

**Great Mage 411**

**Season 2 Chapter 111**

Arid's expression brightened when they heard Lukas' words.

"Ah! As I expected! Then I'll immediately check for them."

[Check for them? How?]

"That's simple. As long as I touch you and concentrate..."

Just as Arid's finger touched Lukas' hand.

Sizzle.

"U-, ugh... Wh-, what was that? This..."

Arid's face became white as Lukas shook his head.

[Don't do that. I'm not a being you can afford to touch.]

"Ugh. E-, eek."

Although they heard this, Arid didn't give up. Instead, they bit their lip and concentrated even more.

Due to their concentration, their eyes gradually began to glow white. In fact, light began to pour out of their entire body like a fountain.

After a brief moment of surprise, Lukas realised that Arid was beginning to resonate with him.

Even if briefly, they had managed to touch and connect with the soul of an Absolute.

This was an amazing feat. After all, this was something that even a first-class Medium, Necromancer, or Sorcerer talented enough to be called a super genius would be unable to do.

'...however.'

It was not something that they could keep up for much longer. If it continued, Arid's body would slowly begin to crumble like a castle made of sand.

Just as Lukas was about to forcefully break the resonance between them, Arid spoke.

"The ones that Mr. Soul wants to see... are very far away."

Arid's voice was hoarse and came out in a stutter.

“They live... in a faraway place that is outside of this world.”

[...]

Lukas couldn't help but shake slightly at those words.

As if possessed, Arid continued to speak in an airy manner.

“There are many people there waiting for Mr. Soul's return... So many... I'm sorry, but it would be impossible for me to help you see them all...”

[All...?]

“Yeah...”

Arid continued to speak without bothering to wipe the sweat that dripped from their face.

“I can help you see... at least one person.”

Paht!

Suddenly, Lukas' gaze was filled with a bright white light.

-The light was so bright that even he was dazed for a moment.

As the light slowly dimmed, a scene began to unveil before his eyes.

Lukas saw a large room, in the center of which sat a large throne. At first glance, one might think that it was only roughly hewn, but upon closer inspection, one would realise that it had been elaborately crafted. Nevertheless, it wasn't the throne that Lukas was paying attention to; it was the figure sitting on it.

A man with hair like a lion's mane.

"..."

Lukas immediately recognised who this man was.

It seemed like only a few years had passed since he'd last seen him. His muscles seemed to be a bit smaller, and his stomach a bit larger than he remembered, but other than that, his appearance was almost the same.

He didn't have any wrinkles yet. However, it seemed he had grown a beard. His beard was just as unruly as his hair and perfectly matched his wild aura.

'...I see.'

It seemed that much time hadn't passed in that world.

Suddenly, the man's eyes turned in his direction.

Then, he slowly opened his mouth with a lazy attitude.

[...I can feel you looking at me.]

The man, Ivan, spoke in his characteristic, arrogant tone.

[Which bastard is it?]

\* \* \*

He hadn't neglected his training.

Lukas wasn't sure just how much time had passed, but he could at least see that much. Compared to the last time he'd seen him, Ivan appeared to have grown stronger.

This was great. After all, he had lost his right hand during the fight with Lord. He knew just how much the loss of 'one arm' meant for a Warrior.

Nevertheless, Ivan seemed to have successfully regained and improved his strength, Probably through an immense amount of hard work. Lukas couldn't be sure if he'd managed to perfect a new fighting style to match his condition, but at least he seemed better.

[Ivan.]

Lukas called out to him.

But Ivan continued to look around, his expression becoming a bit strange.

It was as he expected. Ivan couldn't see him, nor could he hear him.

Lukas could only watch on from the side.

This couldn't be called a reunion. Nevertheless, Lukas shook this bitter thought from his head, grateful to at least have this chance.

Ivan looked around for a bit longer before finally shaking his head.

“What's going on? Was it all in my head?”

With a slight shrug, he leaned back on his throne.

“...I’m tired.”

Ivan had never been the type to say such words easily. He truly appeared tired at that moment.

Lukas couldn’t help but wonder what was troubling him for him to be in such a state.

That wasn’t all.

He wanted to have a conversation with him. There was a heap of things that he wanted to ask, that he wanted to talk about.

[How is everything now? How are the others?]

Like before, his voice didn’t reach Ivan.

Lukas let out a bitter chuckle. It wasn’t very Wizard-like of him to try something when its failure had already been proven.

He had to be patient. Just being able to watch was enough for now.

His anxious heart slowly calmed, and an affectionate light shone in his eyes.

It was unexpectedly easy to calm his emotions.

Suddenly, the door to the throne room opened and someone strode in.

It took some time before Lukas was able to remember the name of this person.

“...Cairo Wilsemann.”

The man known as the 11th Tower Master and the leader of ‘Paragon’.

He looked at Ivan with his wrinkled face for a moment before bowing his head.

“Grand Master.”

“Mm.”

Ivan nodded charismatically.

Grand Master.

‘You’re the leader of the Circle now.’

This was something that Lukas had asked him to do, and although he'd grumbled and complained at the time, it appeared that he'd kept his word.

Cairo then spoke with a heavy expression.

"The <Dijellik Gauntlets(1)> have been annihilated."

"...even Gomez?"

"That's right."

Ivan pressed his fingers firmly to his temples.

"The army will gain momentum once again."

"What will we do?"

"I will deal with it myself."

Crunch-

Ivan clenched his left fist tightly before adding with an expression of dissatisfaction on his face.

“...is what I’d like to say, but I know you’d never agree to it.”

“Isn’t it time you realised the weight of your position as Grand Master?”

“I envy that woman.”

Cairo let out a faint chuckle at those words.

“Miss Iris is not playing around.”

“I know. She’s the busiest of us all.”

Hoo.

Ivan let out a sigh.

“I guess we can only observe the situation for now.”

“Please be mindful of your position. It’s not like you don’t know how important you are to us now.”

“I know.”

Ivan sighed again, appearing even more tired.

“That’s why I’m so frustrated. Because I can’t make a move even in a situation like this.”

Were they fighting against someone?

‘Who could stand up to the current Circle?’

Was it Elliah, the only surviving Demigod?

No. Lukas knew her personality. She would not repeat the mistakes the Demigod race had before.

Other than her... it might have been the Demons, but the most powerful Demons had all been killed during the battle against Lord.

‘...is it internal?’

That was the worst possible conclusion.

Just as Lukas tried to focus a little more on their conversation...

Paht!

His vision was once again filled with an intense white light, and the scene of the throne room faded. Not only that, but the voices of Ivan and Cairo faded into the distance.

Then, the white light faded, once more revealing the room at the top of the former Korea Headquarters' building.

As the bright light completely disappeared, the first thing Lukas noticed was Arid's hunched figure.

"Cough, cough..."

It took a few moments for Arid to calm down, after which he smiled wryly at Lukas.

"...that's the first time I've ever had such a difficult [Communication]."

It seemed that Arid had reached the limits of their mental power.

This was to be expected. After all, Arid had just accomplished a task that was impossible even for Absolutes.

In all honesty, Lukas was still in disbelief.

[Thank you.]

He said these words with utmost sincerity.

This caused a faint smile to blossom on Arid's lips.

"Did that help you to resolve your troubles a bit?"

[Right. It was very important to me.]

"Heh. That's good."

[Are you okay?]

"What do you mean?"

[That Communication seemed to have put your mind under a lot of pressure.]

After saying that, Lukas looked closely at Arid.

To put it bluntly, their white skin, which normally looked pure and sacred, now resembled that of a corpse. And although the light shining from their eyes was somewhat deceiving, Lukas could tell that they were incredibly fatigued.

“Yeah. I’ll be fine after I get some rest.”

With just those words, Lukas was able to understand just what kind of person Arid was. They were the type of person who found satisfaction in doing good deeds. People like this were usually well respected and carried great authority.

Nevertheless, Lukas didn’t completely believe Arid’s words.

After all, they looked like they could collapse at any moment.

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Arid accepted Lukas’ words and quickly fell into a deep sleep as if they had fainted. This showed that their fatigue had reached the limit.

From the looks of it, it was possible that they’d even sleep for a day or more.

Lukas carefully tucked them into bed before returning to his room.

Then, after glaring exasperatedly at Sedi, who had once again been playing with his body, Lukas sat in front of her.

“Sedi, what do you think the power rankings in this world currently are?”

This was something that had to be discussed in preparation for the future.

When she heard this question, Sedi immediately answered straightforwardly, showing no signs of thinking about it deeply.

“Father, then the Demon King, then Nodiesop, then Letip, and finally me?”

Her answer was just as he guessed.

Lukas shook his head, deciding to wake her from her delusion.

“Not quite.”

“Huh?”

“Your current strength is comparable to that of the Five Dukes’... or lower.”

“...”

Those words caused Sedi's expression to change.

