

# THE ACADEMY IS DOOMED

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Chapter 61

Ah! The long-awaited summer vacation!

Amon, who was preparing to return to his territory, received an unexpected summons from the principal.

“Why would the principal want to see the blockhead Amon?”

“Still sulking, I see. I’ve decided to teleport you with Warp Magic, so let go of your grudge.”

“...Fine, I understand. So, why did you call me?”

“Do you have any plans for this summer vacation?”

Amon couldn’t understand why the principal would ask, as he’d already reported his vacation schedule.

“As stated in my report, I plan to visit my hometown.”

“I see.”

“But why are you asking...?”

Amon, mid-sentence, suddenly stepped back and spoke with suspicion.

“You’re not planning another sudden field trip or something in our territory, are you?”

At this, Anar’el twitched her ears.

She was clearly caught, but Anar’el managed to maintain her composure.

“No, it’s not that.”

“Speak without twitching your ears, please.”

“Ah!”

Watching Anar’el hastily clutch her ears, Amon sighed and said:

“It’s summer vacation. This time, I really can’t.”

“But...I’m offering to teleport you with Warp Magic...”

“Is there any specific reason why you must visit our territory? As for the students, I’m open to bringing them along.”

Boris and Chloe had nowhere to go during summer vacation.

Thus, Amon was willing to bring them if they wanted, and excluding Raymond wouldn’t be fair, so he could come too.

‘But it’s different for grown adults.’

Sloth could go home, and Marion could wander around, probably drinking somewhere.

The same applied to the principal and vice principal.

“If you have a compelling reason, please share it.”

Anar’el, who was about to explain, closed her mouth tightly.

‘How can I say it’s because without Mr. Amon, Brestle might go crazy and try to expand the cafeteria?’

If she spoke the truth, she feared getting a stern scolding.

“I just want to go with you.”

“...”

“Wow, look at your face. Do you dislike it that much?”

“What made you think I wouldn’t?”

Scratching his head, Amon replied:

“In any case, I really can’t this time. Last time, I couldn’t see my brother and sister because of unexpected circumstances. This time, I intend to visit them and help out at home.”

Hearing such a firm refusal, Anar’el couldn’t insist further.

“...Alright, I understand. Then, come by when you’re ready. I’ll take you there.”

“Thank you.”

A while later, as Amon packed his luggage, he thought to himself:

‘Hmm, but leaving Vice Principal Brestle here doesn’t seem like a good idea.’

Anar’el’s concern soon became Amon’s worry.

Thus, after roughly finishing his packing, Amon headed straight to the vice principal’s office.

“What brings you here all of a sudden?”

“You’re aware that I’ll be on vacation, right?”

“...Heh, of course I know.”

Seeing Brestle smile slyly, Amon realized:

“You’ve got something up your sleeve.”

“...N-no, I don’t.”

“Maybe fix your ears before saying that.”

“Ugh!”

Watching Brestle hurriedly cover her ears, Amon continued:

“Anyway, I can guess what you’re plotting even without looking. Let me guess—something like premium ingredients or expanding the cafeteria?”

Brestle’s ears perked up confidently.

“No? Then is it hiring a new chef?”

Her ears drooped in defeat.

“...How did you know?”

“I just do. Anyway, please set aside such plans while I’m away. If you behave yourself, then...”

Amon held up three fingers.

“I’ll bring you three sacks of potatoes from our territory.”

“...!”

Drake Territory’s potatoes!

A supreme delicacy that fills the eater with mana just by taking a bite!

Just thinking about it made Brestle’s mouth water, but she tried to keep up her act.

“Hmph! Do you think such a deal will persuade me?”

“So, I have to negotiate just to ask you to behave? Alright then.”

“Huh?”

Amon turned his back abruptly.

“Go ahead and hire chefs, buy premium ingredients, or turn the cafeteria into a palace for all I care. But I’m not bringing the potatoes.”

“...!”

Brestle jumped up and grabbed Amon.

“Alright, fine! I’ll behave. Just bring the potatoes.”

It was a moment of surrender from the vice principal, who had put up a futile front.

“But... um...”

“Yes? But what?”

Brestle spoke timidly:

“Four sacks...”

“Three sacks.”

“...Four sacks.”

“No. Three sacks.”

“...Ugh!”

The final deal was settled on three sacks of potatoes.

“Are you ready? Are the students not coming along?”

“Yes. They said they’d wait at the academy since I’ll be back in a week.”

“I see. Then let’s get started.”

As Anar’el prepared Warp Magic, Amon suddenly spoke as if remembering something.

“By the way, I’ve settled everything with Vice Principal Brestle, so she won’t cause any trouble.”

“What? Really?”

Amon nodded and waved three potato sacks.

“It wasn’t cheap, but it worked.”

“Ah, the potatoes!”

“So, you don’t need to worry.”

“Thank you for taking care of it.”

Anar’el smiled warmly and waved her hand.

“Take a good rest. I’ll pick you up in a week.”

“Thank you.”

With a flash of blue light, Amon disappeared, leaving Anar’el behind with a satisfied smile.

“Mr. Amon, you truly understand my concerns.”

Without her saying a word, he’d kept Brestle in check.

“As expected, his dedication to the academy is extraordinary...”

Stretching with determination, Anar’el muttered to herself:

“If Mr. Amon does so much for the academy, I can’t just sit idle!”

Muttering to herself, Anar’el grabbed a pile of documents.

At the top of the stack was the title: “Project Proposal.”

“He’ll be surprised when he gets back, won’t he?”

Imagining Amon’s delighted face, Anar’el smiled brightly.

Drake Territory.

As he entered the house, he saw his mother sharpening an axe.

“Hmm? What brings you here?”

A mother’s indifferent reaction to her son’s homecoming!

Amon gave a bitter smile.

“I’m here on leave. How’s the potato field? It looked fine when I passed by.”

“The sprouts are coming in well, so it should be okay. Monsters haven’t been showing up much recently.”

“...What?”

Monsters haven’t been showing up?

At those words, Amon furrowed his brows.

-Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

Suddenly, the alarm bell rang from the outskirts of the village!

It was the signal for a monster attack.

“.....”

“.....”

Without a word, his mother handed him the axe, and Amon silently accepted it before turning and stepping out of the house.

‘They say words can bring things to life...’

With the axe his mother had prepared resting on his shoulder, Amon walked toward the village entrance.

“Ah, young master?”

“Long time no see, Mr. Jackson. What’s the situation with the monsters?”

Jackson replied with an awkward expression.

“The eldest young master and the young lady have already gone ahead.”

“...Huh?”

The eldest young master was his older brother, and the young lady was his younger sister.

But weren't they supposed to be working in a nearby city to earn money?

“They must have stopped by the house briefly?”

“No, I heard something happened recently, so they returned for good.”

“...Something happened?”

Jackson made a gesture of slitting his throat with his hand and said:

“The young lady couldn't hold back and ended up...”

“Ah, she caused a commotion and got fired.”

Nodding as if he understood, Amon continued walking.

“Well, I'm off. I guess I'll get to see my brother's face after a while.”

“Yes, take care.”

With a light leap, Amon headed toward the direction of the noise.

Not long after, he spotted a sturdy figure punching monsters into submission with sheer force, and a smaller figure bounding around, cutting down enemies.

Waiting for the battle to end, Amon jumped in as the situation calmed down.

“Brother, it's been a while.”

“...Huh? Amon?”

The burly young man wiping blood off his fists widened his eyes in surprise.

His older brother, Aim, a few years his senior, approached him with a broad grin.

“I heard you came to the territory a while ago?”

“Yeah. I heard you were working in the city nearby, but I was with my colleagues, so I didn’t have time to stop by. Sorry.”

Aim chuckled heartily.

“It’s fine, it’s fine. We were probably both busy anyway.”

“Thanks for understanding. But...”

Amon furrowed his brow and abruptly turned his head.

At that moment, the girl wiping blood off a dagger flinched and averted her gaze.

“Ami.”

“...”

“I heard you caused trouble again?”

His younger sister, Ami, slowly closed her eyes.

“There was a story behind it.”

“A story?”

“Big Brother was working at a fabric shop, and I was working at a fruit store.”

“And?”

Ami opened her closed eyes and spoke.

“When you work hard, sometimes you crave something sweet, right?”

“True.”

“So, the boss occasionally told me to help myself to some fruit. I did, but then suddenly he blew up in anger.”

“Why would he do that?”

“How would I know? It felt unfair, so we argued, and then...”

As tears as big as raindrops began to fall from Ami’s eyes, Amon looked at his brother and asked:

“She got fired for stealing fruit, didn’t she?”

“Yep.”

“And since the fruit store owner knows the fabric shop owner, you got fired too?”

“Spot on.”

Amon turned to look at Ami.

She had already stopped her crocodile tears and was now scowling.

Whack!

“Gyaah! My head!”

“Good job. Stealing food because you’re hungry?”

“Oh, you used to say you snuck food while working, too!”

“Even if you sneak food, don’t get caught.”

Seeing the two squabbling, Aim laughed and stepped in.

“Alright, alright. Calm down, both of you. Let’s head back. People at the estate must be worried.”

“Sigh, seriously...”

“So annoying...”

“Haha, calm down, you two. It’s been a while since we met—”

Before Aim could finish his sentence—

Rumble!

The sound of rocks rolling came from afar, and all three turned their heads at once.

“Isn’t that the sound of the perimeter rock trap outside the village?”

“Y-Yeah.”

Ami nodded.

“...But wasn’t it set to activate only when the Elder Drake appears?”

“...”

The three of them turned pale.

At the news of the Elder Drake's appearance, Amon's father looked ready to collapse completely.

"W-we only just restored the potato field..."

His father sighed and spoke.

"But as long as it's not an Elder Drake, we should somehow be able to protect the potato field."

Hearing his father's hopeful remark, Amon opened his mouth.

"Father."

"...What is it?"

"Ami just snuck a look earlier."

"Amon, please, don't say the words 'Elder Drake.'"

Without another word, Amon turned away.

If his father begged him not to say it, he wouldn't.

While everyone gathered at the village entrance to prepare for the Elder Drake's attack, Amon sat worriedly fiddling with his trusty axe.

'It suffered a lot in the last battle. Will it hold up?'

This was why his mother had been sharpening his axe earlier.

'Well...there's nothing to do but hope it holds.'

Lifting his head, Amon saw it—off in the distance, accompanied by a heavy, rhythmic thudding, a massive figure appeared.

'T-that thing... it's the same one from last time!'

This was his chance for redemption.

'This time, I'll protect the potato field no matter what.'

Filled with determination, Amon gripped his axe tightly.

The potato field was only a minute away by foot.

“Graaah! Push it back!”

“Ahhh! It’s pushing through!”

Everyone, from the young men to the women, was desperately striking and pushing against the Elder Drake.

But their efforts were in vain—the Elder Drake, with a drooling tongue, steadily advanced toward the potato field.

“Ugh! D-damn it...”

Exhausted and panting, Amon swallowed hard.

‘Alright. I’ve recovered enough strength for one swing.’

Gritting his teeth, Amon gripped the axe with both hands and shouted.

“Raaaaagh!”

With a final, desperate burst of strength, he launched his attack!

As he charged forward and swung his axe with all his might—

CRAAACK!

The moment the axe struck the Elder Drake, a deafening noise erupted, and black shards scattered in all directions.

The axe shattered.

“Ugh, nooo!”

Sliding down the Elder Drake’s back, Amon clutched the broken axe handle and shards, crying out.

“My... my axe!”

Memories of the axe flashed before his eyes like a reel of his life.

That beloved axe, which had been by his side in both joy and sorrow, now lay shattered on the ground before him.

Overwhelmed by sadness and despair, another emotion surged within him.

Rage and hatred.

Grinding his teeth as though to crush them, Amon glared at the Elder Drake, his eyes blazing red.

'I'll kill it. That damned thing that broke my beloved axe.'

Fueled by fury, Amon stepped toward the Elder Drake.

"Amon!"

A sudden shout from the sky made him instinctively look up.

And there he saw an old man.

'...Caselag?'

Wasn't that the old, sickly, lonely dragon who occasionally visited the territory?

As he realized this, Caselag yelled:

"Take this! The gift I mentioned last time!"

"...What?"

With that, Caselag threw a long, stick-like object.

As it drew closer, Amon realized what it was.

'A sword?'

It was a jet-black sword.

And as it flew toward him, Amon instinctively caught it with his right hand.

"Graaaaah!"

The immense weight of the sword sent Amon rolling to the ground with its momentum.

Struggling to rise, Amon barely managed to get to his feet.

'W-what is this? Why is it so heavy?'

Though it was similar in size to a typical longsword, its weight was several times greater than his old axe.

Confused, he looked up at Caselag, who said:

“How is it? Pretty heavy, isn’t it? It’s a sword made of adamantium.”

“Ah, adamantium...!”

Adamantium!

A mythical metal, incomparably stronger than mere mithril, symbolizing durability, immutability, and eternity!

“Elder Drake! You will never touch the potato field of our territory!”

Throwing aside the useless axe shards and handle, Amon leaped into action.

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The Elder Drake was only a few steps away from the potato field!

It was drooling in anticipation.

Gulp!

Swallowing the saliva filling its mouth, the creature took a large step forward. As the potato field came into view and it lowered its head toward the crops—

“Hey, you damn beast!”

Amon charged with all his might, swinging the adamantium sword. It struck the Elder Drake’s back.

BOOOOM!

A deafening noise rang out as fragments of the Elder Drake’s scales shot into the air. Shock filled the Elder Drake’s eyes.

Grrr...!?

