

Great Mage 801

[The Great Mage Returns After 4000 Years](#)

Season 2 Chapter 501

“You will probably fight the Demon King.”

In the Omega before they arrived in Manjuri City, Lukas said.

“The Demon King and Diablo. Although both of those guys are my targets, and they will both be aiming for me too... if we fight, it would be better for me to take Diablo on.”

“The reason?”

“Beside Diablo is the Black Knight. You don’t want to antagonise the Four Knights, right?”

Yang In-hyun neither confirmed nor denied.

Instead, he asked another question.

“What kind of person is the Demon King.”

“He used to be one of the Twelve Void Lords, the 0th Demon. He was able to escape the World of Void some time ago through a certain method and now he has become the subordinate of a Ruler.”

Lukas fell silent for a moment before continuing.

“He stole everything from my friend.”

“Stole?”

Then Lukas explained.

About how the man named the Magic Warrior King Kasajin came to the World of Void, and what he went through there.

And exactly what the 0th Demon was.

“...I can tell you the disposition of the man named Kasajin that I know. It should be of some help to you when you fight. But don’t trust it blindly.”

Lukas spoke in a bitter voice.

“Because that thing can already not be called Kasajin.”

* * *

Even when he looked at Mount Tai, he didn’t really get the impression that it was that ‘high’.

Even when he looked at the sea, he didn’t think it was that ‘wide’.

Yang In-hyun had never been overwhelmed by nature.

This was because he had already known that he had become a being that was higher and wider than them.

In a similar way, when he had noticed the existence of a mechanical structure in the space beyond, he had only felt a little wonder.

In terms of whether Yang In-hyun could cut something or not, distance was not much of a restriction.

Only a few beings could understand the sense of alienation Yang In-hyun felt due to the form of the world that he could see.

“...”

It had been a while since Yang In-hyun thought about the Demon King.

—He was a huge being.

Of course, his figure was big. This was true when considering his simple height, but in terms of bulk, he was muscular enough for dozens of people.

However, more than that, it was the aura that the Demon King released that made him appear dozens of times larger.

‘...certainly.’

This was the first real enemy he’d faced since coming to the outside world.

His opponent was a former member of the Twelve Void Lords, a current Absolute, and probably had some other special element besides that.

[...]

The Demon King.

Didn’t seem willing to make the first move. This fact surprised Yang In-hyun.

To put it simply, between him and the Demon King, who was in more of a hurry?

The answer came quickly.

Both of them. Neither could afford it.

Past these ruins was an enormous time bomb that had already started counting down. If things went wrong, there was a chance that a huge mark would be engraved on the planet. There was no guarantee that they wouldn’t be caught in the aftermath.

‘...it can’t be helped.’

It didn’t suit Yang In-hyun’s temperament to just watch his opponent forever.

Raising his drawn sword, he pointed it towards the Demon King. The pointing of the tip of his sword was what the Demon King wanted. The Demon King, who had been standing with his arms folded until now, also changed his stance.

Then, with a faint swoosh sound, the blade became indistinct. Yang In-hyun’s blade disappeared in an instant.

However, it hadn't disappeared.

The sword territory(劍域) expanded. The traces of the sword blade vanished, it could be estimated that dozens of kilometres had been added to Yang In-hyun's new 'cutting range'.

[Kuhu.]

The Demon King couldn't hold back a brief chuckle.

The world in his eyes had become a sword domain(劍界) with millions of swords. Sword hilts swirled like a gale.

[Don't the Swordsmen from Mount Hua usually use the Plum Blossom Method or something like that?]

"That's one of the prejudices I hate. That is just one of the many sword techniques of Mount Hua."

[Kuku. Indeed, I see.]

Boom!

The Demon King clapped his fists together hard. This caused a massive amount of wind pressure to rage around, scattering the pieces of the shattered buildings like pieces of trash.

The sword domain created by Yang In-hyun disappeared like fog after dawn.

[I don't like probing attacks.]

"Then?"

[From start to finish, full power.]

Crack crack.

Cracking his knuckles, the Demon King grinned.

[Our sword or fist will only stop when one of us dies. What do you think?]

"It's barbaric."

[I see. Is that your answer?]

"Everlasting Plum Sword. First Form."

Saying the name of your technique. So you like that.

The Demon King closed his mouth that he'd opened to say that.

He could see the colourless buds rising up like haze. The buds that bloomed faintly and vaguely looked pitiful as if they could be buried with the wave of a finger.

The world of swords. Next was a flower garden?

This situation felt like a joke, but the Demon King couldn't afford to laugh.

A feeling of pressure, which was completely incomparable to what he'd felt before, pressed down on his entire body. All of the Demon King's nerves tensed to the limit in preparation for the coming impact.

The furled buds unfolded.

Dozens of blinding lights exploded from within.

"— Murim Annihilation."

It felt like both of his eyes went blind.

Time was compressed, space was compressed.

And compressed some more.

Compressed...

...

Compressed.

...

-Stab.

Crack!

He realised the true nature of the attack.

And caught it.

Just before it could pierce his chest, the blade Yang In-hyun thrust forward was caught in the Demon King's thick hand. His palm, which was big enough to match his physique made it look like he was holding a toothpick, but blood still dripped from his tightly clenched fingers.

But, the Demon King laughed, regardless of the wound or pain.

[Murim Annihilation? It doesn't quite match its grandiose name. Isn't it just a simple stab? No way, with this much power-]

"Everlasting Plum Sword, Second Form."

The moment Yang In-hyun continued to talk with an expressionless face, the Demon King swallowed the rest of his words.

"Flower Cultivation."

He felt a tremendous weight from the sword tightly held in his grip. There was no time to react.

The hand holding the blade sank. The Demon King's waist and knees also bent, causing him to fall to his knees.

[What...]

The weight hadn't been put onto the blade.

Looking at the Demon King's puzzled expression, Yang In-hyun muttered.

"The kneeling look suits you better than I expected. My neck hurts less now."

As soon as he heard that emotionless voice, the Demon King's eyes became red.

[—!]

Letting out a beastly roar, he raised his hand up from the ground. Piles of dirt were sent flying in every direction, and black energy covered the city.

Yang In-hyun opened space with his sword. The wide expanse of black energy moved across the sky in inconceivable motions and attacked at the same time as Yang In-hyun as if they were in sync.

Clang clang clang!

Deflect, block, dodge.

It wasn't difficult to defend perfectly, but he couldn't relax.

This kind of rotten attack, he felt that it would be annoying if he let it hit him even once.

'And in this case, the hunch isn't wrong.'

Then, the Demon King, who had jumped up, crouched down. Yang In-hyun felt him concentrate his strength on the tips of his toes.

He was coming.

Perhaps, a charge?

It would be hard to dodge. The black energy in every direction completely blocked his retreat.

He was forcing a head on collision.

Yang In-hyun narrowed his eyes.

Of course, even if his movement was restricted it would be possible to release an attack. However...

—From start to finish, full power.

"..."

Right. Fine.

He'd put together the sum for once.

What he needed was his fastest sword. Yang In-hyun quickly sheathed his sword and took a stance.

The movement of the black energy flowing in every direction slowed for a moment. This was because he entered the minimal time zone.

'This pitch black energy is the Demon King's arrangement.'

However, he wasn't the only one who made arrangements.

“Did you know, Demon King?”

Just before the collision, Yang In-hyun whispered.

“Seeds planted will one day germinate.”

This time, he didn't say it and instead just thought it in his head.

My root, my life, my belief.

The things that shaped 'Yang In-hyun' repeatedly rose and fell like water droplets.

...His most precious memory.

A goblet filled with starlight, a bitter smell, the sweet aftertaste on the tip of his tongue.

The image of a woman who shined brighter than anyone else.

A scene that should be protected. A scene he couldn't protect.

The smile of the woman as starlight wrapped around her body was more beautiful than blooming flowers.

Everlasting Plum Sword, Third Form, Full Bloom(滿開).

He drew his sword.

A ray of light flashed across the frozen world.

Gugugugu...

A tremor shook the ground.

The seeds had already been planted.

The Everlasting Plum Sword, Second Form, Flower Cultivation, was technically not an attacking form. Instead, it was more like preparation in advance.

Preparation to link the third form and the final form.

The entire area brightened.

A blade jutted out from the ground. Swords also rained from the sky. Countless swords pierced the Demon King's entire body. This wasn't an illusion or trick. The Demon King could clearly feel the cold touch of the blades as they dug into his skin.

His ferocious charge, which wouldn't stop even after destroying a world, was stopped directly.

The Demon King's body was skewered by swords. The swords were pierced in so many places that even his flesh could not be seen.

Despite shedding blood, the Demon King laughed.

[Kuhaha, hahaha!]

His eyes, which were filled with madness, turned to Yang In-hyun.

[Is this your nirvana? Is the sword you pursue transforming mental reality into physical reality? Answer me. The Everlasting Plum Sword. Is that what your sword is?]

“...”

[The erasure of a world, Murim Annihilation, the planting of seeds in that ruined world, Flower Cultivation, and after a while, the blooming of the bed of flowers once again, Full Bloom... then what will the next form be?]

The Demon King chuckled.

[What do you want to put into your sword, destruction, or regeneration? Can you answer that? No. You can't.]

“Contrary to what I heard, you actually talk a lot.”

Yang In-hyun spoke in a dry voice.

“I tend to listen to what people say just before they die, but for the first time, I feel like it will be hard. So I will set a time limit. You better think of better last words before your time runs out.”

[Kuhaha!]

The Demon King burst into laughter again.

[Contrary to what you heard, I talk a lot... I see. So you heard about me from Lukas. Interesting.]

Yang In-hyun stopped walking.

At that moment, the sense of danger he felt was on a completely different level from before.

[But did he tell you about this?]

Paht!

Strange beings appeared from every direction. That was the best way to describe them. Maybe they should be called flesh instead. They were sinister fleshy beings that looked as if they were made from compressed shadows.

Yang In-hyun didn't panic. He knew that there were things hiding nearby even before Lukas left.

But what happened next was unexpected.

The bizarre creatures curled up like pill bugs. Then, their physiques, which were similar to Yang In-hyun up to that point, became smaller than the palm of his hand.

The black balls then tried to pierce Yang In-hyun's arms and legs.

He could stop them.

And it certainly would have been the case if not for the pitch black thorns that suddenly rushed towards him.

Yang In-hyun swung his sword with all his might.

The moment the silent collision occurred, heaven and earth darkened. Boom boom boom! And a formidable explosion followed.

“...!”

Yang In-hyun’s body stumbled, unable to withstand the shock.

In an instant, he felt his four limbs lose strength. His vision blurred and his body felt as if it weighed thousands of lbs.

It wasn’t because of the horrific clash that just happened.

His limbs began to turn black.

[I made my limbs dwell on you.]

“...”

[They are one time consumables made for that purpose. I think your physical ability should now be around 10% of your full capacity. How is it? Doesn’t the weight of the sword in your hand feel different now?]

“...you used the power of a Ruler.”

Yang In-hyun exhaled deeply. This was to catch his breath.

“We are sensitive to that. I don’t understand. Why would you, who was once one of the Twelve Void Lords become the subordinate of the Demon God?”

[Does it look like I’m the Demon God’s subordinate? Not at all. You really don’t know anything, rookie Void Lord. You don’t even know what the World of Void truly is.]

“...”

[Do you really think there were so many worlds in the beginning that it could be called the Three Thousand Worlds? If so, then why did God leave the rest of the multiverse unattended? Why would he recklessly create a universe that he didn’t have the confidence to manage? Did he really need to create the Absolute system? Why are there beings stronger than the omnipotent God?]

As if he was humming to himself, the Demon King, who asked one question after the other, lowered his tone.

[...what I want to say, Yang In-hyun.]

The Demon King’s entire body became covered in pitch black thorns.

Yang In-hyun watched this scene with a sunken gaze.

[I didn’t borrow or receive these thorns from anyone.]

Laughing, the Demon King said.

[I too am the Black Horned Demon God.]

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His ears were deafened by a beating sound. His lips were dry and his throat burned. Cold and hot sensations ran down his spine at the same time.

The feeling of death.

When was the last time he'd felt it?

[There were two.]

The Demon King stretched out two thick fingers. After grabbing Yang In-hyun's sword, the flesh and bones of his fingers had been damaged, but now not even a speck of blood was visible.

[In the beginning, there were only two worlds. Each world reflected the other like a mirror, and although they could never be separated, they also couldn't interfere with each other. If there was a difference... it would be that only one world had endless possibilities. It's a bit old fashioned, but if you wanted, you could call it the 'World of Light'.]

Yang In-hyun silently listened to what the Demon King was saying.

This was for two reasons.

One was because he expected his physical condition would improve even slightly over time, and the other was because he couldn't ignore what he was talking about.

[However, how many possibilities could one universe really contain? I'm sure you know. Yang In-hyun. The appearance of even a few Absolutes would be enough to make it creak.]

"..."

[The 'certain being' who first realised the situation had to come up with a countermeasure. However, there was no time to explore the many possibilities. The energy of destruction was already nibbling away at the universe, so the being adopted a not so perfect method.]

"Not so perfect method?"

[Duplication.]

The corner of the Demon King's mouth twisted.

[Infinite duplicates of a single universe! In other words, the source of all of the three thousand worlds is the same! Worlds that developed magic, worlds that developed swordsmanship, and even worlds that developed science! From the start, they are all 'the same universe' ...!]

"...!"

[Hahaha! No one would ever notice! However, just one small event would be enough to determine the rise or fall of a universe! 'A little urchin brat was going out on a rainy day but stopped', such an insignificant thing is enough to determine whether a universe disappears or not! Much more than tens

of thousands, millions and even trillions of years have passed since they were duplicated! So it's no surprise that there's nothing in common between the universes!]

