

THE ACADEMY IS DOOMED

The Academy is Doomed

#C21 - Read The Academy is Doomed C21

Chapter 21

The villagers are in the midst of cleaning up the devastated potato fields, and my father has stepped away to talk to an old acquaintance, Caselag.

Amon was also talking to Anar'el.

"He comes over every now and then to discuss magic with my father, and we talk about this and that. He's like a neighborhood grandfather I've known since I was a kid."

Anar'el listened in silence, then spoke up.

"But he's a dragon."

"Yes, he is."

Amon's nonchalant answer puzzled Anar'el.

What is a dragon?

Rulers of Middle-earth, protectors, and all sorts of other terrifying labels!

"Besides, isn't he.....a Black Dragon?"

"As far as I know, yes."

"Oh my....."

To the Elves, the word dragon was nothing more than a word of horror.

A green dragon was better, loving the forest, but a black dragon symbolizes destruction!

That's why she fainted as soon as she saw Caselag.

"Uh, how did you come to be acquainted with such a person?"

“Well.....I’ve known him naturally since I was a child.....”

At that, Anar’el felt a twinge of unease.

Amon liked to present himself as a man of common sense, but there were certain things that sometimes defied it.

“You don’t know much about dragons, do you? They can be very angry if you mess with them.”

Amon frowned at the question.

“Who’s an idiot to not know that dragons are dangerous?”

“Well, then why would.....”

“But not all dragons are dangerous.”

“You mean.....?”

“Well, Mr. Caselag says he’s an old, sickly dragon, and he doesn’t get out much, and he doesn’t know any other dragons, so he comes to our estate once in a while to socialize, and he’s a lonely old man.”

Amon clicked his tongue as if he was imagining Caselag, old, sick, and lonely, scratching at the floor of his room, alone.

‘An old, sickly dragon,’ Anar’el thought.

Dragons are so transcendent that they only grow stronger with age.

They don’t call them Ancient Dragons for nothing.

‘This man believes what the dragon told him when he was younger.’

It was clear that he thought of dragons as old dogs that had been kicked out of the pack.

So Anar’el decided not to think about the matter any further.

“I see!”

“Yes, that’s what it is.”

Thankfully done explaining Caselag, Amon cut to the chase.

“So, Headmaster, I assume you’re familiar with the situation on our estate?”

“.....Yes, of course.”

Caselag’s appearance had forced it to back off, but the Elder Drake’s attack had wiped out half of the estate’s potato fields!

“The manor is in a mess, so I don’t think we can continue the field trip.”

The original plan was to explore the Arma Mountains, learn about monsters, and study manor management.

But that wasn’t possible right now.

“So you’re asking me to return to the academy.”

“Yes, they could use an extra pair of hands, so I’ll help out, but it’s my personal business, so please treat it as a vacation.”

Anar’el nodded without hesitation.

“Yes, I see.”

Amon narrowed his eyes as he watched her in silence.

“You sound like you’ve been waiting for this.”

“It’sthat can’t be right.”

Anar’el said, ears perked up in disbelief.

“You told me to go back, so I did, but what does that mean all of a sudden?”

“I’ve been watching the principal for a while and I’ve felt that if she’s the type of person who would say, ‘I won’t go since I came all this way! I’ll stay and help!’”

Amon’s suspicions have grown during his time at the Academy!

“.....You’re afraid of dragons.”

Anar’el’s ears twitched at Amon’s sharp reasoning.

“You said he’s a close old man? If he’s close to Amon, he’s close to me. I can’t be scared, can I?”

“Then you can stay, Headmaster.”

“Why

“I’ve heard that elves have their own magic that helps crops grow.”

Anar’el’s ears perked up.

“How does that.....”

Amon pulled out the letter.

“The King of Mango Farmers wrote in the letter that you went there on your day off and cast a spell.”

“.....They promised to keep it a secret!”

Grinding her teeth in exasperation, Anar’el flicked her ears.

“Ha, but the effect of that magic is minimal! It’s called a unique magic, but it’s actually a traditional dance of the elf village.....”

“With half the potato field blown away, we need every bit of help we can get.”

“.....”

“Please.”

Amon’s earnestness finally made Anar’el’s ears perk up.

“I have to confess, you’re right.”

“What?”

“I’m afraid of dragons, and I heard that once they come, they stay for a few days.”

“That’s right.”

“If I stay here for those few days, I’ll go crazy with fear. Look, I’m shaking even now.”

Indeed, as soon as she made eye contact with Caselag, she fainted with fear.

“So please let me go back.”

Her voice was almost pleading.

Amon considered the desperation in her voice and sighed heavily before answering.

“No.”

The answer was like a knife, and Anar’el screamed.

“Why, why!”

“Are you going to drag everyone from the Academy with you, and then run away as soon as things get bad?”

“That, that’s.....!”

“That’s not possible, Headmaster.”

True enough, but it seemed unreasonable to Anar’el.

“Huh! Do you think I can’t go if you tell me not to?!”

She shouted, preparing her warp magic.

“Lead me where you want me to go! Whoa.....!”

Amon shouted, pointing behind her.

“Master Caselag, have you come!”

He didn’t.

But Anar’el was so terrified at the thought of a dragon behind her that she failed to cast her warp spell.

“Keeeeeeeeeee!”

Anar’el screams as she is torn apart by the impact of her mana!

Amon paled as he watched her collapse and pass out.

“I’m.....f*ed.”

* * *

Amon’s room.

Since she had nowhere else to stay, Amon offered her his bed in his room.

And Amon was bowing his head before Anar’el, who was lying on the bed.

“I’m sorry.”

“.....hfff!”

“Hmph!”

Amon squirmed as Anar’el’s snorting grew stronger and stronger.

‘Her ears are standing up like never before, so she must be pretty angry.’

After all, Anar’el had failed her warp magic and was unable to use magic for the time being!

That means that the scum of the academy, other than the students, can’t go back either.

‘I can’t imagine them helping rebuild the potato fields.’

We’ll be lucky if they don’t destroy what’s left of the potato patch.

‘Vice Principal Brestle will definitely try to steal the remaining potatoes, and Senior Marion and Senior Sloth.....’

Marion is a viscount and Sloth is a marquis.

Since they are both nobles of considerable rank, it would not be strange if they thought that potatoes were hanging from trees until yesterday.

‘They’d never dream of helping the laborers.’

He was crushed by the disaster he had brought upon himself.

“Ehhh.....”

“What was that sigh?”

“I’m sorry. I was thinking of something else.”

Amon, who had gingerly pushed himself to his feet, said from his knees.

“Well, then, my esteemed headmaster. What are you going to do from here on out?”

“What can I do, I’m stuck here!”

“.....Yes, we’ll make sure you’re as comfortable as possible during your stay, and we’ll keep Mr. Caselag out of here as much as possible.”

“Hmph, of course.....”

The door swung open and Caselag entered.

“Amon, are you there?”

“Kaaaah!”

Caselag shook his head as he entered the room to find Anar’el fluttering about on the bedroll.

“Were you mating?”

Amon gasped at Caselag’s ridiculousness.

“Old man, what a terrible thing to say!”

“No, it is not, and by the way, I came to see your superior, the elf, who has been ill since a failed spell.”

“It’s all right, I’m much better.”

“Yeah, well, an elf can handle a spell failure or two.”

Amon said, seeing Caselag stroking his chin as he spoke.

“Phew, you don’t need to bother with that. Thank you.”

“Yes.....ah, when do you plan to return to the manor again?”

“Well, I don’t know.....I’ll have to accumulate vacation time, so it will be a few months, I suppose?”

Caselag nodded approvingly.

“Good timing. I’ll be ready by then.”

“Ready for what?”

“Preparing a gift, should I say?”

Amon’s eyes lit up.

“Is it gold?”

“No.”

When Amon's shoulders drooped in disappointment, Caselag added.

"Something more precious than that."

Amon's sagging shoulders straightened.

"I'll come as soon as I have time off."

"Heh, heh, heh, and know that I have something important to tell you then."

"Something important?"

"I'll tell you about it then."

"Mmm....."

Well, if he was going to talk about it while giving a gift, he was going to ask for a pretty important favor.

'But he's going to give me something more precious than gold.....'

I'll do him a favor, any favor.

Amon replied readily.

"Okay!"

"Yeah, yeah, I'll see you later."

Caselag left the room and a moment later Anar'el peeked out of the covers, her face pale.

"He's gone?"

"Yes."

".....hulp!"

Amon sat up when he saw Anar'el pinching her nose.

"Anyway, get some rest. The old man won't be around much longer."

"..... Okay."

As he walked out, Marion approached him.

“How is the principal?”

“She’s fine, by the way, everyone.”

Amon explained the situation.

“We’re stuck, so we need your help here!”

Fortunately, there was no pushback.

“I see. As a vice principal, it’s my duty to help teachers in their time of need.”

“Vice Principal, what is in that pocket?”

“.....It’s just a pocket.”

“Give it to me!”

“Ack!”

After subduing the brazen potato-stealing Brestle, I looked at Marion and Sloth with uneasy eyes.

“You two are.....”

“Huh?”

“You do know what a potato is, right?”

Marion said with a wry smile.

“I’ve been in the army before, back in the Great War, overseeing the soldiers. I even helped out a bit with the labor.”

“Oh, oh, oh.....!”

“It was mostly radishes and beans back then, but I suppose it’s not much different.”

“Of course, Mr. Marion, good luck!”

“Hehe, okay. Leave it to me.”

I turned my head.

“And you, senior Sloth, are you.....?”

Sloth replied bluntly.

“I had a few potato trees in my yard, too.”

“Ms. Sloth, you should just take a break.”

“Huh? Okay.”

Sloth is out!

“Well, then, Chloe and Boris, I guess.....”

Chloe said honestly.

“I’ve never farmed before, but I’ll try my best.”

“Chloe! You never cease to impress me!”

I patted her on the head and Chloe let her head fall back.

And then.

“Sir.”

“Eh? Yes, Boris!”

“You see, I’m from a mountain village.”

Amon’s eyes widened.

“Well, then.....”

“I’ve been helping on the farm since I was a kid.”

“.....!”

“Spreading compost and fertilizer, plowing fields, digging grooves, catching pests! You name it!”

Amon hugged Boris, the farming ace.

“Please take care of me, Boris!”

“Yes, sir!”

Chloe, who had been watching Boris being spun around in his arms, clicked her tongue and turned her head away.

“Boris, that pig bastard.....”

But no one heard the muttering.

Whether that should be considered a good thing or not, no one knows.

Chapter 22

Farming is hard work.

But for Boris, rolling around the floor every day in the name of “special classes” was like honey.

And when it came to farming, he was better than anyone in the Academy, except for Amon!

“Mr. Marion! You dug this hole too deep!”

“Oh, really?”

“Vice Principal, take out the potatoes in your pocket!”

“.....chet!”

Boris, who had been promoted at a rapid pace with Amon’s permission, had even been given the position of ‘supervisor’!

Boris wielded his power like honey, reprimanding the Academy’s workers.

“Chloe, what if you slice the seed potatoes? Will they sprout or not?”

“.....”

“You’re a good swordsman, but what’s wrong with your knife skills!”

“.....Boris, let’s go back and see.”

“I’m sorry, it was my fault.....”

The villagers and the Academy staff worked as hard as they could to restore the potato fields.

They’ve been hanging on to the fields for days and days.

“At least we should be able to finish it today, Amon.”

“Yes.”

“Do you pay for work?”

“What?”

“Do you pay for work?”

“Yes?”

Of course, it was under the pretext of a field trip, so she really had no intention of accepting it, and was just asking, but I can't believe she was so shameless.

“Give me back the liquor I gave you as a gift.”

“.....I'll pay you in kind when I get back.”

“That's it, man.”

With a wry smile, Marion looked around.

Even though it's a mess due to the restoration of the potato field, even though there are monsters that appear once or twice a day like deer or wild boars and dig up the potato field, even though it's a rough land with no cultural facilities to speak of...

‘.....Wow, that's a lot to leave out.’

Anyway, the point is, it's country life at its best.

And the judgment I made after putting it all together!

“I'm a city girl.”

“Yeah? You were?”

“Yes.”

Stretching, Marion muttered.

“Well, the work will be done soon, and we can go back tomorrow, right?”

“Yes. The principal says she'll be fully recovered by tomorrow.”

“Good, I'm glad to hear that.”

She was tired of digging with the hoe and running around trying to chase the monsters away.

I wonder how much time has passed.

Bam!

Brest yelled as she tied the rope around the last fence.

“Ooh, the fence is done!”

“Woah!”

The restoration of the estate devastated by the Elder Drake’s raid was finally complete.

The entire village and the Academy’s laborers had worked hard.

That night, the hard work was done, and everyone in the manor went to bed early.

Except for one.

“.....”

Amon sneaked a quick look at the estate’s financial statements without his father’s knowledge, and sighed.

‘The estate is in a lot of trouble.’