Could it be...that my scales are broken? No, impossible.

Since becoming an Elder Drake after enduring countless years, its scales had never once been broken.

Shock gave way to rage.

ROOOOAR!

Though the tantalizing delicacy of the potatoes was within reach, fury over its broken scales overcame its hunger.

Turning its head sharply, the Elder Drake saw Amon standing defiantly before it.

“Whew...”

Massaging his sore shoulders from the heavy swing, Amon spoke coldly.

“You bastard, did you really think you could just eat the sprouting potatoes?”

Grrrrr...

“You’ve really picked the wrong day to mess with me.”

Amon growled, pointing his sword at the Elder Drake.

“I’ll turn you into fertilizer for the field.”

Enough fertilizer to last for years!

As Amon’s eyes gleamed fiercely and he advanced toward the beast—

“Amon, wait a moment.”

“...Elder?”

Caselag, the old dragon who had landed on the ground, spoke.

“Let’s let it go this time.”

“What? What are you saying, Elder?”

Amon retorted angrily.

“How can you tell me to let go of the creature that nearly destroyed our village’s potato field?”

“Boy, it’s just trying to survive like everyone else.”

“We’re trying to survive too—that’s why we grow potatoes.”

Amon’s family didn’t grow potatoes for fun. The villagers’ lives depended on it.

“Hmm...that’s true.”

“So please don’t stop me.”

But Caselag didn’t back down.

“Let it go this once, for my sake. I even gave you that sword, didn’t I?”

“But—”

“I’ll make sure it never comes here again.”

“...”

Amon bit his lip hard.

He wanted nothing more than to destroy the enemy of potatoes—the potato massacrer—right there and then.

But Caselag is an important guest of our territory.

No, not just one of the guests—practically the only guest.

Besides, he’s a dragon.

That last point mattered the most.

Though old and somewhat docile-looking, he was still a dragon.

Realizing he’d already asserted himself enough with a few arguments, Amon decided to yield.

“If you insist, Elder... I’ll let it go.”

“Hahaha, thank you, lad.”

As Caselag approached the Elder Drake, it shrank back, letting out a low whimper.

Grrr...

“You rascal, what’s all this trouble? Leave at once and never return here. Understood?”

Though Caselag spoke gently, the Elder Drake stomped its feet and growled in protest.

Grooowl!

“Oh? You dare talk back? Perhaps a lesson will help you learn!”

At Caselag's scolding, the Elder Drake lowered its head and began trudging away.

Once the beast disappeared beyond the village's edge, Caselag let out a deep sigh.

"Phew, forgive it this one time. It has its own circumstances."

Looking wistfully in the direction the Elder Drake had gone, Caselag shook his head.

Seeing this, Amon narrowed his eyes.

"Circumstances? What kind of circumstances does a monster have?"

But when Caselag glanced over with a sorrowful expression, Amon forced a crooked smile and asked sarcastically:

"What circumstances?"

As if waiting for the question, Caselag began to speak.

The fact that he had been waiting was obvious.

"Drakes are an ancient race that once rivaled us dragons but fell behind in the competition and were driven to extinction. Though they've lost their intellect and become mere monsters, their proud past as our equals remains unchanged."

The story was unexpectedly long.

'The Elder loves to drag on with his tales.'

Though Amon wanted to yawn, he stifled it and listened.

"And that one, in particular, lost its mother when it was young. I found it crying pitifully after losing its mother. I didn't exactly raise it, but I kept an eye on it."

"...I see."

"It must have recognized me as it grew up because it's quite attached to me. Moreover, it recently evolved from an ordinary Drake into an Elder Drake. I couldn't bear to let it die by your hands. I've grown fond of it...like a stray that's hard to hate."

Hearing Caselag mumble with a mix of affection and pity, Amon's eyebrows twitched.

"...Wait a moment."

"Hmm?"

“You said it recently evolved into an Elder Drake?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

Amon realized why he hadn’t seen the Elder Drake for a while—it had been evolving.

“And you’re saying it’s been following you around?”

“Indeed. Even though it’s grown up, it still does that.”

Now that he thought about it, the last time the Elder Drake attacked, Caselag had been in the territory. The same was true this time.

‘So this entire mess is because of that old dragon!’

But what could he do? Dragons were the apex of the world.

If the Elder Drake had ravaged the territory and left, the dragons would have thought, Oh well, humans just died, and shrugged it off.

The only reason Caselag mediated was his fondness for this particular human territory and the Elder Drake.

Realizing this, Amon’s cheeks trembled.

“I see. I’ve just remembered my childhood dream.”

Clutching the adamantium sword tightly, Amon resolved:

‘Yes, I wanted to be a Dragon Slayer.’

Oh, the grand dreams of youth!

Yet, oblivious to Amon’s thoughts, Caselag chuckled as he noticed Amon gripping the sword firmly.

“Hahaha! You seem to like the gift. And why not? It’s an excellent weapon.”

“ ... ”

“It was forged by countless dwarves through painstaking effort.”

“...Dwarves?”

Though Amon had no illusions about elves, he had immense respect for dwarves.

His anger melted away like snow.

“Ahem! I’ll use it gratefully.”

“Good, good.”

At least the potato field was safe this time, and the Elder Drake likely wouldn’t return.

‘A dwarven-forged adamantium sword...I’d better not complain and risk having to return it.’

As Amon smiled inwardly, his mood lifted.

“Hm, by the way, Amon.”

“Yes?”

“Are you still working as a teacher at the academy?”

“The academy’s lifeline is quite tenacious, so yes, I am still working there.”

“Well then...”

Caselag cleared his throat and spoke.

“As you know, I have numerous kin.”

‘I don’t know.’

But Amon nodded vaguely.

Considering how long dragons live, who knows how many eggs he’s hatched over the years?

“Right.”

“And recently, there’s been one I’ve been keeping an eye on. A young member of the Amaranth bloodline. Even at such a young age, the child is remarkably clever with great potential for the future.”

“...Excuse me?”

At this point, Amon could easily guess where Caselag was going with this.

Still working at the academy? And now, mentioning a promising young one?

“Wait a moment, Elder. Don’t tell me...”

“Yes.”

Caselag nodded and said.

“Amonis Academy is said to be one of the finest educational institutions with a proud history in the human empire. Even for a dragon who has lived countless years, the academy’s history spanning thousands of years is not something to take lightly.”

“...”

“So, I’d like to entrust that child to the academy.”

Amon shut his eyes tightly.

“...Elder?”

“What is it?”

“That place is a human academy.”

“It’s not exclusively for humans, is it? The principal is an elf, after all.”

Come to think of it, that made sense.

“And as long as the child assumes a human form, there shouldn’t be much trouble. Suppressing their aura will suffice.”

“But...”

Amon had a hunch.

‘The academy, already a chaotic gathering of unruly humans...’

And now, adding a dragon?

‘It’s only a matter of time before tensions rise. Even a young dragon could easily obliterate the academy...’

As his thoughts reached that point, Amon realized something.

‘Come to think of it, this might not be so bad.’

Nodding readily, Amon said.

“The academy would be delighted to welcome a dragon’s enrollment.”

“Hahaha, I like how straightforward you are.”

“But there’s one thing.”

Glancing at Caselag cautiously, Amon spoke.

“Well, to enroll, there’s something called a tuition fee...”

“Tuition? You mean human currency.”

“That’s correct.”

“Hmm. Unfortunately, I don’t have a habit of hoarding human gold coins.”

Caselag tilted his head thoughtfully, then snapped his fingers.

-Thud!

A gold nugget, the size of a human head, appeared out of thin air and slammed into the ground!

Seeing it, Amon’s jaw dropped as Caselag tilted his head and asked.

“Will this suffice?”

It more than suffices.

But managing to keep a straight face, Amon cleared his throat and replied.

“Ahem! Well, this should just barely cover it.”

“Barely, you say?”

Caselag snapped his fingers again, and two more gold nuggets, each the size of an orc’s head, appeared and embedded themselves into the ground.

“This should be enough, right?”

“Of course!!”

Frantically gathering the gold nuggets, Amon’s smile stretched to his temples.

“I’ll personally take responsibility for preparing the enrollment process!”

“Hahaha, good.”

“It’s currently summer vacation, so feel free to come by later when it’s convenient!”

“Understood. When the time comes, I’ll send the child to the academy.”

“Yes, Elder!”

Having driven off the Elder Drake and hosted Caselag, who had become an unexpected benefactor, the Drake Territory erupted into a grand festival.

Late that night, in his father, Baron Kaim’s study, Amon was reviewing the territory’s finances with a satisfied smile.

Although their current financial state was dire, today’s gains were substantial.

‘An adamantium sword, three massive gold nuggets, and even fragments of the Elder Drake’s broken scales.’

The gifted adamantium sword couldn’t be sold immediately, so he planned to use it for now and sell it later when the time was right.

‘The gold nuggets can be liquidated right away, and while the Elder Drake’s scales aren’t in pristine condition, they’ll still fetch a high price.’

The Elder Drake, who had troubled the territory for so long, had effectively left behind a treasure trove. It was truly a silver lining.

Grinning broadly, Amon drew a bold line through the financial ledger.

‘Finally, a surplus! Our territory finally has some real assets!’

As his mood soared, Amon chuckled to himself.

-Knock, knock.

A sudden knock startled Amon.

‘...Who could it be?’

It wasn’t exactly a good look to be caught reviewing finances in his father’s study, so he hurriedly stood up.

“...Ami?”

“You’re here, after all.”

His adorable little sister, Ami, whom he found unbearably cute, appeared, making Amon collapse back into his chair in exasperation.

“What is it? Why aren’t you asleep at this hour?”

“And what about you, big brother? What are you doing in Dad’s study?”

Normally, he would’ve snapped, “Mind your business,” or “Why do you care?” But thanks to the territory’s improved circumstances, Amon was in an unusually good mood.

“Just checking something real quick. But what about you? Why are you up this late?”

“Well... the thing is.”

Ami hesitated, glancing around nervously, and then spoke.

“I want to enroll in your academy.”

Amon’s good mood plummeted instantly.

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Ami’s sudden demand to enroll in the academy!

It was only natural for Amon’s mood to sour because of it.

The first reason:

‘Does she even realize how terrible the state of our academy is?’

If he had even a shred of decency or common sense, he wouldn’t throw his one and only sister into such a den of chaos.

But above all, the second reason loomed largest.

‘Do I have to deal with this pesky little sister at the academy too?’

It’s already a mess of a place; the last thing he wanted was to add another large source of chaos.

With a warm smile, Amon said:

“Ami, I’ll find you a different academy.”

“What? But why? I can just go to the one where you work!”

“Let me ask you this instead: why do you want to go to the one where I work?”

Just as Amon felt a visceral aversion to the idea of Ami enrolling, Ami's feelings from her perspective likely weren't that different.

That's just how siblings are!

When Amon posed the question, Ami responded without hesitation:  
"Because if you're a teacher, you can help me get good grades!"

"Hmm."

As expected of his sister, she was sharp.

If Amon were a regular teacher, he might have been outraged at the suggestion, declaring it against his principles as an educator. But was Amon an ordinary teacher?

'When did she get so clever? My little sister has really grown up.'

While Amon was basking in nostalgia and admiration, Ami continued.

"And I know what you're worried about."

"...What's that?"

"I won't bother you. I'll behave and act properly at the academy. I'll pretend we're not even related—like I don't know you at all! No, I can act like I've never met you in my life if that helps!"

"...!"

Then, standing on her tiptoes, Ami whispered in his ear:  
"Just make sure I get good grades, okay?"

"...Hmm."

With conditions like these, Amon found it hard to come up with reasons to refuse her enrollment.

"This is definitely tempting."

"Right?"

"I'll think about it positively. But first, I'll need to talk to our parents."

"Okay, got it. Thanks...Th-thank you, brother."

Words of gratitude are unnecessary between siblings!

After Ami left, Amon sat alone, deep in thought.

'Hmm...She's grown up enough to have her own plans and ideas.'

As the second son of the Drake family, Amon held no rights to inherit the estate.

According to imperial law, titles were inherited strictly by the eldest son.

'That's why I found my own path by becoming a teacher at Amonis Academy. But what about Ami?'

Amon couldn't recall ever seeing her dedicate herself to academics.

She hadn't trained seriously in swordsmanship either.

And while noblewomen often entered arranged marriages, such unions required a certain level of prestige and refinement, neither of which Ami had cultivated.

'So enrolling in the academy must be her way of taking control of her future. At least a diploma from the academy will give her more options.'

Of course, at the moment, Amonis Academy's diploma wasn't worth much more than kindling, given its dire state.

But that's only for now.

Amon grinned.

"That's only true for now."

The same ambition that had flared up when he first arrived at Amonis Academy reignited within him.

He would restore the academy's glory and reputation.

With both his sister and Caselag's descendant enrolling, he had no choice but to make it happen.

"Alright. The recommendation to shut the academy down has been rescinded, and the groundwork has been laid. Time to get serious about rebuilding Amonis Academy!"

Upon returning from his leave, Amon was greeted by the sight of the academy's gates firmly locked.

'...Why does this feel so familiar?'

As he puzzled over the situation, he spotted someone nearby—a worker carrying loads through the closed gates.

“Excuse me...”

“Hm? Who are you?”

“I’m a teacher here. What’s going on? Why are the gates locked?”

Where was Reinbelt, who was supposed to be guarding the gates?

When Amon asked this question, the worker answered gruffly:

“Haven’t you heard the news?”

This, too, felt strangely familiar.

‘Wait a second...!’

