

Great Mage 111

Season 1 Chapter 111: Blake Family (2)

“Impossible.”

It was natural for Shepard to be shocked.

Everyone knew that mana and divine power could not coexist.

It could even be called a law of nature that was irreversible.

But the man in front of them was clearly using both.

More importantly, weren't the powers he was using the lightning energy that Lukes had used before and the mana of an 8 star Wizard, which was rare, even in the Circle?

The more he thought about it, the more he felt like a fool.

Just who the hell was this man?

“...”

On the other hand, Heinz's expression became serious for another reason.

Frey was paying attention to him secretly while pretending to look around, so he easily noticed this change.

[I want to talk to you.]

Frey sent Heinz a telepathic message.

Heinz did not say anything, and instead nodded subtly.

After all, the only ones who were able to use divine power and mana together were those with the blood of the Blake family.

Heinz also knew that Frey had obtained the crystal from Lukes.

‘Heinz is likely to have already guessed my identity.’

This was the judgement Frey reached.

There were a few things he wanted to ask Heinz.

Heinz was the only person that Frey had immediate access to who also had a good grasp of the situation within the Blake family.

His help was essential to gain clues about Illuminium.

Frey finished thinking about that as he looked around.

‘It wouldn’t be hard to overpower Dugenjar, Shepard and Jerome.’

This was a remark that most people would doubt if they heard it.

After all, he was talking about two Archmages who had reached 7 stars and a Master class Knight.

Nevertheless, in front of Frey, who had reached 8 stars, taking care of them was no more than child’s play.

Jerome’s ability was nothing he needed to worry about as he couldn’t even pierce the lightning barrier.

He didn’t have a good grasp of the strength of Heinz, the youngest Force Honor of the Strow Necklaces, but Frey knew he wouldn’t fight with his full strength.

For that reason, there was only one person that Frey would need to be wary of.

Sheryl Roland.

Circle Rounder of the Phisfounder Armlets and the Contractor of Lilith.

Because of her nature as a Contractor, she didn't need to use mana, which meant that Frey could not suppress her power, even if he controlled the surrounding space.

Sheryl also knew this, which was why her expression was currently tense.

She realised that her life would be in danger the moment the others were overpowered.

Frey had no intention of killing her, but there was no way for Sheryl to know that.

So in this situation, she would naturally unleash her full strength.

Crackle.

Lightning wriggled around Frey's body.

Now that he thought about it, this was the first time he was using both divine power and mana at the same time.

During his mock battles with Riki, he only ever used his divine power, and after that, he stopped using his mana.

Sik.

Sheryl quickly drew a magic circle, and Frey immediately realised that it was Lilith's summoning circle.

It was fast.

It was already too late for him to stop her.

Upon realising this, Frey changed plans.

Instead, he also drew a summoning circle.

Woowoong.

Two summoning circles turned the ground red at almost the same time as two rulers of the Demon World appeared together.

Dugenjar, who was watching this scene from afar, couldn't help but lower his jaw in shock.

'Is it not enough that he can use magic and divine power at the same time? He can even summon Demons?'

However, when he saw the Demon that the man summoned, his eyes widened to almost an impossible extent.

He couldn't help but cry out.

"Th-, the Ruler of the Slaughter Hell, Asura?!"

This didn't make sense!

It had been a very long time since Asura had been summoned to the continent.

This was because even the Phisfounder Armlets, who had the most knowledge about Demons on the entire continent, still hadn't figured out Asura's summoning circle.

How the hell did that man have it?

Dugenjar could only swallow his question.

Lilith looked around and quickly grasped the situation.

She looked at Sheryl, then at Frey and Asura, before letting out a laugh.

“Huhu. So that man is your Contractor. It’s been a hundred years, hasn’t it, Asura?”

[Who do you think you’re talking to like that? You dirty whore.]

Asura spoke roughly before looking at Frey.

It seemed he was waiting for instructions.

“I’ll leave Lilith to you.”

[Gladly.]

Asura smiled fiercely and turned his eyes back to Lilith.

“Ohohoho. Shall we play again after such a long time?”

Although Lilith laughed as she said that, Sheryl recognised that the situation wasn’t that relaxed.

Among all the Archdukes, Lilith’s combat ability was by far the lowest.

In the first place, Succubi were not a race that were proficient at fighting.

It was fine for her to easily handle three or four top-grade Demons, but against Demons of the same level, it was an entirely different story.

'But... this guy's qualifications as a contractor aren't very high.'

Sheryl could notice something like that with just a glance.

His talent wasn't the worst, but his body was certainly not one that should have allowed him to summon an Archduke.

The differences between their contractors had managed to balance the combat powers of Lilith and Asura.

The two of them began their battle in the distance, further damaging the already destroyed terrain.

Whenever Asura's arms fell, the ground would explode, causing everyone's ears to ring.

Sheryl looked toward Jerome and commanded.

"Honor Jerome, protect the other three."

"...understood."

Jerome bit his lip as he realised that he was nothing more than a hindrance in the present situation.

However, he realised it wasn't the time to wallow in despair because of his own uselessness.

He had to evacuate with the others before the aftermath of the fight spread to them.

He quickly left together with Heinz, Dugenjar and Shepard.

Sheryl then turned to look at Frey once again.

He hadn't made any movements even as Jerome and the others moved to a safe place.

"You seem quite relaxed. Are you certain that you can catch them even if you let them leave now?"

"..."

"What is your goal? What happened here?"

"I'm sorry, but black magic doesn't work against me."

When Frey said those words bluntly, Sheryl felt a slight stinging pain in her face.

This was because she had just tried to secretly use psychic persuasion to induce a conversation.

Of course, it had absolutely no effect.

'His mental power is incredibly strong.'

These were the words that Lilith had said while making an embarrassed expression.

At that time, she hadn't understood how a human could be able to make an Archduke of the Demon World make such an expression, but now, she understood completely.

In terms of mental power, he was truly comparable to a Demigod or a Dragon, who had vanished from the continent.

It was not an exaggeration.

'Well.'

In the first place, if even Lilith had not been able to pierce the man's defenses, there was nothing she could've done.

After that, there was only one option left. Head to head confrontation.

Sheryl's eyes turned golden.

Chak.

Then, large, bat-like wings sprouted from her back.

That wasn't all.

Her shadow began to stretch, thickening as a group of bats suddenly poured out of it.

Frey fired a lightning bolt into the cloud of bats that were frantically flapping their wings.

Crackle.

The swarm of bats instantly turned into ashes, but another group of bats quickly took their place.

'She wants to obscure my vision.'

It wouldn't have taken much time to deal with, but Frey decided to play with her a bit.

Indra's lightning.

To make use of this power, a bit of preparation was required.

Frey looked up at the sky.

Shadows began growing in the sky as dark clouds began rolling in.

Kaboom!

A bolt of lightning brightened the surroundings as it shot from his hand and instantly destroyed the swarm of bats.

This allowed Frey to see what Sheryl was up to.

‘Summoning Demons.’

It was likely to be a top grade Demon as well.

This wasn’t surprising.

After all, as a Contractor, the most familiar and effective method of combat that she knew was to summon Demons.

But when Frey saw her summon another Demon after summoning Lilith, he couldn't help but admire her talent as a Contractor.

Grrr.

The growl of a beast came from his left.

Then, a giant black dog appeared from among the group of bats.

Of course, this dog was almost twice as big as even the largest horse.

“Kung!”

The giant dog then spat a ball of black lava at him.

Crackle.

The grazed past the Lightning Barrier, and slightly to Frey's surprise, it managed to damage it a little.

If he hadn't moved at that time, he might have been injured.

'Is this a Hellhound?'

The lava that the dog spat was quite dangerous.

Since it was able to damage his Lightning Barrier, which was much stronger than Lukes', it was clear that the spit was comparable to a 7 star spell.

Besides, it wasn't just one.

'Three.'

She had summoned quite a few Demons by then.

Frey was slowly beginning to get annoyed by the swarm of bats.

Looking at the sky again, he noticed that it was already covered in dark clouds.

It was no longer hard for Frey to control his divine power.

He raised his right hand and shot a lightning bolt into the sky.

Kaboom!

The dark clouds trembled violently as they became filled with Indra's lightning power.

Seeing this, Sheryl, who was hiding among the bats, stiffened her expression.

'It's dangerous!'

The moment she decided to move.

Flash.

Her vision was filled with white light.

It was a thunderbolt.

Kaboom!

Immediately afterward, a large thunderbolt struck the ground, the sound of an explosion only following it.

Frey realised that the swarm of bats had been vaporised instantly.

This was the maximum amount of divine power that Frey could output at one time.

The power of the lightning was comparable to an 8 star spell.

This was proven by the fact that the top grade Demons that Sheryl had summoned were staggering, their skin badly burned.

Their wounds were fatal, but Frey couldn't help but admire the fact that they were maintaining their presence even if they were dying.

Sheryl was nowhere to be seen.

He determined that she was probably hiding in the shadows.

Frey didn't know a lot about vampires, but he at least knew the power she used.

Ssk.

Sheryl then appeared from the shadows, as he'd expected.

Her body appeared slightly tanned, but it was clear that she had avoided the brunt of the attack.

A look of frustration was on her face.

'He's much stronger than I thought... I can't defeat him.'

Sheryl clicked her tongue resentfully and prepared to use another trick.

"That's enough."

"What?"

"I have no intention of killing you."

At Frey's words, Sheryl made an expression of disbelief.

"Then why did you unleash your divine power?"

When they first met, Shepard had tried to communicate with Frey.

And it was none other than Frey who rejected the conversation and instead unleashed his powers.

"..."

He didn't have an excuse.

To be honest, Frey just wanted to test the powers of the Force Honors and above all, Circle Rounder Sheryl.

“I was curious. I wanted to know how powerful you all were.”

“Why?”

“Because I wanted to see if you were capable of confronting the Demigods.”

“...”

Sheryl’s expression became strange.

“...do you intend to fight against the Demigods?”

“That’s right.”

“...”

“You don’t believe me.”

“...I’m not a fool who would just believe everything I’m told.”

“Well.”

Frey agreed with that.

Then he looked at the wings on Sheryl’s back before muttering.

“I heard that there is no race as sensitive to ‘power’ as vampires.”

Sheryl stared at Frey without responding.

She had no idea where he was going with those words.

“As long as you submit to someone, you have no choice but to obey their orders. And they don’t need to be from the same race as you.”

“What are you trying to say?”

He had nothing more to say.

He had just said that to see what Sheryl’s reaction would be.

And it seemed that Frey's knowledge wasn't wrong.

Vampires could be made to yield. The process didn't matter.

You just had to make them submit somehow.

They just had to accept that the being before them was superior to them.

Sheryl Roland, the number two in her circle.

If he could make her submit, then everything would be much simpler.

After thinking this, Frey gathered his mana.

* * *

Shuk.

Lord's body appeared from a crack in space.

The Frozen Lands.

It was a place where it was hard to see anything because of the ever present blizzards.

Even Ice Trolls, which were known for their excellent thermal insulation, would not be able to last more than 10 minutes in this unforgiving place, but this was no problem for Lord.

He walked forward at a calm pace, as if his surroundings were at room temperature.

And not long after, he stopped walking.

Because he found a woman standing in the corner of his eye.

Her white hair fluttered beautifully in the blizzard.

Lord called her name.

[Elliah.]

“...Lord?”

The woman turned her head to look at him.

Then she spoke with an eerie glint in her eyes.

“I thought I talked to you about trespassing in my territory.”

[I came here to tell you something.]

“I don’t want to know. Get out of here.”

[No. You need to know.]

“You still haven’t broken that habit of doing whatever you want. Right. It wouldn’t be bad to loosen my bones after so long. Especially if my opponent is you.”

A deadly chill began arising from her body.

Lord spoke briefly.

[Riki is dead.]

“...what?”

[To be precise, I killed him.]

“What the hell... Riki... you...? Why?”

[Because he betrayed us. He killed several of our kind, so I punished him.]

Elliah stared at Lord with her mouth wide open, unable to process what she was hearing.

[I want you to take his place, Elliah. If it's you-]

Only

“Get... out.”

Lord looked at Elliah's face as she said those words.

Her expression was unreadable.

[I'll come back another time. I'll expect another answer when I return.]

“...”

With those words, Lord disappeared in a space crack.

Elliah stood for a long time in that same position, seemingly frozen in place.

Season 1 Chapter 112: Blake Family (3)

In order to completely subdue the vampire Sheryl, he would first have to show her his full strength.

It was clear that if he used tricks or shortcuts to beat her, she would not accept defeat.

He would have to use brute force to pound the truth into her skull.

‘The fact that I’m stronger than you.’

Frey’s gaze deepened.

He didn’t think it would be difficult.

Of course, he knew that Sheryl was a formidable opponent.

After all, she was the second in command of the Phisfounder Armlets, one of the Three Great Circles.

There was no one who dared to look down on her.

“What a joke...!”

Fury blazed in Sheryl's eyes as she realised the man in front of her had indirectly said that he would make her submit to him.

She hadn't felt this humiliated in a very long time.

She was a several century old, pureblooded vampire, one of the few on the entire continent.

Even Circle Master Altan didn't dare to look down on her.

Sheryl could admit that the man in front of her was strong. The fact that he'd reached 8 stars was proof enough.

Even so, she didn't believe he was strong enough to disregard her like that.

Crunch.

Sheryl bit her wrist, then swung her hand, causing her blood to splatter and soaked the bodies of her summoned Demons.

Gurgle.

This caused the Demons near death to recover in an instant.

Frey realised that it was one of the recovery techniques used by Contractors.

After looking at the bodies of the other two recovered Demons, Frey was finally able to identify them.

'A Nightmare and a Starving Ghost?' (TL: Or Starving Demon)

Both were top-grade Demons as well.

Frey waited silently until Sheryl had completed her preparations with his hands at his side.

Sss~

Black fog began emanating from the Nightmare's body.

Frey frowned.

'Blinding me again.'

This method had already become a little boring.

As he had this thought, Frey felt movement on his left and right.

He stretched out his hand and created walls of ice.

Thud!

The Hellhound and Starving Ghost collided head first with the ice walls.

Although the walls had been created with chantless magic, they were still hard enough to stop their charge completely.

Then, he felt a chill at the back of his head.

Shek.

