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“Goddess?”

Lukas looked at Pannata in surprise.

Pannata continued to speak with a slightly fanatical expression.

“Right. She’s the greatest, strongest, and most beautiful being on the entire island.”

Dragon King and Goddess.

He was thinking that this was something to pay attention to, but he couldn’t help but pause when he heard Pannata’s next words.

“She suddenly appeared on the island one day and wiped all the Ancient Dragons around her.”

“...”

After hearing that, he couldn’t help but wonder.

Half confident in his conjecture, Lukas decided to throw out some bait.

“...I found the corpses of five Ancient Dragons when I was passing through a nearby mountain range.”

“So you saw it.”

Pannata smirked.

“Those five monsters were the rulers of that mountain range. But even those fearsome beings who had ruled over their territory for hundreds of years could only become cold corpses after meeting the Goddess.”

Lukas recalled the wounds he'd seen on those Ancient Dragon corpses. He also recalled the faint energy signature he'd felt from them.

It was only at that moment that he was certain of the Goddess' identity. The name goddess didn't suit her at all, but he decided to put that aside for now.

“I think the Goddess might be my companion.”

“What? Hahaha.”

It wasn't just Pannata.

Even the Dragonmen guarding the hole above let out loud laughs.

“That’s enough of your bullshit. If the Goddess is your companion, then I’m the Dragon King’s older brother.”

“No. I’m serious. Does your goddess have black hair and red eyes-”

“Shut up. If you insult the Goddess one more time, I will kill you on the spot.”

He looked really angry, so Lukas decided to not continue. Pannata glared at Lukas with an expression of annoyance.

“I think I cleared up enough of your doubts, so stay put.”

With those words, Pannata headed up on his own.

Lukas did as he was told. This was because there was no reason for him to run in the first place. Without another word, he walked to a corner of the pit and sat down. Then, he closed his eyes and began to meditate.

‘...so she became a Goddess.’

What had Sedi been doing on Death Island?

* * *

A few hours passed.

Now that he thought about it, Lukas realised that this was the first time since coming to Death Island that he'd stayed in one place for so long.

During this time, he managed to increase his mana regeneration a bit by increasing his concentration.

It was a harder task than collecting moisture in a desert, but it was still better than nothing.

From the movements above him, he could tell that it was around the time for Sedi to arrive, but there were still no signs of her yet.

Lukas looked at the black ring and injected his mana into it.

Fwoosh-

"...?"

However, instead, the beam of light acted strangely this time.

Instead of shooting out to one of the sides, it shot straight up. In other words, it was pointing at the sky.

Just as Lukas lifted his head to look up, a strange sound came from the sky.

Gugugugugu-

It sounded as though the air was vibrating. Even the ground began to shake a bit.

“Hey! Come up!”

When one of the Dragonmen who was guarding the pit called out to him in a slightly urgent voice, Lukas easily leaped out of the pit before looking up at the sky once again.

All the Dragonmen in the village also began rushing out of their pits.

“She’s here!”

“Ohhh!”

Pannata walked out from the group of cheering Dragonmen and looked at Lukas.

“Now you can get rid of any thought of escaping. It won’t be possible anyway, but if you quietly accept your faith, you might be granted a quick and painless death. Now get on your knees.”

All the Dragonmen, including Pannata, got on their knees and bowed.

Their attitudes were reverent as though they were actually meeting god. They looked completely different from the savages who would even eat their own kin.

Bang!

Suddenly, something fell from the sky like a meteor, throwing dirt and pieces of stone into the air and creating a cloud of dust. A figure stood up from within the dust cloud.

This blurry silhouette was rather small, even smaller than Lukas, who was dwarfed by most beings on the island.

Soon after, the dirt cloud dissipated, and the Goddess was finally revealed.

“ ... ”

Hair darker than the night sky and bright red eyes that created a stark contrast. Her bored expression and heavy aura didn't quite suit her small stature.

Unlike Lukas, who was unable to remain at his peak in this environment, she appeared to be thriving. Her hair was glossy, and her face was bright.

Sedi patted dust from her shoulders before speaking in her uniquely disinterested tone.

“Food.”

“We greet the Goddess.”

“Yeah, whatever. Food.”

“Yes. We prepared an excellent delicacy for you today.”

Pannata spoke with an extremely subservient attitude.

Sedi looked around and even met Lukas’ gaze, but she didn’t seem to recognise him.

After all, he was still wearing the hood.

“Is this the delicacy you were talking about?”

Her frown was the expression that Lukas was most familiar with. Her expression made it look like she was whining to him, but it caused Pannata to tremble fiercely at the thought of angering his god.

“I-, it’s meat from outside. We captured him without a single casualty...!”

“...”

“D-, do you not like it?”

“Of course I don’t. Do you think I’m like you? I told you before that I only eat Ancient Dragon Hearts. Those that have been completely saturated in demonic energy.”

When she said that, the Dragonmen prostrated around her began to tremble, shrinking into themselves and doing their best to become unnoticeable.

Sedi snorted at them before turning to look at Lukas once more.

“But this is the first time I’ve seen anyone wearing clothes on this island. Take off the hood.”

“Ye-, yes.”

Pannata hurriedly removed the hood that was covering Lukas’ face.

“...”

“...”

Their eyes met.

Those bright red eyes were similar to a rabbit's widened. At the same time, Sedi's expression became indescribable.

It was a mixture of shock, disbelief, doubt, and finally, joy.

Then.

"...ha. Hahaha. Ahahaha!"

Sedi burst into laughter. She laughed so hard that she doubled over and held her stomach.

The Dragonmen, who were still nervous, also began to laugh as Sedi laughed. They didn't know what was going on, but the Goddess seemed to be happy. This convinced them that their sacrifice was actually the right choice.

"...kukuku! You there."

"Ye-, yes!"

After laughing for a while, Sedi wiped tears from the corners of her eyes.

"Who captured this person?"

“I did!”

Pannata replied with a proud expression on his face.

Unfortunately, he didn't realise that Sedi, who he revered as his Goddess, had addressed Lukas as 'this person', instead of 'this guy' or 'that guy' like she usually did.

“He's actually really slow and stupid for an outsider. So we were able to capture him easily.”

“Hoh.”

Sedi mumbled under her breath before smiling.

“Right. I suppose I should commend you. Then...”

With a beautiful smile on her face that made her look like a real Goddess, Sedi beckoned to Pannata with her finger.

“Come here.”

With a bright smile on his face, Pannata walked to Sedi.

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“Why do you look so thin?”

“The journey to get here wasn’t easy.”

“Ahh. I forgot that your strength was restricted.”

“Right, Sedi. You should’ve entered this world at the same time I did, but you’ve already grown much stronger than you were before.”

“Why are you saying it so weirdly? Didn’t the others come into this world with us too?”

“They did, but at different times. You completed all ten stages of the tutorial, didn’t you?”

“Of course I did.”

“The timing of your entry coincided with the number of stages you completed. You and I are among the last. The others entered this world many years before we did.”

“Ah. I see... Well then.”

After nodding with a slightly uncaring expression, Sedi then turned to look at the trembling Pannata who was kneeling beside her.

A mischievous smile stretched across her lips.

“Hey, you.”

“Ye-, yes...”

When he heard her call out to him, Pannata lifted his head and answered, only for his face to immediately twist to the right.

Sedi didn’t hit him too hard. All she did was lightly tap his face with her fist. The amount of strength she used in her blow could be seen from the fact that Pannata’s head was still attached to his shoulder, and his face was only slightly distorted.

“What was your name again?”

“Pa-, Pannata, Goddess.”

“I see.”

Sedi, who was still smiling, turned to Lukas before pointing at Pannata.

“Father, didn’t this fool make a big mistake?”

“Mistake?”

“Right. For example, he was very rude to Father. He said a lot of stupid things about you.”

Stupid, or dumb.

Crack.

As she said this, Sedi intentionally cracked her knuckles and Pannata's face became as white as a sheet when he saw this.

He hurriedly turned to look at Lukas. All this while, he had been acting authoritatively and looking down on Lukas, but now he was looking at him with pitiful, begging eyes that were similar to a rabbit stuck in a trap.

Lukas didn't feel sorry for him because of this act, but he still shook his head since there was no benefit to dealing with Pannata.

"No, it's fine. Stop scaring him."

"You heard that? Hey, you're a pretty lucky guy, aren't you?"

Sedi smiled brightly and patted Pannata on the shoulder. (TL: Sedi could be in the mafia.) (PR: Sedi -is- the mafia.)

She seemed to be in a very good mood. Maybe it was because she had finally been reunited with Lukas. Or maybe it was because she felt comfortable in the demonic energy saturated environment of Death Island.

After laughing for a while, Sedi finally looked at Lukas and said,

"Anyways, let's go to a quiet place first. My house should be fine."

"House?"

"Mhm."

After saying that, Sedi held out a small hand to him. Lukas looked down at it for a moment. Did she want him to hold it? At the same moment, Lukas held her hand.

