

Great Mage 431

Season 2 Chapter 131

“Kuh, ah, ack...”

Ugkas was still holding his face while groaning in pain.

Nevertheless, Kran didn't think he would remain in that condition for very long.

This meant that he would have to finish this as soon as possible. Even at the moment, Ugkas' demonic energy was slowly regaining strength.

Kran slowly lifted his gun. As he did, his arm muscles began to tremble violently. It was as if this gun, which was only about as large as a dumbbell, weighed as much as a mountain.

Fortunately, he didn't have to worry about aiming. After all, Ugkas was very close to him, so it would be impossible for him to miss his shot.

Nevertheless, for courtesy's sake, he did his best to aim for the heart.

—And pulled the trigger.

Boom!

The sound wasn't something an old-fashioned revolver should have been able to make.

Unable to withstand the force of the explosion, the revolver broke apart as a large black bullet shot out, cutting through the scattered pieces.

Puk—

And when it reached Ugkas, it made a dull sound.

It was a sound that one would have easily ignored.

“...”

Ugkas was no longer groaning in agony. Instead, he slowly looked down at his chest in disbelief.

A big hole.

In the place where his heart should have been, there was a big hole, large enough that an adult man's fist could easily fit.

“Gurk.”

Ugkas spat out a mouthful of blood before falling to the ground.

“Is it finally over?”

Just as a panting Sedi asked this question.

Sss...

Sipakna suddenly stopped attacking.

Instead, it withdrew its hundreds of tentacles and opened its enormous mouth.

Screech!

“...!”

When Sedi froze for a moment in surprise, it quickly sent its tentacles out and picked up Ugkas before immediately running away.

“You bastard! ...Ugh!”

Kran tried to chase after him, but he was suddenly hit by a wave of dizziness and stumbled. The side effects were much worse than he expected. He felt incredibly dizzy, and his stomach churned heavily. Unable to resist the urge to vomit, he collapsed to one knee.

Sedi shook her head and smiled bitterly as she approached him.

“Do you want to chase after him? That would be really hard.”

“I know that. However...”

“You don’t think it’s over. Is that it?”

“...”

“Relax. That tin can is on the verge of death. His death is nothing short of a fact.”

Sedi, who had been relatively proficient in the domain of death in the past, was almost certain.

That the Iron Duke, Ugkas, would die.

Kran was someone who couldn’t believe something unless he saw it with his own eyes. Nevertheless, even though he was skeptical about Sedi’s words, he still had to regain his strength before he could move.

“Hoo...”

“Is that weapon you just used disposable?”

“Right.”

As he nodded, Kran looked down at the pieces of the completely destroyed revolver.

This gun was actually a high-grade magical item and had been reinforced by all kinds of spells and runes, but it still could not withstand a single bullet before being smashed to bits.

‘If it really did manage to kill one of the five Dukes, then it would be worth it, but...’

It bothered him that Sipakna had escaped with the body.

...They had to chase after them.

Just as Kran had managed to stabilise his condition enough to stand on his feet...

Kaboom!

At that moment, a deafening explosion ripped through the air.

For a moment, Kran couldn't help but wonder if the sky had fallen.

"What was that...?"

He looked up at the sky with a blank expression on his face. This was the first time that he'd been so shocked by a simple sound. However, the explosion had been so loud that his shock was not strange at all.

After all, just that single explosion had been loud enough to tear the eardrums of anyone who heard it.

Kaboom!

However, this sound came once again.

It was like tens of thousands of fireworks had all exploded at the same time.

Of course, the scene that unfolded in the dark sky after this sound was not as beautiful as fireworks. With every explosion, it looked like the sky was trembling.

As she watched the sight, Sedi muttered in a low voice.

"It seems that they've finally started fighting in earnest."

“Started fighting? Who are you talking about?”

“Human and Demon.”

...The Absolutes that represented them.

Sedi swallowed her last words. She knew it wasn't a concept that a mortal like Kran would be able to understand.

Kaboom...! Boom!

Sounds similar to thunder rippled through the sky again and again.

Kran focused as much as he could as he looked up at the pitch black sky.

And beyond the faintly flickering clouds, what appeared to be the shadows of two beings were occasionally revealed.

He could easily guess the identity of one of them.

And that was a monster who had destroyed half of the Korea Branch Headquarters with just two punches. A being Kran would never want to face.

The Demon King.

The one facing him seemed to have a small physique that was similar to a human's. He couldn't be sure since he was only looking at their shadows, but against the Demon King's incredible stature, it seemed that this figure was in a precarious situation.

Bang!

Suddenly, a spark from the sky struck the ground like a bolt of lightning. Just the force being exerted from this spark caused a ten story building that appeared to be in relatively good condition to immediately collapse to the ground.

That wasn't all.

When the spark hit the ground, it caused the ground to shake and crack as if there was an earthquake.

"..."

Cold sweat immediately began to run down Kran's face.

This was nothing more than the aftermath of the fight between the two beings in the clouds. A stray fragment of an attack.

And yet, this stray attack had been able to completely destroy an entire area.

“...wouldn’t it be better for us to find cover?”

“Cover? Where? Now that they’ve started fighting, there is no safe place on this planet.”

Sedi grinned slightly as she clasped her hands together in front of her chest.

“Maybe you should pray. Pray that none of the stray sparks from their fight hit us.”

* * *

Each of the Five Dukes had a special ability that no other Demon Duke had.

For Gullard, it was his ‘wings’.

For Ugkas, it was his ‘skin’.

His skin could be described as the most powerful mortal defense, and it bordered on the realm of transcendent. It was capable of blocking any martial art, spell, or curse.

An invincible shield that he had been certain would never break.

And yet, this shield had now suffered irreparable damage.

“Gurk!”

He spat out a mouthful of blood.

The feeling of his body slowly cooling down was very strange for him. Ugkas realised that he was gradually becoming more and more sleepy, and he knew that if he were to close his eyes, he would never open them again.

In other words, he was going to die here today.

‘In such a vain way...’

He couldn’t help but feel that it was too harsh a price to pay for just a moment’s carelessness.

Ugkas lamented this fact, but he didn’t know.

He didn’t know that most things lost their lives due to a moment’s carelessness. For beings like the Five Dukes, who were born innately strong, their deaths usually only came from such circumstances.

Suddenly...

Guruk guk.

Sipakna, who hadn't said a single word since their arrival, opened its mouth.

[Mission... continuation... difficult...]

It slowly spat out those words.

Ugkas' eyes widened in surprise.

Although he knew that Sipakna was intelligent, this was his first time actually hearing it speak.

But the words that it spoke were even more shocking.

[You... are now... no longer... useful. And soon... you... will... die. So...]

Sipakna's mouth widened considerably.

[I... will eat... you.]

At those words, Ugkas' shock slowly wore off. And his eyes, which had been widened in surprise, grew calm.

Guguk guk.

Sipakna's mouth continued to expand until it was many times its size. No matter how hard its teeth were, it wouldn't be able to break through Ugkas' skin.

However, it would be possible to swallow him whole and slowly melt him with its acid.

With its large mouth, swallowing Ugkas whole would be no trouble at all.

"I see. So I wasn't your insurance. You were my insurance."

He calmly looked at the hundreds of spinning teeth.

...If it is the King's will...

Ugkas slowly closed his eyes while muttering.

"Eat well, Sipakna. I'll leave the rest to you."

Sipakna didn't respond.

Crack! Crack!

And the intraspecies predation began.

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Min Ha-rin looked up at the sky. It was already approaching noon, but the sun was nowhere in sight. However, by now, she no longer found this strange.

Krrr...!

A flash of light seemed to streak across the pitch-black sky, but it disappeared even faster than it appeared.

At that moment, the sky and the ground were both shaking violently, as though it was the dimension itself that was shaking.

'Master...'

The dense mana reverberation that she could feel beyond the dark clouds definitely belonged to Lukas.

As for the identity of the being whom he was fiercely fighting, that was easy enough to guess.

'The Demon who destroyed the Korea Headquarters.'

It was at least one of the five dukes or maybe even something stronger than that.

Suddenly.

"Let go... of me...!"

Slei, who was in her arms, began to struggle.

His arms, which had been severed, and his body, which had not even been half of his torso, had already regenerated.

Min Ha-rin couldn't help but recall the scene.

A human like Slei possessed super fast regeneration, an ability that was usually only found in high ranking Demon Nobles.

This fact caused her to feel slightly disgusted. It felt like this old man was not a human but instead some other being who was wearing human skin.

'I knew he was going to wake up sooner or later.'

Nevertheless, he had regained consciousness much faster than Min Ha-rin expected.

“Bishop...!”

“You’ve awoken!”

The believers all shouted enthusiastically.

This fact seemed to disgust Min Ha-rin even more. Her eyes became cold.

“Don’t move.”

After his regeneration, Slei might have appeared fine, but the deep sense of fatigue that filled his entire body was not alleviated. He was still in pretty bad condition.

Slei coughed up blood a few times before shouting angrily.

“Do you know what you’re doing?! I’m the leader of the Church of Eternal Life...!”

“More like a con artist.”

“How dare you...?!”

“Even if I let you go, what could you do? Do you have the power to change this situation?”

“Of course I do!”

Min Ha-rin’s lips twisted into a sneer.

