

Great Mage 101

Season 1 Chapter 101: Meeting (8)

“Another one died?”

“I-, I’m sorry.”

The Marquis’ face turned red.

Then, he threw the glass of wine that he had been drinking at the subordinate who brought the report, causing the sparkling glass to shatter.

The subordinate didn’t get hurt since he was wearing a helmet, but as a Knight, he still felt humiliated to be treated in such a way.

However, the Knight simply deepened his bow with a servile smile on his face, not daring to show any dissatisfaction.

Dalaman’s bloated body was quite large.

Although he was an outstanding Knight who had crossed the threshold of the Master class in the past, his body, which had been soaked in the pleasure of retirement, had become large like a pig’s.

“Haven’t I told you to handle the Elves with care? Do you know how much even a single one of them is worth?”

“I’m sorry.”

“Useless.”

Dalaman gritted his teeth in frustration.

The value of Elves was so high that they were easily one of the ten most expensive types of slaves to purchase around the world.

With beautiful appearances, long lasting youth and even high spiritual talent, it would’ve been strange if their value wasn’t high.

Of course, there were also some drawbacks.

They were quite difficult to maintain.

They were used to living in the forest, and they even drew energy from nature, so if that energy wasn’t replenished regularly, they would die quickly.

They were also quite tricky to ‘tame’ as they were a proud race who looked down on everyone else.

Of course, there were many kinky nobles who loved that particular trait.

There was a reason why Elven slaves bought by nobles didn't last more than five years at best.

Of course, this was a good thing for Dalaman.

When a slave died, their master would simply come to him to buy another one.

But now, out of the 10 Elven slaves that he had taken a lot of effort to capture, three had already died.

Two of which were female, which made the loss all the more painful.

"I need to calm down."

Dalaman looked toward the attendant standing beside him before saying.

"Prepare some alcohol and meat."

The attendant shivered after hearing those words.

That was because they knew what kind of 'meat' Dalaman was referring to.

"The ingredients..."

“Didn’t you just hear that fool’s report?”

“...S-, sorry. I’ll do as Master has ordered.”

Dalaman swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

Elven meat was the delicacy among delicacies. (TL:...wtf...?)

But it wasn’t just Elves.

Dalaman also enjoyed eating the flesh of Dwarves, Beastkin, and even Humans.

He was under the impression that he was quite the gourmet foodie.

Just as Dalaman rose from his seat with a bottle of alcohol.

“M-, Marquis.”

The Knight, who he had thrown the wine glass at, came back.

Anger once again erupted on Dalaman’s face.

“If you came to tell me another slave died...”

“Th-, there’s an intruder.”

“What?”

An intruder?

At that moment, Dalaman wondered if he’d heard wrong.

This was natural.

It had been more than 20 years since he had invested in the slave trade, and in that time, not once had there been any intruders.

He always made sure to handle the rats who might’ve known too much after completing each deal.

But Dalaman simply shook his hand in annoyance.

“Just deal with it quickly.”

It was clear that the guards he'd hired didn't know how to deal with intruders, so they had come to bother him with such things.

They really were useless.

Dalaman clicked his tongue.

They had been cheap, but it wasn't like he couldn't afford to spend more now.

'Should I just hire better guards...'

He felt that it would've been better to spend some more money.

As he thought this, Dalaman turned to see that the Knight who had reported to him still hadn't left.

Instead, he was sweating and stuttering incoherently.

"What is it?"

Now he was truly angry.

Dalaman began wondering as to how he could punish the Knight to make up for the annoyance.

“A-, all the Knights have been annihilated.”

“What?!”

Dalaman’s expression stiffened.

This happened just as the wall crumbled with a loud explosion.

* * *

A man wearing a robe and a mask appeared from the dust cloud created by the explosion.

The mask was a crying face, but it didn’t feel like it was mourning at all.

Instead, the clown-like mask gave a very ridiculous feeling.

If it weren’t for the current situation, it was quite possible that Dalaman would have burst into laughter.

However, he couldn’t laugh right now.

Not even a little.

The man walked forward at a slow, steady pace, without saying a word.

“Wh-, who are you?”

Dalaman’s face was red as he asked this question.

“You’re Marquis Dalaman.”

“I asked who you were...”

Frey didn’t feel like he had to answer.

It was then.

The attendant beside the Marquis leapt toward Frey at a tremendous speed, his teeth lengthening visibly.

‘Beastkin.’

The instantaneous speed wasn’t something that could be ignored, but Frey didn’t so much as twitch.

He didn't need to.

Crackle.

“Aarrgh!”

An electric current shot through the body of the attendant who had been rushing toward Frey.

Lightning Barrier.

This was an ability that Lukes, the Apostle of Indra that Frey had fought in the past, had used.

Frey's barrier was not as conspicuous as Lukes'. At first glance, it was almost impossible to even tell it was there.

However, the barrier was much stronger than Lukes'.

The attendant fell to the ground, their entire body burned black.

They had died immediately.

Dalaman's expression became stiff to the point where it looked like he was wearing a mask on his face.

Only then had he truly come to understand his situation.

“Do you think you’ll be able to get away with this?”

“Guys like you always say the same things.”

Frey muttered in a calm tone.

Dalaman then swung his hand at the Knight who had come to report to him.

“What are you waiting for?! Go kill him!”

“H-, huk...”

The Knight shivered and drew his sword.

However, in the same instant, a bolt of lightning shot out from Frey and pierced his body.

He died without being able to make a sound, just like the other Knights.

Now, Dalaman was the only one left.

“Wh-, what do you want?”

Dalaman’s eyes rolled frantically in his head.

He couldn’t tell what kind of power this person was using, but he was certain he could be killed in an instant.

Still, they had kept him alive.

There must have been a reason.

He was almost certain that it was his identity. After all, he was a Marquis of the great Luanoble Kingdom.

‘He probably doesn’t have the confidence to kill me.’

When he thought this, Dalaman’s face regained a little color.

Frey nodded.

“Right. There’s something I want.”

“T-, tell me what it is. As, as long as you spare my life-”

Zap.

“Ahhhk!”

Dalaman screamed.

Frey wanted him to suffer.

Unlike with the others, Frey reduced the power of the current so that it wouldn't kill him instantly.

Dalaman's screams resounded for a long time before they eventually became hoarse.

He didn't last as long as Frey thought he would.

After some time, Dalaman's eyes closed, and Frey realised he was dying.

He didn't have a habit of torturing people.

After all, he couldn't derive any pleasure from hearing people scream.

Frey realised he had vented his anger, but it didn't really make him feel better.

Click.

Frey left the castle and looked at the large clearing.

"It's done."

Riki appeared beside him.

He was looking at the slaves trapped in the cages.

"What are you going to do about them?"

"..."

"Are you just going to leave them in the middle of the Luanoble Kingdom?"

Frey looked at the slaves.

He couldn't even see a sliver of hope on their faces.

Dalaman and his subordinates were all dead, but the slaves couldn't even pretend to be happy.

They had already lost their will to live.

Frey left the responsibility to Riki.

He didn't believe Riki made him save them without considering the aftermath.

'I could take them somewhere safe with Warp.'

However, that would completely defeat the purpose of using his divine power to mask his mana's aura.

Riki jumped down to the clearing.

Then he approached them and drew his sword.

Chuk.

His swordsmanship was incredibly precise.

However, the slaves didn't appear happy that their restraints had been broken.

They simply looked at Riki with dead eyes.

“You are free now.”

“...what is freedom?”

It was a Beastlkin man who asked this in a hoarse voice.

He looked at the pile of corpses and said.

“My younger brother is there. He lived like a puppet for the humans and still died. And it’s not just my brother. Out of my twenty relatives, only five are left.”

Juk.

Tears of blood fell from his eyes.

“So please tell me. What is freedom?”

“At least, it is not death.”

Riki’s tone was the same as usual.

“I know you’ve lost a lot. And that you have scars that will take the rest of your lives to heal.”

“Don’t try to console us!”

The Beastkin man opened his eyes and shouted.

He knew Riki was extraordinary.

He knew that he could kill him with just a finger.

But still, he didn’t restrain his anger.

From the start, this was not something he wanted.

“It’s not consolation.”

“...we are tired. You said death is not freedom. But for us, it would be a long rest.”

The man collapsed, and the other slaves lowered their heads at the same time.

It was like they were all agreeing with the man’s words.

Riki looked around at them before saying.

“If you want to die, you can. I will do it for you. There would be no pain. In fact, you wouldn’t even be able to tell it happened.”

Riki slowly drew his sword, the blade shining in the moonlight.

“But are you satisfied with just that?”

“...what are you talking about?”

“I’ve seen many like you. Those who wished to end their lives to escape from despair. Those who stopped moving forward. Those who gave up.”

“Gave up? You’re saying we’ve given up?”

“Isn’t that exactly what you did?”

Riki tilted his head slightly.

“I understand. I don’t want to admit it, but in the end, it’s your choice. It is something that must be respected, and it’s not something that a third party can comment on. But you should also consider it from another angle.”

“Another angle?”

“You are fortunate. Me and that man happened to be here by chance, learn what was happening to you, and have the power to kill all the people here, including the Marquis. So you were freed. But what about those who aren’t?”

Emotion slowly began to show in Riki’s voice.

“There are some who are in much worse situations than you but are still unwilling to give up.”

“So you want us to live on with gratitude for our good fortune?”

“No.”

After a moment of silence, Riki asserted.

“I want you all to save them.”

“Huh...?”

“There are still many like you on this mountain. There are dozens of camps around this place, all filled with slaves.”

The Beastkin man's body trembled.

It wasn't just him.

As though they'd been struck by lightning, all the slaves perked up at Riki's words.

His voice was quiet, but there was something in it that seemed to stir the spirits of everyone listening.

"To be honest, it would be much easier for you all to just die here. So if you're not confident, speak up. I'll send you on your way without pain, just like I said. But if you were moved even a little by what I said."

Puk!

Riki stabbed his sword into the ground.

"Then this time, you all will be their good fortune."

* * *

Frey watched the Beastkin man and the other slaves as they left, unable to forget the look in their eyes.

There was anger, determination and a liveliness that hadn't been there before.

And it was clear who gave them that new energy.

Riki.

He was the one who gave them the will to live.

"They won't last very long."

It was no wonder a Marquis of the Luanoble Kingdom had been able to engage in the slave trade for such a long time.

Just as Riki had said, it was very likely that the royal family and the nobles of this kingdom were all corrupt.

And the place that these slaves had been released into was the heart of the Luanoble Kingdom.

Even if they engaged in guerilla warfare in the mountains between the cities, it wouldn't be long before they were overpowered.

And it would take at least a month's travel for them to get to the nearest border.

Therefore, the probability that they would be able to escape this country was less than 1 percent.

Frey was sure that Riki knew that.

“I know.”

“And you let them go anyway? That’s irresponsible.”

“It’s up to them now. I’ve done my part.”

Riki spoke as emotionlessly as always.

‘What is he thinking?’

He was very straightforward.

Still, there was one thing he could be certain about Riki after staying with him the last few months.

Riki was completely different from the other Demigods.

He’d especially felt it during Riki’s conversation with the Beastkin man.

“There are still more camps around here.”

This was what Frey had been told before he attacked this place.

Frey looked up the night sky and muttered.

“There’s still some time until sunrise.”

“No. That’s all for today. Marquis Dalaman is already dead, and the rest are just garbage.” (TL: any KoreanEnglishman fans?)

“Won’t the fact that Dalaman died spread soon? They’ll be expecting us.”

“That’s right. At least, they won’t be as defenseless as this group was. They’ll definitely be more prepared.”

“Right.”

The battle that just took place could not be called a battle; it was a massacre.

Riki had told him to use divine power as much as possible, but it was useless if it was for ‘battles’ like that.

“I still think it’s too big for the middle of the kingdom.”

“Luanoble won’t be able to move openly. Since they opened an illegal place of business in the first place, they won’t be able to send a subjugation team. Marquis Dalamán was officially supposed to be staying at his own estate during his retirement.”

Riki pointed to Lufei.

“At best, they would only be able to request reinforcements from nearby cities, so they wouldn’t be much of a threat to you.”

“Right.”

They were playing with mud in the first place, so even if Frey made a mess, they would have a hard time dealing with it.

Frey thought that this place was perfect for getting rid of the traces of his mana while also practicing his divine power.

“Then we’ll stay in this castle for the rest of the month.”

“...”

Frey turned and looked at the castle.

It was in a bad shape.

This was natural since he'd used his divine power to his heart's content.

If he had known he would end up living in it he would have practiced a bit more restraint.

* * *

A month passed by quickly.

Frey destroyed the camps around him in a systematic manner.

They prepared as much as they could, but the difference in power was too stark.

In addition, as more slaves were liberated, their strength increased gradually, and they also became a threat.

Eventually, the slavers, who could not handle the pressure, abandoned their camps and ran away.

It was just as Riki had said.

Luanoble did not send any official reinforcements.

