

THE ACADEMY IS DOOMED

The Academy is Doomed

#C31 - Read The Academy is Doomed C31

Chapter 31

Things started off well.

Anar'el's request to see the Emperor was met with immediate acceptance.

But what happened next was not smooth sailing.

'I can't believe I just got the green light, but here's where things went wrong.....'

As no one can easily imagine, Anar'el is the head of what "was" a huge organization called the Amonis Academy.

And since elves live so long, they don't have to retire due to old age!

As such, she had quite a few noble connections who wanted to befriend her.

Yes, there were many.

Past tense.

-Hmph, I don't know. The Emperor is a very diligent man.

"Is he?"

-Yes, he's busy.

Anar'el frowned at the incessant interruption of the magical communication.

Amon's proposed a bribery scheme!

She had already asked more than a dozen nobles about the Emperor's tastes, to no avail.

'Even the most upstanding emperors must have favorite things and foods, but no one knows about them.'

No, in fact, they would know.

The person I just communicated with is Count Magamoa.

As the man in charge of defending the borders and wielding unchecked power within the realm, it was clear that he would be trusted, or at least guarded, by the Emperor.

‘How could such a man not know the Emperor’s tastes? His voice was gravelly to begin with, and I had to call him several times before he would answer.’

He doesn’t need to keep in touch with the headmaster of an academy that has been advised to shut down by the emperor himself.

“Phew, what am I going to do……?”

Sighing, Anar’el suddenly glanced at Amon.

He was in the corner of the headmaster’s office, going through a series of bizarre motions.

He was jumping up and down, doing handstands, somersaulting in place, landing on his knees, and doing other incomprehensible things.

“Mr. Amon, what the hell were you doing back there?”

“I was trying to come up with a means to thaw the Emperor’s frozen heart.”

“What is that?”

Wiping the sweat from his face, Amon spoke in a commanding voice.

“The history books tell me that the greatest form of prostration in the East is the ‘bow,’ and this handstand is an advanced version of that, the ‘grand bow’.”

“So what about the somersaults and kneeling?”

“No. It’s just flashy, it looks like you care and you mean it.”

“……”

Anar’el didn’t answer Amon’s comment.

She merely tilted his head in a ‘I see.’

‘I wonder how our academy got such a crazy teacher.’

Amon thought to himself as he watched Anar'el turn away.

'How did we end up with such an incompetent elf as our headmaster?'

They clicked their tongues at each other.

-Ding!

There was a knock on the door, and Sloth's voice came through.

"Principal, please approve the expense report."

"Yes, Ms. Sloth. Please come in."

Sloth handed the statement over to Anar'el and said.

"I think I'll need to add a little extra for the breakage of three wooden swords."

"I see."

Anar'el stamped her seal, and Sloth glanced at Amon.

"By the way, I assume you were talking about something important?"

"What?"

"Because you and Amon both looked pretty serious."

"That's....."

Should I really tell a slacker like Sloth about the Academy's untold crisis?

'If she realizes that she might not be getting paid anytime soon, she might try to go back home.....'

With the family feud resolved, there's no reason for Sloth to stay.

So when Anar'el tries to make light of the situation, Amon, who also knows the truth, immediately reveals the crisis at the Academy.

Amon wants Sloth out of here more than anyone else!

"Our Academy's finances have collapsed! The King of Mango Farm has gone under!"

"What? Really?"

“Yes! You won’t even get your salary soon!”

“Is that true, Headmaster?”

Anar’el said, her brow furrowed at Amon’s confession.

“It’s true.”

“Hmph.”

“But don’t worry, I’m finding a way, and your salary will come.....”

Sloth shrugged at Anar’el’s less-than-confident tone.

“Well, in that case, I’ll take that as a given, then.”

“It’s.....”

Amon clicked his tongue as Sloth disappeared.

“How cruel, how cruel! Since she’s a Marquis, she should have a lot of money but she didn’t say a word!”

“Mr. Amon.”

“Yes?”

“I really hate you sometimes.”

“What? Why?”

Amon shook his head in disbelief at Anar’el’s sudden disdain and disgust.

I don’t know the Emperor’s tastes, anyway, so I can’t really bribe him.

‘Then we’ll have to go the official route.’

Amon hurried toward the student dormitory.

* * *

“What, you’re going to the capital?”

“Yes. This time, I got a chance to meet His Majesty the Emperor. That’s why I’m taking you along. Last time during the competition, I wasn’t in a position to just sit back and watch, was I?”

Boris's eyes sparkled with anticipation at Amon's cheerful words.

"Wow! Are you going out to play?"

"Yes! How about it, are you going?"

"Yes, sir!"

Amon smiled at the beaming Boris, then turned to Chloe.

"And you, Chloe?"

"I'm coming."

"I'm glad you want to stay cool!"

Amon said, looking at the last student, Raymond.

"You are to rest at the Academy."

"What? What about me?"

"Hahaha, kid, if you don't know, this teacher is going to be very sad."

At those words, Raymond looked at the dolls modeled after him, hugging them from side to side.

'But why are there two of them?'

Raymond said anyway.

"Are you telling me to stay at the academy for the dolls?"

"Haha, it's good you know."

Raymond grumbled.

"As long as I don't stand out, right?"

".....?"

Raymond pulled out a palm-sized doll modeled after him.

"I'll just take this one with me."

"But how many of those dolls are there?"

“About seventeen.”

“I see!”

Amon nodded, no longer thinking about the dolls.

‘Maybe things will go better if Raymond comes with us.’

The current emperor is a saint among saints, as long as he doesn’t tangle with the Drake family.

Besides, he encourages the education of budding students, and given his fondness for them, it was unlikely that he would be oblivious to the plight of students with so much potential.

‘That said, Chloe and Raymond will easily convince the Emperor since they’re so talented!’

And Boris.

‘He’s a good kid!’

Anyway, I hurriedly said to the children.

“Kids! Wear the tackiest clothes you have!”

“What? Why? We’re going to the capital.”

“I’ll explain why as we go!”

The students wore the clothes they could afford to wear while practicing swordsmanship.

A few minutes later, Amon arrived at the headmaster’s office with the students.

“Headmaster, we’re ready.”

“But what’s wrong with your clothes? We’re going to meet the emperor.”

Amon explained.

The rationalization was that the children should be dressed as beggars, so that they would appeal to the emperor’s sympathy!

And for the first time, Amon was able to witness Anar’el use violence.

* * *

'The elf's beating is quite intimidating.'

When the farmer's letter was eaten to destroy the evidence, claiming that elves were related to goats, Anar'el's pounder was every bit as intimidating as the goats'.

Stroking his throbbing jaw, Amon said.

"Is everyone ready?"

"Yes, sir."

The students were dressed in the best clothes they could find.

As a last-ditch compromise, though, Amon was wearing his old clothes, in hopes of provoking the Emperor's sympathy.

"Well then, Headmaster, let's go."

"Please be careful not to be disrespectful to the Emperor."

If the Emperor didn't do it, Amon would, but it was clear that the Emperor would be rude.

But Amon got one thing right.

"Of course."

"Because when you do, you make sure you do it right."

Anar'el spoke her faith and prepared her warp magic.

Moments later, the group arrived at the magic circle set up outside the palace, and after a thorough search, they were escorted to the palace grounds to meet the Emperor.

"By the way, Headmaster."

"What?"

On the way to the audience chamber, Amon spoke.

"You must have known the Emperor for quite some time, since you were granted permission to come so soon?"

“Yes, come to think of it, Sandrio. It’s been at least fifty years since I’ve known the Emperor.”

“That long?”

Anar’el said, brushing back her pale blond hair.

“It doesn’t seem that long to me. It seems like we just met the other day.”

“.....Sir.”

“What?”

“How old are you?”

“I’m 269 years old this year, I think.”

“Wow, my parents. No, you’re older than my whole family combined.”

It was the second time Amon had witnessed Anar’el become violent.

Hopping to his feet, clutching his kicked shin, he stopped.

“We’re here.”

“Oh, my shin.....Oh, by the way, Headmaster.”

“What?”

“Why don’t you go in and negotiate first?”

Anar’el frowned.

“Really, do you trust me?”

In truth, Amon wanted her to meet with the Emperor alone.

However, Anar’el knew very well that she was not very good at speaking or improvising, so she had no choice but to bring Amon along.

Of course, given the bad blood between House Drake and the Emperor’s family, it would have been wiser not to bring him along at all.

‘But I can’t tell the headmaster about it.’

My father told me that.

'It's a top secret, a top secret that only the Emperor's closest circle and the Drake family should know about.'

In the end, he couldn't tell the truth, and Anar'el whined that she wouldn't go if Amon didn't go with her, so he had no choice but to follow her, crying.

"Mr. Amon, this is a strange day for you. Normally, you would have insisted on seeing the Emperor first."

"Well, I have some business of my own."

"I see."

Anar'el said, her ears drooping.

"Then I'll try to talk to him on my own first, but if it doesn't work out, I'll call you, so you'll have to step up then, okay?"

Amon thumped his chest.

"Of course! You can call me if you need me!"

"Yes!"

Amon clasped his hands together and squeezed his eyes shut as Anar'el joined the students in the next moment.

'Please don't call me! Please don't call me!'

The moment the Emperor sees his face, things will go wrong!

* * *

"Heh heh heh, it's been a long time, how are you, Princess Anar'el."

"Your Majesty is still the same."

"Since the princess came, all my aides were kicked out. Don't be uncomfortable and call me comfortably."

"Hoo-hoo, Sandrio, you're the same old Sandrio. How's Victoria?"

"Of course, since you've come all this way, I think you should stay for dinner. I'm sure Victoria will be very happy to meet the princess."

"That would be nice."

“What brings you here?”

Sandrio asked, finally getting to the point.

“That’s.....about the recommendation to suspend operations.”

“Well.....I expected that.”

The Emperor sighed, crossing his arms.

“To be honest, I would have preferred to avoid the shutdown, given my connection to Princess Anar’el, but the precedent set by the Mussiel Academy left me no choice.”

Mussiel Academy!

It was an academy that disappeared into the back alleys of history due to the principal’s failed investment!

Anyway, at the sound of the Emperor’s negative words, Anar’el spoke up.

“Well, but, how can it not work?”

“Hmph. I guess the precedent is set, so it’s not like I can decide for myself.”

The Emperor cleared his throat and suddenly looked at the students standing behind Anar’el.

Chloe, Raymond, Boris.

He recognized them all from memory.

“Oh, aren’t they the students who participated in the last contest?”

“Yes, they are.”

“Yes, now that I think about it, they were from Amonis Academy.”

The emperor who slapped his knee said.

“Good. Given your track record of producing fine students, I’ll persuade the Prime Minister and the bureaucrats to overturn the recommendation to shut it down.”

“Sir, are you sure?”

“Hehehehe, of course, Princess Anar’el.”

“Thank you!”

The Emperor let out a chuckle and lifted his teacup.

He inhaled slowly, savoring the tea’s aroma.

“.....?”

An unpleasant, disgusting odor stung his nose, mixed with the fragrant tea aroma!

“Sniff, sniff, sniff?”

“Sandrio?”

The Emperor suddenly snorted like a dog, much to the disgust of Anar’el and the rest of the students, and turned his head sharply.

His eyes narrowed as he glared at the door of the audience room.

“This smell is that of the filthy Drake clan!”

With a snarl, the Emperor launched himself at the door of the audience room.

Chapter 32

Amon stood in the doorway, outside of the audience room, shuffling his feet.

‘How’s it going?’

The image of Anar’el that lingered in Amon’s mind told him that she would be sobbing her head off by now.

‘But she says she knew the Emperor for fifty years, so maybe he’ll be surprisingly easy to please?’

If he didn’t get involved with the Drake family, he would be known as the saint of saints!

So Amon decided to put some hope in the Emperor’s favor.

‘Yeah, as long as I don’t run into the Emperor, it should be easy.’

Just as he was thinking this, the door of the audience room opened and the Emperor appeared.

“Kahahaha, where did the ugly smell of drake seeds come from? It was you!”

“.....”

Just when I thought things would be fine if we didn't run into each other, not even two seconds had passed!

The Emperor shouted with a devilish face.

“You must be the one responsible for this!”

“What do you mean?”

“You were the one who tricked Princess Anar'el into rescinding the recommendation to shut down the academy!”

The Emperor snapped!

‘But as a teacher at the academy, do you call my job as a mastermind, a deceiver, or an instigator?’

I wanted to question that fact, but judging by the speed at which the Emperor's eyes were spinning, it seemed like he was no ordinary lunatic.

In this state, he'd accuse me of lying no matter what I do.

‘What did I do wrong to deserve this?’

How can he persecute me for the sins of my ancestors!

A rush of anger rose in my throat, but I suppressed it and opened my mouth.

“Your Majesty.”

“Who is your majesty!”

“Please distinguish between public and private life.”

“What?”

“The Drake family's time-honored disrespect is one thing, but the withdrawal of the cease-and-desist recommendation is quite another, isn't it?”

The Emperor narrowed his eyes.

He crossed his arms as if to say more, and Amon spoke.

“Our academy is more than capable of producing a student worthy of your majesty’s attention, as it did during the contest.”

“.....”

“However, the current state of affairs at the Amonis Academy is desperate. The Academy is financially bankrupt, and its students are starving!”

Not quite.

I’m in the capital today, and I’ve fed them a hearty bowl of meat soup.

“We can’t even afford the regular curriculum, let alone the textbooks necessary to teach it!”

