

Great Mage 151

Season 1 Chapter 151: Anastasia (1)

Someone approached Frey, who stood still for a while.

It wasn't someone he brought with him. He didn't promise to cooperate, but the man still asked to accompany him.

It was Cairo Wilsemann.

"...I guess I was mistaken."

As his eyes turned to look at Rezil, Cairo paused for a moment before walking over and looking at his brother's corpse.

"I didn't know what effect teacher's death had on him. No, I didn't even want to know. It was too much for me to handle myself. My vision narrowed.... I shouldn't have done that. I forgot my duty to my brother."

Cairo smiled bitterly.

"Thank you. For letting him die as a human."

Frey nodded.

He didn't ask for forgiveness in the end.

He reflected and regretted his actions, but he didn't open his mouth to say it.

Rezil died as the head of the traitors. He didn't let down those who had followed him.

It was a twisted belief and twisted justice.

He couldn't compliment him, but he couldn't curse him either.

Frey looked around.

Sheryl, Nora and Snow all suffered small and large wounds. After all, the people they fought were all executives in the Circle.

It was almost impossible to annihilate them without taking damage

"..."

Frey sighed heavily at that moment.

It was a victory with only a few wounds. No, it couldn't even be called a victory.

Knowing that didn't help him feel any better.

He'd crossed the heavy mountain known as 'Purge' so he couldn't feel happy at that moment.

'Was this really the best option?'

Frey forcefully suppressed such questions.

It wouldn't be too late to get sentimental after everything was done.

Right, it definitely wouldn't be too late after the Demigods were defeated.

* * *

The Circle Master of the Lucid Swords, Jekid Deosis, sat in a small room lit by a single candle.

The image of him lost in meditation with his eyes closed showed a distinct air that could only be seen from first class masters.

"..."

Jekid quietly opened his eyes, and saw a man standing in front of him.

Frey Blake.

“Rezil?”

“Dead.”

“...I see.”

Frey looked at the silent Jekid.

He was a man who agreed with Rezil’s will, but did not take that irreversible last step. Of course, that didn’t mean that all his evil deeds would disappear.

However, he couldn’t cut down the Circle’s power more than he already had.

One of the Three Great Circles had already been destroyed.

The Trowman Rings could be used to take its place, but if another one collapsed, he would have nothing to fill the gap.

The Circle would lose its balance and would eventually collapse.

He needed the Lucid Swords' reputation.

"What are you going to do now? You don't really intend to have an all-out war with the Demigods."

"Why do you say that?"

"Saying that you would do so at the meeting was simply to expose the traitors."

Frey didn't deny it.

If they were to really fight the Demigods, even if there were less than a hundred of them, the Circle would lose.

Nevertheless, he'd announced an all-out war in order to incite betrayal, and as Frey expected, Rezil was overcome with anxiety and made his move, leading him to be purged.

"I will announce my real plan at the meeting tomorrow."

"Right. So you came here to secure the Lucid Swords' cooperation tomorrow?"

"No."

Jekid tilted his head to the side when he heard Frey's firm tone.

"...then?"

"Think for yourself and make your decision. You don't have to follow me if you think I'm wrong. I don't intend to pressure you or retaliate against you if you don't either."

"Are you serious?"

"I don't need a puppet."

He was serious.

There was no one in the world who could say that all the choices they'd made so far had been right.

Frey believed that he'd made the best possible decision at that time, but there were still things he might have missed. So he needed comrades

People who weren't unconditional yes-men, but who could make up for his own shortcomings and help guide him to a better choice.

"..."

After being silent for a moment, Jekid nodded.

“Understood, Rounder Frey.”

* * *

The next day, the second meeting began quite early.

Before the sun had risen completely, people gathered in the hall and it was soon filled.

Nevertheless, there were three Circles that had yet to make an appearance. The Strow Necklaces, Lucid Swords and Trowman Rings.

“...”

Shepard Jun was silent, but his expression was heavy.

Last night, he had also gotten the offer from Rezil. The proposal to abandon the Circle and join the Demigods.

But Shepard couldn't accept it. His last remaining sliver of conscience didn't allow him to.

Of course, that didn't mean that his conscience was clear. After all, he gave the Strow Necklaces a chance to escape.

Shepard was filled with self-loathing.

After all, the most pathetic men were those who could be neither black nor white, and had to settle for grey.

'What will happen to the Circle now?'

No. It wasn't just the Circle.

What would be the fate of the continent?

As an uncertain Shepard sighed inwardly.

Tap tap.

A group of people entered the hall, causing a bit of commotion from some of the people who saw them.

Shepard was confused.

'The Lucid Swords? Didn't they leave with the Strow Necklaces yesterday?'

Although some of the executives were missing, the Circle Master and Rounder were both present.

The strong alliance between Jekid and Rezil was something of an open secret in the Circle.

Did the two Circles change their minds?

'Something like that would be a miracle...'

Shepard's puzzled expression became even more pronounced as the Trowman Rings walked in soon after.

They crossed the hall with steady steps before seating themselves at the Strow Necklaces' table.

" ... "

" ... "

Shepard hesitated because of the unexpected action.

“...Rounder Frey, that spot...”

Frey ignored Shepard’s mumbling and opened his mouth.

“Looks like everyone is here. So let’s get started.”

“The Strow Necklaces haven’t arrived yet...”

Someone carefully raised their hand and said that, but Frey continued in an irrefutable tone.

“No. Everyone is here.”

“...’

It was just one phrase, but it instantly caused the atmosphere in the room to become heavy.

No one could easily open their mouths.

Just like the day before, Frey walked to the middle of the hall.

Then he looked at each of the empty seats before saying.

“The Circle Master of the Strow Necklaces, Rezil Wilsemann, the Circle Rounder, Simone Kyliia, and eight others, seven from the Lucid Swords, five from the Phisfounder Armlets, and 21 from the middle and small sized circles. A total of 43 people. After the meeting yesterday, they expressed the desire to leave the Circle and join the Demigods, so they were killed.”

“W-, what was that?”

“They’re all dead.”

“Surely...”

The Circle members looked at Frey with disbelieving gazes, and he could feel the subtle fear in them.

Fear was one of the most effective ways to take control of a group, but it wasn’t the way Frey preferred it.

That was why he brought this matter up first.

What was to follow would definitely cover the shock they felt from this news.

“Today, I intend to share with you the information I gained during my travels around the continent. I’m sure you will have a lot of questions, but please wait until I’m finished before asking them.”

Frey took a deep breath before continuing,

“The Demigods are currently facing a crisis.”

“Huh?”

“What does that...”

Everyone couldn't hide their confusion.

After all, those words sounded ridiculous.

Frey spoke slowly.

“One of the five Apocalypses is dead. The other has fallen into hibernation.”

“Hibernation...?”

“When an Apostle dies, the corresponding Demigod goes into hibernation. While hibernating the Demigods are completely defenseless. Even an ordinary person would be able to kill them with just a knife.”

“I-, I don't believe it.”

“I-, impossible.”

Frey pulled out Riki’s bead, causing the hearts of many in the room to shake.

“Mm...!”

“Demigod crystal! It’s ridiculously large...”

“I killed this Demigod.”

It was a lie. So he was deceiving them, but it was urgent.

There was no time for him to reveal all the circumstances and convince them. Therefore, this was the only method he could use, even if they might be a bit suspicious.

“The other three Apocalypses were fatally wounded, and Lord was stuck in one place trying to heal them. Then they destroyed Geotanbul and Talhadun. I’m not completely sure, but I believe that there has been some change to the situation. But they can’t fix everything. Their actions this time were very impulsive.”

“Are you saying the destruction wasn’t planned?”

“Right. One more thing. The Demigods would be placed in a very difficult situation if they just slaughtered indiscriminately.”

“Why?”

“That...”

He told them all he had learned about the will of the world from Riki. The more massacres they carried out, the more karma they would accumulate, and in the worst case scenario, they would be destroyed.

The faces of the Circle members, who were hearing this for the first time, were filled with shock.

“Su-, sure enough.”

“So that’s the reason why we’ve been able to survive for so long...”

“Then isn’t there a high chance that the Demigod who destroyed Geotanbul was also destroyed?”

“No. There is an alloy called Illuminium. If a Demigod eats it, they would be able to trick the will of the world for a short period. But it’s a very tricky thing to make so they have to use it very sparingly.”

Frey didn’t explain any more than that about Illuminium. After all, the Blake family was deeply entwined with it.

'And we don't know how much Illuminium they have left.'

The attack on Geotambul and Talhadun meant that they still had some Illuminium left,

This amount definitely shouldn't be large as he had obtained the largest portions of it, but he couldn't be a hasty judgment.

"We have to kill the Apocalypses' Apostles."

"Do you know who they are?"

"...I know two of them."

In fact, Frey knew all of the Apocalypses Apostles, including Lord's.

Ananta's Apostle was Jenta, a man who appeared to be an assassin, Nozdog's was Kaltud, Agni's was Nix... Lord's...

Frey shook his head.

Then he opened his mouth and said.

"An assassin named Jenta, and a Demon named Kaltud."

“A Demon? You mean a Demon became a Demigod’s Apostle?”

“I can’t believe it.”

“Wait. By Jenta, does he mean the King of Darkness?”

When the commotion subsided, Frey once again opened his mouth.

“We have to kill them somehow. If we can make two more Apocalypses hibernate, then the chance to overcome this hopeless war might not be a fantasy. After all, they are Demigods that Lord considers special.”

It was true.

Even when Frey was identified to have been in the Blake family’s residence, Lord didn’t come to kill him personally, instead choosing to keep healing the others.

If they could make Ananta and Nozdog hibernate, they’d be able to restrict Lord’s movement a bit more.

‘10 stars...’

The fantasy level that Cairo spoke about. He would need to avoid Lord until he reached that level.

So the more restricted his movements, the better.

Frey nodded at Jekid's words.

"From now on, the Circle's members will be scattered across all the major cities on the continent. It'll be up to the Circle Masters exactly who to send to which place, but I hope you respect the Circle members' opinions as much as possible."

If possible, it would be much better to station them in their own hometowns. In addition, the efficiency would be much higher.

"If possible, you should stay in cities that have Warp Stones."

"To prepare for the worst."

Frey nodded.

"In addition, we should create a team that will search the continent thoroughly. Because we need to find those two Apostles."

That was all he had planned at the moment.

At that moment, a subtle air began flowing around the hall. It was a heat.

The information Frey had given them was incredibly shocking and it opened up the possibility for them to deal a blow to the Demigods.

“I think that’s good...”

“Can we win?”

The mood improved, and Frey inwardly sighed in relief.

In truth, their situation wasn’t that good. So he had tried to convey as much positive information as he could.

He controlled what he told them, and he mixed a few lies in.

Frey felt a bit guilty for that, but he didn’t have a choice.

He couldn’t let them think too much about the Strow Necklaces’ betrayal. To do that, he had to give them something that would take their minds off of it.

They would track down the Apostles and protect the cities.

He wasn’t sure what the outcome would be, but at least they would not have any free time.

It was the same for Frey.

'Agni.'

Frey had to defeat Agni. After all, he couldn't kill Nix.

Only

He closed his eyes, settling his thoughts.

He'd regained his 9 stars level, and although it had been done in a violent way, he had achieved the integration of the circles.

He had also secured many like-minded partners.

The goals he had set, big and small, were slowly being completed one after the other, pointing towards the ultimate goal.

'The real fight starts now.'

A fight that wouldn't end until one side was destroyed.

The full-fledged war with the Demigods had begun.

Season 1 Chapter 152: Anastasia (2)

“The man named Jenta is probably the King of Darkness.”

Frey tilted his head slightly at Jekid’s words. (TL: author put ‘lucid’ here but I’m sure it’s a typo)

“The King of Darkness?”

“That’s right. He’s a legend in the underworld since he has assassinated not only high ranking nobles, but even royalty. Although it was just a member of a royal family from a small country... Nevertheless, his techniques are so clever and tricky that they couldn’t find any traces of him even after scouring the entire country.”

He sighed.

“If we didn’t have the client’s testimony and see the contract, we’d have treated the King of Darkness as a fictional character.”

“ ... ”

Frey recalled Jenta’s face.

From what he'd seen, he was sure that Jenta was a top class assassin. But he never would have imagined that he was a legendary assassin who had even assassinated a member of a royal family.

This wasn't something that was possible simply by having the ability to assassinate people.

Having clients who would even request the assassination of a member of a royal family meant that he at least had that much influence in the underworld.

"He's from 'Hitume Ikar', so we can start looking for his traces there."

Hitume Ikar was an island country that was located in the southeastern part of the continent. It was a country with a very unique personality and national power that couldn't be ignored, but it was known to be rather closed off, making it very difficult for outsiders to enter or exit its borders.

"Fortunately, there is a branch of our circle in Hitume Ikar. We also have a few connections there. We'll use them to start looking for Jenta."

"You should be careful. For the Demigods, the Apostles are simply tools. It's possible that they would set him as bait."

"Of course, I know that. Don't worry. If we didn't know how to move secretly, the Circle would have been destroyed long ago."

Jekid said this and the Lucid Swords left the Jun family residence. (TL: lucid again)

The next person Frey talked to was the Circle Master of the Phisfounder Armlets, Altan.

He was with Sheryl and the other executives of the circle.

“Kaltud is a High class Demon. Have you actually seen him?”

When he nodded, the question continued.

“What does he look like?”

“Red skin. His eyes didn’t have whites. And his attitude was strange... to the point where he didn’t even seem like a Demon.”