“Open your eyes properly and look up at the sky.”

“...”

“Do you see them? Those beings fighting beyond the clouds. Could you stop their fight? Could you step in?”

Slei was speechless for a moment. He lowered his head in thought and began to mutter in a low voice.

“Arid... I need Arid. As long as I have that child’s power, I will have nothing to fear... My, my wounds and my pain will all disappear.”

This man had lost his mind. No. He was completely insane.

Min Ha-rin couldn’t help but stand to her feet, throwing Slei to the ground.

“Huk.”

The image of an old man rolling helplessly on the ground would certainly have invoked some sense of sympathy in those who saw it, but Min Ha-rin didn't feel even the slightest hint of it.

“If you dare move, your Bishop will lose his life right here in front of you.”

She wasn't joking.

Feeling the sincerity in her voice, the believers couldn't muster up the courage to approach Slel.

Contrary to her cold and unshakeable expression, Min Ha-rin's insides were churning.

'Ha-min, Ha-yun...'

She was worried about the current status of her younger siblings.

...She couldn't help but wonder if they were seriously injured or, even worse, dead.

Min Ha-rin would never forgive Slel.

“Tell your believers to stop trying to confront the Demons. Let them take the wounded and run away.”

“I can’t do that.”

“Do you really intend to sacrifice everyone here?”

“They will not suffer...! This is the death they all want...!”

“That’s because they were all instigated and fooled by you. They don’t understand what they’re doing.”

“Shut up! What do you know...”

Suddenly.

Slei’s body began to shake.

“This... What the hell is this ominous power?”

“What are you playing at?”

“No. It’s not like that. Something is coming.”

“What?”

Slei didn't respond to the question, and instead, his eyes widened in dismay.

He was looking up at the sky.

'The sky...?'

Following his gaze, Min Ha-rin also looked up at the sky.

“...!”

Just in time to see something huge falling down.

Boom!

The ground immediately shattered, sending bits of stone flying in every direction. A dust cloud was immediately formed.

The force of the impact was so strong that it caused Min Ha-rin and the believers to lose their balance and stumble.

Squelch.

Something shot out from the dust cloud.

Without even taking the time to think about it, Min Ha-rin threw herself backwards, rolling a few times across the ground.

She had chosen to dodge instead of block whatever it was. In hindsight, this instinctive judgement had probably saved her life.

Crack!

“K-, uhh...”

“Kuk... kuruk...”

Those who hadn't tried to dodge or those who hadn't realised what was happening were slowly lifted into the sky with their hearts pierced. In fact, even the believers who had tried to block the attack had died.

What the hell happened...?

Min Ha-rin gulped slightly in fear of the unknown.

Finally, as the dust cloud slowly subsided, the appearance of the attacker was revealed.

“...”

It was a monster.

A huge, terrifying creature that was difficult to describe in words.

To put it bluntly, the giant monster appeared to be some kind of mixture between a slug and a centipede, with a mouth that seemed to take up almost half of its torso, and hundreds of wriggling tentacles that seemed to take the place for feet.

However, the thing that stood out the most was the monster's skin. No, it would be more accurate to call it a carapace.

The carapace glistened like metal, but it looked even stronger than that.

[So... hungry...]

Sipakna, the Monstrous Duke, said these words slowly as it pulled one of the dozen or so believers that had been pierced by its tentacles into its mouth. Its mouth, which was already grotesquely large, seemed to expand even further.

Crunch, crunch...

A disgusting sound came from its mouth as spurts of blood shot past its teeth.

“Believers...! This is one of the Five Dukes!”

Slei shouted out in a wicked voice.

“The path to paradise has opened! Show me your bravery!”

“Ohhh...!!”

“The Bishop has shown us the way!”

The believers started rushing towards Sipakna as though they had been waiting for those words. They looked exactly like moths rushing towards a flame.

Slei then immediately turned and ran away without even the slightest hesitation.

This sight filled Min Ha-rin with rage.

This was so ridiculous that she couldn't even laugh. The one who was urging their believers to kill themselves probably feared death more than anyone else in the world.

She didn't even think about chasing after him. Min Ha-rin would never be able to turn her back on this tragedy.

"What should I do?"

Slei ran away, and the believers were all dying.

If she were to run away now, then she would be no better than Slei.

However, fighting this monster would be no different from suicide.

'Because I'm too weak...'

If she was strong enough, then she would have been able to defeat this monster.

Just as Min Ha-rin clenched her fist helplessly.

Paht!

A bright flash of light came from above.

* * *

He knew Lukas Trowman.

Clang!

Kasajin's fist swung towards Lukas again.

Once again, there was contact. In truth, when fighting against him, it wouldn't be strange if his opponents were to explode into bits of flesh and blood after his attacks, but that wasn't the case now.

"..."

Lukas turned to look at him.

Even from the moment the fight had begun, Kasajin had yet to receive any damage. No spell he used seemed to be able to pierce through his devilish energy. Because of this, the fight began to take a one-sided appearance, and it seemed that it would end at any moment.

His long-time friend would soon die by his hand.

Or, at least, that was how it seemed.

'—how long had it been since I had that thought?'

One step.

It would only take one more step to kill Lukas, but he couldn't do it.

That thought appeared in his head again.

He knew Lukas Trowman.

Lukas wasn't the type to fight a battle that he had no chance of winning, and he was the type to find a way to reverse the positions even if he was so disadvantaged that he couldn't even lift a finger.

At the very least, this guy was not someone he could defeat without using every ounce of his strength.

After all, it was only because he was such a man that Kasajin had been willing to risk his life for him in the past.

'He is up to something.'

He was using his external force, but he was bearing the burden with his soul.

But it couldn't be just that. Kasajin could tell just by looking at his eyes.

Lukas was hiding something. It was just that he couldn't tell what exactly he was hiding.

However, the reason he was so concerned about it was because he knew Lukas's personality well, and he knew...

"It might be able to threaten me."

It wasn't easy for a mortal to become an Absolute. In fact, it was easier to say that it was almost impossible. Especially for humans who were nothing more than worms in the eyes of most cosmic species.

It was a different matter for beings like him, who had completely abandoned their humanity by accepting other powers and twisting their beliefs.

'You haven't changed.'

Lukas, on the other hand, had become an Absolute without changing 'himself'. And as an Absolute, Kasajin knew just how hard that was.

Of course, there were still some things that changed.

The Lukas of the past was not so taciturn. He had his fears, and he made mistakes.

In other words, he was human, imperfect.

‘The only Absolute who favours humans, Madman.’

Truly, that title fits him well.

Babump.

Kasajin felt his heart thump loudly for the first time in tens of thousands of years. In fact, the feeling was so strange that it even took him by surprise. After all, he’d thought that he’d lost his emotions a very long time ago, but it seemed that there were still some left over.

In his heart, an emotion that shouldn’t have existed within Demon King Kasajin began to rear its head.

It was an eruption of fighting spirit.

‘I want to fight him.’

He didn’t want to one-sidedly hit a guy who was worrying about the universe as Lukas was now.

He wanted to fight against Lukas Trowman as he gave it his all.

[...]

Kasajin stopped attacking and stepped back. Instead of launching an attack of his own, Lukas, who had been focused on defense, also took a step back.

The first one to open his mouth was Kasajin.

[I want to make a proposal.]

“A proposal?”

Lukas raised an eyebrow.

“That’s unexpected. Isn’t it much simpler to try to kill me now?”

[No. It would be a much harder and uncertain path. After all, I don’t know how many poisonous daggers you are hiding away.]

“...”

Even in the past, he had been well known for his animal-like instincts.

That was why he had always been slightly wary of whatever trump cards Lukas was hiding.

He was certain of their presence.

After staying silent for a while, Lukas opened his mouth.

“Tell me about this proposal.”

[My reason for coming to this land was to retrieve one of the Top Three, Kran. He is a Hybrid, and he is the only one of the three who can be considered perfect.]

“Do you intend to use Kran to deceive the laws of this universe?”

[The laws of this universe are of no importance to me. I don't care about this world's balance or whether this dimension collapses or not.]

That was true.

Unlike Lukas, Kasajin had never tried to restrain his powers.

“Then why do you want to take Kran?”

[That man will be an important element in commencing the Great Game. He is also an indispensable component in order for me to achieve the orders I was given.]

“...what are you trying to say?”

[It won't be a bad thing for you either. Give him to me. Then the amount of Absolute energy this universe can handle will increase to an absurd extent. In other words...]

For the first time, Kasajin's lips twisted into a terrifying facsimile of a smile.

[You and I will be able to fight to our hearts' content.]

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Kasajin had said earlier that his win rate against Lukas was ninety percent.

In other words, out of ten fights, he won nine times.

However, this win rate would be completely different if their fights weren't always governed by 'sparring rules'. After all, it couldn't be said Kasajin was much stronger than Lukas, if at all.

This wasn't a simple comparison between a normal Wizard and Magic Warrior. Lukas' true strength could only be displayed on a battlefield where his life was on the line.

Fearsome concentration, composure, situational awareness, quick thinking, and, most importantly, fanatical desire for victory.

These were traits that truly made Lukas who he was, traits that were impossible to properly showcase in a light-hearted spar.

'Because there is no risk to his life.'