A chill ran down Amon’s spine, and at the same time, the worker, still hauling things, answered curtly:

“The academy went bankrupt! The headmistress gambled away all the funds and lost everything!”

Amon’s legs gave out, and he collapsed to the ground.

The signs had been ominous.

After securing parental permission for Ami’s enrollment and helping out with tasks at the estate, the day to return from leave arrived.

But Anar’el, who was supposed to pick him up, never showed.

‘Did something happen?’

So Amon asked Caselag for help.

‘Elder, would you mind teleporting me to Amonis Academy?’

‘The teleportation itself isn’t difficult...but I don’t know the exact coordinates of the academy.’

‘Then how about the city of Amur?’

‘Ah, yes. I know where that is.’

Thanks to Caselag, Amon managed to return to the city of Amur, with grand ambitions to restore Amonis Academy to its former glory.

'And now I'm facing a ruined academy again?'

Grinding his teeth, Amon stormed into the headmistress's office, nearly tearing the door off its hinges.

"You damned elf, what kind of nonsense have you pulled this time?!"

Inside the dim office, Anar'el sat slumped over, her head hanging low.

Approaching her, Amon growled:

"You're not even a headmistress anymore! What did you do this time?!"

Startled by his harsh tone, Anar'el flinched and raised her head weakly.

Her appearance was pitiful.

Her face was streaked with tears, her ears drooped so low they nearly touched the ground, and her once-lustrous green hair was dry and lifeless.

Despite her sorry state, Amon glared at her furiously and demanded:

"If you have a mouth, use it! What did you do this time?!"

"...Sniff!"

Swallowing a sob, Anar'el lowered her head again and murmured in a trembling voice:

"I'm sorry..."

"Sorry isn't enough! What did you do?!"

"Sniff... I'm sorry... I'm so sorry..."

As she began to sob uncontrollably, Amon closed his eyes tightly.

Did he pity her?

No. He was just furious.

"Grknng... What the hell happened?"

"Sniff."

With trembling hands, she handed him a stack of documents.

Now that he thought about it, the worker had mentioned that Anar'el had botched another business venture spectacularly.

'Alright, let's see what kind of mess she's made this time.'

Amon snatched up the document and skimmed the text written on it.

[Development Project for the Wastelands of Velslime]

Velslime Wastelands?

'Isn't that...an unclaimed frontier land?'

It was as far from Amon's Arma Mountain estate as one could imagine.

However, its fertility was incomparable to the Arma Mountains.

'Crops supposedly grow effortlessly, and the river water is said to be as sweet and refreshing as if sugar was dissolved in it. The problem, of course, is the abundance of monsters....'

That must be why it was chosen as the target for development.

'Now, let's analyze why it failed so spectacularly.'

Who was responsible for the project?

It must have been some idiotic fools who launched it without proper preparation and ruined everything.

Amon flinched as he checked the names of those involved in the project.

'...The Imperial House of Amonis was behind this?'

Tilting his head, Amon read further.

'The forces mobilized for the project included the 2nd Legion of the Empire, the Empire's Heavy Armored Cavalry, the entire Prime Magic Tower, and even several other battalions....'

An elite force capable of burning down an entire kingdom!

Amon tilted his head again.

"...Principal?"

“...Yes?”

“What—why—why did this fail? It seems impossible for it to have failed. Judging from the troop composition, they deployed forces that had been idle since the Great War to develop the long-coveted Velslime Wastelands. Failure should have been out of the question, no?”

At this, Anar’el burst into tears.

“Sniff! I—I thought so too. Everyone did, even the current Emperor, Antonio.”

“...”

“So Antonio said it was a good venture and told us to invest in it...”

Amon felt a sharp pain in his temples.

‘That cursed Emperor!’

It was Amonis XVIII, the tyrant among tyrants, who had coaxed the gullible elf into this.

“Anyway, why did it fail? Did a dragon show up or something?”

Shaking her head, Anar’el replied.

“A meteor fell.”

“What?”

Was there something wrong with his ears?

Amon scratched at them and asked again.

“Say that one more time.”

“A meteor fell.”

“A meteor.”

So he hadn’t misheard.

“At first, the Imperial Analysis Team suspected a dragon had summoned the meteor. But upon investigation, that wasn’t the case.”

“...”

“It was just sheer bad luck—a meteor fell directly on the Imperial Legion and obliterated them.”

“...”

“Because of that, the Velslime Wastelands were completely scorched and rendered unusable. Antonio fell ill afterward, and since he claimed this was a surefire investment, all the Academy’s operating funds and loans from the trade guilds were poured into it...”

Anar’el broke into sobs again.

“Waaaah! When the news of the project’s failure spread, the trade guilds stormed in and took everything of value!”

Watching the weeping Anar’el, Amon closed his eyes slowly.

Frankly, he couldn’t blame her.

It was truly a natural disaster, a bolt from the blue.

And so, Amon smacked Anar’el on the head.

“Ack! I-I’m sorry! Please don’t hit me...”

“Compose yourself.”

“...What?”

Amon spoke with a resigned expression.

“Can the Academy’s foundation shake when the principal is unsteady?”

“...?”

“First, what about the others? Judging from the situation, it seems you’re the only one left.”

“Mr. Marion left because the Magic Tower recalled all wizards above a certain level. Ms. Sloth evacuated the students to the Pid family. Mr. Reinbelt is absent due to an emergency summons for the Empire’s Four Great Knights. Mr. Kai left, saying he had urgent business.”

Kai, the rookie, bailed. But someone else is missing.

“...What about the vice-principal?”

“The cook quit, so she said she’d return once the situation is under control since he has to prepare meals himself.”

Resolving himself, Amon tossed aside three sacks of potatoes he had brought for Brestle.

‘The vice-principal—I’ll personally take her down someday.’

With a deep sigh, Amon asked.

“So you stayed to deliver this news to me?”

“...Yes. I wanted to use warp magic to fetch you, but I kept failing due to...circumstances. I’m sorry.”

Well, magic is susceptible to mental disturbances, so it was understandable.

“...Anyway, Mr. Amon.”

“Yes?”

With tears streaming like chicken poop, Anar’el spoke.

“I tried my best to manage things while you were on vacation...but it ended up like this. I’m truly sorry.”

“...”

“Thank you so much for all the effort you’ve put into the Academy. But I think it’s over now.”

She pulled out a document.

It was Amon’s teaching contract.

“...Once again, I sincerely thank you for everything.”

Just as she was about to rip Amon’s contract to shreds...

Amon grabbed her hand.

“...Mr. Amon?”

“Wait.”

“...What?”

“I can’t let the Academy collapse like this.”

Anar’el’s eyes widened.

“M-Mr. Amon...”

Moved, her large eyes welled up with tears.

Such devotion to the Academy!

How deeply would Amon’s commitment move her?

Of course, Amon had other thoughts in mind.

‘There’s a dragon and my little sister set to enroll. I can’t let it fall apart like this.’

He was worried about his sister’s future, and with everything he had received from Caselag, he couldn’t just ignore this.

Nodding, Amon said.

“First, let’s hear the details. Then we’ll figure out how to resolve this.”

## Chapter 64

First, Amon listened closely to the detailed explanation from Anar’el about the current situation.

‘Hmm...this situation is worse than I thought.’

The recent disaster stemmed from an initiative led by the Emperor and key officials of the Imperial Court.

However, an unforeseen natural disaster completely ruined the endeavor.

‘Because of this, the Emperor is bedridden. And since investments come with personal responsibility, recovering the invested funds in this situation is nearly impossible. Of course, Anar’el is acquainted with the Emperor and has some connections, so one could hope for some compensation. But with the Emperor incapacitated, pressing the matter is out of the question.’

The immediate problem was that workers from the trading guild were actively seizing the Academy’s belongings.

‘The Gold Road Trading Guild—money-obsessed vultures. I’ve never had a good impression of them.’

Amon's history with the Gold Road Guild was not without its share of grievances.

When he first started at the Academy, he had dealings with them over the "King of Mango" incident.

'Not to mention I lost two gold coins of my own when their Blaton Temple venture failed.'

Because of that, his opinion of the Gold Road Guild was particularly low.

'In any case, Imperial support, which comes quarterly, is still pending. Compensation directly from the Emperor cannot be expected in the short term. Meanwhile, the Guild is actively slapping seizure notices on Academy properties.'

As stated, the situation was worse than it initially seemed.

It was only a matter of time before the entire Academy building was plastered with red notices.

"Uh, Amon, do you have any ideas?"

"Hmm."

At Anar'el's worried inquiry, Amon gave a brief sigh before responding.

"I do have ideas, but there are several things I need to confirm first."

"Confirm? What kind of things?"

"Yes. The Guild is seizing Academy property because they think it's impossible to recover their loan, correct?"

"That's right."

"The borrowed amount is several thousand gold...roughly equivalent to the quarterly Imperial funding."

Amon, deep in thought, furrowed his brow.

"But hold on, why did you borrow so much?"

"Antonio said it was a guaranteed success and urged us to invest big..."

Amon silently vowed that, given the chance, he would ensure the Emperor would meet the same fate as the vice principal.

"So you maxed out the loan limit."

“...Yes.”

“Excellent. You’ve really outdone yourself.”

“....”

“In any case, you maxed out the loan, and the Guild, upon hearing the project failed, is now scrambling to recover the principal by seizing Academy assets.”

“Exactly.”

With a deep sigh, Amon stood up.

“First, I’ll have to visit the Gold Road Guild. We need to get those seizure notices removed immediately.”

“Wh-what? How?”

With another deep breath, Amon reached into his bag, pulling something out. The dazzling sight of it caused Anar’el to reflexively shut her eyes.

Inside the Branch Manager’s Office of the Gold Road Guild.

On the table rested a gold ingot the size of a human head.

It was gold Amon had received during his recent vacation from Caselag.

Seeing it, the Branch Manager, Delmons, broke into a broad grin.

“Haha! If you had the means to pay, you should’ve come sooner! Welcome!”

As Delmons reached to grab the gold ingot, Amon firmly gripped his wrist.

“Hmm? What is this?”

“As you said, I have sufficient means to repay the loan.”

“Yes? Isn’t that why you’ve come now?”

At Delmons’ words, Amon shook his head.

“No, I’m here to ask you to restore the original repayment schedule.”

“What?”

“You’re seizing Academy property because you think we can’t repay the loan. But as you can see, we have enough funds to settle the debt.”

Delmons clicked his tongue and released his hold on the gold ingot.

“That’s certainly true. But what is your plan for repaying the loan? We’ve already confirmed that there’s no remaining liquid funds in the Academy.”

At the Branch Manager’s skeptical look, Amon smirked.

“I have a business venture currently under review.”

“Is that so?”

“Of course. Therefore, there will be no issue repaying the loan. But since mere words aren’t enough, I’ll leave this gold with you as collateral.”

“...!”

“This way, even if the plan fails, you can immediately recover the loan. There’s no reason for the Guild to rush and seize property.”

“Hmm...”

As Amon suggested, there was no longer any reason to hurry.

The Guild had been acting swiftly to minimize risks, assuming the Academy lacked repayment ability.

‘But if this gold serves as reliable collateral, there’s no longer a need to press so hard.’

Ultimately, the gold would serve as a safety net.

Delmons nodded in agreement, prompting Amon to continue.

“By the way, I’ve precisely measured the weight of this gold.”

“...What?”

“Don’t even think about shaving or skimming off any of it. I’ve noted the weight down to the decimal.”

The Branch Manager heaved a sigh.

“Our Gold Road Guild in Amur Branch moves tens of thousands of gold coins every quarter. As long as we recover the principal, that’s all we care about.”

Reassuring Amon of their professionalism, Delmons dismissed any concerns.

Still skeptical, Amon finally rose to leave.

“Well then, I’ll be in touch soon.”

“Yes, take care.”

Amon left the Guild.

‘Hmm...I’ve bought us some time.’

For now, the ruthless debt collectors raiding the Academy would withdraw.

‘But that’s all it is—time. If the debt isn’t repaid, they’ll come back and take everything again.’

Determined to protect the gold ingot, Amon resolved to find another solution.

‘I’d be insane to pay off the Academy’s debt with my money.’

He needed a way to retrieve the gold intact.

‘The next step is crucial.’

Amon hurried back to the Academy and approached Anar’el.

“Principal, did you find it?”

“Yes. I located it quickly using farsight magic, but honestly, I’m not sure if it will work out.”

“It will. It has to.”

For the sake of retrieving his gold, it had to succeed.

“Well then, shall we set out?”

“...Alright.”

Anar’el began casting warp magic. With the location pinpointed by her farsight magic, the two prepared to move.

“Hu...”

How much time has already passed?

Sadly, the middle-aged man, who had been staring blankly at the devastated land, lowered his head in despair.

'The imperial investigation team isn't moving. Should I give up on everything now?'

Was this the end of a lifelong dream, something he had devoted his life to?

There is a saying that despair can build a man, but excessive hopelessness devours everything.

"Hehe...well, there's no helping it."

At least, he would settle this deep grudge.

He could never forget that hateful face.

A devil, whose face was that of a beautiful woman, slowly appeared in front of the middle-aged man.

'Hahaha, look at this! How deep must the grudge be if I'm seeing an illusion like this?'

The middle-aged man, gritting his teeth, grabbed the blood-stained sickle that was lying beside him.

And at that moment, when he swung the sickle toward the illusion as if rehearsing...

"AAAAAH!?"

A scream rang out, and the illusion fell backward.

'...No, it's not an illusion?'

As soon as he realized this, a fiery rage blazed in the middle-aged man's eyes.

"I'll kill you!"

The loathsome elf, who had trampled on his long-held dream, his hopes, and everything!