“...”

Altan turned to look at a man in his group, who lowered his head when Frey also turned to look at him.

“I’m Jullian, a Force Honor of the Phisfounder Armlets. I was Kaltud’s Contractor. I think the Demon Rouser Frey is talking about is Kaltud, my previous contract.”

“Is it possible for a High class Demon to live on the continent?”

“It’s possible in theory. But it would take tens of thousands of lives to perform a ritual like that. It’s not very efficient...”

“...”

Frey frowned for a moment.

It was a little unpleasant that he didn’t mention the ethics or moral repercussions of such actions, but instead looked at the efficiency.

However, he knew that it wasn’t done maliciously. It was simply that all Contractors were like this.

Therefore, Frey wouldn’t say anything about it.

“Kaltud suddenly disappeared about 15 years ago. He wouldn’t even respond to my summons. The Demons are naturally capricious, but Kaltud was particularly severe, so I didn’t find it strange since our contract was about to end soon anyway...”

Julien sighed.

“But if he came to the continent with his true body then it’s natural that my calls couldn’t reach him.”

“Is there any way to track him?”

“It’s not difficult. The Demon’s evil energy isn’t something that they can hide easily. But I can’t guarantee how long it would take.”

“The Lucid Swords are responsible for finding Jenta. So we’ll take charge of finding Kaltud.”

Frey nodded at Altan’s words.

Sheryl, too, bowed her head slightly before following Altan.

Her tracking skills were among the best in the Phisfounder Armlets, so she might as well cooperate in the pursuit of Kaltud.

Frey then returned with the Trowman Rings group to their hideout.

It felt like returning home after a long trip, but he didn’t have time to rest.

He immediately took Benieng to a clearing. Then he said to Benieng, who was staring at him with a nervous expression.

“Master Benieng, starting from today, I’ll teach you how to fight Demigods.”

“T-, to me?!”

Frey looked at her shocked expression.

"I'd like Master Beniag to accompany me to Silkid. Don't you want to help repay the Demigods for the massacre they committed there?"

"De-, Demigod subjugation!"

Beniag tried to forcibly suppress her stutter.

It was true that she had matured a bit over the past few months, but she hadn't grown to the extent that she was prepared to have an all-out war with the Demigods.

"...could I really help?"

"I heard it from Hector. He said your skill with handling your Dragon Heart has increased significantly."

Beniag hesitated for a moment before nodding.

Hector's advice had been incredibly effective. It wasn't that Frey's advice had been wrong, but that the words of Hector, who was once a Dragon himself and had his own Dragon heart, was worth its weight in gold.

Thanks to that, Beniag was able to control the power of the Dragon Heart to an extent.

“I heard you can use Dragontongue twice a day.”

“Yes. If I try to use more than that, I’ll lose consciousness.”

“Dragontongue is one of the most effective ways to threaten the Demigods. What I’m focused on isn’t on how many times you can use it, but the fact that you can use it in the first place.”

Frey spoke in a firm tone.

Indeed, the reason that the Dragons were able to fight off the Demigods for so long was because of the devastating power of Dragontongue, a power that was inherent for the Dragons.

Demigods could endure 9 star spells, powerful sword energy, and even the Warrior King’s Fist, but they had no resistance to Dragontongue.

Two times a day wasn’t much, but depending on how it was used, it might play a crucial role in the fight against Agni.

To do that, first, he had to teach her the fundamental rules to remember in a fight against Demigods.

“But before that, I’m curious as to how strong Master Beniang is.”

Beniang’s face went pale.

“W-, with your ability, we don’t have to fight to do that, do we?”

“It would be more accurate to measure you in this way than just by looking. Get ready.”

Frey planned to head to Silkid in a week or two. To be precise, he planned to go there when Anastasia was finished.

‘I need the power of that Golem.’

Although he was stronger now, the opponent this time was an Apocalypse, not a normal Demigod.

There was no reason not to use Schweiser’s final masterpiece for the battle.

“U-, uhh.”

On the other hand, a look of despair came upon Beni-ang’s face as she recalled her past experiences.

* * *

Most of the Trowman Ring’s members left the hideout.

They seemed to have returned to their hometowns so that they could monitor the situation as had been decided by the Circle.

Because of this, the hideout, which wasn't that large, suddenly became empty, but Benieng didn't notice this.

"Come on. Do you think that's enough pressure to stop a Demigod?"

"So-, sorry!"

Benieng shouted a reply and used Dragontongue once again.

Hector looked at this before clicking his tongue.

"I really do think it's better to be strict as you said. Did you already figure out her personality?"

"Master Benieng is a passive person. She's not weak-willed, but she's not driven, and she's not aware of just what her limits are. Therefore, she needs training that would pull her from the front, and push her from the back."

It was a bit coercive, but it was also very effective.

This was one fact that Hector could agree with.

"But how is her talent?"

“She’s pretty good for a Half Dragon, but there are still some limitations.”

“Do you not think she’d be helpful in a fight?”

“It’s not that... I just feel that it’s a shame. She’s a half, but it’s more because her disposition is as you said.”

“Disposition?”

“It’s too moderate. I can feel that she doesn’t like fighting. If you don’t have the right mindset, you can’t get very far. Regardless of what field you’re in.”

“Aren’t Green Dragons originally a pacifist clan?”

Hector turned his head at those words.

“Who told you that bullshit?”

“Well...”

It was the time that Hector, who was normally gentle and cheerful, had ever expressed anger so openly.

And in front of this reaction, Frey couldn't help but sweat slightly.

Hector continued talking in the same disbelieving tone."

"What do you know? They were a clan with dual personalities. When they want to be peaceful then there's nothing wrong with it, but when they go crazy, it's like they don't care about anything anymore. And you wouldn't even know what makes them angry cause they wouldn't tell you even if you asked. When I think about all the times those sons of bitches hurt me..."

His tone grew harsher by the second, and there seemed to be an illusion of fire billowing behind his back.

Frey looked at him.

"What type of Dragon were you, Hector?"

"A Red Dragon."

Frey was immediately convinced.

"Anyway, let's head over to Paragon as soon as Beniag is done here. It might be finished already."

He didn't even need to ask what 'it' was.

It had been a week since he'd started training Benieng, and from what he had been told, he knew that Anastasia should be finished soon.

* * *

When Frey and Hector arrived at the Paragon hideout, they immediately headed towards the workshop.

There they found Diablo and Cairo standing in front of a silver-haired girl laying on a table with her eyes closed.

Hector looked down at this beautiful girl and laughed happily.

“The three best alchemists on the continent joined forces to create a Golem! You could probably buy a few castles with the price of the materials! As for the unbelievable Golem core made by the Great Sage, Schweiser Strow, during the Age of Light? Hoohoo! There will probably not be another Golem who could match up to this child for the next few hundreds of years.”

Frey thought that his rant was a bit exaggerated, but Cairo and Diablo agreed with him.

It was exactly as he said.

The power that this fragile looking girl possessed had long surpassed the known limits of Golems. In all honesty, even they weren't entirely sure how powerful the girl was at that moment.

Hector walked up to the Golem and flipped her over. Then, he began to reach for her clothes before pausing and looking back.

“Would you please respect our Ana’s privacy?”

“What are you talking about?”

“She’s at the age where she would be greatly embarrassed by something like this, so please turn your backs...”

[Enough of your nonsense, put the core in.]

When Diablo said those words coldly, Hector shook his head.

“You guys, don’t ever have a daughter in the future.”

Then Hector began taking off the Golem’s clothes.

What was revealed was smooth back skin. The Golem’s skeleton, skin and even hair were such that it was almost indistinguishable from a normal human.

Just from looking at it, it would be impossible to tell that it was actually a Golem.

“Frey, core.”

Frey handed over the core, and Hector took it and placed it on the Golem’s back.

Shuk.

Then, the core was absorbed into the Golem’s body.

“Stand back.”

Hector stepped back with a slightly nervous face.

Babump-

Suddenly, a heartbeat could be heard.

Those in the room all stared at the Golem, Anastasia, with serious expressions.

Babump-

The beating sound was heard again. This time, it was followed by a small ripple of energy.

Anastasia's core had an output of 1 million ME, which was absolutely terrifying.

'If you only consider the mana capacity, it will surpass Diablo.'

Mana capacity wasn't something that was a very important factor, but it was still a great tool.

In particular, Diablo had lived for more than 1,000 years, so his mana capacity was enormous.

"What synergy! The core has 1 million ME, but the power it can exercise has already surpassed that! Hahaha!"

Hector was filled with joy, laughing like an old buffalo. At the same time, his eyes were filled with affection, similar to a father looking at their little baby.

Shuk.

Then Anastasia opened her eyes, allowing Frey to see them for the first time.

It was a clear, deep turquoise.

She blinked a few times before speaking in a confused voice.

“...the time... how much...”

After going silent for a moment, she spoke once again.

“4,000 years... 7 months, and... 23 days... mm. A lot has passed.”

She pressed a hand on her temple before looking to the side.

“Then are you the future generation who woke me up? It’s a lot later than I expected, but... I’m happy that mankind hasn’t gone extinct yet. I have so many questions.”

“Wh-, what are you talking about... who are you?”

Anastasia laughed and gave a shocking reply.

“I am Schweiser Strow.”

“...Gre-, Great Sage Strow!”

Cairo shouted out in surprise, and Frey clenched his fist subconsciously.

Anastasia chuckled.

“Huhu. It seems my reputation still persists even after 4,000 years. That makes me happy. After all, geniuses shouldn’t be forgotten, no matter how much time passes.”

Then she frowned and touched her throat. (TL:...not sure which pronoun to use...)

“But the voice is a bit strange. Quite similar to a young girl...”

Anastasia finally looked down at her body.

Shuk.

Only

At that moment, because her clothes had been loosened so that they could put in the core, he was able to see a lot of flesh with that small movement.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

No one could speak for a while.

It was as if time had stopped, and space had frozen.

In the end, it was Anastasia who broke the silence.

“Crazy.”

Season 1 Chapter 153: Anastasia (3)

Anastasia was stunned, and it seemed like she was unable to open her mouth for a while.

Then an extremely rare sight unfolded. Hector began to sweat profusely.

They had only seen his easy-going expression before, so it was quite refreshing to see him have such a reaction.

“I-, I’m sorry.”

“...”

“I never would have thought something like this would even in my wildest dreams. I swear.”

“...”

“M-, me too.”

Cairo, who was looking at this scene, couldn't help but confess with a guilty expression.

“It's my fault too.”

“Hm?”

“Anastasia is originally a male name.”

Frey tilted his head at that.

“Is it? It sounds like a female name because of the soft tone.”

“In the ancient eastern regions, it was often used as a man's name. That was where the Great Sage came from. I noticed it before but I didn't say anything because it's common for Golems to not have a sex.”

Then he sighed.

“By the way, I wonder if Schweiser's soul was...”

“...I have no soul.”

Anastasia replied.

She still had a confused expression on her face, but it seemed that she had resigned herself to her fate.

But what did she just say?

“What was that?”

“I don’t have Schweiser’s soul.”

It was said in a much clearer tone than before.

Frey’s expression changed, and Cairo couldn’t help but ask in a strange voice.

“Didn’t you say you were Schweiser Strow?”

“That’s right.”

“But you don’t have a soul?”

“Of course I don’t. Moving souls is not the field of alchemy.”

[Contractors.]

Diablo’s eyes shook slightly as he said.

[It’s the field of Contractors.]

“Right. This Lich is pretty smart.”

[...]

“Of course, most contractors could only dream about reaching such a level. Out of all the Contractors I knew, there was only one who would have been able to do so...”

Anastasia fell silent for a moment before saying.

“...but I didn’t have a very good relationship with her. I couldn’t ask her to do it.”

Frey narrowed his eyes.

“I heard that the Great Sage and the Black Witch weren’t very close, I guess it was true.”

“Even that was passed down? How shameful.”

Anastasia laughed bitterly.

“Besides, if I transferred my soul to this core, then my body would have died. Because of the various complications, I simply copied all of my memories and personality, and put them in the core.”

It was an incredibly shocking statement.

Copying memories and personality?

Frey wasn’t very knowledgeable when it came to alchemy, but he could tell from the faces of those around him just how ridiculous those words were.

“That... is that even possible?”

Cairo spoke with a trembling voice.

“I was only half confident at the time, but seeing that I’m able to think and move like this, it seems my gamble paid off. I must commend you for your alchemy skills. It wouldn’t have been easy to create a body capable of holding the core I created.”

Then, after inspecting her body once again, she said.

“Though it would have been better if it didn’t look like this. I thought it would have been good as long as it was humanoid, but this was out of my calculations...”

“Kuhum. Hum.”

There was a brief cough from somewhere in the room, but Anastasia simply shook her head. It seemed she’d already realised what happened.

After all, this was Schweiser.

“Right, I didn’t even ask your names.”

“Ah. S-, sorry. It’s an honor to meet you, I’m Cairo Wilsemann.”

“...Wilsemann?”

“Is something wrong?”

“Mm. No. It’s nothing.”

Frey felt a bit strange.

Though he didn't think about it too deeply, it appeared that Cairo didn't know that Wilsemann was Schweiser's real last name.

'He doesn't realise that he is looking at his ancestor.'

Then was he from another line with the Wilsemann name? Or...

"I have one question I'd like to ask."

Everyone listened attentively.

Then Anastasia spoke in a slightly cold voice.

"Who was it that found the core?"

Immediately, they all turned to look at Frey. Anastasia also turned to look at Frey.