By their last day on the mountains, Frey was certain that all the remnants of Marquis Dalamán had been destroyed.

“Thank you.”

The Beastkin man bowed his head.

It seemed like after a month of fighting together, the freed slaves considered Frey to be their benefactor.

“Where will you go?”

“We’re thinking about going to the Ispania Mountains in the south.”

It was definitely the closest place they could go to.

And as the monster paradise, if they escaped to that place, the Luanoble Kingdom would not be able to pursue them.

“That’s not an easy place to live.”

“It would still be better than this one... We will definitely repay the grace you have given us.”

“Wait.”

Frey stopped him.

“What’s your name?”

“Bekend.”

After saying that, Bekend turned around and left without looking back.

As he watched the former slaves leave, Frey spoke.

“Will the meeting start soon?”

“That’s right.”

Riki’s expression was quite relaxed as he said this.

It wouldn’t be a problem even if they left now.

Frey's mana aura had already disappeared completely, and there was no longer anyone for them to deal with.

Frey, who was a bit puzzled, soon nodded.

"Then let's head to the meeting."

"Hmm?"

Riki looked at Frey with a weird expression for a moment before realising.

Only

"It seems I forgot to tell you."

"What?"

"It's here."

"...here?"

“The place where the meeting will be held. ...Hmm. Put on your mask, Frey.”

He didn't even have to ask why.

As soon as Riki said those words, the sky suddenly split.

Season 1 Chapter 102: Lord

The Circle members, including Sheryl, continued following the Sword Demigod.

They almost lost track of them a few times, but somehow, they were able to catch up.

Though catch up might not have been completely accurate.

To be precise, they'd only managed to catch up because they had stopped on a mountain near Lufei and didn't move from there.

Still, they didn't dare get too close even though they had stopped on a mountain.

Because there was still a chance that it was a trap to catch them.

Due to this, they camped out a distance away from the mountain and monitored it from afar.

The pursuers were deeply puzzled by their subsequent actions.

For some reason, they were attacking camps located on the mountain.

“What are they doing?”

“I think this is one of their old outposts.”

Only Jerome Berner’s expression was strange.

“This place... is where they conduct the slave trade.”

He knew the affairs of the country better than the others because he himself was a citizen of Luanoble.

Although there were no bodies left in the places destroyed by the Demigod, they were able to ascertain what was being done in those places because of the cages and other tools.

He also knew that the country had been going down a very unsightly path recently.

However, the exact location of this place had never been revealed.

‘I would never have thought that they were doing this right next to Lufei.’

Jerome's face was stained with shame.

Fortunately, his companions didn't have the time to care about the corruption in the Luanoble Kingdom.

This was because the Demigod's actions were too strange.

'What the hell are they planning?'

And just as they were getting a headache trying to figure out what was happening.

"That... how..."

Shepard's jaw dropped.

The same thing happened to the others.

The sky, which had been normal just a moment ago, was now split open.

This sight made it hard for even Shepard, who was a 7 star Wizard, to maintain his composure.

Sheryl was the only one who managed to keep her cool.

She simply bit her lip with her sharp fangs, showing that the experience that came with age wasn't for naught.

"We're in trouble."

"Why do you say that, Rounder Sheryl?"

"Being able to see this phenomenon means that we are already within the boundaries of that Demigod's domain."

"...that means..."

"Right."

Sheryl's expression was severe.

"We cannot leave until the Demigods' meeting is over."

* * *

Frey suddenly felt a wave of heat.

But it was strange because it didn't actually make him feel hot.

The heat came from the sky.

A huge being completely made of fire in the shape of a man appeared among the clouds.

His figure was burning fiercely as though he would burn the whole world.

"I told you about him before, didn't I? He is one of the beings you call Apocalypse."

"..."

"From now on, be careful with your words and actions. In fact, it would be better if you didn't say anything at all."

Frey nodded.

As Riki said, it was better to keep his mouth shut than speak and reveal a clue.

Riki shot him a glance before looking toward the sky.

Agni, who was even larger than the mountain, slowly began shrinking until he was the size of a normal human.

If he was like a transcendent being made of fire before, now, he was like a normal human man with flaming red hair.

Frey had subjugated and exterminated many Demigods in his time, but it was the first time he'd seen such a sight.

'He can change his size this much?'

He thought about it for a moment but soon realised that it wasn't that strange.

Because Dragons also had the ability to change their shape and size.

'Maybe Riki can as well?'

Was Riki the same?

Frey was curious, but he couldn't ask in this situation.

This was because Agni had already approached them.

To his right was a figure wearing a robe and mask just like Frey.

“It seems you were the first this time.”

“Right.”

“Hmm... but it’s a bit unexpected. I wouldn’t have expected you to already clean this place up.”

Cleaning.

It seemed that he was talking about Dalaman and his men who had been staying on the mountain.

Riki answered bluntly.

“I did it because I was already nearby.”

“I see. Anyway, good job.”

Then Agni turned his eyes to Frey.

“Is this your Apostle?”

“Right.”

“Hmm. Indeed.”

Agni nodded before walking to the side.

“He should be able to withstand seeing Lord face to face. You got a pretty good one.”

“I see you finally made an Apostle.”

“Right. I struggled a bit to get this one.”

At that moment, the figure who was standing behind Agni turned to glance at Frey.

The moment their eyes met in the air.

“...!”

“...!”

They both felt the other person’s shock.

They then looked away at the same time and pretended to be calm.

'Why are they here...?'

He couldn't even begin to imagine the reason.

But he was certain that he knew the person behind that mask.

Frey hurriedly fixed his expression.

Fortunately, Agni didn't seem to notice Frey's shock.

He just walked past him and into the castle.

Frey wanted to tell Riki about it, but now wasn't the time.

Suddenly, a huge gale blew, and Frey's expression stiffened.

He felt three overwhelming presences at the same time, and at that moment, he found it hard to even breathe.

The space seemed to twist, and before long, three figures stepped out.

A young woman with blonde hair, a Skeleton and a wrinkled old man with a hunched back.

Leyrin, Nozdog and Ananta.

Frey realised that he had some history with all three of them.

Leyrin was the puppeteer who was pulling the strings of the Blake Family from behind the curtains. She was the reason 'Frey' could use both divine power and mana in the same body.

Nozdog tried to bait the traitor by using Oydin, and he appeared as an illusion in front of Frey before Oydin died.

He had felt the pressure of his aura at the time, but it was nothing compared to meeting him in person.

And Ananta was one of the Demigods he'd fought against when he was Lukas.

At that time, Lukas, Schweiser, Iris, Kasajin and Lucid could not defeat this 'monstrous old man.'

On the contrary, Kasajin had been inflicted with his poison and was bedridden for a month in a near-death state.

Of course, they had succeeded in doing some damage to Ananta, but defeat was defeat.

It was even more shocking since at that time, Lukas and his party had only just started building up their confidence to fight the Demigods.

Compared to back then, Ananta didn't look much different except for the fact that his clothes were different.

"I don't think we're too late."

"Kukuku. I can't believe Agni beat us. How surprising."

Ananta smiled and spoke in his phlegmatic voice as he looked at the castle.

He could feel Agni's power within it.

Riki looked at them with folded arms.

"The three of you came together?"

"Yeah."

"What for?"

“I heard some interesting information from Lord, so I came to see if it was true.”

“...interesting information?”

“I’ll tell you when the meeting starts. I’m sure you’ll like it.”

Leyrin smiled as she said this, but Riki couldn’t help but feel anxious.

Nozdog, who hadn’t said a word since they arrived, looked down from the mountain as he said.

[There are intruders.]

“What?”

[Just that. There are intruders trying to enter the barrier. No. They’re already in... that’s strange.]

Nozdog’s blazing eyes turned to Riki.

[I don’t believe that you, who are the most sensitive among us, did not sense them. What’s going on, Riki?”

“...there have been a lot of things I’ve had to worry about, so my senses have been dulled lately.”

[...]

After a moment of silence, Nozdog nodded.

[If it’s coming from you, then it must be true.]

“...”

[Then I shall go take care of the rats.]

“Will you be okay? Won’t you get penalised?”

[Leyrin said it, didn’t she? We heard something really interesting from Lord.]

At that moment, Frey couldn’t help but feel that the skinless skeleton in front of him was smiling.

[Everything has been confirmed. It will be very fun and exciting.]

Then Nozdog disappeared.

Frey followed his presence. Fortunately, he was able to clearly see outside of the castle.

And he immediately became confused.

Because there were hundreds of Knights in black armor standing in a clearing.

Riki muttered.

“...they came here with Warp.”

He said it as though he was explaining to Frey.

“I didn’t think they’d send the Black Dragon Knights. It seems they valued the Marquis’ business more than I expected.”

“Riki. Luanoble is your territory. How could they set up here without your knowledge?”

It was Leyrin who answered Ananta’s words.

“This territory. It’s been hundreds of years since he left. The path this country took is quite the spectacle. Did you know, Riki? The reason Lord wanted to meet in Luanoble.”

“No.”

“He thought it needed cleaning.”

Leyrin pointed toward the Black Dragon Knights.

“This is the beginning.”

Nozdog was standing in the sky, looking down at them.

The Black Dragon Knights noticed his presence, and they began to busily prepare, but nothing could save them anymore.

They couldn't damage Nozdog, who was in the air, with their swordsmanship.

Nozdog, with a relaxed motion, stretched out a finger, and a clump of black energy began gathering at the tip.

Shuk.

The black energy then separated to form hundreds of small black spikes.

Frey realised the number of spikes matched the number of Black Dragon Knights exactly.

The spikes then accurately pierced through their helmets like paper.

Then the Knights, who stood there for a few moments after their deaths, collapsed in unison.

That was it.

In an instant, all of the Black Dragon Knights had been annihilated.

[This is death.]

After muttering contentedly, Nozdog's body flashed and reappeared beside Riki.

Riki had an incomprehensible expression on his face.

“Even if you could withstand the penalty... isn't it too much to kill hundreds of people?”

[Huhu. We won't have to worry about that anymore.]

“What?”

[Rejoice, Riki. We have finally found the possibility of evading god's punishment.]

“...!!”

Frey's expression twisted behind his mask.

Riki's surprise was no less than his.

It was then.

[Come inside.]

Frey's entire body froze.

It was a voice he would never be able to forget.

It was a voice that sounded as sacred as hearing God's call in a cathedral, but the owner of this voice was anything but sacred.

Frey turned to look inside the smashed wall of the castle.

Beside Agni, a being was silently revealing its presence.

The reason it was called a 'being' was because there was no other way to express it.

Only

It had the overall shape of a man. However, its head was as smooth as an egg because it lacked any features at all.

It didn't even have hair.

There was not a stitch of clothing on its body, revealing its strong masculine figure, and above all, white light was constantly being emitted from its body.

It looked exactly as it had 4,000 years ago.

[Come inside, my dear family.]

Lord beckoned gently.

Season 1 Chapter 103: Lord (2)

At those words, the Demigods, including Riki, began entering the castle.

Frey was reluctant to face Lord.

However, some Apostles were already waiting in the castle, so he had no choice but to follow Riki.

[It's a little chilly.]

Lord mumbled quietly to himself before shaking his hand.

Then, the broken wall was restored as if time itself had been reversed.

It was a process that could not be explained with the laws of nature. However, the Demigods present seemed to be used to such things as they showed no reaction.

There was a new Apostle in the castle, who was also wearing a mask.

'When did they get here?'

Except for Agni, the other Apocalypses had not brought their Apostles.

Was that person Lord's Apostle?

Just like himself and Agni's Apostle, this person wore a large robe, which not only hid their appearance but even information about their sex and age.

As Frey thought this, Riki turned to Lord and said.

“It’s been a while.”

[Riki, my oldest brother. Have you been well?]

“I have.”

[That’s good.]

Lord laughed happily.

Riki kept looking at Lord for a while before opening his mouth once again.

“May I ask what it is you’ve been doing all this while?”

[It was very important. Of course, you’ll find out right now. Leyrin.]

Lord gestured to Leyrin, who smiled and took something from her pocket.

It was a metal ingot.

[Illuminium]

“This is the first time I’ve heard of this.”

[That’s to be expected. After all, it’s a metal we discovered and named personally.]”

Riki felt a bit anxious.

It seemed the other Demigods knew about this metal already.

Only Riki and Agni were making expressions to show that they hadn’t heard of it before.

Leyrin touched the metal before saying.

“At first glance, it’s a simple metal without any special properties. It’s not that strong, and it does not conduct divine power very well. But.”

Then a shocking sight unfolded.

Leyrin ripped off a small piece of metal with her finger and put it in her mouth.

Crunch crunch.

The piece was about the size of a knuckle, and even if it wasn't hard, per se, it was still a metal.

Even a Drake, which was known for its strong jaws and sharp teeth, would be left with a bloody mouth if it tried the same thing.

Nevertheless, Leyrin moved her jaws as though she was just munching a cookie before swallowing it.

Huk.

Then, at that moment, Riki felt the divine power in Leyrin's body disappear.