"...then the Great Fusion occurred."

[Right. It's not really a Great Fusion. In fact, it's perfectly normal. Currently, the universe is returning to its original state. Because the being who duplicated the universe is dead!]

"..."

[What type of being do you think I was at the beginning? What do you think the name Oth Demon means?]

The Demon King's smile had already calmed.

[The concept of 'evil' stems from me. Every demon can be considered my child. Even the Black Horned Demon God, who acts as if he is invincible in the outside world, is nothing more than a being derived from me.]

Yang In-hyun,

Felt that he'd just heard an important detail. No. It wasn't a 'feeling', he actually had.

Perhaps, even in all of the universes, there were no more than ten individuals who knew what the Demon King had just said.

The feeling of knowing the truth.

Of course, it was amazing. He was a bit taken aback. However, there was something.

'The person to hear this shouldn't have been me.'

—A faint thought.

Yang In-hyun looked at the Demon King. He'd been boasting about all kinds of things, but he had yet to mention the most important thing.

"What is your goal?"

[My goal? I've already accomplished it... I simply had the 'role' to come out. I got an ego. Then, I roamed the world as I pleased according to my own will. So I'm happy now.]

"That's a funny joke."

[...]

Yang In-hyun raised his sword again. It seemed that he'd been wrong. He'd thought that the feeling of his body becoming heavier was an illusion, but it probably wasn't.

At this rate, instead of improving, it would only get worse as time passed.

[What's funny?]

“Your own will? You think that is your will? It’s not. You’re just so hell-bent on roleplaying that it’s horrendous. Keep this in your empty head.”

Still with a smile, Yang In-hyun said.

“You can’t steal more than an ideal.”

[...]

“The reason you will lose to me is because you don’t even know that.”

[Hmm. Those last words aren’t that impressive.]

Seeing the Demon King take a stance, Yang In-hyun forcibly raised his heavy hands.

He managed to get into a stance.

“-huuu.”

As he took a deep breath, he couldn’t help but think.

After a long time, he was going to fight for his life again.

* * *

Lukas was moving quickly..

If he could use space leap, he would have arrived at his destination in an instant, but he couldn’t.

‘The spatial coordinates have twisted once again.’

It was completely incomparable to its previous state. The reason might be because of several overlapping problems that Lukas couldn’t identify, but one of them was definitely Pale going out of control.

The Four Knights, those guys were monsters.

It was hard to imagine that they could make space like this simply by revealing their true strength.

‘Can I stop her?’

Lukas couldn’t answer that question. His current relationship with Pale... compared to his past few lives, could be called the best. However, that and whether or not he could convince Pale were two different things. It was the same in the case of Yang In-hyun. The more powerful a being was beyond the standard, the more they carried a belief to never yield.

It was something that could not be touched, their so-called reverse scale.

...Butterfly.

It was very likely that the red-skinned girl that Pale had allowed into her heart had died. No, she was definitely dead. And that girl’s death had destroyed Pale’s ego.

If he were to go convince her now.

What was he supposed to say?

—His thoughts were interrupted.

Lukas stopped running and stepped back. Taking a step back was an act that he should never have committed as it was a situation where every minute and every second were urgent, but it couldn't be helped.

Crack crack crack!

Hundreds of skeletal hands protruded from the ground.

The fingers on each palm wriggled, looking as disgusting as wriggling white maggots.

“-what the hell do you want?”

Lukas' voice was filled with irritation.

As if to answer, a being wrapped in black cloth fell from the sky.

Lukas' chilly gaze was directed at him.

“Do you need me to explain to you what it means to bother me in this situation, Diablo?”

[No.]

With a brief response, Diablo straightened his back after landing.

[I know you're worried about the Blue Knight's rampage. First of all, it's fine. I've already sent a much better expert than you.]

Lukas' expression changed strangely.

[I was hoping that you'd hear an explanation from Iris Phisfounder. Because I thought that it would be better than if I were to say it myself. But it seems that she has more thoughts than I expected. Right. Then it can't be helped. I guess I can only say it myself.]

“What are you thinking?”

Since he was really curious, he couldn't help but ask.

“You sent the Black Knight to Pale. Don't you know what the current situation means?”

He pointed a finger at Diablo.

“Do you think it would take more than a second for me to kill you here?”

Diablo was completely defenceless.

He had observed him for a few seconds to be certain of that fact. Of course, he might have some means of protecting himself, but those wouldn't be too much of a problem. His defences would be weaker than water soaked paper.

That's why he couldn't understand.

Why did Diablo show up defenceless?

Was it because he hadn't grasped void?

Was it because he determined that Lukas was really weak the last time they met so he could protect himself even in this situation?

No. That was a sloppy thought.

Diablo knew that Lukas had been to the 'World of Void'.

[You have the right to be my death.]

There was even a hint of willingness in his voice.

He kept silent because he wasn't convinced.

...Was it right to continue a conversation with this man?

Would it just be better to kill him?

Crackle, dark red energy formed on his outstretched finger.

The King of Undead, Elder Lich, Undead.

He was a death-defying being with several titles, but that wasn't a problem for Lukas.

[Listen.]

Suddenly, the Lightning God spoke.

...His tone was different from usual.

After a while, Lukas realised that there wasn't any amusement in his voice.

[This is a crossroad.]

'What?'

The Lightning God's voice cut off.

Biting his lip, Lukas looked at Diablo.

"You have no choice but to say it yourself? What more conversation needs to be had between you and me?"

[About death.]

It was a statement that made him want to grit his teeth.

Death, death, death.

Diablo seemed obsessed with the word. It even felt like he was bound by it.

It was a word that he always had in his mouth. And he didn't have even the slightest hesitation in his planning and execution in spreading death across the continent.

When it came to the subject of committing genocide, he even had a slight feeling of nobility.

That was why Lukas thought Diablo was twisted. He thought that he was obsessed with false justice.

However, for the first time, this thought showed signs of cracking.

If that was the case, then why?

Lucid, Iris, and his other past companions.

Why did they all agree with Diablo?

[What do you think is the difference between death and vanishing*?](*:Still haven't found a better word for 'ceasing to exist'. But I like this more than 'disappearing' or 'extinction'.?)

A seemingly random topic was raised.

Lukas didn't respond hastily.

[My assumption is that there would be neither a soul nor an afterlife, that is my standpoint. To vanish is to completely disappear without any observation. No one would remember you, and there would be no traces of you left in the world. In that case, then what is the difference between that and not existing in the first place?]

"...what are you talking about?"

[There has never been a complete vanishing in this world. Anything that once existed still exists in some form. In other words, there was always a 'next'.]

He didn't understand what he was talking about.

But Lukas lowered his outstretched finger and listened to his words.

[After a mortal dies, the soul remains. And the 'next', such as the afterlife, resurrection, or reincarnation, is guaranteed. As it turns out, there is even a 'next' for Absolutes called the 'World of Void'. It's the same for you, Lukas Trowman. Even when all the beings in your home universe forgot you, some Absolutes and other beings in the multiverse, and above all, the Void Records, still remembered your existence.]

Green death energy swirled behind Diablo's back. It wasn't to attack.

The death energy soon condensed to form a shape.

It was a fairly large jar.

[Nothing vanishes, yet new life continues to be born and fill the multiverse.]

Death energy in the form of water poured into the jar.

[Filling. Filling. Slowly but surely, until it's completely full. The world has been filled. This is the core, the truth of the world. In this world we live in, nothing has ever been 'taken out'.]

A full jar.

A place where nothing else could fit.

[What happens if you try to forcibly put something into a space that has been filled? Normally, it would probably overflow. Or stick out on the outside. However, this jar doesn't have an 'outside'. Likewise, the Three Thousand Worlds doesn't have an outside.]

Crack, crack.

The jar began to crack.

[Infinity is a concept that couldn't exist.]

Clink-

The jar broke

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[The vast sky has an end, and the deep ground has a bottom. If there is a beginning, there is an end, perhaps because everyone knows this truth, they failed to realise. Or they avoided it. The fact that the universe has a lifespan... that complete extinction would soon come.]

"Is this universe disappearing?"

[Do you still not understand?]

Diablo's voice was filled with the heat of the fires of retribution.

[It's not just one or two universes that would be ruined at most. The things within your cognitive range, and the things outside of it...! They could disappear in an instant, and you wouldn't even realise! Can you imagine that?]

Diablo clenched his pale fingers.

[There is no being that can foresee the signs of destruction. I mean there isn't much time left. Even as we talk like this, suddenly, 'everything could end'. We wouldn't even realise our deaths. In an instant, a real instant, all of the traces left by beings across an immeasurable number of things could disappear...]

Diablo's body was shaking.

[I'm... I'm afraid of that.]

"..."

Lukas could sense the extreme fear coming from the undead, who had an expressionless body of bones.

[It's not everything that will disappear.]

Suddenly, the Lightning God murmured.

It was still a serious voice unlike usual, but...

[I will 'remain' as I am. My sole defiance is to succeed...]

Nevertheless, there was a hint of madness in his voice.

Lukas paid as much attention to the Lightning God as he did Diablo, but he couldn't talk to him right away.

"Then what is the point of the death you spread?"

Unbeknownst to him, Lukas' voice calmed down.

"As you said, killing someone doesn't count as 'removing' them. The same is true for killing an Absolute. Since the creation of the world, there has never been a being that truly 'ceased to exist'...Then, won't you not be able to buy time no matter who or how many times you kill?"

[I'm not killing to buy time. What I'm doing is advance preparation.]

"Advance preparation."

[...there is only one being who can 'definitely' withstand the force of the coming destruction.]

Diablo murmured.

[The Lord of a place known as the post extinction world, the one who observes all of the possibilities being abandoned, the brother of God whom everyone considers to be unique, or his other side.]

"...surely."

Lukas recalled the old castle that stood all by itself in the desolate desert.

[After the destruction sweeps everything away, only the Void King will remain.]

"...!"

[And in the world with nothing, I shall revive all those I killed. That is why I must become the Void King. That is why I once again stretched my hand out towards the necromantic techniques I had abandoned in the past.]

"...even if you revive them, it wouldn't be a resurrection in the full sense, right? Wouldn't they be completely different beings, constructed simply from your memory?"

[What is wrong with that? My mission is different from the heroic determination to save everyone. I just... just want the things we left behind. I can't accept that everything we've built would just disappear without a trace.]

"..."

[That is why I don't forget those I've killed. I remember everything. I always use more than 90% of my concentration just for that.]

"...what, wait a minute."

For a moment, Lukas was unable to hide his surprise.

How many beings had Diablo killed so far? He wasn't sure. However, it must be an astronomical number.

“You remember all of them?”

[Not just their name and appearance. Their personalities, and even their trivial habits. What I remember is their ego and soul. I can't memorise it half-heartedly. Because even the disappearance of a minute characteristic would make them a completely different being. Of course, as you said, every single cell cannot be the same.]

He wasn't talking nonsense. Diablo's voice was more serious than ever before.

That's why Lukas couldn't help but wonder even more.

He'd realised while eating many 'Lukas' in the Dump Site. That the capacity of a human was by no means small. The determination to put them all in his head... was not something that could be taken lightly.

Of course, the possibility of the being 'Lukas Trowman' was so enormous that it was impossible to compare it with ordinary people, but the number of people Diablo killed was large enough to overshadow that difference.

'...90% of his concentration.'

If that was true then it meant that the power Diablo could normally use in battle was only a tenth of his full power.

Until now, while regressing repeatedly, he had driven Diablo to the brink of death several times. And even then, Diablo had not revealed his true power.

In other words, this meant that he'd always put his mission before his life.

...It was only then that he understood what Iris said. And why the people he knew could sympathise with Diablo.

However...

“Can you guarantee that they can be revived?”

[...]

“How do you know what the world will look like after the destruction? What if all the laws we know disappeared? What if it is impossible to save everyone, and even if it is possible, what if they become a completely different being? What if the only thing alive and well in the world is your 'consciousness', and your thoughts are the only freedom that can be guaranteed?”

Unable to do anything,

In a space where there is nothing,

Where all you can do is think on your own.

Just like...

[You mean like when you were trapped in the Abyss...]

“...”

Diablo chuckled.

[I might regret my choice when that time comes. However, that is not something to worry about now. More than anything, the possibility wouldn't disappear just from being able to continue to 'think'.]

“...”

[Now. I have revealed everything about my clumsy goal. So I would like to hear your opinion.]

“...my opinion?”

[When you regained the consciousness of a human, I was genuinely delighted. Since I'd be able to hear the opinion of the 'human Lukas' rather than of an 'Absolute'.]

Diablo's voice glimmered with anticipation.

[I myself know that the plan I came up with is a bit far-fetched. That's why I want to know even more. What the thoughts of the Great Mage who saved our universe in the past are.]

“...”

[If you have a better way, you can just kill me. I will gladly accept. I'll say it again, 'You are worthy of being my death'.]

Lukas almost sweated under the weight of those words.

[I know how many humans you've saved. I know that you have overcome countless trials that were deemed impossible and that your indomitable will is stronger than anyone else. If anyone other than you tried to kill me, I would struggle to the best of my ability. Because I understand the gravity of my role. However, you are the exception. To kill me is to declare that you will take on the burdens I carry. It would free me from the responsibility weighing on my soul. -How could I not be happy? How could I not laugh?]

“...”

Lukas Trowman,

Had carried many expectations in his life.

However, he had never felt burdened by them. He never felt that he couldn't hold on.

But now, the expectations placed upon him by a single undead were too heavy.

They were so heavy that they made him want to bend his knees just from listening to them.