The stamp on Sloth’s order for another wooden sword had barely dried.

Amon pounded his chest with the palm of his hand.

“I am a teacher at the Amonis Academy, an educator before I am a member of House Drake, and as such, I find it pathetic that the Academy’s meager finances are forcing students to go hungry and unable to receive a proper education!”

“.....”

“Your Majesty the Emperor!”

Amon exclaimed, bowing politely to the Emperor.

“I humbly request that you be so generous as to rescind your recommendation to shut down the Academy!”

At this point, Amon sensed victory.

‘Perfect.’

A cry of pride and conviction as an educator and compassion for his students!

This was an emperor who loved his students and valued education!

To such an emperor, a speech with three beats, education, students, and my beliefs as an educator, packed tightly together, would surely shake his heart.

As Amon glanced at the emperor, he realized.

“It didn’t work!”

The Emperor cupped his ears in disbelief.

“The Drake clan has a long tongue, and that’s all you have to say?”

“.....”

“Hmph, what’s that look on your face, is it discontent?”

Dissatisfaction, that’s what Amon said, and he exploded.

“Look at you, finally showing your ugly colors!”

“Ugh! Really!”

“What, you’re going to punch me for this?”

The Emperor chuckled and puffed out his cheeks.

“Hahahaha! I was once a knight who traveled across the continent! Before the emperor, I was a proud man! Alright, I’ll take on as many tasks as you want!”

The Emperor hates the Drake clan.

That’s why he’s been bullshitting Amon, trying to get him to cry like a baby!

“Giggle, giggle, giggle, punch me!”

“Ew, ew!”

“Oh? Can’t hit me, can you? Hehehe, a man lacking resolve like that, huh?”

Amon rolled his eyes.

‘Just one punch with my eyes closed?’

Of course, the aftermath would be beyond repair.

Punching the Emperor in the face?

It wouldn’t be strange if Amon himself, as well as the three generations above and below, were destroyed!

That’s why Amon’s fists were trembling.

“Your Majesty.”

“So who’s your majesty……?”

The Emperor, who had been lifting Amon up with his eyes rolling back in his head, snapped his mouth shut.

The voice he’d just heard hadn’t belonged to Amon.

A voice he couldn’t forget, the voice of his beloved other half.

The one person in the world he, the Emperor of the Amonis Empire, feared!

Empress Victoria, who had suddenly appeared, stared at the Emperor with narrowed eyes.

“Your Majesty.”

“Bu, ma’am……?”

“Haven’t I told you many times? As the Emperor of the Empire, you must maintain your dignity.”

Tsk, tsk, the Empress craned her neck and smirked.

“Who would have thought that when I came to see you, I would be met with such an ugly sight.”

“……”

“What are you, some common street thug? Go ahead, take a swing. As the ruler of this empire, that’s an unbecoming statement. Absolutely, without a doubt.”

The Emperor took a deep breath at the frosty Empress’s words and said.

“Madam, I think there is a misunderstanding.”

“I see. What misunderstanding?”

“First of all, how much did you hear?”

The Empress smirked.

“From where the ugly odor of some drake seed stung my nose. From the beginning.”

From the beginning.

“I was quietly listening to what you were saying, but you kept getting more and more heated.”

“.....”

“Besides, didn’t I make it clear to you last time, he’s just a young man who has nothing to do with your grudge. So didn’t you vow to put an end to old grudges?”

“.....”

“Sandrio?”

“.....I am listening.”

The Empress smiled and turned on her heel.

“Let’s go.”

“.....”

The Empress led the way to the audience room, and the Emperor followed with his head hanging low and his steps like he was being led to a slaughterhouse.

The next moment, Anar’el and her students were being shoved out of the realm, and the door to the audience room was slammed shut.

Puck! Kwajik, muddle-!

An eerie sound was heard from the audience room!

The sound made Anar’el shiver, her long ears flattening.

“It’s Victoria and Sandrio’s ‘Time of Reflection’ again.....”

It was a sound Anar’el had heard countless times before, before the Emperor was Emperor, before the Empress was Empress.

* * *

After what seemed like an eternity, the Empress stepped out of the audience room.

An eerie groan of “No, no, no, please, Madame, please stop.....” could be heard from within the room, but it was drowned out by the Empress closing the door.

She fiddled with her blood-soaked silk gloves and said.

“Surely, you said Amon?”

“Ah, yes.....”

“Well, now that things have come to this, I think he’s done for the day.”

I hadn’t even gotten a response to the cease-and-desist yet.

“But.....”

The Empress smirked.

“Go home.”

Amon nodded quickly, feeling a chilling sensation like ice running down his back.

“Yes, I will go at once!”

“Good, and Anar’el, I’m sorry you’ve come such a long way.”

Anar’el glanced at her blood-soaked gloves and smiled awkwardly.

“No, no, no. Some days are just like this.”

“Well, thanks for understanding, and I’ll see you next time.”

“Yeah, sure.”

“And next time you come.....”

The Empress whispered to Anar’el.

“Leave that young man behind. As you can see, His Majesty seems to go into a mania whenever he sees him.”

“Ah, I see.”

The Empress smiled and waved, and Amon and the others hurried out of the palace.

A moment later the Empress checked on the stunned Emperor and spoke up.

“Are you there, Kaiyas?”

“Yes, Mother.”

Kaiyas, Crown Prince of the Amonis Empire.

The young woman who had just emerged from the corner spoke wistfully.

“It’s a pity I never got to meet Princess Anar’el, whom I’ve only heard about from my father and mother.”

“There will be another chance. What do you think, anyway?”

“You mean rescinding the recommendation to shut down Amonis Academy?”

“Yes.”

Kaiyas was on his way to the audience room with the Empress.

This meant that he had heard the entire conversation between Amon and the Emperor.

After a moment of thought, the crown prince spoke.

“Perhaps it would be best to withdraw our recommendation and wait and see. If the young man from the Drake clan has a solid track record, as he says, and the students are in need, then a withdrawal would not be inappropriate.”

“I see, you think so too.”

Nodding, the crown prince said.

“But my father must have suffered a lot from the Drake clan. I never thought that my father, who was always so kind, could be so mad…….”

“Don’t even mention it. I only met Belial Drake a couple of times, and even that was enough to make me shudder.”

Belial Drake, Amon’s grandfather and the source of countless frictions when Sandrio was crown prince!

“How glad Sandrio was when that man died.”

“Mmm…….”

The crown prince smirked in amusement.

“From the sounds of it, that man from the Drake clan, he was quite the character.”

“Huh?”

The crown prince smirked.

“In that case, I’ll be sure to cut that bad blood from my line.”

“What?”

* * *

Amon returned to the academy and was lying sick in bed.

‘It’s all over,’ he thought.

The bloodied emperor!

The Empress who coldly demanded to return!

‘Withdrawing the shutdown recommendation under such circumstances, you’re kidding me.’

The only thing left to do now was to suck his fingers and wither away in the ruined academy.

“Where did my life go wrong?”

He sobbed into his comforter, sucking his fingers.

“Sir, are you there?”

“.....!”

A student! Raymond’s voice!

Amon quickly kicked off the covers and straightened his clothes.

“Yes, come in.”

Raymond entered the room and said.

“Sir, was the reason for your visit to the Emperor today about the Academy’s finances?”

“Huh? Alas, yes.”

Now that he had heard, there was nothing to hide and no reason to hide.

Amon sighed heavily, but smiled as if it was okay in front of his student.

“But don’t worry. It’s a grown-up thing.”

“Hmm. Is that so, Teacher?”

“Huh?”

“I have a great idea!”

A great idea?

How is a kid, let alone Reinbelt grandson and a wild plant-eating kid, supposed to solve a funding problem!

So Amon smiled, not expecting much.

“Yeah, well, let’s hear it, shall we?”

As Amon smiled, Raymond pulled something out of a bag.

Amon’s smile faded as he looked at it.

It was a handmade doll modeled after Raymond himself.

Raymond held them up to Amon and said, with a look of remembrance on his face.

“I’m opening an exhibition!”

“.....”

“Don’t we have a lot of empty buildings at the Academy right now? We’re turning one of them into an exhibition hall!”

“.....”

“With my puppet, I’ll be able to attract tons of visitors!”

Amon, who had been watching Raymond in silence as he explained his grand plan, gazed up at the ceiling.

A single tear rolled down Amon’s cheek.

Raymond exclaimed.

“Sir, it’s too soon to be impressed! And if we sell dolls made in my likeness based on the exhibition, we’ll be able to.....!”

Amon was convinced by Raymond’s grand plan.

'This academy is really ruined.'

Chapter 33

Amon recalled a conversation a few days earlier.

'Teacher, what do you think of my plan?'

'You mean the perfect plan to fill an entire building with your dolls?'

'Yes.'

Amon smiled, half dejectedly.

'I think.....would be fine.'

It might be okay.

But you can't just stand in front of a student with sparkling eyes and say, "Stop talking nonsense and get out of here!"

'Yeah, if you want to try it, go for it. But you have to keep this in mind.'

'What? What?'

'You see, our academy's finances are precarious. I can't provide you with the materials.'

Although his true intention was, 'I don't have money to spend on that,' Raymond waved his hand as if he was worried about something so trivial.

"Oh, don't worry, I'll take care of it," he said.

That's Raymond, the man who became a Sword Master while foraging for wild plants.

He's well on his way to self-sufficiency.

'However you're a student and you shouldn't neglect your studies in preparation for the job. As long as you promise me that, you can do as much as you want.'

'Yes, I'll do my best in class!'

And so began Raymond's exhibition plan!

Of course, it doesn't cost Amon any money, and Raymond's diligence in class means he's done his part as an educator.

'Of course, I got in trouble with the principal for renting out an empty building.'

As it turns out, Anar'el is pretty strict when it comes to things other than money.

Anyway, for now, Amon stood in front of the building Raymond had agreed to rent.

'Not much has changed from the outside.'

But Raymond's dark circles from his latest class were getting deeper by the day.

Given that, it was clear that he was doing something.

'Well, let's go inside.'

Once inside the multipurpose room, which had previously been used as an auditorium and gymnasium, Amon's eyes widened in disbelief.

"Huh, huh.....!?"

Raymond. Raymond. Raymond.

Everywhere he looked, there were Raymonds.

"Ugh, ugh.....!"

The ceiling, the walls, the floor, nothing but Raymond!

Raymond was staring at himself with his characteristic expressionless face.

'Those eyes!'

The horrifying sight of dozens, maybe hundreds, of Raymonds watching him from all sides!

Amon clutched at his head, the madness eating away at him.

"Sir."

"Hmph!"

Suddenly, the Raymond doll standing next to him spoke, and Amon was startled out of his thoughts.

If it wasn't for Amon's training in the Arma Mountains, he would've screamed at someone!

“What’s wrong?”

“Uh, uh.....?”

Amon froze like a startled deer and realized that it was the real Raymond, not the puppet, who had spoken to him.

“Are you Raymond?”

“What’s wrong with you all of a sudden, you’re yelling.”

“Uh, um.....”

Amon wanted to ask how he could look like this and not scream, but he swallowed hard.

When he saw Raymond standing there, his dark circles almost reaching his chin, he realized that he had been through a lot.

‘Hard work is hard work.’

Amon coughed and cleared his throat.

“Well, I see. How’s your work going?”

“Yeah, I’m just about done, we just need to open.”

“Open.....”

Was he really going to open this horrific landscape to the citizens of Amur?

While I was pondering this, Raymond held out a bundle of fabric.

“That’s right, we just need to hang this before the opening.”

“This is a banner?”

“Yep. I need to let people know that my handmade doll exhibit is coming, because no matter how amazing my work is, they can’t come if they don’t know.”

“Uh-huh.”

You made nearly a hundred puppets in a few days, and managed to squeeze in a banner in between?

‘He must be a sword master with his hands.’

The scenery is actually quite bizarre, but the quality of each doll is very good.

It was much better quality than the dolls I had seen in the past when I went to the city to buy my sister a doll for her birthday when she was younger.

'I quickly gave up when I saw the price of the doll.'

Anyway, Raymond, who was hugging the banner, suddenly jerked and fell to the ground.

"Raymond, what's wrong with you!"

"Uh, uh.....I've been up all night making dolls for a few days, and I'm just so tired."

"What?"

Raymond mumbled, rubbing his eyes.

"Sir."

"Ugh, huh?"

"Will you go to bed now?"

"What, sleep?"

"As for the rest, please....."

After saying that, Raymond collapsed and fell asleep!

Amon, who was looking down at him, had a hunch.

'Wait. No way.'

Amon looked down at the banner he'd been handed as he collapsed and muttered to himself.

"Am I supposed to be in charge of the exhibit.....?"

* * *

The clock is ticking!

Amon shared the news with his trusted fellow teachers, but their reactions were uniformly puzzled.

'So? You're on your own, right?'

Anar'el was pouting tightly, probably because he let Raymond use the empty building on a whim.

Given the angle of her ears, it would take at least two more days for her anger to dissipate!

And the next one, Brestle?

'You tore up my grocery order, and you want me to help you? I don't care.'

Amon nearly loses his cool when Brestle, haunted by the ghost of a dead man, dares to bring up the subject, but the clock is ticking, and the parties come to an amicable settlement of "confiscated dinners for three days."

And as for Marion.

"I'm drunk! You want me to help you? Of course, of course, I'll help you, giggle giggle!"

'No, just keep drinking.'

I didn't expect that from Marion in the first place!

'And what about Sloth.....?'