In fact, one of the reasons he’d come here was to ask his father for advice on how to get out of his teaching job at the Academy.

But he couldn’t tell him.

‘It seems I can’t ask for the penalty fee. Well, I figured as much...’

A needy manor.

To add insult to injury, the Elder Drake’s raid had destroyed their prized potato patch.

In such a situation, if I said, ‘I’m going to quit my job as an academy teacher!’, I would definitely get scolded by my mother.

‘Of course, if I sell the byproducts of the monsters I caught this time, things will get a little better, but that’ll cost me a lot of money, so I don’t want that.’

The people here weren’t really ‘gentry’.

They were neighbors, colleagues, and friends who lived in the same village.

After all, the tax rate was low, and the income from the monsters' byproducts had to be used for their welfare and the restoration of the estate.

'Right now, more than half of the villagers have been injured in the fight with the Elder Drake, a dozen houses have been destroyed, two warehouses have collapsed, and.....'

In other words, the situation in the manor was as Amon had always known it.

The only unexpected thing is that my brother and sister, who had left the estate, went to a nearby city to work and are apparently making money there.

'Brother, it seems there's a bit of income under my younger sibling's name. But they say monster attacks dropped significantly while I was away from the territory, and as a result, income from dealing with monsters has also taken quite a hit.

Amon shook his head in disbelief.'

'What kind of scourge am I?'

Otherwise, as soon as he arrived, a large army of monsters attacked, and even an Elder Drake came...

'It's convincing.....even for an academy ragtag.'

Sighing, Amon scratched his head.

He'd managed to sneak his entire fortune into the manor's vault, but there was no telling how far it would go.

'I'm going to have to make my fortune soon, and then we'll be better off.....'

Of course, now that he knows the backstory between the Emperor and House Drake, he knows it won't be easy.

'But it's the only way.'

Smiling bitterly, Amon pushed himself to his feet.

He decided to get some fresh air and go to bed.

As Amon wandered outside, he suddenly turned his head.

Shh, shh, shh, shh-!

'Huh?'

A sound cut through the wind.

It was the sound of a sword swinging.

'Who is that at this late hour?'

Could it be Chloe?

'You little brat, practicing at this late hour.....!'

Amon's face fell as he turned toward the source of the sound.

There, Sloth was swinging her sword.

'No, she's not helping, and now she's swinging a sword because she has nothing better to do?'

Amon clicked his tongue and was about to turn away when he suddenly turned his head.

'Then why is she swinging her sword so desperately?'

A furious, flamboyant movement that belied the lazy Sloth.

'.....Is that the true swordsmanship of House Pid?'

It was nothing like the swordsmanship she had taught Boris and Chloe, missing the essentials.

Glamor, finesse, deception, it seemed to encapsulate all those words.

Amon watched in silence as she swung her sword.

Tsk!

Sloth's legs shook with exhaustion, and she faltered.

But then, with a shaky, wobbly effort, she pushed herself up and began swinging her sword again.

That's when Amon frowned.

Sloth's hand was dripping with blood as she held the sword.

'She swings a sword so hard that it bleeds?'

Come to think of it, he could hardly remember ever seeing Sloth's bare hands.

She always held her sleeping bag with both hands.

'.....And the way she always dozed off during the day?'

Was it because she was practicing her swordsmanship while everyone else slept?

".....Tch."

Shrugging his shoulders, Amon turned away.

This world isn't easy, he thought.

* * *

"Grandpa, it's been a while since I've seen you."

"Kahaha, yes, you're back."

The old man looked at the boy who bowed his head deeply and opened his mouth.

"Well, what was the result?"

"I won....."

"Ho-ho, you won?"

The old man said, his eyes narrowing.

"Did you win by hiding your skills, as I said?"

"....."

"Kahaha, I guess not."

Said the old man who patted the boy on the head.

"Well, grandson, the world is not so easy, is it?"

".....Yes, just like you said, Grandpa."

“That’s right. There are many hidden powerhouses in the world. Even though I’m the most powerful swordsman in the world, there’s probably someone out there that even I can’t touch, so it’s foolish to go around showing off your skills.”

“.....”

“That is why I have ordered you to hide your claws, lest you become overconfident. Do you understand?”

The boy was none other than Raymond, the winner of the swordsmanship portion of the contest.

The one whom Amon is grinding his teeth against for stealing Chloe’s victory!

And the old man Raymond was facing was none other than Reinbelt, the Azure Sky Sword King, one of the four Grand Sword Masters of the empire.

“By the way, grandson.”

“Yes.”

“Who is the person who brought out your true skill? As far as I can recall, none of the participants in the swordsmanship division of this competition were plausible.”

The original intention of this competition was to find ‘hidden figures.’

As a result, there were very few big-name contestants.

So it would take a big name to bring out Raymond’s true talent.

“.....I’ve never seen her before.”

“A girl you have never seen before?”

“Yeah. A girl named Chloe Aran, a student at Amonis Academy.”

“Aran? The surviving royalty of the Aran Kingdom.....”

That explained a bit.

The Aran Kingdom is a small country located in the alpine region.

As a result, their natural cardiorespiratory endurance and physical strength were unparalleled.

“And the girl said that she had a master who taught her.”

“Hooo? A master who taught her such a skill.....”

Reinbelt’s eyes flashed.

“That means they’re so good at teaching that she could make you reveal your true abilities.....”

Reinbelt’s mouth watered in interest, and he rose to his feet.

“Sounds like fun! Let’s go, Raymond!”

“What? Uh, where?”

“Kahaha, that’s a stupid question!”

Reinbelt, the Azure Sky Sword King, smirked.

* * *

Flopped down on the bed, Amon sighed.

He had returned to the academy this morning.

“Phew.....the academy beds are fluffy after all.”

So much fluffier than the straw and dried grass bed in his room at the manor!

‘Even that was taken away from me by Headmaster Anar’el, so I slept on the living room floor.’

Anyway, after all they’d been through, they were going to take the rest of the week off and start teaching again next week.

‘Since things have come to this, let’s just teach the students diligently. If they have the skills, it’s natural that they’ll be successful, and if they’re successful, I’ll be able to benefit from my students.....’

It doesn’t matter.

If you follow your connections, that’s the way to go.

‘Then I’ll have to change all the beds in my house to something fluffier.’

Amon smirked and pushed himself to his feet.

He sat down at his desk, trying to figure out what to teach next week.

-BAM!

Anar'el burst through the door, her face bright red.

“Ah, Mr. Amon!”

“.....Couldn't you just knock and come in?”

“Uh, I'm sorry, but.....”

“Ehhh, what's the matter, why don't you calm down and tell me?”

And when she had calmed down, she said.

“We have a visitor.”

“Aha, a guest.”

“And it's a Grand Sword Master.”

“Aha, a Grand Sword Master.....?”

The calmness of home began to return.

“Why is the.....Grand Sword Master here?”

Anar'el swallowed hard at the question.

“Teacher Amon, calm down and listen.”

“I am in a very calm state, Headmaster.”

“No, you're not. Take a deep breath. Come on.”

“Huh, ha, ha. Yes, I did.”

“OkayThen I'll know you're calm and I'll tell you.”

After catching his breath, Anar'el spoke slowly.

“Reinbelt, the Azure Sky Sword King, one of the empire's four Grand Sword Masters. He's come to meet you. Not anyone else, but you specifically—Amon Drake.”

Amon rolled off his chair.

Chapter 23

Reinbelt, the Azure Sky Sword King!

Aren't the Four Great Knights the pillars that support the empire?

'Why would such a great man choose me? What have I done wrong?'

It was convincing.

Especially considering his luck in bringing disaster upon himself!

With these questions in his mind, Amon followed Anar'el to the parlor, where he was able to resolve his earlier doubts.

A familiar figure sat next to an old man who appeared to be a Reinbelt.

'.....Is that the thief who stole Chloe's victory?'

It was Raymond, the lucky winner of the contest.

'I see. You're so young, yet so skilled. Are you a disciple of the Azure Sky Sword King Reinbelt?'

Reinbelt, who had been lost in thought, stood up.

"Kahaha, Headmaster Anar'el, is this young man the teacher I've been searching for!"

"Yes, he is!"

"Ho-ho, is it so!"

Mr. Reinbelt walked up to them with a croaky laugh.

"Nice to meet you! I'm Reinbelt Namak! Raymond's grandfather! You must be familiar with my grandson!"

Amon's eyes widened.

'Not just an apprentice, but a grandson?'

The grandson of the tycoon of tycoons, Reinbelt!

When I realized that, Raymond, who had seemed so hateful, started to look a little cuter.

'This is an opportunity.'

A crisis into an opportunity!

A golden opportunity to impress the tycoon and score points!

“I’m Amon, second son of Baron Drake, and it’s an honor to meet such a prestigious man, Mr. Reinbelt!”

“Kahaha, yes, it’s a pleasure!”

“By the way, may I ask what brings you here today?”

Reinbelt smiled broadly at the question.

“A student of yours, Chloe, gave my grandson a good run for his money, and I wanted to see with my own eyes the man who taught her!”

Quite a compliment!

But Amon examined his own performance with a cool head.

‘What did I.....teach her?’

Chasing her from behind while she was running!

Provoked her into attacking me!

‘There’s no.....?’

Amon said hurriedly.

“You’re being flattering. I was merely showing the student the way.”

The message contained in those words is ‘I didn’t do sh*t!’

But Reinbelt burst out laughing, as if he was even more pleased.

“Kahaha, you’re so humble, I’ve come to the right place today!”

The message didn’t get through.

“Seeing as how you’ve raised your student so well, you must be a man of the sword yourself, aren’t you.....?”

Reinbelt’s voice was getting fainter and fainter the further back he went.

It wasn’t that, but in Reinbelt’s eyes, Amon was a novice at swordsmanship.

His stance was sloppy, and he didn't even have the swiftness of one who had mastered the blade.

And just as ominously, Amon shattered Reinbelt's clouded expectations.

"I do not teach swordsmanship."

".....Is that true?"

"Yes. As I said, I just showed her a path to follow, separate from swordsmanship."

"....."

Reinbelt, who had been staring at Amon blankly, whispered to Raymond.

"Ray, I think you've got the story wrong."

"Ha, but the kid named Chloe definitely said so."

"Then the child told a lie."

"I didn't see it that way....."

"Hmm....."

Frowning, Reinbelt sighed as he resumed eating.

"There are many teachers. You may not have taught her swordsmanship, but if that's what she said, you must have the qualities of a good teacher."

Amon, who, like I said, was a master of self-objectification, took the compliment in stride.

"Thank you!"

"Hmph, now, if you'll excuse me, could you tell me who taught that student swordsmanship? I'd like to see him, now that I'm here, and if he's such a great swordsman, he must be a great man."

Amon smiled broadly.

"You're right, she is!"

"Oooh, yes, I can't wait to meet her!"

"I'll be right back!"

“Kahaha! Thank you!”

* * *

Amon dragged Sloth, who had woken up from her sleep!

Reinbelt looked over with a dazed face and said.

“Is she the one.....?”

“Yep!”

“Are you sure?”

“Of course!”

“Uh.....”

Reinbelt frowned.

The opponent was a ‘Sword Expert’ no matter how you looked at it.

‘My grandson is a sword master even though he is young. But he hid his skills, and the student who hit him once was taught by a sword expert?’

But Reinbelt quickly shook his head.

‘No, there are many ways to teach. She may be a Sword Expert, but her philosophy may be different.’

When he had gathered his thoughts, he spoke.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you. You’re the swordsmanship teacher of the students, aren’t you?”

Sloth, who had already drifted off to sleep, quickly replied.

“Yes, I am!”

When he first came here, she couldn’t believe Amon’s words.

‘Uh, yeah.....what? Why are you waking me up?’

‘The Azure Sky Sword King Reinbelt is calling for you!’

‘What are you talking about.....?’

'It's real, wake up!'

'Go away, I'll sleep better.....Ouch! Don't tie my sleeping bag!'

She finally gave in to Amon's bullying and followed him, but it was true.

'The Four Great Knights.'

The idol and destination of those who walk the path of the sword.

Sloth quickly bowed her head.

"I am Sloth of House Pid. It's an honor to meet you."

"Ho-oh, you're from the Pid family?"

"That's right!"

Reinbelt nodded, intrigued.

"I see. You're from the Pid family?"

The Pid family is renowned for their swordsmanship, and the current head of the family, Batista Ringsley Pid, is also a Grand Sword Master and one of the four great knights of the Empire.

'Certainly, coming from such a place, you must be well versed in teaching, but the strange thing is.....'

As I said, the Pid family is renowned for their swordsmanship.

All of the children of the patriarch are top-ranked Sword Masters, and all of the vassals belonging to the family are swordsmen who are devoted to the art.

'Furthermore, the Pid family is notorious for not tarnishing their name, and they won't let anyone out of the family unless they reach the level of Sword Master, but this child.....?'

She was dubious.

