

Great Mage 91

Season 1 Chapter 91: Whatever it takes to Become Strong(3)

“Mm...”

Ivan opened his eyes with a groan.

He'd finally managed to get that goddamn mana under control.

He stood up with a grimace.

He had been sitting in place for a long time, so his muscles were so sore he felt like he wanted to die.

He hadn't even been able to wash himself, so he smelled quite bad at that moment.

In simple words, he was in the worst condition.

“You're finally awake.”

Ivan turned around and saw Frey standing there. He stared at him with wide eyes.

“How long has it been?”

“One week and two days.”

His sense of time was a mess. He’d felt like only four or five days had passed.

Ivan stretched his sore muscles while looking at Frey. Unlike him, he was dressed in a neat and clean outfit.

“I guess the fruit’s mana wasn’t much of a problem for you.”

“I didn’t eat it.”

“Huh?”

When Frey took out the fruit and showed it to him, his expression became strange.

“Weren’t you also sitting here with me? I’m sure I felt it.”

“You’re right, but I took something other than the fruit.”

“...”

Ivan looked at Frey with the same strange expression.

While Frey's words were a bit strange, it was Frey himself that he was paying more attention to.

The aura around him was completely different to what he'd felt a week ago.

'This... why does it feel like he's a normal person?'

From his aura, one would think that he was a normal person who had never studied magic rather than a powerful Archmage.

In fact, Ivan couldn't feel any mana from him at all. Just like his teacher.

And that made the way he looked at Frey even weirder.

Finally, he couldn't help but ask.

"You... did you advance?"

Frey laughed at his question.

"Right."

“You were 7 stars, so now...”

“I’m 8 stars.”

Ivan was dumbfounded. Even he, a Magic Warrior, knew the significance of an 8 star Wizard.

“You... how old are you?”

“I’m twenty.”

Or was it twenty-one?

Frey tilted his head as he muttered to himself.

However, Ivan, who saw this, was lost for words.

He’d grown up hearing he was talented, but Frey was on a completely different level.

‘...no.’

Could Frey even be described by the word ‘talented’ anymore?

As though he didn't notice Ivan's emotional turmoil, Frey spoke calmly.

"So what are you going to do now?"

"Huh?"

"Although we didn't really achieve our goal, we still killed Oydin as Riki requested. We have completed our mission."

"Hmm..."

Frey was right.

Oydin was dead, and he'd even managed to obtain a fruit from Hruhiral.

Lilund was an amazing village, but it was the worst place for someone like Ivan.

"I'll continue doing what I was doing before."

"What you were doing before?"

"Right. I'm looking for Kasajin's relics."

“By relics...”

“The Tiger King’s Gloves, the Giant’s Belt and the Gale Necklace. Kasajin’s three artifacts.”

Ivan clicked his tongue lightly.

“Master has the Gale Necklace, but even he doesn’t know where the Tiger King’s Gloves and the Giant’s Belt are. I don’t like relying on magic items, but Master told me that I needed to find them if I ever wanted to surpass Kasajin.”

“Master?”

“The former Magic Warrior King’s Successor. He’s dirty and strong... but mostly dirty.”

Ivan made an expression of disgust.

This reaction made Frey curious about the identity of Ivan’s master.

“Where is he now?”

“No idea. He suddenly disappeared three years ago and left nothing but a letter telling me to find the Tiger King’s Gloves and Giant’s Belt. I had nothing better to do, so I’ve been doing that ever since.”

Frey nodded.

Finding the three artifacts was the best thing for Ivan to do.

“If you want to surpass Kasajin, you’ll need to find the three artifacts.”

“Huh? What for?”

“Only then will you be able to see the true form of the Warrior King’s Fist.”

“Really? No, more importantly... how do you know all of that?”

Come to think of it, he still hadn’t asked how this guy knew the Warrior King’s Fist.

He’d forgotten to after the whole series of crazy events recently.

Frey didn’t even pretend to find an excuse and simply shrugged.

“Somehow.”

“So you won’t tell me. Hmm. Well, I’m not that curious anyway.”

Ivan's reaction to that, however, was surprisingly cool. It was clear that he wasn't pretending when he said that – he truly wasn't curious.

And even more than that, he felt that if Frey didn't want to tell him about it, then there must have been a reason.

However, he still felt a bit strange.

That was because he'd only ever felt this kind of trust with his teacher before.

'Is this normal?'

The important thing that he kept in mind was that Frey was strong and trustworthy.

"So what are you going to do, Frey?"

"I'm going to attend the Demigod meeting with Riki."

"Huh? Why are you going there?"

"That..."

Frey briefly explained what he'd heard from Riki. He also told him some of the things he'd learned about the Blake family.

This was because Frey was certain that Ivan's attitude wouldn't change after he learned where he was from.

"Ooh. So you're a hybrid who can use both mana and divine power?"

"..."

His reaction was just as he'd expected, but it did not feel good being called a hybrid.

Frey nodded stiffly.

"I see. Nevertheless, it will be dangerous."

"It's dangerous, but I don't intend to die. And Ivan, after that."