She pouted her lips in displeasure, appearing unconvinced. But after a bit of thought, her expression became a bit strange.

...She then asked in a solemn tone.

"...really?"

"Do you remember the Duke you saw in Africa?"

"Mhm."

"You're currently weaker than he was."

"Mm..."

Sedi's expression became contemplative for a moment. She never thought that he would consider her to be so weak.

Of course, from an objective perspective, Sedi was by no means weak. At the very least, there were few among the humans who could rival her. The only one Lukas could think of at the moment was Kran.

Unfortunately, there were many beings in this world who seemed to push the boundaries of mortals.

And the Five Dukes were among them.

“Not to mention the Absolutes, if you were to face off against one of the Five Dukes, the battle would certainly last quite a while. And if you were to ever die and your soul flowed into the afterlife of this universe, I would be unable to do anything about it.”

“Then what’s the point? It’s not like more time will increase my chances of winning.”

“You will win in the end. I will help you.”

“...”

Those words seemed to have caused Sedi to become speechless. She stared at Lukas with her mouth slightly ajar.

Lukas met her gaze and spoke in a solemn tone.

“Sedi, the one who survives to the end is the winner.”

This wasn’t a concept that Sedi was unfamiliar with. In fact, it was one of the many truths that she’d come to realise back on her home planet.

There, the one who survived till the end was the final victor, the strongest being.

However, at that time, Sedi did not live her life by relying on the protection or help of others.

That's why it wasn't strange when her expression faltered a bit.

"...that would be shameful."

"That might be the case. But isn't it better than dying?"

"..."

"Of course, if you are truly unable to accept it because of your pride. I will respect your decision."

Lukas understood this fact well. After all, there were many things that he would never be able to accept.

There were times when you would be forced to make a choice and it would be better to die. That was why Lukas would never look down on those who chose to die in these types of situations.

Giving up your life in order to maintain your pride.

This might have appeared foolish to many people, but there were sometimes moments when such choices had to be made. Otherwise, while their bodies might survive, their spirits would die.

After thinking about it seriously for a moment, Sedi lifted her head.

“I will try.”

Lukas nodded.

That answer would be enough for now.

\* \* \*

Every Wednesday would be the most exciting day for the members of the Church of Eternal Life.

This was because it was none other than the regular meeting day of the church.

“Only chosen members of the church are allowed to participate in this meeting.”

Min Ha-rin looked around as Kim Min-chul said those words.

...The place had changed a lot.

Once upon a time, this place had been a training ground. It was impossible for her to forget. After all, before she became a hunter, Min Ha-rin spent more time in this place than in her own room.

But now, she could see nothing of its old appearance.

The training ground had been transformed into a large underground auditorium, and the people who now filled it were not hunters but members of the Church of Eternal Life. All of them had dazed and slightly overwhelmed expressions on their faces, almost as if they had been drugged.

“You should be thankful to the Bishop for his generosity. If it wasn’t for his consideration, you wouldn’t have been able to attend.”

“Yeah.”

“Right.”

Kim Min-chul’s expression, which had been serious ever since they got there, finally softened a bit.

“And... you made a wise decision. Joining our church was the best choice you will ever make in your life.”

“...”

There was no reason for her to respond to that, so Min Ha-rin simply nodded slightly. Fortunately, Kim Min-chul did not point out her attitude.

Just in time, the side door to the hall opened and Slei, the Bishop of the Church of Eternal Life, walked in.

“Ohhh...”

“Bishop.”

His appearance alone caused the faces of the believers to become filled with reverence and excitement.

“Hmm.”

Accepting their gazes, Slei walked up to the podium that sat in the center of the auditorium.

Then, all noise in the room disappeared in an instant as dozens of pairs of eyes focused on Slei.

“My dear brothers and sisters, I bring you good news.”

“Good news...?”

“N-, no way...”

Slei smiled warmly at the hope and expectation that became apparent in the gazes of the audience.

“Today, you will lay witness to a miracle firsthand.”

As he said this, the door behind the podium slowly opened and someone walked out.

In an instant, it felt like the underground auditorium had become brighter. No, it wasn't a feeling. It had truly become brighter.

The reason for this was an amazingly beautiful woman.

She had white skin, white eyes, and white hair. Her cold appearance that revealed no emotion perfectly matched her startling appearance.

“Ohhh...”

As soon as this woman appeared, the people in the room chanted in adoration. Some of them even started to sob.

One by one, they all began lowering their heads with reverent expressions.

Kim Min-chul was no exception.

“Ha-rin, be polite.”

At that moment, Min Ha-rin felt that she knew who this woman was.

“That is the Saint of our Church of Eternal Life.”

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“Ahh...”

“Se-, Seung-woo!”

“Mother. Father.”

“Huk, huk...”

Nothing but sobs of joy filled the underground auditorium.

They had been reunited, seeing their most precious people again even though they were deceased. They were face to face with the ones they thought they’d never see again.

[Why have you become so skinny?]

[Have you been eating well?]

[Don't cry. I'm all right. It's very comfortable here.]

Souls.

These whitish beings, who seemed to glow mysteriously, smiled softly as they embraced the members of the Church of Eternal Life. Naturally, there was no physical contact. It was just that they had done the action.

Nevertheless, that was enough. There were happy smiles on the faces of the members of the audience. It was so strong that it seemed to color the entire underground auditorium.

For those who dearly missed their loved ones, the sight unfolding before their eyes would naturally bring a sense of longing. A bright white glow illuminated the stained glass, causing this place to appear like a paradise.

And yet, Min Ha-rin could not truly share in their feelings of bliss.

She couldn't explain it, but as she looked at this sight in front of her, a feeling of anxiety welled up in her heart.

...For some reason, it felt morally wrong.

"Sung-hyun."

Kim Min-chul also joined the group.

In front of him stood the soul of a young man.

It was a face with which Min Ha-rin was all too familiar.

Kim Sung-hyun, Kim Min-chul's only son.

[Father.]

Kim Sung-hyun wrapped his arms around Kim Min-chul with a warm smile.

Min Ha-rin looked away from the touching embrace between father and son. Someone else had caught her eye.

As soon as she turned around, she realised what it was.

Two souls.

As soon as she saw their hazy faces, a strange emotion swelled in her heart.

“...Dad. Mom.”

The ones standing before her were her two parents who had died miserably. She thought she would never see them again, and a reunion was so impossible that she'd never even thought about it.

[Ha-rin.]

[Come here.]

They smiled brightly and spread their arms.

But Min Ha-rin didn't approach them easily.

“Why aren't you going to them?”

Suddenly, a beautiful voice sounded in her ear.

The voice sounded clear like a calm lake, but at the same time, it was cold.

It was the voice of the Saint.

Her cold eyes contained a faint questioning look.

“Your parents are calling for you.”

“...can I ask you something?”

“Go ahead.”

“Are those really my parents?”

The answer didn't come immediately.

Min Ha-rin turned to look at the Saint. This was so she would be able to see if there were any changes to her expression.

But it was Min Ha-rin who was shocked when their eyes met.

There was not a hint of doubt or strangeness in the Saint's cold eyes. She asked in a questioning tone.

“Why are you asking me that?”

“Huh?”

“Those are your parents. If there is anyone who would be able to find something strange about them, it would be you, not a stranger like me. Do you think there is anyone in the world who would know a father better than his own children?”

“...that...”

No. She didn't.

Min Ha-rin had a headache. She was so confused.

She couldn't find any strangeness in her parents' souls.

In fact, this was her second time meeting them.

The first time... was during her private meeting with Sleil. At that time, a white light had radiated from Sleil's body, which then transformed into what appeared to be a stairway to heaven.

Then, her parents appeared, slowly descending the staircase.

She didn't believe it at first. She was doubtful.

It could have been an illusion, hypnosis, or deception.

The senses of a human were not very strong, and there were countless ways to deceive them.

Because of her doubts, Min Ha-rin thought, 'I'm talking to people who look like my parents.'

But within 10 minutes, she realised that they really were her parents.

They knew countless secrets and trivial things that only they, parents, and their children could know. These people were definitely her mother and father.

Their faces, their voices, their personalities, and even their way of speaking.

Everything was just as she remembered.

"Everyone doubts us at first."

As if recalling the distant past, the Saint spoke slowly.

"Bringing back the dead... Right. It certainly is a dubious declaration. But there is one thing that you can trust."

Then, she smiled like a true saint.

"There is not a single lie in my declaration to save you."

\* \* \*

Tap tap tap-

Footsteps rang out in a dark hallway.

Slei, the Bishop of the Church of Eternal Life, walked forward with a pleased expression on his face. Today's meeting had been extremely successful. This was always the case, but Min Ha-rin's presence this time made him feel better than usual.

If she maintained her current attitude, then she would become a true member of the Church of Eternal Life within a week if not sooner.

'This is a great place.'

He really liked this land and the people who lived here.

