

Great Mage 201

Season 1 Chapter 201: Hitume Ikar (5)

No words were spoken for a while.

Frey needed to organise his thoughts, and the being before him knew that.

'Angels.'

He wasn't certain, but he felt that they were similar to the rulers of hell.

'Perhaps the Apocalypses are on par with them.'

There were a total of six rulers of hell.

'Including Lord, there are six Apocalypses.'

Frey closed his eyes.

All of this no longer felt like just a coincidence.

Especially Lord.

His appearance had always been the most bizarre among the Demigods. Even more so than Nozdog, who was a skeleton, or Agni, who was a literal being of fire.

‘Did he unconsciously imitate the appearance of God?’

He’d heard of the Demigods’ origin from Riki, but now, he realised it was much deeper than he first thought. They were beings who were originally the inhabitants of the Celestial World.

Those were the Demigods’ true identities.

‘This is something even the Demigods don’t know.’

It was a strange feeling.

He’d always felt that the Demigods were wrapped in a kind of mysterious veil. But according to this being in front of him, even the Demigods themselves didn’t know what they truly were.

Even Lord.

This was a secret that only he knew.

Frey couldn’t help but feel a little joy at that fact.

[You seem to enjoy this more than I expected. I'm glad to see that.]

"...was this your intention? Is that why you're telling me about the origins of the Demigods?"

[Not exactly. This is simply background information. We're about to move on to the main point.]

His eloquence made Frey speechless once again.

'What did he mean by next?'

The things he'd heard so far had already been extremely shocking for him. Even Frey, who could keep his composure regardless of the situation, couldn't help but react after hearing it.

If it was anyone else who had heard this, they would have definitely shouted in shock or they would have found it hard to close their mouth.

[I need someone to help me keep the balance. A being who would always look over the world and seek harmony. Someone who would devote themselves to maintaining the stability of the world. But it's tricky. Such talent isn't born easily. And it's impossible for me to manipulate the flow of fate and move time forward. Especially since I need three of them.]

Frey couldn't help but ask when he heard this.

"Why do you need three?"

[I told you. There are three worlds in this universe. If the Celestial World hadn't been destroyed, Michael would have been the balance. He would have played his part perfectly, and the Celestial World would have been a true paradise.]

“So the other worlds also need such an existence.”

[Exactly. I'm sure you know who held the balance for the Mortal World.]

“The Dragons.”

[Their leader was the best among them.]

He was referring to the Dragon Lord.

Frey sat down, organising his thoughts.

However, he was still worried of the possibility that this being might disappear at any moment. He had said that he was very busy, and he was stressed about how unusual it was for him to appear directly.

So if his thoughts were correct, this conversation had a time limit.

[When Lord first landed on the continent, the Dragon Lord was simply a large beast. He did not have any intelligence. Lord wasn't very different. He had not established a sense of self and was still confused about his identity.]

Frey realised that this was a tale about tens of thousands of years ago, if not longer. The truth of the past was not recorded anywhere in the world.

It felt a bit strange to hear it from this being who claimed to be God.

[Over time, Lord's ego was established, and the Demigods continued to fall to the continent after him. Around the same time that all the Demigods recognised him as Lord, the Dragons evolved to be the mediators of the continent.]

Dauns voice was quite humorous as he said this.

[When they realised the existence of the other, it was inevitable that conflicts would arise between them. I'm sure that even at the time, they realised that they were not compatible with each other.]

“ ... ”

This was natural.

In those days, the Dragons were the only ones who could fight against the Demigods.

He'd heard about it from Isolla. The Demigods had never been careless or arrogant while fighting against the Dragons.

[However, the 'law' I created had already chosen the Dragons as the balance. Lord was a step above them when it came to aptitude, but in the eyes of the Mortal World, he was an outsider. In any case, Lord couldn't accept this fact, so he went to war against the Dragons, and he won.]

It was only then when Frey understood.

The goal of Lord, which had always been blurry to him. And the reason why he had yet to destroy the continent despite having ample opportunity to.

"Lord's goal is..."

[To become the balance.]

Frey closed his mouth for a moment before speaking.

"...I heard that the Dragon Lord is connected to the continent. Is this balance that you mentioned connected so deeply to the world that it shares an existence with the world?"

[That's right.]

He'd said that the Celestial World had been destroyed. Nevertheless, Lord didn't die.

His soul had already been absorbed by the vortex of will, and his connection to the world was severed.

Frey didn't know the details, but in that process, the Archangel Michael died and the Demigod Lord was born.

This was the same for the Dragon Lord who was connected to the Mortal World. He lost a battle against Lord, but he didn't die.

Although he was barely alive at the moment, he was certainly still alive.

'Then what about the Demon World?'

Was there also a balance in the Demon World?

'Is it one of the six rulers?'

When this question was raised.

[...]

Eyes appeared on the being's head, and he looked at Frey with interest.

[There is someone who knows everything that I just said. Probably the only other person in the universe.]

“Who is that?”

[I already mentioned him. He was the fatal flaw in the Celestial World, and he is the one who rebelled against me.]

Dauns laughed.

[The most arrogant person in the world.]

* * *

“Jeble and Noctis have been slain.”

Beelzebub fell silent.

Jeble and Noctis were two Demons who had served him for hundreds of years.

“What is the damage on the Demigods’ side?”

“...”

Halifer, the Demon who was making the report on one knee, could not answer this question immediately.

Instead, he bit his lip quietly.

“...I’m sorry.”

Beelzebub spoke in a blank tone.

“Two High-rank Demons were lost, but there were no results?”

“I’m sorry.”

“You are not the one who has to apologise.”

After saying this, Beelzebub lowered his head. This was a habit of his whenever he was lost in thought.

Halifer had never seen Beelzebub angry. He never lost his cool, regardless of the situation.

Although Beelzebub was called cunning and treacherous by the public, Halifer knew.

Out of the six rulers of the Demon World, Beelzebub was the wisest.

'He is the only one who can become the true ruler of Hell.'

After pondering for a long time, the King of Flies finally muttered.

"There is a traitor."

"Huh?"

"Someone is communicating with the Demigods."

"Why do you think that?"

"They don't know much about the Demon World. Nevertheless, they have an excellent understanding about their surroundings."

This was definitely the case.

Halifer agreed with Beelzebub. Clearly, they had chosen a strange place to advance.

'They should have passed through Asura's Slaughter Hell, which would have been the worst place for the invaders.'

Asura's Slaughter Hell was not a place that the Demigods' would have been able to penetrate easily.

Asura's territory was infested with battle fanatics who loved fighting. None of his loyal subordinates disliked blood and slaughter.

As such, the combat capability of his territory was excellent. If they had collided, the Demigods would have been hit hard.

'But they attacked the Black Dream Hell instead.'

This was Lilith's territory and the homeland of all Dream Demons. Naturally, their combat power was much lower than other demons'.

Nevertheless, the reason their land had not been invaded and taken from them was because the illusion arts used by the Dream Demons were quite troublesome. Unfortunately, this trump card had no effect against the Demigods.

Their mental power was not something that ordinary demons could compete with. It was possible that Lilith, the Queen of Dream Demons, could affect them if she were to act personally, but the illusions from her subordinates would have no effect.

'About half of the Black Dream Hell has already been lost.'

It had been taken quickly. And soon, their advance would reach Beelzebub's territory.

Their goal was Barbatos' Despair Hell. And to get there, they had to go through Beelzebub's Bloody Hell.

So Beelzebub had sent two of his High-rank subordinates to the Black Dream Hell as reinforcements.

He would not have done it if it were any other Hell. Nevertheless, they had been wiped out without being able to even leave a scratch.

"Are you still trying to find Lord's location?"

"Yes."

Beelzebub became lost in thought once again.

'Lord's power is definitely annoying.'

The power to control space. The versatility of such an ability was too great. It was fortunate that he couldn't move around with other Demigods.

'That's probably why he's moving separately.'

If it weren't for Lord, Beelzebub and the other Archdukes wouldn't have been acting separately even now. Instead, they would have launched an all-out war while they figured out the others' abilities.

But without knowing Lord's whereabouts, they were unable to move hastily.

While they were fighting the main Demigod army, Lord might have turned their unprotected Hells into wastelands. In that case, even if they won the war against the Demigods, they would still lose in the end.

'It's ultimately reached this stage.'

An alliance made by demons was thinner than a piece of wet paper and even easier to tear.

He wondered how Lilith, whose Black Dream Hell was under attack, would act in the next meeting.

Beelzebub awakened from his thoughts.

"Their speed of attacking the Black Dream Hell is much faster than we expected. It's a speed that doesn't make sense unless they have knowledge of the terrains of the various hells as well as the demons who populate them. And there is no way that the Demigods already had this information."

"Ah. I see."

"And this type of knowledge is not something that could be obtained from a low-level demon."

Beelzebub said these words with a fierce voice, his bloody eyes swiveling bizarrely in his head.

“The traitor is a high-level demon. He has to be at least High-rank. Halifer, investigate the demons who have suddenly disappeared in the last decade. Those above Mid-rank. You’ll have to investigate not only our territory but also the other Hells as well. I will tell the other rulers in advance.”

“As you wish.”

Halifer bowed his head, admiring the wisdom of the King of Flies. He was a demon whose loyalty towards his ruler pierced the sky, something that was rare for a demon.

Because of this, although his combat power was a bit lacking, he was able to become one of the arms of the King of Flies.

Halifer stepped out of the room, his expression still filled with reverence.

Beelzebub also rose up from his place on his throne. He had to meet someone urgently.

Just as he opened the window and was about to fly into the murky skies of Hell.

“Where are you going?”

“...”

Beelzebub turned his gaze to the direction from which he heard the voice.

There was an uninvited guest standing there.

“Ruler of the Corrupted Hell.”

“Hmm.”

Lucifer, the lord of the Corrupted Hell, raised his head.

“What do you want with me, King of Flies?”

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Beelzebub looked back at Lucifer. Black hair and eyes, unusually pale skin, and a dwarf-like figure.

He couldn't help but hold his breath as he looked at this being who didn't appear to be a demon.

This was a thought he'd had since the first time he'd seen him.

Of course, this was an impression that one would get from the outside. The demonic energy swirling around inside his body was much greater and purer than any other demon's.

Hiding his personal thoughts, Beelzejub opened his mouth.

“Is it okay for you to leave the Corrupted Hell empty and wander around? Lord’s movements are still unclear.”

“My men are on guard. I can have faith in them.”

Beelzebub couldn’t help but feel a deep sense of incongruity at those words.

He couldn’t help but want to find the reason for this sense.

It wasn’t difficult.

In fact, he could immediately think of a quick and simple way.

‘If I mention this feeling...’

He was certain that Lucifer would react. And he would be able to find a clue based on his reaction.

Nevertheless, Beelzebub couldn’t easily say those words. Instead, his instincts were ringing alarm bells in his head.

In the first place, Lucifer had broken into the deepest part of his castle without anyone knowing.

“I’m sorry, but I overheard your conversation.”

He’d thought this, but he hadn’t dared to mention this himself.

Beelzebub forcibly swallowed his saliva.

He wasn’t scared. But it was true that he was pressured.

Beelzebub admitted this fact to himself.

However, as the Lord of the Bloody Hell, he could not show such a pathetic appearance.

“That’s rude. This isn’t the Corrupted Hell, Lucifer.”

“That’s why I apologized.”

Lucifer smiled as he said this.

When it was said so stiffly, Beelzebub could not stand it any longer.

As an Archduke, he had no choice but to defend his authority.

Just as he was about to make a quiet warning.

“You have a point.”

“What?”

“The traitor. I had the same idea. The Demigods’ movements have been strange. I think they know a lot about Hell.”

He had lost the initiative.

This made it hard for him to question him any further.

As Beelzebub rolled this problem only in his head, Lucifer continued in a quiet voice.

“One of my men disappeared quite a while ago.”

“Who is it?”

“Kaltud.”

“...the Red Devil.”

Beelzebub couldn't help but mutter the demon's moniker. This was a moniker that came from his red skin.

Kaltud was one of Lucifer's closest aides and one of the most powerful demons.

He was definitely among the top 100 demons in the entire Demon World.

Beelzebub had the most information about these demons, so naturally, he knew more about Kaltud than the other Demon Lords.

“I had thought that it had been a long time since I last heard of him, but he's missing?”

“This happened decades ago. The time matches too. I thought he'd run over to the human world, but I never thought he'd go under the Demigods.”

“...”

Beelzebub felt strange again.

What was that tone?

He seemed to be convinced that it wasn't just disappearance and that Kaltud had betrayed them.

'What if I put a stop to it here?'

He had such a thought for a moment, but he soon shook his head.

He alone wasn't enough.

If Lucifer denied it to the end, there was no way to pressure him any further.

'Also, this place is not good.'

He didn't want to make a fuss in his territory. And he couldn't defeat Lucifer in a one-on-one battle.

All of the Demon Lords except Asura would have the same thought.

Beelzebub decided to follow his instincts.

'I'll try to press him later. By then, I should have conclusive evidence as well as the support of the other Demon Lords.'

He just needed to bear the humiliation for the time being.

