

## **Great Mage 631**

He was able to get to know Frey.

He was happy.

This was completely different from his relationships in society which were built on pretenses and checks.

For the first time in a very long while, Peran, who had gained a private friend, had a bright, honest smile.

Frey didn't lower himself. Nor did he place Peran in an elevated position.

It was an equal relationship, and they talked to each other as equals.

It was a type of friendship that Peran had admired and longed for.

After receiving Frey's definite reply that he would visit his house later, Peran's heart fluttered like a little boy eagerly anticipating a picnic.

He was so excited that he even forgot about his engagement to Sonia Aquarid, his fiancée. But when he heard that she had met Frey, a smile unconsciously stretched across his lips as she praised him.

The sight of Frey being insulted by the nobles at his ball enraged him.

...He even told him about the wounds that he refused to tell his father.

And,

—I want to maintain a relationship as equals.

Of course, such a relationship was not necessarily determined by the strength of the parties. He hadn't become his friend for that reason either, but it seemed that Frey was worried about his thoughts.

If the gap between them was to become wider than it already was, then it wouldn't be easy for them to think that the other understood them better than anyone else.

Peran felt like something was piercing his insides.

That was right. Peran also wanted to maintain a relationship as equals.

Even if their friendship wasn't determined by their strength, Peran still had his own pride.

If they were both Wizards, but his strength fell far below Frey's, then he wouldn't be able to accept it.

That was why he needed to be strong.

To be honest with himself, and proud of himself.

Peran no longer felt that life had no meaning. The boredom that had begun to settle in his mind also disappeared. The trauma of the past was dismissed as a trivial matter. Even if his Master was to appear in front of him again, Peran felt that he could face him with a smile.

Magicology became fun for him once again.

His talent, which had stagnated for a while, bloomed once again, and it felt like a warm spring breeze was blowing in his heart.

The darkness that had settled on his mind disappeared without a trace.

And as it did, Peran couldn't help but regret the years he'd spent idly. He should have continued to persevere, but he hadn't.

But regretting the past wouldn't change anything.

All that mattered now was the present.

'I have to become strong.'

He wanted to concentrate fully on magicology.

When he had this thought, Peran couldn't help but feel that everything around him was burdensome.

Peran didn't waste any time. Because he was filled with determination and drive.

After submitting his request for a leave of absence to the academy, he immediately headed for the Lava Field in the south.

It was one of the places with the greatest abundance of natural mana on the continent, and Shepard had said it was the best training place as long as one had patience, determination, and concentration.

'...at least three years.'

He had already taken all the necessary steps to reach 6-stars.

But Peran wasn't satisfied with just becoming a 6-star Wizard.

At that point, he was seriously aiming to reach 7-stars.

Archmage.

Peran wanted to reach the stage that only those chosen by magicology itself would be able to enter.

\* \* \*

A long time passed.

...It hadn't been easy.

No, if he were to put aside his useless pride and speak honestly, he could only say that he was constantly filled with despair.

He didn't know how to get to 7-stars.

"...hoo."

Peran let out a sigh.

After arriving at the Lava Field, it had only taken him 2 months to advance to 6-stars. And after 6 months he was able to reach the great completion of that stage.

However, for the next 2 years and 4 months, he didn't make any progress.

This didn't mean that there wasn't any harvest.

In that time, his mana had grown tremendously. This was the result of spending 2 years and 4 months meditating in a place filled with natural mana.

However, he had reached his limit. He needed to take a break. He didn't want to, but it felt like he would lose his mind if he continued to practice anymore.

That wasn't the only reason.

He felt that, in order to get a clue about 7-stars, it would be better to not just focus on training.

So Peran returned to society.

—And learned that in the 3 years he had been training, many things had happened one after the other.

Demigods.

Extremely powerful beings, who had been controlling the world from the shadows, had suddenly appeared and wreaked havoc on the continent. As a result, numerous cities were wiped out completely, and the Circle had stopped avoiding the fight or 'gathering power', and had instead chosen all out war with the Demigods.

Peran couldn't help but feel suffocated after learning all of this.

'I had been training in a situation like this.'

He couldn't help but shudder in self pity.

After all, one of the reasons why Peran was so desperate to become strong was, in fact, to prepare for when he would have to fight the Demigods.

But now, the war had already ended.

It had ended in the Circle's victory.

...However, many people had died.

The first thing Peran did was confirm the safety of his family. Fortunately, both Shepard and Lylia were unharmed. (TL: Doesn't he have his mother and two other younger brothers?)

The next thing he was concerned about was Frey.

"Father, did you hear anything about Frey?"

"...mm."

Shepard narrowed his eyes for a moment before eventually shaking his head.

“I’m sorry. But I’m not entirely sure who you are talking about.”

“My friend, Frey Blake.”

“...Frey... Blake? Was there someone like that in the Blake Family?”

“Didn’t I invite him to the house before? You even had a face to face conversation with him.”

“...I’m sorry but I really don’t remember that.”

Shepard forgot someone that he’d personally met face to face?

That shouldn’t be possible.

At first, he wondered if Shepard was lying or playing a trick on him, but his expression of confusion seemed genuine.

An extremely strange feeling filled Peran at that moment. Deciding to suppress his anxiety first, Peran began to inquire about Frey on his own.

“Who?”



“Frey Blake?”

“This is my first time hearing that name.”

It was as if he had vanished into thin air.

No one seemed to remember him anywhere.

No, it wasn't just that no one could remember.

There was no record of Frey Blake even in the Westroad Academy's register.

It was as if Frey Blake had completely vanished from the world.

“The Blake Family's third son?”

“Don't talk nonsense. The Blake Family only had two sons.”

“Well, it's possible that there were some hidden illegitimate children.”

The Blake Family had fallen.

This was because it was revealed that the Family Head, Isaka, had been colluding with the Demigods.

Of course, none of that was really important to Peran.

“Ha, hahaha...”

He couldn't help but let out a laugh.

What the hell was going on?

He was confused.

Everyone seemed to have forgotten Frey Blake.

Then... Who did he remember?

What the hell was the Frey Blake that he'd met?

Was he a hallucination? A dream? Or had he already lost his mind a long time ago...

“...that can't be.”

Peran strongly denied it.

He was not crazy, he was not dreaming, and he was not mistaken.

That wasn't possible.

Frey was real, he'd become his friend, and they'd parted after promising to meet again in the future.

Others might be deceived, but he couldn't be.

Because he was Peran Jun.

And because the man called Frey Blake was the one who changed his life.

"...hasn't Sir Peran been acting quite strange recently?"

He was certain.

"He's been asking everyone if they know 'Frey Blake' like a crazy person."

He had to be somewhere.

“Frey Blake? If it’s the Blake Family... that place was ruined during the time of calamity.”

So he wouldn’t give up.

“I don’t think I’ve ever heard of the name ‘Frey’ in that family.”

Ignoring the gossiping of the ignorant, he continued to look for clues.

“...there isn’t anyone like that, Peran.”

“Are you okay? N-, no. I’m not saying you’re weird, it’s just...”

“Why don’t you take some time to relax? There’s a nice resort near the West Sea. Let’s go there together. I’m sure there would be a lot of good looking girls there too...”

His acquaintances were the same as well.

“Older Brother, there is no such person. He doesn’t exist.”

“Are you alright? If you’re tired, you should get some rest.”

Even his family was no different.

Frey had disappeared from the memories of everyone except Peran.

And at this point, it felt like the entire world was laughing at him.

'Accept it. Admit it. Everyone else couldn't be wrong.'

'If you go further than that, you will be treated like a crazy person.'

"..."

It couldn't be said that the majority was always right. But this case far exceeded 'the majority'.

There was only one person who couldn't accept the truth that was given by the world.

So there was only one thing that Peran could do.

"I'm not crazy."

He shook his head at the world.

...Maybe, Peran truly had become crazy.

But he still couldn't understand this situation.

So he decided to stubbornly persevere.

Fortunately, Peran was confident in his own stubbornness.

"I'm not weird."

With a soft murmur, he looked up at the sky, at the entire world.

"It's not me that is weird, it's you all."

He would not give up.

He could not give up.

Frey was the man who changed his life.

If he could forget even him, if he couldn't remember him, then he wouldn't be able to lift his head when they met again.

He believed in himself.

He believed in the one who'd opened his eyes.

And that was why he would never forget.

...As if to laugh at the resolution he just made, Peran's own memories began to fade the very next day.

It was incomparably strange.

Not to boast, but Peran knew that his memory and memorisation skills were exceptional.

"Haha."

But Peran didn't feel despair.

Instead, this just proved his own suspicions.

Something was trying to erase Frey's existence.

He didn't know who or what it was, but in truth, it didn't matter. Just realising its existence was the greatest harvest he could obtain at that moment.

Keeping notes was useless, so all Peran could do was do his best to always remember Frey.

It was possible that he'd already forgotten a few things, so he decided to constantly think and say the most important thing.

"I have a friend."

A friend who was more amazing than anyone else.

...But if his murmuring was to become a habit.

Peran didn't know what would happen then.

### **Volume 2 - Chapter 332**

Peran's figure shot into the sky. Nix, who was staring at him like she wanted to kill him, immediately chased after him.

Changing the battle location.