Naturally, there was no reason for them to risk their lives to fight each other back then.

However, it was different now.

Demon King Kasajin and Absolute Lukas had completely different beliefs. Conflicting beliefs.

"What do you intend to do to Kran?"

[Kill him.]

Kasajin answered truthfully.

[It was destined from the moment he was born. You could even call it his fate.]

Fate.

“You used to hate that word.”

[That, too, is a thing of the past.]

Lukas shook his head.

“I refuse.”

[Why?]

“Because I don’t believe you.”

[I don’t have any reason to lie. If there was something I wanted to hide, then I wouldn’t have mentioned it in the first place.]

“...”

[Isn’t my proposal beneficial to you as well? Look at yourself. In your current state, you probably wouldn’t even be a match for Nodiesop.]

His words were true.

If the tolerance of the universe was to increase, the person who would have the most to gain would be Lukas.

However, he couldn't just believe the words of Demon King Kasajin, the right hand of the Black Horned Demon God.

'At least that was the truth.'

The fact that he hadn't overtly told any lies.

And that he would never mention it if he had something to hide.

"Tell me everything you're hiding. If you can't do that, then I can't accept your offer."

Of course, Kasajin would never do what Lukas requested.

Instead, he spoke in a blunt tone.

[Is there really no room for negotiation?]

"..."

[However, it doesn't matter, Lukas. Because I don't care about your opinion.]

“So you want to fight again?”

[No. I’ve already made up my mind. I won’t fight you until this universe becomes a proper ‘field’.]

As if to prove his words, the aura radiating from Kasajin’s body disappeared. It seemed that he really didn’t have any intention of fighting Lukas at that moment.

[Kran will fall into my hands even if I just wait here.]

“Because of the Five Dukes? It won’t be easy.”

[You have that much faith in Sedi Glaston? Well, it certainly was a good idea to use her now that she’s a mortal. But she alone won’t be enough.]

Kasajin looked down while muttering.

[Do you think that was all I had up my sleeve?]

* * *

The flash of light flew to the ground before wrapping itself around Sipakna’s body like a chain, binding his movements.

Min Ha-rin's mouth unconsciously fell open at the sudden development.

“Now!”

Following the urgent cry, a sharp streak of light appeared.

It was a man wielding a sword.

The man fell from the sky at an astonishing speed, his sword pointed towards Sipakna, and his cloak billowing heroically behind him.

It was almost as if his sword and body had combined to form a divine spear.

Crack!

Nevertheless, his fierce attack was for naught. Instead of piercing through and slaying the large monster, the man's sword broke apart.

But the man didn't seem surprised by this. He simply clicked his tongue and threw a grenade into Sipakna's mouth as he retreated.

Boom!

In an instant, Sipakna's body swelled up like an inflated balloon. After the loud explosion, black smoke began to billow from its enormous mouth.

But that was all. Seemingly unaffected by the explosion, Sipakna twisted its body violently, causing the chains of light around its body to shatter.

Then, a few of its tentacles shot towards the man.

Papapapa!

As he retreated, the man cut down the approaching tentacles with a kukri that had seemingly appeared in his hand.

“ ... ”

Min Ha-rin looked at this scene in shock.

The man's movements had been smooth, fast, and powerful, without even the slightest hesitation or excess.

Something that she wouldn't be able to do even if her life depended on it.

In other words, they were on completely different levels.

“The monster merged with the other monster to become an even bigger monster.”

Suddenly, a familiar cynical voice sounded.

“Hoh, I’m surprised you’re still alive.”

Sedi.

She looked at Min Ha-rin with a slightly cold gaze, but it was only for a moment. Immediately after making her presence known, she began to assist the man with the staff in her hands.

The sight of hundreds of tentacles being fended off by only two people was so amazing that it would make any onlooker speechless. This was especially true for Min Ha-rin, who was only a short distance away from them.

“Are you alright?”

When she heard the concerned voice and turned around, she saw a person standing there with an unbelievable appearance. Their pure white hair and white eyes made them seem distinctly inhuman. In fact, it felt more like they were an angel of some sort.

Their gentle voice matched their appearance perfectly.

“You...”

“I’m Arid.”

“Arid...”

“Yes.”

Arid smiled softly before continuing.

“We will take care of the Demon. So can you... Ah. I’m sorry, may I ask your name?”

“Min Ha-rin.”

“...then Miss Ha-rin, can you please help us evacuate the believers?”

“I’d love to, but the believers won’t listen to me.”

Min Ha-rin muttered in a sad voice.

“They won’t move without Bishop Slei’s orders.”

“They will listen to me.”

“You?”

Just as Arid nodded with a slightly stiff expression, a dazzling white light appeared behind his back. This wasn't an illusion. It was real.

A beautiful light covered his entire body, and for a moment, it truly seemed that an angel had descended.

At that moment, Min Ha-rin realised who this person was.

“By chance... are you the real Saint?”

“...”

Arid didn't answer immediately.

A lot of thoughts were swirling around in his head at that moment. To put it bluntly, he was looking back on his life so far.

Then, after seemingly coming to a decision, he nodded his head in a determined manner.

“Yeah. I’m the Saint of Salvation.”

Min Ha-rin, who had asked the question, would never be able to know.

Just how hard it was for Arid to say those words.

He turned away, his eyes drawn to the believers who were rushing towards the Demon Duke, on their way to a meaningless death.

This was Slei’s sin, but at the same time, it was something that he had to atone for as well.

[Believers.]

That single word was enough to cause the believers to stop.

[Please, heed my words.]

It was a voice similar to the one Slei used to incite the believers, but it felt much holier than his.

[I humbly apologise, for our Church of Eternal Life has cheated and deceived you.]

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As Arid made the believers listen to him by mixing his voice with 'Brilliance', Sedi watched on with a sneer.

"I can't believe he's taking the time to persuade that trash. What a waste of energy."

Kran inwardly agreed with that statement, but he didn't show it.

Arid, the Saint of Salvation, was one of the Top Three.

He was born with an incredible power called Brilliance.

With his power, he had been able to heal Kran and Sedi, who had been severely injured from their fight with Ugkas and Sipakna, in an instant.

It wasn't just their injuries that were healed.

Even the fatigue that had built up in their bodies had disappeared.

'Although, my demonic energy was not replenished.'

But asking for that as well would just be greedy.

Instead, they were grateful that Arid's holy energy did not conflict with the demonic energy in their bodies.

"Even if we regained our stamina, at this rate, we won't win."

"You're right."

Kran nodded at Sedi's words.

At best, they could only cut off a few tentacles or slightly damage Sipakna's new metal shell. If nothing changed, they would be the ones to eventually be at a disadvantage.

'I'm slowly using up all my equipment.'

Out of all his weapons, which could pile up to form a mountain, Kran only had three useful swords left.

"What about the gun that you used to take out the tin can? Can you use it again?"

"You make it sound easy."

Those bullets weren't items that he had tons of like normal bullets.

Of course, even if he had more, he couldn't use it at the moment. This was because despite his condition being better, he didn't have the demonic energy to activate Burnout.

No matter how good the car's condition was, it wouldn't be able to move without gas.

This was also the reason why he was fighting in his human form rather than his true, demonic form.

'...however, my regeneration is still available.'

Kran frowned slightly.

His opponent was one of the Five Dukes, and somehow, it had managed to obtain the power of Ugkas as well.

In such a situation, he would have no choice but to gamble and risk his life.

He'd just thrown a demon grenade into its body, but it seemed to have only a slight effect. This was proof that it had incredible defense or regenerative ability on the outside and the inside.

"When I put the demon grenade in its mouth just now, it seemed to have an effect."

"Do you intend to attack it from the inside? How?"

“By going inside of it.”

When Kran said those words, Sedi’s expression became strange.

“...you’re not thinking about actually going into its mouth, are you?”

“It seems you are a bit smart after all.”

It didn’t seem like he was joking.

At that moment, Sedi wanted to press her hands against her temples, but she couldn’t afford to.

Sipakna had ‘consumed’ Ugkas. In other words, it had swallowed his extremely durable body and digested it, either with its gastrointestinal fluids or some other means.

And yet, Kran wanted to step into that monster’s mouth of his own volition.

“You’re really crazy.”

“My regeneration is still active. So it will be a gamble. Whether I can kill him first or whether he can digest me first.”

“...”

His voice was cold, but when she looked at him, she realised that he wasn't worried at all.

'I'm not the one who made him do it.'

So she had no reason to stop him.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Hold the tentacles back."

Taht.

After saying that, Kran charged forward without waiting for a response.

Sedi clicked her tongue in annoyance before following him.

She lamented the fact that she had to deal with tentacles all day long.

However, their plan was thwarted before it could even commence.

Thump-

“...!”

As he ran forward, Kran suddenly collapsed.

It happened so quickly and without warning that even Sedi was shocked.

“Hey!”

Sedi rushed towards Kran, but before she could reach him, his body rose into the air and flew somewhere.

It wasn't to Sipakna. This large monster had also stopped moving. Its tentacles remained frozen in place.

Pong-

Instead, it was a drop of water.

The drop of water slowly grew larger before finally taking on the appearance of a man.

It was a face that Sedi was familiar with.

“This is a surprise. What brings you here? Did you come to look at the ocean?”

