest route to gaining power.

Plus, since the world still considers this knowledge a mere superstition, it's like a blue ocean opportunity for me.

Yet looking at this...

I peered at the blood on my spoon.

It had the distinct, biting, and sticky taste of hellhound blood, just as I recalled from my past life.

Ellis, my sister, tended to believe in superstitions readily.

She'd buy into anything claiming health benefits without verifying its truth, to the extent where I first thought she'd been swindled with this blood.

Even so, to think that hellhound blood circulated in the black market...

Are they not taking demonic creatures seriously enough?

As much as I was doubtful about it, after I tried it, it wasn't a scam.

I knew the taste of hellhound blood.

I had even eaten its flesh several times.

Based on those experiences, this was definitely pure hellhound essence.

I had never imagined that blood from demonic beings was actively being traded, possibly supplied by someone connected to the frontlines.

It was a matter that couldn't be overlooked, and I decided to inquire further into it.

Having finished my meal, I stood up.

"Where are you off to, Master?"

Emily entered at a most inconvenient time.

"Just going for a walk."

"Are you headed to the back hills again? If you're planning to practice swordsmanship, wouldn't the training grounds be better?"

"I'm going for physical exercise. Have something nice and cool ready for me when I return."

Emily waved her hand, bidding me to be cautious.

I hoped she'd prepare something actually edible.

Leaving the manor, I crossed the back garden and entered the forest path leading up the mountain.

I had waited two weeks for this moment.

All my previous attempts had been foiled by Yulken's surveillance, but today, due to his regular reports, even he was elsewhere.

In other words, at this moment, there were no eyes on me.

I couldn't waste this golden opportunity.

After an hour's climb up the mountain...

I arrived near a vast plateau at its peak.

It felt strange returning here after such a long time.

This was where I hid away to escape everyone's gaze when I was being treated as an outcast at home.

But back then, I was unaware...

Unaware that an incredible treasure was hidden beneath...

I gently shut my eyes, sensing the surrounding energies.

The natural flow of mana converged to one spot.

There lay what I sought.

Twenty paces north, then a sharp left for ten steps, and finally two large steps towards one o'clock...

Once I pinpointed its location, I headed straight there.

The deserted expanse gave no indication of anything hidden.

Yet my eyes perceived the truth.

Beneath where I stood, a space rich with swirling mana.

Without hesitation, I placed my hand on the ground.

-Wooong

I channeled my internal mana into the earth.

"...Hmm."

The reaction was weak.

I guess I needed to pour in more mana.

-Wooong

Still no response?

It's proving trickier than expected.

If I were an earth mage, I would've opened it with ease. Is this because of my differing elements?

Even with the maximum amount of mana, the ground just trembled faintly with no other signs of change.

It seemed I had reached my limit.

But that didn't mean I was out of options.

Once more, I aligned my hand with the ground.

-Swish!

A black aura flowed through my hand into the soil, merging with the previously transferred mana, creating a resonance and a different vibration than before.

I stepped back to watch the unfolding change.

-Kugugung!

The ground cracked open, veins spreading across it like a blood network, and when it couldn't hold any longer, it collapsed dramatically.

Once the dust cleared, stairways emerged beneath the broken ground.

I descended the stairs without a moment's pause.

At the end of the staircase was a long corridor, surprisingly clear though no light should've penetrated this underground space.

I felt mana still flowing throughout the corridor.

At the point where the mana ceased, there must be something that pulls and gathers it.

A different feeling from the last visit came over me.

Like rediscovering a long-forgotten toy.

In simple terms, this place was a temple.

Now buried beneath the ground and fallen to ruin, it once hosted an altar for the god of light, Lumerendel.

Why was such a sacred site behind my house?

Pure coincidence.

After the Divine Demon War 300 years ago, all historical records were erased. There's no trace of the past.

Whether such a temple is behind a house or an outhouse, it's irrelevant.

Just a forgotten fragment of history, with no one but me knowing of its existence now.