Her turquoise eyes seemed to comb his entire body. As if she didn't want to miss even a single detail.

"..."

He knew why she was doing this.

The place where Anastasia's core was kept was in the final room in Schweiser's dungeon. And in order to enter that room, one was required to answer the final question asked by Schweiser's hologram.

Schweiser's real name.

This was something that very few people knew.

In fact, seeing that even Cairo, who was Schweiser's descendant, didn't know, it was possible that Frey was the only one.

"I would like to talk to him alone for a moment."

"That..."

Cairo hesitated for a moment, but Frey quietly glanced at him.

Then he nodded, and together with Hector and Diablo, he walked through the door.

Tak.

The door closed behind them.

The two faced each other. They were probably the only ones who had experienced something like this in the long history of the continent.

They had reunited with their best friend after 4,000 years, but they both had different names and faces.

Frey and Anastasia simply looked at each other for a while.

Not Lukas and Schweiser. It was Frey and Anastasia.

Frey had come to realise this fact once again.

“What’s your name?”

“Frey Blake.”

“...”

Anastasia’s expression became complicated, and there seemed to be many things she wanted to say, but Frey opened his mouth before she could do so.

“You can’t use the same name as before. It would be better for you to use the name Anastasia for the time being.”

“What...”

“The stories about us in the modern era seem to have been exaggerated far beyond our expectations.”

“...you.”

Anastasia’s eyes became red, and tears began rolling down her face.

“You came back...?”

“It took 4,000 years.”

Suddenly, Anastasia ran up and hugged Frey, and he hugged her back.

However, his expression became strange. He was clearly hugging his best friend, but what was this soft feeling?

“You bastard, you’re late, you’re really late.”

“It’s great that I could even return. If it was you, it would probably take 4,000 years more.”

“What the hell do you mean by that? Ugh. Dammit. It’s hard to even hug you properly. What the hell is with this body? You, you bastard, do you like this sort of thing? Were you the one who decided to make it like this?”

“It was beyond my control. But I don’t think it’s bad like this.”

“What do you mean?”

“It feels better than hugging a man.”

Anastasia spoke in a disbelieving voice.

“You can make such jokes while looking at me?”

“Kuku.”

Frey chuckled.

He couldn’t remember the last time he’d laughed so cheerfully.

* * *

It was almost as though they had returned to the past. It was a bit strange.

Both had different looks and names from the past. Yet the fact that they were best friends was not changed or doubted.

The more they talked, the more convinced they became.

Both were sure that the other was their closest friend.

They talked endlessly in quiet voices. Then they were silent after a while.

It wasn't that they had run out of things to talk about. It was their first reunion in 4,000 years.

Even talking for a month wouldn't be enough.

So there was no rush. It wasn't like they wouldn't be able to talk as much as they wanted after, it was just that there were some things that had to be discussed first.

"I saw the memory of the earth through Hruhiral. Iris killed you."

"...as expected. Iris was the one who killed me."

Those words sounded a bit awkward.

“As expected?”

“My memories are up until ‘I’ went to see Iris.”

“...I see.”

From the way he spoke, it seemed that he had slightly expected to be killed by Iris.

Anastasia hesitated for a moment before continuing.

“I had my suspicions.”

“About what?”

“That Iris betrayed us. For a reason...”

“That may be. But that is not a good enough reason. You know it too.”

Anastasia fell silent.

“Either way, she still killed you, and destroyed the relationship between Kasajin and Lucid. We cannot forgive her for that. And she has to pay the price for what she did.”

“I don’t think it’s my business anymore.”

Then she spoke with a complex tone.

Maybe it didn’t feel real because she had no memory of dying to Iris.

“You’ll have to make the judgement on your own... but do you think of me as Schweiser?”

“What do you mean?”

“I told you. I’m nothing but a copy of his memories and personality. To put it bluntly, I can’t actually call myself Schweiser.”

Anastasia said this in a slightly uneasy tone.

Nevertheless, Frey understood her troubles to an extent. She didn’t speak about her feelings, but it was clear that she was unsure about her identity.

This was natural. The situation she was in was quite special.

Therefore, he spoke in a calm voice.

“That’s something for you to ponder.”

“Huh?”

“I have a lot of other problems to think about. So roll that around in your head on your own. I don’t know if I’d have the time to think about that in the first place.”

From now on, he would be extremely busy every second he was awake.

When she heard Frey’s casual response, Anastasia’s expression became blank.

“Is that it?”

“When you get your answer, tell me. Whether you’re Schweiser or someone else. Then I’ll think about it.”

“...haha.”

Anastasia laughed.

“Right. You were always like that.”

“There are more things you need to know. I’ll try to be as concise as I can, so listen carefully.”

“I’m all ears.”

How the world changed, what was the continent’s current situation, and how they would move in the future.

Frey spoke for a long time.

* * *

“You did a good job today, Great Warrior.”

An Orc bowed his head.

Ivan roughly bandaged his arm while grumbling.

“I’m not a Great Warrior.”

“You still say that. Give up. You are a warrior among warriors, and you have the charisma to lead the tribe. Without you, the monsters would have already wiped us out.”

It wasn't exactly monsters. Instead, they were actually Demigod Creatures. They were fast, strong, and tough.

They were so powerful that even Silkid's greatest warriors were barely able to handle them.

These creatures first appeared after the fall of Talhadun.

After that, these creatures began appearing randomly all over Silkid, and began an indiscriminate massacre.

No city was considered safe from these monsters, as they came in huge armies, like ants.

Ivan was wandering around Silkid looking for Kasajin's items when he saw a group of creatures attacking this group.

He couldn't pretend he didn't see them, so he saved them, but since then, these guys had been calling him 'Great Warrior', and started following him.

'It hasn't been that long but they've already grown a lot.'

At first, there were only around twenty people, but now, the group had swelled to around 100.

Getting food in itself was tricky, but the truly annoying part was word of mouth. Most of the Warchiefs, the core forces of Talhadun, had died in the fall of the city.

Fortunately, several Warchiefs and other great commanders had survived, but the fact remained that they were few in number.

Therefore, for the people of Silkid, rumors about Ivan would have the same response as the coming of the Saviour.

A hero wandering around Silkid and gathering strong warriors! His fists made it seem as though the Magic Warrior King Kasajin had returned!

At first, it was just considered a silly rumor, but it gradually gained weight, and eventually, it sprouted wings and flew away.

It took less than a week for that to happen.

And from that point, they began calling Ivan 'Great Warrior'. Of course, Ivan loathed this title that had been placed upon him.

'It's rotten. Who cares about that.'

Ivan clicked his tongue as he had that thought.

Then a Centaur walked into his tent.

“Great Warrior, someone has come to see you.”

“What is it? Are there more warriors who came because of the rumors?”

“I don’t think so. She didn’t appear to be a warrior.”

Annoyed, Ivan could only wave his hand and say.

“Tell them to come in first.”

“Understood.”

Soon, someone walked into the tent.

When she walked in, the dark tent seemed to brighten up. This wasn’t a metaphor. Her hair, which looked like fire itself, seemed to contain light more intense than the candlelight in the tent.

Ivan narrowed his eyes.

‘Definitely not a warrior.’

It was usually apparent on a woman's body whether she trained or not. His teacher looked like a child, but under that fragile appearance, her condensed muscles were easily visible.

In that sense, it was clear that this woman was far from a warrior.

"Who are you?"

"...I'm called Torkunta."

Only

It wasn't the strangest name he'd heard.

"Right, Torkunta. What is it that you want?"

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

"What is it?"

The woman, Torkunta, took a deep breath before speaking in a heavy voice.

"Kill me."

Season 1 Chapter 154: Anastasia (4)

Frey told Anastasia everything that happened.

It was literally everything.

Frey didn't hide anything from her. It was probably the first time he'd been so honest to someone since he'd entered Frey Blake's body.

Anastasia's expression became more and more serious with each story that she heard.

Then she looked surprised at Riki's betrayal.

"A Demigod betrayed them?"

"That's right."

"That's really hard to believe."

"It seems he was influenced by Lucid."

Then Frey continued with a bitter tone.

“He continued helping us even after death.”

Frey thought of Lucid for a moment. Since Lucid was the biggest contributor to Riki’s change of heart, it would be safe to say that his influence could be felt even 4,000 years after his death.

“So he put all the other Apocalypses in a near death state on his own?”

“Can you not believe it?”

“...would you believe it? Apocalypses are all like that old man who used poison. The Demigods who were as powerful as him could probably only be counted on one hand.”

Frey nodded.

Then Anastasia spoke with a ridiculous expression on her face.

“It’s really hard to believe, but... if it’s true, that’s pretty amazing.”

“Riki was the number two among the Demigods, both in name and ability.”

That was what made it even more unfortunate.

As the fight against the Demigods became fiercer, the greater the role Riki could have played. If he was still alive, the war situation would have been many times better than it was now.

However, this wasn't the time to be disappointed.

Riki was already dead, and while it was not completely guaranteed at the moment, they had gained another partner.

"There is a Demigod named Elliah, who helped me reach 9 stars."

"I guess the world really has changed a lot. We would never have imagined something like a Demigod traitor back in our day."

Anastasia's grumbling wasn't unreasonable. Even Frey had not fully believed it at first when he learned about Riki's betrayal.

"After that, the countries known as Geotambul and Silkid were destroyed, right?"

"For Silkid, only the capital city Talhadun, disappeared. The Great Chief seems to have kept his life."

"Hmm..."

After thinking to herself for a moment, Anastasia then said.

“There is too little information.”

“I agree.”

“We need to know why they destroyed two countries. Above all, it would be great if we could predict Lord’s movements...”

Frey nodded.

Lord was literally a walking natural disaster. And since he was not as predictable as a common natural disaster, and he was far, far worse.

‘His space-time movement is troublesome.’

He was an absolute existence who had a risk free means of transport to almost any location he desired. The fact that Lord could appear and disappear at will anywhere on the continent meant that preparation and defense were meaningless.

Anastasia spoke after a moment of silence.

“There’s a way to monitor his movements.”

“What is it?”

“We can get help from Iris.”

“...what?”

Frey frowned deeply, but Anastasia continued talking as though she didn't notice her expression.

“As you said. Iris is Lord's Apostle. Since she can use Lord's power, she should be able to predict his movements to an extent.”

“How are we supposed to trust her?”

“You said she saved your life.”

Anastasia's words made Frey speechless.

“When Riki died, if Iris didn't appear to stop Lord then you would be dead. You know that.”

“...”

There was nothing he could say.

Frey hadn't thought deeply about this before. No, to be precise, he had intentionally avoided thinking about it.

He wanted Iris to remain a traitor.

'I didn't want this to get any more complicated.'

Realising this, Frey sighed.

"One thing is clear, Lukas. Iris is not someone who would ever betray you."

"She betrayed us."

"Stupid, she didn't betray you, she betrayed us."

Frey frowned.

"It's the same, betraying you means betraying me." (TL: at this point, I don't know if he's intentionally dense or pretending)

"Hoo. I can't believe I have to explain this to the guy called the Great Mage."

Anastasia awkwardly reached her hand to her chest, then as if realising something, her hand fell to her side once again.

“What are you doing.”

“I don’t have a beard. Stroking it helped me calm down. Now, everything’s changed.”

“Would you like us to give you a beard?”

“No thanks.”

Anastasia sighed.

“Do you think I have good feelings toward her? We weren’t really close even before she betrayed us. Ha. Really. Even though I’ve lived for such a long time, I never would have thought that I would take her side.”

Anastasia laughed for a moment before her expression became serious once again.

“...there is one thing that I can be certain about. Even if Iris betrayed the entire world, she would never betray you. Unless her mind is controlled.”

“...”

“Relax, Lukas. I know how deeply you care for all of us. But now it’s time to let go of your personal feelings.”

Anastasia was right.

Frey suppressed his pent up feelings. Maybe it was because he'd reached 9 stars. His emotions seemed to have become more intense than when he was in 8 stars.

That's why this sensitive topic affected him so much.

"Understood."

"Good. So do we have any way to meet Iris?"

"I don't, And it would be difficult to meet her openly. The Demigods and their Apostles are connected mentally."

If they didn't use shortcuts like Nix and Torkunta, there was no way for them to escape the Demigods' surveillance.

Maybe Iris had a way.

"...ah. As I listened to your story, I had a question."

"What is it?"

“The Dragons. Are they really dead?”

“Mm.”

Frey shook his head after a moment.

“I don’t know. There’s no way to check.”

“But the fact that there was a Half Dragon means they were still active not so long ago.”

“Right.”

In addition, there was also Hector who was trapped in a human body after losing his body to the Demigods.

“The Half Dragon probably wouldn’t know much, so it would be better to ask Hector. Please call him here for a moment. I have something to ask him.”

It seemed Anastasia was thinking the same thing as she then spoke up. Frey nodded, went out, and brought Hector, who then sat politely in front of her with a pensive expression.

“No way.”

“What’s wrong?”

“The core and Sia have become one. Have you reached a state of unity, where the core became Sia and Sia became the core?” (TL: pronounced ‘sha’)

“What is ‘Sia’?”

“It’s a nickname.”

Frey clicked his tongue, remembering the name ‘Anastasia’.

It seemed Hector hadn’t fully gotten over it yet. He probably expected Anastasia to ask him to change bodies.

But as an authority in alchemy, he knew how ridiculous that thought was. Apart from the fusion of the core and the body, there was almost no way to reproduce a Golem with the same quality as Anastasia.

“Nevermind. I just wanted to talk to you about Dragons.”

