

THE ACADEMY IS DOOMED

The Academy is Doomed

#C91 - Read The Academy is Doomed C91

Chapter 91

Fiora was trembling, her face flushed red.

'How did it come to this?'

The memory of what had happened not long ago began to resurface in her mind.

'Fiora, Fiora dear, would you listen to me for a moment?'

'Hmph! No. I don't like you, Grandmother.'

'Oh, goodness! Please, just calm down and hear me out this once.'

In the end, Fiora had no choice but to listen to Diana's long, drawn-out story.

The extraordinary talent of a young man named Amon!
Diana's earnest wish to take him as her disciple!
But the despair of being unable to do so because of the Emperor's hostility!

Even after hearing the tale, Fiora's expression didn't soften. If anything, it grew colder, resembling a biting northern wind.

'...So, are you telling me to sacrifice myself?'

'It's not a matter of sacrifice, dear. It's a hopeful possibility—that perhaps, while working at Amonis Academy, you might form a good relationship with that young man.'

'It's not hopeful for me at all.'

Faced with Fiora's complaints, Diana resorted to appealing emotionally.

'How many more years do you think this old woman has left to live?'

'You're a Grand Swordmaster, so probably another hundred years.'

'And yet, you won't grant me my last wish! I've lived my life in vain! Oh, the tragedy!'

'...Sigh.'

Faced with Diana's tearful pleas, Fiora eventually surrendered.

'Fine. But I'm just going to go for the interview and come right back.'

'Yes, yes. Thank you so much, my dear granddaughter.'

And thus, Fiora ended up going to Amonis Academy.

Her true intention was simply to attend the interview and return home. But life rarely goes according to plan.

'L-Lord Reinbelt?'

'Ah, you must be Diana's granddaughter...'

'I'm Fiora Pendorean. But why are you here, Lord Reinbelt...?'

Why was Reinbelt, one of the Empire's Four Knights and a renowned Grand Swordmaster like Diana, sweeping the courtyard with a broom?

'Haha, I've taken a job here.'

'A-a job?'

'Yes, there's a reason for it. But what brings you here?'

Fiora gave a brief answer, leaving out the details.

Unbeknownst to her, she made a mistake at that moment.

'I'm here for an interview.'

'I see. I'll guide you to the Headmaster's office.'

If she had explained her purpose in detail, Reinbelt might have found a way to interfere with Diana's plans and chase Fiora away!

Reinbelt still secretly harbored the dream of making Amon his disciple.

In any case, a short time later...

The news that a young lady of the illustrious Pendorean family had come in person for an interview caused Headmaster Anar'el to come rushing out as if rolling down a hill.

'Lady Fiora Pendorean! Thank you so much for coming!!'

'W-what!?'

The unexpected, enthusiastic welcome!

It was understandable. For Anar'el, this was a golden opportunity.

Recruiting the young lady of a prestigious noble family as a teacher? The benefits for the academy would be immeasurable.

Especially in terms of reputation and prestige, Anar'el, who prided himself on being more human than humans, couldn't afford to let Fiora slip away.

'Vice Headmaster Brestle! Hurry and prepare to welcome Lady Pendorean!'

Anar'el even dragged the previously idle Brestle out to assist in the reception.

The problem was that Brestle was well aware of the Pendorean family's prestige.

'L-Lady Pendorean, you say?'

'Yes! The young lady of the Pendorean family is here in person!'

'Ah! The Pendorean Ducal House!'

At that moment, seeing the sudden flood of fervent hospitality, Fiora instinctively realized she wouldn't just be attending an interview and going back home.

'What do I do? If this keeps up, I might actually end up working here...'

She was aware of her status as a member of a prestigious family.

Walking away after deciding to attend the interview and being offered the position would undoubtedly tarnish the family's honor if rumors spread.

'In that case... there's only one way.'

The only solution was to make the academy reject her.

With that in mind, Fiora decided to act like a "scoundrel."

And now, the present.

“Hack! Ptui! Ugh, gross, it splattered.”

“P-please don’t spit...”

“My apologies.”

The effect was remarkable.

‘Perfect! Even the welcoming headmaster is looking at me like I’m a cockroach!’

Anar’el, trembling with her ears drooping, leaned her upper body far back.

It seemed she wanted to put as much physical distance as possible between them, just like the psychological distance she felt.

‘This should be enough for them to reject me, right? Flawless!’

Of course, there was one small, adorable problem.

Acting like this might actually tarnish her family’s honor far more than simply walking away from the job.

But who in their right mind would believe the ridiculous rumor that the noble young lady of the illustrious Pendorean family had turned into a crazy delinquent?

‘They’ll definitely believe the part where I rudely refused the job I was offered. But me spitting indoors and puffing on cigarettes like a thug? Who would buy such nonsense?’

Given Fiora’s normally impeccable behavior, such rumors would be dismissed as baseless.

Even the Pendorean family, hearing such tales, would likely respond with, ‘Who on earth would spread such ludicrous lies?’ followed by laughter.

‘Or maybe the absurdity of it all would keep the rumors from spreading entirely. It’s so outlandish no one would dare repeat it.’

Fiora feigned annoyance and spoke up.

“Ugh, I really want a cigarette right now...”

Muttering to herself, Fiora was trembling, her face flushed red.

It looked as though she was desperately suppressing her desires like a true delinquent but in reality, she was dying of embarrassment!

'This is getting unbearable. Can't they just reject me already...?'

Perhaps her wish had reached them.

'So, that person was just putting on an act in front of Lady Diana, huh.'

Amon, who had been silently observing, finally spoke.

"I'm sorry, but we cannot accept you."

Fiora's cheek twitched.

'It worked! I can finally go home!'

She was so delighted she almost felt grateful to Amon for rejecting her outright.

With her goal achieved, Fiora began to rise discreetly but at that moment.

"Excuse me, Mr. Amon?"

"Yes?"

Anar'el hesitated before continuing.

"If we could hire her as a teacher, we could officially distribute promotional materials for the academy..."

"We still can't."

"But Lady Pendorean herself came here. How can we say no?"

"I said no. It's bad for the students' education."

"But..."

Although Anar'el was still terrified of Fiora, her proximity to Amon gave her just enough courage to entertain her ambitions.

"She's from the Pendorean family..."

Still clinging to her hopes, Anar'el fiddled with her fingers and ears while Amon sighed deeply.

"Headmaster."

"Yes?"

“Lend me your ear.”

As Anareel leaned in, Amon growled.

“She’s just a crazy delinquent!”

“Eek! That tickles.”

“You want to hire someone like her? Are you serious? Our faculty is already in shambles, and you’re thinking of adding someone so unfit?”

Anar’el thought to herself.

‘Mr. Amon, why are you excluding yourself from that statement?’

But she couldn’t voice her thoughts. Unable to refute Amon, Anar’el merely swallowed her frustration in silence.

True to her lineage as the granddaughter of a Grand Swordmaster, Fiora overheard every word of Amon’s whispered critique.

‘Did he just call me a crazy delinquent?’

She felt wronged and angry but in the end, Amon was actually helping her, so she had no choice but to support his argument.

“Whew! What are you two whispering about? You look cute together!”

“See that? She’s not just rude—she’s completely unhinged!”

“Grrr!”

“Oh my! Look at her go! Truly shameless!”

Amon was desperate.

‘The academy is already in dire straits. Adding another disaster is out of the question.’

As Amon passionately denounced Fiora, Vice Headmaster Brestle, who had been quietly watching, suddenly raised his hand.

“I support hiring Lady Fiora.”

Brestle’s shocking statement made Amon shriek.

“Where did that come from?!”

In the Bog Mountains, ogres really do farm!

Anyway, as Amon's eyes demanded an explanation, Brestle crossed her arms and smirked.

"I find her quite appealing."

"What... what exactly is appealing...?"

"That bold personality. I'm very fond of talents like that."

"What did you say?"

Brestle gently closed her eyes, her eyelashes and ears trembling slightly as she spoke.

"And hmm...this cigarette smell. It's so delightful."

As she said this, Brestle opened one eye and shot a sidelong glance at Amon.

Seeing the menacing glint in her eye, Amon's mouth dropped open.

'This crazy dark elf... is she doing this on purpose, knowing I don't want that brat hired...?'

It wasn't just baseless suspicion. Brestle had pulled this kind of stunt before.

When Amon was recommended for dismissal, Brestle had realized that Amon himself wanted to resign, and, out of pure contrariness, she opposed it!

Amon slammed the table and shouted.

"Don't talk nonsense! You don't even smoke in the first place!"

"That's not true! That's not true! What do you know?"

"Argh, seriously!"

Amon clutched his head in despair and let out a scream!

Witnessing this spectacle, Fiora's face also stiffened.

'Does that dark elf actually like my behavior?'

Fiora hastily spoke up.

"I don't actually smoke—"

But before she could finish, Amon and Anar'el turned to look at her.

Under their gaze, Fiora realized something critical.

'Wait, if that's the case, they'll actually try to hire me!'

In a panic, Fiora spat on the ground.

"Cough! Spit!"

"Stop spitting!"

As Amon raised his voice in frustration, Fiora decided to drive the nail in completely and lit a cigarette.

The cigarette she placed in her mouth was a premium one she had bought in the commercial city of Amur as a gift for her father.

"Inhale... Cough, hack, wheeze...Ah, what a fine cigarette!"

"Smoking indoors is prohibited! Put it out!"

Amon shrieked in dismay!

But Fiora, too, was silently lamenting over the acrid smell of the smoke.

'But it's fine. This makes it two-to-one against me. Amon is definitely going to refuse to hire me. And the headmaster won't want me either!'

With that, her rejection seemed certain!

However, nothing in this world is truly certain.

"Amon."

Hearing Anar'el's resolute tone, Amon crumpled to his knees.

"Wait. Please, headmaster, I'm begging you. I'm really begging you."

"....."

"Please, I'm getting on my hands and knees here."

Anar'el quietly closed her eyes.

"The name of the Pendorean Duchy is not one to be taken lightly."

“Headmaster! Headmaster!”

“Hiring her as a teacher would be an unparalleled blessing for the academy.”

“Headmaster... No, hey! Anar’el! You deranged elf!”

“Though she may have her rough edges, it’s the duty of a senior and an educator to guide juniors and correct their flaws. I have absolute faith in you, teacher Amon.”

At some point, Anar’el had covered her left ear with her left hand.

Her right ear was covered by Brestle, meaning Amon’s words didn’t reach her at all.

“That’s why... this is the path for the academy’s future.”

As she spoke, she held up a contract that already bore her seal of approval!

It turned out she had stamped it long ago while Amon and Brestle were quarreling!

As Amon exited the Headmaster’s office, he staggered down the hallway.

After walking for a while, he collapsed.

Slumping against the wall, Amon began to sob.

On the other side of the wall he was leaning against, Fiora, too, had sunk to the ground in the reception room and was sobbing.

After crying for what felt like ages, both of them spoke at the same time.

And they uttered the exact same words.

“I... I want to go home...”

But that was a wish they could not fulfill, bound as they were by the contract.

Chapter 92

Amon had many strengths, but his greatest strength was ‘adaptability.’

He hadn’t realized it until he left the estate, but his immense physical strength was merely a secondary feature.

Frankly, there weren’t many situations where a history teacher at the academy needed to use brute force.

‘Though I’ve been using it quite a lot recently.’

In any case, Amon’s adaptability was shining brightly even now.

From his initial resolve to completely destroy the academy with its crumbling foundations, to his gradual determination to restore and rejuvenate it as it began to revive.

And considering that he managed to survive among colleagues at a despairing level, he was someone who could probably thrive harmoniously even if dropped into the most remote wilderness.

But adapting and enduring were two different things.

“Sniff...!”

Barely holding back tears, Amon stood with Fiora behind him, leaning to one side with her arms crossed.

As a new recruit, she was observing Amon’s class.

The problem was her constant phlegm throat-clearing from the back.

“Khrrk! Ahem.”

“...So, as I mentioned last time, Hero Gregory...”

“Hack! Krrrk!”

“...drew the holy sword Nukhael, and according to its legend...”

At least she wasn’t spitting the phlegm on the ground, which was a relief.

‘She wouldn’t be saving it up just to spit it in my face later, would she?’

Shuddering at the horrible thought, Amon continued trembling as Fiora’s lips moved wordlessly while her face turned red.

Thanks to her noble upbringing and strict self-discipline, Fiora had never engaged in the vulgar act of spitting phlegm in her life! Well, except during her interview.

In any case, all she was doing now was scratching her throat raw.

‘It must hurt! I’ve read in books that thugs do this all the time, but how are their throats okay?’

As Fiora, who had been pouting, suddenly flinched and contorted her expression into a scowl, Amon glanced back.

“Uh, Ms. Fiora.”

“Khrrk! Yes?”

“We’re in the middle of a class, so could you... tone it down a bit?”

“Khrrrk! Should I just spit it out, then?”

“Uh, no...”

Amon turned his head back.

“Sniff!”

The indignity of dealing with a hooligan who carried the weight of a noble family’s name!

Fiora, too, tightly shut her moistening eyes when Amon turned away.

“Khrrp!”

It was baffling how the esteemed lady of the illustrious Pendorean family had ended up like this.

Amon was sucking on a tea bag filled with chamomile leaves, known for their calming effects on the nerves.

He had half-checked out mentally from the stress.

“Hey, what are you doing? Why are you chewing on a tea bag like that?”

“...Senior Sloth.”

Clearly mid-sword training, Sloth approached, shaking her sweat-soaked hair. Amon’s tear-filled eyes turned to her.

His sudden presence startled Sloth, but Amon mumbled blankly.

“Senior Sloth.”

“Y-Yeah?”

“Only now do I realize that you truly embody the grace befitting the noble Marquis Pid family.”

“What...?”

Sloth tilted her head, puzzled.

‘What’s with this guy all of a sudden?’

Still, compliments were compliments, and praise could make even the laziest person want to dance.

“Heh, finally figured it out, huh?”

“I apologize for my unseeing eyes, which failed to recognize your noble grace and magnanimous heart. No, what am I saying? Unseeing eyes are an understatement—I must’ve been blind altogether.”

“Heh heh! Well, at least you know now.”

“Could you ever forgive someone like me?”

“Sure, I’ll forgive you.”

“As expected of the noble lady Sloth Pid of the esteemed Pid Marquis family...”

Amon lavished her with praises as if possessed, and Sloth began to feel quite pleased.

But it didn’t last long.