From Peran's perspective, his highest priority goal had already been completed.

'She was curiously easy to provoke.'



This didn't mean that he thought she was an easy enemy.

In fact, she was probably the most formidable enemy he'd ever faced.

"Hoo..."

He took a deep breath and calmed himself down.

Peran realised that his emotions were in a slightly unstable state.

The first thing he needed to do was forget everything.

The conversation between Lukas and Nix.

The first clue that he'd found in ten years.

And everything about Frey Blake.

This opponent was not one he could face while his mind was in turmoil.

It was even possible that he would have to risk his life in this fight.

Fwoosh!

Immediately afterward, he felt immense heat coming from behind him. When he glanced back, the first thing he saw was a wave of flames that completely covered his entire field of view.

Trying to block those flames was no different from suicide.

Should he use Blink? Unfortunately, it didn't seem that the range of this attack was small enough for him to escape it using short distance teleportation.

Narrowing his eyes slightly, Peran observed Nix over the flames.

Her eyes were shaky, her breathing was erratic, and her face was flushed.

...It was clear that this person had lost half of their reason and had become mentally unstable. This was probably the reason why her attacks were so one dimensional. In the first place, fire was an element that was easy to understand and simple to use.

'I won't be intimidated.'

He just had to do what he always did.

There was no need for him to be frightened by her overwhelming firepower.

Of course, this didn't mean that this would be an easy fight for Peran at all. If he were to touch even a small spark of those flames, the tide of the battle would turn in an instant. Or perhaps it would immediately end. It was entirely possible that Peran would suffer from the tragic end of having his body turn into ashes without being able to resist.

The overwhelming pressure from his enemy and the overwhelming pressure from this life and death battle overlapped, creating a heavy weight on his shoulders.

This pressure was so immense that even high level Wizards would find it hard to concentrate enough to cast spells.

'Right. It's too heavy.'

But if he couldn't overcome adversity like this one, then he couldn't really call himself an Archmage.

Whoosh!

A windstorm began to form above Peran's hand.

Just because his opponent was a Phoenix didn't mean he needed to use water attributed magic.

Of course, it was impossible to put out such a huge flame with wind magic. Even a naturally formed hurricane would not be able to do so.

However, it was possible to change the path of the flames.

Whoosh!

The raging storm temporarily stalled the flames before forcibly changing their direction. The flames, which were rushing towards the forest with fierce momentum, rolled over and went back in the direction they came from.

In other words, they rushed towards Nix.

“...”

Nix didn't try to avoid them.

In fact, she didn't even blink as the flames she shot out engulfed her entire body. Those flames were hot enough that even polished steel would have melted in an instant, but Nix looked like she was just feeling a warm breeze instead. (TL:...no duh...)

'I didn't expect that.'

He didn't expect it to have any effect at all.

As he looked at her unmoving expression, Peran couldn't help but feel a bit of fear rising within him.

For instance, if this had been a battle between Wizards and those flames were a spell, it would have been a completely different story.

Just because the caster was the one who created the spell didn't mean that they wouldn't take damage from it.

Peran couldn't help but recall the fact that his opponent was a divine beast and a Phoenix at that.

For a being that had been born from flames, the flames she made were as threatening as her own fingernails.

Crack!

Whoosh!

Immediately after carefully analysing the situation, Peran cast Earth Fragment and Frost Scream simultaneously.

In terms of pure skill, the Monster Queen surpassed him by an almost insurmountable margin. Peran's only advantage in this fight was the fact that he was much calmer than Nix was.

Usually, in battle, if your opponent was to lose their cool first, it would be possible to win even if there was a large gap between you.

But Peran quickly realised that irregardless of how many spells he shot out one after the other, he still failed to pierce the shell of flames that covered Nix.

The reason for this was simple.

Nix was several times stronger than Peran.

Moreover, her flames were gradually becoming stronger as more time passed.

Despite this, there were two reasons why Peran had yet to receive any injuries.

The first, as mentioned earlier, was that Nix's attacks were too one dimensional. The other was that Nix had become too used to one sided slaughtering.

Wiping entire regions with a vast range of flame attacks.

That was the main fighting style of Nix, the Monster Queen.

However, Peran was able to respond to the flame attacks she used to an extent.

Even though he was only desperately defending, it couldn't be denied that Peran was doing an exceptional job at staying alive.

'In other words, the Monster Queen has never fought an enemy as strong as I am.'

It was thanks to that that he hadn't stopped breathing yet, but he wasn't optimistic that would remain the case for long.

The Monster Queen's combat senses were extraordinary. Even now, she constantly analysed Peran's numerous spells as if she could see right through them, and was able to distinguish his real attacks from his feints. Since she was effectively half-mad at the moment, this meant that she was relying almost solely on her instincts.

This fact covered his back in cold sweat.

That was why he couldn't let his guard down for even an instant.

'I can't afford to waste any more time.'

His analysis was complete.

Peran's judgement was simple.

He needed to act as soon as possible.

"In the beginning, there was only a handful of wind."

While holding Nix back, he began to chant a spell.

Although this counted as a form of double casting, the perfection of the spell he was using to hold Nix back didn't falter at all.

"This wind became a breeze for the good and a typhoon for the corrupt. Behold. Even if a formidable foe blocks my path, how can I feel fear when I have the fangs of wind that scratch the earth on my side?"

Howl-

His mana, which was slowly rising up from his body, began to shake violently.

It was a strange omen.

It was Lukas, who was still collapsed on the ground, that noticed it before anyone else. He stared blankly at Peran for a moment before his eyes quickly widened.

He realised what spell Peran was trying to cast.

"I declare here and now. That the fangs of wind have come to rest on me, and I will not show mercy to my enemies."

Bang!



The harbinger of the spell appeared.

Following the loud sound, an enormous shockwave spread in every direction.

The clouds in the sky immediately scattered and disappeared.

Rumble...

Then came the vibrations.

Even Nix, who had lost basically half of her reason, could tell that these unusual vibrations were not a good sign.

“...”

While she didn't know what it was, she could tell that it was dangerous.

This man was up to something.

Fwoosh!

Nix let out a breath of flames, and the space that had just been occupied by the clouds, were now filled by a sea of flames.

But Lukas could tell that Nix's response was already a step too late.

His eyes were glued to Peran as he saw him mutter the name of the spell he was about to invoke.

"...Beginning Wind."

Roar!

—In an instant, the scarlet flames were torn apart by a sudden gust of wind. It was as if the sunset sky was falling.

Those who witnessed a battle between high level Wizards might mistakenly think that they had somehow fallen into a of mythology. If anyone were to see this scene, they would not think it was strange, instead, they would feel like it was normal. They would believe that they were witnessing a battle of the gods.

"Kyaak!"

Nix's scream ripped across the sky.

The Beginning Wind tore her flames, which covered the sky, to shreds before continuing to scratch deep grooves in her body.

The feeling of the blades of wind cutting into her flesh was so intense that Nix couldn't help but scream, but her eyes became overflowing with murderous intent.

"You... dare...!"

Flames erupted from her back.

### **Volume 2 - Chapter 333**

Just as the flame that sprouted from Nix's back transformed into wings,

Crack!

A vine of ice suddenly wrapped around her body.

Peran's eyes were cold.

The hottest flames that Nix utilised were the ones that came from her back.

To be precise, they erupted from her shoulder blades.

Those flames were so strong that they were able to instantly annihilate any spells 6-stars and below, but that was only when her wings had fully taken the shape of wings.

In other words, if the flames were only just beginning to appear, or if they hadn't yet taken the shape of wings, the temperature probably wouldn't be so high... Or so Peran hoped, which is why he cast a spell trying to take advantage of that gap.

His experiment was a success.

He had managed to restrain her with just the 5-star spell, Ice Vine.

"K-, kuh..."

Nix groaned and struggled, but it wasn't easy for her to break free of the Ice Vine.

This was because the Beginning Wind was still swirling around her.

Like a bonfire that could stay alight in heavy wind, the swirling blades of wind shattered any flames she tried to emit before they could become terrifying.

Nix couldn't help but tremble as a sense of helplessness filled her heart.

'This guy... Who the hell is he?'

Of course, she knew he was a Wizard. But she couldn't help but feel that he was fundamentally different from all the Wizards she'd killed before.

Even the 7-star Wizards, high ranking Wizards who were known as Archmages, weren't able to push Nix like this.

“...”

Looking at this scene, Lukas couldn't help but remain silent, almost forgetting about the pain in his abdomen.

Beginning Wind.

That spell, called Beginning Wind, was an 8-star spell.

Peran had been able to cast it perfectly. Even going so far as to use double casting.

In other words, that Wizard, who was currently suppressing Nix in the sky, had reached 8-stars at an unprecedented age.

Crack!

Nevertheless, despite his seemingly overwhelming advantage, Peran didn't let his guard down.

The Ice Vine that sprouted from his hands grew thicker, and gradually, more than half of Nix's body was encased.

“Ack.”

A soft moan escaped Nix’s lips.

It was cold.

Needless to say, the cold was deadly for Phoenixes.

For them, becoming cold was the same as watching their approaching death.

Ice Vine.

Although it was just a 5-star spell, it was slowly but surely sapping Nix of her heat.