At the meeting, Lucifer said that if the Demigods were driven out, he would give up all of his rights over the Corrupted Hell and step down as a Demon Lord.

Even Asura, who had been pressuring Lucifer at that moment, couldn't help but step back with his mouth open in shock.

'He lowered his head and it worked.'

Because Lucifer had lowered his head at that time. And that's why it was natural that everyone had only paid attention to that fact.

Demons were extremely proud beings.

Therefore, even Lilith, the most insidious and cunning demon, couldn't help but respect Lucifer's position.

Beelzebub didn't.

He was able to vaguely feel how strong Lucifer's pride was and just how arrogant he was.

'What could he be planning that he would willingly abandon that pride?'

It was a simple belief.

However, Beelzebub's belief was quite firm. He believed his senses.

Lucifer's actions made him feel a strong sense of peculiarity. Like something was off or out of place. Even though he was doing the same thing as before, it felt different, and it caused his suspicion to increase.

"Do you know about Satan?" (TL:...what is this novel turning to?)

Once again, an unexpected topic was brought up.

Beelzebub responded in a calm voice.

"You mean the Demon King? I have no interest in the old days."

"I see. Then you don't know about his peril."

Lucifer seemed amused as he said this.

Beelzebub couldn't help but feel a chill down his spine in that moment.

Lucifer could have been described as living history in the Demon World. Even Beelzebub didn't know just how long he'd been alive.

Satan, whom he had mentioned, was also a legend.

He was the only one who had ruled over the entirety of Hell and who had been called the Demon King.

Of course, Beelzebub had never seen Satan for himself, so he wasn't completely certain about his legend.

Compared to mortals, demons had near infinite lifespans, but they were not immortal.

Satan had disappeared a long time before Beelzebub had come into existence. However... it was possible that Lucifer had met him.

'Why did he suddenly mention the Demon King?'

Beelzebub couldn't figure out the reason.

"Then I will go look for traces of Kaltud. I will inform you if I make any progress."

"Wait. You didn't tell me when you came here."

“Ah.”

Lucifer turned around and laughed heartily.

“Accidents are bound to happen, Beelzebub.”

“What?”

He didn't receive an answer.

Lucifer had disappeared after saying those words.

Beelzebub stood there for a moment before collapsing onto his throne, shivering.

Satan's peril. He'd said he wasn't interested, but that didn't mean he didn't know.

Instead, it could be said that he knew it better than any other demon.

The Demon King, the ruler of Hell stronger than any other demon, suddenly went missing one day.

* * *

[Lucifer swallowed the balance of the Demon World.]

“Swallowed?”

[He absorbed him.]

Absorbed.

This was a very ominous statement.

“Then, did Lucifer become the balance of the Demon World?”

[If it was so simple, the Demon World would have already become Lucifer’s world. In any case... there aren’t just one or two dangerous guys.]

Dauns spoke in a light tone before he suddenly froze.

[Tch. I guess this was too much fun. I lost track of the time.]

It felt like he sighed.

Flash.

Then, his body started shining brightly.

Frey couldn't help but squint his eyes, finding it difficult to look at him directly.

It felt as though he was being sucked or merged into that light.

Dauns turned to look at Frey.

[Anyway, this was interesting. Personally, I'm rooting for you. But that doesn't mean I will intervene directly. You should be thankful that I'm giving you this bit of advice. This alone can be considered special treatment.]

"Wait. You still haven't told me what a candidate is."

[You want me to help you chew the food I gave you? No matter how nice I am, there's no way I'd do that. I gave you the pieces of the puzzle; it's up to you to assemble them.]

The light shined even brighter.

Frey felt like his eyes were burning.

Just when he couldn't handle it anymore and was about to close his eyes.

"...!"

He realised that the features on Dauns' face were slowly beginning to appear.

As he tried to squint his eyes in order to see more clearly.

[See you later.]

"..."

Frey felt that he'd returned to the shrine. The sense of disorientation that he'd had disappeared.

He was once again facing the statue.

He couldn't help but feel a bit strange standing on solid ground again. It felt like the meeting he'd just had with God, where he'd been able to talk face-to-face with the strongest being in the world, was a dream.

...But he knew it wasn't a dream.

See you later.

He never expected this being to mention a reunion.

Frey left the shrine with a strange expression on his face.

The Great Medium, who was standing in the distance, asked in a puzzled voice.

“What’s wrong?”

“Nothing.”

“Then why did you leave immediately after entering?”

Immediately after entering?

Frey frowned at those words.

He was certain that they’d talked for a few dozen minutes, if not longer.

‘Even the time?’

Frey had no choice but to admit that the being he’d just met was truly God.

He sighed heavily.

Then he turned to the Great Medium. He wondered how she would react if she learned the true nature of her God.

“...”

It would probably be one of two things.

She would either immediately shake her head without believing me or agree unhesitatingly.

In any case, he had nothing to gain from enlightening her.

Therefore, Frey chose silence.

Then the Great Medium spoke with bright eyes.

“I guess Dauns didn’t show any reaction. It seems he has judged that you’re not qualified.”

It didn’t really matter to him, so Frey simply nodded and asked.

“So will I not be allowed to enter Hitume Ikar?”

“...I’ll listen to your reason first.”

As the Great Medium said this, she prepared to use her sorcery again.

“Wait. Can’t we just talk here?”

“Only Great Mediums are allowed to enter this place...”

She paused, looked at Frey, and sighed.

“...fine, let’s do that. Then tell me why you want to get into Hitume Ikar.”

“There is an Apostle in that country.”

“Hmm.”

The Great Medium’s eyes shined slightly.

She knew about the Apostles. In other words, this meant that she’d already known about them before the Demigods revealed their intentions.

Well. She had lived for a few hundred years, so she should have at least known that much.

“His name is Jenta. He is quite famous and is known as the Assassin King.”

The Great Medium’s expression suddenly changed.

She frowned.

“I see.”

“Do you believe me?”

“I just realised that it really could be Jenta.”

“It seems you know him.”

“He’s an exiled royal.”

Frey’s expression became strange.

For some reason, there seemed to be similar cases before. Wasn’t there Oydin from the Elf Forest?

At that time, when he found out that Oydin was Snow's brother, he'd clicked his tongue. He didn't expect his target this time to be an exiled royal.

"Although he was exiled, for a member of the Royal family to join under the Demigods..."

"Jenta had always been an ambitious child. He would do anything to achieve his goals, even if it meant shedding blood. He was heartless, and he killed without hesitation. Therefore, this is no surprise. And Jenta isn't the only one working with the Demigods."

Frey was unable to prevent his expression from changing. He was aware that there was a high possibility of this happening, but he didn't expect to hear it from the lips of the Great Medium, the top executive of the country, herself.

"Then this country..."

"It's not the entire country. This is only an issue of the high-ranking persons."

If one was to talk about high-ranking people in Hitume Ikar...

"The King?"

"Right. Morgid, the current king. That man... huhu."

The Great Medium chuckled for a while before turning to Frey.

“In any case, if it’s Jenta, then I have no choice but to cooperate.”

“Can you tell me where he is?”

“It will take a while.”

After saying that, the Great Medium paused for a moment.

“...Lutaha is the only port open to outsiders, but you don’t have to enter the city through the sea route. I’ll show you another way.”

Frey nodded.

Of course, now that he had her cooperation, Frey didn’t actually need her to do anything.

The woman in front of him was probably the only person in the entire country who could faintly sense his magic. If she condoned his actions, then Frey was certain that no one would notice.

In addition, she could even tell him Jenta’s whereabouts.

‘Maybe this will end sooner than I thought.’

Season 1 Chapter 203: Hitume Ikar (7)

“I need some time to prepare, so please wait in your room for a moment.”

Frey nodded gently at her words. He too, needed time to organise his thoughts.

It was Jose who then led him to his room. He still seemed to be upset with Frey, but he also seemed to fear him greatly.

Frey allowed him to guide him without further threatening or pressuring him.

The room was one that overlooked the island’s scenery.

Without greeting him any further, Jose left.

Frey sat down by the window, immediately diving into his thoughts.

‘God said that he’d given me all the pieces.’

The pieces were clues. Clues needed to find the ‘conclusion’ that solved the question.

‘Lord’s goal is to be the balance of the Mortal World.’

For that goal, he buried the Dragon Lord in the Demon World without killing him.

Absorption.

This was another clue that he'd received from God. He suggested the possibility of absorbing the balances.

This meant that it was possible that Lord's goal was to absorb the Dragon Lord. Frey didn't know the details, but it was highly likely that the reason Lord imprisoned the Dragon Lord in the Demon World for over 5,000 years was in preparation to absorb him.

'And Lord's reason for going to Hell now is...'

Probably because he was ready to absorb him.

In other words, he was ready to become the Mortal World's balance. (TL: but didn't god say it wasn't so easy?)

Frey's expression became severe when he had this thought.

'If Lord becomes the balance, I can't kill him.'

Now that he had divine magic power, he thought he could finally see some hope of victory. The method to attack Lord, who'd he'd had no chance of defeating before, seemed to have finally fallen into his hands.

But he couldn't guarantee victory by himself yet. After all, he'd never witnessed Lord's true power.

Nevertheless, Frey was not alone.

If he fought together with his companions, it was no longer impossible to truly defeat Lord. But even this assumption would be pointless if Lord became the balance of the Mortal World.

'If I kill Lord then, the continent would be destroyed.'

Then what should he do?

The first thing that came to his mind was a seal. Similar to what Lord did.

But was it possible for them to drive him to the brink of death?

It wasn't possible for them to fight equally with Lord. The only way one could overpower their opponent was if they were several times stronger.

And even if he did manage to seal him, there was still a problem.

Lord was the ruler of space. So no matter how perfect the seal is, it wouldn't be able to hold him for very long.

'It would be fine as long as the Rulers of Hell win.'

If he is not able to get a hold of the body of the Dragon Lord, Lord wouldn't be able to become the balance.

Originally, Frey thought about helping them. By killing Jenta, he would be able to weakened the Demigods' main forces.

However, he couldn't help but hesitate because of Lucifer.

'The flaw of the Celestial World. The fallen angel. The being who absorbed the balance of the Demon World.'

Yet he was still not the balance. He must have done it incorrectly.

'The most arrogant man.'

Those words stuck in his throat. Frey wasn't sure exactly what Lucifer was thinking.

He was the one who conspired to have the Demigods go to the Demon World. It was even possible that Lucifer was manipulating the stage from behind the scenes.

This thought made Frey's heart feel heavy.

'Iris.'

The only Contractor Lucifer had ever chosen. Asura said she'd been moving around in the Demon World with Lucifer.

This caused Frey to think of a new question.

Lucifer, the Ruler of Hell whose goals were still unclear, could never be trusted.

So how did Iris manage to bring this being over to her side?

'No, in the first place.'

Were they even on the same side?

* * *

'First, I'll kill Jenta.'

This was Frey's conclusion.

First, he judged that the most important thing was the presence of Lord, who wanted to become the balance of the Mortal World.

Lucifer's intentions were still unknown, but he decided to put that aside for now.

Frey looked down at the summoning circle in front of him. It was Asura's summoning circle.

He no longer responded to Frey's calls.

Frey couldn't help but feel a bit disappointed. He had information that could help him and there were also things that he wanted to know.

They could have been of great help to each other as long as contact had been made.

'I know he's busy, but I'm still disappointed.'

Frey got up from his seat, shaking his head.

When he opened the door, he found the Great Medium standing there with her hand raised as though she was about to knock.

“I’ve finished my preparations.”

“How are we going to get into Hitume Ikar?”

“I will use the same sorcery I used to go to the shrine.”

“Then wait a minute before you do that.”

“Aht. Where are you going?”

Walking outside, Frey didn’t answer.

He headed over to Neptunus, who was still waiting in the fog.

Neptunus trembled when he saw Frey.

It wasn’t that he didn’t think about running away. Instead, he had already tried dozens of times. But there was no way for him to escape this monster-like man.

‘He can pull me out even if I try to hide at the bottom of the sea.’

Neptunus’ fate was completely in this man’s hands.

Frey looked at him carefully for a moment before speaking.

“There are two hearts beating in your chest. One of them belongs to my teacher. At first, I was going to kill you and recover her heart.”

[...sp-, spare me.]

“Listen to the end.”

[...]

Neptunus obediently became silent.

Frey sighed.

Perhaps because it involved his teacher, his tone was many times sharper than usual.

“...however, you are also a victim. You were kidnapped by the Demigods and forced to undergo body modifications.”

[Of course I am! If it wasn't for those bastards, I Neptunus would...]

Neptunus, who was about to profess his innocence, went silent again as he saw Frey's eyes.

"You must not kill humans in the future. And you must help those who encounter sea disasters around here. Keep that in mind."

[A-, are you saying I can't return to my homeland?]

Frey looked at the dejected Neptunus and said.

"100 years."

[Huh?]

"You can return in 100 years. Keep in mind, Neptunus. The heart in your chest belonged to my teacher. You are not allowed to disgrace her. I'll be watching."

Then he turned around without saying any more words.

Looking at his back with a blank expression, Neptunus then helplessly muttered.

[...how long is 100 years?]

