

Great Mage 221

Season 1 Chapter 221: Decisive Battle (2)

Frey understood Lord's words.

Lucifer didn't absorb the Dragon Lord. He accepted him. This meant that every part of these two independent beings had been combined.

'Their egos, consciousness, and even their memories.'

They were each other's other half. It couldn't be expressed in any other way.

Even if black and white were separated after being mixed, they would never return to their original colors.

And that's exactly what Lucifer did. It was no longer possible to distinguish Lucifer or the Dragon Lord as independent beings.

They had literally been 'reborn' as an entirely new being.

"Just Lucifer is fine. That's how we decided to do it... I am a bit closer to 'Lucifer' in nature."

Lucifer said these words with a terrible expression. He didn't try to refute Lord's words.

He admitted that he was neither Lucifer nor the Dragon Lord but an entirely new being.

There was a faint hint of madness in his eyes as he continued.

“Lord of the Demigods, you can’t imagine how long I... no, how long we have been waiting for this moment. I naturally don’t think it would be easy, but we will definitely be the ones to win in the end.”

[...]

“I’ll show you everything I have. You don’t need to restrain yourself anymore. —Then, firstly.”

Flash.

A golden glow shined within Lucifer’s eyes. His pupils were torn vertically, and the golden glow made his eyes seem like those of a predator.

<Stop.>

Thud!

Dragontongue!

The most powerful ability of the Dragons was now being displayed in Hell. In addition, it was the Dragontongue of a being who had once been the Dragon Lord. No matter what Lord tried to do, his movements would most certainly be stopped.

Puk!

Then Lucifer's body swelled up, and his skin was torn apart. Of course, no flesh was shown, and no blood poured out of the gaps.

Instead, scales could be seen under his skin.

'There was never a Dragon with black scales.'

Frey couldn't help but recall Lord's words. But now, he was witnessing a scene that made him doubt those words.

The scales that covered Lucifer's body were so black that they didn't reflect any light.

Nevertheless, although he could freely use Dragontongue and his body was covered in scales, it was still not enough to call Lucifer a Dragon. He was much too small to be a member of the ancient race.

He was much larger than a human, but he was still far from the giant body that exceeded tens of meters in height.

At best, he was three times Frey's size, but the pressure that was constantly flowing off his body was far stronger than that of his teacher, Isolla.

Juk.

Lucifer's mouth opened. Behind his sharp teeth, flames could be seen fluttering in his throat.

Frey slightly anticipated what was about to happen.

Fwoosh!

Black flames poured out of Lucifer's mouth, moving so quickly that they engulfed Lord's body in an instant.

But even up to that point, Lord didn't move in the slightest.

Crackle...

'Those flames are definitely not ordinary.'

As though he heard Frey's thoughts, Lucifer muttered quietly.

“It’s not Dragon Breath.”

Even though he was talking to Frey, his gaze didn’t move from Lord’s position.

“But I can’t say it’s completely different. It’s the Dragon Lord’s Dragon Breath combined with Lucifer’s destructive powers.”

“...”

“I’ve defeated many powerful beings with this power. Because of the nature of Hell, powerful monsters would appear in places beyond imagination. Those guys all had power that was at least comparable to those of the current Rulers.”

Fwoosh!

The flames died down, and Lord’s figure was revealed once again. There were still no burn marks on his body.

Lucifer simply shrugged at the sight.

“But this power is still not enough to deal with the real monster.”

“...what are you trying to say?”

“That guy has dominion over space itself. You could say that he has a thin veil covering his skin. Every attack disappears upon touching that veil. Well, to be precise, they are sent to another place.”

This meant that no attack would work against Lord while he was able to use his powers to the fullest.

Like a Dragon, unless it was an attack that exerted pressure on his very existence, it would be impossible for any attack to reach Lord unless he ran out of energy.

“It should be obvious by now, but soul attacks would never work on this opponent of ours. However, it appears that you have the power to pierce Lord’s space.”

When Frey moved to protect Lilith, he saw his power collide with Lord’s. At the same time, he saw Lord’s power falter.

If Lucifer’s predictions were correct, Frey’s attacks would be able to reach Lord.

“So you intend to block Lord’s movements, and you want me to end it.”

“Right. Think about it carefully. Right now, he-”

“You don’t have to keep talking. I don’t plan on helping you.”

“...hmm?”

Lucifer tilted his head to the side as though he was genuinely confused.

“Why? Isn’t that what you want?”

“It is, but... your sudden change of attitude is pretty suspicious. I was hit in the back of the head just recently.”

He looked at Lord as he said those words.

Then Frey continued without even smiling at his own lame joke.

“As you said, you only just decided to join forces with me.”

That was his answer, but Frey felt a strange desire surging in his heart.

Lucifer believed that his divine magic power could threaten Lord’s life.

This wasn’t wrong. But it also wasn’t completely true. It could hurt him, but it wasn’t enough to kill him.

‘Will alone is not enough.’

Frey had realised this fact in his brief skirmish with Lord. His 'willpower' was enough to kill the other Demigods, even the Apocalypses, but he could only use it to inflict damage to Lord.

'I have to take it a step further.'

He would have to move to the next level.

-In truth, it was not that difficult.

Frey looked down at himself.

His body was currently on the continent. It was his soul that was in Hell.

However, the 'string' that connected his body and soul was still present. He knew that the string was the compass that would help him return.

Frey's current appearance was the best proof of that. He still looked like Frey Blake.

It wasn't just his body. Even his soul had taken this appearance.

'If I cut that string.'

Many things would change.

It wasn't just his appearance. His thoughts and personality would be reset.

Just like Lucifer and the Dragon Lord had combined to create a third persona, an entirely new being with Frey's power and memory would appear.

Shuk.

But Frey still cut the string. There was no hesitation.

And a bitter smile still appeared on his face.

'I didn't hesitate at all.'

Instead, it could even be said that he was happy with this situation. Frey felt that he might have been waiting for a situation like this.

An unavoidable situation where he was forced to make this choice.

This was probably because he wanted an excuse in order to relieve his own guilt even a little.

'How pathetic.'

And this was what made Frey feel bitter.

* * *

Frey's thoughts seemed to have taken a long time to process, but for Lucifer, who was in front of him, the change happened in the blink of an eye.

This meant that the changes he was worried about didn't take that long.

Juk, juk.

'He finally decided to become transcendent.'

As Lucifer was so close to him, he was able to grasp what was happening much faster than anyone else.

As if it was an eggshell, Frey's skin began cracking. And underneath this cracked skin, he could see a shimmering blue glow.

Crack!

His skin felt like cracked pottery.

Then Lucifer laughed when he saw his new appearance.

“Is this your transcendent appearance?”

“...”

All of “Frey”’s external features had disappeared. However, in Lucifer’s eyes, there was no significant difference.

He still looked like a human. Instead of gray hair, his hair had become blonde, and even though his facial features and physique were different from before, he was clearly still human.

But as soon as Frey opened his eyes, Lucifer’s thoughts changed.

‘This...’

Only blue energy could be seen fluttering in his eyes. His pupils had disappeared.

That was the only thing that made him different from a normal human. Nevertheless, Lucifer could easily tell that this man in front of him was anything but human.

However, if Anastasia had been present, she would have been surprised. Frey’s appearance had become that of Lukas Trowman, the Great Mage who had been renowned around the continent 4,000 years ago.

Lucifer smiled gently.

“How interesting. Show me your strength.”

“...”

Frey’s gaze turned to Lucifer.

“Lucifer.”

Even his voice had changed. While thinking this, Lucifer responded.

“What is it?”

“You’re blocking Lord’s movement with Dragontongue.”

“You could tell just from looking.”

“Then if I attacked you right now, you’d die.”

“...what?”

Lucifer glared at Frey.

He had a smile on his face that he had never seen before. It was not a smile that contained any cynicism or ridicule. Instead, it was a real smile filled with genuine joy.

“Why are you so shocked? It was just a small joke. Laugh.” (TL: was tempted to put ‘why so serious?’)

“...I thought you didn’t like jokes.”

“Is that so? I didn’t know.”

Huhuhu.

Frey chuckled softly. The sound was soft, but somehow, it still filled the area.

Lucifer subconsciously swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

‘What is going on?’

Something had changed. Of course, Lucifer didn’t know enough about Frey to point out exactly what that was.

However, he at least knew that he was not the type of man who would crack jokes at such an important moment.

'Has his personality changed completely?'

That was bad.

If that was really the case, then the situation might have been worse than he expected.

Lucifer couldn't help but question whether urging him to become transcendent was really a good idea.

Frey didn't seem to care about Lucifer's inner turmoil. There was even a soft smile hanging on his lips.

To Lucifer, this was a smile that dripped with arrogance.

Then Frey lifted his hand and said.

"Shall I give it a try?"

Paht.

A blue beam of light shot out from his hand. This beam did not make a sound. At the same time, it was so clear that the sight of it was engraved on one's retina.

This beam of light reached Lord in the same instant it appeared. To be precise, that was how fast it was.

Crunch!

[...mm!]

Lord was hit for the first time. His body couldn't handle the force of the light, and he was pushed backwards.

His power to control space had not been able to prevent it.

"Did it work?"

Lucifer asked in a bright tone.

"It was still too shallow. Hmm... even though I've become transcendent, it seems I'm still not able to reach Lord's core."

As he said this, Frey dropped his hand.

Then he shot an admiring gaze at Lord as he continued.

“You really are an incredible being, Lord.”

“...Great Mage, you’re making me wonder if something went wrong in your head. What the hell are you saying?”

“Do you have a problem with me?”

“A problem? I do. You don’t seem to be sane at this moment. Think about it. You’re standing there, voicing admiration for the being you hate the most in this world.”

“Mm.”

After thinking for a while, Frey finally responded.

“Should I really get rid of Lord?”

“...what are you talking about?”

“I suddenly remembered a deal I discussed with him. He said that if I helped him kill you, he would not dominate the mortals on the continent and he would even release Iris.”

Lucifer's expression hardened.

He looked at Frey and spoke in a harsh tone.

"You don't really believe that bullshit, do you?"

"Lord 'swore' to me. I think it's worth trusting him at least once."

Frey's gaze turned to Lucifer once more.

The moment he saw the blue energy swirling in those eyes, Lucifer felt a chill down his spine.

"So what do you think I should do, Lucifer?"

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"That was also a joke. Why don't you relax, Lucifer? We obviously need to work together to defeat Lord."

Frey laughed as he said those words.

Looking at his smile, Lucifer couldn't help but think.

'...this guy.'

He was dangerous.

No. He'd become dangerous.

By abandoning the humans and becoming transcendent, he had set foot on an entirely new level.

But that wasn't a big deal to Lucifer.

The most important thing was the way his thinking had changed.

'This is outside of my predictions.'

Before this, he was able to read Frey's way of thinking. From the information he'd gotten from Iris, the stories about the Great Mage, and the information he'd obtained first-hand. All of those had allowed him to have a certain understanding of the human named Frey Blake.

But it was different now.

'I thought that becoming a transcendent being would cause a dramatic change in his personality, but...'

He hadn't expected that he would change so severely. He didn't know why, but the hostility that the current Frey had towards the Demigods or Lord had faded.

In addition, it seemed that some of the responsibility towards the humans he'd carried had been relieved to an extent.

Frey had said that they should work together to defeat Lord, but Lucifer didn't trust him anymore.

He stopped making predictions. From now on, he thought to deal with the situation using the things he'd prepared beforehand... and improvisation.

He could have an alliance with Frey, but it would only be temporary. If Frey determined that he'd reduced Lord's power to a certain extent, he would immediately turn his sword on him without hesitation.

'It's so ironic. The weakest of the three of us is the one holding the sword.'

And they didn't have a choice but to let him. Frey was the weakest one there, so he already occupied the safest position.

He was a wolf in a fight between a lion and a tiger.

