

**Great Mage 561**

**Volume 2 - Chapter 261**

A droplet of water slowly formed on Nodiesop's finger.

"...what are you doing?"

"I don't want to waste my external force on mere mortals. One drop is enough to deal with you."

"Are you saying you blocked all of our attacks with just that one drop of water?"

"It's not just to block. This drop is enough to take your lives as well."

The drop of water wriggled as if it were alive before taking on other forms. It took the shape of a spear before flattening to become an extremely thin membrane.

Were there attacks really blocked by this thin membrane that was barely visible to the naked eye?

"I have a rough idea of your level now. I was wary of your explosive growth since this world was created by the Rulers themselves, but in the end, you're still mortals. Why don't we call your Master? He should be aware of the difference in our power by now."

"..."

It was only then that Leo got a vague understanding of the situation.

Despite his bravado, this man was still wary of Lukas, who hadn't made an appearance yet. The reason he was saving his external force was also in preparation for his fight against Lukas.

'He doesn't know that Master can't even lift a finger right now.'

If it wasn't for his own thoughts holding him back, Sedi, Min Ha-rin and Leo might already be dead.

After thinking that far, he found it hard to suppress the urge to laugh. Their Master was currently weaker than a newborn baby. But even in that state, Lukas was still protecting them.

'However, we won't get any help from Master in this fight.'

They had already decided to do it on their own. Even if they would lose their lives, they'd decided to do it together.

Still, anything that could be used, should be used.

Currently, Nodiesop was wary of Lukas, who had yet to make an appearance.

'We have to think of a way to make use of that delusion.'

He wasn't confident that he could think of a plan, but they still had to do something.

Even if that something was only a bit better than what they were doing currently.

\* \* \*

"...cough!"

He spat out a mouthful of water.

"Cough, cough...! Ugh...!"

Tears pooled at the corners of his eyes as he continued to cough up water. Even after spitting out a surprising amount of water, there was still an uncomfortable feeling in his stomach. This showed that he had drunk a ridiculous amount of seawater.

"Hah, hah..."

Panting for breath, Arid began to take stock of the situation.

"I was resting in the Young Dragon Nest..."

Then he'd suddenly heard a strange noise. When he went to the window to investigate, a huge torrent of water had appeared and swept him away.

And his memories ended there.

"...kuk."

Arid's face burned red at his blunder. His lack of practical experience and poor ability to cope with sudden situations had been put on full display. Nodiesop had attacked Dragon God Island much sooner than they had expected, but the situation in itself was not unexpected.

In fact, Arid had been on his guard from the moment he'd heard the news. And yet, he'd ended up like this.

Throb-

"..."

The back of his head ached. When he touched it, he found that a large bump had appeared. It seemed that when he was swept away by the rapids, he'd struck his head against something hard.

Deciding to figure out where he was first, Arid got up from the ground.

"Is this the hill behind the Young Dragon Nest?"

He wasn't sure why, but it seemed he had been deposited there by the rapids. Nevertheless, he could only count himself lucky. If the rapids had continued to drag him away, he probably would have already died an unfair death by now.

"This isn't the time."

Nodiesop's attack had already begun. It wouldn't be strange if he had already broken into the island and started his search for Lukas by now.

Arid tried to use his communication power to find his Master's whereabouts.

"..."

But he couldn't sense Lukas' presence at all. Was it because of Nodiesop's interference? Or was his condition that bad?

Paht!

At that moment, an explosion sounded from behind him. Arid narrowed his eyes.

That was in the direction of the Young Dragon Nest.

When he focused his eyes a bit more, he was able to see his companions grouped together.

And the blue haired man standing in front of them.

'Nodiesop...!'

Sparks appeared in Arid's eyes. Before he could even begin to think about it too deeply, his body was already rushing over.

\* \* \*

"Those kids don't seem like they can hold on for much longer."

"..."

Sedi turned to look at the Priestess. She wasn't sure when her hair had changed to the color of cotton yarn, but it was her eyes that caught her attention at that moment.

They were sparkling brilliantly, as though they contained every star in the night sky.

"You should go lend your strength to the others too."

"If I join them, Nodiesop will kill you."

She now felt that she had a bit of understanding about Nodiesop's thoughts at that moment.

There were two reasons why he wasn't giving it his all at that moment.

The first was that he was wary of Lukas, who was 'hiding' somewhere. And the second was to ensure that he could immediately respond to any sudden actions the Priestess made.

Sedi took a deep breath before shouting in a loud voice.

"Don't be scared!"

Leo and Min Ha-rin flinched at the same time when the loud voice pierced their ears.

"Why do you think he's showing off that drop of water to you? It's because he can't think of a good plan so he's probing our bottom line."

Those words weren't wrong.

Leo took a deep breath before staring at Nodiesop again. He'd started thinking too much because their opponent was an Absolute, a being who had reached the same level as their Master, Lukas.

"Don't fall for his deception. 80% of his power has been restricted, so he can't afford to use too much of it. If you hold on for just a bit longer, Father will come to deal with him."

Those last words were added on purpose.

It was an obvious trick, but she still had to do it. It could be considered a success if that guy was even the slightest bit conscious of it.

## **Volume 2 - Chapter 262**

Leo and Min Ha-rin were fighting in earnest. In all honesty, the two of them didn't seem to have very good chemistry. Despite attacking the same target, they both gave off the feeling that they were fighting on their own. They were students under the same master, but that was the impression they were giving.

Seeing this made Sedi feel that she might cry in frustration, but thankfully, they seemed to be getting better.

The Priestess looked at Sedi's frustrated expression for a moment before muttering.

"...ahhh. You're gathering your power."

"Speak quietly."

"Don't worry. No one else can hear me."

"But why are you suddenly talking like that?"

"Hoh. You two really are like father and daughter. You both choose to ask questions when you notice something instead of just letting it pass."



Her tone suggested that she was being sarcastic, but Sedi wasn't very offended by her words.

Nevertheless, now wasn't the time to feel proud about what she said.

"Instead of talking so much, I'd rather you helped. You seem to be even more relaxed than I am."

"Well, you're not wrong."

"..."

Paht.

The Priestess swung her arms, casting several spells at the same time. Nodiesop reacted immediately. In the first place, he'd always had his guard raised against Sedi and the Priestess, who were just watching as the two children in front of him uselessly swung their sword and fists.

But the one he was most cautious of, Lukas, still hadn't made his appearance yet.

'...I think I'll need 10 more minutes.'

Crackle-

Demonic energy wriggled within Sedi's hand. She was intentionally gathering it as slowly as she could, but she still couldn't help but feel that it was painfully slow.

Would she really be able to deceive Nodiesop for 10 minutes in this state?

Paht!

"...!"

Nodiesop stumbled slightly. A purple snake from the Priestess had managed to wrap around his ankles.

Naturally, Min Ha-rin and Leo didn't miss this chance. As if they had agreed beforehand, the two of them rushed towards Nodiesop at their fastest speed.

Whoosh!

But at that moment, water erupted from Nodiesop's body. The force of the eruption was so strong that it was difficult for them to get any closer.

"Hmph."

With a cold snort, Nodiesop pierced the snake that was wrapped around his ankles with a droplet of water. Although the attack had ultimately failed, it had forced him to actively defend himself for the first time. This was proven by the fact that he'd used a technique that he hadn't used before.

Sedi turned to look at the Priestess again. She couldn't help but wonder about this strange person.

"What did he mean when he called you the special statue?"

"Aigo, is this really the time to be asking questions?"

"You don't have to answer if you don't want to."

"..."

The Priestess remained silent for a moment before smiling.

At the same time, her hair became a completely different color.

"It has no meaning. It's the truth."

"...so you're the statue? So was he wrong when he called you the Seven Fanged Dragon God?"

"I am the Seven Fanged Dragon God too."

“I don’t think this is the time to be speaking in riddles.”

Sedi murmured softly as she watched the fierce battle unfolding in front of her.

“You’re right, it’s not... How much do you know about the Seven Fanged Dragon God?”

“I know almost nothing. All I know is that they’re a Ruler and that the number of Absolutes under them is much smaller when compared to the other Rulers.”