At that moment, the middle-aged man lunged fiercely at the elf.

"Wait, just a second!"

A young man suddenly jumped forward and grabbed the middle-aged man.

"Calm down!"

“Let go! I will rust this sickle with the blood of that loathsome demon!”

The elf, Anar’el, was the very one the middle-aged man, the owner of the King of Mango farm, was trying to kill with the sickle!

Anar’el had repeatedly come to the farm and danced to pray for good harvests, which had led to an unprecedented flood and disaster in the continent’s history, ruining the farm!

Since there was no clear evidence, and the imperial investigation team had not taken action, the poor farm owner had not been able to receive compensation, and his mind had gone white with grief.

He was now sobbing as he vented his anger.

“Because of that demon, nothing is left for me! Let go!”

“Mm...”

The young man, Amon, who was holding the farm owner, glanced at Anar’el.

She was sitting down, trembling and lost in thought.

‘There’s no helping it.’

In order to calm the farm owner’s anger, Amon pulled out his secret weapon.

“Look at this!”

It was a magical item that could calm anger and hatred in any living creature with blood and flesh!

It was a gold nugget the size of an orc’s head!

When the farm owner saw it, his jaw dropped in disbelief.

“Hey! Get that out of here! What is this nonsense?”

The gold nugget was thrown into the muddy, flooded ground!

Amon screamed at the sight.

“AAAHHH!”

In a panic, Amon grabbed the gold nugget back, feeling a trace of fear at the farm owner’s immense fury.

'Even after seeing the gold, he reacted like this? Just how angry is he...'

Anyway, since Anar'el was about to be killed by the sickle, Amon hurriedly restrained the farm owner and shouted.

"Calm down for now!"

"AHHH! You expect me to calm down? That wicked demon took everything from me!"

"And that's exactly why we're here! To help rebuild the King of Mango farm!"

"What?"

The farm owner flinched as he looked at Amon, and Amon, seeing his reaction, thought to himself.

'Rejecting the gold and suppressing his anger for the sake of rebuilding the farm. What an unusual person.'

It's not wrong to say that there are all kinds of people in this world.

At any rate, when the farm owner showed interest, Amon quickly continued.

"As I said, we came to help rebuild the King of Mango farm."

"Is that true? But..."

The farm owner gestured to the surroundings.

"Look. The farm is nothing but mud from the flood, and the buildings have all collapsed. And I can't even hire workers to clean it up."

"What about the savings you had?"

"I spent all that on expanding the farm after I paid the academy's dividends. There's no savings left."

Amon thought the man wasn't quite sane and spoke up.

"Do you have saplings or seeds?"

"I managed to save those. That's the only thing I've managed to hold onto with my life."

"That's good. At least that's one thing."

"What's good about that?"

Looking at the vast fields, now turned into a muddy mess, Amon said,

“Since the flood was so severe, once it’s cleaned up, the soil quality should improve, right?”

“...If we can clean it up, maybe.”

Floods are great natural disasters that cause huge damage to humans.

But from the perspective of the earth, it’s not entirely a bad thing.

Floods mix organic matter into the soil and balance the layers, enriching the soil.

But for the farm owner, who needed results today or tomorrow, rich soil in the distant future was a luxury.

“So...?”

“Hm?”

“Then...?”

“...Huh?”

The farm owner’s eyes widened.

“Is that really possible?”

“I think it will be.”

“Hmm...”

The farm owner, who had been mumbling, looked at the trembling Anar’el, who was sitting there, and Amon also looked at her.

And at that moment, both of their gazes landed on her.

“...?”

Anar’el, feeling an unknown sense of unease, dropped her ears.

Chapter 65

“Phew...”

The owner of King of Mango Farm let out a sigh of astonishment.

Having dedicated his entire life to farming, it was no exaggeration to say that the large-scale magic unfolding before him was nothing short of miraculous.

‘Moreover, to restore the land using such a clever method... Magic is truly remarkable. And the young man who came up with such an idea is extraordinary as well.’

The farm looked at Amon with a face full of admiration.

Amon was secretly impressed as well.

‘This really works.’

After all, theoretically, there was nothing impossible about it.

The amount of time it would take to make the land, which had turned into a muddy swamp due to the flood, farmable again was unknown.

But Amon believed that with magic, he could shorten that period as much as possible.

‘That’s why, the headmaster will have to put in a bit of effort.’

‘...Yes, I will burn myself for the future of the academy.’

‘That’s a truly admirable mindset.’

‘It is only natural as the headmaster. So, what should I do?’

‘Do you see that land over there? The area turned into mud?’

‘Yes? Oh, yes. I see it.’

‘Then you need to dig the soil up and down, while drying it out.’

At those words, Anar’el tilted her head.

‘What did you say?’

‘There’s a digging spell called Dig, right? You’ll use that to turn the earth over, then use Fly magic to make the soil float, and Dry magic to gently dry out the wet soil. Just repeat that. But don’t dry it too much, it should still be slightly moist.’

It was a method that, in theory, shouldn’t fail.

However, after muttering to herself, Anar’el subtly surveyed the vast land.

The land stretched so wide that only the horizon was visible.

'A place that big? All I can see is the horizon.'

'Didn't you say you would burn yourself for this?'

'It's not burning, it's drying up and dying.'

'Whether you burn up or dry up, it's the same result, isn't it?'

Amon said with a warm smile, gently patting Anar'el's shoulder.

'So, I'm counting on you.'

'...Sniff!'

And now Anar'el was desperately squeezing out her mana and repeating the tasks.

"Kiiiiii!"

It was only a few low-level spells combined, but because the area was so vast, even someone like Anar'el, who was skilled in warp magic, was struggling to manage it.

Meanwhile, Amon was sitting nearby, chopping up the King of Mango fruits that the farm owner had saved.

"You're doing well! Ah, wait, you dried that area too much!"

"Kii-kii-ki-ki!"

"Oh no! Look! All the worms are dead!"

"Hek, hek!"

As Anar'el panted weakly, Amon gave her another piece of King of Mango fruit and touched the soil where the work had been completed.

'Hmm, this turned out well. The soil quality is excellent.'

The land chosen by the farm owner, who had dedicated his life to farming, was living up to expectations.

'It was already good land, but after the flood, the soil was well-mixed. It must have improved, not worsened.'

Amon smiled in satisfaction and glanced at Anar'el.

She was lying on the ground, sobbing with tears streaming down her face.

“Headmaster, now it’s not the time to rest.”

“Sniff...Please save me.”

“You’re asking to be saved, so it seems you haven’t died yet.”

“Ahhh...”

As Anar’el wept, Amon gave her another piece of King of Mango fruit.

At that, Anar’el stopped crying and sniffled.

“Alright, then take a short break and continue.”

“Sniff! Yes...mumble, mumble.”

Turning away from the still-resting Anar’el, Amon walked over to the farm owner, who had been watching the work.

“Looking at the progress, if we focus for about a week, it should be mostly finished. I’ll start planting the saplings in the land where the work is done.”

“Oh, I see. Then I’ll need to hire workers immediately.”

“You won’t need any workers.”

“Huh?”

The farm owner glanced behind him.

There were dozens of saplings already loaded onto a cart.

‘Even though they are saplings, the King of Mango trees are bigger than most, so the saplings must weigh quite a bit...?’

Additionally, there were a few trees that had been preserved with preservation magic, ready to be transplanted.

“Hey.”

“Yes?”

“You’ll need to dig quite deep, and you’ll need a lot of hands to transplant all of those. Why do you say you won’t need workers?”

At the farm owner's question, Amon silently grabbed a shovel and walked toward the land where Anar'el had finished her work.

"Hey, wait!"

"Just unload the saplings from the cart so they're easier to move."

Amon said and began to dig.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

The farm owner sighed as he watched Amon digging energetically.

'Hah, I knew he'd do that. No technique, just digging with brute strength.'

He shook his head as if there was no helping it and, intending to offer advice, started heading towards Amon with his own shovel.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"...Huh?"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"...!"

Despite digging for a while, Amon's digging speed didn't slow down at all.

No, it was actually getting faster.

'Did he really just dig five holes for saplings in such a short amount of time?'

Amon had spent so many days digging land to plant potatoes in the harsh lands of the Drake Territory!

While not the brightest in terms of knowledge, he was far superior to the farm owner when it came to simple physical labor.

In other words, there was no need for technique!

And after some time passed.

"Phew, I've mostly finished. There are 15 saplings to plant, right?"

"Y-Yes."

“The trees I’m transplanting are two, so...I should have made the holes for those a bit bigger.”

Once again, the sound of thwack, thwack echoed, and two large holes were made.

Before the farm owner could react, Amon appeared and started moving the large saplings back and forth.

‘Those saplings must weigh several dozen kilograms each, but he’s carrying them with one sapling in each hand and planting them like that...?’

Amon planted all 15 heavy King of Mango saplings, covered them with soil, and nodded in satisfaction.

“Hmm, I think this is good for now...”

Amon turned to look at Anar’el.

She had curled up on the ground like a shrimp, taking a quick nap. He hurried over to her and gently shook her awake.

“Huh?!”

“You can’t sleep. You have to keep working.”

“Sniff, huh-huh-huh...”

Delmons, the branch manager of Gold Road’s Amur branch, was smiling broadly.

However, it was only on the surface, as he was complaining inwardly.

‘Damn, I’m so busy, and now this...’

Had it been about a week since Amon left the gold ingot with him?

Suddenly, Amon came back and wanted to show the progress of his business.

Though he was trying to pay back the money he borrowed, Delmons was skeptical about the speed of progress.

‘What could possibly have been achieved in just a week?’

While grumbling internally, Delmons followed Amon to the headmaster’s office at Amonis Academy.

“...Are you doing business within the academy?”

“Oh, not really. For now...”

Amon, who was rummaging through the desk in the headmaster’s office, pulled out a scroll.

It was a scroll imbued with the space-moving magic created by Anar’el herself.

“Then let’s go.”

“Yes? W-Where are we going?”

“To the business site, of course...”

“Wait, just a moment...”

Delmons urgently tried to stop Amon, but Amon didn’t listen and tore the scroll in half.

At that moment, a blue light burst forth, and Delmons, who had covered his face with his arm, looked around with a stiff expression.

‘Damn it! How rude...What is this...?’

Delmons, who had planned to sternly admonish Amon, immediately forgot all about it as he looked around in shock.

“What...What is this...?”

“Let me introduce it again.”

Amon, with a cheerful smile, pointed at the vast farm.

“This is the newly rebuilt King of Mango farm.”

“The King of Mango farm!”

Delmons’ mouth fell open.

He couldn’t help but be familiar with the King of Mangoes. It was one of the high-end luxury crops that the Gold Road Association actively distributed.

‘But the largest King of Mango farm on the continent went bankrupt after being hit by the flood. Then...this farm...eh!?’

Delmons ran toward the farm owner, who was visible in the distance.

“Are you the owner of Farmors farm!?”

“Huh? Who are you?”

“Ah, sorry for the late introduction. I am Delmons from the Gold Road Association’s Amur branch. I’ve seen the owner of Farmors farm a few times from a distance.”

“Ah, Gold Road Association.”

The farm owner’s expression was cold.

It was understandable. The moment the farm was hit by the flood and went bankrupt, the Gold Road Association turned its back without a second thought.

Of course, considering the Association’s objectives, it wasn’t necessarily a bad decision, but it had left a wound on the innocent farmer, Farmors.

“When my business was thriving, you visited frequently. So what brings you here now?”

“Hahaha...Well, how should I put it...”

Having no words, Delmons quickly changed the topic.

“By the way, what happened here?”

“What do you mean?”

At the farm owner’s question, Delmons pointed to the surroundings.

“Isn’t this a magnificent farm, comparable to before? The barn, the warehouse, the fences...The buildings are great, and it seems you’ve properly restored the orchard too!”

“Hmph!”

“Where did you manage to get the funds...Could it be!?”

Delmons quickly turned to Amon.

‘Could he have gotten the funds from the Amonis Academy?’

No, that wasn’t it. He had done it by his own effort.

Amon had personally built the barn, the warehouse, and the fences.

But Delmons, who didn’t know that, shuddered.

‘How much money did he secretly have hidden away?’

Delmons, grumbling inwardly, glanced at Farmors and spoke.

“Heh, heh heh. Isn’t it a great thing? The King of Mangoes that Farmors farm owner personally improved is surely the best in the continent.”

“....”

“So I’m saying, when you harvest them, please make sure to do business with our Association...”

Delmons spoke bluntly.

“The full harvest will have to wait until the saplings all grow. Well, they’re growing very quickly, so it won’t be long, though.”

Thanks to Anar’el’s harvest dance.

Moreover, this time, she had promised to dance ‘just once,’ so there wouldn’t be another flood.

Probably.

“Anyway, for now, everything we have is coming from a few mature trees that we replanted, so it’s still not enough to do business with the Association.”

“Heh, heh heh. Time will solve everything, won’t it?”

“...Hmph.”

Farmors was clearly still upset with the Gold Road Association!

As Delmons watched Farmors, he stomped his feet.

‘Damn, who would have thought this farm would be restored so well in such a short time? If I had known, I would have suggested holding off on trading with other farms...’

But back then, due to the King of Mango craze spreading across the continent, the Association had to start trading with other farms as quickly as possible to recover losses.

‘...Sigh, well, I’ll have to keep trying to persuade him for a while.’

Though, considering how his mouth was almost turned down to his chin, it wouldn’t be easy.

Just as Delmons sighed inwardly, Amon suddenly tapped him on the shoulder.

“Huh? What’s the matter?”