‘This guy’s acting like this for a reason... What could it be?’

Pondering the matter, Sloth cautiously said, “If it’s about borrowing money, forget it.”

“...It’s not that.”

“Then why are you acting like this all of a sudden? It’s kind of creepy.”

“Sniff!”

Amon suddenly burst into tears, startling Sloth.

“W-Why are you crying?”

“Senior Sloth...”

“Yeah, what?”

“You know that new recruit who joined yesterday.”

“The new recruit?”

Sloth thought back, trying to recall.

Come to think of it, a woman had come to her class, introducing herself as the new recruit.

‘Khrrp! I’m Fiora, the new recruit.’

‘Oh. Right.’

‘...W-What should I do?’

‘If you’re new, just watch the class.’

‘Y-Yes.’

Reflecting on the memory, Sloth tilted her head.

“She didn’t seem all that weird. She just sat quietly and observed.”

The reason was simple!

Sloth’s indifferent attitude had made Fiora think, “I guess I can keep it low-key?” So she had toned down her theatrics.

Sloth’s innate laziness had inadvertently shielded Fiora’s intentions.

But Amon was indignant at Sloth’s response.

“She didn’t seem weird to you?! She kept clearing her throat non-stop like she wanted to spit phlegm, muttering all through the class about wanting to smoke, and complaining about why she even had to do this job!”

“What? Really?”

“Yes! How can someone like that be a teacher...!”

Amon took pride in his role as an educator, but that pride was crumbling under the weight of Fiora’s antics.

“And yet, with your personality, you just let her be? Didn’t even smack her once?”

At that remark, tears streamed down Amon’s face.

“She’s from the Pendorean family.”

“...Pendorean? As in that Pendorean ducal family?”

“Yes. The great Pendorean.”

Sloth's face stiffened.

Although the Pid Marquis family was prestigious, it didn't compare to the Pendorean ducal family.

The Pendoreans had served the Amonis imperial family since the time of the empire's seventh emperor.

The Pid Marquis family had served for a respectable period as well, but it was only a fraction of the Pendoreans legacy.

'And our family only gained its current prominence after my father was named one of the empire's Four Knights.'

In other words, the Pendoreans were on another level entirely.

Sloth sighed awkwardly and said, "So, you're scared to mess with someone from the Pendorean family."

"...I only have one life, you see."

"But you mess with me just fine."

"Well, that's different..."

Amon muttered something unintelligible, then added, "I've met her grandmother before."

"You mean Diana Pendorean?"

"Yes. I've met her, and it seemed like she doted on that hooligan granddaughter of hers. If I were to cross the line, I'm pretty sure Diana would come dancing with a sword and turn me into Amon tartar."

"...Yeah, that sounds likely."

If Sloth's father, Batista, ever found out about the disrespect Amon often showed her, the Pid family's dinner menu that evening would probably feature roasted Amon.

"Tch, she acts so demure in front of Diana, but... Wait, you don't know her? You're both from noble families. Don't noble families constantly throw parties and mingle at social gatherings? Oh, right. You're Sloth."

There was no way someone as lazy as Sloth would attend such events!

Though Amon's self-talk irritated her, it was annoyingly true, leaving Sloth unable to retort.

“Sigh, whining, mumbling... That hooligan, this is all about her upbringing, grumble, grumble!”

“...”

As she watched Amon grumble endlessly, Sloth thought to herself.

‘Hmm. Is that so...?’

A determined glint appeared in her eyes.

The next day, at swordsmanship class Fiora sighed in relief, patting her chest.

‘Whew, I’m starting to calm down.’

After observing all the classes yesterday, she realized that the only teacher aware of her acting like a delinquent was Amon.

Fortunately, it seemed Amon hadn’t spread the word to the other teachers.

‘I just need to be careful around him.’

Would “being careful” mean making a point to mimic delinquent behavior meticulously?

In any case, Fiora headed toward the training grounds where the swordsmanship class was held.

‘Sloth from the Marquis House of Pid. She seems indifferent to everything, like someone from a swordsmanship family who’s detached from worldly matters and uninterested in others. I can probably loosen up a bit around her, right?’

Thinking this, Fiora entered the training grounds, only to freeze in her tracks.

Unlike the Sloth she saw yesterday, this version had entirely shed her lethargy and was staring straight at her.

Sloth was in full “serious mode.”

“...Uh, uh?”

“Sloth Pid here. We met yesterday, didn’t we?”

“Y-Yes, we did.”

“I heard you’re from the Pendorean family.”

At those words, Fiora flinched.

‘What? I deliberately didn’t mention it yesterday. How did she find out?’

Fiora had purposely avoided revealing her surname, thinking it would buy her some time. After all, sooner or later, the truth would come out. But how had it been uncovered within a day?

The mystery was soon resolved.

“Amon mentioned it...”

‘That wretched man told her!’

“He also said your personality is rather...rough.”

‘He even tattled about me being a delinquent!’

Fiora internally grimaced, but she quickly refocused on her “role.”

Since her cover was blown, there was no need for restraint.

Moreover, solidifying her image as unfit for teaching—making herself a nuisance to other teachers—might increase her chances of getting expelled.

“Kaaargh! Spit! So, what’s the problem?”

“Hmm.”

“Cough! Spit! Is there an issue?”

“Hm.”

Fiora strained to hawk up nonexistent phlegm and spat exaggeratedly.

‘At this rate, she’s got to tell me to stop spitting, right?’

But this was the dirt floor of the training grounds!

Nobody cared whether one spat or coughed up a lung here!

Realizing this fact and standing there frozen, Fiora watched Sloth, who had been observing her exaggerated swagger, nod approvingly.

“You’ve caught my attention.”

'What!?'

What on earth had caught her attention?

Out of defiance, Fiora doubled down on her delinquent persona and pulled the nastiest face she could muster.

But even after seeing Fiora's determinedly "intimidating expression," Sloth didn't flinch.

'She's like a Chihuahua.'

After all, Sloth had seen the face of her sixth older brother—whom her older sibling Lancelot described as "less civilized than ogres." Compared to that, this was nothing.

Seeing Sloth remain unfazed, Fiora's face flushed red, and Sloth, still gazing at her, spoke.

"Well, nice to meet you. Let's work hard together."

"W-Work hard, my f—"

"Yes, yes."

As Sloth returned to sit on the bench, Fiora began to sweat profusely.

'This is bad. She thinks I'm a delinquent too.'

Meanwhile, Sloth smiled in satisfaction.

'Well, she's a delinquent, but since she's from the Pendorean family, it's probably best to stay on her good side. Besides, I should keep an eye on her for now.'

'Am I going to have to keep this act up even in swordsmanship classes now?'

'Still, I must've made a good first impression, right? My first impression isn't bad, after all! And she even buttered me up, saying I caught her attention.'

'Amon and Sloth... I'll remember those two.'

Fiora internally wept, while Sloth felt pleased at the prospect of expanding her social network.

Fiora was quietly sobbing to herself.

'What a mess my life is...'

Sloth approached her repeatedly, rubbing her hands together in a fawning manner.

'As expected of Miss Fiora Pendorean. That rough demeanor suits you so well.'

'Cough, cough! Spit! Ack!'

'I heard you smoke too. Care for a cigarette? Though you'd have to go to that corner during class. Here's a light!'

'T-Thank... cough! hack!'

Having studied Amon's sycophantic ways, Sloth was applying them meticulously to ingratiate herself with Fiora, hoping to build a connection with someone from the illustrious Pendorean family.

'Phew. At least swordsmanship class is over. Now it's time for magic class...'

The teacher for magic was Marion Rumdom.

A war hero, known by the moniker "Fiery Demon," Marion's reputation was well-known even to Fiora.

Of course, they weren't acquainted, and when she introduced herself yesterday, Marion simply responded with, "Ah, nice to meet you!" and didn't seem aware that Fiora was from the Pendorean family.

'I don't know why someone like that ended up a drunkard, but... at least he probably won't care much about me, right?'

Thinking this, Fiora entered the classroom for magic lessons, only to have Marion, mid-drink, raise a hand and shout.

"Well, if it isn't the delinquent of the Pendorean family!"

Fiora collapsed on the spot.

It was then she realized: Amon had spread the word everywhere.

Chapter 93

Fiora's face was filled with despair.

'The fact that even Viscount Rumdom thinks I'm a delinquent...'

Yesterday, when interacting with her, Marion treated Fiora as nothing more than a new instructor, nothing less and nothing more.

The only words Marion had spoken to her were, "Are you observing the lessons well?" and "Work hard in the future!"

He even seemed to hold back on his drinking in front of the newcomer.

But today, everything was different.

"Hahaha! Come, come. Sit over here!"

"Eh? What? Me?"

"Sit down now!"

Drunken Marion insisted she sit, leaving Fiora unable to hide her bewilderment.

Fiora quickly realized that, much like her swordsmanship class, her magic class was not going to be peaceful.

"So, I hear you're from the Pendorean family? Nice to meet you! How's your head of the family doing?"

"He... he's doing well."

Fiora's face turned pale.

'Could it be... he knows my father?'

"Hahaha, I saw him a few times during the Great War!"

'Wait, he doesn't know him that well, then? He acted so friendly I thought he had a close relationship with my father...'

Why was he acting like they were close?

Did he perhaps think associating with her would lead to some kind of success?

As these thoughts raced through her mind, Marion suddenly pushed a glass of alcohol toward her, startling her.

"Now, have a refreshing drink!"

"What? D-drink?"

"Yes! It's good alcohol. You'll like it!"

"But why suddenly alcohol...?"

As someone raised as the daughter of a prestigious family, Fiora had lived a proper and disciplined life. Her only experience with alcohol was a single glass of wine her father had offered her at a family banquet.

With an awkward smile, she gently pushed the glass away.

“I’m sorry, but I don’t drink.”

Marion’s eyes widened in surprise.

“You don’t drink? A delinquent who doesn’t drink?”

“What?”

Marion looked as if he had just witnessed an impossible sight.

A delinquent who didn’t drink? While there might be drunkards who weren’t delinquents, there was no such thing as a delinquent who wasn’t a drunkard—at least in Marion’s biased worldview.

Though it was only his assumption, Fiora froze in shock at his seemingly profound observation.

‘Right! All the delinquents in the books I’ve read were heavy drinkers!’

Her idea of a delinquent had been shaped entirely by books.

Almost as if hypnotized, Fiora reached out for the glass before pausing mid-movement.

‘Wait, why should I drink this?’

She wasn’t a real delinquent; she was only pretending to be one. And the more other teachers disliked her, the more likely she would be expelled from this academy, which was a living hell for her.

‘Wouldn’t it be better to avoid drinking and let him be disappointed in me?’

With a polite smile, Fiora again pushed the glass away.

“I’m sorry, I really can’t drink.”

“You can’t drink? Hah! Can you believe this?”

As Marion smacked his lips in disbelief, Fiora’s eyes lit up.

‘Yes! He’s disappointed...’

“Hahaha! A delinquent who doesn’t drink? That’s rare!”

‘What?’

“Yes, yes! It’s time we break away from such overused character tropes! How refreshing! Welcome aboard!”

Marion’s reaction was one of genuine excitement.

Fiora’s face twisted into a mix of confusion and horror.

‘This crazy drunkard...’

Desperate, Fiora grabbed the glass and downed its contents in one go, hoping to shatter Marion’s newfound admiration.

The strong taste of cheap alcohol hit her like a brick wall.

‘What is this? So strong!’

Unlike the mild wine her father had once offered, Marion’s drink was practically a concoction of undiluted spirits.

Despite the burning pain, Fiora forced a smile.

“Ahh! So good!”

Surely, Marion’s illusions would crumble now, right?

But when Fiora looked up at him, he was clapping his hands like a seal, thrilled.

“Now, that’s what I’m talking about! That’s the spirit of a true delinquent!”

“Hiccup?”

“Drink up! There’s plenty more where that came from!”

“Ugh...”

The fake delinquent was on the verge of tears.

‘Why is this happening to me? What did I ever do to deserve this?’

She glared at Marion, wondering if he had some ulterior motive.

But Marion had none!

'Hahaha! A great drinking buddy has joined the ranks.'

'Do you... hold a grudge against my family or something?'

'Amon likes to drink, but he's no drunkard. But a delinquent and a drunkard? Those go hand in hand! We'll have to drink together from now on!'

Marion, laughing heartily, poured another drink for her.

"Come on! Let's drink till we drop!"

"Hiccup..."

"After class, let's go out for a proper drink!"

Fiora, after just one drink, already had a flushed face.

Meanwhile, Amon, who peeked into the classroom on his way past, nodded as if his suspicions were confirmed.

'Look at her! Her face is beet red from drinking so much. A true delinquent through and through.'

The misunderstanding deepened.

"Sniff...I can't live like this."

In the end, Fiora made a big decision.

'Let's just reveal everything and clear the air.'

She decided to reveal the truth: she was not the delinquent everyone thought she was.

'Besides, I can't keep working in a place like this. There's a penalty fee for breaching the contract, but I can easily pay that.'

Of course, she didn't have the money on hand, but contacting her family would resolve that issue.

'Father and Grandmother will understand if I explain the situation...'

Wait. Her situation?

If she revealed it all, she was sure to get scolded severely.

'Fiora! I must have failed as your parent! How could you, no matter the circumstances, pretend to be a delinquent? Was tarnishing the family name your goal?'

'Oh no! Oh no! My poor granddaughter has gone mad!'

She could almost hear her father and grandmother's voices.

'No, I'll soften it a bit. I'll just say teaching isn't a good fit for me.'

Resolving herself, Fiora dashed straight to the principal's office.

"Oh, oh, you're here?"

"Principal."

"Yes, yes?"

Seeing the stern look on Fiora's face, Anar'el gulped and leaned as far back as she could, increasing the physical distance to match the psychological one.

"W-what's the matter?"

"I have something to confess."

"Confess, as in...?"

Anar'el's ears twitched nervously.

"Ah, no, I can't. I already have someone in my heart..."

"What? What are you talking about?"

"Huh? Oh."

Seeing Fiora's baffled reaction, Anar'el cleared her throat and subtly pushed aside the romance novel on her desk, one she had recently taken a liking to.

"Ahem, just kidding."

"..."

"So, what is it you wanted to say?"

In the end, Fiora confessed everything to Anar'el.

"I am not a delinquent! My family sent me here to get a job, but I had no intention of accepting, so I pretended to be one to get my application rejected!"