“I’m pretty sure that everyone knows at least that much.”

The Priestess nodded for a moment before opening her mouth.

“...in the past... an unprecedentedly terrifying being appeared in the universe.”

“What?”

“It was a being capable of destroying all the galaxies in the universe and was even capable of destroying an entire universe. What’s more, it could also travel across the multiverse. It could tear apart a dimension with nothing but its physical strength. If left alone, it would have destroyed countless universes.”

“...there’s no way the Rulers would allow such a being to exist.”

“At that time, there were no Rulers.”

For a moment, Sedi forgot how to speak.

It was only at that moment that she realised the Priestess was talking about a past so distant that she couldn't even begin to imagine it.

“There weren't any existences in a single universe strong enough to stop that being. So God made a decision. He looked for beings across multiple universes that could withstand dimensional travel and gathered them together.”

“...you don't mean...”

“That's right. That was the first group created by God. You could say that they were the prototypes for the current 'Absolute system'. It was an outline that was later used to establish what you know now.”

“...”

“A total of seven Absolutes joined forces to defeat the being. The fight lasted for hundreds of years, and many universes were devastated in the process, but in the end, the seven Absolutes were able to suppress the being.”

“Suppress?”

“That’s right. The body of that being was so powerful that nothing could cut through its scales or injure its heart. Perhaps with the exception of God, there is no force or material in the multiverse capable of cutting it.”

Sedi’s eyebrows raised slightly when she heard the word scales.

She was beginning to have an idea about why the Priestess had started telling her this seemingly random story.

“So the seven Absolutes came up with an alternative. To take control of the body of the being, the Great Dragon of the End.”

The Priestess continued in a flat tone.

“And that was the moment the Seven Fanged Dragon God came into existence.”

“...”

For a moment, Sedi forgot how to breathe. She never thought that she would learn the origin of the Seven Fanged Dragon God, which had always been shrouded in mystery, in such an urgent situation.

“...should you really be telling me something like that?”

“Of course, you’ve earned the right to know.”

“The right?”

The Priestess didn’t respond to her question and simply looked at her silently. Noticing that she probably wouldn’t receive an answer, Sedi opened her mouth again.

“...that’s an interesting story, but I don’t think it answers my question. I asked you why Nodiesop called you the ‘special statue’.”

“The Great Dragon of the End had seven fangs. The force capable of tearing the universe was contained in those seven fangs. The seven Absolutes, each with their own individuality, occupied the teeth, and as a result, the teeth not only had the power to tear the dimensional fabric, but each fang also had the power of an Absolute.”

“You still haven’t told me what that has to do with being a statue.”

“Of course, it has something to do with it. The seven fangs were made into statues. Well, to be precise, it’s impossible to mold them, so I guess I should say the seven fangs were hidden in the form of statues.”

“...but that’s...”

Sedi couldn’t help but frown. While she didn’t think she was smart, she wasn’t stupid either, but she still found it hard to keep up with the conversation.

“There are only four special statues. So where are the other three-”

Sedi froze for a moment after saying that.

It was none other than the Rulers who had created this world.

The Rulers were also the ones who decided to place the statues in each area.

If that was the case, then...

“...the Rulers?”

“Exactly.”

The Priestess spoke in a bitter tone.

“Each of them has one.”

“...shit. This is giving me a headache.”

Even while listening to this ridiculous story, Sedi hadn't forgotten to gather her demonic energy. If she had to choose, she'd much rather focus on that instead.



“Why are you in this state? Did the other three Rulers work together to attack you? After all, I can’t imagine anyone else capable of putting a Ruler in such a state.”

“That’s an interesting guess, but it’s wrong.”

“...”

“That’s all I’m going to say. You haven’t earned the right to know the truth yet.”

“Then why did you tell me about the special statue and the Great Dragon of the End?”

“...because Sedi Trowman. Seeing you for myself has allowed me to understand something.”

As her tone changed once again, the Priestess smiled gently.

“Out of Nodiesop, Lukas, Letip, Kasajin... and maybe even myself as well.”

Those twinkling eyes which seemed to contain all the stars in the sky were clearly focused on Sedi.

“I think you might be the one who is closest to becoming a Ruler.”

**Volume 2 - Chapter 263**

‘Something’s not right.’

Nodiesop looked around.

He was certain that Lukas was somewhere on this island. After all, in the first place, he'd come here after sensing his presence.

Nevertheless, ever since he'd entered the island, he'd completely lost all traces of the man's aura. It was completely gone as if he had disappeared into thin air.

At first, he thought that he was just hiding from him and waiting for a chance to strike when he let his guard down. Nodiesop knew that Lukas' current level of power couldn't compare to his, but in the end, he was still an Absolute. He was certain to have at least one trump card hidden in his sleeves, so Nodiesop made sure to pay close attention to his surroundings.

Water was flowing all around them. In other words, the entirety of Dragon God Island had become his 'territory'.

'...I should test it first.'

With that thought in mind, Nodiesop used even more of his external power than before.

"...!"

Leo and Min Ha-rin sensed the change in their opponent's momentum at the same time and stepped back. They had caught on quickly, but his attack wasn't something that they could avoid in the first place.

“Die.”

Piht-

A jet of water shot towards Leo with unstoppable force. There was quite a bit of his external force in that stream of water. At the very least, it was at a level that Leo wouldn't be able to dodge or block.

‘What will you do, Lukas?’

If he didn't do anything, his disciple would die.

“Kuuuap!”

Leo called upon all the mana in his body.

This attack was different from before. There was no room for him to conserve his strength.

Warrior King Fist. Rock Shield.

It was a defense technique that boosted the defensive ability of the entire body to the maximum, but this time, he didn't use it to cover his entire body. Instead, Leo concentrated on protecting his vital points before focusing the rest of his mana on the palms of his hands.

Clang!

The stream collided with his palms, and for a moment, Leo's mind went blank.

“...”

Blood gushed from his lips that he'd bitten subconsciously, but he couldn't even afford to wipe it away. If he stopped focusing for even a moment, his palms would be pierced through by the stream of water.

“Kuk!”

Min Ha-rin tried to use the opportunity to attack Nodiesop, but she was sent flying by a wave of water with just a gesture of his hand.

'Is he still not coming out?'

This had been a gamble for Nodiesop. At that moment, he'd revealed an opening. Even if it was intentional, such an opening was an opportunity that Lukas would never pass up.

If he ignored even this opportunity, then...

“Lukas isn't around here. Or if he is, he can't afford to attack.”

“...!”

Although he muttered those words, they easily reached Leo’s ears.

Nodiesop’s expression immediately became one of disinterest. Either way, the result was very bland and boring for him.

“Without Lukas, there’s no need for me to hold back against a couple small fries.”

Pipipiht-

Countless droplets of water appeared in the air.

When he saw this, Leo’s expression became solemn. Just blocking one stream of water made it feel like his entire body was going to break apart. If he were to be hit by that many droplets of water, the result would be obvious.

It was at that moment.

Taht!

Min Ha-rin, who had been sent flying by the waves just a moment ago, came rushing back.

Nodiesop made an expression of annoyance.

“There’s no need to push. Even if you didn’t, you’d still be next.”

He shook his hand.

The droplets of water shot towards Min Ha-rin.

Min Ha-rin swung her sword towards the droplets. Leo couldn’t bear to watch. He’d already been put in such a state by one drop of water if it were three drops...

Papapat!

“...!”

However, an unbelievable scene occurred.

With a flash of light, the three droplets of water were sliced apart in an instant. This sight caused Nodiesop’s eyes to widen, creating a brief opening.

Naturally, Min Ha-rin didn’t hesitate to get close to him and take advantage of that opening.

Shuk!

She stabbed her sword upwards. Her intention was to pierce through his jaw and into his brain, but Nodiesop managed to tilt his head backward at the last moment.

Swoosh!

Nodiesop took a few steps backward. This was the first time he'd been forced to make such a defensive action.

"Huu."

Min Ha-rin slowly exhaled and lowered her gaze to her sword.

On the tip of her sword was a drop of blood.

Piht-

At the same time, Nodiesop's chin split slightly and another drop of blood dripped down.

He was injured.

She'd hurt him.