“Watch your mouth, mortal. Do you think you and I are still in the same position?”

Thud.

A huge amount of pressure weighed down Sedi’s shoulders. Her knees began to creak, and her thighs felt like they would be torn apart.

Nevertheless, she refused to kneel. That was out of her pride as a former Absolute.

Instead, she spat out in a harsh voice.

“Nodiesop, did you decide to wag your tail for the Demon King in the end?”

Nodiesop sneered.

“It’s just an alliance. And even if I did, it’s still better than you, Sedi Glaston.”

“Kuk.”

“You fell from grace. No, you were stripped. I can’t even bear to look at you. If I were you, I would have already killed myself by now.”

He shook his head slowly before spreading his arms.

“How about this? Instead of just killing you, I will completely destroy you. That way, you won’t have to be stuck in the cycle of reincarnation. I think it is the best end for a being who used to be an Absolute.”

“Enough of your bullshit.”

Even though she appeared calm as she said those words, Sedi’s hands, which were wrapped around the staff, were white.

To say that this situation was the worst would be an understatement,

It would probably be better to fight ten Sipaknas at the same time.

Nodiesop didn’t need to rest or sleep.

Sedi, who was now a mortal, had no chance of defeating him.

‘I don’t know what to do, Father.’

A drop of sweat rolled down the back of Sedi’s neck.

'I think I really might die this time.'

* * *

In a ruined city sat beneath an ominous black sky, unknown screams ripped through the air and mysterious vibrations shook the ground.

In this place, which seemed like a world on the brink of destruction, a melancholic voice resounded.

[The souls you saw were not your family members.]

The believers of the Church of Eternal Life stared at Arid with blank expressions.

This was their first time seeing Arid. Because Slei and Reika always made sure to hide him away thoroughly.

Nevertheless, the believers instinctively felt that Arid was an extraordinary being.

The Brilliance which encapsulated his body was the best proof of that.

[I'm sorry.]

Arid apologised.

His voice was filled with sincerity and regret.

In the end, it was his indecisiveness that had caused the situation to become what it was.

This wasn't a hypocritical self-sacrifice. They were his genuine thoughts.

Swallowing the wave of remorse and regret, Arid continued.

[The souls you met were nothing more than copies of your loved ones' personalities that had been imprinted on wandering souls. They were no different from the relatives you had and lost, but they were also not truly them. Our Church of Eternal Life cheated and deceived you.]

"...what are you talking about?"

"Copies of their personalities? You deceived us?"

For the first time, the believers looked confused.

They looked at Arid with disbelieving expressions.

Their eyes widened, and their bodies shook. It was almost as if they were about to be consumed by fear.

[I know that it might be hard to accept. I know the depth of your wounds.]

After saying that, Arid shook his head.

[No. I don't know.]

It wasn't something that he could understand.

[However, I know that it is unforgivable. That's why I won't ask for your forgiveness.... I will bear all the blame.]

It was then.

A middle-aged woman at the front of the group approached Arid.

"A-, are you the Saint?"

"Yes. That's right."

“...liar.”

“Huh?”

“Stop lying!”

The woman’s face contorted to become like a demon’s as she charged towards Arid and began to strangle him.

“Ku-, urk!”

“Y-, y-, yo-, you are just impersonating the Saint, aren’t you? D-, d-, do you think we would fall for your tricks?! B-, Bishop would never lie to us...!”

He couldn’t breathe.

As he was being choked, Arid could see the fanatical belief that flashed in the woman’s eyes.

It was only then when he realised just how deep the darkness in their hearts truly was. Perhaps, in their hearts, they already knew the truth.

There’s no way that they couldn’t tell Arid’s identity by his hair, eyes, and the brilliance that enveloped his body.

Nevertheless...

They did not want to accept it.

“H-, h-, heathen! This is blasphemy!”

As she shouted this, the middle-aged woman threw Arid to the ground.

Crack!

“Huk!”

Then she began to stomp on him. On his head, on his face. His cheeks quickly became numb.

Most of his Brilliance had already been used, so he had no way to heal himself. His white skin soon became covered in red blood.

But that was only the beginning.

It was as if a wind of madness had overtook the believers. The mob’s fear transformed into a need for violence. Maybe it was because of the many things they had been through that day, but it seemed that none of them were able to make rational decisions.

“He’s the Devil’s servant!”

“Everyone, don’t be shaken!”

“O-, ohh. Bishop, Saint. Where the hell are you...?”

“Teach us! Show us the way!”

As they screamed madly, they stomped and beat his body.

Soon, he felt nothing but pain.

Nevertheless, it was the pain in his heart that hurt him more than the physical pain.

Tears began to flow from his white eyes.

Ahh.... Grandfather.

You’ve done such a terrible thing.

Season 2 Chapter 135

After leaving the believers to Arid, Min Ha-rin had gone after Slei.

Fortunately, she was able to see his figure not too far in the distance.

He was crushed beneath the rubble of a collapsed building.

“Ah... Uhh... Ahhh...”

What happened to him?

Had the building collapsed without giving him time to escape? She wasn't sure. And in all honesty, she didn't really care.

Nevertheless, Min Ha-rin couldn't help but feel a bit nauseous when she went closer.

The rubble from the building had crushed the lower half of Slei's body. With the state he was in, it seemed that he was completely unable to move. From the blood that pooled on the ground, it was clear that any normal person would have long since died of these injuries.

Nevertheless, she didn't think that Slei was going to die. After all, this old man had monstrous vitality and regeneration capabilities. He had managed to fully recover from a worse state than this one.

Of course, it wasn't the sight of his crushed body that made her stomach turn.

Instead, the thing that truly disgusted her was the fact that he had sent everyone to their deaths but he was now here, desperately trying to survive.

Seemingly noticing her presence, Sleil turned to look at Min Ha-rin, a gleam appearing within his eyes.

“P-, please help me.”

It was unbelievable.

Min Ha-rin was so shocked that she didn’t even feel angry.

“Help yourself.”

“I-, it’s impossible for me right now. Y-, you are a hunter, so you should be able to lift this rubble, shouldn’t you?”

“...”

When Min Ha-rin didn’t respond, Sleil’s voice became more desperate.

“P-, please. H-, h-, hu-, huk. I know you don’t like me. But I couldn’t help it. I’m sorry. I’m really sorry...”

Crunch.

As she looked at the sniveling old man, Min Ha-rin didn't feel even the slightest shred of sympathy.

Instead, she became filled with rage.

This was because she knew. Slei was only pretending to be remorseful in order to get her help.

'...how?'

How could such a person exist?

She couldn't believe that they were of the same race.

Min Ha-rin wished the old man in front of her had been a Demon. If he was, she would have been able to slit his throat without even the slightest hesitation.

No. If that were the case...

'What is the difference between a Demon and a human?'

Suddenly.

A muffled sound came from the distance.

It came from the place Min Ha-rin had left not so long ago. She turned and looked towards the source of the noise, her expression becoming stiff.

Then, without a single word, she turned to look at Slei again.

As he looked at the cold expression on Min Ha-rin's face, Slei felt fear.

'...am I really scared of this little brat?'

Was it because he was injured? Because he no longer had any Brilliance?

No. It was neither of those.

It was because Min Ha-rin, who was looking down at him with an expressionless face, seemed to be exuding an indescribable pressure.

As if to shake off his fear, Slei spoke in a cracked, desperate voice.

"M-, my grandson has special powers!"

"..."

“You must have seen it earlier, right? That child named Arid. H-, he was born from a miracle. If there is anything you want, you can ask that child. For his grandfather, that child, that child would give you anything...”

“So that man is your grandson.”

Krrr...

After saying that, Min Ha-rin lifted the debris that was crushing Slei’s body.

“H-, huh...?”

Slei’s eyes widened in surprise.

After all, he didn’t think she’d actually listen to him.

Unfortunately, he was right. Min Ha-rin hadn’t cleared away the rubble to save Slei’s life.

Crack!

She grabbed Slei by the neck and began dragging him in a certain direction. The direction of the previous explosion.

“L-, let go of me...!”

Slei began to struggle once again.

He realised that she was taking him towards a higher point.

Was this crazy bitch going to throw him off of a building?

When he had this thought, Slei’s heart sank. In his current condition, if he were to be dropped from such a height, he really would die.

But Min Ha-rin didn’t throw Slei to the ground.

Instead, she stood at the top of the building and gestured towards a spot with her chin.

“Look over there.”

“Where...?”

“There.”

Slei wasn't sure where she was talking about at first. After all, his physical condition was a mess and his vision was very blurry. However, after blinking and concentrating for a few moments, he was able to properly look in the direction Min Ha-rin was pointing at.

There, he saw a dozen or so people gathered in a cloud of dust.

He wasn't entirely sure, but it seemed that they were excitedly stomping on someone.

There was no mercy in their kicks and stomps, almost as if they were exacting vengeance upon an enemy.

It was violence that could only stem from pure malice.

This was a sight that Slei had already seen many times before. He knew just how ugly humans truly were, especially in extreme situations like this one. It wasn't uncommon for them to kill someone after just a few words or gestures.

Nevertheless, Slei's expression soon hardened.

Because he realised who the victim of this violence was.

His grandson, Arid.

"W-, why?"

Slei's voice shook slightly as he spoke.