‘It... hurts...’

The pain was beginning to make her feel light headed.

Beginning Wind was still scratching her all over her body.

At first, no blood came from the scratches. Her skin, which was being sliced apart, was restored almost instantaneously by the innate regenerative powers of Phoenixes.

Nevertheless, there was a limit.

Now, red blood was beginning to flow from her wounds.

“Uh... ah... st-... stop...”

Nix groaned and stuttered, but Peran didn't stop using his spells.

This wasn't the time to show mercy.

If he missed this opportunity, it was possible that he would lose and die.

Crack-

Before long, the Ice Vine completely covered Nix's body.

Nix was now completely trapped in a block of ice. She could no longer move, and she could no longer speak.

Rumble-

The final hit.

He gathered the remaining power of the Beginning Wind before shattering the block of ice into pieces.

The pieces were so small that even a Phoenix would not be able to put itself back together.

This fight was finally over.

“...”

Peran's deep gaze slowly cooled.

\* \* \*

...Nix was alone in the dark.

-Are you leaving?

She heard a voice from somewhere.

It was a soft, fragile voice that seemed like it would shatter at any moment.



It was familiar. Whose voice was that?

-...please take me with you.

...Ah. She realised.

It was her voice.

After realising this, Nix couldn't help but question herself once again.

Had she ever said something like that?

-The best place for you is not beside me.

...A gentle voice sounded.

For a moment, Nix almost burst into tears. She couldn't help but feel that she'd heard this voice just recently too.

Where had she heard it? She couldn't seem to recall.

-Is there anything that you want to do?

However, every time she heard that voice, she felt her eyes tear up. Her heart began to ache as though it was being ripped apart.

“...I... want to find my people.”

That was Nix’s answer.

The voice of her memory overlapped with her own voice at that moment.

-Don’t be afraid of them rejecting you. Since you’ve become such a powerful being, you can become their shadow. Keep that in mind. (TL: This wasn’t what Lukas originally said. PR: Author has memory issues just like everyone else lol)

-Is ■■■■ still there?

Who?

For a moment, she wasn’t able to hear what her voice said.

-...sharing a body with someone is not something that many can experience. Moreover, he’s a monster who lived for almost 1,000 years. His character is poor, but your relationship doesn’t seem to be that bad.

Lived for 1000 years?

Their relationship didn't seem to be that bad?

...It was obvious that he was talking to her.

But she didn't know who he was referring to.

-Treat him well.

-■■■■Please take care of Nix.

At those words.

She felt like she heard a strange voice from somewhere.

-Hmph... Naturally. If this woman dies, I will die as well.

It was a deep voice.

For a moment after hearing it, Nix felt like her head had been struck by a hammer.

Then, she felt her dreadful headache, the painful companion that had haunted her for years, suddenly disappear.

Right.

She wasn't alone.

She'd never been alone in the darkness.

She turned around.

There, she came face to face with a pair of bright yellow eyes. This pair of eyes, which were so large that they were as tall as she was, was staring intently at her.

This would have been a frightening sight for anyone, but not for Nix.

Instead, she smiled and whispered the name of her other half.

"...Torkunta."

**Volume 2 - Chapter 334**

There were moments when you were certain of your victory in battle.

Of course, the timing of this 'moment' varied greatly depending on the person, but in Peran's case, because of his calm personality, he was never certain of his victory until there was irrefutable evidence.

But this time was different.

Just before the enhanced blades of wind hit Nix, Peran was already certain of his victory. He'd vowed to never let his guard down in the battle against Nix, but it was different when he was just about to win.

It was only for a moment, perhaps only a few seconds or less, but he relaxed.

He let his guard down.

Crackle!

So by the time he realised, it was already too late.

A crack appeared in the Ice Vine cocoon covering Nix's body.

Just before the blades of wind hit the block of ice.

Boom!

A huge explosion erupted from Nix.

“What?”

Peran couldn't help but let out a startled exclamation.

The instantaneous eruption of light was so intense that for a moment he lost his vision.

He could feel the flames shooting in all directions. The roar of the flames was deafening.

The force of the explosion was so great that Beginning Wind was no longer capable of containing the flames.

This was understandable since the duration of the spell was almost over.

'Fire...'

Through his vision, which was blurred from his tears, Peran was able to see that the sky had once again turned crimson.

Fwoosh!

Even Peran was not free from the fire.

The end of his robe had caught fire.

Without hesitation, he threw his robe to the side.

This wasn't an exaggeration, instead, it was an accurate response.

The small speck of flame, which was only about as large as the flame from a match when it first landed, quickly grew in size until it consumed the entire robe.

'...that was a magic robe covered in numerous high ranking resistance runes.'

That was amazing incineration ability. If Peran had been even a moment slower in throwing it away, his body would have been mixed in with the rest of the ashes.

Cold sweat covered his back.

With just that single explosion, the Ice Vine was instantly destroyed and his magic robes were burned to ashes.

'The temperature of the flames rose?'

That wasn't all.

The momentum was much fiercer, and the explosive power felt more like a rampaging bull.

Could it be that she was using this fight to improve herself? Was he helping this monster gain exp?

...No.

It felt a little different from that.

“Ahhh!”

Boom boom boom!

Following a scream, he heard a series of explosions.

Pillars of fire burst into existence before intertwining around Nix, occasionally releasing gouts of flame, creating a phenomenon similar to a solar flare. Soon, the only sound that could be heard was the constant rumbling explosion and the sound of the air gradually beginning to burn as the ambient temperature rose sharply.

“Huff, huff...”

As his heat resistance disappeared together with the loss of his robe, it was becoming difficult for him to breathe. The heat stung his skin and sweat quickly soaked his body.



Roar!

As the flames broke out once again, Peran had to admit that the situation was a bit more twisted than he expected.

'This... is not good.'

In all honesty, it could no longer be considered a level of 'not good', it was now extremely dangerous.

Heavy breathing, heat, sweat.

Factors that interfered with his concentration were beginning to pile up one after the other.

The worst one was the sweat that was constantly flowing without end.

The moisture in his body was rapidly disappearing. His vision was beginning to blur, and his throat was swiftly becoming dry.

These were all signs of a case of dehydration that was rapidly becoming more severe.

'...did I make the wrong judgement?'

He bit his lip lightly.

First, he used strong winds to extinguish the flames then a relatively weak ice spell to restrain Nix's movements. Afterward, he tried to finish it off with wind magic.

His plan had been almost flawless, and he was even on the verge of completing it.

Nevertheless, Peran failed.

He couldn't help but be filled with regret.

He couldn't help but wonder if it would be possible for him to change the outcome if he were to use the 8-star spell Ice Age together with a 7-star spell.

'I don't have enough mana.'

Before coming here, Peran had fought a battle at the mansion. He'd faced two opponents, and none of them were easy.

Then, after receiving the signal from Snow, he forcibly withdrew from that battle. At that time, he'd already used a large portion of his mana by then, but in the process of flying to the Amalgam Forest, he consumed even more mana.

Of course, all of his battles occurred at unexpected moments, so he could only complain about his luck...

Bang!

An explosion occurred a short distance away from him. It was getting harder for him to avoid.

The entwined flames, the pillars of fire... The flares and explosions were starting to become more frequent and Peran was having a hard time responding to each one.

This was natural.

Who could predict the paths of hundreds and thousands of flames.

Peran couldn't help but accept the fact as he saw the flames shooting toward him.

His chances of victory had completely disappeared.

'Should I escape?'

After thinking that, his gaze turned to the ground.

He could see Lukas groaning beneath a tree, and the fainted Swordnaz scattered in all directions.

The explosions that Nix had created in the sky had produced a lot of embers. For those on the ground, it would be like a rain of fire.

Their wounds needed to be taken care of as soon as possible.

Of course, Peran didn't have any intention of personally treating them, but he would at least take measures to prevent them from getting worse. The more serious the wound, the more important it was for them to receive some form of first aid.

Lukas was in the most serious condition. The amount of blood seeping from his abdomen was by no means healthy.

It wouldn't be strange if he were to die in a few minutes if he didn't receive any aid.

Crunch.

He grit his teeth in frustration.

...He'd finally managed to find a clue. He wouldn't let it go like this.

He had two options.

One would be to somehow end this battle against Nix.

The other was to take Lukas and Snow and escape.

Both options carried their own risks. The probability of death was higher for the first one, but there was no guarantee that he would be able to successfully escape.

Boom!

—The explosion caught him by surprise.

His field of view had narrowed momentarily and he took his attention away from above him.

The five overlapping barriers he'd created just in case were shattered in an instant. The first thing Peran felt was a burning sensation on his back before he shot towards the ground.

Thud!

Just before hitting the ground, he barely managed to cast the Fly spell, but it wasn't enough to fully absorb the impact of the fall.

Peran's figure crashed into the ground. One of Wizards' greatest weaknesses was their abysmal defence, so receiving even a single attack would usually place them in a near death state.

Today was no different.

Although he didn't receive the attack directly, the resulting collision with the ground was enough to cover him in scratches and bruises.

"...dammit."

With a soft swear, he got to his feet and looked up at the sky. Did he hit his head? There was a cut on his forehead from which a trickle of blood rolled out.