Anastasia was polite because she knew Hector was once a Dragon.

When he saw this, Hector spoke with a strange expression on his face.

“That feels weird. You don’t have to be polite when you talk to me. Like Frey.”

“...”

That was right.

Frey and Anastasia were great figures from 4,000 years ago. People who knew them would remember their amazing feat of fighting off the Demigods in a time when no one else would.

And if they knew that, then they had no choice but to pay their respects.

“Well. Enough of that. Please ask your question.”

“Are all the Dragons really dead?”

“For the most part. Some of them are stuck doing chores like I was.”

It was the same question Frey had asked him in the past. But now, they could ask even more questions than at that time.

“Mostly. Then there are still living Dragons.”

“I don’t know. I don’t know if you know this, but it’s not like we used to have any close relationships with each other or anything like that.”

Frey and Anastasia nodded at the same time.

They were certainly a race with strong, individualistic tendencies.

“Then I’ll change my question. Where is the Dragon Lord?”

Hector’s face changed. His light attitude evaporated in an instant and instead, it was replaced with a serious expression.

For a moment, Frey felt like he was looking at his teacher.

He tilted his head.

“Dragon Lord?”

Did the Dragons have a Lord?

He had never heard the term before, but from the look on Hector’s face, Frey knew that it was something serious.

“How do you know about that? Among the Dragons, only the ancients know...”

“I got the help of a Blue Dragon when making this core. It was a Dragon named Aitlans.”

“Mm... Aitlans. He...”

Hector clicked his tongue before sighing.

“The Dragon Lord is dead.”

“Don’t lie to me. The Dragon Lord is a natural being connected to the continent. If he dies, the continent would be destroyed.”

“To be precise, he’s in a state that is no better than death.”

“Huh?”

Anastasia’s expression became one of confusion.

On the other hand, Hector, whose expression was incredibly calm, continued.

“I only know about it from the records. It should have been 1,000 years before the Great Sage was born, so 5,000 years ago. The Demigods’ Lord and the Dragons’ Lord. Two absolute beings, fought, and the Dragon Lord lost. Like you said, the Dragon Lord is connected to the continent. So Lord didn’t kill him, instead, he trapped him in another world.”

The process was a bit different, but it was still similar to his own case, so Frey couldn’t stop himself from asking.

“The Abyss?”

“Where’s that? I’ve never heard of that name before.”

Guess not.

“Then where is he?”

“The Demon World.”

At that moment, he thought he’d heard wrong. Therefore, Frey subconsciously asked him again.

“...where?”

“The Demon World. The world where the Demons live.”

Frey clicked his tongue.

The Demon World.

The Land of the Demons was a place that no human had ever set foot.

* * *

“This is probably the first time in history.”

Iris looked back while feeling the hot, unpleasant breeze that she'd never felt before.

Standing there was a pale young man. Though his appearance could not be seen clearly, she knew that this was Lucifer, one of the six Archdukes of the Demon World.

He had been reigning over his domain, the Corrupted Hell, for the longest time among the Archdukes, and many Demons would readily open their mouths and proclaim that he was the true ruler of the Demon World.

In fact, even the proud Asura admitted that Lucifer was one level above him.

Lucifer narrowed his eyes before saying.

“A human actually came to the Demon World. Calling you a genius really isn’t enough. It’s unfortunate. It’s really unfortunate. If you were born a Demon, you definitely would have been equal to me, if not greater.”

Iris’ expression remained cold.

Lucifer couldn’t even remember the last time she’d actually shown any emotion since her heart died 4,000 years ago.

Maybe this was just a way to protect herself. After all, no matter how firm and strong-willed she was, she was still human.

There was no way she could have survived 4,000 without any changes in her mindset.

Therefore, she suppressed her emotions, forgot her personal thoughts, and only focused on her mission.

Lucifer felt that she was no different from a corpse. Perhaps she didn’t even have a sense of self left.

The end for people like this was usually quite miserable.

Either they ran away or they collapsed.

Only

It was such a shame. The only person he'd signed a contract to, and the only other existence he'd actually acknowledged, would end up in such a miserable state.

"Where are you going?"

"To where the Dragon Lord is. Lucifer, you know where Lord placed him."

"I do. But what are you going to do?"

"About 5,000 years have passed since he was sealed. If it goes as I expect, he should be opening his eyes soon."

Iris spoke with a cold glint in her eyes.

"I will stop him."

Season 1 Chapter 155: Silkid (1)

They decided to put the Dragon Lord on hold for now. After all, even if they were sure he was sealed in the Demon World, they couldn't reach him with their human bodies anyway.

'Should I ask Asura for help?'

Frey had this thought for a moment before he shook his head. He didn't believe Asura would accept such a troublesome and dire request.

Even if they had a good relationship, he couldn't forget that Asura was whimsical.

Their contract was also half-baked at best.

'First things first: Silkid.'

But before that, he would have to meet Nix again.

Frey was about to leave when he turned to look at Anastasia.

"I'm going to the Ispania Mountains. Would you like to go with me?"

"I'd love to."

When she nodded her head, Frey immediately used Warp to carry them to the Ispania Mountains.

Shuk.

After feeling the Warp, Anastasia nodded appreciatively.

"You're definitely 9 stars again."

“I told you that already.”

“I still wanted to see it for myself. In any case, that’s a relief. Mm. In fact, I think you’re even stronger than you were in the past.”

“Am I?”

“You consumed a bunch of powerful elixirs like the Frozen River from me, the Drake’s heart and the Demigod’s crystal, so it’s natural.”

Indeed.

To collect this much mana the usual way, one would have to devote oneself to meditation for decades in a place with high mana density and minimal distractions.

In addition, after training his mind for 4,000 years in the Abyss, it was safe to say he had long surpassed the Lukas Trowman of the past.

Anastasia looked at the mountains surrounding them with a deep gaze.

“It feels like this place didn’t change much.”

“It’s been 4,000 years, so it definitely feels different.”

“Hmm. Well, for me, I just feel like I woke up from a very deep sleep. It still doesn’t feel like 4,000 years have passed.”

From Anastasia’s perspective, it was like she was just continuing from where her memories were cut off, so she couldn’t really feel the time difference.

The amount of time that passed was the same, but her situation was very different from Frey’s.

Frey went to the same rock, where he sat last time and waited for Nix. Anastasia looked around for a bit before saying she would go to the dungeon.

Frey nodded because he didn’t think he’d have to wait too long.

An hour passed.

“...”

As time went by, Frey couldn’t help but get up from his seat. The last time he came here, Nix had arrived in less than thirty minutes.

‘Did something happen?’

In the first place, Nix was placed in a very precarious position from the moment she was made into Agni's Apostle.

Therefore, he would understand if she encountered a dangerous situation, but he didn't believe she would disappear without a trace.

As he was agonising over this.

Kiiik....

Someone hesitantly approached Frey.

It wasn't a human. It was a monster. However, instead of a Drake, it was a Goblin with a large, protruding belly.

It was much larger than ordinary Goblins.

With a curious gaze, Anastasia looked at it while saying.

"The size of Goblins has really changed a lot in 4,000 years."

"The monsters here are larger than normal."

“I know that, but the Ispanian Goblin I saw 4,000 years ago wasn’t this big.”

“Then, isn’t it just mutated?”

The Goblin opened its mouth while they were having their silly conversation.

“Grey hair, human, Master’s Master, came.”

The Goblin looked at Frey with shaking eyes. It was clear that it was terrified.

“Master’s Master.”

By master... it should be referring to Nix. It seemed she’d become the ruler of the entire mountain range.

And the Nix’s master... was that referring to himself?

“What did Nix want you to say to me?”

“Ma-, Master said. A dangerous situation. Came. Can’t. Hold on.”

“ ... ”

“So will create. A flaw. For Master’s Master to. Take advantage of.”

He couldn’t understand what it meant, and from Anastasia’s confused expression, it was clear that she didn’t understand either.

When Frey pressed the Goblin more, it only repeated those words with a terrified look on its face before finally saying just one word with a shaking body and a tearful expression.

“Si-, Silkid. Silkid. Silkid...”

He reluctantly sent the Goblin back, and it hurriedly disappeared without any hesitation.

Frey grew anxious.

“Dangerous situation.”

Agni should not have been able to move properly at that moment.

Frey bit his lip.

He had probably woken up. Frey’s original plan had been to deal with him while he was in a weakened state, but if he had somehow made a recovery...

“I don’t know anything else, but I do know where we need to go now.”

Frey nodded.

They had to go to Silkid.

* * *

He woke up but didn’t open his eyes right away as he felt like dozens of loaches were wriggling around in his head.

When was the last time he’d gotten a good night’s rest?

Ever since he’d come to the desert, he wasn’t able to get more than four hours of rest a day. (TL: relatable... my life is the desert)

But he had no choice but to reduce his hours of sleep since he had to keep up his training regimen.

Ivan sighed heavily before leaving the tent.

The sky was bluish, and it seemed dawn was approaching.

Ivan went to the warriors who were keeping watch and asked.

“Is everything okay?”

“There were no problems.”

The night before seemed to have passed quietly.

Ivan scratched his head while asking another question.

“The suicidal girl...”

“It seems she left during the night.”

“...she didn’t appear to be possessed. This was the first time a woman came to me and asked me to kill her. Even in such a tumultuous situation.”

Ivan thought of the night before.

A red-haired woman came and asked him to kill her. Ivan judged her as a madwoman, and he promptly kicked her out.

So she bit her lip and left.

'It looked like she had a lot to say.'

But she didn't open her mouth in the end. She looked like it was urgent, and she was desperate.

It was a rather strange story.

A woman who was desperate to die. If she wanted to die so badly, she could've just hanged herself rather than come to him.

"Hoo."

Ivan suppressed his thoughts about her. He didn't have the time to think about something like that.

The warriors began to come out of their tents one after another, and light slowly spilled over the horizon.

The light soon covered the desert.

They had made their camp on high ground, so they could see the surrounding area with ease.

Naturally, this allowed them to see the swarm of monsters charging in from the east.

“It would have been pretty bad if I woke up ten minutes later.”

“It seems their numbers are gradually increasing.”

“So disgusting. It looks like there are hundreds of them.”

“...‘Kuraksar’ is in that direction.”

It was an Orc Warrior who spoke with a heavy voice.

His name was Guarus, and he was the most outstanding warrior out of the hundred or so gathered there.

Not counting Ivan, of course.

His analytical and physical abilities were both excellent, which was why Ivan remembered his name quickly.

He was also the one who first praised Ivan as the Great Warrior.

“Just what kind of magic are they using? Even when we wander around, they still find us as though they have dog noses.”

“It can only be one of two things. One, they have an excellent tracker.”

Guaras turned back, his cold eyes settling on the warriors.

“Or there is a traitor telling them exactly where we are.”

* * *

The reason why Talhadun was able to become the capital of Silkid was because, before anything else, it was the location of the largest oasis in the desert.

Now, there were no longer any traces of warriors in Talhadun. Most of the buildings were either partially or completely destroyed.

It was a terrible sight as if a powerful sandstorm had swept through it. But the oasis had been able to maintain its original form, which was close to a miracle.

No.

In truth, it had nothing to do with miracles.

There was only one reason. Because Agni didn't destroy it.

With his power, it was a very simple task to evaporate the entire oasis.

But Agni didn't do that.

[What is it that you wanted to talk about?]

He turned around and found Nozdog standing there.

Agni noticed that there was a bit of annoyance in his voice.

[Speak quickly. I'm also in charge of an area.]

"I wonder what you think about Leyrin's disappearance."

The answer didn't come immediately.

Nozdog didn't have any expression on his face, but Agni noticed that there were no ripples in his breathing.

[Leyrin sacrificed herself to awaken the three of us. That's all. It's a simple story.]

"That wasn't a sacrifice. It wasn't Leyrin's will. It was all Lord's idea to convert her into divine power and inject it into us."

[What's the difference?]

"What..."

Nozdog seemed to sigh.

[The will of Lord is the will of all Demigods. This might have happened while Leyrin was hibernating, but if she was awake, she would definitely have met her end with a smile. So would I, and so would Ananta.]

Nozdog's fierce gaze turned to Agni.

[Aren't you the same?]

"Yes."

It was true.

If Lord asked him to sacrifice himself, he would do so without any hesitation.

But...

“Lord didn’t tell us about the sacrifice.”

That was what confused Agni.

“Even after leading the Demigods for such a long time, he never asked us to sacrifice ourselves.”

For the Demigods, Lord was many things.

A guide, a pioneer, a leader.

For the Demigods, the most benevolent being was their Lord.

That was why it was strange for Agni, a Demigod, to question why Lord sacrificed one Demigod to save three.

[Something must have changed, but I don’t think Lord did anything wrong.]

“I...”

[Why don't you trust Lord?]

There was hostility in Nozdog's voice.

Agni fell silent for a moment before responding honestly.

"I'm not sure yet."

How to deal with Lord and why he was so agitated.

Nozdog was dumbfounded for a moment before he spoke in a disbelieving voice.

[No way. Have you suddenly started respecting the mortals' stance and whatnot?]

"No."

Agni shook his head firmly without hesitation.

No matter how many races other than Demigods died, it had nothing to do with him.

It wasn't out of sympathy that he spared Talhadun. It was because Lord's actions made him uncomfortable, and he wondered if destroying Talhadun would have had a positive effect on the Demigods.

He hated the fact that the thought 'run away' kept popping up whenever he looked at Lord.

All Demigods were free, dignified and equal. It was none other than Lord who taught them that.