But the mana flowing from her body bore a striking resemblance to the Marquis of Pid, whom he had had the opportunity to meet a few times before.

'She's not lying.'

Well, I suppose he has his reasons.

“Let’s get out of here, then. Where’s the training room?”

“.....?”

Reinbelt smirked at Sloth, who blinked in confusion.

“If you’re a sword-wielder, you wouldn’t dare turn down my challenge to a fight, would you?”

“.....!”

A chance to duel a master!

Sloth huffed and puffed as she led Reinbelt to the training grounds.

Amon, meanwhile, was smiling broadly.

‘That’s how my life is!’

Amon has been treated like a borrowed sack of grain since Sloth was brought in!

His plan to impress the tycoon had failed!

* * *

“Is this the end?”

Sloth was kneeling in front of Reinbelt as he said that.

“Ah, it’s still.....!”

“Hmm, I see.”

Reinbelt’s face was filled with despair despite Sloth’s motivated reply.

‘A Sword Expert, nothing more, nothing less.’

There was a glimpse of the cunning sword form characteristic of the Pid family, but nothing special.

‘If the sword that unfolds itself is so insignificant, what makes her teaching so special?’

Reinbelt, who had reached the peak of the sword, could read the philosophy of the teaching just by looking at his opponent.

'Well, it's not that far-fetched. The Pid family teaches swordsmanship to outsiders in a way that it's not a problem to send them out. Since that's all they teach, there's no way their teachings are anything special.'

A tongue-in-cheek Reinbelt said.

"Anyway, if you're going to continue, get up."

"Yes, yes! Okay.....!"

He watched her grunt and get to her feet, then said with a stern face.

"I'll show you one last trick, and then we'll end this duel, since I don't think you can take it any further."

"Yes"

"Then....."

Reinbelt pointed to the 'nearby branch' he had been wielding at Sloth.

And just as he takes a step.

Bam!

Suddenly, Reinbelt was standing in front of Sloth, and the branch he held was touching the tip of Sloth's chin.

"Did you see that?"

"....."

"Yeah, yeah. I see."

Reinbelt withdrew the branch and turned away.

"Keep up the good work."

".....Thank you."

Reinbelt turned and looked at Amon out of the corner of his eye.

Amon had brought Boris and Chloe along to watch the duel, thinking it would be a good show.

"Ho ho, is that the girl who gave Raymond a hard time?"

“Yes, she is. Her name is Chloe.”

“Hmph.....”

Reinbelt nodded as he stared at Chloe.

‘Aye, she’s got some qualities.’

When he realized this, Reinbelt’s interest in the girl waned.

It wasn’t that her education was superior, it was simply that Chloe’s qualities were such that they would challenge his grandson.

And he had seen countless ‘geniuses’.

There was no reason to pay attention to a mere prodigy.

“Keep up the good work, Amon. Now, if you’ll excuse me, tell the headmaster it was a pleasure to meet her.”

“Uh, you’re leaving?”

“Yes. I’m going to go now.”

“.....Okay, thank you for showing me your awesome sword skills.”

“Well, bye.....”

Reinbelt, who was turning around, suddenly stopped walking.

“.....What did you just say, wonderful swordsmanship?”

“What? Well, yes.”

Reinbelt frowned.

‘What is he talking about?’

As he’d advised Raymond at the tournament, he kept his skills well hidden.

His duel with Sloth would be seen by others as ‘a few swings of a twig’.

But fancy swordplay?

“.....What do you mean, cool?”

Amon shuddered at the suddenly serious look on Reinbelt's face.

"Well, what's not to love about great swordsmanship, especially that last one?"

".....what?"

Amon said apologetically as Reinbelt blinked.

"The trajectory kept changing, maybe thirty-six times in total, but the center never wavered, and all that was left was a single thrust..... What's not to love about that?"

"....."

You read the last one?

He glared at Amon for a long moment.

".....You've never learned swordsmanship?"

"What? Yes, but....."

"Is that true?"

".....I see no reason to tell a falsehood, do you?"

Reinbelt smirked at the answer.

"I see."

"That's right."

"Then....."

He held out the branch he was holding.

When he accepted it without thinking, Reinbelt approached, holding a sturdy new branch he had found, and spoke.

"Okay, let's have a go."

"What? Me?"

"Then who would it be?"

"Why me?"

Amon was jumping up and down like a madman.

'Why do you want to spar endlessly? Are you an old man trying to show off your strength?'

There has never been tyranny like this.

Reinbelt smirked.

"A light duel. No pressure."

"I haven't even learned how to hold a sword, so why would there be no pressure?"

"Uh-huh, a light duel."

"Not light to me?"

Reinbelt sighed heavily.

He wanted to see Amon's true colors, to see that he had read his last move correctly.

'I suppose I could strike first, but then I wouldn't be able to see his true colors in a half-hearted counterattack.'

But as he said, Amon had no intention of doing that.

'In that case, I'll just have to drag.....out.'

A smirking Reinbelt said.

"Hmm, I guess you don't have the balls to do that."

"That's right."

"What a disappointment. I thought you were a great guy."

"My apologies."

Of course, it didn't work.

'Because it's true!'

I don't have the liver to actually challenge a Grand Sword Master!

Besides, I don't think I'm very good at it!

'If I were great enough to challenge a Grand Sword Master, I'd have gotten out of the countryside!'

Amon clicked his tongue inwardly.

'And isn't the provocation too obvious?'

It was clear that he intended to provoke me somehow.

"No, he's not going to pounce!"

Reinbelt frowned at the nonchalant Amon.

'What's the use of slandering him?'

Reinbelt mused.

Why does Amon stay here?

If I'm right, he's supposed to be somebody, but there's no way he's a new teacher at this failing academy.

'.....Is it camaraderie?'

After all, he had just praised Sloth, a mere Sword Expert, as a 'great man'!

Realizing this, Reinbelt switched targets.

"What a disappointment, not only for you, but also for your companion over there. I guess it was a waste of time coming here today."

"Yes, I apologize."

"I find it suspicious that the headmaster has such people as teachers."

"I agree."

Amon also thinks Anar'el's eyes are as bad as a mole!

Reinbelt was even more troubled.

'Is it not camaraderie?'

Then why is he here?

He couldn't figure it out.

'To teach students?'

That explained it.

'Yes, I'm sure you've shown her the way. You may not know much about swordsmanship, but you must be a serious educator.'

Wrong.

'Then.....'

The target was chosen.

Glancing at Boris, who was becoming increasingly serious, and then at Chloe, who was glaring at him, Reinbelt smirked.

"Well, I can tell by the look on your face."

"What?"

'The quality of the students you've taught must not be much better.....'

Amon lunged like a tiger and swung a branch.

He went along with the provocation without protest, unable to bring himself to curse what might be his lifeline in the future!

Chapter 24

Go, go, go!

Amon's favorite word.

'Are you trying to cut off the rope that I have raised with so much care for that?'

The first step is always the most important.

Students are insulted in front of you, but as a teacher, you just let it go quietly?

They might harbor a grudge because of this and later cut the rice cake they were going to give to their teacher by half!

'I'm sick of eating potatoes three times a day! Let's raise our children well and make a living!'

With a transparently selfish motive, he swung the branch fiercely at Reinbelt!

It was almost a surprise attack, but who was the target?

It was none other than the Grand Sword Master, one of the four great knights of the empire, the one hailed as the Azure Sky Sword King!

'He even provoked me by telling me to come, so I'm sure he can block this easily!'

With that thought in his mind, he swung the branch with all his might!

Seeing that, Reinbelt smiled and swung the branch back at him.

Kwajik-!

The branch that Reinbelt swung was instantly broken, and Amon's branch struck Reinbelt squarely in the head.

"KUCK.....!?"

The branch that hit him in the head was also smashed and shattered into pieces, and Reinbelt let out a groan and collapsed to the ground!

Amon's mouth dropped open as he stretched out on the ground.

'.....No, no, no.'

What is this?

He looked back and forth between the broken branches and the fallen Reinbelt, then his eyes widened in realization.

'Oh, right.'

It was a fake.

'You cowardly impersonator!'

Otherwise, the so-called Azure Sky Sword King would not have fallen from a branch like this!

Boris shouted.

"Lord, he's dead!"

"Sir, what can we do?"

Amon calmed the panicked, chirping students.

“Guys, it’s okay, he’s not dead!”

“What? Really?”

“Yeah, and he’s a fake!”

Chloe pointed to the fake Azure Sky Sword King, who was twitching and writhing as if in postmortem convulsions.

“Sir, the fake is about to die.”

“Well, it’s not fair for a fake to die, so we’ll have to move him.”

“Sir, the fake’s mouth is dripping with brain fluid.”

“It’s saliva, Chloe.”

Amon dragged the stunned fake along.

‘Woohoo, I’ve captured the impersonator of the Azure Sky Sword King, so maybe I’ll get a reward for my efforts!’

No, maybe the Azure Sky Sword King himself will be overjoyed when he finds out about this, and he’ll even reward me separately!

‘Maybe he’ll even try to take me as his disciple!’

Amon smiled and headed towards the headmaster’s office.

* * *

Anar’el’s ears pricked up in fury.

“Hey, what the hell do you think you’re doing?”

Amon was hanging his head.

“It’s obviously fake.....”

“What kind of nonsense are you talking about? He’s someone I’ve known for a long time!”

That made her sound even less credible.

“.....Does the principal trust her own judgment?”

“Kak! Shut up!”

After scolding Amon harshly, Anar’el scurried over to Reinbelt, who was lying on the couch.

She pushed Raymond out of the way as he clutched his leg, his face pale with disbelief...and just as she was preparing her magic to heal him.

“Ugh! My, my, my head.....”

Reinbelt scrambled to his feet, holding his head as if it was about to fall off.

“Mr. Reinbelt, are you okay?”

“Ha, Principal, is my head still attached or is it broken?”

“Yes! It’s attached! It’s not broken!”

“Uh, I think my crown is bald.....”

“It was always bald!”

Reinbelt, who had been fiddling with his hair with a sad face, turned his head.

Realizing that he was looking at Amon, Anar’el blurted out.

“I’m so sorry.”

“.....”

“Please forgive Amon for his rudeness, I’ll reprimand him harshly.....”

“.....”

“No, this is my displeasure as headmaster, so.....”

If it became known that he had dared to touch one of the Four Imperial Knights, the Academy would be torn apart.

Therefore, despite Anar’el’s desperate pleas for forgiveness, Reinbelt, who had been silently looking at Amon, spoke up.

“It’s not your fault, Headmaster.”

“It’s.....?”

“I brought it on myself to see what he was capable of.”

Reinbelt continued.

“Amon Drake, get up and come here.”

Amon approached, and Reinbelt closed his eyes.

‘I don’t know.’

After all, he was no expert with a sword.

The branch he’d swung a moment ago had literally just ‘swung’.

‘But I could feel it. He is strong.’

It was pure, unadulterated strength.

Physical discipline, deep mana, or something else, Reinbelt couldn’t tell, but he was certain of one thing.

‘Even though I didn’t use mana and intentionally took the hit while defenseless, it possessed such a powerful force that it could boil away my consciousness in an instant. If someone with such an outstanding body were to learn my swordsmanship.....’

He will surely become a knight who will leave a huge mark in the history of the continent.

“.....You said Amon Drake?”

“Yes.”

“You are strong.”

Amon replied curtly to the unexpected compliment.

“Thank you.”

“But.....”

Reinbelt drew up mana on his finger.

At that moment, an aura blade surged through his fingers.

Goooooo-!

Reinbelt lifted it up to look at it, shining brightly, like a small blue milky way, and spoke.

“What you possess is nothing more than pure physical strength. You will be at a disadvantage against the mana and swordsmanship that the knights have accumulated through countless training sessions.”

The question of whether such a great person had been knocked out after being hit by me was on the verge of my throat, but I had superhuman self-control and blurted out a different answer.

“Of course not. I’m a little strong, but I’m nothing compared to your swordsmanship.”

“Mm.”

Reinbelt nodded quietly.

“For that reason, I have an offer for you.”

“.....An offer?”

Reinbelt nodded.

“Would you like to learn swordsmanship from me?”

“.....!”

Amon’s mouth dropped open.

“You mean, you’re going to take me as an apprentice?”

“Yes. It’s a little late for you to learn the sword, but with your qualities, it shouldn’t be a problem.”

Reinbelt smiled as he extended his hand.

“What do you say, will you be my apprentice?”

Amon shuddered.

‘Oh, no.....’

Since he had just captured the impersonator of the Azure Sky Sword King a moment ago, he had jokingly and vainly hoped that he might be able to become a disciple of the real Azure Sky Sword King.

‘But I can really become a disciple of the Azure Sky Sword King.....’

He had long since abandoned his suspicions that the old man in front of him was a fake.

He had Anar'el's assurance, and the aura blade that resembled the Milky Way was the exclusive property of a Grand Sword Master!

'If I become his disciple, I'll be destined for greatness!'