“Just a moment, follow me...”

Delmons was led by Amon to a somewhat quiet location.

“Well, as you might have guessed, the ones who helped with the farm restoration are us, Amonis Academy.”

“...Well, that makes sense.”

“So here’s the thing...”

Amon, smiling broadly, spoke.

“Farmors farm owner promised to give us a 20% share of the farm once it’s restored.”

Delmons’ mouth dropped open.

20% of the King of Mango farm?

20% of this vast farm that stretched to the horizon?

Seeing Delmons frozen in shock, Amon spoke.

“I will transfer 10% to you, so please pay off the debt the Academy owes.”

“...!”

“What will you do?”

Of course, in the long run, steadily paying off the loan with a 20% share would be profitable.

‘But the farm could go bankrupt overnight! And the Academy’s funds are involved, so it’s not even my own money.’

For this reason, he intended to clear the debt at once, ignoring repayment terms, in exchange for just 10% of the share.

Furthermore, from the Gold Road Association’s perspective, this was a very attractive offer.

With a 10% share, they would be able to acquire King of Mangoes at cost price!

'Anyway, if things go well, I'll clear the debt with that 10% share and secure a steady income for the Academy with the remaining 10%.'

Having calculated this, Amon made the offer.

A shrewd businessman, Delmons, immediately understood the terms and took Amon's hand politely.

"I look forward to working with you, Mr. Amon."

## Chapter 66

The farm owner had a somewhat displeased expression when it was mentioned that 10% of the academy's shares would be handed over to the Gold Road Trading Company.

However, after Amon's fervent persuasion, he eventually came to accept it.

'What benefit would there be in giving shares to the academy? Wouldn't it be better to establish a cooperative relationship with the trading company instead? That would be much more secure, wouldn't it?'

'Hmm, but...'

'Wouldn't it be better to stay close to the trading company to secure distribution networks, rather than collaborating with those academy types who only know ink and books?'

For the sake of his goal, Amon could lower even his own group if needed.

After Amon's passionate persuasion, the farm owner finally nodded in agreement.

'Well, anyway, the immediate crisis has been averted.'

The red tags that had been covering the academy had long since disappeared!

The workers who had been sweeping up various things had also vanished.

'But it felt crowded with people, didn't it? Now that they've all gone, the academy feels empty. No, it really is empty...'

At that moment, the only people remaining on the vast academy grounds were Amon and Anar'el—just the two of them.

'There are only two weeks left of the summer vacation. Soon, my little sister and the Dragon Lord will be enrolling, so I'll have to make sure we have everything ready...'

Of course, even if everyone gathered here, the feeling of emptiness wouldn't change much. But three is better than two, and four is better than three.

"Well, now that the immediate crisis is averted, should we call others?"

Amon pulled out the low-quality papers from the stack he had.

'They all come from prominent places, so the letters should arrive soon, and they'll return shortly, right?'

Amon wrote letters to the scattered colleagues of the academy.

Two days later.

'What's going on? Why haven't I received any replies?'

Even though they had been sent by special courier, there was still no reply.

None of them were in some remote, secluded place.

Sloth would likely be at the prestigious Pid Marquis household, and Marion was reportedly back at the famous Mage Tower where he had once been affiliated.

'And Reinbelt is probably in the capital for the Four Great Knights' summons?'

In other words, if the letters were sent by special courier, they should have arrived within a day at the latest.

So two days was more than enough time, and yet, no replies?

'Could they all be too busy?'

Well, Marion and Reinbelt could be too busy to reply.

'...Then why hasn't Sloth replied?'

She was probably lounging around at the Marquis household, yet she didn't even bother to reply to a letter!

Having worked up a sweat to restore the King of Mango Farm and resolve the academy's crisis, yet the senior teachers were off leisurely enjoying themselves elsewhere!

"How disappointing. Don't you think so, Headmaster?"

At Amon's question, Anar'el responded with a powerless groan, as she was in a miserable state.

She had spent almost an entire week restoring the King of Mango Farm and was now suffering from mana depletion, leaving her looking like dried fish.

"Well, I told them to come back before summer vacation ends, so they'll probably return on their own."

"Ugh..."

"Well, if they don't come back by then, we can just go and catch them."

"Ughhh..."

"So, I'm saying..."

At Amon's meaningful words, Anar'el flinched.

What else was he planning to make her do, now that she was in such a pitiful state?

"The first person we need to find is..."

"Who, who do you mean...?"

"Others are easy to locate, and I've already sent letters to them, so they'll return on their own by the end of the summer vacation, but one person is completely different."

"...Could it be?"

"Yes, Vice-Principal Brestle."

Anar'el's eyes widened.

Not long ago, when the Gold Road Trading Company's creditors came to take away the academy's property, Brestle had remained completely unconcerned.

"Ah, I'm hungry. Headmaster, is there anything to eat?"

"Ack! Don't take that! That's the history of our academy..."

"Ugh, this is chaotic."

"Brestle! Stop them! The bust of the second headmaster in the vice-principal's office was made to honor..."

“Ah, yes. Please pass by.”

“Ahhhh!”

Amidst the chaos, Brestle had been wandering around, rubbing her belly and looking for food, and eventually, she fled the academy.

The Headmaster’s fury must have been immense!

What’s more, she had vanished without even saying where she was going!

Anar’el gritted her teeth.

“Ugh, what should I do? Should I track down her location?”

“Yes. That will be enough.”

As long as she found her location, Amon would go after her immediately, grabbing her by the hair and bringing her back to face a stern judgment.

Anar’el, now looking even more like dried fish, weakly rose from her sickbed.

“Cough! Huh, huuu...”

“Headmaster! Don’t overdo it!”

“It’s... fine. You don’t need to worry.”

“But...”

Anar’el smiled sadly.

“For Brestle’s punishment... No, for the academy’s future, I’d gladly sacrifice my body.”

Anar’el muttered resolutely and tightly shut her eyes.

Then, she activated a tracking spell to trace Brestle’s presence.

“Ugh!? Cough, cough!”

With violent coughing, she covered her mouth, and Amon’s eyes widened.

Was she pushing herself so hard that she was about to vomit blood?

Turning her head, Anar’el said.

“Amon, do you have something to wipe with?”

“Are... you okay? You’re coughing up blood...”

“No, I just choked on my saliva...”

“...”

After wiping her nose, Anar’el sniffled and activated the magic again.

Some time passed.

“...I found her.”

“Ah!”

“To the southeast of Amur...She’s there. It’s about a day’s journey by horse.”

Southeast of Amur.

If you continue down that path, a few villages will appear.

And if you go a little further south, there’s even a fairly large city.

‘But that’s a place that would take several days to reach by horse, right? But he said it’s only a day’s journey—what could be there?’

Lost in thought, Amon recalled what might be in that direction and flinched.

“...Amur Forest?”

The statement that it would take about a day to get there meant that if Amon ran at full speed, it wouldn’t take more than a few hours to arrive.

‘This is the Amur Forest. I’ve always skirted around it, but this is my first time actually entering...’

The Amur Forest was denser than expected.

For Amon, who had freely roamed the vast Arma Mountain Range like it was his backyard, it was a significant sign if he thought, ‘It’s bigger than I thought.’

‘Finding Brestle here won’t be easy. If I had known this, I should have brought Principal Anar’el along.’

While Amon was thinking this, the dried Elf from the Academy, who had been left behind, suddenly felt an itch in her ears.

But, lacking the strength, she couldn't scratch her ears, so she just ended up sobbing.

Anyway, at present Amon sighed as he looked around the Amur Forest.

“Ugh...If I'm not careful, I'll end up wasting a lot of time in this forest... Hmm?”

He muttered as he suddenly turned his head.

There was a smell in the air that didn't belong in an ordinary forest.

‘The smell of roasting meat!’

Amon shot toward the source of the smell like lightning.

‘Of course! Even after coming all the way here, she's just hanging around looking for something to eat!’

Amon, having launched himself toward the smell, clenched his fist as it grew closer.

‘Let's give her a punch first!’

Amon, leaping out of the bushes, prepared to swing his fist and shouted.

“Brestle...!”

“Ugh!”

“...It's not her?”

To his surprise, a middle-aged man, who had fallen after being startled by Amon's shout, was the one who had been there.

“Who are you?”

“Who are you?!”

Flustered, Amon hurriedly explained who he was.

He was a teacher from the Academy, and he had come here searching for a colleague.

The middle-aged man let out a sigh of relief after hearing Amon's explanation.

“Phew, I thought I was going to have a heart attack.”

“I’m sorry. I came a long way looking for that bastard...”

“...Phew, I understand.”

The middle-aged man introduced himself as a hunter who made a living by hunting beasts.

“It just so happens that it’s time for my meal, and I was about to eat when you startled me.”

“Sorry again.”

The hunter, tearing off the hind leg of a rabbit, continued.

“So, who are you looking for?”

Amon, eyeing the greasy rabbit leg, responded.

“Oh, a Dark Elf. Have you seen one around?”

The hunter paused for a moment, frowning at Amon’s words.

“A Dark Elf? Is that one of your companions?”

“One of my companions? No, she’s just a colleague.”

“Hm. I don’t know if it’s the one you’re looking for, but I did see a Dark Elf lurking around here recently, someone I haven’t seen around before.”

“R-Really?!”

The hunter nodded and, with the bare bone of the rabbit leg, pointed in a direction.

“If you go a little that way, you should find her.”

“T-Thank you!”

“Sure, take care.”

“...”

“...Aren’t you going?”

Amon hesitated before carefully speaking.

“U-Excuse me, but could I join you for the meal?”

“...Sit.”

Amon sat down and devoured all four rabbits that the hunter had caught.

Today's expenditure: One silver coin.

'Ugh, that damn hunter. Asking for a silver coin just for the price of a rabbit...'

Nature belongs to no one, yet here he was accepting money.

Grumbling, Amon trudged through the bushes, muttering.

“Anyway, this direction should be correct... But I haven't even seen a single rabbit, let alone a Dark Elf.”

As Amon continued grumbling and walking, he suddenly remembered what the hunter had said.

'Anyway, be careful. She's a very violent one.'

It's true that Brestle had a bit of a violent side, but was she really violent enough for the hunter to warn him so seriously?

Now that he thought about it, Anar'el had given him similar advice.

'Be careful when you find Vice-Principal Brestle.'

'Huh? What should I be careful of?'

'You'll understand once you see her.'

With that vague warning in mind, Amon clicked his tongue.

'Well, I'll understand once I see her. But why is the path so rough?'

Grumbling, Amon continued on his way, but then suddenly stopped.

Once again, the smell of roasting meat hit his nose.

'...Could it be the hunter again?'

Frowning, Amon moved cautiously forward and then widened his eyes.

'There! Found her!'

Brestle was squatting by a campfire.

And, as if she had hunted it herself, there was a large wild boar lying next to her!

'This damn Dark Elf leaves the Academy, runs away, and now she's living the good life roasting a pig!?'

Furious, Amon burst out of the bushes and shouted.

"Brestle! You damn Dark Elf...!"

Just as he shouted, Brestle jumped back and glared at Amon, shouting.

"U!"

"...Huh? U?"

"U! Uuuu! Ugh, ack!"

Brestle threatened by slapping the ground with her palms and throwing stones!

"What?"

"Uuu! U! Aah!"

"..."

Seeing Brestle showing her teeth and growling threateningly, Amon suddenly remembered the hunter's warning.

'Anyway, be careful. She's a very violent one.'

He also recalled Anar'el's advice.

'Be careful when you find Vice-Principal Brestle. You'll understand once you see her.'

The meaning of those words finally sank in, and Amon collapsed, overwhelmed.

"Is the Dark Elf such a wild species that it can become feral this quickly...?"

"U, u! U, ack ack ack!"

Chapter 67

Vice Principal, Brestle's Lightning-fast Wildness!

It had only been a few weeks since leaving the academy, but something was terribly wrong.

Because of this, Amon was so shocked that he completely forgot his desire to strike Brestle when he met her.

“Vice Principal! What happened in the short time we didn’t see each other?!”

“Uwa-! Eek! U, uuuuu!”

“What in the world is this...?”

Brestle, who was jumping around like a barbarian detached from civilization!

Seeing the stone knife that seemed to have been used for preparing the wild boar, Amon bit his lip tightly.

‘It looks like she’s transitioning from chipped stone tools to polished stone tools.’

Ah! What in the world made Brestle like this?

Amon was in such shock that he flinched.

‘Wait, could it be...?’

He suddenly recalled what Anar’el had said about Brestle in the past.

‘Dark Elves often get obsessed with one desire. The Vice Principal has a severe obsession with food. But did she go hungry on vacation? It seems to have gotten worse since before.’

Could it be that leaving the academy was fine, but since she starved, she went mad?

‘Yeah, she probably didn’t have any money, so she couldn’t buy food. So, she ended up returning to the primal hunting lifestyle!’

Looking at it from that angle, it could be said that her choice to capture and roast a wild boar was indeed correct.

‘Hmm, maybe it was good I brought this after all.’

Amon pulled something out of his pocket and gently set it down on the ground.

“Vice Principal!”

“U, ack- ack!”

“Look at this!”

Amon pointed to what he had brought and took a few steps back.

I am harmless. I am not your enemy.

He stepped back with both hands held out, as though to show he meant no harm, and continued speaking.

“It’s something you like!”

“U... Uuu?”

As Amon spoke and stepped back, Brestle showed interest in what he had placed down.

When Brestle saw it, her eyes widened.

That’s right.

“It’s a potato from our territory!”

“...U!”

The perfect bait to lure Brestle!