But wasn't the same Lord the one who wanted to sacrifice an innocent Demigod to save Riki?

Agni wanted to bring this up, but he chose to keep his mouth closed.

The source of this information was Iris, and since Nozdog hated her, he wouldn't have believed it even if he told him.

[I don't care as long as you don't step on the same path as Riki. Experiencing fighting my own kind once was enough.]

That was the only consolation that Nozdog could give him.

'There's no need to ask Ananta's opinion.'

He would probably have the same thoughts as Nozdog.

Agni wondered why he was the only one out of the three who was confused.

The answer came easily.

Leyrin's existence was particularly special to Agni. Her death saddened him more than anyone else.

Nozdog, who was about to leave, suddenly asked a question.

[This might be a pointless question. But Agni, how are you managing your Apostle?]

"Managing?"

[Frey Blake.]

He was the greatest enemy of the Demigods at that moment. After saying his name, Nozdog continued.

[He knows all of our Apostles. That means he knows all of our weaknesses. He's also very cunning, so you should pay extra attention to your Apostle.]

"What did you do?"

[My Apostle is somewhere the humans would never be able to find.]

Only

Nozdog laughed darkly.

[Ananta's Apostle appears to be very proficient at hiding. And Lord doesn't have to worry about his at all.]

"I have a relatively moderate method."

[Moderate? What do you intend to do?]

"I was thinking of a way to get rid of this 'weakness' entirely."

Agni paused for a moment before continuing.

"And it matches well since my Apostle is a Phoenix. If I achieve the conditions, I will no longer need an Apostle."

Season 1 Chapter 156: Silkid (2)

"How long are you going to keep running away?"

There was no one around, but Torkunta grumbled.

Then, despite receiving no response, she grit her teeth.

“Didn’t I tell you? I have no intention of accompanying you on your suicide quest. Understand? You’re the only one that’s gonna die.”

There was silence again before Torkunta’s expression became even more grim.

“You’re so young.”

Torkunta, who seemed so upset she would vomit, suddenly sighed.

“You’re afraid of dying, yet you claim to want to sacrifice yourself. It’s not even for your own satisfaction. Hmph.”

“...”

“Then do it yourself. I’m letting go of the reins. But I should warn you. You didn’t forget your promise, did you?”

Torkunta bit her lips before saying one more thing.

“Stupid bitch.”

* * *

Hot winds blew across the desert.

Frey narrowed his eyes as he looked ahead. The half-hidden sun was tinting the golden earth scarlet.

It was an incredibly beautiful sight, but unfortunately, he didn't have the time to admire it.

Cairo looked at Frey and said.

"I'm sorry. I wish I could help you, but..."

"No."

Frey shook his head.

It was already enough for him to warp them there.

The only reason he'd asked Cairo for help in the first place was because he didn't know Silkid's coordinates.

Paragon was still busy with its own business.

Cairo nodded.

“There is a warrior from Paragon in Rnei. He and Nora are acquainted, and he should be able to tell you about the situation in Silkid.”

Cairo left with those words.

Frey then turned around to look at the ones who'd gone to Silkid with him.

Snow, Nora, and Benieng.

Anastasia didn't come.

Frey remembered what she'd said before they parted.

“I need time.”

“What do you mean by time?”

“Time to get used to this body. I don't think I can use it to fight the way I used to.”

Frey nodded.

Although the Golem's body could control mana, it was a body that was more suited for a Magic Warrior than a Wizard.

So like it or not, she would have to learn to fight with her body from now on instead of with magic. Because it was more efficient.

To do that, she would need to get rid of all the stereotypical combat methods and habits that she'd developed as a Wizard.

"You want to train here?"

"I think it's a good place."

"That's true, but how will you get to Silkid?"

He didn't think Anastasia's body could use Warp.

Anastasia laughed.

"There's a way."

She tapped on her earrings that hadn't been there when they first came to the mountains.

"That's?"

"I brought it out of the dungeon. And this is for you."

Then she handed him a ring.

"Keep it on. It'll tell me where you are."

Both were magic items.

Frey nodded and put the ring on.

"Understood."

"As soon as I get used to my body, I'll head over."

"Keeping my word is one of my ironclad rules."

Anastasia nodded.

Thus, Anastasia's arrival would be a bit delayed.

"The entire desert is covered in divine power. Even when seeing it for myself, I find it hard to believe. I can't believe the Demigods are revealing themselves like this."

Nora spoke in a calm voice, and Frey agreed with her.

Divine power indeed covered the entire desert. It was like a beast deliberately marking its territory with its scent.

'Considering the size of Silkid, it couldn't be just one.'

This meant that they wouldn't be able to tell how many Demigods were staying in the desert.

Naturally, this meant that they had to move as stealthily as possible.

Frey took out a map from his bag and looked at it.

"Rnei. It's close. We'll go there to obtain information first."

Cairo must have brought them this close on purpose. Frey was once again grateful for his consideration.

Then Snow spoke.

“Wasn’t it said that creatures swept all the cities in the country? I don’t think he would still be there.”

“Hmm.”

That made sense.

“I’ll still check it out first.”

He then flew up into the sky using Fly. When he got high enough, he was able to see the blurry image of Rnei.

From what he could see, the buildings were not destroyed, so from the outside, it still looked fine.

‘I don’t know if a Demigod is there or not.’

With all the divine power scattered across the desert, it was impossible for him to determine a specific source.

‘It’s a good thing that they can’t find us easily either.’

Frey then pointed to Rnei and said.

“Let’s walk. It’ll take a couple of hours to get there.”

Using Warp would be too conspicuous.

“I’m so glad it’s not midday~ It’s less hot.”

Snow spoke in a relaxed tone as the party headed to Rnei with a rapid pace.

Frey looked at the desolate desert before turning to Nora.

“Who exactly is the Paragon member in Rnei?”

“A warrior.”

Nora thought that answer was not enough, so she continued.

“He was once a Great Warrior who was spoken about in history.”

“Great Warrior?”

“It is one of the highest honours one can receive in Silkid.”

It was Snow who answered.

Frey then turned to her and said suspiciously.

“You know quite a lot about a country that’s on the opposite side of the continent.”

Just as he’d said, Silkid and the Great Forest were indeed on opposite sides of the continent.

Snow put on a triumphant expression at his words.

“Hoohoo! It was this queen’s dream to travel around the continent and challenge the strong! The strongest fighters in every region on the continent.”

After saying that, she tilted her head.

“Mm. But in the last ten years, there hasn’t been a Great Warrior in Silkid.”

“It is a title that can only be given to one person. But lately, many outstanding warriors have appeared. Guarus the Berserker, Heildek the Grappler, Twin Blade Urha... if the Demigods hadn’t destroyed Talhadun, there definitely would have been the most spectacular martial arts competition in history.”

“Hmmm.”

“Urha is the Paragon member. He’s a swordsman who uses the Fire and Ice Swords.”

Twin Blades.

In the past, Frey had once asked Lucid, who had countless legendary swords, why he insisted on using just one sword.

Then Lucid gave him one simple response.

[It’s not efficient.]

There was nothing wrong with wearing many magical items. Of course, Frey avoided using them to avoid being dependent on them.

But it didn’t seem to be the same for swords.

Now that he thought about it, Riki also used just one sword.

Although he hid many small daggers in his pockets, when fighting, he only drew one sword.

[Then why are you collecting so many swords?]

Lucid's answer to this question was spectacular.

[It's my hobby. Please respect it.]

[...]

Twin Blade Urha.

He should at least have had some skill since he was able to become a member of Paragon. But Frey wondered just how strong he was.

It was at that time that he noticed Beniang moving forward with an exceptionally stiff expression on her face.

"Master Beniang, you don't have to be so tense. We're not going to fight any Demigods yet."

"Ah, I see. Thank you."

Beniang smiled shyly and bowed her head.

Her Dragontongue would be a great help in battle against the Demigods.

Then Frey saw Snow turn to look at him.

“What is it?”

“It’s unfair.”

“What is?”

“Why do you only use honorifics with that woman?”

“She’s my superior.”

“...you used to use honorifics with this queen too.”

“That was when you were still a queen.”

“Mm...”

Snow pouted, clearly not convinced.

Then Nora asked.

“What about Hector?”

“There’s nothing to compare. He’s a Dragon. That alone makes him deserving of respect.”

“ ... ”

What a strange man.

Nora and Snow had this thought at the same time. All of them had lived for a sizable amount of time, yet they still got an archaic feeling from this young man who wasn’t even thirty.

Could this be called a generation gap?

Strangely enough, it was the girls who had the trendier way of thinking.

After all, it had been hundreds of years since the Dragons disappeared from the continent. Only stories of them could be heard from time to time, and even then, most of the stories were about them losing to the Demigods.

Nevertheless, Frey was extremely polite to Hector.

This was something that was extremely strange when considering that he spoke informally to Cairo, Diablo, and the other Circle Masters.

It was almost as if he had seen the time period when Dragons ruled the continent in the past.

Him using honorifics to Benieng might not necessarily have been because she was his superior. It might just have been because she was Half-Dragon.

‘What kind of relationship does Frey have with the Dragons?’

They wanted to ask, but they didn’t think they would get an answer.

Just as Snow clicked her tongue, they arrived at Rnei.

* * *

“Silkid is finished.”

There wasn’t anyone who didn’t know that fact.

But the power those words contained depended on who was saying them.

Take the man in front of him for example.

Sarman, the Warchief and guardian of Rnei, was not someone who should say such words.

Urha frowned, opening his mouth before reluctantly closing it again.

He was angry, but he couldn't argue.

Sarman continued in a deep voice.

"Of 17 cities, 7 have already fallen and 4 have surrendered. There are only 6 cities left including Rnei."

"Are you going to surrender?"

Sarman shook his head at Urha's words.

"I just got a report. What happened to the 7 cities... saying their fall is not appropriate."

"..."

"Entire cities vanished. They're gone. All that was left were ashes that were blown by the desert winds. That's when I realised. We cannot expect any mercy from these monsters."

To die or to surrender: those were the only two options.

“So you, a Warchief, plan to surrender.”

Urha understood Sarman’s feelings, but that didn’t stop him from speaking in a sharp tone.

“Do you know the will of a warrior?”

“...it is to fight.”

“So you do know.”

Then Sarman continued with an empty voice.

“Against the Demigods, we cannot fight.”

They had no chance of winning.

Sarman bit his lip.

The bitter taste of blood spread on his tongue, but the strength of his bite didn’t diminish at all.

How could he not be angry? His family, friends, and people had died. They were still dying even now.

But they couldn't talk to the Demigods. There was no negotiation.

They asked for one thing – surrender. Those who disobeyed would die.

They would die regardless of sex or age.

Even the term tyrannical could not express their attitudes. Their actions weren't things that mortals could understand.

Even a fly wouldn't do so vainly.

"Have you heard the rumors of the Great Warrior?"

"...I have."

There was a warrior wandering around Silkid, gathering the other warriors together. It was said that his name was Ivan.

Given that this was the first time many were hearing his name, it was certain that he wasn't someone who was famous before.

"I heard that he's the Magic Warrior King's Successor."

“...even if Kasajin himself returned, he would not be able to change this situation.”

Sarman spoke coolly.

Then he added in a dejected tone.

“The number of warriors is still lacking. What we lack at the moment is troops.”

They couldn't fight the Demigods with warriors alone. Urha fell silent because he also knew that.

Then someone came into the tent.

“Urha, you have guests.”

“Guests?”

“They say they're from Paragon.”

“...!”

He got up in a hurry.

Unexpected reinforcements had arrived.

'Is it Diablo? No, even Cairo!'

9 star Wizards!

Any one of them would be able to convince Sarman.

Urha hurried out.

The first person he saw was Nora. Because she was in front.

Seeing him, Nora lifted her head and spoke in her signature, calm voice.

"It's been a while, Urha."

Only

"Ms. Nora, how have you been?"

Urha returned the greeting out of courtesy while looking around.

'Ah...'

Neither Cairo nor Diablo were there.

The only ones standing beside Nora were a woman with a mask, a timid looking green-haired girl, and a young man with an expressionless face.

He didn't know any of them. This also meant that they weren't helpers from Paragon.

Urha couldn't help but sigh in disappointment.

Season 1 Chapter 157: Silkid (3)

"Urha?"

"...ah. My apologies."

Nora's voice woke Urha from his thoughts.

Then, he stepped forward and extended his hand towards the party beside her.

"This one is called Urha. I hope you can understand that I couldn't give you a proper welcome because of the current situation."

“I’m Frey, and I understand completely. Is the situation bad?”

Frey?

He’d heard the name somewhere before.

Urha narrowed his eyes for a moment, but he came to his senses when Frey’s cool hand touched his.

They did a few perfunctory hand movements before releasing their grip.

“It’s not good. Are you our reinforcements?”

“Right. I’m from the Circle.”

“The Circle... ah. It’s you. The Trowman Rings’ young Circle Rounder.”

Frey nodded.

The Circle didn’t even know about Paragon’s existence, but Paragon had a good grasp on everything happening in the Circle.

He'd also felt this during his conversation with Cairo.

Of course, it didn't seem like he knew about the recent activities. Perhaps Cairo didn't have the time to spread the information.

"I've also heard of your prestige."

His appearance wasn't quite what he'd expected.

Frey looked at Urha.

He looked to be about 30 or so years old, but he gave off a fragile feeling unbefitting of a desert Warrior.

His whole body wasn't filled with muscles like Ivan, nor was his aura as fierce as Ivan's. And his smile wasn't confident like...

'...'

Frey became puzzled for a moment.