Boom!

"...!"

Sedi kicked off the ground and shot up into the sky. In an instant, they reached a height of several hundred meters in the air.

While holding Lukas' hand, Sedi looked around for a bit before pointing to a large mountain not so far away.

"My house is at the top."

Lukas couldn't respond.

Sedi tilted her head to the side once they had landed on the top of the mountain.

"What's wrong? This place is pretty good for a desolate land like this one... Why do you look like that?"

"...it's because... I'm human now. Next time, it would be nice of you to tell me before you jump."

That jump had made him so dizzy it felt like he had gotten a concussion and was about to throw up. In addition, it had caused him to waste mana.

This couldn't be helped. Since he had been unable to prepare, he had to use his mana to offset the force of the sudden leap and the landing, otherwise, he would have suffered heavy damage to his internal organs which would have caused him to vomit blood.

Sedi looked at Lukas for a while before bursting into a fit of giggles.

"You're much weaker than I expected."

"..."

Lukas ignored her, calmed his agitated body, and looked around at their surroundings.

The top of the mountain looked no different from that of any mountain except for the fact that it was a bit flatter and had signs that someone lived there.

The most noticeable part was a strange bowl which was filled with what appeared to be small pouches.

"What is that?"

"My bed."

"What is it made of?"

"Ancient Dragon hearts. They shrink down to that size after I absorb the demonic energy within them. Nevertheless, they are the softest material I could find on this island."

After saying that, Sedi set her butt down on her bed of Ancient Dragon hearts and wiggled around a bit. If an outsider were to see this scene, they would definitely think that she was as old as she looked.

"It seems that you've stayed on top of this mountain for a long while."

"From here, I can see everything in the surrounding area with ease."

"Why didn't you move?"

"Huh?"

"I figured that with your personality, you would constantly move from one place to another."

When she heard that, Sedi tilted her head to the side.

"If I did that, it would be hard for Father to find me."

It was a unique statement that Lukas couldn't imagine Sedi saying when they first met.

He smiled at her.

"So you were waiting for me."

"..."

It was only at that moment that Sedi realised what she'd said.

She was just like a lost child who didn't wander around but instead waited in one spot for their parents to find them.

It wasn't that this analogy was wrong exactly, but her pride as an Absolute didn't allow her to easily accept that.

"...that... well... I was just thinking that it would be annoying for you if I just did whatever I wanted. There were no special thoughts behind it."

"You made the right decision. Good job."

As he said that, Lukas wondered if he should stroke her hair, but he felt that he might be treating her too much like a child.

On the surface, she had the appearance of a 15-year-old girl, but on the inside, she was an Absolute who was on the same level as Lukas. Although she claimed to be his daughter now, that history didn't disappear.

In addition, hair stroking and saying they did well were actions that he had been showing to his disciples recently.

Could he do the same for his daughter?

How should he differentiate between his daughter and his disciples?

Lukas tried to use his eons of experience to come up with an answer, but he found that there was no right way to respond to this former Absolute that had become his daughter.

In the first place, most Absolutes are prideful and stubborn, and even 'Assistants' who ranked at the very bottom didn't bow their heads to other Absolutes.

Unless the other was a Ruler of course.

"You look well."

"This place is saturated with demonic energy. Even an act as simple as breathing makes me stronger."

As she said that, Sedi looked at Lukas before clapping her hands.

"As I said before, you really don't look too good Father."

"That's because there are a lot of restrictions placed upon me. Even before coming to Death Island, I encountered all kinds of troublesome situations."

"Death Island?"

"That's the name of this island."

Sedi stuck her tongue out as though she'd just heard something ridiculous.

"What did you just say? This is an island? How can a place this outrageously large be called something like that?"

"The entire planet seems to be incredibly large. This place is an island in the sea of a floating continent called the Heavenly Realm..."

Lukas began to give her a brief explanation of the world. He explained that there wasn't just the Heavenly Realm, but also the Giant Field, Black Earth, Lightning Gorge, and even the supercontinent Gaia.

He then gave her a rough explanation of everything that had happened so far as well as an explanation of the current situation.

The goal is to find the most special statues and his desire for her to participate in the Championship.

"Championship?"

"Kran is also here."

"Hmph. That person..."

"Other than you, there is no one in our group who can defeat him. Including me."

"So you need my help."

After absorbing the demonic energy on Death Island, Sedi had become much stronger than before. In her current state, it would be difficult for her to lose to Kran.

Then Sedi frowned.

"But I don't like it."

"What do you mean?"

"Dragon God Island or whatever you called it. What are they trying to do by restricting access to this amazing island? It's not like we're at war or anything... That's why..."

Sedi gave her signature sadistic smile.

"Father, why don't we-"

"Recklessly break into Dragon God Island and check if the statue there is the one we want?"

Sedi nodded.

"Wouldn't that be better? That way you wouldn't have to waste time on the Championship or whatever it is."

It would certainly be more efficient, but Lukas still shook his head.

It wouldn't be morally right for them to break into a place that was considered a sanctuary and had restricted access. Of course, Sedi wouldn't understand it even if he put it like that, so he gave a different answer.

"We still don't know how strong the Priestess is."

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Sedi looked at Lukas with an incredulous expression.

“Ha. At best, that Priestess or whatever would be a bit stronger than those weaklings. She can’t possibly be stronger than I am now.”

“You can’t be so certain.”

“...do you not have faith in me?”

Sedi narrowed her eyes slightly as she said this.

Lukas remained silent. It wasn’t that he doubted Sedi’s strength, but instead that the Priestess’ power was still unknown.

Nevertheless, from what he’d heard from Arid as well as the various tales he’d read, he didn’t think that she was weaker than the current Sedi. At present, the Priestess’ influence could be felt all across the Heavenly Realm.

But Sedi took Lukas’ silence to mean something else and snorted heavily.

“Hmph. I understand that you’re a bit more cautious due to being much weaker than you’re accustomed to. But you don’t have anything to worry about now that you’ve found me. There are times when it is necessary to rush in without thinking too much about it, and if anything happens, I’ll protect you.”

She said the last sentence in what was supposed to be a mean voice.

Maybe it was because he was also happy at their reunion, but Lukas’ reaction was different from what she expected.

Instead of being agitated or annoyed, he simply smiled at her.

“Fine. Then I’ll rely on you to protect me from now on.”

“...it’s not fun when you say things like that.”

She retorted in a voice that seemed to have been sapped of all interest and flopped onto her bed. Her silky black hair spread out gentle like a halo around her head. It was difficult to find fresh water in this place, which meant that she couldn’t wash it regularly, but her hair still managed to remain glossy.

This wasn’t very surprising.

After all, the stronger a being became, the less waste was excreted from their body.

“I talked to the Dragonmen in the area. They all worshipped you and called you their Goddess. Are you having fun? Kuku. Although, I’m not sure it suits you.”

Sedi was previously an Absolute with dominion over Death. It didn’t go very well with a holy title like Goddess.

“I hunted a couple Ancient Dragons. It was mostly to recover my demonic energy. As you can see, I don’t really need anything other than the hearts. They asked me if they could take those rotten carcasses and I said yes. For them, that was like the blessing of God.”

It was then that Lukas understood the situation.

In other words, instead of Sedi dominating the area and putting the Dragonmen under her rule as he'd initially thought, they were the ones who chose to submit to her and worship her.

Lukas looked at her for a moment before muttering.

"Now that I've found you, the only one left is Leo."

"Mm?"

Sedi lifted her head slightly at those words.

"Then you should have searched for him first before coming to look for me. It's not like I'm in a dangerous situation or anything. Why did you force yourself to come?"

"You are in the most dangerous situation."

"Huh?"

She blinked as if she wasn't sure she'd heard him correctly.

"Arid said that there is an Absolute on this island."

"...!"

Sedi's eyes went wide in an instant.

She immediately sat up and looked at Lukas with a very serious expression on her little face.

"Who?"

"I haven't figured that out yet."

"Mm... but weren't those guys restricted as well? Just like Father is weaker than me, they should be weaker than me too."

"That would be the best possible scenario. But there are many items in this world capable of lifting the restrictions. With enough effort and luck, it's possible to recover their strength in a short period of time." (TL: I suppose Lukas had neither? Seeing as he only went up one level)

"..."

He was right.

Sedi contemplated inwardly.

She had certainly become much stronger after absorbing the energy in this place, but she was still within the bounds of mortality.

She had also been an Absolute before, so even if she didn't want to admit it, she knew that she was still far from that level. She couldn't guarantee that she would win even if she became an Absolute.

Letip, Kasajin, and Nodiesop were all Absolutes that Sedi wasn't sure she could defeat even when she was at her peak.

In fact, she had already been defeated by Kasajin.

‘Tch.’

She forcefully pushed those unpleasant memories away.

“In any case, it seems that you haven’t met them yet.”

“Right. I haven’t seen any of them. Although there are still annoying people here.”

“Annoying people?”