When Frey's tone became serious, Ivan tilted his head curiously.

"Huh?"

“The biennial Circle meeting will be held in about a year and a half. It is said to be an important meeting that all the important members of the Circle will attend.”

“Right. I’ve heard about it.”

He’d heard about it from his master a few times.

Of course, Ivan had never attended it, and his master also stopped attending it after an unpleasant event.

“I’m going to overturn it.”

“...huh? Overturn it? Overturn what?”

“Everything. As you said. The current Circle is a pigsty filled with livestock.”

Frey let out a short laugh.

“I agree with you. So I’m going to fix that. I’ll remove the smell and organize it properly... think of it as house cleaning.”

“House cleaning!”

Ivan looked excited. Had it been anyone else saying those words, he would have just ignored them. But if it came from Frey's mouth, then it was different.

This guy was a bit strange, but he was not a fool.

When he thought this, he laughed subconsciously.

"Why are you telling me this."

"You'll help..."

"Help...?"

Ivan's expression became a bit proud, and upon seeing that, Frey decided to change his words a bit.

"...create a chance."

The grammar became a bit strange, but he didn't care. It was the meaning that mattered.

As he said that, Frey reached out a hand to Ivan.

“Uhahaha!”

Ivan couldn't hold it in any longer and burst into happy laughter, his loud voice filling the dark room.

With tears in his eyes, he gripped Frey's hand tightly.

“After a year and a half.”

“After a year and a half.”

Ivan couldn't help but think to himself.

‘It will be a mess.’

He was looking forward to it so much that he didn't know if he would be able to wait patiently.

* * *

Ivan said he was going south.

“Silkid, the Desert Country. According to Master, it was the last place where traces of Kasajin were found.”

“Is it in the Amakan Desert?”

“That’s right.”

He knew it because he’d heard of Kasajin’s demise from Riki. (TL: I’m pretty sure Hruhiral was the one who told him, but it’s cute that the author made a mistake)

“I’ll try to find the traces left there. It shouldn’t be too boring. I heard that the desert is filled with strong warriors.”

Frey nodded.

“I wish you luck.”

“Thanks.”

And with that, Ivan left.

Syax was the one to guide him out of the Great Forest.

It seemed that she had managed to let go off all the bad feelings she had towards Ivan. No, rather, her eyes were clearly filled with respect as she looked at him.

Well, her attitude was understandable since he was one of the heroes who had saved her village.

Thinking that they looked better together than he expected, Frey then spoke softly.

“Snow.”

“While I’m wearing the mask, call me Swordna.”

Snow dropped down from above him. She then turned to look at Frey with confusion visible in her eyes.

“How did you know I was there? I didn’t reveal myself like last time. And I’m quite confident in my ability to hide.”

“It’s because I’m now 8 stars.”

It really was because he became 8 stars.

Snow’s expression changed a little as she remembered the explanation Syax had given her.

“...something like that is really possible at 8 stars?”

“That’s right. But that’s not why I called you.”

“...”

“Can you take me to Riki? I’d like to talk to him.”

“Understood.”

With that, Frey and Snow headed to Riki’s cabin once again.

However, this time, Frey completely skipped the process of drawing the magic circle and just directly cast Warp. It took a bit of time to cast, but the spell felt as light and as a simple Blink spell.

Just as Riki’s hut came into view.

[Don’t come here!]

“...!”

It was Riki’s voice.

Frey and Snow’s expressions changed instantly.

[Hide nearby! Quickly!]

Hearing Riki's urgent tone for the first time was enough to explain the seriousness of the situation.

Their reactions were swift. Frey and Snow met each other's eyes for a moment before they immediately scattered to both sides of the clearing and hid in the underbrush.

At the same time, the door to the cabin opened.

"..."

It was a woman with snakes for hair.

Frey shuddered slightly at her bright, yellow eyes.

'A Demigod.'

The pressure she gave him wasn't the same as Nozdog or Riki, which meant she wasn't an Apocalypse.

However, she was still a Demigod, so he had to be vigilant.

Slurp.

She stuck out her long tongue.

“That’s weird~ I’m sure I felt a wave of mana~”

She had a strange, listing tone that made her voice difficult to listen to.

Riki, who was following her, spoke with an expressionless face.

“You must’ve been mistaken, Hydra.”

“Is that so~ Hmm~”

The woman named Hydra tilted her head to the side.

It was then.

“...”

Her gaze turned to the spot where Snow was hiding.

“Hmm.”

Her expression became strange.

Once again, she struck out her tongue and wiggled it a few times.

Then she began to walk to the place where Snow was hidden.

“...”

Frey’s expression hardened.

‘Did she notice my divine power?’

Snow’s expression was even more serious.

With her hand on the hilt of her sword, she watched as Hydra walked towards her with anxiety.

“Where are you going, Hydra?”

However, Riki blocked her at the last minute.

Then Hydra tilted her head again.

“I could sense something over there~”

“...my Apostle is over there.”

“Hmm? Really?”