...The responsibility weighing on my soul. Diablo's words were embedded in his mind.

[Now. Lukas Trowman...!]

Diablo spread his arms.

He showed no intention of attacking.

It was a similar act to sticking your neck out to your opponent's blade.

As if pushed, Lukas stretched his hand out. And aimed at Diablo's neck once again.

...When they first met.

Lukas had been willing to kill Diablo. The reason he hadn't killed him was because his calm attitude worried him.

Now he understood why.

He understood what it meant to kill him here.

"..."

His outstretched fingers,

Fell powerlessly.

[...I see.]

Diablo let out a cold voice.

[Right. That's right.]

"..."

[I'm not disappointed. I thought about this more deeply than anyone else, and I sought advice from transcendent figures, but they also couldn't give me a clear answer. That's why I'm not disappointed. However... right.]

After searching for the word for a while, Diablo nodded faintly.

[It's a bit, of a shame.]

"...I."

[You don't have to force yourself to say it. It's not a matter of refusing to give up.]

"..."

[I will go to the 'Blue Knight' on this road. Because it is necessary to become the Void King. If I, the Black Knight, and those who sympathise with me join forces, it will be possible to subdue her.]

"...you intend to subdue her to gain her loyalty."

[It would be more certain to obtain it voluntarily, but the beings known as the Four Knights are quite picky. It is fundamentally impossible for all four of them to be loyal to the same being. Lucid is the only knight who will agree with me in the truest sense. So I have no choice but to make the rest submit to me.]

"..."

[I'd like you to help me. Then, I would be able to subdue the Blue Knight more easily.]

Turning around, Diablo murmured.

[I will wait.]

* * *

There is nothing more horrendous than terrible hunger. Pale was convinced of this fact based on experience.

She swung a slash at the sky.

It was a simple swing without any technique, but the slash from the pale blade pierced the barrier system that was a condensation of the Great Galactic Alliance's scientific power and shattered the surface of the artificial island that was made out of a superalloy.

"...for pain."

Pale's lips suddenly moved.

"There are things that can be tolerated and things that can't. Hunger is obviously the latter, a terrible thing you can never get used to over time."

A gauntlet covered hand groped her stomach.

"...'can it be more painful than this?', 'isn't this the end of the pain?', small expectations, and the slightest bit of hope like that always disappears the next moment."

Pale grinned.

"I. Have never described the pain I suffered in detail. Because I'm not confident that I could make anyone understand even a little through imperfect means like words or language."

[...]

"We all are born with flaws. And we all look for something that can fill that flaw. Some sought 'to have no ambition', and some sought 'to live in peace forever'."

She turned around.

Looking at the being in front of her, the smile on Pale's face widened.

"Isn't it funny? Those who were more crazy about conquest and war than anyone else in the past are now looking for a king with an ideology that is completely different from theirs at that time, which would be absurd to say when they were alive."

[...]

"How about you? Did you look for a king who can defy death?"

Lucid didn't answer.

It was not just because his reason for going there was not to have a conversation. He didn't know what to say in return.

Pale's slender body staggered slightly. Accordingly, the blue sword danced like an afterimage.

"Desire for domination, desire for battle, desire for survival. Hahaha. Don't make me laugh."

The low pitched voice encroached gloomily on the surroundings.

"It was always me that was the coldest, with the most difficulty, in the most pain. Don't act like we're the same. You bastards don't even know what it means to starve."

[...what is it that you desire?]

Lucid asked.

And Pale laughed again.

"Hunger. It always has been. Nevertheless, I never wanted this hunger to go away. If you jump into a lake because you want to go to the moon, it won't change anything. It is more efficient to not do meaningless things."

[...I understand now.]

Lucid murmured.

"What?"

[Why you, who became a Knight before me, know nothing. Your existence is too dangerous.]

Srng

After he finished speaking, Lucid drew his sword.

[You need to be subdued as soon as possible.]

"Subdue? Me? Hahaha."

Pale swung her sword.

Lucid responded by swinging his sword head on. Clang! The first attack was parried. However, Pale's attack wasn't over.

The attacks came one after the other. Accordingly, Lucid's swings became increasingly more urgent.

"Do you think you're on the same level with me just because you became the Black Knight? You probably don't know--"

Chrng.

[-how stupid that is.]

The tone of speech changed. It would have been a good thing if that was all.

Lucid paid more attention to the fact that the power of the slashes had become ten times stronger. When he hit the next blow, he realised that his body had been pushed backward, and that his wrist had completely shattered.

[...hmmm.]

For the first time, he was grateful for the fact that his body wasn't made of flesh. Lucid's wrist regenerated faster than it was broken.

Of course, none of that impressed Pale.

She continued to swing her sword at the same speed.

[You are really stable. But you have no peace of mind. All I can feel are your emotions being extremely restrained. In the end, even moving must be a mission. You will never be able to close the gap with me with such boring emotions.]

Pale muttered.

[Do you not know that?]

[I know.]

Lucid muttered in a tired voice.

[That's why I didn't intend to fight alone in the first place.]

Kiiing!

The sky above the two split and a group of people appeared.

Lucid looked at the woman standing in front of them.

"They say that people change when they die."

Iris Peacefinder smiled.

"You have become a chatterbox, Lucid."

[...]

Pale's gaze sank.

Although she was a woman she'd only seen once, she had left an impression she couldn't easily forget.

The most annoying person she'd ever met.

"Yo, Lucid, your skin has gotten more crumbly since the last time I saw you."

A beautiful woman with silver hair and turquoise eyes appeared.

Pale could feel that the girl who spoke like a man was actually a puppet with an extremely accurate body.

[Schweiser.]

"It's Anastasia now."

[...hmm. Should I congratulate you on discovering a new hobby?]

“Ah, man. Don’t do that.”

Anastasia snapped in a slightly annoyed voice before saying.

“This is an unexpected reunion. That guy Kasajin...”

“He’s nearby. Although I’m not sure if you can call ‘that thing’ Kasajin.”

“You should get over the change of appearance. Look at me and Lucid.”

[I haven’t changed that much.]

Lowering her sword, Pale watched on.

She stared blankly.

The Black Knight of Death.

One of the Four Knights like her, surrounded by countless people.

[...kiki.]

A laugh leaked out.

Right. That was the case.

She didn’t understand the whole situation, but she could tell one thing.

Lucid had dozens on his side.

While she was standing alone.

Even if they were both Knights, they were different.

That’s why Pale raised her sword and smiled brightly.

[Ahh. As expected-]

—This really was a fucked up world.

[The Great Mage Returns After 4000 Years](#)

Season 2 Chapter 504

For a while, he stood there, unable to move.

Tuduk, tuk. A few drops of liquid fell from the sky like rain.

The reason it was ‘like rain’ was because it clearly couldn’t be rainwater.

The Next Stage seemed to have suffered great damage from Pale’s attacks, but it hadn’t fallen yet. It was still floating in the sky.

In other words, the falling liquid was something from the bottom of the Next Stage.

Some kind of liquid was leaking from the artificial island. Regardless of whether it was a drinking water reservoir or something else.

The implications of this situation were clear to Lukas.

Being hit as if it was rainwater, made Lukas feel dirty.

“...that conversation.”

Lukas’ lips twitched.

“I’m sure you heard it all.”

[...]

“Tell me. Is everything Diablo said true?”

[Most of it.]

The Lightning God’s dry answer came back.

The possibility he anticipated the most.

The moment the possibility that Diablo had misunderstood something disappeared, his clenched fists tightened even more.

It had been confirmed by none other than the Lightning God, a Ruler.

No, that wasn’t all.

After hearing everything Diablo said, Lukas couldn’t help but understand what he was saying. This was because most of his unanswered questions and suspicions had been solved. It was not something that could have been made up.

...But even after obtaining the truth that he’d longed for, he didn’t feel any better. On the contrary, he felt heavier.

“Lightning God, what do you want from me?”

Lukas spoke harshly as if chewing the words.

“So this is it? The reason you wanted to send me to the Three Thousand Worlds. The reason you interfered when the Exile was playing his tricks was to make me aware of this.”

[That’s right.]

“Why?”

[Because I wanted to know what you would do after knowing the truth.]

“...”

[Didn’t I tell you? I want you to become the Void King.]

“You can become it yourself.”

[That is a difficult task.]

Although that is what he said, to Lukas it seemed as if he was saying it was 'impossible'. After all, most things were possible for a Ruler like the Lightning God.

"What's so hard about it?"

[The Four Knights. Don't you know how much they hate the Rulers?]

"Don't tell me you thought of forcefully making them submit like Diablo..."

[Of course I did. However, unfortunately, there is not enough time to make all four of them submit. I also don't want to take an uncertain gamble in this case.]

"So you want me to be your proxy?"

The Lightning God didn't answer, but it was clear affirmation.

But there was still something that was unconvincing.

"Diablo said. After the apocalypse* sweeps away everything, the only thing that will exist is the Void King. In order to survive, you would have no choice but to become the Void King." (*: Previously just 'destruction', I changed it to highlight the severity and impact)

[Kuku. That's one of the things the Lich got wrong. Hey, Lukas Trowman. Even if the world disappears, I will never disappear.]

"Why?"

[Because I am the Lightning God.]

That was a terrible reason.

[You don't believe me.]

"Any words that are not supported by evidence are usually lies."

[I already told you the reason.]

It was a pointless conversation.

Crunch.

Lukas gritted his teeth.

"...you have known about the apocalypse since a long time ago."

[That's right. I at least had a vague feeling about it before you were even born. The actual trigger for the apocalypse was the death of God. The implications from that incident were surprisingly large. As the Lich said, the apocalypse is no longer far away. Not from my perspective, but the perspective of a mortal.]

"Are you going to let that happen?"

[What is that supposed to mean?]

"Even if the apocalypse covers the entire multiverse, will you just watch."

[That's right.]

"Shit. Is it really okay for a Ruler to do that?"

Rumble, the air around Lukas shook heavily. Spider web cracks spread across the ground, and the surrounding debris rattled.

"The Absolutes, living beings, and universes are your responsibility! Are you really going to let all those who worshiped you like a god disappear?"

[Lukas Trowman... After such a long time, you really still don't know anything about them.]

In a voice as if he couldn't understand, the Lightning God spoke.

[All those who follow me understand me. Not to mention the Absolutes. You used to be an Absolute, so you should know... think about it. Do you think anything would change if all the Absolutes who follow me knew this?]

"..."

[Do you think a single one of them would struggle because they don't want to be destroyed? Do you think they would tremble out of fear of extinction*? Or do you think they would be unable to overcome their fear and rebel against me? Think for yourself and answer. How would the Absolutes who learn the truth act?](*: the same 'disappearance' mentioned in the world of void, just changed to suit context)

"...they would follow your will."

Lukas couldn't help but spit out an answer mixed with disgust and pity.

"No matter what choice you make, they will follow you. Even if it meant their eternal extinction."

[Exactly... And for most mortals, in the first place, death is no different from extinction. Most universes are not even sure about the existence of an afterlife. Within the scope of their knowledge, there is no difference between death and extinction.]

"That's not wrong. However, that... isn't that deception?"

The strength in Lukas' voice gradually faded.

However, nevertheless, he didn't stop talking.

"We know that's not it. You know more than the ignorant, and you have a lot more power. So, shouldn't your responsibility be greater as well?"

[With great power comes great responsibility... That was one of the boring notions created by the weak to trap the strong. As far I know, there is only one thing to keep in mind before making a choice.]

Sighing, the Lightning God said.

[Regardless of the result that comes after, I must adapt. And I've never regretted a single choice that I've made in my life.]

"..."

[You know it, Lukas Trowman. I am a Ruler. A being who has never experienced defeat since birth. To be precise... I've never even experienced a crisis.]

There was a deep emptiness in the Lightning God's voice.

At that moment, for the first time, Lukas felt that he'd gotten a glimpse of this incomprehensible being's true thoughts.

[A sea route that has never experienced a single storm, a farm that has never experienced a single drought. Right. It's not bad. However, what if you have sailed and sowed seeds for thousands or tens of thousands of years? What if you never failed once and succeeded constantly? How would you feel if such a life didn't end and continued forever...]

Lukas realised that the Lightning God was displaying a never before seen kindness. He was explaining his case by using a mortal scenario.

[There is nothing more boring than a life without twists and turns... kukuku.]

“...”

[I know that even if I say this, no one would agree with it. However, Lukas Trowman. I'm feeling a bit thrilled now. It's like an electric current is spreading to every corner of my body, and I have a sensation as if a heart that doesn't exist is beating. Because.]

The Lightning God spoke in a cheerful voice.

[For the first time since I was born, I have something worth challenging.]

“...what if you fail that first challenge? What if even you cannot withstand the power of the apocalypse and disappear without leaving so much as a scream?”

[That won't happen. Because I am the Lightning God.]

...Completely insane.

That was the conclusion Lukas reached at the end of the fruitless conversation.

He couldn't understand why the Lightning God didn't take any measures even though he had noticed this kind of cosmic apocalypse in advance.

Then he himself was startled by such a thought.

Was he now... trying to rely on a Ruler?

‘-ha.’

He had gotten weaker.

Just now, if the Lightning God had some method, a clear way to prevent the apocalypse,

Lukas... might have become a subordinate of the Lightning God. No, he definitely would have.

He had tried to pass his responsibility onto someone else,

Something he hated so much.

'...I have to come up with something.'

The Lightning God interrupted his inner thoughts.

[What?]

'A better choice. Better than Diablo's, the right choice.'

[Why?]

'Because that's how it's always been.'

[So you plan to do that again? Are you sure you can do it? Even God was unable to come up with a countermeasure, so what can a guy like you do?]