“That Dragon King guy.”

Dragon King.

This was a being he’d heard of from Pannata earlier. (TL: Kekeke Pannata’s little brother)

It was the being he’d said was the ruler of this island.

“What kind of person is he?”

“A crazy one.”

“What do you mean?”

“He’s chasing me.”

“...what?”

Lukas stared blankly at the unexpected statement.

Sedi sighed in disgust.

“That son of a bitch is trying to court me.”

“...”

He wasn’t sure why, but this was a bigger blow to Lukas than he expected. (TL: Just became a daddy and someone is already trying to take his little girl)

* * *

“...what... Did you tell him?”

“Ha. As if I’d become the mate of a reptile bastard. I’d rather die.”

Sedi said these words through gritted teeth.

While Lukas was immersed in a feeling that he wasn’t sure how to describe, Sedi continued.

“But that guy... he’s strong.”

“Strong?”

“Un.”

Naturally, with Sedi's personality, if someone were to tell her nonsense like that, it would be difficult to imagine them surviving the aftermath.

The fact that he was able to meant...

"How strong is he?"

"I'm not sure."

Sedi frowned.

"I think he was holding back quite a bit of power. The power he revealed was already enough to crush those little lizards. Plus..."

After a moment of hesitation, she added.

"His scales are annoyingly tough."

Sedi didn't seem to want to talk about the Dragon King anymore, so Lukas nodded and changed the subject.

"Is there anything else you have to do on the island?"

"Why? Do you want to leave right away?"

"Right. We're already cutting it a bit close."

It was fortunate that he had managed to find Sedi today, but considering how long it would take to go back, he didn't think they could relax. Even if they were to move as fast as possible, they would arrive very close to the deadline.

Lukas didn't want to stay on this island any longer than necessary. Encountering the Absolute here would not be a good thing in the current situation, so he wanted to avoid that as much as possible.

No, it had to be avoided.

'Kasajin.'

He couldn't help but think that Kasajin was the Absolute who was probably staying on this island. After all, Kran, who he had kidnapped, had appeared around the same time that Arid mentioned that an Absolute was on this island.

It might have been a coincidence, but the timing was just a bit too coincidental.

In addition, the demonic energy on this island would have a fairly positive effect on the being known as the Demon King.

"Well, I wanted to hunt a few more Ancient Dragons. But it doesn't matter if we leave right now."

"If we see any on the way back, we'll hunt them. I'll help."

"That's great then."

With those words, Sedi stood up and patted her butt.

“Then shall we leave now?”

“Are you not going to say goodbye?”

When Lukas asked this, she tilted her head to the side.

“Goodbye? To whom?”

“To Pannata and the other Dragonmen. They seem to hold you in very high regard.”

“Hmph. Why do I have to say goodbye to them just because of that? I’m sure they’ll live well and eat well.”

Sedi seemed to have no feelings towards them.

But it was highly likely that the Dragonmen in the area would fall into chaos if she were to suddenly disappear. Even when he’d been hit in the face by Sedi, Pannata still maintained his attitude of respect and admiration.

Just before they descended the mountain, Lukas turned to look at the central part of Death Island.

“Have you ever been there?”

“A few times.”

“I heard that it is a very dangerous area. What’s in there?”

“That guy.”

She said these words like she didn’t even want to think about it.

With her attitude, it was easy for Lukas to guess who she was talking about.

“...the Dragon King?”

“Right. The central region is his territory. Even if I step a single foot in it, he will immediately be able to sense my location. Father should know how disgusting that feels. So I stopped going there.”

It felt like she wasn’t telling him something.

‘It’s strange.’

For Sedi, the dense demonic and death energy in the central region should be irresistible. If she had stayed there, she would definitely have absorbed more demonic energy than she had now.

But Lukas didn’t pursue it.

“Anyways, let’s go. Before that guy notices us.”

Lukas nodded.

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Sedi ran to the ground, while Lukas flew through the sky.

In all honesty, the most efficient method for him would have been to be carried by Sedi. After all, it would allow him to preserve his mana, and her running speed was faster than his flight spell unless he pushed his speed to the maximum.

“No. It’s fine.”

When Lukas bluntly refused like this, Sedi smiled slyly and stretched out her thin white arms.

“Or would you prefer I hug you? Like this.”

She then offered to hold him in her arms. An idea that he hated even more.

When Lukas shook his head firmly, Sedi burst into laughter. She probably knew that Lukas would never accept such an offer in the first place.

‘In any case, I won’t need to use my mana much anyway.’

It didn’t take very long for this expectation that Lukas had in his heart to be brutally crushed.

They encountered Ancient Dragons.

Not one of them, but three.

Each of them were extremely large and ferocious.

Rooaaar!

They all roared at the same time. The volume was so loud that it felt like his eardrums were about to be ripped apart. If Lukas had to fight them on his own, he would have probably needed to use all of his remaining mana.

This evaluation was enough to show how difficult these enemies were.

“Shut up!”

But now he had Sedi.

She immediately appeared above one of the Ancient Dragons and stomped its head into the ground.

Bang!

With a heavy sound, the Ancient Dragon’s head was buried into the ground to the point that it was barely visible. The force of the stomp was so great that even the ground around the hole was heavily cracked.

Sedi's single attack had instantly crushed the Ancient Dragon's skull and liquified the brain matter within. In short, it was an instakill.

A haze of demonic energy flowed from Sedi's body. In her current state, it wouldn't be wrong to say that Sedi's entire body had become a weapon. No, not just a weapon, a weapon of mass destruction.

She didn't even need Lukas' help.

In less than an hour, she cleanly dealt with the three Ancient Dragons.

"They actually came to us on their own. That saves us the trouble."

While humming happily, Sedi pulled their hearts from their chests and absorbed the dense demonic energy within them.

Squelch.

In a short amount of time, those incredibly large hearts shrunk.

Sedi looked content. She had a satisfied expression on her face as though she'd just had the best delicacy in the world.

"Each one's demonic energy has a distinct flavor."

“ ... ”

Those three Ancient Dragons that Sedi has just slain.

What would have happened if they were to appear somewhere, for example, a city on Combat Island.

If it wasn't one of the major cities, then without a doubt, it would become ruins within a single day. In terms of size and strength, those Ancient Dragons were beings that couldn't even be classified as monsters, but natural disasters.

And yet, these disasters had become nothing more than different flavored snacks for Sedi.

'It's unfortunate.'

'If it wasn't for the existence of the Absolute lurking somewhere on the island, Lukas would have preferred to leave Sedi on the island so that she could continue to increase her strength.

“I hope we can meet a few more.”

Sedi had said this half as a joke, but she knew that such an event was unlikely to happen. Although their population was by no means small, the probability of meeting an Ancient Dragon on Death Island was actually surprisingly low.

But that evening.

Roaaar!

Ancient Dragons appeared before them once again.

This time, there were five of them, more than before.

Lukas concentrated his mana and said.

“This time, I’ll help you.”

“You don’t have to. I just absorbed a lot of demonic energy, so I feel better than ever.”

“You might be full of energy, but the strain on your body won’t go away so easily.”

“...”

Sedi snorted with a daughter whose weakness had been immediately seen through by her father.

Then the battle began.

“...”

At the end, she had no choice but to admit.

Thanks to Lukas' help, the fatigue she felt at the end was significantly reduced compared to before.

The five Ancient Dragons this time were larger and more powerful than the previous group, but the fight had actually been easier than when she fought the three Ancient Dragons on her own.

Now that she thought about it, Sedi realised that she'd rarely ever fought together with other people. In fact, the only case that she could remember was the brief collaboration with Kran back on earth.

Their collaboration at that time hadn't been bad, but it certainly couldn't compare to the balance of having someone at the front with the other supporting them from behind.

However, this fight had taken longer than the one before.

This was because Lukas believed in a complete and easy victory even if it meant taking a bit longer to finish. Lukas didn't say anything to Sedi, but she understood his intentions, and slowed down to match his pace.

"We actually managed to get the hearts of a few more Ancient Dragons."

While she happily sang these words, she noticed Lukas' serious expression.

“Why do you look like that? Is something wrong?”

“...it feels a bit weird.”

“What do you mean?”

“We encountered eight Ancient Dragons today. Have you ever encountered a situation like this before?”

“Um... I think five is the most I have met in a single day.”

“...”

Now that she thought about it, she'd killed five Ancient Dragons the day she entered the Heavenly Realm.

In a way, while this situation wasn't impossible, it was highly unusual. Lukas felt that something was going on, but he still shook his head and decided to wait and see instead of making a conclusion now.

But the next day.

“...something's... going on.”

It was Sedi, not Lukas, who muttered these words while panting heavily.

She wiped some blood from her face while looking at the Ancient Dragon corpses that were scattered around them.

There were ten of them.

They had actually encountered ten Ancient Dragons at once.

No, they didn't encounter them...

"They came to us."

Sedi nodded at Lukas' words.