“That’s right. And I have no intentions of showing anyone what my Apostle looks like until the identity of the traitor is revealed.”

Even though Riki’s tone was quite sharp, Hydra still acted in a carefree manner.

“Hmm. Right. That’s right. Lord said so too. The identities of our Apostles should remain hidden.”

It was then.

Hydra suddenly began to giggle hysterically.

“Hehehe! Hehehe!... but it’s so funny.”

“What is funny?”

Only

“In fact, I saw them already. Because I have a lot of eyes...9 times more than you do. So I didn’t miss it~”

Hydra let out another laugh.

“Riki, your Apostle is an Elf? Huh. Come to think of it, the bait that Nozdog lost not so long ago was also an El-”

It was at that moment, that Riki’s expression which had been only a bit embarrassed, sank like a stone in a river.

Then.

Shik.

Hydra’s head flew into the air, and green blood shot up like a fountain.

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It happened so quickly.

They blinked, and Hydra’s head was on the ground.

Had he killed Hydra in one stroke just like he'd killed Indra?

'No.'

It wasn't the same. In fact, these two situations couldn't be more different.

Hydra hadn't been hibernating, and Frey knew how resilient Demigods were.

The sword skill Riki had shown was better than Lucid, but he didn't think it was good enough to kill a Demigod in one strike.

"Kyahahaha!"

As if responding to Frey's doubts, Hydra's voice rang out.

Two heads grew from the stump of her neck. It was a very grotesque sight, but no one present was weak enough to cry out in disgust.

Hydra fluttered around as though she were dancing.

She then made a noise of excitement.

“Now I understand! Riki! It was you! You were the traitor all along! Hehehe! If I tell Ananta, he will surely reward me greatly!”

Hydra’s hair quickly began falling out.

No, it wasn’t just her hair.

Snakes began crawling on the ground at a tremendous speed.

Then Riki swung his sword again.

Shuk.

Green blood splattered once again as the snakes were all precisely cut into six pieces.

Chiiik.

The blood corroded the ground.

Did her blood contain strong acid?

As Frey noticed this fact, Riki spoke with a stiff expression.

“...I missed two.”

As he stepped out of his hiding spot, Frey asked.

“What do you mean?”

“She split her lives and ran.”

“Split her lives?”

It was not an easy concept to understand.

Riki spoke quickly as he explained.

“Hydra has 9 lives. This means that she will not completely die unless she has died nine times. In addition, she has a lot of annoying skills that make it possible for her to divide and scatter her lives like she just did.”

Frey couldn't understand much, but he understood that it made her extremely dangerous.

Riki's expression also hinted at the urgency of the situation.

“Then this is not the time to be explaining like this, is it? We need to start tracking her as soon as possible...”

Frey agreed with Snow.

But Riki’s expression remained the same.

“Although, it’s just two of them. They scattered in two different directions. Chasing one means inevitably losing the other.”

“Even with your abilities?”

Frey asked with a disbelieving expression.

At first glance, it might have seemed impossible to catch the two Hydras that had gone in opposite directions; however, the one standing in front of him was an Apocalypse, one of the five who stood above the normal Demigods.

Riki sighed.

“If I could use all of my power, I’d naturally be able to kill her even if she scattered in four directions instead of two. But I’m currently putting a great deal of effort into maintaining the barrier currently surrounding this forest.”

He was talking about the barrier that Frey had felt before.

“Then can’t you release it and hunt Hydra down?”

“The moment that happens, Hydra will immediately tell the other Demigods everything she learned here. The barrier is blocking any communication to the outside.”

Only then did Frey truly understand the urgency of the situation.

If the other Demigods learned that Riki was the traitor, everything would be over.

“Then what will we do?”

“I’ll take one. As for the other one...”

“We’ll handle it.”

He hadn’t said it first because he understood what Riki intended to do.

Riki’s expression stiffened a bit.

“Can you do it?”

“It’s not about whether we can or not. If we let Hydra go, we all know what will happen.”

“That’s true.”

“Then we have no choice.”

“...I know. We don’t have time, so let’s move out immediately.”

Riki looked at the forest around them.

“My barrier covers this entire forest. However, that means we have to kill Hydra before she can leave.”

“Understood.”

“...The power of the snake clone would be only about 1/9th of Hydra’s full power, but that doesn’t mean she can be underestimated.”

That made sense.

Originally, Frey would not have accepted such a request. It was not easy to deal with a Demigod even when he had been at his peak.

But this time was different.

Frey felt calm confidence fill his heart.

'...the first time I defeated a Demigod, I was also 8 stars.'

However, now was not the time for him to dwell on such thoughts.

"Snow, we'll have to hurry."

"Understood."

"You go east. I'll handle the one in the west. She stopped controlling her power, so you shouldn't have any trouble tracking her, right?"

"Of course."

"Then I wish you luck."

Just as Riki was about to leave, Frey called out to him.

“Wait. What exactly is Hydra’s power? I don’t think that it’s just the extra lives you just told me about.”

“It’s tenacious vitality, regeneration and poison. Stay away from the green liquid that she spits. You guys wouldn’t be able to withstand it.”