Frey lowered his head slightly to avoid the incoming attack, and Sheryl's well-groomed finger brushed against his hair.

When he simply glanced at her, she snorted before fading into the Nightmare's fog once again.

A group of bats appeared from the place she disappeared, their vicious fangs clearly visible.

They were probably vampire bats, so it would be annoying to get bitten by them.

'I'm going to have to cut them down one by one.'

After making this judgement, Frey touched the ground.

"Burning Ground."

Fwoosh.

Flames from Frey's hand instantly spread across the ground.

In no time at all, his surroundings were set ablaze, with dozens of flaming pillars shooting up into the sky.

Not only the annoying swarm of bats but even the black fog created by the Nightmare could not withstand the heat of Burning Ground and disappeared.

"Kuk!"

Sheryl, who was hiding in the fog, was once again revealed.

'This isn't the power of a 7 star spell.'

She forcefully swallowed her words and spread her wings.

Now that such terrifying fire had engulfed the ground, she could no longer hide in the shadows.

The Starving Ghost immediately climbed onto the Nightmare's back and fled to the sky, and the Hellhound remained on the ground.

As a being born from lava, it was able to withstand flames of this level.

Unfortunately, it wasn't just flames.

"Frost Scream."

Dozens of ice fragments were embedded in the Hellhound's body.

The Hellhound, which was easily able to withstand the 7 star Burning Ground, was completely helpless against the 6 star Frost Scream.

The cold aura of the ice quickly began covering its body.

It didn't take very long for the Hellhound's body to be completely frozen.

Frey shook his hand lightly.

Crack.

A gale from his body then shattered the Hellhound's body.

A top-grade Demon.

One that had the potential to defeat almost any circle executive under the right conditions.

Sheryl bit her lip nervously.

'The power of his spells is so strange.'

Strange?

No, it was more than just strange!

Who the hell was this man?!

Just a Burning Ground and a Frost Scream.

The power of the two spells this man used far surpassed her expectations.

They had the same names, but she wondered if they were really the same spells.

'Get it together!'

Sheryl shook her head.

There was no time for her to think about things like that.

Frey then turned his eyes to the Nightmare and Starving Ghost.

"Roar!"

The Starving Ghost expressed its frustration.

This cannibal Demon, who was always hungry, grew stronger and more violent the angrier it became.

It angrily pulled on the Nightmare's reins.

The Nightmare also responded to the Starving Ghost's anger and rushed forward while spewing black fog from its mouth.

Overwhelming victory.

As he recalled his plan, Frey had a thought.

First, he would have to break Sheryl's fighting spirit.

Chuk.

A spear of ice began forming in front of Frey.

Sheryl's eyes widened.

'It can't be... an Ice Spear.'

The mana fluctuations from this spear did not feel like a threat.

She quickly pondered what she should do.

Avoid it, prevent it or face it head on.

And during that momentary pause, Frey completed his spell.

The spear was extremely large and sharp.

Despite appearing in the middle of the Burning Ground, its coldness did not seem to be diminished at all.

Shuk!

The spear shot forward, and Sheryl realised that it was too late to do any of her three thoughts.

She couldn't avoid it, prevent it or confront it.

She snapped her finger, and the charging Nightmare changed its course.

No, it was almost as though it had been dragged by an invisible force.

Puk!

The Ice Spear pierced the bodies of the Nightmare and the Starving Ghost at the same time.

Even when two top-grade Demons were used as Shields, the Ice Spear did not stop.

However, it slowed down a little.

Thanks to that, Sheryl was able to escape.

After all, her agility was by no means lacking. Thanks to the bat wings on her back, she was able to fly very quickly in the air.

Sheryl was no longer shocked.

Even the Starving Ghost and the Nightmare had been recalled, but to an extent, she had expected this to happen.

'Ever since the Hellhound died.'

She felt like this man's power was brushing against her skin.

Sheryl wondered what to do now.

Even three top-grade Demons were useless.

And her vampire abilities were of no use either.

Even if she used some kind of trick, it would only be useful to stall for time.

In addition, she had already used too much mental power.

This was because her power was also being drawn out due to Lilith's battle with Asura.

'...should I summon Lucifer?'

No.

Summoning another Archduke was a burden that her body would not be able to handle.

Moreover, unlike Lilith, she had no control over Lucifer.

The moment he found an opening, he would devour her soul.

Sheryl sighed.

Frey kept looking at her.

It seemed he had no intention of making the first move.

His attitude seemed to say 'if you are going to struggle further, then go ahead.'

This made her angry, but she was also convinced.

"You... want to make me submit, right?"

"That's right."

"I'll admit it. You are qualified to say that."

Frey couldn't help but make a strange expression at Sheryl's words.

"I'll stop fighting. It's my loss."

She had admitted defeat?

But it didn't seem like she had lowered her guard at all.

Although she said it was her loss, Sheryl's expression did not seem to show that.

"You are strong. Stronger than anyone I've ever fought. Other than the Demigods, of course."

Divine power, magic power and the ability to summon Demons.

And none of them were at a low level.

In particular, his magical prowess was unbelievable.

He was at least as strong as Altan, the Circle Master of the Phisfounder Armlets.

“So will you submit?”

“No. Instead... I have a proposal.”

“A proposal?”

“I also want you to submit to me.”

It was the last thing Sheryl could think of.

In any case, Frey didn't seem to have any intention of killing her, so while it was unsightly, she had no choice but to make use of that fact to make a deal.

Frey tilted his head slightly.

“Psychic domination doesn’t work on me. Haven’t you learned that already?”

“I know. I meant something else. I am a part of the Vampire Royal Family.”

Vampires also had specific rankings or social standing.

In particular, Vampires with the blood of the ‘Royal Family’ could suppress other vampires with their blood alone.

He’d thought she was a formidable woman, but he had still assumed that she was a high-ranking noble at best.

Frey had never expected that Sheryl would actually be royalty.

“I see. Do you want to try to make me your blood relative?”

“Right.”

Her fangs sparkled a little.

Frey shook his hand, and the Burning Ground spell disappeared.

Standing on the charred ground, he nodded to her.

“I accept.”

“Really?”

“Of course.”

“...”

Her gamble had succeeded, but now, she was feeling a bit worried since Frey had accepted it so easily.

Sheryl couldn't feel pleased because his attitude made her feel like she'd made a mistake.

‘It's just baseless anxiety.’

She didn't have any other choice anyway.

“Before that, should we recall them? If we leave them like that, then we'll have to make a new map of the area by the time they're done.”

As she said this, Sheryl turned to look at Lilith and Asura.

She could see that a nearby mountain had already been leveled by them.

Frey agreed with her.

[That's enough, Asura.]

[I haven't been able to tear this damn bitch's crotch yet.] (TL:...)

[Today won't be your only opportunity. I'll give you another chance sooner or later, so just wait.]

[...I guess it can't be helped.]

Asura responded with dissatisfaction clear on his face.

Likewise, Sheryl also recalled Lilith.

Then, she slowly landed on the ground and started walking towards Frey.

Once she finally reached Frey, he rolled up his sleeve and held his hand out to her.

“You don’t have to bite my neck, do you?”

“It doesn’t matter.”

It was true that biting the neck was more effective, but at Sheryl’s level, such a thing didn’t matter.

Sheryl bit his wrist.

It didn’t hurt much, but it felt a little like a shock.

Kuk.

Sheryl’s eyes began to glow red.

This was proof that she was using her mental power to the max.

After all, her opponent was a Wizard. An 8 star Archmage.

Moreover, his mental power was much stronger than other Wizards of the same level.

She believed this was probably the reason Frey stuck his wrist out so easily. His confidence was understandable.

But Sheryl had her own reason for her confidence.

Huk.

Frey suddenly felt his vision go black.

He blinked his eyes.

Once, twice.

When he blinked a third time, he found that he was standing alone in a dark space.

Suddenly, he turned his head and saw Sheryl standing there.

Surprisingly, she was naked.

Her golden hair barely covering her.

But Sheryl, who was standing there naked, felt little to no humiliation, and Frey, who was looking at her, didn't seem fazed.

Instead, Frey was thinking about something else.

When he first saw this dark space, an unpleasant memory came to his mind.

“This is a mental world that I created. There is absolutely nothing in this space. Even you, an Archmage with great attainments, will soon go crazy in this empty place.” (TL: pfft)

“...”

“In addition, this place does not follow the same time as reality.”

Frey’s mental power was strong.

Sheryl knew that.

So the first thing she intended to do was wear away at his mental power.

“If you stay here for a year, no matter how resilient you are, your mind will-”

“You’re wrong.”

Frey interrupted Sheryl.

“What?”

“It’s not that there’s nothing here.”

Frey looked down at his body.

He clenched his fist.

The sensation of his nails digging into his palm could be clearly felt.

His senses.

His body.

There was even another person with him.

A cold smile blossomed on his lips.

Compared to the hell-like Abyss, this place was practically heaven.

Paat.

Frey's mana spread out and began dominating this space.

Sheryl anxiously took a step back when she saw this.

"Wh-, what are you doing..."

"Thanks to you, I'm now in a bad mood. It's only fair that I show my gratitude."

Pat.

Frey appeared before her in a flash, and at that moment, Sheryl showed fear for the first time.

It was an emotion that she'd only shown to beings who far surpassed her ability or understanding.

But that was a good thing for Frey.

After all, there was no better emotion for forcing someone into submission than fear.

Only

Frey put his hand on Sheryl's head.

Sheryl shivered.

This couldn't be considered a gentle act like petting.

In the end, Sheryl's decision had been the worst she could make.

"I'll show you some of my memories."

His 4,000 years of solitude.

With those words, Frey took control of Sheryl's mind.

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Ahhhh-

Sheryl let out a silent scream and her eyes turned white.

Frey showed her the memories of the early days of his time locked in the Abyss.

The memories of when he was the most desperate, lonely and distressed.

'I think it should be a few hundred years.'

Of course, that was just Frey's assumption as it was impossible for him to accurately measure time in the Abyss.

During that time, he had been unable to escape, and he was also unable to tell when his torment would end.

He was certain that if he lost consciousness, his soul would disperse in this empty space.

In a way, this was a punishment much worse than death.

This was the end of 'Lukas Trowman' that Lord truly wanted.

But Frey didn't give up.

He didn't stop thinking.

How much time had passed since he entered this place?

He began to see the flaws in the Abyss.

Frey found that he was able to send his consciousness out of the Abyss, and he was able to make contact with people who had the suitable aptitude to peek outside.

It was only for a short time, but he was delighted since it had given him hope of discovering a way to escape this world.

Of course, he had still been a ways away from escaping the Abyss at that time.

'I don't need to show her everything.'

In the first place, if he made her experience all 4,000 years of his imprisonment, Sheryl's brain would explode.

It was enough to give her small fragments that contained the negative emotions that he had experienced.

A few minutes later.

Huk.

Sheryl's imaginary world was lifted like a veil.

Frey looked around, realising they had returned to reality.

“...yo-... yo-, you... no way...”

Sheryl looked at Frey with a shocked expression.

Frey could tell from the look on her face.

It seemed that a few of Lukas’ memories had been mixed into the memories he had shown her.

She stuttered with her eyes wide open.

“Great, Great Mage Luk-”

“Stop.”

Frey forced Sheryl to close her mouth.

The first being to learn of his existence other than transcendent beings like Hruhiral and Asura turned out to be a vampire he’d met that very day.

It felt a bit strange, but that was all.

Sheryl couldn’t go around spreading this fact unless he allowed it.

'Instead, she might have given in so easily because she became aware of my identity.'

"I have something I'd like to ask."

"...anything."

Sheryl went down on one knee, bowing politely.

Some might have felt that her attitude had changed too quickly, but for Sheryl, such a reaction was natural.

In fact, she believed that even this level of politeness was insufficient in front of such a man.

"Tell me why you followed us and what you know. Without omitting a single detail."

"Understood."

Sheryl began to explain.

She told him that the Circle had been monitoring Riki for a while and that she learned of the information about the Demigod meeting from Heinz.

After hearing this, Frey's expression became a bit strange.

This was because while he thought that their tracking and individual abilities weren't bad, the information they actually had wasn't much.

Frey nodded and said.

"After sunset, bring Heinz Blake here. Make sure no one else follows him."

Heinz Blake?

Why?

Questions filled Sheryl's head, but she did not ask them.

She didn't believe that she deserved to know even though she already had a bit of an idea.

"Understood."

"Keep your knowledge of me to yourself."

“Yes, sir.”

Sheryl couldn't help but speak up urgently when she realised that Frey intended to leave after saying those words.

“Can I ask you one thing?”

“What is it?”

“Are you really back?”

Frey met Sheryl's desperate gaze.

Then he nodded slowly.

“...ah!”

Sheryl smiled.

Then, she lowered her head and quickly headed towards Heinz and the others.

If before, she fit the image of a several hundred year royal vampire, now, she had a smile like that of a young girl.

The members of the Circle all admired the heroes engraved in the pages of history, and among them, the heroes of the Age of Light were revered as almost divine beings.

Sheryl Roland, Circle Round of the Phisfounder Armlets, was no exception.

“...”

Frey watched Sheryl's back as she left.

She might find it strange that he was able to come back to life since she didn't see the end of his memories, but Frey would be able to come up with a good excuse using his years of experience.

There was nothing to worry about.

Finally turning his head away, he used Warp.

This time, he traveled a long distance instead of a short jump.

Shuk.

“Ssp...”

He took a deep breath.

It hadn't been very long since he'd last visited this place, but Frey still enjoyed the refreshing air.

Nevertheless, he couldn't help but feel a bit strange.

Was it because this was where Schweiser's dungeon was located?

Frey looked down from the top of Drake Mountain located in the Ispania Mountains.

It was still unchanged.

Well.

That was natural for a mountain range inhabited by nothing but monsters.

Frey sat on a large rock nearby, as though he was waiting for something.

About thirty minutes passed before a beautiful red-haired woman appeared.

The person he was waiting for had arrived, but Frey was dumbfounded.

He realised he didn't know how to address her.

"Hmph!"

There was a snort.

It wasn't from Frey.

It was the woman.

"I didn't expect you to come crawling back here again!"

She spoke in a voice filled with hatred.

'What's going on?'

He didn't know a lot about the Phoenix, but he could feel that something was strange about the woman in front of him.