Frey returned to where the Great Medium was once again.

She seemed to have just been calmly observing what happened, but the look in her eyes wasn't very nice.

"I don't think that monster will listen to you."

"He will listen."

"A monster's patience is not that deep. It will pretend to listen to you for a while out of fear, but it will eventually reveal its true nature when its memories of you have faded."

"That's just your preconception. He has intelligence, that means he can become a better being. Knowing the joy of doing good would make him a spirit creature, not a monster."

"He sank many ships. Hundreds of people died because of him."

"He will save many more people than that."

"Will that bring the dead back to life?"

Their eyes met for a moment.

The Great Medium thought Frey would be upset at her questioning, but he was only looking at her with a sad expression.

“Do not mistake the wrong person to vent your anger.”

“...”

The Great Medium closed her mouth.

The moment she heard those words, she had a strange feeling.

‘Preceding Great Medium.’

Talking to Frey felt like talking to her teacher.

And as she pondered the reason for this feeling, the answer came to her immediately. The more she talked to this man, the more intimidated and small she felt.

‘Did I do something wrong?’

She couldn’t help but have this thought.

The Great Medium shook her head.

Maybe he had twisted the conversation so that she'd think like that.

"Can you take me to the royal family of this country?"

"...it's possible."

"Then please do so. I think it would be better if I was able to see and talk to the king personally."

The Great Medium nodded.

Regardless of whatever disagreement they had, she couldn't snub him right after agreeing to help him.

The Great Medium used sorcery to create a rift in space once again.

Seeing this, Frey asked.

"What is the name of this sorcery?"

"It's called God's Steps."

“...”

Without realising Frey’s strange gaze when she said those words, the Great Medium continued.

“Morgin is suspicious in many ways at this point, but in the end, he is still the king of the country. You will not be forgiven if you act as rudely towards him as you do to me. So you’ll have to be polite.”

“If he is someone who deserves my politeness, then I will.”

The Great Medium couldn’t help but feel a bit anxious since those words were neither positive nor negative. But she quickly put aside her anxiety.

No matter how rude he was, he shouldn’t act the same way to a king.

“Let’s head over first.”

Frey nodded and followed the Great Medium into her space rift. He immediately felt a sensation that was very different from a Warp.

As if they were moving at high speeds, the surrounding objects blurred past them. And suddenly, Frey found himself standing in front of a castle.

“Please wait here for a moment. I will return after receiving permission.”

After saying that, the Great Medium walked into the castle.

Frey looked up at the castle without answering her.

“...ha.”

He let out a laugh.

He'd seen it for himself.

The castle of Hitume Ikar. The safest and noblest place in the entire country had traces that shouldn't have been here.

Frey's expression became cold and his heart even colder.

He felt that he couldn't listen to the Great Medium's words.

He'd changed his mind a bit after meeting God. He needed to move faster and with more focus. He couldn't afford to take his time any more.

Frey's figure disappeared.

The place he reappeared was the deepest and safest part of the castle. The King's chambers.

He looked up to the middle-aged man sitting on a throne. This should be Morgid, the King of Hitume Ikar.

"W-, who are you?"

The man looked at Frey with a frightened expression.

The Samurai around him hurriedly drew their swords.

"Who are you?!"

"Do you know where this is....?!"

They were the elite Samurai of Hitume Ikar. They were all probably close to being First class Magic Warriors.

In no time, they drew their swords and charged towards Frey.

A swift and ferocious aura seemed to burst out from their bodies. It was clear that anyone they faced would feel threatened by their movements.

But their swords weren't able to even touch Frey.

Swish.

Just a gentle swing of his hand was enough.

Dozens of Samurai collapsed to their knees in the middle of the room.

"Kuk!"

"K-, kuk..."

Their bodies shook uncontrollably. It felt like a mountain was sitting on their shoulders.

They felt as though their entire bodies were crumbling. Some of the weaker fighters even fainted on the spot with their eyes still open.

"How impudent."

"..."

Morgid's expression changed when he heard that.

He quickly asked.

"A-, are you a Demigod?"

"..."

Frey didn't answer.

He just looked at Morgid's face with a cold expression.

"I came here to kill you."

"H-, huh? Wh-, why..."

"You should know it well. Do you have anything to say? Human."

Morgid's expression changed in an instant.

Without even the slightest hint of hesitation, he leapt from his throne and knelt before Frey with his forehead on the ground.

“I-, I’m sorry... I’m sorry... God’s race...”

He cried out in a tearful voice.

Frey’s eyes shook and a feeling of bitterness overtook him.

This was not the attitude he expected to see from the king of a country.

He had mistaken Frey for a Demigod, and it was natural that he’d feel that way. Frey was currently unleashing his divine power freely, and the way he spoke was similar to the Demigods.

He’d also used divine power when subduing the guards.

Therefore, they believed that only a Demigod would be able to show such a performance.

The race of God.

That was what Morgid had just referred to the Demigods as. Perhaps the reason they gave in was because they felt the Demigods were close to their god of creation.

Of course, that wasn’t important to Frey.

“Please forgive me... please... please...”

Morgid believed that his actions were the most suitable to guarantee his survival.

For those who bowed their heads and gave in, the Demigods showed an appearance of merciful gods.

However, he wasn't.

This was a mistake. Because the one standing before him was not a Demigod, nor did he want Morgid's subservience.

'...he's not just doing it for appearances sake.'

He expected to see something different.

If he had risked his life to go against him, if he had shown himself worthy of the title King, if he had remained calm despite his fear... but he didn't.

Anyone could tell from Morgid's current appearance.

This was a man who had completely submitted in body and in mind. He was someone who would lick the soles of his feet without hesitation just to survive.

For people like this, there was only one thing Frey could do.

“Stand up.”

“Y-, yes.”

Morgid hurried to his feet.

Frey closed his eyes.

Ever since he thought about going to Hitume Ikar, he'd had a thought.

If the reason that this country was able to remain peaceful was because they had shady dealings with the Demigods. And if it was completely voluntary, without any signs of force or intimidation. If the senior executives in this country proved to be rotten and were eating it from the inside.

Then he would stop treating them like human beings.

“Morgid, King of Hitume Ikar.”

“Y-, yes.”

Morgid looked at him in anticipation.

Frey looked at him like he was no longer human and said.

“Die here.”

Season 1 Chapter 204: Hell (1)

“A-, ahh...”

Morgid looked up at Frey with a fearful expression. He felt like an inevitable death was approaching.

Why was he angry?

He'd never made any mistakes in front of the Demigods.

Morgid desperately rolled this problem around in his head.

The reason he was able to become the King over all his brothers was because he had the sharpest wits.

But at that moment, his brain didn't seem to be working properly, probably because of the fear of death. His tongue, which normally moved so well, was frozen stiff.

Meanwhile, Frey slowly walked up to him.

He closed his eyes tightly, trying to show as much determination as he could.

“I-, if I die, this country will be over!”

These words were said recklessly, but Frey stopped moving.

Morgid felt the aura of death, which was lingering around his neck, recede slightly.

“What do you mean?”

‘It worked!’

Morgid inwardly cheered loudly at this fact.

Of course, this could simply have been prolonging his death. He didn’t have time to waste.

He quickly continued.

“I-, it hasn’t even been five years since I succeeded the throne. I haven’t fully established my authority. My brothers, who are still ambitious, would have a chance to...”

“Just get to the point.”

He gulped audibly.

“If I die, my brother will take my place as King.”

“Brother?”

“I-, I mean Jenta. Don’t you know? Lord Ananta’s Apostle...”

Morgid still mistook him for a Demigod.

“Right. But I heard that Jenta was exiled. How could such a person become king?”

Morgid tilted his head inwardly at those words.

The Demigods were basically indifferent to the affairs of humans. So he didn’t expect this one to know about Jenta’s exile.

However, Jenta was Ananta’s Apostle. So it wasn’t strange that he would know a bit more about him.

“Jenta still has many supporters in Hitume Ikar! Mostly those powers in the dark! I-, it’s not just domestic! Jenta also has a strong relationship with many foreign countries. P-, possibly even more than me. I don’t know just how much power Jenta has.”

Frey frowned.

This was because he thought it was truly unruly for a king to say such things.

‘Someone is amassing power to the point where they might rebel and you do nothing to pressure them or create any countermeasures?’

‘And you can even admit that you don’t know just how much power the other has?’

He couldn’t help but feel that this man before him was not qualified to be king.

This irresponsibility would develop into a rebellion or a civil war and would cause great fear to spread throughout the country.

Just as Frey looked at Morgid from above.

Piht.

Projectiles were suddenly shot from above.

They were aimed at both Frey and Morgid at the same time. Or at least that's how it appeared at first glance.

In truth, they were mostly focused on Morgid. The ones that were sent to Frey were just to grab his attention.

Frey immediately created a barrier.

The projectiles crashed into the barrier, giving him a chance to see what they were.

'Needles.'

They were also coated in poison.

Then, Frey felt movement from the ceiling.

Suddenly, two men in black dropped down at the same time. Their actions were swift and stealthy, with no wasted movements.

It was clear that they were trained professionals.

Flashing daggers were held in their hands.

'They're aiming for Morgid.'

Crackle.

Pale lightning erupted from Frey's body. The current traveled along the floor before touching their feet.

"Kurk!"

"Kuk!"

The would-be assassins convulsed violently and foamed from the mouth. They then collapsed to the floor, unable to move even a finger.

"H-, huk..."

Morgid also collapsed.

It had only taken a few seconds for all of those actions to take place.

He'd seen everything that happened, but he couldn't figure out what was going on.

Frey looked down at the convulsing assassins and said.

“Who are they?”

“A-, assassins! They are Jenta’s men. I can’t believe it... I didn’t think they’d dare to infiltrate the royal castle...”

Frey looked away from Morgid and approached the assassins.

He’d controlled his strength, so they were still conscious.

“Tell me where Jenta is.”

“...”

Juk.

Purple liquid seeped from the assassin’s lips.

Frey furrowed his eyebrows.

Poison.

Were they hiding it in their mouths?

It seemed they still had the ability to move their chin.

Frey's face crumpled with displeasure.

He hadn't thought they'd kill themselves without hesitation. It seemed they had also been trained to do that as well.

It was then.

The space beside Frey twisted before splitting vertically. The Great Medium then walked through this rift.

She looked around before sighing.

"I thought this would be the case. Do you know what you've done?"

Morgid blinked in confusion.

The Great Medium had suddenly appeared and started talking to the man he thought was a Demigod. As though they were acquainted.

'How does the Great Medium...?'

It was a well-known fact that the Great Medium didn't acknowledge the existence of the Demigods.

Therefore, the relationship between the Great Medium and Morgid was naturally poor.

Frey looked down at Morgid and said.

"This man, the King, was in communication with the Demigods. He sold his pride to save his life and didn't hesitate to become a dog."

"So you plan to kill the king of the country?"

"What does his status have to do with killing this man?"

The Great Medium and Morgid both felt chills when Frey said those words. In particular, Morgid felt pressure as though someone was gripping his heart.

If Frey had decided to do it earlier, he would have been dead by now.

Since he'd become King, there hadn't been a day that he'd been able to sleep comfortably because threats to his life surrounded him.

However, this was the first time that he'd truly felt the grip of death.

"Morgid cannot be called a good king, but he did what was best for his people. If the Demigods were to reveal their fangs, then the island would be engulfed in war and many people would have died. Is that what you want to happen?"

"I think it's better than being raised as livestock."

"...that's just your perspective."

"..."

Frey didn't know what to say for a moment.

Then he suddenly let out a sigh.

"...you're right. That's just my perspective."

At that moment, Asura's words appeared in his mind.

He'd called him a warrior. A fighter. And that was right.

Frey despised those who would discard their pride just to save their own lives. No, his feelings went beyond simple contempt and bordered against utter disgust.

But in the end, this was just a subjective view.

Morgid was a king.

As he calmed down, Frey understood what this meant.

For Morgid, the things that mattered the most were the survival of his people and his country.

“I was too hasty. As you said, it wasn’t without reason.”

“...”

The Great Medium was genuinely shocked when Frey reflected and suddenly apologized.

Frey then pointed to the assassins and said.

“They tried to kill Morgid. It seems they are under Jenta. Where is he?”

The Great Medium frowned.

“What will you do with the information?”

“I have to kill him.”

Unlike Morgid, he had no intention of sparing Jenta.

“Jenta is the King of Darkness. He is called the King of Death, the legendary assassin. He enjoys sneak attacks, but that doesn’t mean he isn’t strong in head-on battles. And a few years ago, he became the Apostle of Ananta and gained the ability to use divine power, so no one knows just how strong he is anymore.”

She took a deep breath before continuing.

“The place where Jenta is staying is his territory. With a simple gesture, he would be able to summon hundreds of assassins who would willingly throw their lives away for him.”

“That’s fine.”

“ ... ”

There was no sign of pride. Frey remained expressionless as though what she’d just said was unimportant.

The Great Medium then glanced at the warriors collapsed around the room.

‘Certainly.’

This man’s power was certainly extraordinary. Not even the best Sorcerer she knew would be able to incapacitate so many top Samurai with ease.