“...green liquid.”

It seemed that her blood was also like that.

“Fire is her weakness. If you can manage to cast powerful fire spells, you will have an advantage.”

Riki said this as though it was insignificant, but the information was actually extremely useful for Frey.

Originally, these were all things he would only earn after entering a life and death struggle with the Demigod, but now, he had been given such information without any risk.

‘I definitely can’t break this alliance with Riki just yet.’

He still had yet to fully grasp his ally’s true intentions, but at least for now, it was worth it to stick with him.

Shik.

Riki's figure disappeared, and Frey left with Snow.

As Riki had said, Hydra no longer paid attention to controlling her enormous strength, which made her easy to track.

It wasn't long before they caught up.

"Hehehehe! Hihihihihhi!"

She was showing off her tremendous strength, her aura rising fiercely. Trees were uprooted and thrown out of the way as they collided with her body. Even so, her speed did not decrease at all as she swept forth like a typhoon hellbent on destroying the forest.

'It doesn't seem like she's trying to run away.'

Frey felt that the situation might've been a little dangerous as he turned to Snow.

"Let's split up and attack. There is no plan. We will attack while assisting each other."

This was more efficient than trying to create a detailed plan on the spot. Both Frey and Snow had a lot of practical experience so they could fully understand each other's intentions.

"Understood."

Snow then shifted her trajectory, moving to the side.

As he kept following Hydra, Frey decided his next move.

'If fire magic is her weakness...'

It may have a much greater effect than they expected.

A resolute glint flickered in Frey's eyes.

He had no intention of holding back just because they were surrounded by trees. Even if the entire forest was to turn to ashes, it would still be worth it if they were able to get rid of Hydra.

"Lava Blast."

He didn't even need to chant.

As soon as Frey said those words, a Lava Blast, which was the 7 star spell with the highest destructive capability, appeared immediately.

It had been powerful enough to destroy the lightning barrier that Lukes had been proud of!

However, the Lava Blast that he cast this time was much more powerful than it was at that time, despite the fact that he'd omitted the chant.

Kaboom!

The spell struck Hydra's side.

Despite this, Frey did not lower his guard, and instead, he paid close attention to the cloud of smoke created by the explosion.

"Hihihi!"

With her signature giggle, Hydra's body shot into the sky. One of her arms hung loosely while covered in horrible burns, but Hydra simply ripped it off with her other hand.

It was a similar situation to what happened with Lukes. At that time, Frey's Lava Blast had also injured Lukes' arm.

The difference, however, was the attitude.

Hydra didn't show any reaction even after discarding one of her own arms.

Taht.

Snow shot up after her. Her speed at that moment was so fast that she appeared to be twice as fast as Ivan.

And the speed with which she swung her sword was even greater.

Shiik.

Hydra's head was cut off.

Nevertheless, her body was still filled with overflowing vitality.

“Hehe!”

She turned in the air while letting out a laugh, causing her green blood to splash towards Snow.

‘The green liquid is dangerous.’

She remembered Riki's advice at that moment, but because she was in the air, there was no way for her to evade it.

She tried to minimize the damage as much as possible with the one handed shield in her other hand.

Psshk!

Nevertheless, Frey's barrier was much faster.

The barrier didn't last very long. After blocking the blood for a few breaths, it shattered.

However, it was enough.

Snow hurriedly dived away from the blood.

Kuurk!

The heads sprouted from Hydra's neck, and her severed head flew toward Snow at a tremendous speed.

The two heads sprouting from the severed neck was something she'd witnessed before, so Snow had raised her sword in preparation.

Kwak!

"Ugghh...!"

Snow grit her teeth.

The blade of her sword creaked, and more than that, her joints screamed in protest. But if she reduced her strength for even a moment, there would be a new Hydra head sized hole in her body.

Her body smashed through several large trees, creating a large scar in the ground.

“Ahhhhhp!”

Snow desperately hit Hydra’s head into the sky. (YH: home run?)

Hydra, who was still in the air, spoke with a laugh.

“You’re pretty good! Then it’s my turn...”

And with that, she began to vomit something.

“Urrk!”

“...!”

From her mouth came snakes with bright green scales. These snakes rained down from the sky, which would cause one to wonder how so many snakes managed to fit in such a small body.

Snow made an expression of disgust.

“You are so disgusting.” (TL: agreed, bleh)

This was very tricky.

Her vitality was beyond imagination. Before Snow realised, her arm had also regenerated.

If this was just 1/9th of her power, just how strong was this Demigod at full strength?

Snow had never doubted herself, but now, she couldn't help but feel something deep within.

‘I just need to stall for time. Frey will use that chance to cast a powerful spell.’

They would need to burn her entire body all at once. Otherwise, they would never be able to kill this ridiculous monster.

But now wasn't the time to ponder.

She had to delay this Demigod as long as possible, even if it meant using Riki's divine power.

It was then.

“...huh?”

Suddenly Snow looked up at the sky, wondering why there were suddenly two suns floating there.