Was it supposed to be like this?

When they met at the Demigod's meeting, she had been much calmer.

Something was different.

The woman shook her head and spoke with disgust.

"Right. Did you enjoy digesting my heart?"

Frey's expression became strange.

Heart...

"...Torkunta."

"You noticed it quickly, human."

The woman, who he presumed to be Torkunta, laughed viciously when he realised it.

"How? You should've died...."

"You're right. I did die. But you guys were sloppy."

Frey's expression hardened.

Unlike Frey, who only absorbed half his heart, the Phoenix was likely to have absorbed Torkunta's entire body.

'Were there fragments of his consciousness left that the Phoenix absorbed, which let him take over the Phoenix's body instead?'

That would mean the woman in front of him was not the Phoenix.

'If so, then there's no reason not to kill him.'

Just as Frey was about to unleash his mana, Torkunta began speaking while frowning.

"What are you talking about? This is the guy who killed me. How else am I supposed to act in front of him?"

"...?"

"W-, wait. Don't yell... u-, ugh! I understand. I was wrong. I'm sorry. So please..."

Torkunta, who had grabbed his head in agony while shooting a resentful glare at Frey, let out a sigh.

“Goddammit. I can’t believe the mighty Drake King has fallen to such a state.”

“...what’s going on?”

Torkunta gave him a deep look.

“What’s going on? I’ve become so miserable that I can’t even cry even if I had the tears.”

“What?”

“When that bitch absorbed my body, she absorbed some of my consciousness as well. I fought for control of this body, but I lost.”

Originally, even the Phoenix would have been unable to defeat the thousand year old Drake, but Torkunta’s consciousness was weak at that time.

Eventually, the Phoenix won, and Torkunta was defeated.

The woman sighed.

“Thanks to you, I’ve been put in such a miserable state. There’s nothing I can do when that bitch is in control of the main consciousness, I can only be in the subconscious all the time.” (TL: I really dislike ‘that bitch’ but they addressed it later so I can’t change it πππ)

“Indeed.”

It was truly in a miserable state.

But Frey didn't feel sorry for it.

“Then why are you in control of the body now?”

“Because of you.”

“Me?”

“Right. That bitch is now connected to that man called Agni. So if she meets you, she might get caught.”

This was something that Frey had heard from Riki before.

The Demigods could view the thoughts and memories of their Apostles without any restriction.

“So she let you be the front.”

“It’s just a simple trick, but we heard that he’s not in very good shape right now, so it shouldn’t be a problem.”

Frey didn’t know how to feel about Torkunta.

The appearance was that of a beautiful woman, but inside was a thousand year old male Drake.

Was it even possible for there to be a bigger difference between the entity on the inside and its appearance?

“How did you become Agni’s Apostle?”

“...”

Torkunta sighed.

“I’m dead, that bit-”

“Wait.”

“What is it?”

“It’s uncomfortable to hear ‘that bitch’ and ‘that bitch’. Can’t you call her something else?”

“She’s a bitch without a name, so there’s nothing else I can use. Just roug-”

Then Torukunta paused for a moment before turning to Frey with an unwilling look on their face. (TL: pronouns are so hard...)

“Please pick one.”

“What?”

“A name. She wants you to give her a name.”

“...”

Frey thought for a while.

“Nix.”

“Hmm. Where did you get that from?”

“I don’t know.”

“Hmph.”

Torkunta, who had been agonizing for a while, snorted grumpily.

“Aha. I know. You picked Nix because she’s a Phoenix, right? Haha. That’s so tacky.”

Every single word was said with a sharp attitude.

He didn’t think Nix felt the same... but it was clear that Torkunta didn’t like Frey very much. Which was natural considering the fact that Frey was the one who killed him.

“Then I’ll continue the story.”

Her story went like this.

After Torkunta died, an unidentifiable amount of time passed before Nix was resurrected.

And although her appearance had changed greatly, she had also become more powerful, which was a bonus.

As Frey had told her, after she came back, Nix proceeded to subdue the surrounding monsters one by one and expand her territory in order to become the ruler of the mountain range.

And during that time, Agni appeared.

“It didn’t make any sense.”

Torkunta gritted his teeth.

At that time, he’d been overcome by fear that was completely incomparable to when he fought Frey.

Just at first glance, he was able to realise they were on completely different levels.

“Nix had the determination to fight even at the cost of her life. I’d felt it in the past, but she’s really a fearless bitch. However, I was able to coax her into accepting Agni’s offer.”

“That’s unexpected. I didn’t think you could persuade someone.”

“It’s not something I’m used to. But if Nix dies, so will I.”

“...”

Frey felt that Torkunta had changed slightly.

He felt that his manner of speaking had become much softer and smoother compared to before.

“But we couldn’t even refuse to be turned into his Apostle.”

“You were only able to survive because you accepted.”

It was completely unavoidable.

Right, it couldn’t be helped.

But it still made them uncomfortable.

Torkunta looked at Frey before saying.

“But what the hell is up with you?”

“What do you mean?”

“We saw that silver-haired Demigod, who you were with, fighting. With just his sword, he completely overwhelmed those other Demigods. We didn’t get to see the end, but...”

“He’s dead.”

“What?”

“That man, Riki, he’s dead.”

“...”

Torkunta fell silent.

“I can’t tell you who I am, but I can tell you my purpose. I’m going to kill all of the Demigods.”

“You want to kill those monsters?”

“Right.”

“...it would be really difficult.”

“I know.”

“Hmm.”

Surprisingly, Torkunta didn’t laugh at him.

Because he expected Torkunta to shout at him that it was impossible, this attitude took Frey by surprise.

After thinking for a moment, Torkunta spoke.

“Alright. We’ll help.”

“How?”

Nix was connected to Agni.

Even if Torkunta was able to help them hide what was happening to some extent, it would still be hard for Nix to openly lend a hand.

“Don’t we just have to kill Agni?”

“That’s easy to say.”

Riki had proven that killing a Demigod didn’t affect the Apostle. So if they killed Agni as Torkunta said, they would be able to take advantage of that.

Only

However, their opponent was one of the Apocalypses.

Even if he was weakened, he would not be an easy opponent.

Most importantly.

“I don’t even know where he is.”

“I know.”

Torkunta let out a laugh.

“I said I know where Agni is.”

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“Where is he?”

“The desert.”

Frey furrowed his eyebrows.

“Silkid?”

“Probably near there. We’d have to find out more once we get there.”

Watching Torkunta nod his head, Frey fell into thought. (TL: for Nix, I'll just use 'him/her' depending on who's in control)

This was because Silkid was the place where the Magic Warrior King Kasajin met his end and where Ivan was currently trying to find Kasajin's relics.

'Don't tell me I'm going to encounter Ivan.'

Frey then shook his head as though he was erasing an ominous thought.

"It'll take him about a year to heal, which means if we fight, we need to do it within that time."

"Sounds good."

"We are bound to that monster, so we won't be able to fight him. But we can still help you fight. I believe we can find his location since we're his Apostle."

"That would be enough."

He had no reason to refuse.

It seemed like a much smarter idea to attack the Apocalypses while they were heavily injured rather than giving them time to recover.

The only issue was the fact that he didn't know where they were.

But Torkunta had now come to him with Agni's location.

After he finished forming a plan in his head, Frey warned Torkunta.

"Don't let the Circle find out you're an Apostle. Otherwise, the situation might become troublesome."

"Hmph. I, at least, have that level of discernment... I'd love to say that, but someone has already seen my face."

"What? Who?"

"That guy named Jenta. Do you remember him?"

Frey frowned.

There was no way he'd forget.

"He's the assassin who's Ananta's Apostle. What happened?"

“When the silver-haired Demigod caused the commotion, my mask came off. He saw me.” (TL: didn’t they already reveal their faces to each other?)

“Hmmm.”

It wasn’t good news, but Frey didn’t think it was a big deal.

Just because he’d seen her face didn’t mean Jenta would attack Nix for no reason.

After all, the only reason they covered their faces in the first place was to hide their identities from the traitor, who had already been revealed.

‘...but he could still try to find out who Nix is.’

Of course, that wasn’t a big cause for concern, either.

Nix had never left the Ispania mountains since she was born other than to attend the Demigod meeting with Agni, and even then, they had not left many traces. (TL: Agni said that he found Nix in the Ispania Mountains...best place to start a search)

“If you can, try not to leave the mountain range.”

“I wouldn’t have done so even if you didn’t tell me.”

“Then I’ll take my leave now. I have somewhere to go.”

“Whatever.”

Torkunta flung his hand like he didn’t care before suddenly frowning.

Then, after hesitating for a moment, he turned to Frey and said.

“Be careful.”

“...?”

“...it’s from Niks.”

Frey looked at Torkunta before he spoke to Niks who he knew was looking at him.

“You too.”

* * *

Frey returned to Dalaman’s castle.

In fact, it was embarrassing to even refer to it by that name anymore.

The castle had been completely destroyed, with only a few walls remaining.

The sun had already set, allowing Frey to realise that he had been talking to Torkunta for far longer than he expected.

Heinz was already there.

He was standing on a broken wall and seemed to be looking at something in the distance.

“...are you Frey?”

He turned his head and looked back.

As expected, he had already guessed who Frey was.

To be precise, it was Frey who basically revealed his own identity to him.

Frey nodded and took off his mask.

“Right.”

Heinz muttered under his breath.

Judging from his reaction, he had still been skeptical up to the point when Frey took off his mask.

“To be able to use divine power, you must’ve consumed Lukes’ crystal.”

Without a word, Frey climbed the stairs and stood beside him.

This allowed him to see what Heinz had been staring at.

It was the area that had been ruined by the Demigods.

“The current situation in Luanoble is pretty serious.”

“What do you mean?”

“We also saw the Black Dragon Knights get annihilated. And Honor Jerome has already informed the leadership of Luanoble. Not so long ago.”

Heinz let out a cold laugh.

“It was completely by accident. Isn’t it funny? They had no intention of confronting the Demigods. If they knew they were here, they wouldn’t have even dared to send the Black Dragon Knights.”

Frey knew that the Luanoble Kingdom was rotten to the core.

However, the servility they displayed, even when the kingdom’s proudest Knight regiment was destroyed, made him sick.

“I digress. Frey, I heard about your movements. You disappeared after contacting Benieng from the Trowman Rings.”

He glanced at Frey’s mask before continuing.

“It hasn’t been that long since I last saw you, but it feels like a lot happened. What the hell-”

“Heinz Blake.”

Frey intentionally cut him off.

Heinz closed his mouth and threw a calm look to his side.

“I learned about the true nature of the Blake family. That it’s a huge experimental site for the Demigods to study the harmony between divine power and mana.”

“...that’s right.”

Heinz wasn’t particularly surprised.

This was because from the moment he saw Frey using both divine power and mana, he assumed that he might know of what was going on at least to some extent.

“Which side are you on? The Circle or the Demigods?”

“Neither. I’m just struggling to take care of my own life.”

“Can you also use divine power?”

“To some extent.”

“And Mischael and Isaka?”

“That’s right. Mischael is about as good as I am, but you can’t ignore our father’s strength.”

Heinz spoke as though he had no intention of hiding anything from him.

Frey wondered if he should trust this man beside him.

“I’m going to the Blake family.”

“Why?”

“There’s something I need to find out.”

“What’s that?”

“I have no intention of telling you.”

Frey ended it there.

He did not hold any hostility towards Heinz, but information about Illuminium needed to be handled with care.

“It’s possible that I will exterminate the Blake family.”

Frey spoke of the worst case scenario, but if someone were to hear him, he would be seen as crazy.

His words were extremely arrogant.

Was he really talking about exterminating the Blake family, one of the Five Great Families of the Kastkau Empire?

However, Heinz knew he wasn't bragging and actually had the power to carry out such a task.

The man beside him was an 8 star Archmage, could summon a Demon Archduke and could also use lightning divine power.

Every one of these was already immensely powerful, and there was still the possibility that he had some cards hidden.

"You want me to help you enter the family more naturally?"

"I don't want to raise any suspicion."

Leita Blake.

As Leyrin's Apostle, she was the one he had to be the most careful of in the Blake family.

Isaka was only an Archmage, and Mischael was a 5 star Wizard at best.

Even if the two of them were able to use divine power, Frey didn't think they were that threatening.

However, Leyrin's Apostle, Leita, was different.

She was not an opponent he dared to underestimate.

"You can do whatever you like, but..."

"If you have a request, I'll try to fulfill it to the best of my ability."

If possible.

Frey swallowed the end of his sentence and instead turned to Heinz, but what he heard was surprising.

"...in that case, I'd like to ask you some questions when we're finished."

"Questions?"

"Right. But you don't have to answer them."

"If you have any questions, you can ask them now."

"No. I still want to observe some more."

It was quite the strange request.

It didn't matter if he answered or not, but he still wanted to observe a bit more first?

Frey was curious, but he didn't think Heinz would tell him if he asked.

'It doesn't matter if I answer.'

Frey nodded.

"Sure."

"Then shall we leave right away?"

"What about the other Circle members?"

"They have already withdrawn. Rounder Sheryl led them away."

"I see."

It was a shame.

He wanted to ask Sheryl a few questions.

But it didn't matter that much. He would just wait until the next Circle meeting.

The two immediately set out for Lufei.

If he wanted to, he could simply warp them over to Pillat as he'd remembered the coordinates.

However, as it was a long warp, it would be impossible to completely erase the traces.

Since he was going to the Blake family to get clues about the Illuminium, he wanted to stay as discreet as possible.

It was better to experience some hardship than get caught in vain.

This was the reason they chose to use the Warp Stone to get to Pillat.

The Warp to Pillat was scheduled for four days later, so the two decided to wait in a nearby hotel.

Although they were brothers, they each had their own room, and not once did they go into the other's room.

Even when they occasionally encountered each other in the restaurant in the hotel, they didn't say a word to each other.

Though it seemed quite dreary, Frey didn't have a problem with it, and Heinz didn't seem to, either.

And so, four days passed quickly.

They were finally able to Warp to Pillat.

Shortly after the Warp ended, the two headed over to the Blake family residence without hesitation.

Standing before the magnificent mansion, 'Frey' couldn't help but feel a slight tremor in his heart.

"This place...'