If I can go out on the battlefield and win, even the Emperor who is a mere pupil of the Grand Sword Master won't be able to say anything against me!

"Master!"

I called out his name at the top of my lungs, and he chuckled.

"Kahahaha, yes, yes. But it is not yet time to call me Master!"

"If I don't call you Master, what can I call you?"

Amon's sly exclamation made Reinbelt laugh even harder.

"Kahaha, boy, I like your attitude, but to become my disciple, you must swear an oath!"

An oath?

He had tried to ask Sloth to teach him swordsmanship time and time again, but each time he had been met with a cold rebuff!

So Amon wasn't about to let this opportunity pass him by.

"This disciple is already ready to swear!"

"Kahaha! Alright, alright, then I'll recite the oath, and you must repeat it!"

"Yes!"

"I will become the disciple of the Azure Sky Sword King and devote myself to the sword!"

"I will become the disciple of my master and devote myself to the sword!"

"I vow to abstain from my lusts and worldly desires and focus on my own cultivation!"

"Abstain from lust and worldly desires....."

Amon stopped talking and looked at Reinbelt.

Did he hear wrong?

“.....What?”

“Huh? Didn’t you hear me? I swear to abstain from the lust of the flesh and the desires of the world and focus on my training!”

I did hear him right!

‘Wait a minute. That doesn’t sound right.’

Amon glanced over at Reinbelt, who was grinning from ear to ear, obviously pleased to have a new apprentice, and realized.

‘Why are the clothes of one of the four great knights of the empire so tattered?’

So were Raymond’s in the first place.

That way, his fake identity as a ‘commoner’ wouldn’t be discovered at the tournament.

“Master.....Reinbelt.”

“Huh? What?”

“Excuse me, sir, but I was just wondering.....what’s the status of your title?”

Reinbelt snorted.

“Hmph, a title? That’s just a pretense. The Emperor once offered me a marquise, but I refused.”

Amon lamented.

“And what of your fortune.....?”

“Fortune? Ha! Of what use is that to me in my sword training, when all I need is a small piece of land on which to wield my sword!”

“.....”

“If you try to become my disciple and harbor such desires, I will strike you dead with my sword, so remember that!”

“.....”

Reinbelt’s sword, concealing its true power!

Such was his swordplay, such was his disposition.

He was a natural born martial artist who turned his back on the world and immersed himself in swordsmanship for the sole purpose of self-satisfaction!

At that moment, Raymond's stomach rumbled.

Looking at his appearance, it seemed that he had no money and even his grandson and disciple Raymond was starving.

'I see.'

Amon had an epiphany.

'This guy is pretty crazy.'

Amon fled without looking back.

Amon, who ran away like lightning, disappeared without a trace.

Considering that Reinbelt was searching the Academy, and he wasn't there, it seemed like he had completely fled out of the Academy.

"Looks like he hasn't decided to become a disciple of this body yet!"

Anar'el said.

"And I don't think he ever will."

"What do you mean by that, Headmaster?"

".....No. More importantly, what are you going to do now?"

"Hmmm.....I was originally going to go back, but I've changed my mind a bit."

A smirking Reinbelt said.

"I think I'll stay here and wait for him to make up his mind."

Reinbelt chuckled.

"Kahaha, I know that much, I'll be the swordsmanship teacher here, then I'll have every chance to convince Amon!"

Recruit the Grand Sword Master, the Azure Sky Sword King, as a teacher!

Any other academy would have bitten the bullet and agreed, but Anar'el narrowed her brow in embarrassment.

"Mr. Reinbelt, we have three students, including Raymond, and we already have a swordsmanship teacher."

".....ah."

"Besides, by regulation, the number of teachers per subject is limited by the number of students, and with the number of students we have now, we can only have one teacher per subject."

Clearly, there was no reason to add more teachers.

And she couldn't call for Sloth's dismissal.

After all, she was the Lady of the Marquisate of Pid, so she couldn't just dismiss her.

".....What subject is he, then, Amon?"

"He's an aspiring history teacher. I'm sure he's shed his new-teacher look, and I'm sure we'll be giving him a permanent position soon."

"....."

"Or do you have a flair for other subjects, like math or humanities?"

It's impossible for a mere man who has only ever eaten wild plants and wielded a sword to have an aptitude for such things.

After all, the teaching profession has wings!

Closing his eyes tightly, Reinbelt said.

"Are there no jobs left.....?"

After a moment's pause, Anar'el clapped her hands.

"Oh, we do have some openings, but there's a guy who quit a few months ago when we were advised to shut down."

"Oh, oh, oh, what?"

Anar'el replied with a wry smile.

“The front gate guard!”

Chapter 25

Amon was collapsed on his bed.

He had returned to the Academy late at night after running away from Reinbelt.

Since it was late, I thought the crazy old man would have gone back to his crib.

But instead, the crazy old man was standing at the front door with a broom.

‘Oh, no, what the hell.....’

‘Kahaha, the gate guard position just happened to be vacant, so I’ve decided to work here for a while!’

‘Ugh.....!’

Amon quickly retorted.

‘Why would you want to work in the world when you have no taste for it? Go back to the mountains!’

‘Kkkkk, I might, but do you think Ray should?’

‘.....?’

‘Ray has become a Sword Master, he doesn’t need me to look after him. Besides, isn’t it time for him to get an education appropriate to his age?’

He wasn’t wrong, Raymond was about Boris and Chloe’s age.

‘You don’t mean.....’

‘Yes, I do. Ray has decided to enroll here as well. You may not know much about swordsmanship, but you’re a strong believer in education, so you’ll make a good teacher.’

‘K, k, k.....’

Who knew that raising Chloe so well would come back to haunt me!

Reinbelt chuckled.

‘But the tuition was quite expensive, so I decided to work here.’

'.....ugh.'

In Boris and Chloe's case, the academy took them in and took care of them because they had lost their parents and home.

Raymond, on the other hand, has to pay his own way in!

That's why Mr. Reinbelt, a penniless man with no estate and no title, is willing to work here and pay for Raymond's education.

'So take care of him, Mr. Amon.'

It was a plausible reason, but Amon could guess the madman's intentions.

'Yes, but I have one request. I have my own circumstances, and I cannot devote myself to the sword while abandoning the secular world. So please do not force me to become your disciple.'

Reinbelt nodded, unexpectedly cordially.

'Yes, the path must be walked of one's own volition. Don't worry.'

With that, Amon looked at Reinbelt's smiling face and muttered.

'You don't seem to have given up.....at all.'

How did it happen?

'Is this a dream?'

He pinched his cheeks together in frustration.

"Ha, shit....."

Rolling over, Amon pulled the covers over his head and closed his eyes.

'Let's get some sleep. I have to start planning the curriculum tomorrow.'

His own class, the one he's been waiting for, starts next week.

'I'm sure I'll be able to teach History.....well, right?'

He drifted off to sleep with a little anxiety.

A sudden knock on the door jolted him awake.

“Who is it?”

“It’s me, the vice principal.”

“.....The vice principal?”

“Yes, may I come in?”

I straightened my robes and opened the door, and Brestle walked in casually.

Amon grumbled at the sight of her.

“What are you doing here at this late hour?”

Brestle answered with a smug look on her face, as if he had no shame in the world.

“When are you going to eat the potatoes you brought today?”

I got a sack of potatoes from my mother!

The potatoes that Amon had stashed away because he was sure that Brestle would have a fit if he left it in the cold!

Amon rolled his eyes.

“Did.....come to me for potatoes at this late hour?”

“In case you didn’t know, dark elves are most active at night, so it’s only natural that I eat.”

“Uh.....uh, yes. Excuse me.”

Brestle’s ears began to flap furiously as Amon pulled out a sack of potatoes he had hidden in the closet.

“Hmm.....”

Amon pulled out a few potatoes for Brestle.

Now that he thought about it, he was a little hungry.

‘Maybe I’ll have a little something to eat at night, too.’

Amon's mouth watered as he remembered the flavor of the potatoes he ate every day back home.

'Yes, our potatoes are especially easy to digest. It's nighttime, but I can eat them and go straight to sleep.'

I bring out more potatoes, and Brestle is overjoyed.

She thinks it's all hers.

"Half of it is mine."

Brestle's heart sank.

* * *

As I walked down the hall with the potato colander, I bumped into Boris.

"Hey, Boris, what are you doing up at this late hour?"

"I just came out to get some water and am on my way back. Why are you bringing potatoes...?"

He glanced at Brestle, who was following me.

"The vice principal said she wanted some, so I thought I'd have some."

"Aha."

"Do you want some, Boris?"

Boris smiled broadly.

"Yes, sir!"

I said in a low, joking tone to the grinning boy.

"Let's not tell Chloe and keep it to ourselves."

Isn't it true that the best food is the one you don't tell anyone about and eat in secret?

But Boris's complexion changed drastically when he heard that.

"Ah.....Ugh, I'll bring Chloe too."

"Uh, huh, why?"

“Uh, because she wants to eat with you.”

“Really? Um, okay.”

Boris ran back to his room, panting.

If he didn't tell Chloe about this and if she found out about it.....

'Chloe might kill me.'

There was no need to take that risk, so Boris hurried to his room.

“Take Chloe and bring her to the training ground!”

“Yes, sir!”

Amon continued walking as Boris moved away.

Meanwhile, Brestle, who was following Amon, had a grave look on her face.

'I've barely had enough to eat for myself, and now you're adding another mouth.....'

Brestle bit her lip and shook her head.

'No. How much will they eat if they try it?'

Brestle didn't know.

She doesn't know how much kids eat when they're growing up.

Amon arrived at the training grounds and gathered branches for a bonfire.

“Deputy Headmaster, steamed potatoes would be fine, right?”

“Sure.”

Amon was excited to eat steamed potatoes, which he had eaten to the point of vomiting in the manor.

And as he watched the potatoes half-submerged in the boiling water.

“What is this, the vice principal and Amon? What a rare combination.”

“What, Marion?”

Marion appeared, drunk and staggering!

Apparently, he had just returned from a bender outside the academy.

“So, what are you doing?”

“We’re just eating steamed potatoes for a midnight snack.”

“Oh, are those from your estate?”

“Yes. Would you like some?”

“Hahaha, that sounds good!”

Brestle’s ears perked up as Marion quickly sat down.

‘You’ve added another mouth?’

But inwardly, Brestle was relieved.

‘I’m not sure how much she’ll be able to eat.’

When you’re moderately drunk, food just keeps on coming.

Soon, Boris and Chloe arrive at the training ground, accompanied by an unexpected visitor.

“What is this banquet at this time of night?”

Anar’el appeared with a big smile on her face!

“Ha, what are you doing here, Headmaster?”

“I was trying to warn Boris and Chloe about wandering around at such a late hour, and they told me that Mr. Amon was having a midnight snack, so I came over.”

I know, I shouldn’t have done that as a teacher.

Eating late at night with students who are growing up and should be in bed early!

“Would the principal of.....like to join us?”

Anar’el sat down as if she had been waiting.

“Hehe, it’s a late night snack.”

Brestle’s ears perked up at the sight of Anar’el’s appetite.

'Oh, no. This can't be.'

It's widely known that "Elves eat sparingly," or so the rumor goes.

In fact, the elves did eat sparingly, but Brestle knew that it was limited to 'food other than vegetables.'

'That elf eats several bowls of salad in one meal!'

I'll bet she can empty a colander full of potatoes, too!

'Yes, an unexpected foe.'

Amon brought twelve potatoes but there were already six heads.

'That's only two potatoes for each person.'

Brestle was getting nervous.

"Mmm.....smells delicious."

Amon frowned at the sudden appearance of Sloth as she sneaked up on them.

"What kind of day is it? They just keep showing up one by one."

".....Do you have any for me?"

"Um.....not much."

"That's okay, I won't eat much."

By this point, Brestle was shaking.

'You're not going to eat a lot?'

Sloth was swallowing hard!

Amon didn't say anything, but he guessed that she had come here after a grueling training session at another training ground.

How hungry she must be!

'If I had known, I would have brought more potatoes.'

I thought to myself.

“Hoo, where does this delicious smell come from?”

Reinbelt and Raymond arrive with big appetites!

Brestle jumped up and shouted loudly as soon as the obviously hearty-eating old man and boy appeared.

“Mr. Amon, bring more potatoes, no, bring all of them!”

Amon heard her and yelled back.

“You’ve been so quiet, and now you’re showing your true colors!”

“Shut up, bring me all the potatoes you have.....No, I’ll go get them!”

Amon shouted after Brestle, who took off like a bolt of lightning.

“You gluttonous dark elf!”

“Kiaak, let go.....ahhh, my head!”

* * *

Eventually, I came back with a whole sack of potatoes.

“.....gulp!”

Brestle, who had been grabbed by the hair by Amon, muttered through her snotty nose.

“My potatoes.....”

“.....Why are these the Vice Principal’s potatoes?”

Amon said, clicking his tongue as he rummaged around in the large pot he’d brought with him.