Of course, that wasn't the case. She soon heard Frey's telepathy.

[Snow, get back.]

Snow didn't think too deeply and retreated hurriedly.

After confirming that Snow was out of range, Frey muttered while looking at Hydra.

His first 8 star spell.

“Another Sun.” (TL: literally)

“...h-, huh?”

Hydra looked back with a blank expression.

‘I see the sun... but why are there two?’

That was Hydra's last thought. Shortly thereafter, her entire body became black ash before scattering in the wind.

Frey didn't let his guard down against Demigods because he knew better than anyone how strong they were.

He had had countless experiences of someone he thought dead jumping up and attacking him again.

That was why he didn't lower his guard until he was certain that Hydra had definitely been killed by the spell.

8 star Magic, Torkunta's heart and the Staff of the Great Sage.

The synergy created by these three elements created an effect that not even Frey had been able to expect.

No. It wasn't just that.

Originally, it should have taken many times longer to cast an 8 star spell. Yet Frey had been able to drastically reduce that time.

'Ultra-high speed computation gained from my years in the Abyss. I'm finally able to use it.'

In that space completely cut off from the outside world, the only thing that Frey had the freedom to do was think.

He thought a great deal to maintain his sense of self. However, the only thing that he'd been able to think about was Magical Science.

Frey thought and thought and thought.

It was strange to call it hard work.

Killing time.

Right, it was more accurate to call it killing time.

Nevertheless, one of the by-products of this endeavour to kill time was an ultra fast computational ability.

As he was now, he could do the calculations for dozens of magical formulas at the same time. (TL: I was wondering why he was so fast at that and didn't want to put it under the banner 'well he's the great mage'...now it makes sense)

Regardless of how complex it was, if he was to calculate it hundreds or even thousands of times, eventually he would figure it out.

This meant that even the most complicated large-scale spells could be created instantaneously.

Only

Omitting the chant required a tremendous amount of mana, many times more than if one was to chant the spell, but even that could be disregarded.

Frey's current mana capacity was already double of when he was Lukas.

And when he reached 8 stars, the Ultra-high speed computation that had only been possible in his thoughts had become a reality.

In a sense, this was much more important than any elixir he had taken so far or the Staff of the Great Sage.

Frey realised.

At that moment, he was already stronger than the '8 stars Lukas' of the past.

And also that it wasn't impossible for him to deal with Demigods.

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Snow was shell-shocked.

The scene she'd just witnessed was too unbelievable.

Half of the forest, which had completely filled her sight just moments ago, had become ash in the blink of an eye.

She didn't even see them burn.

Her gaze then turned to Frey.

Even when the Demigod had been killed in an instant and most of the surrounding forest had been turned to ash, he hadn't even broken a sweat.

'Doesn't that mean that he can cast more spells like that?'

When she heard Syax's explanation, she'd thought he was amazing. However, the prowess he was displaying now far exceeded her expectations.

He was like a natural disaster that a human would be powerless against.

Shuk.

Riki appeared beside her.

It was obvious that he'd hurried over as his clothes were messy, and sweat was dripping down his face.

Riki's expression stiffened as he looked around.

He clearly saw the ashes on the ground and felt the traces of Hydra's aura lingering in the air. The result of their battle was already clear for him to see.

His gaze also turned to Frey.

"Did you kill Hydra?"

"I did."

"..."

After hearing Frey's response, Riki's expression became strange.

He paused for a moment before speaking in a weak voice.

"...I see. So my worry was unnecessary in the first place."

He then raised his head, and Frey felt his gaze had become more serious.

"First, let's return to the hut."

Frey and Snow nodded.

The middle of the burnt scene, where ash was blowing constantly, was not a suitable place to have a conversation.

“Is Hydra completely dead now?”

“That’s right.”

Riki nodded, but his expression didn’t improve.

Although it was an unexpected situation, since they’d managed to deal with one Demigod, didn’t that mean they turned a crisis into an opportunity?

Snow wanted to ask this question, but his expression made it hard for her to say anything.

Soon after, they arrived at the hut.

Perhaps it was because he returned to his own territory, but Riki’s expression relaxed a little.

Frey observed him for a moment before asking.

“Why did a Demigod come to you?”

“There wasn’t a specific reason. Hydra stops by from time to time.”

They had arrived at the worst possible time. Had it been earlier or later, he could have prepared properly.

Riki let out a heavy sigh.

“The fact that Hydra died won’t be hidden for long. Ananta will soon learn of it.”

“Ananta?”

“He is one of the Apocalypses. He uses the power of poison.”

“...”

So that old man’s name was Ananta.

He had met him a few times when he was Lukas, but he hadn’t known his name.

Snow asked with a strange voice.

“Then what do we do now?”

“If Hydra told Ananta that she was coming to visit me... then her death would make him suspicious.”

“...”

“This would make attending the meeting an act of suicide. I’ll have to investigate some things.”

Riki’s expression became even more serious.

“Time is running out. Frey, have you made up your mind?”

There was no need to say anything since he was already determined.

Frey simply took out the vial of the elixir containing Indra’s lightning and put it on the table.