For a Wizard, such an injury was near fatal since it hampered his ability to calculate. If flares and explosions were to pepper him like before, he would have no way to stop it.

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But, fortunately, Nix didn't pursue Peran.

"Ahhhh-!"

Instead, she continued to scream, still creating almost instantaneous explosions without any warning.

"Tweh."

Peran spat out a mouthful of blood on the ground before turning back to the sky.

If it was the state the Monster Queen was in now...

“...falling.”

A voice came from his right.

It was Lukas.

‘Did I fall in his direction?’

Peran examined Lukas’ appearance. His complexion was pale, and his lips were bluish, but he looked strangely calm despite this.

“...your injuries are very serious.”

Peran muttered in a low, cold tone that was almost the opposite of his usual, gentle tone. This was probably because his nerves were still stretched thin due to the fight with Nix.

“The flames falling from the sky...”

“What?”

Without another word, Lukas moved his hand away to show his abdomen.

There, his torn, discoloured skin was visible.

Peran's expression froze. It was clear now that this man had been wounded by the flames that littered the ground.

"You're insane..."

### **Volume 2 - Chapter 335**

"I had no choice. If I didn't do such a crazy thing, I would have died from excessive blood loss."

"..."

As he looked at this man who used a Phoenix's flames to cauterize his injuries, Peran couldn't blame him.

Lukas looked up at the sky before murmuring.

"...the one going crazy right now is Nix."

"Nix?"



“That’s her name.”

“...”

He couldn’t help but have a strange feeling.

Peran hadn’t known the name of the Monster Queen before, no, he hadn’t even known that she had a name.

So how did this man know the Monster Queen’s name?

“We have to stop Nix.”

“Of course, if we leave the Monster Queen like this, then not just this forest, but this entire area will become a sea of fire. Fortunately, there are no cities or villages in this area. Although it’s a pity, I don’t think we can stop the Amalgam Forest from disappearing...”

“That’s not what I mean. Right now, Nix is using her life force to create those flames. If we let this continue, her body and soul will eventually disappear without a trace.”

“What’s wrong with that?”

Nix was a murderer.

A murderer who had already killed thousands of people, and who, if left alone, would kill even more.

But now, it sounded like Lukas was worried about her.

“I don’t want that to happen.”

“...you don’t want it to happen? Are you thinking of saving the Monster Queen?”

“Right.”

When Lukas nodded his head slowly, Peran’s expression became cold.

“You really have lost your mind. She tried to kill you.”

“I know that. But I still want to save her.”

“...”

It was an uncompromising tone.

...Since he'd heard a bit of their conversation, Peran was able to gather that Lukas and Nix had some kind of relationship.

But even with that...

"Peran, you're just as amazing as I thought."

"...what?"

"You must have worked hard day and night. You probably used all of your talents but still suffered from setbacks. You must have been desperate. People who are called geniuses all feel that the first wall they encounter is as high as a mountain. Most of them usually fail to climb that wall."

He wasn't sure why Lukas was suddenly saying this.

But for some reason, Peran suddenly felt like he was going to cry.

Lukas forced himself up from the ground. His entire body ached, and he felt dizzy, but he forcibly stood up.

...He was glad that he met Peran.

Because he was the only one who seemed to remember him.

This allowed him to piece together some of his broken heart.

Peran looked at Lukas with a complicated gaze before opening his mouth.

“...you.”

Suddenly.

Whoosh!

The flames in the sky merged to form a gigantic sun.

It looked like the entire sky was on fire.

Upon seeing this, Peran couldn't help but put aside what he was about to say.

“...it seems it's already too late for us to run away. That sun will soon explode.”

“...”

“The explosion will probably have a radius of a few kilometers, but the damage radius will probably be more than double that.”

The area would be devoured by the explosion and flames, and the only one who would be safe was Nix, who was immune to them.

Peran thought of dozens of ideas in an instant, but none of them seemed feasible.

“...this is the end.’

This wasn't him giving up quickly.

Instead, Peran had thought up all kinds of situations and considered all the available means, but he could not find a way to overcome this difficulty.

“Don't you still have mana left?”

“It's not enough. I don't have enough to stop this attack or to escape its range.”

The sun would explode in about a minute.

It was just his guess, but he was sure that he wouldn't be off by more than 5 seconds.

It was an absurdly short time to run away, it was the same even if he used the Fly spell at maximum speed. He also didn't have enough mana to use the Warp spell.

No matter what method he used, his remaining mana was not enough to let him escape the explosion.

So it was natural for Peran to accept death.

“If you’re going to die anyway, why not gamble a bit?”

“...gamble?”

“Give your mana to me.”

Peran narrowed his eyes.

“...you’re not a Wizard.”

“That’s right. My mana room is broken.”

Having a broken mana room meant that even if he were to give him all of his mana, it would just seep out of him like pouring water into a broken cup.

But Lukas continued in a calm voice.

“8-star Wizards have the ability to embody their mana room. Not just in their own bodies, but outside it.”

“So?”

“So make a mana room in my body.”

“...”

Peran fell silent.

Lukas didn't say more. There was no time to persuade him.

In truth, even as he was making the proposal, he felt that the probability of Peran accepting it was very low.

After all, it was an absurd suggestion, and his intentions were unclear.

In truth, Peran's real thoughts were a bit different.

What was the point of creating a mana room in someone else's body? Someone who wasn't even a Wizard no less.

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It was not a rational choice.

And there was no reason for him to accept it.

“...if you answer a question for me, I will accept your suggestion.”

But instead of directly refusing, Peran said something else.

“What is it?”

“You... Are you Frey?”

“...”

Lukas couldn't easily answer this question.

Because he knew just how much weight it carried.

This question was an important one for both Peran and Lukas.



But one thing was clear.

“No.”

Lukas was not Frey Blake.

Peran couldn't hide his disappointment at the answer. He lowered his head and bit his lip.

But Lukas wasn't done talking.

“But I am your friend.”

“...!”

Peran's head shot up, his eyes wide. His gaze was locked onto Lukas, his pupils shaking.

His mouth opened and closed repeatedly.

Their eyes met.

And Peran immediately...

Sss-

Began to create the mana room.

Lukas immediately noticed the strange sensation in his body. To put it into simple terms, it was as though someone was blowing cool air into his intestines.

It was not a very pleasant feeling, but this wasn't the time to complain about that.

...He just accepted the mana.

“ ... ”

For some reason, Peran became speechless as he beheld this scene.

The soaring mana and fluttering hair.

In truth, Lukas' condition at that moment couldn't be worse.

It wasn't just because of the wound on his abdomen. His body, covered in bruises, his crippled arm, and leg, and his torn clothes made him look pitiful.

Nevertheless, Lukas, whose eyes were closed as he concentrated, had such an otherworldly aura that it took Peran's breath away.

Sss-

Finally, Lukas opened his eyes.

A bluish glint flickered in his pupils.

Peran had embodied his mana room in Lukas body and transferred the control of the mana within it to Lukas.

In other words, in this state, Lukas...

Paht.

Had the ability to use magic.

“...”

If he could just cast a simple magic missile.

That would make him feel endlessly happy.

He was filled with familiarity and nostalgia.

After all, interfering with another person's spell casting and casting spells on his own was completely different.

"Thanks."

'Thanks for trusting me. And thanks for not forgetting me.'

'Thanks for not giving up and immersing yourself in magicology which allowed you to become an 8-star Wizard at such an unprecedented age.'

Although he only spoke one word, the meanings hidden within it were clear.

Lukas turned to look at Nix once again.

Since his mana room was artificial and temporary, it was dozens of times more difficult to draw upon the mana and create magic formulas. As Peran had said, the mana he had left was not a lot.

But that didn't matter.

Taht.

Lukas' body slowly rose into the air.

Right. None of that mattered at all.

At that moment, there was only one thing that was important.

From now on, Lukas...

Lukas Trowman could use magic.

So he would take this opportunity to show Peran and Nix.

How the Great Mage fought.

**Volume 2 - Chapter 336**

Fwoosh.

Lukas created a ball of fire.

Fireball? No.

It was the 5-star spell Flame Ball.

‘An extraordinary degree of perfection.’

Peran quietly admired.

Just like a master Swordsman could guess the skill level of someone wielding a sword, Peran was also able to see the depth that Lukas reached in magicology with just one spell.

A flawless Flame Ball had been immediately casted without a chant. It was amazing.

It was amazing, but...

‘Why?’

Despite the spell’s perfection, he couldn’t understand why he had used Flame Ball.

Why did he use a fire spell?

That fire would not work on Nix. Peran wasn’t sure if even a 7-star or 8-star fire spell would work, and the spell that Lukas had used was only 5-stars. Even dozens or hundreds of such spells would not be able to burn a single strand of her hair.

He didn't think Lukas wouldn't know this fact.

...Was it to ensure that he could cast spells properly?

Clearly, creating an artificial mana room in someone's body to give them the ability to use magic was something that had never been done before. And it was natural for someone to be sure of their full ability before stepping into battle.

But if his goal was to confirm his ability to cast spells, then there would be no need to use the 5-star spell, Flame Ball. Fireball, no, even a magic missile would have been enough. (TL: Isn't he floating in the air rn?)

Fwoosh!