Anar'el was so shocked at this unexpected truth that her ears practically jumped.

"Is that true?"

"Yes, it is."

"Oh, what a relief!"

"Pardon?"

"That makes me even more eager to have you at our academy!"

Anar'el sprang to her feet and bowed respectfully.

"Please, take care of us moving forward, Lady Fiora Pendorean."

"Wait, hold on a moment."

"Yes?"

Clearing her throat, Fiora got to the main point.

"As I mentioned, I only came for the interview due to certain circumstances. I'd like to terminate my contract as a teacher."

"T-terminate...?"

Anar'el's long ears drooped so low they nearly touched the ground.

"B-but Lady Pendorean, please reconsider..."

"My decision won't change."

Her resolve was as firm as it had been when facing Diana.

After hesitating and mumbling, Anar'el's eyes sparkled as she remembered something.

"That's right! A breach of contract! There's a penalty fee..."

"I'll pay it."

"Ugh..."

Tears streaming down her face, Anar'el extended her hand.

"Fine, the penalty fee is..."

Hearing the amount, Fiora smiled brightly.

'Oh, that's not much.'

Feeling relieved, Fiora nodded and said, "May I use the communication crystal for a moment?"

"Yes..."

Fiora contacted her family. Her father picked up immediately.

"Ah, Father!?"

-Hmm? Fiora, is that you? What's the matter?

"W-why are you personally answering the communication crystal?"

-Haha, the empire's been rather noisy lately, hasn't it? I thought it best to handle important calls myself in case something urgent came up.

"I-I see."

-So, how's work going? I heard you got a job at Amonis Academy.

Fiora's face twisted into a grimace.

"Uh, sort of..."

-Haha, really? Keep at it. Amonis Academy is a prestigious institution. The experience you gain there will surely benefit you in the future.

"...Father."

-Go ahead, I'm listening.

Taking a deep breath, Fiora spoke up.

"I, um, I'm planning to quit."

-...What?

"The work is too hard."

-You've only been there for two days.

"...I'm sorry."

A long silence followed.

After a moment, Duke Pendorean spoke again, his voice carefully composed.

-Very well. I understand.

"I-I'm sorry. So, about the penalty fee for breaking the contract..."

-What? You already signed the contract?

"Yes..."

Another long silence ensued.

During that silence, Fiora barely dared to breathe. Finally, the Duke spoke again.

-...Is there anyone from the academy nearby? Perhaps the principal?

"T-the principal is here."

-Principal Anar'el, how have you been?

Anar'el straightened up in shock, her body stiff with surprise.

Duke Pendorean knew her name!

"Yes, yes! I've been well, Your Grace!"

-I apologize for this informal conversation. I have something to say regarding my daughter.

"Yes? What would that be...?"

The Duke's tone turned grave.

-I fear I have failed in raising my daughter properly. For a noble, promises and contracts are sacred. A single word, a single syllable, can affect one's honor. I believed I had instilled this firmly, but clearly, I have not.

"Pardon...?"

-Despite her shortcomings, I ask that Amonis Academy guide her to cultivate both wisdom and virtue. I must go now, as work beckons. Farewell.

“Yes! Yes, Your Grace!”

When the call ended, Anar’el turned to look at Fiora.

Her face was ashen.

“L-Lady Fiora?”

“...”

“His Grace said...”

Before Anar’el could finish, Fiora slumped sideways and fainted, overwhelmed by the mental shock.

Fiora’s collapse prompted a gathering of the academy staff.

As a distinguished noblewoman of the Pendorean family had fainted, Anar’el insisted they remain present out of respect.

Anar’el also explained the situation to the assembled teachers (although Brestle didn’t come, claiming it was lunchtime).

“...So, Lady Fiora isn’t actually a delinquent!”

Marion looked disappointed.

“Ugh, I thought I’d found a good drinking buddy.”

Sloth remained indifferent.

“Well, it doesn’t really matter.”

Kai nodded knowingly, as if everything made sense now.

“Yeah, someone from the Pendorean family wouldn’t act like that.”

Kai’s self-assured response prompted Amon to grumble.

“You’re just defending her because she’s your junior.”

“No, that’s not it, senior.”

“Forget it.”

Amon sighed and scratched his head.

‘Well, I’m not sure what exactly is going on, but it’s good she’s not actually a delinquent.’

With that thought, Fiora’s likability in his mind rose slightly from rock bottom.

Moreover, the revelation that Fiora wasn’t a delinquent was encouraging.

‘Five teachers. Now everything’s set.’

It was the first step toward the academy’s revival.

Just as he was thinking this...

“Ahhh! Because of you!”

“What!?”

Fiora suddenly screamed and sprang to her feet, startling everyone.

Still half-asleep, she blinked and looked around in surprise.

“This is...Amonis Academy?”

“Yes! This is Amonis Academy!”

“It wasn’t a dream...?”

As if in a trance, she scanned the room until her eyes landed on Amon.

‘Amon Drake?’

Amon. Amon? Amon!

Grandmother Diana’s cherished Amon!

She had been sent here by her grandmother to get close to him, making him the cause of all her troubles!

Like a bolt of lightning, Fiora lunged at Amon and kicked him.

“Because of you!”

“Argh!”

Sent flying, Amon rolled across the ground, and Fiora climbed on top of him, grabbing his collar and shaking him furiously.

“It’s all your fault! Yours! You wretched scoundrel!”

“Ugh! Ack! Wh-why all of a sudden...!”

As he was shaken mercilessly, Amon suddenly shouted with an enlightened expression.

“So you’re finally showing your true colors! You really are a delinquent!”

“Shut up!”

“Principal! She’s not pretending to be a delinquent—she’s a full-blown one!”

Meanwhile, Anar’el had retreated into a corner, trembling.

“Eek! She really is a delinquent...”

Marion was delighted.

“My drinking buddy is back!”

Sloth remained indifferent.

“Well, it doesn’t really matter.”

Kai shook his head in disbelief.

‘The Pendorean family must be going through a tough time...’

At the same time, Brestle was enjoying her meal.

“Yum! This pilaf is delicious!”

Chapter 94

Anar’el was gazing at someone beyond her clasped hands.

Occasionally, she showed this side of her—a serious expression if you put it nicely, or an unnecessarily weighty look if you didn’t.

“The inevitable has finally come.”

Hearing Anar’el’s weighty declaration, the person in question, Amon, rested his chin on his hand and stared idly at his nails.

Cutting his nails too short had left them feeling strange!

Seeing his lack of response, Anar'el, thinking he hadn't heard her, repeated herself.

"The inevitable has finally come."

"....."

"The inevitable has come, Professor Amon?"

"What?"

"Could it be that you can't hear what I'm saying?"

"Was that something I had to respond to?"

At Amon's brusque reaction, Anar'el pouted.

It was no surprise he reacted that way.

'Die! Dieeee! It's all because of you!'

'Ack! This—this madman! To hell with it! Never mind the House of Pendorean, let's just kill you so I can survive!'

'What! I'll kill you first!'

'Graaaaah!'

'Kyaaaaaah!'

The fiery clash with Fiora!

After such an ordeal, Amon had strongly demanded Anar'el dismiss Fiora.

But in some respects, Anar'el was more human than any human could be.

'His Grace, Duke Pendorean, personally entrusted Miss Fiora to me.'

'So you're saying you won't fire her?'

'It's not that I won't. I can't.'

As a result, an extremely disgruntled Amon went on strike.

Of course, he still diligently attended classes for the students but neglected routine administrative work!

This left Kai, who had to take over Amon's tasks, struggling.

However, as someone accustomed to dealing with official duties as the crown prince, Kai only said it was hard; in reality, he handled it with ease.

“Anyway, why did you call for me? I’m busy with my strike.”

“.....I told you, the inevitable has come.”

“What ‘inevitable’ thing keeps coming?”

Sighing, Amon rubbed his too-short nails.

“The academy’s promotional flyers? Kai mentioned you’d already placed the order.”

“Yes, and once they’re ready, we’ll distribute them. Then the academy’s revival can truly begin.”

“.....Headmaster.”

“Go ahead.”

“I’ve thought about it rationally, and...”

Tilting his head slightly, Amon spoke.

“If I were a student, I wouldn’t come to this academy.”

“Eh?”

“Look at the state of the faculty.”

Anar’el immediately refuted him.

“What’s wrong with our faculty? They’re all excellent and respectable individuals.”

She wasn’t wrong but she wasn’t entirely right either.

“They just have flashy titles.”

“.....”

“Marion Rumdom! The war hero!”

Amon continued.

“He’s a drunkard.”

“.....”

“Sloth Pid! The young lady of the Pid Marquisate! She’s practically a living sleeping bag.”

“And who else? Amon Drake! Who got beaten like a dog in a bare-knuckle fight against a rogue...”

“Enough, enough!”

As Amon’s cynical, self-deprecating tirade continued, Anar’el waved her hands to stop him and pulled out something.

It was a small pouch of coins.

“An advance bonus.”

“My goodness! Do you think money solves everything?”

“I added some gold coins.”

“My goodness! That solves everything.”

No wonder the pouch felt light.

Snatching the coin pouch, Amon scratched his head.

Well, since Anar’el had resorted to pulling out precious funds as a last-ditch effort, this protest had probably gone on long enough.

“So, why exactly did you call for me? Surely not to distribute flyers, since they’re still a week away from being ready.”

“Exactly. It’ll take a week for the flyers to arrive.”

“That’s quite a while. Then again, we rushed the last batch with a hefty tip to bump it up the schedule.”

“Exactly.”

Was she seriously going to assign flyer distribution?

Anar’el continued.

“That means we have about a week to wrap up the remaining agenda.”

“In one week. The remaining agenda.”

Repeating her words like an echo, Amon pondered.

'One of the pending tasks is the standard test. It's about time, considering summer vacation just ended.'

The standardized test was a mandatory process outlined by the Imperial Ministry of Education to assess whether first-years had adequately learned and were ready to advance to the second year.

'The timing is a bit odd, but the first year is deliberately relaxed to help students adjust to the academy, so it should be fine.'

All the students were first-years, so the test would likely involve clearing the 'Mage Guild's Welcome Dungeon' cooperatively.

'Conveniently, the maximum team size is five. Though we've already cleared that dungeon before, it's required by the Ministry, and we'll need evidence, so no choice there.'

Considering the current skill level of the students, they could probably clear the dungeon solo without breaking a sweat.

'Then the next item is the field trip... which is basically a picnic.'

It was the recurring event held every quarter.

Last time, they went to Amon's Drake territory.

'We spent most of it repairing potato fields, but whatever. Lastly, the festival.'

The festival was the highlight of the academy.

But with five teachers and five students, could they really host a proper festival?

Not a chance.

'So, we'll probably skip the festival and focus on the other two agendas.'

Amon decided to prioritize the most urgent task between the two.

"Then let's address the most pressing matter first."

"Exactly!"

"The test..."

“Of course, we should start with the field trip!”

“.....”

Laughing gleefully, Anar’el waved her hands dismissively.

“Come on, the test isn’t urgent, is it?”

“.....”

“I hear the students can each clear the Mage Guild’s Welcome Dungeon on their own anyway, so there’s no need to rush.”

She wasn’t wrong, but it was still infuriating.

“That’s not something a headmaster should say.”

“Oh, being headmaster isn’t such a big deal.”

Well, given how she wagged her ears like a tail when flaunting the Pendorean family name, that statement made sense.

“Fair enough. So, where are you planning to go for the field trip?”

Anar’el’s eyes sparkled.

“To Professor Amon’s territory...”

Seeing Amon clench his fist, Anar’el quickly corrected herself.

“...which we visited last time! So we’ll need to consider somewhere else!”

“Thank you for your wise judgment.”

“Ahaha...Yes. So, where would be good, I wonder? Hehe.”

Watching Anar’el perk up her ears with excitement, Amon threw out a suggestion without much thought.

“Then how about the headmaster’s hometown?”

“Eh? My kingdom?”

“It’s a kingdom? Anyway, the place with the World Tree and all those snails crawling around.”

“.....”

Anar’el’s face turned serious and Amon didn’t miss her reaction.

‘Oh ho? What’s this?’

She visibly disliked the idea of going to her hometown.

Yet she was so eager to visit his territory?

Oh? Now he was annoyed.

Jumping to his feet, Amon passionately declared.

“Let’s go! To the headmaster’s hometown!”

“Th-that is...”

“I’ve always wanted to take the time to explore it! The Grand World Tree! The home of the wise forest elves! It’ll be inspiring for both students and teachers!”

Anar’el drooped her ears and muttered.

“Ah, Professor Amon already visited last time, didn’t you? Going again would be boring...”

“I only saw the snails last time.”

“.....”

Watching Anar’el rack her brain for excuses, Amon turned away.

“Alright, then.”

“Eh? Eh?”

“I’ll just ask the others for their opinions.”

“W-wait a moment...!”

Anar’el tried to stop him, but Amon slipped away like a slippery fish and stormed out of the headmaster’s office.

Amon’s face lit up with a sly grin.

‘So this is how Brestle felt!’

It was the dark pleasure of forcing someone to do something they hated!

Other people were unanimously in favor.

‘Oh, the Elf Kingdom? I heard they have a drink made from gathered dew. I’ve always wanted to try it. Slurp.’

‘Elf Kingdom? There must be tons of trees, right? I’d love to take a nap there.’

‘Crown Prince, ahem! For the future of the Empire, I must visit at least once.’

‘Ugh, go away. Don’t talk to me.’

Everyone responded according to their personalities.

Anyway, since everyone’s reaction was positive, Amon headed to the headmaster’s office to deliver the news.

‘But the headmaster seems to really dislike this idea.’

In that case, Amon had no intention of forcing the field trip to the Elf Kingdom, even though everyone was on board.

So, he decided to leave the decision up to the headmaster, since everyone was already in agreement.

Amon wasn’t a damn Dark Elf!

“Headmaster.”

“...Yes.”

“Everyone is in favor.”

“...”

“However, if you really don’t want to, I guess there’s nothing we can do.”

He said, taking a step back.

After some time, Anar’el sighed deeply while mumbling to herself.

“It’s not that I don’t want to go. It’s just... there are personal reasons.”

She went to the snail race just fine, though.

“The snail race wasn’t an official visit.”

“...Did you read my mind?”

“Your expression said it all. Anyway, in order for the Academy’s staff to stay in the Elf Kingdom, we need formal permission. Since I’m from there, getting the permission itself is simple, but it means my personal situation comes into play.”