But that safety wouldn't last long either. Sooner or later, if Lord and Lucifer's powers were reduced to a level similar to Frey's, they would also pressure him more and more.

So in the end, the conclusion was simple.

He needed to figure a way to hide how much power he had left.

[That was a magnificent attack.]

Then they heard Lord's voice. There was a crack on his chest. It was the first time that he'd actually been hit.

He looked at Frey and said.

[Is that what your transcendent body looks like? It's pretty good.]

"Are you still in the position to be so relaxed?"

[...Huhu. My goal was already achieved the moment you, Frey Blake, became a transcendent being. I sincerely welcome you. Become one of my kin.]

Frey gently raised his eyebrows as he said.

"Why are you so adamant to pull me to your side? Lord, I don't think that you'd ever consider a human as your kind."

[You are the biggest piece.]

“What?”

[...and as you said, I don't think I can afford to remain relaxed. So let's move on to the 'next step'.]

Lord turned to look at Lucifer.

[So Lucifer, it's time for the clown to leave.]

“...!”

Woowoong.

Lucifer reacted.

He saw something white shoot out from Lord's hand. This was the only warning that appeared before space was torn.

Jijik!

“Kuk!”

Nevertheless, he was unable to avoid it. When Lucifer came to his senses, one of his wings had been torn off.

Black blood poured from Lucifer's back. He then used the feathers of the torn wing to engulf Lord.

Lord simply waved his hand slightly.

[Didn't you already say it? Your attacks will not reach me.]

"My attack was...!"

Piht.

Frey unleashed his divine magic power once again.

In an instant, the divine magic power soared into the sky and split apart like lightning before charging towards Lord.

Only then did Lucifer realise just how strong Frey had become.

'He hasn't reached the next stage.'

Before this, Frey could have been said to have surpassed the mortal class. Therefore, his complete separation from the human race did not lead to a radical increase in power.

If he were to express it, then it was only his output that had increased. The divine magic power he released now was about twice as powerful as before.

But that was still not enough to kill Lord.

Woowoong.

The warning came once again. And just like before, he was unable to dodge it.

Another one of Lucifer's wings was torn off.

'Dammit.'

He couldn't help but swear.

Lord was persistently aiming for him. It was a hellish situation.

It was Frey who was actively damaging him, but Lord's focus never shifted from Lucifer.

[I wonder how weak you would become if all of your wings were torn off.]

When he heard Lord's voice, Lucifer had a slight mental breakdown.

Every time the number of wings he had decreased, Lucifer would become weaker. But this was something that no one should have known.

"I wonder who told you that."

[No one told me... about the characteristics of an Angel. I found them out on my own.]

"Then did you realise your true identity?"

[...]

Lord paused for a moment. It seemed he didn't know that yet.

Lucifer sneered.

"Then should I tell you?"

This time, a pair of Lucifer's wings was torn off simultaneously. He couldn't hold it in and let out a cry. (TL: It seems he really did have 12 'pairs' of wings originally and 6 pairs in Hell. 3 pairs went to both sides. So far Lucifer has lost 2 pairs of wings. Hopefully the author sticks to this count...)

“Kuack!”

[No. You don't need to.]

Lord finally responded.

At that moment, Frey was still attacking Lord, but it didn't seem to have any effect.

Frey was probably trying his best. But Lucifer didn't believe that. He felt that he was only pretending to help while conserving his power.

‘So this is how it is.’

The only one he could rely on was himself.

<I found Nozdog.>

Then he heard Dro's voice.

“Haha!”

A smile blossomed on Lucifer's lips.

"Stop, Lord."

[...]

Lord, who was about to rip off another pair of wings, stopped moving.

This was because he was curious about Lucifer's confident tone.

Lucifer opened his mouth, not trying to suppress his leaking laughter at all.

"My preparations are complete."

[What preparations are you talking about?]

"Huhu."

Tak.

Lucifer flicked his finger, and a moment later, someone appeared in the sky above them.

Frey and Lord narrowed their eyes at the same time.

It was a face they all knew.

“Kaltud...”

Kaltud, the High ranking demon who was also Nozdog’s Apostle. The red-skinned demon had suddenly appeared there.

“You seem a little surprised, Lord. I’ll show you something even more amazing.”

Lucifer smiled as he said this.

“Kaltud, kill yourself.”

[...!]

Everything afterwards happened in an instant.

“Yes.”

With a happy expression on his face, Kaltud reached into his chest and pulled out his own heart.

The heart in his hand was still beating while giving off a dark, evil aura. Every time it pulsed, black liquid poured from the broken veins.

[What are you doing?]

Unlike Lord, who had become a bit more serious, Lucifer's voice was completely relaxed as he spoke.

"Kaltud was one of my most loyal servants. And he inherited some of Lucifer's power. Therefore, he was able to enter and exit the Continent as he pleased. Decades ago, I told him to become the Apostle of any Demigod."

At first, the plan was to have an insider in order to learn the Demigods' movements. An Apostle, who was closely connected to their Demigod, was the most suitable for such a role.

He didn't have high expectations. After all, the Demigods would definitely be wary of the demons. However, Kaltud carried out Lucifer's orders brilliantly, completely surpassing his expectations.

He managed to become the Apostle of an Apocalypse called Nozdog!

"When I received that report, I felt that the day would arrive when I would be able to use this card. Lord, you should have a good understanding of the relationship between Demigods and Apostles, right? Now that Kaltud is dead, Nozdog will definitely fall into hibernation. Even if he forces himself to stay awake, he would definitely be much weaker."

Lord froze.

It was so faint that it was almost unnoticeable, but he was clearly affected.

Lucifer laughed as he targeted that sore spot.

“And Dro is on the continent right now. You should have an understanding of his strength. It wouldn’t be a problem for him to kill a weakened Nozdog.”

[...]

Silence.

Lucifer quite liked this silence. He continued in a cheerful voice.

“It seems like it’s my turn to take the lead, Lord.”

[This... was this your hidden card?]

Lord’s voice shook slightly.

This was proof that he was surprised. Lucifer sneered as he replied.

“Right. You must have been surprised. Now, listen to my demands. Firstly-”

[How disappointing.]

“...what?”

[Lucifer, I’m even more certain now that your fusion was a failure.]

Crack!

“Kuack!”

Lucifer let out a scream. His last two wings were torn off, and his body fell to the ground in an instant.

‘What’s going on?’

He didn’t understand.

Did Lord just use his power to rip off the rest of his wings?

How?

He raised his head.

Lord was looking down at him.

[The Dragon Lord's clumsy schemes and Lucifer's arrogance. It seems you have received only the worst parts of the two. As a result, you're weak. It would have been much harder if you worked as separate individuals.]

"...you, do you think that Nozdog will be safe after doing this?"

[It doesn't matter if he's safe or not.]

"What did you say?"

[I said it's fine if Nozdog falls into hibernation or even dies.]

Lucifer became speechless.

This wasn't a lie. He could hear the sincerity in Lord's voice.

"How... you... are you really Lord? The Demigods, you..."

[You have the habit of guessing what the other person is thinking and making your own conclusions. Didn't you realise how dangerous something like that is? Change is bound to happen, Lucifer. The same goes for my values.]

"That's... hilarious."

Lucifer suddenly roared.

"*You* talking about change? Garbage that wasted almost an eternity...! Demigods, especially you, do not have the right to talk about that!"

Suddenly, Lucifer's head cooled down.

"...the Demigods that came to hell. Right. I thought you'd sent them back to the continent. To protect Nozdog or to carry out some other plan. Because I could no longer feel their divine power in Hell."

However, that wasn't the case.

Lucifer muttered in disbelief.

"You ate all the other Demigods. Ha-, haha!"

[...]

Lord didn't deny it.

Right. It was only then when all the pieces fit into place.

Lord had gotten stronger. In a short amount of time, he'd become ridiculously strong. According to what he'd known, this half should have been enough to deal with Lord. Yet his powers couldn't even reach Lord.

And now, he knew the reason.

"You're crazy. Did you really swallow the people who supported you for thousands and tens of thousands of years?"

[Do not insult us with such vulgar words. I didn't swallow them. They simply returned. They're back where they belong.]

Lord's voice was calm and confident as he said these words.

He put his hand on his chest and said.

[I can still hear the voices of my people. They are thanking me for allowing them to feel this fullness once again. Of course, you wouldn't understand.]

"..."

He didn't know much, but he knew one thing.

'A clumsy trick.'

Right. At some point, he'd become accustomed to moving things behind the scenes rather than doing them directly.

He became hesitant to act personally. And when things happened as he predicted, he felt pleasure similar to that of a drug. This all started after he accepted the Dragon Lord.

He looked at Lord and muttered in a strange voice.

"...I didn't think there would be someone even more broken than I."

No one here would have expected it. Not even himself.

That those would be Lucifer's last words.

Chak!

In the next instant, Lucifer's head was ripped off.

Feathers, blood, and brain matter mixed together and fell like rain.

In this gruesome downpour, Lord and Frey's eyes met.

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[Now, you can stop acting.]

When Frey didn't answer, Lord turned to look at the head of Lucifer that rolled forward. (TL: I'm pretty sure this should have been destroyed since blood and brain matter rained down)

Crack!

Then, he stepped on the head with a simple motion and crushed it. Lucifer, who was already dead, might not have realised, but Lord had shown a similar nonchalance as Lucifer did when he destroyed Zefar's head.

Lord then continued as though nothing happened.

[I know that you were acting to deceive this trash. As far as I can tell, personality changes are never so radical. It is very slow and subtle, such that it happens sometimes without the individual even noticing. Just like a drizzle that you might not pay attention to might end up soaking your body.]

"Are you certain that I was acting?"

Frey finally opened his mouth again. His face and voice became cold once again.

Lord chuckled.

[You were curious about Lucifer's final card. In order to make him reveal it, you intentionally made him feel like he was in danger, causing him to increase his vigilance. Your awakening was a great opportunity that made it impossible to doubt your performance.]

"..."

[In the end, Lucifer judged you as unpredictable, a potential enemy. Therefore, he summoned Kaltud to threaten me with a hostage. That was Lucifer's last card. The plan was actually pretty good. The only thing he overlooked was our unity.]

"Don't try to twist it, Lord. Your actions were just to satisfy yourself."

[Don't say it like you were any different.]

Lord's voice contained some emotion, but it was faint.

Frey looked at him with a solemn gaze.

His guess was right. Frey had only acted as though his personality had suddenly changed. He had done this to force Lucifer into a corner and make him take out the cards he was hiding.

Frey's plan had succeeded much more easily than he expected. Perhaps because, as Lord said, using his awakening as a pretext was very effective.

Lucifer believed that Frey had been reborn as a transcendent being, so he didn't find his change of attitude strange.

Therefore, he could only take out his card to threaten Lord.

However, what came after did not go according to Frey's intentions.

'I thought I could push Lord a bit further.'

Lucifer's plan had been ineffective to the extent that it could be called futile. Nevertheless, he couldn't dismiss it as his fault.

If he had used it on Lord ten years ago, it might have gone just as he expected, if not better. Lord treated all the Demigods equally and loved them more than anything. Every single Demigod could have been considered a weakness to take advantage of.

But the current Lord was different. At some point, his way of thinking had changed.

"Now, I understand. The reason for your change of attitude."

Lord wanted to consume Frey as well. That's why he treated him as his kind.

"The biggest piece."

Recalling how he'd referred to him, Frey continued.

"...that's probably referring to Riki."

[Hmm.]

Lord hummed as though he was surprised.

Frey's words were correct. Riki, the second Demigod to appear on the continent, was the biggest piece that Lord wanted. And Riki's crystal had now merged with Frey.

[It's not just Riki. I can also feel the power of Indra and Milled. And you also have the crystals of Norn and Sunsir. Every crystal left in the world by my people is a piece of the puzzle that I cannot miss.]

"I don't understand. Why did you suddenly think of your own kind as pieces?"