'...I, I.'

Thud.

Then he heard a heavy step.

[This falling like rain makes me feel dirty.]

And a voice that was just as heavy.

He turned around.

There, he saw the Demon King walking towards him.

But Lukas paid more attention to the direction he was walking from rather than his existence in itself.

"...you."

He couldn't sense anything in the direction the Demon King was walking from.

Even if he was unconscious, Lukas would still be able to notice his power.

"What happened there?"

[...]

"What happened to Yang In-hyun?"

[It's been a long time since we met, but the first thing you talk about is someone else? I'm a little disappointed, Lukas.]

Crunch. He gritted his teeth once again.

Lukas ground out in a voice mixed with hate.

"Quit your disgusting bullshit. I've heard all about your origin."

[...hmm. Indeed, is it because Yang In-hyun knows my identity? He told you everything.]

After muttering casually, the Demon King showed his chest.

[That man was strong.]

A grievous injury.

Blood still dripped from a cut deep enough to show his ribs.

[See? This is the sword mark he left. It will forever be incurable. It is a wound that was engraved on my 'very existence', so if I transfer my soul or create a new body, it will follow me like a leech.]

"I asked you what happened."

[Dead.]

The Demon King continued to speak in an indifferent voice.

[Sadly, there was no corpse. It's too bad. If I could have given him to Diablo, I would have been able to find out how efficient the undead made from the corpse of one of the Twelve Void Lords is compared to when he was alive.]

"Cut the crap. You cannot defeat Yang In-hyun with your power."

[You seem certain.]

"I am well aware of Yang In-hyun's power."

[Is that so? But you do not know anything about me.]

The Demon King grinned.

[Let me introduce myself formally. I'm the former 0th Demon, the one that stole all of the components that made up your close friend Kasajin, the current Demon King. And.]

Crack crack.

Black thorns sprouted from the Demon King's body.

[Another 'Black Horned Demon God'.]

"...what?"

[I'm deeply fatigued. Nevertheless, I wanted to walk here on my own power. Because I wanted to see you with my own eyes. I'm glad. Lukas Trowman... I'm glad you're alive, and much stronger. However, that's all.]

The Demon King's eyes gradually became hazy.

[I'm going to get some rest now. So you can continue talking to 'him'. After all, he is the one who has business with you in the first place...]

Then, the house-like body stumbled as if it was about to collapse.

He bent over, his waist which seemed that it would stretch at any moment, stopped as if it had been frozen in time.

Crack.

Then, his back, which had been completely bent, straightened as if the scene was playing in reverse.

[Hmm...]

When he heard the voice that leaked out, Lukas finally realised that it was no longer the Demon King.

“...Demon God.”

[Long time no see, Lukas Trowman.]

The Black Horned Demon God smiled.

“You have business with me?”

[You could say it's an offer.]

“Enough of your bullshit. Again, I'm not going to accept your offer.”

[That's a strange thing to say. Have I ever made a real offer to you?]

“...”

Lukas closed his half open mouth for a moment.

When the Demon God had stolen the body of Sedi Trowman. Even at that time, the offer he'd made to Lukas had felt more like an insult. However, that already 'didn't exist'. Even the Rulers couldn't realise God's last miracle.

[Or, have you accepted the Lightning God's offer?]

“What?”

[There's no need to pretend. I know the Lightning God exists within you right now.]

A convinced tone.

...He couldn't help but wonder if the Lightning God had sent him some kind of signal.

[I didn't do anything.]

Perhaps reading his mind, the Lightning God grumbled.

[If it had been the other way around, I would have noticed as well. That's why I told you, it's better to not encounter the Demon God too much.]

“...”

There was a hint of laughter in the Demon God's voice.

[I'm not upset because something unexpected happened. Has your hatred towards us improved, Lukas Trowman? Seeing as you allowed the Lightning God to stay in your body.]

“That wasn't my aim.”

[What do you mean?]

“I fought the Lightning God in the imaginary world. I won, but I wasn’t able to completely get rid of that guy’s remnant thoughts.”

[...what?]

The Demon God seemed to pause.

Then, he looked into Lukas’ eyes as if to ascertain the truth.

After a while, as if he realised something, the corners of his lips twitched.

[Kuk, haha, hahahaha!]

The small snicker became full blown mad laughter.

After bursting out laughing, the Demon God opened his mouth.

[You defeated the Lightning God? In the imaginary world? Just you?]

“Is that hard to believe?”

[It’s not a story I can believe or not. In the first place, it is impossible... kukuku.]

“Your arrogance is no surprise, but I’ll let you know that it was a humble victory. At that time, the Lightning God was in the state of controlling a puppet. Since he wasn’t able to show his full power—”

[It’s not a question of body. You said it yourself, it was a mental confrontation.]

“...”

[If the Lightning God was willing to use a bit more concentration, he could have summoned the main body of God in the imaginary world.]

“...what?”

[You’re doing something interesting, Lightning God.]

There was laughter mixed into the Demon God’s voice as he spoke.

[Why did you intentionally lose?]

[The Great Mage Returns After 4000 Years](#)

Season 2 Chapter 505

Shwaaaaa.

The liquid pouring from the sky was no different from rainwater. Before long, Lukas’ entire body was soaked.

The Demon God was still standing there with a smile.

He stayed silent without saying anything. It was as if he was giving Lukas time to determine whether he was telling the truth or not.

“...”

The pattering of the rain, the cold touch of his clothes clinging to his skin.

However, the thing that disturbed Lukas the most was the presence that he could feel in the corner of his mind.

‘Is it true?’

[.....]

‘Lightning God, is everything the Demon God said true?’

[Right. It’s true.]

The Lightning God affirmed with a patient attitude.

‘Did you lose on purpose in order to enter my body?’

[Right.]

‘So that was your goal?’

[One of them.]

‘What are the others?’

[...]

Whenever he didn’t want to answer, the Lightning God remained silent. Lukas had no choice but to accept this attitude.

Gritting his teeth, Lukas quickly drew upon void. The surrounding air began to shake.

Hoh, the Demon God let out a soft exclamation. There was a look of genuine surprise in his eyes.

The Lightning God spoke.

[What are you trying to do?]

‘...’

[Are you trying to force me out? No matter the cost? In order to do that, we would have to compete in the imaginary world again. Give up. The Demon God is watching. Do you think he wouldn’t do anything to you while you’re defenseless?]

‘The existence of you hiding within me is much more annoying than the Demon God in front of me.’

The Lightning God fell silent at those sincere words before speaking.

[...I had no intention of causing any direct harm to you. Although, I won’t deny that I didn’t intend to use you.]

‘So what? We should keep going like before? Ha. Bullshit.’

[I will tell you about my goals.]

‘...’

[However, before that, listen to the Demon God’s offer. Didn’t you ask if the reason I sent you to the Three Thousand Worlds to make you listen to Diablo’s proposal? That was half right. As for the other half, it was to listen to what the Demon God had to say.]

‘...and after that?’

[After that I’ll clarify my goals and ask for your cooperation. If you want, I will remove my thought projection from this body. I ‘promise’.]

Promise.

It was a word that didn’t suit a Ruler the most, but it was because of it that Lukas became speechless.

...Had he ever heard the Lightning God say ‘promise’ before?

[–is the conversation over?]

A chilling voice.

The Demon God, who had sat down roughly, suddenly turned his gaze in a certain direction. It was the direction Diablo had gone in. And probably the place where the fiercest battle in the universe was taking place.

[It seems the battle between the Four Knights has begun in earnest. I’m sure you noticed.]

“...”

[I don’t think there is much time so I’ll get to the point. Don’t you want to be happy, Lukas Trowman?]

Lukas paused for a moment.

This was because that was a question he didn’t expect to come out of the Demon God’s mouth.

“You talk as if you know what happiness is.”

[Of course I know. The fact that beings like humans cannot live without happiness and pleasure. However, what about you? If you look back at it, what was your life like? Wasn’t it mostly pain? Compared to the number of years you lived, the amount of happiness you felt is ridiculously small... Have you never felt that before?]

It would be a lie to say he hadn’t.

Especially more recently.

There were even times when he cursed his own fate.

[I think the Lightning God should have revealed a bit about his goals. My goal isn’t that different from his. I also want to experience the apocalypse. If there’s a difference between me and him... I guess it would be that I could make an attractive offer to make you fulfill my goal.]

“What offer?”

[I will let you experience happiness as a human. I will send you back to your home universe. Not just return. The memories, achievements, and history of ‘Lukas Trowman’ that had disappeared from that universe. I will bring that all back.]

“...you, what are you talking about.”

[Do you not think it’s possible? Or do you think it’s a bluff? I can declare it in my name. Everything I say now is true.]

“...”

[It will be for a long time. I will give you and all those you love enough time to become numb to happiness. Not just those from your home universe. The relationships you made in other universes... perhaps I can even bring Sedi as well. You can live with them to your heart’s content, and when you get tired of it, think of death. There won’t be any rush. Even if it takes hundreds of millions of years, I’ll wait.]

Hundreds of millions of years of happiness.

To be guaranteed the happiness that Lukas longed for, for hundreds of millions of years.

[Then, when you and all those you remembered have died, and there is no longer any trace of them, then, I will let the ‘energy of apocalypse’ spread throughout the multiverse.]

“It’s said that no one knows when the apocalypse will occur. Much less adjusting the timing...”

The Demon God smiled brightly.

[It’s possible. If you become the Void King, and obtain the corpse of God in that place, it would be possible to postpone the apocalypse by hundreds of millions of years.]

“...”

[We can talk about the how and why later. For now, Lukas Trowman, focus on the offer. I cannot think of any reason for you to refuse.]

—Everything the Demon God said was true.

If that was the case, then just as he said, it was a hard offer for Lukas to refuse.

However.

“However... that is wrong.”

At that, the Demon God smiled as if that was what he was waiting for.

[Right. Perhaps from your perspective, just letting the apocalypse happen is wrong. However, isn’t that the thought of an Absolute?]

“What?”

[Don't you know? Hundreds of millions of years... in other words, only after a period longer than the lifecycle of a star will I bring the apocalypse to the world. A length of time that humans cannot experience or even comprehend. Only after then will the apocalypse occur... Tell me. Do you know any humans who can fight for hundreds of millions of years? And even if you do, can their way of thinking still be called human?]

"...!"

[If you don't kill the Demon King, the world will suffer. If that was all, most humans would struggle. However, what about this case? Grab a passerby and ask. Ask them to fight with you for hundreds of millions of years in order to prevent the world from being destroyed. It's obvious what kind of answer you'd receive.]

...There was nothing wrong with the Demon God's words.

The being that Lukas hated so much in the past, now had a better understanding of human behaviour than anyone else.

[Is it right to give up your happiness for danger that will come hundreds of millions of years later? Do you think that is also shifting the blame? It's not. It's the succession of the will or responsibility that the humans have been clamouring for.]

Lukas' expression stiffened.

It was only at that moment that he understood what the Demon God's proposal meant.

[What will you do, Lukas Trowman? Will you refuse? However, if you refuse...]

The Black Horned Demon God's smile widened.

[Does that mean you are denying that you are human?]

* * *

A hectic life.

That was the evaluation Anastasia gave to her life.

Boom!

Suddenly, a huge explosion erupted. Wind pressure that could make even a typhoon feel like a summer breeze, rippled outward in every direction. For a moment, Anastasia was unable to keep control of her body.

'Dammit. Give me some time to think.'

But in retrospect, relaxation was a word that was quite distant from Anastasia. From the day she was born until now, she had never had the time to really relax and think.

Naturally, she couldn't get any significant answers about her identity.

'I didn't show it, but...'

At least on the surface, she pretended that she didn't care much about that stuff. Nevertheless, it was not a problem that could be completely ignored. On a psychological level, she felt anxious.

Was she Schweiser?

Or was she an individual being that just inherited the man's memories and personality.

If it was the latter, then what was the difference between her and Schweiser.

There was nothing more disturbing than being unsure about your identity.

The issue of self consciousness was not something that could easily be overlooked. She knew because she'd made a lot of golems in the past.

The first thing to do to a golem with self consciousness was to give it a name. You have to make them aware of who they are. Entering the rest of information was only secondary.

But according to this theory, Anastasia hadn't even taken the first step yet.

Boom!

There was another explosion.

Anastasia forcibly opened her eyes and looked ahead.

Whenever the Blue Knight and Black Knight clashed, an overpowering feeling seemed to weigh on her skin.

"Lucid, that son of a bitch. Did he train even while he was dead? It feels like he's thousands of times faster than before."

"It's not training, it's because he inherited a special role."

With a soft voice, Iris appeared.

Anastasia looked at her with an unfriendly gaze.

"Role? What role?"

"There's no time to explain."

"Then don't say anything in the first place."

"I'll do that from now on."

Resisting the urge to smack Iris upside the head as hard as she could, Anastasia said.

"...it's nice to look impressive, but what exactly are we supposed to do here? If we step into a fight like that, we'll get squashed like shrimp."

"This... shouldn't be the real show yet. The Blue Knight probably hasn't used 10% of their real strength yet."

"What?"

Iris' gaze continued to point forward. Come to think of it, she hadn't taken her eyes off the fight for a moment since it had begun. As if she was waiting for something.

"...right. Let's pretend your words are true. Then what was the point of us coming here? If that monstrous fight isn't even a warm up, then it wouldn't change anything if we all were to charge in at once."

Anastasia's words were correct.

The people Iris brought were not only people from their universe. There were other powerful people from all other universes who agreed with Diablo's ideals. But none of them dared to intervene in the fight.

In the end, they could only watch on from a distance of dozens of steps away, shaming their initial dignified appearance.