“Personal situation...”

After a moment of thought, Amon took a step back.

“You’re not a criminal Elf, are you?”

“I’m not! What do you think Elves are?”

269 years old, rounding to 300, so maybe I’ve done something questionable by now, but still.

Anyway, Anar’el scratched her head.

“Phew, I was planning to visit soon anyway, so let’s just say I moved the visit up a bit. I was originally going to visit in about 10 years.”

“The Elves’ sense of time...”

“Anyway, please tell everyone to get ready.”

“Ready? What for?”

Anar’el asked as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

“We’re going on a field trip, of course.”

“...Why is it that only when it’s about something like this, you don’t follow Elf time?”

Amon stood in awe, gazing at the World Tree.

It was the second time he’d seen it, but its grandeur felt like it was carved into his heart.

‘And this time, no snails around, so it’s actually nice to look at...wait?’

Looking closely, a few snails were attached to the trunk of the World Tree.

“Teacher, teacher.”

“Yeah, Chloe. What’s wrong?”

“There’s something strange attached to the World Tree.”

“It’s snails.”

“Pardon?”

“Snails.”

“Why are there snails...?”

I’m curious about that too.

“Oh my, they’re all training hard.”

“...Do they usually train like this, attached to the tree?”

“That’s right.”

“It’s kind of ruining the aesthetic.”

“Huh? How are snails ruining the aesthetics?”

The Elves’ sense of beauty.

Anyway, everyone was impressed by the Elf Kingdom, their eyes wide with admiration.

Of course, everyone was sticking to their own purposes.

“That, that’s the Elf wine made from dew. Glug, glug.”

“Sniff...the phytoncides are amazing. Ah, I feel sleepy.”

“I wonder if the Empire should establish a proper alliance with the Elf Kingdom?”

Just then, Fiora, who locked eyes with Amon, growled at him.

“What are you staring at? Not going to lower your eyes?”

Amon lowered his gaze.

The teachers were a complete mess!

Likewise, the students were silently observing the surroundings, not speaking.

'Why are there snails on the World Tree?'

'They say magic staffs made from the branches of the World Tree are extremely powerful...'

'Why is a wooden sword made from Elf wood so sharp?'

Ami thought.

'Are there any gold coins around?'

Rustianel also thought.

'Are there any gold coins around?'

Feeling the chaotic atmosphere, Anar'el clapped her hands.

"If we go a little further, we'll be at my house, so let's unpack first. We can look around later."

"Okay."

The teachers and students followed her, moving quickly behind.

The tree roots twisted and turned, and they felt like they might get lost if they weren't careful.

After walking for some time...

Whoosh-!

Suddenly, someone charged ahead and knocked Anar'el, who was leading the group, over.

At the shock of the sight, everyone moved to react, but before they could...

Whap-!

Anar'el, who had been harshly hit on the back, fell to the ground.

Out of nowhere, an Elf woman appeared and slapped Anar'el's back hard, yelling at her.

"Hey, you brat!"

"Ah! Aaah!"

“How dare you crawl into our house like this!”

“Aaah! Mom! It hurts!”

Mom? The Elf woman who was smacking Anar’el like that...is she Anar’el’s mother? The realization stunned everyone.

And when Anar’el’s mother shouted, everyone froze even more.

“You ran away from home saying you didn’t want to get married, and now you have the nerve to crawl back in here!”

“Aaaahhh!”

Anar’el curled up like a pill bug, screaming.

Chapter 95

The World Tree, which seemed to try to pierce the sky, disappeared beyond the clouds.

Although it wasn’t as mythical as the World Tree itself, the inside of the sufficiently massive tree was filled with Elf-style furniture and decorations.

The furniture looked as though it was made from the tree itself.

Anar’el spoke.

“Actually, the tree itself has a will and turned into furniture and decorations!”

It really was the tree itself.

“Our tree’s name is Moderaus!”

It even had a name.

While explaining, Anar’el was lying down, seemingly trying to show off her swollen back, which had been struck by her mother.

If she didn’t distract herself even a little, tears seemed to fall due to the pain, as Anar’el’s eyelashes were wet with tears.

And if it were any other time, I wouldn’t have entertained such a pointless conversation.

“I see! Moderaus! What a wonderful name!”

Just as I praised, the chair I was sitting on began massaging my shoulders, seemingly pleased.

“Ah, that feels nice.”

The skilled massage technique was slowly melting the accumulated fatigue!

Well, it's a tree, so how long must it have lived, taking care of Elf shoulders?

“Hmm, by the way, why am I the only one staying here?”

While everyone else quickly left to explore the Elf Kingdom, Amon stayed inside the tree house with Anar'el.

Amon had also wanted to go out and enjoy the sightseeing, but Anar'el's mother, Arnen's words, meant he had no choice but to remain here.

“Should I be exiled from the kingdom?”

“I will stay!”

In the end, Amon had no choice but to stay with Anar'el, who was groaning with her back exposed.

Anyway, while Amon was enjoying the treehouse giving him a shoulder massage, Anar'el's mother, Arnen, entered holding some medicine.

She looked at Amon, enjoying the massage, and spoke with a disapproving voice.

“Point deduction.”

“Yes?”

“How can you leave your partner, the Elf, groaning in pain and ignore it like it's someone else's problem? Point deduction.”

Amon was so surprised that he jumped up.

“Partner? What nonsense are you talking about!”

“Huh? Isn't that so?”

Anar'el also groaned and shouted.

“Mother! We're 'not' like that yet!”

Amon had a fit.

“Don’t put unnecessary qualifiers! It’s not ‘not yet,’ it’s ‘forever!’”

It would be hard to have such intense feelings even if the sky were turned upside down.

Anar’el spoke with dissatisfaction.

“If it’s not, then why are you so angry?”

“I’m not angry...sigh, it’s just that I fear it would be disrespectful, as my level is so much lower than the principal’s. I’m sorry if I gave the wrong impression.”

“Oh my.”

Anar’el laughed, saying ‘Gold paint!’ but Amon said it because he saw Arnen’s sharp gaze.

Indeed, it wouldn’t be right to criticize someone else’s daughter in someone else’s house.

“So, I guess this human isn’t the same as the other one?”

“...Huh?”

“You were with two human males, an older one and a younger one?”

“Th-thats not it.”

“Then...oh my, girl! Even though humans grow fast, a human child is still...”

“Oh my!”

Anar’el suddenly became angry.

“I told you it’s not like that!”

Amon also became furious.

“How dare you speak ill of our precious students, like the principal or that disgrace...”

“What did you say?”

“They’re a disgrace to the principal, of course.”

Amon, barely swallowing ‘disgrace,’ nodded.

Anyway, after hearing the justified anger from both sides, Arnen clicked her tongue and spoke.

“So you left home so proudly because you didn’t want to get married, and now you’re bringing men here. I just had to ask in case.”

“...”

“Anyway, it’s been a while.”

“...Yes, it’s been 40 years.”

40 years of running away!

The sense of time among Elves is truly awe-inspiring.

As Arnen applied medicine to Anar’el’s swollen back, she spoke.

“Since you’re here, you should rest properly.”

“...Yes, mother. But what about father?”

Arnen spoke in a calm voice.

“He returned to the Mother Forest about 10 years ago.”

At those words, Amon clicked his tongue.

“That...in the time you were gone, such sad news came?”

“When will he come back?”

“Huh?”

“He said he’d be back soon, so he should return in a few years.”

“I see.”

“Anyway, it’s fine. The swelling on your back will go down soon.”

“If you’re going to apply medicine, you could have at least slapped me lightly, right?”

Slap!

Anar’el, who was struck again, curled up like a pill bug.

“Well, I’ll go now. Rest well.”

“Ah... Yes.”

After Arnen left, Amon cautiously spoke.

“By the way, when you said your father returned to the Mother Forest...?”

“Huh? Ah, I see how that could be misunderstood in the context of the Imperial language?”

Anar’el laughed and explained.

“The Mother Forest is a place. It’s where the High Elves grow.”

“I see. Hmm, High Elves...”

“Do you know about High Elves?”

“I only know what is widely known.”

They are a race born with tremendous mana and a close affinity with spirits.

That was old information, but I had heard that High Elves are simply the ‘elite’ of Elves.

It may sound odd, but if I had to compare them, they would be the ‘good mutation.’

They aren’t inherited genetically but are chosen by the World Tree, with only one being born per generation.

And the one born through that rare chance would become the ‘king’ who rules over the Elf Kingdom.

“I guess your father is a High Elf.”

“Huh? No, my parents are ordinary Elves. My father is probably away because he’s the king.”

“Really? Isn’t it the High Elf who becomes the king?”

At that moment, Anar’el proudly raised her ears.

“I’m a High Elf!”

“...What?”

“Since I’m young, my father ascended the throne in my place!”

“...Huh?”

“Y-you didn’t know I’m a High Elf?”

When I nodded, Anar’el’s face was filled with shock.

“Why, how did you not know?”

“How would I know unless you told me?”

“No, you should have known just by looking at me!”

“How on earth would I know you’re a High Elf just by looking at you?”

Who would ever think this stiff-eared person was a High Elf?

But Anar’el seemed to feel incredibly wronged.

“Go away! Ask someone else!”

Meanwhile, the group was sightseeing near Moderaus.

“Teacher Marion! Teacher Marion!”

“Huh? Principal?”

Anar’el, who had rushed over with an excited face, pointed at herself and said.

“Marion, you must know!”

“Huh? What are you talking about?”

“You know, that I’m a High Elf!”

Marion’s eyes widened.

“You’re a High Elf?”

“Huh.”

“The one High Elf born per generation...Wait, you’re the principal? Oh my, this is truly surprising.”

Seeing Marion’s genuine surprise, it seemed she really didn’t know.

Anar'el, with a hurt expression, now looked at Sloth.

“Teacher Sloth?”

“You were a High Elf? But why, um. Yes. I see now.”

“.....”

Despair appeared on Anar'el's face.

She didn't make the foolish mistake of asking Kai and Fiora.

Marion, Sloth, and Amon didn't know, so there was no way the newcomers would know.

However, contrary to her thoughts, Kai knew.

‘In this atmosphere, it would be hard to admit I knew.’

The Emperor, his father, and the Empress, his mother, frequently spoke about Anar'el, so there was no way Kai didn't know.

“Se-seems no one knew?”

With her face completely downcast, she trembled with her ears and teeth as she looked at Brestle, who was tossing and turning while unconscious.

“The vice-principal knows though...”

Amon scratched his head.

“You should tell me for me to know. How would I know if you don't tell me?”

“But if I say it, it'll sound like I'm boasting about being a high elf.”

“I think this is more like boasting, though...”

Amon, nodding to Marion's remark, continued.

“By the way, you said ‘you should be able to tell just by looking,’ what exactly should we look at to know?”

Suddenly, Anar'el's ears started flapping.

What on earth is going on now?

“What do you mean ‘tell’?”

Flap, flap!

“Principal?”

Flap, flap!

“Why aren’t you talking...”

“Ears! Ears!”

“Huh?”

With a sullen expression, Anar’el spoke.

“High elves have ears that move better!”

“...Ah, yes. I see.”

The shocking truth about high elves.

Crossing her arms as though sulking, Anar’el muttered.

“How could you not know this?”

“I don’t know why you think I should know. But now that I think about it...”

Amon glanced at the still unconscious Brestle.

“Brestle’s ears aren’t flapping like that.”

Brestle’s ears had never flapped like pigeon wings.

“See, right? You understand now!”

Seeing her so proud of it, it seemed like moving ears was something to boast about.

‘Sigh, students, don’t grow up to be adults like this...huh?’

Amon looked around.

“But where did the kids go? They were just here a moment ago?”

“Huh? Ah, I think they went that way.”

Now that he thought about it, he could hear kids’ voices from that direction.

“Principal, what’s over there?”

“Huh? Ah, there’s a stable over there.”

“A stable? A horse stable?”

At those words, Anar’el put her finger to her lips.

“Shh! Shh. They don’t like it when you call it a horse stable.”

“Uh? Who doesn’t like it?”

“The unicorns.”

“U-unicorns? The mythical unicorns?”

Anar’el nodded.

“Yes, a few unicorns are staying at the stable behind our house.”

“A few... are they considered sentient beings?”

“Ugh, they actually are sentient beings, you know?”

“Stable or horse stable, it’s the same thing, but when you say stable, it really makes them seem less sentient, doesn’t it? It makes them look pretty unsentient.”

“They think the stable sounds more sophisticated.”

Claiming that it sounds sophisticated made them suddenly feel much more sentient.

Anyway, Amon headed towards the unicorn stable at the back.

“Kids, what are you doing over there?”

“Wow! Wow wow!”

Boris and Raymond were playing, riding the unicorns with sparkling eyes, while Chloe and Ami were horrified by the unicorns’ chewing of their hair.

Seeing this scene, Amon spoke with a grim face.

“Is it okay to ride them like that?”

“Of course! Unicorns like pure-hearted people and children.”

“That’s just like in the legends.”

However, while the unicorns, who were supposed to have the ability to see the truth, were hiding their power, they were desperately avoiding the dragon, Rustianel.

“They’re avoiding me so blatantly, it’s making me uncomfortable.”

-Hee, heehee!

“I got it, I got it.”

-Heeheehee...

Wow, it’s like I’m communicating with a unicorn.

At that moment, a unicorn approached, pawing at the ground.

“Oh, Unicorn. It’s been a while.”

-Heeheehee.

“Yes, I’ve been doing well. How about your son?”

-Hee! Hee! Heehee!

“Ah, really?”

It seemed Anar’el could communicate with them.

Watching with awe, the unicorn, called Unicorn, approached and started chewing Amon’s hair.

“...What is this? I never heard of a unicorn doing this.”

“It’s not well known, but it’s a sign of affection! The unicorn likes you, Amon!”

Amon closed his eyes slightly.

It was like his private life was being exposed sneakily.

When he opened his eyes again, Anar’el was also having her hair chewed.

“Hahaha! It tickles.”

“Hah.”

It was an odd sense of kinship, and Amon was also amazed at Anar'el, who was still innocent despite being 269 years old.

“Are the students really here?”

“Senior Marion!”

Amon hastily blocked Marion.

The unicorn would surely kick or poke the old Marion with its horn!

“You can't come!”

“Huh? Why?”

At that moment, the unicorn raised its front legs and started crying, then charged toward Marion.

‘Oh no!’

Just as Amon hurriedly tried to stop the unicorn.