'Thanks to Amon, the misunderstanding between her family has been resolved, so maybe Sloth will be willing to help?'

I rushed to see her, hoping for the best.

'I'm in a hurry, I have to go home.'

Isn't there a saying that you are betrayed by your expectations?

Amon was rather surprised by Sloth's betrayal.

'Haha, yeah. Have a safe trip.'

'Okay.'

With Sloth gone, there was only one person left to help.

'Of course, Reinbelt would help.'

It was his grandson's exhibition.

Even so, if he doesn't help, it would mean his conscience isn't just slightly tarnished—it's downright overgrown.

As he thought about it, he and Reinbelt hung a banner at the main gate to announce the event, and he replied with a wry smile.

'Even if it's an exhibition at the Amonis Academy, will there be enough people to need help?'

'Ah.'

That's what I heard.

If ten people come all day, that's a lot, don't you think?

'I suppose it's more a matter of how to cheer up Raymond.'

'Well, I guess that's true.'

I was overwhelmed with logic.

A few moments later, Amon was seated at a makeshift table in the hastily constructed pavilion. He was waiting for customers who might or might not show up.

'Well, by the way.'

Amon looked around.

'Sitting alone, with hundreds of Raymonds staring at you...If one of them makes a sudden move, I'm afraid they'll run away.....'

It's definitely a well-made doll, but I guess it has that uncanny valley vibe to it?

Amon shook his head to clear his thoughts.

'Well, from the looks of it, we'll never get any guests. Let's figure out how to appease Raymond.'

* * *

City of Amur!

The fall of the Amonis Academy tarnished its shine a bit, but as a city where many nobles' children stayed, the development of commerce and entertainment was a natural progression.

Of course, as I said, it declined a bit with the fall of the Academy, but as the saying goes, riches come and go.

Amur was still a large commercial city, hence the occasional social gathering of visiting nobles!

Today's visitors to Amur are art-loving nobles, thirsty deers in search of art.

They came to Amur and found a stream in the middle of nowhere.

"Ho, ho, the Amonis Academy is having an exhibition."

"Though faltering at the moment, the Amonis Academy is a prestigious institution, and its reputation cannot be ignored."

"Hmph, then we should definitely go!"

Dozens of art-loving nobles marched toward the Amonis Academy with their squires and servants.

"Huh? What's that procession?"

"The Amonis Academy is holding an exhibition."

"Hao, if there's a procession like that, it must be quite an exhibition."

"Shall we go?"

The Second Army marched toward the Amonis Academy.

* * *

Amon's heart skipped a beat at the sudden influx of people.

"Get in line, please!"

"Hahaha! Follow me quickly!"

"Yes, master!"

"Line up! Please line up!"

Despite the bullying, the art-loving aristocrats pushed their way into the exhibition hall.

Well, as long as they got in, it wasn't too much of a problem.

The size of the Amonis Academy meant that every single building was substantial.

The problem lay elsewhere.

“Aaahhhhh! Those eyes!”

“Don’t look at me like that!”

Everyone who went in was running out, their faces white with terror.

Who wouldn’t be like that if hundreds of identical faces were staring back at them with doll-like vacant eyes and alien features?

So there was a jumble of people trying to get in and people trying to get out, and it was a hell on earth.

Moreover, the commotion made those who hadn’t yet entered even more curious.

“Isn’t everyone going crazy when they walk in?”

“What is it?”

It was a vicious cycle.

“Please, please, get in line…….”

“Hahaha, this is why people don’t understand art, even the most sublime works have hidden meanings!”

The nobleman laughed heartily, and immediately jumped out with his arms wide open.

“Ugh! This is hell!”

Amon gave up on controlling the crowd as the uproar continued.

‘Let’s just stay put.’

Amon nodded.

‘It’s strange that some crazies have come so suddenly, but once these people leave, word will spread and no more will come, so let’s just hold it together for today.’

Amon smirked.

He relaxed, and his tight chest felt like it was about to burst open.

* * *

A contemplative patron burst through the door of a tavern in Amur.

“Uh, come on, come on.....”

“Get me a drink, get me a drink, come on!”

The customer rolled over and sat down, and the bartender quickly served him a drink.

The boss, who had been waiting for the customer to gulp down his drink, cautiously opened his mouth.

“Customer, your complexion doesn’t look good. Is something wrong?”

“Kuluk! Yes, it is. I saw something so horrible that I’d rather forget it with a drink.”

“Huh? What the heck?”

The guest sipped his drink and told his tale, while the boss listened with a twinkle in his eye.

And there’s a saying.

If you want to hear the rumors of the world, go to a tavern.

In other words, all kinds of rumors gather in a bar, and all kinds of rumors spread in a bar.

“Ho, so there is such a thing.”

The boss’s eyes twinkled.

* * *

The next morning Reinbelt rubbed his eyes.

‘What was that?’

Reinbelt’s job, ‘managing the front gate’, was a dull affair.

Not surprising, given how few visitors came to the Academy.

‘But what’s this.....?’

Hundreds, maybe thousands, of people camped outside the main gate!

Then someone spotted Reinbelt outside and exclaimed.

“Oh! There’s a person!”

“When will the exhibition hall open?”

“Hurry up and open the doors!”

Reinbelt’s face turned to panic as he looked at the screaming crowd.

These were all people who had come to see the exhibition.

Chapter 34

“Amon! Uh, wake up!”

“Hmph, potato bowl!”

Amon jerked awake as Reinbelt shook him.

Rubbing his eyes, he mumbled,

“What happened this early in the morning? It’s not even time to get up yet.”

In response to the groggy question, Reinbelt wordlessly drew the curtains and pointed out the window.

This caused Amon to yawn and sit up, and he looked out the window.

He froze in place.

“.....What is that?”

“Those are the guests who came to see the exhibition.”

“Hahaha, what kind of joke is this!”

I laughed and opened the window, and I could hear their voices clearly.

“Open the door at once!”

“When the hell are you going to open the exhibition hall?”

I slammed the window back shut.

“Don’t be ridiculous.....”

“What are you going to do now? From the looks of it, it doesn’t look like there’s much point in me helping you. No, it looks like you’ve got enough on your plate with visitor control alone.”

“Ugh.”

Yesterday, I thought I could get through the day and not have any more customers.

But now I’m faced with more unwanted visitors than I had yesterday!

‘Oh, right, this is a dream.’

In the early morning hours, Amon denied reality.

But as sleep slowly slipped away, the weight of reality was pressing down on his shoulders.

It was only then that he was able to make a sober judgment and decide what he should do.

“Very well, Mr. Reinbelt. Here’s what I’ll do.”

“Oh, you have a good idea?”

“Kill them all.”

Amon’s honeycomb of favor quickly changed his mind.

‘This is not the time.’

Amon hurried to the principal’s office and knocked on the door.

Of course, given the angle of her ears, he was correct in his prediction that she would be out for another two days.

However, given the urgency of the situation, she agreed to talk to me after I forcefully pulled her ears down.

“My ear…….”

“I’m sorry, sir. But it’s urgent, so please understand.”

Amon pointed to the mob at the front door, clearly visible from the principal’s office.

“At any rate, they’re several times the number of visitors we had yesterday. Please give me your wisdom on how to defeat them.”

“.....”

“I’ve heard that our academy has hosted a few exhibitions before, and given the state of the academy then, I’m sure there were far more visitors than there are now. What did you do then?”

Anar’el said with a serious face.

“There were a lot more people in the Academy then than there are now.”

“What? You mean.”

“Yes.”

Anar’el looked up at the ceiling.

“I don’t know, the other teachers were in charge back then.”

“Ah.....”

Amon covered his face with his hands.

‘What is she, some kind of gargoyle guarding the principal’s office, sitting around doing nothing?’

Anar’el frowned, as if reading his rude thoughts.

“I think you have a very rude idea.”

“Exactly. You know it well.”

“I don’t know how, of course, but I do have an idea.”

Amon’s ears perked up at that.

“What is it?”

“Hoo-hoo.....”

“Don’t be silly, just tell me, those rioters are grabbing the front door and shaking it right now!”

Amon pleaded, and Anar’el said with a smug look on her face.

“We’ll charge them for admission!”

“.....!!”

“Yesterday it was free, but today we’re charging admission? Surely the people who came for free will leave disappointed, and we’ll get half as many visitors!”

Amon gaped.

“So this is the wisdom of the Forest Clan.....!”

“Ahhhhh, now you’re getting it!”

Anar’el spread her hands wide.

“Now, Mr. Amon, hurry up and tell our visitors about this!”

“Yes, Headmaster!”

As Amon rushed outside, Anar’el looked out the window to see what was happening.

She saw a flurry of stones hitting Amon as he eagerly announced the news to the mob outside the front gate, and then realized that when you suddenly announce that you’re going to charge for something that was free, the mob gets extremely excited and angry!

* * *

“I can’t help it.”

Amon said with a serious face.

“I’ll kill them all.”

“Put up with it.”

“Put up with what, I’ve memorized the face of the guy who threw a rock at my temple.”

Scratching his head in annoyance, Amon sighed.

“There’s nothing we can do. We have no choice but to do it the right way.”

“The right way?”

Amon nodded.

“You need to get up.”

“What?”

“Let’s go out.”

“What?”

Suddenly, Amon tugged on her wrist, and Anar’el followed.

A moment later, arriving at the vice principal’s office, Amon shook Brestle, who was sleeping soundly, awake.

“Yes, what, what is it?”

“Come on, get up. We’re going out.”

“What? Where are we going……?”

Amon smirked.

“You need to help with the exhibit.”

Brestle frowned, having been jolted out of sleep by the words.

“Why would I help with that?”

“Are you sure you don’t want to help?”

“There’s no reason to help……”

Amon pointed at Anar’el, who stood there in a daze.

“The Headmaster has come out and offered to help, and the Vice Headmaster won’t!”

Anar’el was taken aback by the uncoordinated remark.

“Well, you’re out of your depth! When did I say I’d help?”

“……”

“Professor Amon said that he would use the empty building on his own and handle the exhibition on his own! What are you talking about now?”

Anar’el’s shout made Brestle widen her eyes.

“You lied to me right out in the open!”

“That’s right, Mr. Amon, you’re on your own in this one!”

The two elves shouted back at each other.

Amon finally decided to use the trick he had been hiding.

'I have no choice.'

It wasn't a skill he should use in a place like this.

But what the hell, a skill is worthless if it's not used.

Glancing at the two elves who were shouting at him, Amon leapt up like lightning.

Amon stood upside down as if doing a handstand!

Anar'el gasped at the sight.

"That's.....!"

It was the Grand Bow, an advanced version of the Eastern Continent's most polite form of bowing, the Prostrate Bow!

In fact, this technique was prepared to melt the heart of a dark emperor, but to use it in a place like this!

"Headmaster, Vice Headmaster."

"Yes, eh?"

Amon stood upside down, tears streaming down his face.

"Please help me."

"....."

* * *

Once the headmaster and vice headmaster were moved by Amon's sincerity, it wasn't hard to convince the other faculty members.

Well, actually, Marion was the only other faculty member.

'I guess Sloth is not back yet.'

There's no such thing as too much laziness.

'Anyway, there's a saying that even a hundred-piece suit is better when held together.'

Of course, now it wasn't a daunting task, but more like a giant boulder, but with the extra help, things would be easier than yesterday!

A few hours later Amon, Anar'el, Brestle, and Marion were crouched in a corner of the pavilion.

Like Amon yesterday, they had finally given up control of the group.

"Aaaaah! I want out of here!"

"Those eyes!"

"Almighty Blaton, protect me with your eternal light. Almighty Blaton, protect me with your eternal light....."

What a maddened, rampaging crowd!

There were several times as many people as there had been yesterday, and the mere increase of three people was not enough to keep them in check.

"What shall we do, teacher Amon?"

"I don't know. I just hope those lunatics fall off on their own."

"I'm so afraid."

"It's okay, they won't attack us if we sit still like this."

Marion, the one of them who had been breathlessly surveying the situation as if he had fallen into an animal cage, said.

"Uh, people are starting to fall out."

"Oh, really?"

It was almost time for lunch, and the madmen were retreating.

I guess people have to eat, too.

"This is our chance, let's take advantage of it and retrieve the banner and end the exhibition."

"Yeah, but it was only supposed to be open this weekend anyway, right?"

Thanks to the support, we decided to make amends by closing the show early.

I was in the middle of taking down the banners and cleaning up.

“Huh?”

An elderly gentleman with a dignified appearance had stayed until the end and was surveying the exhibition with a serious face.

Amon approached him and said.

“Sir, it’s almost closing time.”

“Hm? Is it that time already?”

The old gentleman scratched his head and said with a pitying look on his face.

“I’m really sorry, but can you give me a little more time?”

“Um.”

Well, honestly, I don’t really care.

“Okay, but not for long.”

“Thank you.”

With that, the old gentleman left the exhibit, and the faculty went into a meeting.

“What about the profits from this exhibition?”

Amon curled his fingers into a ball at Anar’el’s question.

“Zero. None.”

“.....”

“We’d have to charge admission or sell dolls to make money, and since there’s no admission and no dolls sold, we didn’t make any money.”

Anar’el sighed and closed her eyes.

“I don’t know what to make of this.....”

“Well.”

“Raymond must be very discouraged that the exhibition was a flop.”

“I told him earlier, but he didn’t seem to mind.”

“What?”

“He said he didn’t think the dull masses would recognize his high quality work.”

“.....”

A heavy silence settled around the four people in the meeting.

And in that silence, Amon was lost in thought.