“...”

Nodiesop's expression became frighteningly cold. His golden eyes turned to look behind Min Ha-rin.

His gaze was focused on the white-haired human that had appeared there.

“...I see. So it's the Communicator from Earth. With the help of his power, your physical abilities and even your attack power were greatly enhanced.”

Arid clenched his fists.

That was close. If he had been a little later, Leo would have died.

“We injured him.”

Although it was just a small scratch, it was true that they'd managed to make Nodiesop bleed.

Victory was in sight. (TL: I'm not sure that's how that works guys...) (PR: Like taking candy from a giant flamethrowing Gundamized Orochi!)



This proved that it wasn't a fight that they had no chance of winning.

"Senior sister, senior brother. I'm here to help you."

Arid spoke with a solemn tone.

"Our counterattack begins now."

\* \* \*

The Black Sorcerer looked down at the pale faced man laying on the ground in front of him.

"White Sorcerer, how much longer do you intend to stay here?"

"..."

"We have already been delayed for a long time. We should return quickly. The Priestess is in danger."

"I know that, but... the Priestess ordered us to rescue this man."

"Right. But staying here won't undo what has already happened."

The White Sorcerer knew that too.

Nevertheless, she didn't want to leave so easily.

This wasn't because she hadn't been able to complete their orders.

Instead, it was because she had the feeling that something was wrong.

“There is no blood in his face, and his fingertips are cold. More importantly, his heart has stopped beating. We... were too late.”

The Black Sorcerer looked down at Lukas before continuing in a solemn voice.

“This man is already dead.”

#### **Volume 2 - Chapter 264**

Lukas had once said to Arid.

—I have wandered through countless universes, but I've never encountered a power with more potential than your 'communication'.

It could be used to access the void to obtain information, heal most injuries, be lent to others, and be used to increase the target's strength.

Arid used this power to boost Leo and Min Ha-rin's physical abilities.

'...I told them about it beforehand.'

He'd already told them that if the time came when they would have to fight against Nodiesop, he would use his power on them without asking for permission first.

Nevertheless, Arid felt a bit worried in his heart.

'We can't let this drag on for too long.'

Some facets of his power, especially those that were used to increase another person's physical abilities, came with a significant burden. And in most cases, it was the person who borrowed his power that had to bear the burden, not Arid, who lent it to them.

Min Ha-rin and Leo had become stronger.

It was obvious that their physical abilities had risen to an extent that was completely incomparable to before.

Nevertheless, the time that they would be able to remain in such a state was very short. From his calculations, they would only be able to endure it for around 10 minutes or so. If they tried to hold on longer than that, they would probably cease to exist. Their bodies would slowly but surely collapse from the inside.

However, there was no way for Nodiesop to know that, so they would just have to hide the burden somehow and end the battle as quickly as possible.

“A technique that uses up lifespan, huh?”

Arid’s expression immediately became stiff.

Nodiesop stroked his chin slightly. The cut had already disappeared. Although it wasn’t a big achievement, it was still an injury that they’d managed to inflict after much difficulty. They expected such an outcome, nevertheless, seeing it disappear without any issues still filled them with a sense of emptiness.

“You forcibly increased your physical abilities to a level that your bodies would never be able to handle. I see, is that what you used to cut me?”

As if he found it amusing, Nodiesop’s mouth twisted in a mocking sneer.

“Your counterattack begins now? Don’t make me laugh, mortals. Look at me. Take a good look at just what you’re fighting against.”

In an instant, their surroundings became quiet.

This wasn’t an illusion.

In the first place, the sounds in their surroundings had mostly been generated by the water flowing around them. As the entire island was flooded, the sound of water was loud enough to be obnoxious. Therefore, the absence of that sound was deafening.

The water had stopped moving. It wasn't just the waters around them. Even the whirlpool surrounding the island had frozen in place in the air. It was as if time itself had stopped.

"What?"

But time didn't actually stop.

They could definitely move and hear each other's voices.

Nevertheless, the strange sense of incongruity created an eerie atmosphere that gave them goosebumps.

"Restrictions, restrictions, restrictions, in the end, if it weren't for those, you wouldn't even have the slightest hope for victory against me. Nevertheless, your predictions are wrong. You can't defeat me just because you weakened me a little."

Nodiesop stretched his arms out wide, his lips drawn into an ominous line.

"Now, I'm going to change the field."

Whoosh!

Suddenly, the water around them began to flow in the opposite direction.

No. That wasn't it.

As if it had a mind of its own, the seawater began flowing freely in every direction. It was the first time they'd ever witnessed water flow in such a chaotic manner. Large and small waves swirled around and crashed into each other.

The quiet surroundings became a cacophony in an instant.

'This is bad...! The water is rising...!'

Before he could even finish the thought, seawater swallowed the entire area.

Leo couldn't help but gasp slightly as he looked around. No matter how much their physical abilities had increased, they were bound to be restricted if they had to fight underwater. In addition, the current was too strong.

'Kuk!'

Nevertheless, Leo remained calm. Firstly, he took a deep breath and imprinted the locations of everyone around him before he was completely submerged in the water and his sight was blocked.

“With my lung capacity, I should be able to last for 10 minutes without needing to breathe...”

However, because of the pressure Arid’s power was putting on his body, he wasn’t sure if he’d be able to last that long.

In addition, the time that he could hold his breath would definitely decrease as he moved his body around.

On the other hand, Nodiesop—.

“...!”

His gaze shifted to their enemy.

Even as the currents pulled and tugged in every direction, Nodiesop’s body remained standing in the same position he’d been in before.

Right. He was an Absolute who controlled water. It would be strange if his movements were restricted or he was incapable of breathing in the liquid.

Perhaps... This situation was even worse than he’d initially thought.

If it turned out that he was even more powerful in water...

Whoosh.

Nodiesop suddenly turned to look at Leo and reached out his hand. At that moment, Leo's body, which had been entangled by the currents, suddenly froze.

'Kuh...!'

It was like pressure had been applied to his entire body. At that moment, Leo felt like his muscles were being torn apart, and his bones were being crushed.

This pressure... came from the water. The water was exerting pressure strong enough to crush his entire body.

"Surprisingly, water pressure is something you can't ignore, right?"

Even though they were underwater, Nodiesop's voice sounded even clearer than when they were on land.

Nodiesop began to walk towards Leo. As if they were still on land, his footsteps were firm and steady. Naturally, the sound of his footsteps couldn't be heard. (TL: It would be kind of cool if they could be heard)



“You haven’t exhaled yet. I must admit, your coolheadedness is commendable. But I wonder how long you’ll be able to last. It would probably be more fun if I slowly increased the pressure like this...”

Creak.

Nodiesop slowly clenched his fist.

At the same time, the tremendous pressure on Leo’s body gradually increased.

“\_”

Leo’s eyes rolled backward in his skull.

This... couldn’t continue.

He had already been having difficulty holding his breath before, but now, he was struggling to even remain conscious. Unable to hold it any longer, Leo’s mouth opened up and bubbles of air rushed out. More than half of the air stored in his lungs had escaped at that moment. This means that the time he could remain underwater was significantly reduced.

“I don’t have any more time to waste on you mortals. So just di-”

Unable to finish his sentence, Nodiesop moved his head backward.

In the same instant, a sword swept through the space that his head had just been occupying.

'The magic swordsman girl.'

A hint of displeasure appeared in his eyes. She'd also interrupted him when he was trying to finish things off earlier.

...But that attack just now.

The speed that it was launched at was considerable, the same was true for the force behind it. How was she able to move so freely underwater?

He soon realised the reason.

'She's using some kind of spell.'

Min Ha-rin wasn't swimming. Instead, her body swayed and moved like a puppet being controlled by strings. She was probably using something similar to a flying spell in order to manipulate her body.

She seemed to still be under some form of restrictions because she was underwater, but it was still several times faster than swimming.

However.

“Did you expect that to work?”

Paht.

He stretched out his other hand.

Shortly after Min Ha-rin appeared, her body also became frozen in place.

“Do you not understand where this is? Do you think that you’re just underwater? Who was it that created the tsunami that practically submerged this entire island? How have you not understood by now? You are already in my jaws.”