Before he knew it, the image of 'Warrior' in his mind had become Ivan.

But he wasn't a Warrior; he was a Magic Warrior.

No.

What exactly was the difference between a Warrior and a Magic Warrior?

“I’m Beniang.”

“Snow.”

Short voices sounded at that moment.

Frey turned to look at Snow.

“You’re using your real name?”

“What’s wrong with that? We’re on the other side of the continent. And it’s annoying to use aliases.”

Although Snow said this in a casual tone, Frey was certain that only the latter part of the sentence truly mattered.

Nora looked at Urha and said.

“Urha, we want to know the current situation in Silkid.”

“Please follow me.”

Urha nodded before turning around.

Frey looked around as they walked behind Urha.

“U-, urk...”

“Damn.”

“Hey, are there any more herbs?”

There was no one uninjured.

There were those covered in bandages and groaning painfully and those who had suffered severe injuries and seemed to be on the brink of death.

One thing to note was the fact that almost all of them had been burned.

“They weren’t hurt by a Demigod.”

“They were hurt by the creatures they created. How did you know?”

Frey’s following words made him speechless.

“Because they’re still alive.”

They soon arrived at a small barracks tent.

Although there was dust and sand everywhere, this place was much cleaner than anywhere else.

When they went inside, they found space large enough for five people.

Urha sat down on a shabby looking chair. Then, he covered his face with his hands before mumbling.

“...it was a Demigod made of fire.”

Frey’s brows furrowed.

“I don’t mean to brag, but I’ve encountered a few Demigods before. I know that they differ greatly depending on the individual and that it’s not just their features and habits. There are differences in strength. But he was on a completely different level.”

“That’s right. He’s an Apocalypse.”

“...I knew it.”

Urha sighed as if he’d expected it to an extent.

Frey also wanted to sigh at that moment.

Agni. They had successfully treated his wounds.

Riki had said it would take at least a year before they could barely begin to move again.

Frey couldn’t help but wonder if Agni was barely moving or if he was completely healed and, if that was the case, how it happened.

He suppressed the questions in his heart and continued listening to Urha.

“Of the 17 cities in Silkid, 7 have already been destroyed, 4 have surrendered, and the 6 remaining cities, including Rnei, are still fighting. But now, Sarman, Rnei’s Guardian Warrior, shows signs of wanting to surrender.”

“What is a Guardian Warrior?”

“...it is difficult to explain. Just take it as the City Lord.”

If one looked at the details then the two were very different, but that was all he could say at the moment.

Frey continued listening to Urha’s explanation attentively. Then, his expression changed when he heard the next bit of information.

“A Great Warrior?”

“Right. A man named Ivan. I don’t think he’s from Silkid, but he has a lot of charisma to pull the warriors together and form a counter force. It’s probably the largest single force in Silkid at the moment. And it’s still growing.”

Frey chuckled.

He was a man who stood out no matter where he went. This wasn’t unexpected.

Ivan seemed to like being alone, but he had the natural aura of a leader and innate charisma.

In times of chaos, it was natural for people to gather around a focal point.

‘He’s just like *him*.’

Nora's expression also changed, and she smiled softly as she thought about Kasajin.

For some reason, however, her smile appeared quite cold. To put it bluntly, her expression seemed to say 'I've got you now'.

Come to think of it, Frey remembered that he still needed to resolve the misunderstanding.

'...mm.'

Well. He could always do it when they met.

Frey shook his head and put those thoughts away.

'It's been a while since Ivan and I parted ways.'

They had agreed to go upturn the Circle together, but Frey had unexpectedly done it all by himself. But with that guy's personality, he shouldn't mind that too much.

Frey wondered how much stronger he'd gotten.

Ivan was a genius. A true genius who wouldn't lose even when compared to Kasajin.

Frey was looking forward to seeing how much stronger he'd gotten since he came to Silkid.

"Have you encountered any other Demigods?"

"We haven't. We've only seen the fire Demigod."

"Hmm."

Agni was the only one who'd made an appearance.

Frey clicked his tongue at those words.

The divine power that was covering Silkid was not something that could have come from Agni alone.

That meant that there were still two or three Demigods hiding in Silkid.

'They wouldn't stick together.'

Demigods wouldn't group up unless there was a special situation, for example, when Lord called a meeting. They were extremely individualistic beings.

Maybe he was on a different mission.

Nix's image appeared in his head for a moment.

Could it be that Agni was chasing her?

'He can't kill her since she's his Apostle.'

Did she think he was going to restrain her?

It was possible.

From Agni's perspective, it might not be good for her to keep wandering around as she pleased.

Of course, this wasn't a good situation for Frey either.

Anastasia was the only one who knew that she was Agni's Apostle. If anyone else found out, it was almost certain that they would try to kill Nix.

So before that happened, he had to find Nix first.

Urha finished his explanation while Frey agonised over the difficult problem.

“Have you ever heard about a red-haired woman?”

It was at that moment.

“Mr. Urha!”

The tent was suddenly opened, and Warrior Lieutenant walked in. He had run so quickly that his entire body was covered in sweat.

He spoke with a quivering voice.

“T-, there’s a raid.”

Urha immediately rose from his seat with a stiff expression.

“Tell me the situation.”

“I-, it’s the Demigod’s creatures.”

“How many?”

“...that...”

“Report it properly. How many enemies are there?”

The man gulped.

“...they cover the horizon. The dust cloud they are kicking up also makes it hard to see, so we aren't fully sure.”

Then he forcibly squeezed out a few words.

“...but there are at least thousands of them.”

Urha sighed heavily.

It was as if his soul had just left his body, and his face became filled with despair.

Thousands.

If that was true, then it was over for Rnei.

“What about Demigods?”

A flat voice sounded out. It was Frey.

The lieutenant turned to look at him, and Frey once again asked in a calm manner.

“Has the Demigods’ presence been confirmed?”

This Warrior, who was seeing Frey for the first time, could not help but respond with honorifics as he was intimidated by his mysterious aura.

“I-, it hasn’t been confirmed, but there doesn’t seem to be any Demigods.”

“So there aren’t any.”

It was a relief but also a shame.

Feeling a bit upset, Frey rose from his seat.

“Which direction are the creatures coming from?”

“So-, southeast, but... that. Who are you...”

Frey walked past him with a brief response.

“Reinforcements.” (TL: Kyaaa!)

* * *

He headed southeast.

A stone spire had been erected there. It was quite high.

When he got to the top of the spire, he could see hundreds of kilometers in every direction. So, naturally, he was able to see the horde of creatures galloping toward them, creating a large dust cloud.

Frey narrowed his eyes and examined this group closely.

‘It’s still quite bizarre.’

They looked like Fire Spirits. Beings whose entire bodies were covered in flames.

These were probably creatures that Agni himself had created.

“Are you really going to stop that army alone?”

Urha couldn't erase the doubt from his voice.

"Do you think it's a joke?"

"As far as I know, there are only two Wizards in Paragon who could accomplish such a feat."

"Cairo Wilsemann and Diablo."

Urha was shocked.

Frey didn't turn around as he continued.

"You seem to have been hoping for them to arrive from the start."

"...you noticed?"

"How could I not notice when it was so obvious?"

Frey spoke simply, but Urha was shocked.

He was confident in his ability to hide his inner feelings. And he had believed he'd hid his disappointment too quickly for anyone to notice.

"To correct one misunderstanding, I am not below them."

"What...?"

"Watch closely."

Frey walked to the end of the spire with dozens of calculations spinning in his mind.

"They have spirit bodies, so they are bad opponents for warriors. It would require a lot of force to subdue them with physical attacks."

"Their firepower is also formidable. Their flames can even melt rocks."

Urha bit his lip.

"...although their numbers are small, there are still a few Wizards and Sorcerers in Silkid. But their ice magic didn't really have an effect on them."

"That's natural. There are also classes among creatures."

After all, they were made by the Apocalypse Agni.

It depended on the individual, but he was sure that the strongest amongst these creatures were Intermediate rank Spirits.

That meant that any spell below 6 stars wouldn't really have much of an effect on them.

"Even I can't guarantee victory over a hundred of them, but you alone..."

"You're not very knowledgeable about Wizards."

Frey's words made Urha speechless.

"...what is that..."

"The number of enemies doesn't matter to a Wizard. As long as you know their coordinates, it doesn't matter if there are hundreds or thousands."

Pak.

As soon as he was finished speaking, Frey's robe flapped.

Originally, he intended to move in the shadows since he didn't want to be spotted by the Demigods' spies that might have been hidden in the desert.

But he'd changed his mind.

Agni hadn't been seen since Talhadun, and the other Demigods' whereabouts were unknown.

But it was possible that he was chasing after Nix.

If so, then Frey would draw their attention.

It didn't matter if the Demigods came.

It would be even better if Nix came.

And drawing attention was something that Wizards were the best at.

Roar-

Urha stumbled back a few steps.

"W-, what is this..."

A horrifying amount of mana was spewing from Frey's body. It was so dense that it seemed as if thousands of threads were encircling Frey's body.

"And for 9 star Wizards, size and location don't matter at all. Everything within my sight is my space."

"9 star?"

Urha's mouth fell open.

Frey drew a line with his two fingers.

This action felt holy to Urha, as though a devout believer was drawing a cross.

"Blizzard."

Then...

Urha saw snowflakes falling in the desert.

"U-, uhh..."

The ground froze, snowflakes fell, and the atmosphere became cold.

Everyone saw and felt it.

Despite that, they couldn't believe their eyes. It was such an unbelievable sight.

Then, a wave of ice swept across the army of creatures in an instant. They weren't even able to let out a scream before their bodies froze in place.

'Is this young man really a 9 star Wizard?'

He'd heard it before.

9 star Wizards could even control nature.

And that was exactly the scene that had unfolded in front of him.

He dared to say. Frey had just made the desert submit.

"A-, ahh..."

"What the hell..."

No one would have ever imagined that a day would come when they would be able to see their breaths in the desert.

“This is the difference between a Wizard and a Warrior.”

Frey let out a breath.

Immediately afterwards, the pieces of ice broke, and Agni’s creatures shattered.

Urha blinked twice at this scene before he finally understood the situation.

Thousands of creatures had been wiped out in an instant.

“Ho-, how...”

“Wiping out small fry is a Wizards’ specialty.”

This was to be expected.

After all, these weren’t Apostles, they were only creatures. Just Blizzard, a 7 star spell, was enough.

In such large-scale battles, the utility of a Wizard would surpass any other strategic weapon.

The tricky part was when they had to face powerful individuals. Like the Demigods, for example.

Only

Frey turned around and said.

“The ice will melt quickly in the sun. It’ll stay cold for a bit, but that will also go away soon.”

“...”

Frey headed down the spire, and Urha hurried after him.

The only ones left were the two guards tasked with observing their surroundings, who still felt like they were dreaming.

“...let’s have a snowball fight. I always wanted to try it.”

“Sure. But if we tell the others, they’ll think we’re crazy.”

Season 1 Chapter 158: Silkid (4)

Urha went to report what happened to the Warchief, so Frey returned to the barracks alone.

Snow and Nora had an idea about Frey's power, so they weren't very surprised by the fact that he could freeze thousands of creatures in an instant.

Instead, the one who was the most surprised was the Wizard, Benieng.

She looked at Frey and couldn't help but ask in a shocked tone.

"Rounder Frey really is 9 stars?"

"Didn't I tell you?"

"...ah. Yes. You did. Ahaha."

Benieng let out a weak laugh.

"..."

Frey saw through her intentions.

At that moment, Frey turned his head and opened his mouth.

“Agni should have noticed that spell.”

“I guess so.”

Snow’s eyes lit up.

“Are you intentionally trying to draw attention?”

“It’s said that Agni is still in Talhadun. We need to know if he’s tied to that area.”

“That’s a risky gamble. What if he comes here personally?”

“He probably won’t.”

Frey knew that there was a hidden hierarchy among the Demigods. Of course, this didn’t mean there was a clear separation between the upper and lower levels.

Basically, it was true that all Demigods under Lord were equal.

However, there was a bit of a line between them.

Just like Hydra, who Riki had killed in the past. She was one of Ananta’s subordinates.

The three Demigods who rushed to help Leyrin should be her subordinates.

And perhaps the Demigods who were currently in Silkid were Agni's subordinates.

'Rumours about me will definitely spread all over Silkid.'

Snowflakes appearing in the desert would certainly have such an effect.

There was no doubt that news of this would reach Agni soon.

Nora spoke in a calm voice.

"What if a Demigod comes? The damage could spread to this city."

"That's why I'm thinking about moving in separate groups from now on."

"Mm?"

Snow furrowed her eyebrows.

"Please explain."

“From now on, I will go around Silkid and attract as much attention as possible. I will deal with whatever Demigod creatures I encounter at random, and if I encounter a Demigod, I won’t avoid a fight.”

Agni was the only exception.

An Apocalypse was not something Frey could deal with at the moment.

“In the meantime, you will join Ivan, go to the Great Chief of Silkid, and try to propose to fight against Agni with him.”

Nora’s eyes lit up.

“Join Ivan. I like that idea.”

“I’m not sure if the Great Chief will agree as Silkid has lost a majority of its forces.”

“We’ll have to make him agree somehow.”

The Great Chief Tuarik was indispensable when it came to uniting the warriors of Silkid.

Nora tilted her head.

“But Frey, without you, it’ll be annoying to deal with the creatures. It’s gonna be tricky if we are unable to avoid a fight with a Demigod.”