The residence of the Blake family had a strong aura of dignity surrounding it, and it could be considered on par with the Jun family residence.

In fact, the overall size, including that of the garden, seemed to be much larger than that of the Jun family's.

"Ah! Young Master Heinz!"

“Are you returning home now?”

The guards recognized Heinz and all began bowing respectfully.

It was clear that the respect and joy they had on their faces were genuine.

Frey felt like he was finally getting a glimpse of Heinz’s human side.

“Right. I just got back. Who’s home?”

“All the members are in at the moment.”

“...I see.”

Heinz’s expression changed slightly.

The fact ‘all’ the members were in the house at the moment meant that the head of the family, Isaka Blake, was also there.

It would have been a lot easier without him.

Then the guard’s gaze turned to Frey.

“Ah, by the way.”

“The one behind you...?”

Then, Heinz spoke with a stern expression on his face.

“Hmm. Did the Blake family’s guards forget my younger brother’s face?”

“Hu-, huh?”

“If it’s his younger brother... no way...”

“Young Master Frey?”

Embarrassment sprang up on the guard’s faces.

Rumours about Frey were also prevalent among the members of the Blake family.

The child of a wizard family who was treated like an abandoned child because of his lackluster talent in magic and who had been practically chased into the Westroad Academy.

Few nobles knew of Frey's feats afterwards, such as fighting the pirates and the Lich or becoming close friends with Peran Jun.

So naturally, there weren't many members who knew of these rumors.

Heinz ignored their reaction while saying.

"Where is my father?"

"I-, in the garden."

"Good, Frey, let's go."

"Yes."

Because there were many people around, Frey bowed his head politely to show his respect.

"Yo-, Young Master Heinz, please wait!"

"What is it?"

"We currently have a guest in the manor. The Lord said that no one is to disturb him because he is entertaining them."

Only

“A guest? Who is it?”

Heinz’s expression was filled with displeasure.

No matter who it was, Heinz was still the second son of the Blake family.

Of course, there was no such thing as Heinz and Isaka having a close relationship, but externally, there was no better justification for his actions as he was a son who had been away from home for a while.

He couldn’t think of a guest powerful enough to negate this justification.

But as soon as Heinz heard the guard’s next words, the displeasure disappeared in an instant.

“...it’s the Third Imperial Princess.”

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They passed the front gate and headed inside.

Heinz seemed a bit shaken by the guard’s words.

“Does the Third Imperial Princess come to the mansion often?” (TL: I’ll shorten it to Third Princess from now on)

There was no one around, so Frey didn’t bother speaking politely.

Heinz responded after thinking for a moment.

“...she has been visiting frequently for the past few years. She mainly talked to mother whenever she came.”

With Leita Blake?

Suspicion flashed across Frey’s face.

If it was related to her, who was an Apostle, then it might also be related to the Demigods.

The Third Princess.

Frey tried to recall his memories of her.

He remembered that her name was Fiore.

She was beautiful and very smart, and he'd heard that she was greatly favored by the Emperor even though she was a woman.

It was highly likely that her reputation was genuine and not made up by the imperial family as she had appeared in the cabinet, where only the highly ranked and intelligent figures in the empire could participate, several times.

She was 25 years old this year and had missed the best time to get married.

Maybe she herself refused a marriage, or she had the emperor's backing.

"What do they talk about?"

"I don't know... or without having to think too deeply about it, the visits might just be a politically motivated performance."

"..."

Were her visits just to show that the Third Princess and the Blake family had a close relationship?

'I'd prefer it if that were the reason.'

He didn't care about the politics in this country, but Frey's instincts were warning him that that might not be the case.

He was aware that the Demigods had a much bigger influence on the major countries than he'd expected.

As Fiore was a member of the imperial family, it might be better for him to be more suspicious rather than relaxed.

While Frey was focused on his thoughts, they arrived at the garden and found a group of people walking there.

'Isaka, Mischael and Leita.'

All of the members of the Blake family were gathered.

And it wasn't just them.

A woman, who was probably Fiore, was standing in the center of the group, seeming to exude noble elegance.

Then Mischael, who was at the front of the group, spotted Heinz, and his face brightened.

"Heinz?"

“Oh my.”

“Hmm.”

At Mischael’s words, Leita and Isaka turned to look at Heinz, who bowed his head politely to Fiore as he approached them.

“Heinz Blake, second son of the Blake family, greets Your Majesty.”

“It’s been a while, Heinz.”

It seemed Fiore and Heinz were well acquainted as she greeted him with a bright smile.

“Your Majesty seems to become more and more beautiful every time we meet.”

“Thank you.”

Frey glanced at Heinz.

He found the sight of this blunt man speaking in such a flattering way quite strange.

Heinz only looked at his family after greeting the princess.

“Father, I’ve returned.”

“Good. We’ll talk later. For now, entertaining Her Majesty is the priority.”

“Yes.”

“...however...”

Isaka’s gaze turned to Frey, who was standing behind him, a complex light seeming to shine in his eyes.

He forcibly contained the questions that sprung up within him at the moment and suppressed the deep sense of incongruity he felt.

“Frey.”

“It’s been a long time, Father.”

“...I’m curious as to what you’ve experienced during this time, but I’ll ask about it later.”

“Understood.”

Then. Fiore looked at Frey and said.

“We haven’t met before, have we? My name is Fiore Diak Kastkau.”

“I am Frey Blake. It is an honor to meet Your Royal Highness, who is praised as the sapphire of the imperial family.”

“Oh my.”

As Frey bowed politely, the expressions of Mischael and Isaka became strange.

This wasn’t because he’d made a mistake.

Rather, it was the opposite.

Frey’s greeting had been perfect.

His manners had been impeccable, and there was no sign of nervousness, even when faced with the princess.

It was even more surprising because these two, who were used to his usually timid appearance, were inwardly anxious that he would make a mistake in front of the princess.

“I’d love to share the honor of hosting Your Highness, but I don’t think it would be so polite to do it with such a dusty appearance.”

“Huhu. I don’t mind, but I’ll respect Heinz’s will.”

“Thank you for your consideration.”

Heinz then nodded at Isaka.

“We’ll see you at dinner.”

“Yes... let’s go, Frey.”

Frey also nodded at Fiore and Isaka before following Heinz.

After they disappeared, Fiore spoke out with a slight smile.

“I only just found out that Duke Isaka has three sons.”

“Frey is a student at the academy, so he’s rarely at home.”

“By academy...?”

“The Westroad Academy.”

Fiore looked a little surprised.

“That’s a very prestigious academy.”

“...that’s right.”

If it hadn’t been for his backing, Frey would not have been able to get into the academy with his skills.

But it was the best choice.

After all, even if he was an abandoned child, if he went to an academy worse than that one, it would tarnish the Blake family’s reputation.

“He’s not as good as Heinz and Mischael.”

“...it didn’t seem that way.”

“I’m sorry, what did you just say?”

“Nothing.”

After mumbling to herself, Fiore shook her head.

* * *

Tak.

Heinz closed the door.

Then, he turned to Frey and said.

“There’s a high probability that Father, Mother and Mischael will question you this evening.”

“I know.”

He could tell from the brief encounter just now.

They didn’t have any good feelings towards him.

But with Fiore beside them, they couldn’t ask the questions they were thinking.

“So, how are you going to act moving forward?”

“First... I’ll have to act like the ‘Frey Blake’ they remember.”

He had to move as stealthily as possible in order to find clues about the Illuminium.

If he revealed himself for no reason and drew their suspicion, his actions might be restricted.

‘When I’ve found what I’m looking for, I can take action.’

Then it might be the time to kill Leita.

Frey was determined to kill her since she was Leyrin’s Apostle.

Compared to that, the fact that she was Frey’s mother was not that important.

“It would be better for you to show a different side.”

“Why?”

“They already know of some of your deeds. Like defeating the pirates and being recognised by Peran Jun. If you acted that way despite that, they might become suspicious.”

Mischael might be too stupid to notice, but Isaka would definitely be suspicious.

Heinz was certain of this.

“...hmm. You’re right.”

Although he agreed so easily, the task would still be pretty difficult.

He would have to play a slightly more mature Frey instead of a loser Frey.

‘But it makes sense.’

It would be annoying, but there was nothing he could do about it.

He had no choice but to do what Heinz had suggested.

He had come to the Blake family with a strong resolution anyway.

After all, if everything worked out as he planned, he would be able to force Leyrin into Hibernation while also finding the information he needed.

“Then I’ll take my leave.”

Heinz left the room.

Frey looked around, only just realising that they had been standing in Frey’s old room.

It wasn’t shabby; on the contrary, it was as large as a room in an expensive inn.

However, there was a large amount of dust sitting on every surface as though it had not been cleaned in a long time.

Frey took off his robe and opened the closet.

Fortunately, the clothes in the closet were relatively neat.

Frey took out some house clothes and put them on.

Although it had been a long time since he had been home, he didn’t feel impressed.

Instead, he was currently feeling a headache because of all of the things he had to think about.

Frey sat on the bed with his back straight, intending to meditate to pass the time.

A little after the sun went down, the door to the room was opened without warning.

“ ... ”

Frey opened his eyes.

Standing there was a man who appeared to be the butler.

His name came to Frey's mind easily.

'Fabian.'

He was in his late 30s and was one of the people who had looked down on Frey when he was younger.

Even at that moment, his attitude was extremely rude.

He opened the door without knocking, then he stood there looking at him as if he hadn't done anything wrong.

He even furrowed his eyebrows while looking at him.

'I remember this situation, but it's still shocking to see it again.'

When he saw that Frey had yet to say anything, he finally spoke.

"The Lord is calling for you."

He crossed the line.

Thinking this, Frey got up from his seat and stared at Fabian for a moment before saying.

"Don't forget to knock next time."

"...huh?"

Fabian was taken aback and asked with a confused expression.

He was surprised by Frey's sudden words.

The timid young master who would get embarrassed just from being looked at too strongly was now talking to him in such an informal tone.

With an indifferent expression, Frey spoke again.

“I will forgive you this time. But there won’t be a second time.”

“...ah. Yes.”

Fabian nodded in a confused manner with his head tilted to the side.

‘...what was that?’

Did he just get reprimanded?

“Where is my father?”

“In the dining room on the first floor.”

Frey immediately headed to the dining room.

There, he found the entire Blake family sitting around a long table.

Isaka, Letia, Mischael and Heinz.

Their eyes turn to look at him at the same time.

“Amazing. It’s been a while since I last saw you, but now, it seems that you have become quite proud.”

When Mischael spoke out with a very sharp tone, Frey simply bowed his head and held back a sigh.

“Sorry.”

“Hmph. Do you think that’s enough? You are the reason we’ve been wait-”

“That’s enough, Mischael.”

Isaka interrupted him before turning to Frey.

“Sit. We will talk after we eat.”

“Yes.”

Frey took his seat.

Unfortunately, it was beside Leita.

Frey picked up a spoon while shooting a glance at her.

Leita turned her head to him with a mysterious expression on her face while taking a sip of tea.

“Do you have something to say?”

Frey pretended to flinch and shook his head.

“N-, no.”

“Hmmm.”

Leita turned her head without questioning him further.

Not long afterwards, the food came out, and for a moment, only the sound of the cutlery could be heard.

‘They won’t say anything while having dinner.’

It was one of the tacit rules of the Blake family.

Frey cut the steak before him and began eating,

The meal soon ended.

The quality of the food was incredibly high so it was the most satisfying meal that Frey had in a long time. (TL: ironic)

He felt a bit drowsy after having a few sips of wine with his meal, but Frey cleared it away with his mana before turning to Isaka.

The important part was coming.

“Frey, where have you been?”

Frey put on a determined expression while saying.

“...I wanted to travel the world.”

“Hahaha...”

A laugh filled with ridicule.

Needless to say, it came from Heinz.

“So you didn’t go back to the Westroad Academy, huh? You know you’ve been expelled, don’t you?”

“Yes.”

“You didn’t enter the academy with your own ability in the first place. Do you understand what I’m saying? It took a lot of money and effort to get you into that school.”

“My deepest apologies.”

“Tch...”

Frey lowered his head, and Mischael snorted.

“You don’t have to listen to any more of this, Father.”

Then, he turned to look at Frey.

“*You* want to travel the world? That’s a good excuse. It seems to me that he had a miserable time at the academy and ran away because he couldn’t take it. Truly the trash of the Blake family.”

“...”

Isaka didn't try to stop Mischael, Leita continued drinking her tea and Heinz acted like he wasn't interested in what was going on.

It seemed that they were waiting to see his reaction.

"I didn't run away."

"Really? Then did you get anything from your 'travels'?"

Mischael Blake.

It was like he was looking for any reason to continue the argument.

Frey felt a bit dirty as it was like being bitten by a child over and over, but the situation itself wasn't bad.

He couldn't openly confront Isaka because he was the head of the family, and he needed to be careful around Leita.

Only

Heinz could be considered an ally.

This meant that Mischael was the easiest target among those in the dining room.

“I did.”

“Hoh. Tell me what you got.”

“At least.”

Frey locked gazes with Heinz.

“I don’t think I’d lose to you, brother.”

Season 1 Chapter 116: Blake Family (7)

“Puhaha!”

Mischael burst out laughing, Isaka smiled slightly and Leita covered her mouth with her hand.

Only Heinz maintained his calm indifference.

Mischael looked at Frey with tears in his eyes from laughing too hard.

“I guess you have some pride now. At least it’s better than the old days when you were more timid than a mouse.”

Mischael’s gaze became cold.

“Distinguish courage and foolhardiness, stupid.”

“I know how to make the distinction.”

“...”

The atmosphere in the room suddenly became frozen.

Mischael wasn’t smiling anymore.

Instead, displeasure and disgust were clearly visible in his gaze.

It was the same way one would look at a bug if it landed on them. (TL: before or after freaking out?)

What was wrong with this weakling who used to tremble with a single glare?

“Because we are in front of father, I’ll let this go once.”

“You don’t need to let it go.”

“...are you really out of your mind?”

When Frey openly challenged him, Mischael expressed his anger in a threatening way.

But Frey didn’t stand down at all.

Instead, he completely ignored Mischael’s posturing and took a sip of tea.

“...okay. Good. I intended to teach you some manners later, but it seems I have to do it much sooner than I expected. Follow me.”