“Well, they’re cooked anyway, so let’s eat.”

Amon laid out the potatoes, and one by one, they reached out and grabbed them.

Then they all took a bite.

“What, what, what is this?”

“.....These are potatoes?”

“What have I been eating all this time.....?”

I was proud to see them stunned, unable to swallow the potato in their mouths.

“Our potatoes are good, right?”

“.....wooooooo.”

Brestle was eating the potatoes with tears in her eyes.

‘Woohoo, our potatoes are the best.’

Amon wiped his nose, then looked at Reinbelt.

He took a bite of the potato and glared at him.

“What’s wrong? Doesn’t it fit in your mouth?”

“.....I see now.”

“What?”

Reinbelt swallowed the potato and smirked.

“I see now why you’re so strong.”

“What?”

“It’s no wonder, you’ve been eating food with such strong mana every day. Your body has adapted to the mana itself.”

“Hmm.....?”

The words made me realize something.

‘Now that I think about it, there really isn’t anyone in our territory who isn’t pretty strong.’

Was it all because of the potatoes?

‘But why?’

The potatoes themselves weren’t anything special.

As far as Amon knew, they had simply planted and grown seed potatoes from a nearby city.

'Is it because the land has good air and water?'

Amon shrugged his shoulders, as if it didn't matter.

'I don't know. Let's eat some potatoes. If I keep doing this, other people will end up eating them.'

Reinbelt didn't seem like he was going to say anything more, so Amon quickly grabbed a potato and took a big bite.

"Amon."

Amon, who had been eating his potato in silence, turned his head at Sloth call.

And the moment their eyes met, she said.

"I want you to marry me."

"Poohoo!"

A fountain of chewed potato spewed out of Amon's mouth.

Chapter 26

Marriage is the most important event in the life of a human being.

It's been said that you should pray once when you go to sea, twice when you go to war, and three times when you get married!

'It's that important.'

But how can we discuss such an important matter while eating boiled potatoes?

'No, no, no, I must have misheard.'

Although it may not seem like it, Sloth is the daughter of a powerful marquis.

Given her position, this was not something she could say so easily.

'Yes, I must have misheard.'

Amon said, washing his ears with the water he'd scooped up to boil the potatoes.

"Phew, I can hear you a little better now, senior, I didn't hear you right, please say it again."

“Marry me.”

“I didn’t hear you wrong.”

Amon, with his eyes wide with disbelief, snapped his fingers.

“Yes! You were joking! Ah, that’s funny!”

“I wasn’t kidding.”

“Ugh.”

Amon cleared his throat.

“There’s a time and a place for it, but what are you talking about when you’re eating steamed potatoes?”

Marion, whose steamed potato had gotten stuck in his throat at Sloth’s shocked comment, chimed in.

“Kuluk, that’s right. What are you talking about all of a sudden?”

Anar’el chimed in.

“I was just wondering how good the potatoes were…….”

It was a reasonable line of reasoning.

She was actually enjoying herself, and Brestle had taken advantage of the distraction to wolf down the potatoes.

“Hup, hup, hup, hup, hup, hup, hup, hup, hup, hup!”

“……I think the vice principal would like to marry you, too.”

“Well, who wouldn’t?”

Reinbelt smirked at Sloth’s shocked comment.

“Hmph, you don’t want to lose talent, is that it?”

“What? What’s that……Ah!”

Marion, the ‘only’ sane noble among them, understood what Reinbelt meant.

As Reinbelt had said, Amon’s talent with the sword was extraordinary.

It would be more accurate to say that he overpowered them with his strength, but who could be more gifted at a craft whose purpose is to kill?

'After all, the Marquis of Pid, Sloth's father, has a frightening obsession with the sword. So if they know Amon is so talented, they won't leave him alone. So it must be a ploy to lure Amon into an arranged marriage!'

.....was Reinbelt's guess, but Marion was skeptical.

'But that can't be true, can it?'

Reinbelt's earlier speculation would only be possible if Sloth had a deep sense of belonging to the Marquis of Pid.

'But if Sloth had such a sense of authority, Amon would have been dragged to the Pid house long ago, put on trial, and sent to prison.'

For the crime of treating the noble marquis's daughter disrespectfully!

'But Sloth has no such sense of authority. A sense of authority comes from a sense of belonging and pride. But considering that Amon's neck is still intact.....'

Marion, deep in thought, pulled himself up and sat back down.

'I don't know, let's just watch!'

Meanwhile, Sloth, who had dropped the bombshell, wiped the corner of her mouth and said.

"Amon, can I talk to you in private?"

".....Yes, because I'd like to hear what you meant by that."

With that, the two men left the room.

Boom!

Chloe, who was helping Amon boil potatoes, squeezed the raw potatoes with such force that Boris winced and began to shudder.

* * *

A garden withered from lack of care.

Anar'el's elf touch would have been maddening, but she hadn't laid a finger on the garden, having been steeped in humanity in this way.

Only when they were far enough away from the others did Sloth speak.

“Amon. What do you know about the Marquis of Pid?”

“The Marquis of Pid is an arcane swordsman of great skill. And it’s a great family, with everyone in the immediate family being a Sword Master. That’s all I know.”

Sloth nodded.

“That’s enough, and you’re right, everyone in my family is a Sword Master, and for fear of the family’s reputation, you can’t even see the world unless you’re a Sword Master, which means you’re not allowed to leave the family.”

“.....?”

And Sloth in front of me?

‘No way.....’

He’s never learned swordsmanship, but he knows a thing or two about it now.

‘I mistook it for Aura Blade at first, but Sloth can only deploy Sword Aura at maximum, which means she’s a Sword Expert.’

However, given the previous story, there’s a contradiction.

Members of the Pid family cannot come out unless they’re Sword Masters.

But Sloth, despite being a Sword Expert, lives outside.

There could be one reason, or many, for this, but they were all things Amon hesitated to say.

Is that why?

Sloth herself explains.

“I’ve been a pariah in my family since I was a kid.”

“.....!”

“What do you look surprised about?”

“Because I didn’t expect you to speak.....so casually.”

Sloth laughed bitterly.

“Because I’m used to it.”

“.....”

“Anyway, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t reach the level of a Sword Master, which is why I was looked down upon so much. Swordsmanship is the most important thing in our family.”

Suddenly, I remembered Sloth from last night in the manor, her hands bleeding from her sword grip.

How could Amon understand that she could never become a Sword Master?

“And one day, Father.....said to me. Go to the Amonis Academy.”

“.....”

“Well, I knew inwardly that he was going to treat me as if I didn’t exist, so I resisted, saying that I couldn’t, given the family rules.....”

She bit her lip hard, then said.

“He said I don’t have to care about that.”

“.....”

“Anyway, that’s why I’m here, and in all the years since I’ve been here, I’ve never been called back home even once.”

Sloth, who had been silent the entire time, dropped her head.

“.....I guess he meant to tell me to live on my own.”

“.....”

“So I don’t think he’d care if I married you or not.”

Amon closed his eyes as he listened to Sloth’s uncharacteristically sullen, almost pensive tone.

‘I may be in a different position, but I know a little of the frustration.’

Noble titles are inherited only by the ‘firstborn’.

Since Amon was the second son, it was only natural that the barony—and even the impoverished estate—would be inherited by his older brother.

It allows them to weigh their interests and gains.

“And what’s in it for me?”

“Amon.”

“What?”

“Think about it.”

Sloth pointed to herself.

“Suppose I eat your potatoes, get stronger, and return to the clan.”

“I suppose.”

“Then you’d have some say, right?”

“I suppose.”

“Then I guess I can jump into the competition for succession. Our family values strength above all else, regardless of whether it’s a man or a woman.”

“Right.....wait.”

For a moment, Amon felt a chill run down his spine.

“Do you understand?”

“If by any chance you get to be the head of the household.....”

Amon closed his eyes.

Okay, let’s think about this seriously.

Sloth became the head of the family?

Will Sloth pay attention to the family business?

The lazy Sloth?

Of course, neglecting classes is one of the reasons he stays up late practicing swordsmanship.....

‘She’s basically lazy by nature.’

There's no way she's going to be able to focus on running a large marquise!

'If she were to take the reins, she'd probably just wield her sword and sleep in the corner of her room!'

The moment that realization dawned on him.

"Amon."

"....."

"The power of a marquis. Don't you covet it?"

".....!"

"Well, I'll have a minimal amount of actual power, but most of it will be yours."

Amon's mouth dropped open.

"And the management of the family's finances....."

"Of course. I'm not good at managing money, to put it mildly."

"Aaah, aaah....."

Embezzlement! What a wonderful word!

I felt like I was going to cry as soon as I heard it.

'I guess I can change the bed in my house to something fluffy.'

Said Sloth, looking at Amon's sweetly wet face.

"Besides, now that you're an insider in our family, you can learn our swordsmanship, right?"

"Ugh.....!"

"How is it? Are you shaken?"

Shaken? No, I was already on the verge of falling!

'If I become an apprentice to that old man, Reinbelt, I'll have to forsake my worldly possessions, but if I marry Sloth, I'll be able to learn the swordsmanship of the Marquis of Pid?'

Marquis power! Marquis wealth! Marquis swordsmanship!

I can get all of those things at once!

Then Sloth said confidently.

“And you can even take a beautiful woman like me as your wife.”

Amon frowned in disbelief.

“Ah, that’s definitely a disadvantage.”

“.....”

“As someone who values a person’s inner self a bit more, I think it’s a bit.....”

“You’re so annoying.”

Said Sloth, grumbling.

“Anyway, what do you think?”

Amon squeezed his eyes shut at the question.

“Alas, I see it. A rose path to the top.’

If you think about it, there’s never been a faster or more efficient way to get ahead.

Why do you think the concept of a “live-in son-in-law” even exists? It’s to benefit from the wife’s family, of course.

‘No matter how strong I am, it doesn’t help me get promoted.’

The bad blood between the Emperor and the Drake family helped me realize.

‘The only way I can use my strength to my advantage is through war. But given my family’s relationship with the Emperor, I’ll be lucky if I don’t get a slap on the wrist when I’m rewarded for my accomplishments.’

Maybe he’ll say, ‘That’s a reward for treason,’ and be beaten to death on the spot!

‘... ... In the first place, before that, it hadn’t even been that long since the Great War ended, so there couldn’t have been another battlefield where I could have gotten merits.’

In addition, the second son of a rural aristocratic family rarely had a chance to marry.

Hence the conclusion.

Amon took Sloth's hand in his own.

"Madam! Let's go and tell my father-in-law about this as soon as it's daybreak!"

Chapter 27

The bluebird called success was surprisingly close by.

'I don't like the idea of marrying Sloth, but what the heck!'

Isn't that what arranged marriages are all about!

Of course, a country nobleman's son like him, let alone the second in line, is far from being in an arranged marriage.

In the first place, arranged marriages are meant to unite families and create a synergistic effect!

'I'm going to make a living out of nothing.'

This means that even if you want to have an arranged marriage, you can't.

'My heart is broken because I'm separated from my beloved because of an arranged marriage? That's all bullshit from people who have had their fill!'

Amon dismisses tragic romances as full-bellied bullshit!

Anyway, to the present.

Early in the morning, looking out the window at the rising sun, he muttered to himself.

"At last, a new day for me."

It was time to say goodbye to his old self.

'.....All right, then, let's get ready, shall we?'

As he had told Sloth yesterday, the day was bright, and he planned to go to the Marquis of Pid to ask for his permission to marry her.

Soon afterward, he meticulously dressed in a suit that she had hastily purchased late at night in the city center.

Amon looked at himself in the mirror and smiled with satisfaction.

'You look good in just about anything, but this suit looks especially good on you.'

Sloth, who had been helping him pick out his outfit, would change it over and over again, adding the odd "hmmm, hmmm, hmmm," as she did so.

'The shopkeeper raved about how well he looks in everything he wears, and I'll definitely be buying from her again next time I'm in the market for clothes, although she's a bit shy and keeps averting her eyes.'

Anyway, against Sloth's recommendation, Amon confidently walked out of the store in a suit of his own choosing.

He bumped into Marion, who was in the next room.

"Ugh, I'm hungover.....Amon, why are you wearing a suit?"

"I thought I said you were going to Marquis Pid today?"

"To Marquis Pid.....? Ah, ah!"

Marion muttered, pressing a hand through his hangover-tinged hair.

"Ugh, you did. Maybe I should cut back on the drinking....."

"Yeah, well, seeing as how you don't even remember yesterday, you should probably cut back."

".....Huh, yesterday?"

Marion remembered yesterday.

Slightly blurred by his hangover, the memories began to trickle back.

'You're really getting married? Ugh, you're so mismatched I can't help but laugh!'

'.....What's so funny?'

'Giggles! What's not to like? Sloth is such a waste!'

'I'm more of a waste.....'

'Giggle, that's the funniest joke you've ever told!'

Marion finally snapped out of his reminiscing and looked at Amon.