Crunch.

He clenched his fist.

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Min Ha-rin struggled to hold her breath under the pressure that was crushing her entire body.

“If I wanted to keep playing around, I wouldn’t have submerged this area.”

After capturing the two who had been annoying him the most, Nodiesop looked around one more time before he finished them off once and for all.

Lukas' presence... He still couldn't feel it. This caused him to be increasingly more certain about his suspicions.

Was he no longer on this island? Maybe he'd thrown these pieces of trash out to distract him so that he could quietly leave the island. Right. That was a judgment that was worthy of an Absolute. After all, it was extremely foolish for a being like an Absolute to risk their life just to save a few mortals when they could save dozens of universes in the future.

Arid was a bit further away.

He was also underwater, and he was currently glaring at Nodiesop with wide eyes.

That was all he could do. Unfortunately for Arid, there was nothing someone like him, who specialised in support, could do to reverse the current situation.

'The Priestess... is over there.'

He couldn't see her, but he could sense her.

But in the next moment, Nodiesop's expression became stiff.

'Where's Sedi?'

Clang!

Just as he had this thought, he felt a tremendous impact and pain at the same time.

In an instant, Nodiesop's body shot through the water before soaring into the sky.

"Cough...!"

He spat out a mouthful of blood.

With wide eyes, he looked beneath him. There, he found the missing Sedi.

He couldn't understand. His vigilance towards her... while it couldn't be compared to Lukas and the Priestess, he had still been paying close attention to her.

Enough that he should have been able to immediately notice if she tried to do anything funny.

'This much power...'

She would have needed to build up for at least a few minutes in order to unleash such an attack. Right. It was possible that he'd missed that.

However, was it possible for him to miss Sedi's approach with the intent to attack? In water no less?

'...was it the Priestess? Or Arid?'

He wasn't sure. But he knew that it was one or even both of them.

Whoosh!

Min Ha-rin and Leo shot after Nodiesop.

Their sword and fist were aimed at his vital points at the same time. Strange flames also covered the sword. It seemed a spell had been added to it. The momentum behind the fist was enough to destroy several buildings one after the other. It was also not something that could be ignored.

Nodiesop knew that he had to block these attacks, but he couldn't move a finger.

Demonic energy was interfering with the circulation of his external force. He would only need about three seconds to flush it out of his system, but in other words, it had created an opening for the same amount of time.

"Don't mess with me!"

Nodiesop roared in rage. He coughed out another mouthful of blood that had pooled in his throat. As if it had a mind of its own, the blood floated in the air for a moment before quickly taking shape.

Paak!

The blood, which coagulated into a ball, shot down and hit both Min Ha-rin and Leo sending them both flying without even having the time to scream. Min Ha-rin was able to forcibly stop her fall with a flight spell, but her gaze turned to Leo, who was still falling.

Crack!

She grabbed his arm, but the force of his fall was considerable. It felt like her arm was about to be dislocated. However, she knew that if they let themselves fall into the water again, it would all be over.

“Uah!”

With a loud cry of exertion, she borrowed the force of Leo’s fall to throw him in a different direction. His body flew in the air for a while before he was finally able to catch himself on an exposed tree branch.

“Huff, huff...”

Min Ha-rin panted heavily. Although she’d prevented Leo from falling into the water again, she still had a heavy expression on her face.

She knew that the opportunity they had just missed was not something that was easy to come by.

“In the end, I wasn’t able to gather all of my strength.”

Sedi, who appeared beside her, clicked her tongue.

If she had managed to gather for two or three more minutes, they might have been able to critically injure him. Min Ha-rin was silent for a while before finally opening her mouth.

“Sorry.”

“Don’t worry about it. Although things didn’t go according to plan, I still managed to learn something interesting.”

“Something interesting?”

“That bastard’s body.”

Min Ha-rin blinked, unable to understand the meaning of Sedi’s words. Sedi frowned for a moment before deciding to explain.

“When one becomes an Absolute, they break free from their flesh and blood body and instead take a near perfect form that is known as a Transcendent Body. Generally speaking, the only things that can affect a Transcendent Body are the attacks of another Transcendent Body or external force.”

“...my sword cut the tip of his chin.”



Although it was just a small scratch, she'd clearly cut his skin and caused him to bleed a little. She'd felt the feedback through her sword, so she didn't think it was an illusion.

"And that's our key to victory. It's true that Nodiesop regained most of his power as an Absolute. Although he's under many restrictions right now, it's obvious that he can use his external force. Nevertheless, it doesn't seem like he was able to break free from that flesh and blood body. It was the same for Father, too. The same might be true for Letip and the Demon King, although I haven't seen them yet."

"I'm not sure I understand what you're talking about."

"Nodiesop's existence is bound to that body."

Their bodies were something that was arranged by the Rulers. Regardless of how much of their power they regained, it was impossible for them to escape that fact.

In other words, Nodiesop's existence was closely connected to his body. And if their opponent was an Absolute with a flesh and blood body, then they would have a higher chance than they expected.

At the very least, as long as they were able to kill his body, they would be able to defeat him, regardless of whether they managed to kill him or not. (TL: Just in case anyone is confused, killing Nodiesop and killing his body are separate)

"My demonic energy is currently interfering with his body. So he will have to use his external force to deal with it first. This should decrease the amount of external force he can use from now on, even if it's only a little."

Rumble-

Suddenly the water around them began to surge again and the water level gradually began to rise. Then, in the blink of an eye, a huge wall of water that seemed to cover their field of vision appeared.

It became dark.

The wall of water, which was at least a few tens of meters tall, was created in an instant.

“...what did you just say?”

“...at least it didn't reach the sky like last time...”

Sedi muttered in a sheepish tone and Min Ha-rin had to suppress the urge to roll her eyes. Right. In a sense, it was clear that his power was much weaker.

But as Nodiesop said, although his power had been restricted several times, he was still not an opponent they could easily deal with.

Min Ha-rin once again realised just how ridiculous the beings known as Absolutes were.

The good news was that despite coming to this realisation, her will to fight didn't disappear.

“But how will we attack him while he’s in the sky?”

There was still a limit to what she could do with magic. Min Ha-rin didn’t think Nodiesop would stay in place and wait for her to come to him.

Leo was also incapable of flying or even attacking from a distance, which made the situation even more frustrating.

However, Sedi responded in a nonchalant manner.

“Ah- That’s fine. He’ll be coming down soon.”

“What?”

Paht-

Suddenly, a red beam of light shot from somewhere on the ground and instantly pierced Nodiesop’s stomach.

The beam had moved so quickly and with such force that it seemed to tear apart space itself.

“...!”

Min Ha-rin's eyes went wide. She'd heard about something like this from Lukas not long ago.

Was it a similar technique? No. That wasn't it. Min Ha-rin was currently 7 stars and it seemed that she wasn't very far from reaching 8-stars.

The point was that her perception was completely different from before.

That beam of light that pierced through Nodiesop was a skill that every Wizard wanted to obtain.

A power that could only be used by those who had reached the very end of the path of magic.

Absolute Power. (1)

"Ma...ster...?"

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He didn't cry out. Because physical pain was nothing to him.

However, it was impossible for him to stop his body's reaction to it. As a result of the attack, he froze for a moment before falling from the air.

He was surprised.

What exactly was the source of that power that had just penetrated his body so easily?

'...magic?'

He knew a bit about the power that Lukas used. He'd heard that the main force he used was called magic.

'This is probably a technique that can only be used after reaching the very peak of magicology.' (TL: Been a long time since I used this word. For those who forgot, it's basically 'the study of magic')

Nevertheless, he still couldn't understand. From what he knew, magicology is a 'technique' that was created by mortals.

But the large hole in Nodiesop's abdomen seemed to tell a different story. He wasn't even able to heal the damage. The space itself had been damaged. Even if he tried to force his cells to merge and reproduce, all he was met with was the sound of static.

'This will probably take some time to recover.'

That technique was something he had to take note of. It was fortunate that the attack had struck him in the abdomen. If that attack managed to hit any of his vital points...

" ... "

This situation in itself was annoying for Nodiesop.