There was no need to care about the Demons or Demon Beasts, and there were a lot of people who had suffered from some form of psychological trauma. At the same time, there were quite a few outstanding talents who could be made into true believers.

There was no better place for a religion to flourish.

'At this rate, in just one year...'

Perhaps the banner of the Church of Eternal life would be planted throughout this land.

When this thought appeared in his mind, Slei felt his body burn up with excitement. When he arrived at his destination, he paused, forcibly suppressing his emotions.

He was standing in front of a large door.

Right. The person in this room was the most important cog in his great plan.

He didn't have to, but Slei decided to knock on the door politely.

Knock knock.

" ... "

Silence.

That was strange. Normally, he would have received an answer immediately.

Slei knocked on the door again but still didn't receive an answer.

'Surely...'

His heart sank as a thought appeared in his head. Without any hesitation, Slei opened the door and went into the room. Fortunately, it was never locked.

When he entered the room, he looked around with a sharp gaze. Fortunately, the thing he feared hadn't happened.

Because the being he was looking for was currently sleeping on the bed.

"Arid."

He called their name but didn't receive a response.

Slei approached the bed, immediately noticing that Arid's white face was much paler than usual.

His expression gradually lost all emotion, his face becoming an eerie mask.

"Arid, wake up."

It was only then that Arid slowly opened their eyes.

“...Grandfather?”

“You must have been very tired. I knocked many times on the door and you didn’t notice.”

“Th-, that...”

Slei looked at the stuttering Arid before speaking coldly.

“You used your power again.”

“Ah...!”

At those words, Arid hurriedly sat up.

“I-, I’m so-...”

Paak!

Before they could finish speaking, Arid’s head snapped to the side as a reddish-brown bruise formed on their cheek.

Slei spoke in an emotionless voice.

“Turn your head.”

“...yes.”

Enduring the throbbing pain in their cheek, Arid turned their head. Slei then slapped their other cheek in a mechanical motion.

Turn the head, slap the cheek. This process is repeated over and over again.

The pale white skin had become red and started to swell. The inside of their mouth appeared to have been torn as red blood slowly dribbled from their lips.

It was only then when Slei stopped swinging his hand.

“Arid.”

“Yes.”

“You are special.”

“...yes.”

“And special people have special fates.”

As he said this, Slei stroked Arid’s cheek.

“Does it hurt?”

“No.”

“Right. It shouldn’t hurt much. And even if it does, it would only be the pain of stinging cheeks and a torn mouth. There are many people in the world who suffer from even greater pain.”

“...”

“Never forget, Arid. Your power is not for yourself. It is for the weak and suffering.”

“Yes.”

“And Grandfather told you the most effective way to help them, didn’t he?”

“...helping the Church of Eternal Life is God’s will and the shortest way to help all of humanity.”

As if reciting something they'd been forced to memorise countless times, Arid said those words in a mechanical tone.

It was only then that a smile of satisfaction appeared on Sleis face.

"You know it well... Right. Did God say anything after the prophecy?"

"He is still silent."

"I see."

Slei thought for a moment.

Of course, there was no reason to hurry.

"...Arid, this is the last time you use your power to help strange souls. You will save it from now on. There will soon come a time when I will need your power."

With those words, Sleis left the room without waiting for an answer.

Arid looked at his back with empty eyes and muttered in a weak voice.

"Yes, Grandfather."

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“I never thought I’d be sent out to the outskirts.”

The Iron Duke, Ugkas, one of the Five Dukes, muttered softly to himself as he looked around.

A few days ago, he’d received orders directly from Demon King Kasajin to come to this place.

The orders were to capture Kran, one of the Top Three, and bring him back.

‘That guy is probably a hybrid.’

It was an experiment that Gullard had been secretly conducting some time ago to see if it was possible to create the perfect hybrids between Demons and humans.

In truth, Ugkas was surprised that Gullard had been able to create a being like Kran, but he was even more surprised to learn that it was Kran himself who’d kill him.

Of course, this didn’t mean that Kran had killed him on his own.

‘Lukas Trowman.’

A man with the same surname as Azazel.

Ugkas' expression became a bit strange.

He had also been given the name 'Ugkas Strow', but he didn't know much about his surname. Azazel was the only one who knew the story behind their names.

Nevertheless, there was one thing that Ugkas did know.

And that was that Lukas Trowman was one of the Demon King's old friends.

He couldn't help but recall the Demon King's other order.

'Do not fight Lukas.'

This order heavily bruised Ugkas' pride, but he had no choice but to accept it. If Lukas was even half as strong as the Demon King, then he had no chance of winning.

Glug... glug.

At that moment, Ugkas' companion made their presence known with a strange, grotesque sound. His eyes turned to his right.

What he saw there was a monster with an appearance similar to that of a slug.

It was about 5 meters long, and the only opening on its body was an incredibly large mouth, which was filled with large, irregularly shaped teeth.

Hundreds of tentacle-like legs protruded from all over its body, and a strange slime seemed to ooze from its skin.

This being was Sipakna, also known as the Monster Duke.

Ugkas looked at this creature with a hint of appreciation mixed with disgust.

After all, despite its looks, Sipakna was highly intelligent and possessed the ability to speak. Moreover, its strength was only a bit below that of the Five Dukes.

Nevertheless, this guy never revealed his intelligence in front of anyone other than the Demon King. In truth, Ugkas had no idea why the Demon King had ordered it to accompany him.

Ugkas was confident that he could eliminate every living being on this peninsula on his own. Of course, this included the Top Three, Kran, who was somewhere in this land.

Although they had the appearances of an iron statue and a monstrous slug, they were, in the end, Dukes. Naturally, this meant that they had territories of their own, and things that they had to do.

To make matters worse, Gullard had died and Rose was running around on her own, disobeying the Demon King's orders and doing as she pleased. This naturally meant that the amount of work the other Dukes had to do was proportionally larger.

That was why Ugkas felt that it was a waste of manpower to send two Dukes together on a mission like this.

However,

"It is the King's orders. There must certainly be reasons that I cannot understand."

After thinking this, Ugkas lifted his head.

There was no need to search all over this large landmass for Kran. The most efficient way would be to get him to come to them instead. And to do this, Ugkas could think of a very effective method.

He could feel the presence of multiple beings nearby. It was probably a human city.

"That's Busan, isn't it? The place where the Hunter Association Branch is located."

He knew from experience that there were always large numbers of humans living near the branches of the Hunter Association.

About a hundred kilometers from Busan, Ugkas had the idea to slowly walk to the city, killing any humans he happened to meet along the way.

As he walked forward in a leisurely manner, his mouth slowly warped, creating a hideous impression of a smile.

He was curious.

How many humans would he have to kill before Kran made his appearance?

\* \* \*

“Mr. Soul is amazing.”

[What do you mean?]

“My power [Communication] grants me the ability to listen to the voice of God...”

After saying that, Arid realised that they were about to explain their abilities to the soul in front of them.

‘Oops.’

Now that they thought about it, that wasn’t the only strange thing.

At some point, the subject of their conversations had changed.

In general, it was Arid who was the listener whenever they encountered a soul. After all, it was their job to listen to the worries and troubles of the various souls in order to help them shake off their lingering regrets.

But this time was different.

Somehow, before they realised, Arid became the one talking about themselves and the soul in front of them became the listener.

Why did it become like this?

The answer to that question came easily.

'Because it's so comfortable.'

It was strange.

They never thought that they could be so comfortable talking to a soul that they had only met a few days ago.

In fact, until yesterday, they hadn't been entirely sure about this feeling, but now that they were face to face again, it was clearer.

“...in the past, I used to get tired every time I used my power. As I got used to it, that stopped happening. But after I used my power to help you, I felt really tired. I was so sleepy that I almost fainted.”

[...]

“The people Mr. Soul wants to see are far away.”

Lukas simply nodded, and Arid didn't pry any further.

For some reason, they didn't want to have any serious conversations with him. They just wanted to enjoy the comfortable feeling for as long as possible.

Suddenly, Arid's expression became solemn. Slei's words resounded in their mind.

[You seem to have a lot on your mind.]

Arid trembled slightly at those words.

“...ah. You could tell?”

[Right.]

Arid raised their hand to touch their face.

Of course, that alone wasn't enough to tell them what their expression was at that moment.

[What's wrong?]

It was a blunt but friendly voice. It had been a while since they had heard a voice like that.

Arid couldn't find the words to speak and fell silent for a while.

Come to think of it, Mr. Soul had noticed their troubles from the very first day.

'I want to tell him.'

They wanted to say it.

It felt like if they did, then the pressure that weighed on their chest would be relieved a bit.

But Arid simply raised their head and smiled brightly.

"No. It's nothing."

[...]

“Ah. It’s nothing bad. It’s just that I owe Mr. Soul an apology. So, sorry in advance.”

[Apology?]

“Yeah. I don’t think I’ll be able to send Mr. Soul to paradise right now.”