“I’ll do it.”

Divine power.

The transcendent power used by Demigods.

To learn more about it, he decided to learn how to control this energy.

It was an old saying, but if he knew his enemies and he knew himself, wouldn't victory be assured?

'The harmony of mana and divine power.'

The words that Riki said resounded in his head.

Maybe he would be able to find a clue to defeat Lord.

It was impossible for him to defeat him. This was something that Frey had realised 4,000 years ago.

Because of that, he had tried to learn as much as he could in this life, after he'd gained Frey's body.

Warrior King's Fist, Spiritism, Alchemy and even making contracts with Devils.

He learned everything regardless of the type.

And now, for Frey, the divine power would just be another way to increase his own power.

He had no intention of rejecting a method to become stronger because the power of the Demigods had always made him uncomfortable.

“Good. Then absorb the energy in that lightning elixir right away.”

Frey stared at the lightning elixir in his hand.

“Can I really drink this?”

“You can.”

Pijik.

The pale lightning swirling within the bottle made him think the elixir wasn't edible.

Perhaps he would just be electrocuted.

Riki spoke to the suspicious Frey.

“It will probably sting a bit.”

“...”

...The worst case scenario would be it colliding with his mana, which was something that Frey believed he could handle.

Frey opened the bottle and took a deep breath before putting the vial to his lips.

Gulp.

“...!”

Krrrng!

He immediately felt dizzy.

The shock of the lightning racing down his spine made his mind completely blank, and he almost lost consciousness.

“Kuk...”

“Because it is divine power, it might collide with your mana at first. It would be best to not forcefully separate them. Just let it run its course.”

He heard Riki’s cold voice.

Frey desperately controlled his roaring mana.

‘So this is divine power...’

He had a rough idea of how the energy felt.

However, feeling it running through his veins allowed him to realise just how explosively powerful this energy really was.

Before, he had only seen it from afar, but now, it was like he was touching, tasting and smelling it.

At that moment, Frey truly began to understand just what ‘divine power’ truly was.

“Gather the power into your heart. It’s more efficient to store it there.”

After a while, the divine energy, which had been running around like a mad bull, slowly began changing direction, following Frey’s guidance.

Snow, who was watching from the side, couldn’t help but make a shocked expression.

Frey’s body had only just received divine power for the first time. More importantly, he had to control his mana to stop it from reacting.

Nevertheless, the skill with which Frey was handling the divine power was completely incomparable to her when she took it in for the first time.

Riki's eyes shined brightly.

'...a natural talent.'

No.

Divine power was not something that could be controlled with just talent.

This was only possible because Frey's body had the Blake family's blood in its veins.

His body had been optimised to handle divine power.

'Isn't this creating a being that can't be contained?'

A thought suddenly occurred to Riki.

He didn't know much about the inner details of the experiment being conducted in the Blake family. He only knew that it was possible for mana and divine power to coexist in their bodies.

However, Leyrin had said that the current rate of synchronisation was not too good.

[It will get higher and higher in the future generations! If we wait a few hundred years, we'll get a race better than any other mortal!]

Leyrin had laughed loudly at the time.

Riki looked at Frey.

Divine power and mana, two energies that could not coexist naturally, were now gently embracing each other as though they were lovers.

It could even be called fusion.

The vortex that had silently formed around Frey slowly subsided, and Frey's body, which had seemed on the verge of collapse, stabilised.

When he saw this, Riki laughed in a way that he hadn't for decades.

'...hundreds of years?'

How long had he been waiting?

Frey slowly opened his eyes.

Pijiik.

Lightning wriggled around his head.

Riki observed this calmly for a moment before speaking.

“It seems it was successful.”

Of course, this was only the beginning.

It was natural for him to be able to use divine power since he was a descendant of the Blake family.

His synchronisation rate was much higher than Riki had expected, but what really mattered was what would happen from that point on.

There were three months left until the meeting. During that time, Frey would need to learn how to use his divine power to some extent.

At least to a level where no one would be suspicious of his disguise as an Apostle.

“You’ll be really busy starting today. It’ll be difficult, and you will feel that time is passing quickly.”

Riki looked at Frey before saying.

“Are you still going with me?”

Frey nodded.

Although Riki had asked him something, he couldn’t even open his mouth.

...His tongue was paralysed, and he couldn’t speak.

* * *

‘Time will pass quickly.’

Riki was right.

Time flew by in the blink of an eye.

A bolt of lightning from Frey’s hand upturned the ground.

He was running, his robe flapping wildly in the wind.

His sharp gaze turned towards Riki, who was standing there with his hands at his sides.

Pijiik

Once again, lightning shot out from his fingertips.

Riki had just one thought as he looked at the bolt of lightning that twisted like a spiderweb.

'Isn't his power higher than a normal Apostle?'

He gently swung his sheath.

Chain Lightning.

This was the name that Frey had given to the fierce bolt of lightning that looked like a spiderweb.

At the same time, Frey jumped into the air.

When he stretched his arms up to the sky, Indra's divine power, which filled his body, shot into the sky.