From now on, he would have to fight while paying attention to protecting his vital points. Like a mortal.

Having a flesh and blood body really pissed him off. But it couldn't be helped. If this body died, even if he didn't die as well, he would be eliminated from the qualifiers and the Sun Giant would never forgive him.

That was the thing he was afraid of the most.

Nodiesop's body didn't fall below the surface of the water. Instead, a huge hand of water came up and caught him gently in its palm.

He glared at the being that had pierced his abdomen with that attack.

It wasn't Lukas. (TL: Ha! Goteem!)

"You really have a lot of tricks up your sleeve."

As he looked at the Priestess who was standing on the surface of the water with a calm expression on her face, he couldn't help but speak in a cold voice.

"I already know your situation. You're just a statue. How long will you continue pretending to be the Seven Fanged Dragon?"

“...don't you know that your pathetic grumbling only highlights the fact that you don't know anything?”

As they stared at each other, Min Ha-rin couldn't help but look over with a confused expression.

The Priestess.

The leader of Dragon God Island and another teacher for Arid.

...How did she know how to use magic?

'That wasn't sorcery.'

The magic that she'd just used was without a doubt Absolute Power which could only be used by 9 star Wizards. There was no magic on Dragon God Island. And she couldn't have learned it from Arid since he also didn't know anything about magic.

Then from Lukas? No. He'd only recently gained consciousness. He didn't have any time to teach her magic.

The Priestess also turned to look at Min Ha-rin at that moment.

“...”

“...”

The Priestess looked at Min Ha-rin with a strange expression that was difficult to describe. She opened and closed her mouth a few times without saying anything before finally letting out a soft sigh.

“I will support you all from now on.”

It was just a feeling, but Min Ha-rin didn't think that was what she wanted to say.

“...can you afford to? I thought restricting him was placing a great burden on you.”

“It's fine now. The Black and White Sorcerers are back. They will take over my role.”

As she spoke in a calm tone, she pointed to the man and woman behind her. Their expressions weren't very good at that moment.

Their faces caused Min Ha-rin to have an ominous feeling. Just as she was about to ask about it.

Whoosh!

The waters surged, showing signs of creating another huge tsunami.



Min Ha-rin and Leo's expressions became stiff. It would be the same situation as before, he would force them into the water. If a tsunami of that size were to hit them, they would inevitably be tossed around by the currents.

"The bigger a fuss he makes, the more of a bluff it is."

The Priestess continued to speak in a calm tone. Sedi nodded in agreement.

"The two Sorcerers behind you. The restrictions weakening Nodiesop have been completed since they have returned, haven't they?"

"Yes. Now, 90% or more of Nodiesop's power has been sealed."

Paht.

Stretching her arms out, the Priestess added.

"...without external force, he is simply using a technique to raise the water level. It is not difficult to stop this tsunami. Blizzard."

Crackle!

A storm of cold air poured out of the Priestess' palms. The freezing air didn't just stop at freezing the surface of the water beneath their feet, instead, it even froze the tsunami that was looming above their heads.

'Magic...!'

That was the 7 star spell, Blizzard.

Min Ha-rin couldn't help but be shocked. It was impossible even for her, who had reached 7 stars, to completely freeze a tsunami so large in an instant.

This meant that there was a significant difference in magic power between Min Ha-rin and the Priestess.

That wasn't all. For some reason, when she casted the spell just now, it felt like the figure of Lukas had overlapped with her own.

"You... how the hell do you know magic?"

"Min Ha-rin, I heard that you are Lukas Trowman's... first disciple on Earth."

For some reason, it felt like this topic made her uncomfortable.

"If you want to be a true Trowman disciple, then you need to get stronger. Don't just rely on him. So that one day, you can take care of some of his responsibilities."

Suddenly, Nodiesop, who had still been standing on the hand of water, stepped onto the ice.

Crack!

The frozen surface of the water immediately cracked, and water could be seen surging beneath it.

Nodiesop then raised his hand.

Rumble...

And the frozen surface began to shake ominously.

The Priestess made a quick analysis.

“He is creating currents beneath the ice. He will probably cause it to erupt at certain locations. But I can’t pinpoint exactly where.”

“He’s taking advantage of the fact that the surface is frozen so we’ll be unable to see where the water will erupt beforehand. This guy is so slippery.”

Sedi clicked her tongue as she said this.

However, it was impossible for them to melt the ice again. They had already witnessed his prowess underwater. If they fell in again, their odds of winning would disappear.

She looked at Nodiesop. She could still feel the vibrations beneath the ice, but the water had yet to erupt. Instead, he was just looking at them instead of making the first move. In a way, it could be understood that he was taking the defensive.

“I think he’s trying to buy time in order to expel the demonic energy I injected into him.”

“If we let him do that, our chances of victory will plummet.”

“You support us from the back. Hey, let’s go. Make sure to keep a bit of distance between us when we attack him.”

“...right.”

Min Ha-rin replied briefly before turning to look at Leo, who was still a ways away from them. He gave a slight nod to show that he understood Sedi’s intentions.

“Be mindful, senior sister. You only have a few minutes left.”

When she heard Arid’s reminder, Min Ha-rin realised that it been quite a while since he’d lent them his power. She wasn’t sure how much longer she’d be able to hold on.

‘...it doesn’t matter.’

If they lost this battle then everyone would die anyway. Nodiesop wasn't an opponent that one could fight while wondering if they could survive. They had to risk their lives and fight him as long as their bodies could support them.

Crack, crack!

The ice suddenly cracked and a jet of water shot out. Min Ha-rin ducked slightly to dodge the stream. Some of her hair remained in the path of the jet of water and it was cut as though it had been sliced by a sharp blade.

Min Ha-rin's expression immediately stiffened.

Although it didn't have much momentum, the cutting force of that stream of water was terrifying.

'...still.'

She'd managed to figure out a sign before the eruption. That was the inevitable sound of the ice cracking as the water was forced upwards. With her current reaction speed, Min Ha-rin was sure that she could avoid the jets of water as long as she remained vigilant. Nevertheless, there were several close calls that caused her heart to race.

Every time she avoided the water, it felt like she lost a few years of her life.

Perhaps it was because he noticed this unease, but Nodiesop changed tactics.

Crack, crack!

The ice shattered as hundreds of jets of water erupted at the same time instead of the one or two that had appeared before. Visually, it had a much greater impact, but in truth, this was a reckless response. After all, the risk was significantly reduced now.

Nodiesop didn't seem like an Absolute at all. Was it because there were so many people attacking him at once?

Min Ha-rin strengthened the grip of the hand that held her sword.

The almost non-existent chance of victory was gradually taking shape.

'I'll protect him.'

With that very hand, she would protect Lukas.

It was different from when her parents and Lee Jong-hak died.

She was stronger than she was then. She'd become strong enough to protect her Master.

And this was her chance to prove it.

Swoosh-

Min Ha-rin, Leo and Sedi appeared in front of Nodiesop at almost the exact same time.

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The three fighters didn't even need to look at each other as they rushed towards their target, Nodiesop.

Swoosh!

As they grew closer, an explosion of water erupted from Nodiesop's body. But they didn't panic or flinch. They couldn't help but feel that this response was similar to before.

It was possible that this was Nodiesop's last line of defense.

-Scarlet Killament.

The sword had been with her for several years already.

Participating in the Championship had allowed her to develop a new technique to use with this sword.

"Enchant."

Fwoosh!

Flames soared to life in an instant. At the same time, more than half of her remaining mana evaporated.

“Dragon’s Roar.”

Roar!

Scarlet Killament creaked, and the faint cries of a dragon could be heard from inside it. At that moment, her sword contained the greatest offensive power she could currently muster.

After taking a deep breath, she swung her sword towards the waves that were rushing towards her.

Tsssss-!

The rushing waves were easily evaporated by the attack, creating a huge cloud of steam. The steam was hot... no, it was more than just hot, it felt like the steam had been released directly from a steam engine.

Her face and eyes felt like they were burning. Nevertheless, Min Ha-rin refused to close her eyes. Even if she became blind, she could not miss this opportunity.

Eventually, most of the waves evaporated away, revealing the figure of Nodiesop, who still had yet to move. Instead, he was staring at Min Ha-rin with an unreadable expression on his face.