"Why are they beating him up like that? W-, with that child's powers, he shouldn't have a hard time dealing with a group of believers..."

"Your grandson was trying to persuade them. He wanted to clear up the misunderstanding, atone for the wrongdoings, and, above all, save them. Unlike you, who ran away because you wanted to save yourself, he faced the victims and apologised."

"...!"

Apologised? Arid?

But... that child...

"He didn't do anything wrong."

"I don't know much about your Church of Eternal Life. But it's pretty obvious that you used him."

She had only met Arid for a brief moment, but she was able to see how innocent he was from that single meeting.

If there was anyone who could be considered blameless in this situation, it would be Arid.

There is no way such a person could cheat and deceive people. If that were the case, then he would have run away with Slei without even thinking about persuading the believers.

“Even if that person was guilty of something, it would be minuscule compared to what you have done.”

Slei’s mind was blank at that moment.

She was right.

After all, Slei actually knew the truth, not just conjectures like Min Ha-rin.

Arid was the type who would always smile brightly and think about others before himself, even in this cold, dark world... He was the Saint whom everyone longed for.

That was the type of person he was.

“What are you feeling right now?”

Min Ha-rin was genuinely curious.

She wondered how he felt as he watched his grandson be brutally beaten for something he had done.

She wanted to know. She needed to know.

And when she heard his answer, then she would be able to decide.

Just how she would treat Sleii.

* * *

Even kicks could kill a person.

As he lay huddled on the ground, Arid couldn't help but have this thought.

At some point, it seemed the surroundings had calmed down. Of course, that wasn't truly the case.

The believers were still stomping on him with crazed expressions.

However, their gazes seemed to be far away.

'...if my death can alleviate their anger...'

Then he could give up his life without much regret.

But a thought suddenly occurred to him.

Was that really the fundamental reason for his actions?

Or was this some kind of hypocritical self-sacrifice in order to make himself feel better?

'But... I don't know what else to do.'

He had never learned.

In all of his twenty or so years of life, he had never been taught how to think for himself and draw his own conclusions.

Nevertheless, Arid knew one thing.

Choosing death in this situation was simply an escape.

He would just be running away from the tragic and horrific things that had happened around him without even trying to think of a solution.

Suddenly.

He saw the feet of someone walking towards the group.

“Do you want me to tell you the answer?”

This being seemed to be responding to Arid’s internal question. Arid couldn’t see who the owner of this voice was.

When he focused his blurred vision, he saw a middle-aged man in a leather biker jacket.

Boom!

Then, lightning struck.

If the things that lit up the sky before were only sparks that imitated lightning, then this was real lightning.

The white lightning was so bright that it seemed to burn his retinas. The believers of the Church of Eternal Life were also sent flying in every direction.

Arid looked around with a shocked expression.

Crackle crackle...

Sparks of electricity danced around the middle aged man's body.

"It's really interesting. All the transcendent beings are crammed together in this tiny land."

Letip looked down at Arid, his eyes shining with amusement.

"Nice to meet you, Communicator."

Season 2 Chapter 136

"Ugh... guh... kuh... huff, huff."

"Cough, cough..."

The believers coughed up black smoke as they lay twitching on the ground.

They had been hit directly by the Absolute who was the right hand of the Lightning God.

Letip.

Nevertheless, the only reason they were still alive was because Letip had perfect control of his power.

However, he hadn't held back out of mercy or sympathy.

"Who the hell are you?!"

"What the hell did you do to us?"

Some of the believers, who hadn't been hit directly by the lightning, stared at him with wary gazes.

Letip grinned and snapped his finger.

Crackle!

This action caused lightning to 'shoot' out of his fingers. In other words, the lightning simply appeared out of thin air.

The bolt of lightning swept forward in a straight line, easily cutting those believers in half.

In an instant, the believers died without even knowing what happened.

"Huh...?"

One of the survivors muttered dumbly.

This couldn't be helped. After all, this was the first time he'd seen humans being killed as easily as bugs.

More importantly, their deaths had been completely silent. It had happened so quickly that they didn't even get the chance to kick up a fuss or scream.

"I-, it's a Demon!"

"Run away!" (TL: At least they're running now...)

As if they had seen the God of Death himself, the believers all screamed and fled, their actions creating a lot of noise.

And, unfortunately for them, the thing Letip disliked the most was noise.

Crackle!

A bolt of blue lightning shot out from Letip's forehead before spreading out in every direction. With a soft buzzing sound, it pierced the bodies of all the escaping believers.

In an instant, a heavy silence seemed to fall upon the area.

“Now, it’s a bit quieter.”

Letip smiled contentedly before turning to Arid once again.

“Hi, there.”

Arid stared at Letip with a blank expression on his face.

Ironically, the only person who had survived the catastrophe was Arid, who had been the target of malicious violence not so long before.

“What did you do...?”

“It’s much easier to have a conversation when the place is quiet, so I cleaned up the area a little. Or would you rather move somewhere else entirely, Communicator?”

“Communicator...”

It was the first time he’d ever heard of such a title.

Letip didn’t seem particularly interested in Arid’s reaction. He simply stroked his chin before nodding.

“Hmmm, your condition isn’t the best... but at least you’re still alive. That should be good enough. It’s not like I’ll need you for long.”

“Huh...?”

Arid wasn’t sure what was going on, but his body suddenly floated into the air.

Wary of this strange person, he struggled helplessly in the air.

“W-, what do you intend to do?”

“Nothing much. I just need to take you with me.”

“Need to...? Sh-, shouldn’t you explain yourself first?”

“That’s fine. It’s not like telling you will change anything.”

“...”

For the first time in his life, Arid felt genuine fear.

This was truly a strange phenomenon.

Letip's attitude has always been calm, gentle. His voice was soft, and a friendly smile always hung from his lips.

Nevertheless, Arid was deathly afraid of this man in front of him.

He struggled more desperately, but his actions were meaningless. It was as if he was bound by some kind of invisible rope.

'S-, someone... Anyone...'

Help me.

Just as that thought appeared in his mind...

"Stop."

"..."

Letip turned his head and looked behind him.

There, he saw a man and a woman staring at him.

It was a heavily injured old man and a woman with a cold expression.

“Ah...”

Arid’s gaze turned to the old man.

Then, his eyes widened in surprise.

“G-, Grandfather.”

“Bishop Sleii.”

Letip, on the other hand, displayed an expression of interest. He turned his body completely to face him.

“I really enjoy watching your religious play. It’s very fun and interesting. Only someone who has a good grasp of the dark side of humans could create such an elaborate play...”

‘...he knows me.’

This fact weighed heavily on Sleii’s heart.

He had used all of the remaining Brilliance in his body to heal his legs. In truth, even standing was an extremely difficult task for him at that moment.

Nevertheless, Slei remained standing.

His eyes turned to Arid, his only grandson.

...The miracle child who had been born with the power of Brilliance.

At that moment, he couldn't even make eye contact with this child.

Slei's gaze returned to Letip.

"May I ask what you intend to do with that child?"

"That's not something you need to know."

"...Then I'll change my question. After your 'task', what will you do to Arid?"

This was a question formed by Slei's age and experience.

He knew that Letip would probably not lie to him. After all, there was no need for him to do that. For him, the majority of humans, including Slei, was no different from the dust floating in the air.

'Absolute.'

This man was also an Absolute.

Just facing him right now was enough to cause his entire body to be drenched in cold sweat. He wanted nothing more than to run away from this place as fast as he could.

But Slei suppressed that desire with superhuman patience.

For now, at least.

He didn't want to show such a disgraceful and ugly appearance. At least not right now.

"There are many ways to dispose of a tool after it has served its purpose."

Letip smiled before pointing towards Arid.

"Is that why you're standing in front of me right now? Because you're anxious I'll damage or break your precious tool?"

Arid's eyes clouded over at that remark. Then he slowly lowered his head.

Slei bit his lip at the sight.

He had never seen his grandson make that kind of expression before.

'No.'

He had...

He must have seen it dozens, no, hundreds of times before.

And yet, Slei had turned a blind eye to it every single time, ignoring the hurt and torment he begot to his own flesh and blood.

"That's not it."

Arid wasn't a tool.

He might have thought so not so long ago, but no more.

"He is my grandson."

There wasn't a need for another reason.

The realisation of that simple fact was more than enough.

Even after suffering more than he ever had in his life today, it was only after seeing Arid getting unfairly attacked as a result of his actions that he was able to realise this.

Slei stared fiercely at Letip and took a firm step forward.

"I'm standing in front of you to save my grandson."

"..."

Arid lifted his head and looked at Slei in disbelief.

Slei wished he could know what he was thinking at that moment. He wanted to ask.

There were a lot of things he wanted to say, a lot he wanted to apologise for.

But maybe...

"How touching. Your love towards your flesh and blood seems to have awoken."

The touching reunion that Slei hoped for might never happen.

“However, it seems that you misunderstood what I meant when I asked you why you were standing in front of me, so I’ll rephrase.”

Crackle.

Sparks bounced off of Letip’s body.

He slowly raised a finger.

“Why are you, a mortal whom I can crush and kill without even trying, standing in front of me?”

Season 2 Chapter 137

For the vast majority of Absolutes, raw emotions like happiness or sadness were blunted.