Dark clouds formed instantly.

Boom!

Then, without warning, a lightning bolt struck down towards Riki.

Shik.

However, Riki's sword cut through the lightning at an even greater speed.

"..."

"..."

Silence fell upon the clearing.

At first glance, it would appear that Riki had cut Frey's momentum, but instead, a deep smile blossomed on Frey's face instead.

"You drew your sword."

“...right.”

On the other hand, Riki’s expression was not happy.

He’d drawn his sword, so he had to admit it.

The man before him had been learning to control divine power for about two months.

‘It’s not perfect. There are still a few shortcomings.’

However, that wasn’t very important.

What was truly important was the fact that it had only been two months since Frey had accepted divine power into his body.

He’d learned how to utilise his new power at a tremendous speed.

Snow was a true genius who only needed to be instructed once to learn something.

But Frey’s talent was much more than that.

‘No.’

It could no longer be considered as just talent.

Frey's power was already close to exceeding that of an Apostle.

Riki could only guess the reason.

'Maybe it's because Indra's dead.'

In essence, Apostles borrowed divine power from the Demigods and utilised that power.

However, Indra, who was the owner of the divine power of lightning, was already dead.

That was the reason why Frey's lightning power was uninhibited and was able to grow to such an extent with training.

At that point, it might be an advantage or a disadvantage.

What would happen if they created fake Apostles using the energy extracted from dead Demigods?

This was something that not even the research fanatic, Leyrin, would have been able to research.

In the first place, the death of a Demigod was something that would only happen once every few hundred years or so.

Riki concealed his thoughts and said.

“I drew my sword today, so as promised, it will be the last day of training.”

To reach the level where he would be forced to draw his sword. That had been the minimum requirement.

Even if Riki hadn't been serious, this was still an incredibly hard thing to do.

At least, it was not something that most Apostles would be able to accomplish.

“What about the situation with Hydra?”

“It seems no one has noticed anything yet. We'll attend the meeting as planned.”

“Where is it being held?”

“The Luanoble Kingdom.”

“Hmmm.”

It was the country of Knights and Sonia Aquarid's homeland.

It was quite far from the Great Reynolds Forest.

"Did you think of a means of transportation?"

"I'm thinking about using Warp Stones."

"...I didn't think Demigods would use Warp Stones as well."

He knew that Riki had a different way of getting from one location to another.

When he killed Indra, he'd suddenly appeared and disappeared. However, Riki shook his head as he realised Frey's thoughts.

"Space-time movement is not an option. There are many conditions to using it, and the human body wouldn't be able to withstand it. There's a high probability that at the end of the movement, you would become a pool of blood."

Over the past two months, Frey had become accustomed to Riki's way of speaking, which often included harsh words.

Thanks to this, Frey's expression didn't change much as he heard that.

“There’s a Warp Stone in Pillat. If we use it, we’ll be able to arrive in Luanoble in no time. But we have a lot more time than I expected.”

It wouldn’t even take them a week to get to Pillat. And even if they were late, they could just use the Warp spell to arrive nearby.

As though he suddenly remembered something, Riki turned and said.

“You shouldn’t use mana from now on.”

“Why?”

“Because you have to completely erase the reverberation that mana gives off.”

The mana reverberation.

At 8 stars, it was possible for him to appear no different from the general public, but it wasn’t perfect.

The possibility of Lord sensing his mana was very high.

And if he didn’t use mana for a month, the reverberation would fade by a large amount, if not completely.

“If you use your divine power, you should be able to trick Lord’s senses.”

This meant that he had to use divine power as much as possible.

Frey nodded.

“Understood.”

“Shall we go then?”

“...right now?”

“Why? Is there a reason not to?”

When he heard Riki’s words, Frey pondered for a moment before shaking his head.

“No.”

He felt a little bad for not saying goodbye to Snow, Camille and Syax, but they were all busy anyway.

Snow helped Frey learn to control his divine power for the first month before she had to return to deal with her overdue work, and Syax was busy helping rebuild the village.

Camille also had her hands full with the Dark Elf youths she was leading.

'It's fine. I'll meet them again soon anyway.'

He felt that it wouldn't be long before he met Syax, as well as Snow and Camille, who were a part of the Circle, again.

"Then let's go."

Riki only carried his sword as he turned and began walking away.

Frey also followed him since most of his belongings were in the Subspace bag.

'I never would have imagined that I'd go on a trip with a Demigod.'

If he told the Lukas from 4,000 years ago that this would happen, he would have laughed in his own face.

Frey gave a wry smile as he followed Riki.

There was very little conversation as they walked through the woods.

Frey didn't have much of a chatty personality, nor did he really want to have any real conversation with Riki.

Riki was also the type who only spoke when absolutely necessary.

However, their comfortable silence was soon destroyed.

"Halt!"

"Kuhuhu!"

A group of men stepped out from behind the trees.

There were about twenty armed men, and greed was clearly visible on their faces.

Thanks to that, it was easy to identify them.

'Bandits.'