As expected, Brestle quickly approached and showed interest in the potato.

“U, ah! Kyakyak!”

Brestle, examining the potato as if it were a rare treasure!

And then, it happened.

Flinch-!

Brestle, who had been jumping around, suddenly started shuddering.

“U, uuuu...”

Seeing this, Amon shouted strongly.

“Yes! It’s a potato!”

“Uuuu...”

“It’s the product of agriculture, not hunting!”

“Ughhhh...!”

“Return to civilization!”

At Amon’s booming command, Brestle, who had been shaking while staring at the potato, grabbed her head.

“Ck, ck! My... My head! What... What is this memory...?”

“Vice Principal! Are you coming to your senses?!”

“You... Who are you?”

Shuddering, Brestle paused and then spoke.

“Teacher Amon...?”

“Your memory’s coming back!”

As she responded with a faint smile, Amon suddenly swung his fist at the back of her head.

He had intentionally made her regain her memory in order to fulfill his desire to hit her.

Amon dragged the unconscious Brestle back to the academy.

He literally dragged her along.

After hearing the whole story, Anar’el sighed and said.

“Dark Elves tend to be like that. It’s called regression. If there’s no external interference, they revert to the past. I was worried something like this might happen, but to regress all the way to the Stone Age in just a few weeks...”

“She was just about to transition from chipped stone tools to polished stone tools.”

“It’s basically the same thing.”

Anar’el sighed in disbelief and looked at the unconscious Brestle.

“Anyway, has she returned to normal now?”

“Well, while dragging her back, she was making weird sounds like ‘gya-ruk’.”

“Maybe she’s just in pain because you dragged her back?”

“Hm.”

Just as if to confirm that possibility, Brestle, who was still unconscious, started making a ‘gya-ruk’ sound again.

“...Doesn’t seem like it.”

“Let her try a potato.”

After putting the potato in Brestle’s mouth, she licked her lips and muttered, “Potato...”

“It seems like she’s not fully back yet.”

“This situation is serious.”

Seeing her with drooping ears as if in a headache, Amon spoke.

“Well, if we hang some potatoes on the ceiling for a while, she’ll return to normal quickly. It’d be even better with a ladder and a stick.”

Amon was going to help Brestle evolve!

“Anyway, now that we’ve caught the Vice Principal who ran away, once the seniors and Elder Reinbelt, along with Kai, come back, our academy should return to normal as well. By the way, did I receive a reply while I was gone?”

Anar’el shook her head.

“No, not yet.”

“Hm...They’re probably busy, or maybe they’ve read it and don’t plan on responding.”

At that assumption, Anar’el ears trembled in fear.

“Our teachers would never do that!”

Though Anar’el firmly believed in the teachers, Amon, who had only distrust towards them, decided to take further action.

“I’ll write one more letter. If they’ve read it but haven’t responded, this time, I’ll make sure I get a definite response...”

Anar’el’s face lit up with admiration as she saw Amon nod in determination.

“Ah, truly, Teacher Amon... To consider the possibility of unexpected accidents and even take care of the return of other teachers! You’re the only one who fits the role of the head of the faculty!”

I’ll say this a few more times, but Amon is doing this because of his sister sibling and the dragon.

‘Then I should hurry and write the letter!’

Amon hurriedly headed to his quarters.

“This can’t be.”

He sent the letter to ensure there was no way they couldn’t respond.

But it was strange that no reply had come after two days.

[To Senior Marion]

[You old, sick, drunkard of a senior, there are about ten days until the new academic year starts, and you still haven’t responded to my letter. Have you gotten so frail that you can’t even read my letter? If so, I’ll prepare a nice coffin for you, so don’t worry and come back. I just need to measure your size.]

[From Amon]

[P.S. – The liquor hidden in your room, I drank it. It was delicious.]

After reading this, if there’s still no response or if they haven’t returned...

That can’t be!

‘...Could it be that they haven’t read it at all?’

Maybe they’re so busy, or perhaps, as soon as they received the letter, they tore it up because they didn’t want to deal with anything related to the academy!

‘This is serious. I sent a similar letter to Senior Sloth...’

To her, he had sent a letter saying, “How do you feel knowing Chloe will soon surpass you?”

Despite her skill decline, Sloth’s obsession with swordsmanship was unrivaled, so Amon had expected a response, but she hadn’t replied either.

‘But does Sloth even have anything urgent to do with her family?’

It was truly a puzzling matter.

'Anyway, I sent a letter to Lord Reinbelt saying something like, "I want to learn swordsmanship, is there anyone who can teach me?" But even he hasn't responded.'

It was at that moment, overwhelmed by confusion, that Amon sighed.

'...Hm?'

Just then, he noticed a delivery man putting a letter in the mailbox outside the window.

'It's here!'

He wasn't sure what it was, but something had arrived.

Amon rushed to the mailbox and then went upstairs to his room with a letter in hand.

'This is...!'

A letter from the Ignis Mage Tower.

It was where Marion had been affiliated in the past.

'Then this must be a reply from Senior Marion!'

Thinking this, Amon quickly opened the letter and the words that caught his eye.

[You're dead when you return, you bastard.]

The hurriedly written words were so frantic that it was clear the person had split their time to write this.

Moreover, the last part looked as if the person had been dragged away while writing.

Amon folded the letter and muttered as he looked at it.

"Thank goodness. Looks like he was just busy and couldn't reply."

Besides, the fact that Marion had even announced he would return was a very good thing.

Of course, Amon felt slightly uncomfortable with the cheeky wording of his own letter, but he was already planning to buy a good amount of fine alcohol soon.

'That should help ease his anger, right?'

While admiring his own foresight, Amon continued to look out the window.

“...Hm?”

Another delivery man was placing something in the mailbox.

It seemed like another letter had arrived, but maybe he didn't put everything in at once earlier.

'Did the paths cross?'

The thought that someone else might have sent a reply made Amon hurry to the mailbox.

He arrived and read the outside of the letter.

“From Marquis Pid!”

This must have been from Sloth.

'Hmm, she must have been very angry after reading my letter.'

After all, the feeling of being overtaken by one's own disciple must be indescribable!

'She would definitely be upset, having being overtaken so accurately pointed out.'

Thinking this, Amon carefully opened the letter and frowned as he read the words.

[It's disappointing, but it's a rewarding thing as a teacher. It means I taught well enough.]

Amon's face stiffened at the completely unexpected prelude.

'She's lost it. Senior Sloth has completely lost it.'

There was no way Sloth would act so humble unless something had happened to her.

Anyway, Amon quickly read the next lines.

[By the way, is everything okay at the academy? I believe so, but I have one request. Our family has some sponsorship money and goods to send to the academy, and I think it would be hard to carry them all myself when I return. It's difficult to hire workers due to family circumstances, so if you have time, please drop by our family's estate. I'd appreciate it.]

[P.S. – Please come as soon as possible.]

At that moment, Marquis Pid was smiling coldly.

“Did he take the letter?”

“Yes, Your Grace.”

“Hmm.”

Letters arriving at the Pid family were always checked in advance before being delivered.

And all the letters that Amon had sent to Sloth were burned.

How dare a country bumpkin send a letter to his precious only daughter!

That’s why the first letter inquiring about her well-being was cleanly burned, but the second letter couldn’t be ignored.

‘How dare he compare my precious daughter to a disciple and laugh at her?’

Because of that, Marquis Pid personally sent a letter to Amon.

According to Sloth, Amon was very money-oriented, so the Marquis thought that sponsorship money and goods would easily lure him to come.

“Tell the twelve swords of the family! The man named Amon, who insulted Sloth, will come here, so prepare to deal with him!”

“Yes! Your Grace!”

As the servants left, Marquis Pid smiled coldly.

‘That bastard, I will teach him a lesson for insulting my daughter!’

Amon crumpled the letter and threw it into the trash can.

“It’s a trap.”

The letter’s intention was clearly obvious!

Sloth had clearly summoned him to the Marquis estate to kill him.

As proof of this, the delivery man who had dropped off the letter earlier was now glancing at Amon from a nearby alley.

'Did Senior Sloth send this? It was suspicious when the letters didn't arrive together earlier.'

Clicking his tongue, Amon muttered.

"Well, since the reply came, she'll come back when the time's right."

Chapter 68

Amon was worried in various ways.

"Has it already been two weeks since the students left the academy?"

Soon, the students would have been away from his care for three weeks.

Amon was so concerned about his beloved students that he couldn't sleep at night.

"Ah! I'm sure they're staying up all night, crying because they miss me!"

At that moment, Boris and Raymond were rolling around, chuckling.

"Hehehe! It's so comfortable here, isn't it?"

"Yeah, this is what it means to live well."

The vast wealth of the Marquis Pid family!

There was no way that the teacher's beloved disciples, visiting his house, would not be treated well!

In the end, Raymond, eager to make up for the hardships of living by eating only wild herbs, ate so much that he became chubby, and Boris had become so lazy that he had forgotten half of the magic he had learned.

The only one who hadn't changed was Chloe.

"...Guys, we'll have to return to the academy soon. Shouldn't we review what we've learned?"

Chloe tried to speak up, but there was no use with the lazy pigs.

"Hehehe! Chloe, do you want some chocolate?"

Boris, offering chocolate, was met with a glare from Chloe, but unlike usual, he flinched slightly and kept up his rebellious behavior.

“No matter how much you glare at me, it’s useless!”

Raymond went even further.

He had been offered a chance to stay there, having been recognized for his swordsmanship.

“I’ll never leave here!”

Chloe sighed heavily as she stared at the chubby pigs.

‘What should I do? These guys won’t be able to adapt when we return to the academy...’

People tend to think that once they reach a high point, that’s their place in the world.

But when they fall back down, the mental shock is unimaginable.

As someone who had once been royalty, Chloe knew this better than anyone.

‘But they won’t even listen to me, no matter what I say...’

If this were the academy, she would have beaten them into listening, but this was not the academy—it was Marquis Pid house.

As someone who had been strictly educated as royalty, she knew that causing trouble in another family’s house was a huge disrespect.

Sigh ‘I guess there’s no helping it.’

In the end, Chloe decided to use her trump card.

[From Chloe to Teacher Amon]

[Teacher, are you doing well? I am fine.]

Amon, reading Chloe’s letter asking about his well-being, was on the verge of tears.

While fellow teacher Marion had threatened to kill him, and Sloth had been intent on leading him into a trap, how could a letter from a student be so warm?

‘As expected, the only ones I can trust are my students.’

Amon continued reading the letter.

[The problem is that only I am doing well. Boris and Raymond are in a terrible state. They've stayed here without swinging a sword or reading a single page of a book.]

The letter shifted into a dire situation, turning sharply without warning!

It had been less than five seconds since Amon thought he could only trust Chloe.

'I guess I can only trust Chloe after all.'

It was then that the next lines appeared.

[So, if you're not busy, could you come by for a bit? Please scold Raymond and Boris properly!]

[From Chloe]

Amon closed his eyes tightly.

Even though Sloth had clearly set a trap for him at the Marquis' house, Chloe was asking him to walk right into it.

'There really is nothing to trust in this world. After all, the world is meant to be lived alone.'

Shivering with deep despair, Amon's eyes landed on the postscript.

[P.S. – Teacher, I miss you.]

Amon carefully folded the letter and tucked it into his chest.

"Alright, Chloe. I'll be there soon."

How could he not go when his beloved student said she missed him?

Although he was a bit concerned about the trap set by Sloth, there was no way the prestigious Marquis Pid family would just let a conflict arise in their house.

'Even if Senior Sloth causes a ruckus, the Marquis family will probably stop it for me!'

But the truth is always cruel.

Sloth didn't send a letter, nor did she set a trap!

After arriving at the family estate, Sloth stayed in her room, just sleeping!

While Marquis Pid whom Amon believed would resolve the issue was actually the one who had actually set the trap and he was sharpening his sword.

'That bastard who insulted my precious daughter! I'll cut him down in one strike!'

But Amon, unaware of this, was preparing to leave for the Marquis estate, believing in the Marquis' sincerity.

'The misunderstanding about marriage was cleared up last time, so they won't treat me badly!'

"Cut off his head and feed it to the dogs!"

"Huh?"

As soon as Amon knocked on the Pid mansion door, the Twelve Swords ran out as if waiting for him, and as soon as they dragged him into the main hall.

Marquis Pid furious roar echoed and Amon's face turned pale.

"Wait a minute! Your Grace! What do you mean by that all of a sudden?!"

"Fool! Don't you know your crime?!"

Amon, thinking it seemed like a similar conversation from when he had visited the Pid estate before, shouted loudly.

"Please tell me what crime I've committed!"

"You despicable bastard! How dare you insult my precious daughter and still shamelessly open your mouth!"

It had been weeks since he had last seen Sloth's face, and hearing Amon being accused of insulting Sloth made him turn pale.

"What... What nonsense is this?! Your Grace, there must be a misunderstanding!"

"A misunderstanding?! A misunderstanding, you say?!"

Marquis Pid, roaring in fury, pulled out a piece of paper from his coat.

"Are you still calling this a misunderstanding after seeing this?!"

"...!"

Amon's face turned ashen when he saw the paper the Marquis was holding.

It was the letter he had sent to Sloth.

[To Senior Sloth]

[Are you doing well? I think you'll soon be overtaken in swordsmanship by Chloe, but as long as you're well, that's all that matters. But I'm curious—how does it feel?]

[P.S. – Does that swordsmanship help you sleep?]

Seeing his own letter in the Marquis hands, Amon clenched his eyes shut.

'Damn it! It wasn't Senior Sloth who set the trap, it was Marquis Pid!'