[I swallowed Leyrin. I absorbed her after she fell into hibernation, and with her energy, I was able to heal the others. Do you know what happened to me in the process?]

Lord spoke in a heated voice.

“It was ‘memory’. Memories came back to me. And what came back to me weren’t things that I’d forgotten but things that had been wiped from my memory!”

Frey furrowed his eyebrows.

Not memories that had been forgotten but memories that had been replaced. Was that referring to the memories he had when he was Michael?

[I don’t know what the principle behind it is. However, I found out as soon as I became one with Leyrin. We, Demigods, are all pieces... when we’re separate, it’s impossible to determine the whole picture, but the more pieces I combine, the clearer the image becomes.]

“Is that why you started swallowing your own people?”

[That’s right.]

He no longer denied the word ‘swallowed’. Perhaps Lord knew exactly what he’d done.

[The more pieces I gathered, the more I learned the truths of the world that no one else knows. Thanks to that, I was able to learn about Lucifer.... And then, I realised. I knew what my mission was. What I had to do. We had to become one.]

In Lord's voice, conviction and madness could be heard in equal parts.

Now that he was actually saying it out loud, he was becoming even more certain. He was convinced that he was doing the right thing, that he wasn't wrong.

[I persuaded the rest of my people. I wanted them to understand my mission. Some of them agreed, but the majority of them could not understand. It was a pity, but I understood. It's not a concept that could be understood simply by explaining in the first place. So I used a bit of coercion... And in the end, I was proven right.]

Brruk.

Suddenly, bubbles began appearing on Lord's skin. Then, faces began to appear all over his body. It was a very frightening and gruesome sight.

"Ahaha...!"

"Aha, ha!"

"Hi, hihi."

It was the faces of the Demigods. Probably those who had been absorbed by Lord. Not only did he see Heimdall, whom he'd met only a few days ago, but even Leyrin's face was there.

All of these faces burst into laughter. The laughter of dozens of completely different voices at the same time created an incredibly creepy feeling.

But that wasn't the only sound coming from the body.

[Listen, Frey. This is the laughter of my people. I'm certain now. Everyone who became one with me is satisfied. In every instant, we are all feeling a sense of fulfillment that we never would have felt as individuals. We have finally understood and achieved the concept of perfection and true unity!]

Frey was now certain.

At some point, Lord had gone completely insane. Frey couldn't help but snort in disgust.

Lord tilted his head to the side as he heard the sound.

[Do you not understand?]

"...in my mental world, I accepted Milled and Indra. Not just their power but their memories and personalities, too. The method was different, but in a way, it is similar to the absorption you are talking about."

[Hoh...]

Lord gasped in admiration.

Two Demigods. As well as Riki.

Perhaps it was just residual thoughts, but they were still not things that a human could absorb.

If it was an ordinary human being, that is.

He let out a laugh.

As expected, it was an incredible waste for Frey Blake to live as a human.

“That’s why I can understand. Just what every Demigod thought of you, Lord. I learned of the respect and awe they had for you.”

That was why... he’d come to acknowledge Lord to an extent.

He didn’t have a choice. Of course, this didn’t mean he would ever forgive him for what he’d done. He didn’t even want to justify it.

He was still Frey’s greatest and most hated enemy. But from the perspective of the Demigods, Lord was a hero.

They were transcendent beings who didn't know why they'd suddenly fallen to the Continent. Each of them had the power to destroy a country with ease.

Nevertheless, their minds were delicate and fragile. They were afraid. They were like newborn babies who had yet to understand themselves.

The transcendent power that was given to them was a curse, not a blessing.

They didn't know what to do, where they were, or even who they were.

It was Lord who reached his hand out to these Demigods, who were trembling in fear, and united them.

He was the first Demigod, their leader. He was also like a parent to the other Demigods.

Perhaps even more terrifying things would have been done to the continent if it weren't for Lord. Predators who didn't know restraint were much more terrifying than purposeful tyrants.

If the Demigods, who had overwhelming power, simply saw other living beings as food... If they didn't dominate them but instead chose to eat them...

Frey looked at Lord and said.

"The Demigods didn't become beasts because of you. Because of your teachings."

[...]

“But now, I understand. You are no longer my enemy. The Demigods no longer have the right to rule over the Continent. And you, Lord, no longer deserve to be called ‘Lord’.”

Frey spoke with confidence.

“Now, you are nothing but a monster.”

[...]

Shuk.

All the Demigods’ faces that were protruding out of Lord’s skin disappeared.

He sighed and muttered.

[Right. You don’t understand me after all. Even if you have Riki’s piece.]

“Don’t distort the facts. Riki never understood in the first place. Not even once. If you felt that way, then it was only your one-sided delusion.”

[That’s a lie. I can tell.]

“...”

Frey stopped talking.

Just because they were talking didn't mean they were having a conversation. It was foolish to try to have a conversation with someone who was covering his ears and only listening to the things he wanted to hear. Even if he was a powerful being like Lord.

This meant there was only one thing left to do.

Koo.

Divine magic power surged in Frey's body.

[Do you intend to fight? It's not like you don't know it's pointless. Haven't you realised what kind of being I have become?]

Lord spread his hands. It was a holy gesture as though he had become a supreme being.

His body slowly rose into the air.

Crack!

The sky split open. Then a crack appeared on the ground.

A black space could be seen behind these cracks.

[I brought the Abyss to this place... the 'world I created' has overlapped with Hell.]

“ ... ”

[I suddenly remembered something you told me, 4,000 years ago. You said we don't have the right to claim to be gods. What about now? My existence isn't far away from that state.]

This wasn't pretense. Lord was now the being closest to the level of God. Even though Lucifer was only half of a being, his power was comparable to that of Frey, who was a transcendent being.

Yet Lucifer had died after one attack from Lord.

Even his 'power of space' had evolved. It was also possible that he could use the powers of the other Demigods as well.

It was impossible that Lord would be able to immediately digest all the power he received from the Demigods. This meant that he was becoming stronger even at this moment.

When he was finished digesting all of the divine power, Lord might truly become God-like.

He knew that, but Frey still stepped towards Lord.

Instead of avoiding eye contact, he looked up directly at Lord's face.

[...so this is your answer.]

It was a pity.

Following Lord's mutter, there was no more conversation.

And so began the most arduous battle of Frey's life.

Season 1 Chapter 224: Decisive Battle (5)

There was a chance for him to win. If he didn't believe that he had a chance, he wouldn't have let Lucifer die so easily.

After all, the more variables present in a battle where the outcome was not guaranteed, the better.

Nevertheless, the fact that his odds of winning remained abysmal was unchanged.

Clang!

Following a heavy sound, Frey's body was pushed backward. It felt as though a hammer as heavy as a mountain had struck his body.

The shock from this blow was so powerful that it shook his very transcendent bones.

Lord was still standing in the air, and a pale glow shone around his body. As Lucifer had noticed before, this was a sign that he was about to attack.

Frey seemed to understand the true nature of this glow.

'It's a visible representation of his divine power.'

The reason why it was barely visible was because the space couldn't properly digest his divine power. This was nothing to scoff at as it meant that Lord's power had reached a stage that surpassed the limits of their dimension.

Clang! Clang!

The heavy sounds continued one after the other. Lord's attack had no shape, and it had already become unnecessary for him to move.

It was possible for him to deal with his opponents using only his thoughts.

This also meant that his attacks couldn't be anticipated. Invisible attacks repeatedly struck Frey's body from every direction.

Of course, he wasn't unprotected. His divine magic power wrapped around his entire body like solid armor.

Nevertheless, this didn't mean that he was completely unscathed. His divine magic power was being whittled away, bit by bit, with each subsequent attack.

He couldn't continue like this. He had no hope of winning this battle unless he turned his defensive into an offensive.

But there was one thing that he'd become convinced of after a series of blows.

'Lord doesn't want to kill me.'

He was trying to capture Frey alive. And the reason was quite obvious.

It was in order to completely absorb the divine power that Frey had. After Frey died, there was no guarantee that he would leave behind a crystal like the Demigods did.

'The only way to win would be to make use of that point.'

He didn't think it was cowardly. Rather, he thought that it was an opportunity.

Those who wanted the kill and those who wanted to capture. The difference in mindset was by no means trivial.

Moreover, in a fight like this one, the fight between Frey and Lord, could be seen as a clash of wills.

It was the same as when he'd defeated Milled, Indra, and Riki in the mental world. In the end, it would become a question of whose will was stronger.

And Lord's 'capture' mindset would surely work against him at a crucial moment.

'In addition.'

Clang!

Lord's attacks were steadily becoming faster. He was as expressionless as usual, but Frey could feel the faint impatience in his attacks.

This was inevitable.

Kaltud was dead. This meant that Nozdog was either hibernating or severely weakened. Moreover, Nozdog was currently in Hitume Ikar. Frey's teammates and Dro were there as well.

All of them were hostile towards Nozdog, and it wouldn't be hard for either party to find and kill a defenseless Demigod.

Lord said that he didn't care about Nozdog's death, but he would definitely want to obtain the crystal he left behind.

'Did he realise that he wouldn't be able to subdue me with this kind of attack?'

Lord had become too strong. It was possible that he didn't know his own strength, which was why he wasn't putting all of his strength into his attacks.

Therefore, he was gradually increasing the strength with each subsequent attack. But Frey's defenses were also gradually becoming stronger.

The strength and weakness of their respective powers didn't matter. What mattered was that Frey was becoming used to his attacks.

He would not be able to overpower Frey if he continued to attack in this way.

Did he feel that?

Lord's attacks, which seemed unrelenting, stopped for a moment. It seemed that he intended to change his attack method.

Frey's eyes shined.

This was the moment he was waiting for.

“Spear of light, pierce through the enemy.”

Frey muttered softly.

“Magic Missile.”

[...?]

Lord paused.

It was unintentional, but his pause created a small opening. Then, the magic missile that Frey created shot towards him.

It wasn't fast. The size was also ordinary.

Lord had some degree of understanding towards magic. No, it could be said that he had more knowledge and understanding than most Wizards.

That was why he could tell. The Magic Missile that was flying towards him was a basic spell with no special properties.

[...!]

Lord, who was quietly observing the magic missile, twisted his body slightly, and with a sharp sound, the magic missile flew past his cheek.

After flying for a bit longer, the magic missile disappeared.

That was it. It was a basic spell that would disappear after flying a few dozen meters.

Nevertheless, he could not allow this attack to touch him. This was because the energy that the Magic Missile constructed was not from mana but from divine magic power.

However, this was only the beginning of Frey's attack.

"Balls of flame soaring through the air. Fireball."

Fwoosh!

A ball of fire as large as a fist suddenly appeared in the air. But this time, Lord did not sit still.

He immediately used his power of space to extinguish the flames.

Frey continued to chant without hesitation.

“Bind their voices. Chain Lightning.”

“The Ruler of Earth devours you. Earthquake.”

“My enemies will forever dance in fields of flames. Flame Ball.”

Frey cast one spell after another. And Lord responded to each spell immediately.

Destroying them, blocking them, or avoiding them. He did not allow any of the spells to hit him directly.

Lord thought.

They were threatening. They were definitely a threat to him. However... they were sloppy.

As he extinguished a Flame Ball, he spoke.

[Spells. This is probably the weapon you are most familiar with. But the idea of going back to basics is quaint. It's sloppy. Did you think that fighting in the way you are most comfortable with would help?]

“ ... ”

[Your attacks are nothing now that you've lost the element of surprise. By the time your first attack missed, my guard was raised. So now, any of the tricks you might have hidden in these spells has lost their meaning.]

Lord's voice was filled with disgust. He even felt that Frey was just giving up.

It was impossible for him to defeat him with such clumsy spells.

Frey muttered in a soft voice.

“The screams of ice tear the eardrums. Frost Scream.”

Whoosh-

Then he looked at the storm of ice while thinking.