However, Lukas continued to make more balls of fire until they numbered in the dozens. Then, he slowly began to approach the artificial sun.

That seemed risky. What was he thinking?

Peran accepted that Lukas had a strange origin, but at that moment, he had no idea what Lukas had in mind.

He didn't think he was trying to commit suicide.

Boom!

Suddenly, there was an explosion.

It erupted right beside Lukas, but somehow, he was not touched by it.

Nevertheless, his hair and clothes were swept up in the aftermath. It felt like his slender body would fly away in an instant.

Boom!

Another explosion, this time, closer.

Peran was filled with anxiety as he watched on.

Could it be that he couldn't think of a solution either? If that was the case then he was no different from a moth rushing towards a flame.

Boom!

“...”

When the third explosion occurred, Peran finally had a strange feeling.



This explosion once again came frighteningly close, but somehow it didn't manage to hit Lukas. They made his hair and clothes flutter, but he himself suffered no injuries.

The first one could have been called a coincidence. The second could be considered luck.

But the third?

Boom!

It was just as Peran thought.

It wasn't by luck or coincidence that the explosions were not affecting Lukas.

Lukas' fingers twitched.

As a result, one of the flame balls around him would appear in position to intercept a flare from the artificial sun. The two flames collided.

Boom!

And an explosion occurred.

“So that’s what it was.”

Peran was finally able to realise Lukas’ intentions, but that only made his surprise greater.

This man was artificially causing the explosions around the artificial sun. He was using none other than the Flame Balls he’d created!

Peran was confident in his ability to calculate. He also felt that he had a wide point of view and the ability to grasp everything that was happening around him with a glance as well as the calmness to not be surprised by any unexpected events.

Nevertheless, the level of skill that Lukas was displaying was almost godly to him.

Boom!

“ ... ”

But Lukas wasn’t actually as relaxed as Peran thought him to be.

It was true that the explosions were no longer a threat to him. The same was true even for the large explosion of the artificial sun that would happen a minute later. After reaching the interior of the sun, he was using the Flame Balls he created to gradually deplete the energy of the artificial sun.

In other words, he was delaying the time of the explosion. By his calculation, he'd managed to buy ten minutes by using the Flame Balls.

But he'd run into another problem.

Finding Nix's position within the artificial sun.

'...it's hot.'

Calling the inside of the artificial hot was a great understatement. Lukas had to occasionally create Water Balls to soak his head.

The water was practically useless compared to its mana cost, but he had no choice but to use it. The water only managed to last 30 seconds before evaporating. If Lukas were to stop this repetition, Lukas' body would be covered in severe burns in an instant.

Using Water Ball, deploying barriers, and maintaining Fly.

And when considering the spells he might have to use after meeting Nix, he wouldn't be able to make more Flame Balls.

In other words, he needed to find Nix before he ran out of Flame Balls.

Boom!

One Flame Ball disappeared.

...The temperatures of the aftermath of the explosions were different as well. Some of them had extremely high temperatures, and some had lower temperatures.

The conditions for the explosions weren't very hard to figure out.

When two flares weaved together and combined, and when the temperature instantaneously exceeded a certain level, an explosion would occur as long as there was a spark.

Of course, Lukas wasn't sure what the exact temperature was. The explosions he caused were a result of relying on his senses.

**Boom!**

...How deep did he have to go? He wasn't exactly sure. However, if he were to make an assumption, he would say that she was in the centre of the sun.

Looking back, Lukas could see that the path he'd taken had already disappeared. All he could see were the red flares and flames. He couldn't help the chuckle that escaped his lips.

He realised now that if he couldn't manage to stop Nix, he would die.

'...Nix.'

She was not completely out of control. It seemed that she still retained some of her reason.

This wasn't just speculation, he was certain.

There was only one reason for this certainty.

If Nix really had lost her mind, the power of her flames would not only be this much.

This artificial sun.

It looked very large, but even the weakened Lukas was able to withstand the heat on the inside.

If Nix had gone into a complete frenzy and created the sun with the maximum output that she was capable of, then everything in the area would have been melted or burned to ash.

'She's fighting.'

He knew she was still struggling because she didn't want to just run wild, and she didn't want to burn everything.

That's why Lukas wanted to help her.

“Huff, huff...”

...It was getting harder and harder to breathe.

He only had three flame balls left.

Since he'd reached this far, he should at least be able to get some clue as to her location...

“...ah.”

—Bright red hair.

At first, he thought it was just red flames, but it couldn't be. It was too faint and thin.

It was Nix.

She was floating in the air with a blank expression on her face.

Boom!

Lukas caused another explosion as he approached her. Nix's entire body was on fire.

The flames around her were hotter than any other he'd encountered so far. He could not touch her.

"...huh."

Nevertheless, he got as close as he could.

At least till he was close enough to look her in the eyes.

"...you should be in there, Torkunta."

"..."

Nix didn't respond. However, she turned to look at Lukas with a blank gaze.

That was enough. He knew they shared senses.

If there was a reaction, then he'd know his voice had reached him.

"Listen, Torkunta, from now on, I'm going to try to kill Nix."

Flinch-

There was a clear reaction on her doll-like face.

A faint light flashed within her unfocused eyes.

0

Crack-

A scythe of ice appeared in Lukas' hands. He put all of his remaining mana into it. This was the reason why it was able to maintain its shape despite the surrounding temperatures.

"Do you remember? It might not be a pleasant memory, but I cut off your head in the Ispania Mountains with an ice scythe like this one."

"..."

"Torkunta, I know how much you want to live... You're more afraid of death than anyone else. Despite being trapped in the body of another person, you didn't feel pessimistic about your situation, and were instead happy that you were still alive."

Torkunta was Lukas' only hope now. Torkunta was probably trapped deep within her.



There was only one reason why he was certain about this. If he was still active, Nix's mind would not have become so broken.

Nix was strong, but she was young.

She didn't understand the ways of the world. She wasn't used to sadness, and she didn't know how to control her anger.

That was why she couldn't come to terms with the death of her people. She blamed herself for it and walked down the path of destruction.

...If Torkunta was there.

If she had the advice of Torkunta, who had lived for 1000 years, then Nix would never have become so broken.

Lukas slowly approached Nix and lifted the scythe into the air.

"I really hope you show yourself."

He hoped that he wouldn't be able to tolerate Nix's, and by extension his own, death.

Lukas put his heart into the scythe. He infused the certainty and determination to kill her within himself.

Then swung the blade towards her white neck.

### **Volume 2 - Chapter 337**

Fwoosh!

“Kuk...!”

The flames around Nix soared, blocking the scythe and pushing it away. The force of the eruption was so strong that he almost lost his grip on the scythe.

Then came the heat.

He could feel his skin begin to burn.

Nevertheless, Lukas didn't stop pushing. Instead, he grit his teeth and wrung out the rest of his strength.

“Kuh...!”

The veins in his eyes burst, and blood seeped from between his clenched teeth, but he couldn't feel any pain. This was because he was using so much energy that his senses had become muted.

Creak-

A soft sound came from the scythe in his hands. Was it already reaching its limits?...No. That wasn't right.

It wasn't the scythe that had creaked, it was Lukas' body.

A certain place in his body.

'The mana room...'

The mana room that had been embodied in Lukas body would soon disappear.

What was the reason? There was still a lot of mana left in the mana room, could it be because he was too far away from Peran?

...He didn't have the time to think.

'Just a bit... more...'

At last, the scythe reached Nix's neck, causing a few droplets of blood to roll down.

But that still wasn't enough. It wasn't enough to make her feel like her life was in danger.

It wasn't enough to force Torkunta's mind to awaken.

Just a bit more.

If he could cut a bit deeper...

Crack!

"...ah."

It was the sound of something breaking.

The mana room in his body disappeared.

Sss-

The cold scythe of ice quickly became liquid and flowed between his fingers before quickly evaporating. He could no longer maintain the Fly spell either.

...Lukas' body began to fall into the fire.

'...'

He'd reached his limits both mentally and physically. His willpower alone was no longer enough to support his mind and body . This backlash was the price of pushing himself far past his limits.

He couldn't even move a single finger.

Like this, his stiff body slowly fell towards the red flames which flickered like the tongue of a predator.

Just as Lukas was about to be consumed in the flames...

Snap-

Someone grabbed him by the arm.

"...hmpf."

Then came a soft snort.

"I can't believe you would use such an ignorant method... That doesn't suit you at all. What would you do if this body really died?"

"..."

“But I guess you didn’t have much time either. Well, it’s fine. Now let me have a good look at your shabby appearance.”

Lukas, who had already lost consciousness, could not respond.

Her eyes.

Nix’s eyes were no longer red.

Now, they had become resplendent gold like the eyes of a predator.

The Drake King, Torkunta, held Lukas in his arms as he muttered softly. (TL: Remember male pronouns for Torkunta, female for Nix.)

“First off, I guess I should congratulate you. And give you a warm welcome. Lukas Trowman. Even if this world has become crazy, you managed to return successfully...”

\* \* \*

Two days before.

Deep within the Amalgam Forest.

Snow was feeling the dirtiest she had in years.

The reason wasn't just because undead had appeared in this beautiful forest.

“ ... ”

With her sword hanging at her side, she looked in front of her.