‘...first, I’ll see how it goes.’

If he was unable to deal with Jenta, she would step in. As long as Jenta was a citizen of Hitume Ikar, he would never harm the Great Medium.

When she finished her calculations, she opened her mouth.

“Jenta is in a city called ‘Perunaya’ in the northernmost part of the island.”

“Perunaya?”

Morgid asked in a surprised tone.

The Great Medium nodded.

“Right. As you know, it’s the city of Karuka, your sister.”

He sighed.

“They... right. So she laid the groundwork for Jenta to expand his power. Huhu...”

Morgid burst into laughter, but he didn’t look happy.

Instead, he looked incredibly sad.

The Great Medium looked at him with a sad gaze.

Frey could feel the complicated relationship in the royal family, but he had no intention of prying any further.

‘I’ll just kill Jenta and have Ivan clean up the rest.’

As he’d said, he didn’t have time to waste.

“Do you plan to leave right away?”

“Right.”

“The civilians who are not assassins...”

“I won’t let them get involved.”

“Fine, give me a minute.”

The Great Medium seemed to want to say more, but in the end, she simply shook her head and opened a rift to Perunaya.

It was easy to get there because it was in the northernmost part of the island.

Taht.

They arrived in Perunaya in no time.

Frey looked around and narrowed his eyes.

‘Divine power.’

Frey was able to distinguish the divine power.

What he was feeling now was Ananta's power. It was a strangely dark energy that seemed to seep into the skin.

It felt like being blown around by an uncomfortably hot wind. This was a place where sea breeze blew constantly, but it didn't feel fresh.

Crunch.

Without hesitation, he walked towards a shaded back alley.

Before long, the noise of the port faded together with the unique smell of the sea.

Then, Frey stopped walking.

He looked into the shadows and said.

"I didn't think you'd come to me directly."

A man appeared in the dark.

It was Jenta, the man he'd seen in the past.

He wasn't wearing a mask this time, and he was instead revealing the bare face he'd seen back at the Demigods' meeting.

Jenta spoke in an arrogant voice.

"There's no reason to run away. This is an opportunity to finish you with my own hands."

"You brought many hands to accomplish this goal."

Jenta frowned.

His subordinates who were surrounding them had been noticed.

"Did you come even though you knew? Ha. You're out of your mind."

"I came..."

Frey's voice was cold.

"Because you guys are nothing to me."

Season 1 Chapter 205: Hell (2)

[This is a shallow land.]

Lord muttered, looking down at the land of the Demon World.

He never thought about conquering this world. After all, it was clear why this place was called Hell.

[Don't you think so?]

“Compared to the continent, it is.”

Iris smiled.

“Can I ask why you called me here?”

[There's something I want you to do.]

“Please say it.”

[Send Nozdog to Hitume Ikar.]

Iris' expression changed at those words.

“At this point, if Nozdog is absent, then the power of the main force will be greatly reduced, wouldn’t it?”

[That’s right. But it’s not something you need to worry about.]

“...I see, but...”

[But what?]

Humour could be heard in Lord’s voice.

[Are you currently occupied with something else?]

The moment she heard that, Iris felt an unknown chill. But she was used to hiding her feelings, so it didn’t show.

Instead, she answered naturally.

“Busy? What could I possibly be busy with?”

[You are borrowing my power. Except for me, you are the only person who could enter the Demon World.]

“I know that.”

[Huhu.]

Lord’s low laugh was disturbing.

Iris looked at him in silence. He was still looking down at the Demon World’s earth with his back to her, so she couldn’t see his expression or tell what he was thinking.

No. She wouldn’t have been able to tell even if she could see his face. After all, he didn’t have any features.

But as soon as Lord turned around to face her, Iris realised that her prediction was wrong.

“Hup.”

Iris couldn’t help but take a breath.

Lord’s face was now clearly revealed to her. He had eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

But they were all positioned in a bizarre manner. His mouth was vertical, extending from his forehead to his chin, four eyes, and an innumerable amount of flaring nostrils.

[Iris Phisfounder.]

Lord smiled hideously with his large vertical mouth.

[If a tail is too long, it's bound to be stepped on.]

* * *

Jenta looked down at Frey with a laugh.

He never thought he'd come to Perunaya on his own.

'A prey caught in a spider's web.'

Of course, that didn't mean he would take him lightly. After all, it was still unclear just how powerful this Wizard truly was.

However, this was the place where most of the assassins Jenta had raised were located.

Even if it was the king of the country, Jenta was confident that if he dared to set foot in this city, he would be assassinated without a trace.

It wasn't even worth mentioning that this was clearly an irrational Wizard. For generations, even collected Wizards were the easiest targets for assassinations.

Their bodies were filled with openings.

They were very different from the Magic Warriors, who always fought on the edge of the blade, the Knights, who were covered in heavy armors, or the Sorcerers, who could employ all manners of unpredictable tricks.

Their entire bodies were open when they walked, ate, slept, or even when they were on guard. And during the time it took for them to cast spells was the perfect time to assassinate them.

'How should I kill him?'

He came to Hitume Ikar without properly understanding his target. If he was to kill him in a straightforward manner, then it wouldn't be able to resolve the grievances he had inside.

He felt it would be good to pull out his nails first. Or melt the tips of his toes off with poison.

People usually died in shock if their lower bodies suddenly disappeared. But this man was a powerful Wizard, so he should have been able to last a bit longer.

Most people did not have a good resistance to physical pain.

As Jenta was wondering how he should kill him, Frey's expression changed slightly.

“...”

They had already been staring at each other for some time.

Jenta knew that.

Nevertheless, he was unable to give the order to attack hastily.

What was the reason?

He wondered to himself.

Frey's body was full of openings. That he was certain about.

With just a single gesture, he was sure that this man's body would become a ball of meat.

'Yet...'

He didn't want to. He didn't want to give the order.

Jenta felt that his palms had become wet without him realising.

'Am I nervous?'

Crunch.

He grit his teeth subconsciously.

Nervousness, fear, dread. These were words that should have no connection to him.

Until he met the Demigods.

Faced with them, he had no choice but to abandon his arrogance. And he believed that he had grown to the next level, both as a human and as an assassin.

Now that he thought about it, this situation was very similar to the one of that time.

When he first met Ananta, he'd also felt that his body was full of openings. The Jenta at that time had quickly narrowed the distance. In his head, he could already see the scene of his sword slicing through Ananta's throat.

But the moment he was tossed to the floor was when he realised it was all an illusion.

He was shocked.

He'd actually thought that he could kill a great being that had lived for thousands of years. He'd been drunk on his own lethal power.

But that illusion was shattered when he saw Ananta's power. Even the little hesitation he had in his heart disappeared after he learned of Lord's existence.

Jenta decided to compromise.

He decided to consider the Demigods as beings on a completely different level than humans. That was his last bit of pride.

He would recognise the Demigods as the true superior species. And he wouldn't hesitate to bow his head or borrow their strength.

But if it was anything else, he wouldn't lose. He would kill it.

That was what he thought.

'Yet...'

He didn't know why he was nervous.

Jenta stepped back.

Before he knew it, the ridicule had disappeared from his face.

“...kuk.”

Jenta bit his lip, using the sharp pain to calm his mind.

Then, he regained his composure while calmly wiping the blood from his lips.

‘He’s just a Wizard at best. There’s no reason to be scared of him.’

Several years had passed since he became an Apostle, and his mental power was many times more powerful than it had been. He’d successfully developed his own style of assassination by incorporating his divine power into his techniques.

For him, Ananta’s power was like adding wings to a tiger.

A small bottle of poison was enough to contaminate an entire lake. That was how deadly Ananta’s poison was.

With a stiff expression, he raised one hand.

“First generation.”

Paht.

The assassins in the dark moved simultaneously.

This was the best terrain for them to move as they pleased. It was dark, there were many places to hide, and there was limited space to move.

Of course, the fact that there was limited space to move was only from the prey’s perspective. For them, this space was not a constraint at all. Instead, it was close to an advantage as it made it possible for them to reach their prey more efficiently.

But in the very next moment, they realised that all of these advantages were meaningless.

Flash!

Something blue fell from the sky.

Jenta closed his eyes in an instant. If he had been a moment slower, it was possible that he would’ve been blinded.

Strong light filled the entire alley.

Boom!

Then, a noise loud enough to shake heaven and earth was heard. It was a loud explosion as though a meteorite had fallen from the sky.

Of course, he knew that a meteorite hadn't fallen.

Before he could open his eyes, the first thing that greeted Jenta was a smell. It was a strange smell, but it was one he was familiar with.

It was the smell of burnt skin.

Jenta opened his eyes.

And immediately regretted it.

Black lumps of charcoal were scattered everywhere. Without any difficulty, Jenta realised that they were the first generation assassins.

Dozens of burned bodies were scattered around Frey.

"H... ow."

Total annihilation.

This elite group, which had carried out dozens of missions without receiving even a single scratch, had been completely decimated.

Jenta's expression was one of shock.

He shook his head.

"Th-, that wasn't magic."

That was not like magic at all.

The first generation had a lot of experience fighting against Wizards. They were well aware that when mana erupted around a Wizard; it was both a crisis and an opportunity.

There were no fools amongst them who didn't know the dangers and destructive power of magic and the flaws.

Yet it was this elite group who had been turned into charcoal before they even had a chance to properly respond.

In addition, the attack just then had been enough to immediately turn humans into charcoal, but there wasn't even a single mark on the surrounding structures.

Jenta wondered if he was dreaming.

"It's not magic."

As he responded to Jenta's words, Frey took a step forward. And Jenta took a step back without realising it.

It was both fortunate and unfortunate that Jenta did not notice this fact.

It was true to say that Wizards could only serve as prey for assassins. Even 7 star Wizards, crowned as Archmages, would have trouble against them. Perhaps even an 8 star Wizard would struggle.

Jenta's power and the addition of his hidden assassins were truly troublesome.

High ranking assassins were able to read the movement of mana. They would keep their eyes on the Wizard's every gesture and listen to even the softest murmurs. To observe their target, they would raise their concentrations to the limit.

However, their detection abilities didn't work on 9 star Wizards. Frey could move his mana without them noticing, and he could cast spells without chanting or doing any prior actions.

He could even use their keen senses to set traps for them. It was the same just then.

'They thought I would use a defensive spell.'

He pretended to be on the defensive on purpose. And the assassins were unable to see through Frey's trick.

This wasn't because they lacked foresight. Instead, it was because Frey's control over his mana was too outstanding.

It was not that they were wrong but that they had been blinded by their own eyes.

"Second generation! Third generation! Don't get close to him! First, we'll pressure him with long distance attacks! No, we have to determine his attack range..."

"This entire city."

It could just be a low-handed trick, but Jenta had no time to listen to it. Frey had reached close enough to touch him.

'When?'

'No. How did he even get there?'

'Did he use Blink?'

'No. That didn't matter.'

Jenta's face became clouded by rage.

"You... bastard!"

It was a very primitive rage.

He had never heard of a Wizard who dared to get close to an assassin.

It was something that would never have happened if they were treating their opponent seriously.

'No.'

He forcibly regained his calm. Unexpected things kept happening consecutively, but it could just be the other's plan.

'You're too arrogant, Wizard!'

Such a close distance. This was an opportunity like no other.

Each assassin had their secret weapons, and Jenta's were particularly deadly.

There was no way he would miss at this distance. It would definitely mean certain death.

Paht.

What Jenta revealed was a simple-looking awl. Six of them.

He put them between his fingers and crossed his arms. His expression became extremely serious at that moment.

'If you can block this, I'll admit you are better than-'

Jenta didn't get to finish his thought.

A white light from Frey covered his head.

"..."

Then, Jenta's body, which had lost its head, collapsed to the ground. He hadn't even realised how he'd died.

"L-, leader!"

“Impossible...”

Even when the first generation had been annihilated, the group of assassins hadn't wavered or been so distracted.

Naturally, Frey would not miss this chance.

He was aware of the location of every single one of them.

There were 129 left.

Chchch!

A stream of lightning went through the ground and engulfed them.

The assassins weren't even given the chance to scream. Just like the first generation, they all quickly became lumps of charcoal.

“...”

Frey looked around.

Jenta and the assassins had been wiped out.

They were dead. It was not a trick, nor was it a mistake.

Frey was certain that he'd killed Ananta's Apostle, Jenta.

Nevertheless, Frey's expression did not look good. Instead, he felt incredibly uncomfortable.

'Is this it?'

He felt like something was stuck in his throat.

Jenta's ability to hide was amazing. But he should have known that he would be unable to hide from the Great Medium.

Did the Demigods not know that too?

'That's not possible.'

They were the type to pay attention to their weaknesses. If they weren't certain of their safety, they would not have rushed over to Hell.

Then... was it possible that they disconnected from their Apostles? So that even if the Apostle was killed, the Demigods wouldn't go into hibernation?

If that was the case, then Ananta would not have needed to care about Jenta any longer.

That was a possibility. But Frey didn't think that chance was very high.

Even if such a thing were possible, it would not have been something that could be done quickly or easily.

'...the most plausible hypothesis is that they were confident in Neptunus' protection.'