"What do you think? Doesn't it feel like my divine power has disappeared?"

"It does."

"But it's still the same."

Whoosh.

A small whirlwind formed above Leyrin's hand.

It was clear that her divine power was just as powerful as before.

Nevertheless, it couldn't be felt at all.

Riki's expression stiffened.

"...did you conceal it?"

"Do you think I'd deceive you? You're still too behind the times."

Leyrin was smug.

Riki looked at her strangely.

"How?"

"The power of Illuminium. It's an alloy I created, but I originally made it to conceal our divine power. I was tired of those Circle bastards following me around. But it ended up being more effective than I predicted."

Leyrin didn't hold back her laughter.

"Just by eating a bit of metal, you could kill as many mortals as you want for a certain period without having to worry about punishment. In other words, we can deceive god's laws."

“...!”

“Well. It only lasts a few minutes at best, and the more you use divine power, the shorter the duration, but it’s better than nothing, right?”

If this was true, then this was catastrophic news for all races on the continent who opposed the Demigods.

Behind the mask, Frey’s face was harder than stone.

Only then did he understand why Nozdog had been able to annihilate the Black Dragon Knights without worry.

“Can the metal be produced indefinitely?”

Riki casually pointed out a very important point.

Frey paid close attention to what Leyrin said next.

If this metal could be mass produced, then it wouldn’t take more than a few years for the entire continent to completely fall into the Demigods’ hands.

“It would be great if I could, but the production process is so complicated that it’s no joke. The ingredients are also difficult to acquire. So for now, we need to use it sparingly.”

After saying that, Leyrin threw the Illuminium in her hand to Riki.

“Cut it into small pieces and eat it. I’m also considering making it into a liquid, but I’ll have to wait to do research, or our supply might run out.”

“...”

Riki put away the ingot silently.

Nozdog narrowed his eyes.

[You don’t look very happy, Riki.]

“...”

[This is an opportunity to destroy the insects that have been troubling us for so long. Aren’t you excited?]

“I’m not interested.”

[...You've always said that. No. Not always.]

Nozdog swayed slightly.

[Did you know? Ever since you destroyed Icollium 4,000 years ago, you've been acting very strangely.]

Frey was once again grateful that he was wearing a mask since it was almost impossible for him to conceal the flash of surprise that appeared on his face.

Icollium was Lucid's birthplace.

Was Riki the one who destroyed it?

[The Sword King Lucid met his end together with his country.]

Hruhiral's words once again resounded in Frey's mind.

Then didn't that mean that Riki, the one who destroyed Icollium, was also the one who killed Lucid?

"4,000 years have already passed, Nozdog. That's enough time for things to change."

[Stop saying disgusting things. Change is something only imperfect beings experience. It doesn't apply to beings like us, who are perfect from birth.]

“I don’t think we are perfect.”

[...]

At those words, a terrifying aura suddenly billowed out.

Nozdog had released his full power.

Clear suspicion was visible in his gaze. (TL: aren’t his eyes just fire?)

Frey felt a little frustrated by Riki’s attitude.

He didn’t understand why he was using words and actions that could cause conflict with Nozdog when it was better to lay low.

“Kukuku... come to think of it.”

It was Ananta who began speaking with a grim smile.

His smile made his heavily wrinkled face look even worse as he said.

“Hydra’s dead.”

“Huh? Really?”

Leyrin tilted her head since it was the first time she was hearing this news.

It was the same for the others.

Agni spoke bluntly.

“Why are you only saying this now?”

“I only just found out.”

Ananta locked gazes with Riki.

‘They’re suspicious.’

Riki was convinced at that moment.

Even if the others didn’t think the same, these two suspected him.

However, he wasn't too surprised by this. After all, he had done too many suspicious things.

It was clear that they weren't yet certain, but the current atmosphere was already bad.

There was a chance that their suspicion might spread to Agni and Leyrin.

It was then.

[Nozdog, Ananta.]

At Lord's quiet words, Nozdog and Ananta shivered before turning to look at him.

Suddenly, a mouth appeared on Lord's previously featureless face.

As if something that had been buried in a snowfield finally revealed itself, Lord smiled, revealing white teeth.

[What are you doing to your brother?]

[...I'm sorry.]

"I was too hasty."

The two proud Demigods immediately apologised.

Lord's mouth disappeared again.

This time, he turned to Riki.

[Please understand, Riki. This is proof of how unusual our current situation is.]

"I know."

Riki responded bluntly, and Nozdog felt angered inwardly by that fact.

'It's so different.'

It was different.

Apocalypse.

That was the term the Circle used to describe the five Demigods gathered here, but Nozdog was the only one who knew that unlike them, Riki was not pressured at all by Lord.

He could guess why.

Lord was the first to separate from the enormous body of energy known as the laws of the world.

And the next Demigod to emerge with self consciousness was Riki.

For this reason, there was a relationship between Lord and Riki that they could not even wish to interfere with.

In fact, there were several instances where Lord was soft to Riki when he would normally be brutal to others.

The Demigods here all controlled large cities or even small countries from the shadows.

And even if they didn't have total control, it was certain that they had some amount of influence.

But this country, Luanoble, was supposed to be completely dominated by Riki.

But Riki didn't do it.

Instead, he built a hut in the woods and started living like a hermit.

It was like blatantly throwing away his responsibility.

But Lord did not reprimand him at all.

Nozdog couldn't understand that.

Riki opened his mouth with a calm expression.

"Let's get down to business. Didn't you call this meeting to find the traitor?"

[Right. But not all the Demigods have arrived yet, so we'll wait a bit longer. Why don't we share a little secret?]

"A secret?"

[Let's reveal our Apostles to each other.]

"...Lord, are you serious?"

It wasn't unreasonable for Leyrin to ask this question with such a strange tone.

She didn't doubt Riki like Ananta and Nozdog did.

She wasn't raising her hand to say one of the people here was the traitor.

Nevertheless, there was still a possibility.

If there really was a traitor among the people gathered here, then revealing the identity of their Apostles was very risky.

[You might be reluctant. I completely understand. It's okay, no need to worry about it.]

As he said this, Lord's voice was very quiet.

He told them not to worry, and he also hadn't given them a reason, but Leyrin's expression softened at his words.

The same was true for the others.

Only Riki's expression remained the same.

[Since I'm the one who brought it up, I'll show you mine first.]

Just as Lord laughed and said this, he was interrupted.

"Wait."

[What is it, Agni?]

“Lord, I don’t think you should reveal your Apostle.”

[Hmmm.]

Lord paused for a moment before saying.

“You are the core of the Demigods. If there really is a traitor here, then your Apostle would be the one they care about the most.”

How accurate.

This thought flashed through Riki’s mind, but he didn’t show it.

Somehow, Lord managed to show an awkward expression.

[Then I’d be the only one who wouldn’t reveal my Apostle, wouldn’t I? I’m the one who brought it up, but it has become such a funny situation.]

Lord’s head dropped down for a moment before he said.

[If you all agree with Agni's opinion, then I won't reveal mine.]

Riki almost sighed.

It was clear that he had predicted this situation since he was the one who brought it up in the first place.

"I agree."

Only

"I concur."

[I am in agreement.]

"Agreed."

The other four all nodded. Then, as if planned beforehand, they all turned to look at Riki.

"I don't care, but."

Riki turned to look at Lord.

“If you don’t reveal your Apostle, then I won’t, either.”

Season 1 Chapter 104: Lord (3)

“Stop talking nonsense.”

“Riki, are you out of your mind?”

Anger was evident on the other Demigods’ faces.

This was a natural reaction.

After all, what Riki had just said had clearly crossed the line.

Even Agni and Leyrin, who had simply been observing the situation from the side, stared at Riki with fierce expressions.

However, it was Nozdog who was most angry.

He looked at Riki as if he wanted to tear him apart.

[If Lord doesn’t reveal his, you won’t reveal yours? Don’t be ridiculous. Are you now considering yourself equal to Lord?]

All Demigods were inherently equal.

But by calling Lord 'Lord', the Demigods were paying homage to the being who was the very first Demigod.

[Stop spouting nonsense. He is the only one who can handle the work and responsibility that comes with being Lord. On his own, he can do things that even all of us combined would fail to do.]

"You're not wrong. But there are things I can do that Lord can't."

[You...!]

The terrifying aura of death rose from Nozdog's body.

This time, Riki also put his hand on the hilt of his sword.

With just these actions, the atmosphere in the room became as taut as a bowstring waiting to be released.

Once again, it was Lord who broke the tense silence.

[Enough.]

But this time, Nozdog didn't intend to back down.

The flames in his eye sockets burned fiercely with rage.

[Do not stop me any more, Lord. It is clear that Riki is suspicious. I'm not the only one who thinks that.]

"Kukuku. That's right."

Ananta nodded.

From the moment he had learned of Hydra's death, he had begun to have doubts about Riki.

He was the only one who could get rid of such a resilient person without a trace.

Leyrin and Agni were clearly hesitating, but it was obvious that their suspicion had grown stronger.

[Nozdog, your suspicion is valid. However, it would be best to pay attention to your words and actions until everything is confirmed.]

Nozdog grit his teeth.

However, since he wanted to gain the authority that came with Lord's recognition, he could not continue to be disobedient.

The deathly aura disappeared as if it had been washed away, and Riki also let go of his hilt.

[...The thing that truly makes me angry is the fact that Riki is not even trying to alleviate our doubts. His attitude makes it seem like it doesn't matter if we are suspicious of him. It's impossible for me to not feel upset by this.]

[...]

Lord fell silent for a moment.

He felt that Nozdog had a point.

After thinking for a while, he finally said.

[I understand.]

“You understand?”

When Leyrin asked with a confused expression on her face, Lord spoke in a flat tone.

[After this meeting ends, I will personally check if Riki is the traitor or not.]

“...”

Silence fell at those words.

This was because they knew Lord was not one to lie.

Lord turned to look at Riki before saying.

[Of course, you will cooperate, won't you?]

[woopread, woopread]

“Sure.”

[Good.]

Lord then stood to his feet.

[Now then, will you show me your Apostles?]

“...that.”

“Well...”

[...]

At Lord’s words, the other Demigods showed uncomfortable expressions.

They all glanced at Riki.

If Riki was truly the traitor, it would be very risky for them to reveal their Apostles to him.

When he saw this, Lord waved his hand.

[There’s no need to worry. I’ve put a barrier around this place. People can enter, but it is impossible for anyone to leave.]

This explained why the Black Dragon Knights had been able to enter this place.

Frey turned to Lord.

[I will not release the barrier until we have confirmed the identity of the traitor. Even if it takes a week, a month, or a year.]

“...I see.”

“It can’t be helped.”

The Demigods all nodded since it was understandable.

“Then I’ll go first.”

It was Agni who stepped forward.

In the first place, he seemed to have very little hesitation when it came to revealing his Apostle.

Looking at him, Frey couldn’t help but feel that he was quite similar to Ivan.

He seemed to be the type who could burn with passion from his very soul if he found something interesting. Conversely, he also seemed to be the type that wouldn’t care what happened if it was something uninteresting to him.

And to Agni, this meeting seemed to be the latter.

He turned to the Apostle standing behind him and said.

“Take off your mask.”

The Apostle stepped forward slowly, removing the mask from their face.

“ ... ”

The face revealed was that of a woman Frey had never seen before.

She was very beautiful, with full lips, a small nose and burning eyes.

The hair that could be seen from under her hood showed a color that was reminiscent of boiling lava.

However, Frey felt a connection to this woman.

Babump.

[read at woopread]

His heart beat felt exceptionally loud at that moment.

He knew that she was probably feeling the same.

'Phoenix.'

Her appearance had changed, but she was definitely the Phoenix he had left in Torkunta's body.

Frey was certain.

The reason he felt this was simple.

He had absorbed half of Torkunta's heart.

A slight exaggeration would be to say that Frey felt like she was his other half.

It wasn't too surprising that she'd gained a human form.

In a near death state, the Phoenix had absorbed Torkunta's body and half of his heart.

The enormous amount of energy she had absorbed would have made it easy to construct her body.

In fact, there would still be a lot of energy left after the reconstruction, and there was a chance that the great change in the Phoenix's appearance might have been influenced by her will.

But... he never imagined that she'd become Agni's Apostle.

'Was she forced to become Agni's Apostle? Or... was it of her own volition?'

He couldn't tell, but Frey sincerely hoped it wasn't the latter.

Leyrin narrowed her eyes before saying.

"The outer shell looks human, but within... I'm not sure. What exactly is she?"

"A Phoenix. I found her when I was passing over the Ispania Mountains. She's a dozen times stronger than a normal phoenix."

"A Phoenix? Those are really rare nowadays, yet you managed to find one. But it seems to be... mixed with something... It doesn't appear to be a half-breed. Hmm. It is certainly a unique entity. How interesting."

Leyrin's eyes sparkled.

If it wasn't for Lord's next words, it was quite possible that she would have said something ridiculous like wanting to dissect it.

[Next.]

At Lord's words, Ananta beckoned.