Death Knight.

A being that was generally classified as a high ranking undead.

Its combat power was comparable to a First class Swordsman or Warrior, but they weren't just classified as high ranking because of their power.

Beings classified as high ranking undead like Death Knights, Dullahans, and Liches, were all sapient.

In other words, they knew what they were.

For example, even if they didn't have memories of when they were alive, they still understood that they were just rotting corpses.

The lower ranking undead were different.

The emotions of resentment, hatred, or rage that they might have had at their death were what became the energy that drove them. Even after they were resurrected, they didn't know what they were, and they didn't care.

They simply acted upon their resentment for the living in order to fill emptiness within them that could never be satisfied.

In Snow's opinion, it would be more accurate to call them 'Corpse Beasts' instead of an old fashioned name like undead.

'These guys are different.'

Five Death Knights.

Death energy was also wrapped around them like a fog.

Since Diablo had begun to scatter undead across the continent, she had already cut down countless undead. That's why she was clear as to why these five Death Knights were considered to be high ranking undead.

If even a single one of them were to leave the forest, a horrific disaster would occur.



Crack.

The Death Knights were facing Snow in an organised formation.

They didn't rush in. In other words, they remained cautious

This could mean that they had some level of intelligence...

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'They don't seem to possess their own ego.'

The only thing that could be seen in their blank eyes was a glint of death energy.

This was proof that they were just puppets who moved according to the orders of the caster.

"Aren't you gonna come?"

[...]

Snow swung her sword in provocation, but she didn't receive a response.

They were all high ranking undead, but they didn't have their own intelligence. To be precise, it was being suppressed... This proved the strength of the Necromancer who was controlling them.

"I really wanna know who you are."

Snow grinned before she returned Deukid to its sheath and slowly walked towards the Death Knights.

A Swordsman who put away their sword and approached their enemy with their two hands at their sides.

If the Death Knights had any of the pride they had during their lives left, they would have been outraged by the blatant insult, but they were now undead who had no care for such things.

Instead, they looked at Snow with a hint of hesitation.

In the meantime, the distance between them continued to close.

In the end, the closest Death Knight had no choice but to rush forward.

Crack.

Its armour cracked.

With a bewildered glimmer in its eyes, the Death Knight stumbled backward.

It wasn't the only one. The other Death Knights behind it also staggered backward as if they had been hit.

Crack crack!

The armors of all five Death Knights had identical cracks.

Clink!

Then, as if their entire bodies had been crushed, they fell into a pile of rubble.

"You were even too slow to notice that attack. Stupid things."

Snow muttered indifferently as she walked over the remains of the Death Knights.

### **Volume 2 - Chapter 338**

How many undead had she killed in this forest? The number should have surpassed 100 a long time ago.

'They didn't appear here naturally.'

It would take hundreds of years for such a number to occur naturally. Even on a battlefield where tens of thousands lost their lives, it would take at least ten years for undead to appear.

Naturally, for a peaceful place like the Amalgam Forest, there was no way to foster the negative emotions necessary for that.

In addition, as the Elf Queen, Snow was able to grasp the condition of any forest from the moment she set foot in it.

When she arrived with Lukas, there were no signs of undead in this forest.

In other words, someone had very recently released a large number of undead in this forest.

What was their goal?

“Hmph.”

A sneer spread across Snow’s lips.

They had to be.

Diablo’s minions.

Her eyes turned towards the depths of the forest.

She could sense thick death energy there.

Even up to the day before, he had been carefully hiding his presence, but now he was blatantly beckoning her over.

Although the fact that it was a trap was as clear as day.

“Interesting.”

Snow still smiled.

One trait of the strong was to boldly respond to such provocations.

Taking a deep breath, she kicked off from the ground.

Boom!

The ground shook heavily and was overturned. This was an act that the nature loving Queen would normally avoid doing, but the land in this area had already died.

Moreover, Snow wasn't there as the Elf Queen, but as a Swordsman.

Of course, that didn't mean it didn't enrage her to see the forest in this state.

...She saw it.

An army of undead.

With many individuals who were even stronger than the Death Knights she'd seen before.

Nevertheless, this didn't make much of a difference for Snow.

She swung Deukid.

Boom!

Dozens of undead were utterly destroyed by a single swipe that carried no technique.

Snow brutally destroyed all of the undead troops that she encountered, but that didn't slow her advance in the slightest.

She was like a flash of white.

And in the places that she passed through, there was nothing but scraps of flesh and bone fragments, the only proof that the undead had once been there.

This didn't mean that they were weak. Every undead that Snow crushed like weeds was strong enough to slaughter well trained soldiers.

However, Snow's power was so overwhelming that she made them look like low ranking undead.

'There is no end.'

Snow clicked her tongue.

She had been fighting against undead for almost three days straight without pause.

Fighting against undead always took the form of a protracted war.

This was because she could not let even a single undead escape. This was something that had to be done even if there were no cities or villages nearby.

The power and infectivity of a single high ranking undead were enough to turn an entire village into a den for undead in the blink of an eye.

Snow absolutely could not allow such a thing to happen.

That was why she thoroughly destroyed every undead she encountered without missing even a single one.

As a result, the fatigue that began to accumulate in her body steadily built up before making itself known.

What was worse was her concentration.

A person's concentration was not infinite. It wore out as you used it, and naturally, the longer you used it, the faster it wore out.

Sleep was the best way to clear her exhaustion, but she hadn't slept for three days and three nights.

'It would have been better if the Swordnaz and Peran were here...'

She couldn't afford to sit around and wait for them.

At that moment, Snow remembered Lukas, who she had left alone for a while, but she soon shook her head. Although she was sorry, she didn't have the time to care about him right now.

Fortunately, he was far from the source of the undead, so he shouldn't be in any danger.



'...the source.'

She needed to find the source of the undead as soon as possible.

She would probably get there if she continued to head towards the death energy they had blatantly been releasing a while ago.

Taht!

Snow, who had been slaughtering undead as she travelled, eventually came to a stop.

She found it.

In front of her was a large cave.

The death energy that she could feel seeping from the mouth of the cave was indescribable.

Nevertheless, Snow walked directly into it. She didn't have the time for hesitation.

The cave was deep.

Even though she was moving at a speed that caused her surroundings to change rapidly, she could not see the end.

'It continues downwards.'

It seemed that this cave stretched tens of metres underground, or maybe even more.

...After a while, the entrance of the cave was no longer visible. (PR: I thought she was moving rapidly—)

Splash-

“...”

Snow finally stopped walking and looked around carefully.

She was in a limestone cave.

The ceiling was covered in sharp stalactites, and the ground was covered in a pool of water high enough to cover her ankles.

Flesh and bone fragments floated in the water.

“...indeed.”

This was where they created the undead.

Splash-

She walked around. The dense death energy had already polluted the water in this place so much that it would be impossible to purify.

Those with low resistance would melt simply by stepping into this water, but it was no problem for Snow.

After wandering around for a while, Snow found something huge in the centre of the cave.

“This is not something I thought I’d see again.”

A soft chuckle escaped her lips.

It was at least tens of metres long.

A giant Dragon made entirely of bones without the slightest hint of flesh.

This Bone Dragon was a type of undead that could only be created by those who’d reached the absolute peak of necromancy.

In the past, it was this very monster that had attacked the elves' capital city.

At that time, she had been helped by Ivan.

Just as Snow was bitterly recalling the past.

[So you've seen a Bone Dragon before.]

A deep, eerie voice sounded in her ears. It was like the roars of the devil, who had been trapped in hell.

If it was someone without much mental strength, they would have gone mad just hearing it, but Snow only made a slightly surprised expression as she opened her mouth.

"I never would have expected this. I didn't think you would dare to show up in person... Should I shout 'bingo' in this situation?"

[...kuku.]

A figure slowly rose up from the water that covered the floor.

The first thing that appeared was the pale white skull. Next were the sinister eye sockets that contained flames which glowed the colour of rotten blood, and the skeletal body wrapped in black robes.

Finally, a sickle shaped staff formed in his hand.

He looked more like a Death God who guided people to hell than a Wizard.

Diablo.

Snow turned to look at the being who currently terrified the entire continent.

When it came to black magic, necromancy, and even magicology, Snow could not think of a Wizard better than him.

For that reason, she couldn't help but consider a possibility.

The fact that the Diablo before her might not be the real one, but instead a double, or puppet.

But

"You're the real Diablo."

If nothing else, the suffocating death energy exuding from him was enough to convince her that he was the real deal.

[That is correct.]

“I don’t understand. Why would you reveal yourself to me when you could have escaped? Do you want to die now after living for about 1000 years?”

[You can’t speak to me about death, young elf.]

“Young elf... It’s been a long time since I heard something like that. I’ll have to thank you for calling me pretty, bones.”

Diablo let out a quiet laugh.

[Snow de Predickwood, Queen of the Elves and Master of the Sword, Revered White Supreme.]

“Hmmm.”

An arrogant smile stretched across Snow’s lips as she put her hand on her waist.

“This Queen likes being praised by others, but... being praised by a rotten corpse makes me feel uncomfortable instead.”

[...we do not have to be enemies.]

“That was true. Until you murdered hundreds of thousands of people.]

[Do you consider me a murderer?]