“.....You know how, when you’re pleasantly drunk, you can get a laugh out of rolling leaves.”

“.....”

“And I couldn’t stop laughing when I found out that one of my favorite juniors was getting married, so I guess that’s why my prank was a little more serious than usual.”

“.....”

Marion swallowed hard as the silence returned.

“But now that I think about it, I feel sorry for you.”

Amon grinned.

“Isn’t that right?”

“Yes.....”

“I’ll see you then.”

Amon left the academy and headed to his appointment.

‘The hair salon.’

Since it was his first time at the Pid family home, and he was going to announce his betrothal, Sloth was sure he needed to get ready accordingly.

‘What is she preparing so early in the morning?’

The building he arrived at was luxurious, the kind of place a noblewoman would patronize.

‘..... Is this where Sloth is?’

No way.

‘What kind of person sleeps in a sleeping bag in an alleyway warehouse?’

I look around, wondering if I’m in the wrong place, but the sign says it’s where Sloth told me yesterday.

‘Um.....But there’s a close sign on the door?’

Amon was lurking at the door.

The woman who'd been fixing Sloth's hair peeked out the window and whispered.

"Is someone outside?"

"What? I put up the curtains, but who's there?"

She's in the middle of grooming the daughter of Marquis Pid, so she locked the door and was absorbed in her work, but what kind of visitor is this?

"Well, it's a man."

"A man?"

Normally, this is a place for noblewomen, the wives of noble families.

But a man?

It was then that Sloth, who had closed her eyes and was having her hair trimmed, spoke up.

"Is he wearing a saccharine suit, like he's going to a funeral?"

"Oh, yes. That's right."

"Then he must be with me."

"Aha, is that right, the butler....."

The woman, noticing Amon's color, corrected herself.

"No, an attendant....."

She started to say that, then realized it wasn't right, so she corrected herself again.

"A servant!"

Suddenly, Amon became her servant, but no matter how sensitive Sloth was, she couldn't say, "He's the one who's going to be my husband" at this time.

Besides, she didn't even have the will to defend Amon!

"Anyway, do you want me to bring him inside?"

"Yes, we can't leave him outside."

Once inside, Amon looked around and said.

“Not here yet?”

“Yes?”

“Well, I’ll just wait outside.”

Hair salons, the exclusive domain of noble women!

It was an uncomfortable place for Amon, who was digging potatoes in the field.

So instead of cowering, he turned to wait outside.

“I’m almost done, just wait a minute.”

“.....?”

Amon’s eyes widened as he looked toward the source of the voice.

“Senior Sloth.....?”

“What?”

Amon’s mouth dropped open, and Sloth narrowed his eyes.

“You didn’t recognize me?”

“.....”

“Huh.”

Sloth snorted in disbelief, but her cheeks were tingling with laughter.

‘Yeah, well, I don’t usually dress up, so you wouldn’t recognize me if I did.’

I usually just roll around in my sleeping bag with my hair down and messy.

But this was a hair salon that catered to a lot of aristocrats!

The skilled staff had transformed her into a new look, so it was no wonder Amon didn’t recognize her!

“Ho ho ho, it looks like the servant didn’t recognize you!”

The staff giggled!

Sloth smirked with her head slightly turned!

Seeing them, Amon smiled wryly.

In fact, he purposely pretended not to recognize her to make her feel better!

'Whether I like it or not, we are destined to be on the same boat. I have to show it to her from now on.'

That way, when Sloth eats potatoes and grows up to become powerful, wouldn't the hat she gives Amon be thicker?

The first step to greatness has already been taken!

'Sloth's cheekbones are dancing. Is she that happy?'

Amon stood beside her, flattering her in every way possible.

"But if you look closely, you only fixed your hair a little and put on a little eye makeup? Well, the original was so good, so....."

There was even a subtle compliment saying, 'The original is so good that even if you decorate it a little, it looks completely different!'

The corner of Sloth's mouth curved upward even further.

"Hmph, starting to get it now? Who's the one missing out?"

"Me, of course!"

"Right? Right?"

At that moment, a staff member approached Amon, who was trembling as he stuck out his tongue.

"Well, servant, could you step out for a moment, please, so I can finish fixing the hair?"

".....?"

Come to think of it, didn't she just say something about a servant a moment ago?

I shook my head, and Sloth turned to the employee.

"He's not a servant, he's a husband-to-be."

"What! Ah, I'm sorry!"

Amon, who had just accepted the apology from the surprised employee, glanced at Sloth.

Apparently, the staff thought he was a servant when he wandered in earlier.

‘Well, so be it. What’s a man to do with makeup?’

Amon smiled rottenly, feeling his inner closeness to the lowly Sloth diminish.

* * *

~A branch of the Mages’ Guild on one side of the city~

Sloth, who was waiting for the warp gate to be ready for the Marquisate of Pid, spoke.

“Amon.”

“Yes, senior.”

“.....I think you’d best keep your tongue in check in front of the lord.”

“What? Why?”

Hadn’t I been playing out all sorts of scenarios in my head the night before?

“I’ve planned out every question, every response. What did you like about Sloth, could you afford it, etc.

And now you’re about to undo all that hard work.

Sloth replied.

“It’s just.....that he doesn’t listen to anyone. He barely even listens to me, so why would he listen to you?”

“Mmm.”

“Well, I suppose he could ask you something, but I don’t think it’s anything important.”

“.....”

“You’ll have to answer in moderation.”

Amon nodded at the self-deprecating tone of voice that showed no signs of anticipation for her father.

“I’ll be good.”

“.....Yes.”

Given what Sloth had said, the day would be over very quickly.

Traveling through the warp gate, Amon looked around.

“This is the city of Ringsleigh.”

This was Ringsleigh, the city ruled by Batista Ringsleigh Pid, the current head of House Pid and the Marquis of Pid.

While Amon was wandering around, Sloth was also looking around, seemingly unfamiliar with the place.

‘Since Sloth came to Amonis Academy almost immediately, she probably didn’t have much of a chance to explore the city.’

So Sloth and Amon made their way to the Marquis’ mansion.

As they walked along the familiar streets, Sloth’s steps grew steadier and steadier, but her pace became slower and slower.

“Don’t you think we should prepare ourselves a bit?”

At that, Sloth shook her head slightly.

“Forget it, let’s get this over with.”

“.....Yes.”

They arrived at the mansion.

As they approached the main entrance, guards raised their spears to block their path.

“This is the mansion of His Excellency the Marquis of Pid, if you have any business.....”

The guard stopped dead in his tracks and narrowed his eyes.

“Lady Sloth?”

“It’s been a long time, Orson.”

“Uh, how could you come without a message.....I’ll let them know right away!”

The guard rushed inside the mansion.

Sloth soon followed, muttering as she stepped through the open door.

“I know he’ll find it annoying even if I tell him.”

The manor’s interior was familiar, and Sloth made her way to the parlor and sat down hesitantly.

“Sit down and wait. My lord will be calling for you soon.”

“Ah, yes.”

“That’s right, and you should be prepared for a surprise.”

“What?”

Sloth said, running a hand through her hair.

“My family seems to have a lot to deal with. So we hold meetings quite often.”

“Meetings?”

“Yep. And all thirteen swords of my family gather there.”

“Thirteen swords?”

“Yes. The thirteen best members of our family. The best of them is my father, of course, and the other twelve are my older brothers.”

Amon blinked.

‘Twelve brothers?’

Amon scratched his back after a moment of not understanding what that meant and then belatedly understanding the meaning.

Suddenly, a chill ran down his spine.

* * *

The Great Hall.

Seated at the head of the table, Marquis Pid, with his face stern and his eyes closed along with the other twelve swordsmen, seated equally stiffly and silent.

After surveying the room, the butler spoke in a polite voice.

“Then this agenda will be dealt with as before.”

“.....”

“And this agenda item will be dealt with as soon as possible, sometime tomorrow.”

“.....”

The Marquis of Pid’s meetings were always like this.

Knowing that this silence was consent, the butler gathered his papers and said.

“I will now invite you into the meeting, my lady, and there is a gentleman with you, who I will also invite in.....”

The butler didn’t finish his sentence.

He didn’t finish because all thirteen swords in the room, including the Marquis of Pid, were staring at him with wide eyes.

Chapter 28

The wait was not long.

The butler came into the parlor, bowed, and said politely.

“You have waited a long time, my lady. You may now enter the great hall.”

“Yes, sir, I understand, but my companion is.....”

At the word companion, the butler glanced over but he quickly averted his gaze, as if trying to look away.

“If there is a reason why you should go together, then you should go together.”

After all, this was a ‘marriage announcement’, so Amon’s accompaniment would be a mouthful to say the least!

So Sloth took the lead, as if it were a matter of course.

“Let’s go, Amon.”

Amon followed her, and as he passed the butler, he could see it.

The butler's eyes were filled with pity and compassion!

'Why does he look at me like that?'

Despite his doubts, and a twinge of unease, Amon followed Sloth into the great hall.

The sight that greeted him made him swallow his saliva wrong and choke.

".....Kolok!"

A group of gnarled, hulking men sat around a large table.

Thirteen of them!

It was enough to make the spacious great hall feel packed.

'Are they the Thirteen Swords of House Pid?'

If so, the middle-aged man seated at the head of the table must be Batista Ringsleigh Pid, the head of the Marquisate of Pid household.

'..... That means he's my father-in-law.'

Amon quickly sized up the situation and took a step forward.

Sloth, who quickly raised a hand to stop him, made eye contact and gave a small shake of her head.

'This is a signal to keep quiet and stay still.'

She told him to keep his mouth shut.

Sloth took a small, deep breath as he obeyed, then turned to face the Marquis of Pid and bowed her head.

"Father, how have you been?"

Sloth looked up, her voice dignified as befitting a Marquis' honor.

A short time, if short but it was enough time to return the greeting, and yet the Marquis of Pid mouth didn't move as he looked at his daughter.

He merely stared at Sloth with a piercing gaze.

But she spoke again, as if she were used to this.

“I have come to see you today on a matter of some importance.”

“.....”

“I’m a teacher at Amonis Academy, and I’ve recently met someone I’d like to see a future with, and I’m here to tell you about it.”

“.....”

“Allow me to introduce you, the scion of Baron Drake, with whom I have a good relationship.”

Amon, stabbed in the side, bowed politely.

“It is a pleasure to meet you, Your Excellency, Amon Drake of the Barony of Drake.”

After the introductions, Sloth spoke.

“Although this is a marriage not authorized by father.....”

“.....”

“I wonder if you could congratulate me.....”

Her voice faded into the background.

Her voice was the only one echoing in the vast hall, and the silence was so thick that even the slightest breathing seemed loud.

There was no answer, no response.

Just thirteen pairs of eyes, squinting and staring.

“.....”

In the heavy silence, Sloth, breathing heavily, turns and storms out of the room.

“.....?”

Amon was about to follow her when the sudden sight caught him off guard.

“Wait.”

He turned his head at the sound of low bass and saw the Marquis of Pid glaring at him.

He puffed quietly on his cigarette, then opened his mouth to speak, puffing out a long stream of smoke.

“You say you are Amon of the Barony of Drake?”

“.....Yes, sir.”

“I see, Baron Drake.”

Muttering, the Marquis of Pid looked around.

“Who would?”

The moment the words left his mouth, the young man sitting closest to the table jumped to his feet.

“I will do it, father.”

“Very well, Lancelot. Go.”

“Yes, father.”

Lancelot nodded, then glared at Amon.

“I’m coming.”

“What?”

Coming? What does he mean?

Before I could formulate the question properly.

“Fuck you.”

Amon shouted, dodging Lancelot fist as it came out of nowhere.

“What the hell are you doing?”

“That’s the end for you!”

“What bullshit.....”

“I’ll make sure your will is passed on to Baron Drake!”

Lancelot swung his fist at me before I could even finish my sentence!

Even though Amon was blinded by his desire for success, he couldn't just take it when someone came rushing at him without even knowing what was going on.

'Eh, I don't know!'

He met Lancelot's fist as he charged at him and struck him back.

-Pow!

Amon's fist was surprisingly strong for a man of the Drake estate who fought orcs with his bare hands!

Lancelot fell to the ground, clutching his broken fist, and cried out.

"Aaahhhhhh!"

Lancelot let out a pitiful scream like a puppy, unlike the wild boar he had been a moment ago!

The rest of the Twelve Swords giggled at the sight.

"Hoho, Lancelot was defeated in a single blow....."

"Hmph, he's the weakest of our Thirteen Swords anyway."

One of the scowling men stood up.

"I'll step up."

"Hmm, if it's Kanzlor, I can trust him."

Kanzlor, the Twelfth Sword, right above Lancelot, was the most eloquent of them all!

He approached, fists clenched, and Amon gasped.

"Wait, wait, wait, wait, why are you suddenly like this....."

"Shut up!"

Kanzlor yelled, lunging at Amon and punching him in the face.

"Die!"

With those last words, Kanzlor fell to the floor with a shattered jaw.