"...minimal time zone."

"What's that"

"It's a place in space-time that probably only less than 20 people in this entire universe can enter. In order to influence this fight, we need to enter that place too."

"How do we do that?"

At that, Iris turned to look at her for the first time and smiled.

"You wouldn't understand even if I explained, so for now, just pay some more attention to the Blue Knight's movements. Our chances of winning will go up if you do."

...She really couldn't deal with her.

Anastasia looked at Iris' side profile for a while.

When was it? The moment her attitude changed.

Was it when the Great Medium told them about Lukas Trowman?

Was it afterwards, when Lukas completely disappeared from the continent?

Was it when Diablo, who appeared suddenly, revealed his goal and asked for their cooperation?

...Or was it...

After, when Peran Jun appeared-

Boom!

There was another explosion. The battle was heating up.

At first glance, it seemed like an equal fight, but the reality was different.

The one who knew that the best was Lucid, who was directly exchanging swords with Pale.

'Since the fight began, dozens of battles of nerves, hundreds of feints, thousands of contests of force.'

Lucid hadn't won a single one of all those encounters. If it wasn't for the defensive ability of the black armour covering him, every bone in his entire body would have long since shattered.

He knew that, but it was hard for him to understand.

It was pointless to say that it was because she'd become one of the Four Knights before him, or because he was 'too stable' as Pale had said.

Lucid felt ashamed of being pushed around by a sword that carried no convictions. And it could be seen that, despite having so much power, Pale's ability to wield a sword was unbearably pitiful.

'This is no time for sympathy.'

When his shoulder armour shattered, Lucid decided to stop thinking about other things.

[I don't believe you called so many people out to be spectators.]

Swinging her sword, the Blue Knight, Pale, spoke.

[What are you trying to do?]

[That's what I would like to ask instead. Blue Knight, why are you not trying your hardest?]

[...]

[If you showed your real power, not to mention me, those behind me would be swept away simply by the aftermath. Nevertheless, you aren't revealing more than 10% of your power right now.]

[I'm sure it's the same for you.]

[I'm in a passive situation. If I exert my full power, you can respond to it. However, you are different.]

[...]

Pale's sword attacks stopped for the first time.

She glanced at the staggering Lucid, then at those standing behind him, watching the fight, then at the surroundings.

[...if I do my best, this world will be destroyed.]

[What?]

[What kind of person do you think I am? Do you think I'd want that?]

...Her manner of speech changed.

For the first time, soft emotions mixed into Pale's voice.

Only Lucid, who was nearby, and Iris, who was paying the most attention to their conversation, noticed.

Just as Iris' lips moved slightly.

Boom boom boom!

Suddenly, dozens of spells poured down fiercely onto Pale's body from the sky. Pale's small body was quickly devoured by the magical storm and disappeared.

"Wh-, what was that? Did you allow someone to attack?"

Anastasia hurriedly asked Iris, but Iris' expression was different from before.

"...no."

"What?"

"It's not someone we brought."

The two looked towards the sky at the same time.

There, they saw a man standing in the pouring rain.

"Isn't that..."

Anastasia's eyes narrowed, then after scrutinising the man's face, she uttered.

"...Lukas, Trowman..."

(1/2)

[The Great Mage Returns After 4000 Years](#)

Season 2 Chapter 506

What is human nature?

If anyone were to ask that, Lukas would say that it is the qualities that make humans human.

Then, what were the qualities that made humans human?

What were the decisive differences between humans and non-humans?

Ironically, it was during his time as an Absolute that Lukas pondered this question the most, not when he was human.

When he decided to become a god, when he decided to save every suffering human in the entire multiverse.

Lukas had to distinguish between those he should save and those he shouldn't save.

It was a time when he didn't realise that such a distinction was built on disgustingly self righteous arrogance, a time when he was incredibly immature and thus fearless.

Humans, humans, they, he...

-Lukas.

Remembered a story.

He remembered the story of a man who, on a night when the moon was exceptionally bright, had a drink with a precious woman.

“ ... ”

To refuse the offer.

According to the Black Horned Demon God, that would be Lukas' choice to abandon his humanity.

...Was that really the case?

Did he have the right to decide that?

Once again, he thought a little deeper.

What was human nature to him? What would it mean to throw it away?

At the Dump Site.

Lukas had thrown everything away. He thought he had become a being that was completely devoid of dignity, morality, ethics that humans had. Depending on the perspective, it could be interpreted as a kind of liberation.

However, what happened to him after that?

I looked at the current 'Lukas Trowman'.

Was the image of the current him as disgusting as the 'Lukas eating humans' was concerned about? Was he so disgusted with himself that he couldn't even maintain his own ego? Was that how he saw himself even at that moment?

...It wasn't.

That might have been the case right after.

However, as time passed, Lukas eventually affirmed his existence. And eventually, he accepted the fact that he was Lukas.

'Is it something that can't be thrown away even if I want to?'

Or are humans creatures that can't live without affirming themselves?

“ ... ”

...This situation.

In this situation, where two Rulers had made offers to Lukas, the causal relationships were probably much more complicated than expected.

There were also facts that he could learn from their attitudes.

The Rulers seemed to believe that there was a high chance that Lukas could become the Void King.

In the end, that was the reason.

The reason the Lightning God, who was hidden inside Lukas, and the Demon God, who was standing a short distance away, were both making offers as if they believed that Lukas could become the Void King as long as he wanted to.

After he finished talking, the Demon God didn't open his mouth. He wasn't even looking at Lukas.

His gaze and attention were directed at the battle that was taking place not so far away.

This attitude seemed to suggest that he understood that Lukas would need a lot of time to think before answering.

Nevertheless, his face was strangely relaxed.

It was as if he already knew what he was going to say.

'Is he assuming that I can't refuse?'

Lukas let out a silent laugh.

While the Demon God's attitude was annoying, he felt embarrassed by the fact that he couldn't completely betray his expectations. There was a reason for his composure, as well as a certain charm.

Right.

For Lukas, it was clear that he had nothing to lose in this offer.

If he nodded, the Demon God would surely keep his promise. Lukas could live the life he desired and pursued for hundreds of millions of years. He would give him a tediously long time to drown in happiness.

However...

Why was he not willing to obediently accept the offer?

Was it because of his nonsensical pride?

"..."

Surprisingly, that was it.

Lukas looked within himself and realised that fact. His breathy laugh grew louder.

[Did you get an answer?]

The sound of his laughter seemed to reach the Demon God.

Nevertheless, Lukas' laugh didn't stop.

Guaranteed happiness, a safe life.

However that...

A life like that.

"...it's not for me."

[What?]

The Demon God turned his head.

By this point, the laughter had grown even louder. For a while, Lukas laughed like a madman. The Demon God's attention, which had been focused away, was immediately drawn over.

"What's the point of living a life that you made and prepared?"

[There is no meaning to giving a reason to everything.]

"It might not be needed for other things. But happiness has to have a meaning."

[That is an extremely emotional and impulsive answer. Why can't you understand? Just the fact that you can elicit this offer from me makes you amazing...]

That was probably the greatest compliment a Ruler could give.

[Since the dawn of time, how many beings in this vast multiverse do you think have been able to receive an offer from a Ruler? You are one of the chosen few.]

"Did I make a mistake? Hearing that doesn't make me feel proud at all. Instead, it fills me with anger. The way you're talking seems to be looking down on me."

[...]

"...not just me. Any human that could maintain their discernment in front of you would be offended. Because you're treating them like a pet."

I'll make a good kennel for you and feed you, so listen to me.

The Demon God's offer didn't deviate too far from that.

That was why such an offer was an insult to Lukas.

"I, cannot let go of my pride."

[Why?]

"Because I am Lukas Trowman."

At some point, Lukas' laughter became a faint smile.

Then, he recalled a certain point in his memory.

—Pride. What do you call someone that abandons it?

In his memory, Lukas was proudly talking to a certain man.

—Livestock. Understand? You would become a domestic animal. You'll gradually get used to the feed they give you, and you will be stripped of your ability to think for yourself. Is that what you want?

He had preached like this to a fallen man who had submitted to an absolute being.

That man must have had reasons too. There must have been a good reason for him to fall. His actions and choices were obviously wrong, but they were understandable.

However, just looking at the result, Lukas saved that man's life. He became his condemner.

That was to say, he could not repeat the sins the man committed.

That was too ugly.

“...do you understand, Demon God? To me, human nature is being able to take a sip of wine under the moonlight.”

Like another man had done.

Right, Yang In-hyun.

Who had become a powerhouse as a human.

Even after obtaining overwhelming power, even after becoming one of the Twelve Void Lords,

He was still human. Still stuck in the past.

He recalled his expression as he regaled him with stories from the past on the 5th floor of a bar, where the noise from the street below drifted in.

That was cool.

[Are you declining my offer?]

“Have you ever smiled while thinking about the past? Do you know what it means to reminisce? No, you don’t know. You can’t even understand it.”

[...you even reverted to the bad part of being human.]

The Demon God muttered.

[That’s truly a disappointing answer. If that is your conclusion then I have nothing more to say. I have no choice but to proceed as planned.]

The Demon God stretched out his hand.

With just that simple gesture, Lukas’ expression became filled with a deep sense of crisis.

...Fight the Demon God.

He’d probably have to risk his life. He wasn’t sure he could win even if he poured out all the void he had stored, but he couldn’t do that.

Lukas still had work to do. He still had a role to play.

[Are you going to fight while preserving your strength? Against the Demon King that has been possessed by the Demon God?]

‘Right.’

[That is reckless. Even ten lives won’t be enough.]

‘I know that too.’

[...why don’t you ask me about my offer?]

Lukas let out a laugh at the Lightning God's words.

'In this current situation? Quit it. It won't be enough even if I use all of my concentration.'

[That's right too... This is a separate offer, but I have a great way to break out of this situation. Do you want to hear it?]

'Are you going to suggest I use your power again?'

[Will you refuse this time too?]

He didn't feel as much resistance to it as when the Lightning God had first offered it.

'Wouldn't that make you completely hostile to the Demon God?'

[That's another disgusting misunderstanding I sometimes hear. We were never on the same side in the first place.]

'I see.'

Before answering, just as Lukas hesitated...

Dark red thorns shot out of the Demon God's body. Lukas didn't hesitate and immediately roused the void.

Or at least he would have had it not been for a sword falling from the sky.

Crack!

The dark red thorns shot by the Demon God were severed.

Lukas looked down at the sword stuck in the ground. It was a familiar sword.

Taht.

Not long after, someone made a soft landing in front of him. Lukas looked at the back of a man that was dripping with blood.

"...you."

"..."

Yang In-hyun straightened his bent back... He was fatally injured. Let alone standing on two feet, it was amazing that he was still alive with such serious injuries.

"Cool answer, Lukas."

But the voice was clear.

Pulling his sword out of the ground, Yang In-hyun took a stance.

"I lost consciousness for a bit. It's my mistake for letting this guy come here."

"..."

“I won’t let him go twice, so go. To where you need to be.”

“...are you going to fight with that body?”

Yang In-hyun smiled at that.

“Are you worrying about my fight? As I said before, that’s crossing the line.”

“...”

Lukas smiled at those words.

“I have something to tell you about Lee Jong-hak.”

“Mm.”

It was out of the blue.

Even when Yang In-hyun gave him a strange glance, Lukas continued without a care.

“It’s something that would help if that man became your disciple. You could call it advice.”

“...why at this time?”

“Naturally, I don’t have any intention of talking about it now. I’ll tell you later.”

“...”

At that, Yang In-hyun’s mouth fell open slightly, then he burst into laughter.

“Right. Then I’ll listen to it, later.”

The conversation ended.

Lukas just left like that.

[This is a new feeling.]

The Demon God’s voice was gloomy.

[So this is what it’s like to be ignored. It’s certainly new, but not pleasant.]

Crack crack crack!

Hundreds of thorns attacked Lukas, who was about to leave. But Lukas didn’t even look back at them.

This was because the thorns were cut off before they could reach him.

[...Yang In-hyun.]

“Hmm.”

Yang In-hyun brushed torn fragments off of his blade.

“My body feels light. It seems I bled too much. No. That’s not it... Now that I think about it. I haven’t risked my life in a fight in a long time, so maybe I’ve grown a bit from fighting.”

[How are you alive?]

“You can’t kill me with something like a thorn.”

[...]

“Since my opponent is a Ruler, I should also come up with a suitable means.”

Smiling, Yang In-hyun said.

“Let me show you. Everlasting Plum Sword Final Form(最後招式).”

(2/2)

[The Great Mage Returns After 4000 Years](#)

Season 2 Chapter 507

He had never handed over his messes to be taken care of by someone else. To be frank, Lukas’ role had always been the opposite.

He even took care of the messes that he didn’t cause. He had to.

There was no setting of a heroic sense of sacrifice behind that. It was simply that there was no one else who could take care of it apart from Lukas.

If he ignored it, a city would sink into the depths of evil, the fate of a country would be shaken, or an entire world would be destroyed...

–Why are you taking care of someone else’s shit?

–What?

–It has nothing to do with you.

It didn’t have nothing to do with him.

As long as he knew about it, it couldn’t have nothing to do with him.

If he were to turn away, he would be haunted by guilt for the rest of his life.

And in all honesty, he was much more comfortable taking care of it himself than leaving it to someone else. He found it hard.

Because of that, there was a point in time when Lukas was surprisingly unable to trust anyone.

But not today.

The Demon King and the Demon God were things that Lukas should have taken care of. Even if Lukas didn’t take full responsibility, he should have at least been more deeply involved than Yang In-hyun.

And yet, he left Yang In-hyun there.