“Hehehe! Ticklish!”

Amon covered his mouth as he saw Marion being chewed on by the unicorn.

It seemed like tears were about to burst out.

“Hehehe! Huh? Amon, why are you trying to make me cry?”

“No! I didn't see anything!”

“Huh? Really? But what's going on with this unicorn?”

“I don't know!”

“That's the unicorn's way of showing affection...”

“Principal! Please be quiet!”

Marion, whose hair was being chewed and almost pulled out, was being dragged around!

At that moment, Sloth and Fiora sneakily approached.

“What's going on? What happened?”

“Senior Sloth! Don’t come! You’re a troublemaker, you can do whatever you want.”

Amon, who was kicked by Fiora’s foot and rolling on the ground, lifted his head with difficulty, only to see Sloth and Fiora screaming as their hair was chewed by the unicorn.

Amon couldn’t stop sighing at this scene.

Chew, chew-

Brestle, who was being dragged by Sloth, was now having her hair chewed by one of the unicorns that had approached.

‘...Is it really okay for our academy to be like this?’

Everyone on the academy staff was of an age where they could have families, so how did it end up like this?

At that moment, Kai appeared.

“Ah! You guys are here...”

-Heeheeheehee!

“Kraaaaack!”

Kai was kicked by a unicorn that charged at him like lightning, and Amon’s face hardened.

‘Kai, you...’

Amon’s fondness for Kai had fallen straight through the floor.

Chapter 96

A unicorn is a legendary creature.

Originally, they could be found occasionally on the continent, but at some point, unicorns disappeared and remained as a fantasy in legends.

However, looking at their manes and the way they chew, even that bit of fantasy about them has disappeared.

“Ughh! Those horned horses, get away.....”

It was especially apparent when watching Kai having nightmares while sleeping due to injuries from being kicked by a unicorn.

'Speaking of which, I wondered why that bastard Kai got hit by a unicorn.'

Amon had desperately questioned Kai who had fallen and was groaning.

'You impure one! Quick, confess why the honorable unicorn attacked you!'

'Urghh! W-what are you suddenly saying.....'

'Come on! Speak up! It's dangerous if you lose consciousness like this, so answer quickly!'

'I, I have a fiancée! Ah, if I die here, I swear with her.....'

Having a fiancée, lucky bastard.

"But Headmaster, why don't unicorns kick elves like that? Many elves must have children too."

"It seems elves are relatively okay because of their high affinity with nature."

"They still seem to dislike them though."

"But they can tolerate them to some extent."

Anar'el said while watching Kai sweating and tossing around muttering 'Those horned colts, I'll strangle their...'

"It's fine with elves, but I didn't know it would be this bad with humans."

"It's fortunate there are no unicorns outside. If there were, they might have become enemies of humanity."

To those words, Anar'el said.

"Oh? You didn't know?"

"Pardon? Know what?"

"Actually, humans declared war against unicorns in the past. The unicorns lost the war and that's why they're staying in the elven kingdom."

".....What did you say?"

“Since my grandmother heard it from her great-grandmother, it must be a story from thousands of years ago.”

“.....”

He closed his eyes tightly in dismay.

‘Could it be that the reason unicorns became legendary creatures was because they were driven away by humans for causing this kind of trouble and disappeared?’

This was not the kind of legend he wanted to know.

Anar’el said.

“Anyway, since Professor Kai seems to have calmed down, shall we go out?”

“.....Let’s do that. Since we’re here in the elven kingdom, we should look around at various things. Last time we only watched snails climbing the World Tree.”

At those words, Anar’el clapped her hands and said.

“Right, speaking of snail racing, I just remembered!”

“Yes?”

“Hohoho! You can be happy! I just found out myself.....”

Anar’el smiled brightly with sparkling eyes.

“Originally, snail racing was a festival held once every 10 years! But today is special – it’s an all-star dream match where all previous champions gather! Even Mr. Slug, the champion from 30 years ago, is participating!”

Amon abandoned Anar’el and fled outside.

* * *

‘They’re crazy. They’re all completely insane.’

Amon glared at the World Tree.

Frenzied cheers could be heard from there.

‘I wondered why the snails were warming up when we arrived earlier, but to think they were holding such an absurd competition.....’

He got goosebumps.

Anar'el's eyes were gleaming ominously when she said she just found out.

Had she really not known? Only Anar'el herself would know that fact.

'Suddenly changing her mind and struggling to come here despite sacrificing her back, she might have known.'

While shuddering, Chloe who was sightseeing the elven kingdom together pulled his sleeve.

"Teacher, it's really noisy in the direction of the World Tree. They must be doing something."

"Chloe, don't even turn your gaze in that direction."

"What?"

"Something very frightening is happening."

"Oh, I see."

Amon sighed and looked at Boris who was pointing somewhere with an excited face.

"Teacher! They're selling spirit honey bread over there!"

"Spirit honey bread?"

Amon wanted to try that too.

The problem was that the elven kingdom used different currency from the Empire.

Although gold coins were accepted, when he presented them to ordinary elven kingdom citizens, they all looked troubled.

They didn't have Empire currency to give as change.

But now Amon had no problem.

"Twenty spirit honey breads please."

"Here you go, human. That's 40 elven coins."

"Put it on Princess Anar'el's tab."

“Gasp! This is Princess Anar’el’s guest token!”

This way, Amon was thoroughly enjoying tourism in the elven kingdom.

‘I think I’ve used about 500 elven coins so far, I wonder how much that is in Empire money?’

Honestly speaking, it wasn’t Amon’s concern.

“Nom nom! Brother, this is really delicious!”

“It’s tasty, not too sweet.”

Amy and Rustianel seemed to like it too.

Then Raymond, who was gulping down honey bread, started jumping up and down.

Raymond’s life-sized doll was jumping together with him.

“Teacher! They’re selling elven-style roasted grasshoppers over there!”

“.....Raymond, you eat grasshoppers too?”

“I ate them when I was in the mountains with my grandfather. Not often though. It was a delicacy.”

“.....”

Even Amon had never eaten grasshoppers before.

After hesitating briefly, what he found at the street stall he went to was roasted grasshopper legs the size of turkey legs.

‘This is supposed to be grasshopper legs?’

The snails were disgustingly huge, and now the grasshoppers are this big too?

‘Don’t tell me they have grasshopper racing too.....?’

When he tried it, the taste wasn’t bad surprisingly.

Anyway, while enjoying the tourism, a question suddenly came to mind.

“By the way kids, where did all the other teachers go? When we came out after putting Kai to sleep earlier, I couldn’t see anyone.”

Raymond, who was crunching on herb-wrapped roasted grasshopper legs, said.

“Professor Marion went to drink elven wine, and Professor Sloth is sleeping.”

“.....figures.”

Everyone’s exactly as expected.

‘Vice Principal Brestle is probably running around here and there eating things, and I wonder what that troublemaker is doing. I hope she’s not harassing the elves.’

He was worried she might damage the elves’ perception of humans and the Empire.

“I-is this news really true?”

“That’s right, human woman.”

“T-this can’t be! It must be false information!”

“Ack! W-why are you doing this! Human!”

Fiora was grabbing and shaking the collar of the elven newspaper stand owner!

Seeing that sight, Amon shook his head.

‘What a troublemaker. She’s causing trouble on purpose.’

Though he wanted to pretend he didn’t know her and pass by, considering the relationship with the elven kingdom and being Princess Anar’el’s guest, he couldn’t leave her like that.

Amon hurriedly approached to stop Fiora.

“Troublemaker, stop it and let’s go.”

“Ah, Mr. Amon!”

Despite being unfortunate acquaintances, she turned around as if happy to hear a familiar voice, with a crying face.

That made Amon also surprised and speak in a gentle voice.

“W-what is it? What’s wrong?”

At that question, Fiora thrust out the elven newspaper.

There was something written in large elven letters at the top, but the problem was that Amon couldn't read elven.

'But wait a minute.'

The detailed illustration below showed the Empire's flag.

And flames were engulfing beneath that flag.

Seeing the illustration with an obviously negative nuance, Amon's eyes went wide.

"Wait, could this be.....?"

Perhaps, maybe, it couldn't be.

As if shattering that denial, Fiora shouted like screaming.

"War has broken out in the Empire!"

At Fiora's confirmation shot, Amon jumped up in place.

To receive such crazy news when everyone was scattered around!

* * *

Marion was drunk as usual.

"Geh geh geh! Elven wine made from collected morning dew! The alcohol goes down so smoothly!"

He had maintained a proper appearance until morning, but now that free time was given in earnest, he was having a proper drinking party.

The street vendor selling elven wine also looked satisfied with Marion's behavior of drinking alcohol like water.

As someone who made the wine himself, he couldn't help but be pleased seeing someone drink it with such joy.

"Old human, you really drink well! Try this too!"

"Ohoho! Sure! Where's the money....."

"It's on the house!"

"Gyaah! Burp! Let's drink!"

The owner also picked up his cup to have a good time together today, closing his business early due to Marion's enthusiastic reaction to his wine.

"Human! Have a drink with me too!"

"Keh keh keh! Gladly!"

Just as Marion and the owner clinked glasses with joy.

"Senior Marion!"

"Huh?"

As Amon came running while shouting loudly from far away, Marion raised his hand.

"Oh! Amon, have a glug with us!"

Marion got grabbed by the nape and dragged away!

Seeing that sight, the owner reached out his hand and cried out desperately.

"Humaaan!"

"Owner siiir!"

* * *

Brestle was devouring food from street stalls like she was possessed.

"Nom nom nom nom!"

"Tsk."

"Munch munch! Gulp, munch munch munch!"

"Tsk tsk!"

As Brestle said, the pale elves looked at her, a dark elf, with displeasure.

But that didn't last long.

"One more bowl."

".....Again?"

"Two more bowls."

“Eh?”

“Bring more! No, bring everything!”

“I’ll bring it right away!”

Even elven discrimination is no match for money when it comes to business.

While Brestle was frantically inhaling food like that.

-Thud thud thud thud-

Startled by the sudden footsteps, Brestle turned her head.

‘Professor Amon? And Professor Marion?’

Amon was running like crazy while holding the nape of Marion who was throwing up.

Seeing that sight, Brestle turned her head back and buried her face in the food bowl.

‘He’s finally gone mad. Let’s pretend I didn’t see and let him pass by.’

-Thud thud thud-

‘Go away. Go away. Please just go away.’

Grab-!

“Keheeeek!”

Brestle also ended up being dragged away by Amon who grabbed her nape.

* * *

Sloth was lying at the top of Moderaus, Anar’el’s house.

‘Ahh, this place is really nice.....’

Since Moderaus was only blocking the sunlight shining on her face by moving its branches, her body was warm and cozy, her face had just the right amount of brightness, and the branches were gently fanning her with wind, so this place was heaven for Sloth.

‘I wonder if there’s a way to seek asylum in the elven kingdom?’

While Sloth was having such naughty thoughts.

Whoosh-!

Hearing the sudden sound of wind being cut, Sloth opened her eyes.

And the sight reflected in her trained eyes was Amon appearing through the branches in slow motion.

'Huh? What? Why is Amon suddenly appearing.....?'

Sloth's thoughts couldn't continue.

"Kyaaaack!"

She was grabbed by Amon and fell down.

Soon after landing on the ground, Amon put Sloth down.

"Heck! Heeck! Hey, Amon! What are you.....?"

Sloth blinked her eyes.

Marion and Brestle seemed to have been dragged along too, and they were in terrible shape.

"Ow, ow!"

"Uck! Ueck!"

They were rolling on the ground holding their stomachs, having been dragged away while drinking heavily and binge eating.

Realizing she was fine compared to them, Sloth stammered.

"A-Amon. Why are you suddenly doing this.....?"

At that question, Amon silently held out the newspaper from earlier.

"I can't read elven.....huh?"

The burning Empire flag!

After staring at the illustration blankly, she raised her head stiffly.

"Wait. No way. Perhaps?"

"Yes."

Amon nodded and said.

“War has broken out.”

“Ack!”

Sloth jumped up.

“T-the students!?”

“The troublemaker should be bringing them.”

“The headmaster!?”

“Well of course.....”

Amon turned his head.

Looking toward the World Tree where frenzied cheers from the snail racing were erupting, he said.

“We need to go drag her out now.”

Chapter 97

Anar’el was wailing.

“Hanaslug! What on earth is going on!”

Despite her outcry, Hanaslug, who was climbing up the World Tree at the very back, remained motionless.

Anar’el had judged that Hanaslug, being the winner of the previous tournament, would show the least decline in skill.

What did that mean?

“My 50,000 Elf coins! Hanaslug! Please try harder!”

Despite her desperate cry, Hanaslug still didn’t make the slightest movement.

It wasn’t just her imagination that Hanaslug’s waistline looked thicker than during the last tournament.

She had found 50,000 Elf coins in her room that she had saved penny by penny before running away, and thinking it was 'destiny,' she bet it all on Hanaslug, but what kind of cruel twist of fate was this!

"Sob! Hanaslug! Don't you remember me!"

As Anar'el shed tears amid her unreachable, mournful cries, when someone tapped her shoulder, she violently shook off their arm.

"Don't touch me!"

"Headmaster."

"Ah, don't touch...Teacher Amon?"

Recognizing the familiar voice, Anar'el turned her head.

There stood Amon with a stern face.

"Ah, Teacher Amon! You came at the right time. Hanaslug isn't trying hard enough! Let's cheer together, Teacher Amon!"

"....."

Silent and listening to her words quietly, Amon wiggled his fingers.

It was a signal to bring her ear closer.

"Huh? Why suddenly...the Empire, what? Eh?"

Anar'el's face turned pale.

"W-war in the Empire?"

"It appears so."

"Th-that's impossible. It can't be."

She quickly looked around.

The surrounding elves were only enthusiastic about the snail race, as if unaware of any war.

But that was natural.

Not only were elves themselves indifferent to the human world and the outside, but they were living a life completely unrelated to 'enemy invasion' because the World Tree, which possessed will as a divine tree, protected the Elf Kingdom with a barrier.

The World Tree wasn't simply a racetrack for snail racing.

It wasn't just an 'ordinary tree' either.

"See for yourself."

Although he had already gotten confirmation from the newspaper stand owner earlier, it would be better for Anar'el to see it with her own eyes too.

Reading the huge text written at the top of the extended newspaper, her ears trembled.

"Th-the Gunter Archipelago Alliance declares war against the Empire..."

"Just as the newspaper vendor said."