‘This exhibition was supposed to be a way to fund the Academy.’

We’ve tried many things to do that.

We’ve tried to find new sources of funding, we’ve tried to change the Emperor’s mind about shutting it down, we’ve tried to get Sloth to help us.

“Did I even try, though? But judging by how they didn’t say much after hearing the situation, it seems like they’re not too keen on helping.”

Sloth doesn’t seem to have much affection for the academy.

‘Besides, there’s no reason for her to be here now that the misunderstanding with her family has been resolved.’

In fact, I wonder if her hasty return home was part of her abandonment of the Academy.

‘Hmm. Anyway, the exhibition was a flop.’

In the end, all our efforts were for naught.

Amon’s hopes were completely dashed, especially since he had been so badly beaten at the exhibition.

In the end, there was only one answer left.

‘Let’s rip the Academy out by the roots.’

Let’s ruin the Academy. It’s a long-standing plan that has finally returned to square one.

“Headmaster.”

“Yes?”

Amon said, his face deadly serious.

“Let’s take what’s left of our operating funds and throw a big banquet.”

“What?”

It was Brestle who reacted immediately.

“That’s a great idea!”

That’s when Marion interrupted.

“Amon, are you out of your mind?”

“We’ll eat and drink, and we’ll have plenty of Amur specialty liquor.”

“That’s a great idea!”

Anar’el said with a serious face, leaving a giggling Marion behind.

“Teacher Amon, what are you thinking, a banquet all of a sudden?”

“Let’s see, Headmaster.”

Amon pointed to Brestle and Marion.

“They’ve been in a heavy mood, but at the mere mention of a banquet, they’ve regained their strength and are enjoying themselves.”

“What?”

“No matter what you do, it won’t go well with a sinking mood, so I think it’s time for a little cheer.”

“.....”

“A banquet, or a meal, is a big deal. Just eating a meal can energize you, it can change the way you think, so this is not just a banquet, it’s a banquet to build up the strength to start anew.”

“.....”

“That’s what we need right now, I think.”

At the seriousness in Amon’s voice, Anar’el narrowed her eyes.

“You are certainly right, and since there is nothing we can do about it now, we might as well eat and drink and drown our sorrows.”

“Exactly.”

Pushing herself to her feet, Anar’el held out her pouch of operating funds.

“It’s all the operating funds the Academy has left.”

“.....”

“Then I’ll ask you to prepare the banquet with it.”

With that, Anar’el smiled sheepishly and turned away.

Seeing her like that, Amon had a hunch.

‘The headmaster has a premonition.’

That this would be the last banquet.

That maybe it would be right to leave on a high note one last time, rather than trying to keep the Academy alive in a shoddy, crappy way.

‘But she’s not wrong.’

Amon, clutching the operating funds tightly, pushed himself to his feet.

One last banquet.

He planned to set the table as richly and lavishly as possible, to make it a fond memory.

‘They say that ghosts that eat and die are handsome, so we might as well leave the Academy with at least one good memory!’

Amon smiled brightly and ran off.

* * *

After buying as many good ingredients as he could find at the market, Amon returned to the academy with his luggage.

“Huh? Who are these people?”

Were they people who came to see the exhibition late?

Amon frowned as he approached them, and just as he did, Anar'el came running up to him, panting.

"Ah, Teacher Amon!"

"Who are those people?"

"You don't have to worry about them now!"

"What? Why?"

Just then, Sloth poked his head out of the crowd and said.

"Amon, are you here?"

"Senior?"

For a moment, Amon's head spun.

All the worst possible scenarios that I can think of flash through my mind.

"Wait, senior."

"Huh?"

"The things they have."

Sloth nodded.

"Academy sponsorships and donations from my family."

Amon fell to his knees in a heap at that, but Anar'el grabbed him by the shoulders and shook him.

"That's not all, when teacher Amon was away, a messenger from the imperial family went by, and they're going to lift the suspension on a trial basis, and they're also going to give us a monthly subsidy!"

"Ah, ahhh....."

Amon fell to his knees and began to pick at his head.

At that moment, Raymond walked over, smiling.

"Sir, an old gentleman was so impressed with my work earlier, he's donated money to the academy so I can continue my artistic endeavors!"

“Uh, uhhhhh.....”

The old man who was the last one left in the exhibition hall earlier!

Amon was clutching his head and twitching.

Seeing him, the entire academy shouted.

“Then, teacher Amon, let the celebration begin!”

Amon howled in response to their hopeful shouts, clutching his head.

Anar’el smiled broadly through her tears.

“Yes, teacher Amon, let out all of your pent-up frustrations, you’ve been in so much trouble!”

“Aaaaaaah!”

“I didn’t know you’ve been holding your tears in like that.....!”

Chapter 35

In a darkened office, Anar’el placed her clenched hands on the table and muttered in a deep voice.

“.....The time has finally come.”

The cease-and-desist recommendation had been rescinded, meaning that Amonis Academy had finally been officially recognized for its resurrection.

The number of students and teachers hasn’t changed, of course, except that funding has become more accessible.

But “officially revived” was a big deal.

“Whoo-hoo-hoo, good, it’s about time.”

Muttering again for emphasis, Anar’el began to move.

* * *

A person can gain peace of mind simply by thinking differently even if it’s a desperate mental victory.

‘Okay, let’s just pretend it’s a job saved.’

If you think of it that way, it's not bad news, it's good news.

'Even though the executives and fellow teachers are still incompetent, and the situation is still desperate, the fact that the workplace has survived is good news.'

A smirking Amon muttered.

"Isright?"

I don't think so.

'Um, but why did I get a chill earlier.....?'

Amon shivered at the unexplained chill.

Chalking it up to exhaustion, Amon began to organize his stack of papers.

It was a paper for his subject, history.

'First of all, I finished today's class, so let's see what I need for tomorrow.'

Amon smiled softly as he began to sort through the papers.

"Peaceful."

It's been a few months since his appointment to the Academy.

In a few more months, he would have been here for half a year.

But with so many twists and turns along the way, it hasn't felt like a short time at all.

'It feels like years have passed.'

But lo and behold!

I'm organizing papers for tomorrow's class right now!

It's the life of a teacher she dreamed of, nothing more, nothing less!

'And the students are all so well behaved, so eager to learn, so happy in this calm peace.'

Although he found his fellow teachers a little frustrating, he didn't have to deal with them as much as he would have liked.

He'd joined them when his subject wasn't assigned, or when he'd been given temporary classes, but now he was a history teacher, proudly in charge of his own subject!

"Hoo hoo hoo. I guess I can sleep well tonight."

A little happiness!

He lifted his favorite chamomile tea to his lips, as his insomnia had been getting worse lately.

"Teacher Amon!"

Amon's face contorted into a ghastly grimace at the sound of Anar'el's voice.

But he quickly composed himself and muttered.

"It's nothing."

Amon swallowed a gulp of chamomile tea to help calm his emotions.

"Yes, please come in."

"Yes, yes, you're not busy, are you?"

Amon glanced at the thick stack of papers.

"Yes. As you can see, I'm 'not' busy at all, of course."

"Good! I came to see you first because there's something I wanted to talk to you about at length."

Talking at length.

Amon laughed as he poured himself a cup of soothing chamomile tea.

"Haha, I see, what can I help you with?"

"Oh, thank you for the tea."

"Don't touch it. It's mine."

"Oh, right."

Anar'el cleared her throat.

“As you may have heard, teacher Amon, the shutdown recommendation for our academy has been rescinded.”

“Yes, I know.”

True to her word, the shutdown was rescinded about a week ago.

Anar’el continued.

“We no longer have to worry about operating funds like we used to, and if we do need them, the Imperials will provide them, as long as we’re worthy.”

“Of course.”

I understand that’s why Vice Headmaster Brestle has been in trouble lately.

‘Do you think you can satisfactorily feed the students with a shabby cafeteria? Buy the finest ingredients and hire the best chefs right now and.....’

Of course, more than half of the comments were dismissed, but the rather shabby cafeteria was on the way to improvement.

“Anyway, at this point, it’s my judgment as headmaster that our academy can’t afford to rest on its laurels.”

“Hoh, that sounds like.....”

Amon’s eyes twinkled.

“As the headmaster said, we are an academy in name only. Three students, three teachers.....”

Amon mumbled, then clapped his hands.

“So you’re going to start recruiting students and hiring new teachers!”

Anar’el smiled broadly at that reasonable comment.

“No, we’re going to start an academy exchange!”

Amon cupped his ears, wondering if he’d heard wrong.

When he felt the pain in his ears, he decided enough was enough and removed his hands from his ears and opened his mouth.

“Can you say that again?”

“The Academy Exchange!”

“.....Uh, um, yes.”

Amon is no stranger to the Academy Exchange War.

It was a system to capitalize on the competitive spirit of academies and their students, and it was a kind of competition organized by the imperial family where each academy competed against each other in various ways!

With direct imperial oversight, the academy that won the competition would be able to boost its reputation.

“Anyway,” Amon said after gulping down the soothing chamomile tea.

“Headmaster.”

“Yes?”

“I understand what you mean. Since the suspension has been rescinded, our academy is officially revived, which means we are eligible to hold the Academy Exchange War.”

“Exactly!”

Amon replied cheerfully, suppressing the urge to tug at Anar’el’s ears.

“But, Headmaster, think carefully. An exchange is premature. Even the smallest, most insignificant academy would have well over a hundred students, while we only have three students and three teachers”

“Hmm.”

“Besides, unlike the competition where only certain events are allowed, the exchange events have clearly defined events, right? Each academy decides on a topic among swordsmanship, magic, and general academics.”

“Right.”

Amon smiled, glad that Anar’el understood what he was saying.

“So we’ll have to compete in all of them, and since our academy only has three students, someone will have to compete in more than one, right?”

“I suppose so.”

Amon narrowed his eyes. Was she really getting this?

“Headmaster.”

“Yes.”

“So why don’t we hold off on the exchange?”

“I already signed up for it.”

Amon began to sip from the pot of chamomile tea, a soothing and relaxing drink.

And when the pot was empty he hit Anar’el on the head with it.

“Kkiyaaaaak! Wh, what are you doing!”

“What are you doing! You’re the one whose head doesn’t work! What the hell were you thinking, signing up for an exchange! What are you going to use those long ears for, can’t you hear people!”

“Heehee! Ears, ears are not allowed.....”

“Ew, ew, ew!”

Amon finally sank to the ground in a huff.

Competing against other academies? Yeah, well, swordsmanship is one thing.

There is Chloe, who has done well in the competition, and Sword Master Raymond, the grandson and disciple of the Azure Sky Sword King Reinbelt.

Oh, and there’s Boris.

‘But what about the other disciplines? Magic? My students still don’t understand the connection between ether and mana, or the interference of the Etherius and Material Plane barriers!’

Actually, those are things even a dragon would have trouble with!

‘And history? I’m sure the other academies have students who know their books like they’ve chewed them up, swallowed them, and digested them! And math? We don’t even teach it!’

In other words, we’re going to lose everything except swordsmanship!

‘But we can’t cancel it!’

The tournament is organized by the Imperial Court.

So, a week after the suspension was rescinded, you're going to apply for a tournament and then cancel it with a flip of your hand?

If Amon were Emperor, he'd have the Academy burned to the ground for malfeasance.

"Ugh, uhhhh....."

Amon glares at Anar'el.

"Hey, let me get this straight, which academy did you sign up for the exchange?"

"Vestric Academy."

"No!"

Amon was stunned.

Vestric Academy was the strongest academy in the continent, the best and the largest academy in the empire.

* * *

All the teachers who received the news were lying next to each other.

Amon was obviously in shock, while Marion was sick with alcohol poisoning.

Sloth was just lying there.

Amon, who was grunting anyway, muttered.

"An exchange match.....Our academy is having an exchange match....."

Marion opened his alcoholic mouth at the sound of Amon's sobbing.

"Amon, don't worry too much."

"Are you not worried now?"

"Uh huh, just listen. You're right, it's a bit rash, but I can understand the headmaster's intentions for the exchange."

"....."

"The suspension is rescinded. The Academy has been officially revived, but as you say, the admission of students and the appointment of faculty members....."

Lifting his head slightly, Marion glanced at the three lying teachers.

“Who would want to come in after seeing this?”

“.....”

She wasn't wrong.

There were only three students and three teachers.

What kind of lunatic would want to cross the threshold of this place, even if it was reopened?

“Besides, even if it was open, who would know? They'll just think it was a failed academy.”

“.....”

“But what if we held an exchange, and we could announce the Academy's resurrection to the rest of the Empire, and what if we did well in the exchange?”

Amon replied.

“We'd be swamped with people trying to get in.”

“That's right. At a time when the prestigious Amonis Academy is still not forgotten, if news of its victory in the exchange battle spreads, it will only be a matter of time before it regains its former glory.”

“But even if there is a chance, it is too much.”

“.....”

It is.

The opponent was Vestric Academy, with thousands of students and hundreds of teachers.

Numbers were numbers, but the comparison to Amonis Academy in terms of quality was ridiculous.

Each and every one of their teachers would be able to obtain a high-ranking noble title even if they defected to any kingdom, and every single one of their graduates would be appointed as knights and wizards!

“Anyone can see that this is like throwing an egg at a rock.”

Sloth, who had been listening silently, said.

Aren't you being rude to the egg?"

"I'm sorry, egg."

With a heavy sigh, Amon pushed himself to his feet.

"In any case, I can see the Headmaster's intentions: to revive the Academy as quickly as possible."