Arid tried to make their voice as bright and carefree as possible.

“Because I think I’ll be busy from now on.”

The soul, Lukas, looked silently at Arid.

## **Season 2 Chapter 115**

That was the end of their conversation that day.

Because Arid’s expression became a bit tired and they expressed the desire to rest a bit more. Accepting this clumsy signal, Lukas quietly returned to his room.

And the next day, when he went back to the room on the top floor of the building, Arid was not there.

Of course, Lukas knew this even before he entered the room.

Nevertheless, the reason he went there was to track Arid's signature with this room as the starting point.

Arid's aura was very unique, and he had memorised it throughout their few encounters. At that point, Lukas was confident that he'd be able to find Arid regardless of where they were in the base.

He followed Arid's signature through the building and stopped as he came upon a thick wall.

Crackle.

When he touched it with his finger, a weak spark appeared.

It seemed that a barrier that prevented the intrusion of souls had been erected in this space behind this wall. This was a type of barrier that could only be created through the use of excellent potions, special tools, and symbols of great power.

'They weren't forced to enter.'

If that was the case, then he would've noticed it.

Nevertheless, he wasn't in a rush. After all, Kim Min-chul had said that they would be meeting the Saint the next day.

After looking at the wall for a while longer, Lukas gradually faded like smoke before he disappeared entirely.

\* \* \*

From birth, they had been a child of light.

This wasn't figurative. It was literal. When Arid was born, his body flashed with a bright light that drove away the darkness in the room.

"Are you ready?"

Arid nodded in response to Sleï's question.

"Yes."

"Then let's get started."

"Understood."

Hup!

Arid drew a deep breath and concentrated all the power in their body. Suddenly, their entire body began to shine with bright white light.

It was a pure and holy light that flitted around like a willful butterfly. Slei looked at this beautiful sight with a face filled with excitement.

“Ahh...! Come here!”

As he shouted, he lifted his hands and beckoned. The light, which was floating around, quickly flew into his body.

“Ah...! Ahh...!”

He could feel it.

The omniscient light, holier than any other power in the world, coursed through his body. A feeling of intense satisfaction that filled Slei's body at that moment was like a drug-induced euphoria.

The feeling of ecstasy was like no other. The pleasure was so strong, it felt like his brain was melting.

Saliva dripped from Slei's open mouth. Unable to contain it, he released a pleasure-filled cry.

“Ahhh...! Ahh...!”

He wasn't the only one who couldn't contain his moans.

A white-haired woman, the Saint who had appeared in the auditorium not so long ago, also received the blessing of light.

After a while, the light that filled the room slowly faded.

“Huff, huff...”

The difference between the one who'd released the light and those who accepted it was stark.

Arid was hunched over, panting heavily as cold sweat covered their entire body. Their face was deathly pale, and it looked like they would collapse at any moment.

On the other hand, Slei and the Saint appeared to be filled with energy. There were even dazed smiles on their lips as they basked in the afterglow of the experience.

“Hahaha!”

Slei let out a burst of contented laughter.

It was done. Now, he could once again clearly hear the voice of God, which had begun to fade.

His eyes turned to Arid.

“Well done, Arid. I have prepared a place for you to rest. Go and take a break there.”

“...yes.”

Arid mumbled softly before staggering out of the room.

The Saint, who watched him leave with cold eyes, opened her mouth.

“That child looks more tired than usual.”

“It seems that they used their power to help evil spirits again.”

“In that regard, they’re just like their mother.”

A strange emotion seemed to flash in the Saint’s eyes for a moment.

“I’ve already warned them. It won’t happen again.”

“Then I’m relieved.”

“...now that our power has been recharged, we will be able to hear the voice of God once again.”

“Will you ask about that Absolute existence again?”

Slei nodded.

“I didn’t have enough power last time, so I was unable to hear the answer clearly... if my predictions are correct, then the Absolute will be a hindrance to our plan.”

The Saint raised an eyebrow slightly as she looked at him.

“You look quite relaxed even while saying that. Do you have a plan?”

“Even if they are an Absolute or whatever, in the end, they are still God’s subordinate.”

With the power of Communication that Slei borrowed from Arid, he was able to receive knowledge that would usually not be available to mortals.

And that was how he knew.

What kind of beings Absolutes were, what their goals were, and what kind of ideals they had.

“They are just the servants of God, like us. With the exception of the ‘four great beings’.”

Slei was not too familiar with the ‘four great beings’, but he at least knew that they were so powerful that they could not take even a single step into a small universe like this one for fear of destroying it. In other words, they were nothing like the Absolute who would be coming to Korea soon.

“While I’m at it, I think it would be good to find out what is happening in this land. I will need you to assist me.”

“Understood.”

At those words, the Saint, no, Slei’s wife, Reika, nodded and held his hand, lending her power to Slei, who had begun to use Communication.

Chtcht.

Waves of light began to swirl around Slei, looking like a huge storm.

Before he knew it, Slei felt his consciousness rise up out of his body. He felt himself going higher into the air, higher than the buildings, higher than the mountains, higher than the clouds, higher than the sky.

Before long, his consciousness had arrived in space.

'Ah...'

And there, he saw God.

The being who held all of the knowledge in the universe.

Well, he couldn't see him, for after all, it wasn't a concept that could be seen in the first place. Slei understood that. Even if he could break free of his mortal constraints, he would not be able to change that.

Without hesitating any further, Slei threw himself into the sea of knowledge.

Brr.

He felt his consciousness shake as a great deal of knowledge rushed directly into his brain. He knew that if he lost focus here, his ego would be swept away and he would become one with the sea of knowledge.

Fortunately, he had Arid's power and a little trick of his own to help him.

'Teach me, God.'

He whispered inwardly.

...

...

Paht.

Slei's consciousness returned to his body. He stumbled heavily but was able to remain on his feet with Reika's support.

"How was it?"

"...there is trouble."

"Are the Absolutes as troublesome as we expected?"

"It's not that. Members of the Five Dukes are on their way here."

"The Five Dukes?"

It was only two words, but it caused Reika's eyes to light up.

"That's good. It would be a great opportunity for us to spread the name of our Church of Eternal Life. With our current power, we should be able to defeat one of the Five Dukes without much issue."

“The Five Dukes are not simple opponents. More importantly, it’s not just one of them.”

“Huh?”

“Two of the Five Dukes are on their way here.”

When she heard that, Reika’s expression became serious.

“Two of them?... Why are they coming here?”

“I think they’re looking for someone... I’m not too sure about the details. In any cause, that’s not the point.”

Slei stroked his chin for a moment.

In a short while, the entirety of Busan, no, the entirety of the Korean Peninsula would fall under the control of their Church of Eternal Life.

It would be a shame for them to back down like this.

“It seems that we will have to change our plans a bit.”

After pondering for a moment, Slei came to a decision.

“Gather all of the believers who were once hunters.”

\* \* \*

Around dawn, before the sun had even risen, Kim Min-chul came to them.

“I’m sorry for coming to you so early in the morning, Mr. Frey.”

He spoke in a whispering tone.

This must have been in consideration of Sedi, who was currently sleeping on the bed without a care in the world. Lukas looked down at her face for a moment before muttering in a similarly low voice,

“It’s fine.”

“...there is an emergency meeting being held by the church today. If you don’t mind, why don’t we go see the Saint now?”

There was no reason for him to refuse. The sooner they met, the better.

When Lukas nodded, Kim Min-chul turned around without any further ado.

“Follow me.”

As he followed Kim Min-chul, Lukas looked around the base. It was before dawn, a time that couldn't even be called the start of the day, but the inside of the base was already bustling with activity.

The members of the Church of Eternal Life moved around busily while whispering amongst themselves.

“Is something wrong?”

“I suppose it would be best to inform you. After all, it would be best if Mr. Frey left immediately after meeting the Saint.”

Kim Min-chul paused for a moment before continuing.

“...Because members of the Five Dukes are on their way here.”

“...the Five Dukes?”

When Lukas mumbled these words in a surprised voice, Kim Min-chul nodded as if he'd expected such a reaction.

“It’s understandable that you don’t immediately believe me. But this was said to us by the Bishop himself, so I am certain that it is not false. He said that they would enter Busan as early as tomorrow morning or as late as tomorrow night.”

“...”

Lukas stopped walking.

Realising this, Kim Min-chul, who was walking ahead of him, also stopped and turned back to look at him.

“Many people will die.”

“Perhaps.”

“But Mr. Kim Min-chul still looks calm.”

“That’s because this is a moment we have been waiting for for a very long time.”

“...what do you mean?”

When Lukas asked that, all he received was a short laugh before Kim Min-chul turned around and resumed walking.

“We should hurry. Time is of the essence, after all.”

Then, saying no more, his steps sped up as he led Lukas to their destination. Finally, after a short while, they stopped in front of a large door.

“We’re here.”