"You knocked him out with a single blow."

“Hmph, he’s the second weakest of our Thirteen Swords. This time, I, the Eleventh Sword, will step up.”

Eleventh Sword Benslaw cried out in agony as his leg was broken.

And Amon, who had already defeated three men, was deep in thought.

‘Why are they doing this to me?’

The reason was obvious.

It seems like he doesn’t like the idea of some lowly rural noble trying to approach the Marquis of Pid family, huh?

But that’s a different story now.

By now, the Marquis of Pid was staring at him with a stern face.

He’s not even bothering to blow out the ash from the cigarette he’s holding in his mouth, so it’s clear he’s quite impressed.

‘So, the Marquis of Pid is all about power.’

Yet he has defeated three of the Marquis of Pid’s most elite swordsmen.

‘.....This is an opportunity for advancement.’

Enlightened, Amon threw off his frock coat and let out a roar of laughter.

“Hahaha! Is this all there is to the Thirteen Swords of the Marquis of Pid!!”

“That, that bastard.....!”

“Come on!”

The middle-aged man who had slammed the table stood up.

“You cheeky brat! Our ten swords are the real deal! The lowest three swords are just trash that can’t make it to the ten swords!”

At his words, the three who had fallen first began to shake their shoulders and sob.

“But as long as I, Kraslo, the Marquis of Pid’s Tenth Sword, am here, your insolence is over!”

“Hahaha, very well, go for it!”

“You bastard!”

Kraslo’s words were true, and the tenth sword was facing Amon without an inch of weakness.

However, the specialty of the Marquis of Pid family is the sword.

In the end, he had no choice but to reach his limit with his bare hands in front of Amon’s brute strength, which was so strong that he could even arm-wrestle an ogre.

“Kuch!”

Amon shouted as Kraslo collapsed, clutching his battered stomach.

“Next!”

The chorus of the rest of the swords at the table grew louder.

“It won’t be easy to kill him with our bare hands.”

“But it would be shameful for us to raise our swords against his bare hands.”

The Marquis of Pid, who had been listening to the chatter, rose to his feet.

“You are quite the fighter for a young man.”

As the Marquis of Pid approached Amon, the surrounding Eight Swords were shocked.

“Ah, Father!”

“You can’t be…….”

Marquis Pid looked down at Amon, towering over him.

Amon wasn’t all that short, but the Marquis of Pid was a giant of a man to look down on him.

“Ah, father himself!”

“It’s been a while since I’ve seen Father’s work! It’s a feast for the eyes!”

The rest of the Swords were chirping.

Amon’s eyes widened at their chatter.

‘No, it can’t be.’

Whatever they were talking about, they were surely mistaken.

As proof, the Marquis of Pid in front of him looked so calm!

“Amon Drake.”

The moment Marquis Pid opened his mouth, his figure swelled even more enormously in Amon’s eyes.

It was as if he was looking at a mountain in front of him.

Grand Sword Master Batista Ringsleigh Pid, one of the Empire’s Four Great Knights.

Amon’s face hardened at the murderous intent he was spewing out.

‘.....? Murderous intent?’

The hopes of the Eight Swords were not in vain.

The Marquis of Pid spoke up.

“Are you ready to die?”

Amon swallowed hard at the harshness of his voice.

Ready to die?

‘Of course not!’

Amon, who had quickly backed away, spoke up.

“Just a moment, please!”

“Is that all for your last words?”

“No, Your Excellency the Marquis of Pid, what on earth is your reason for doing this?”

“.....why?”

“Yes, why are you trying to catch me by surprise and kill me!”

The Marquis of Pid’s cheeks twitched.

At the same time, the eight swords and the fallen swords, each broken in one place, also cried out.

“Hmph, what a fool!”

“How dare he, uh, step on the threshold of the Marquis of Pid.....!”

Amon, who had heard their outbursts with one ear and waved them off, spoke up again.

“I apologize if I’ve been rude, so please tell me why!”

“.....reason.”

Said the Marquis of Pid, who chuckled.

“Do you really not know your sins?”

“Yes, Your Excellency the Marquis of Pid, please tell me!”

Amon’s exasperated shout made the Marquis of Pid roar, as if in exasperation.

“Hmph, hmph, hahahahaha, good! I will inform you myself!”

* * *

After storming out of the tournament hall, Sloth stood at the door.

She was so anxious and nervous that her legs gave out.

The rush of nerves overwhelmed her and she burst into tears.

She leaned against the door and cried for a long time.

“Heh, heh, hahahahaha! That’s good! I’ll tell you!”

Sloth listened to the Marquis of Pid thunderous shout, which suddenly erupted from within the great hall.

* * *

Thump-!

The Marquis of Pid took a huge step forward, as if he was going to eat Amon, and roared.

“How dare you, you dare to hold my pretty, lovely daughter captive with your filthy tricks, and then say you don’t know the sin you’re committing!”

“I’m very sorry for that.....eh?”

The Marquis of Pid exclaimed, stomping the ground with his foot.

“How dare you, you little brat, take my daughter! That little, fragile child!”

“.....?”

The other Twelve Swords, Sloth’s brothers, pounded on the table and shouted back.

“How dare you, you low-life, low-life, lowlife!”

“Marrying Sloth, no way! Argh!”

Amon stared blankly at the thirteen glowering men.

‘Small and delicate, what is going on?’

Amon’s mind raced at the nonsense and slander against him.

-Bam!

Sloth opened the door and walked in.

“.....”

“.....”

And the thirteen men who had been glowing like a swarm a moment ago fell silent in unison.

Sloth stared at them, then closed the door behind her and left.

A moment later, as they wiped the sweat from their brow, they muttered.

“Gasp! Hah! She scared me!”

“My, my daughter, but how is she so cute every time I see her.....”

“Whew, is that the case with you too, Dad? Whenever I see that kid, I find myself frozen in place without even realizing it.”

Amon’s head spun as he listened to them chatter away.

‘Wait a minute. These people, no. These assholes can’t possibly.....’

When Sloth proposed marriage earlier, was the reason they remained silent simply because they were frozen in front of Sloth?

'So the reason why you're doing this to me is because you're upset that I'm marrying Sloth?'

Amon asked, dazed with shock.

They were talking about Sloth, who had appeared out of nowhere.

"By the way, Sloth, I'm not saying this because she's my daughter, but I haven't seen her in a while, and she's gotten a lot prettier!"

"Giggles, she looks just like our late mother!"

The thirteen swords of the Marquis of Pid were lavishing praise on Sloth!

It was hard to believe that they had been so angry and hateful towards Amon, and while they were talking about Sloth.

-Bam!

They froze again, silent as Sloth opened the door again and entered.

As she looked at them, the corners of her eyes were damp with moisture.

She'd been listening all this time outside!

"Father."

"....."

"My brothers."

"....."

It was just a misunderstanding caused by a clumsy father and brothers!

Sloth approached the Marquis of Pid.

She carefully hugged him, afraid he might push her away.

But instead of pushing him away, the Marquis carefully wrapped his arms around Sloth's shoulders, his hands trembling as if he were afraid they might break if he touched them wrong.

"Awww.....!"

How sad he was that he hadn't been able to reach her!

The tearful Marquis of Pid!

And with that, it began.

Slowly, slowly-

The other twelve swords, Sloth's brothers, swarmed around her, clinging to her like a swarm of ants to candy!

A harmonious and touching scene that cannot be seen without tears!

And meanwhile.

".....hulp!"

Amon had fallen to his knees and was sobbing.

It was not because of the touching sight of the father and daughter and brother and sister resolving their old feelings, but also because he realized that his success had taken off like this!

Chapter 29

'Excuse me, Mr. Sloth?'

'What is it?'

'How about staying? Since the misunderstanding has been resolved, there's no reason for you to stay at the academy, right?'

Sloth shook her head.

'My father and brothers don't want me to follow the path of the sword.'

'What? And why is that.....?'

'They say it's bloody hard. They don't want me to walk such a hard path, so they sent me out to live free.'

I didn't realize there was a reason for that.

Sloth stretches, as if she's relieved, and smirks.

'Still, I'll try to make my own way.'

'.....'

'So I'm going to stay at the Academy for a while. When I said I was going back to the Academy, my youngest brother gave me a note. It said to come home from time to time.'

'.....'

'Hee hee. But why are you looking so rotten, don't you like it?'

Amon said bluntly.

'You can't be in a good mood when your career has been destroyed.'

'It's not my fault.'

'Even if it's not your fault, senior, just looking at you makes me feel like my chances of success have flown away, so it's a bit unsettling.'

Sloth slapped him hard on the back of the head.

'Well, anyway, it's already been a week since I visited the Fid Marquisate.'

When I returned to the Academy and told him the news of the breakup, Marion laughed hard, saying he had known it was coming, though he quickly stopped laughing when Amon clutched his bottle upside down.

Vice Headmaster Brestle was like, 'What the hell,' and Reinbelt looked like he had a chance to have a pupil again.

A little troubling, though, was that Headmaster Anar'el seemed to have something on her mind, and she was sweating profusely and looking very pale.

'What's wrong with her? Well, what can I do about it?'

She's got to take care of herself!

'Anyway, I'm not doing so bad lately. Though I'm not sure I'd be able to make a go of it without the Marquis of Pid on my back.'

Amon smirked and picked up his class materials.

'My history lesson is going pretty well, too.'

I was worried when I first started planning the curriculum, but once I got into the class, it wasn't too bad.

'Boris and Chloe are motivated and fun to teach. The only problem is that Raymond is joining the class today.....'

When Amon went to the Marquis, Reinbelt and Raymond had gone back to their old place for a while.

They said they had something to bring back.

That's why Raymond didn't get to take Amon's first class until today.

'Well, he grew up with a strict grandfather, so he should have a good attitude.'

With that thought, Amon pushed open the classroom door.

"Hey, everyone, did you have a good lunch?" Amon exclaimed, entering the classroom with a flourish.

Boris, Chloe, and Raymond.

It was nice to have three students sitting next to each other.

The problem is, there's another one sitting next to Raymond.

"Why are there four.....students?"

Maybe he's a freshman, but I didn't hear that?

"Uh, um.....?"

Amon rubbed his eyes and counted the students again.

Boris, Chloe, and Raymond.

And another one.....

'.....What, that one.'

It was a doll.

A doll that looked exactly like Raymond.

"Raymond?"

"What?"

"What's that..... doll next to you?"

Raymond frowned at the question and hugged the doll tightly.

“It’s not a doll.”

“What……?”

“This is me.”

“What……”

The words, “What the fuck are you talking about, you crazy bastard,” rose to the top of my throat, but I couldn’t get them out.

The look in Raymond’s eyes as he gazed at the doll was adorable.

It was like looking at a sweetheart!

Boris and Chloe, too, were staring in horror at Raymond’s crazy behavior.

“Alright, let’s start the class!”

Amon decided to snap back to reality.

* * *

“Old man, your grandson seems to have lost his mind.”

Reinbelt, sweeping the courtyard with his broom, frowned at Amon’s rambling.

“What do you mean by that all of a sudden?”

“Your grandson is hugging some doll and saying it’s not a doll, it’s me.”

“……aah.”

Reinbelt looked as if he knew this all too well.

That meant Raymond didn’t just go crazy overnight.

“So you’ve seen that?”

“Yes, because I’ve barely left my room since I went to the Marquis of Pid to organize the curriculum for my classes.”

“Hmm……I see.”

Clicking his tongue and scratching his head, Reinbelt sighed.

“There’s a story there. So I guess we’ll just have to let it go for now.”

The words made Amon’s jaw drop.

‘No way…….’

Normally, being obsessed with a doll is a sign of lack of affection.

But when you’re obsessed with a doll that looks exactly like you, you can’t imagine the depth of the problem.

‘Parental abuse? Twin brother’s death?’

There are many other reasons.

Of course, I imagined it, but I didn’t say it out loud.

Reinbelt, who had been silent, spoke up.

“I assume you want to know the story.”

“……I’d be lying if I said I didn’t.”

“Right.”

“If it’s something you can’t talk about, you don’t have to.”

At that, Reinbelt said with a heavy sigh.

“No, come to think of it, you’re his teacher, so you might as well know.”

Reinbelt looked up at the sky with a bitter face.

“Ray, that guy…….”

Reinbelt said in a solemn voice.

“Has a terrible prince syndrome.”

“Alas, a prince…….What?”

“Also known as narcissism.”

“You mean narcissistic?”

“Yes. He loves himself to death.”

I suddenly remembered Raymond’s moist eyes staring at the doll earlier.

So that can’t be.....

“I’d rather carry a mirror, not a doll.....”

Amon lamented, and Reinbelt echoed.

“It was a mirror at first.”

“.....?”

“But he wasn’t satisfied with a mirror, so he made a doll that looked exactly like him and carried it around with him.”

A chill ran down my spine.

“Did he make that himself?”

“Yes. He’s very handy.”

“.....”