"Hmm, I suppose so?"

"Besides, the water has already been spilled. I guess we'll just have to do the best we can with what we've got."

"Hmm?"

Marion and Sloth scratched their heads at Amon's sudden turn to positivity.

"What's with the sudden motivation?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, well."

Amon said, chewing on a chamomile leaf absentmindedly.

"I thought about it for a minute, but it's not like I'll be the one to suffer anyway, it's the students."

"....."

Chapter 36

The old man burst into laughter.

"Ha, hahahaha!"

The imperial messenger brought shocking news.

Amonis Academy has requested an exchange match with the Vestric Academy, the best and strongest academy on the continent.

The old man, the headmaster of Vestric Academy, laughed out loud.

“Well, that’s pretty funny news. Isn’t it, Jericho?”

Jericho, the imperial messenger, smirked.

“I think so, too.”

“Fufufufu. An exchange match with the Amonis Academy.”

He glanced at the newspaper on his desk.

He’d already read that the cease-and-desist letter issued to Amonis Academy had been rescinded.

In other words, Amonis Academy is officially back.

“I was thinking of stepping on Amonis Academy, but I was worried about the publicity and wondering when to make a move, but they took the initiative first.....I can’t thank them enough!”

The two academies have a long history of enmity.

Vestric Academy was a venerable and prestigious institution, but it paled in comparison to Amonis Academy, which was founded by the first Emperor of the Empire.

‘Aye, but our Vestric Academy has surpassed Amonis Academy. It’s just a bunch of stupid pompous people talking about nothing.’

So Vestric watched for an opportunity to dethrone Amonis.

Then one day Amonis Academy failed.

‘No big event, just a bad investment by the headmaster, and the academy was gone in one fell swoop.....’

I wanted a good cleanse, not this hollow victory but then this opportunity came along!

“Hoo hoo hoo, fine, I’ll accept the exchange. Please organize it as soon as possible.”

“Yes, sir, I will report to the imperial court as such.”

After the messenger left, the headmaster of Vestric was lost in thought.

‘But what is she thinking?’

A dying Amonis against Vestric in an exchange?

Even a three-year-old knows it's a losing proposition.

'I don't know what you're thinking, but I don't care.'

No matter how good Amonis was, they were no match for Vestric.

'It's like a mouse pouncing on a still cat. All a cat can do is have fun with it.'

The Headmaster chuckled grimly and rose to his feet.

'It's time to settle an old score between the academies, and.....my own personal grudge.'

The Headmaster's eyes flashed and he burst into laughter.

* * *

Amon frowned.

"The.....exchange is in three days?"

"Yes, that's right."

Anar'el, whose eyes were shining over her clasped hands, said in a serious voice.

"By the way, how are your preparations for the exchange coming along?"

Shifting her weight, Anar'el hastily assumed a defensive stance.

She expected Amon to attack as soon as she spoke but instead, Amon just stroked his chin, lost in thought.

".....?"

"Hmm.....it's going well....."

Muttering to himself, Amon clicked his tongue.

"Well, it's going well, for now."

"What? For now?"

Amon nodded.

"It's just a matter of when it's going to blow up."

“Blow up?”

“Mmm, would you like to take a look?”

“.....Uh, do you think so?”

After a moment, looking at the students, Anar’el said.

“By exploding, did you mean their head would explode?”

The students had their heads buried in piles of papers, unable to breathe!

Amon cracked his whip at the relaxed students.

“Hurry up and read your papers!”

“Hee hee!”

Anar’el yelped and lunged at Amon.

“Teacher Amon, what kind of whip are you using on your students!”

“It’s okay! It’s just a paddle! It doesn’t hurt!”

“Uh, a paddle.”

“Hurry up and read your papers!”

“Gaaaaaah!”

The problem was, it was Amon who was wielding the paddle.

As the students groaned in terror at the sight of the cord tearing through the air, Anar’el felt a familiar tingle of dread.

‘Man, this reminds me of something I experienced as a graduate student at the Academy.....!’

Her ears began to twitch as the painful memories of the past came flooding back.

And just as she was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, Boris, buried in his papers, howled.

Amon heard his plaintive cry and shouted back.

“Boris, if you suffer now, riches and honor will follow!”

“Wealth, wealth and honor.....!”

“Yes, all you have to do is win against Vestric, and you’ll be on solid ground!”

Boris, dazed, began to read the paper with a gasp.

And then.

“Chloe, are you reading the papers well?”

“The technique of the Bastrode family...the center of power.....”

“You’re doing great!”

Amon glared at Raymond.

He was reading a history book with dark circles under his eyes.

“Raymond!”

“I’m reading hard!”

“No, you can take it easy.”

“Yes.....?”

Seeing Raymond’s confusion, Anar’el clapped her hands in understanding.

“Ah! Well, Raymond’s going to be competing in the swordsmanship event, so he won’t have to study too hard!”

“Isn’t that right?”

“Exactly.”

“Raymond will be competing in another event.”

“What? What’s that.....?”

Where else would you use a sure-win card that guarantees you an unconditional victory in a swordsmanship event?

“Uh-huh, Principal!”

“What?”

Amon thumped his chest.

“Just trust me! Didn’t you leave this exchange to me?”

“Well, yeah.....”

“You can rest assured that I will win this exchange!”

Amon’s enthusiastic words relaxed Anar’el’s expression a bit.

“That’s right.....”

And there was a good reason for Amon’s enthusiasm.

‘It’s not like I’m the one who’s suffering.....’

Only the students were pitiful.

* * *

The three days went by too quickly.

But like a long-awaited picnic day, Benjamin, the headmaster of Vestric Academy, had been waiting for this day for what seemed like weeks.

‘Hoo hoo hoo, this day has finally arrived, the day I will finally end Amonis Academy with my own hands.....’

Benjamin turned his head with a wicked smile.

Behind him, the students who would be participating in the exchange and the teachers who taught them stood smugly.

“Now, are you all ready?”

“Yes, Headmaster!”

Benjamin strutted away as the thunderous response fell.

He walked through the front gates of Amonis Academy.

Benjamin glanced at the old gatekeeper who opened the gate for him and scratched his head.

‘Who is he? I recognize him from somewhere.....’

The question was in his mind, but today was the long-awaited day of the destruction of Amonis Academy!

Benjamin quickly put the old gatekeeper out of his mind and started walking towards the main building of Amonis Academy.

Once there, he spotted a familiar face and burst out laughing.

“Hahahaha, look who it is!”

“Huh?”

“Headmaster Anar’el, it’s been a long time!”

The two academies had a long history of enmity, so of course they were old faces.

Benjamin’s laugh made Anar’el grin from ear to ear.

“It’s been a long time, I thought you were dead of old age.”

“Well, you’re pretty laid back.”

Benjamin chuckled and looked around at Anar’el.

‘.....But what is this?’

He knew that the number of students and teachers was significantly smaller.

He’d expected the students to be fairly sophisticated for such a small number, but they were in terrible shape.

“Ugh, uh, uh.....”

“I’m tired.....”

The fact that all three students were standing there at all seemed surprisingly sketchy.

Eventually, Benjamin burst out laughing.

“Hahahaha! Headmaster Anar’el, are those the students who will be participating in the exchange?”

“.....”

“And what the heck!”

The teachers were even worse.

A woman with scattered hair, wearing an eye patch and dozing off!

A middle-aged woman reeking of alcohol, clutching her aching stomach while groaning in discomfort!

And a young man who is laughing hysterically at what's so good about his hopeless situation!

"Hahaha, Amonis Academy has so many talented people, I envy you!"

At Benjamin's sarcasm, the students and teachers of the academy who had followed him also began to giggle and laugh.

Clearly, in their eyes, Amonis Academy was not normal.

Anar'el, who had heard Benjamin's mockery through one ear and let it pass through his long ears, spoke.

"Now that both sides are here, shall we begin?"

"Hahaha, good."

As soon as the two principals reached an agreement, several men and women who had been waiting on one side of the headmaster approached.

They were the imperial overseers who would be joining the exchange.

One of the overseers spoke up.

"I am Aspatal, the overseer of this tournament. Today's competition between the two academies will feature swordsmanship, magic, history, math, and science. Five disciplines in total, is that correct?"

"That is correct."

"No objection."

"Very well, then, please decide which disciplines will be contested first."

The order will be determined by agreement of both academies.

Anar'el glanced at Benjamin, but he merely shrugged, his face relaxed, as if to say, "You decide."

“The first event will be the theory of magic and the construction of magic circles.”

“Hmm. What does Vestric have to say?”

Benjamin frowned suddenly at the overseer’s question.

“Theories of magic and the construction of magic circles? Doesn’t that seem intuitive for a magical contest?”

At that, Anar’el spoke up.

“I’m sorry, but all of our students are still first years, and we’re not at the stage where we can hold magic competitions yet.”

“.....Hmm.”

“Please consider the circumstances of this academy.”

Benjamin’s lips twitched up at the corners as if to say, “What the hell.”

“Well, it is what it is. I understand.”

“I’m glad you understand, Benjamin.”

“You have nothing to thank me for.....”

A smirking Benjamin shook his head.

‘This is ridiculous.’

The student from Vestric’s side who would be competing in the magical event was from the ‘Tower’ and was slated to be hired as an apprentice imperial mage after graduating from the academy.

‘That means he’s perfect in theory as well as practice. Do you really think you might have a chance if it’s just theory?’

Benjamin nodded, thinking it was a shallow calculation.

“Very well, then, let’s get started.”

“Okay.”

As the two principals spoke, one of the overseers stepped forward.

He was the one who would decide the outcome of the magical contest.

“Students of both sides, forward.”

Vestric’s student stepped forward confidently.

“Hmm, I’ve never met anyone my age who’s better at magic than me.

The sight of the Amonis student stepping forward further boosted Vestric’s confidence.

‘What’s this wiry little fellow, learning magic like this?’

Magic has a lot to do with talent and bloodline.

‘But this kid in front of me is nothing more than a commoner!’

The proctor looked at the student and said.

“Mutual courtesy.”

“I am Meyer Delmond of.....Vestric Academy.”

“Boris of Amonis Academy.”

Meyer frowned at the name.

‘No last name? You’re really a commoner, aren’t you?’

He wasn’t expecting anything spectacular, but he should at least be decent.

‘Well, that’s pathetic. Let’s get this over with and get some rest.’

The overseer spoke up.

“This match will be a debate, asking for each other’s opinions on theories after the construction of the magic circle, and the judgment of victory or defeat will be decided by this proctor.”

“Yes!”

“Very well, then who goes first?”

“I’ll go first.”

Meyer quickly stepped forward.

As he drew a magic circle in the air, the proctor’s mouth twitched.

'Wow, a magic circle at such a young age, and without a medium? Meyer Delmond.....'

The proctor turned his head, recognizing the student as one to watch.

"Amonis Academy, then. Identify the magic circle."

".....Ah, yes."

The dazed boy from Amonis Academy looked at the magic circle.

"Uh.....um....."

Meyer smirked at the drooling, stuttering boy.

'Hmph, this isn't your kind of magic.'

A 'blind' magic circle that could only be used by a mage of four circles or higher!

So Meyer waited for his opponent to admit defeat, but what he heard next was unexpected.

"Blind?"

".....?"

A quick glance at that?

The next words were even more shocking.

"But your magic circle is so ineffective."

"What, what.....?"

The boy scribbled on the paper he was holding.

"Look, this is the magic circle that Mr. Meyer drew, but if you take out the two outer lines, here and here, the flow of mana will be more active."

"....."

"And why do you need the bottom reinforcement line? I thought the theory that reinforcement lines were necessary for mana reinforcement was abandoned years ago thanks to Archmage Gilliam thesis....."

Meyer's eyes widened in disbelief.

'What is he talking about?'

It was all unintelligible.

Meyer looked at the supervisor in confusion and realized that the supervisor was listening to the boy with a serious face.

After a moment, the supervisor spoke up.

"... .. That's true. If we remove two outer lines, the duration of Blind will at least double."

".....!"

Meyer's mouth dropped open, and the supervisor continued.

"Besides, you know the theory of Mr. Gilliam, who belongs to a non-mainstream school....."

Scratching his head, the supervisor looked at the boy.

"A student of Amonis."

"What?"

"May I ask the student's name again, what did you say it was?"

To that question, the boy who had been forcibly indoctrinated with the 'basic magic theory of Amon's common sense' without sleep answered in a half-sane voice.

"Boris."

".....Oh, yes, Boris. I'll remember that."

The supervisor glanced at Meyer.

Judging by the way his mouth was hanging open and he was trembling, he didn't have the energy to counter at Boris's suggestion.

"Then, student Boris, present your magic circle."

"Yes."

Boris scribbled on a fresh sheet of paper and held it out.

Meyer looked at the magic circle on the paper and scratched his head.

'What's that magic circle.....?'

Seeing Meyer's mouth hanging open in a dumbfounded expression, the supervisor looked at Boris's magic circle.

And then.

"Kuluk!"

The overseer coughed and covered his mouth, but before he could stop himself, he muttered the magic name.

"Seven, seventh circle firestorm.....?"

Boris, who had been forcibly injected with the 'magic circle, which is basic to Amon's common sense' without being able to sleep, spoke in a half-sane voice.

"Yep. It's Firestorm."

Chapter 37

The people of Vestric Academy were in an uproar.

"He, at such a young age, drew a difficult magic circle as Firestorm, and he did it on the fly, just like that.....?"

"That's ridiculous! It's a magic circle that even mid-level mages in the Magic Tower can't draw easily!"