It seemed the Marquis had intercepted the letter sent to Sloth.

'That daughter-loving fool...What should I do now?'

Should he stretch his neck out to make it easier for them to chop it off? No, absolutely not.

Amon, gritting his teeth, shouted loudly.

"Wait! There seems to be a misunderstanding!"

"Ha ha ha! A misunderstanding? Alright, speak up! Let me hear what you have to say!"

As Marquis Pid raised his hand, Kaiser, one of the Twelve Swords of the Marquis house, who had been dancing around with his sword, suddenly stopped.

'Alright, I've bought some time.'

Now, it was time to clear up the misunderstanding.

'...But wait a minute.'

Thinking about it, there was no misunderstanding, so there was nothing to clear up.

The letter contained nothing but truth, facts, sincerity, and honest words, so there was nothing to explain.

'This is bad.'

As he saw no way out, panic instantly struck his mind!

Nonetheless, Amon desperately squeezed out his words.

“Well...”

“Well? Is that your last will?”

“No, what I meant was...”

Amon, shrinking his shoulders, cautiously observed Marquis Pid’s expression.

Seeing the red face filled with anger, it wouldn’t be surprising if he attacked right now, and Kaiser, standing beside him, was once again dancing with his sword.

In other words, if Amon didn’t say something right away, his head would be on the line.

‘...To hell with it.’

Amon suddenly stood up and shouted.

“That letter was to praise Miss Sloth’s beauty!”

“What, what did you say!?”

The only way to soften the heart of the daughter-obsessed, no, the daughter-obsessed fool, Marquis Pid, was to praise Sloth!

And amazingly,

“.....!”

Marquis Pid froze with wide eyes after hearing those words.

‘Got it! It’s working!’

Seeing the daughter-obsessed fool freeze at the praise for his daughter was too good to pass up!

Amon pushed forward with his words.

“As you can see, the sentences in that letter have complex meanings hidden behind them...”

“What letter?”

“.....!?”

Amon flinched and turned his head at the sudden voice from behind.

There stood Sloth, frowning.

“Senior Sloth...?”

“I came to see if you had stopped by our family, and what is this situation?”

Sloth spoke irritably, glaring at Marquis Pid.

“Father, what is going on right now?”

“.....”

Marquis Pid remained silent, rolling his eyes without saying a word.

He looked like a dog who had done something wrong, nervously avoiding eye contact!

“What’s going on, brothers?”

Her brothers, also dumbfounded, lowered their heads and stood stiff.

Seeing this, Sloth sighed, clearly frustrated.

“Ugh, seriously...”

Sloth scratched her head and spoke.

“By the way, what letter? Did you send me a letter?”

“Uh...yes, I sent a letter asking when you would be returning to the academy.”

“I was planning to head back soon, but I never received a letter...?”

At that moment, Sloth quickly glanced at Marquis Pid.

Marquis Pid, who had been holding and shaking the letter, hurriedly tried to hide it, but it was too late.

“Father, are you hiding my letter?”

“.....”

“Why...?”

Sloth, sighing as if there was no stopping this, approached Marquis Pid and snatched the letter away.

Marquis Pid, who had helplessly lost the letter, seemed to want to say something, but when his eyes met Sloth's, he quickly avoided her gaze.

He was beyond being a daughter-obsessed fool, almost like a daughter-obsessed madman!

“Ugh, anyway, Father. I'll leave now.”

“.....”

“Let's go, Amon.”

Sloth grabbed Amon and led him out of the main hall.

As she walked, Sloth quietly thought to herself.

‘So, he sent a letter saying he praised my beauty?’

Sloth secretly smiled.

‘I mean, I am pretty beautiful, after all!’

Then, a moment later.

“.....”

“S-sorry, Senior.”

“.....”

“There was a misunderstanding, a misunderstanding...”

Amon, trembling and with his head down, stood before Sloth, who was reading the letter and exuding an aura of menace.

Chapter 69

“Haah.”

“.....”

“Phew.....”

“.....”

Amon, glancing at Sloth sighing deeply with her arms crossed, cautiously opened his mouth.

“Uh, Miss Sloth?”

“Shut up.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

Sloth snapped irritably, waving a letter in her hand.

“How could you send a letter like this?”

“Well, I think there’s been a misunderstanding.”

“Misunderstanding? A misunderstanding?”

At Sloth’s pressing tone, dragging out her words in disbelief, Amon internally nodded to himself.

‘Like father, like daughter. She’s just like Marquis Pid.’

Anyway, after glaring at Amon for a while, Sloth spoke up.

“Fine, what misunderstanding? Let’s hear it.”

“Well, um....”

Amon began to explain the situation.

He had sent a letter but received no reply. Thinking it was deliberate, he wrote another letter to provoke a response.

“...So you wrote the letter so it would be impossible to ignore?”

“Exactly.”

“Well, it certainly got a reaction. Just not from me.”

“You’re right.”

Amon briefly considered explaining this to Marquis Pid but figured, given the earlier fury in the marquis’ eyes, it would have been a fruitless effort.

Clicking her tongue in exasperation, Sloth shook the letter and said:

“Anyway, is this letter serious? About Chloe surpassing me?”

Sloth’s blunt question startled Amon so much that he quickly exclaimed internally.

‘Of course not!’

Unable to admit the truth, he licked his lips nervously and replied:

“No way! It was just nonsense to get a reply! Anyone hearing this would misunderstand.”

“Good. That answer just saved your life.”

“Pardon?”

When Sloth waved her hand, a ‘thud-thud-thud’ sound came from the ceiling.

Hearing it, Amon felt chills down his spine.

‘Damn it, so that’s what the presence on the ceiling was...I thought it was just some servant on the second floor!’

After dismissing her listeners, Sloth sighed and said:

“Anyway, I’ll let it go this time.”

“Th-thank you.”

“Though the content of the letter was wrong.”

“Pardon? What do you mean....?”

Sloth smiled faintly, then grasped the sword she had left at her side.

Seeing this, Amon thought, “She’s finally going to kill me.” He prepared to counterattack, but the sight that unfolded next left him wide-eyed.

Woooooosh—!

A beam of light surged from Sloth’s sword.

It was an Aura Blade, a technique exclusive to Sword Masters.

“I finally became a Sword Master. You could say my talent has finally blossomed.”

Although there had been signs recently, it was only after returning to her family estate and reflecting during her rest that Sloth had achieved the level of Sword Master.

Standing tall and proud, Sloth exuded confidence, but Amon wanted to point out one critical fact.

'Even Raymond, who became a Sword Master ages ago, is on the verge of being surpassed by Chloe. For Senior Sloth, who just became a Sword Master, getting overtaken is inevitable, isn't it?'

But quick-witted as he was, Amon clapped like a seal and praised her.

"That's truly amazing! I always knew Senior Sloth would become a Sword Master!"

"Hahaha, really? You mean it?"

"Of course! At this rate, becoming a Grand Sword Master isn't just a dream! To reach Sword Master at such a young age is incredible!"

Overflowing with insincere flattery, Amon's compliments made Sloth's shoulders rise by a fist's height.

And as she basked in the cascade of compliments, she suddenly remembered something and spoke up.

"Right, but why did you suddenly come to my house?"

"Oh."

Only then did Amon recall the purpose of his visit and glanced around before answering.

"Speaking of which, where are the students?"

"The kids? They're in another room."

"I see. I got a letter from Chloe earlier."

"From Chloe?"

"Yes. She said Boris and Raymond don't seem interested in returning to the academy, so she asked me to come and discipline them."

"Oh, really?"

Sloth scratched her head awkwardly.

“Now that you mention it, I haven’t checked on them recently because I’ve been so busy myself.”

“You call yourself a teacher....”

“Do you think I’m suited to being a teacher?”

Amon glanced at the ceiling.

It seemed no one was listening.

“No, not at all.”

“At least pretend to think about it before answering. Anyway, so that’s how it is....”

Sloth began walking.

“Let’s go. I’ll guide you.”

“Yes, Senior.”

“Mwahaha! This is delicious!”

“Gulp, gulp! Ahh! This is life!”

Raymond and Boris were reveling in food and drink, living in sheer indulgence.

“Nom nom, this chocolate is juicy.”

“It’s got a nice sweetness.”

Their carefree voices, soaked in luxury and decadence, reached Amon’s ears as he listened from outside the door. His body trembled with rage.

‘These brats....’

Was it anger at the students he’d trained falling into ruin? No.

‘How dare they gorge themselves on chocolate I couldn’t even taste as a child!’

It was envy and jealousy!

As the second son of the potato-dependent Drake territory, Amon had decided to harshly discipline these spoiled students who had learned all the wrong things.

“You rascals!”

He wanted to kick the door down, but it looked expensive—befitting Marquis Pid’s estate—so he cautiously opened it and roared:

“How dare students of the academy, who should be devoted to learning and frugality, act like this!”

Boris and Raymond jumped in shock at Amon’s sudden appearance.

“S-sir, why are you here...?”

“I came after receiving an anonymous tip that you’d become fat pigs!”

“An anonymous tip...!”

There was only one person who could have sent it.

Boris and Raymond turned their blazing gazes toward Chloe.

Sitting nearby, Chloe was calmly trimming her nails. As their eyes landed on her, she lifted her gaze with a sharp glint and snapped:

“What?”

“N-nothing.”

“Humph.”

As the students tried to shift blame onto Chloe, Amon bellowed:

“You scoundrels! Get up this instant! I’ll see if your skills have dulled!”

“Yes, sir!”

“Head to the training ground immediately. Uh...Senior Sloth, where’s the training ground?”

“Just go out the back door to the right.”

“You heard her! Move it, you brats!”

After the two chubby students scurried off to the training ground, Amon, still seething, approached the pile of chocolate on the table.

As a child, he had never once tasted chocolate. The scars of that deprivation, combined with its high price, meant he couldn’t afford it even as an adult.

When he finally put a piece of chocolate in his mouth, Amon felt his childhood return.

“Sniff...So this is what chocolate tastes like.”

“...Amon.”

“Yes?”

“I’ll pack some chocolate for you when you leave.”

“Gasp! Thank you so much!”

‘Hmm, the situation is more serious than I thought.’

Raymond, a sword master and lover of wild herbs, displayed two distinct ridges along his sharp jawline.

And Boris, whose physique was neither slim nor bulky, now had a sturdy and imposing presence.

‘Did the Pid family feed them bread soaked in oil? Otherwise, how could they change this much in just a few weeks...?’

The transformation was so dramatic that anyone serious about muscle training would foam at the mouth, begging for their diet plan.

With a sigh, Amon spoke up.

“Well then, let’s start with Boris.”

“Yes, yes, sir!”

“Let’s check the magic theory you’ve been learning.”

Looking at Boris, who swallowed nervously, Amon continued.

“Explain one of the three main theories of magic, the Uncertainty of Mana.”

As Amon posed the question, Chloe, observing nearby, nodded slightly.

‘Come on, he should know that.’

It was a fundamental theory, even known to Chloe, who didn’t primarily study magic.

‘Mana is not visible to the naked eye, and those who don’t practice magic or swordsmanship might never sense it in their entire lives. Even those devoted to magic

struggle to be certain of its existence, making magic a field where its essence remains unproven.'

This summary, while simple, hinted at the depth of the theory.

And if Chloe knew this much, Boris certainly couldn't be ignorant of it.

As expected.

"...It's an unproven field of study!"

"Exactly right!"

Amon's face lit up with satisfaction as he listened to Boris's explanation.

Chloe also exhaled in relief.

'Phew, maybe the situation isn't as dire as I thought.'

Amon, sharing a similar thought, pressed on.

"Alright, next question! What are the precautions for converting mana into fire magic?"

This was a question Chloe didn't know the answer to.

It concerned the precautions when 'using' magic.

'But Boris should know, right?'

However, as some wise person once said, expectations lead to betrayal!

"I don't know."

Boris casually tossed Amon's trust aside like a worn-out shoe, leaving Amon's mouth agape.

"Boris! We covered this recently!"

"Did we? I really don't remember..."

Shaking with betrayal, Amon suddenly widened his eyes as a realization struck him.

It was the warning given about a spell he had once cast on Boris for a practice duel with the Vestric Academy, the "Long-Lasting Memory of Unfortunate Events" spell.

Anar'el had cautioned him at the time.

'This spell has significant side effects if the tension is released too much.'

'Side effects? Like what...?'

'Well, it makes the memories of what was learned grow faint. It usually happens if someone spends weeks just goofing off without reviewing.'

'Haha! Boris would never do that!'

'Oh, absolutely!'

Yet, reality had turned into a gutter.

"Arghhh!"

As Amon pulled at his hair in frustration, he quickly turned his gaze elsewhere.

"Then, next! Raymond!"

"Yes, sir!?"

"Come here! Grab the practice sword! Leave that dummy alone!"

Raymond timidly picked up a wooden sword in response to Amon's stern order.

"Alright, show me the first move of the Azure Sword Technique. Begin!"

"Y-Yes, sir!"

Raymond began moving his sword in flowing arcs.

And as Amon watched, he pulled at his hair again, groaning.

"Arghhh!"

Raymond's movements had slowed down, matching his newfound bulk.

'This can't be happening...'

Hoping for a miracle, Amon pulled out chamomile leaves, known for their calming effect, and began chewing on them before snapping his head toward Chloe.

"Chloe."

"...Yes, sir?!"

Am I the next target? Chloe's pupils trembled.

"Let's check on you too."

"B-But, sir, I'm fine."

"No! Even your cheeks have gotten plumper since last time!"

"...!"

Although not as severe as Boris and Raymond, Chloe, too, had indulged heartily alongside them.