The presence of a Wizard during a fight with a Demigod was like the difference between heaven and earth.

But Frey shook his head.

“That worry is unnecessary. There is an excellent Wizard right beside me.”

Frey’s gaze turned to Benieng.

She was visibly shaken.

“M-, me?”

“With the skills that Master Benieng has now. She is more than enough to take my place.”

“Bu-, but...”

Her eyes shook. Her hands, which were being clasped gracefully, began shaking.

She seemed to be much more intimidated than when she was at the Circle meeting before. Beniang's imposing appearance at that time was took quite a toll.

So he was disappointed.

If Frey hadn't shown up, he was sure that her guts would have grown even more.

Frey got up from his seat.

"Master Beniang."

"Ye-, yes?"

"Shall we go talk for a moment? Just the two of us."

"Th-, the two of us?"

Frey nodded and looked at Beniang's wide eyes.

"Yes. The two of us."

* * *

The desert night was exceptionally cold. Perhaps it was a result of Frey's Blizzard spell.

A cold wind blew, as if it would freeze her heart.

Frey went up to the spire with Beniang. When they got there, he asked the guards to kindly give them some time.

The guards nodded without hesitation before heading down.

"A-, Archmage."

"So amazing..."

They could hear the guards murmur to each other as they left.

"You're amazing, Frey."

Beniang's voice reverberated in the cold, winter air. She was staring at the black horizon with a blank gaze.

The darkened desert looked like a sea of darkness, whose depths couldn't be seen. The shards of ice that sat there perfectly represented the beauty of the moment.

Frey didn't respond.

"I've thought so since the beginning. You always move confidently, without any hesitation. As if you looked ahead a few steps before making the right decisions. Compared to you, I'm..."

"Pathetic?"

Beniang flinched before nodding.

"Yes."

"..."

Frey could see her worries. It wasn't jealousy or an inferiority complex. She was not the type of person to be jealous of others, nor did she think so highly of herself to have an inferiority complex.

She just had deep doubts about herself.

"...Frey, I've wanted to say this for a long time. I'm sure you are the one who will lead the Trowman Rings-"

“Just a while ago, my friend woke up.”

Beniang paused at the unexpected words.

“Huh?”

“From a very long sleep. I thought I’d never see him again. Indeed... it was a really long time since I last saw him.”

“Ah. Congratulations.”

Despite her confusion, Beniang still congratulated him. This was because she could hear the sincerity in Frey’s voice.

His face was also filled with joy.

Since Frey was usually a very reserved person, she couldn’t help but wonder just who was able to bring such joy to him.

‘A long sleep.’

What did that mean? Was his friend injured?

Or did he have an incurable disease?

Even while Benieng contemplated in silence, Frey continued.

“He’s a much better guy than I am. The same way Master Benieng thinks of me, I thought of him. He was a good, strong, wise friend. He was a good friend who always respected my beliefs.”

He meant it.

For Frey – no, for Lukas – Schweiser was the best friend and life coach.

He was able to learn a lot from watching his attitude towards life.

“He was an amazing guy, but strangely enough, he never took any disciples. It’s been that way for a long time. He was definitely better at teaching than I was, and he’s much more compassionate, but in the end, I was the one who was called the Great Teacher.”

“Great... Teacher?”

A ripple of shock flowed through Benieng’s eyes.

Frey quietly continued.

“Not so long ago, he became interested when he found out about the Circle. I understood it completely. After all, I was the same. He was curious about how the younger generation inherited our will to fight against the Demigods. And he was definitely the most interested in the Strow Necklaces.”

That was natural since it was a group that inherited his name.

“...”

Beniang couldn't speak anymore.

She couldn't even lift a finger. Her entire body was frozen.

Yet, her gaze remained locked on Frey's lips.

Frey was still in his reverie.

“But I didn't tell him everything about the Strow Necklaces. If I did, he would've been disappointed. I didn't want to see his bitter expression.”

Frey frowned slightly.

“...that friend's name.”

Beniang could finally open her mouth. Frey kept looking into the distance as he said.

“Schweiser Strow.”

“T-, the Great Sage...”

Beniang almost collapsed as she lost feelings in her legs.

“I shouldn’t have, but when I found out the Strow Necklaces was rotten, the first thing that crossed my mind was...”

A small smile spread across Frey’s lips.

“I’m a lucky guy.”

“A-, ahh...”

“I was very happy. Even after 4,000 years had passed, my will was still being carried on perfectly. No, it was even better. I was so proud that you guys were the ones to carry my name.”

“F-, Frey. N-, no, you can’t...”

Frey’s eyes finally turned to Beniang.

His eyes were filled with warmth and kindness that she'd never seen before.

"Thank you."

"...!!"

When she heard those words, Benieng became emotional, and she couldn't help but tear up a little.

"I wanted to say this ever since I met you. Thank you very much."

Tears fell from Benieng's eyes.

"N-, no. I, I... I just did... e-, everything was collapsing... everything was falling apart..."

She fell silent, but there was a slight sound coming from her throat.

"The circle was falling apart... so I led. It was hard. I wanted to die... I wanted to throw in the towel and run so many times! But I couldn't. I, I..."

Her face burned with shame. She was whining.

She knew this, but she couldn't stop. Her feeling just poured out like water from a dam that had just collapsed.

It was so hard she wanted to die.

It wasn't just hard.

Everyone left. The Circle Master, the Rounder, the executives. Even the magic tools and relics were taken away.

All that had remained was the shell of the 'Trowman Rings'. Nevertheless, the pressure from the other powers didn't stop.

Their few assets were continually taken away, and the talented members of their circle left day after day.

Their power leaked out endlessly, like water flowing off the edge of a cliff.

She felt like she was falling into a never-ending abyss.

Still, she held on.

When she was a child, Osel would always read the fairytale of the Great Mage to her.

Lukas Trowman.

She loved his story. He was respectable and amazing, and she couldn't help but want to be like him.

After the fight with Nozdog, those who remained in the circle were those who had similar thoughts.

So she couldn't run away.

She couldn't abandon the Trowman Rings.

"I...! Really....!"

"I know."

Frey laughed as Benieng sobbed and blurted out her feelings.

'I see.'

Now, she understood why she saw Osel in Frey. Why she felt so relieved when she was around him.

Just his presence was enough to fill her with confidence.

She felt a cool touch on her head.

“I am truly proud of you.”

“A-, ahh...”

How could she accept such an honour?

Beniang began to cry once again.

It wasn't because she was sad. They were tears of joy.

Only

Frey stroked Beniang's head while saying.

“You did well. And you will do even better in the future. I trust you, Beniang Argento.”

What she needed wasn't teaching. Nor was it a word of warning.

It was comfort. Frey could see that.

The reason he was called the Great Teacher wasn't anything special.

Frey simply had the ability to tell a person exactly what one needed to hear when one was going through the toughest situations.

That was all.

Season 1 Chapter 159: Silkid (5)

"Let's head back. Urha should have returned by now."

When Frey's tone returned to normal, Beniung tilted her head slightly.

"Ah, yes. Uh... but you can speak casually..."

"How can I, the Circle Rounder, speak casually to the Master?"

"Huh?"

Frey didn't answer her question, instead opting to just give her a quiet glance.

Then, their previous conversation came to her mind.

[You have done well. And I'm sure you'll do even better in the future.]

Right.

Frey was asking her for the same relationship they'd had up to that point.

"U-, umm...!"

She couldn't help but make a sound of discomfort.

It hadn't been a problem before she knew who Frey really was, but now that she knew, it would be extremely hard for her to treat him the way she had before.

Beniang asked carefully.

"May I ask why you're hiding your real identity? If you revealed who you truly are, I'm sure there would no longer be any problems in the Circle..."

"I'm not confident that I can play the role of 'Lukas' properly."

Frey spoke his thoughts honestly.

If he were to reveal the fact that he was Lukas, the Circle's morale would certainly soar. But that was probably the only positive thing that would come from that.

After that, they would definitely have an infinite amount of expectations, and they would try to completely rely on Frey.

This was not a good thing.

Including the heavy burden that would be placed on Frey's shoulders, it would also not be a good thing for the Circle.

The current Circle had entered a very important period of growth. Most of the rotten parts, including Rezil, had been removed, and a new wind was blowing both internally and externally.

This strong wind would make the Circle stronger and stronger over time. After overcoming its current predicament, the unity and harmony within the Circle would definitely become firmer.

If Frey were to reveal himself at this time, it would do more bad than good.

Of course, another reason was the fact that Frey didn't particularly like being looked up to.

He knew that moving in the same way that he was currently was the most efficient way to make use of his abilities.

It allowed him to have a wide and objective view, and it also made it easier for him to handle emergency situations.

“So please look after me, Master Beniang.”

“Ye-, yes.”

She never thought there would be a day when she heard those words from the Great Mage Lukas Trowman himself!

Beniang nodded, unsure if her heart was thumping because of joy, anxiety, or something else entirely.

This was exactly the feeling of not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

They then returned to the barracks tent and found that Urha had indeed returned.

There was a middle-aged man standing beside him who bowed his head the moment he saw Frey.

“I’d like to thank you on behalf of Rnei.”

“You are?”

“I’m Sarman, the Guardian Warrior.”

His voice was filled with emotion. His gestures, speech, and facial expressions were all filled with good will.

From his perspective, Frey was the saviour of Rnej, so his response was natural.

However, Sarman was a Guardian Warrior. Someone who only had to show respect to the Great Chief.

Even Urha, who was a candidate for Great Warrior and a member of Paragon, would not be able to obtain such a level of respect from him.

Sarman's polite speech was the greatest indicator of the respect and indebtedness he felt towards Frey.

"I'm Frey Blake, Circle Rounder of the Trowman Rings."

When Frey stretched his hand out, Sarman immediately grabbed it.

"Rounder Frey, that was an amazing spell. I humbly salute your great achievement."

He spoke in a confident voice.

"Your spell has firmed up my resolve. We will never give in."

It seemed Urha's persuasion had worked perfectly.

This meant that the next part would be easier.

“Have you heard our plan?”

“What plan?”

Frey then told him the plan he’d told to Snow and Nora.

As he talked, Sarman’s expression gradually became brighter and brighter.

“That’s a great plan. But wouldn’t Rounder Frey be exposed to too much danger? To run around Silkid alone in the current situation would be no different from suicide... there are a lot of Demigods hiding in the desert at the moment.”

It seemed that Sarman didn’t have a full understanding of Frey.

As long as it wasn’t Lord, Frey would be able to escape from the clutches of any Demigod, including Agni.

“No need to worry about that.”

“Hmm. If so...”

After thinking for a moment, Sarman started speaking again.

“I’d recommend you head north.”

“Any special reason?”

“Most of the cities there have surrendered to the Demigods. In other words, it’s the Demigods’ territory.”

“Hmm.”

“Of course, this means that you’d have to be extra careful. I heard the northern region has become a completely lawless zone.”

Frey nodded.

“There’s one thing I’d like to ask you.”

“Please ask.”

“Have you seen a red-haired woman about the age of 20?”

“Hmm...”

Sarman’s expression became strange at those words. Even Urha’s complexion became a few shades lighter.

Frey’s eyes lit up.

It seemed that he indeed knew something.

“It sounds like you’re talking about the strange person from the rumours that have been circulating recently.”

“Rumors?”

“A woman who wants to die.”

Frey furrowed his eyebrows.

“A woman has been wandering around Silkid asking people to kill her. But then, when you do try to kill her, she would scream crazily and unleash flames at whoever tried to do it... and no one understands why she does this. It’s quite hard to believe it to be true.”

At that moment, some of Frey’s questions had been answered.

Nix's sudden disappearance, the words of the Goblin from the Ispania Mountains, and the words that Sarman had just said had allowed him to have an idea of what Nix was thinking.

'Is she trying to use the fact that she's an Apostle?'

It was efficient, but he had no intention of praising it.

Perhaps it was because of Torkunta that she hadn't actually gotten herself killed by now. If it weren't for him, there was a high chance that she would already be dead.

It couldn't be more ironic.

Frey never would have imagined that he would have to owe the thousand year old Drake anything.

"This is all I know about her. I'm sorry. She's a very elusive woman..."

Frey shook his head.

"It's enough."

* * *

Alone, Frey left Rnei before sunrise.

He didn't say goodbye.

This was because they would meet each other soon anyway.

He wore a loose coat he received from Sarman together with a robe. He even put a turban on his head and used an illusion to alter his face.

If he were to go around with 'Frey's' face, it would be the same as advertising that he was an outsider.

The most important thing was to make his skin darker. Then, after making a few other minor changes, the impression he gave changed completely.

Thanks to the martial arts training he did on occasion, his physique was by no means small.

He even had a shamshir(1) at his waist to complete the look of a desert Warrior.

Frey took out a map from his bag.

'The nearest city.'

It was called Al-Tarha.

It was about three days away by foot. Frey didn't use magic.

He didn't know the exact coordinates, so he would be unable to use Warp, and flying across the desert would be too conspicuous.

While he could conceal his presence, there was no guarantee that he'd be able to hide from the Demigods.

Therefore, the safest way was to walk through the desert while pretending to be a Silkid Warrior.

At first glance, it might have seemed like he was being very relaxed, but Frey knew this was the fastest 'normal' way to get to Al-Tarha.

He had enough food and water, so he was able to arrive at Al-Tarha after putting one foot in front of the other for three days.

Al-Tarha was a much larger city than Rnei. Its walls were about twice as high, and the city itself was about three times bigger.

Frey jumped over the wall and went inside, and he immediately became speechless when he saw the scene within the city.