"Didn't he just memorize that magic circle?"

The overseer glared at them with a stern face.

"Does that mean you're doubting my discernment?"

"That's not what....."

"If he had only memorized that magic circle in the first place, he wouldn't have been able to see through Vestric's magic circle so easily. Please don't take the student's hard work and achievements for granted, and refrain from making rash comments."

".....Sorry, sir."

Amon smirked as the supervisor scolded Vestric.

The Vestric Academy wasn't entirely wrong.

'He actually memorized it by cramming.'

But even if the proctor was right, it would be difficult to achieve the kind of results he did today even if he memorized everything.

Besides, there are shortcuts to everything.

'.....what is this?'

'I noticed you've been feeling tired lately. Drink this.'

'I mean, what is this?'

Boris looked at the bubbling liquid and instinctively recoiled.

Amon smiled in response to Boris's question.

'It's made with the arcane techniques of Vice Principal Brestle's tribe.'

'.....What are the effects?'

'First, the name. Sleepless Medicine Bath.'

'.....?'

That's the name. How intuitive is that?

'Oh, I don't want to take it.'

'No, you have to eat it.'

Boris, who was expressing his reluctance with his whole body, ended up taking the special Brestle medicine bath thanks to Amon's 'sweet and gentle' behavior.

'It's working.'

Eventually, Boris was able to devour magical texts and treatises without sleep, but there was a small, tiny problem.

Reading without sleep was one thing, but memorizing was another.

But after consulting with Anar'el, Amon came up with a solution.

"Boris, open this scroll," he said.

'What is this?'

'It's a magic scroll.'

'I mean, what kind of magic?'

'You'll know when you hear the name. The magic of remembering bad things. How's that for intuitive?'

'.....'

Once again, Boris was vehement in his refusal.

But Amon's "cajoling and pleading" forced him to tear up the scroll.

The result.

'Sir, my dark circles are down to my chest.'

'Um.....'

'Can't you get rid of these later?'

'Mmm.....By the way, how are you remembering the content?'

'Most of it is still in my head, but can I get rid of these dark circles?'

Amon didn't answer, and Boris's face flushed with anger.

'What the hell.'

My hard work is paying off!

'Boris! I'm so proud of you!'

Amon, who had been gazing at Boris with affection, raised his hand.

"First match, Boris of Amonis Academy wins!"

A heavy silence fell on the Vestric Academy side at the shout.

They had traveled all the way here to simply step on Amonis Academy's toes, but they had lost the first match in a crushing defeat.

The supervisor who had declared Amonis victorious tapped Boris on the shoulder.

"Boris, I remembered your name well. After you graduate from the academy, you will come to the imperial court."

“.....?”

Instead of answering, the overseer handed him a small marker and he returned to his seat.

As Boris returned to his seat, still clutching the marker, Anar’el spoke in a low voice.

“Good work, student Boris.”

“Ah, yes.....thank you.”

Anar’el wore a serious face, befitting the dignity of a headmaster.

However, her ears flicked inexplicably, indicating that she was more than a little pleased to have won.

“That’s right. Congratulations.”

“What.....?”

“That’s the mark of an imperial mage recruiter. I guess you’ve got a job lined up early after graduation, huh?”

“.....!”

At Anar’el’s words, Boris absentmindedly glanced at the overseer.

And the supervisor whose eyes met, the imperial magician training instructor Brayling, nodded with a faint smile.

“Hua, imperial mage.....I, I really.....”

Boris clutched the mark tightly in both hands and began to tremble at the shocking truth.

A commoner entering the imperial court? What an honor to even dream of.

Amon stroked Boris’ head as tears of emotion welled up in his eyes.

“What do you think, was I right?”

“.....Yes, sir.”

It’s no exaggeration to say that Amon has set Boris on the path to wealth and fame.

And while Amon’s smile at Boris is friendly at first glance, a closer look reveals that it’s actually quite rotten.

'This is ridiculous.'

Some people are rotting away in this dirty academy at a young age, while their young disciple is hired as an imperial wizard.

'Boris, you rascal! You're like a cow catching a rat while backing away!'

Jealousy for a student!

Amon, however, didn't seem to mind at all and congratulated Boris, feigning sincerity.

"Congratulations! Boris!"

"Yes, thank you, sir!"

"Don't forget this teacher if you succeed in the future!"

"Yes, Mr. Aaron!"

"Have you forgotten your teacher's name already?"

Meanwhile, Benjamin, the principal of Vestric's school, walked into a meeting with the other teachers with a serious face.

"Damn.....what's going on? I've never heard of Boris before, and I never thought he'd have such a good theory of magic....."

"Well, you're right. We've never heard of him either....."

Benjamin said through gritted teeth.

"An unexpected double agent.....So what about the other students, should we be careful in other competitions?"

At that question, one of the teachers glanced in Amonis' direction.

"Besides this Boris guy, there's another boy.....I remember seeing him."

"Really, where?"

The teacher swallowed hard and said.

"Raymond, the winner of the swordsmanship division of His Majesty's contest not long ago."

Raymond yawned and scratched his chin at being named, and Vestric, who had been glaring at him, entered the road conference.

“What about the level?”

“The runner-up is from House Rada, a family with a reputation for rising to the level of Sword Expert at a young age. But a victory over such a Sword Expert must mean that Raymond is at least a Sword Expert.”

“.....I don't think he's a Sword Master.”

“Considering his age, it's likely he hasn't reached the level of Sword Master.”

Regardless, he was a formidable opponent, that much was certain.

“..... Which of our students can compete in the sword fight?”

“The one with the best swordsmanship is the one who has reached the rank of Sword Master.”

“Ah, so you mean the one with a promising future.”

Benjamin nodded.

“Then that student shall be in charge of Raymond.”

“I see.”

Benjamin patted his chest in relief, as if glad to have Raymond's presence known in advance, and turned to Anar'el.

“So, what would you like for our next match?”

Benjamin assumed it would be a swordsmanship contest.

After winning the first match, it was only natural to want to keep the momentum going and win the next.

But Anar'el seemed unconcerned.

“Let's go with history.”

“.....huh? Not swordsmanship?”

“Yes, history.”

Benjamin frowned at that, then clicked his tongue.

'I would have thought she would have played a card with a higher chance of winning to win the second match, but.....she's a clueless elf.'

Vestric was actually hoping for a History match.

'Hoo hoo hoo.....the student who will be competing in the history tournament is a very accomplished student.'

Winner of many official debate tournaments!

He had won several times and performed well in oratorical competitions, so after graduation, he was offered appointments as a politician and diplomat in many kingdoms.

'He's very familiar with history.'

In the end, the match was a must-win for Vestric.

When the match was finally set, one of the overseers stepped forward.

"I am Kaloris, imperial scholar, and this contest will be a debate on a topic related to history, and the winner will be the one who makes the most reasoned argument, and the judgment of victory or defeat will be made by me, the Overseer."

As the words fell, a student from Vestric's side stepped forward confidently.

A winner of many debate tournaments, and a student who was more confident than anyone else when it came to speaking!

'Fufufufu, didn't they say that the headmaster would write a letter of recommendation to the imperial court if I win this exchange? What an opportunity.....'

Winning a debate against a student from a failing academy?

It's so simple that it makes me wonder if the headmaster was trying to find an excuse to write a letter of recommendation!

So Vestric's student, John of Marnie's House, has to think about what to say.

'Wouldn't it be good to have a topic that would definitely bring down the opponent and also catch the eye of the imperial overseer? Then, I would choose the political conflict between the Principality of Vladimir and the Duke of Everglow as a topic.....'

John, who had been lost in thought, suddenly looked up.

A student from Amonis had stepped forward.

'I assume this is the girl from earlier?'

Since Raymond will be participating in the sword fight, there is only one girl left.

That's why John looked up and saw the figure in front of him!

It was Raymond.

"Kuluk!?"

John coughed hard.

"What!?"

The teachers on Vestric's side were in a panic.

"Uh, why Raymond?"

"Weren't you supposed to be participating in the swordfight?"

John coughed and said in disbelief, echoing the questions of the faculty.

"Uh, uh, why, why would you....."

Raymond tilted his head at the question and opened his mouth.

"What, you?"

John's body stiffened at the icy words.

John is a typical academic.

He's a desk-bound student who's lived his life walled off from athletics!

But the moment the 'Sword Master' spoke those words with irritation and hostility!

-Eek!

A sharp sense of intimidation, as if a ferocious beast was roaring in front of him!

John quietly lowered his eyes and muttered.

"Oh, no. Sorry."

Raymond, seeing him stammering, smirked and whispered back.

“Yeah, yeah. Let’s be good.”

“Uh, yeah.”

“Huh?”

“Yeah, yeah.”

The two students shook hands in a “friendly manner,” and the proctor smiled.

“Heh, heh, heh, good, then we’ll start the second round. Which student will present their thesis first?”

But there was silence.

The proctor looked back and forth between the two students.

“Hmm? Which student would like to present their thesis first?”

“.....”

He asked again, but no answer!

Of the two students, John was the one who couldn’t open his mouth.

Raymond was glaring coldly in front of him!

-Rattle, rattle, rattle!

The gaze of a Sword Master who wasn’t even a scholar, and was at best a ‘wannabe scholar’, was far too fierce and fierce for him to handle!

That’s why John didn’t dare to meet that gaze, only dropping his gaze, and the silence that followed made the overseer frown.

Raymond held up his hand.

“I’ll go first.”

He did as Amon told him, and after days of skimming through history books, he had finally come up with a thesis that he could talk about.

Chapter 38

It was a simple argument that can be spit out by simply skimming through a history book!

Raymond continued.

“What is the significance of the Marquis de Mannoni’s treason?”

Raymond’s simple question brought a look of disbelief to the faces of those watching the discussion, including the supervisor.

‘What.....’

‘What simple.....’

The treason of Marquis de Mannoni’s!

It was an embarrassingly simple topic for a discussion.

A case of history that simply says, ‘This happened and this is the result,’ with no room to dig deeper!

The discussion would end the moment John says, “The Marquis of Mannoni disappeared without leaving a single foundation stone, and only served to strengthen the imperial power!”

There is no room for further discussion!

Amon, watching the situation, smiled wickedly.

‘Fufufufu, but do you think John can answer that question?’

The questioner was none other than a Sword Master.

With the Sword Master glaring in front of him and focusing his intimidating power on John, how could he possibly say anything?

No matter how brilliant John is as a politician, diplomat, or scholar, he’s still just a student.

That means he doesn’t have the courage to speak up for himself!

Amon clenched his fists tightly as he watched John fidgeting with his fingers in front of Raymond.

‘Hahahaha, Vestric Academy, you’ll lose the second match as well!’

He laughed inwardly, his laughter drenched in madness.

“I’ll give you my opinion.”

“.....?”

John, who had been avoiding Raymond’s gaze, took a deep breath.

Then he straightened up, locked eyes with Raymond, and spoke with authority.

“The Marquis of Mannoni’s rebellion was in vain, and as a result, the position of the commoners was greatly enhanced by the efforts of the imperial court, which was wary of the unchecked power of the aristocracy. As a result, the introduction of the tribune system representing the rights of the commoners resulted in the beginning of a confrontational structure between the three powers of the imperial family, the nobles, and the tribune.”

“.....!”

“However, considering the history of the establishment of the Tribune, it is natural that the commoners would support the imperial family, so the treason of the Marquis Mannoni ended up strengthening the imperial power.”

“.....”

John, speaking with a strong voice and expressing his opinions in a well-crafted manner!

Amon’s mouth dropped open at the sight of him.

‘Xed!’

TLN: The author means fuc*ed.

People can’t always kneel down in fear!

In the end, John overcame his fear and took a step forward like a promising student!

‘Besides, he explained the implications of the Marquis’s treason perfectly! There’s nothing to add or take away from it!’

That was the limit of Raymond, who had only read history for a few days!

‘Raymond, you fool, I told you to read history books!’

Amon never said that!

Anyway, as John's sharp retort sent Amon reeling, the supervisor glanced at Raymond, knowing that he had nothing more to say.

"What does student Raymond have to say?"

The cruelty of asking when he knew there was nothing to rebut!

"Nothing....."

"Well, I see."

Then the supervisor, Kaloris, who nodded with a knowing look on his face, continued.

"In that case, I'll let John present his argument this time."

As he had done with Boris and Meyer, Kaloris looked at John with a smirk.

He's secretly betting on John's victory.

And he was right: Raymond's argument was weak, to say the least.

'.....lost.'

Just as Amon was realizing his defeat, John spoke up.

"I would like to speak about the political conflict that has been brewing due to a recent incident on the outskirts of the Empire, on the border between the Duke of Everglow Boston estate and the Grand Duchy of Vladimir."

Amon gasped at the words.

'We lost!'

Amon had hoped that Raymond would use his brilliant mind to make a comment that would cut to the heart of the matter, but what came out of John's mouth was hard for Amon to grasp.

'It's complicated. There's a lot of politics involved.'

The borderline, the refugees, the conflict within the politically neutral zone on the borderline, the long-standing conflict between the Duke of Everglow and the actual ruler of the Grand Duchy of Vladimir, the effective resources of the neutral zone.....

'I can think of at least five conflicts off the top of my head. But I'm sure there are a few more.....'

Even Amon wasn't sure he could win a debate against John on this topic.

It came down to the information gap.

Vestric Academy is a huge organization with tons of up-to-date information!

Amonis Academy, on the other hand, is a small organization that can't be said to be well known, so the information they could receive was limited.