That fact made Lukas feel strange, but it wasn’t as bad as he thought it would be.

—.

The vibrations of the air, or the screams of space.

He could feel a sensation on his back that couldn't be properly described in words.

Yang In-hyun and the Demon God had begun to fight in earnest.

And yet, Lukas didn't look back. Instead, he suppressed his attention from going behind him.

The probability that Yang In-hyun could defeat the Demon God?

To be honest, it was low. Enough to fight a thousand times and only win once. No, even that much could be considered the most optimistic perspective.

[Yang In-hyun is probably already risking his life in battle with the Demon God.]

He heard the Lightning God's voice.

[In the end, that guy probably would have won, but his body is already a mess. The Demon God probably appeared as soon as he was certain of his victory and let his guard down. Borrowing the Demon King's body.]

'...'

[Lukas Trowman, would you condemn the Demon God's actions as cowardly?]

'No.'

Lukas shook his head.

That was a meaningless action, a useless expenditure of emotion.

In any case, no matter how much he insisted on the matter, it would be impossible to awaken feelings of guilt in the Demon God. After all, that was what a Ruler was like in the first place.

[Interesting.]

The Lightning God spoke in an interested voice.

[You are gaining a deeper understanding of Rulers.]

'I guess that makes us even.'

[What?]

'Aren't you also gaining an understanding about humans?'

[...]

At that moment, Lukas could feel the Lightning God's surprise.

In this state, Lukas and the Lightning God were not just sharing senses. They were also experiencing an assimilation of emotions to an extent.

[You...]

The Lightning God tried to say something and stopped. Because he had arrived at his destination. So Lukas was no longer curious about what the Lightning God would say.

The scene that was unfolding was a scene that far exceeded his expectations, making him speechless.

“...this.”

At some point.

Lukas realised that he could no longer hear the noise from the battlefield. That’s why he sped up even more and had no choice but to be grateful for Yang In-hyun’s help.

Nevertheless, his anxiety hadn’t eased.

—No way, could the battle have ended already?

It could only mean the death or annihilation of one side.

And as soon as he saw this scene, Lukas realised the reason.

There were a lot of corpses around.

These weren’t the corpses of ordinary people from the city. Each and every one of the scattered corpses belonged to a powerful being who at least surpassed Dok Go-yun. They were probably the comrades Diablo had gathered from the conjoined universes.

There were a few that were familiar to him. It wasn’t to the level of being called acquaintances. There were members of the Circle from Lukas’ home universe. Beings from the same universe as Lukas.

And among the corpses.

Was Diablo.

“...”

Diablo was laying on the ground with his bottom half completely shattered. He couldn’t feel his uniquely gloomy and decayed aura. At first glance, he looked like an ordinary skeleton.

Lukas went up to Diablo and knelt down on one knee, looking into his black eye sockets.

“What happened?”

[...]

“Diablo, didn’t you say you would wait for me?”

Faded ghostly flames flickered in the dark holes.

The ghostly flames, which burned frighteningly not so long ago, now seemed like candles on the verge of being extinguished. This seemed to be a visual representation of Diablo’s vitality.

[...I did.]

His voice was faint, as if it would be cut off at any moment.

...Diablo might soon die.

Lukas couldn't help but feel the absurdity of that fact.

"Who made you like this?"

Pausing for a moment, Lukas asked.

"Was it Pale?"

[It wasn't the Blue Knight. Raise your senses a bit more and focus on the surroundings... You, will know who it was that created this scene.]

...Diablo.

Knew who was responsible for this. And yet, instead of telling him his name, he was telling him to think for himself.

This wasn't meant to tease or mock him.

So Lukas just did as he said.

"..."

Once again, he took a look at the surroundings and accelerated his mind.

Diablo's eyes flashed with surprise as he looked at Lukas.

[You changed so much in that instant. Enough to accept my advice. How else did you grow?]

"Well."

Lukas shook his head and responded roughly. His speculation came to an end.

"It was a Wizard."

[That's right... a Wizard who is only second to you. And also copies your name.]

"Someone that copies my name...."

Lukas' expression changed.

"Are you talking about the 'Lukas Trowman' that is active in this world?"

Diablo nodded weakly.

[...a dangerous being. The magic that spewed from his hands was even more so. I couldn't even respond to anything he did before my body became like this. Even my Black Knight, Lucid.]

"...!"

[As soon as that 'Lukas' appeared, he launched an indiscriminate attack in every direction. By the time I arrived, half of my companions were already dead.]

"What is that guy's goal?"

[I don't know. 'Lukas' left after making a mess of this place.]

"Where"

Diablo's gaze turned towards the sky.

Then, his gaze slowly lowered.

[...I do not see any more confusion in you, Lukas Trowman. I know one thing. You won't accept my negotiation, right?]

"Well."

Lukas murmured.

"There is no specific way to deal with the apocalypse. Nevertheless, I couldn't accept your offer nor the Demon God's offer."

After saying that, he felt that it wasn't enough, so he added.

"What can I say? It just happens to be like that."

[Kuku. I like your calm attitude. I know. It's not easy to be like that after knowing everything... At least I couldn't be like that.]

Diablo's voice gradually faded.

[...how unfortunate. I wanted to see what your choice would be. Then I...]

"..."

[...you, will you remember my death?]

Before Lukas could answer, Diablo's skull scattered like ash. Lukas unknowingly retracted his half outstretched hand.

Then, his eyes turned up to the sky. To the place where Diablo's eyes were just directed.

[Next Stage]

The fight on the artificial island floating in the sky continued.

* * *

Sometimes she wondered.

Did she really have a childhood?

Her first memory was hunger. She didn't even know that the pang in her stomach was called that, so at first she only knew it as pain.

Hunger, which never disappeared no matter what she did, constantly ate away at her mind. If possible, she wished she could tear out her stomach to take out the source of the pain.

—Eating anything would make it feel better.

This unpleasant voice sounded in her head from time to time.

Sometimes, the voice bothered her more than the pain in her stomach.

However, those words were true.

Because when she chewed something, or swallowed something, she could forget her hunger. The moment was fleeting, but as a result, she couldn't help but be addicted to eating.

In a life filled with pain, the temptation of that moment was very sweet.

Nevertheless, there was a fact that she knew instinctively.

This pain would probably not go away.

It would follow her for the rest of her life, and even after death.

'Why me?'

She cursed the world, cursed her fate.

She screamed until she became hoarse and her throat bled. In the process, she realised another fact.

Nothing would get better.

"Are you okay?"

"I brought you something to eat."

Her parents, whose faces she couldn't remember, were always gentle with her.

They were rarely at home, but she knew it was because of her. Because of her abnormal appetite, the two of them probably worked from dawn to dawn. Even so, they never complained about her.

It's okay.

We love you.

The two things she heard the most.

...She also wanted to help.

She wanted to endure her hunger and do something.

So she went out and worked.

"You crazy bitch!"

"What will we do if you eat that?"

The situation got worse.

She couldn't help herself when food was placed in front of her. It was far more than a matter of patience.

In addition, if she moved her body even a little, the side effect would be that she would become insanely hungry.

She, she...

She couldn't take it.

She collapsed, cried, and still wanted something to eat. One day, she hit herself to the point of bruising her stomach. Nevertheless, nothing got better.

She didn't want to do it anymore, so she wanted to die, but she couldn't. Her body didn't die. The pain just got worse.

She could clearly tell that she was strange. Even the word monster was not enough to describe her.

She was certain that her parents were the same.

However.

"It's okay."

Mother said.

"It's okay."

Father said.

"It's not your fault."

"You did nothing wrong."

The two, who were now old and no longer had the energy to work, said.

"Come here."

"There's still something to eat."

Laying on the hospital bed, gesturing to her with weak hands.

No, there wasn't.

Now, at home, there was no 'food'.

With trembling hands, she covered her eyes.

—Eating anything would make it feel better

And yet, she still heard the voice.

She wanted to ignore it. She hated it.

Until now, the thing she resented was the hunger, but at that moment, the thing she hated was eating in itself. To do that here, she...

"Sorry. Daughter."

“I’m really sorry.”

“I wanted to give you something delicious to eat.”

“Without end, to your heart’s content...”

Those were the last words she heard.

—A red skinned girl.

Butterfly was her.

That child couldn’t bear her hunger either, so she ate something that should never be eaten. She committed the same original sin, an act that could never be forgiven.

She saw that scene. No, she made it happen.

That’s why it was even more pitiful, pathetic, and why she couldn’t look away—.

[The Great Mage Returns After 4000 Years](#)

Season 2 Chapter 508

There was little life on the Great Galactic Union’s artificial island, the Next Stage.

Or at least in this area.

The only things moving around the long and pointlessly flashing buildings with differently coloured artificial lighting that dazzled the eyes were machines that busily traveled along the ground or in the air.

[.....]

Withdrawing her outstretched hand, Pale looked around.

The world she saw was dyed red. The moment she had come to terms with the death she didn’t want to accept, her vision became like this.

She hadn’t fully vented the anger pent up in her chest. Proof of this being the fact that this planet was still intact.

But her patience was gradually reaching its limit.

This was because she couldn’t get rid of the causes of that anger.

Especially one of them. A being who would suddenly appear, change the battle situation, and quickly disappear again.

Pale knew who it was.

“...”

First, she turned to the woman, who was also looking at her.

Because of that woman.

Because of her annoying ability, Pale had failed to achieve her goal until now.

Nevertheless.

[This is the limit.]

“.....”

[That’s right. That power far exceeds the capacity of a mortal.]

“Well. I don’t think it’s that amazing of a power.”

Although Iris said this with a smile, to Anastasia it seemed like nothing more than a pitiful bluff.

‘Iris, what the hell kind of power are you using...?’

The veins on her forehead were clearly prominent, and her eyes were so bloodshot it seemed like she would cry tears of blood at any moment.

With the exception of Lucid, everyone that was still alive was doing so under the protection of Iris.

Of course, Anastasia was no exception.

‘Shit. Iris’ plan is screwed.’

Of course, she didn’t know what exactly the plan was. From the start, Iris never shared the plans or strategies she concocted. She was really distasteful.

No. That wasn’t the point.

The sudden appearance of ‘Lukas Trowman’ ruined the operation Iris had designed.

Of course, he wasn’t an ally of Pale, but in the face of his indiscriminate bombardment, the Blue Knight didn’t suffer any damage. Instead, it could be said that his actions had worsened the situation as it had only roused her anger.

And their battle formation suffered.

The body of Diablo, who had just joined them, was split in two.

‘Wouldn’t it have been better to run away when the Blue Knight pursued [Lukas]?’

However, Lucid and Iris followed the Blue Knight as if they didn’t have to think about it. The rest of them were forced to follow, and the situation eventually reached this point.

“...shit.”

Anastasia was one of the few beings that were still alive, but she had surprisingly little influence on the situation. Her being there or not made no difference to the situation.

She wanted to say that fighting wasn’t her specialty in the first place, but such an excuse could only be seen as cowardly when considering the fact that she possessed the body of a battle golem.

‘Even the Blue Knight isn’t completely unscathed.’

Her armour had quite a few scars on it. Lucid’s wounds were far more severe so they couldn’t really brag, but still...

Shuk.

Suddenly, Lucid's chest was cut deeply. There was the sound of not only his armour, but also the flesh inside being cut.

Although there was no blood splatter, Lucid's body instantly staggered. His sword shook as if it would fall to the ground at any moment. Had he reached the point where he couldn't even maintain his grip?

Anastasia belatedly tried to join, but Pale's series of attacks continued before she could. Instead of withdrawing her sword which was explosively drawing a straight line to the sky, she extended her right leg and shoved Lucid's chest.

Clang!

Looking at it again, rather than shove, it was better to say she launched him. Lucid's body flew like a cannonball, striking a wall so hard it created a sound that threatened to tear their eardrums.

Iris' expression hardened.

Lucid's absence from the frontline was equivalent to the collapse of the frontline.

The term 'desperate situation' flashed in her mind.

Shuk.

The last thing she noticed was the disappearance of Pale's figure. From the start, Iris' sensory organs were unable to keep up with Pale's movements.

The same was true for Anastasia and the few survivors that were left.

Lucid was the only one who could respond to her, but now, he was implanted in a wall with injuries that could not be ignored.

When she noticed Pale's presence again

'-ah.'

The thing that entered Iris' sight was a pale blade.

Glowing under the artificial lighting, the blade slowly fell. As it did, her mind went blank, and her entire body was still as if she had been frozen.

But the blade stopped just before cutting Iris.

"..."

Cold sweat broke out.

Just now, Iris almost died without realising.

But just before, Pale stopped her slash.

[...why?]

Soon after, a powerless voice leaked out.

The blue eyes within the helmet shook violently.

[Why did you block it?]

Whoosh—

Then, when someone appeared through space, Iris' eyes couldn't help but shake like Pale's voice.

"...enough."

Panting, Lukas spoke.

His head ached. Was this the backlash from forcibly using spatial movement? Nevertheless, if he had hesitated for even a moment, it would have been too late.

"Stand back."

He said this without looking back.

He could feel the slight inhalation of breath behind him.

[...]

Pale looked at that figure before taking a few steps back.

Then she took off her helmet, revealing a face covered in blood and sweat. Pale's expression was not something that could be described in a few words.

It looked like she was about to cry, angry, and expressionless all at the same time.

"Why did you block it?"

The same question came once again.

"Why are you siding with them?"

"...Pale."

"Do you know what those guys did?"

"They didn't kill Butterfly."

"They're the same group."

"That's a misunderstanding. VIP is—"

"Even if it's a misunderstanding, that changes nothing."

Pale raised her sword.