"I have never met so many Ancient Dragons at the same time. In the first place, it's almost impossible to encounter so many at once since Ancient Dragons rarely share their territory."

The five Ancient Dragons that she encountered when she first entered were a special case.

They all knew that they were equal in strength, and they were intelligent enough to know that if they fought each other, they would all be mutually destroyed.

But the group that they had just encountered was not like that at all.

Whether it was size, appearance, or strength, they were all different.

They were probably from different places as well.

And yet, as if they shared thoughts, they had all come from wherever they stayed to attack Lukas and Sedi.

Like they had received the orders from someone.

And Sedi knew the only being who could make Ancient Dragons do their bidding.

“...it’s the Dragon King.”

Sedi’s voice shook slightly as she said these words.

“It can only be that guy. All of the Ancient Dragons on Death Island are under his rule, so sending them to attack us is as easy as flicking a finger.”

Lukas was also certain that the movements of the Ancient Dragons were not natural.

What was the Dragon King’s plan? What was his goal?

Did he want to kill them? Or just hold them back?

He couldn't tell which it was yet.

Lukas frowned heavily.

Their schedule was being delayed a lot because of the Ancient Dragons. It had already been three days. According to the plan, they should have already arrived at the coast and laid their eyes on Temple Island, but now, they had only reached about halfway.

However, it wouldn't be easy to avoid the Ancient Dragons. Since they were all capable of flight and were, in fact, quite fast, it was hard to outrun them.

"...I have a bad feeling. So I think we should hurry up a bit more."

This was the conclusion that Lukas reached.

Sedi, who had finished absorbing all of the demonic energy, turned to look at him.

"How?"

"I have no choice but to fly at my maximum speed, even if it consumes my mana."

After saying that, Lukas walked up to Sedi and held her hand. Then their figures flickered before shooting into the sky.

As they flew through the sky, Sedi couldn't help but look back. With her enhanced vision, it was possible for her to clearly see dozens of kilometers away.

'There's still more still chasing us?'

And what she saw was several more Ancient Dragons flying towards them.

They were fast, but they still couldn't compare to Lukas' Fly spell. With their current speed, they were able to gradually pull away from their pursuers.

At that moment, Lukas was thinking about the safe zone guarded by the stone statues. The level of sorcery used in the area was quite high, so it might be possible for them to shake off the Ancient Dragons after they got close.

Without stopping to rest, Lukas flew through the air at full speed for two days and two nights. Even though he hadn't slept, he didn't feel much of a burden.(1)

And finally, Lukas and Sedi reached the shore.

"Hmm. The demonic energy in this place is really thin. Is it because of those statues?"

Sedi tapped on one of the statues as she asked this.

Instead of replying, Lukas checked his remaining mana.

[Current Mana 3614/10000]

'...about 3500.'

He had less than half of his reserves left, but it didn't matter since they had already arrived at their destination.

There should be no more threats, and as long as they returned to Temple Island, he would be able to quickly recover his mana.

They were finally able to take a breather.

Or so he thought.

Bang!

—An enormous beam of energy shot towards them from the direction they had come from.

It wasn't too late for him to react. However, Lukas simply stared at the energy beam without making any move to block it. This is because he could tell the energy beam wasn't aimed at them.

Lukas immediately realised what this enormous beam of energy was.

It was a destructive beam, or dragon breath attack that Ancient Dragons could shoot from their mouths.

Voosh-!

The dragon breath passed Lukas and shot across the ocean, splitting it apart as it flew. The force of the attack was so powerful, that despite flying overhead, it was still able to split the polluted waters beneath it like a miracle.

And it was only then that Lukas realised the target of the breath attack.

Temple Island.

Crackle-!

The dragon breath was incredibly bright, to the extent of almost burning the retinas of whoever saw it. For a moment, the black sky seemed to have become white.

Lukas had a bad feeling. Then the sound of a huge explosion ripped through the area.

Booom!

The explosion was so loud that it sounded like the very world was roaring.

The residual force of the explosion was enough to send storms of wind in every direction, and create enormous waves that were taller than many mountains.

Before the wind and waves settled, Lukas and Sedi realised something at the same time.

“...!”

Temple Island had disappeared.

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“What...”

Sedi muttered under her breath in slight disbelief. Then, she suddenly turned around and looked behind them.

“I didn’t think you’d try to run away without giving me an answer.”

Lukas also turned around when he heard a gentle voice from behind.

Standing there was a handsome man with vibrant green hair. The young and gentle appearance of this man didn't quite match the cold and desolate background that was Death Island.

He was so beautiful in fact, that he reminded Lukas of the Elves, a noble and beautiful race. But he wasn't fooled by his appearance.

After all, it was none other than this gentle man in front of them who had destroyed Temple Island.

"I still have to give you an answer? Then it's 'fuck off'."

Sedi grit her teeth and spoke to the man with a harsh voice. But he simply chuckled softly as if he didn't mind her words.

"That wasn't the answer I hoped to hear."

"So you won't let me go until you hear the answer you want? You disgusting son of a bitch."

"As I expected, you're really quick to understand. You are definitely the perfect fit to be my bride... By the way..."

The man then turned to Lukas, and unlike when he looked at Sedi, his gaze was cold.

"Who is that man standing beside you? He doesn't seem to be someone from the island."

“None of your business.”

“How could you say that? That man is standing beside my partner.”

It was at that moment that Lukas finally opened his mouth.

“Dragon King Kaz.”

“Hmm. You know who I am?”

“I’ve heard your name a few times.”

The Ruler of Death Island.

Was he simply mimicking a human form? He certainly couldn’t be classified as an ordinary Dragonling or Ancient Dragon. Then could he be considered a Dragonman? That wasn’t it either.

Despite his humanoid appearance, Lukas could still feel the ferocity that hid beneath the surface.

Dragonmen could only be considered human in a broad sense of the word. Like humans, they were social animals.

But this man was a being that did not belong anywhere near society.

“There’s something I’d like to ask you. Why did you destroy Temple Island?”

“The answer to that question is a bit complex. Firstly.”

Kaz turned his gaze to look at the place where Temple Island once stood.

“I’ve always disliked them. The only reason I left them for so long was because it’s annoying for me to leave this place. Well, I’ll admit that the Priestess also has some influence when it comes to that.”

“...”

“There really isn’t any special reason for it. I just decided to get rid of them since I was already here. Since I don’t usually go out, I tend to finish everything I need to all at once.”

He spoke in a very casual manner, as if it was an insignificant action.

Lukas knew that Temple Island was by no means a small island. And since it was used as a monitoring point for Death Island, it was surrounded by a strong barrier, one that was probably made by the Priestess herself.

But in the end, it was useless.

In the blink of an eye, the dragon breath released by Kaz shot across the ocean, shattered the barrier, and disintegrated the entire island.

Most of the people on Temple Island probably didn't even know how they died.

"Secondly, if I had left it alone, you guys would have fled to it. And then things would be much more annoying. As I said before, it's not easy for me to leave this island. But it's a simple task to get rid of an island that's within my line of sight. And finally."

Kaz smiled brightly.

"I thought I could get you to submit by showing off this level of power..."

"..."

"But this is completely outside of my expectations. You haven't lost even the slightest bit of courage."

"It's not that big of a deal to destroy a little island."

Sedi snapped coldly, but Kaz wasn't offended. Instead, he seemed to be amused by her reaction.

"That was only a fraction of my power. My partner."

“Who the hell is your partner?”

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a bit rebellious. The island truly does lack means of entertainment. Does acting like this make you happy?”

After saying that, he spread out his hands.

Sedi clicked her tongue.

“Father, sorry, but I don’t think we can just ignore him and leave.”

“I don’t think so either.”

Lukas sighed heavily as he said this.

Kaz’s true power was still unknown.

He’d said that the power he’d used to destroy Temple Island was just a fraction. It was possible that it was just an arrogant bluff, but Lukas didn’t think that was the case.

“Father? So you have a father-daughter relationship? You don’t look anything like him.”

Kaz chuckled as he said this.

On the other hand, Sedi didn't have any intention of talking to him any further.

"This bastard... his defense is insane. Even when I used my full strength to hit him, I was unable to leave a scratch. But he didn't look like this when I fought him..."

Sedi lowered her voice and continued.

"It's possible that he let his guard down after fighting me once. If there's a chance, we might be able to use that to our advantage." (TL: Aren't there voice transmission techniques? I'm pretty sure the Dragon King could still hear them even if they whispered...)

"Use your full power and go on the offense. I'll support you from the back while looking for weaknesses."

"Understood."

Immediately after saying that, Sedi disappeared.

Bang!

Lukas was relieved to find that his eyesight hadn't been suppressed as well. At the very least, his eyes could still keep up with Sedi's movements.

Currently, she was frozen in the same posture she had while launching a midair roundhouse kick, her instep pressed against Kaz' neck.

Sedi held nothing back. Although she had failed to leverage the force from her speed to its fullest, she still managed to unleash her full strength with that attack.

Normally, such an attack would smash the neck bones of her target.