'In the end, the only history we can learn is what's in the history books. The conflict between the Duke of Everglow Boston estate and the Grand Duchy of Vladimir, on the other hand, is not something we can read about.....'

It was a conflict that would soon be in the history books.

History is history, but not if you don't pick it apart.

Nevertheless, it's a good challenge for a discussion like this.

In the end, it meant that for Raymond, who had only skimmed through a few history books, it was content that he could not overcome even if he flew or crawled.

'Okay, let's just make peace with losing.'

Amon smiled, relieved.

"Which incident exactly are you referring to?"

".....?"

"When you say recent, do you mean the battle between the regular army and the mercenaries in the politically neutral zone, or the disappearance of the Grand Duchy's convoy?"

'You mean.....?'

Amon cocked his head.

'Why does he know so much about that? That's an unfamiliar event to me.....?'

Suddenly, Raymond looked different.

John looked puzzled by Raymond's sudden demand for a 'precise definition of the incident'.

"T, since we're discussing a specific incident, any incident is fine."

“Really?”

Raymond stroked his chin.

“Then let’s talk about the conflict with the Duchy over the anomalies on Boston Mountain, located on the Duke of Everglow’s Boston estate.”

“.....?”

John’s eyes narrowed.

He looked as if he was asking, “What the hell is that?”

After a moment of dumbfounded scratching of his head, he looked at the supervisor.

“Mr. Supervisor, I’ve never heard of the conflict caused by the Boston Mountain anomalies.....”

At John’s bewildered question, the supervisor frowned.

“It’s one of the incidents from last year.”

“.....?”

“The incident itself was fairly minor, but it escalated the conflict between the Grand Duchy and the Duke of Everglow, so to speak, and set the stage for many of the events that followed. But.....”

The supervisor frowned and looked at Raymond.

‘How does that student know that? It’s a case that’s been buried under a mountain of dirt on both sides.’

It was something that only the Empire’s most renowned historians had heard of, so how could Raymond know about it?

The reason was simple.

“Ray, have you started your turn yet?”

Amon turned at the sound of a voice behind him.

“Sir, are you here?”

“Hehe, I thought I’d see if there were any other guests today. I hear Ray’s off to the history competition, right?”

“Yes, that’s right, your grandson is about to do something big.”

“What does he know about history?”

The overseer’s eyes widened at the sight of the old man talking to Amon.

“.....?”

It took a few more glances before the supervisor realized the old man’s identity.

‘Azure Sky Sword King Reinbelt!?! And Raymond is the grandson of Reinbelt!?’

He is a Grand Sword Master and one of the ‘Four Imperial Knights’, the core power of the Empire.

Although he was almost invisible and very little information was known about him, everyone knew that he was one of the pillars of the Empire.

So, despite the lack of information, they thought they had a complete picture of his residence.

‘Why would Reinbelt be here.....?’

As the question arose, another was answered.

Why Raymond knows so much about the first conflict between the Duke of Everglow and the Grand Duchy!

‘Well, of course he knows, since Mr. Reinbelt is a resident of the Everglow Dukedom’s Boston Mountain, and the Boston Mountain phenomenon that Raymond mentioned was centered around Mr. Reinbelt!’

An incident where a group of noble children from the Grand Duchy mistook Reinbelt, who was digging for wild vegetables, for a lost old man and played a prank on him, only to be almost beaten to death!

Both sides were embarrassed that such a trivial incident was the start of a political dispute, so they swept it under the rug!

“Furthermore, the other party is none other than the Azure Sky Sword King, Reinbelt. Since he’s a recluse, we can’t build a case around him, so even if we count the conflict as a conflict, we’ve covered it up.....’

The overseer glanced at Reinbelt.

At that moment, their eyes met and he felt a chilling sensation!

The overseer's face turned pale as he felt as if his entire body was being torn apart and he heard a whisper in his ear.

-My grandson has brought up an unnecessary incident. I'm very sorry, but I don't want this to get out of hand, so will you please keep quiet?

'.....'

-I beg you.

The art of transmitting your voice across space needs a massive amount of mana!

The overseer gave a small nod of approval, and Reinbelt smiled with satisfaction.

"Kkkkkkkk.....!"

The overseer coughed and glared at John with a fierce look on his face.

"Student John!"

"Yeah, yeah!"

"You have no intention of refuting the argument!"

"What! Now, give me a minute to....."

"I've given you plenty of time! If you can't come up with an opinion on the argument, there will be consequences!"

The overseer shouted, pointing at Raymond with a stern face.

"Amonis side, student Raymond wins!"

Raymond shook his head at the sudden declaration of victory.

"It's?"

"Student Raymond, congratulations on winning the match. I'll leave you to it!"

The overseer huffed and puffed his way out of the room, leaving the Amonis side stunned by their sudden victory.

"What's going on here?"

"Well, it's just that, all of a sudden, what....."

They were dumbfounded because they didn't know where Reinbelt and Raymond lived, and they didn't know that Reinbelt was the one who did it.

Moreover, giving the victory to Amonis side was ridiculous, so what about the Vestric side?

"Supervisor, what are you doing all of a sudden!"

"Declaring victory without proper criteria, what kind of.....!"

But the supervisor stood his ground.

"If you have any objections, please raise them formally later!"

"This.....!"

The unreasonableness of the situation finally got to Vestric's side.

'Damn it.....did Amonis bribe the supervisor too?'

Benjamin, the headmaster of Vestric's academy, glanced at Jericho, the proctor but Jericho shrugged, as if he didn't know what was going on.

'This is the kind of humiliation the Amonis Academy deserves.....'

Benjamin gritted his teeth.

"I can't. Since we gave them two wins, we'll have no choice but to win the other three games in a landslide."

"That's right, Headmaster."

"We can't keep giving them the choice of matches."

"That's right."

With that, Benjamin turned toward Anar'el.

"This time, we'll have the choice of the match!"

".....Well, go ahead."

"Fine!"

Benjamin exclaimed, looking back at the proctor.

“Proctor, our next match will be math!”

At that shout, the supervisor in charge of math, and the supervisor who was in cahoots with Vestric’s side, stepped forward!

A student with a keen eye for math also walked out from the Vestric side!

“.....We’ll win this match by a landslide.

The student from the Vestric side was already a mathematician.

‘I’ve solved many problems and published several papers.’

So when Vestric puffed out his chest with pride.

Amon, from the Amonis side, raised his hand to the proctor and shouted.

“We will abstain from the math competition!”

Chapter 39

“What’s?”

“What did you just say.....?”

Everyone in the room, faculty and supervisors alike, not to mention Vestric’s students, looked at Amon with dumbfounded faces.

“Zee, what did you just say, abstain?”

Amon nodded confidently in response to the bewildered supervisor’s question.

“Yep. Abstain.”

The answer was met with a shout from Benjamin, the headmaster of Vestric.

“Now what do you mean!”

He shouted as he strode toward Amonis.

“Abstaining? Abstaining from an honorable Academy’s exchange, what kind of nonsense is that?”

Amon smirked at his trembling, outraged face.

“It’s not like we’re going to do something that doesn’t exist, so why can’t we use the abstention system?”

“What, what!”

“We only have three students to compete in the first place, which means that either two students will have to compete in two bouts or one student will have to run the full three bouts, and that’s too much for them, don’t you think?”

“This…….”

“It’s called conditioning for a smooth bout, so to speak.”

Amon said, this time looking at the supervisor.

“Supervisor, I know that there is a system of abstention in the exchange battle, but is it wrong to abstain?”

“Well, it’s…….”

Jericho, a supervisor with close ties to the Vestric side, looked at Benjamin and said.

“I’m sure you’re right, but it’s a great dishonor to abstain from an exchange that is organized by the imperial family themselves.”

“I see, I understand that, but I value students more than honor. I don’t want to put unnecessary pressure on my students.”

“…….”

This is a lie.

There is currently no “math” teacher at the Academy.

That means there are no students to compete in the math tournament!

Still, just to be safe, Amon checked the students’ math level – or rather, their arithmetic before math – and the results were hopeless!

‘Guys, there are five apples, and Boris ate three of them, and then Raymond picked three new apples, and you and Raymond ate one apple each, and Boris ate two more apples, so how many apples are left?’

Chloe answered.

‘Kill Boris, who ate five apples by himself.’

Boris replied.

'I don't like apples.'

Raymond.

'I have three left.'

'.....Why three?'

'Why not?'

'.....'

They had no choice but to abstain.

'There's no way we're going to get the entire regular curriculum back when the Academy has only just been revived.'

Rather than compete and be humiliated, they would save face in the name of "protecting the students"!

'I am a genius after all!'

But the times always persecute geniuses unjustly!

Everyone at Vestric Academy, as well as Supervisor Jericho, were staring at him like he was garbage.

'It's okay, I'm used to playing the villain.'

Just then, a quiet voice came from the allies' side.

"Wow, what a piece of shit....."

Silent gossip from an ally, Sloth!

It was one thing to be slandered by your enemies, but to have your own allies criticize you was unbearable.

That's when Marion quietly corrected her.

"Sloth, it's all been said before."

"Why didn't I hear it?"

“You didn’t hear it because you were asleep…….”

“Aha.”

Amon nodded.

‘I’m not trash after all.’

While Amon was celebrating his mental victory, Vestric was in a tactical meeting.

“Oh no. Judging by the way he speaks…….”

“Yeah, they’ve already won the first two bouts, which means there’s only one student left, and he’ll probably withdraw from either of the two remaining bouts…….”

The mood on Vestric’s side darkened as they realized this.

They had come here confident of a landslide victory.

But if Amonis Academy were to forfeit one of the two remaining matches, it would mean that there was only one match they could actually win.

‘So, does that mean we can win two matches by forfeiting, and only one match can actually be won?’

‘What a disgrace against a dying academy…….’

If they win two bouts by forfeit and win the other one, it’s a win for Vestric.

But “winning two matches by forfeit”?

How can this be called a victory? It would be more correct to say that he was defeated!

Benjamin gritted his teeth and glared at Anar’el.

‘Damn you……are you going to humiliate me again?’

How humiliating it had been when Amonis Academy had been shut down, leaving him with an empty victory.

And now you’re going to humiliate me with this hollow victory in an exchange?

Finally, an enraged Benjamin shouted.

“Headmaster Anar’el!”

“Oh, why are you shouting?”

“What are you going to compete in next? Are you going to cowardly withdraw from the next competition too!”

At his rant, Anar’el grabbed Amon and whispered.

“What can we do, he’s already noticed?”

“Well.....I can’t help it.”

Two abstentions in a row was supposed to be a serious traumatizing blow to the Vestric, but it was so easy to see through him.

“Well.....it doesn’t really matter, it doesn’t change the fact that we’re going to win anyway.”

“.....Mmm.”

Drooling, Anar’el rolled her eyes.

“By the way, Mr. Amon.”

“What?”

“I’ve heard a little bit about it.....Why is Chloe participating in the swordsmanship round?”

The two remaining competitions were swordsmanship and science!

Science is out, and Chloe is supposed to compete in the swordsmanship tournament.

But that worries Anar’el.

“After all, we need three wins to win, so shouldn’t we put Raymond in the swordsmanship tournament after all? He’s a Sword Master, right?”

“Hmm.....”

“Why wouldn’t we play the must-win card.....?”

“Umm.....”

Anar’el wasn’t wrong.

There was just a problem.

“I thought it was a must-win card at first, too.”

“It’s?”

“So, I actually wanted to send Raymond in after seeing the situation, but when I actually looked at the cards, the other team’s cards were a bit stronger.”

“.....what?”

Amon looked at the boy on Vestric’s side.

‘.....Wait, is he really a boy?’

The boy’s face was old, but his sturdy body could have been a young man.

‘He’s a very well-built boy.’

Given the aura of a student about to enter a sword fighting tournament, it was likely he was a Sword Master.

‘If Raymond it’s a flush, they have a full house.’

He’s got a slight edge.

Of course, a difference of that magnitude can change the outcome in a real game, but the problem is that he is physically superior.

‘How old is he? He’s bigger than me, and I wonder if he’s had a face lift?’

Reasonable suspicion!

That’s why Amon didn’t want Raymond to compete.

“But if this was the real thing.....”

“What?”

“I would have played Raymond.”

“.....?”

“But this isn’t a real game, it’s a competition, right?”

Amon said, tapping Chloe on the shoulder as she stood next to him.

“Chloe, your turn.”

“Yes, sir.”

Taking a small breath, Chloe swept a hand through her hair and strode forward.

“Bye.”

The supervisor in charge of the swordsmanship tournament stepped forward.

“Students of both sides, forward. Mutual courtesy.”

The two students lightly clashed their swords and took a step back.

The supervisor swung his hand.

“Begin!”

The supervisor signaled the start of the match, but neither Chloe nor Vestric’s students moved an inch.

Oliver, Vestric’s student, was glaring at Raymond with a frown.

‘Raymond, I thought you were the only one who could defeat me, but you ran away like this.’

Oliver clicked his tongue in disbelief and turned away.

‘Chloe, a student of Amonis’.

She was so small that her height barely reached his chest, and her frail body looked like it might topple over at any moment.

‘This kid is my opponent.....Huh! This is boring.’

Moreover, considering the momentum she is giving off, could she have even reached the level of a sword user, let alone a sword expert?

As for his opponent who has reached Sword Master.....

‘I can’t.....I’ll have to end this quickly, and demand a rematch with Raymond.’

With that thought, Oliver raised his wooden sword.