The Apostle standing behind him took off his mask. (TL: I even double checked, the author did not mention anything about the others bringing their apostles, only Riki, Agni and maybe Lord.)

It was a man with a very common appearance. Brown hair and eyes with a blank expression on his face.

Nozdog didn't look pleased as he said.

[Ananta. We're in front of Lord.]

"Right. Jenta, take it off."

"..."

The man named Jenta pulled on his face without a word.

The skin on his face ripped easily and revealed his real face beneath.

The man's face gave off a very sharp feeling, especially because of the large wound that went across his nose.

'Is he an assassin?'

The mask made of human flesh caused Frey to have an idea about the man's identity.

The man had a very formidable aura, and Frey was sure that he was a very skilled assassin.

'If this kind of assassin decided to hide...'

He would be difficult to find even if one had thousands of troops searching.

Ananta must have taken that into account when making his decision.

Even 4,000 years later, he was a tricky and wicked old man.

[Next.]

It was Nozdog's turn.

When he beckoned his Apostle to remove their mask, the person that was revealed turned out to be a Demon.

"A Demon? Isn't that a Demon?"

Leyrin couldn't help but ask in surprise.

"How did you make a Demon into your Apostle? No. More importantly... isn't this this Demon's true body?"

Moreover, it wasn't a weak Lower Demon. For it to be of any use, it would have to be a Superior Demon at the least.

"How did you manage to do that?"

[I had help.]

Help.

Frey thought of Iris.

She had researched for a long time for a way to allow a Demon to project its full power to the continent.

At that time, she hadn't made any progress, but 4,000 years had passed, so it was possible that she'd made a breakthrough.

It was also suspicious that Oydin knew Asura's summoning circle.

'...Nozdog has some connection to Iris.'

Frey thought that this speculation was pretty credible.

[Next]

When Leyrin beckoned, the Apostle behind her also took off their mask.

The person behind the mask was a woman with a very cold, expressionless face.

She looked to be about 30 years of age, but Frey knew she was older than that.

...Riki had said there was a high chance that Isaka Blake was Leyrin's Apostle, and Frey agreed with him.

He felt that even if it wasn't him, it would still be a member of the Blake family.

The eldest son, Mischael, or even Heinz... the second son.

But it wasn't any of them.

Leyrin's Apostle was none other than the Lady of the Blake Family, Reita Blake.

[Good. Thank you for fulfilling my request despite the risk, my companions.]

When Lord spoke out with satisfaction, the Apostles placed their masks back on their faces.

Frey realised that everyone's eyes were on him.

They must have been curious.

Because he was the only Apostle who hadn't revealed their appearance.

'...come to think of it.'

Lord's Apostle was not among the people gathered here.

It seems he did not intend to reveal his Apostle from the beginning.

Or maybe he could summon them at any time.

Nevertheless, Frey had learned the identities of all the Apocalypses' Apostles.

However, none of them were easy opponents.

One was a Demon who was able to use its full strength, one was the Lady of the Blake family, and one was a formidable assassin whose identity could be changed at any moment.

And the other one... was someone he'd promised to reunite with in the future.

Nevertheless, it was too soon for him to think about them.

Frey recalled Lord's words.

[I will not release the barrier until we have confirmed the identity of the traitor. Even if it takes a week, a month, or a year.]

A barrier created by Lord himself.

Warp would definitely not work, and there was a chance that not even Riki's space/time movement would work.

He intended to use this opportunity to flush out the traitor.

He had even let the Apocalypses reveal the identities of their Apostles.

Only

Even if Lord had another reason for doing so, one thing was made clear by this.

And that was the fact that Lord was confident he could find the traitor.

He would do it somehow, regardless of the method.

‘This situation has become rather amusing.’

Although he thought that, this situation wasn’t funny at all.

The disconnected space, Lord’s unexpected move and Riki’s incomprehensible actions.

Frey had begun to seriously wonder whether he’d be able to leave this place alive.

Season 1 Chapter 105: Lord (4)

Lord said they would have to wait a little longer for the other Demigods to gather.

Then, he ordered the Apostles to leave because he wanted to discuss something with the Apocalypses.

There was no way they could disobey him, so the five Apostles headed down to the basement of the castle.

Frey was the one who acted as the guide, which was natural since Frey and Riki were the ones who got there first.

The basement was quite large, but since it had been used to house slaves, it was quite dreary and filthy.

Frey and Riki didn't bother cleaning it up since they only stayed in the upper floors.

Thanks to that, the entire room was filled with a horrid stench.

“...”

However, none of the Apostles seemed to be bothered by it.

Even Letia, the Lady of the Blake family, grabbed an old wooden chair and planted her buttocks on it without hesitation. (TL: author's words...not mine...)

The rest were the same.

They each found a corner to sit quietly in.

“Do you have anything to eat?”

It was the Demon who asked this question in a deep voice.

Frey glanced at him for a moment before answering.

“I have bread.”

“What about to drink?”

“Beer.”

“That’s good.”

“...”

Frey then went upstairs to the food storehouse and brought back four servings of bread and beer to give to everyone.

“No need.”

Letia was the only one who didn’t accept it.

Frey also didn’t eat anything.

He wasn’t hungry, and he didn’t want to take the mask off his face.

After the short meal, Jenta approached Frey, who was sitting in a corner.

“Take off your mask.”

It was clearly an order.

Frey wasn't surprised. Rather, he expected something like this to happen.

They were bound to be dissatisfied at Frey who didn't reveal his face like everyone else.

“What if I don't?”

Of course, he didn't have to respond, but Frey chose to provoke him.

“Do you intend to take it off by force?”

“I don't see why not.”

“Quit it.”

It wasn't Frey who said that.

It was the Demon who was tearing into the bread viciously.

He had red skin and pupilless eyes, and it seemed he had no intention of hiding behind a mask.

Jenta and the Phoenix had both eaten their bread while trying to keep their faces as covered as possible.

“Quit it? Aren’t you curious about this guy’s identity?”

“Of course I’m curious. But that’s not something we have to worry about.”

“...”

“You can’t do much about your curiosity. Especially when the Demigods are nearby.”

Jenta didn’t say anything further. He simply turned around, walked back to his corner and sat down.

Frey sighed inwardly before turning to the Demon.

Sensing his gaze, the Demon also turned to look at Frey.

Besides that, there was also another gaze that was locked on to Frey.

The Phoenix.

She was also looking at him.

Frey turned his head and met her gaze, but everyone remained quiet.

'It's so frustrating not being able to use Telepathy.'

He wondered how exactly she'd become Agni's Apostle and what exactly was on her mind at that moment.

One good thing was that he did not sense any suspicion or hostility in her gaze.

Otherwise, she would have already revealed his identity.

Frey had sincerely hoped to have a happy reunion with her. However, this was quite a contrast to the reunion he had envisioned.

For now, he decided not to think about that.

* * *

[That's all I have to say for now.]

When Lord said that, the other Demigods nodded.

[The rest of you may leave. Riki, I'd like to talk to you for a moment.]

"...understood."

'There's something coming.'

This thought floated in Riki's head as the other Demigods slowly left the room.

As Ananta passed by, he shot Riki a mocking look.

He was certain that Lord would now pay close attention to Riki.

Before long, only Lord and Riki remained in the hall.

Lord shook his hand slightly.

Woowoong.

The room was suddenly covered by layers of barriers.

Riki's expression hardened as he felt the power of the barriers.

He was certain that he wouldn't be able to escape it unless he used his full power.

[There's no need to feel nervous, Riki.]

Lord spoke softly.

Riki then realised that he had subconsciously put his hand on the hilt of his sword.

[I just didn't want anyone to hear our conversation. You know that Nozdog and Ananta currently don't have any positive feelings towards you. Leyrin doesn't seem to be suspicious... but she's definitely curious.]

"..."

There was certainly a chance that they would've tried to eavesdrop on this conversation.

But now that Lord had erected multiple layers of barriers, they wouldn't be able to.

“What do you want to talk about?”

[Riki, my oldest brother, I still remember the joy I felt when I saw you for the first time.]

It was an unexpected statement, but Lord’s voice was so filled with nostalgia that he didn’t question him.

Lord pondered for a moment.

He couldn’t even remember how long ago it had been.

In the old days, humans and the other mortal creatures hadn’t even learned to use proper tools yet, Dragons had simply been large monsters, and the continent’s terrain had been completely different.

That was when Lord had broken off. A small, broken fragment that had detached from the will of the world.

It had taken hundreds of years for him to gain sentience.

At that time, it didn’t take long for Lord to realise that he was stronger than every other being alive, that he was superior to every other race.

He felt that even if all of these beings worked together to fight against him, he would still be able to win without difficulty.

But that fact didn't impress Lord.

What did it matter?

He didn't even know why he had such absolute power.

He had the power to rule the world, but he had no purpose.

He didn't even know why he existed in the first place. So as time went by, he slowly became consumed by a deep sense of loneliness.

Then, another piece fell from the will of the world.

[You wouldn't understand the sheer joy I felt to finally find another person in this world who was like me.]

He was finally not alone.

That fact alone suddenly gave Lord the will to live.

No purpose?

Then he'd just have to make one.

He had the power to do whatever he wanted after all.

That wasn't all.

After Riki's appearance, more Demigods began appearing one after another.

They, like him, were confused at first.

They experienced the same loneliness and confusion that he'd felt.

That was when Lord realised what his purpose was.

He was to be their leader.

The leader who would guide these people who did not know how to control their transcendent powers.

The reason why he had gained consciousness before the others was because there would always be a pioneer who had to suffer for his kind.

Since then, Lord had been leading the Demigods superbly.

“Why are you telling me this?”

[Riki, I want to treat all of my kind fairly, and I’m trying to do that. But... I feel that there is some truth to Nozdog’s complaint.]

“...”

[As he said, I’m too soft towards you. I’ve let you get away with things that the other Demigods wouldn’t even dare to do. Not meeting your quota, not managing your territory, ignoring my requests...]

As he fell silent, eyes appeared on Lord’s face.

He turned these eyes to look at Riki.

[Killing our kind.]

“...”

Riki didn’t look surprised.

Instead, he'd expected this.

He had suspected that Lord knew he was the traitor.

But when Lord asked them to reveal their Apostles to the others, he had been certain.

So he went a step further.

Frey might not have understood why he'd acted in such a way, but he needed to create a situation that would prevent Lord from being soft once again.

He didn't know where he had slipped up or when Lord had found out, but Riki knew he wouldn't know every little detail.

With his insight, Lord would have been able to notice even the most minute details.

Lord's voice sounded once again.

[Killing our people is unforgivable, Riki.]

"I know."

[I want to ask. Why did you betray us? You weren't like this before. You understood me better than anyone else and agreed with my goal.]

"That's obvious, Lord."

Riki looked at Lord with a firm gaze.

"It's because I realised at the time that we were in the wrong."

[So you're saying you're in the right now?]

"That's right."

Lord sighed emotionally.

His piercing eyes disappeared once again.

Lord's features only changed when there was a significant change to his emotions.

It seemed he had regained his composure.

[Perhaps, this is all my fault.]

“What?”

[4,000 years ago. I’ve never seen you as angry as after I killed that Knight.]

“...”

He couldn’t deny it.

That was because that had been the first time that a negative thought towards Lord had appeared in his mind.

That was the beginning of everything.

That negative view towards Lord changed his way of thinking and started making him question the existence of the Demigods.

And he began to feel repulsed by what they were doing.

Are our actions really correct?

[Then let’s pretend this never happened.]

“...what?”

That was completely unexpected.

Riki looked at him in suspicion.

However, it was impossible to read Lord’s intentions when he was in a featureless state.

The only way to catch a glimpse of his emotions was through his voice, but even that had fallen to a monotone.

[I’m going to forgive you, Riki. Because this is as much my fault as it is yours.]

“You would forgive me for killing our kind?”

[That’s right.]

Riki had not expected such an outcome, but he knew that Lord wasn’t trying to deceive him.

The words he was saying now were truly sincere.

Lord was willing to forgive him even though he had killed so many of their people.

“Will the other Demigods accept something like that?”

[That’s right. Therefore... it’s unfortunate, but we’ll have to trick them.]

“Trick?”

[Because I promised to find the traitor unconditionally. The others might not say anything, but Nozdog and Ananta will not be convinced.]

“...certainly.”

Lord smiled.

Or rather, it felt like he was smiling.

[I’ve picked a suitable candidate from the Demigods that are coming to this meeting. There will be no suspicion, and everything will go smoothly. You will have nothing to worry about.]

Those words made Riki speechless.

He stared at Lord in disbelief.

“...you’re going to falsely accuse an innocent Demigod and kill them?”

[It is unfortunate, but it can’t be helped. Because you are more important than they are.]

Riki’s pulse froze at that moment.

‘I see.’

He wasn’t the only one who had changed over the years.

If it had been the Lord of the past, he would not have made such a suggestion.

No matter how much he cared for Riki, he would never falsely accuse and execute an innocent member of his own race.

[Of course, it will also take some acting on your part.]