Anar'el tightly closed her eyes.

She was in a position of receiving a salary from the Empire.

Moreover, having long-standing ties with the Emperor and Empress, she couldn't just stand by even though she was an elf who had little interest in human affairs.

Of course, although she wouldn't participate directly in the war, this was no time to be distracted by the All-Star Snail Race.

"Teacher Amon."

"Yes, Principal."

"We need to return quickly. Please gather everyone else."

"I've already gathered them all."

"As expected of Teacher Amon."

Taking a deep breath, Anar'el glanced to the side.

"Mister Slug! He's a god!"

Turning away from her mother, Arnen, who was cheering with flying spittle for the snail in the lead, Anar'el nodded with a grave face.

“Well then, let’s hurry back.”

* * *

Since it was an urgent matter, the group returned immediately.

And waiting for them upon their return was Reinbelt, whose face was serious.

“Everyone has returned.”

“Elder.”

“Has news of the war reached even the Elf Kingdom?”

Amon nodded with a gloomy face.

“Yes.”

“Hmm... I see. Principal, welcome back. Everyone, please come in.”

After trying to reassure the agitated students and escorting them to the dormitory, the teaching staff headed to the conference room located next to the principal’s office.

Since there had been almost no occasions for many people to gather after the academy’s downfall, this was Amon’s first time entering this place.

There hadn’t been any need to use it either.

But in this situation, it was absolutely necessary.

Seated, Reinbelt spoke with a stern face.

“Well then, Principal, how much do you know about the situation?”

“I only know that the Gunter Archipelago Alliance has declared war against the Empire.”

“Hmm. This will be a long explanation.”

Reinbelt pulled over a blackboard and skillfully drew a map.

That familiarity proved that his claim of having a teaching certificate was no lie.

“I’m sure you all know about the Gunter Archipelago Alliance.”

Archipelago. A collection of large and small islands.

The Gunter Archipelago Alliance was a union of numerous small kingdoms located in the Gunter Archipelago.

The size of each individual kingdom was by no means large.

However, due to the characteristics of the archipelago, most of its members were 'maritime people.'

Tough sailors who roamed the rough seas on ships and rough-tempered pirates.

The Gunter Archipelago Alliance was mostly composed of such people, and consequently, they couldn't help but have an aggressive disposition.

"After the end of the Great War. They were undoubtedly the ones who held the greatest dissatisfaction with the hundred-year peace treaty that followed. Due to the nature of archipelago kingdoms, they must have yearned for the fertile lands of the continent more than anyone else, but occupation was difficult, and even the lands they did occupy were quickly recaptured. If the Empire had been just a little weaker, if the Great War had been just a little weaker..."

Amon continued those words.

"History might have been different."

"Fitting for a history teacher. Though they say there are no 'ifs' in history, that's correct. Just a few years, if they had just a little more time to develop the know-how and foundation to rule the continental lands, the Gunter Archipelago Alliance would have gained land connected to the continent."

"The continental landscape would have changed."

"That's right."

Nodding, Reinbelt scanned the teachers.

"This explains why the Gunter Archipelago Alliance declared war. Also, though they call it a war declaration, it's no different from a surprise attack. Currently, the Empire's ally, the Baltran Coastal Kingdom, is engaged in battle with them, but the war situation is not good."

Amon let out a sigh.

"I heard they barely invested in military power because they were allies with the Empire. After becoming the Empire's ally, they turned their fleet, once called the Thousand-Ship Fleet, into a merchant fleet..."

“Enough. That’s beside the point.”

“I apologize.”

At the resolute words befitting one of the Empire’s Four Knights, Amon quietly bowed his head.

Then Sloth spoke with incredulity.

“But is the Gunter Archipelago Alliance strong enough to challenge the Empire? I understand their reasons, but surely they must know it’s like hitting a rock with an egg...”

Kai answered Sloth’s question.

Like the Empire’s Crown Prince, he seemed to be taking this situation extremely seriously, having shed his usual mask and wearing a dignified expression.

“If it were the Empire in its normal state, they wouldn’t have dared. They’re taking advantage of the Empire’s weakness following the failure of the Velslime Wasteland Development Project.”

“Ah...”

The unprecedented incident where the Empire’s 2nd Corps, Imperial Heavy Cavalry, Prime Magic Tower, and several other battalions that had gone on the development project were annihilated by a suddenly falling ‘meteor.’

The Gunter Archipelago Alliance was targeting this power vacuum.

“Moreover, the Gunter Archipelago Alliance is strong. Though they lack cohesion as they’re not a single nation, their maritime people’s characteristic toughness and breakthrough power are top-notch. Each member of their elite unit, the Kraken Warrior Division, surpasses a Sword Expert knight.”

Marion, who had been sighing with her arms crossed, touched her shoulder.

There still remained a clear scar from when a single Kraken Warrior had broken through dozens of soldiers protecting him and wounded him.

“...Damn. It’s coming back to me.”

As Marion muttered weakly with a sigh, Amon broke the brief silence that had fallen.

“Elder Reinbelt.”

“What is it?”

“Surely they must know they have no chance in a prolonged war? After all, the current poor war situation is only because we were caught off guard by their surprise attack, isn't it?”

No matter how shaken the Empire might be, it was still the Empire.

“If even a portion of the Empire's military power is deployed, the Gunter Archipelago Alliance will be destroyed. Of course, this might lead to the rise of other wolves like the Gunter Alliance. But the Gunter Alliance wouldn't have moved with that in mind, would they? There's no reason for them to lay the groundwork for that at the cost of their own destruction.”

Amon's point was accurate.

What good would it do if other forces rose up and seized hegemony over the continent?

The Gunter Archipelago Alliance would already be destroyed by then.

“No matter how I think about it, it seems reckless.”

“You're a history teacher, so you must know about the history of the Gunter Archipelago Alliance.”

“Of course.”

The Gunter Archipelago Alliance takes the 'Kraken' as their symbol.

However, it's not the sea monster Kraken, but rather the 'Mother Kraken,' a legendary being said to rule all krakens and govern the seas.

“According to legend, someone received the blessing and revelation of Mother Kraken, and the nations of the archipelago, moved by this, gathered to form the alliance. That's what I know.”

“Correct. Though there is just one wrong part.”

“Pardon? Wrong part...?”

Reinbelt nodded.

“Mother Kraken is real. Not a legend.”

“What...!?”

That means...

"Then the reason they dared to attack..."

"Is because Mother Kraken has appeared and is leading them."

"Th-that's impossible! Mother Kraken!?"

It was more shocking than the reality where legendary unicorns, after kicking humans and losing the war against them, now stayed in the Elf Kingdom.

This was because there were simply too many truly mythical stories about Mother Kraken.

"I-I heard it even eats dragons?"

"Though it's said to be dragons that have just reached maturity, that's correct."

"They say it has dozens or hundreds of tentacles, and each tentacle is as big as a castle wall..."

"According to the urgent report from the messenger dispatched to the Baltran Kingdom, each tentacle is even bigger than the castle walls."

Amon tightly closed his eyes.

He had only imagined the dozens or hundreds of Kraken tentacles larger than the castle walls filling the coastline.

"This is serious."

"Yes. It is serious."

Clicking his tongue, Reinbelt spoke.

"Anyway, Principal. For these reasons, though I've stayed behind to relay the situation, I must hurry to the capital."

As one of the Empire's Four Knights, he couldn't stand by while the Empire was in crisis.

And then Reinbelt looked at the teaching staff and said.

"And teachers."

"....."

“Don’t stand idle in the face of the threat to the Empire. There’s an emergency deployment unit application office hastily set up in the streets of Amur. That’s all I have to say. Now then, I’ll take my leave.”

After Reinbelt hurriedly left the conference room, a long silence fell.

‘Deployment.’

It seemed not to be mandatory at this point.

It meant they would leave it to the discretion of the teachers who had the duty to teach students.

‘The problem is, the emergency deployment unit.’

The Empire’s regular units were relatively delayed in deployment due to logistics and supply issues.

That’s why they were recruiting those who could be deployed as quickly as possible.

This meant there was a high possibility of being sent directly to the front lines, so they would surely be selective and accept only those with considerable skill.

And all the teachers here were quite skilled.

“...What will everyone do?”

Anar’el and Brestle showed no reaction.

For them, being elves, human wars were irrelevant matters.

And besides that, it was impossible for the academy’s principal and vice principal to participate in the war.

Sloth was the first to speak.

“I don’t want to. Hey, what’s with that look like you knew I’d say that? It’s not because I’m lazy.”

Sighing, Sloth fingered the sword at her waist.

She was a knight who had reached the realm of Sword Master.

But actual combat? Beyond that, war?

“It’s just, well...”

Marion cut off her words that were becoming unclear with fear.

“Young ones don’t need to get involved in this sort of thing. This is a responsibility that should be borne by the old and foolish. Young people don’t need to step forward. No, they shouldn’t step forward.”

At Marion’s firm words, Sloth quietly lowered her head.

“I...”

Fiora trailed off.

As a member of the loyal Pendorean family of the Empire, she wanted to strongly express her intention to participate.

However, the meaning contained in Marion’s words was so intense that she couldn’t easily open her mouth.

That’s when Kai spoke.

“May I ask what Senior Amon is thinking of doing?”

As attention focused on him, Amon blankly stared at the ceiling.

In the harsh Arma Mountains, just surviving was close to warfare. But now war is a peaceful life where there is food to eat and culture to enjoy.

It was just pathetic.

‘Deployment, a chance to achieve merit, an opportunity for advancement.’

Though he wanted that, Amon was negative about war itself for the aforementioned reasons.

Nevertheless, he had lived in the Arma Mountains where survival itself was warfare.

Amon’s family, everyone in the village, was still living in war.

That was the reason he needed to advance.

“I will participate.”

The moment those words fell, Marion slammed the table with a bang. In his eyes, intense anger had risen.

Chapter 98

Marion spoke with a cold, hardened face.

“No good.”

“.....”

“I told you. Young people shouldn’t get involved in old people’s fights.”

Marion pointed at Amon with his finger.

“You’re young. Your future is bright. You shouldn’t step into this pathetic affair.”

“.....”

“I understand your youthful spirit. Your blood must be boiling. But that’s not your blood boiling. It’s just the dark thing in your head and chest urging you on. Protecting your country and homeland! Or for advancement! Maybe both, or maybe there’s another reason.”

Marion’s eyes were bloodshot.

“I won’t dare say that’s wrong or bad. But it’s not time yet. You should just cheer on those who go to battle with your boiling blood. The time to stand on the battlefield is when that blood has cooled or when the enemy’s blade is at your throat. But you’re neither of those right now.”

Marion’s voice was dripping with conviction, hatred, and sadness.

The atmosphere overwhelmed everyone present, making them forget even to breathe.

After firing words like a machine gun, Marion caught his breath and said:

“Amon.”

“...Yes, senior.”

“Please. Don’t make the same mistake as the drunk fool before you.”

War hero, Crimson Demon. Those impressive titles were the result of foolish decisions.

After Marion’s speech ended, Amon, who had been lost in thought, spoke:

“Senior.”

“Speak. I’m listening.”

“As you said, I am young. But my future isn’t bright.”

“...What? What do you mean?”

For a moment, a look of pity crossed Kai’s face.

He knows about the hidden story between the Drake family and the imperial Amonis family.

Therefore, he also knows that Amon cannot advance normally.

“I can’t give you details. Let’s just say it’s a family matter. Anyway, I just want to say that advancement is difficult for such reasons.”

“...Advancement?”

Marion gave a hollow laugh.

“So in the end, for mere advancement...”

“You said the time to stand on the battlefield is when the blood has cooled. My blood isn’t hot. Hasn’t been for quite a while.”

“What?”

“...Where should I start telling this story?”

Amon smiled bitterly and continued.

“You’ve all visited our territory, right? Well, not Fiora. Anyway, how did it look? Honestly, it didn’t seem very well-off, did it?”

“.....”

“But that’s actually much better now. When I was young, don’t even ask. We often went hungry. Yet we were supposed to be a baronial family. Among fallen nobility, poor nobility, we were probably among the poorest. I wouldn’t know for sure.”

Amon was fidgeting with his fingers while keeping his gaze down.

He didn’t want to talk about it since it wasn’t a good story, but since Marion so passionately tried to dissuade him from participating, he wanted to explain his reasons.

“Well, being poor would have been fine but our territory isn’t even safe. Monsters would invade almost daily, so when I was young, many people died. These days it rarely happens.”

Amon cleared his throat as if his mouth was dry but no one seemed to think of offering him tea.

Under their fixed, stern gazes, Amon moistened his lips with his tongue and continued.

“And there’s a small city at the foot of the Drake Mountains. It’s the closest place to our territory that could be called habitable. Something happened there, something predictable.”

“...?”

“You know how we eat white bread here at this restaurant? But when I was young and went to that city, that’s when I first learned there was such a thing as white bread. Isn’t all bread black? Isn’t bread made from rye? Turns out not. But I didn’t know that, and I said to my father who had taken me to the city on business:”

“.....”

“Wow! Dad, look at that. The bread is white. Isn’t that amazing?”

Rye bread is a symbol of poverty.

White bread made from wheat is a symbol of wealth.

But that’s just an old saying for the Empire’s citizens.

Due to agricultural promotion and technological advancement, white bread made from ‘wheat’ is even distributed as relief goods in poor neighborhoods.

But it seems that wasn’t the case for young Amon and the Drake territory because it was too barren and too rough a place.

“Well, and then the predictable happened. Some noble’s child who was staying in that city heard those words, and looking at my father and me, said:

“.....”

“What’s this? What are these beggars doing here?”

The words heard by a baron family’s child.

Everyone’s face hardened as they listened to the story.

Kai was almost making a crying face.

“Father immediately took me somewhere else. And he remained silent throughout our business, and on the way back he bought me a loaf of white bread.”

“.....”

“It was soft and delicious. Incredibly so.”

Taking a small breath, Amon looked at Marion and said:

“As I said, our territory is better than that now. We eat white bread too. But I want to give my family and the townspeople better food than white bread. And I don’t want my sister Ami to ever hear such nasty things anywhere.”

“.....”

“There’s no vigor or passion. I want to advance coldly and rationally.”

That was the reason for Amon’s desire for advancement.

And Marion, who had been listening silently with his eyes closed, stood up and left without a word.

“Huh? Why did he just leave without even giving an answer?”

“.....”

“I guess it means I can do as I please?”

“.....”

No one answered Amon’s words.