“...”

He then remembered the words that Sarman had told him.

A lawless zone.

It certainly was.

There were people fighting randomly in the streets, and foul smells were coming from every corner from the carelessly thrown trash.

The fights were also not honourable duels; instead, they were dog fights filled with dirty intentions.

And the people around them were cheering or enjoying meals as they watched.

There was no one among them who still had the appearance of a Warrior. Their dignity as humans had completely disappeared. In less than a month.

Frey bit his lip.

It was like this 4,000 years ago as well.

Those who surrendered to the Demigods quickly degenerated. After all, they chose to submit to an absolute being, or in other words, they chose to become livestock.

Frey realised that Al-Tarha had basically become a large kennel.

He was instantly struck with the urge to wipe out the entire city, but he shook his head. There was something that had to be done before that.

He went back to the wall.

There, he found a guard standing at the gate of the city yawning. He determined that since he was a guard, he would probably know more than the others.

Frey snuck up behind the guard and grabbed his head.

“Huk...?!”

Mind control.

Although it was a very dangerous method, Frey was skilled enough as to not damage the guard’s consciousness.

As he skillfully injected his mana into the guard’s brain, his expression slowly became blank.

“Heehh...”

From that moment on, the guard would be unable to disobey Frey’s words.

“What’s your name?”

“...Wilter.”

“Wilter, are you one of Al-Tarha’s guards?”

“...yes.”

After a simple test to ensure he was in control, Frey began asking questions in earnest.

“How do you deal with intruders?”

“...kill them.”

“Even if it’s one of your kind?”

“...yes.”

Frey then spoke with a strange tone.

“I will ask my question again. Would you kill citizens of this city just a month ago if you found that they broke in?”

“...those were... his orders.”

“Who is he?”

“...Demigod.”

“Is it the Demigod of fire?”

“...not... fire.”

“Then?”

“...I don't... know.”

It seemed that that was all the information he would be able to obtain, but Frey wasn't disappointed.

It was a big harvest to learn that the Demigod who brought down Al-Tarha was not Agni. There was even a high chance that the Demigod was still in the vicinity.

Even if it wasn't in the city, it shouldn't have been too far away.

Frey had the guard return to his original position.

'One Demigod.'

...time to draw some attention.

* * *

"I heard you can't find your Apostle. You look much more relaxed than I expected."

Agni turned around and saw an uninvited guest.

He turned back as he said.

"I don't remember calling you here, Ananta."

"Kulkul. Am I interrupting?"

“No.”

That wasn't it.

Agni shook his head.

Ananta smiled grimly as he came to Agni's side and sat down.

“Aren't you nervous? Your Apostle is running around as she wishes. If I were you, I wouldn't be able to sit on my ass in these ruins.”

“Just tell me what you want.”

“Hmm.”

Ananta shrugged. It seemed Agni really wasn't pressured at all.

“Lord told me to check up on you. He wants to know if the reason why you haven't made a move yet is because there were some problems with the treatment.”

“There are no problems. The treatment was perfect.”

“Then why are you still here?”

“There’s no need to move.”

Ananta’s eyes lit up at those words as he realised the meaning behind Agni’s words.

“You called your people.”

Agni nodded.

“Right. They’re scouring through Silkid even at this very moment. Soon enough, my Apostle will return to my hands.”

Only

“Come to think of it, you have a pretty large following. How many of them did you call?”

“Ten.”

“...what?”

Ananta blinked his eyes for a moment, thinking he'd misheard, but Agni simply continued on with a calm tone.

"At the moment, there are ten of my subordinates in Silkid."

Season 1 Chapter 160: Silkid (6)

First of all, he needed to gather more information.

The most important part of the fight was information.

Just how many Demigods were in Silkid, what powers they had, why Agni hadn't moved, Nix's current location. There were many things he needed to know, but none of them were easy to find out.

'It would be a great help even if I just found out what powers they had,'

Anything that would point out their weaknesses would help.

In the past, Riki had told him that Hydra's weakness was fire. Thanks to that small piece of information, Frey was able to kill a Demigod with just an 8 star spell.

Although he had only been able to do it because she was barely alive after Riki attacked her, the fact remained that he was able to do so because he knew her weakness.

'Did he say Guardian Warrior?'

The true ruler of the city. Urha said that it was a concept similar to a City Lord.

Therefore, he was likely to know more about Demigods than others.

Didn't Rnei almost surrender simply because of Sarman's choice?

After making his decision, Frey headed to a bar in Al-Tarha.

The city had reached a state of lawlessness, but it hadn't devolved completely yet.

There were still several open bars that seemed normal. But it was unclear how long this last bit of order would last.

It was fine to grab guards and pull the information directly from their minds as he'd just done, but if he wanted to get a good grasp of the overall situation, it would be best to observe a large group.

That being the case, bars were some of the best places to gather information.

Creak.

He pushed open the shabby door and headed in.

Even though it was midday, the bar was crowded. However, contrary to what one might expect, there weren't any loud noises in the bar. Only a low murmur could be heard in the bar since most of the customers were drinking quietly.

When the door opened, everyone turned to look at Frey for a moment before they turned away, uninterested.

This proved that Frey's disguise was perfect.

Frey sat in a spot that made it convenient to listen to the others' conversations while ordering a simple meal.

"Have you heard the story about Rnei?"

"The rumour that the desert was frozen? Do you believe that?"

"It's not a rumour. Lukel said he saw it with his own eyes."

"Hmph. It's not rare to see a mirage in the desert."

"That's true."

Frey's actions in Rnei seemed to have already spread far away as warriors in Al-Tarha already knew about it.

'If it's already spread this much, the Demigods should have heard about it.'

But there were few people who actually believed it. After all, a desert had been frozen.

Just saying those words was enough to spark disbelief.

Perhaps the longer one lived in Silkid, the less likely one was to believe such a story.

'So the Demigods will be more vigilant.'

It was possible to trick the eyes with a mirage, but it wasn't possible to annihilate the creatures with one.

They would also know that freezing a desert wouldn't be a difficult task for a 9 star Wizard.

"What should we do now?"

"We're already in the same boat. What can we do? Whether we live or die, we have to follow Milled from now on."

“I don’t like him. Sir Porto is the Guardian Warrior. So why is he acting like he’s in charge?”

“We can’t do anything about it. The monster who burned Talhadun favours him.”

Frey narrowed his eyes.

So it wasn’t Porto, the Guardian Warrior, but a man named Milled who was controlling the city?

Besides, the fact that Agni favored him was important information. This man wasn’t Agni’s Apostle, so that meant he’d pledged allegiance to him.

Or.

‘Another Demigods’ Apostle.’

That was a possibility.

If not...

Frey shook his head at the sudden thought. He didn’t have enough information to make a random conclusion.

“Should we just stick with Ivan?”

“The so-called Great Warrior? Forget it. No matter how strong he is, he’s only human.”

“We’re on the right side. I saw Talhadun disappear with my own eyes. Fighting those monsters is suicide. I... I don’t wanna die just yet.”

“...”

Silkid.

It was a place known as the Land of Warriors, but it seemed that not all of them were proud and honourable Warriors.

At least, most of the people in this bar had chosen to run away without fighting.

Nevertheless, they were afraid because they were unsure about the choice they’d made. Therefore, they used alcohol to drown away their anxiety.

To save their lives by discarding their prides.

Frey didn’t blame them.

After all, it wasn’t wrong to fear death. But at the same time, he was disgusted.

Frey listened for another half an hour while filling his stomach with food.

Then he slowly organised the information he obtained.

Al-Tarha hadn't intended to surrender at first. They had formed armies of their own to fight against the enemies, but unfortunately, they were annihilated before they could even fight.

Then a man named Milled appeared to rally Al-Tarha together with the Guardian Warrior Porto.

'This is all I'll learn from here.'

He wouldn't learn anything else even if he kept sitting there.

Frey got up and left the tavern before looking at the castle in the center of the city.

According to the information he'd obtained, Milled was living in that castle.

'So Milled holds the key.'

Frey recalled the information.

A man who appeared to be in his early 30s with pale, white skin that was rare to see in the desert, which made him easy to find.

Frey was about to head straight for the castle when he noticed there were people crowded around something. Naturally, Frey's eyes turned to see what it was.

"..."

It was a group of corpses.

They were corpses that had been dismembered and displayed in the town square on a spear.

It seemed that the corpses had been there for a long time already as they were covered in maggots and had an extremely rotten smell.

It was a sight so disgusting that it would make most people vomit.

A word had been engraved on a sign in front of the corpses.

[Purge]

Frey clicked his tongue.

Then, he went towards a man among the onlookers nearby who gave him a good impression.

“Who is he?”

“Huh? Did you just arrive in the city?”

The hairy man looked at Frey with a suspicious gaze, but Frey simply responded without a change in his facial expression.

“I arrived from Gollod yesterday.”

“Ah. I see.”

Gollod was one of the cities that had been destroyed by the Demigods. The survivors were only those who were away from Gollod at that time or those who had barely managed to escape with their lives. Most of them headed to Al-Tarha...

This was a story Frey had just heard in the bar.

The suspicion on the man’s face disappeared, and he nodded.

“These are those who rebelled against Milled.”

“Rebelled?”

“They rebelled against the formation of a subjugation squad, and this was the outcome. Tch. If they had kept to themselves, they would’ve still been alive. They were proud for nothing.”

“Who are they going to hunt?”

“The Great Warrior, Ivan. Have you heard about him? He’s a man who has recently been traveling around Silkid gathering forces. It’s said that he is a thorn in the side of the monster who captured Silkid.”

“...”

Frey was speechless.

This man had just told him that they were building a team to subjugate Ivan, who was going all around Silkid to gather forces, and had brutally executed everyone who protested.

‘Hah.’

His chest cooled down at that moment.

They had crossed the line. It was no different from selling not just their pride but also their morals and ethics as humans.

The scale in Frey's heart gradually shifted to one side.

He took a small breath to organise his thoughts.

'There's no way their subjugation team could annihilate Ivan's forces.'

And Milled should've known that.

Then, what was he aiming for? Did he want to inflict losses on Ivan's group at the expense of the complete destruction of the subjugation team?

Or did he simply want a reason to execute rebels?

'No.'

Those were all byproducts.

What Milled was after... was probably a civil war.

This was Frey's thought.

He intended to create animosity between the two sides and eventually lead people of the same country to point their swords at each other.

Step 1 was already successful. Silkid had been divided into two groups.

And now, it was time for step 2. Which was to deepen the hostility between the two forces. Until it reached the point where they regarded each other as their sworn enemies.

'This isn't good.'

If this insidious plan was to work, Silkid would not fall from the outside but from the inside. The Demigods would be able to remove one of the most powerful countries on the continent with barely any effort of their own.

This wasn't simply about losing the nation's territory.

Even the identity of the country called Silkid would disappear.

In a sense, it was a far more terrible end than the simple destruction of the country.

'This isn't a plan a Demigod could think of.'

If one didn't understand the dark side of humans, one wouldn't be able to make such a plan.

Frey looked towards the castle again.

Milled.

He would have to meet him and, if necessary, kill him.

* * *

[You seem to be pretty busy these days.]

Iris looked back and found Lord standing there without any sign.

Iris was confident in her ability to move without a trace, but Lord was on a completely different level.

This fact remained even after she'd obtained the power of space after becoming his Apostle.

[Where have you been?]

"Silkid."

[Why there?]

It was a suspicious tone.

Iris answered without panicking because it was a common occurrence.

“Agni called over ten Demigods. I thought it was a bit too much, so I went to take a look. Maybe he was planning something.”

Although she said it in a roundabout way, her words were definitely hinting at Riki’s betrayal. After that incident, even the Demigods would not easily talk about Riki in front of Lord.

This was because it was no different from pushing Lord’s buttons. But this time, Lord was surprisingly calm as he said.

[I see.]

“...”

[I’m heading to the Kastkau Empire today.]

“Are you going to destroy it?”

[That depends on their choice.]

It was said with a lazy voice. Iris’ expression didn’t change as she said.

“Is that all you wanted to talk about? If so, then...”

[That man you saved. He is called Frey Blake.]

“...”

Those words broke Iris’ composure for the first time. Lord also showed a reaction for the first time.

A smile appeared on his otherwise blank face. As if he was enjoying Iris’ reaction.

[I won’t ask why you saved that man. After all, that was one of the conditions. But the next time I meet him, I will kill him. And just as I declared the other day, I will do it very painfully. I will make him regret not dying at that time.]

Iris understood Lord’s intention.

It was a warning.

Maybe the next time she tried to stop him, she herself might not be safe.

Hok.

The Lord's figure disappeared without a trace. Maybe he had gone to Kastkau as he said.

"..."

Left alone, Iris almost collapsed as she felt her legs lose strength, but she forcibly endured it.

Then, she leaned her head against a wall and muttered.

"...I want to rest."

Just one day would be fine.

But she soon shook her head.

Rest was a luxury for her. It had already been that way for 4,000 years.

* * *

A man opened his eyes. It felt like he'd been sleeping for a long time.

"This is..."

Where was he?

He looked around.

All he could see was a desolate land where not even a blade of grass could be found.

Although it was a desolate landscape, the man was feeling an unknown emotion.

'Longing.'

He was happy but also sad at the same time.

These conflicting emotions blended together, causing confusion.

Why the hell was he feeling this way?

Only

The man had a headache.

And more importantly, who the hell was he?

“...”

He couldn't remember.

He couldn't remember anything.

But there was one thing he was certain of.

The desert wasn't pleasant.