The weapon he was most familiar with. Calling them that was not wrong, but that wasn't really the case.

Frey's recent focus had not been on his magic but on his divine magic power. During his 800 years in the mental world, he'd devoted all of his attention to learning to control divine magic power.

Jijjik!

The ice storm was ripped apart. This was also caused by Lord's power.

"The condensed lava roars. Lava Blast."

Boom boom boom!

This spell was quite intimidating. And it was very fast.

It was much more powerful than a normal Lava Blast.

But Lord didn't panic, easily avoiding the attack. The power of the spells was gradually increasing, but that wasn't very surprising.

In all honesty, it was natural. After all, the spells that Frey was using were gradually increasing in level.

[...]

It was at that moment when Lord felt uncomfortable.

The levels were increasing?

Right. They were.

The spells that Frey used were increasing in levels, one after the other.

From the 1 star spell Magic Missile to the 2 star spell Fireball, 3 star, 4 star, 5 star, 6 star... and now the 7 star Lava Blast.

Lord turned to look at Frey.

That meant that this time...

“At a gesture of my hand, the frozen era breathes a deep sigh. Ice Age.”

Crack crack!

Frost spread from the tips of Frey’s toes to cover the surrounding area. It was as though the cold hand of an ice god had touched the ground.

Lord flew into the air without responding to the spell. (TL: when did he land?)

‘Why is he wasting so much of his willpower?’

Once one became a transcendent being, the energy that had to be treasured was not mana, nor stamina, but willpower. That was the power that formed the basis of every other power.

So if it was wasted unnecessarily, it was the same as setting oneself up for an inevitable defeat. Of course, he didn't find it strange that Frey, who was weaker than him, was doing all he could right from the beginning.

If he hadn't been playing around with spells up to this point, Lord would have thought so. But in his eyes, Frey's spells weren't very efficient.

Instead of wasting his willpower to create these spells, it would have been much stronger and more efficient to directly make use of his divine magic power.

"Did you know, Lord? 9 star spells don't exist."

Frey's quiet but cold voice suddenly resounded.

Lord looked down at him without responding.

When a Wizard reached 9 stars, he gained the ability to use Absolute Field. This couldn't be called a spell. It was a simple power.

The Absolute Beam that Frey used was derived from this power.

“...in general, the complexity of the formula is what determines the rank of a spell.”

2 star spells were more complicated than 1 star spells, and 3 star spells were more complicated and difficult to cast than 2 star spells.

If a 7 star spell were to be written down, the magic formula would easily be able to fill ten sheets of paper.

That was why everyone who met Frey was amazed. Frey’s ability to swiftly break down and create magic formulas exceeded common sense.

Of course, no matter how powerful Frey was, this would have been impossible if he hadn’t spent over 4,000 years in the Abyss.

“I created a 9 star spell, Lord.”

[You can’t defeat me with a spell.]

“I agree. However, this one will be a bit different.”

[...show it to me. Let me take a look at it.]

Frey laughed at Lord’s words.

“It seems you still haven’t noticed. I already used it.”

[...what are you talking about?]

Frey tapped his chin.

“I showed you every spell from 1 star to 8 stars. I even added the chants to make them appear perfect. Thanks to that, half of my divine magic power disappeared.”

[...]

“Did you think my attack was over? No. It’s only just beginning.”

Paht!

Lord felt heat on his back and dodged without turning around.

Whoosh!

A fireball flew past him in an instant.

Lord's expression stiffened.

Did he secretly cast a spell?

No. It wasn't so simple.

Crack crack!

This time, it was an Ice Spear. Then a Magic Missile flew over at that same time.

These spells also didn't come from Frey's direction.

He avoided and blocked, but the onslaught continued.

Instead, the number of spells flying towards him steadily increased as though it was just beginning.

[...this.]

"These spells have already been cast. So they won't go away even if you block them or avoid them. In time, they will simply appear again. And they will keep getting faster and faster. As long as my willpower supports it, this magic bombardment will never end."

Frey fell silent for a moment before adding.

“Since all of these processes were calculated at the same time, it created a formula that was incomparable to that of an 8 star spell. It’s a complicated and esoteric formula that would truly turn anyone’s brain to dust. So I decided to call it the 9 star spell Infinite Field.”

The surrounding area had already been filled with Frey’s divine magic power. Even with Lord’s power of space, he could not easily disperse it.

Especially since he would be focused on defense from now on.

Frey did not say anything else.

This was because he didn’t have the time to. From now on, he had to focus most of his attention on calculating formulas.

Boom, boom, boom!

Lord’s body was covered with dozens of spells. It didn’t matter whether it was a 1 star or 8 star spell. What mattered was that they were all made of divine magic power.

So he had to avoid them. Or he had to block them.

Frey no longer had to control the spells he’d cast. He just had to keep adding spells one after the other and wait for Lord to reveal a fatal opening.

'...but I can't kill Lord with just this.'

Frey's eyes sank.

At first glance, it seemed like he had the upper hand, but that didn't mean he could let down his guard.

He also didn't think that this was enough to actually defeat Lord.

So Frey was preparing a spell of the next level. The step above 9 stars, which was known as the peak of Magical Science, and the legend the very existence of which was still unclear.

A 10 star spell.

Season 1 Chapter 225: Decisive Battle (6)

"It's an honor to meet you."

Grey wanted to pretend to be calm, but he couldn't. His heart pounded like he was a young boy again.

With trembling eyes, he looked up at Frey, the Great Mage who had made unprecedented achievements in the study of Magical Science.

'Anyone who understood mana would be excited.'

His heart trembled violently just by making eye contact.

Frey looked at the man who currently possessed his own body before saying.

“I need your help. Can you lend me your strength?”

“I will do whatever you say.”

He said these words without even needing to think.

Grey’s firm belief in Frey could be clearly seen in his eyes.

“I’ve long dreamed of something like this happening. That the Great Mage, who suddenly disappeared, was still alive and had returned to defeat the Demigods.... Haha. It was like a fairy tale that even little children would not believe possible...”

“The truly unbelievable things only happen in real life. You have wisdom that befits your age, so I’m sure you already know this.”

“Of course I do.”

Frey looked at Grey for a moment before speaking.

“By the way, why did you give yourself the surname Trowman?”

“Ah... pardon my discourtesy.”

“I’m not against it. I’m just curious.”

This was the truth.

Frey was not a noble. So naturally, he didn’t have any pride in his bloodline. He had no objections to someone using his last name unless it was a despicable person.

“If I think about it simply, I believe you took my last name out of respect...”

“That is naturally one of the reasons.”

“So there are other reasons.”

“Huhu. That’s right. It is also because I, Grey Trowman, am the successor to the Great Mage’s path in the truest sense.”

“...”

This was a statement that he couldn't understand.

Naturally, there were many Wizards whom Frey had 'taught', but he didn't have a 'direct disciple' among them who had received everything.

As if he knew that, Grey nodded.

"Of course, I know that the Great Mage didn't have any direct disciples. But a book containing the essence of your path was passed down."

"...a book?"

Frey's eyes narrowed.

A book containing his essence. He had never written anything of the sort.

Grey laughed bitterly.

"Of course, you might not know about it. It is a book written by those who were taught by you at least once and were greatly impressed by your teachings.... You thought that you were just guiding the lost, but for them, you were their lifelong teacher."

"..."

“My master’s master.... No, even long before my master’s master, we were able to decipher the teachings in the book. And many were able to reach 9 stars because of that book.”

When he heard that, Frey recalled something.

“There is an organisation called Paragon in the modern era. They mentioned 10 stars to me. And they seemed convinced that it was real. They said... that they read it in the Great Mage’s... my book.”

When Grey heard that, he pondered for a moment.

He had never thought deeply about the 10 stars level, nor did he recall leaving it in a book.

But if the authors of the book were truly Grey’s ancestors and descendants, then the missing pieces could be interlocked.

“May I ask the name of the person who owns the book?”

“Cairo Wilsemann.”

“Wilsemann! Then he must be a descendant of the Great Sage. In that case, I’m certain. They have always had a close relationship with us in the past.”

“...by that you mean...”

“Exactly.”

Grey nodded, saying.

“After your ‘death’, we never once neglected our research. The path of the Great Mage was continuously inherited, and for a long time, we were able to progress steadily by taking one step at a time. And that was why we were certain. That the 10 stars level is real.”

* * *

Crack, crack!

Lord admired the spells as they bombarded his entire body.

‘The number of spells has surpassed 50.’

Frey had implied that all of these processes were within the formula of the Infinite Field spell, but it was not so simple. To put it simply, a vast and complex process that even ten 9 star Wizards working together would have had trouble breaking down was being carried out every moment.

At the same time, not even the smallest miscalculation was tolerated.

Dozens of spells of different attributes and types had created what could be described as a magical storm in a certain portion of space. It was an amazing feat to be able to control them so that they did not conflict with each other.

'It's as though dozens of Wizards who have been working together for a very long time are attacking me in unison.'

Crack, crack!

At that moment, a Howling Tempest spell was gnawing at his skin. It was only a 6 star spell, but because it was created by divine magic power, it was able to reach his core.

Frey's attacks were definitely causing damage to Lord.

'-a scratch on a tree branch can still be called a wound.'

As he had this thought, Lord lifted his hand.

Crack!

"...!"

Frey, who was watching from the sidelines, narrowed his eyes.

A spell had just disappeared. Of course, this didn't mean he'd completely gotten rid of it.

Crack! Crack!

But it wasn't an illusion. Even at that moment, his spells were being nullified one after the other.

There was no need to ponder who was behind this.

'Is he erasing them with his power?'

But that couldn't be it.

Frey's spells, which were cast using divine magic power, could not be so easily erased by Lord's power.

Frey looked inside the field. And when he realised what Lord was doing, he became speechless.

How many times could he witness such a sight?

'He's disrupting the spells.'

Frey had no choice but to watch on in disbelief.

What he was seeing was certainly theoretically possible. It could also be called the most efficient method.

It involved basically conserving your own power and making your opponent's attacks collide with each other, thereby negating themselves.

But there were many 'theoretically possible' things in the world. And the reason they were given such a grand modifier was simple.

That was because the vast majority of beings were unable to even try to attempt these things. It was like catching an incoming arrow before throwing it again and hitting another incoming arrow.

No. It was much more difficult than that. What Lord was doing was many times harder than that.

Another spell disappeared.

Lord was gradually increasing the speed with which he destroyed the spells.

'I can't afford to waste even a single minute.'

Frey's judgement was quick.

If it no longer had an effect, then he had no reason to continue using Infinite Field, which required a large amount of willpower. (TL: Author keeps jumping between 'infinite' and 'infinity', I'll just stick to infinite.)

Huk.

In an instant, silence fell upon the area. Then, the dust settled, and Lord's figure was revealed. There were a few scratches on his body, but after a moment, those were healed.

Frey looked at him silently for a moment before opening his mouth.

"...I didn't expect the Infinite Field to have much of an effect."

[The heavy expression on your face says otherwise.]

"That's because I didn't expect that you'd use such an unbelievable method. You used a technique that requires a great understanding of Magical Science. Is this also knowledge you gained by consuming your own kind?"

[Right. To be precise, I gained an understanding of the concept of mana. Magical Science is a study of mana created by you humans, but mana itself is derived from the power of origin.]

"..."

Lord's affirmation made Frey's heart feel heavy.

It was hard not to. After all, one of Lord's weaknesses had been erased.

Just as Frey used his understanding of divine power to his advantage in fights against Demigods, Lord had also learned the concept of mana and could now use it to deal with magic.

“You really are powerful.”

He meant it.

Frey was incomparably stronger than he had been 4,000 years ago. But Lord was still stronger than him.

He’d thought he’d narrowed the distance between them, but inexplicably, it had only grown larger.

It would have been a lie to say he didn’t feel any hopelessness. But Frey struggled to suppress those negative thoughts.