They were just desperately staring at the innocent ceiling.

Seeing this, Amon said irritably:

“Ah, damn. This is why I didn’t want to say anything.”

“...Amon.”

“What is it, Senior Sloth?”

“Here’s some chocolate, *sniff*! Eat it.”

“Thanks.”

Munching on the chocolate Sloth gave him, Amon clapped his hands once and summarized:

“Well, anyway, that’s my position.”

Anar’el, whose eyes and nose had somehow turned bright red, spun around and said:

“I’d like to stop you but if that’s how it is, there’s nothing we can do.”

Though Fiora had ill feelings toward Amon and didn’t say much, her gaze toward him had softened somewhat.

Of course, Amon’s inner thoughts weren’t soft!

‘Why is that brute looking at me like that? Are you pitying me right now?’

And Kai, who had been watching Amon with a serious face while crossing his arms, said:

“I understand those feelings well, Senior Amon.”

‘What’s this? Why is this guy suddenly talking like a superior?’

“Though my power is lacking, I’ll help as much as I can.”

At those words, Amon’s eyes grew round.

“Are you going to participate too?”

“What? No?”

What crazy crown prince would crawl onto the front lines?

Amon’s face soured.

“Are you joking? Then what do you mean you’ll help?”

“Ha, hahaha...I mean, I’ll cheer you on from afar, that’s what I mean.”

He had unknowingly spoken from his position as ‘Crown Prince Kaias’.

Anyway, as the situation more or less concluded, Brestle opened her mouth.

“Can we go eat now?”

Before Brestle could finish speaking, she was hit by Anar'el's headbutt and rolled off her chair.

* * *

In the withered garden located behind the academy, Marion was sitting on a bench there, quietly sipping from his glass.

Unlike his usual gulping, he was thoughtfully savoring the alcohol while deeply contemplating something.

He held out his glass to the side and said:

"Care for a drink Amon?"

"If you're offering, I'll gratefully accept."

Sitting down next to Marion with an "oof," Amon said:

"This seems more expensive than usual? Different from what you usually drink."

"When facing deployment, I can't just pour cheap alcohol down my throat even on a day like this."

"That's true."

After taking a refreshing gulp of alcohol, Amon said:

"Whew, this is good."

"Amon."

"Yes."

"I'm a mage, so I'll be assigned to the battle mage division. You, as a noble's child and an academy teacher, will command volunteer soldiers. I don't know exactly, but you'll probably start as a captain of a hundred."

Marion refilled the glass with alcohol and continued:

"Remember their faces well. Never forget them, remember them."

"...I'll keep that in mind."

"If you forget, those with blurred faces will endlessly follow you. Not just when you're sleeping, but when you're awake too."

Marion was staring blankly into space as he said this.

It was the usual look of drunk Marion, but after hearing those words and his earlier speech, Amon finally realized:

“Senior, you don’t mean even now?”

Instead of answering, Marion poured more alcohol down his throat.

That was why he always lived drunk.

‘When we first met, saying he just drank because it was delicious was a cover-up.’

It must have also been because Amon’s words about “trying to forget guilt with alcohol” had hit the mark.

Amon said with a bitter face:

“Well, who drinks alcohol because it’s delicious anyway?”

At those words, Marion frowned as if hearing nonsense and said:

“What are you talking about? This is delicious.”

“Huh.”

“Yes, I drink to forget too, but I also drink because it tastes good. What kind of pointless act would it be to force yourself to drink something that doesn’t even taste good just to forget? That would be torture.”

“...Ah, yes.”

Marion chuckled and slapped Amon’s back, then said:

“Anyway, come back safely. I’m asking you.”

“...Thank you. Please come back safely too, Senior. I’m asking you.”

“Mm.”

The two clinked their glasses.

* * *

As Marion said, Amon became the commander of a hundred-man unit of soldiers.

And as promised to Marion, he will never forget their faces.

“Captain! Let’s take it easy! Please?”

“.....”

“Tsk, this is why newly appointed noble captains are...”

“.....”

The experienced soldiers often disregarded Amon, their new captain of hundred.

‘Should I just kill them all with my own hands? No. Amon, then you’ll be in big trouble too.’

Because of this, his anger was only building up, so he wouldn’t be able to forget their faces even if asked to.

In the end, Amon carved the word patience in his heart and silently moved forward.

That’s how it was on the second night of the campaign.

“Captain Drake! Come to the tent!”

“Yes!”

At the captain of thousand’s call, Amon hurriedly headed to the tent.

Gathered in the tent were all captains of hundred, including himself, and all captains of thousand.

‘What is this? What’s happening?’

Having all commanders gathered meant it was that important a matter.

And Baron Salmon, the commander of the emergency dispatch force, opened his mouth:

“Now, is everyone here without exception?”

“Yes! Sir!”

“Listen carefully, everyone!”

“Yes!”

Baron Salmon scattered documents and shouted:

“The war is overrrrr!”

“Yes, what!?”

“Her Majesty the Empress personally led her ladies-in-waiting corps and subjugated Mother Kraken, and consequently the Gunter Archipelago Alliance surrendered en masse!”

The Empire’s Empress!

She was the ‘swordsmanship master’ of Emperor Amonis XVIII, who was a Grand Sword Master and Great Mage.

Such an Empress had coldly raged at the Gunter Archipelago Alliance’s declaration of war.

‘As if it wasn’t bad enough that our Sandrio is sick in bed, these impudent creatures bare their teeth at the Empire?’

Showing her anger unfiltered, Empress Victoria led her personally trained ‘ladies-in-waiting corps’ to the front lines.

For reference, all 50 members of the ladies-in-waiting corps are monsters who are Sword Masters!

When such skilled individuals, led by the Empress, rushed at Mother Kraken, Mother Kraken couldn’t hold out for long and ended up becoming generous octopus sashimi!

“Thus, with all nations of the Gunter Archipelago Alliance swearing allegiance under the Empire’s flag, the war has ended!”

At Baron Salmon’s declaration, all the commanders gathered in the tent burst into fierce cheers.

“Woooooo!”

“Long live the Empress! Glory to the Empire!”

Amid the enthusiastic cheers, the captains of hundred composed of noble children were hugging each other in a frenzy.

It was welcome news that came while they were trembling in fear during their first deployment.

“Hahaha! Hurray! Hurray! The war is over!”

“Hey! Are you crying!?”

“Hahaha! You’re crying too!”

As Amon stared blankly at them hugging and making a commotion while shedding tears, a tear streaked down his own face.

“Oh!? Amon is crying too!”

“Puhaha! That guy who kept saying what’s there to be afraid of every day is crying too?”

“Hic, uhic... huhic...”

Seeing him sobbing hard, the other captains of a hundred gathered around Amon while crying, and buried in their embrace, Amon began to cry even harder.

“Huhic! That’s right, cry you bastard! You were really scared too!”

“Kuhub! Uhueeeeeng!”

Chapter 99

Ami had tears in her eyes.

‘Sob sob, my brother. What should we do?’

When Amon’s participation in the war was announced, the students were literally in chaos.

Of course, they decided to keep Amon’s participation a secret from the students to avoid unnecessary worry, but secrets are meant to reveal their true value when exposed.

Due to the unusual atmosphere among the teachers, the truth was soon revealed.

Boris rolled around on the ground begging him not to go, while Raymond expressed his firm determination to participate as a Sword Master.

There was no need to mention Chloe’s reaction.

‘Teacher, I’m now a Sword Expert warrior too. I’ll go with you.’

Ami, who shared his blood, also had a serious face.

'I'm strong like my brother too! I think I can play a part in the war!'

Speaking from the position of a true 'blood relative' as family takes the dangerous path.

However, Amon scolded the students with a stern face.

'You are students! Looking back at the history of the Amonis Empire, there has never been a single case of sending students to the battlefield!'

Well, there were actually a couple of times when the empire was shaking in the old days but sometimes hidden truths can be beautiful.

'So children, please don't even joke about going to the battlefield. Why do you think your teacher is going to war?'

Boris said while sniffing.

'To, to protect us.'

No.

It's for success and fame.

But as mentioned, sometimes hidden truths, etc., are omitted.

'Yes! But how much would it hurt your teacher's heart if you say such things!'

'Huhuhu! Teacher!'

'Yes, children! Come here!'

Amon hugged the wailing students and patted their backs.

If it weren't for Rustianel standing at a distance with a puzzled face wondering 'What's this? Why are they crying like that?' not understanding the meaning of human war, he might have truly wailed.

'Waaah! Teacher!'

'Yes! Your teacher will surely return safely, so don't cry!'

After a stormy day passed, the students were still maintaining their daily lives.

Given the academy's position, they couldn't neglect the students' education even when faced with war.

So another day dawned, and in the first morning class of swordsmanship, the students were keenly feeling Amon's absence.

Sloth was still at her post since she wasn't participating in the war, but with two teachers gone, she seemed to be under great mental strain.

As evidence, Sloth was using her sleeping bag, which she usually hugged like hidden gold, as foot wrapping.

Sloth was standing tall with the sleeping bag worn like shoes!

"Sigh....."

"Te-teacher, I finished Pid Swordsmanship Third Form."

"Is that so? Then let's move on to the Second Form."

"I said I finished Third Form?"

"Is that so? Then let's move on to Third Form. Sigh, I hope everyone returns safely."

Seeing Sloth's inconsistent behavior, Chloe let out a sigh.

'Teacher Sloth must be having a hard time worrying about the other teachers.'

No!

She's worried about her brothers and family members from the Pid family, a prestigious swordsmanship house, who were drafted to the frontlines!

'Honestly, Amon will return just fine.'

Amon had even defeated several accomplished knights in succession.

It made more sense to worry about her brothers than Amon.

This is what you call twisted trust.

"Sigh, children. Good work with sword training. See you next time."

"Yes, Teacher Sloth."

After sword training ended, the students headed to the magic classroom in groups.

Of course, Marion had left for war participation, so the classroom was empty.

“Should we do self-study?”

“I guess so. Should Raymond and I go to the training ground?”

Hearing Boris and Chloe’s words, Ami spoke.

“Rustianel, what are you going to do during self-study?”

“Hmm? What about you, Miss Ami?”

“I’m thinking of doing magic self-study with Boris. Starting with memorizing theory. Boris seems quite good since he majors in magic.”

Rustianel tilted his head.

“Then shall I teach you?”

“...Huh?”

“Dragons know human magic well too.”

Ami internally shook her head.

‘There he goes with the dragon talk again.’

But she couldn’t rebuff him with ‘I don’t want to.’

With Amon gone to war, there was no need to create unnecessary friction.

Besides, wasn’t she the eldest among the students!

Ami nodded with a warm face.

“Okay, let’s study together with Boris.”

“That would be nice.”

Just as the decision was made and Chloe and Raymond were about to head to the training ground...

“Hm? Where are you all going?”

“...Eh?”

Kai was standing there with an armful of books, smiling broadly.

“T-Teacher Kai?”

“You weren’t planning to skip class just because Teacher Marion isn’t here, were you?”

“W-well...”

“Haha! Just kidding! You’re not that kind of students!”

The students’ faces contorted at Kai’s cheerful winking.

It was nothing more or less than the appearance of an enthusiastic rookie.

“B-but Teacher Kai, what brings you here?”

“Teacher Marion is away, isn’t he? So I’ll be taking over the magic classes.”

“What did you say?”

What kind of bolt from the blue was this?

Kai took the podium and tapped the blackboard with his baton while speaking.

“Well, I’m quite well-versed in magic too! There won’t be any major problems with me taking over Teacher Marion’s classes!”

“.....”

“Now then, how far did you get in the curriculum?”

“.....”

In the end, the students had no choice but to attend Kai’s rigid classes with gloomy faces.

* * *

During lunch time, the students were huddled together.

“Aren’t we in big trouble? If Teacher Kai is taking over magic class, that means he’ll probably take over history class too.”

At Raymond’s words, Chloe and Boris’ faces turned pale.

They had been badly burned by Kai’s classes before.

‘Teacher Kai doesn’t give us snacks.’

'There are no breaks.'

'He just keeps pushing us to memorize things.'

The class of a rookie overflowing with passion for education!

Chloe warned Ami and Rustianel in advance.

"The history class will be conducted just like the magic class we just had."

"Ugh! My, my head..."

Ami clutched her aching head.

Math, Kai's original subject, naturally couldn't be fun due to its characteristics, since it's just a one-sided listing of mathematical formulas and principles.

Therefore, they could accept it as 'naturally boring and uninteresting,' but Marion and Amon's magic and history classes were different.

'And so, magicians began to leave their mark on the world! Chloe! Don't get complacent just because you reached Sword Expert, Boris might overtake you someday!'

'I-I'll work harder!'

'Good, well done! Have some snacks! Come on, all of you too!'

Marion conducts classes cheerfully with the help of alcohol!

'As I said, the empire could use the name empire thanks to the efforts of many great people! And I believe that you will be one of those great people.'

'Yes! I'll work hard!'

'Good! Shall we take a break and have some snacks?'

Amon is caring and believing in his students!

The common point between the two teachers was that they were considerate of their students.

Absolutely, absolutely not because they gave out snacks.

Then what about Kai's class?

'So the mathematical formulas of the Nozemia school are truly interesting! Because they define mathematics as an organism and establish hypotheses so formulas interact with each other creating synergy making it that much more complex but producing many interesting results and having a close relationship with the Cas Nozemia school which succeeded the Nozemia school and.'

I'm going crazy! I'm going crazy!

This was the common opinion of students who had taken Kai's classes.

'And we have to take Teacher Kai's classes not just for math, but for magic and history too?'

The students weren't feeling desperate for nothing.

That's why the students desperately wished.

'Teacher Amon, please return safely.'

'You have to come back quickly!'

The students are praying for Amon's swift return!

The students forced down their unappetizing food.

The time for the next subject, history class, was approaching.

'I feel like I'm going to choke.'

'So this is what it feels like when your stomach is bubbling.'

Shortly after the students were sitting in the lecture hall where history class was held but their faces were all haggard.

'We just need to endure until Teacher Amon returns.'

'I am a tree. No, a stone. An inorganic substance that doesn't breathe.'

The students sitting with serious faces flinched.

Footsteps could be heard from outside the lecture hall.

'It's coming. The monster is coming.'

'Should I play dead?'

While the students were sweating profusely the door opened, and a young man appeared.

Step step-

The young man who naturally stepped onto the podium like flowing water opened his book and he spoke calmly as if nothing had happened.