“Plus, whenever he grows taller, he somehow always makes a new one to carry around like a ghost.”

“.....”

“I tried to steal it, which was nice at first, but then he went crazy.”

My eyes glazed over.

“At least he didn’t do it in front of everyone.”

“From what I hear, he didn’t bring his doll to the contest.”

“Oh, right. The contest.”

“Yes.

“Part of the reason I told Ray to win the contest was to kill that tendency.”

“.....”

“Otherwise it would definitely be too flashy.”

“.....”

Amon covered his face with his hands.

‘How come there are no sane people in the Academy?’

The student body, the only hope, the light and salt, has been tainted by a madman!

The precious, flawless student body tainted like this.

‘Why did I suddenly think of Chloe?’

Amon scratched his head.

‘..... But we’ll see. At least it’s not like carrying around a doll in his likeness is doing anyone any harm, and from the looks of them, they don’t understand, so I doubt they’ll get it.’

Besides, Raymond may be ugly, but he’s a Sword Master!

He’ll give Chloe and Boris some motivation. As unsightly as he is.

‘Besides, he might be able to give Chloe and Boris some advice on swordsmanship. Even if he’s not pretty.’

Amon patted his chest with a satisfied smile.

The mind control had worked.

“I see, I’ll keep that in mind.”

“Good. Maybe a good teacher like you can set him straight.”

“..... I’ll try.”

Reinbelt, who was sweeping the yard with a broom while smiling gratefully, said with an expression of regret.

“Come to think of it, I almost forgot.”

“What else?”

“Headmistress Anar’el told me earlier that she wants to see you in her office.”

“Really? Didn’t she say what it was about?”

“I didn’t hear much. But it sounds like you’re in a lot of trouble.”

Amon’s face darkened at the mention of trouble.

‘Come to think of it, the headmaster’s complexion was pretty bad when I told her about my visit to the Marquis the other day.....’

Could that be the ‘great trouble’ Reinbelt was talking about?

Amon hurriedly headed towards the headmaster’s office.

* * *

“Ugh, ugh, ugh.....”

Anar’el, who had been sitting up and dozing, opened her eyes with a startled gasp.

“Ahhh! Gasp, ugh, it was a dream.....”

Muttering to herself, she wiped the sweat from her brow and looked up from her desk.

At the same time, her normally white face turned bloodlessly pale.

“No, it wasn’t a dream.....!”

Anar’el’s ears fluttered in panic.

There was a knock on the door and a voice!

“Headmaster, it’s Amon Drake. You called for me?”

“Aaaaah!”

“What, what!”

Amon rushed in at the sound of Anar’el’s screams.

He looked around for any intruders and sighed heavily when he realized that no one was there.

“You startled me, what were you screaming about?”

“Hic, hic.....”

“No, what’s wrong with you all of a sudden?”

Amon shook his head at Anar’el’s behavior, not answering the question.

But after a moment, he realized that she was afraid of ‘something’ on the desk.

‘What is it, a letter?’

Amon reached over, picked it up, and read it.

[King of Mango Farms bankruptcy notice]

[Due to the unprecedented and historic rainy season and flooding disaster, your investment, King of Mango Farms, has gone bankrupt, and we ask for your generous understanding.....]

Amon blinked.

No, he just stood there for a long moment, staring blankly.

“Oh, Mr. Amon.....?”

“.....”

“Teacher Amon!?”

Anar’el called out, but Amon just stared at the letter.

Amon shook his head, dazed and disoriented.

“What? What letter?”

Amon read the letter again, and then froze again.

“Ah, teacher Amon!”

“.....? What kind of letter is this?”

Amon’s brain is in a state of extreme shock and is shutting down one after another!

Amon suffered one short-term memory loss after another, but he could still vaguely recognize them.

Finally, finally, finally.

‘The Academy is doomed.’

Chapter 30

Feeding a group of people is no easy task.

The academy currently has a total of twelve people.

And aside from clothing and housing, the daily food expenses alone were not insignificant.

Of course, Brestle took up the lion's share of the food budget, but there was no denying that the healthy children who were growing up also took up quite a bit of it.

'Add in the cost of textbooks, water bills, etc....and it's a lot of money.'

The problem is that the King of Mango farm, which was responsible for all of these expenses, has been flooded and ruined overnight!

'In a world full of people asking for money, the only one who gave money disappeared.'

Amon put his hand over his eyes.

'.....Let's think about it. Isn't there a way to make money?'

Maybe ask Sloth for help?

With the conflict with her family resolved, wouldn't the money flow if she asked the marquis?

'No, not a chance, he'd probably send a mercenary army to destroy the academy, which is a failure anyway.'

There was already a lot of negativity toward them, so it was hard to imagine anything positive.

And Marion, the rotten Viscount?

'I don't expect it, but I'll ask him later,' he thought, but Marion only sprinkled salt on Amon's aching chest, 'I only want to drink until I die.'

'Reinbelt is penniless, living on wild herbs in a crumbling hovel.'

I sighed at the pathetic state of affairs.

'How is it that none of the teachers at the Academy are sane?'

As the only one with common sense, I'm ashamed!

Clicking his tongue, Amon lowered his gaze.

“Then, Headmaster, may I ask if you have anything constructive to say?”

Anar’el’s ears twitched pitifully as she buried her head in the ground.

A stranger might ask, “What does the failure of the King of Mango Farm have to do with her?” but Amon saw it.

A letter arrived with a scorpion informing him why the King of Mango Farm had failed.

[Your damned ritual of praying for a good harvest has caused an unprecedented and historic flood, and I demand compensation for it, and I wish you a long, long watery road ahead.....]

It was a letter from the King of Mango Farmer, filled with desperate rants and curses!

Anar’el, having found it late, tries to eat the letter, confessing the shocking fact that ‘elves are actually related to goats’, but was stopped by Amon.

Anyway, Amon muttered to himself in disbelief.

“I should have known something like this would happen when you visited the farm and performed the ritual to pray for a good harvest.”

“Hmph.”

“No, you should have split your shins on the way out of the academy.”

“Ahhhhhh.”

“You said it wouldn’t do any good in our territory, and you clenched your teeth and refused to do it.”

Amon sighed as he saw her with her ears hanging down in sorrow and regret.

“Anyway, what are we going to do now, do we even have any operating funds left?”

“Ooh, there are quite a few operating expenses.....left!”

“Okay, let’s hear it. How much do you have left?”

Anar’el stretched out the four fingers of his backward right hand.

“Four thousand gold, by any chance?”

“Well, that’s not likely. I haven’t even gotten that much in dividends every quarter.”

“I see. Forty gold, then.”

When I told her how low my expectations had sunk, Anar’el spoke up, her voice full of authority.

“No, it’s four hundred gold!”

“Well, I kind of expected that. 400 gold, by the way.....”

It wasn’t a small amount of money, but it wasn’t much to feed twelve people in the academy.

‘Still, 400 gold might last a year if I spend it wisely.’

As Amon thought this, he suddenly saw something on the desk.

It was Brestle’s thick food bill.

-Bam!

Tearing it up, Amon muttered to himself.

“Even if I try to survive with the remaining money, it’s just eating my own flesh. I have to find a way to survive.”

“Hmph.....”

“Well then, Headmaster, get up.”

Anar’el stood up as if he’d been waiting.

Carefully arranging her sweaty hair, she spoke.

“Do you have any ideas?”

“I need to think about it. More importantly, the farm owner wants me to pay compensation. What should I do about that?”

Anar’el smiled broadly at the question.

“It’ll be fine, because the Imperial Investigators won’t move unless they can prove a connection between the Elven dance for a good harvest and this weather event!”

“Does that mean you’re going to make a big deal out of this?”

“I didn’t say that.”

“Hmm.”

Sometimes I look at the elf in front of me and I can’t tell if it’s a prickly elf or a wisdom bag.

“I’ve had a lot of King of Mango so far, so it’s a bit hard to keep my mouth shut, but there’s no other way now. Let’s ask.”

“Hehe.”

I wonder what she’s smiling about.

“Anyway, with these 400 gold coins, how should I invest them to make a name for myself?”

It’s way worse than when I first arrived at the Academy!

I had 4900 gold then, and now I had less than a tenth of that.

As I pondered this, Anar’el’s eyes lit up.

“I have an idea.”

“Ho ho, I hope it’s not racing snails.”

If she happens to say snail race, I’ll raise my clenched fist and punch her in the face.

Anar’el giggled and clapped her hands.

“Mr. Amon, the snail race is only held once every ten years!”

“.....”

“I swear, you love the snail race!”

Amon’s fists clenched at the sight of Anar’el grinning from ear to ear.

He was debating whether or not to punch her.

“..... Okay, let’s see if you have a good idea.”

“A unicorn race!”

Anar’el’s head exploded with a sound like something splitting.

“You never fail to disappoint me.”

“Awww, my, my head.....!”

Sighing heavily, Amon scratched his head.

“Well, let’s look outward for now.”

Because there’s no answer internally!

“What about externally.....?”

“We should try to find new sources of investment.”

Amon and Anar’el hurried to the Gold Road Trading Company.

* * *

They say even dung is nowhere to be found when you need it for medicine, and sure enough, there wasn’t a decent investment opportunity in sight.

So as Amon grunted through the few business prospectuses that looked decent.

“Amon, Amon.”

He glanced up as she tugged at his sleeve.

“What’s?”

“How about this, it looks good.”

“Let’s see.”

I took the manual and read it.

[Shrimp banana cultivation business]

[Profit expectations mediocre]

“Hmm.....”

It’s a farm again. Of course, investing in a farm is not a bad idea.

However, shrimp bananas are a crop with an ordinary harvest period.

“Shouldn’t we have a modest harvest ritual this time? If we have a good harvest, the dividends will be generous.”

“We’ll definitely make a profit, but the amount of money we’ll be investing this time is smaller than before, so we won’t be able to receive as generous a dividend as before.”

“Ah.....”

“On top of that, the King of Mangoes plantation owner will be watching us like a hawk, so leaving a trail for him to catch onto is a bit... risky.”

Anar’el imagined the sight of the King of Mango farm owner glaring at her with his eyes lit up while she was dancing a traditional dance to pray for a good harvest at the Shrimp Banana Farm!

Anar’el nodded, blushing.

“Well, yeah, that’s true, and it’s not like there’s a groundbreaking way to get them to grow.”

“Right.”

Her ears perked up in satisfaction, and she held out a new manual.

“How about this one, then?”

[Investigating a mysterious new substance]

[Low return expectation]

Although I initially gave it a huge negative review score for the low expected profit potential, I read the prospectus just in case.

And here’s what it says

I was right!

“Why are you doing this?”

“What?”

“Back when we funded the Mythic Continent Expedition, I could understand, but why waste money on something with such low expectations?”

Amon tapped his fingers on the manual.

“Why go so far as to investigate? What’s the big deal about the black oil that came out when digging?”

“Ugh, ugh.....”

“And look at this, a hefty dividend on all related businesses and products when they’re properly valued in the future? Ha! That’s not even funny, they know this is all bullshit, that’s why they’re offering these ridiculous terms.”

“.....”

“Moreover, the person running the business is all style with no substance, and they’ve gone and slapped some ridiculous name on that worthless black oil. What’s oil, really? What’s oil?”

Amon crumpled up the manual.

There is a swindler who tries to prey on foolish beings like Anar’e!

What a vile world this is!

“Tsk, I don’t see anything that looks like a good investment this time.”

“Mm-hmm..... That’s true.”

“Well, what do we do now.....?”

Clearly, investing in King of Mango Farms was a combination of good timing, good circumstances, and a lot of luck.

The owner had the technology to significantly accelerate the harvest, and there were no other investors.

‘Honestly, it would be shameless to hope for another investment like that.’

Scratching his head, Amon suddenly frowned.

‘..... Wait.’

Maybe he’d been thinking about the solution in the wrong way all along.

‘What is an academy?’

An educational institution.

And the Empire greatly encourages the education of its up-and-comers.

That's why they give each academy a subsidy every year, as well as support to help them improve the quality of their education.

'But now we have no subsidies and no support because of the shutdown recommendation. That's why we're in this mess.'

Yes, we need to eliminate the root of the problem, but we've been looking for solutions in all the wrong places!

Rather than focusing on dirty business and investments, wouldn't it be better to find a way to change the Emperor's mind?

'But there's a big problem.'

Given the bad blood between the Drakes and the Emperor's family, it's highly unlikely that the Emperor will rescind his recommendation to shut down operations.

'.....But there is a way to change that.'

Yes, just one.

The only way.

Taking a deep breath to calm his racing heart, Amon spoke.

"Headmaster Anar'el."

"Yes? What is it?"

"I need you to gather information."

"Information? About what?"

Amon said in a commanding tone.

"The Emperor's favorite foods, things, everything!"

Anar'el's face paled.

"You don't mean....."

"Yes."

Amon nodded, his face filled with determination.

The only way to rescind the shutdown recommendation!

“Let’s bribe the Emperor.”