If his conviction was broken, a monster called defeat would surely raise its ugly head.

Even if one was forced or bluffing, one should never admit that one’s opponent was superior. In a sense, sometimes, it was better to keep a good frame of mind than to conserve willpower.

“However, even if you understand mana, you won’t be able to decipher a 10 star spell.”

[You seem to be mistaken. The 10 star level doesn’t exist.]

“I, too, thought so.”

[...]

Lord paused. He could feel in Frey’s tone that he wasn’t lying.

[...are you saying that you have achieved that level?]

“It seems that I have at least stepped one foot in.”

[I see. So that’s why you haven’t become desperate yet.]

He nodded.

[I’ll give you time. Enough time to prepare. So do your best, and show me the 10 stars level.]

At first glance, this statement might have seemed to carry the composure of a powerful being. But the meaning being it was completely different.

Lord’s goal was to defeat, capture, and ultimately consume Frey. And the most efficient way to do that was to make him realise the difference between them.

Lord knew.

Just as Kaltud was Lucifer's last card, the power of 10 stars was Frey's. If he could withstand this attack, then Frey's will would certainly be broken. Because he would realise that he couldn't win.

"Sss..."

Breathe.

Close your eyes.

Empty your thoughts.

Then remember the power of 10 stars that Grey Trowman had found.

'-language.'

Whether it was spoken or written. Words contained power.

Frey knew that too.

The power that Grey's ancestors, that is to say, Frey's disciples, paid attention to was the Dragons' Dragontongue.

This was a power unique to Dragons that was neither magic nor divine power.

Then how was this transcendent power expressed? How could a combination of words released through speech have such an effect on the fabric of reality?

They explored.

They explored for thousands of years.

Even someone with an extremely long lifespan would not have been able to achieve such a feat.

Frey dared to affirm this.

He believed that this achievement was only possible because it was done by humans.

'Our lives are short.'

Even if they reached the highest level, they would rarely be able to surpass 200 years. But they were able to fiercely live each moment to the fullest because they knew that death could arrive at any moment.

They could burn their souls as though the present was their last. They could run constantly, and even if they couldn't achieve their goal in the end, they could die laughing. Because their will, desire, and achievements would all be inherited.

And they believed that their future generations would be able to complete the mission that they couldn't.

If not the next one, then the next after that.

It kept stacking and stacking. And eventually, the pile of leaves would become trees.

“The power of beginning. Ether.”

[...!]

Lord showed a rare look of surprise.

This was because he didn't expect Frey to suddenly mention this power.

“The Dragons used Dragontongue to communicate with the ‘ether’. The power that forms the foundation of the world. This law, which only operated of its own will, responded to the Dragons’ voices... Probably because they were given the role as the balance of the Continent from the beginning.”

However, it was pointless to imitate them. Dragontongue was certainly powerful, but in the end, it was defeated by the Demigods’ divine power.

“We couldn’t handle that power. So I found a new law. I decided to communicate with the law I was most familiar with instead of ether.”

Mana.

Season 1 Chapter 226: Decisive Battle (7)

Frey muttered softly.

<Wizard’s World.>

Krrr.

Space changed.

Lord could feel it more clearly than anyone else.

He looked at Frey with a deep gaze and saw that the blue energy that was overflowing in his eyes had started to glow brilliantly.

After looking at him for a while, Lord sighed.

[...I can’t help but feel a little disappointed, Great Mage.]

Lord felt the same way he had with Lucifer before. Just like that time, this was far below his expectations.

He felt that all the preparations and schemes that they had prepared were of no threat to him. Everything they'd done had only been able to injure him at most.

He never thought it would be so easy.

[I know what you're trying to do. After understanding and deciphering the Dragon's Dragontongue, you then applied the same principle to the law of mana.]

If Dragontongue could control the ether, then the power Frey was currently using could control mana.

That was why he was disappointed.

Because this power only controlled the mana within a certain space.

[How dare you say the word 'world' when all you are controlling is the mana in your surroundings?]

Lord's voice shook with rage.

[Do you truly understand the law? This power that controls an entire area? Wizard's World? Does it only have a grand name? Do you still not understand who is standing in front of you?]

Lord growled.

[You're more arrogant than Lucifer. How dare you claim to have taken control of space in front of me?!]

Frey looked at him before speaking in a calm voice.

"You are a Demigod. Demigods use divine power."

[That's right.]

"The Dragons used ether, and the Demons used demonic energy."

[...are you trying to say you need to do that now?]

"I need to. Definitely."

Frey muttered softly.

Then, looking back at the steps he'd taken, he questioned himself. After he separated from his body and became a transcendent being, his emotions had gradually begun to fade.

He could feel even more clearly that he'd stepped out of the realm of mortality. In the end, he had become completely separate from the humans he was so obsessed with.

Nevertheless, there was something that didn't change.

"I am a Wizard."

...No. That alone wasn't enough.

Frey shook his head then spoke with greater confidence in himself.

"I am the Great Mage."

The explorer of mana.

That was who Frey was in essence.

"My mission is to explore mana, the greatest energy, and decipher the truths hidden within it. It is my duty to understand and adjust the complex laws of this world. That is the responsibility I hold as the Great Mage. That's why, Lord, I will face you with mana."

Ttuk.

Lord's aura changed in an instant.

It was as though the calm before the storm had descended upon the area.

[That disgusting stubbornness. I've changed my mind again, Frey Blake. You don't deserve to be our kin.]

Lord looked at Frey like he was delivering a sentence.

[First, I will suck out all of my kind's power from your body. Then, I will kill you. You will die in the most miserable and humiliating way you can imagine.]

Frey smiled at that.

"If you take away my powers, I can die as a human."

[...]

Lord closed his mouth.

He realised that any further conversation was meaningless.

Frey thought so too.

And so.

A silent clash of wills began.

* * *

It was Lord who announced the start of the battle.

He suddenly lifted his right hand and pointed it towards Frey. His entire body became covered with a pale glow, and his outstretched hand appeared even whiter than usual.

The distance between them was great. At least a few hundred steps. Nevertheless, instantly, it felt that Lord's hand was right in front of him and large enough to cover his entire body.

This was a visual representation of the fact that Lord could close the distance between them in an instant.

Lord's plan was also predictable.

He intended to touch Frey's transcendent body and directly destroy his consciousness. If necessary, he would also torture him and much more.

He no longer considered Frey his own kind. Nevertheless, he still had no intention of killing him directly.

His goal was to absorb all of the divine power in his body.

Frey spoke softly.

<Get lost.>

Crunch.

In an instant, Lord's hand, which was about to reach Frey, suddenly twisted in a bizarre direction. Then, his entire body flew backwards like he was a cannonball shot from a cannon, quickly flying so far away that he could no longer be seen.

The distance between them had been widened again. But this wasn't enough to make him relax.

The blue light shining in Frey's eyes became stronger. He narrowed his eyes, and as though he could see the staggering Lord who was slowly getting to his feet, he said.

<Fall.>

Thud!

Lord's knee, which was almost straight, was forced into a right angle.

Unable to withstand the invisible pressure, his face soon made contact with the ground.

In this broken state, Lord lifted his head to look at Frey. The faint glow began to cover his body once again.

<Stop.>

Huk.

This word caused the glow to tremble dangerously. Then it was extinguished like a candle in front of a strong breeze.

Three words. With just three words, Frey had completely neutralised Lord's actions.

These words weren't temporary like Dragontongue either. They had the ability to last for a very long time.

Lord could no longer reach Frey, could no longer stand, and could no longer use his power as he pleased.

This would remain the case as long as Frey had the mental power to support it.

Yet, it was Frey who decided to call this power 'Endtongue'. (TL: strange name, it was 'created' in the same way Dragontongue was, I'll try to think of something better...)

“...”

At first glance, it seemed as though he was overpowering Lord, but Frey's expression wasn't very good.

'It's hard.'

He had restrained him, but he hadn't caused any actual damage.

No. Could it even be called restraint? It wasn't considered a restraint when a rope was tied around a rock.

It wasn't enough. He couldn't kill Lord with just this.

Frey calmed himself.

Now that he'd brought all of his power to bear, he had no intention of wasting any time. In fact, he was already feeling a bit dizzy.

This was the effect caused by his use of Infinite Field as well as a power with which he was not familiar. In particular, the aftereffects of his Endtongue were quite severe.

It was inevitable.

'It is the power to change my perception into reality.'

It was an ability that could be called 'reality manipulation'.

It might even have been possible for him to create matter as long as he had the time to increase his proficiency. It was a power that was no different from the power of God; however, it wasn't universal.

If anything he said really could happen, he would have already told Lord to 'die'. In fact, he still wanted to try it. But it was up to Frey to handle the impact his Endtongue had on reality.

Stopping Lord's movements and extinguishing his very existence were completely different. And naturally, their aftereffects would also be different.

Frey was unsure of just how much of a price he'd have to pay for Lord to be destroyed. More importantly, he wasn't sure if Lord would be destroyed immediately.

It was the same even now.

Crik, crik...

Lord was already resisting his Endtongue.

This wasn't because Frey's powers had weakened. Instead, it was because his body was gradually developing a resistance.

"Monster."

It was a scene that he found hard to believe even though he was seeing it with his own eyes. This was because most Demigods would be completely defenseless in front of his Endtongue.

Crack!

He felt something break.

Lord had broken one of Frey's three words.

It was the word <Fall>. He no longer felt a great pressure pressing him down.

[...]

Lord had temporarily regained his freedom, but he didn't try to close the distance.

Instead, he just looked down at his hand and clenched his fist.

He didn't have a choice.

There were still two words binding him. Unless he broke those two, he would not be able to approach him...

Whoosh.

-Probably.

In what could only be called a stroke of luck, Frey suddenly realised that the winds he suddenly felt were not the disgusting winds of Hell, and his eyes widened.

<Stop.>

He used Endtongue once again, and he felt that the winds around him had stopped.

Frey subconsciously swallowed his saliva.

If he had used Endtongue even a moment later, wind blades would have torn his body apart.

This was also Lord's power.

'He can use the power of every Demigod he absorbed.'

What Frey had restrained with <Stop> before was Lord's own 'power of space'. But there were dozens of powers that Lord could still use.

"I was mistaken."

Frey muttered.

He'd intended to restrain him with the Endtongue before finishing him off with his divine magic power. However, he did not even have the time for that.

He had realised that now. His chances of defeating Lord had a very short window.

Now that only a small amount of his mental power remained, he would have to go all in.

Krrr-

Blue light covered Frey's body.

Lord also felt the restraints on his body disappear.

[...]

He knew that this blow would contain Frey's all.

His largest and last attack would be coming. In other words, if Lord could survive this attack, it would be his victory.

<Die.>

Crack.

Death had no substance. Lord was aware of that. However, Frey's voice had clearly caused an embodiment of death to appear in reality.

Lord looked at this ominous, amorphous black fog. This fog, which seemed to drift aimlessly, gradually began to take shape.

[...]

Lord was speechless.

Then his eyes appeared. And nothing but rage could be seen within them.

It was a blade.

The black fog had slowly transformed into a sword that shined with a dazzling silver glow. (TL: RIKI?!)

Lord burst out in an angry voice.

[Insolent! Are you saying this is how I will die?!]

Then his body seemed to move impulsively.

Lord charged towards the sword without any protection from his power.

This was something that even Frey couldn't predict. In an instant, the sword collided with Lord's chest.

Jujuk-

Lord's chest cracked. Then light exploded from within him.

Frey looked at this light. He didn't blink even when his eyes started to burn.

The brilliant flash of light swallowed Lord, then the sword, and then, eventually, it swallowed Frey.

Season 1 Chapter 227: Decisive Battle (8)

He could see many faces. Faces he'd seen before.

They were looking up at him in fear.

"S-, stop."

"We don't want that."

Frey looked at them and reached out his hand. No. He wasn't the one who was moving.