“ ... ”

[It’s nothing much. Just kill your Apostle with your own hands.]

“What?”

[Then you will fall into hibernation. Maybe for 100 years. That’s not a very long time for us, so just take it as a long nap. In the meantime, I will protect you. And when you wake up, I assure you. There would be nothing left for you to worry about.]

...Right.

If he were to fall into hibernation, it would clear Ananta and Nozdog’s suspicion.

It was clear that Lord had thought of everything to ensure the plan would go smoothly.

Maybe even the Demigod who would be framed would be convinced.

[The Demigod who will take the blame for you will be ‘Ur’. It’ll take a few more days for him to get here. Kill your Apostle right after he arrives. I will handle the rest.]

Lord got up from his seat.

[That’s all I wanted to say, Riki. Keep in mind, if you choose to accept this, we can start over. Just like how the ground will harden after the rain, we can build a stronger relationship with more trust than before.]

He then tapped Riki on the shoulder and left the room.

By that time, the barriers had already disappeared.

'...can they really change? Lord, the Demigods?'

Only

Since he had changed, there was nothing preventing the others from changing as well.

Then would he still need to kill them?

Couldn't he work together with Lord to change the Demigods from within?

...If that was possible, then it would be much more logical than trying to fight against the Demigods on his own.

"..."

Even after thinking for a long time, the answer didn't come easily.

Riki stood as though he was nailed to that spot.

Season 1 Chapter 106: Riki (1)

While they were waiting for the other Demigods, Frey paid close attention to the Apocalypses' Apostles.

He wanted to be able to track them down and kill them if possible. Only if he would be able to leave this place, that is.

Letia, who had the most prominent status, was pushed as far back in his mind as possible.

The same went for the Phoenix.

This left only Jenta, Ananta's Apostle and the red-skinned Demon.

First was the Demon.

He had even boldly revealed his name to them.

"I'm Kaltud."

Kaltud's attitude had broken all the stereotypes of Demons.

He was serious, had good discernment and was able to have proper conversations.

In addition, he had even taken it upon himself to clean up the foul-smelling basement.

But that was it.

Frey was unable to get any other clues about him.

In the first place, there was no one for him to really talk to, so there were no conversations to eavesdrop on.

The Apostles didn't talk to each other.

In addition, he was clearly wary of Frey, so even if he were to have a conversation, he would certainly make sure Frey couldn't hear.

Next was Jenta.

However, he hadn't learned more from him than he had from Kaltud.

He simply sat in his corner, cleaning his dagger or mixing some strange chemicals.

And whenever their eyes met, he would glare at Frey.

'I'm glad I learned his face and real name.'

The only things he knew were Jenta's name and face.

In particular, the scar across his face was a rare characteristic that would certainly make it easier to hunt him down later.

But that was all Frey had.

Personally, Frey wanted to find a way to talk to the Phoenix, but it wasn't easy.

Frey simply spent his time meditating.

Even then, he didn't let down his guard in case any of the Apostles made a sudden movement.

And so, time passed rather boringly.

But a few days later, when Riki opened the door and stepped into the room, he was quite happy.

However, his happy expression didn't last long.

Although Riki was expressionless as usual, Frey couldn't help but feel that something had changed.

“Come on.”

It was clear who he was talking to.

Frey immediately got up and followed him

The other Apostles were a bit dissatisfied, but they didn't dare say anything against the Demigod's actions.

When Frey got up to follow him, Riki continued heading down.

'Lower?'

Was there another room below this one?

As if in response to Frey's question, a dead end appeared before them.

Riki raised his hand lightly and cut the wall.

Shik.

The wall split apart, and a large space was revealed.

Frey's expression became a bit strange.

He hadn't known there was this hidden space here.

He would have learned of its existence if he had searched more thoroughly, but he hadn't found it necessary.

Behind this wall was a large amount of gold and silver.

This was all the wealth that Marquis Dalaman had obtained with his blood, sweat and tears.

Of course, it couldn't gain Frey and Riki's attention.

Riki only stopped after he reached the deepest part of the room

"Do you know what Lord's power is?"

"No."

"It's space."

“ ... ”

“He has control over space.”

This was the first time Frey was hearing about this.

But when he heard it, many pieces fell into place.

Even the Absolute Field, which only 9 star Wizards could unleash, had no effect when used against Lord.

He had also been able to separate his soul and trap it in the Abyss.

If Lord truly had the power to control space, then it would explain the power he had displayed.

“Do you understand what I’m trying to say?”

“No.”

“I’m saying even if you become a 9 star Wizard, you would still be far from being able to defeat Lord.’

Frey wanted to refute Riki’s words, but he couldn’t.

He knew that Riki was telling the truth.

The thought that he couldn't defeat Lord simply by reaching 9 stars remained in his mind since his return.

And at that moment, Riki was just confirming his worst fear.

"That's why I'm targeting the Apostles."

"Right. But you've seen it, too, haven't you? Illuminium. With that metal, the Demigods would be able to exercise their power without being punished. This means they no longer need to rely on the Apostles."

(TL: The author used 'illuninium' the first time and I thought it was a typo as 'L' and '□' are beside each other...but the same thing was done here. Should I change the name?)

That was true.

When Leyrin first explained about the metal, Frey's heart felt heavy.

The short duration wasn't a large hindrance either.

It was obvious to him that if they exerted their full force, it would only take the Demigods a few minutes to completely destroy a city.

"This doesn't mean they will just get rid of the Apostles right away. Because it's not possible to create Illuminium indefinitely. However, it's an undeniable fact that the value of the Apostles has fallen."

“So? You want to give up?”

“...”

Riki fell silent.

Frey had no idea what he was thinking at that moment.

Ssrrng.

Then, Riki drew his sword.

Frey started to gather his mana, but Riki’s sword was faster.

Shuk.

“Kuh... ugh...”

Another being appeared in the dark room with them.

“...!”

When Frey saw the ugly, wrinkled face, he couldn't help but doubt his eyes for a moment.

Ananta, one of the five Apocalypses, had a large wound across his chest.

"Ri... ki..."

Ananta burst out angrily.

Riki spat out coldly.

"Did you enjoy eavesdropping like a rat?"

"As I expected... you are the one... Hydra..."

"Right. I killed Hydra."

Chuk.

Riki's sword moved once again, and Ananta's body was cleanly cut in half.

Frey looked at Riki in shock.

“You... what are you...”

It was the same sudden way in which he killed Hydra, but the location, situation and opponent were all incomparable to last time.

This was the castle where Lord and the other Apocalypses, who were already suspicious of Riki, were staying.

Besides, this was Ananta, the Poison Apocalypse, not some small-fry Demigod.

Riki pointed at Ananta’s body.

“This is just a clone he sent to watch me. His real body will notice this before long, so you have to hurry.”

After saying this, Riki closed his eyes.

Then, he drew his sword and took a deep breath.

“Sss...”

Krrr.

Tremendously powerful divine power began emitting from Riki's body, causing Frey, who was standing in front of him, to shudder and feel small.

'This... the same as Lord...!'

It wasn't just the vault.

The castle. No.

The entire mountain began shaking violently.

Chuk.

Frey didn't see Riki swing his sword. He only saw him slowly return it to its sheath.

Riki looked extremely exhausted, and sweat slowly dripped down his face.

However, there was a look of satisfaction on his face.

"...as I expected. It wasn't easy to cut Lord's barrier."

The void in front of him had been cut open.

“Go in there and wait.”

“And you?”

“I’ll be there soon.”

“...”

“What? Don’t you believe me?”

It was true that he still hadn’t fully come to trust Riki, but Frey became certain at that moment.

“I don’t think you’ll make it.”

“Haha...”

When he heard Frey’s blunt words, Riki let out a rare laugh.

Rare?

No, Frey was certain that he had never heard Riki laugh before.

Riki gestured with a smile.

“It’s fine, so go ahead.”

Frey nodded and dived into the crack in space.

Immediately afterwards, the crack sealed up once again.

Riki took a deep breath, then stood there, as if waiting for someone.

Then, four figures entered the vault.

The Apocalypses.

[Have you finally decided to reveal your true colors?]

“Kukuku...”

Nozdog and Ananta both looked like they’d expected this to happen.

On the other hand, Leyrin and Agni looked like they were having trouble coming to terms with it.

“I really didn’t expect you to be the traitor.”

“Riki, what were you thinking?”

What was he thinking?

They wouldn’t understand even if he told them.

If it was possible to convince them through conversation, then he would have done that far sooner.

But it was impossible.

They were Demigods. Their utmost confidence in themselves and their strength were things that had formed over a countless number of years and could not be easily changed.

[You even cut Lord’s Barrier to let your Apostle escape... and you’re standing in our way to give them more time.]

“That’s right.”

[For a mortal... Ha. You really are crazy. Is this the change you were talking about, Riki?]

Riki didn't respond.

In fact, saving Frey was only a secondary objective.

Lord's deal for him to kill his own Apostle and go into hibernation for 100 years. Riki couldn't accept it.

As Lord had said, when he woke up from hibernation, he would no longer have anything to worry about.

Now that they had discovered Illuminium, 100 years was more than enough time for the Demigods to take complete control of the continent.

For Riki, living such a life was no better than dying.

Riki looked around before saying.

"Where is Lord?"

[Hmph... do you want to beg Lord? You want him to let you off?]

Nozdog snorted.

[That's too bad. Lord didn't come here. He didn't even tell us to spare you. It's a shame for us to kill our kind with our own hands, but you've gone too far.]

"You're mistaken."

[What?]

"I'll tell you something interesting. The Circle was the one to put us in the same category. Calling us Apocalypses."

"Kukuku. It was a pretty accurate analysis by them. I don't know how they managed to measure our strength."

Ananta let out a low laugh.

However, Riki shook his head.

"I don't know why Lord didn't come. However, that has greatly increased my chances of getting out of here."

Leyrin couldn't help but ask a question when she heard his ridiculous words.

"Riki, you... are you saying you can take on the four of us on your own?"

“...I know your strength, Riki. You might be stronger than us, but the difference can’t be that large.”

Riki shook his head at Agni’s words.

“It’ll be different from that time. For one reason.”

Riki drew his sword while looking at the other Demigods.

“You and I, we’re no longer on the same level.”

* * *

The place that Frey was sent to was a dark, empty cave.

No, it wasn’t empty.

He spotted a lone grave on the far end of the cave.

Frey walked towards it as though he was possessed.

A simple sword was stuck in the grave.

“This sword...”

Diukid.

Sword King Lucid’s sword.

Only

Then this grave...

[There you are.]

Then he heard a voice.

Frey shivered and turned around.

[Is it you? The foreign entity that caused my oldest sibling to be confused?]

Lord.

He stood at the entrance to the cave, and his words were filled with anger.

Season 1 Chapter 107: Riki (2)

'Not on the same level?'

Nozdog subconsciously shuddered when he heard those words.

He had no choice but to shut his mouth.

Riki drew his sword.

"..."

Then, something strange happened.

Fear gripped Nozdog's very soul as he gazed at this simple, unadorned sword.

He was astonished by this fact.

'Am I afraid? Me?'

It was impossible.

Because of his control of the power of death, fear was something he was very familiar with, more than any other Demigod.

Although he didn't actually have any memories of feeling it, he knew better than anyone how to control and induce fear.

Lord was the only one who could make him feel that way.

Or so he'd believed.

Until Riki drew his sword, that is.

Riki drew his sword in a slow, smooth motion.

Nozdog didn't move.

No, he couldn't move.

The experience he had gained over the years warned him that moving at that moment would be extremely dangerous.

It would be no different from suicide.

First, he should observe.

They all knew Riki's power.

'Power of the sword.'

From the moment a sword entered his hand, even if it was an old, rusty sword with a blunt edge, it would become a sword that was capable of cutting anything.

That was all they knew about Riki's power.

But was that truly all?

[Not on the same level.]

These words were said very confidently.

“ ... ”

Riki looked down at his sword.

[A sword without conviction is just a piece of metal.]

He could hear the heavy voice of a man in his ear, as clearly as 4,000 years ago.

He wanted to ask himself.

Is there still no conviction in me?

Am I just swinging a piece of metal?

He was curious.

If that man saw his sword now, what would he think?

Everything started from one question.

[Are you really satisfied?]

'I don't know.'

He still didn't know yet.

[Have you ever risked your life while wielding a sword?]

He hadn't.

Because he was too strong.

Riki only knew one being who was stronger than him, and he never had a reason to fight him.

But... if he were to face four opponents at the same time, he would have to stake his life.

[When that time comes, maybe you'll feel something.]

"Right."

Riki mumbled softly and swung his sword.

His sword seemed to disappear, becoming a flash of white light.

The one standing nearest to Riki was Agni, but Riki wasn't aiming at him.

Agni's body was made of inextinguishable flames.

In terms of regeneration, he was the best among all the Demigods.

He could still cut him with his sword and even deal a severe blow. But the damage would be insignificant compared to the others.

Because of this, Riki chose to target Nozdog instead.