“Where did we leave off in class?”

“.....”

“Ah, we covered up to the establishment of the Dragonia Knights. Well then, let’s begin class.”

“.....”

The young man, Amon, turned towards the blackboard holding chalk.

His back was damp with cold sweat.

‘This is driving me crazy.’

The students’ gazes fixed on his back without any response!

‘Waaah! Teacher, don’t go!’

‘Huhuhu! Just come back with your arms and legs intact!’

‘Sniff! Brother, if you die, I’ll bury you myself in a sunny spot in our territory!’

Faced with the students’ desperate wailing, Amon finally couldn’t hold back and embraced them while crying out.

‘Children! I’ll definitely return, so let’s meet again as changed people!’

‘Waaah!’

‘I don’t know when it will be, but I’ll certainly return, so wait for your teacher!’

Only ‘two days’ had passed since that commotion.

They reunited after just 2 days, not 2 months or 2 weeks.

From Amon’s perspective, it couldn’t be more embarrassing even if he tried.

The reaction of other teachers who saw Amon arriving at the academy just before lunch break ended was also unusual.

'Headmaster, I've returned.'

'Teacher Amon? Uh, huh? It's only been two days since you left...'

'...That's how it turned out. I guess news of the war's end hasn't reached here yet?'

Brestle asked with a stupid face.

'Is the war over?'

'.....'

'What kind of war ends in two days?'

The end must have been so sudden that rumors haven't spread yet!

Sloth, who happened to come to the headmaster's office with reports, also jumped in surprise.

'G-ghost! Amon, you died already!'

'I'm human.'

'Huh? But why are you here?'

'The war ended.'

'...In two days?'

'Yeah.'

Sloth examined Amon while asking.

'But what about Old Man Marion?'

'He said he's going drinking, treating it as a vacation. Headmaster, I strongly petition for a pay cut for Senior Marion.'

Anar'el nodded and began writing up the pay cut notice.

And now.

“...The Dragonia Knights can be said to have been established based on the wyverns that could be tamed thanks to the dedicated research of Michael Dragonoff, the first Dragon Knight.”

-Tap

Amon put down the chalk and spoke with his back drenched in cold sweat.

“Now children, any questions?”

Though Amon couldn't see it with his back turned, Chloe raised her hand and spoke.

“T-teacher?”

“...Yes, Chloe.”

“Why did you come back so soon...? No, I'm glad to see you. I'm glad, but I'm a bit confused.”

“It's class time now. Let's not talk about things unrelated to the lesson.”

“.....”

Amon tapped the blackboard with chalk while speaking.

“Now, any questions?”

“.....”

“Children, I'm asking if you have questions.”

“.....”

“You all, your attitude in class has really become terrible while I was gone. I never wanted to say things to you like this but in my day people treated studying as a life and death matter.”

Amon scolded the students' attitude with a heart that felt like it was coughing up blood.

His voice was filled with laments about his situation.

Chapter 100

A dream of success.

It's a hope I've held three times in my life so far.

The first dream I had was to become a dragon slayer when I was young.

But that was thwarted by Caselag, an old and sick lonely dragon who frequently visited the village.

I couldn't tell the already lonely old man that 'I'm going to kill your kind to become a hero.'

'And my second dream of success was to become a teacher at Amonis Academy and reap the benefits of having many excellent students graduate.'

Although Amonis Academy itself is no different from a cesspool of evil, the students are growing up splendidly, so this dream is still ongoing.

And the third and last one.

I wanted to rise to prominence by demonstrating valor across various battlefields, but that ended in frustration due to the 'Empress' who ended the war in one breath.

'Both the Emperor and things with the character for 'Imperial' (皇) seem desperate to kill me.'

Frustration builds a man.

But that's only good once or twice; when it keeps coming without rest, Amon didn't want to do anything.

"For that reason, kids."

Amon was lying on the teaching podium.

"Let's start class."

"...Teacher?"

"What."

"This is history class right now. Not sword training."

"Boris, are you trying to say I'm like Senior Sloth?"

Boris nodded slightly, and Amon slowly got up, thinking this wasn't quite right no matter what.

One should act according to how they look, even if they're in despair.

'Sigh, but even living according to how I look is hard.'

After returning, his fellow teachers' attitudes toward him had become strangely warmer.

Probably because he confessed about his tumultuous childhood.

But Amon's heart was too rotten to accept their kindness purely.

'You pity me? I'll get revenge on all of you.'

Amon made that pledge while chewing on the chocolate of kindness Sloth gave him.

"...and so, the rebellion led by Count Kegarten was ended. Now, there should be a question that comes to mind here, does anyone know?"

Chloe raised her hand high.

"The imperial authority should have been strengthened after the Marquis Mannoni's rebellion, but this rebellion occurred too naturally."

"Exactly! Applause for Chloe!"

"Hehehe."

"That question can be understood by examining the internal situation of the imperial family at the time. His Majesty Emperor Amonis XI was severely injured in a friendly duel with a noble..."

While writing on the blackboard and lecturing, Amon flinched.

'...Wait a minute.'

The content seemed familiar.

'What is this? This feels familiar? Where have I seen this before?'

Suddenly, Amon's face hardened.

[When His Majesty Amonis XI struck Duke Drake's cheek, he suffered a fierce counterattack, leaving no part of his arms and legs unharmed, causing him to be bedridden for a long time.]

Amon's mouth fell open.

'Content written in our family chronicles...?'

Family secrets slowly raising their heads from history!

Amon glanced sideways.

Fiora, who was observing the class, tilted her head wondering why he stopped in the middle of teaching well.

“Senior Amon, why are you...”

“What are you looking at?”

“Ah geez, starting again.”

“Kekeke!”

Making his fellow teachers’ warm gazes uncomfortable was Amon’s joy these days.

‘Anyway, I need to examine our family chronicles more carefully.’

He had skimmed through it quickly before because the content was so shocking, but now that he realized why he couldn’t advance in society, he needed to know more details.

‘I need to know well about the ill fate between the Amonis family and our family. That way I can be careful and avoid them in advance.’

It’s not that he’s scared, he wants to avoid them because they’re disgusting.

Coincidentally, Anar’el gave him special leave to visit his home for just one day to comfort the despairing Amon, so he could go this weekend.

‘And while I’m going, let’s also find out why our territory’s potatoes are so amazing. But for now, I need to focus on class.’

Amon picked up the chalk again.

* * *

“Principal.”

“Teacher Amon, you’re here.”

In the principal’s office which he visited to get special leave, Anar’el was maintaining her characteristic serious face and dignity as always.

“It’s finally here.”

Looking at the shadowed face visible beyond the interlocked hands, Amon sat in the chair and said.

“Here again. What’s here this time?”

“Huhuhu. Don’t be surprised when you hear this.”

Anar’el wiped under her nose and smiled.

“I got a call that the promotional leaflets we ordered are complete!”

Anar’el expected Amon to jump around with joy but Amon’s face was indifferent.

“Yes, that’s good.”

“Oh.”

Anar’el said with a disappointed face.

“Aren’t you happy? I thought you would be.”

“Well, should I say I’m slowly starting to realize my situation? Just looking at it, if I roll around making a fuss whether needed or not, the result will always be like a perfectly drawn cesspool anyway.”

“...”

Anar’el nodded weakly at Amon’s self-deprecating lament dripping with cynicism.

“I don’t know about that, but I can see that you need to go on special leave quickly.”

“You should realize it soon too, Principal.”

Anar’el smiled bitterly at Amon’s sullen words.

“Then are you ready to go on leave?”

“Yes. I just finished the students’ regular test yesterday, so there’s no urgent work right now.”

The regular test following the Imperial Education Department’s guidelines was a test to clear the Mage Guild’s welcome dungeon, which originally required forming groups of 5 to cooperatively clear the dungeon.

‘Sir examiner, can’t we just go in individually?’

'Huh? Well, you can.'

'Then let's do that.'

The students who entered the dungeon individually were able to proudly make it onto the list of successful candidates.

From the beginning, the dungeon was too simple a task for the students' current level.

And there was one more remaining task besides the test.

'Teacher Amon.'

'Yes?'

'What about the academy festival...?'

'What festival in these times! How long has it been since the war ended!'

It could be finished by crushing Anar'el's vain expectations in one breath.

What festival when there are only five students to begin with.

"Then Principal, please cast the warp magic."

"Yes. Understood."

Soon after, Amon was able to arrive at Drake territory.

Vast potato fields! Peaceful village! Clean air! Putting everything else aside, Drake territory in the Arma Mountains which prided itself on having the best scenery was.

"Huh?"

Bustling with unfamiliar people.

'W-what? What's this suddenly?'

Drake territory bustling with outsiders?

While wiggling his fingers, unable to move forward or back in confusion at this unprecedented sight, his father who spotted Amon approached with an excited face.

"Isn't it Amon? What brings you here?"

“I-I got special leave to rest for a day...What’s going on here? Why are there so many outsiders in the village...?”

To that question, Amon’s father, Kaim, laughed heartily and answered.

“Hahaha! You know that small city down below?”

“You mean Eden?”

The small-scale city, Eden.

Just as the Arma Mountains were the frontier of frontiers, Eden city located right below it was also a frontier city.

To be honest, though called a city, Eden was comparable in size to a ‘village’ near Amur, the commercial city where the academy was located.

“Some wealthy person boldly invested a huge sum in that Eden!”

“What? L-large-scale investment in Eden?”

What madman in the world would throw money at such a frontier city!

“So the administrators of Eden came to greet us at Drake territory, the closest territory.”

“Why would administrators come to greet...Wait, don’t tell me?”

Eden was so remote that it wasn’t managed by nobles.

Therefore, it established a council with a ‘tribune’ system for commoners, where ‘administrators’ elected periodically by the council of commoners living there governed the city.

‘A huge sum was invested in a city that was operating on such a small scale? When big money is involved, professional management and observation become necessary. And for such tasks, the role of nobles is essential, and the noble residing closest to Eden is who...?’

As if proving Amon’s speculation, Kaim said with a bright smile.

“That’s right! Your father’s name is now Kaim Eden Drake!”

The city of Eden was subordinated under the name of Kaim, the head of the Drake family!

Upon realizing this fact, Amon.

“Aak!”

Fainted with a scream of joy.

* * *

Tak-!

A letter flew over the alley wall.

The young man, Crown Prince Kaias, smiled slightly as he opened it, bearing the seal used by the crown prince’s direct information group.

‘Things worked out well. To think the city of Eden wasn’t managed by nobles.’

Thanks to that, he was able to make a huge investment through a merchant group secretly operated by the crown prince.

He made up a plausible justification that the head merchant had attachment to it as his hometown from childhood.

Of course, the head merchant was a person installed by the crown prince, so all the previous justification was false.

‘Well, it won’t be revealed and it’s not illegal so it doesn’t matter. Anyway...’

Crown Prince Kaias, no, Kai who was a teacher at Amonis Academy, smiled slightly while gazing in the direction where Drake territory would be far away.

‘Senior Amon, I said I would help as much as I could, didn’t I? Since my father His Majesty the Emperor is still alive and well, I can’t do more than this. I hope this helps your family even if just a little.’

* * *

“Urgh! My head...”

When Amon woke up, he could see his father smiling from ear to ear.

“You’re awake?”

“Father? Why did I lose consciousness...?”

“Your father’s name is now Kaim Eden Drake!”

“Aak!”

Amon fainting again!

Kaim was laughing heartily watching that, finding it too amusing but that laughter didn't last long.

Pak-!

Kaim fell forward after getting hit on the back of his head.

“Argh! W-who dares to hit the back of Kaim Eden Drake's head...”

“Oh my, this guy.”

“Y-Yulia!”

“Is our son fainting that funny?”

“D-don't you find it funny?”

At those words, Amon's mother, Yulia, clicked her tongue.

Even for the mother who gave birth to him painfully, watching Amon collapse repeatedly while hearing the name 'Kaim Eden Drake' several times was honestly funny.

“Still, that's enough. I'm worried about the child's health.”

“A-alright. I'm sorry.”

“Anyway, what about the people who came up to the territory?”

“Well, I sent Aim down to the city as acting lord with them.”

Originally, Kaim as the current lord should inspect the city, but since it was such a sudden situation, it was difficult for Kaim to suddenly leave the territory.

There were already piles of work to handle in the territory right now.

“I hope Aim does well.”

“He's such a reliable kid, he'll do well.”

“True, whose son is he after all.”

“Hohoho, our son of course.”

Yulia looked at Amon who was trembling while still unconscious.

“Then when will this son wake up?”

“Hmm...calculating based on the time he’s been unconscious so far, two, three.”

“Uurgh! Father, why did I faint?”

Seeing Amon getting up, Kaim smiled slightly.

“Nothing happened, son.”

“I-I see.”

Looking at Amon who was rubbing his head which had developed a bump from constantly falling, Kaim opened his mouth.

“But Amon, why did you suddenly come?”

“Do I need a reason to come home? It’s a special leave.”

“Special leave? Is there such a thing?”

“Well, yes. Some bad things happened to me recently, so I got it for comfort.”

“Bad things?”

Amon smiled slightly.

“It’s nothing much. Besides, today I heard good news, goo-urgh...”

Still trembling from panic due to joy, Amon took a deep breath and regained his composure.

“Whew, hearing the good news makes the bad memories fly away.”

“Bad things... What happened?”

That’s when.

“L-lord! Big news!”

A man who burst through the door waved a letter and shouted.

“U-urgent news that young master Amon participated in the defense battle of the Baltran Kingdom... Eh?”

The man tilted his head looking back and forth between Amon and Kaim sitting there blankly.

How could Amon who supposedly participated in the war be here?

“Are you...a ghost young master?”

Amon held his forehead.

Being a rural territory, news arrived too late.

‘Well, but that should improve soon too? Since the city of Eden became under our territory’s jurisdiction, if we develop it diligently the communication network will also be properly established...’

Amon flinched while continuing that thought.

It was because of the cold gazes flying in from both sides.

“Don’t tell me you participated in this war?”

“W-well about that...”

“Did you or didn’t you.”

“...I did.”

“Why?”

“W-well, as a son I wanted to help the family a bit...”

“...”

“H-haha. Hahaha.”

Soon after, Amon realized.

Mother and father are still quite strong.

Seeing how fierce their hands striking his back were, the day he could win against his parents still seemed far away.

And with his parents’ embrace as he wailed from getting hit on the back, Amon pledged not to do unnecessary things anymore.