It seemed that Frey was only conscious, but it was someone else who was controlling his body.

[Don't be afraid, my people. You will understand soon.]

It was Lord's voice.

Only then did Frey realise that this was Lord's body. And the beings who were shivering in front of him were the Demigods.

These transcendent beings, who had trampled upon humans like bugs, were now even more miserable than those they killed.

They never even thought about fighting back. They had no choice but to watch on in horror as death approached them.

The feast began.

Crunch, crunch...

Although Lord expressed it as accepting them and becoming one, that was not the case. No, he literally devoured them.

A huge mouth appeared on Lord's face, and with it, he bit the Demigods, chewed their bodies, and swallowed them.

Lord didn't seem to hesitate when moving his mouth. He could feel it now that he was a part of him.

He did not feel even the slightest repulsion in his actions. In fact, there was even a sense of satisfaction in his mind like he was truly doing the right thing.

Frey felt speechless.

'These are Lord's memories.'

Only then did he understand his situation.

Frey and Lord's wills had been stirred violently, and fragments of their memories had been scattered everywhere.

What Frey was currently witnessing was one of those fragments. It was possible that Lord was viewing his memories as well.

He was drawn into another memory.

This time, he saw a silver-haired man.

[Killing our people is unforgivable, Riki.]

"I know."

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

"That's obvious, Lord."

Riki looked at Lord with a firm gaze.

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

Right after hearing Riki's words, it was like a large, irreparable crack appeared in Lord's mind. It caused his emotions, which didn't so much as shake when he devoured dozens of his people, to waver.

Their conversation continued.

Lord pretended to be calm, but he was burning on the inside. He felt impatient. He felt confused.

He'd never expected the betrayal of the person he trusted the most.

He felt that he had to change Riki's mind somehow. His impatience made him say something that never should have been said.

[Then let's pretend this never happened.]

"...what?"

[We have to put on a good act. I will pick one of the Demigods who comes here. There will be no suspicion, and everything will go smoothly. You will have nothing to worry about...]

"...you're going to falsely accuse and then kill an innocent Demigod?"

[It is unfortunate, but it can't be helped. Because you are more important than anyone else.]

It must have been exactly at this point. The first distortion in Lord's mindset and all the subsequent changes began with this very proposal.

Naturally, Riki did not accept his offer, which further increased the speed of the cracks spreading throughout Lord's psyche.

'I was willing to give up so much for you! Yet you!...you...!'

Lord screamed desperately on the inside. For more than tens of thousands of years, he had treated and loved every Demigod equally.

It was because of this that he was able to gain the title 'Lord' and was able to win every Demigod's blind loyalty.

Yet he'd committed the first act that went against his beliefs for Riki.

It was an act that violated his own identity.

But he didn't even realise that his thoughts were already crooked. He was just angry because his dedication wasn't rewarded.

He didn't care about the confusion that the other Demigods would feel if this were revealed.

The biggest problem had already sprung up in Lord's mind. And for the first time, he felt hate towards the race known as Demigods.

'This is.'

This was Lord's weakness.

It was the only thing that could pierce through the iron fortress that was his conviction.

I can win.

The moment Frey had this thought.

Crack.

'Kuk...'

He woke up from the assimilation in intense pain.

* * *

"Huk... huk..."

Frey panted heavily.

After waking up from the memories, he noticed his condition. He had poured out everything he had.

The power used in the Endtongue word <Die> was beyond imagination.

Frey's body had even become faint like an illusion. He forcibly raised his head and looked around.

Lord was standing there. His current state could only be described as a mess.

The glow around his body flashed like a candle ready to go out. There were cracks all over his body that revealed the flesh beneath. And his presence could barely be felt.

This was enough to show just how much damage he'd taken.

The most important thing was that despite this damage, his condition was still better than Frey's.

Defeat.

This word suddenly popped into his mind.

Frey bit his lip as he tried to erase this negative thought, but it didn't work. Even considering all the means he had, no way to reverse the current situation.

At that moment, having such a clever brain felt like a hindrance.

[I won.]

“ ... ”

Frey saw Lord’s face for the first time. This face, which was usually blank, had clear features.

Lord also had a smug smile on his lips, but his expression was still somber.

He didn’t have a choice.

He had no choice but to change his decision at the last minute.

He didn’t intend to kill Frey. But he might have disappeared if he so much as touched him.

Therefore, he did his best. And he won.

[We became assimilated after that clash. And most of your power came to me. Just as the river flows into the sea. This is proof that I have greater power.]

'It was a really... really long and hard fight.'

Lord had no choice but to admit this fact.

It wasn't even a Dragon, a Demon, or even God.

Instead, it was this man before him, a human, who was Lord's greatest enemy.

But that was it.

In the end, it was Lord who won.

[You will die here.]

"..."

Frey opened his mouth for a moment before closing it again.

He had nothing to say.

He had challenged him, fought, and lost. His will dampened.

Now, he didn't even have the strength to lift a finger.

In the end, all this scene showed was Lord's conviction which was still stronger than his own.

In truth, he couldn't believe it. There was no way he could believe it considering everything he'd gone through throughout the years.

Lord's conviction was clouded. It was twisted and contradictory. If it were to be expressed as a color, it would be dark while giving off a dull aura.

That was why he couldn't believe that he'd lost to such a perverse conviction.

Nevertheless, it was undeniable that he'd lost.

The results didn't lie.

“...”

Frey closed his eyes.

‘...I didn't think it would end like this.’

He'd thought he could win. He'd even learned Lord's decisive weakness.

But in the end, he still lost. Just like 4,000 years ago.

Of course, it was different from back then.

Lord could no longer look down on Frey. Therefore, he would not do something like locking him in the Abyss again.

He had clearly recognised just how threatening Frey was, so he wouldn't leave even a piece of him behind.

There would be no miracles this time.

"...I lost. But..."

Frey's voice was clear as he spoke.

"Humanity didn't lose."

[...Frey Blake, do you not yet understand? For me, your existence was more troublesome than every other human on the continent combined.]

Lord looked down at him for a moment before muttering softly.

[Goodbye.]

Puk.

Lord's hand stabbed into his chest.

Then, his consciousness disappeared. It was as though he had been sucked into a dark space. Like he had fallen into an abyss from which he would never escape.

It was useless to even struggle. Instead, the darkness would only pull him deeper and deeper like quicksand.

And so.

'Frey Blake' died.

Season 1 Chapter 228: The Great Mage Returns after 4000 Years (1)

Strange.

Lord thought this while looking down at Frey's body.

It wasn't Frey's body that was there. He had already separated from his flesh.

This was his soul body. Or it could be called his transcendent body.

Nevertheless, whether it was called his soul body or his transcendent body, if the body of a transcendent being received a fatal attack to its 'core', it would inevitably disappear. This was true even for his own kind.

But Frey's body didn't disappear. It was still translucent as though it would disappear at any moment, but it didn't disappear even after he stopped breathing.

It was strange.

'I'm sure he's dead.'

To put it in the context of other living beings, his heart had exploded and his brain had been smashed. There was no living being who could remain alive when its vital organs had been destroyed.

That was why he still felt uneasy.

After all, this was the man who'd managed to escape from the Abyss. Even if he didn't do it on his own, it was still an achievement that ordinary humans would never have been able to accomplish.

In short, this man had a record of making the impossible possible.

So he couldn't let his guard down. He couldn't even relax.

Therefore, in order to get rid of his anxiety, he had to erase even the slightest possibility.

Just as Lord was about to raise his hands and carry out his thoughts.

"You look exhausted."

Lord didn't turn around. But he knew the owner of the voice was Asura.

[So? Did you reveal yourself because you think you can defeat me now?]

Lord's voice was filled with disdain.

Of course, it wouldn't have been enough to call his current state a mess. But that didn't matter.

The only one who could kill him was already dead. If there was truly something called fate, then it was already settled.

Now, there were no longer any threats to Lord's fate.

In other words, he no longer had to worry about dying. Everything he wanted to happen would surely happen.

He was the winner.

“...no.”

Asura knew that too.

He shook his head bitterly.

“I saw your fight with Frey.”

It was such a fierce battle that he couldn't even have tried to interfere. Their levels were so different that they could be said to have been in different dimensions.

Asura had no choice but to run away and watch from a distance. He'd even used the power of Lilith, who he always disdained, to save his life.

It was the most humiliating thing he'd ever done in his life. It was to the point that he wanted to bite off his tongue and kill himself in shame.

For Asura, who had lived for thousands of years, this day was surely an incurable scar on his heart.

...Or not.

There was another way.

Clang.

Asura threw his six weapons aside.

Then, while taking the stance he'd shown Frey not so long ago, he said.

"Let's exchange pointers, Lord."

[Don't be ridiculous, Asura. It's very unsightly to see you, a demon, trying to imitate a Magic Warrior.]

"...I know. I think so too."

[Why are you trying to throw away your life? I have no intention of destroying Hell.]

Lord sounded genuinely confused.

[I think it is necessary for Hell to exist. I will not destroy this place and cause chaos. Look. This is the end of the clown who mistook Hell for his own property.]

Lucifer's headless body suddenly appeared.

Lord then put his hand into the body.

Crack!

[...and this is the core of Satan, Hell's former balance. It wasn't completely digested.]

Lord opened his bloodied hand to reveal a small gem.

Even though it was a gem, it seemed to have a mysterious aura filled with unlimited vitality and potential. This was the only thing that could have been considered the qualification of a balance in a material way.

It was just as Lord expected. Lucifer had the cores of both Satan and the Dragon Lord. And after separating them, he realised that it would be inefficient for one being to possess all the cores, so he decided to share.

Lord held out Satan's core to Asura.

[I will give this to you.]

“ ... ”

[You and Lilith are the only surviving Rulers. Just you two. The Dream Demon is not qualified to be the balance. But if it's you, it might be possible. It can be said that you're a half-step ahead of the other Rulers.... You could become the only Ruler just like Satan in the past. I will help you do that.]

It was an extremely attractive offer. He felt that every Ruler would have had this dream at least once.

To be the one and only Ruler of Hell.

Asura's desire to do this was particularly strong. It would have been a lie if he said he wasn't shaken.

But.

Asura still shook his head.

[...why?]

"There is no point sitting on a seat that someone else prepared for you. I get what I want with my own two hands. This is the way I have lived from the start."

Crunch.

Asura clenched his fists.

Lord sighed.

[How foolish. Do you feel like you've accomplished something by telling yourself that? Your image, which has been deeply influenced by the mortals' way of thinking, just looks unsightly. Don't forget your place, Demon.]

Asura didn't answer and rushed towards Lord.

Lord didn't even bother to move.

"...!"

Then Asura's body suddenly stopped.

His body gradually became bright red. He was using all he had, but he still could not move even a single muscle.

Chak!

Blood splattered from Asura's body.

He wasn't even sure what happened. Lord had only looked at him with the same disdainful gaze.

But in truth, such a result was natural.

With no way to resist Lord's power, this was inevitable. Frey was the only exception.

So even Asura, who was the strongest demon after Lucifer, could not even touch Lord's body despite the state he was in.

Hik.

But Asura just laughed.

Curious, Lord asked.

[Why are you laughing?]

"Because... it took longer than I thought. We talked for so long."

[...!]

At those words, Lord turned to look behind him. Frey's body was no longer there.

[You dare...!]

Burning with rage, Lord's eyes appeared on his face.

Asura grinned.

"Dumbass...! Exchange pointers. Bullshit! Is there any way the War Demon King... would say that kind of nonsense? Hu-, hahaha."

Asura looked Lord in the eyes.

"I... really hate you Demigods."

[...]

Lord's hand shook. Then Asura's body exploded, his flesh and blood scattering everywhere.

He'd killed Asura with a gesture, but Lord's thoughts had already turned away from him.

Frey's body couldn't have just disappeared on its own. Someone had to have taken him.