Crack-

"Kuh..."

But this time, she was only left with a sore foot.

It was hard. Like kicking steel. No.

Even steel, one of the strongest metals, wouldn't have been able to withstand such a blow.

In any case, it was incredibly hard.

Kaz's defense was clearly stronger than her offense.

"This is such a harsh tantrum."

As he said this, Kaz smiled and reached up to grab Sedi's ankle.

But before he could, Sedi had already pulled her foot back, retreating a few steps before immediately kicking off from the ground and closing the distance again. Her movements were as fast as a bullet.

Nevertheless, Kaz made no effort to defend himself. His entire body was filled with openings, and it seemed that she would be able to deal lethal damage wherever she aimed.

Face, throat, heart, abdomen, groin.

Sedi extended her index and middle fingers and poked each of these vulnerable spots.

Saying it makes it seem like she did them in order, but these attacks were done so quickly that it was impossible to tell which one came first or last.

The reason she used two fingers was so she could control her demonic energy more precisely.

With this control, she created a needle thin thread of energy sharp enough to pierce through any obstacle at the tips of her fingers.

There was a tried and true method to break through an iron wall.

Concentrating the force on one point.

Just like a highly compressed jet of water could cut through even diamonds, Sedi condensed her demonic energy to create a similar tool.

Naturally, the resulting force and cutting power were dozens of times more powerful than water.

Crack!

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Sedi frowned.

Her attack didn't work at all. In fact, it felt like trying to stab a needle into a brick.

In the end, the only things that broke were Sedi's fingernails.

"Kuk."

There was a look of disappointment on her face. It was a bit childish for her to display such an expression when her attack didn't work, but at that moment, she couldn't help it.

Why the hell was this guy's defense so high?

“Stand back.”

Then she heard Lukas’ voice in her ear.

His voice was soft, but it was filled with confidence.

It was strange. She was certain that Lukas was much weaker than her now, so it should be impossible for any of his attacks to work on Kaz.

But if it was Lukas...

If it was the man she recognised as her father, maybe he might really be able to do something.

Rumble...

The air around them began to vibrate slightly.

Realising that this phenomenon was not natural, Kaz lifted his face and sniffed the air.

He looked up at the sky. Was something being created there?

“What is that? It doesn’t look like sorcery...”

Suddenly, a white bolt of lightning shot down from the sky. Like a spear thrown down from heaven by God, the bolt of lightning penetrated Kaz’s body.

7-star spell. Gigantic Thunder.

Once again, he was forced to use a large chunk of his depleting mana reserves. But it couldn’t be helped. After all, Lukas didn’t think 6-star and lower spells would have any effect against the Dragon King.

No, in truth, he didn’t believe a 7-star would have much of an effect either.

“That sorcery is very interesting.”

As expected, Kaz’s voice sounded from within the dust cloud that had been created by the lightning attack.

When the dust cleared, his body was revealed. Sparks were flying off of his body, but other than that, he was completely fine. There wasn’t a single visible wound.

“This...”

Sedi was speechless. Even the spell that Lukas had faith in didn’t work.

This was the effect that Kaz was aiming for, but Lukas was not discouraged. Instead, he felt like he had solved the mystery of Kaz's defense to an extent.

"He's probably strengthening the area right before receiving an attack."

A faint smile stretched across Kaz's face when he heard this.

"Why do you say that?"

"I saw your entire body become green in the instant before you were hit by the Gigantic Thunder. It looked like a thin film appeared and covered your skin."

"You've got some good eyes. But I didn't intend to hide it in the first place."

Because it wouldn't change anything even if they did find out.

"Have you ever heard of 'Absolute Defense'? In this world, my scales are probably the closest things to this concept. Personally, I call them Dragon Scales."

"...Dragon."

Lukas muttered softly.

“Defense like that is not something one can just be born with.”

“Good guess. I have tempered my scales countless times over the past thousands of years. Just like a blacksmith hammering metal tens of thousands of times... I must admit, at first, I just used it as a way to escape my boredom. After all, as I said before, there aren't many means of entertainment on this island.”

“...”

“At first, my scales couldn't handle it. They constantly cracked and broke. But as time passed, the cracks gradually decreased. Did you know? There is a huge volcano at the center of this island. The temperature at its core reaches tens of thousands of degrees, which is enough to cause most things to burn and melt the instant they enter.”

Kaz chuckled softly.

“That's where my house is. For me, it's warm and comfortable. I get the best sleep when I'm there.”

“You talk big, is it that big of a deal to withstand temperatures of around a few thousand degrees?”

“...”

Those words wiped the smile from Kaz's face.

In an instant, the surroundings became a few degrees colder.

“Since you have so much confidence in your scales, we should test it out.”

“What do you mean?”

“My attack.”

Lukas looked down at his arm.

“I don’t have much energy left now. I’m going to pour all of it into a single spell, and I think that no matter how tough your scales are, you won’t be able to withstand it.”

“Hmm. Is this the so-called last resort? Nevertheless, it sounds like fun. If I endure this attack of yours, I’m sure my companion will willingly run into my arms.”

Of course, Sedi had no intention of ever doing something like that. She scoffed at Kaz and raised her middle finger towards him.

“So, what kind of attack are you going to use?”

“I’ve already used it. You just need to stay still.”

“What?”

At that moment, Kaz suddenly felt his back begin to burn. Since it had been a very long time since he'd experienced this sensation, he couldn't help but turn around to see the culprit.

What he found was the sun floating behind him.

No. It wasn't the sun. It was much too close for that to be the case. Nevertheless, it became hard to breathe as even the air around them began to burn.

8-star spell, Another Sun.

"You said that you can withstand tens of thousands of degrees. Another Sun is not that hot, but it's definitely hotter than magma."

It was already too late for him to dodge. The Another Sun wasn't just floating in position like the real sun. Instead, it was shooting towards Kaz like a meteor.

Boom!

The instant it collided with the ground, an enormous wave of heat soared in every direction.

Without even trying to defend himself, Lukas took a deep breath before collapsing onto his butt.

"Father!"

Sedi hurriedly rushed to his side and blocked the incoming red flames from Another Sun.

“Are you alright?”

“I’ve used almost all of my mana.”

“I see. Your attack was very powerful.”

“...it wasn’t enough.”

“What?”

“Sedi, I was wrong. We shouldn’t have fought Kaz.”

“What are you talking about?”

[This certainly was hot.]

Just as Sedi was wondering if Lukas had become delirious because of mana loss, they heard footsteps approaching them from behind.

Lukas could see the figure of someone walking out of the ball of flames that was Another Sun.

[However, I think this proves that your little magic tricks don't work on me.]

It was Kaz.

He looked completely different now. He no longer looked like a human but like a Dragonman. No, his appearance was still a bit too exaggerated to be called a Dragonman. Even when compared to the ones who lived on Death Island.

The scales that covered his body were a disturbing shade of green, and a pair of enormous wings were folded on his back.

However, the thing that made Lukas' heart heavy was the fact that there wasn't a single injury on his body.

There wasn't even a scorch mark.

It had to be mentioned that this was the same spell that had, at one point, killed a Demigod, although they were in a weakened state. A spell with that much destructive power had hit him directly, but it had no effect at all.

What this meant was simple.

"...Dragon King Kaz, is no longer mortal."

Lukas realised that he'd made a big mistake.

The Absolute on Death Island that Arid had told him about. He'd always assumed that it was one of the Absolutes who had entered at the same time as he did.

He hadn't thought of any other possibilities

It was a hasty judgement on his part.

After all, even though it was only a world created for the Great Game, there was still a possibility.

Dragon King Kaz...

Was an Absolute who had been born in this world.

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What most people didn't know was that Death Island hadn't always been in such a desolate state.

In the past, it was just like the other islands, with lush forests, towering mountains, and beautiful lakes that combined to create a beautiful landscape.

The natural environment on Death Island had been comparable to Untamed Island.

Resources were abundant. Food and drink overflowed everywhere. And one didn't have to specially adapt or wear protective clothing to survive.

Of course, this didn't mean that Death Island was any less dangerous than it was now. The population density of living beings on fertile land was naturally much higher than in a desolate area. And no matter how abundant resources were, disputes over rights and territory were bound to happen.

Beasts were no exception to this rule. In fact, territorial disputes between beasts were usually much more cruel and brutal than between sapient beings.

However, none of the Dragonmen living in the current era could remember that beautiful sight.

Except for one person.

In the current era, Dragonlings have deep maternal affection for their offspring, but that wasn't the case in the old era. Perhaps because they were among the island's top predators, most Dragonlings didn't have many children. And if they did, they often left them unattended.

They didn't break the eggs they laid, but they also didn't keep them safe until they hatched. Therefore, most Dragonlings died before they were even born.

For those predators who sat around the middle of the food chain, Dragonling eggs were an easy and nutritious meal.

Among these creatures were some who looked similar to saber-toothed tigers. Their fangs were longer and much sharper than their counterpart, and they were many times larger, but their appearances were still vaguely similar.