Snow frowned when she heard this.

“Cut the crap, Elder Lich. That is what you are. You destroyed two countries, seven cities, and twenty two villages just to satisfy your own disgusting self interests. There is only one way for you to atone for those crimes. By dying.”

[I have no intention of denying that. But what if there was a reason for my murder?]

“...”

[Regardless of the reason, there is no justification for murder... There are countless hypocrites who make that boring claim. I'm sure you are not like that. To be honest, it isn't really murder if there was a reason. From my perspective, I only sacrificed a few humans.]

Snow silently looked at him with an absurd expression before opening her mouth and speaking in a harsh tone.

“...even this Queen feels like her patience will shatter after listening to your bullshit. So? What is it that you're trying to say?”

The faint humour in Diablo's voice disappeared.

[...a glimpse into the truth of the universe.]

“What?”

[You, me, and even the beings called Demigods, you do not realise just how weak we truly are. Kukuku, I shudder at the feeling. The words ‘Transcendent’ and ‘Absolute’. They were not things we could understand...]

...Although Diablo’s voice was calm, the insanity contained within it was dizzying.

Rumble. Even the water on the ground began to quiver in tune with his emotions.

Snow slowly drew Deukid from its sheath.

“What a load of bullshit. Are you trying to say that you learned the truth about the universe a long time ago?”

[It’s different.]

“What?”

[The universe you know, and the universe I know are fundamentally different.]



“...I can’t listen to any more of your nonsense.”

Snow let out a sigh.

“I didn’t come here to talk to you, Diablo. There are a lot of things I need to deal with besides you. This Queen is the type of person who cuts down the things that displeases her, and that’s exactly what you are. So this Queen will kill you here today.”

[So that is your answer... In that case, I sincerely apologize.]

The vibrations in the water became stronger, causing droplets of water to occasionally splatter across the clearing.

Krrr-

The Bone Dragon began rising to its feet.

That wasn’t all.

Snow could also see hundreds of undead approaching her.

[I hereby declare. You will die here today.]

Snow looked around.

“Those undead...”

[These are my strongest armies that I've been secretly nurturing over the past few decades. Rejoice, for I am using a force strong enough to destroy a nation just to slay you.]

He wasn't lying.

The auras of the undead in these armies were all stronger and more vile than any of the undead in the forest above.

Each army was at least a few hundred strong, perhaps even more than that.

“...haha.”

But at that moment, a roar of laughter filled the cave, carrying on for a while before it eventually stopped.

After taking some time to catch her breath, Snow then spoke with a frighteningly cold expression.

“How unbelievably foolish. I can't believe you'd treat this Queen as just one nation.”

[...]

“How dare you talk to me like that with just these couple of undead? Since when did my title as White Supreme become so shallow?... You... are spitting on this Queen’s pride. I’ve never been so insulted and disgraced before. Therefore.”

Taht.

The stagnant water scattered in every direction.

“I will definitely execute you here.”

Snow leaped forward.

Her figure, which seemed to have disappeared for a moment, reappeared dozens of meters in the air.

Her cold gaze was locked onto the head of the Bone Dragon which was right below her feet.

[Roar!]

The Bone Dragon finally sensed Snow’s presence and raised its head with a loud roar.

Green fog writhed in the darkness of its throat, seeming as though it would rush out at any moment. Just from looking at it, one could tell that everything that touched this acidic breath would melt.

Crack!

But it was too late.

Before it even had a chance to spit it out, its neck was cut. No, it was smashed.

The neck bones of Bone Dragon, which supported its massive head and were several times stronger than steel, shattered like glass.

Splash...

The bone fragments fell like rain.

Among them, Snow landed silently on the ground before slowly approaching Diablo.

“You brought your strongest armies? That was the wrong move, Diablo. Just the strongest is not enough. You ought to have brought every undead army you control. If that had happened...”

Boom!

The Bone Dragon's giant body collapsed, causing a wave to roll across the surface of the water.

[...]

When she saw the violent glint in Diablo's eyes, Snow sneered.

"Maybe your chances of winning would have increased by 1 percent."

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Hundreds of undead charged toward her at the same time.

With a fierce laugh, Snow threw herself into the crowd of corpses.

Boom!

The first clash.

It wasn't the same as before in the forest.

These undead didn't shatter with one hit.

They were pretty tough. If she were to focus on them a bit more, it wouldn't be a problem to cut them cleanly with her sword, but she couldn't afford to spend too much time on one enemy.

So she divided it.

She didn't spend more than half a breath on a single enemy.

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And if any of them managed to land any blows on her, she remembered them. Then she made sure to silence them completely.

Slash, stab, smash.

The tip of her sword never stopped moving. When the blade fell, it immediately rose up again in an equally powerful reverse movement. Whenever she took large steps forward, her slashes became stabs. When she swung sideways before her momentum died, the flat faces of her sword became great tools for smashing.

Snow's series of movements were worthy of being called never ending. Nevertheless, this was accomplished by forcibly continuing her flowing movements.

The pressure that this placed on her muscles was beyond imagination, but she still managed to keep up such a vigorous performance for several minutes.

[Amazing.]

Diablo humbly admitted this fact.

He didn't know much about swords. It would be enough to even call him a layman.

Nevertheless, Snow's swordsmanship was able to cause the heart of an undead, which he assumed had long gone dormant, to feel admiration.

He could tell.

She was close to reaching the very peak of her realm.

Even if it wasn't the same peak where he was standing, as someone who was also standing at the peak of a mountain, he could see the other mountains in the distance, even if it was a bit faint. Because of this, he knew just how difficult the journey to get there was.

The sword was Snow's life.

That was why,

He was even more satisfied.

Diablo's gaze drifted to the side.

[Look carefully and make sure you don't miss anything. That is Snow de Predickwood, the greatest Swordsman of her time, and the strongest being in this era.]

—Although Snow continued to destroy the undead, at least 30% of her attention remained on Diablo. This was a natural response since she didn't know what he had hidden up his sleeves.

However, Diablo didn't appear to be planning anything. On the contrary, he just continued to watch in a leisurely manner.

Why?

Undead. Although it was a terrifyingly large number, they weren't infinite. Although her speed couldn't be considered too fast, she was still gradually whittling down the number of troops.

To borrow Diablo's words, these undead were the strongest armies that he had been secretly nurturing for a long time. She didn't think he would be happy to have them wasted here.

'What is he thinking?'

Snow couldn't help but wonder as she looked at Diablo. Then, she finally realised something strange.

At some point, someone had appeared to stand beside him.



It was an undead. Probably a Death Knight.

The jet black armour that it wore, which didn't expose even a hint of flesh, had a ferocious aura as if it had been modelled after a Demon.

...But it was strange.

She could barely feel the death energy and deathly aura from the armoured Death Knight.

But there was something that was even more surprising than that.

'It's strong.'

Its strength was on a completely different level when compared to the other undead.

Even Snow was not certain of just how strong it was.

This realisation caused another question to bubble up with her.

Why wasn't he letting this undead fight?

Was that this guy's plan?

To slowly use up Snow's stamina and mental strength with the unending attacks of the other undead before stepping in at the last moment and finishing the fight?

It was a simple and obvious plan, but the problem was that despite knowing it, she had no way to respond to it.

All Snow could do at this point was kill at least once more undead before he decided to use his full strength.

\* \* \*

“ ... ”

She wanted to take a deep breath.

But she didn't.

Snow stood atop a pile of undead corpses.

Her white hair was covered in disgusting bits of flesh and bone fragments, and her entire body was covered in sweat. But Snow didn't try to clear her hair.

Instead, her gaze remained locked on Diablo.

She didn't look tired.

Although she wasn't sure if Diablo knew what her current physical condition was, this was still better than if she were to reveal it herself.

It wasn't just a matter of pride.

[121 Death Knights.]

“...”

[152 Dullahans. 73 Liches. And 103 other miscellaneous high ranking undead. As for ghouls and skeletons... there were roughly 2000 or so.]

“...what are you talking about?”

[That was the composition of my army that you destroyed. I thought you'd be curious.]

Although he'd lost nearly 2500 undead, his attitude remained nonchalant.

This attitude made Snow angry, but instead of expressing that anger, she showed a provocative smile.

“You miscounted.”

[Hoh. Were you counting all the undead you killed? I didn't think you had that much time.]

“No, I didn't count. But I could tell after hearing what you said.”

Snow raised her sword to point at Diablo.

“That you forgot to add a Death Knight and a Lich.”

[...kukuku.]

Diablo chuckled.

[I will give you time to rest.]

“...”

[I know you're very tired. If you rest for an hour or two you should be able to regain some of your energy.]

“Enough bullshit.”

Snow shot with an irritated voice.

“There is no way an undead with no sense of honour would be worried about this Queen’s health. There is nothing more unpleasant than a dirty victory, Diablo. What exactly do you want from this Queen?”

[...]

As expected, she was quick to realise.

No. In this case, it was probably because his proposal had been too blatantly suspicious.

Nevertheless, it didn’t matter. He’d already achieved his goal.

[I don’t want anything.]

“...”

[To be precise, I no longer want anything. I already got everything I wanted from you in the previous fight.]

“What?”

[Do you wish to have your final battle now? Then I will grant your wish.]