"From the start, they are the ones that wanted to fight me. They had a chance to end the fight but they kept persisting."

That was right.

They could have stopped the fight when Pale chased after 'Lukas'. But, instead, they chose to pursue Pale to the end.

Lukas also kept his mouth shut.

Subduing the Blue Knight was one of the cornerstones of Diablo's plan to become the Void King.

And these people... were those that agreed with Diablo's ideals.

The only variable was that Pale was much stronger than they'd expected.

"I see."

Pale suddenly giggled.

"Lukas is also putting them before me. You want to kill me to protect them."

"No. These people you're trying to kill can no longer..."

It took a bit of time and courage to spit out the rest of the sentence.

"...be my meaning."

"Is that so? From the look on your face, I don't think so."

She didn't look at Lukas as she said this.

He wondered who Pale was looking at and talking to, but he couldn't afford to turn around at that moment. In the first place, it could be a lie.

"In the end, Lukas is trying to trick me too. Haha. Ahaha."

Holding her face, Pale burst into laughter for a while.

Then, she slowly put her helmet back on, as if donning a heavy crown.

[Right. At best, it can only be said that we met in a garbage dump*.](*:This is actually the same 'Dump Site' as the territory, but considering they didn't go there this life, I'm assuming she is referring to the world of void as a whole)

"You're wrong."

[Then what is it?]

"For you."

Pale's movements suddenly stopped.

"Pale. I'm stopping you here, for your sake."

[What the hell...?]

"They never intended to kill you from the start. Diablo's goal wasn't to kill but to subdue."

[...]

“They are just annoying you. Something about them just offended you. And if that’s your only reason for killing them... you will be ruined. You might not realise it right away, but it will slowly eat at your mind. Then, one day, you will think of this moment, and you will regret it terribly.”

[Regret? That’s not something I’ve done before.]

“I heard something similar before coming here. So I know. That’s a lie.”

With a smile, Lukas said.

“I know you. You are not a Ruler. You can’t be like that.”

If that were the case, then even if she did regret, it would not be until the moment she died.

Lukas only knew this fact because he was the one who had seen Pale’s most diverse forms.

[...bullshit. Don’t pretend like you know me.]

Pale spoke in a dangerous voice.

[If that’s really true then you kill them. I can kill them with Lukas’ hand instead of my own. Then there would be no reason for anything to eat away at me.]

“That’s far-fetched.”

[Haha. Right. I knew you’d answer like that. Then I... I...]

Pale’s voice dropped.

The air shook.

This was dangerous. Lukas knew. Pale’s ego was very unstable. Compared to the other Knights, it was more fragile than glass.

That was why she hadn’t yet been told the ‘truth of the world’ that Diablo had told him.

Crack, crack...

Cracks began to appear on the ground and surrounding buildings.

[No. Not this. This isn’t what I wanted...]

Pale continued to mutter in an unstable voice.

Still staring at Pale through the rubble of the collapsing buildings, Lukas said.

“Leave.”

He said to Iris.

“And don’t do anything stupid like trying to subdue the Blue Knight again.”

“...why are you protecting us?”

“Since I am the one that brought Pale to this world, I am obligated to send her back to her original world.”

“...”

“Sorry, but I don’t think I can afford to take care of other people.”

A moment of hesitation.

“I can do it.”

At this time, Iris was swift. She quickly made up her mind and began taking care of those around her.

Just before leaving, she left a word.

“...don’t die.”

Lukas pretended not to notice the emotion in her voice.

His words to Pale weren’t lies. Iris... could no longer be Lukas’ meaning. It wasn’t anyone’s fault. It just, just happened like that. And it was very difficult to revive a broken relationship.

It wasn’t long before Iris’ presence disappeared completely. The same was true for the other presences in the surrounding area.

Then, looking at Pale again, Lukas said inwardly.

‘Lightning God.’

[What is it?]

‘What are my chances of winning?’

[Zero.]

His certainty was a bit annoying. Although he agreed.

Lukas laughed at that thought.

‘Then, what are my chances of survival?’

[The probability of that is also low. The Blue Knight’s mind is extremely unstable. It seems that you managed to somehow build a relationship with her, but that probably doesn’t mean much in the current situation. Look. Isn’t she already unable to distinguish her surroundings?]

After a moment of silence, the Lightning God continued.

[To put it simply, she already lost her mind.]

‘...’

[What a contradictory being. Such power, yet such an unstable ego... hmm. It is understandable why she hates God more than anyone else.]

At that moment, Pale’s figure disappeared.

Lukas' eyes widened and he raised his concentration to the limit.

—Minimal time zone.

In the world where everything moved slowly, Lukas grasped Pale's movements. Surprisingly, despite being in the minimal time zone, she was still moving at an alarming pace.

It was a terrifying sight. If it hadn't been for the slowly moving objects in the surroundings, Lukas might have mistakenly thought that he hadn't actually entered the minimal time zone.

'Shit.'

He had to overpower that? Him?

He already began to feel dizzy.

Pale's movements were devastating.

With every step she took, the ground cracked, and he could see a shockwave that turned the surrounding buildings to dust spreading outward in every direction. This was a mess that she was creating simply from her momentum.

Not allowing approach.

This was a battle method that Lukas had adopted some time ago, but this time, it was a necessity.

He could not allow Pale to get within five steps of him.

Paht.

A storm of magic unfolded from his outstretched hand.

'This isn't the time to worry about the surrounding space.'

If he left Pale as is, the universe itself would be destroyed.

Countless spells scratched Pale's armour. But, at best, all of the scratches were not even worth being called scratches.

This was proven by the fact that the speed of Pale's approach was not reduced in the slightest.

'What should I use?'

Lukas thought of all the means he had, but none of them led to the image of him defeating Pale.

His throat burned with anxiety.

Now, the distance from Pale was about 20 steps, he still had time to—

—Think.

Piht.

Disappeared.

Pale disappeared.

Puk!

Immediately after, Lukas felt a burning pain in his stomach. Instead of letting out a scream, he used space leap to widen the distance as much as possible.

‘What happened...’

The cool touch of the blade was still vivid.

The pain Pale left behind was so severe that Lukas almost screamed for a moment.

The Lightning God commented calmly.

[It’s nothing grandiose. It’s just instantaneous acceleration.]

‘She moved at a speed that I couldn’t perceive, in the minimal time zone?’

[Kuku. Lukas Trowman.... Do not underestimate the being in front of you.]

The Lightning God chuckled.

[That is a monster.]

This was even heavier considering the fact that it came from none other than a Ruler.

Lukas used void to heal his wound in an instant.

Unable to perceive her movement even in the minimal time zone, Lukas realised that he was completely mistaken.

The level of power revealed by the Four Knights far exceeded his expectations.

Monsters comparable to the main body of a Ruler.

If that was the case, then Lukas didn’t have time to choose between means and methods.

Right. Means and methods...

‘Lightning God.’

[What is it?]

Gritting his teeth, Lukas said.

‘Lend me your power.’

[...!]

He could feel the Lightning God’s surprise.

Then, for a moment, he also felt his immense joy.

[Uhahaha!]

The Lightning God burst into laughter.

[I've been waiting for those words, Lukas Trowman!]

'I can't afford to waste time, hurry!'

[Kuhahahaha! Good! I'll let you taste a bit of extreme power!]

The next moment, Pale's figure disappeared.

Rumble!

And a bolt of lightning struck the world that had ground to a halt.

(1/2)

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Season 2 Chapter 509

Crackle—!

It felt like thousands of birds were all chirping in his head at the same time. It wasn't easy to lift even a single finger.

A split mind, an electrocuted body.

Struggling, Lukas let out a silent scream.

A torrent of pain, which made what he had just received from Pale feel like a joke, grasped horribly at his mind. If he were to let down his guard for even a moment, it felt like he would get caught up in the torrent and his consciousness would disappear without a trace.

However, there was something that was even greater than the pain he was desperately feeling. It was a tremendous power that he had never experienced before.

A taste of extreme power, what the Lightning God had said, was not a lie.

If this much power was only a taste, then how much power did the Lightning God originally have?

...If.

If he were to submit to the Lightning God, he would be able to use—.

[Only this much]

Right before he was swept away by that power, a voice that was reminiscent of thunder brought him back to his senses.

[Did you really think you could handle the power of the Lightning God at that level? After all, you're just another being that isn't one of 'us'.]

'...!.'

[Maintain your consciousness. Be conscious of who you are. Lukas Trowman, what did you do when you couldn't control yourself.]

'...'

Moments when he couldn't control himself.

At that time, he.

First, he always took a deep breath.

"Hu-, up..."

Lukas took the most unsteady breath he ever had.

Air rushed violently into his trembling airways. His head, which felt like an electric current was jumping around frantically inside, felt refreshed.

And conscious of the Lightning God.

Did this guy... just help him?

[Don't relax, look straight ahead.]

Firstly, he didn't think too deeply and took the Lightning God's words as a signpost. It tensed his mind just enough so that he wasn't swept away by the torrent. It felt like a waterfall was flowing endlessly inside his head, and if his goal was just to hold on, then all he had to do was not let go of the branch he was clinging to, but that was meaningless.

One day, the branch would break, and Lukas would be swept away by the large waterfall.

'I have to overcome it.'

Or dominate it.

This meant that climbing the waterfall was his only option.

He could do it.

With a unified spirit and void, it was not impossible. Even if it was impossible, he would just make it possible. Just like he used to.

Struggling mentally, Lukas looked straight ahead.

And came to his senses in a different sense.

[Hahaha, ahahaha—!]

He saw Pale rushing in with a mad laugh. There was no longer even a single trace of sanity on her.

[It seems that she noticed my presence even after completely losing her mind.]

'That... is possible?'

[Naturally. The presence of the Lightning God is not something trivial that you can ignore just because you lost your mind.]

Grinning, the Lightning God continued.

[Kuku. How is it? It seems that the anger the Blue Knight feels towards you is beyond imagination. Did you not foresee this situation? That if you accept my power, the situation would only become worse.]

'...of course I did.'

He'd calmed down a bit now.

Trying to keep his wild spirit as calm as possible, Lukas spoke to the Lightning God.

'With this, I should have become Pale's number one target.'

[So she will no longer ignore you and chase someone else? Kukuku. How self sacrificing. It's a shame that I'm the only spectator that can witness this tragedy. Would you like a round of applause?]

'Shut up. I don't need you anymore, so stay put for a while.'

[Kuhaha... This is why I like you]

The Lightning God burst into laughter as if it had been something pleasant.

Lukas looked down at his hands and clenched them tightly.

'...this is [Thunder].'

The power that made the Lightning God the Lightning God.

The power that made him one of the strongest beings that ruled over the Three Thousand Worlds.

One of the greatest powers in the entire multiverse.

It certainly deserved to be expressed like that.

Lukas felt a ridiculous sense of omnipotence just from obtaining a small portion of Thunder.

However, when he became aware of the being called Pale, that sense of omnipotence and superiority disappeared.

'The opponent is also a monster.'

The chill down his spine was the perfect stimulant.

[Should I teach you how to handle that power?]

'If I listen to you, it'll only get more twisted.'

[Well.]

He couldn't imitate the Lightning God. It wasn't possible.

So he had to figure out how to use this power to fight on his own.

...He had memories of thunder and lightning. This was because there was a demigod who had similar powers in the past. However, the feelings from that time were of use now.

The Lightning God's 'Thunder' was a power that was dozens of levels higher than the demigod's power.

'I'll use it in my own way.'

The opponent was an out of control Pale.

Control by force was not an option.

Even if he were to fight with the intention to kill, his chances of winning were less than half.

Lukas pointed a finger towards Pale.

Pale's movement, which he was completely unable to follow just a moment before, could now be grasped to an extent.

Just having Thunder flowing through his body caused his sensory organs to be enhanced by several levels. Just because he'd reached the minimal time zone didn't mean that was the end.

Feeling a bit of bitterness at that fact, Lukas fired a bolt of lightning.

Boom!

Something exploded.

Not Pale, Lukas' arm.

'This crazy...'

Lukas' body failed to overcome the output of Thunder. As if it had nothing to do with the flustered Lukas, a blue bolt shot out.

Then, for the first time, Pale stopped advancing. And for the first time, after holding her sword with both hands, she took a stance.

Upper defence. She held the blade upwards, drawing a vertical line in front of her forehead.

—!

His vision became white.

Dozens of airwaves erupted simultaneously from the place where the lightning bolt and sword met. In accordance, the world repeatedly lost and regained its colour.

"Kuk..."

Lukas grunted.

Just as he was about to use Void to regenerate his arm.

[Focus!]

He heard the Lightning God's reminder. Goosebumps instantly ran down his spine, but it was a step too late.

Lukas felt death behind him.

It was strange. The only being that could threaten him was confronting the lightning over—

'Not there?'

There was no one in the place that the light was extending from.

Then this feeling—

His consciousness was cut off.

Shuk-

Lukas' head was severed. The hand that he'd just outstretched fell down, and he collapsed.

Blood slowly leaked from the body. After shaking intermittently for a while, the body finally stopped moving.

[...ha.]

Pale looked down at her sword. Looking at the blood dripping from her blade, she was tormented by a feeling she'd never felt before.

Regret, remorse.

No. It wasn't anything like that.

She did what she had to do, and killed who she had to kill.

That was all.

[...by chance, if it was Lukas.]

Nevertheless, to anyone who could hear it, the voice that came out sounded pitiful.

[I thought he could be the only one that could understand me.]

"Aren't you the one that killed him with your own hands?"

[...!]

Pale turned around.

Lukas was standing there. Unscathed.

It wasn't that the attack was too shallow or anything like that. Because Pale's blade had directly severed Lukas' head.