For these creatures, Ancient Dragon eggs were their favorite meal. And with their sharp fangs, the shells of the eggs were of no concern.

But one day,

An unexpected change occurred that would affect the ecosystem of the island for tens of thousands of years.

A saber-toothed tiger found a Dragonling egg. But this Dragonling egg was different from the others. It was green.

Since ancient times, green has always been a color that was considered unappetising. The same was true for the saber-toothed tiger, which ate meat. The color of the egg reminded it of grass, something that it couldn't even think of eating.

Or at least that would have been the case if it wasn't a Dragonling egg.

The saber-toothed tiger didn't care that the color was different. Without any more hesitation, the saber-toothed tiger opened its mouth and bit down.

Crack-

There was the satisfying cracking sound. Followed by the taste of savory liquid flowing down its throat, but... the saber-toothed tiger realised that something was wrong. This egg tasted different from usual. It was salty, and had a bit of a fishy flavor.

This was something the saber-toothed tiger had tasted before, and could even be called something it liked, but it was not a flavor it expected to taste in an egg.

It was at that moment, while it was wondering what was going on, that it felt a great deal of pain.

“Rooaar!”

It let out a loud roar.

It was only then that it realised that one of its fangs had broken.

What the saber-toothed tiger had been drinking weren't the contents of the egg, but the blood from its broken tooth. There wasn't even a scratch on the egg.

Furious, the saber-toothed tiger rushed forwards and fiercely attacked the egg. However, neither its fangs nor its claws were able to damage the egg.

It even used its head to push the egg off of a cliff, but the egg was still fine.

Eventually, the saber-toothed tiger gave up on eating the egg.

But it wasn't the only challenger. Many ferocious, large, and powerful beasts approached the egg. After all, Dragonling eggs were a popular delicacy for all the predators on the island.

However, without fail, they all had the same result as the first saber-toothed tiger. They were all forced to return to their dens with broken claws and fangs, without leaving a single scratch on the egg.

The egg didn't hatch for a strangely long time. Usually, at the latest, Dragonling eggs would show signs of hatching around three months. But even after 6 months, the egg didn't so much as budge.

Then, two years after all the predators had lost interest in it and shoved it into a quiet corner, the egg hatched.

It was the birth of Dragon King Kaz.

When he was younger, Kaz was innately ferocious, almost to an extreme. He trampled upon any creature that entered his sight. Even when he wasn't hungry, he killed the animals around him for fun. Less than half a year after his birth, Kaz had already learned the joys of the hunt and slaughter.

After a year, the area that he'd hatched in had already become Kaz's territory. By that time, Kaz was confident that he was a special being who was the only one of his kind in this world.

For example, when compared to Dragonlings, he was so small that he could be considered deformed, but even the lord of the area wasn't Kaz' opponent.

Secondly, his scales were invincible.

The teeth or claws of most beings couldn't hurt his scales. In his life, it was only possible for him to win.

Kaz didn't know the meaning of defeat.

Nevertheless, there had been many times when his life had been in danger. After all, Death Island is incredibly large and the lords of each were by no pushovers.

However, even when he was on the brink of death and was forced to escape, Kaz always believed that he would win if he ever met his opponent again.

This was because the more he fought, the more injuries he suffered. And after a few days, when his scales healed, they would be much stronger than before. (TL: So he's a Saiyanling)

In the end, Kaz survived.

No, he thrived.

As his experience increased, he gradually became a horrifying being that brought terror to the hearts of all that encountered him.

The river of time slowly flowed.

The seasons constantly changed.

And over time, as the rivers and mountains constantly changed, the mutated Dragonling with the naturally hard scales became known as the Dragon King.

The first ones to follow him were the intelligent beings who lived on Death Island, the Dragonmen.

Then came the beasts such as the saber-toothed tigers and the Dragonlings who were driven by their instincts.

Hundreds of years passed after that.

It had also been many years since he'd completely conquered the island.

At that time, Kaz felt nothing but boredom.

He didn't have a rival.

He'd already grown tired of killing Dragonmen, or finding some new innovative way to kill Dragonlings.

So Kaz prepared to leave the island.

He spread his wings, hoping that he'd find an opponent that could give him a challenge somewhere else.

But before he could even head out to sea, Kaz encountered the worst person he could ever meet.

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For the first time, their fighting spirit began to flicker and dim.

The ones in this situation were none other than Lukas and Sedi, the two strongest participants in Lukas' team. But even their combined strength still wouldn't be enough.

This was something that they were certain of. After all, the gap between mortals and absolutes wasn't something that could be filled with numbers.

An Absolute wasn't an opponent that one could defeat by relying on strategy, schemes or luck.

And to make matters worse. Lukas was in the worst possible condition at that moment. He had less than 500 mana remaining.

With only that much, it was impossible for him to use 7 star or higher spells.

[It seems that you reached the end of your ropes before I even needed to act.]

Kaz softly muttered those words, his eyes flashing with a strange light.

[Although it was only for a moment, feeling heat again was an extremely unpleasant experience. So disappear.]

The moment he opened his mouth, a Dragon Breath shot out with almost no warning.

This Dragon Breath was at least twice as strong as the one Kaz had used to destroy Temple Island.

Dozens of countermeasures flashed in Lukas' mind. But none of them could guarantee his survival.

Nevertheless, there was one thing that was abundantly clear.

This was an attack that he couldn't block. The destructive power of Kaz's Dragon Breath was much higher than Lukas could handle in his current state.

Then what should he do? Could he dodge it? The range of his Blink spell was extremely limited. And with a Dragon Breath of this size, even if he were able to avoid being hit by the direct blast, the aftermath would still be enough to tear his entire body to shreds.

Taht!

But as Lukas was trying to figure out what to do, Sedi appeared in front of him. With Lukas behind her as if she was protecting him, Sedi stretched her arms in front of her and received the breath attack with her front.

Grrng!

Her mind went blank. For a moment, she lost consciousness.

The blood vessels in her eyes burst and tears of blood rolled down her cheeks.

“Sedi!”

Lukas called out her name almost on reflex. Sedi couldn't answer because she fully focused on defending. It felt like her palms were on fire, but she knew that if she let her guard down for even an instant, she would be blown away.

‘Dammit.’

She had grown much stronger after absorbing so much demonic energy, but it was still hard for her to face an Absolute.

Lukas didn't just quietly watch Sedi defend from behind. Instead, he squeezed out the last of his mana and tried to attack.

Papapa!

Dozens of spells appeared at the same time. It was a colorful display, but it wasn't very practical. After all, they were all 3 star spells. It would be hard for him to use more than that since he didn't have enough mana.

This was the same technique he used not so long ago in his fight against the Ancient Dragon.

He attacked simultaneously with various attributed spells to find out which one they were more susceptible to.

Bang bang bang!

The spells crashed fiercely against Kaz's body, but there was no way those attacks would work.

Lukas didn't believe it was possible to hurt him with a 3 star spell, even if he was weak towards its attribute.

So he analyzed. It didn't matter if the flaw was miniscule. If even a single weakness could be found, then there would be some possibility of turning this situation around.

[...you should know by now. Your little magic tricks won't work.]

But there wasn't a single flaw on Kaz's entire body. Did that mean that it didn't work at all?

Lukas bit his lip.

'There is no such thing as perfect defense.'

He knew that for a fact.

Even if the durability of his scales is close to absolute defense, he could just aim for places that weren't protected by them.

Eyeballs, anus, testicles, mouth... If he were to hit any of these places with the right spell. (TL: Lukas...)

If he could damage his organs directly...

However, it would take a high level of technique to accurately hit such a vital point.

'I can calculate it.'

Even at the moment, Lukas' brain had come up with about three different alternative methods he could use.

However...

'I don't have enough mana.'

In the end, no matter how he twisted and turned, the conclusion was always the same.

Even so, he had no choice but to try.

If there was anything that he could dig into in his current state, it would be Kaz's pride. He had absolute faith in his defense.

"Sedi."

"...un."

Sedi grunted as she wiped blood away from her eyes. Her condition was also not the best. She could tell that her body was reaching its limit, but there was nothing she could do about it.

"Attack his mouth."

"Mouth?"

"Right."

"...sure."

Sedi immediately understood what Lukas was saying. It was impossible to attack him from the outside, so he intended to attack his insides...

But she still had her doubts.

“...that guy... he’s arrogant, but he’s not stupid. He probably knows that he has only a few weaknesses. Besides, it would be impossible to attack it if he keeps his mouth shut.”

“There are no scales around his lips, and even if there were, the defense of that area would be much lower than in other places. His teeth shouldn’t be as hard as his scales. If you managed to put your hand in his mouth and then pump a large amount of demonic energy into him...”

“His body will inflate like a balloon.”

Would things really work out so easily?

Although she had this thought, Sedi still sighed.

“...well, that’s the only thing we can aim for right now.”

Her demonic energy was still at full capacity. However, her body was the problem.