Diablo beckoned, and the Death Knight, who had been silently standing beside him, stepped forward.

It was the Death Knight wearing the devilish armour.

“ ... ”

Snow had a bad feeling. The demonic energy that was being released by the Death Knight felt like a thousand pound weight pressing on her shoulders, but she forced herself to lift Deukid.

...If her senses were correct, then this one Death Knight would be harder to deal with than the thousands of undead she'd killed before.

'This wouldn't be an easy enemy even if I was in a normal state.'

If she were to fight in her current state, then her chances of winning would be very slim.

Moreover, Diablo was still alive and well.

...But none of that mattered.

In fact...

[Why are you smiling?]

She was excited.

“Because I’m happy.”

[Happy?]

“Ahh. I’m so happy. I really have to thank you. For pushing this Queen so hard. If I make even a single mistake now, I will definitely die. It’s been 10 years since I felt a crisis like this.”

### **Volume 2 - Chapter 340**

...After the Demigods disappeared, Snow devoted herself to training like crazy.

This was because she realised how powerless she was.

Did she work harder than anyone else? Did she overcome her limits?

She didn’t know anything like that.

However, one thing she could be certain of was the fact that she was more desperate than anyone else.

So Snow became strong. She became strong enough to overcome her past weakness.

But she had no more enemies left.

She never had a chance to push herself to the limit, to use all of her rage and resentment to push herself even further.

At that time, she'd felt so dissatisfied that it felt like she would explode.

Now, finally. She had met someone who could detonate that urge.

[You will die here.]

“Maybe. However, you should keep something in mind. If you don't kill me here today, I will go beyond my limits once again and become even stronger.”

[...hmmm.]

Just as Diablo shook his head as if he couldn't understand what she was saying, the Death Knight disappeared.



Clang!

...She managed to react in time.

Fortunately, she hadn't let her guard down.

The two swords grinded against each other, with neither side retreating.

Snow's smile widened as a cold chill rolled down her spine.

They were equal in strength. No, actually, she was being pushed back slightly. Snow easily accepted this fact.

But that was fine.

After all, Snow's physical ability wasn't her only weapon.

Crack...

White fog began to rise up from her body. The extreme cold that exuded from her body quickly began to freeze the ankle deep water beneath their feet.

The Death Knight tried to pull its feet out, but it was a step too slow. The frozen ground bound its ankles.

While this was happening, Snow broke the engagement and pulled back a bit before unleashing a series of attacks on the trapped Death Knight, while it was off balance.

Clang clang clang!

Ten strikes landed in an instant.

All of them were hits that not even an undead would be able to ignore, but none of them landed.

Snow narrowed her eyes.

The temperature of the surroundings rapidly fell after she released her cold aura.

Within this area, everyone but Snow would have their movements inhibited.

'I know the effect against undead is fairly limited, but...'

She couldn't believe that the Death Knight was able to defend itself perfectly despite that.

...It was stable.

A perfect stance and perfect swordsmanship.

It was monotonous and basic, but it was terrifying. She couldn't find any openings to take advantage of. It was like she was facing an iron wall that blocks everything in sight.

Swoosh!

And at times, the iron wall would take the shape of a sharp spear.

The sound of the air being cut was terrifying.

They were all straight line attacks without any tricks, but it felt as though dozens of contradictory sword techniques were being used at the same time.

It was unpredictable. No matter where she moved, this inescapable sword would reach her.

That's why she had no choice but to block it.

Clang!

“...”

Jurk-

Blood spilled from the corner of Snow’s lips. The shock of that attack reached her internal organs.

Her opponent’s intentions were clear. The Death Knight intended to force Snow to continually block his attacks in order to accumulate blunt force trauma to her internal organs. This wasn’t good. Her body was already reaching its limit.

If she were to continue receiving such trauma while in this state...

Ten times? Twenty times?

How long would her body be able to last?

Clang! Clang!

Before she knew it, the initiative had already been grasped by her opponent.

Ignoring her rising doubts and spasming muscles, Snow tried to force the offensive.

Crack!

But she was blocked before she could even properly begin.

Biting her lip, she tried again.

Clang!

And failed again.

'...this Queen's movements.'

Were being read.

And with very high probability too.

Five out of ten of her attacks were blocked before they could even be properly unleashed. And the more they fought, the higher the ratio became.

Six, seven, eight...

'Impossible.'

What the hell was this monster?

It was being absorbed. It was only at that moment that Snow realised.

The path she'd walked, her life, her experience. It was all being copied at a terrifying rate.

"Kuk."

She couldn't help the groan that slipped out. The more they fought, the more she realised.

...This guy was extremely dangerous.

He could not be allowed to leave this forest.

Ivan? Iris?

No. Even they could not stop this Knight of Death. (TL: Yes, different from Death Knight)

'This Queen has to do it.'

She had to risk her life.

Even if she had to settle for mutual destruction. She had to stop this monster.

“Cough.”

She coughed up a mouthful of blood.

Snow didn't even bother to wipe the gushing blood. Her hair, which was always neatly arranged, began to scatter as a wind began to blow.

Whoosh!

The wind was heavy.

Just as Snow's eyes began to fill with blue light.

Puk.

“...ah.”

She let out a soft cry.

Snow slowly lowered her head and looked down.

There, she saw what appeared to be a skeletal arm sticking out of her stomach.

[It's nothing special.]

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Diablo's dry voice resounded.

[It's just a simple application of the Blink spell... I moved my arm into your body. As you can see, I haven't yet perfected the spell. After all, I can't recall my arm.]

As he said that, Diablo waved the stump that remained of his arm, and after a while, the bones that had disappeared, soon regenerated.

[It's not much when compared to the Black Witch's ability to control space, but it seems to be quite useful for launching surprise attacks...]

“...”

Snow didn't have the chance to listen to everything he said.



Her eyes had returned to the Knight in front of her.

Clang!

In a flash, the Death Knight's sword collided with Deukid. Snow was no longer able to put any strength in her wrist.

'I... let go of my sword...?'

Snow looked at the sword soaring into the air with a blank expression.

The Knight of Death leaped upwards.

Then it caught Deukid, which was soaring through the air.

'—Ah.'

When she saw this scene, Snow's heart began to pound in her chest.

Her opponent was an undead, a resurrected dead being with a suppressed ego who only followed Diablo's commands. But when this being grasped the sword, it almost instinctively took a stance.

That was all it did, but it was enough to make Snow's heart shake. She was deeply moved.

No. The admiration and awe that she felt at that moment far surpassed being 'moved'.

She had feelings that one should never have for an enemy.

And those feelings...

Puk-

Didn't disappear even as Deukid pierced her body.

She could clearly feel the cool sensation of her muscles and organs being torn.

"..."

But she didn't scream.

The wound was by no means shallow. She could feel her strength leaving her as her vitality was greedily sucked out through the blade.

“Cough...”

[...amazing. To think that you could remain conscious after being stabbed by my ‘Heart Knight’.]

Snow didn’t respond to Diablo’s words.

To be precise, she couldn’t easily answer.

Jurk, blood continuously streamed from her mouth.

“...without a doubt... this guy... this Death Knight is...”

[...]

If Diablo had facial muscles, there would probably have been a deep smile on his face at that moment.

He clapped his boney hands together.

His finger bones clashed against each other, creating the most terrible applause in the world.

[White Supreme... I pay my respects to your achievements. There is currently no individual stronger than you on the continent. Whether it’s the Grand Master Ivan, the Black Witch Iris, the Wandering Golem

Anastasia, the last Demigod Elliah... or me, the Immortal King. Even among all of the strongest beings, you alone deserve to be called the strongest.]

“...”

[It is because I acknowledged that fact that I considered you to be my greatest enemy. I decided to take the most difficult and important step first by killing you. And this has proven it... There is no longer anyone who can oppose me.]

Snow was beginning to lose consciousness.

Nevertheless, her eyes remained fixed on the Knight of Death. The Knight was looking down at Deukid in his hand, the flames in his eye sockets shining brightly.

This undead Knight in devilish armour was holding the best sword in the world.

...Contradictingly, the two seemed to be a perfect fit.

[With this, the final piece has been placed...]

Diablo let out a laugh, and the entire forest rumbled.

[Rejoice, my Knight! There are no longer any living beings in this world capable of stopping you!]

“ ... ”

Snow watched this scene with blurred vision,

She forcibly twisted her lips into a smile.

Then, she spoke the name of the undead before her.

“...Sword King Lucid.”

[...]

“I always wanted to have a sword fight with you.”

...It had been her childhood dream.

It wasn't just Snow. It was a dream that everyone who used a sword should have had at some point.

Clang.

Lucid walked toward Snow without a response. The sound of his metal armour clashing filled the cave.

Snow could only behold this scene through her blurry vision. Should she call him the Heart Knight now? Perhaps she should call him the Demon Sword since he was sucking all of the vitality from her body.

She couldn't even move a finger now.

A bitter smile spread across her lips.

"It's unfortunate."

[...]

"I didn't want to fight you like-"

Puk.

Her words were cut short as Lucid stabbed her with his sword once again.

"..."

Snow, who had been twitching from time to time, finally stopped moving.

And thick blood mixed with the dark water below.