And that person's identity was quite obvious.

[Lilith.]

The last Ruler, Queen of the Dream Demons. He never thought that she was worth his time, just a bug, but now, she was annoying him.

Where did she go?

[...fine. I'll play tag with you.]

Lord's eyes disappeared again.

His mind had calmed down again.

He would literally pursue her 'to the ends of Hell' and kill her.

* * *

"Huk...! Huk...!"

Lilith flapped her wings desperately as she ran away.

"Why am I... doing this...?"

Frey's body was on her shoulder.

Right. His dead body. A body colder than ice with not even a hint of vitality in it.

"Asura, you stupid bastard!"

She cursed nervously.

She didn't see Asura's end, but she knew that he wouldn't have survived.

Paht!

Lilith's body faded for an instant before reappearing in an entirely different place.

This was Lilith's power. She was able to step into the virtual world of 'dreams'. She was sure that Lord would invade and conquer the Dream Realm. That was why she was only using it sparingly.

This was to blur Lord's perception of the Dream Realm and reality. If she hadn't used this method, then she would've been caught already.

'However... I'm only stalling.'

Lilith bit her lip.

If Lord had been in his normal condition, even this method would not have worked. She'd have been caught in seconds and suffered a miserable end just like Asura.

'How am I supposed to run away from a guy who controls space?'

Hell had already become a strange world that could no longer be called Hell. This was because Lord had mixed the Abyss with the space here.

It was like black ink had been spread across the sky and earth, and ominous dimensional cracks were everywhere.

Crack!

"Kuk..."

Lilith didn't scream despite the pain of the sudden attack. Then she felt that something was missing.

Her left wing had been torn off.

After losing a wing, she inevitably crashed to the ground as she was no longer able to fly.

Then, as she lay face-down on the ground, she heard a voice.

[You really thought you were clever.]

Lord.

Lilith grit her teeth.

She couldn't believe that the time Asura had desperately fought for had been so meaningless.

[Asura died to protect his petty pride. He didn't want to sit on a throne created for him and died for his stupidity. So what about you? Why are you trying to save him?]

"...I owe him my life."

Lilith glanced at Frey and muttered.

"I am a demon, but I have something called shame. Do you? You are lying. You never thought about making Asura the balance of Hell."

[Nonsense...]

“Ha. Stop pretending. I am a woman who survived for thousands of years with the lies from my mouth. Do you think I can’t smell a liar?”

Lilith laughed.

“You have no intention of keeping Hell around.”

Lord was speechless.

He never thought that he would be seen through so easily by this woman.

Lilith didn’t miss this opening. She pushed Frey into the black space beside her.

Frey’s body was quickly swallowed by this black space.

Seeing this scene, Lord shook his head and said.

[Do you know what you’ve done?]

“I’m going to die anyway, so what does it matter?”

[Right. You know it well.]

Crack!

In the next instant, Lilith's body was crushed as though she had been stepped on by a giant being.

It was an end so pointless and miserable that it was not befitting of the last Ruler of Hell.

Lilith didn't even know how she died.

Lord looked down at the puddle of flesh and blood that had once been the Ruler known as Lilith. Unlike Asura, he didn't think she was worth talking to.

[That space, the Abyss, is my world. Lilith, all you did was push Frey directly into my lair. Your foolish struggle was for nothing.]

That was what Lord thought.

He tried to step into his space.

But,

Tak.

He felt that he'd been blocked by a wall.

[What is going on?]

Lord's voice was filled with shock.

This wasn't possible.

He couldn't step into the space that he'd created?

[...]

But Lord soon realised something.

His expression became distorted.

[...Iris, do you intend to block me till the end?]

“Huhuhu...”

A loud laugh reverberated around him.

Lord spoke in a cold voice.

[Your struggle is futile. Right. I forgot your existence because you were so insignificant. Iris Phisfounder. 'Get out' of my Abyss immediately.]

...

...

It wasn't possible.

Lord's expression became stiff.

Despite his direct declaration, Iris was still staying in the Abyss.

No, that wasn't all.

He couldn't 'interfere' with the Abyss.

[How...]

“The Abyss is no longer your world. I’ve been studying this space for over 4,000 years, Lord. I know secrets of this place even you don’t know.”

That was impossible.

Lord was silent for a moment before opening his mouth.

[Nonsense. The place you’re in isn’t the Abyss. Where is ‘that’ place? Where the hell did you take Frey?]

“Huhu.”

Iris chuckled.

Lord stared at the black space in front of him and opened his mouth.

[I don’t know what the hell you’re thinking. He’s already dead. What you have is nothing more than a corpse... Frey Blake reached the transcendent level. That means the boundary between his soul and body disappeared.]

For ordinary beings, death meant a new beginning. Even if their body died, their souls would wander around the Continent, and soon, they would get a new beginning.

But after reaching the transcendent level, one stepped outside of the path of reincarnation. One would be able to view the world from a higher level.

However, this wasn't necessarily a blessing. There was a price to pay for breaking free of the yoke of life.

For transcendent beings, death was not a chance to restart but a complete end... nothingness.

It was not possible for them to leave behind a crystal like the Demigods, so they wouldn't even leave residual thoughts behind.

There was no way Iris Phisfounder didn't know that.

"I know. So please don't worry about us."

[...us?]

"Yes. Lukas and I will live here forever. I don't want anyone to interfere. Lord, you have a lot of work to do, don't you? You have a world to reset."

[...]

When Lord didn't answer, Iris continued in a cold voice.

"Lukas is already dead. If you try to take even his body from me, then I will interfere with everything you do. I will bother you till the day I die."

This wasn't a bluff.

Lord weighed the pros and cons for a moment.

Iris Phisfounder. This woman could definitely be incredibly annoying. Now that Frey was dead, it was clear that she was the person who could bother him the most.

After all, Iris had his power and would be able to resist his power of space to an extent.

'I could spend the time to find and kill Iris, but...'

He was thinking about the Continent.

Dro's core on the continent was Lord's top priority.

Besides, Frey was already dead. There was no way he'd be revived.

Therefore, it was more urgent to deal with the situation on the continent than chase after a corpse.

'I will kill her after.'

After thinking this, Lord nodded.

[In the end, you got what you wanted. Black Witch, I admire your perseverance and willpower.]

Lord did not say anything else and simply disappeared.

He was headed to the Continent.

“...”

It was only then when Hell finally became silent.

Season 1 Chapter 229: The Great Mage Returns after 4000 Years (2)

It was a beautiful sunset.

As he woke up, Lukas Trowman looked up with a blank gaze. He didn't know why, but he felt like he'd been unconscious for a long time.

Then he shook his head and turned to the side. There he saw a black-haired woman looking at him with a smile.

“Why?”

“Just because.”

Iris laughed as she said this.

When Lukas only tilted his head, Schweiser sighed.

“You’re so slow that I’m going crazy.”

“What do you mean?”

“You don’t need to know, you stonehead. Anyway, what are you going to do now? We’ve already explored every ruin in this country.”

“...well.”

Lukas felt strange. His thoughts were hazy.

It was strange because this was a feeling that he hadn’t felt since reaching 7 stars.

“...we... what were we doing?”

“Where did you leave your mind?”

Schweiser asked this in a disbelieving voice.

Then Kasajin, who was also beside them, answered.

“We decided to head east. You were interested in the culture there.”

“...”

Was that it?

Lukas was confused. He felt like he had been doing something incredibly important.

But no matter how hard he tried to think about it, nothing came to mind.

Trying to shake off the strange feeling, Lukas nodded.

“...right. Then let’s go there.”

“I heard the eastern swords are unique. I’m already looking forward to it.”

Lucid said these words in a pleased tone.

* * *

It was a pleasant journey.

They weren't in a hurry. After all, there was no urgency.

Therefore, they purposely rented a carriage despite the fact that they had the power to go to the other side of the continent in an instant. Yet, they traveled slowly on the road.

When they found a place with a particularly good view, they would set up a camp there even if the sun was still high.

If there was a village or city nearby, they would definitely visit it even if they had to make a slight detour.

The East was an exotic land. Not only the countries, the characteristics of each city were different, so it was interesting no matter where they went.

...He should have been enjoying it.

"This is a really good blade."

Lucid looked at the sword in his hand with ecstasy.

It had a deformed and bent blade, so Lukas, who had no knowledge of weapons, was unable to determine if it was really good or bad.

“What’s wrong, Lukas?”

Schweiser walked up to him and hit him on the shoulder.

“You look like you just ate a bug. Why? Are these artifacts below your expectations?”

“...no.”

The ruins in the land were all amazing. Lukas couldn’t help but once again admire their ancestors and praise their achievements.

But apart from that, the strange feeling he had only got stronger. The thing that frustrated him the most was the fact that he didn’t even know what was causing the strange feeling.

But traveling around the eastern nations did nothing to make him feel better. Instead, his heart only grew heavier.

Eventually, it got to the point where Lukas no longer smiled.

Schweiser kept glancing at him like he was acting strange, but he did not say anything.

That night, Lukas couldn't sleep, so he went out.

They were currently on an island in the far east. He walked along the shore for a while before sitting on a large rock.

Shhh-

He looked at the dark sea, feeling like he was being sucked in.

He just sat there without thinking about anything. The rock was a pretty good location. He was able to see the horizon drawn between the beautiful dark sea and the night sky at a glance.

The scenery was quite superb, but it did nothing to alleviate his heavy heart.

"You don't look so good."

It was Iris.

She spoke in a soft voice. Her ebony hair blended perfectly with the dark sandy beach.

She hesitated for a moment before taking a seat not too far from Lukas.

“You must have been worried. Sorry.”

“...no.”

Lukas looked at her before saying.

“So do you.”

“Huh?”

“You don’t look so good either.”

“...”

There was a subtle change in Iris’ face when she heard those words.

Lukas turned away from her. Then, while looking at the dark sea, he spoke again.

“...I think I’m forgetting something important.”

“Can’t stop thinking about it?”

“Right.”

“...if it doesn't come to mind, maybe it wasn't that important.”

“That might be true, but this is different.”

Lukas grabbed his chest, his auburn robes crumpling.

“I'm happy now. Touring the continent with my best friends, exploring and examining the ruins and artifacts left behind by our ancestors.... This is something I have wanted to do for a long time. It's what I call my dream come true.”

“That's good. So what's the problem?”

“...I feel like it's not the right time.”

Lukas' voice became heavy.

“I feel like everything has been derailed. I felt like this for a while too. It's like we stepped off the beaten path and began walking in the wrong direction. I know I have to go back... but it seems that part of me is reluctant to do that.”

He felt that the path he used to walk on had become difficult. On the other hand, this smooth path and beautiful scenery were amazing.

Every time he walked, he felt cheered up, like he was having a lazy afternoon outing.

“Sometimes, I hear people screaming, and I feel like I’m running away with my eyes covered and my ears blocked.”

“That’s not so bad.”

Iris was indignant. Her voice was filled with stubbornness.

“Lukas deserves to rest. Why don’t you ignore them? Is it so wrong to run away? You don’t have to deal with all of their problems. Sometimes, you need to take a break. You... you are human too.”

Her voice became sad.

Lukas lowered his head, silent.

He looked at the sandy beach that was stained by the darkness.

“...sometimes. I want to live like that. Like you said.... Do you think I hate taking breaks? Sometimes, I want to be lazy. That’s natural. But I can’t.”

Lukas seemed to space out for a moment before continuing.

“I know that I’m special. I know just how many people I could save. And I’m not confident that I can face the disaster that would come from ignoring their screams.”

“You are bound by responsibility. That can’t be called a life.”

“It’s nothing so grand. I’m just a bit more tired than everyone else.”

Lukas let out a soft laugh.

“Thank you, Iris. I feel comforted by your words.”

“...what do you mean?”

“The word human. You called me human. Haha. I don’t know why... but that made me happy.”

“...”

“Why are you making that face?”