Her stamina was almost depleted.

If she were to push herself much more, it’s possible that her frail body would collapse in on itself. No matter how powerful an engine was, it was useless if the body that supported it was not strong enough.

The amount of demonic energy she had digested was already reaching the limits of what a mortal body could contain.

'This body is really annoying.'

This fight would end here.

Sedi increased her concentration to the maximum.

"Now."

Lukas' mutter was the signal.

Sedi immediately got close to Kaz once again.

[Are you still not giving up?]

He seemed to be slowly losing interest.

Kaz saw Sedi lift her fist. Was she aiming for his mouth? It was a stupid and one dimensional idea. It would be fine if she just wanted to hit him, but looking at her eyes, it seemed that she was betting her life and death on this single attack.

In that case, it would be better to block it. One arm should be enough...

Crack!

[...!]

At that moment, both of his arms became trapped by something. Kaz glanced down and found that the ground had risen up without him noticing, and trapped his hands.

It was easy to shake off, but that moment's delay was all that was needed.

Paak!

Sedi's fist accurately struck Kaz's mouth.

And he could tell immediately.

Sedi had used her full strength in that punch.

"Eat this! You disgusting motherfu-!"

Fwoosh!

Before she even finished speaking, an enormous amount of demonic energy flowed out from Sedi's fist, down his oesophagus and into his intestines.

Kaz staggered backwards.

[Uk... urk... kuh...]

A strange sound came from his mouth.

By this time, Lukas had already fallen to one knee, feeling dizzy.

This was the first time in thousands of years that he'd experienced mana depletion.

This had to work.

Even if it didn't, it had to have some effect.

If this attack didn't work, then they had no chance of winning.

Suddenly, Kaz stopped moving.

[...huhuhu...]

Then he began to chuckle.

The moment he looked up at them with an innocent smile on his face, Lukas realised their situation had reached its worst.

“...how? I pumped demonic energy directly into your internal organs.”

[That was your mistake.]

“What are you talking about?”

[Do you know why this place is called Death Island?]

They didn't know. Nor were they curious.

However, Kaz continued to talk without caring about his listener's feelings.

[There was a big fight here in the past. Against the only being in the Heavenly Realm who can be compared to me. The only time I've ever been truly defeated in my life. That woman is the first being that I've never seen a chance of defeating if we fought again.]

“That doesn’t sound like it has anything to do with the island.”

“It does. You see, most of the creatures on the island died in the aftermath of that battle.”

“What...?”

No, wait a minute.

Sedi’s face turned pale as a random thought popped into her head.

She had been so focused on his scales that she hadn’t even thought of this possibility.

The central region of Death Island,

The region where the demonic energy was the thickest,

That place... That was where the Dragon King lived.

[My partner. The demonic energy that you use.]

Kaz spoke in a calm voice.

Then, an explosion of demonic energy flowed out of his body.

[It is a power that I am very familiar with.]

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The fight lasted for an extremely long time.

Kaz had suffered through long fights before. He had even grown used to fighting on an almost daily basis.

With his experience, he knew that in a long fight, the most important things were concentration and composure.

In all honesty, whenever Kaz fought, he still had room to plan and think. This was the case even in fights when both sides were being pushed to the extreme.

But for him, those situations couldn't be called 'crises'.

Not like this.

For the first time in his life, Kaz fought with every ounce of his concentration without even the slightest leeway.

Fwoosh!

A Dragon Breath shot out of Kaz's mouth. This attack was so powerful that even small islands would be instantly obliterated.

Taht.

But his opponent simply swatted it away like it was nothing. One of his most powerful attacks was treated like an annoying fly.

[What the hell are you, you crazy bitch...!]

"Something that surpasses your understanding."

She replied in a flat tone. Beneath the hood of her robe, her hair, which seemed to be a different color whenever he managed to see it, flowed like a halo around her head. He wondered if the color of her hair changed depending on the direction in which the light was refracted.

But that wasn't the only weird thing.

Even during their fight, her intonation and manner of speech changed from time to time, and every time they did, her attack style also changed.

It was like fighting a large number of beings at the same time instead of just one, and it was driving him insane.

[You... crazy bitch...!]

Kaz let out a loud roar. It was so powerful that it forced all of the living beings on the island to tremble in fear, but the woman continued to rush to him without any signs of flinching.

He hurried to defend himself, and the fight continued.

Kaz never had any chance of winning.

And as expected, he lost.

It was a complete and utter defeat.

By the time the fight had ended, the entire island had become a wasteland. He didn't even know how long they had been fighting.

Kaz coughed out a mouthful of blood onto the ground of the now devastated lands which had once been lush and beautiful.

[Cough...!]

“...”

“Wh..y?”

Doubts had begun to appear around halfway through the fight. He was certain that it had been going on for far too long. Compared to Kaz, who was covered in dust and injuries, the woman didn't even have a single smudge on her clothing.

The difference between them was obvious.

[If you wanted to kill me, it wouldn't take this long. Why did you... Why are you sparing me?]

"Because you have potential."

The woman's temperament seemed to change once again.

...Crazy bitch. Kaz suppressed the swear words that appeared in his heart and struggled back to his feet.

[What the hell are you talking about?]

The veil over the woman's face fluttered in the wind. This time, the hair that was revealed appeared green.

What the hell did she look like?

Kaz couldn't help but feel curious about the face behind that veil. At the same time, he was skeptical.

Even after fighting so desperately, he still hadn't been able to remove at least that thin piece of fabric in front of her face.

"Your innate ferocity. It would be a waste to kill you when you have something like that."

[...]

"To become a superior being, you need dignity. Until that happens, I will not let you leave this island."

After hearing those last few words, Kaz's consciousness faded. And when he opened his eyes again, he realised immediately.

His very existence had been bound to the land beneath him, the island that would later be known as Death Island.

He had become a being incapable of leaving the island on his own.

* * *

As you accumulate combat experience, you gain the ability to sense certain things.

For example, whether your opponent had the will and means to continue fighting.

This was something that could easily be inferred from facial expressions, bodily movements, and attitude.

Kaz grinned fiercely.

That attack just now was definitely their trump card.

Seeing that it had also failed, they should be feeling desperate now.

‘—no.’

That guy was different.

Unlike Sedi, who was frowning at the front, the man behind her showed no signs of giving up.

This caused a glint to appear in Kaz’s eyes.

This guy was really interesting.

He was much weaker than Sedi, and he was completely exhausted with no more energy at his disposal. He had a lot of interesting tricks, but none of them worked on him.

This was something that all of them were aware of. And yet, this man still burned with fighting spirit without backing down in the slightest.

Perhaps he was used to being in such desperate situations.

Otherwise...

[Do you still have other means left?]

“...”

[For me, fighting has become rather boring. Except for one, everyone that I have faced lost without much suspense. I had high hopes for you guys... but I guess this was to be expected. Should I say the problem is me? I suppose my unreasonable strength is the one thing I always fail to factor in.]

...Kaz could use demonic energy.

Lukas felt that he had finally peeked slightly into the secret that was Kaz's absolute defense.

No matter how strong his scales were, it was strange that he could so casually accept the punches of Sedi, someone who was at the very peak of mortality. But now, it was revealed that Kaz could also use demonic energy.

So in truth, it was just that he was a bad matchup for Sedi.

It was like throwing a fireball at a monster made of fire.

'Other means?'

He didn't have any. Well, in all honesty, he did have a few left.

Lukas' gaze drifted to the staff in his left hand.

[Staff of the Distant Night Sky]

The only staff in this world, created for him personally by Nekdu.

The possibility of a bumpy path lay with this staff.

'...however.'

To do that, he would have to get closer to Kaz. Close enough that he would be able to reach out and touch him.

But how?

Should he just walk up to him?

Kaz was conceited and made no effort to defend himself. It was clear that he didn't think Lukas was much of an enemy, so he probably wouldn't consider Lukas a threat and allow him to approach him.

...But that was only a possibility. There was no guarantee, and the risk was high.

Compared to the power Kaz currently had, Lukas was no better than an insect.

With just a slight swing of his hand, Lukas' entire body would become a mist of blood. It was a tragic thought for an Absolute, but it was the truth. So rather than rage at the ridiculousness of the situation, it was better to accept it.

'It doesn't matter if he attacks me.'

However, the attack couldn't be so strong as to kill him in a single hit.

Since that was the case, there was only one thing he could do.

"Dragon King Kaz."

Provocation.

Lukas' lips twisted into a sneer.

"You are not a true Absolute."

[...]

Kaz tilted his head to the side.

[Absolute? I don't think I understand the exact meaning behind your use of that word.]

"So you don't even know that. I guess I'll have to explain it to you. Absolutes are miraculous beings that are so rare it's hard for even a single one to appear in a universe."

[Sounds interesting. Hard to find even a single one in an entire universe... If that is the case then Dragon King Kaz is the only one suitable for it.]

"No. You're not even close to that level."