“The Saint is in this room?”

“Yes.”

Lukas turned to look at the door again.

...It was strange. He couldn’t feel Arid’s unique aura anywhere nearby.

That fact alone caused Lukas’ expression to become cold. Kim Min-chul, who was bowing his head at the time, didn’t realise this.

Click.

Lukas entered the room.

Inside the room was a table that was neither too large nor too small and a few chairs. A figure sat in the chair that faced the door.

When she saw him enter, the white-haired woman who sat at the table opened her mouth and spoke with a calm voice.

“Is it you? The hunter who said they wanted to see me?”

“See you?”

At those words, Reika nodded her head.

“That’s right. It’s a pleasure to meet you. I am the Saint of the Church of Eternal Life.”

“...”

Lukas’ mouth twisted slightly at her self-introduction.

**Season 2 Chapter 116**

“Two of the Five Dukes are coming to Busan.”

“ ... ”

Early in the morning, before the sun had even risen, the Bishop of the Church of Eternal Life delivered the news.

‘...I was unable to sleep for most of the night, so it’s like I’m half awake.’

Had she simply heard incorrectly.?

Min Ha-rin, who had a slightly dazed expression, realised that she was simply trying to escape reality, so she went to the sink to splash water on her face, hoping it would help her wake up.

Splash.

When the cold water hit her face, she felt her mind clear up a bit.

The Five Dukes.

She was well aware of the weight of those words.

After all, she was one of the few hunters who had personally witnessed the power of a Demon Duke. A Duke was a walking disaster. They were comparable to disasters like typhoons, earthquakes, or tsunamis.

The Five Dukes was said to be a level above normal Dukes, and yet, not one but two of them were on their way?

When faced with such a crisis, it would be normal to feel fearful and contemplate running away, but she didn't think about that.

After all, it was none other than Lukas who had accompanied her there. Min Ha-rin had learned that her Master had already slain one of the Five Dukes. Surprisingly, Lukas had been able to accomplish a task that no one could even imagine without a single scratch.

'Besides... Sedi is also really strong.'

Although she would never show it in front of her, Min Ha-rin acknowledged Sedi's transcendent strength.

This was only natural. She'd personally seen her play around with the veteran hunters back in America.

It also occurred to that she might have been an old monster who was many times older than her appearance. Even though she looked like a child and also acted like one sometimes, her strength made her suspicious.

There was also the Saint, the Bishop of the Church of Eternal Life, and all of the believers who used to be hunters on standby. The two Dukes would certainly be fearsome, but she felt that it would be possible to eliminate them.

However, there was something else that made Min Ha-rin feel uneasy.

'I don't know what the hell I want to do.'

Creak-

She turned off the faucet.

Min Ha-rin looked at herself in the mirror. She could see the water dripping down her face, the dark bags under her eyes, her dry lips, and her flaky skin.

It was just a haggard face in general. But she couldn't help it. She had been having trouble sleeping.

The Church of Eternal Life.

The organisation that had completely devoured the Korea Branch of the Hunter Association down to the bones.

The ones who had let her meet her parents' souls.

The ones who were training her younger siblings without her knowledge.

She didn't know how she felt about them. Her mind was a tangled mess.

And yet, before she could even begin to organise her thoughts, the Five Dukes had made an appearance.

“Huu.”

Min Ha-rin shook her head with a sigh.

This wasn't the time to dwell on her troubles. A believer had just delivered some news to her.

There would be an emergency meeting in the morning and she was to be a participant.

She had been puzzled at first but soon nodded her head in understanding when she learned that it was the believers who used to be hunters that were called.

Perhaps they were thinking of exchanging opinions on how they should deal with the imminent arrival of the two Dukes as hunters were professionals when it came to facing Demons.

The meeting place was the underground auditorium that she'd gone to before. It seemed that space was used for multiple purposes.

When Min Ha-rin stepped into the auditorium, there were already many people there.

She also saw a few familiar faces.

No. It wasn't a few.

'They said that they would only be gathering the hunters.'

It took a while for her to realise because their clothing was different from what she remembered, but most of the believers there were Korean hunters.

It was the first time in many years that she was seeing some of the people here.

In a normal situation, she would have happily approached them, held their hands, and reminisced.

But it was hard now.

This was because the entire underground auditorium was filled with a strangely heated atmosphere.

It felt like they were all excited, and they couldn't contain their excitement.

...No. It wasn't just a feeling. They were genuinely excited.

'But why?'

The approach of two of the Five Dukes was not something she'd expected to feel excited about. Min Ha-rin hesitated for a moment before approaching someone she knew.

"Hello."

"Huh?"

"Oh, it's Ha-rin. Long time no see."

They smiled and greeted her.

Min Ha-rin was slightly surprised. After all, the reunion was less heartfelt than she expected.

This wasn't what she expected from a reunion after several years. It felt like they were meeting after only separating just yesterday.

It wasn't just them.

Min Ha-rin also treated them much more coldly than usual. Probably because of her experience with Kim Min-chul.

"Did you also join the church?"

“Haha. That’s right. Ha-rin, you should too. I’m sure that you’d be very helpful to the Bishop, the Saint, and the entire Church of Eternal Life.”

The person she was talking to was someone Min Ha-rin had known to be a strict atheist.

“...did you hear that members of the Five Dukes are on their way?”

“What a strange thing to say.”

“Don’t you know that that’s why we’re all gathered here?”

They all spoke as if it was an insignificant issue.

Looking at their nonchalance, Min Ha-rin could only think of one conclusion.

“Have you guys heard of countermeasures against them?”

“...”

The others didn’t answer this question. Instead, they simply exchanged glances with strange smiles on their lips.

At that moment, the door to the hall opened and Bishop Slei walked out.

Min Ha-rin couldn't help but feel that the brilliance which surrounded his body had become a bit brighter. He also had a strange smile on his lips, similar to the other believers'. What was strange was that he now carried a staff in his hand.

Slei walked up to a table that had been placed in the center of the room. Despite the emergency situation, he was exceptionally calm. Then, he took a relaxed gaze at the audience.

When his eyes met Min Ha-rin's, they curved up slightly.

Min Ha-rin didn't have any ill will towards this old man. She also didn't think that the doctrine he preached was bad either.

To be with your loved ones forever. Wasn't that something every human longed for?

But at that moment, when their eyes met, Min Ha-rin had an extreme feeling of discomfort and unconsciously shuddered. It felt as though a bug had just crawled down her spine.

"It looks like everyone is here. Hmm. First of all, I'd like to say a brief word of thanks to all of you for gathering here so early in the morning. Now then, let's get down to business."

Tak.

Slei tapped his staff against the floor. The sound wasn't very loud, but it immediately caused the atmosphere of the room to shift.

“Two of the Five Dukes are coming here.”

He slowly looked around before continuing.

“I don’t know what their goal is. But they are destroying every city in their path. Many people have already died by their hands. And it’s unlikely that their destructive attitude will change when they arrive at Busan.”

Min Ha-rin focused on Sleï’s voice. She felt that she would be able to hear it now.

Just why Sleï and the other believers of the Church of Eternal Life were so relaxed.

“I need you all to stop them.”

“...”

She thought that Sleï would mention some kind of plan afterward, but he didn’t say anything more, and instead smiled warmly.

This couldn’t be it. Min Ha-rin tried to suppress the creeping anxiety that welled up in her heart at that moment.

If.

If they were to face the two Dukes like this without any countermeasures in place, it would be no different from suicide.

It was at that moment.

“Yes, sir!”

“Eternal Life with the ones you love!”

“Long live the Church of Eternal Life!”

Shouts erupted one after the other. The temperature in the room seemed to rise several degrees in an instant. This was because of the heat that was erupting from the believers’ bodies.

This sight made Min Ha-rin speechless.

She looked around. At the strange expressions of the believers as they expressed their excitement...

It gave her goosebumps.

It was only then when she realised where the heat came from.

Distorted faith. Fanatic and misguided beliefs burned in their eyes like flames.

'This isn't...'

Just as Min Ha-rin bit her lip and decided to say something...

"Isn't that just ordering them to die?"

The door suddenly opened, and someone walked in.

It was the person Min Ha-rin had been looking for since she'd arrived at the branch headquarters.

Slei smirked slightly.

"Branch President Jung Ho-min."

"Bishop Slei, you called for all hunters, so why didn't you call for me too?"

### **Season 2 Chapter 117**

A middle-aged man stood in the doorway of the auditorium with a harsh expression on his face.

It was Jung Ho-min, the current President of the Korea Branch of the Hunter Association.

Nevertheless, it took Min Ha-rin a few moments to recognise him. This was because his appearance was very different from the last time she saw him.

Before, he always had a neat, sharp appearance and a relaxed expression. Even though they were of different genders, she'd always felt that she'd like to be like him when she grew up.

But he had changed greatly.