The chimera that Leyrin had made was quite strong. If it wasn't Dro and Frey, but someone else, they would have suffered.

This was especially because they would be forced to face him in the sea, a terrain that was most advantageous to him.

It was possible that Ananta overestimated the power of Neptunus. As long as he could protect Hitume Ikar, Jenta would be perfectly safe.

He might have thought so.

'It's too lax.'

It was too sloppy.

He was certain that they knew Agni was dead. Yet they were acting like this?

Frey couldn't help but feel anxious.

'I have to contact Asura.'

The quickest way to check if Ananta was hibernating was to ask a ruler of Hell directly. But Asura no longer responded to Frey's calls.

'Should I get Sheryl to contact Lilith?'

The two seemed to be close. At least closer than Frey and Asura.

But he wasn't sure if Lilith would respond.

'Should I find another Contractor?'

One who had signed a contract with a High rank Demon who wasn't a Demon Lord. He could use them to help him pass on a message to Asura.

However, Frey's concerns soon became useless.

"Hello."

Frey looked back in shock.

Without him noticing, a man had appeared behind him.

'I couldn't feel his presence.'

That fact alone made Frey's expression harden.

"Who are you?"

When Frey asked this in a vigilant voice, the man smiled.

"Lucifer."

"...!"

The Lord of the Corrupted Hell!

Frey breathed in sharply.

This was his first time meeting this man in person, but he couldn't help but raise his guard.

He wasn't sure if this man was truly Lucifer, but it was clear that this was no ordinary person since he was able to evade his senses.

'Even though demons can't use their full strength in the Mortal World...'

He felt a sense of portent that couldn't be hidden.

God's words appeared in his mind at that moment.

The flaw of heaven, who knew the true background of Lord and the Demigods. And the man who had devoured the real balance of Hell.

How should he react?

"...what business do you have with me?"

"I came to make an offer."

“An offer?”

“Right. An offer.”

Lucifer looked at Frey without hiding his interest.

“Would you like to go to Hell with me, Great Mage?”

Season 1 Chapter 206: Hell (3)

“I’m human, I can’t go to Hell.”

“You don’t have to be so stiff around me.”

When Frey didn’t respond, Lucifer shrugged.

“You don’t really think that, do you? Are you afraid that you wouldn’t be able to perform the dimensional leap?”

Lucifer’s movements were exaggerated, and he had a strange way of speaking. Nevertheless, his gaze was sharp.

That was the reason why Frey was unable to relax.

Dimensional leap.

He'd never tried it for himself, but in his heart, Frey agreed with Lucifer's words.

He knew that his soul had already transcended human standards. Even the turbulence that he would encounter during a dimensional leap would affect him.

Just like he'd been able to send Apep to the Slaughter Hell in the past, it was also possible for the current Frey.

But that didn't mean that all of the problems had been solved.

"Even if my soul can withstand it, my body can't. My body would be torn apart like a piece of paper."

"That's not a problem either."

"What do you mean?"

Lucifer burst out into laughter.

"Are you sure you don't know? Great Mage, I'm sure you can feel the changes occurring in your soul."

“You talk as though you know me well.”

“It’s not from observation. I don’t have that much free time.”

“...”

“Can you tell who told me?”

Frey’s eyes shook.

He didn’t answer that question either. But the image of a purple-haired woman subconsciously appeared in his mind.

Frey sighed deeply.

“Transcendent.”

“Huhu!”

Lucifer laughed happily and nodded.

The Demigods' true self. It was easy to understand if one thought about Agni, who had a body made of fire.

The boundary between body and soul was not present. Even if their organs exploded or their limbs were torn off, their bodies could be constantly and quickly regenerated as long as they still had mental power.

For transcendent bodies, normal physical attacks were pointless. Magic, and even divine power, was the same.

To deal a proper blow to a transcendent, one had to use a high level technique to reach their 'core'.

"You can also become transcendent."

Frey knew that.

He put his hand on his chest.

At some point, he'd begun feeling that his body was unnecessary. It felt cumbersome, like it was holding him back.

He also knew that he could throw away this body if he wanted. He could get a 'freedom' that he'd never felt before in his life. He could feel a sense of fullness that the feeling he had now would never be able to compare to.

Frey knew that he could be like that at some point.

“You have already surpassed the class of humans. So why are you still clinging to your body?”

Lucifer asked this question with genuine curiosity.

Frey’s mouth twisted.

In all honesty, it was because he wasn’t confident. He didn’t know what changes he would experience after truly becoming a transcendent being.

It was possible that he’d become completely different to how he was now. Even his way of thinking might change.

He was scared. He wasn’t sure if he’d still consider himself a human at that time, or how he would feel towards them.

Frey loved humans, but at the same time, he hated them.

He knew of their extremely contradictory nature better than anyone else. He knew that there were just as many bad people as there were good.

What if he only focused on the former after becoming a transcendent being? What if he could no longer see the bright side of man?

When he became transcendent, Frey believed that his vision would be much higher than it was now. It would be almost impossible for him to see the humans below him. Even if he bent his back as much as he could, he would never be able to see their expressions. And no matter how he stretched his ears, their desperate cries would never reach him.

He would become a new level of existence.

Would he even be himself anymore?

“Hmmm.”

Lucifer’s expression changed for the first time.

The relaxed expression that he had up to that point disappeared, replaced by a bit of surprise and frustration.

“Foolish. It has already been determined. You are destined to abandon humanity in the end.”

“...”

Frey took Lucifer’s words to mean two things.

He would abandon his humanity. Or abandon the human race.

Both were obviously things that he never wanted to happen. Nevertheless, the moment he heard it, his heart became heavy.

He felt that those words were like a prophecy that couldn't be denied.

“Chrysalis. That's the best word to describe your current state. You're already ready to spread your wings. So why aren't you flying? Why are you still focused on the days when you crawled across the ground? Do you think you can go back to being a caterpillar? No. You can't!”

Lucifer's voice was filled with a strange emotion.

“Evolution or destruction. You have to pick between them. The cocoon will eventually rot, and your body will rot with it. That's not the end you want, is it?”

He would die as a human.

Lucifer didn't want to say such terrible words. Instead, he looked at Frey with eyes filled with anticipation. There was even a faint hint of affection in his gaze.

He couldn't help it.

He had been alive for a frightening amount of time. Except for God, there was no one else in the universe who'd been alive as long as he had. He was the oldest creation.

Lucifer also knew more about the structure of the world than anyone else. In other words, he knew the laws and order.

The core of these laws was 'class'.

All living beings were placed in a class from birth. It could be called a brand.

Frey was a human. Even though he had power that far surpassed humans, he was still classified as a human.

It was the same even when he was the Great Mage, Lukas Trowman. Even though he reached 9 stars, he was still mortal.

He was still inferior to the Rulers of Hell and the Demigods.

In a sense, that was the limit of a human.

But Frey had raised his class. He far surpassed the limit of power that humans could possess.

He broke the limit.

In truth, this result came from a series of coincidences. But Lucifer didn't care about the process. The only thing he paid attention to was the result.

This human in front of him had accomplished something that was unprecedented in thousands, no, tens of thousands of years.

Lucifer greatly admired Frey's feat and praised him sincerely. It even made him uncharacteristically excited.

The 'possibility' that Frey's existence revealed was simply astonishing.

It was natural for him to have a lot of curiosity towards him.

He was curious about this human who managed to break the 'law'. And just what thoughts he had in his mind.

But right after he finally met this person and talked for a brief moment, he was overwhelmed by disappointment.

'Lingering affection.'

Frey was still deeply attached to the human race.

He shouldn't have been. Such personal affection was not a virtue that a transcendent being needed to have.

"Become transcendent, Lukas."

Lucifer spoke with a serious expression.

“I know you have an aversion towards transcendent beings. It’s only natural since you’ve only experienced the Demigods’ behaviour.”

“...”

“However, you should have realised. They don’t have the dignity worthy of their long lives. They are just pathetic. The Demigods have wasted their near infinite time, and they are now paying the price for it. Look! The fall of those arrogant beings who claimed to be the masters of the continent is at hand!”

Lucifer clenched his fist.

“You won’t be like that. The path you’ve taken so far proves that.”

“All of a sudden.”

Frey finally opened his mouth.

Lucifer looked at him in anticipation. But his expression became hard when he heard the words Frey said next.

“My friend’s advice comes to mind.”

“What is that?”

“They said that you should be especially careful when a demon starts wagging its tongue at you enthusiastically.”

“...”

The expression of Lucifer, which had been alight as he was talking passionately, quickly cooled down. The emotion disappeared from his face.

The change was so sudden that it would cause anyone to feel chills, but Frey didn't shrink back.

Instead, he continued in a cold voice.

“What do you want?”

Frey's expression was as cold as his voice.

He didn't trust Lucifer at all.

This would have been the case even if he hadn't heard the truth from God.

“As you said, I will transcend humanity. Sooner or later... Perhaps it will be as you said. Perhaps.”

“Hoh.”

“However, in the end, that is my choice. Do you understand? It is a judgement that I will make for myself after careful consideration. Your words have no effect on my choice.”

Lucifer smiled coldly.

This smile was very different from the one he'd given before. However, Frey felt that this smile revealed his true intentions.

“I understand perfectly. Right. Every choice deserves respect. However, you should understand the reason why I want you to become transcendent as soon as possible. We have a common enemy. I just thought that you would like to increase our odds.”

“You mean Lord. He certainly is a common enemy between the Continent and Hell. But in my opinion, you and Lord are the same.”

He didn't know what he was up to.

“Demons cannot exert their full strength here on the continent. We are of no threat to you.”

“I don’t know that.”

The Demigods had been able to avoid the law’s punishment by using a metal called Illuminium.

It was one of the laws that also restricted the demons when they entered the Mortal World. So he couldn’t say for sure whether they had a way to bypass it or not.

“Then let’s change the method of this negotiation a little.”

“Do you intend to threaten me?”

“You might see it that way.”

Lucifer’s lips spread to form a large, sinister smile.

“ ... ”

Frey’s expression became hard when he heard his words.

* * *

[I’m sorry, Nozdog. You must have been busy, but I called you here.]

Nozdog shook his head at Lord's words.

{It's fine at the moment. The battle has entered a lull.}

[It's only a matter of time.]

{Right.}

Nozdog nodded heavily.

Lord looked at his empty eye sockets and opened his mouth.

[I heard Ananta went into hibernation.]

{...It's probable that his Apostle in Hitume Ikar was attacked. We were worried, but we didn't expect it to happen so fast.}

[Right. It's certainly a shame.]

Nozdog couldn't help but feel a bit strange after hearing Lord's voice.

'Since when?'

Lord was accepting the death of his own people calmly.

He wasn't like this before. He would be furious at the death of every single one of his people. As if he carried the anger of every single Demigod.

This was why the majority of Demigods felt a strong bond to Lord.

[Of the five of my people that I was closest with. You are the only one left, Nozdog.]

Nozdog felt two discrepancies in those words.

'The ones he was closest to?'

Lord loved every Demigod equally. He never used a tone which seemed to favor one over the other. Even if he thought it, he would never say it directly.

And there was another thing.

{Lord, Ananta is still alive. He is just hibernating.}

[...ah. Right.]

Nozdog felt a strange sense of anxiety.

He couldn't help but fall silent for a moment.

[Right. That's true.]

Nozdog's body was a skeleton. This meant he had no heart. But if he did, he was certain that it would practically jump out of his chest with how hard it would be beating at that moment.

[Head over to Hitume Ikar.]

{I don't mind doing that, but... Will it be fine over here?}

If both Nozdog and Ananta were away, the power of the Demigods' side would fall by at least half.

Lord was acting on his own, so he wouldn't be able to help.

With just the others, even if only two Archdukes made a move, they would have a hard time.

[It's fine. I have a plan.]

{...understood.}

Nozdog forcibly suppressed his anxiety.

Even when Lord absorbed Leyrin, his belief did not waver. Regardless of the consequences, he would listen to Lord's will.

{What should I do after I get there?}

[There should be a being with a Dragon Heart there. Take him down. But don't kill him.]

{...understood. Then I will brief the others and come back.}

Nozdog left after saying those words.

Lord's gaze was elsewhere. It was like he was looking beyond Hell.

He was looking at the one who was probably his biggest obstacle.

[It must have been fun. Everything was going according to your plans.]

A smile appeared on his face.

[But it will be different from now on.]

Season 1 Chapter 207: Hell (4)

Lucifer left, saying that he would return the next day. He also added that he hoped Frey would have made a decision by then.

Frey was once again alone in the back alley.

He sat on the dirty ground, looking up at the sky.

He couldn't help but think back to what Lucifer had said.

'Iris was caught by Lord.'

'I lost contact. I don't know if she is alive or dead. Lord has no reason to keep her alive. Even if she is alive, there is no guarantee that she's okay.'

Strangely enough, he felt that those words were true.

Lucifer no longer tried to force an alliance. He simply looked at him with a meaningful smile.

However, it was this attitude that shook Frey's heart more than the persuasion tactics he'd employed before.

He slowly closed his eyes.

There were a lot of thoughts on his mind. His face was stiff, and his heart was heavy.