It wasn’t that they didn’t feel it. It was just that it felt muted like sound underwater. To be more precise, it was like their emotions had been worn out.

This was because they had experienced many things over the years.

For them, life was but a never-ending journey, and the memories they had were like scenes outside a window. Regardless of who it was, after seeing the same thing hundreds of millions of times, you would become numb and tired of them.

The same was true for Nodiesop. Few things could make his heart move anymore.

That was why he was slowly enjoying himself this time.

For Absolutes like him, finding things like this, which could be considered 'fun' or 'interesting', was quite rare.

Crack!

With a flick of his wrist, he destroyed Sedi's arm. Nodiesop felt a bit bad for that. It was similar to the feeling one would have if one were to damage their favorite toy.

He couldn't help but lament for a moment.

He should have been more careful.

Nevertheless, the pleasure that swept across his spine at that moment was clear.

Contrary to Nodiesop's leisure thoughts, Sedi was a mess.

Of her limbs, only her left side was still in relatively good condition. Her right leg dragged on the ground, and her right arm was now hanging limply at her side.

Now that she was a mortal, she couldn't fix her limbs in the same way she used to in the past.

In other words, for now, Sedi was crippled.

A former Absolute.

A being who had once stood at the peak of the multiverse had fallen from her position and become a mortal.

Nevertheless, she continued struggling to survive, unwilling to accept death.

'This is so disgraceful, disgusting.'

And stepping on a former Absolute like Sedi, slowly driving her to death, was a new and enjoyable experience for Nodiesop.

"Why don't you scream, or even beg a little? You never know. Maybe it will create a bit of mercy or sympathy in my heart."

"...fuck... you."

Sedi forced those words through her gritted teeth as she panted heavily. Instead of taking offense, Nodiesop simply laughed at her response.

After all, he didn't want her to scream. In fact, had that truly been the case, his excitement would have long since died down.

What Nodiesop really wanted was for Sedi to maintain her unyielding attitude until she took her very last breath.

Churung-

A droplet of water began to form in the air. This water droplet was so small that it was hard to see it unless one looked carefully.

Nevertheless, Sedi's expression became a bit tense as she saw it.

"Huff, huff..."

At that moment, the only thing she could hear was her own labored breathing.

She was so focused at that moment that even the hair on her body had stood up. This couldn't be helped.

After all, she knew that this small droplet of water was more dangerous than thousands of blades.

Piht-

Suddenly, the drop of water disappeared from her sight.

Sedi forcibly twisted her heavily injured body.

Despite her fast reaction, she felt the drop of water, which had just disappeared, fly past her neck. She hadn't been able to avoid it completely.

She felt her neck become warm as a throbbing pain appeared. Even without looking, she knew that blood was flowing from her neck at that moment.

The neck was one of the vital points of a mortal body. If she hadn't avoided that attack, she might have died.

'...no. That's not true.'

Nodiesop had intentionally allowed her to survive.

He'd made sure to attack at a speed that she would barely be able to react to.

'Son of a bitch.'

Sedi was furious.

He was toying with her.

If Nodiesop really wanted to kill her, Sedi would have already become a cold corpse by now.

'I have to catch him off guard.'

This factor usually created the most important variable to help the weak defeat the strong.

But if the difference in power between the two sides was too large, then it would be meaningless.

After all, nothing would change if a tiger decided to sleep in front of a baby.

'Then why do I still not want to give up?'

Did she still expect help?

In reality, Lukas was the only one who could help her out of her current situation.

But she knew that he was also in a situation where he couldn't easily care about others.

More importantly.

'It's not that.'

Sedi shook her head.

She wasn't waiting for anyone's help.

The reason she was still struggling so desperately despite being toyed with and humiliated by Nodiesop, was actually quite simple.

She just didn't want to die.

She wanted to live.

Crack!

Her left foot, which had been the only thing supporting her body, was finally crushed as well. No matter how powerful she might be, even Sedi couldn't stand without her legs. Helpless, she could only fall onto her face.

"Hoo."

Nodiesop finally shook his head.

It had been fun, but it was time to put an end to it. After all, even as he had his fun, he hadn't forgotten his task. He glanced to the side.

Sipakna, one of the Five Dukes.

This monster in the shape of a slug had been watching on from the side with an unconscious Kran bound by its tentacles.

It was waiting for Nodiesop to finish playing with Sedi.

"Thanks for letting me have some fun, Sedi Glaston. Now, I'll send you on your way."

Woowoong.

External force appeared around Nodiesop's hand.

He had a sincere expression on his face.

He honestly believed that it was better for a former absolute to be completely destroyed than for them to become a mortal and get caught in the cycle of reincarnation.

And that was something that Nodiesop could do. With the external force that all Absolutes could use, it would be quite easy to completely erase a soul from existence.

It was then that Sedi muttered.

“...wrong.”

“What was that?”

“You said my name wrong.”

Sedi spoke in a strained voice.

“My name... is Sedi Trowman.”

Nodiesop frowned at those words.

He knew who the surname Trowman came from.

“Pathetic.”

He sneered slightly.

Pop-

Then, droplets of water began to appear in the air.

These were much bigger than the ones before, and they were a deep red as if they were made of blood instead of water.

All he had to do was shoot them forward.

And it would all be over...

But he couldn't.

“ ... ”

Nodiesop froze.

The drops of water that had condensed in the air all disappeared.

Sedi hadn't taken her eyes off of him for a moment. So she noticed immediately.

Nodiesop's expression had been relaxed before, but now his face was stiff.

Then, he slowly raised his head and looked at the sky.

As if controlled by an unknown force, Sedi imitated him.

In the instant that she saw the being standing above them.

"Ah..."

She subconsciously let out a soft cry.

"Haha."

Which was immediately followed by a bout of weak laughter.

Why was he here?

Wasn't he fighting the Demon King?

Did he accomplish his goal?

Even as all of these questions flashed in her mind, a warm sense of security filled her body at that moment.

In that moment, she felt like she could no longer feel the intense pain that came from every part of her body.

Right. This was what it felt like to be protected by someone.

'I thought it would be disgusting or unsightly.'

It wasn't.

Her mouth twitched slightly. Her heart felt strange, and for some reason, she felt embarrassed.

Nevertheless, at that moment, she was really happy.

"...you were really, really late."

Sedi looked up at the sky and smiled.

No.

“I almost died, Father.”

She looked up at Lukas and smiled.

Season 2 Chapter 138

Lukas slowly descended from the sky, landing just in front of Sedi. Then, he looked down at the panting Sedi and spoke slowly.

“Thanks. For staying alive.”

“...ha. I’d appreciate it if you came faster next time.”

Sedi meant those words. Maybe it was because of Lukas appearance, but the tension in her body had evaporated. The little strength she had left faded away, and her eyelids drooped.

Noticing her fatigue, Lukas nodded.

“You can rest now.”

“...right. I’ll get some rest, then.”

Sedi lost consciousness immediately after saying those words.

She was very hurt, but at least she wasn't at risk of dying at that moment.

"As expected, you act just like a human."

This mocking voice came from none other than Nodiesop. His gaze swept over Lukas' entire body.

Although he didn't appear to be heavily injured, it couldn't be said that he was in good condition. This was natural. After all, he had just exchanged blows with the Demon King.

'But the fact that he came to this place...'

Did that mean that he'd defeated Kasajin?

No.

At the very least, Nodiesop knew that such a thing was impossible.

He knew just how powerful Kasajin was, and he also knew that Lukas would never use his full power in this universe.

Therefore, Lukas couldn't defeat the Demon King.

Thud-

As if to confirm Nodiesop's conjecture, Kasajin landed not too far away from him. His body was overflowing with thick devilish energy.

Incidentally, the position Kasajin took was, unfortunately, behind Nodiesop.

Nodiesop wasn't sure if it was a coincidence or not, but the positions of Lukas and Kasajin gave the impression that they were surrounding him.

"You stopped your fight to come here. Did you decide to join hands?"

Although Nodiesop mentioned this possibility in a calm tone, his expression oozed negativity.

If his assumption was indeed true, then the person who would be at the most risk in this situation was none other than him.

However, the answer to his question didn't come for either Lukas or Kasajin. Instead, it came from a third party.

"They didn't."

Boom!

A white bolt of lightning struck the ground, and someone emerged from the resulting dust cloud.

Nodiesop's expression hardened, even more, when he saw this person.

It was Letip, the last Absolute to come to this universe.

"Why are you here?"

"Everyone else is here, so I came to see what you guys were up to. I'd feel lonely if I got left out."

"..."

"It was a joke. Don't make that face."

Letip snickered slightly.

Nodiesop frowned at his attitude.

"You're on Lukas' side, aren't you?"

“You could say that. If two Absolutes decide to join forces to kill Lukas, then as a neutral party, I have no choice but to help the weaker side.”

“Ha.”

Nodiesop sneered derisively.

His gaze turned to Kasajin.

“Demon King, didn’t you say that your goal was to kill Lukas? Why did it suddenly change?”

[My goal hasn’t changed. It’s just been delayed slightly. I’m still going to use all I have to kill Lukas.]

That absurd remark left Nodiesop speechless for a while.

[As for why I haven’t killed Letip... That’s because the Demon God didn’t want me to.]

“What?”

Demon God.