His eyes were bloodshot, and a beard spread messily over his face. Compared to his powerful and confident appearance of the past, he now looked like a small, powerless old man.

"I don't remember inviting you in."

"This is the Korea Branch Headquarters, and I am the Branch President. There is no place here that I cannot enter."

"It seems you're still trapped in your delusions of the past. Please try to accept it. This place is no longer the Korea Branch of the Hunter Association. It is the Church of Eternal Life."

"Bullshit."

Crunch.

Jung Ho-min grit his teeth as he looked around fiercely.

“Everyone, snap out of it! How long will you allow yourselves to be deluded by this madman’s words?”

“...”

His voice cracked with desperation.

However, the reactions he received from those around him were cold. It was only then Min Ha-rin understood that the people around her were no longer hunters of the Korea Branch. Instead, they were believers of the Church of Eternal Life.

Unfortunately, Jung Ho-min, who used to be in charge of this, could not see that. Or maybe he just couldn’t accept it.

“Do you all think it’s right to call upon the dead over and over and make them come back to this world...?! Don’t any of you find it strange?”

“Take him away.”

Slei said these words in a blunt tone.

At those words, some of the believers in the hall immediately stepped forward and grabbed his arms.

“Let go of me!”

Jung Ho-min resisted as much as he could, but it was to no avail. The strong Branch President that Min Ha-rin remembered was nowhere to be seen. Nevertheless, he refused to give up easily and flailed wildly.

The expression of one of the believers holding him became filled with annoyance. They clenched their fist before punching him in the stomach.

“Huk...”

Jung Ho-min seemed to have not expected the sudden attack. His eyes rolled up in his head as he slumped in his captors’ arms.

The moment she saw that Min Ha-rin stopped hesitating.

Taht.

With a step, she appeared in front of them. Then, Min Ha-rin easily subdued the two believers who were holding Jung Ho-min up by his arms.

She hit one in the back of the head and the other in the stomach.

“...!”

Both of them collapsed without being able to retaliate.

Her attacks had been clean without any openings. Min Ha-rin couldn't help but feel that it was fortunate she hadn't neglected her physical training after becoming a Wizard. She also felt grateful for the practical experience her spars with Vincent had given her.

“Ha-, Ha-rin?”

Jung Ho-min called out in a slightly dazed voice.

Min Ha-rin didn't respond. Her skin tingled because of the sharp gazes from the crowd of believers. A heavy silence filled the room.

“What are you doing?”

It was Sleii who spoke for them.

Nevertheless, Min Ha-rin ignored him, her gaze focused on the believers staring at her.

“The Demon Dukes are powerful. Even if all of you were to fight, you would die without being able to touch even a single hair. Are you going to obey those orders?”

“Of course we will.”

“Why?”

“Didn’t you hear the doctrine of our Church of Eternal Life, too?”

Min Ha-rin frowned at those words.

“Eternal Life with the ones you love.”

“The body is a cage, and the soul is the source. It is only by dying that we can be freed and be qualified to go to paradise.”

“Who told you that?”

“The Bishop. And our dead loved ones.”

“...that’s not possible. If they were really your family, they wouldn’t wish for your death.”

Min Ha-rin chuckled derisively.

“Bishop Slei, are you also going to fight with them?”

She no longer used honorifics. Because she didn't feel the need to anymore. Slei didn't seem to care about Min Ha-rin's change of tone.

“I still have work to do in this land. So I will need to delay my trip to paradise a little while longer.”

The words were said decisively.

Min Ha-rin understood then.

Right, it seemed that her hunch at the beginning was correct.

At first, she thought that Slei knew just how powerful Lukas and Sedi were, and he hoped to rely on them to deal with the approaching Five Dukes...

After all, he seemed to know about Lukas during their first meeting.

But that wasn't the case.

This old man in front of her was ordering these people to commit suicide.

“As I expected, you really are a cult leader.”

“How dare you say that about the Bishop...?!”

“How can you say that after personally witnessing the miracles?”

Those who had greeted Min Ha-rin with smiles at the beginning were now staring at her with gazes filled with killing intent. Those gazes seemed to bring her back to her senses.

It was truly strange.

She'd acted purely out of anger.

Anger at the fact that Jung Ho-min, the reliable and powerful Branch President whom she'd looked up to in the past, was being assaulted while he was in a weakened state. At that time, she'd acted without thinking about the future consequences.

Right. Without thinking about the future. Without thinking about anything at all.

Her mind had been strangely clear at that moment.

The fog that had filled her head ever since she'd returned seemed to have cleared up in an instant.

“Haha.”

Min Ha-rin let out a clear, refreshed laugh.

She was still tired, she still felt unwell, and this situation was the worst, but her mind was extremely clear.

She could tell why. It was simple.

She was finally doing what she thought was right. Therefore, all of her reluctance and hesitation disappeared.

At that moment, Min Ha-rin couldn't help but feel that she should've done this sooner.

"...how unfortunate. I thought you could become a good believer. But I suppose that is impossible now. So what will you do now? Do you intend to fight all of us on your own? Or do you believe that your Master, who isn't here, will be able to save you?"

When Min Ha-rin didn't respond, Slei smiled.

"Absolute. Although the title is grand, they aren't anything special. Your Master won't be able to come here."

By now, he should have been face to face with the Saint, Reika.

Even if he noticed what was happening and tried to come here, Reika would stop him. Slei didn't think that he would be able to force his way past her. Unlike himself, who focused on Communication, Reika's power was purely focused on combat.

That was why Slei could speak with such confidence.

Unfortunately, those words offended a certain former Absolute.

"You're really good at spouting bullshit, old man."

At that moment, a clear voice rang out in the auditorium.

Those rude words caused all of the believers in the auditorium to turn around with displeased expressions. But their expressions all became slightly strange when they saw the owner of the voice.

It was a young, black-haired girl who seemed exceptionally small at that moment.

"What's going on? Who is this brat?"

"Right, she's not a believer. How did you get in here, kid?"

"Shut up."

Crunch.

“Kuk!”

“Urk!”

The jaws of the two people who spoke were broken in an instant. They screamed in pain and collapsed on the spot.

“Huh?”

“Wh-, what’s going on?”

An uproar filled the room as the believers all stared in disbelief.

Slei’s expression hardened.

This was because even he had also been unable to see what just happened.

“Ah...!”

Among those in the room, Min Ha-rin was the only one who seemed happy at the girl’s appearance.

With a sadistic smile on her face, Sedi's gaze caught Sleis's.

"Who isn't anything special?"

### **Season 2 Chapter 118**

"Would you like some tea?"

"No thanks."

Reika nodded before pouring some tea for herself.

When the cup was about half full, Lukas opened his mouth.

"You created a very interesting religion."

"..."

At those words, the tea stopped flowing into the cup.

"That's quite rude, isn't it? We didn't create this religious organisation for fun. How could you call it 'interesting'?"

After saying those words with a smile, she resumed pouring her tea. This would normally give someone a gracious and polite impression of her, but it only filled Lukas, who could see her true nature, with disgust.

His lips twisted subconsciously.

“Well. I think ‘funny’ would be a more appropriate expression.”

“...”

It was only then when the smile disappeared from Reika’s lips. With a cold glint in her eyes, she opened her mouth.

“You’re intentionally being rude. What do you know about our Church of Eternal Life?”

“I’m not interested in finding out.”

Lukas said those words in a cold voice, but Reika didn’t panic.

If the man in front of her was who she thought he was, then this attitude was to be expected.

“However, by imitating souls, you are disrespecting the dead. In my opinion, it is an act that is a lot worse than spitting on a grave or punching a corpse.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“At your level, it is impossible for you to interact with the afterlife. The power of Communication is great, but its essence is in the name ‘Communication’. Even at its best, it would be impossible for you to call souls from the afterlife and have them descend upon the mortal world once again. However, you make it a practice to show your believers their dead loved ones... And there is only one way that is possible.”

“...”

“You copied the memories and personalities of the dead.”

Reika was completely expressionless at that moment. Coupled with her unrealistic appearance, this caused her to look like a doll.

She slowly picked up the teacup in front of her, intending to take a sip.

But Lukas took this opportunity to speak in a low voice.

“Put your hand down. I’m talking.”

“...”

Reika's movements froze at those words. This wasn't because she had listened to his words. Instead, it was as though Lukas' words were a command that she had no choice but to follow. As though the language itself had power.

Chtcht-

A white glow flickered in his eyes like an electric current.

This light reminded her of Arid's eyes, but it seemed to contain more mysterious and dangerous energy.

'What did he do... to me...?'

Looking at Reika, who was gritting her teeth as she tried to move, Lukas continued.

"Copying personalities and memories, things necessary to imitate a soul, wouldn't be hard with the power of [Communication]. That is already an absurd action in the first place, but you weren't satisfied with that. Instead, you looked for mediums to contain the imitation souls..."