After about ten minutes...

A golden radiance flickered from the corridor's end.

Approaching it, the brightness intensified as mana surged around it.

In sight at last.

The master of this temple.

An altar made of silver surrounded by two flights of stairs, and at its heart, a brilliant golden sword shining with an undying light—like a sun beaming with life.

It had an intoxicating vibrancy of a living aura that felt like a sonnet in the air.

But to me, it was nothing but loathing.

Holy Sword Durandal.

A legendary relic graced with the blessings of the god Lumerendel; only the saviors who could extract life's warm light from the cold darkness were worthy to wield it.

Saviors, my foot...

It was likely for traitors who only knew how to stab others in the back.

Ah, but I was stabbed squarely in the chest, so perhaps not in the back after all?

Regardless, how could I look upon this sword fondly?

In a past life, the one who wielded this sword was none other than Aschelle Vert.

Hence, it was the blade that pierced my heart, making me lose everything I had built and denying my very purpose in life.

How could I welcome it with open arms?

I felt myself souring with old thoughts, better to focus on the task and get out.

Otherwise, I might just die, suffocated by this wretched aura.

I bypassed the sword, heading to where its shadow fell.

Regretfully, my goal wasn't the sword.

I could've pulled it, but what use would it have, especially with my small stature? Plus, it being so brightly glaring only hurts my eyes.

Above all, it's the weapon that struck down my heart; why should I have any need for it?

It's better to avoid what's unclean.

We naturally gravitate toward the familiar.

That's precisely what I was searching for.

The shadow cast by the holy altar stretched long behind it.

Where there's light, there will always be darkness following.

This was a law of nature since the dawn of creation.

But the ignorant chase only the light, ignoring the shadows.

Just look at this temple—it's evident everywhere.

Though the world has changed, humanity remains the same.

Standing atop the lengthy shadow, I crouched down and placed my hands onto it.

-Woong

The shadow of the holy sword spun like a whirlpool.

It morphed freely, resembling a human figure.

Then, after a moment, the shadow stretched out, pointing towards a specific direction.

There, at its end, a strange black door now stood where none had been before.

-Creak

I opened the door as if entering a familiar room and stepped inside.

Beyond lay utter darkness, filled with a thick mist rising from unknown origins.

In the center was another altar, similar to the one that held the holy sword, but the feelings it evoked were distinct, comforting.

The smile on my face grew as I bathed in the sensation.

Moving through the mist, I came face to face with another weapon lying atop the altar.

A short dagger with a purple blade emanating a sinister aura.

Without hesitation, I grasped its hilt.

-Kugugung

The surroundings resonated powerfully—no cause for alarm.

Where there's a treasure, there's often a guardian.

The same went for this dagger, its guard being quite the welcome entity for me.

[Giggle, giggle, giggle...]

An unsettling feminine laugh filled the space.

Soon, a strange fog swirled through the room, engulfing both the dagger and myself.

A mysterious black soul emerged from the weapon, shifting into a bewitching woman with flowing black hair.

[Ah! How long has it been since I last tasted the outside air? It's exhilarating!]

The woman, taking a deep breath, soon noticed my presence—her grasp upon the hilt.

[What's this, a fledgling? A child? Are you the one who woke me?]

"As you can see..." I replied, entirely unbothered.

[Kyaha! Such a young lad, fearless, quite adorable, isn't it? Do you even comprehend what you've done? Do you know what happens when you wake me?]

"That this dagger is mine?"

[Wrong! It's not the dagger but your body that is mine! Kyahaha!]

The spirit, licking her lips, soared upwards and dived swiftly, attempting to engulf me.

Hmm...

I wasn't quite so unprepared in my past life.

-Catch

[Ack!]

Smoothly, I twisted her neck in my grip.

Her sharp nails seemed poised to scratch me apart, but they only flailed uselessly at the air.

“Should you really be biting your owner?”

Her panicked gaze met my smiling face.

(To be continued)