“It’s amazing that you managed to come this far.”



“I don’t need your compliments, just die.”

“It wasn’t a compliment. It’s a mixture of surprise and amazement... and discomfort. You’d feel the same too if a bug you slapped away with your palm was still moving around.”

“...”

He really treated mortals like insects or perhaps even less than that.

How could they be so different even though they were both Absolutes?

Min Ha-rin couldn’t contain the hatred and disgust she felt for Nodiesop at that moment.

Crack!

Suddenly, Nodiesop’s knee bent at a strange angle with a loud sound, causing him to lose his balance. Leo who had approached silently from the back had attacked without him realising it. Sedi’s attack naturally followed. She clasped her two small hands together and swung them like a hammer towards the back of Nodiesop’s head.

The force of the attack was considerable, and it caused Nodiesop to stumble. (TL: With a broken knee?)

Was this actually working? Or was he just pretending? She wasn’t sure. But the one thing she knew was that Nodiesop’s body was filled with openings at that moment.

Regardless of if it was a trap or not, she couldn't let this opportunity pass.

'Hold on.'

Ignoring her screaming joints, Min Ha-rin put all of her strength into the hand holding her sword. Even more of her mana disappeared. It was so much so that she was certain she would be unable to move afterward.

She put all of her power into the tip of her sword before stabbing forward.

Puk!

Her attack landed. She clearly felt the 'feedback' as her sword pierced through Nodiesop's ribcage and entered his heart.

Whoosh!

Suddenly, a red explosion erupted from Nodiesop's body. It was blood. This explosion was much larger and stronger than the explosion of water. On the other hand, Min Ha-rin had already long exceeded her limits, so she didn't even get a chance to block it.

Her body, which was in the very center of the explosion, was sent flying into the air.

The surface of the water, which had been frozen solid before, was completely destroyed, becoming several large chunks of ice that floated in the water. The scene was similar to what one would expect to see at the arctic ocean.

Min Ha-rin bounced on the water a few times, fortunate enough to not land on any chunks of ice before her body was barely able to stop. Well, to be precise, she hadn't stopped on her own, someone had caught her.

"Are you okay, senior sister?"

It was Leo.

After taking a few moments to catch her breath, Min Ha-rin nodded.

"Good job!"

Sedi, who also came to join them, gave Min Ha-rin a rare word of praise.

"I saw you destroy his heart. I'm not sure what will happen to his existence, but his body definitely should have died in that atta-"

Sedi didn't finish her sentence. Min Ha-rin and Leo also had expressions as if they had seen a ghost.

Their gazes were locked onto the same location.

“...ha.”

There stood Nodiesop. There was a hole in his chest from which blood poured, but after a while, it stopped. And after swiping his finger over his chest, the blood flowed back into his body.

It was as if time was being reversed.

“Indeed...”

They never expected to hear the voice of someone whose heart had been destroyed. But he continued to speak in a calm tone.

“Even though I’m tied to this body, it’s not to the extent that I will die if the heart is destroyed. Well, in the first place oxygen is a type of energy that I need. Nevertheless, I was able to learn some interesting information. Perhaps the only true vital point would be the brain, which is directly connected to my consciousness.” (TL: Give your enemies more information why dontcha.)

Min Ha-rin bit her lip, and her vision went dark for a moment. It was difficult for her to even stand on her own two feet. The side effects of Arid’s power boost were beginning to take their toll on her body. Leo was the same.

Sedi on the other hand was fine, but it was clear that she was also quite tired.

“By the way, do you remember the jets of water I made erupt not so long ago?”

“...why are you mentioning that now?”

“I can’t believe you didn’t notice anything strange. I thought it was obvious that such a clumsy attack would never work against you.”

The entire group had puzzled expressions on their faces. Anything strange? They had only been focusing on avoiding them at all costs.

“Haha. I suppose your vision was narrowed because you were so focused on me.... Look up at the sky, Sedi Glaston.”

“...”

“From the start, those jets of water were never aimed at you.”

Sedi slowly looked up at the sky, then her expression became stiff.

The Barrier.

The streams of water were violently crashing against the barrier that covered the entirety of Dragon God Island.

“My goal was to break that barrier. It’s like a castle wall. Although it appears fairly sturdy from the outside, it’s surprisingly easy to break through from the inside.”

Crack!

Following those words, spider web cracks began to spread across the surface of the barrier.

The Priestess’ expression also became frighteningly stiff at that moment. On the other hand, Nodiesop’s smile just became wider and brighter.

Crash!

Then, with a sound similar to dozens of windows shattering at the same time, the barrier broke.

The following events could be imagined.

In the first place, Dragon God Island had been in the center of an enormous vortex of water that was only being held at bay by the barrier. In fact, the current of the vortex was so strong that the small islands surrounding Dragon God Island that weren’t protected by the barrier had all been swallowed.

It was like a plastic bottle blocking a small drainage hole. Although it couldn’t stop the water from flowing completely, it still hampered its flow by a large extent.

But if that plastic bottle was removed, the water would rush into the hole with ferocious momentum.

In this case, the barrier was the bottle. As soon as it shattered, the waves greedily crashed towards the island, like a hungry beast lunging at its prey.

“Ah.”

Leo couldn't help but let out a soft exclamation.

For the first time since the fight began, he lost the will to fight. A huge wave of water was rushing towards them from the sky, and there was nothing they could do to stop it.

On the other hand, Nodiesop's gaze remained on the group.

He wondered just how a person who was forced to slowly watch their inevitable end would feel.

He let out a laugh.

“Now then, how will you all respond this time?”

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Sedi's first thought was to get rid of Nodiesop before the tsunami arrived. But that plan wasn't very feasible. The distance between them was quite far, and she was exhausted at that moment. More importantly, there was no way that Nodiesop would just sit still and allow that to happen.

Min Ha-rin and Leo had similar ideas, but they came to their senses a moment later when they realised that with their strength, they were far less likely to succeed compared to Sedi.

In such an urgent situation, the difference of even one second could determine their life or death.

Arid bit his lip... According to Lukas, he had the power with the greatest potential, the so-called Communication. If that was true, then maybe he could prevent this, even if he'd never tried to do something like this before. There was only one problem. He wasn't even sure where to start.

No one had a way to deal with the current situation.

Except for the Priestess.

"Ice Age."

With a low murmur, cold air exploded from her body.

8-star spells.

Things that could theoretically be regarded as the very end of 'magicology' in terms of range and power. After all, 9-star spells didn't exist.

The thing that distinguished 8-stars and 9-stars was the ability to manipulate Absolute Power, not the type or power of the spells they could use.



In other words, depending on how much magic power was injected into it, the Ice Age spell that the Priestess had just used was capable of not only changing the terrain but also the climate.

Crackle!

The wave of cold air explosively spread in every direction, causing the crushed and broken pieces of ice to fuse together once again.

Once again, the surface of the water became a landmass made entirely out of white ice. The water falling from the sky was no exception. The cold air perfectly froze the wave in its curved state.

“...!”

Min Ha-rin couldn't help but look at this scene with wide eyes.

Although she was seeing it with her own eyes, it was still hard to believe.

‘...so this is magic.’

Was this the level she was aiming to reach?

At that moment, it felt extremely distant.

“Huff...”

The Priestess exhaled roughly before collapsing down onto one knee.

“Priestess!”

“Are you okay?”

The Black and White Sorcerers called out in worried voices, but they couldn’t even help her up. This was because they were currently pouring all of their energy into suppressing Nodiesop’s power.

The Priestess gave them a slow nod.

Nodiesop, who was quietly watching the entire process, finally let out a mocking laugh.

“You managed to deal with the most pressing concern. But now, you’re not capable of using the attack you used to pierce my stomach.”

It was true.

At that moment, the Priestess was in no condition to use Absolute Power.

She’d spent most of her mana on Ice Age.

'...if the island was still okay, we might have been able to get help from the various formations I made.'

The island had been completely devastated by the first tsunami.

Now, it was completely submerged and even frozen. This meant that the formations on the island would not work.

But that wasn't her greatest concern.