[...!]

He couldn't avoid it.

Nozdog knew this.

As he had the power of death, Nozdog's defensive techniques were mediocre at best, and he knew that he would be unable to block Riki's attack with just that.

'In that case...'

Kooo.

The power of death erupted from his right hand.

It would be a terrible joke for someone who knew they had weak defense to just watch on and wait for death to take them away.

The gold and silver in the room turned purple and melted quickly.

Clang!

The power of death was released as energy.

This caused its speed to match that of Riki's sword.

'Can you destroy it, Riki...?!'

Nozdog asked this question inwardly.

Riki's answer was yes.

Crack.

[Kuaak!]

Nozdog's right shoulder was completely destroyed as he released a scream at the tremendous pain he hadn't felt in centuries.

[How... did he stop my death energy?]

Just before reaching him, his death energy had disappeared without a trace.

Riki revealed a dagger in his left hand.

Nozdog hadn't realised it because it was in his blind spot.

[E-, even... such a small blade could block my power...]

"The size doesn't matter. It just needs to be in the shape of a sword."

[I can't accept...]

Fury shined from Nozdog's eyes.

He looked around.

This place was small.

Too small.

He couldn't even stretch properly.

So what would he do?

It was obvious.

He would just have to make it bigger.

Kugugu.

Nozdog's body began to grow.

Leyrin spoke hurriedly.

"Nozdog! If you release your power here..."

[Shut up!]

"What did you say?"

Nozdog's words caused Leyrin's expression to stiffen.

This was because the Demigods rarely ever used such harsh terms toward each other.

This was proof that Nozdog was no longer thinking clearly.

“Tch...”

Leyrin decided to let it go for now.

Then, she turned to the relatively calm Agni and said.

“I’ll protect the Apostles. Agni, you and Ananta help Nozdog.”

“...Help”

Agni made an uncomfortable expression.

What were they?

They were Demigods.

Beings who had overpowered the dragons and were praised as the strongest.

They were unmatched on the continent.

As such, they were all incredibly proud.

Of course, he had never fought against his own kind.

However, he didn't have a choice at this moment.

"...understood."

After receiving Agni's nod, Leyrin disappeared from her spot.

Riki saw this, understanding that she had gone to move the Apostles to a safe place.

He continued to pressure Nozdog with his swordsmanship.

'Come to think of it.'

He hadn't even used his divine form.

There was a high chance that he would use it in this fight.

'...This is a difficult situation.'

Agni analysed the situation calmly.

He was the master of flames, but that didn't mean he had a fiery personality.

Instead, he was the second most logical among all the Apocalypses, after Riki.

That was why he was able to quickly grasp their current situation and the problems they faced.

The most unexpected thing for him was the fact that Riki really was much stronger than the other Apocalypses.

When it came to divine power, he was certain that Riki was the strongest one after Lord.

However, he couldn't say if he was strong enough to suppress the four Demigods gathered here.

Agni, Leyrin, Nozdog, Ananta.

These beings were among the strongest Demigods in existence.

Nevertheless, there was no sign that they could conclude this situation easily.

Nozdog spread his death energy, covering Ananta and himself.

Even if Leyrin wasn't there, they should've been able to suppress Riki and force him to kneel down.

[Kuk!]

Nozdog's left arm was injured next.

Riki used his sword to completely dominate the fight even when the blade was only the size of a fingernail compared to Nozdog's huge body.

'This isn't good.'

Nozdog's death energy might have had the ability to cause death itself to his opponent, but he was similarly able to give the dead life.

The undead that he raised were dozens of times stronger than normal undead.

This was natural since even the undead summoned by Oydin, who was simply used as bait, were extremely strong.

Yet, Nozdog still hadn't summoned any undead.

The reason was simple.

It was meaningless.

Even if he summoned hundreds or even thousands of small fries, they would be unable to stall Riki, even for a moment.

‘No. They’re not even small fry.’”

Even the weakest among Nozdog’s undead could massacre groups of A class monsters.

However, even these undead would not be able to withstand even a single slash from Riki’s sword.

‘But why can Riki show such strength in that form?’

For Demigods, it was common for them to exert more power the larger they became.

However, Riki was still maintaining his human form.

‘...no way.’

Was this his strongest state?

If so, then there was a chance for them to win this fight.

Crackle.

A ball of flame flew from Agni's hand.

It looked like a normal fireball at first glance, but the heat it stored was terrifying.

Riki glanced at him before pausing his attack for a moment to swing his sword at Agni's flames.

"I knew it."

"What do you know, Agni?"

Ananta, who was standing beside him, asked.

Agni narrowed his eyes as he looked at Riki.

"Isn't it weird? Riki is able to overpower us even in his human form. If he were to enter his divine form, this fight would definitely be much easier, so why doesn't he do it?"

“Hmm... is it because he’s not in a hurry?”

“No. Lord will be back soon, so Riki has to end this fight before that. He doesn’t have the time to relax.”

“Then...”

Agni’s gaze was locked onto Riki.

His serious expression, skillful swordsmanship and his body filled with divine power comparable to a divine form.

“That is Riki’s strongest state.”

“What?”

“You’d understand if you remembered that he has the power of the sword. For Riki, entering his divine form wouldn’t mean becoming strong. Instead, it would be a hindrance.”

Ananta nodded.

When they entered their divine form, they would become larger.

For the Apocalypses, while their divine forms weren't as large as Agni's, who had the largest, they were still much larger than ordinary Demigods.

And for Riki, who used swords, that was a disadvantage. (TL: they don't really explain it, but I'm assuming this has something to do with him having to use swords, and there not being any swords of that size/the tedium of having to carry around a sword so large)

"Maybe for the past few thousands of years, Riki trained himself to be able to unleash his full strength in that form."

"Kukuku... right. But that still doesn't mean we have any clear countermeasures. As you said, he can still use his full power in that state."

"There's one. If he stays in that state, then his durability should not surpass that of an ordinary mortal's by much."

Of course, Nozdog also knew this.

Nevertheless, Riki was moving too quickly, and he was unable to do any damage.

Agni was also not confident he could keep up with his speed, either.

But he had a solution.

Roar!

A pillar of fire rose up from Agni's body and shot into the sky, causing Ananta to have to back away to not get burnt.

In his divine form, Agni looked down at Ananta and said.

[You should enter your divine form as well.]

"Why?"

[Because I'm planning on raising the temperature of this place.]

The heat rapidly rose, and Ananta's usual smile disappeared from his face.

"To what extent?"

[Beyond the tolerance of the human body.]

* * *

'He's angry.'

Frey was certain.

Lord was practically exuding anger. Far more than 4,000 years ago when he had locked him in the Abyss.

This showed just how much he cared for Riki.

It was also evidence that Riki's betrayal was more painful to him than any Demigod's death.

[I won't kill you easily. That wouldn't assuage my anger at all. You did something you shouldn't have done. I'll make you pay for that.] (TL: Lock him in the Abyss!)

Kung.

He felt the space around him get sealed.

Frey sighed.

He couldn't beat Lord even if he awakened his full power at that moment.

He wouldn't even be able to put up a fight.

Only

Just as Frey was about to gather his mana.

“Wait.”

A passage appeared in the frozen space, and someone stepped out of it.

It was a woman he’d never seen before.

The woman had a very sensual body and bright, purple hair, but Frey couldn’t help but feel like she reminded him of someone.

Lord turned to her.

[Iris, what are you doing here?] (YH: oh it gets better)

Season 1 Chapter 108: Riki (3)

Iris.

The moment he heard this name, Frey was glad he was wearing a mask.

Her appearance had changed a lot.

Iris always had a neat appearance with black hair and black eyes.

Her full lips had always been curved into a sensual smile, and he still remembered the shy smiles she sometimes gave him.

But all of that had changed.

The purple hair, revealing clothes and the wicked aura.

Still, he could tell.

The woman in front of him was definitely Iris Phisfounder.

One of his closest friends with whom he fought against the Demigods 4,000 years ago.

He didn't know why she suddenly appeared here, and he also didn't know her relationship with Lord.

This wasn't like the old days.

Back then, Frey believed he knew Iris well enough to guess what she was thinking.

But now, he had no idea what Iris was thinking or what her purpose was.

One cruel fact coldly awakened his disillusioned mind just as he started questioning what had happened.

Iris was the one who killed Schweiser.

'Why...'

Frey clenched his fist tightly.

'Why did you kill Schweiser, Iris?'

If it weren't for that, he would have been happier than anyone to see her.

He would have laughed heartily upon learning that she was still alive.

It would have completely washed away the sadness and loneliness he'd felt since his return.

He was sad.

He was very sad.

Iris, who had once been one of his most precious friends, had become someone he could never forgive.

[I find your entering of my space without permission incredibly unpleasant.]

“Lord, don’t kill that man.”

Frey turned to Iris with a shocked expression.

He never would have expected her to defend him.

As if she didn’t notice his gaze, Iris continued looking at Lord.

[...]

Lord didn’t respond.

Instead, he turned his head towards Iris and slowly lifted his finger.

‘It’s dangerous.’

It was just a simple gesture of raising one’s finger, but when Lord was the one doing it, this gesture rose to a different level.

At that moment, Frey wondered if he should warn Iris.

Then Iris spoke.

“This is my request.”

[...what?]

Lord asked in a confused voice.

‘Eyes’ filled with confusion appeared on Lord’s face.

[What did you just say?]

“I said please, Lord. Let him go. This is my request.”

Lord was silent for a while, and it seemed he was still wondering if he had heard her words correctly or not.

[...that’s ridiculous. Are you really going to use that opportunity here?]

“Are you not going to do it for me?”

[No.]

Lord lowered his finger before speaking in a blunt tone.

[That promise, I'll keep it.]

Then he continued in a calm tone.

[That's it, Iris. You can no longer ask me for anything.]

“Yes.”

[Ha. I don't understand. You've been patient for so long... no. I don't care. He will eventually die by my hands anyway.]

Lord spoke of his death as though it was set in stone, then he disappeared in the same manner that he appeared.

Frey and Iris were the only ones remaining in the cave.

No words were said for a while.

There were tens of thousands of thoughts floating through his mind, but none of them came out of his mouth.

Frey still didn't trust her.

He couldn't tell what she was thinking.

But... she had just saved his life.

However, this only made him more confused,

What exactly was Iris' goal?

"The mask."

Iris finally spoke.

"Can you take off the mask?"

It was a very sad voice.

It was desperate and fragile as though it might break at any moment.

Frey almost nodded subconsciously.

“No.”

But he didn't.

Instead, he shook his head and spoke in a blunt tone.

It was possible that Iris was only acting like this to make him feel that way.

He was relieved when his voice didn't falter like he thought it would.

“...why?”

“Because I don't trust you.”

“...”

At that moment, Iris looked like her world had ended. She slowly lowered her head to the ground.

'...don't make that face.'

It would be a lie to say that Frey's will wasn't shaken after seeing her expression.

Even now, he couldn't fully believe that she had killed Schweiser.

However, Hruhiral had shown him the memory of the earth directly.

With that undeniable evidence, there was nothing Frey could say to deny that.

Iris looked up again.

The weak expression had disappeared, replaced with the blank expression she had when she'd first arrived.

"...pardon me. I'll take my leave now."

The void split in front of Iris.

It was the same power as Lord.

As Riki had called it, the power of space... that meant.

Iris was Lord's Apostle.

Frey asked her before she stepped into the crack in space.

"Why did you save me?"

Iris responded without looking back.

"Because I wanted to."

* * *

'It's hot.'

In the scorching heat that was beginning to burn the air, Riki continued wielding his sword, unable to even wipe his sweat.

However, it was clear to anyone that his sharpness was beginning to dull.

The long battle was beginning to wear on his concentration.

Besides, there were too many things that he had to pay attention to.

Agni's fiery hell, Ananta, Nozdog, and even Leyrins' return.

Their onslaught, which would not tolerate any carelessness, gradually wore away at his concentration.

'As time goes on, my situation will become more disadvantageous.'

They had noticed his weaknesses.

This was why they had settled for guerilla warfare within the field of fire rather than a direct confrontation.

In fact, their plan was perfect.

'...I suppose it's time to show my cards.'

As he had this thought, Riki held his sword upright.

Then, he looked at Nozdog and took a deep breath.

"Ssss..."

What he intended to use now was not his own power.

Instead, it was the swordsmanship that had been created by the only human he had ever considered a true opponent.

Riki had stolen this swordsmanship and polished it over the years.

Dreadment.

Lucid's swordsmanship, whose name and movements had been changed drastically since the formation of the Luanoble Kingdom, was about to be wielded in Riki's hands.

'With my current strength...'

There weren't many moves in Dreadment.

Additionally, it was a very risky technique.

If one made a wrong move, they might be the one to die instead of their opponent.

But that didn't matter.

Riki felt no anxiety.

Instead, he felt a pleasant tension begin to build within his body.

Badump.

His heart began pounding violently.

He forgot everything.

Even breathing, which had become painful at that point.

'Is this it?'