He was talking about the Black Horned Demon God.

Letip looked at Nodiesop with a smile.

“It’s the same for you, Nodiesop. The one you follow also wants you to follow my orders while we’re here.”

“...him too...”

He knew it wasn’t a lie.

No matter how laid back Letip was, he wouldn’t dare to do that.

To tell a lie about a Ruler? No Absolute could even imagine doing something so crazy.

...Except for a psycho like Lukas.

“What the hell for?”

[Letip will explain everything later.]

Letip shrugged his shoulders as if to say that it couldn’t be helped, but Nodiesop wasn’t so easily appeased.

“I don’t understand.”

“You, me, and the Demon King... all three of us follow different Rulers, and all of them want the Madman to die.”

It was incredibly rare for the Rulers to agree on something. Of course, that didn’t necessarily mean that they would work together. After all, just because they had the same goal didn’t mean they had to join hands.

“...if my Master has ordered that I listen to you, then I naturally will. However, does *he* need to hear what you intend to say?”

Nodiesop’s eyes were filled with killing intent.

“Wouldn’t it be better to just kill this guy before having a conversation among ourselves?”

“No.”

Letip shook his head calmly.

“Unfortunately, Lukas is the key to what we’re about to hear. Without him, the conversation can’t proceed.”

“...”

Nodiesop appeared unconvinced, but everyone else had already agreed. Nevertheless, the most decisive reason for his acceptance was Kasajin’s reaction. The Demon King, who was his only ally in this place, remained silent, so Nodiesop decided to not argue any further.

Letip calmly looked around at the group.

It seemed that these three Absolutes with completely different personalities finally understood.

“Then... let me get the tool first.”

Letip seemed to push his hand through space before pulling it out again.

When he pulled his hand out, in it was a human.

An unconscious, white-haired human.

A human that Lukas knew.

“Arid...?”

“That used to be its name.”

Letip spoke in a cheerful voice.

Anger appeared in Lukas' eyes.

"What do you intend to do to him?"

"I have to use it."

"What?"

Those who didn't know Lukas wouldn't have noticed that his expression became colder the more Letip spoke.

Absolute Letip.

Despite the volatile situation, he had suddenly appeared between Lukas and Kasajin in a bright flash of light.

In truth, Lukas was a bit happy when Letip first appeared. This was because he was hostile towards Kasajin. If he were to participate in the fight, he would be a useful card in turning this desperate situation around.

In fact, it was thanks to his appearance that he was able to come here so quickly, which allowed him to prevent Sedi's death.

Nevertheless, Lukas wasn't entirely sure about his intentions yet...

'I can't trust him completely.'

Letip wasn't an enemy, but he couldn't be called an ally either.

Ttak-

Letip snapped his finger.

In an instant, a bolt of lightning shot out from his finger and into Arid's body.

"Ahhhhh!"

Arid's body began to shake as he let out a terrible scream.

This lightning bolt was no ordinary lightning bolt. Letip had injected a portion of his external force into the lightning bolt. Had it been an ordinary mortal, they would have immediately exploded.

In that regard, Arid's power was great. He was able to resist Letip's external force to an extent.

However...

'He can't last much longer.'

If this continued, Arid would die.

Lukas looked at Letip.

"Stop."

Letip responded without even turning to him.

"Why?"

"He might die if you continue."

"That's not for certain. I heard you had great faith in humans. Don't you think he can withstand this little pain? Is your title of Human Saviour just for show?"

"Do not abuse the word faith."

“Kukuku.”

Letip chuckled, but he still didn't stop the flow of the lightning.

“Then you should try stopping me yourself. Though, I'm not sure if our two friends here would let you.”

“Sure.”

The actions that followed was something that even Letip hadn't been able to predict.

Lukas really cast a spell at him after saying that.

“You really are a madman.”

As he dodged the spell, Letip recalled the name Lukas was given by the other Absolutes.

He didn't expect that he would risk breaking ties with him and giving the enemy a chance just to protect a single human.

‘No.’

In a way, this response was natural.

After all, the reason he became an Absolute was to protect humans, so watching such a scene directly conflicted with his identity as an Absolute.

‘His independence really is strong enough to make one envious.’

Letip shook his head.

“Hey, hey. Stop. I was just joking. The Communicator won’t die from something like this. Besides, it won’t take that long... See? It’s already over.”

At those words, Lukas stopped attacking.

“Ah... u-, uhhh...”

Arid’s eyes rolled into the back of his head, and his mouth opened, allowing white mist to pour out. This white mist then gathered together before taking the form of a door that led to another space.

Letip looked at the door in admiration.

“Haha. It’s as amazing as I expected. I’ve seen quite a few Communicators by now, but this one is by far the strongest!”

“...what did you do?”

“Connected this universe to another universe... Well, it’s not another universe, per se, but more like a temporary dimension.”

“A temporary dimension?”

“Right. We should hurry. We wouldn’t want to keep them waiting for too long.”

Nodiesop’s expression hardened when he heard that.

He slowly turned his head and looked at the dimensional door.

“...do you mean that in there...”

“Right.”

At that moment, Lukas realised what he was about to say before Letip could even open his mouth.

“The Rulers.”

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Huge thrones.

No, calling them huge was not enough. This was because they were so large that they far exceeded what a mortal being could conceive.

To put it in simple terms, every single one of these thrones was as large as a planet.

There were four of these thrones floating in this space.

It was a sight so magnificent that it would leave anyone who saw it speechless.

At first glance, it seemed that no one was sitting on these thrones, but Lukas and the other Absolutes knew that wasn't the case.

On each of these huge thrones sat a Ruler.

Of course, their physical bodies weren't here.

There was an infinite number of universes in the multiverse, but there was no universe that could hold all four of the Rulers at the same time.

Instead, they all sent their wills to this place.

Nevertheless, that was enough to place immense pressure on all of the Absolutes who entered this space.

The Thunderous Lightning God.

The Black Horned Demon God.

The Sun God. (1)

And...

“ ... ”

It was only then when Lukas realised something.

Although there were four thrones in this space, one of them was empty.

[Kneel.]

It was a heavy voice that said this word.

Letip knelt on one knee with a soft smile on his lips. Nodiesop also knelt with a strange emotion on his face.

Only Lukas didn't kneel. No. It wasn't just Lukas.

Kasajin wasn't kneeling, either.

“...”

The Black Horned Demon King was also sitting on one of the thrones. According to Letip, Kasajin was his right hand, his Conqueror.

Nevertheless, Kasajin didn't seem to have the slightest hint of subservience for the Demon God.

Lukas felt that there might be some significance behind this fact, but he refrained from making any hasty conclusions.

[All of the main characters have arrived.]

This voice was strangely heavy but also light at the same time, creating a contradictory feeling.

This was a voice that Lukas had heard before.

[There are people I've met and people I've never seen before... But since we don't have any time to waste, let's just skip the introductions and get straight to the point.]

The Thunderous Lightning God.

He seemed to be sitting on a throne made of pure gold.

[What I'm about to tell you is the will of us Rulers.]

'Us' Rulers.

Those words caught Lukas' ear.

He knew very well how good the relationship between the four Rulers was.

They had been at odds for a very long time, and not once had they ever tried to compromise or negotiate among themselves.

This was the fate of a Ruler.

For them, compromise was similar to lowering their head to another person. And for Rulers, such a thing was tantamount to 'denying the foundation of their existence', which was to 'rule' over all things.

In the first place, the reason they were praised as Rulers and were able to stand above all Absolutes was because of their strong sense of independence that couldn't be influenced by any other being.

But now, all of the Rulers had agreed and were now going to tell them their unified opinion.

“ ... ”

Lukas' expression subconsciously became more serious at that moment.

* * *

[The Great Game will begin soon.]

This remark was basically a statement.

The Lightning God's voice seemed to have a strange compulsion in it, as though anything he said would come to pass.

No matter how absurd it might have been.

[In fact, to be completely honest, it would have started already.]

It was another Ruler who said those words in a deep, gloomy voice.

It was probably the Ruler sitting on the black throne, the Black Horned Demon God. He wasn't visible, but Lukas could clearly feel the overwhelming killing intent that he emitted.

[If it weren't for your existence, Lukas Trowman.]

He was completely different from the Lightning God.

In fact, of all the Rulers, the killing intent that the Demon God had towards Lukas was by far the strongest. If the other Rulers weren't there, he probably would have crushed him to dust already.

He was the Ruler who had the hardest time putting his murderous thoughts to rest.

[That isn't something you were supposed to say.]

If lava had a voice, this was probably what it would sound like.

It was a calm voice, but it seemed to be filled with boundless heat.

The being sitting on the crimson throne was probably the Sun God.

This was Lukas' first time meeting him personally, but he had heard many rumors about this Ruler.

Sun Giants were special beings in the multiverse who were birthed directly from solar bodies. They were one of the races that God had mentioned in the past who were transcendent beings from birth.

Nevertheless, the being who sat on the crimson throne could be considered a mutant among his race.

The Sun Giants in the multiverse were usually born with varying characteristics depending on which body they were birthed from.

The Sun God had been birthed from a supergiant star, something that was incredibly rare even in the multiverse.

In fact, the vast majority of Sun Giants hadn't believed that he would be born.