His worries continued to pile up.

His relationship with Iris. The things she'd done after he disappeared. What Anastasia said. Lucifer and Lord.

“...”

He suddenly felt that that wasn't important.

'What do I want to do?'

Frey asked himself.

The most important thing was his own thoughts.

And that answer came so quickly that his worries seemed unnecessary.

'Regardless of the reason, I don't want to leave her like that.'

He didn't want Iris to end up dying at Lord's hand. It wouldn't solve anything.

There was still a lot that needed to be cleared up between Frey and Iris. A lot of things that he wanted to hear and a lot that he wanted to say.

In this sense, Lord was a hindrance and an uninvited guest. He did nothing but interfere.

Frey was finally able to see inside himself clearly.

He wasn't just going to save Iris. If he met her this time, he would be able to look at her more calmly than the last time.

He couldn't help but wonder how exactly he would treat Iris Phisfounder.

"..."

First of all, he had to meet her again.

After having this thought, Frey stood up.

He didn't intend to act as Lucifer wished. He said he would return the next day, but Frey didn't intend to wait until then.

He would go to Hell on his own.

Of course, there was something he needed to take care of before that.

* * *

"You go first."

Ivan's cheek twitched at Dro's sudden announcement.

"What?"

"There's something I need to do."

"There's nothing to do in this depressing forest where you can't even find a single bug. Do you plan to dig up a tree? The quality of the wood isn't too bad."

Ivan touched a dark tree beside him while he mumbled insensibly.

But Dro shook his head firmly.

“That’s not it.”

“Then?”

“...”

“Dammit. What’s the need to hide it?”

Dro remained silent even as Ivan vented his anger. This attitude made Ivan even angrier.

But Anastasia, who was observing Dro’s expression, had a different view than Ivan.

“Let’s just go.”

“What?”

“I have a bad feeling.”

Anastasia frowned.

“Dro’s words sound like advice.”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“Just come. That friend needs our help.”

“...”

Anastasia pointed towards Jekid who was standing at the front of his group as she said this. But Jekid couldn't help but make a strange expression when he heard himself being called 'that friend' by a girl who looked much younger than his daughter.

Ivan clicked his tongue.

He didn't trust Dro completely, but he was at least certain that he wouldn't try anything stupid.

Nevertheless, he turned to Anastasia and opened his mouth, showing that he didn't back down easily.

“It's not that you don't understand what I'm implying, is it?”

“Something like that wouldn't happen.”

“Ha.”

Ivan snorted before walking over to Jekid.

Anastasia gave Dro a meaningful gaze before turning around and following him.

Their figures grew further and further away.

No signs of life could be found in the entire forest. So as they disappeared, a sense of serenity settled. Like the calm before the storm.

Dro appeared to be left alone in the clearing. But he knew he was not alone.

“You’re still not very good at speaking. Well. Iris couldn’t really afford to care about that.”

A man was standing in the darkness of the forest.

He was not hiding his presence. In fact, he had been leaning against a tree since the beginning, but no one except Dro had felt his presence.

Neither Ivan, who was at the gateway to the Warrior King, Anastasia, who carried the title Great Sage, nor Jekid, leader of one of the Three Great Circles and a Knight who surpassed the Master rank, were able to.

“It’s quite amazing that you sent them away so recklessly.”

The man spoke in a strange manner.

Dro felt like he knew who he was somehow. So he wasn't surprised.

Instead, he continued talking in his normal, blank tone.

"What if I didn't tell them to leave first? What if they were still here?"

"I wanted to talk to you alone. I don't want others to hear our conversation."

His tone was light but seemed to carry a deeper meaning.

He meant that he would have killed everyone there. It wouldn't have been difficult for him.

Looking at his pale complexion, Dro slowly opened his mouth.

"Lucifer."

"Hoh."

Lucifer made a sound of admiration when he heard his name called.

His voice was filled with a sense of anticipation as he asked.

“Can you remember?”

“Faintly.”

“That’s good to hear. Now, come here.”

Lucifer beckoned to him, but Dro didn’t move from his position.

Instead, he shook his head firmly.

“I was told not to trust you.”

“I don’t need to ask who told you that. Haha. I can’t believe Iris said that. She is fun and annoying at the same time.”

He still had a smile on his face as he spoke.

“Iris created me. She is my...”

“What? Hahaha!”

This time he truly burst into laughter.

Lucifer laughed for a long time before looking at Dro again.

“Kuku. You’re not wrong, but... How naive. Right. I get it now. Is this also part of Iris’ design? That woman really can’t be underestimated.”

“What are you talking about?”

The answer came from behind him.

“The one you need to believe is not her but me.”

“...!”

Snap.

Lucifer, who’d moved behind Dro, grabbed his shoulder. And in that instant, Dro felt as though lightning bolts were flashing in his mind.

“Remember, Dro. The meaning of your name.”

His voice drifted into his ears like an irresistible hypnosis. First, it flowed in smoothly like a gentle breeze before eventually becoming a storm.

“—.”

Dro’s mouth hung open, and his eyes were stretched wide.

“...I... am not the Dragon Lord.”

“Right. You’re not.”

Lucifer smiled brightly.

“You’re not just that much, Dro.”

* * *

Lilith breathed deeply as she stared at the Demigods.

She didn’t have her usual composure at all. Her well groomed hair hung wildly, and her entire body was covered in wounds.

That wasn't all.

Most of the Black Dream Hell had been taken, and even her own castle had been destroyed.

'This is really frustrating.'

She never would have thought that she'd be the first victim.

At first, she had the advantage, but she wouldn't have imagined that it could become like this.

Because the Demigods were ignorant about Hell.

Lilith was confident in her territory. She had believed that since it was the Black Dream Hell, she would be able to stop the Demigods' advance and even kill a few of them.

But it was all just an illusion.

Their patterns began changing as the battles continued. The Demigods inexplicably adapted to the terrain and environment in Hell at a quick rate.

They were not shaken by the advantages of the demons. And in the end, the difference between winning and losing became the difference in power.

Each Demigod had power that surpassed even the High rank demons'. And while they might have been weaker than the six Rulers of Hell, there were over a dozen of them.

And among them, there were also those who were exceptionally strong.

Nozdog and Ananta. Those who were called Apocalypses.

The two of them weren't around right then, but Lilith couldn't afford to care about them at that moment.

"It's like we were told. The Queen of the Dream Demons is particularly weak among the Archdukes."

"Indeed."

The Demigods muttered these words with expressionless faces. They just muttered what they thought.

But Lilith felt humiliated as though they were actively mocking her.

And the thing that was the most humiliating was the fact that she couldn't refute their words.

It was true that of the six Rulers of Hell, she was the weakest.

'In the end, no one came to help.'

Lilith laughed to herself.

She wasn't disappointed. Because she didn't expect to get any help in the first place.

She knew the habits of demonkind well. If it was strong, they'd eat it, and if it was weak, they'd still eat it.

Hell followed the rules of the jungle. Those who couldn't protect themselves would be eaten without hesitation.

Maybe that was why the other Archdukes didn't view Lilith in a good light. She relied on cunning and treachery instead of simply advancing with force.

Of course, Lilith didn't think she was wrong. She also struggled to survive. Which was why she was able to accept this death calmly.

It would have been a lie to say she wasn't regretful, but she felt that there was nothing she could do.

She would die because she was weak.

She never would have expected to die at the hands of Demigods instead of Demons.

“Hooo.”

She closed her eyes.

Just as she tried to accept her end with one last sigh.

Woowoong-

The Demigods looked up to the sky at the same time.

The sinister, purple sky of Hell cracked open, and someone fell from it.

At first, the Demigods thought it was their own kind. Some of them even though it was Lord.

But that was an absurd misunderstanding.

“...you are...”

Shock was visible in Lilith’s eyes.

It was a face she was familiar with but not one she expected to see at that moment.

No.

Instead, it could be said that this sight made her wonder if she was dreaming.

The appearance of a human falling from the skies of Hell was not realistic in any way.

Taht.

Frey looked around.

This was his first time in Hell. He quickly noticed that there were certainly many things that were different from the continent.

The purple sky, pitch-black earth, and incredibly disgusting stench which permeated the environment were the most noticeable.

Then he saw the rivers that appeared to be made of flowing blood.

Chch-

“...”

His divine magic power fluctuated for a moment. The dimensional leap had been successful, but it wasn't without side effects.

Frey realised that he was currently in a state of excitement.

Was the raging divine magic power affecting his mind?

"Who the hell are you?"

"I can feel divine power, but he's definitely not our kind."

"I don't think he's a demon."

Only then did Frey turn around.

Seeing the beings standing there, it took him a moment to realise that they were Demigods.

Even Frey had never seen so many Demigods in one place. Of course, Frey did not think about having a conversation with them.

This number was a threat even to him.

Frey's mind spun quickly.

The best strategy was to reduce their numbers before they realised who he was. If his attack went well, he would be able to get rid of two of them.

Just as lightning was about to spread out from his body.

“Wait a moment. We have no intention of fighting you.”

At those words, Frey suppressed his divine magic power.

Then he turned to the one who spoke and asked.

“Who are you?”

“I am Heimdall.”

It was a man with cloth tied around his eyes.

His aura was also different from the other Demigods'.

“We have no intention of fighting?”

“Heimdall, what are you talking about?”

It was the Demigods around him who expressed displeasure at his words. However, his next words forced them to shut up.

“Lord said it directly. If Frey Blake appears in Hell, be polite.”

Frey’s expression became strange.

After a brief silence, Heimdall added.

“Just like we treat our own kind.”

Season 1 Chapter 208: Hell (5)

‘Did I hear that incorrectly?’

No. It wasn’t possible.

Frey didn’t even know what kind of expression he was making at that moment. He even wanted to feel his face to check.

The words that Heimdall had just said were too unbelievable.

Be polite? Like he was one of their kind?

He couldn't believe that Lord would say such words.

Frey spoke coldly.

"Nonsense."

"Right. Don't be ridiculous, Heimdall."

One of the Demigods beside him agreed with Frey's words. His voice was fierce, and his eyes had a hideous glow, as though he was ready to tear his opponent apart without any hesitation.

"He is an enemy who has killed many of our people. I don't need to talk. I'm going to kill him here."

"You are no match for him, Kullis."

Crunch.

The Demigod named Kullis grit his teeth at those words, but he held back his violent behaviour.

It was a sign that the Demigods' thoughts had changed a lot.

He didn't vent his anger even though he was told he was weaker than a mortal. In fact, Kullis was not confident that he could defeat Frey on his own.

Heimdall looked at Frey again and said.

"Frey Blake, it doesn't matter whether you believe me or not. However... Lord seemed certain of your arrival."

"..."

Frey guessed the reason.

Iris Phisfounder.

Was he using her as a hostage?

The situation wasn't good. Nevertheless, a smile spread across Frey's lips.

Of course, it was a smile colder than ice.

“Right. That’s more like Lord.”

He would not have understood if he hadn’t said that. Even if he pretended to have suddenly gotten a change of heart, he would only feel suspicion.

Frey pointed to Lilith, who was still staring without understanding what was going on.

“Do not touch Lilith anymore.”

“Ha. Why the hell would we listen to-”

“We understand.”

Kullis opened his mouth to retort, but Heimdall nodded gently.

It seemed that Heimdall’s position was higher than the other Demigods’ there.

Of course, all Demigods were viewed equally by each other, but it was a difference in speaking right.

Lord and the Apocalypses were representative of this.

“Follow me.”

After saying that, Heimdall turned around. Most of the other Demigods seemed to be just as displeased as Kullis was, but they didn't express it openly.

Lilith urgently called out to Frey, who was about to leave.

“Y-, you. Why did you save me?”

“Because it's not time for you to die yet.”

“What?”

“Tell Asura. Tell him that he must not trust Lucifer.”

“W-, wait.”

Frey didn't listen and followed Heimdall away.

Except for Lucifer, the five Lords of Hell must not be allowed to die. Because they were the best deterrent to hold Lord and Lucifer back.

* * *

Lord looked no different from the last time he saw him.

He was standing on the edge of a cliff, looking at Frey.

What was unusual was that the land around him was not black. Instead, it was fertile and grassy as though they'd returned to the continent.

[Welcome.]

“...”

Frey didn't know what to say.

He never could have imagined that a day would come when he'd hear this word from Lord.

He felt strange.

Of course, it wasn't a good feeling. Instead, it was a feeling so unpleasant that it gave him goosebumps.

His disgust increased, and Frey didn't try to hide it.

[You're too quick-tempered. Why don't we sit first?]

The space split open, and two chairs appeared.

[There is none of that murky energy unique to hell around here. I purified it. I made it so that it would make people from the continent like us more comfortable. Do you like it?]

"You're out of your mind. Are you trying to build rapport? Are you foolish enough to think we could ever be close?"

[Not at all. I just want to talk.]

"Talk. Talk?"

Frey let out a cold laugh.

"It's too late for that. 4,000 years too late."

Lord's attitude didn't change even after hearing Frey's cold words.

Of course, he didn't suggest he sit down again either.

[I'm surprised. I didn't think you'd come here so easily. It seems you knew this wouldn't be a trap. Hmm. Or perhaps...]