Was this the battle that Lucid told him about? Where he had to risk his life?

A smile formed on Riki's lips.

He stretched his sword towards the sky.

Sky Break.

“...!”

Leyrin looked at the sword that Riki was extending with wide eyes.

For a moment, even the flames surrounding Riki seemed to freeze in place.

Ananta, who had been waiting for Riki to reveal an opening, suddenly stiffened.

Agni and Nozdog did the same.

They all looked up to the sky.

And literally watched as the sky began to split.

Crack.

A sword beam cut through the sky soundlessly.

“That is all for Dreadment.”

From now on, this was the power of the Demigod Riki.

Rain began pouring down from the cut in the sky.

Nozdogs face became stoney.

It was a rain of swords.

Heavy rain made from a sword strike so powerful it threatened all of their lives!

[Ri-ki-!]

Nozdog raised his hand to the sky as he shouted out his name.

Crack! Crack!

However, Nozdog's bones, which boasted strength similar to mithril, were being cut apart as easily as worn stones.

Nozdog was struck by the horrific pain that coursed through his arm.

The same happened to the other Demigods.

Even Agni, who was known for his superb resistance to physical attacks, could not escape the threat of the sword rain.

The worst of them all was Ananta.

Even Leyrin was able to make use of wind pressure to deflect some of the swords.

‘Now.’

Riki realised that this was his best opportunity.

His head was dizzy because he used Sky Break, and blood dripped from his nose.

That wasn’t just a temporary symptom.

The longer he delayed, the more dizzy he would become.

So he forced his body to move.

Riki kicked off from the ground.

His body soared into the air, and he appeared before Nozdog in an instant.

[...! You!]

Just as Nozdog's flaming eyes turned to Riki.

Shuk.

Riki's blade slashed horizontally, and Nozdog was beheaded cleanly.

[Nozdog!]

Agni cried out urgently.

Naturally, Riki targeted him next.

He moved through the air and appeared beside Agni instantaneously.

'Agni.'

The Demigod with a body of flame.

He could hurt him with his sword, but it wouldn't have much of an effect.

He couldn't just deal a single fatal blow like with Nozdog.

Therefore, it became a game of speed.

Papapat.

In less than the time it took to take a breath, Riki swung his sword hundreds of times.

[Ke...huk!]

Agni's entire body shattered.

At the same time, Ananta appeared behind Riki.

"Puh!"

He spat, and his purple saliva flew towards Riki at a tremendous speed.

Riki didn't look back.

He used the dagger in his left hand to block the saliva before immediately throwing it into Ananta's heart.

"Kuk...!"

Ananta's heart would corrode faster than the dagger.

Next was Leyrin.

Riki lifted his sword and charged toward her.

[Stop.]

Riki's body froze in the air.

His expression hardened.

[Stop it, Riki.]

Lord spoke in a cold voice.

Riki turned his eyes to look at Lord, who'd just appeared.

He looked calm.

Riki couldn't remember the last time he'd looked so cold.

[You made a foolish choice in the end.]

Only

"...Lord."

[Don't call me that, you traitor who turned his back on the Demigods.]

As he said this, Lord looked around.

Nozdog was missing a head, Agni was in thousands of pieces and Ananta had a dagger stuck in his chest.

[I've decided to not consider you a Demigod anymore. You've caused our kind so much pain. It's unforgivable.]

Lord came closer to Riki and spoke in his ear.

[It was your choice that led to this. I'm sorry, Riki.]

Season 1 Chapter 109: Riki (4)

“...Lo-, Lord.”

Leyrin stuttered.

She was looking at the scene in front of her with a trembling face.

There were not many things that could agitate a Demigod who had lived for thousands of years.

This was because the experience that they accumulated over the years allowed them to handle almost any situation.

But at that moment, Leyrin couldn't help it.

This was because Riki, the Demigod who Lord cared for most, was now laying on the floor in an incredibly miserable state.

His right arm was severely burned, his left arm was inflicted with deadly poison, his right leg was filled with death energy and his left leg had been torn apart by fierce winds.

It was clear who thought of this method of punishment.

Lord lowered his finger.

[Can you feel the pain of your kind, Riki?]

Riki, like a doll, showed absolutely no reaction to Lord's torture.

Being a Demigod didn't mean that they didn't feel pain, nor did it mean it was quickly alleviated.

Instead, Demigods were actually more susceptible to pain because it was something they rarely felt.

Nevertheless, Riki didn't even frown.

"Kill me."

Instead, he spoke in a calm voice.

Lord looked at him for a moment before turning around without a word.

[...I'm leaving. Leyrin, take care of Ananta, Agni, and Nozdog.]

"Take care?"

[They suffered fatal injuries and need to be treated urgently. I'm going to travel around the continent for the time being and prepare the necessary items. So take care of them until I return.]

“Wa-, wait. What about Riki?”

[...]

Lord glanced at Riki before walking away without another word.

Leyrin watched him leave with a dazed expression.

“What in the world am I supposed to do...?”

Her gaze then landed on Riki.

He had been fatally injured.

Not even a Demigod would be able to survive with such injuries.

Even if she left him as he was, she was certain he would die.

After all, there was no one who knew the anatomy of a Demigod better than her.

Nothing could save him now. Riki's death was a foregone conclusion.

Leyrin raised her hand, and a violent gale wrapped around it.

In his current weakened state, even this much was enough to easily finish Riki off. His body would be shredded.

But Leyrin couldn't do it.

Huk.

The gale disappeared.

"...you should regret until the moment you die, Riki. I don't know how you could be so stupid."

"..."

"The only reason I won't kill you now is because I don't want to see the miserable end of someone I once considered a brother."

Riki didn't respond.

Leyrin bit her lip.

“Go somewhere else. Somewhere my eyes wouldn’t reach. And die there.”

With those words, Leyrin disappeared.

Following Lord’s instructions, she had probably gone to help the ones Riki had injured.

Riki slowly got to his feet.

Then he slowly staggered away, his shattered sword held tightly in his hand.

* * *

Frey was alone in the cave once again, a sudden sense of helplessness striking him clearly.

‘...if it wasn’t for Iris’ help, I would’ve died here.’

The fact that his opponent had been the strongest among the Demigods wasn’t a good enough excuse.

After all, he came back in the first place to kill that very being.

But as he remembered his pathetic state not so long ago...

Frey bit his lip so hard it bled.

'...dammit.'

He was weak.

Too weak.

If anyone else heard that, they would have given him a scornful look.

He had reached 8 stars, signed a contract with Asura, the ruler of the Slaughter Hell, and now, he could even control divine power, yet he called himself weak.

However, in a way, this was inevitable.

Because his opponents were Demigods. Transcendental beings that mortals could not do anything against.

But could he really convince himself with such an excuse?

Wasn't it his determination to fight them that helped him return in the first place?

'...I'm sorry for showing you such a shameful sight, Lucid.'

He had displayed such an unsightly scene in front of his friend's grave.

He glanced at the sword that had been stuck into the grave.

Even though 4,000 years had passed, Diukid's edge had not dulled at all.

"...tell me, Lucid. What exactly did you do to Riki?"

What caused that man to betray his kind?

The answer came from behind him.

"...he gave me... an admonition."

"...!"

Frey turned around.

However, he was immediately lost for words.

Riki was standing there in a miserable state.

Frey had never seen someone who could still move after sustaining such injuries.

There were places that were burned, places that were purple from poison, places that seemed to have been sliced apart by some kind of blade, and places where the skin had completely discoloured and died.

He was so badly injured that it was incredible that he was even able to stand.

“Your injuries...”

“It’s fine.”

As he said that, Riki began walking forward with slow footsteps.

Discoloured blood dripped down with every step.

Thump.

He collapsed after a few steps.

However, even when he collapsed heavily onto the ground, a pained expression didn't appear on his face.

In fact, it was almost as if his face and body belonged to two separate entities.

He only frowned slightly as he said.

"...I'm sorry, but can you give me a hand?"

Frey never thought there would be a day when he'd hear such a request from a Demigod.

After a brief silence, Frey approached Riki and supported him.

Riki seemed to want to lean against Lucid's tombstone, so Frey did just that.

Riki took a deep breath before saying.

"...it seems Lord was here."

“Right.”

“It’s my fault. Huhu. I thought I had an opportunity, but it turns out he came here. He wasn’t supposed to know about this place.”

Riki laughed self-deprecatingly before coughing up a mouthful of blood.

He didn’t even bother wiping the blood from his chin as he asked.

“How did you survive?”

“...”

“...well. That’s not very important right now.”

Then, Frey’s expression stiffened.

Riki’s left arm, which had been filled with deadly poison, fell to the floor.

Riki only glanced at his left arm before saying.

“I bought you a year.”

“...a year?”

“Right. Ananta, Agni and Nozdog have been severely injured. Especially Nozdog... that one is fatal. It’ll take at least a year for them to heal. Until then, they won’t be able to make any moves.”

“What about Lord?”

“He will help them together with Leyrin. If he leaves them as they are, they might die.”

“...are you saying you beat the other four on your own?”

Riki didn’t deny it.

He looked exhausted.

It was a very strange sight. His body was filled with horrible wounds, yet Riki didn’t even groan once.

‘He’s beyond saving.’

Frey, who had killed several Demigods, could immediately tell that Riki had received many fatal injuries.

Riki, the Sword Apocalypse, was dying.

Under normal circumstances, this was something that he would've welcomed with open arms.

But Frey couldn't be happy at this moment.

Instead, his heart felt heavy.

"...why did you betray the Demigods?"

He asked the question he'd held inside from the first day they met.

Riki turned his head to look at Frey.

Looking closely, his left eye was already half closed.

"...4,000 years ago... I fought a man."

Frey knew who that man was.

"Sword King Lucid."

“Right. He was an amazing man. His physical abilities were great, but his willpower was absolutely outstanding. He had a strong, unshakeable conviction that couldn’t be swayed by anything.”

Riki calmly recalled his battle with Lucid.

The memories flowed through his mind as if it had been just yesterday.

Among them, it was Lucid’s words that had left a particularly strong impression on him.

It wouldn’t have been an exaggeration to say that those words had changed everything about him.

“A sword without conviction is just a piece of metal.”

“...!”

Frey trembled slightly.

That was because, at that moment, he saw Lucid’s face overlap with Riki’s as he recited those words.

“At first, I thought it was just nonsense. Conviction is conviction, and violence is violence. I always believed the strong didn’t need a purpose. But... the more I learned his swordsmanship, the more I understood his thoughts.”

It was a mysterious experience that could never be repeated.

At that time, Riki hadn't gone all out. This was because he wanted to steal Lucid's sword techniques.

For him to completely control the power of the sword, there was a need for him to witness and master many different types of swordsmanship.

And Lucid's Dreadment was the most perfect swordsmanship he'd ever encountered.

But it wasn't just that.

Lucid's will was firm. It never wavered.

It seemed he would be able to stand firm even if his sword was destroyed and his heart was pierced.

At that moment, Riki had understood.

That it was Lucid's faith in his sword.

But when he looked down at his sword, he felt nothing.

“What I held in my hand was just a piece of metal. I realised then just how ridiculous I was. When it came to pure sword ability, without the power of sword that I was born with... I couldn't even scratch at Lucid's toes.”

He wanted to learn more.

He felt that this mysterious hunger that filled him would be sated if he kept fighting against this man.

However, his wish didn't come true.

“Lord killed Lucid.”

It had happened in an instant.

Lord had appeared from a space crack and immediately killed Lucid.

His match had been interrupted.

Riki had never felt so angry.

“I attacked Lord at that time, but he tried to gently soothe me. He even apologized. He said ‘that was your prey, I'm sorry.’”

Prey?

What did he mean by prey?

It wasn't like that.

Lucid wasn't his prey.

Riki had only realised at that time.

What kind of being Lord was.

Riki looked at Frey with only one eye still open.

He had something to tell him.

For himself, for Frey, for every species on the continent and even for the Demigods.

“Listen, Frey. In Lord's world... there are only Demigods.”

If there was a flaw in Lord, who appeared to be an absolute existence, then it was this. For Lord, the Demigods were everything.

That was his only weakness.

But Riki wasn't comfortable talking about it. Because he felt that it was just as much his fault as Lord's.

He had agreed with that ideal. He had believed it was right.

He had thought that the continent was meant to belong to the Demigods.

But it wasn't.

How could that be the case when there were countless beings living on the vast continent?

How could all of it belong to the Demigods whose number hadn't even reached a hundred?

"We... weren't meant to exist in the first place."

Fragments of energy that had broken off from the laws of the world who had gained sentience and could exert its power.

It was something that was never supposed to happen.

Riki had pondered that fact for a long time.

Then what should he do?

If everything continued to progress at the same rate, then it was only a matter of time till the Demigods were truly the only absolute existence on the continent who would rule over it until the end of time.

Their only rival, the Dragons, were almost extinct.

The other transcendental beings from other worlds who were comparable to the Demigods could not exert their full power on the continent and weren't even interested.

Then there was only one option left.