Mischael’s face burned red as he left the room.

If it wasn’t for Leita and Isaka being in the room, he might have already flipped the table in anger.

Frey got up and followed him.

“It seems that child has changed a bit.”

Leita giggled softly as she said.

“Maybe we’ll see an unexpected result.”

“...no. Frey could never beat Mischael.”

Isaka got up from his seat and followed Frey and Mischael with a stiff expression.

Leita then turned to look at Heinz.

“Heinz, aren’t you going to go watch?”

“I’m not interested.”

To be exact, it was obvious to him what the outcome would be.

At Mischael’s level, he would be unable to win even if Frey decided to lay down and sleep during the fight.

No, it would still be their loss even if the entire Blake family tried to fight him.

The Blake family was a Wizard family, but no matter how many wizards they had, they would all be powerless in front of an 8 star Wizard.

'I'm not sure about the Apostle.'

Heinz also knew that there was an Apostle among the members of the Blake family.

Personally, he believed that it was the family head, Isaka.

"Hmm. I see."

Leita gave a mysterious smile.

Heinz shot a glance at his mother and a thought flashed in his mind.

He had a faint feeling that this woman in front of him, Leita, his mother, could also be the Apostle.

* * *

The training ground in the mansion.

Having come this far, Mischael now sported a suspicious expression.

He couldn't help but shoot an incredulous glare at Frey.

'Did he really lose his mind?'

This was his younger brother.

No, he didn't even consider him to be his brother.

Unlike Heinz, who was second to none when it came to talent, Frey was pathetic in every way.

He was trash who could not even use 1 star spells.

This was why they didn't share the secrets of the family with him and instead sent him away to the distant academy.

Yet such a guy was now standing in front of him with a calm expression.

This fact made his mood worsen.

It wouldn't be enough for him to just win.

He had to make Frey realise the difference between them.

So that he would never look at him in such a way again.

“Cast the first spell.”

“Huh?”

When Frey tilted his head, Mischael let out a laugh.

“I’m saying I’m giving the first move to the younger brother I haven’t seen in a long time.”

“...”

Frey wondered what his next move should be.

When he glanced to the right, he found Isaka standing there without any expression on his face.

And after a while, Leita walked over after receiving a parasol from an attendant.

It wasn’t hard for him to beat Mischael.

Certainly, he was a top notch Wizard, but he was only human.

For Frey, who had been traveling together with the Demigod traitor, Riki, and had even encountered their leader, Lord, Mischael was as dangerous as a newborn baby.

‘An overwhelming victory, a difficult victory, or an unfortunate defeat.’

Those were his three options.

First, he’d need to get an idea of Mischael’s ability.

After thinking this, Frey finally cast a spell after a very long time.

“Magic Missile.”

Chut.

“...ha.”

The disdain on Mischael’s face was evident.

It seemed like he was thinking about what to do for a long time, but in the end, he only used the 1 star spell, Magic Missile?

Shek.

“...!”

He hurriedly scrambled to the right.

In the same instant, the Magic Missile rapidly narrowed the distance and brushed past his side.

‘What was that speed?’

Mischael’s embarrassment was palpable.

He felt a stinging pain in his side as the spell had grazed him.

Taht.

Frey kicked off from the ground and rapidly approached Mischael.

Isaka’s eyes shined slightly when he saw Frey’s movements.

“Kuk! Ice Arrow!”

Mischael hurriedly cast a spell.

An arrow made of ice shot towards Frey.

Its accuracy, speed and power were intimidating.

At least, for someone other than Frey.

Paht.

Frey didn't slow down at all, and instead, he twisted his body to avoid the Ice Arrow.

“What?!”

It was a move that almost surpassed human ability.

The shock was even greater for Mischael, who only saw Frey as a Wizard.

Seeing this, Isaka clicked his tongue softly.

‘He learned magic martial arts...’

That was the only explanation.

Frey avoided three arrows and destroyed two more with his fists, but his advance didn't slow down at all.

In an instant, Frey arrived in front of Mischael.

Their eyes met.

"...Spirit Fire!"

Fwoosh!

Flames engulfed Mischael's body.

This 5 star spell, Spirit Fire, was the strongest spell he had in his repertoire.

The flames fluttered around Mischael as though they would burn anything that tried to approach him.

But.

Grab. (TL:...I agonised over this sfx for literally ten minutes before giving up...)

Frey ignored the Spirit Fire and grabbed Mischael by the collar.

Shock covered Mischael's face.

Frey's hand was burned by the flame.

But the thing that shocked Mischael the most was Frey's expression.

Although his hand was being burnt, Frey's face didn't even twitch.

"Ps-, psycho!"

Frey raised his hand without saying anything and lifted Mischael's body into the air.

"Uh, uhh..."

Dozens of spells passed through Mischael's mind, but his mouth didn't move at all.

This was proof that he lacked practical experience.

His ability to cope with unexpected situations was also poor.

Spirit Fire, a 5 star spell, was burning his hand, but he was able to ignore that and continue fighting?

What the hell were his nerves made of?

Crack!

“Kuk...!”

Mischael’s body was slammed to the ground, and he coughed as the wind was knocked out of him.

Isaka clicked his tongue.

‘It’s over.’

The most important thing for Wizards was the ability to remain calm regardless of the situation.

Failure to do this would result in hesitation while casting.

And even if the spell did manage to get cast, it would only be about half as powerful as normal.

Mischael was obviously shaken.

No, he probably couldn't even think properly at that moment.

Even now, as he lay on the ground, he probably didn't realise what happened.

On the other hand, Frey's strategy was perfect.

'With the skill he displayed, Frey didn't need to say the name to cast Magic Missile.'

Yet he'd done so anyway.

In a loud voice that Mischael was able to hear.

This was obviously deliberately done to make him lower his guard.

Mischael's carelessness had reached the peak when he saw Frey, who had been thinking for such a long time, cast a 1 star spell.

But the Magic Missile had been fast and threatening.

At that point, Mischael's composure was slightly shaken.

Then, Frey quickly narrowed the distance, which was an unthinkable move for a Wizard.

Mischael used Ice Arrow to fend him off, but it didn't work.

His carelessness had vanished, but in its place was confusion.

At that point, the match had been decided.

“ ... ”

Frey looked down at Mischael.

He had no grudge against this man, and the match had already ended.

However, Frey Blake's debt still remained.

Kuk.

Frey clenched his fist.

Then he put it right in front of the face of Mischael, who was groaning in pain.

Pak.

“Ugh...!”

He felt a slight resistance before his nose bones were crushed.

Blood quickly covered Mischael’s face.

“Li-, Little Master!”

Someone cried out from the side.

It was Alexandro, the steward he’d met before.

He came running over with a white face.

“I-, I’ll take him to get treated!”

With those words, he quickly ran back into the mansion with Mischael on his back.

If it was dealt with quickly, they might be able to fix his crushed nose.

Then Isaka walked up to Frey as he wiped the blood from his fist.

The burns from the Spirit Fire stung a bit, but it was still bearable.

“You learned magic martial arts.”

“I thought it would be difficult to win with magic, so I tried something else.”

“It was excellent.”

“...thank you.”

Isaka spoke with pure admiration.

Frey was certain that he hadn't garnered any suspicion.

‘Using martial arts was indeed the wisest decision.’

If he had only used magic to defeat Mischael, they would have wondered how he got so strong so quickly, but since he also made use of martial arts, they would not question him.

The duel had highlighted Frey's exceptional wit and quick judgement while also emphasising Mischael's sloppiness and inexperience, so Isaka wouldn't think that Frey's skill was too high.

In conclusion, he had managed to attain an overwhelming victory without revealing any of his true strength.

“But magic martial arts also requires mana. Has your mana sensitivity increased from before?”

“It’s improved a lot since then.”

“Hmm.”

...He had changed.

Isaka was sure of it.

Was it an awakening?

He couldn’t help but think of the Frey of the past, who would always be extremely timid in front of him.

“It was a great display of skill. Magic Warrior. There’s also that path,”

He had a surprisingly calm reaction.

Frey, who was puzzled, couldn't help but ask.

"Is it really okay for me to learn martial arts?"

"It doesn't matter. You're the third son anyway. Plus, we're not a Wizard Family. We're a Magic Family."
(TL: coughs in translator)

'You are the third son anyway.'

Frey's expression became a bit strange when he heard that.

These were words that 'Frey' had longed to hear in the past.

It was a remark made by a father who finally recognised his child, but it didn't affect Frey in any way.

He was more curious about Isaka's calmness.

This was because he showed no reaction even when the family's eldest son and heir, Mischael, had to be carried away with a destroyed nose.

'Is he really a 7 star Wizard?'

It was then.

Leita, who had walked over while they were talking, gave Frey a beautiful smile.

“I’m proud of you, Frey.”

“ ... ”

Even Frey was made speechless at that moment.

If a stranger had been looking at this scene, they would think that she was a mother who cared deeply for her child.

But that was impossible,

The cold Isaka in front of him, the smiling Leita, Mischael, who had been carried away before, and even Heinz, who was not there, had all made Frey’s childhood a nightmare.

Heinz might have been forced by circumstances, but that didn’t change the fact that he was one of the culprits who forced ‘Frey Blake’ to make the extreme decision of taking his own life.

This was why Frey felt extremely disgusted watching Leita approach him with a motherly smile on her face.

“Frey, do you remember Princess Fiore that you met in the afternoon?”

Leita spoke in a quiet voice.

“Of course I remember.”

“Why do you think the princess, who is favored by the Emperor, came to our family?”

“I don’t know.”

“She came to pick a husband.”

“...huh?”

“Originally, I was thinking of choosing Mischael or Heinz. Because they’re both of age to start their own families.”

That was completely unexpected.

He didn’t even know why she was bringing up such a topic with him.

Well, the Blake family’s prestige certainly wasn’t much lower than that of the imperial family, but...

“But now that I think about it, you would also be a perfect match for the princess.”

“ ... ”

Frey fell silent at Leita’s words.

An arranged marriage?

He never would have expected such a thing.

Even when he saw the engagement between Peran and Sonia, he didn’t think that he would have to go through something like that.

Much less with a party like the Third Princess.

Leita laughed as she saw Frey’s expression.

“Although the Third Princess certainly isn’t young, she is still the best prospective bride as she lacks nothing, being it appearance, pedigree, or intellect. She is the perfect partner.”

“...I know that. But it’s so sudden.”

“Well, I have no intention of revealing it to the public immediately. First, we’d need to raise your reputation, which has been swimming at the bottom for such a long time. So as to not make Fiore embarrassed to have you as a partner.”

“...”

Only

“Fortunately, the princess doesn’t seem to have a bad opinion of you. It might just be a small appreciation right now, but it will certainly develop into a good relationship if you keep meeting over time.”

Although it was incredibly surprising, he didn’t have any reason to accept.

Just as Frey opened his mouth to reject the offer.

“Don’t be hasty. If you do this, you could proudly become a true member of the Blake family.”

“What would that change?”

Leita let out a low laugh.

“We’ll share the secrets of our family.”

Season 1 Chapter 117: The Third Imperial Princess (1)

“I need time to think.”

“Is three days enough?”

“That’s enough.”

“Alright. Get some rest.”

At Isaka’s words, Frey bowed once and returned to his room.

Coincidentally, it was the butler, Fabian, who led the way.

When he met Frey’s eyes, he subconsciously lowered his head as he said.

“I, I will guide you.”

When he returned to the room, Fabian spoke with a stiff expression, unlike earlier.

“Do you need anything else?”

“The room.”

Frey slowly walked over to the window sill and rubbed his finger through the dust that had accumulated there.

“Don’t you think it’s a bit dirty?”

“I-, I’m sorry. I’ll immed-”

“No. I’ll bear it for today, so take care of it tomorrow.”

“I’ll make sure to clean it while you are having your meal.”

Frey then pointed at the closet.

“Add some more clothes there.”

“Yes.”

“Right. And I’m thinking about going to bed right away today. I’m a little sensitive while I sleep so...”

“I will station a guard. I hope you sleep well.”

He catches on quickly.

Fabian immediately left the room when Frey dismissed him with the shake of his hand.

The attitude he displayed was very different to what he had shown before.

But this was natural.

That man had been able to knock down the heir of the Blake family, Mischael Blake, in a one on one duel.

Moreover, Isaka and Leita, who had always ignored him before, were showing signs of acknowledging Frey as their son.

Only a few servants, including Fabian, had witnessed the fight, but it was certain that everyone in the mansion would learn of it by the next day.

Naturally, Frey's reputation in the mansion would also rise significantly.

Frey Blake, the loser who had been ignored by everyone was no longer present.

In his place was Frey Blake, the third son of the Blake family.

Fabian was certain.

By the next day, there would be no one else who dared to ignore him.

* * *

Frey was laying on his bed.

Unlike what he told Fabian, he actually had no intention of sleeping.

Instead, he had a much more important task than fighting Mischael and gaining recognition.

Frey closed his eyes and muttered in a low voice.

“Darkming.”

Shik.

The intermediate Dark Spirit, Darkming, appeared.

It looked at Frey with a drowsy look in its eyes.

“I want you to alert me as soon as someone with a hostile aura approaches. Can you do that?”

Darkming nodded.

It could do that much.

Naturally, this Spirit, which looked very much like a house cat, was not very good at fighting.

Frey’s greatest trump card was that he could summon Asura, the ruler of the Slaughter Hell.

If he protected him, then no one in the mansion would be able to hurt him.

‘I could make the summoning circle and call him, but...’

He couldn’t just ask a proud ruler of the Demon World to be his bodyguard.

Darkming was enough.

“Ghost.”

Shik.

Frey's spirit body came out of his real body.

This was that 8 star spell, Ghost.

He was now in a state where he could ignore all the laws of physics and almost all physical attacks.

Naturally, he was still able to cast some spells.

Most importantly, those who were at a lower level than him wouldn't be able to see him at all.

It was the perfect spell to search the mansion.

Frey floated through the wall and began searching the house.

He didn't believe that anyone would be able to see through his spell.

No human at least.

'Leyrin.'

He couldn't forget her existence.

Riki had heavily injured three Demigods in their fight.

Agni, Ananta and Nozdog.

'Leyrin and Lord are still okay.'

Leyrin might be in the Blake family residence.