Lord chuckled softly and said.

[Do you have the confidence to defeat or run away from all of us?]

"I can take at least half of you down with me. Then you would not win against the demons."

[Right. You calculated it well. You're correct. I don't want that kind of result.]

After a moment of silence, Lord spoke once again.

[Frey Blake, would you like to become one of our kind?]

Those words made the surroundings as quiet as death.

The Demigods around him looked at Lord in disbelief. A few of the more hasty ones took steps forward to tell Lord something, but it was Heimdall who silently stopped them.

Nevertheless, his expression was also one of shock.

He couldn't understand Lord's intentions.

[You have the power of origin. This is a very special type of energy. It must have caused many changes within you. I'm sure I don't even need to explain this. You must already feel a sense of solitude as though you are floating alone in space.]

There was great emotion in Lord's voice.

[If it's me, no, if it's us, we can fill that solitude. Become one of us. Then, everything you desire...]

"That's enough of your bullshit."

Frey's tone was harsh.

He rarely got excited, and his time in the mental world had given him even more control over his emotions. But Lord's words seemed to reach past all of his safeguards to his most sensitive parts, causing Frey to feel an unprecedented rage.

"This is the last warning. Get to the point. What you wanted to say was not this proposal but to make a deal, right?"

[Huhu.]

Lord chuckled before muttering.

[You don't compromise... just like Riki.]

“...”

[Fine. Let's move on to the deal.]

With whose words, Lord's demeanour changed.

[Lucifer is dangerous.]

“You're one to talk.”

[I understand your hostility towards me, but that kind of attitude makes it difficult for us to communicate.]

At Lord's words, Frey shut his mouth for a moment. He didn't want to admit it, but he knew he was being too emotional.

Although it was better to keep your calm in front of an enemy, he didn't intend to fight right away. So he decided to focus on what he was saying first.

[Lucifer is more dangerous than I am.]

“Do you know what he’s after?”

[I know much more than you do.]

Frey recalled his conversation with God. The flaw of the Celestial World, the most arrogant being in the universe.

Did Lord know about this? Did he know about his origin?

‘Michael.’

The balance of the Celestial World.

Frey looked at the leader of the Demigods who was imitating God’s appearance.

[Do you know that the Dragon Lord is in Hell?]

“Yes.”

[About 5,000 years ago, we fought and I won. It was a bloody battle for the fates of our respective races. After I won, the Dragons should have submitted to us. And given their authority to us. They shouldn’t have rebelled against us. That was against the agreement.]

“So they were supposed to watch as you reigned over the continent as gods?”

As Frey laughingly said those words, Lord nodded.

[Exactly.]

“Ha.”

[I don't think it's wrong. We just wanted to rule in a peaceful manner, and that thought remains unchanged. If not us, who could play such a role?]

“It would be different if it were the Dragons.”

[Haha! Really? Do you think it really would have been different if it were the Dragons?]

“...what do you mean?”

Lord's mouth appeared as he let out a hearty laugh.

[Long before 5,000 years ago. Before our battle with the Dragons. Do you know how the humans at that time lived?]

“Those are ancient that couldn't be recorded in history. I don't...”

[They were slaves.]

“What?”

[They were the weakest and most insignificant beings on the entire continent. This was natural. Their bodies weren't strong like the orcs'. They couldn't communicate with Spirits like the elves. Nor were they as strong as the dwarves.]

“Humans had magic.”

[That might be the case now. However, humans at that time could not even feel mana. Because that was before the concept of Magical Science was established.]

“...”

[But there were many of them at the time. At least enough to overcome the innate weakness of the race. Nevertheless, they were slaves. Why do you think that is?]

Frey felt that there was a deeper meaning behind Lord's smile.

[Because the Dragons made it that way.]

“...!”

[There weren't any special reasons or circumstances. The Dragons at that time were nothing like what you knew. They were arrogant and greedy. They needed slaves to satisfy their desires. And the humans were the best race to satisfy their lowly desires. They were moderately intelligent, knew how to bow their heads, and were well suited to the tasks. And more importantly, they were so weak that they couldn't even think about rebelling.]

“...”

Frey didn't know what to say.

He wanted to shout that Lord was speaking nonsense, but his voice refused to come out at that moment, as though it had been stuck in his throat.

He couldn't help but recall Isolla's words.

'...while fighting the Demigods, I thought we were the good guys. But it is possible that the Dragons were not a good race.'

[Then who do you think it was who freed the humans?]

Lord continued, his eyes locked onto the speechless Frey.

[It was us, Frey Blake. We changed your fate with our hands. It is the Demigods, whom you hate, who freed you from a life of slavery.]

“...”

[I'll ask you again. Do you really think your fate would have been different if the Dragon Lord was the one who defeated me 5,000 years ago? Do you believe they would have respected you and cared for you?]

Lord clenched his fist and shouted.

[No! Nothing would have changed! The only thing that would have changed is that the Dragons would be the ones in our place right now!]

“...”

Frey closed his eyes.

He was confused. He didn't believe everything Lord said, but he was certain that at least most of what he said was true.

'Is that really possible?'

The possibility of humans joining hands with the Demigods to fight against the Dragons.

It was hard to accept.

Naturally, he was shocked. But the chaos in his head didn't last very long.

Frey quickly regained his stability. His mind became cool once again, and he was confident that he could dismiss Lord's words as simple information.

He took a short time to organise his thoughts before he opened his mouth again.

"You have the Dragons."

[Right. They're not as noble as you think they are. At some point, they stood together with the weak and fought against us. Declaring that the Demigods were evil. Their hypocrisy was disgusting to me. Nothing more. Most importantly, the Dragon Lord...]

Blood vessels sprang up on Lord's face.

Frey could clearly see that he was angry.

[Deceived me.]

"Deceived you?"

Lord forcibly controlled his anger.

Then, after a moment, he spoke in a calm voice once again.

[...I will tell you everything I know. After that, think and decide for yourself. I don't know what decision you'll make.]

“...”

Frey finally understood the situation.

Lord and Lucifer.

Demigod and Demon.

Their powers had reached their peaks centuries ago. If they were to fight with everything they had, it was highly likely that they would annihilate each other.

Therefore, they turned to Frey. A being who had managed to surpass the limits of mortality. The only one who could break the balance of power.

The third power.

Frey's choice would be the deciding factor that determined victory or defeat in this battle between absolute beings.

Season 1 Chapter 209: Hell (6)

Frey looked at Lord for a moment before he finally spoke.

“I met God.”

[Hoh.]

“To be precise, it was a being who referred to himself as God. He looks just like you do. No. It would be more accurate to say that you copied his appearance.”

[...]

Lord went silent.

Frey couldn't help but feel it was regrettable that he couldn't see his expression. But if he had any features, he was certain his expression would be terrible.

[What did he tell you?]

“I have no intention of telling you.”

[Hmm. Then why did you say anything about this God in the first place?]

“Can’t you tell? Just as you know secrets that I don’t, I am the same. He told me a lot of interesting things. For example... about the <Celestial World>.”

[...!]

There was a reaction for the first time.

Frey didn’t miss the faint reaction.

‘I’m not sure how much he knows.’

Frey didn’t believe every word God told him. He’d said that Lucifer was the only one in the world who knew the things he’d told him, but he’d also said that he didn’t pay much attention to the world as he was always busy.

‘This means that even if Lucifer was the only one who knew it in the past, that might not be the case now.’

Lord also knew something about the Celestial World. His slight reaction to his words had proved that.

That was part of the reason why Frey had brought up God in the first place. Because he felt that Lord would try to tell him lies.

'Most of what he said so far is probably true.'

The vicious attitudes of the Dragons thousands of years ago, the miserable lives of humans at that time, and what would have happened if the Dragon Lord won.

Of course, since it was coming from Lord's mouth, it was definitely somewhat biased towards the Demigods, but other than that biased interpretation, most of it should have been true.

This conclusion came from Lord's attitude and the information Frey already knew.

'But it might be different from now on.'

'He could make things up.'

Lord is an insidious creature.

He was different from the other Demigods. This was a being who knew how to scheme properly.

'Hiding one lie amongst nine truths.'

The truth that he told so far could very well be preparation for the lies he intended to tell.

That was why Frey mentioned the Celestial World. He made it so Lord thought he already knew some of the information he was about to tell him.

That way, he would feel uncomfortable telling any lies. Because Frey might already know enough information to see through his lies.

That was enough for now.

He could be satisfied with the fact that he'd suppressed Lord's possible lies to an extent.

'Lord is trying to gain my trust.'

There was one thing he could be certain of.

Lord's biggest enemy at that moment was not him; it was Lucifer.

It was the same for Lucifer.

They were beings who would never be able to see eye to eye, and they were desperate for Frey's help to get rid of the other.

[...fine. Let's start the conversation.]

After a brief silence, Lord opened his mouth and spoke in a serious tone.

From his tone, Frey noticed that Lord's thoughts had changed a little. Something had changed.

Frey only hoped that this would mean a positive result for him.

[5,000 years ago. Before the battle between the Dragon Lord and I, we made a promise.]

"A promise?"

[The winner would become the Continent's balance.]

Frey didn't ask what the balance was.

Lord looked at him in silence as though he found this fact interesting.

'I should have pretended that I'd never heard of it before.'

Frey lamented for a moment before shaking his head.

Hiding his inner thoughts, he continued to listen to Lord.

[It was a fierce battle. If there were maps in those days, it would have taken at least a few days to fix it. Dozens of mountains disappeared, and the sea was overturned. This fight lasted for decades.]

That would have been a terrible disaster for the Continent.

If the Dragon Lord's power was comparable to Lord's, dozens of civilizations would have disappeared during that fight. They would have been like shrimp in a fight between whales.

[My kind and the Dragons did not get into the fight. Because we didn't want them to. And in the end, I won. I was the one who won. But the Dragon Lord didn't keep his promise.]

"You mean he didn't give you the right to become the balance?"

[That's right. And because I couldn't kill the Dragon Lord, I decided to bury him in Hell. To later absorb him when the connection between him and the Continent had faded.]

"..."

[So I want to ask. Was I wrong? Or is he the one who was in the wrong?]

"Generally speaking, the person who didn't keep their promise is wrong."

Frey, who had been speechless for a while, continued before Lord could speak.

“And the one who dares to tell lies is also wrong.”

[...you think I'm lying?]

“Don't you think my accumulated hatred is too deep to try to earn my trust with just a few words?”

Lord shrugged his shoulders as though he agreed.

“Tell me why you say Lucifer is dangerous.”

[He is greedy.]

Frey frowned.

“That's a little different from what I know. God said that he was the most arrogant being in the universe.”

[Both are true. And in a way, they are related.]

Lord turned his head to look out over the Demon World.

[This world won't last much longer.]

"...what?"

[Hell will disappear. It is something that was set to happen a long time ago. It's also something that can't be changed. Right, since you know about the Celestial World, it's easier to talk about this. Sooner or later, the same thing will happen here. Possibly sooner.]

"Why?"

[Because Lucifer couldn't become the balance.]

"He devoured Satan but couldn't become the balance."

[Hoh.]

Eyes appeared on Lord's face, a light of interest shining within them.

However, a shadowed look appeared in his eyes not long after.

[You know quite a bit. That's something that happened during the period of the world's creation... So it seems you truly met God.]

It seemed Lord had also been testing to see if Frey was bluffing or not. And the words he'd just said seemed to prove that he wasn't bluffing.

'On the bright side.'

He wasn't sure why, but the negotiation felt more dangerous than the numerous life-or-death battles he'd had up to that point. Perhaps because his opponent was Lord.

[Lucifer tried to become the balance without permission. But it didn't work because Satan was already dead at that time. He'd absorbed Satan's corpse.]

"The balance was already dead? Then why wasn't the Demon World destroyed?"

[It is going to be destroyed. It's happening even right now. It's just that it's happening slowly. Even at this moment, Satan's body is still being digested in Lucifer's stomach. It was a pretty good plan. Hell managed to last a pretty long time as a result. But when that process is over, this world will also be over.]

"..."

Frey frowned.

"Then what is Lucifer's goal?"

[To reign over a new world.]

“So he plans to head to the Continent.”

Frey sighed.

In the end, it was as he expected.

Lucifer also had an insidious goal.

“But how does he intend to ignore the laws of the world? Aren’t demons unable to move freely on the Continent?”

“If it’s a pure demon, then yes. But that’s not the case for the current Lucifer. Now, he has the power to travel freely between the Continent and Hell as he pleases.”

“What?”

[You know what my power is, don’t you?]

Frey nodded.

“Dominion over space.”

[Soon after first coming to Hell, I went directly to the place where the Dragon Lord was buried. It wasn't hard to deceive the eyes of Barbatos, the owner of the Despair Hell. But it was too late. The 'core' was already gone.]

"The core? Are you talking about his Dragon Heart?"

[It's a bit different, but I won't say you're completely wrong. The core is in the Dragon Heart. To put it simply, it is the qualification to become the balance in a material form.]

"..."

[You must have met Dro. And I assume you believe he is the Dragon Lord.]

"No, he's not."