He would have to end it with his own hands.

But Riki had failed.

Psss.

"...! Your leg..."

Riki's toes turned to ash and scattered into the air.

Frey was shocked, but Riki was as calm as ever.

He spoke in his normal, blunt tone.

“...go to the Blake family. They should have some clues about the Illuminium. If the Demigods manage to mass produce it, it'll all be over. You have to stop them somehow.”

“...understood.”

Frey could only nod.

Hesitation bloomed on his face.

He didn't know how to react to Riki dying before him.

Should he console him?

Should he make a promise?

Neither one made sense.

Not only was there nothing he could do, Riki wouldn't want him to do anything, either.

"In the Frozen Lands in the north... there is a Demigod named Elliah..."

"Elliah...?"

"...She's a weirdo who doesn't care about the Demigods or the Circle. Even Lord has given up trying to get her to do anything... if there is any Demigod who would help you... it would be her."

His voice was gradually fading.

"For Snow... tell her I'm sorry... and that she has nothing to worry about. Even if I die, it won't affect her..."

Riki's vision was becoming increasingly blurry.

He knew he was at his limit.

Death for Demigods was different for other beings.

It meant the collapse of their consciousnesses and an end to their eternal lives.

He wasn't afraid of it, but he couldn't help but think it was a bit regrettable

“Lucid... if you saw me now... and if we fought...”

What would he say?

He could only wonder.

It was regrettable that he would never hear the answer, but it wasn't something he could help.

It was then.

“It was great swordsmanship.”

“...!”

Riki looked at Frey, and Frey continued speaking without avoiding his gaze.

“If you had fought right now, that is what Lucid would say.”

“You... who are you...?”

Frey was silent for a moment.

However, he didn't take too long to answer.

"Lukas Trowman."

"...!"

Complex emotions were visible in Riki's eye.

He looked at Frey for a long time before finally closing his eyes.

Only

"I see... you... huhu. I'm relieved..."

"..."

"Thank you, Lukas..."

Then he gave a satisfied smile that stretched across his face.

In time, his entire body became ashes.

The Demigod with the power of the sword, the Sword Apocalypse, Riki.

Had died.

Season 1 Chapter 110: Blake Family (1)

Frey couldn't move from the spot for a while.

As he looked at Riki's ashes, a whirlwind of emotions seemed to run amok within him.

At the same time, he came to realise something.

Frey realised that he had just lost an unparalleled helper who would have had an enormous impact in his fight against the Demigods.

'...if I had trusted Riki a bit more...'

Or if they had moved more carefully.

Such regrets began to fill his head.

However, all these assumptions were meaningless now.

Riki was already dead.

Now, Frey could only think of ways to best make use of the year Riki had earned him at the cost of his life.

'Before that.'

Frey used his mana to dig a hole beside Lucid's grave.

Then, he carefully buried Riki's ashes in it with his own hands without using mana.

At that time, something bumped against Frey's hand.

When he checked to see what it was, Frey found a marble the size of a fist buried under the ashes.

The glittering silvery bead reminded him of Riki's hair.

It must be his Demigod crystal.

Frey wondered what he would do with the crystal. After all, this was a Demigod's crystal, not an Apostle's.

It would only be possible for him to make use of it after it had been processed into an elixir, but it was not something he was capable of doing on his own.

In fact, he was certain that Adelia couldn't either.

Then, Hector's face flashed across his mind.

Wouldn't that Dragon turned man, who was extremely talented in alchemy, be able to process this crystal?

But there was a problem.

'Is it really okay to go to Hector?'

It was possible that his identity would have been exposed.

But Hector didn't know that he was Riki's 'Apostle', besides, he was supposed to collect Anastasia's body from him in the future.

When he remembered Hector's eyes, Frey was sure that he was working on the production of the Golem, even at that moment.

Even if it was risky, it was still worth it to visit Hector.

As he had that thought, Frey put the crystal away.

Chuk.

Frey then stabbed Riki's broken sword, which was little more than a hilt, into his grave.

Frey looked at the two graves that laid beside each other.

Lucid and Riki.

A human and a Demigod.

It was strange for the graves of such opposing beings to be placed beside each other.

Frey shook his head and focused his mind.

There was a lot of work to be done, and he didn't have the time to dwell in sentimentality.

He remembered Riki's words.

"...Blake family."

Otherwise known as the site of Leyrin's experiment.

There should be clues about Illuminium there.

Frey had been planning on visiting the Blake family in time, but now, he felt like he had to make his move sooner rather than later.

Illuminium.

The metal that removed the Demigod's inhibitors.

If they managed to find a way to produce this metal in bulk, the circle, no.

It would be a disaster for all life on the continent.

'I have to stop them.'

He only had a year.

In that time, the four Apocalypses and Lord would be unable to move properly, so it was his best chance.

Of course, it was still risky.

Out of the four Apocalypses, Leyrin was the only one left unhurt.

However, Frey did not intend to miss this opportunity.

The next thing that came to mind was the mysterious Demigod 'Elliah'.

Riki had described her as a weirdo who did not care about the Circle nor the Demigods. He had also added that she was mostly likely the only other Demigod who would cooperate with Frey like he had.

'A Demigod's cooperation is necessary.'

If he wanted to kill Demigods who had been forced into hibernation because he killed their Apostles, then he would need a Demigod's help.

The only problem was that he didn't know how strong the Demigod Elliah was.

He had no idea just what she was capable of. More importantly, he wasn't even certain if she would cooperate with him like Riki had.

Even so, Frey trusted Riki's words.

If it was impossible from the start, then he would not have mentioned it in the first place.

'...of course, it won't be easy.'

Nevertheless, he had to hurry.

Lord could try to kill him at any moment. After all, he held a grudge against him.

The anger he directed at Frey now was many times greater than the anger he had towards Lukas 4,000 years ago.

He felt that Frey was the reason Riki betrayed him.

Frey was certain that Lord knew just how ridiculous that was, but he still wouldn't change his mind.

'Because he needs something to direct his anger at.'

It was the betrayal of Riki, the sibling he cared the most for.

No matter how clear it was, he would never believe that he was the one at fault.

In this way, Frey's existence became the perfect justification.

Besides, Frey knew the identities of all the Apocalypses' Apostles, so that was even more reason to kill him.

Depending on how he used this information, he could put a lot of pressure on the Demigods.

'Phoenix.'

He couldn't help but think about her.

It was still something he had a hard time coming to terms with.

The Phoenix, who he had promised to reunite with, had become Agni's Apostle.

This meant that at least for Agni, he would not be able to deal with him through his Apostle.

Then what could he do to kill Agni, a powerful Demigod otherwise known as an Apocalypse?

...It was a difficult problem.

He didn't know about the other Apostles, but he'd have to at least keep the Phoenix's identity to himself.

Otherwise, the Circle might try to kill her after learning of her identity.

“Good.”

First, he would head to the Blake family.

After thinking this, Frey stood to his feet before he suddenly thought of Iris.

“...why did you save me?”

It was obvious that Iris had saved his life.

If she had not arrived and stopped Lord, he would have been tortured and killed right there.

At first, he'd felt resentful and ashamed for what she'd done, but looking back, more questions popped into his mind.

Did Iris really betray them?

And if not, then why did she kill Schweiser and start a feud between Kasajin and Lucid?

‘Lucas, that stone-headed bastard. He was the only one on the entire continent who didn't realise she was blatantly flirting with him.’

Schweiser's voice drifted in his head once again.

Surely...

No way. Frey shook his head.

Regardless of the circumstances, nothing could change the fact that she was the one who killed Schweiser.

Frey stopped thinking about her and walked out of the cave.

* * *

He came out of the cave and looked around before realising how close he was to Dalaman's castle.

In fact, he could clearly see the smashed castle not far away.

Shuk.

Frey warped to the castle.

After all, he no longer had a reason to hide his mana.

He hadn't used his mana in a month, but it still moved in a smoother manner than his divine power.

At this point, he felt like he could smoothly use a close range warp even if he was half asleep.

“...”

After arriving at the castle, Frey couldn't help but fall silent for a while.

The castle and its surroundings had been completely destroyed. The fact that the terrain itself had been irreversibly changed showed the ferocity of the fight that had happened.

'...by himself, he was able to defeat the other four Apocalypses.'

Frey had not witnessed Riki's full power personally, but he was able to get a rough idea from the traces that had been left on the battlefield.

It was amazing.

No, even such a word was not enough.

Riki was truly incredibly powerful, even among the Demigods.

It was then.

Frey felt something nearby.

He turned around without bothering to hide his presence.

When those who were carefully approaching from a distance saw Frey standing in the air, their expressions hardened.

“Mm...!”

Standing there were people from the Circle.

Among them were many people that Frey were familiar with.

No, most of them were.

Shepard Jun, one of the few Archmages and Tower Masters in the Kastkau Empire. Dugenjar from the Phisfounder Armlets whom he'd had a dispute with in the past. Jerome Werner from the Lucid Swords that he saw not so long ago.

...And Heinz Blake, the second son of the Blake family and his older brother.

There was only one person in the group that he hadn't seen before.

It was a woman with the appearance of a blonde girl with red eyes.

Frey realised that she was Sheryl Roland, Circle Rounder of the Phisfounder Armlets.

The word 'girl' was suitable for her appearance, but she was, in fact, a terrifying vampire who was actually several hundred years old.

Shepard, who was at the front, couldn't help but mutter in a confused voice.

"...I couldn't feel anything."

It wasn't his fault.

Frey's control over his energy was, in itself, outstanding, and it was further enhanced by the mask.

At that moment, even though Frey was clearly standing in front of them, they could barely feel his presence.

'What the hell is going on?'

Shepard stared at Frey with a stiff expression.

They had seen the Demigods' fight unfold from a distance.

At first, they were shocked.

Why had they suddenly started fighting?

However, the answer quickly made itself known.

Internal strife.

They had personally seen the infighting with their own eyes, something that had never happened in the past thousands of years.

They had borne witness to an indescribable fight.

And while they were still shaking from the sheer power the Demigods had displayed, the fight had ended.

Once they confirmed that the Demigods had left, they finally approached the scene of the fight.

Shepard knew that the masked man in front of them was the Sword Apocalypse's Apostle.

...And the Sword Apocalypse had been the one who was fighting against the other Demigods.

Therefore, it was too early to regard this man as an enemy.

"What are you waiting for, Honor Shepard? This man is an Apostle."

Jerome spoke bluntly and drew his sword.

He glanced at those around him and said.

"All of us are executives in our circles. Now that the Demigods are gone, we can subdue him for questioning."

"...it's not that simple, Honor Jerome."

Shepard sighed heavily before looking up at Frey.

"Kain Rixton, right?"

They were aware of his fake identity.

Frey realised that they were the ones who had been monitoring him and Riki in Pillat.

He'd believed that they had managed to lose them, but it seemed they were even able to follow them here.

He nodded his head, answering positively.

"You know we're from the Circle, don't you?"

"I do."

Shepard spoke in a solemn tone.

"...we saw the Sword Apocalypse's fight with the other Apocalypses. We believe that it was infighting. Should we consider you an enemy?"

Frey admired Shepard's social skills and flexibility.

He felt that this man was truly deserving of the title 'Archmage'.

It wouldn't be strange if a fight broke out immediately simply because of his identity as an Apostle.

Shepard, however, calmly analysed the situation and was able to determine that infighting had occurred for some reason, and he sought a way to avoid fighting.

Frey realised then that the outcome of this situation could change greatly depending on his response.

Except for Jerome, he could see that none of the others had any intention of fighting him at that moment.

It was then.

Frey's eyes turned to Heinz.

“...”

Then he unleashed his divine power.

Kooo~

“Mm...!”

“Kuk!”

All of those present could feel it.

Frey calmly observed the circle members who were rapidly distancing themselves from him.

“Hmph!”

Jerome snorted coldly and kicked off from the ground.

His body soon appeared beside Frey. His speed was quite admirable.

But to Frey, who had trained with Riki for the past few months and had gotten used to his movements, Jerome was even slower than a slug.

Besides...

Crackle.

“Kuk...!”

He had no reason to make a move anyway.

The Lightning Barrier.

At Jerome's level, he couldn't hope to break through the barrier.

"That...?"

"Lightning divine power? How?"

Confusion was clear on Shepard's face.

The Apostle who had the power of lightning had already died.

He had been killed by Frey, Camille, Liamson and Mikel.

When an Apostle died, the Demigod would fall into hibernation.

The Circle wasn't able to get all the information, but they were certain that Apostles using the same power wouldn't appear for a while.

'It's not the same...'

Shepard's confusion deepened.

But in the next moment, everyone present was shocked to the core.

Woowoong.

“...!!”

Only

“Wh-, what’s going on?!”

The expressions of Shepard and Dugenjar showed astonishment beyond comparison.

Everyone had suddenly been deprived of their control over mana.

Sheryl and Heinz’s eyebrows furrowed.

Mana Room Projection.

In other words, he had taken control over this space.

“...an 8 star Wizard?”