He wasn't sure, but Frey still made sure that he was fully prepared for the possibility.

He slowly and patiently expanded the scope of his search.

He wasn't anxious.

Not even a little.

For Frey, patience was one of the virtues he was most confident in.

And sooner than he expected, he was able to find the characters he was looking for.

"...-id you mean that?"

“Of course I was.”

Isaka and Leita Blake, the two people in charge of the Blake family, were having a serious conversation in their room.

Fortunately, neither of them seemed to notice Frey’s presence.

He continued listening to their conversation from a short distance away.

“Is it because Mischael is like that?”

“I won’t say it doesn’t have some sway in the decision. Alexandro took him to the best physician we have and got the diagnosis. His nasal bones were completely crushed, and it’ll take at least two weeks to heal.”

Leita shrugged.

“We can’t send him to the imperial family with a crushed nose, can we?”

“Right. But we still have Heinz.”

“It can’t be Heinz. Don’t you already know? That child’s talent, his role.”

Isaka was silent for a moment before finally speaking in his characteristic, cold tone.

“...now I understand. You intend to use Frey as a disposable card.”

“Huhu. Frey came back at the perfect time. With some improvement as well.”

Frey furrowed his eyebrows.

With the help of the light from the lone candle in the room, he was able to make out a gentle smile on Leita's face.

“You were originally going to use Mischael, weren't you?”

“If worst came to worst, that was the plan, yes. As you know, Fiore, the Third Princess, is no pushover. Even in the whole empire, the people smarter than her can be counted on one hand.”

She sighed.

“...it's a pity that such a talent couldn't be on our side.”

“She's not a member of the Circle.”

“Yes. Leyrin has the entire imperial family in the palm of her hand, so if any risk factors pop up, they’d immediately be ousted.”

Nevertheless, she did not completely obey the orders she got from their side.

Whenever they requested help, she would come up with a plausible excuse and devise ways to extricate herself.

Isaka sighed.

“On the surface, Princess Fiore is maintaining her neutrality.”

“That’s right.”

Leita nodded.

“And yet she proved her worth to Leyrin. She’s a very cunning girl. She’s walking on a tightrope with her own life as collateral... I can’t believe she’s made it so far.”

If she was born a boy or had talent in the fields of magic, martial arts or swordsmanship, her situation would have been many times more difficult than it currently was.

It was the same for her status.

She was fortunate to have been born into such an ambiguous position like the Third Princess.

“Moreover, the Third Princess is backed by the Eleventh Tower Master. And it’s still troublesome for Leyrin to deal with him at the moment.”

The Eleventh Tower Master.

It was a title he’d heard from Hector not so long ago.

He was one of the three best alchemists on the entire continent.

‘Isn’t he also the secret protector of the Empire?’

At that time, he hadn’t paid much attention to it.

After all, even if he was the Empire’s guardian, he wouldn’t be able to do much against the Demigods.

But now, Leita had brought up the Eleventh Tower Master again.

‘It seems he has the ability to deter the Demigods a little.’

Frey became curious about his identity.

If he had the chance, he would have liked to meet him somehow.

No, it wasn't an option.

He had to meet him.

If he wasn't on the Demigod's side, then Frey had to meet him.

"Can't we cooperate with others from the imperial family? The Third Prince or Fifth Prince, even the First Princess. Their ambition makes them much easier to deal with, and their influence in the imperial family is just as high as Fiore's."

"It's impossible. Only Fiore can give us what we want."

Isaka sighed and muttered.

"...Illuminium."

"Shh."

Leita put her finger to her lips and slowly looked around.

“Don’t you know that Leyrin told use to maintain strict secrecy about that term?”

“I know, but it’s strange. Isn’t it an alloy that Leyrin made herself? Why do we need to rely on the princess?”

“Because we need her skills to get a hold of a large quantity of ‘Harkon’, the most essential metal for creating Illuminium.”

“Hmm...”

“She doesn’t know why we need it. And if we urge her or show her that we need it desperately, she would grow suspicious. I can’t keep doing this tiring thing forever...”

“So you want to make her a member of the Blake family, ostensibly.”

Leita smiled and nodded.

“Just bringing her out of the imperial family is enough to greatly restrict her movements. At least, she wouldn’t be able to act as freely as she is now.”

If her status as Third Princess disappeared, Fiore would no longer be so hard to deal with.

Moreover, if they brought her into the Blake family, then they might be able to coax her over to their side over time.

“Up until now, Fiore has been against marriage. But she’s already 25 years old, so she is being forced to make a decision.”

“...true. There’s still one more thing I’d like to ask.”

“What is it?”

“Where is Leyrin now?”

Frey held his breath and looked at Leita’s lips.

However, Leita simply let out a smile and said.

“That’s none of your business.”

“...”

At that moment, there was a subtle flash of emotion on Isaka’s face.

Leita didn’t notice, but from his position, Frey was able to see it clearly.

'Hmm... is Isaka...'

Frey shook his head after making some guesses.

It didn't matter to him anyway.

That was all he heard that was worth listening to.

From then, the conversation turned to the family situation, the magic tower and the Circle.

There was no useful information, but Frey still stayed around just in case.

An hour passed, and the candle went out.

Only then did Frey return to his room.

It was already dawn, but he didn't feel tired at all. He simply sat on his bed and organised his thoughts.

'...so.'

Leita had been ordered by Leyrin to mass produce Illuminium.

But to do that, they needed large quantities of metal called 'Harkon', which they needed the help of the Third Princess, Fiore, to acquire.

Currently, the princess didn't know that Harkon was so useful to the Demigods, and it was possible that they might encounter problems if she were to find out, such as an interruption of the supply.

That was why they planned to bring Fiore into the Blake family and then forcefully isolate her, gradually weakening her influence.

"..."

Leita's plan seemed plausible at first glance, but Frey was more curious as to how Fiore would face this plan.

After all, he didn't think that the Third Princess, labeled the Sapphire of the Imperial Family, would fall so easily.

'Maybe she has a plan, too.'

Frey finished organizing his thoughts.

The Blake family, Illuminium and the Eleventh Tower Master.

Only

Princess Fiore was related to all three of these things, so Frey decided to start there,

'The question is, how would we meet?'

Even if they were to meet, it would be in the Blake family or the imperial family, neither of which was suitable.

They wouldn't be able to talk about anything sensitive as it was more likely they would be separated before they could.

If possible, it would be better for the two of them to talk in a quiet, deserted place alone.

Frey currently had no way to contact her.

However, he was unexpectedly given the opportunity the very next day as Fiore came to the Blake family without warning.

Season 1 Chapter 118: The Third Imperial Princess (2)

"If you have contacted us beforehand, we would have prepared to receive you."

"It's fine. I didn't come for any serious business."

Fiore smiled gently as she took a sip of tea.

Dak.

“By the way, where’s Mischael?”

Leita answered with a calm expression.

“He has returned to the tower for a while. I heard that there’s a meeting for the Floor Masters. If he knew you were coming, he definitely would have postponed his departure.”

“Ah, now that you mention it, I just remembered Mischael is a Floor Master.”

Fiore, who was smiling, suddenly furrowed her brows slightly.

“Huh? But that’s strange.”

“What is?”

“Mischael is a member of the 9th Magic Tower, isn’t he? I thought the Floor Master meeting was held four days ago.”

“...”

The atmosphere cooled down a little.

Leita’s fingertips paused a bit as she reached to pick up her cup, but her expression didn’t change.

“...maybe there was an unexpected situation which forced them to call for another Floor Master meeting.”

“I see. The 9th Magic Tower is to the east, isn’t it? I’ll stop by later to find out what kind of trouble has arisen.”

“I don’t think it would be something the princess would need to worry about.”

“Thank you for your consideration. But I’m a very meticulous person, so I can’t just let this go.”

As she said that, Fiore let out a soft laugh.

Leita smiled.

Both of them were smiling, but Frey couldn’t see the subtle trace of emotion on Leita’s face.

'She's pushing her.'

Princess Fiore was pressing Leita.

And there was no way for Leita, who had been making excuses without thinking about it too deeply, to fool her, someone who had memorised the schedules for all ten magic towers, without the correct details.

The atmosphere had been completely upturned by Fiore.

Then, with a relaxed expression, she turned towards Frey.

"Yesterday, you left so quickly that we did not get the chance to have a proper conversation. So I'll introduce myself again. I am Fiore Diak Kastkau, Third Princess of the Kastkau Empire."

"I am Frey Blake, third son of the Blake family. It is an honour to meet you again."

Fiore slowly rose up from her seat.

"Frey, would it be okay for me to request a tour of the mansion?"

She was formally asking him to escort her.

As it was impolite to reject a lady's request, Frey nodded.

"It would be my honour."

Isaka, Fiore and Heinz also began rising from their seats, but Fiore shook her head gently.

"I would like to talk to Frey alone."

"Will you be okay?"

"Of course."

"..."

There was some suspicion in Leita's eyes.

She and her husband were already thinking about making Frey her husband, but when she saw Fiore being so interested in him, she felt suspicious instead.

Maybe these two already knew each other or had some kind of secret conversation that she didn't know about.

“I heard you were a student at the Westroad Academy?”

“I dropped out of school...”

To be precise, he had been expelled from the school.

“Then do you know Peran?”

Peran?

Was Fiore an acquaintance of Peran?

...if not.

“He’s one of my few friends.”

“Wow.”

Fiore gave a wide smile.

“I used to play with Peran when we were younger. I haven’t been able to meet him these past few years since I’ve been so busy, but we still exchange letters on occasion.”

“I see.”

“I’d like you to tell me about Peran. Is that okay?”

Frey rose from his seat and offered the approaching Fiore his arm.

“...”

Leita had no choice but to watch this without saying anything.

She had already made a mistake by mentioning the Floor Master meeting. Fiore didn’t say anything else about it now, but if she kept pushing, there was a high chance that she would bring it up once more.

* * *

They went to the garden.

She had formally requested a tour of the mansion, but it was obvious she just wanted a chance for the two of them to be alone.

“Peran has always been interested in magical science since we were children. He especially liked the Great Mage, Lukas Trowman...”

“He’s become a fanatic.”

“Ahaha.”

It looked like they were just having a pleasant conversation, but that wasn’t entirely the case.

Fiore would occasionally look around, and Frey noticed that she wasn’t just admiring the scenery.

‘There are people tailing us.’

Instead, she was looking at the people that Leita had sent to follow them.

They weren’t hiding. Instead, they disguised themselves as servants, and they were scattered everywhere.

This made it annoying because they couldn’t question them.

At first glance, they were only servants who were preoccupied with the management of the mansion, so they couldn’t make them leave.

The servants didn't get too close, but they still pressured Frey and Fiore.

This was Leita's intention.

They weren't enough to be obvious, but they were enough to be annoying.

"...ah!"

It was then.

Fiore tripped over something and stumbled, and Frey hurriedly caught her.

"Ah... thank you."

"Are you hurt anywhere?"

"I'm fine."

Fiore smiled shyly as she stood up straight once again.

There was some disturbance for a while, but that was all.

Afterwards, they continued their friendly conversation.

The two of them circled the garden about two times before returning to the mansion as the sun began to set.

Fiore greeted Isaka and left the mansion.

And when Frey returned to his room, he took a note out of his pocket.

The note that Fiore had placed there after her 'fall'.

[2 am, Millakid Inn 3-B]

* * *

The reason she chose that time was in consideration of Frey.

After all, it would be very suspicious if he decided to go out right after being alone with the princess.

Of course, he still had to move stealthily when he left just after midnight, but it wouldn't be that difficult.

A map of the Millakid Inn, which was located not far from the Blake family residence, was also included on the note, so he could arrive there with Warp.

There would also be no trace left because it was only a short distance Warp.

'The only problem is if someone comes to my room.'

It was possible that Isaka or Leita would suddenly visit him during the night.

If they found out that he was away, he would definitely be interrogated upon his return.

Frey didn't want them to even have the slightest bit of suspicion. Not yet at least.

He wanted them to act as they would normally so he could make use of their lack of caution.

After all, it was only because their guards were lowered that Frey was able to eavesdrop on Leita and Isaka's conversation the night before.

If they knew Frey was an 8 star Wizard, then even if they were in a secure area, they would never discuss sensitive topics like Fiore or Illuminium.

After thinking for a moment, Frey went to find Heinz.

“I’m going to be away just after midnight.”

“Are you going to meet the princess?”

“Right.”

When Frey nodded, Heinz pondered for a moment before saying.

“Go and come back quickly. If you get caught, I will cover for you.”

Frey didn’t completely trust Heinz, but they shared a secret.

Moreover, Heinz wasn’t the type to lie needlessly, so he didn’t have anything to worry about.

Frey waited in his room and then left the mansion at 1 am.

Just in case something happened, he changed his appearance with an illusion once again.

His appearance had once again become that of Kain Rixton.

Shuk.

Frey's figure suddenly appeared in the air above a street before gently floating to a back alley.

Taht.

He was immediately hit by a foul smell.

Some of the streets of Pillat might not have been very clean, but the back alleys were much worse.

Frey brushed some dust from his robe and walked into the street.

1 am.

This was usually the time when people would be asleep, but Pillat's nightlife seemed to have only just begun.

Mercenaries gathered in groups of three to five and slammed their pints of beer against each other loudly.

It wasn't hard for him to cross the lively street.

Frey looked around a bit before heading to the Millakid Inn.

From the outside, it was a larger and more luxurious inn than he'd initially expected.

It was not a place where Mercenaries, who lived from paycheck to paycheck, would be able to enjoy.

Creak.

“Welcome.”

When he opened the door and entered, the clerk bowed and greeted him.

His attitude was calm and reserved.

“We provide meals and lodging. Which would you like to have?”

“Lodging.”

“Are you alone?”

“My party has already booked a room. 3-B”

“...I see.”

The clerk paused for a moment before nodding and saying.

“Here’s the key.”

Frey took the key and headed to the third floor.

Then, he turned the doorknob to the room with the nameplate B.

There was no need for him to use the key as the door was already open.

The room was spacious and quiet.

Fiore was sitting calmly on a chair. When she heard the door, she turned her head and gave a gentle smile.

“You’re early.”

Even though he was using the face of Kain Rixton, she didn’t show any surprise.

She couldn’t have seen through the illusion because she hadn’t learned magic.