The Priestess turned to look at the Black and White Sorcerers for a moment. They'd failed to complete her orders to save Lukas.

When they returned, they told her that he was already dead when they found him.

'...'

Was it possible that they were mistaken?

It could be that he wasn't really dead. But what if they were right and Lukas was actually dead?

She tried her best to kill those thoughts. At that moment, the only thing she should be thinking about was the fight.

In any case, from the beginning, she hadn't intended to receive Lukas' support during the fight against Nodiesop. So, in a sense, there was no 'loss of power'.

"...it's true that I drained most of my mana."

In a tone colder than the ice around her, the Priestess began to speak.

"But most of the water in the area has been completely frozen. I didn't just freeze the surface like when I used the Blizzard spell. Instead, even the currents below have been frozen solid."

"Doesn't that mean that Nodiesop can no longer use the water to increase his advantage?"

Sedi was quick to understand her meaning.

After all, she was the one who regained her composure the fastest after the Priestess.

"Then we still have a chance to win this fight."

With those words, she clenched and unclenched her fists a few times. Her body could still move. But what about the others?

Min Ha-rin's condition was... not very good. She was panting uncontrollably and looked like she would pass out at any moment.

Her muscles, bones, and willpower. All of them had been pushed beyond their limits. If she kept moving her body, she would suffer numerous aftereffects, so Sedi forcibly knocked her unconscious. Even then, her eyebrows remained furrowed. This showed that even in unconsciousness, she was probably experiencing tremendous pain all over her body.

Leo's condition was a bit better, but he could only last another two to three minutes at best.

She turned to look at Arid, who was standing behind them. As soon as he received her attention, Arid flinched, and when their eyes met, she could see the guilt and shame that he felt deep in his heart.

Without saying anything, Sedi's gaze soon left him and returned to Leo once again. Then, while loosening her neck and shoulder muscles, she said.

"Hey, brat."

"Yeah."

"It seems like you and I are the only ones that can still move, but honestly, when it's reached this point, strategy doesn't really mean much anymore."

"...yeah."

"In my experience, while in a situation where the possibility of death is overwhelming, it's best to not fight while thinking about winning."

Leo's expression became a bit strange. He realised that Sedi was giving him advice. Until now, Lukas was the only person who had truly acknowledged him.

'...no.'

She wasn't really acknowledging him, instead, it could be said that the desperate situation was forcing her to rely on someone that she normally wouldn't.

"Just focus on surviving. Always keep the word survival in your head. Don't think about how much energy your enemy has left, how much longer your body will last, or even what the current situation is. Put aside all of those useless thoughts."

"Yes, thank you."

"...hah."

Sedi shook her head slowly as if she couldn't believe what was happening.

Then, she exchanged one more glance with Leo.

Before they both charged towards Nodiesop at the same time.

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—Nodiesop.

Up until now, most of the powers he used were like magic or were similar to magic. This, combined with his slender physique gave Leo hope that he might be weak in face to face or hand to hand combat.

But that wasn't the case at all.

Sedi's kick and Leo's fist were blocked at the same time. Their subsequent attacks also didn't have any effect. It was as if Nodiesop's palms were covered with a layer of oil. Surprisingly, this man stood there and dealt with their attacks while using nothing but his palms.

His occasional attacks were also so sharp that they gave him chills down his spine.

In terms of ratio, for every ten or so attacks that they launched, Nodiesop only counterattacked once. Therefore, at first glance, it would seem that Leo and Sedi were launching a fierce offensive. But the reality was completely different from how it appeared.

Cold sweat covered Leo's entire body.

There was a saying that said 'attack is the best defense'. This was similar to his current situation. If he stopped moving for even a moment, he would die. As for breaking away from his opponent and making space, he couldn't.

Because of that, he had no choice but to attack with all his might.

Nevertheless, there were no results.

It was like punching 'water'.

'Don't think about it.'

Leo tried his best to get rid of his thoughts that were gradually becoming bleak. It was like Sedi told him. All he had to do was focus on surviving somehow.

But unlike Leo, Sedi's thoughts at that moment were completely different.

'...is this fight really worth it?'

In all honesty, she never expected such a fight. She never thought that she would have the time to think of such useless things.

'This bastard... is still conserving his strength.'

Why?

The biggest threats to him were Lukas and the Priestess.

The Priestess was unable to fight, and he should have realised by now that Lukas would not join this fight.



Nevertheless, he was still conserving his strength.

What kind of situation was he preparing for exactly?

Taht!

With a burst of force, Nodiesop interrupted Sedi and Leo's momentum at the same time. In an instant, dozens of openings appeared on their bodies.

"..."

If he had used his external force at that moment, he could have taken their lives as easy as cutting the stem of a flower.

But he didn't.

Did he not have enough external force? No, he had barely used any external force to break the barrier around the island. In the first place, if he had added external force to the tsunami before, it would never have been frozen by the Priestess.

'...Kasajin.'

It was strange.

She could vaguely sense the presence of that man somewhere in the Heavenly Realm.

It was so faint that it would be easily ignored if one didn't pay attention to it. But it was because it was faint that she noticed it even more.

'Is he watching from a safe place and waiting to take advantage of the situation?'

From the moment they entered the field, all of the Absolutes became hostile towards each other. The former alliances that they had made had become meaningless.

From the start, the concept of the qualifiers was a four way battle.

'If he uses his external force wantonly now, he might get picked off by Kasajin.'

It was possible that he'd used more external force than she thought.

Of course, at this point, Kasajin's power was very limited, but the same was true for Nodiesop. Now that most of his power had been restricted by the Priestess and the Sorcerers on Dragon God Island, even a weakened Kasajin posed a sufficient threat.

This was probably the judgement Nodiesop had made and the reason for him saving his external force.

However, all of that was a grand illusion that Nodiesop had created on his own.

Kasajin was not in the Heavenly Realm at that moment.

Nevertheless, his presence could still be felt due to the existence of Kran. That was why it was 'faint'.

As a result, Sedi and Leo's lives were prolonged by this illusion, and they were forced into this protracted fight.

"..."

She grit her teeth helplessly.

Although Sedi and Leo were fighting well, it seemed that they already thought they had lost. In other words, they were slowly losing the will to continue. At this rate, it would only be a matter of time before they died.

Arid looked around.

Dragon God Island had become a frozen wasteland. This place was his second home. There was no part of it that he hadn't seen, and who knew everyone who lived in each area. And yet, even the island's original shape could no longer be seen.

Then he turned to look at Min Ha-rin, who had already fallen unconscious, and the Priestess, who was completely drained.

And then he looked within.

...Could he say that he fought?

Could he say that he risked his life?

He hadn't done anything.

He was a bystander, a sightseer.

'I hate it.'

He hated this feeling. He wanted to fight too.

Of course, he knew that supporting the others from the rear was an important role.

However, this was a matter of mindset.

Everyone was injured or on the verge of death.

But among them, only Arid hadn't suffered a single scratch.

Could he really accept this situation?

Could he feel proud of himself?

[Have you killed anyone since entering this world?]

Lukas' words suddenly resounded in his mind once again.

It was only at that moment that Arid understood Lukas' intention when he'd asked this question.

If you didn't fight, you'd lose everything. There were times when killing your opponent was the only answer. That was the 'inevitable fight' that Lukas was talking about.

And in an inevitable fight, an unavoidable fight, weakness became a sin.

This wasn't necessarily talking about power. It was also talking about one's innate nature. In the end, there was only a paper thin difference between the words 'kind' and 'weak'.

In general, hurting and killing others was an unforgivable and immoral act.

But if millions were to die because they couldn't stop Nodiesop at that moment, could not killing him really be called the right thing to do? Could they be praised for not giving in to the desires of their flesh?

'...'

No.

By any means possible.

They had to kill him.

They had to ensure that Nodiesop died here.

For the first time in his life, killing intent arose in Arid's heart. It resonated with his unique power and caused a tremendous change to occur in an instant.

...Falling.

His body and mind seemed to gradually sink into darkness.

'I might never be able to go back to the way I was.'

It was sad, but at the same time, it couldn't be helped.

Arid had made up his mind.

Tuk-

But at that moment, he felt someone tap him on the shoulder.