At Amon's shocking remark, Chloe froze, while Sloth, who had been watching from the sidelines, muttered coldly.

"He's a real piece of trash."

"Quiet! Chloe, show me the first move of the Pid Sword Technique! Begin!"

Later, Amon was lying sideways on the ground, tears streaming down his face.

Chloe's performance had been no better than Raymond's.

'Ah, the stars are fading. My bright, hopeful stars...'

The grand dream of reaping the rewards of teaching his students had crumbled.

As he despaired, sobbing uncontrollably, Sloth spoke up.

"Hey, Amon?"

"...What?"

"Get up. I've got something to tell you."

"...What is it?"

As Amon staggered to his feet, a familiar middle-aged man stood beside Sloth.

It was the butler of the Pid family, someone Amon had met before.

"Ah, yes. I'll deliver the message."

"Yes, ma'am."

Clearing her throat, Sloth continued.

“So, you wrote to Sir Reinbelt, didn’t you?”

Amon’s face froze in shock.

‘Wait, don’t tell me...’

Sloth went on.

“You asked for his guidance, saying you’ve finally decided to dedicate yourself to swordsmanship. Sir Reinbelt was overjoyed and has summoned you.”

“What!?”

It had been a drastic move to provoke a response.

But he had taken it literally...

‘Alright, I’ll just refuse. Becoming that old man’s disciple means living like a beggar.’

Look no further than Raymond, who had gone wild eating wild herbs, as evidence!

As Amon prepared to decline, Sloth added another blow.

“And he said he’d like to introduce you to the other members of the Empire’s Four Great Knights at their upcoming meeting. He’s already secured their consent, so you just need to show up.”

The escape route was sealed shut!

How could he decline when the other Great Knights of the Empire were surely anticipating his arrival, lured by Reinbelt’s sweet words?

“N-No! This can’t be happening!”

“Oh, and...”

Sloth glanced at the butler and asked.

“Should we leave now?”

“I’ll confirm right away.”

The butler scurried off to a corner where the Marquis Pid himself was hiding.

The Marquis, who stiffened whenever he faced Sloth, had opted to stay hidden there.

Soon, the butler returned with a message.

“Just as it happens, His Grace the Marquis was preparing to depart for the meeting himself. He suggests that Lord Amon Drake accompany him.”

With his escape route entirely blocked, Amon clutched his head and let out a scream of despair.

Chapter 70

The Four Great Knights of the Empire!

They are pillars symbolizing the immense power of the Empire, each one said to surpass the military strength of an entire legion.

It's no wonder, considering that there are only ten Grand Sword Masters across the entire vast continent.

And among them, four bear the title of “The Empire's Four Great Knights.”

But does it end at four?

No! Including the Emperor and the Empress, who are also Grand Sword Masters, the Empire boasts six such figures in total!

This was the very reason the Empire could reign supreme over this vast continent.

‘And you dare refuse a summons from such pillars of the Empire?’

On that note, Amon's head would surely bid farewell to his body.

And what about Reinbelt, who was determined to take him on as a disciple?

A mad old man of unprecedented caliber, living as a beggar despite his extraordinary skills and status!

A complete opposite to Amon, who sought wealth and glory!

“Ohhhh!”

Amon's tears!

So transparent and sincere were these tears of deep resentment that even Marquis Pid, who was accompanying him in the carriage, was taken aback.

'That trash is crying so bitterly?'

Moved by Amon's evident sorrow, Marquis Pid hesitantly offered him a chocolate.

"Would you like one?"

At the sight of the chocolate, Amon wept even harder.

'If I become a disciple of that crazy old man Reinbelt, I'll never get to taste something like this again! I'll be stuck eating wild greens for the rest of my life!'

Thinking this might be his last chocolate ever, Amon quickly grabbed and ate it.

"Th-thank you."

"Alright. We'll be arriving soon, so get ready."

"Yes, sir."

Swallowing his chocolate, now soaked with tears, Amon looked out the carriage window.

The streets of the capital were dazzling beyond words.

Seeing this, Amon burst into tears once more.

'I'll probably never live in a place like this for the rest of my life!'

Before long, the carriage stopped in front of an imperial annex.

A special annex had been provided for the gathering of the Empire's pillars.

"Well, let's head in."

Marquis Pid straightened his attire and took the lead.

The moment they stepped into the annex, a welcoming face greeted them.

"Ha ha ha! You've arrived, my disciple!"

Reinbelt's declaration, as though Amon had already become his disciple!

Amon hastily spoke with a pale face.

"Master Reinbelt! It's been a while!"

“Haha! Come on, call me Master already!”

“Master Reinbelt! It seems like you’ve lost some weight since I last saw you!”

“Disciple!”

“Master Reinbelt!”

The two ground their teeth, endlessly exchanging “Disciple” and “Master Reinbelt” in retort!

At this rate, they might not even make it inside the private room. Marquis Pid cleared his throat and interrupted.

“Ahem, Master Reinbelt. It’s been a while.”

“Disciple...! Oh, Batista, long time no see.”

“It has been indeed. Though I must say, it feels quite odd to hear someone call me by name.”

Having grown accustomed to being addressed as “Marquis Pid,” his full name, “Batista Ringsley Pid,” sounded somewhat unfamiliar.

At this, Reinbelt chuckled.

“Well, how many people would dare call you by name?”

“Indeed. Aside from esteemed elders or His Majesty the Emperor.”

Reinbelt laughed aloud.

“Haha, how about it, Disciple? That’s the fearsome power of a title! A title ends up replacing your name!”

Amon quickly chimed in.

“Wow! That’s quite something!”

“Disciple!”

“Master Reinbelt!”

As Marquis Pid sighed at the foolish banter between the two, he finally said, “Let’s get moving. The others must be waiting.”

“Oh, right. Let’s head in.”

Eventually, Reinbelt and Marquis Pid led the way, while Amon followed, feeling as though he was being dragged to the slaughterhouse.

‘...The other Four Great Knights, huh.’

Just how incredible could these figures be?

As they entered the private room, Amon’s eyes widened.

The scene before him looked oddly familiar.

“Hohoho, Batista, is that our youngest?”

“Yes, Lady Diana. My apologies for not visiting sooner.”

“Hohohoho, it’s a pleasure to see our youngest’s face.”

“Demonic Heart, sir, your dentures are on your lap.”

“Ah! No wonder I couldn’t find them...”

It was like a gathering of seniors at a community hall!

The grandmother, referred to as Lady Diana, had a cat on her lap and was knitting. The grandfather, called Demonic Heart, was busy adjusting his dentures back into place!

When Reinbelt took a seat in an empty chair, he perfectly fit the image of a robust elderly chairman of the group!

Then the chairman—no, Reinbelt—pointed to Amon and introduced him.

“Haha! Folks, let me introduce you to my new disciple, Amon Drake!”

All eyes turned to Amon, whose face turned ghostly pale.

‘That crazy old man really did it!’

Amon quickly bowed his head and shouted.

“I am Amon Drake, a history instructor at Amonis Academy! My dream is to one day earn a title and revive my family. I love money, gold, and power! Please take care of me, honored elders!”

Amon directly opposed Reinbelt’s philosophy with his introduction!

While Reinbelt's face twisted with displeasure, the other elders burst into laughter.

"Hohoho, that lad has quite the voice."

"Hoho, his spirit reminds me of my youth."

"Demonic Heart, sir, your dentures have fallen again."

"Ah! They keep falling out!"

Sweating profusely, Amon forced a smile.

By then, Reinbelt's gaze had become unnervingly sharp.

"...Disciple."

"Yes, Master Reinbelt!"

"You wrote in your letter that you had an interest in the sword. Was that a lie?"

That cursed letter!

Amon desperately racked his brain.

'What exactly did I write in that letter?'

Then his eyes lit up as he recalled the contents.

[To Master Reinbelt,  
Master, I feel as though I've hit a wall. With my stamina seemingly declining by the day, I've come to realize that even as a mere scholar, physical strength is crucial for wrestling with books. Therefore, I'd like to learn swordsmanship as a means of physical training. Do you have any advice?]

Remembering every word, Amon exclaimed.

"Master, I only said I wanted to learn swordsmanship for physical training!"

"Wha...!"

"I never said I was going to become someone's disciple!"

Reinbelt hastily pulled out the letter and read it.

It was true, just as Amon had said.

But his eagerness to make Amon his disciple had blinded him to the details.

“Y-you conniving brat! You left yourself a way out!”

“Haha!”

Grinding his teeth, Reinbelt glared.

“But your intent to learn swordsmanship remains unchanged, correct?”

“Well, that’s...”

Amon hesitated.

‘I have no intention of learning it, though.’

The letter was merely bait to elicit a reply from Reinbelt!

Thus, Amon shook his head.

“No, I’m not particularly interested in learning swordsmanship...”

Before he could finish, an overwhelming killing intent, sharp as a blade, engulfed him.

‘Ack—!’

The knitting grandmother, Lady Diana, and the denture-adjusting grandfather, Demonic Heart, were now staring at him expressionlessly.

Despite their elderly appearances, these two were none other than members of the Empire’s Four Great Knights!

And both were directing their murderous aura squarely at Amon.

“Did you just refer to swordsmanship as ‘something like that’?”

“Are you belittling what we’ve devoted our entire lives to mastering?”

“Hohoho! Dear, forgive me. I promised never to unleash my killing intent again...”

“Haha! My demon sword-hand is itching to strike...”

The oppressive aura exuded by the elders prompted Amon to cry out.

“!! I want to learn swordsmanship!”

“.....!”

“What could be as excellent and noble a discipline as swordsmanship? Don’t you agree, elders? Ah, I absolutely love swordsmanship!”

Amon’s abrupt change in attitude!

Grandma Diana resumed her knitting with a bright smile, and Grandpa Demonic Heart began fiddling with his dentures again.

“Hohoho, isn’t that so?”

“Haha, it reminds me of my younger days.”

“Elder, your dentures are...”

Amon, meanwhile, was silently shedding tears.

‘Where did my life go so horribly wrong?’

The answer: From the moment he got hired at Amonis Academy!

Seeing Amon’s dramatic shift, Reinbelt grinned broadly, baring his gums.

“So, swordsmanship...you’ll learn it? From me?”

“Sniff!”

Just as Amon was about to nod weakly, Diana spoke up.

“Reinbelt, old man.”

“Hm? What is it, Diana?”

“Does that young man even have the skill to learn your swordsmanship?”

At this, Reinbelt chuckled slyly.

“Haha, skill, you ask?”

Already imagining the glory of showing off his disciple, Reinbelt decided to make a demonstration.

“Well, this will do nicely.”

He picked up a teacup and held out a sword along with it.

“Now, my disciple, take this sword.”

“Sniffle, sniffle.”

“And slice this teacup.”

“Sniff?”

When Amon tilted his head, clearly thinking What nonsense is this?, Reinbelt frowned.

“Hey, just do as you’re told!”

“Sniffle!”

The prospect of the suffering he’d endure if he became this man’s disciple flashed vividly in Amon’s mind, and he began crying again. Reluctantly, he raised the sword above his head in what resembled a crude axe-swinging stance.

“Give it your all. Use every ounce of strength.”

“Pardon?”

“Pour in every last bit of effort, like your life depends on it.”

Though the instruction made no sense, a despairing Amon swung the sword with all his might, just as Reinbelt instructed.

And then—

Swoosh!

Amon’s right hand blurred.

Everyone present, the Empire’s Four Pillars, widened their eyes.

For several seconds, the room fell silent.

The stillness was broken by the sound of—

Crash!

The teacup split cleanly in half and clattered onto the table.

Everyone, mesmerized by the scene, had a single unanimous thought in their minds:

‘We couldn’t see the movement.’

The implication was unmistakable.

Considering Amon's awkward, axe-like stance, he was clearly untrained in swordsmanship.

And yet, the strike they had just witnessed...

The potential of someone like him mastering their swordsmanship?

Suddenly, Diana threw her knitting aside and stood up.

Her startled cat tumbled off her lap and rolled across the floor, but Diana paid no mind as she shouted.

"Reinbelt! That young man, hand him over to me!"

Reinbelt flinched in shock.

"W-What!?"

"He hasn't committed to anyone yet, has he?"

A look of panic crossed Reinbelt's face.

'Damn it! I shouldn't have bragged about my disciple!'

At that moment, Demonic Heart rose to his feet as well.

"No way! I'll teach him swor—"

"Elder, your dentures."

"Ah! He must learn from me! With my Demonic Sword Style, I could shape him into a knight worthy of continental history!"

Reinbelt gritted his teeth.

"You crazy old coots, what's gotten into you...."

Even Marquis Pid, who had been silent, cleared his throat and finally spoke.

Although he bore considerable resentment toward Amon, the marquis was a sword fanatic.

Having seen such a towering 'sapling,' he couldn't resist.

“Well, we aren’t strangers, are we? Come to the House of Pid. I’ll cultivate you into something great.”

The elders reacted sharply to his words.

“Brat! You stay out of this!”

“How dare a snot-nosed kid!”

“Elders! Shouldn’t you be tending to your grandchildren in the back room instead of taking disciples in your twilight years?”

“Brat! I remember changing your diapers not long ago!”

As the insults flew, Amon coughed deliberately.

“Ahem!”

Instant silence.

All eyes turned to him and Amon finally realized his current position.

With a leisurely air, he made his way to the head seat—the throne of this chamber—and smiled.

“Now then, elders.”

“.....”

In the stillness, Amon extended a hand toward them and spoke.

“First, shall we hear your terms?”

At that moment, Amon became the master among them.