"This is why I don't feel like a human."

Lukas spoke in a self deprecating voice.

The emotions that flowed onto Pale's face disappeared once again.

[Is that also the Lightning God's power?]

No.

This regeneration was from the power of Void that Lukas had acquired on his own. But Lukas didn't bother to answer. Regardless of what he said, he wouldn't get through to Pale.

Pale fixed her grip on her sword. With this signal, the battle began once again.

Blue sword slashes shot out with every swing of the sword. Every strike was heavy. It felt like his back was going to break and his will would collapse.

Lukas gritted his teeth, thinking.

'This can't be called swordsmanship.'

[That's right. It's simply swinging the sword without form.]

'...however, it is more chaotic than any swordsmanship I've ever experienced.'

[Kukuku. When you have that much power, it becomes annoying to use swordsmanship.]

Lukas dodged Pale's attack with his naked eyes.

The attacks that he couldn't respond to were blocked with Thunder, but there were attacks that he couldn't block.

Shuk-

Every time that happened, a scar appeared on his body. The cuts would be so deep that his bones were visible or one of his limbs would fall off. Such damage caused the physical condition of his body to quickly deteriorate.

He wouldn't be able to last under Pale's attacks unless he was in perfect condition, so he had no choice but to use Void to continuously regenerate his body.

The form of the fight was established. This was surprising considering the fact that the opponent was one of the Four Knights.

However.

[Thunder is not infinite.]

'...I know.'

It was not infinite and neither was Void.

The core energies supporting Lukas were quickly running out.

Once again, the fight was established. However, what was the difference?

Pale's anger wouldn't subside even if he dragged time out before dying. After tearing apart Lukas' corpse, she would still kill Iris, and she might even destroy this entire universe.

'I need time.'

[Hmm?]

'I need to reflect on your Thunder.'

[You can do it now.]

'Dammit. No matter how extraordinary my brain is, I can't completely immerse myself in this state!'

[Aha. I see. You mean you need some training time in order to interpret Thunder in your own way.]

Understanding Lukas' intentions, the Lightning God smiled.

[To say something like that in this situation. You madman.]

Of course, Lukas was aware. Of just how crazy what he was saying was.

[How much?]

'...at least 10 minutes.'

[Kuhahaha.....]

The mockery came once again.

The Lightning God spoke laughingly.

[You know how ridiculous what you're saying is, don't you? Do you think there is anyone who could last against one of the Four Knights for 10 minutes?]

'...'

He had nothing to say in response.

But the Lightning God continued.

[Actually, there is.]

'What?'

[Until when are you going to watch? Come out already.]

At that moment he realised.

The Lightning God's voice was not directed at Lukas.

Then the sky turned dark.

[...what other tricks do you have...?]

Pale's words were cut off.

The darkened sky brightened up. She saw a crack in the sky. It was a bolt of lightning with ten thousand branches.

Boom!

Following a thunderclap, a bolt of lightning pierced Pale's body. Pale's prized blue armour was scorched.

Taht.

The being that appeared with the thunder gently knelt on one knee as soon as they landed.

It was the perfect posture of obedience, without flaws.

Lukas was surprised at the sight of the man's face.

It was a middle aged man wearing a biker jacket and jeans. His messy golden hair fell to his shoulders.

A being he knew. How could he forget?

"You called, one true being."

[~10 minutes.]

Instead of returning the greeting, the Lightning God asked.

[I need 10 minutes. Can you do it?]

"Hmm."

The right hand of the Thunderous Lightning God.

The Lord, Retip, straightened his bent knee and looked at Pale.

"Honestly, it won't be easy."

There was a smile in the eyes covered by sunglasses.

"But who can refuse your orders?"

[The Great Mage Returns After 4000 Years](#)

Season 2 Chapter 510

"Shit."

Neil Prand clenched his fists. He clenched them so tightly that his nails pierced his skin and blood flowed. However, he himself didn't even realise this. Mind numbing despair and a sense of shame masked the pain.

'I couldn't stop it...'

He knew in advance that something unusual was going to happen in the [Next Stage]. He'd come here to prevent that, but he couldn't change anything.

It wasn't an artificial island at all.

It was a gigantic aerial warship that could turn an entire area into powder... Shortly after he'd realised this fact, the massacre in Manjuri City took place.

"...you knew, didn't you?"

Neil's burning gaze turned towards his side.

Retip, who was reading a book with his chin in his hand, looked over at him with an annoyed expression.

“What?”

“About the massacre that was going to happen in this place.”

“Your words are gradually getting more impolite.”

Smiling, Retip closed his book.

“Right. I had a rough idea. But what about it? Does knowing in advance give me a reason to stop it?”

“...isn't that why you accompanied me?”

“Not at all. I told you. You and I just have overlapping destinations.”

“...”

“More than that, I'm very displeased with your behaviour, Neil Prand. Why did it change so much? Looking at your actions, I can't help but feel sick sometimes.”

Neil couldn't help but ask back strangely.

“Roaming the world preventing conflicts among the various forces, gathering orphans, and eliminating war. Is there any part of this behaviour that can make you feel sick?”

“Are you trying to talk to me about human ethical beliefs?”

“...”

“I'm talking about change. It's your changed attitude that is disgusting. Didn't you decide to live only for Americans?”

Neil remained silent for a moment then opened his mouth.

“You said that we had overlapping destinations.”

Retip obediently accepted Neil's change of subject.

“Right.”

“What is your goal?”

“That...”

Suddenly.

Retip turned to look out the window, put his book down, and stood to his feet.

“It seems I have to go.”

“Where?”

Retip smiled roughly.

“To where my master calls.”

* * *

“I never expected to get such an opportunity.”

Smiling, Retip spread out his arms.

Boom! A bolt of lightning struck down from the sky before transforming into a spear and was caught in Retip’s hand.

Soul Weapon, Astrafe.

In the Lightning God’s residence [Thunder Planet].

Once every 100,000 years, the most ferocious bolt of lightning would strike, and the soul weapon [Astrafe] was formed after the Lightning God gathered one hundred of these lightning bolts and refined them into a weapon.

Feeling the electricity in his hand, Retip’s smile deepened.

“Has it been 300 years since I last brought this out?”

[...]

“Why aren’t you saying anything? Aren’t you the one that’s going to fight for your life from now on?”

[Make me fight for my life. Someone like you?]

Once again, Pale’s attitude was dry.

In the first place, there was only one being that could stop her from maintaining her demeanour as the Blue Knight.

She swung her drawn sword.

Clang!

Pale’s slash was blocked by a series of fierce lightning bolts from Astrafe. Feeling the heavy sensation in his hands, Retip almost burst into laughter.

‘If it wasn’t for Astrafe, my arm would have been blown off.’

A single clash, that was all it took to make him realise the gap between his opponent and himself.

‘This is even more absurd than the order to conquer 17 great universes, Lightning God.’

Ignoring the pain in his throbbing arms, Retip took a stance.

Then, when he saw that Pale had also taken a stance in front of him, his smile widened.

Right.

Nevertheless, since he had received the order, he had to complete it.

Because he was the Lord, Retip

* * *

'He can't hold on.'

As he witnessed the unfolding scene, Lukas thought.

It had only been a few seconds since the fight had started, but Retip had already been driven into a corner. He seemed to be able to respond with the spear in his hands, but it was so dangerous that it wouldn't be strange if he were to collapse into a splatter of blood the next moment.

'...this isn't looking down on Retip. I know how strong a Lord is.'

The Demon King.

He had fought that guy who, besides his complicated origin, was in the position of Lord for the Demon God.

'However, Pale is a monster that doesn't conform to the norm. Shouldn't you, a Ruler, know that better than anyone else, Lightning God?'

[Don't treat him so lightly.]

A rare occasion.

There was a hint of coldness in the Lightning God's voice.

[That is a being that I personally bestowed a weapon unto. Very few Absolutes that follow me can maintain their individuality. That guy is special.]

'...'

[He was probably born with a strong ego. In a certain universe, he is the King of all beings and is called god. The pride born from that is by no means negligible, and I also couldn't make him a puppet either. Making that guy my subordinate was pretty fun.]

The King of all beings called god.

...Retip was a being like Lord of the Demigods.

[Focus on your own task, Lukas Trowman. You should not waste even a single strand of concentration. Just whose power do you think you're reinterpreting?]

It was like the Lightning God hit the inside of his head.

[You'll have to exert more concentration than you ever have... Otherwise, not to mention 10 minutes, even 10 hours would not be enough.]

'...I know.'

Nodding, Lukas added.

'I'll trust Retip. I'll assume he can survive for 10 minutes.'

There was no other way. If he didn't gain control of Thunder here, everything would be over.

[That's enough.]

As he felt the Lightning God nod, Lukas took a deep breath.

“Huu...”

Raising his concentration, he began the immersion.

And closed his eyes.

Time shut off.

The surrounding objects disappeared one after the other, and the sound of the rumbling ground faded. His sense of smell and touch also disappeared.

—After a while, he could not feel anything.

In the world where he was the only one, in other words, the best environment to concentrate, Lukas threw himself a topic.

...What is ‘Thunder’?

The authority of the Lightning God,

The unique power that only the Lightning God could control,

The Lightning God’s symbol of absolute authority,

On a more fundamental level... it was thunder and lightning.

Thunder and lightning have long since been symbols of fear.

The darkening sky was seen as ominous, and even more ominous than that was the dragon-like roar that came from it. Even snout nosed kids instinctively knew that such a sound was nothing but a portent.

Soon afterward, a flash of light streaked across the dark clouds followed by a loud explosion as if the sky was being torn apart.

Naturally, humans, who could not understand such weather phenomena, were filled with wonder and fear at that sight.

That was what the Lightning God was.

Thunder was the ubiquitous image of the Lightning God. A being that reaped both fear and wonder at the same time. It was a characteristic that was unique to the Lightning God, as the Demon God, Sun God, and Dragon God did not have it.

And the Thunder that the Lightning God controlled was the purest energy of destruction in the multiverse. Lukas would not hesitate to describe that flash of light as the ‘destruction of destructions’.

‘Then how should I use that Thunder?’

Should he also focus on destruction?

If he were to mix Thunder with magic, it was possible. The destruction Lukas could produce would be comparable to the Lightning God.

However... that was not the answer.

While it might not be impossible, such a fusion would change the main principle.

Thunder would become the lead, and magic would be downgraded to an auxiliary role.

In other words, mixing Thunder with magic, the difference would be huge.

Of course, the destructive power would be tremendous. It would no doubt be great enough to deal effective damage to Pale.

But.

'No.'

There had already been an 'opportunity' to do so.

Immediately after he'd accepted Thunder into his body, just as he'd been infected by the feeling of omnipotence, the moment he'd lost consciousness in the raging torrent.

At that moment, it was none other than the Lightning God who had slapped the near collapsed Lukas on the cheek.

The Lightning God didn't want that option.

And he could now be sure. That the Lightning God's restraint was for him.

'The capacity of Thunder is not just destruction.'

He recalled.

In the imaginary world, how did the Lightning God fight?

He was the person who had observed battles with the Rulers the most. He hadn't taken his eyes off for a moment, and analysed the Lightning God's power. Then he'd realised.

'This guy doesn't fight in a fixed pattern.'

Different methods, different habits, different patterns.

The Lightning God's fighting style was filled with countless habits, endless changes, and a near infinite number of things.

At first, he thought that every Ruler was like this, but that wasn't the case. The Demon God didn't have many changes. He knew this because he'd fought him personally.

In other words, the display of so many fighting styles was also a part of the Lightning God's authority...

'How?'

Was it because he'd lived too long? There wasn't enough evidence. He had to think about it in relation to Thunder.

Disorganised words floated in his head without any connection, as if his thoughts had been broken and every piece had their own will.

Lukas let it be.

He randomly spread the disorganised information out and analysed them all at the same time.

Thunder, thunder and lightning, static, current, electricity, magnetism.

—Lukas' thoughts came to a complete stop.

'...electromagnetism?'

One of the most basic forces in the universe.

What if that was what Thunder was rooted in?

'That force is the source of almost all the forces and phenomena that naturally occur.'

So if he could perfectly understand that concept, he might also be able to know the position and momentum of every atom. In theory, he would know 'everything about the present'.

If he had the capacity and processing ability of a Ruler, it might even be possible to predict the future based on the acquired information.

'In the imaginary world, the patterns of 'Lukas' are infinite.'

He knew this because he'd accepted every Lukas. All of them were the same, but at the same time different, being. Even if the root was Lukas, they all lived completely different lives, so inevitably, there were differences which eventually led to their own individuality.

The Lightning God must have known about that individuality even before the fight.

So the fight that followed was nothing more than a response to the information gained in advance.

The battle style that the Lightning God displayed, which Lukas mistakenly thought were infinite patterns, was nothing more than something 'made as a result'.

If there was a hundred, there was a strategy for a hundred.

In the end, the patterns that one revealed during a fight usually occurred because there was no 'perfect strategy'. After all, because of a lack of information about your opponent, you would have no choice but to fight in the method you were most confident in.

In other words, if you knew everything about your opponent before you even started, there would be no need to reveal your habits.

It was like reaching a stage of omniscience.

'...haha.'

A laugh leaked out as goosebumps ran down his spine.

It wasn't because of fear or terror.

It was because for the first time since obtaining Void, he had seen the path to the next level. At that moment, Lukas had a feeling of both achievement and excitement that numbed his brain.

Just a bit.

If he analysed just a little bit more, he thought that he could catch something. He knew he could.

—It was because of this that Lukas didn't realise.

10 minutes.

The 10 minutes he'd talked about with the Lightning God.

Had already passed.