“Don’t hold it against me. I’ll end this as quickly as I can.”

“.....”

“Here we go.”

Oliver flung himself lightly then swung his sword at Chloe.

Flash-!

A sudden flash of light dazzled his eyes and struck him in the thigh.

“.....!?”

Oliver’s eyes widened as he grabbed his thigh, and the proctor raised his hand and shouted.

“Chloe, one point!”

The shout caused Oliver to look at Chloe in confusion.

Before he knew it, Chloe was pointing her sword at him, her eyes cold.

“Do it right.”

“What.....?”

Chloe muttered, her voice barely audible.

“Piglet.”

“What, what.....!?”

“I’m sorry. I said the wrong thing. You lowly pig.”

“.....”

Gritting his teeth, Oliver glared and raised his sword.

“How dare this tiny girl insult me?”

“A pig talks?”

“I’ll kill you!”

Shouting, Oliver launched himself.

And as he swung his sword, a gust of wind rose up and rushed toward Chloe.

If it hit, it would break her in two.

Yes, if it hits.

Thrrr-

Chloe's body slid into Oliver's arms, mirroring the trajectory of Oliver's sword.

Then, Chloe's right hand, holding the sword, blurred.

FUBBERBUBBLE-!

In the knee, in the gut, in the side, under the chin.

Oliver staggered back from the impact of the blow, and the supervisor raised his hand, eyes wide.

"Four points, Chloe!"

Chloe scored a five in one fell swoop.

Watching the scene, Anar'el's mouth dropped open.

"Oh, Mr. Amon!"

"What?"

"Wow, Chloe's swordsmanship is that good? I've heard that she's good, but I never expected her to be that good....."

Amon frowned at the question.

"What are you talking about now?"

"What?"

"Chloe actually beat Raymond in the competition, right? It's just that the rules of the contest made it a loss."

"Exactly."

"Right, Raymond?"

"....."

Ignoring Raymond's silence, Amon continued.

"Well, of course, Chloe was overstepping her bounds then."

“Oh, really?”

“But lately, Sloth has been teaching Chloe the proper House of Pid swordsmanship, and what she was learning before was half-assed, lacking the House’s vision.”

Now that the family feud was settled, Sloth had nothing to spare!

“In any case, Chloe’s swordsmanship potential was superlative to begin with, and if she’s taught the proper Pid Family swordsmanship, you can see the results...”

“I see.”

“Besides.”

Amon gestured to the arena with his chin.

“Compatibility is also a problem. Raymond’s teacher, the Azure Sky Sword King.....”

Amon glanced around.

Raymond’s bout had ended, and Reinbelt was gone.

“Ahem, his swordsmanship is a sword that hides your own skills. That’s why it’s swordsmanship with great technique, but that’s only great because he’s a Grand Sword Master. Right, Raymond? You still value strength a bit more.”

“.....”

Raymond fell silent again.

In reality, Raymond was still more inclined to emphasize strength over finesse.

“The swordsmanship of House Pid, on the other hand, is all about cunning and deception. A swordsmanship that focuses on pulling the wool over your opponent’s eyes and exploiting their weaknesses. If Chloe’s talents were properly matched with the swordsmanship of House Pid, she would be able to use it to her advantage.....”

Even at this moment, Chloe was dodging Oliver’s sturdy blade and scoring points.

“It’s not unreasonable to play with an opponent like that.”

“I see.”

“Well, but this is a competition, not a real fight.”

“What? What does that mean?”

“It means that the use of ‘aura’ is forbidden in swordplay competitions, so if it’s just a contest of skill, there’s no way Chloe can lose.....”

Amon interrupted abruptly, and Anar’el turned her head.

“.....?”

Amon, who had been standing next to her just a moment ago, had disappeared.

Anar’el turned her head in confusion.

“.....Ah, teacher Amon!?”

Amon burst into the arena, grabbed Oliver by the throat, and lifted him up.

Chapter 40

A harsh yell erupted from Vestric’s side as Amon grabbed Oliver’s neck and wrists and held him down.

“What the hell are you doing!”

“How dare a teacher intervene in a student-student exchange!”

Amon growled at their shouting, pressing Oliver even harder against him.

“Didn’t you just see him try to use his Aura Blade?”

Aura blade was never a technique to be used in a duel to test each other’s skills.

In fact, the very act of using an Aura Blade in a duel was an admission of defeat.

Even Raymond, who had faced Chloe in the original tournament, hadn’t used Aura Blade at all, even when he was outmatched.

“I’m sure the supervisor saw that.”

“.....mm.”

True to Amon’s word, the supervisor was about to signal the end of the duel when Oliver raised his Aura Blade.

Only Amon was one step ahead of him, interrupting the flow.

“You’re right.”

The supervisor turned around with a stern face.

“Listen up, everyone!”

The supervisor, having gotten everyone’s attention, pointed at Oliver.

“A moment ago, a student of Vestric’s attempted to use ‘Aura Blade’ in a sacred exchange! What is an Aura Blade? A blade forged from the mana that enriches the world, its grateful existence, for the sole purpose of ‘destroying’ it, a weapon whose sole purpose is to kill!”

The Supervisor spoke up with a furious face.

“To use such a weapon in a friendly exchange is blasphemy. I am disqualifying Oliver, a student of Vestric’s, from the competition!”

At that, the Vestric faculty began to chant.

“He used Aura blade?”

“I didn’t see any…….”

As the chorus grew louder, Benjamin spoke up with difficulty.

“Oh, student Oliver, did you really use an Aura Blade?”

“Yes…….”

“None of us saw it, and I don’t know if that teacher was just going to jump in and persecute an innocent student…….”

The supervisor grimaced in displeasure and unsheathed his sword.

Benjamin backed away in anger at the sight, and a brilliant colorful sword light surrounded the supervisor’s raised sword.

The Supervisor, whose ‘Aura Blade’ rose up like a cluster of stars in the sky, spoke in annoyance.

“Does that mean you doubt my eyes, even the eyes of the Imperial Swordsmanship Instructor, Volbert, Headmaster Benjamin?”

“Ah, ah…….”

The supervisor was also a mid-level Sword Master.

When he spoke with a stern face, everyone in the Vestric, including Benjamin, turned tail and retreated.

After glaring at them, the supervisor announced.

“The fourth match, the swordsmanship tournament, is in favor of Amonis Academy.”

As the words fell from his lips, Amon let go of Oliver as if to throw him down.

“Aura blade is a taboo in exchange competition. They are meant only to take an opponent’s life. It is never to be used in a duel.”

“Ugh.....”

Biting his lip, Oliver dropped his head and returned to Vestric’s side, while the Supervisor stepped toward Amon.

“You’ve saved me a lot of trouble. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

A smiling Supervisor Volbert patted Amon on the shoulder.

Amon glanced back at him as he returned to his seat.

Three of the five matches had already been won by Amonis Academy.

It was safe to say that the exchange had already ended in Amonis Academy’s favor.

‘Everyone’s not happy.’

To be more precise, they looked as if they were about to pounce at any moment.

Well, why wouldn’t they?

‘Boris’s fight was one thing, but the second one was a series of ambiguities.’

Raymond’s historiography match?

It ended with the referee declaring Raymond the winner.

The third bout ended in a forfeit, and the fourth swordsmanship bout ended in a near-disqualification for cheating.

But Amon was not about to let the fifth bout go by without a fight, and he was going to withdraw anyway.

'It's a tight feeling in the pit of your stomach.'

He wouldn't look so upset if he'd lost in a way that everyone could understand.

'What's the point, you can't win if you're cute.'

What can you do when the imperial supervisors are standing over you, glaring?

Even as he chuckled inwardly, Amon crossed his arms and faced Vestric with a stern, stern, serious expression on his face.

Meanwhile Anar'el was staring at Vestric's side, too.

Just as Amon had guessed their intentions, she could read them just as easily.

"Benjamin."

"....."

"We won this exchange. No, would it be better to say that we won this time too?"

Benjamin gritted his fangs at the words and smirked.

"Oh, I see. Huh, I never thought I'd be subjected to such humiliation at a failing academy....."

"Shame? If you were defeated by the Amonis Academy, wouldn't it be an honor rather than a shame?"

The sight of Anar'el laughing at Benjamin made Amon want to jump up and down.

'Well done! Our headmaster!'

Who knew Anar'el had such a hilarious side!

'Laugh more! Make it really hard!'

And then I thought, "Well, I'm done with the exchange, so I'm going to tell him to get lost."

"Well, it's not going to be easy to convince them after this, so what do you say we play an extra game?"

Amon's mouth dropped open at that.

She was so proud of herself.

“Headmaster.....?”

Amon grabbed Anar’el’s wrist, but Anar’el, who had gained momentum, brushed Amon’s hand away and said confidently.

“Our Amonis Academy is not only amazing for its students, but also for its teachers! Since this is the purpose of the exchange, why don’t we try to make some goodwill among the teachers?”

“What, what!

“I’m sure it’ll be easier to convince them, don’t you think?”

‘What is this elf saying all of a sudden?’

If there weren’t people around, I would have grabbed Anar’el by the ear and yanked her off.

But with so many eyes Amon could only stare sadly at her ears as they fluttered with momentum.

And Benjamin, hearing her suggestion, burst out laughing.

Principal Anar’el?”

“Of course! Well, then.....”

Like a ship with a sail in a gentle breeze, Anar’el scanned her trusted teachers with a smile on her face.

But then she realized.

Sloth, Amon, Brestle, and Marion were all staring at her.

Of course, it wasn’t because they were motivated.

Their gazes contained emotions like anger and hatred.

‘Ah.....’

But they say that regret is never too soon.

Anar’el realized the meaning of that saying.

“Hahahaha! Then what event will we start with?”

“.....”

Anar’el looked at Benjamin.

“Mi.....”

“Huh?”

“Mi.....”

Sorry, it was a joke.

So let’s cancel the teacher exchange.

Just as she was about to say that, she saw the sneer on Benjamin’s face and exclaimed.

“You decide!”

“Ha! Hahahaha! Fine!”

Anar’el exclaimed triumphantly, then looked at her trusty teachers and said in a worldly tone of politeness

“I’m sorry, everyone.”

“.....”

“But we can’t just stand there and let them laugh at us like that!”

Amon spoke up.

“Who laughed first?”

Marion said.

“Why is there a teacher exchange there in the first place?”

Sloth lamented.

“Maybe I should retire.....”

Brestle whispered quietly into Anar’el’s ear.

“We’ll see when it’s over.”

“Heh, heh!”

You can't pick up spilled water, after all.

Sighing, Amon shook his head.

'But that's fortunate. If the situation is this emotional, they wouldn't have called me out for a history competition, right?'

It was clear they were going to have a barbaric sword fight, with swords clashing and sweat pouring down their faces, or an ugly magical contest that turned the grateful world's source of mana into murderous magic.

'Thank goodness. I suppose there's no place for an intelligent, noble scholar like me.'

That's why Amon patted his chest in relief.

Headmaster Benjamin of Vestric pointed a finger.

“There, the teacher from earlier, step forward!”

Amon clicked his tongue.

'Who would participate in such a useless teacher exchange? It's really a shame.'

“The guy who interrupted the match a little while ago, come out!”

“Who's going to be nominated anyway? It's definitely not me, and it's not.....”

Seeing Amon's gritted teeth, Benjamin spoke up.

“Headmaster Anar'el, what's the name of that young male teacher there?”

Without missing a beat, Anar'el answered.

“It's Amon Drake!”

“Amon Drake, come out!”

Amon sighed and strode forward, his eyes filled with resentment at Anar'el for selling out his name so relentlessly.

“Phew.....I really don't want to do this.....”

Scratching his head, Amon shrugged.

“So what is the subject of the competition? History? Or rhetoric?”

At that, the opponent who stepped forward tossed him a wooden sword and growled.

“Swordsmanship. You cocky bastard.”

“.....?”

Amon cocked his head.

“I’m a history teacher, and.....?”

“Don’t make me laugh! The movements I saw a moment ago were not those of a scholar!”

“I’m a scholar, but.....”

The other teacher whispered in a low voice, barely audible to the others.

“Hmph, as is typical of the despicable Amonis Academy, they lie whenever they open their mouths.”

Amon was dumbfounded, for he had always spoken only the truth.

But Amon had an innocence that was beyond reproach.

Therefore, the words “despicable” and “lying” didn’t hurt him at all.

But the other person continued.

“You’re no different from your despicable principal, you filthy bastard.”

“What.....!”

What did I just hear?

Did he just put him on the same level as that rotten elf?

-Thwack!

Amon snatched the wooden sword from the ground like lightning and pointed it at his opponent.

“Take that back.”

“Hmph, you’re finally showing your true colors.”

As Amon snarled with a ferocious look on his face, Anar'el clasped her hands together in excitement, tears streaming down her face.

'Alas, Mr. Amon, I never thought you would be so enraged by the insults directed at me.....'

Being an elf with good ears, Anar'el had heard the entire conversation!

That's why she guessed Amon's anger at the words 'despicable headmaster'!

"I say again. Take that back."

"Alas, Mr. Amon.....!"

"You won't take it back, then, good."

Amon growled, gripping his wooden sword with both hands.

"Good. I'll force you to take it back."

The two men locked halberds, pointing them at each other, and the other lunged at Amon.

"Teacher Amon, come on!"

A vein popped in Amon's temple at the sound of Anar'el cheering him on.

Does she even realize who this is all for?

'.....Alright, when this is all over, let's kill that elf.'

With that thought, Amon swung his sword at his opponent.