Crack-

The teacup in her hand cracked and shattered, spilling hot tea all over Reika's hand, as well as the table.

She wanted to scream at the sudden heat, but Lukas wouldn't even let her do that.

“So you turned your sights on the wandering souls who had yet to find peace.”

They overwrote the personalities of those wandering souls and imprinted their imitations instead.

That was the true reason why Lukas was so angry.

“You captured them and forcefully overlaid your copies onto them. As they were weak, they had no way to resist you. Those confused wandering souls could only helplessly lose their consciousness. It can’t even be called death.”

It was something far more terrible than that.

It was then.

Bang!

A bright flash of light exploded around Reika’s body. The table was sent flying, and the entire room began to vibrate loudly.

With a cold expression on her face, she had managed to break free from Lukas’ restraints.

“Do you know why the wandering souls are called wandering souls? It’s because they are unable to let go of their lingering feelings, which causes them to be unable to ascend to paradise.”

That was why Reika didn't feel guilty.

Because she did the right thing.

No. Rather...

"They should be grateful that we give them new identities. Thanks to the overlaying personality, they can feel happiness and satisfaction that they would never be able to experience while wandering the world."

Feel happiness and satisfaction.

Those words weren't wrong.

Because of the overlaying personalities, they were able to feel the happiness of reuniting with their families. But it was only false happiness.

They were just being deceived. In truth, they didn't have any relationship with the people they met. Nevertheless, the wandering souls felt happiness as though they had been reunited with their real family. And they gratefully bowed their heads to the Church of Eternal Life, who gave them the opportunity.

They didn't know that those were not their true feelings. That their existence in itself was a lie.

They didn't know that they had been cut off from an important cycle.

From life to death. Afterward, they would pass through the afterlife before finally being reincarnated.

This was something that every human was entitled to.

And that was why Lukas hated them.

Regardless of whether they had been good or bad, one should never forget the path that one walked.

The righteous had the right to feel pleased with their right actions.

The wrongdoers had the right to repent and atone for their wrongdoings.

And yet, those rights were being stripped away by the humans in front of him. In order to pursue their own goals, they had done something that should never be done.

They had erased human lives.

Boom!

A large explosion sounded beneath them. It sounded like it came from underground. The entire building shook as if there was an earthquake.

A smile appeared on Reika's lips.

"It seems there is a bit of a commotion downstairs."

"..."

"I know what you are. Absolute."

"You know who I am?"

"Huhu, did you think I wouldn't know?"

Reika chuckled. After all, she was proud that there were things this cosmic being in front of her didn't know.

Right. It was as Sleis said.

Unlike their seemingly grand name, they were nothing more than servants of God who were tasked with maintaining balance and harmony.

"Absolutes. The only beings who can travel between the universes that are more numerous than the stars in the sky... Huhu! That is a great truth that most mortals are unable to know, but we can. For we can communicate with God. No secrets can escape our eyes."

Lukas raised an eyebrow.

“It’s not your power. It is something you stole from that child.”

He knew even that?

But even when that secret was revealed, Reika retained her proud attitude.

“Arid. That is too much power for a child. Instead, meeting us was that child’s great fortune. Because we know the most effective way to make use of that gift!”

“You’re mistaken. That child doesn’t use his power recklessly because he knows just how dangerous his abilities are. But maybe you’re right. Maybe you do know how to use it more effectively.”

At that moment, the pleased expression on Reika’s face disappeared.

“After all, with your wisdom, you used most of your power to keep your young appearance instead of the way it was intended.”

“...what the hell are you...”

“Now, I get it. You seem to know quite a bit about Absolutes, but your knowledge is still lacking. You’re not actually communicating with God. You’re just one-sidedly asking for information from a void space somewhere in the universe.”

In other words, they were communicating with something known as the Akashic Records.

It was a Great Library of semi-transcendent information that recorded all information in the universe.

Of course, Lukas knew about it.

Unfortunately, despite its reputation, not everything was recorded in that library of information.

Rather than grand names like the Akashic Records or Great Library, Absolutes preferred to call it ‘God’s Diary’.

So what they thought was the voice of God was simply, actually just God’s diary.

Of course, that child, Arid, would eventually be able to communicate directly with God. But at his current level, that was still impossible.

Naturally, there was no way Slei and Reika would be able to do something that even the true owner of the power of Communication couldn’t.

That was why Lukas couldn’t help but wonder why they were so proud.

Perhaps they had managed to learn about Absolutes from the answer to one of their questions.

Perhaps.

They had heard about Lukas.

That he was the only Absolute who was friendly to humans.

After all, that was the only thing that could explain their strange confidence.

Lukas felt pure anger at that moment.

Everything he'd learned made him feel disgusted and nauseous.

And yet, there was one thing that made him feel the worst.

That was the fact that this human in front of him didn't seem to understand what she'd done wrong.

"Do you think it's impressive that you managed to obtain fragmented information about my identity, origins, or goals...? It's not. All you need to know is that right now, I am truly disgusted by you."

Suddenly, Reika found it hard to breathe.

And indescribable tightness seemed to fill her chest at that moment.

“Even the dumbest of wild beasts know fear. At least they know to be wary of predators. How about you?”

Lukas’ voice was filled with rage.

“Are your senses as good as a beast’s?”

### **Season 2 Chapter 119**

Bang!

With a loud sound, the body of one of the believers collided heavily with the wall. They collapsed to the ground, covered in blood.

Min Ha-rin cried out in surprise.

“Did you kill him?”

“I don’t know. I don’t care.”

“Don’t do that. These people were led astray.”

“Ha. Ignorance is a sin in itself. Do you think these people are innocent?”

Min Ha-rin had no comeback for that harsh comment.

Sedi turned to her and rolled her eyes.

“You’re annoying. Get out.”

“I want to stay here.”

As she said that, Min Ha-rin looked around the room.

“I’ve known everyone here since I was a child.”

“So what? You want to see if I kill them or not?”

“...I want to convince you not to.”

“I don’t have time for that.”

“No, you do. You just have to deal with Bishop Sleis first.”

Sedi frowned at that.

“Are you saying that you’re going to take on all of these people on your own while I deal with the old man?”

When Min Ha-rin nodded, she let out a cold snort.

“Your self-awareness sucks. You’re nowhere near strong enough to do something like that.”

Although Sedi said this in a blunt tone, it was the truth.

Min Ha-rin could certainly be considered strong. It wouldn’t be a problem even if she had to face dozens of opponents at the same time. But the dozens of believers in this room were all former hunters.

More importantly, Min Ha-rin didn’t seem to want to kill them or even injure them too badly. It was clear that she wanted to simply subdue them at most.

And to fight with such a mindset was no different from suicide.

Nevertheless...

“I would like to try anyway.”

Sedi turned to look at Min Ha-rin, a sneer spreading across her lips.

“Do you think that I’ll save you?”

“No. I know that you don’t care if I die or not.”

Min Ha-rin knew this to be true. Sedi wouldn’t make a move even if she was on the verge of death.

Of course, this wasn’t because of some petty reason like the childish squabbles between them.

Instead, it was simply because Sedi didn’t agree with Lukas’ approach.

Lukas’ opponents, Nodiesop, Letip, and the Demon King, were all extremely strong. None of them were easy to handle.

And frankly speaking, when the time came to finally deal with them, Min Ha-rin would not be able to help in any way. Weaklings like her were not even worth mentioning.

That was why she couldn’t understand Lukas’ reason for taking these weak humans as his disciples. Even if they had potential, it would take much too long for them to be useful.

In her opinion, the picture that Lukas was painting was far too large.

'If this brat dies while doing what she wants, maybe Father will change his mind.'

After having this thought, Sedi smiled brightly at Min Ha-rin.

"Try your best!"

Then, she walked towards Slei without waiting for a response. Without knowing her objective, the believers reached out to stop her again.

Annoyed, Sedi swung her little fists at them, immediately putting them in a near-death state. But even after seeing this, the believers didn't stop rushing towards her until Slei stopped them.

"Stop."

Immediately after she said those words, the believers stopped moving and simply stared at Sedi. Thanks to that, she was able to leisurely walk up and stand in front of Slei.

Sedi looked up at him, confusion clear in her eyes.

"I don't understand how a being as weak as you knows about Absolutes. It shouldn't be accessible to you."

“Aren’t you the same? You’re not an Absolute, but you know about them. Was it that man who told you?”

“Don’t put me on the same level as you.”

Sedi growled those words in a fierce tone, the aura that began to radiate from her body causing Sleis palms to be covered in sweat.

‘...she certainly is strong.’

She looked like a cute little girl, but she was more powerful than any human he’d ever seen.

Min Ha-rin was also standing behind her.

Against this many believers, even a veteran hunter would have to struggle, and yet, she made it look easy.

Slei didn’t know exactly where this powerful person came from, but he decided to try and avert the crisis first.

“I would like to propose something.”