Kaz's eyebrow twitched slightly when he heard this, then he spoke in a flat tone.

"Don't be ridiculous. You inferior being. You're not even as good as my toenail. Are you trying to say you are superior to me?"

“Do you think I am inferior to you? Sedi and I are true Absolutes who have stepped into that level that you have yet to reach. We have only been weakened because of the circumstances now, but at our peak, it wouldn’t take more than a thought to completely erase you.”

Kaz’s sneer disappeared, his face becoming completely expressionless. This was proof that Lukas’ provocation was working.

This was a tense moment. It was a gamble. It was possible that Kaz would lose all reasoning and kill him with one blow.

So Lukas intended to keep him as rational as possible.

“This weak man in front of you, and Sedi, who you are trying to claim as your own, are real Absolutes. That’s why we find you so ridiculous. I can’t believe that you would proclaim yourself to be strong when you haven’t even fully escaped the bonds of the flesh. It’s still too soon for you.”

[Stop talking.]

His voice changed.

Sedi’s eyes twitched slightly.

She couldn’t understand why Lukas was provoking Kaz to such an extent.

Of course, the fact that her last attack didn't work wasn't enough to make Sedi give up. Instead, she simply felt that they had to find another avenue.

However, provoking Kaz at this moment was like suicide. It was like asking for directions to the nether road.

"F-, father."

Ignoring Sedi's call, Lukas continued.

"You are bound to this island. You were probably chained up after being brutally beaten by someone."

[...]

Kaz's expression became solemn.

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Lukas looked at Kaz's expression, realising that this was his greatest anguish.

[Krrrr...]

Like a beast, Kaz lowered his head slightly as a deep growl echoed from his throat.

But this didn't scare Lukas at all. Instead, it caused the corners of his lips to raise up slightly.

"The solitude of an Absolute is something one can only experience after standing at the very top of at least one universe. Foolish creature."

What happened next almost seemed to happen instantaneously.

Kaz's figure disappeared from where he was standing.

"...kuk."

And appeared in front of Lukas with his hand around his throat.

"You son of a bitch!"

Enraged, Sedi tried to kick Kaz's hand away, but Kaz stretched his other hand towards her and fired a Dragon Breath.

"...!!"

He could fire breath attacks with his hands as well as his mouth?

Sedi crossed her arms and tried to block the Dragon Breath, but in her weakened state, it was impossible to perfectly defend against it.

Boom!

Unable to withstand the force behind the attack, her small figure was sent flying into the distance.

Lukas looked closely at Kaz.

He had completely lost his composure. Unlike before, he hadn't restrained himself in that attack. This meant that in his anger, he no longer cared even about the wellbeing of Sedi, whom he called his partner.

Kaz probably didn't think about Sedi for more than an instant, as his burning gaze once again turned to Lukas.

[...you... have gone too far.]

His voice was cold.

Lukas couldn't breathe. Kaz's grip was so tight that his fingernails dug into his flesh. If he were to squeeze even a little harder, then the bones in his neck would be crushed instantly and he would die.

However, the fact that he hadn't done so immediately proved that his plan had worked.

Although killing him was as easy as twisting a baby's arm, he was still keeping Lukas alive.

In addition, the pressure on his neck was just enough that he could only get the smallest amount of air needed to keep him conscious.

This meant that he wanted to see his reaction before he killed him. Kaz was an extremely arrogant being, and Lukas had looked down on him. So he wouldn't let him die easily. Even if he was going to kill him, he still wanted to hear his last words.

"...eat."

[What?"]

Lukas spoke more clearly this time.

"Eat this."

Lukas pushed the jewel on the tip of his staff into Kaz's mouth. (TL...this... um... T~T I couldn't think of a better wording)

With the jewel in his mouth, Kaz stared at Lukas mockingly. His eyes seemed to be asking 'What are you going to do with this stick?'

It was hard, but that was it. (TL: Author-nim... please...) (PR: Oh my...)

It didn't even have spikes on it. No, even if it was a sword, he wouldn't be able to harm him.

Lukas also expected this reaction.

Kaz had the constant desire to show off. After receiving his opponent's attack with just his body, he would show off his confident figure and enjoy the sight of his opponent drowning in despair.

'It's distasteful, but more than that, it's dangerous.'

It was this very desire to show off that was working in Lukas' favor.

It had paved the path for a comeback.

He felt bad for Nekdu, who worked hard to make it, but it was time to say goodbye to the [Staff of the Distant Night Sky].

Crack!

The staff broke.

Or to be precise, the jewel at the tip broke.

A large amount of mana was concentrated in that jewel which was refined from an Ancient Dragon's heart. The mana within the jewel could be considered the dregs of mana that were left whenever the staff was used to cast spells, and usually increased at a gradual pace. However, Lukas had been using his mana constantly ever since he'd come to Death Island, which had caused the accumulation to be much faster.

There was enough mana in it to cast a single 7-star spell. Unfortunately, there was only one way to access that mana.

By destroying the jewel.

Crack!

[...!]

Kaz's eyes widened.

Seeing this, Lukas smiled.

"This will be a little different from demonic energy."

With those words, Lukas casted his final spell.

Explosion.

With his soft whisper, an explosion occurred in Kaz's mouth. (TL: T~T)

* * *

[...!!]

He couldn't even scream. For a moment, it felt like he'd lost consciousness.

What he was feeling far surpassed the level of intense pain.

A large explosion had occurred in his mouth.

Right. A very large explosion.

Lukas' observation had been correct. Kaz also had a few weaknesses, and his mouth was one of them.

There were no scales in his mouth. In other words, he couldn't train or increase his mouth's defense. There were very few creatures with armored tongues.

The explosion had ripped through Kaz's mouth, crushing his tongue, breaking his teeth, and shattering the roof of his mouth.

His skull shook and his internal organs quaked.

Kaz's entire body spasmed like a frog that had touched an exposed wire.

"Ku-, guk-, urk-..."

Blood poured from his mouth. Within this stream of blood that poured onto his chest were broken teeth and pieces of flesh from his tongue.

"Huff, huff..."

Lukas was gasping on the floor in front of him. He had used the last of his mana to stimulate the explosion. The mana needed to do so wasn't much, but even 'wasn't much' was 'too much' for Lukas in his current state.

This had forced him to use up some of his vitality and life energy to replace the mana. They were incredibly inefficient, and the side effects were horrific, but he didn't have a choice.

This was the reason why he could barely pick himself up, and his consciousness was blurred. He was exhausted. To the point of not even knowing where he was at that moment.

Nevertheless, he knew one thing.

Kaz was still alive. He was in shock, but still not in a state that would allow Lukas to kill him.

But it wasn't up to Lukas to finish him off.

"Se-, di."

Just before collapsing into unconsciousness, Lukas muttered her name one more time.

Kaz's scales were hard. Nevertheless, he still had weaknesses. If he couldn't concentrate, he wouldn't be able to put up a solid defense. Just as one clenched their muscles when expecting a blow, he focused his mind on his scales.

Since that was the case, Kaz's defensive ability would naturally plunge now that he was in a situation where he could barely think or move his body because of the intense pain he was experiencing. But even in this state, his natural defense would still be enough to block the attacks of most beings.

However, Sedi didn't fall under the same category as 'most beings'.

Paht!

Sedi, who had been sent flying by the Dragon Breath, shot towards Kaz. She was bleeding all over, but there was venom in her gaze.

Paak!

[Kuk...!]

Kaz tried to defend himself, but the scales that he was so proud of shattered and fell like broken marble.

Her attack had dealt damage.

Sedi immediately realised that her attacks were actually working, unlike before.

Nevertheless, it was too early for her to be happy about it. She cleared her mind. This wasn't the time to let her guard down.

'If I miss this opportunity...!'

They wouldn't win.

Papapapak!

She punched Kaz all over his body like he was a sandbag. In only a few seconds, she had already hit him dozens of times.

Sedi's fists glowed with a dark red hue. Perhaps all of her skin covered by her clothes was also the same color. The demonic energy she was using, which had already surpassed the level that a mortal could handle, was slowly corroding her body.

But she didn't stop.

She couldn't stop.

She forced her screaming joints and muscles to move.

One more punch.

Hit a little harder.

[Kuk... guk... kuh...]

Kaz felt like his vision was spinning around.

His brain felt like it was bouncing from one side of his skull to the other, his mouth hurt like hell, his internal organs were gradually becoming mush. All of this, along with Sedi's consecutive attacks, made it hard for him to regain his senses.

Nevertheless, Kaz reached an instinctive conclusion.

His current situation was extremely dangerous.

'Have to stop her... somehow...'

Just as he had this thought, Sedi shoved even more demonic energy into her small fist.

Tutuk.

This time, it took her a few seconds to concentrate the energy into her fist. This was proof that she was preparing a big attack.

As the seconds passed, Sedi's fist gradually became black, and her veins stood out starkly.

Danger.

Although he couldn't see it very clearly, Kaz's senses screamed at him. A chill went up his spine.