Frey sat in front of her without responding.

Fiore raised an eyebrow when she saw the attitude that was completely different from the one she had seen earlier.

“I’ve heard of your prestige.”

“Prestige?”

“The Trowman Rings’ new Circle Rounder.”

Frey was still unresponsive.

“Oh my. You’re not surprised.”

“Why would I be surprised?”

“I know your hidden identity.”

She was testing his reaction.

Frey shook his head.

He didn’t want to deal with such a troublesome process.

“Let’s skip the nonsense, Princess Fiore. If you didn’t know that in the first place, you wouldn’t have had a reason to contact me.”

The most important factor when maintaining neutrality was to have good sources of information.

You needed to have a good understanding of the situation on both sides so you could take care of yourself.

Fiore had a good understanding of some of the inner workings of the Demigods as well as the Circle.

And Frey had learned from Heinz that he had become somewhat famous in the Circle.

He was called the young Archmage who had revived the Trowman Rings.

Fiore would only have tried to contact him after learning that fact.

“...well. You’re right.”

After being silent for a moment, Fiore shrugged.

“In any case, I wanted to meet you. The young talent who brilliantly revived the fallen Trowman Rings. Well, these days... it looks a bit precarious.”

When Fiore suddenly brought up the Trowman Rings, she especially emphasized the last part.

It seemed she intended to break Frey's composure by mentioning the circle he was a part of.

But Frey's expressionless face didn't even twitch, and he clicked his tongue inwardly.

She still had yet to bring up the main point.

Instead, it seemed that she wanted to understand Frey's disposition and, if possible, take the initiative and direct the conversation.

This was one of the bad habits of people who had been rolling in the muddy pit known as politics for too long.

'The conversation won't progress until this little reconnaissance skirmish has ended.'

The look in Frey's eyes changed a little.

If she wanted to have a battle, then so be it.

"Is that so?"

“Haven’t you been in contact with them?”

“I’ve been busy.”

“ ... ”

Fiore was momentarily perplexed by Frey’s indifference.

She was confident that when it came to psychological warfare, she would not lose to anyone.

No one could disagree when she was easily handling Leita, who could be said to be quite proficient at politics.

But the man in front of her was different.

‘I can’t tell.’

She couldn’t tell what he was thinking because he remained expressionless, regardless of how much she poked and prodded.

Even when she mentioned his hidden identity or the situation of his circle, he remained indifferent.

Or was he just pretending to be calm?

'He's only around twenty. He never stepped foot in the political arena...'

No, her plan had been wrong from the start.

Fiore understood that now.

The man in front of her was a 7 star Archmage. Honestly, when she had heard it before, she had only half believed it.

After all, Frey Blake was only a little over the age of adulthood.

No genius ever recorded in the history of the continent had ever been able to become an Archmage at that age.

But if it was true.

If Frey Blake really was 7 stars, then he would have had the ability to maintain his composure regardless of the situation.

'...if so.'

She had to choose another tactic.

Just as Fiore was about to open her mouth after a brief calculation.

“By the way.”

Frey finally spoke.

As his voice sounded out, Fiore almost jumped out of her seat.

The timing was so exquisite that it made her speechless of a moment.

‘...He was aiming for that.’

Impossible.

There was no way.

It had to be a coincidence.

Thinking this, Fiore gave him a smile.

“What is it?”

“I also wanted to meet the princess alone.”

“...you’re doing it now, aren’t you?”

“Is that so?”

Frey’s gaze met Fiore’s.

“Then the one hiding in the ceiling is an enemy.”

Kuoh.

Mana raged around him.

Even she, someone who couldn’t use magic, was able to tell the sheer power of the mana he was releasing.

It was not a joke. He was serious.

Fiore spoke up hurriedly.

“Wa-, wait!”

“What is it?”

“...he’s my bodyguard.”

Shuk.

The mana disappeared.

Frey then muttered in a careless tone.

“I see. I hope you’d tell me earlier next time. I almost killed him.”

It was intentionally direct, an intentional threat.

This man knew.

He must have noticed from the moment he entered the room that there was someone hiding in the ceiling and that the person hiding was most likely her subordinate.

Nevertheless, he purposely unleashed his mana before adding that he almost killed them.

The reason was obvious.

He had taken the initiative.

Only

'That was an act?'

Fiore was dumbfounded.

In her eyes, Frey was no longer a young man who had just entered his twenties.

Instead, he was like an old noble who had been rolling around in the political arena for decades.

'Now, then.'

Frey adjusted himself slightly and looked at Fiore.

'I think we can have a proper conversation now.'

Season 1 Chapter 119: The Third Imperial Princess (3)

Taht.

Someone dropped down from the ceiling.

It was a woman whose face was hidden behind a mask.

She was wearing a tight-fitting nocturnal suit, which made it easy to tell her gender.

Her mask only covered half her face and left her forehead exposed, her rich black hair tied back in one braid.

Overall, she gave off a very cold impression.

“You’re her bodyguard?”

“Yes. That’s right.”

A fake smile would never work on this man, so she didn’t bother to waste her time doing so.

Fiore’s expression changed as she thought of how to proceed with this conversation.

'I hate to admit it.'

She had to admit it.

This battle had ended in her defeat.

Her complete and utter defeat.

"Using an Assassin as a bodyguard. How eccentric."

"Veronica isn't an Assassin."

Fiore quickly denied it.

It would not be good for her if he used that fact to pressure her.

Frey nodded as he said.

"My apologies. She's wearing a voice modulating mask, a black leopard skin bodysuit and has nine daggers, so I was mistaken."

“ ... ”

Fiore pressed her temples.

It was a habit that she'd developed when she felt mentally burdened.

'...hoo.'

She couldn't even feel admiration anymore.

Finally, she nodded, trying to minimize her losses.

“You're right. Veronica is an Assassin.”

Even if she admitted it, she knew she wouldn't get much of a reaction.

At that point, Fiore felt like she might get more of a reaction from a wall of bricks.

She was tired.

She never would have expected that she could feel this tired after only engaging in psychological warfare with this person for a few minutes.

Frey was right.

The woman next to her, Veronica, was an Assassin.

In fact, she was one of the most skilled Assassins on the entire continent.

Veronica's expression was cold.

She was staring at Frey with an incredibly cold gaze. Her pride had been severely wounded by this man.

"Why don't you repeat what you said earlier?"

Her eyes were practically burning.

Fiore felt her reaction was unusual and quickly tried to stop her, but Frey's response was even faster.

"What I said earlier? Ah, I said I could kill you."

"Ha. A Wizard killing an Assassin. That sort of nonsense only comes out of the lips of Wizards who think too highly of themselves."

Then, she drew a dagger and glared at Frey.

But Frey simply shook his head at her.

“Are you really threatening a top-class Archmage? You don’t have the strength. Put your dagger away.”

Piht.

Clang.

Fiore’s eyes opened wide.

A small skirmish broke out, but her eyes couldn’t keep up with it.

She looked at Veronica’s face.

“...”

Veronica had her head down with a somber expression on her face.

The dagger in her hand had also disappeared.

Frey, on the other hand, remained expressionless, and a dagger floated in front of his eyelid.

Chang.

“I will let this go this time because of your master.”

“Don’t babble-”

“Veronica, enough.”

Fiore spoke out in a cold voice, and when she saw her fierce gaze, Veronica flinched and lowered her head.

“...I’m sorry.”

“I will forgive you this time. But if something like this happens again, there will be consequences.”

“I will keep that in mind.”

Veronica took a few steps back, and Fiore sighed inwardly before looking at Frey once more.

“Please forgive my rudeness.”

The sincerity in her voice was palpable.

The implications behind this were clear.

It meant that the princess no longer intended to treat this man like the 'Blake family's third son' but like a 'top class Archmage'.

Frey shook his hand.

"It's fine. By the way... are you planning to let her stay?"

"My status as the Third Princess makes it difficult to have private meetings without at least one guard."

If she wanted to keep her status as princess, there were certain concessions she had to make.

There was no way that the things discussed here would be leaked anyway.

Moreover, Veronica's skills weren't a threat to him.

Frey nodded.

The tedious battle of wits had truly come to an end, and now, the truly important topics could be discussed.

“Then I will speak without hesitation. How much do you know about Leita’s plan?”

Even when he said the Duchess’ name, Frey’s expression did not change even the slightest bit.

It didn’t seem like he was talking about the mother who gave birth to him.

‘My preparations were insufficient.’

Fiore bit her lips.

She should have carried out more investigations on Frey.

However, there was not much information on him as he was treated as a man abandoned by his family and had only been in the academy for a short period of time.

After he came into contact with the Circle, his movements had been even more mysterious.

Fiore decided to change her strategy.

She had already lost the initiative, so she had to at least prove her worth. She couldn't let the other person think she was incompetent.

That was something she absolutely couldn't let happen.

"She wants to bring me into the Blake family to isolate me from the Imperial family... and."

Fiore hesitated as she wondered if she should continue.

It couldn't be helped. Because the information she was about to say was still unverified.

'...but.'

That alone wasn't enough.

She could see it in Frey's eyes.

He was not urging her, he was just observing her quietly.

But Fiore was able to tell what his true intentions were.

'He's testing my value.'

She could tell that much.

How long had it been since people started looking at her in that way?

It wasn't just a blessing to be born into the Imperial family.

If you let down your guard a little or if you showed a flaw, you would be devoured without hesitation.

After that, it was obvious.

You would have to live the rest of your life like a puppet for your siblings.

A truly miserable life.

In order to not experience such a life, Fiore learned how to live.

She made use of every resource available. Just to survive.

The Circle and the Demigods were also tools used by Fiore.

They always tested and questioned her value.

And Fiore knew.

The moment she didn't live up to their expectations, she would lose her voice and her influence. After all, there were many members of the Imperial family for them to make use of.

She didn't want to end up like that, so Fiore desperately thought about what to do, and eventually, she found a way to survive.

She had succeeded in showing her value to both sides.

'I even proved my worth to a Demigod.'

The man in front of her wasn't much different from them.

So Fiore strengthened her resolve and opened her mouth.

"...they need something from me."

"Hoh."

Frey quietly expressed his admiration.

The look in his eyes changed for the first time.

A flicker of interest could be seen.

“Why do you think that?”

She couldn't miss this opportunity.

Fiore licked her lips and continued her explanation.

“The Blake family usually purchases magical materials, rare metals and magic tools from me. But in recent years, their purchases have tripled.”

Triple.

That was not a simple figure.

After all, all the items that Fiore had just mentioned were quite expensive.

Even if the family bought double, it would cost a jaw-dropping amount, not to mention triple.

Such an amount would certainly be burdensome, even for the Blake family.

“On the surface, they said they were using it for the study of magical science, but I didn’t fully believe that.”

“Why?”

“Because items like Black Iron ingots and herbs unnecessary for magical science were included.”

“Black Iron ingots can be used in alchemy. And the more herbs a family has in stock, the better, especially for large families.”

He was arguing, but he wasn’t attacking her.

Rather, it seemed like he wanted to see how she would respond. He even looked a little pleased at that moment.

This was the first time that Frey had revealed any emotion to her.

“...?”

At that moment, Fiore couldn’t help but see the image of her teacher projected onto his figure.

No.

No way.

Of all the Wizards she knew, her teacher was the most amazing.

She could admit that the man in front of her was really amazing, but there was absolutely no way that he could be compared to her teacher.

Fiore calmed herself and said.

“The amount was too much. No matter what they were making, they wouldn’t be able to make use of close to a ton of Black Iron in such a short time. Even the herbs came up to hundreds of kilograms. The amount they bought is well above the standard, even if we include all the members of the Blake family and their servants.”

“...”

“And they didn’t need to buy it from the Imperial family in the first place. Those items aren’t extremely hard to obtain, and the Blake family certainly has its own suppliers.”

Hiding the tension she felt inside, Fiore released the last piece of information.

“Troll’s blood, Ten year old Wild Ginseng, Harkon, Emeralds and Bloodstones. Some of them are surely decoys, but I’m certain that there is something among these that the Duchess wants to obtain.”

Frey narrowed his eyes.

She had kept close records of her transactions with the Blake family, which had allowed her to get a rough estimate of the family's size.

She then analyzed this information without exaggerating any details before reaching her conclusion.

At least, in the field of mental calculation and reasoning, Fiore could be considered among the best on the continent.

If even one aspect had been lacking, she would not have been able to produce the same results she had thus far.

Frey nodded.

"Excellent. Among the five materials Your Majesty mentioned, the item Leita is aiming for is listed."

"Ah... thank you."

Fiore responded while blushing subconsciously.

At that moment, she was filled with a sense of accomplishment and pride from successfully answering his question.

Rather, Veronica, who was standing beside her, watched this scene with wide eyes.

'Who the hell is this guy?'

It was always Fiore, the Third Princess, who embarrassed those old men who believed they were experienced and strong in politics.

At least, Veronica had never seen her lose a battle of wits.

No.

To be exact, she couldn't even imagine such a thing happening.

Yet, this man before her was treating Fiore like a child and praised her like he was her superior.

But the thing that truly shocked her was Fiore's response to it.

Why was she acting proud and happy like she had been praised by her teacher?

It had been almost ten years since Veronica had stood beside Fiore, and she had never seen her in such a state before.

“Which of the five materials does the Duchess want?”

“Before I answer that, can I ask one question, Your Majesty?”

“Yes. Please ask.”

“Are you going to continue being neutral?”

At that moment, Fiore’s expression hardened, and her blushing face regained its cool.

“...that’s none of your business.”

“I know my rudeness, but dare I ask, Your Highness. How long do you think you can remain neutral?”

“What do you mean?”

“The Demigods will soon take over the continent.”

“...huh?”

Fiore’s eyes widened when she heard that ridiculous statement.

Veronica's reaction was not very different.

But Frey didn't say these words without reason.

"I am telling you in advance. This isn't a guess nor a delusion. In a year at the earliest and two years at the latest, they will begin acting in earnest to take control of the continent."

"B-, but... why now? They have been silent for thousands of years..."

"It has been a long time. Enough that we might have forgotten their nature. But don't be fooled. They could do it at any time, and they want to."

Even if he said this, she wouldn't believe his words easily.

This was what Fiore's expression told him.

But it didn't matter.

Nothing he could say would be able to convince her.

Frey spoke without hesitation.