Iris was shaking her head with teary eyes. She flinched for a moment before speaking half impulsively.

"I... like you, Lukas."

"..."

Lukas' expression stiffened.

This was a confession. A confession between a man and a woman, not showing favor to a friend.

He would have never imagined.

But... he felt like he'd known this. Like someone had told him about her feelings before.

That couldn't be.

Iris wiped the tears from her eyes as she hurriedly said.

"That... I shouldn't have... told you that. I just..."

Iris hesitated for a moment before burying her face in her knees and muttering.

"...I love you. Lukas, I love you more than anyone else in the world."

“Iris.”

“So I was a bit greedy, but I can’t do it. I can’t change the nature of my beloved Lukas Trowman with my own hands. It would feel like I’m killing you with my own hands.”

“...”

“I just...”

Iris’ voice faded.

Then his surroundings were enveloped by a bright light.

‘This...’

Lukas’ mind sank into this light.

* * *

[3917 years, 11 Months, 7 days...]

He heard a voice. A familiar voice.

Lukas regained his consciousness while hearing this voice. He felt like he was waking up from a long dream.

'That was just...'

Was it an illusion?

He'd never seen something like it before. It was so vivid and long that it could not be compared to reliving a memory.

He clearly remembered traveling with his friends for a few months.

'No. But...'

The conversation he'd had with Iris...

Lukas could not remember ever seeing Iris' tears. Even if it was only once, he would not have forgotten it even if 4,000 years passed.

It wasn't just that.

There was a lot of incompatibility in the memories he just witnessed.

'I was about 30.'

He wasn't too sure, but he felt that it was probably around that age.

At that age, Lukas was already engaged in an all-out war against the Demigods. He would not have been able to afford such a leisure trip with his friends.

But the thing that puzzled him the most was the fact that he was still able to think. He had gained a transcendent body and died after being defeated by Lord.

He should have already disappeared without even a soul left. Naturally, it was impossible for him to consciously think like this.

[3111 years, 9 months, 4 days...]

'Who's there?'

Lukas wanted to ask this, but he didn't have a mouth. He didn't even have a tongue.

So there was no way for him to talk. He could only cry out in his mind.

Naturally, he didn't receive an answer.

'Where am I?'

It was a place that was filled with just darkness.

It felt very similar to Lord's prison, the Abyss. But he felt that there was a fundamental difference.

Shuk...

Suddenly, something changed.

His senses began to return. This was the first time Lukas had ever felt this sensation.

It was as though ice covered him and was slowly melting, allowing him to feel his 'body'.

Then he felt warmth. Warmth that was milder than a spring breeze.

Lukas tried to suppress the fatigue that suddenly hit him in waves.

[2937 years, 4 months, 20 days...]

The voice continued.

It calmed Lukas' heart like warm sunlight.

He then realised that he had a tongue. But he still couldn't speak.

His senses hadn't fully returned yet.

'Something is still missing.'

A piece was still missing. But that piece was vital.

It was like a Golem who didn't have a core. Just like a Golem wouldn't be able to move even a finger without its power source even when complete, Frey couldn't move.

[2300 years, 1 month, 9 days...]

[1721 years, 8 months, 18 days...]

[1001 years, 7 months, 17 days...]

[661 years, 3 months, 1 day...]

He continued hearing the voice.

It was gradually going back in time.

Frey finally realised whose voice it was. (TL: This time it wasn't me putting the wrong name)

'Iris.'

She continued reciting the date in a calm voice. One by one, detailing such a long time that humans would not begin to imagine.

[121 years, 11 months, 11 days...]

Dak-

Then something pierced Lukas' chest.

It was at that moment.

Babump!

It seemed he had regained his heart. Blood raced through his body, and his weak heartbeat gradually gained strength.

His senses came back. He also became able to move again.

Lukas opened his eyes.

Paht.

The first thing he saw was a bright light. It was so bright that he was blinded for a moment.

After blinking several times, he realised that it was light from a small candle.

Scribble-

Someone was bent over, relying on the light to write something.

The elegant curves that could be seen despite looking at them from the back told him immediately that this person was a woman. He could also see her ebony hair.

Iris Phisfounder.

He was looking back at her.

Season 1 Chapter 230: The Great Mage Returns after 4000 Years (3)

“Do you trust me?”

When she asked this, he replied with a complicated expression.

“I don’t know.”

When she heard that, Iris’ composure broke.

She was such a fool.

She killed Schweiser, and she drove a wedge between Kasajin and Lucid. She even accepted Lord’s power and assisted the Demigods.

She had committed sins that could never be forgiven regardless of the circumstances.

That fact was abundantly clear.

...But she was hopeful.

Maybe he’d forgive her. Maybe they would be able to go back to the way things were.

This was her hope.

“ ... ”

Iris shook her head.

But that wasn't possible. Even if he forgave her, she would never be able to forgive herself. She would hate herself, curse herself, and resent herself even more.

And in the end, she wanted him to be her judge.

Iris wanted to die by Lukas' hand.

* * *

-Lukas Trowman had disappeared.

It wasn't just one Wizard who had disappeared. He was the center, the core behind which people of all races, cultures, and beliefs had rallied.

He was the hero of all mortals who had disappeared.

They felt defeated. They no longer had the will to fight.

It wasn't strange that those who were fighting against the Demigods had this thought. A lot of time had passed since they'd been on the defensive because of a lack of leadership.

Over time, more and more people fled, and many even surrendered because of their broken wills.

And the man who represented the hope of all humanity was still missing.

It was natural that they'd feel despair.

They felt cold, as though their struggle up to this point had been for naught.

Of course, not everyone collapsed.

Schweiser continued to struggle.

Lucid united a kingdom.

And even in this time, Kasajin remained focused on his training.

Nevertheless, Iris could feel their hidden despair.

They were just helplessly fighting against the evil. There was no basis behind their actions.

Struggling did nothing to improve the situation.

Building a kingdom had no meaning.

And no matter how hard one trained, it still wouldn't be possible to take on a Demigod on one's own.

This was the truth.

So Iris went missing too.

She refused to accept Lukas' death more than anyone else. Perhaps even at that moment, he was in a difficult situation, waiting for his friends to help him.

With this thought, she desperately searched the continent like she was going crazy, eager to find even the smallest trace of Lukas.

Meanwhile, the Demigods' power continued to increase.

Most of the kingdoms had already cut off their support, and many countries had even sided with the Demigods.

Slick bastards.

When they judged that there was no chance to win, they betrayed them without hesitation, even going so far as to reveal their weaknesses.

Yet even as the situation seemed to get progressively worse, Iris did not find any clues.

No. The clue was that there were no clues.

Iris bit her lip.

'Lord.'

He was the only being who could make the Great Mage disappear without a trace.

So Iris arranged a meeting with Lord.

As she requested, he appeared alone. This was because he had full confidence in his power.

This was natural.

After all, there was no trap from which he couldn't escape. Not even if they used a million soldiers or some other mysterious power.

Lord was a being who felt that he was only slightly inferior when compared to God.

"Where is Lukas?"

[He is being punished.]

Lord didn't seem to have any intention of hiding it, but he didn't tell her more than that.

Iris became nervous.

As expected, he was directly involved in Lukas' disappearance.

[Black Witch, Iris Phisfounder, you have no chances of winning. Quietly submit to us. Then I will spare his life.]

"Sure."

Iris revealed her intention as though she had been waiting for such an offer.

She had already thought about it before going there. So she didn't hesitate for even a moment.

[Hoh.]

Lord seemed interested, but he didn't show any other emotions. He probably didn't believe Iris' words.

Nevertheless, the reason he didn't kill her was because he was certain that he could prevent whatever she had planned.

'...it will be difficult to gain Lord's trust.'

She needed results. Achievements were the easiest way to obtain trust.

Her heart became heavy at this thought, but she simply shook her head.

She'd already steeled her determination.

It would have just been like going back to the old days. The time when she stayed alone in the swamp and was called the 'Black Witch' while receiving the accusations, insults, and disgust from the rest of the world.

Just for Lukas to come back. She would have done anything just to see his face again.

What could she do to make Lord trust her?

It couldn't be something small.

Iris had been one of Lord's most troublesome enemies. So she needed to do something unconventional.

'...'

The alternative she thought of made Iris' expression stiffen for a moment.

This was an irreversible path.

It was more than a sinful and morally outrageous choice. It was something that Lukas would never be able to tolerate.

But there was no other way.

"It's impossible for us to defeat the Demigods right now. So please start a fight with Kasajin."

"..."

Lucid didn't panic.

He didn't even appear surprised to see Iris, who had suddenly appeared in front of him.

He simply asked back in a quiet voice.

"What does that have to do with getting rid of the Demigods?"

"..."

"Did you know? All of our former teammates are cursing you. They're calling you the Traitorous Witch."

"I know."

Lucid's gaze was deep.

"You betrayed us, and you became Lord's right hand. Now, you appear before me and ask me to clash with Kasajin? I'm not sure I understand you correctly."

"You understand it perfectly."

"..."

Lucid lifted Deukid off his lap, the cold blade shining in the moonlight.

“What are you planning?”

“We need time. We can’t win right now. It’s not possible at this time. Most of the different races and kingdoms have already submitted to the Demigods. Their pride and fighting spirits have disappeared.”

That was a fact that even Lucid could not deny.

There were very few people who had not lost their wills, and it was impossible to stand against the Demigods with them.

“So you want us to give up?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s funny... We’re giving up our responsibility.”

“No. I have faith in the future generations. Of course, a long time has to pass. A lot longer than we might expect.”

However.

Iris continued in a clear voice.

“The Demigods cannot grow any stronger. Because they’ve already reached their peak. It’s possible that laziness might even weaken them over time. But ‘we’ are different. We have not finished growing, and we can still become much stronger. And that time will come.”

“That time?”

“When the Demigods become weak and the humans become strong.”

A strange emotion entered Iris’ voice.

“At that time, under Lukas’ banner, the Demigods will cease to exist.”

“...”

Lucid was silent for a long time.

Suddenly he put Deukid back into its sheath.

“...Lukas... is alive?”

His voice was shaking slightly.

Iris nodded.

“Yeah. He’s alive. And I will save him.”

“...”

Lucid sat up in his seat.

Then he looked out the window and murmured.

“...does anyone else know what you just told me?”

“No.”

“Why did you only tell me?”

“Because I thought that you could understand me.”

Schweiser had too much affection, and such a complex plan would just go right over Kasajin’s head.

Naturally, Lucid was the only one left.

“I’m going to kill Schweiser now.”

“...!”

Lucid shot up at those words. His deep, dark eyes bore into Iris’.

Iris accepted this look calmly.

“I will use his life and my support to gain Lord’s trust, and in return, I will demand his power.”

“You’re crazy.”

“I wish I were, but unfortunately, I’m still perfectly sane.”

“...”

Lucid grit his teeth.

He stared at Iris with a fierce gaze.

“...even if it’s for Lukas, killing one of our friends is unforgivable. Don’t you know this? If you cross over that river you will never be able to return.”

“Of course I know that.”

“You will be hated by the man you love.”

“...I know that too.”

She was willing to do it despite knowing that.

At that moment, Lucid seemed to see a giant mountain on Iris’ shoulders. It was so large that it seemed impossible for her thin shoulders to handle its weight.

Nevertheless, her eyes were still clear.

Seeing this, Lucid suddenly calmed down. He couldn’t bring himself to curse her anymore.

Because he’d managed to get a glimpse of the pain Iris would have to endure.

“...you are going to fight a long and painful battle that is incomparable to our own. All by yourself.”

Lucid sighed.

Iris' judgement was correct. Lucid was the only one who could understand her. That's because he put his reasoning over his emotions.

It was probably not his role to hold her accountable.

No matter when, no matter how long it took, no matter what they thought of each other.

He hoped that Lukas and Iris would reunite.

So Lucid nodded his head.