\* \* \*

Leo was the first to break the balance. His body had long surpassed the limits. He tried to leap forward, but at that moment, he found that he could put no strength in his knees. Losing his balance, Leo fell onto his face on the ice.

It was 2 on 1, so they were managing to hold out somehow. But after one collapsed, naturally, the other would soon follow.

Paak!

Sedi was overpowered in an instant. Nodiesop's fingers pierced deeply into her stomach. It felt like her intestines had been torn apart.

She doubled over Nodiesop's hand as all the air in her lungs escaped. For a moment, she was frozen in that position as if her entire body had been paralysed.

Thud.

Nodiesop pulled his hand back, causing her to fall to the ground. Sedi tried to get up immediately, but he stepped on her face, preventing her from doing so. (TL: He really likes to step on her head...)

“Did you think you’d grown stronger?”

As his cold voice sounded, the force of his trampling began to increase.

“Well, I wouldn’t say that you were wrong. However, is it possible for cotton wool to become a blade? No matter how hard they train, an insect will always be an insect. That is a natural limitation.”

The pressure continued to increase.

Her skull began to creak. The pain was terrible, as if someone was driving a nail into her head, but Sedi only groaned slightly.

If this continued, her head would probably explode and she would die. What an ugly death.

“You talk too much. Kill me.”

“...as you wish.”

Just as Nodiesop was about to crush Sedi’s head.



Paht!

At that moment, a dark red light shot towards him.

He was too slow to react. No, that wasn't it. Instead, this red light was faster and stronger than the previous one.

Paak!

The red beam of light pierced Nodiesop's throat.

"Kuk!"

Nodiesop stumbled backwards with a soft groan.

After she was released from the pressure, Sedi immediately jumped up, grabbed Leo, who had collapsed, and quickly widened the distance between them. Then, while panting, she turned to look at the Priestess.

"What was that? If you could have used more of those, you should've done it sooner. What's the point of waiting till we're all down?"

But the Priestess' attitude was strange. Her expression was also stained with disbelief.

“...I didn’t do that.”

“What?”

Sedi turned to look at Nodiesop once again.

He was no longer looking at them. Instead, he was looking in another direction with wide eyes while covering the gaping hole in his neck.

He was no longer paying any attention to them. As if they weren’t worth it.

She followed his gaze.

On the frozen surface of the water was a man that shouldn’t have been standing there.

“Nodiesop, I will warn you with the utmost certainty.”

Lukas Trowman, whose complexion was unusually pale at that moment, continued.

“Get out of the Heavenly Realm right now. Then, I’ll spare your life.”

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He could no longer hear the 'voice'.

This was natural. After all, the voice would only reveal its presence when his inner conflict escalated.

Now that he'd received the 'answer' after his long contemplation, there was no reason for him to hear the voice again.

Nevertheless, the doubts in Lukas' heart didn't disappear completely.

'Wasn't I making the wrong choice?'

This was a thought that an Absolute was never supposed to have.

Regardless of whether they had walked the correct path or not, denying or doubting the things they had done was no different from crushing the beliefs that made them Absolutes with their own hands.

'...weak thoughts.'

The reason he felt that was simple... They were predictable.

After they entered the Great World, he was given a human body.

Eating, sleeping, resting, and bleeding when he was injured. A true, human body.

After being bound by this body, he felt as if his lost emotions had been revived once again. He felt his mind swirl, like catching a whiff of a nostalgic perfume after having lost his sense of smell for a long time.

Not that long ago, he'd thought he didn't like it, but that wasn't true.

The body and mind were closely related.

It was for that reason that the transcendent body, which was the union of the two, was considered a product of perfection and a symbol of Absolutes.

'...was this an arrangement of the Rulers?'

To make Lukas reminisce about his days as a human, fill him with doubt and make him weak.

No. It was impossible.

While it was true that the Rulers were paying attention to Lukas, that was all. After all, they never considered Lukas to be a threat. The number of Absolutes at the 'Lord' level like Lukas was uncountable. There was no reason for the Rulers to go out of their way to keep one of them in check.

'But one thing is certain.'

From now on, Lukas would make different choices from before.

Wiggle.

He tried to move his 'finger'. The heart in his chest had already stopped beating. In a sense, his body was already dead.

But that didn't matter.

He would be able to continue moving his body unless his brain was destroyed or his entire body was torn apart. He probably wouldn't die even if most of his internal organs were destroyed.

He tried to get up, but couldn't. Half of his body was frozen in ice. The last thing he remembered before falling unconscious was being swept away by the water, and it seemed that he had still been partially submerged when the priestess froze the water's surface.

If he tried to forcefully extract himself, he would tear his skin apart.

Fwoosh-

A weak flame rose up from Lukas' body. Although it was faint, the fire quickly melted the ice that encased Lukas and even evaporated the water in his clothes.

Then, he finally got to his feet.

His body wasn't moving as well as he expected. To be precise, instead of moving his body, it felt more like his was manipulating a puppet.

This sensation, where his mind seemed to transcend his body, was quite familiar.(1)

“...”

Lukas turned his gaze to look across the ice cap.

There, he saw Nodiesop.

He slowly raised his finger.

Crackle.

Dark red light blossomed at the tip of his finger as Absolute Power swelled within him. He felt his transcendent body, not his physical body, creak slightly.

Ignoring the creaking, Lukas fired the shot.

And the Absolute Beam pierced Nodiesop's neck.

\* \* \*

Although it was faint, she felt like she'd heard Lukas' voice.

Throb-

"Kuh..."

Her head ached. It felt like someone was constantly hammering inside her skull. Her body cried out for rest. It was begging her to rest just a while longer.

Ignoring the cries, she forcibly opened her eyes.

"..."

A familiar face appeared in her blurry vision.

The face of someone who shouldn't be there.

“...Master.”

Why, why was he here?

“Kakakak.”

Then she heard a sound similar to someone coughing up mouthfuls of water.

“Kakakakak.”

It was Nodiesop’s laughter. He’d burst into laughter despite the gaping hole in his neck.

“I didn’t expect to hear bullshit like that. Interesting.”

After speaking in a broken voice, he rubbed his throat slightly.

The wound couldn’t be healed, but he could at least stop the bleeding. He also absorbed some of the blood back into his throat. Aside from the pain, it was difficult to speak because his vocal cords had been badly damaged.

“I don’t know how you managed to use that technique just now, but that isn’t something you can do often in your current state.”



“ ... ”

“You’re like a half corpse now. I thought it might be a trap since you dare to appear before me in such a state, but that doesn’t seem to be the case. How absurd. It would have been much better for you if you didn’t show yourself now, so why did you make such a foolish decision?”

If Lukas had attacked while remaining hidden, Nodiesop wouldn’t have been able to do as he pleased since he would have to constantly be vigilant. For Nodiesop, such a situation would be countless times more difficult. A threat could only approach him if he wasn’t aware of the danger.

But Lukas didn’t do that. Instead, he attacked openly. Was it to protect those he’d brought into this world?

Or.

“Were you planning on showing off in front of me?”

“You’ve been talking a lot today, Nodiesop. Did something good happen?”

“Kakak... That’s right. I can finally kill you, who have been a thorn in my eyes for a long time.”

“That’s enough of your excitement.”

Lukas shook his head slowly. Deep fatigue was clear on his extremely pale face.

“More importantly, it seems you didn’t take my warning to heart.”

“Warning?”

Nodiesop’s expression darkened.

Surely... he couldn’t be talking about when he told him to leave the Heavenly realm, could he? Then he’d spare his life?

“Ha. I don’t even know how to respond to that bullshit.”

Lukas simply looked at him without saying anything. And Nodiesop couldn’t help but let out a laugh.

Just what exactly was this guy thinking?

‘Why did he decide to appear in front of me now?’

Desperation?

That wasn’t it.54055

His face was pale, and his movements had no strength behind them. However, his eyes had remained cool and calm from the beginning.

He seemed relaxed. There were no signs of worry at all. He knew that Absolutes were skilled at hiding their inner thoughts, but it was a completely different story when they were no signs at all.

In other words, this meant that Lukas still had something to rely on.

'Interesting.'