“And before that happens, Your Majesty will die.”

Silence descended on the room for a moment, then Veronica spoke out in outrage.

“You, I don’t know what you...”

“She knows.”

As a guard, it was clear that she was very loyal to her charge. In the face of such words, it was natural for her to express her anger when she heard someone talk about her master’s death so openly.

But Fiore, on the other hand, remained calm as though they were not talking about her life.

“Can I ask why?”

“To answer your previous question, the material that Leita needs is Harkon. And the only one in the Imperial family who could supply it to them is you.”

“Ah... that’s right. I’m the only one in the Imperial family who knows how to obtain Harkon. But that... it’s not a very useful metal.”

Fiore tilted her head slightly and closed her eyes, seemingly trying to organize her thoughts.

“...they want to restrict me in order to find out the origin of Harkon or its location. Is that what you’re trying to say?”

“Yes. And if their schedule hadn’t changed, it might have happened already.”

If Riki hadn’t injured the apocalypses to the point where Lord and Leyrin had to run around to treat them, it almost certainly would have happened already.

After all, if they were able to mass produce Illuminium, they would be able to act without restraint.

If it was Leyrin, she would be able to wipe out Kausymphony on her own.

“Leita judged you to be a true neutral, but I think differently. Your Highness’ life is in jeopardy. If you take even one step in the wrong direction, you would fall off a cliff where you couldn’t even see the ground.”

“...”

Fiore bit her lip because he wasn’t completely wrong.

It was true that she was forced to gamble with her life dozens of times before, and if she had made even one mistake, then she wouldn’t be sitting there at that moment.

Only

She spoke in a slightly disheartened tone.

“Then are you recommending I join the Circle?”

“No. They can’t protect you.”

“Then...”

“Not the Circle. Join me instead.”

Frey looked into Fiore’s shaking eyes.

“I will be your shield.”

Season 1 Chapter 120: The Third Imperial Princess (4)

Even if Frey said that, it was impossible for her to believe him so easily.

He was publicly known to be at the 7 star level. Not to mention the Demigods, he wasn’t even comparable to most circles.

From the thorough nature of the princess, it was natural for her to be suspicious of his words at first.

This wasn't a problem, though, as that was Frey's intention from the start.

After all, the effect would be much greater if she had doubts beforehand.

However, the princess' reaction was completely unexpected.

"Ah..."

Why was she looking at Frey with wide eyes while her face was as red as a beet?

Seeing this, Veronica, who was beside her, poked her in the side with her finger.

"...Your Majesty."

"Ah? Ahh. I, I see. Gi-, give me a second."

Fiore tried to calm herself down while fanning her face with a hand.

Veronica sighed and muttered in a low voice.

“...Your Majesty, it’s better to not show that you’re an old maid(1).”

“Sh-, shut up!”

After a moment, Fiore looked at Frey with a calm expression as though nothing had happened.

“You’re right. I’m in a much more precarious situation than I seem to be in.”

Leita seemed to believe that Fiore would be safe as long as she was within the Imperial family, but she was wrong.

The Imperial family was not a safe place for Fiore.

On the contrary, in a way, there could be no place more dangerous for her.

It wasn’t just because of the Circle and the Demigods.

There were invisible rank skirmishes, feuds between factions and constant checks.

She couldn’t even remember the last time she’d slept soundly.

She had survived on such a battlefield, and to some extent, she had even established herself to some extent.

This was something Fiore was proud of.

“But even the Demigods wouldn’t kill me easily.”

“The Eleventh Tower Master. Is it because of him?”

“...you know about him, too.”

Fiore smiled bitterly as she said those words, but she wasn’t completely surprised.

There weren’t many people who knew of the Eleventh Tower Master, but the number was still quite large.

The secret guardian of the Imperial family.

A Wizard that even the Demigods wouldn’t touch easily.

That was the person who stood behind her.

By relying on that fact, Fiore was able to overcome numerous threats in the Imperial family.

“That’s right. The reason I have been able to survive in the Imperial family is because I have his support.”

Of course, it was her ability that had caught the Eleventh Tower Master’s attention. (TL: really need a new name for this guy...)

Frey was curious about him.

“I would like to meet him sometime.”

“Well...”

“Can’t I?”

Fiore shook her head.

“That’s not something I can decide. The biggest reason is that I don’t know where my Master is.”

“Even the princess doesn’t?”

“Right.”

This was unexpected.

Frey had thought he would be able to meet the Eleventh Tower Master using Fiore as a proxy.

“By the way, ‘Master’... I don’t think the princess has learned magical science.” (TL: considering calling this Magicology...thoughts?)

“He’s the greatest Wizard I know, but my Master’s knowledge isn’t necessarily limited to magical science. I’ve learned a lot from my Master. I don’t believe I could ever repay his grace to me even if I worked for the rest of my life.”

“Hmmm...”

“Anyway... ah!”

It was then.

Fiore frowned for a moment before taking a small marble out of her pocket.

Frey’s eyes shined slightly when he saw it.

‘Magic tool.’

Fiore then spoke with a slightly confused expression on her face.

“My Master is contacting me. He rarely ever does so first...”

“Should I leave for a while?”

“No. You don’t have to. I think... perhaps my master would like to speak to Frey.”

Fiore then tapped on the marble with her index finger before muttering in a low voice.

“Connect.”

Woowoong.

Then, a small light was projected from the marble before forming into the blurry shape of a man.

The figure was wearing a robe, but his appearance couldn’t be clearly seen as the image was very dark.

[It’s a pleasure to meet you, Frey Blake.]

“...”

The voice was strange.

It was impossible to even guess the gender of the one speaking, let alone the age.

The hood of the robe was not deep enough to provide full coverage, so it should be the magic tool that obscured their appearance.

This meant the person had no intention of revealing his identity, which was quite common.

Even Frey himself was currently using the image of Kain Rixton.

“The Eleventh Tower Master?”

[Correct. I heard your conversation.]

Did he eavesdrop on his conversation with Fiore by using the marble? (TL: although I’m using male pronouns, the Eleventh Tower Master’s gender hasn’t been confirmed.)

This didn’t make Frey feel good.

‘Did Fiore know about this?’

Frey shot a glance at her, a brief glimmer flashing in his eyes.

“...”

But Fiore seemed to be as surprised as he was.

‘Did she not know that the marble could eavesdrop on her?’

It was clear that the Eleventh Tower Master hadn’t fully explained the functions of the marble to Fiore.

There might have been a hidden reason, but right now, he felt a bit upset.

Then the Eleventh Tower Master continued.

[‘The Demigods’ domination over the continent will start in a few years.’ I don’t think that’s too far from the truth.]

“It’s very likely.”

Frey spoke casually.

It was a stark contrast from Fiore’s polite use of honorifics, but the Eleventh Tower Master wasn’t a title that existed officially in the first place.

Frey also didn't see a reason to be polite in the first place.

The Eleventh Floor Master didn't seem to mind his manner of speech.

[...the Luanoble Kingdom's Black Dragon Knight regiment was destroyed overnight.]

"Hmm."

Frey wondered how he had learned that information.

Of course, Frey knew because he had been right next to Nozdog as he annihilated the group of Knights.

[The Black Dragon Knights were strong enough to take down a small fortress in a day. Yet after they received some kind of mission from the Royal family, they simply disappeared as though they had evaporated. As far as I know, the only beings capable of such a thing on the entire continent are the Demigods.]

"It was the Demigod with the power of death."

It wasn't something he needed to hide.

The Eleventh Tower Master nodded.

[So it was Nozdog. I also thought it would be one of the Apocalypses.]

The three Apocalypses that the Circle had identified were the Demigods of the sword, poison and death.

It seemed the Eleventh Tower Master also knew about Nozdog.

[...No one knows why the Demigods have remained in the shadows for so long. But I'm certain about one thing. The reason they didn't take control of the continent before was not because they lacked confidence.]

It was an accurate judgement.

After all, it was safe to assume that there were few beings on the entire continent who could threaten the Demigods after the Dragons disappeared.

Even so, there was one reason why they remained hidden.

Because they were afraid of the punishment.

But the Illuminium that Leyrin had created had given them the chance to deceive the Laws of the World.

Even if there was a time limit, that was not a big issue.

And this meant that they no longer had to stay silent.

[Killing the Black Dragon Knights was one of the most striking massacres carried out by the Demigods in decades. It wasn't through their Apostle or subordinate; it was a massacre carried out with their own hands.]

“What about the attack on Nozdog before? Thousands of people died at that time.”

The Eleventh Tower Master shook his head.

[They found out where Nozdog was staying and, the Circle was the one to make the first move. To paraphrase it, it was a foolish act to touch the nose of a sleeping lion.]

Frey's eyes shined when he heard those words.

“You know a lot about the Circle. Information that outsiders would not be able to know...”

[...mm.]

The Eleventh Tower Master paused for a moment before letting out a sigh and saying.

[I let down my guard. You're right. I was originally a member of the Circle.]

“...!”

Fiore was the most surprised by that.

This was her first time hearing this information.

Frey thought for a moment before saying.

“Were you a member of the Strow Necklaces?”

[...why do you say that?]

“That marble was probably made by you.”

He pointed towards the marble Fiore was holding.

“It looks like it was just made with alchemy, but it is a precise magic tool that couldn’t be made without the highest degree of magical knowledge. It’s not something that could’ve been made by someone who didn’t belong to the Strow School, who have deep knowledge about the Great Sage and are masters of alchemy.”

That wasn’t all.

He couldn't be sure because of the blurriness of the image, but Frey was almost certain that the robe the Eleventh Tower Master was wearing was also a magic tool.

The Eleventh Tower Master nodded his head, not intending to deny Frey's observation.

[I was once the Circle Master of the Straw Necklaces.]

"...!"

Frey couldn't help but be surprised by this information.

He had believed that the Eleventh Tower Master had at least been an executive, but he had never imagined that he would actually be a previous leader of one of the Three Great Circles.

"Why did you leave the circle if you were the Circle Master?"

[I didn't leave. I was kicked out.]

"What do you mean?"

[Frey Blake. I can see it in your eyes that you are seriously thinking about defeating the Demigods... it's a look that reminds me of Osel.]

“...you knew Osel Argento?”

Osel Argento.

Beniang Argento’s foster father and the man who had sat on the seat as head of the Trowman Rings when it was one of the most prominent forces in the Circle.

The Eleventh Tower Master nodded.

[Osel was one of my closest friends. We promised to revive the Circle and one day fully escape the Demigods’ clutches.]

His voice was bitter.

[His death was the thing that truly highlighted just how rotten the Circle was. If he had listened to me and left the Circle sooner, he might not have met such a gruesome end...]

“ ... ”

When he heard that, Frey suddenly recalled Ivan’s words.

[The Trowman Rings... I heard they suffered considerable damage during the battle with the Death Apocalypse. There were even rumors that the Three Great Circles had a hand to play in that...]

“I’m not sure, but that is what I heard.” (TL: this was in [] but I don’t think the 11th was the one who said that)

At that time, Frey had felt that Master Osel’s death was quite suspicious.

However, looking at the Eleventh Tower Master’s reaction, it seemed that there really was more to his death than it seemed.

[When I was kicked out of the Circle, I wanted to take Benieng with me, but it didn’t work out. But unexpectedly, I have a new chance.]

“Chance?”

[I’m going to make a formal offer. Would you like to take the Trowman Rings out of the Circle?]

“...”

[With your level of insight, I’m certain you know that the Circle is rotten to the core. If you stay there, you will never be able to accomplish your goals.]

“And joining you would be different?”

[Of course.]

The Eleventh Tower Master said those words with conviction.

[It has already been 50 years since I was kicked out of the Circle. And during that time, I struggled to create a group that truly inherited the will of the heroes of the past... and just recently, I managed to achieve that.]

His voice, which had been calm up until that point, became filled with passion and vigour.

[I have a strong alliance, Frey. It won't become like the Circle. No, our alliance might already be more powerful. With us, defeating the Demigods might not be just a dream!]

The Eleventh Tower Master's proposal was perfect.

Moreover, his behaviour was something Frey could understand.

He thought that it was amazing that someone would still have the fire of fighting spirit burning within, even after being kicked out of the Circle.

'Besides.'

The Eleventh Tower Master was at least an 8 star Wizard.

If not, he would not have been able to hold the position of Circle Master of one of the Three Great Circles, and he would not have been able to keep the Demigods at bay.

The group he belonged to might very well be stronger than the Circle. So there was no need to go further.

This group would be able to move alone without Frey's guidance, and they would be able to steadily move toward the destruction of the Demigods, Frey's long-cherished desire.

On the other hand, the Circle was different.

It needed to be fixed.

If it was left the way it was, then it would only take a brief offensive from the Demigods to completely destroy.

Since the Circle was the biggest thorn in the Demigods' sides, the first thing they would do when they got enough Illuminium would be to destroy them.

He couldn't do it.

Although it was a fact that the Circle was rotten, Frey couldn't help but feel that it was a waste of power and potential to leave it as it was.

"I appreciate the offer, but I intend to fix the Circle from the inside."

The Eleventh Tower Master was shocked by those words, but then he gave a bitter laugh.

[Hoho... reform the Circle from within. You really are like Osel.]

“...”

[That's not as easy as it sounds. In the past, the Trowman Rings was as powerful as the Three Great Circles, but it took less than 10 years for them to collapse.]

Then he gave a slight smile

[My proposal still stands. I will always welcome someone with your talent... I just hope you don't meet the same end as Osel.]

“That won't happen.”

[I hope not. Then... we will meet again someday. Let's have a serious conversation when that time comes.]

He then turned his head and spoke to Fiore.

[Fiore, spare no effort in helping him. Although we are currently walking two different paths, our destinations are still the same...]

“Ah... yes, Master.”

Shuk.

After Fiore nodded, the Eleventh Tower Master’s image became hazy and began to disappear.

It was clear that he was disconnecting the ‘call’.

Frey opened his mouth just before he disappeared.

“Can you tell me your name?”

[...I am Cairo Wilsemann.]

“...!”

Only

With those words, the Eleventh Tower Master’s figure disappeared completely.

Nevertheless, Frey kept staring at the spot where he had been standing.

'Cairo Wilsemann...'

Wilsemann.

That was the surname that Schweiser had before he changed his name to Strow.