This was because the temperature of the supergiant was so high that they believed his entire body would melt before he, a fetus, could even begin to take shape.

In fact, the Sun God had taken an extremely long time to be born. He had been silent for billions of years. (2)

And when most of the Sun Giants had all but forgot his existence, the supergiant star suddenly stopped burning. This was quite strange. After all, the supergiant still had much of its lifespan left.

Curious, the Sun Giants went to investigate the dying star and soon found a flickering sign of life within its core.

Soon after they discovered him, immense flames erupted from the core and the Sun God was born.

And in the aftermath of his birth, all living beings in that universe died. Although there was a bit of a delay, no one had been able to escape the disaster.

This vast, expansive universe, the end of which was completely unknown, soon became completely red simply because of the heat emitted from the Sun God's body.

In an instant, there was only one living being in the entire universe.

'The heat he radiates gets progressively stronger.'

There was no way to know how much time had passed since the Sun God had been born. Likewise, no one knew just how hot he was now.

In any case, it was rumoured that his personality was considerably moderate among the Rulers.

Of course, it could just be a meaningless rumour considering the extremely arrogant Lightning God or the crazy, bloodthirsty Demon God.

[Respect the Lightning God. We already decided that he would be the one to represent us. Demon God, do you intend to go back on your word?]

"..."

The Demon God fell silent at those words, and the Lightning God continued to speak in a voice that carried a hint of laughter.

[As fun as it is to watch you two bicker, we should continue. This universe is quite stifling, but... that won't matter anymore. As soon as the Great Game is over, I won't have to see you anymore.]

"...there is one thing I'd like to ask."

It was Nodiesop who started to speak.

The Lightning God asked as if he already knew what he wanted.

[Why are there only three of us here?]

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Nodiesop wasn't surprised when the Lightning God asked his question for him.

After all, for beings as powerful as the Rulers, mind reading was as easy as breathing.

"Yes. I believe that the Seven Fanged Dragon God is not sitting on a throne... But if I am mistaken, then please forgive me for my ignorance."

Nodiesop.

In front of the Rulers, this normally arrogant Absolute had no choice but to lower his head like a soldier before a king.

This was unavoidable, even if the one he was addressing was the Lightning God and not the Ruler he followed, the Sun God. (TL: Guess I was wrong...)

[She doesn't agree with us. Which is disappointing since I even made a nice throne for her.]

“...”

[Nevertheless, since a majority of Rulers has agreed, we will proceed as planned. Of course, it is possible that she will try to interfere... But we are doing our best to prevent such a thing from happening.]

The Seven Fanged Dragon God.

She was the most mysterious of the four Rulers. Lukas had fought against Absolutes many times before, but he had only ever faced Absolutes who followed her a handful of times.

And even then, it had only been during the early days of him being an Absolute. Ever since he'd become a Lord, he had never had any interactions with the Seven Fanged Dragon God.

Because of that, for a while, he truly wondered whether she was hostile towards him or not.

'It shouldn't be very far from that.'

Even if she wasn't hostile towards him, the best and most realistic possibility would be that she had an 'indifferent' attitude. After all, there was no reason for a Ruler to look favorably at Lukas, who was wantonly messing up the balance of the multiverse.

[I'll say it again. The Great Game is about to begin. However, the opening of the Game is being delayed by you, Lukas.]

At that moment, everyone turned to look at Lukas.

Kung-

Pressure.

An immense pressure fell on his shoulders. It felt like he was carrying the weight of a planet.

It was an incredibly difficult task to remain standing under the gazes of three Rulers. This was especially so now that Lukas had drawn the backlash for using his external force to his own body.

Nevertheless, there was no change to his expression. He continued to look at them with a determined face, completely ignoring the small voice within him that was trying to convince him to give in.

Not lowering his head to the strong was something Lukas was very familiar with.

'It's weird.'

He felt his heart begin to pound for the first time in a long while.

Lukas knew that it was his morale being boosted.

The heart of this Absolute, who had a reputation for not being shaken by anything, was now beginning to stir as he was faced with the threat of these transcendent beings known as Rulers.

For a moment, his vivid emotions caused him to feel like he had returned to his days as a human.

[Kasajin was tasked by the Demon God to create a 'battlefield' suitable for the Great Game. When this world becomes a battlefield, its tolerance will increase at an explosive rate... which would be a good thing for you as well since you would be able to use your power as you please. So why are you stopping him?]

"Before I answer your question, there is something I'd like to ask."

"..."

Nodiesop couldn't help but frown when he heard Lukas' words.

He didn't like the way Lukas continued to stand up straight in front of the Rulers and even speak in an informal manner.

He didn't know who started it, but the title 'Madman' really suited him well.

[What is it?]

"What would happen to this universe if it were to become a battlefield for the Great Game?"

This question was particularly important for Lukas.

He had no idea what the Great Game was. He had been bluffing to Sedi as if he knew, but in truth, everything he knew about the Great Game had come from the Lightning God.

The most important thing for Lukas now was to protect the humans living in this universe. But if he were to fight against Absolutes like Kasajin and Nodiesop, it would definitely disrupt the balance of the universe.

In other words, by fighting to protect the humans, he would only be hastening their demise.

That was why he needed to know exactly what the Great Game was.

[There's no need to go around in circles. What you're really curious about isn't the fate of this universe but the fate of the humans. Isn't it?]

“...”

[Well, that's fine. I'll answer it anyway. Most of them will get an opportunity that might not even come once in a lifetime.]

“...what do you mean?”

[There is a saying that heroes are born from turmoil. You can understand this in the same way. When the Great Game begins, all beings within it will have a chance to become an 'Absolute'. No matter how weak or insignificant they might be.]

“...!”

Nodiesop was greatly shocked by those words.

This was because he knew how unlikely it was for even a single Absolute to be born in a universe.

On the other hand, Kasajin and Letip didn't appear surprised. Perhaps they already knew about the Great Game.

Nevertheless, Lukas was paying attention to something else.

Opportunities like that are practically nonexistent for most humans. And considering the ratio, it would be considered high if even ten people were to become Absolutes.

“Then what would happen to the rest of the humans, the weak?”

[They’ll die. Or worse.]

It was the Black Horned Demon God who answered his unasked question.

[The moment this little world becomes the battlefield for the Great Game, at least half of the humans you are trying to protect will certainly die.]

“...”

As if taking turns, it was the Sun God who spoke next.

[And you, Lukas, will try to stop that.]

“Is that why you called me here? To get rid of me?”

[Kuku, what a cocky brat. We only sent our ‘wills’ here. You should know that they alone won’t be enough to kill you.]

Naturally, he was right.

If that wasn't the case, Lukas would never have stepped into this space with three Rulers.

[Incidentally, there are now four Absolutes in this universe, each following a different Ruler.]

The Lightning God added with a chuckle.

[Or following none at all.]

“...”

[In addition, all four Absolutes have different goals. Isn't that so?]

That was true.

Kasajin and Nodiesop's temporary alliance was already beginning to fray because of their differing plans for Lukas. It was also the same for Letip, who had yet to reveal his true intentions.

[However, we don't want you to fight each other anymore. This universe will definitely get destroyed if you continue, and it would be too annoying to create another battlefield. So Kasajin, do what you must. Start doing your best to turn this universe into a battlefield.]

Kasajin responded in a flat tone.

[...of course, I will. I intend to fulfill my promise to the Demon God.]

As expected.

Like Lukas, Kasajin also spoke to the Rulers in an informal manner. But surprisingly, the Demon God didn't seem bothered by it.

Was it because he was a Conqueror? No. That didn't have anything to do with it. Letip, who was also a Conqueror, was very polite to the Lightning God.

There seemed to be some kind of inside story between Kasajin and the Demon God. Of course, knowing it wouldn't change anything.

Kasajin would still be Lukas' enemy, and his attitude probably wouldn't change.

Nevertheless, Lukas couldn't help but think about Kasajin. If this guy, who had never cared about hierarchical relationships before, were to lower his head and act like an obedient dog for the Demon God, he would have been incredibly disappointed, regardless of whether they were enemies or not.

[That's why we came up with a good idea. A way to allow everyone to get what they want without disturbing the balance of this universe.]

"What's that?"

[Qualifiers for the Great Game.]

Lukas narrowed his eyes slightly at the strange name.

[Lukas, if you win the Qualifiers, then we won't touch this universe anymore. The Demon God will even remove all of his creations.]

They would leave so easily?

When Lukas turned to look at the Demon God with a hint of disbelief, he heard his deep voice.

[I swear on my authority.]

An agreement sworn on the authority of an Absolute was something that took effect the moment it was said. Breaking this promise wouldn't be lethal or cause them to disappear, but they would still suffer from a corresponding penalty.

In other words, the Black Horned Demon God was speaking truthfully.

“What do you mean by ‘qualifiers’?”

[It's nothing special. You will simply select a few persons from each faction who will then fight against each other, and if your faction wins, that's it.]

“By faction...”

[I’m referring to you, the Demon King, Nodiesop, and Letip.]

It was only then when Lukas realised what the Qualifiers were really about.

Nevertheless, he couldn’t help but ask again for confirmation.

“Are you saying that the four ‘factions’ will have a four-way battle?”

Although he was invisible, Lukas could feel the Lightning God nod.

[Exactly.]