[Huht.]

Lord chuckled.

[That's right. He isn't.]

* * *

Dro began recalling memories from the past. The distant past.

Fragments of things that he thought he would never have been able to remember once again appeared in his mind. Then they began to merge.

[You lost.]

He heard a voice.

A being that constantly radiated white light was the one talking to him. It was the Demigod Lord.

But he couldn't understand what he was saying. He didn't lose. He wasn't defeated.

It wasn't a fair fight.

While he was obligated to take care of and protect the Continent, Lord didn't have those restrictions.

They were the one that carried and the one that wanted to take.

That was the difference between winning and losing.

'I didn't lose!'

Dro's scream was swallowed by the darkness.

He was buried alive beneath the Demon World.

He had no strength at all. He couldn't even move a muscle.

Nevertheless, he could feel it. His 'connection' to the Continent grew weaker as time passed. He was constantly in pain as what seemed like an eternity went by.

To him, this was far worse torture than being imprisoned in Hell.

'Lord is going to swallow me.'

He would try to take the right in an unjust manner.

It was unacceptable. He couldn't hand the Continent over to a guy like that.

But there was nothing he could do. The fierce energy that permeated the ground of the Demon World constantly weakened him.

His mana couldn't move. Even his voice could not be heard.

He was being forced to die slowly.

Time passed.

How long had it been?

He didn't know.

He hated this place. It was cold. Damp.

He wanted to go back.

'To my world... to my continent...'

"Are you still alive?"

Then he heard a voice.

Dro opened his eyes. And for the first time, he was actually grateful that he was able to do that.

Because for the first time, he was able to 'see' something.

It was a man with incredibly pale skin.

“It seems you’re still conscious. That’s good. What a relief.”

“...you.... Who are... you?”

“I’m Lucifer, Balance of the Continent. It’s sudden, but I have one thing to inform you about. Ah. Of course, I’ll tell you in advance that it’s not harmful to you in any way.

“In... form?”

Lucifer smiled brightly and said.

“That fight—I don’t think you lost it.”

“Fight...”

Dro, who was blankly looking at this man, nodded slowly but without hesitation.

“Right. Didn’t lose... I didn’t lose.”

“But I can’t say you won either.”

This time, the answer did not come immediately.

But this was a fact that even Dro knew.

“That’s... right. That’s right. I didn’t win. Then the fight is...”

“It’s a draw.”

“...!”

It was as though a bolt of lightning struck his head.

Dro trembled in excitement.

“Just now... what did you say?”

“The fight was a draw. Wasn’t it?”

“Right! Right...”

Dro repeated Lucifer's words as though he was out of his mind.

Why didn't he realise it when it was so simple?

The fight was a draw. There was no conclusion!

It was a tie!

Dro spoke with confidence.

"Right. You're right."

Lucifer drew a line around his mouth as he agreed with Dro.

"A draw."

Season 1 Chapter 210: The Black Witch (1)

[If Lucifer becomes the balance of the Continent, it will become a world no better than Hell. I don't even need to explain. The example is right in front of you.]

As he said this, Lord looked out over the Demon World once again. Frey was also looking at this scene.

'This is Hell.'

In truth, he felt that the name Demon World was more suitable.

This place was a different world. At first glance, it seemed chaotic, but there was an order in the chaos.

There were many different forces and factions, and they all combined to form a strange balance.

Except for a few fundamental values and ways of thinking, this was a place where living beings could live.

But that didn't mean he would want to see the Continent become like this. Extreme change was always followed by chaos. It was possible that even more blood would be spilled once the Demigods began acting in earnest.

"Is it not picking between two evils?"

[Right.]

"..."

To be honest, Frey could not really understand Lord's reactions at that moment.

'Something has changed.'

He felt completely different from the last time.

From Lord's perspective, he would certainly not feel comfortable unless Frey was torn apart and killed. He should've hated Frey just as much as Frey hated him.

However, during this reunion, Lord did not once show any signs of that hatred.

It felt strange. As though something important was missing.

Was this really Lord?

Frey suppressed his suspicions and asked.

"What if I don't interfere?"

Lord's and Lucifer's powers were almost equal.

Their fight would definitely be determined by subtle advantages, and neither of them would end up the winner.

Frey could certainly take the position of fisherman while watching the situation progress.

But Lord didn't overlook Frey's idea either.

[The one who loses will be consumed by the other. Either Lucifer or I... will be absorbed by the winner. Do you know what will happen then?]

"What will happen?"

[I don't know.]

Frey furrowed his eyebrows.

Was he joking?

No. Lord's expression was serious.

[However, an unprecedented 'something' will definitely be born. Something that is definitely close to the level of God. An absolute, not a transcendent. If you're confident that you can take on such a being, you're welcome to watch.]

"..."

It was a very impactful statement.

No matter how powerful Frey was, he would not be able to defeat a combination of Lord and Lucifer.

[So choose.]

Lord's voice urged him to answer.

Frey closed his eyes.

This was not a decision that he could delay making. The fight between Lord and Lucifer was about to begin.

But before that, there was still something he needed to know.

It was probably the question that he should have asked as soon as he arrived there.

"Before I answer, there is something I want to ask you."

[Say it.]

"Where is Iris?"

Lord fell silent for a moment.

Just as he was about to open his mouth, Frey spoke first.

“I will warn you in advance. I will not tolerate any lies or tricks on this matter. Think about it carefully, Lord.”

Frey’s warning was sincere.

Realising this, Lord closed his mouth before he could say what he was about to.

He didn’t speak for a long time.

The Demigods around them became a bit noisy at this time.

Then, as everyone focused on Lord and waited for his answer, he opened his mouth.

[The Abyss.]

Frey’s pupils enlarged before becoming even smaller than before.

“...I see.”

He closed his eyes, and a hot wind blew over at that moment.

The winds of hell were ominous and disgusting. It smelled horrible, like the burp of a monster that carried the scent of flesh and blood.

When the breeze passed, Frey opened his eyes.

“I want to meet her.”

[I can't do that.]

“Why?”

[Iris is deeply connected to Lucifer. She also had many secrets. Maybe just her existence is a trump card for Lucifer.]

So he imprisoned her in a space that was filled with nothingness?

It was only then when Frey realised just how tightly he was clenching his fist. His nails had pierced into his palms, but no blood came out.

This was natural. After all, his body wasn't there.

“In that case, I will go to the Abyss.”

Even Lord couldn't help but make a speechless expression at those words.

[...are you serious? Don't you know that if you enter that place you might not be able to come out ever again?]

“There is proof right in front you that your words aren't accurate.”

Frey's existence was the best proof that the Abyss was not a perfect prison.

But unexpectedly, Lord burst out laughing at his words.

[Hahaha...]

“Why are you laughing?”

[Do you really think that? That you were able to successfully find and attack a flaw in the Abyss and escape?]

“Is that not the case?”

[You were human at that time. Even if you were 9 stars, you weren't able to break out of the frame of humanity. And my powers are not so weak as to be exploited by a mere human.]

“You're too confident in your strength. I spent 4,000 years in that place.”

Not 100, not 1000, but 4,000 years. Forty centuries.

That was an amount of time that even transcendent beings would not be able to scoff at.

“A long time passed, and a flaw appeared. And I managed to take advantage of that flaw perfectly.”

[Huhu.]

Unlike Frey, whose voice was becoming sharper, Lord's voice remained calm.

He simply chuckled and nodded.

[In any case, it doesn't matter what you think. Above all, it has nothing to do with me.]

“...”

[In your current state, it shouldn't be too hard for you to escape from the Abyss. So do whatever you want.]

With those words, space split open, and a world that was darker than Hell appeared.

Lord smiled brightly as he pointed to this pitch black world that seemed to be filled with solitude.

[Welcome, Frey Blake. To your dear old home.]

* * *

Iris Phisfounder was able to hear special voices from the moment she could speak.

The voices were countless, and each of them was different, and they all talked to Iris about different things.

Nevertheless, there was one thing that they all had in common. And that was the fact that they all favoured Iris.

At first, she thought they were spirits.

She'd seen them in fairytale books.

Pure and innocent beings who were close to nature, also known as fairies.

But they weren't. They weren't such cute beings.

As she got older, she no longer just heard their voices, but she also saw their figures. Even though they were blurry, she could tell with a glance that they were far from spirits.

They were demons.

Iris learned of her identity when she was 9 years old.

Witch.

Witches were terrible things. Regardless of race, ethnicity, or age, they were treated like a terrible curse.

Every Witch had no choice but to hide herself. If their identities were revealed, they would suffer from the constant pursuit of the Heretic Inquisition, which transcended the frame of the state, and after being captured, they would be subjected to hundreds of different types of torture.

Iris was smart. Even though she was only 9 years old, she already understood what it meant to be a Witch in such a society.

She could have concealed her secret.

...The only exception was her family.

Iris told her parents her secret. Unfortunately for her, her parents had more religious passion than affection for their child.

When Iris, who had dinner as normal and went to sleep, opened her eyes again, she realised that she was in a place she'd never seen before.

The strong smell of blood pierced the nose. On the floor, she could see puddles of blood and pieces of flesh. Then, she heard the screams.

Dozens of tortures that her mind would never have been able to conceive were all being carried out in front of her.

This scene, which was of the torture chamber in the basement of the Inquisition's base, was not something that a girl her age could bear to see.

She burst into tears immediately.

Of course, there were many girls her age there as well. And as she later learned, the torture was supposedly a means to purify the soul.

After the torture, the body would then be lit with a torch and the soul would rest as the body burned.

That was what those lunatics believed.

Then, when the members finally laid their hands to Iris, she instinctively summoned a demon.

The High-rank demon turned the headquarters of the Inquisition into a sea of fire in no time.

After leaving the hideout, which had become nothing but ashes behind, she walked aimlessly.

And when she came to her senses, she'd returned home. She wasn't sure what her goal was, but her footsteps had led her home.

She missed her parents. She wondered what they'd say.

"We didn't give birth to something like you. You, you are a monster."

"Oh God... I'm sorry.... Please forgive me... I'm so sorry."

"..."

And she regretted her choice.

She hadn't wanted an apology.

If so, then what did she want?

Iris was unable to answer her own questions.

She left her fearful parents behind, and at the same time, her heart cooled. She was cold.

Her body was shivering. But she wasn't scared or nervous.

Her expression became cold as though she lost her emotions. And she felt this coldness would never go away.

There was no way she'd ever trust humans again.

Never.

* * *

Ten years passed.

Iris was now 19 years old.

She lived alone in a deserted forest. It was a place in which she had no problems being self-sufficient.

But it was a life without a purpose.

At a young age, she was already feeling empty deep inside.

'I should just die.'

This was the first thought she had every morning after opening her eyes.

However, she felt it was unfair to just take her own life.

That day. The day that changed Iris' fate forever was a little more special than any other day.

She had a visitor.

"Are you the Black Witch?"

It was a man in a brown robe and a long staff.

He didn't have an appearance that stood out, but Iris felt a strange sense of familiarity to this man.

Of course, it was just a hint of it. By that point, Iris had already become sick of the human race.

But there was a decisive difference in this man who appeared to be a Wizard.

“Am I?”

It was a name. And naturally, Iris was not happy to hear it.

Being distinguished from other Witches meant that she was becoming well known, and that meant that the Heresy Inquisition would fall upon her soon.

The man continued in a calm tone.

“I saw a forest to the west. It was terrible. Hundreds of trees were uprooted. That was your doing, wasn't it?”

Iris couldn't help but sigh.

She didn't even bother denying it.

“...right.”

She just nodded with a tired expression on her face.

It was true that she'd done it. There was naturally a reason, but she didn't bother trying to explain it.

He wouldn't accept it. And he wouldn't understand anyway.

He wouldn't even have the slightest intention of understanding Iris. As long as she was branded as a Witch, all of her actions would be seen as carrying out the work of the devil.

She decided to just moderately threaten this man and chase him away.

Then, she would have to find a new place to stay.

Just as she decided to summon a demon.

"Thank you."

"...huh?"

This was something Iris would never have expected.

The man continued, ignoring her blank expression.

“It was already a dead forest. It’s probably the work of a Lich who has been active around this region. If it wasn’t for your quick action, the entire forest would’ve become rotten.”

“...”

Iris hesitated for a moment before opening her mouth,

“Did you come here just to say that?”

“Right.”

“...I am a Witch.”

Hearing this question, the man responded with a confused look on his face.

“I know. Did you forget already? I called you the Black Witch.”

“And you still believe me?”

“To be precise, I believe my eyes.”

The man’s voice was filled with self-confidence.

It wasn't just his words. It was clear that he truly believed what he said.

"If you're a real Witch, then you know at least a dozen ways to make the forest rot more efficiently. Nevertheless, by cutting only the rotten trees, it shows that you're actually trying to help the forest heal."

"..."

"Am I wrong?"

Iris heard a beating.

It was her own heart. She didn't know why, but she felt her face become hot.

Her throat felt tight, and her eyes felt like they were burning. (TL: Sounds like an allergic reaction)

She felt like she couldn't move her lips easily.

"That...."

Iris understood why.

This was the first time she'd been understood by another person since she was born.