“If you don’t spout any bullshit about your church or anything like that, I’ll listen to what you have to say.”

“There’s no reason for you to be so hostile to me. As long as you cooperate with me, I can help you reunite with those you lost.”

“...old fart.”

For a moment, Slei didn’t realise those insulting words were directed at him.

Of course, he knew that there was no other person in this room to whom it could be used to refer. After all, objectively speaking, he was also aware of the fact that he was quite ugly and old.

Nevertheless, he took some time to react because no one had ever dared to say such rude words to his face.

“Huhu.”

Slei chuckled.

He was naturally displeased. After all, he had never felt so disrespected in all his life.

Nevertheless, the reason he laughed was because he couldn’t show that displeasure in the presence of the believers. Especially to a being with a child-like appearance.

“I must say. I hate trash like you. If this was in the past, I would have killed you the moment you opened your mouth.”

“That’s a rather radical statement...”

“But my Father is different. I’m not sure why, but he always hesitates when it comes to killing trash like you. Maybe I will be the same eventually...”

Shortly after her voice trailed off, Sedi’s figure disappeared.

Just as Slei blinked in surprise.

Paak!

He felt an intense pain in his stomach. It was almost as if his abdomen had been pierced through. Unable to withstand the force of the blow, his body flew through the air before crashing into a wall.

“Hup!”

Sedi caught the staff that Slei dropped before inspecting it.

“Wow.”

She didn't know what material it was made from, but it was surprisingly durable. More importantly, the length was just right. Of course, it could never compare to her soul weapon, but it would do nicely. For now, at least.

"Not bad."

Whoosh. Whoosh.

Sedi swung the staff a few times before taking a stance.

The tip of the staff was pointed towards Slei, who was slowly rising from a cloud of dust. He spat out a mouthful of blood as he stared at her with bloodshot eyes.

Boom!

Then, the sound of a huge explosion came from above them.

Sedi glanced upwards.

"Ah... Forget what I just said."

Then, a bright smile stretched across her face.

“It seems that you guys have managed to piss my Father off somehow. So I’d advise you to start praying. Pray that his anger will have subsided a little by the time he gets here.”

## **Season 2 Chapter 120**

The Church of Eternal Life was an emerging religion that was gradually gaining prominence throughout the world.

In fact, it was the most prominent religion in Australia, where it devoted most of its efforts and where it remained the longest. The same could be said for Europe, where it was slowly expanding its influence.

After ‘conquering’ these two regions, the Church of Eternal Life set its sights on Asia.

In fact, it didn’t have much of a choice. No matter how ambitious Sleil was, he knew that it would only be crazy to set his sights on North America at that point.

Asia.

In particular, Sleil focused on the Korean Peninsula.

He felt that it would be easy to attract believers there because it had suffered great damage from the Demons in the past and it was neglected by the Hunter Association. This meant that it would serve as the perfect foothold to support their expansion into China, which was considered the center of Asia.

And his expectations were on point.

Most of the citizens of Korea were unable to let go of their feelings of loss, which allowed Sleil to capture their hearts by showing them miracles.

Everything had been going according to plan.

Paak!

Sleil rolled across the ground once again. He rolled a few times before finally springing to his feet.

He didn't even see Sedi.

Puk.

"U-. urk..."

All he felt was the pain in his side before he was sent flying through the air once again. His body crashed into a wall like a meteor.

The walls of the auditorium, which had once been a training ground for hunters and could withstand the strikes of multiple missiles, were now covered in cracks because of the continuous impacts.

“Huk...”

Slei coughed up a mouthful of blood, his mind racing.

She was strong.

She was too strong.

‘She’s not an Absolute or a Demon... So how...?’

This question lingered in his mind.

At the same time, he was filled with regrets.

If the three Vice Bishops who led each region... No, if even two of them had been there, they would have been able to deal with the monstrous little bitch.

Taht.

Sedi didn’t give Slei the chance to think. Once again, she kicked off from the ground and quickly closed the distance between them.

However, this time, Slei was able to react in time. He barely raised his right hand, blocking the blow from his staff, which was now in Sedi's hands.

Crack!

But just because he'd managed to successfully block the attack didn't mean he had been able to negate the damage.

The bones of his right hand were smashed to bits as soon as they came into contact with the staff.

Nevertheless, Slei used his building rage to suppress his pain as he grabbed the staff. His eyes were filled with venom.

"This is mine!"

"Fuck you."

As she muttered in a cynical tone, Sedi stretched out her left hand. Her dainty white hand formed the shape of a blade as it slid across Slei's forearm.

Shuk-

The sound that emerged was not something a hand should've been able to make. Slei looked down at his arm with a blank expression.

There, he saw a thin red line, from which blood slowly began to drip. Then, Slei's forearm slid smoothly like a perfectly sliced cake.

"Kuaak...!"

Slei let out a scream of pain before a flash of bright light exploded from his body.

Sedi frowned slightly. She still hadn't figured out what exactly this power was yet. Of course, she didn't think that it was particularly threatening, but one could never be certain.

She'd seen people who were on the brink of death ignore everything and drag their murderers down with them many times.

'He's caught like a rat anyway.'

There was no reason for her to gamble with her life. With a sly smirk on her face, Sedi widened the distance between them.

"Cough, cough..."

Slei coughed heavily, and his body shook.

Before this, he had always done his best to maintain a neat appearance. His bleached white hair was always combed neatly without even a single errant strand, his expression had always been calm and gentle, and his voice was always warm and soothing.

But now, that appearance was nowhere to be seen.

His hair was disheveled, his face was distorted like a devil, and his eyes were filled with sheer hatred.

Sedi smiled brightly at him for a moment before her eyes were drawn to the staff in her hands. There, she saw Sleis' detached right hand, still holding on firmly.

"Hmph."

She made an expression of disgust before shaking her hand slightly, causing the disgusting hand to fall to the ground with a thud.

Sleis cried out with a broken voice.

"Do you know what you're doing?!"

"Getting rid of an old fart who should have died long ago."

"Our Church of Eternal Life has over a million followers!"

“Why would I care about that?”

Sedi raised an eyebrow.

She hoped that this old man wouldn't suddenly say bullshit like 'if you kill me, then they will all become your enemies'.

“Killing me means destroying all of their hopes! Are you prepared for that? Are you prepared to be the one who steals away their opportunities to reunite with their loved ones and feel happiness once again?!”

Fortunately for Sleij, he didn't say what Sedi expected, but that didn't change anything.

She became even more annoyed.

As if to vent her anger, Sedi stomped on the severed right hand in front of her.

Strangely, there was a weak snap as though she had stomped on an old tree branch instead of a hand.

Sleij quivered as if he could feel his hand being trampled.

“Prepared? Always. I'm always prepared to kill trash who cry out like they're the most pitiful beings in the world.”

“What did you...”

“You heard me. I don’t care about garbage that deserves to be culled.”

This was a truth that Sedi learned in her home world.

Laws and Justice? Those were simply delusions of the weak.

“It’s the rule of nature for the weak to lose everything and be devoured. If they don’t like it, then they simply have to become strong.”

After saying that, Sedi smiled.

It was only at that moment when Slei finally realised.

Despite her doll-like appearance, this being in front of him was no little girl. Instead, she was a monster in human form who wore the mask of a little girl.

“Anyone who willingly listens to your nonsense is an idiot. They are weak and pathetic for willingly following and relying on a fool like you. A fool who has delusions of grandeur but no real power to back it up.”

Slei shouted in a hoarse voice.

“I, I can’t believe you’d say that about people who lost their families and were filled with despair... Y-, you’re a demonic beast.”

“...in the past, I might have taken that as a compliment.”

Sedi muttered those words and closed her eyes.

Right. In the old days, she used to like having her eyes closed like this. Since all she could see was darkness, she always felt that closing her eyes allowed her to connect with him a little more.

But not anymore.

Sedi Glaston was no longer the child of the Black Horned Demon King.

“...now, I feel kinda bad.”

After saying that, Sedi pointed her staff towards Sleii.

It seemed that she no longer had any intentions of keeping this old man alive.

If nothing had happened at that moment, the tip of her staff would have probably pierced the old man’s throat.

“Huh?”

However, Sedi suddenly raised her eyes to look at the ceiling.

She could feel two sources of demonic energy approaching at high speeds. Lukas could probably sense them as well.

“...the Five Dukes?”

It could only be them.

Their demonic energy was similar to the Duke's, whom she'd encountered back in Africa.

However, it was strange.

Sedi also knew that the Demon Dukes would only arrive in Busan the next morning if they were to continue at their original pace.

‘No.’

It wasn't that strange.

In the first place, since they had only been a day away, it was possible that they had grown tired of destroying the cities or killing the humans and decided to increase their speed.

“...no. Wait.”

In addition to the Demon Dukes, she also sensed another energy signature.

For the first time in a very long while, Sedi’s expression hardened.