They were dressed in shabby clothes and didn't appear to be very strong.

From what Frey could see, even the most common mercenaries would be able to defeat them easily.

They were probably a group of bandits who specialised in terrorising the merchants who traded with the elves.

Frey's expression became strange.

Riki also looked at them with slight confusion.

"Can we help you with something?"

"Of course you can. That's why we stopped you."

"Boss! Doesn't the silver-haired one look pretty good for a man?"

"Kukuku! If we sell him to a male brothel after we're done playing with him, we'd probably make a lot of money!" (TL: *gag*)

"That one has a nice sword. I call dibs."

"..."

Frey was dumbfounded.

This couldn't even be called a comedy.

These poor men couldn't even dream of the fact that the silver-haired man in front of them was one of the strongest beings in the world.

A hairy man standing at the front let out a cruel laugh, not even imagining the terror he was about to face.

"If you do everything I say, this old man will allow you to keep your puny lives."

"...you mean my life?"

Riki tilted his head as if he didn't understand.

"Do you really mean that?"

"Does our boss look like someone who would mess around?"

Shwing.

One of the bandits drew his sword with a twisted expression on his face.

Riki's expression became more suspicious.

The hairy man laughed loudly.

"Be careful. The silver-haired one is mine. I don't care if you kill the other one." (TL: poor Frey)

"Yeah!"

"You heard that, didn't you? Don't resist too much. We wouldn't want you to get hurt."

Frey looked at Riki and folded his arms.

Only

"You get a penalty for killing humans, right? Should I take care of this?"

But Riki shook his head expressionlessly.

"No."

He drew his sword quietly.

Chuk.

“I just have to not kill them.”

Season 1 Chapter 94: Meeting (1)

Five people from all walks of life were gathered in a room.

While only one candle lit up the interior, a blonde girl, who didn't seem to fit into the heavy setting, opened her mouth.

“Is it true that the ‘Sword’ has made a move?”

Her voice was filled with irritation.

Shepard Jun, the middle aged man who was being glared at by the girl, could only give a bitter smile.

“He removed the barrier he placed in the forest. Trust me, Rounder Sheryl, I'll bet my reputation on it.”

If anyone were to see this sight, they would have doubted their own eyes.

Shepard Jun, master of a magic tower and head of the renowned Jun family, was acting so differentially to a young girl?

Was he really the one who did not dare to meet this girl's gaze and continuously avoided it?

However, there was no one in the Circle who would find fault with Shepard Jun's actions when they heard his words.

Rounder Sheryl!

This blonde girl was none other than the second in command of the Phisfounder Armlets, one of the Three Great Circles.

On the surface, she appeared to be a blonde girl who did not exceed twenty years, but in fact, she was actually a vampire who had already lived for hundreds of years.

Sheryl smiled slightly and lifted her chin.

"Where is he headed?"

"Pillat, the city we are in currently. That's why I called you."

"Hmph..."

Sheryl's sharp crimson eyes swept across the people in the room.

Most of the people who received her gaze seemed to feel uncomfortable as they hurriedly avoided meeting it.

She licked her lips once before saying.

"Well, it makes sense that you'd call for me. After all, you're nothing but a baby chick in front of an Apocalypse."

Crunch.

She gritted her teeth with an angry expression.

"But aren't you forgetting the battle to subjugate Nozdog? The Trowman Rings, who were on par with the Three Great Circles, was almost completely annihilated in one battle. At that time, we only obtained one piece of information, and that was the fact that that monster had the power of death."

Hundreds, almost thousands of people died just to obtain that one piece of information.

She knew the five of them were very talented. Even Sheryl alone had centuries worth of knowledge and experience.

As long as she had a good enough plan, she could even take down a small fortress by herself.

But the opponent this time was a Demigod. Transcendent beings who could destroy a city or even a country by themselves, depending on their power.

Shepard shook his head with a determined expression.

“Of course, I didn’t call you here to fight.”

“Then?”

“We’re thinking of tailing him.”

It was a grey-haired man who said that.

Sheryl frowned.

“You... what was your name again?”

“Heinz Blake, Rounder Sheryl.”

“The youngest executive in the Strow Necklaces? I’ve heard the rumors.”

Nevertheless, she still looked at him with her sharp gaze.

“What can we get from following him?”

“We received information that the Demigods are gathering in one place.”

Shepard was the one who spoke, but Sheryl didn’t take her eyes off of Heinz.

“From which source?”

“Me.”

Once again, it was Heinz who spoke.

Sheryl’s expression became strange.

“Is it information from the Blake family?”

“I overheard a conversation between Isaka Blake and a Demigod.”

“...”

The fact that Isaka, the head of the Blake family, had a certain relationship with the Demigods was something that was an open secret among the main figures of the Circle.

And Heinz was the one to report it.

From then on, he kept on giving the Circle information that couldn't be obtained by normal means.

Therefore, the information that Heinz brought was highly reliable.

Nevertheless, there were still many in the Circle who doubted him.

Heinz's expression remained calm even when he knew that she might be one of them.

He didn't look like he was lying.

'He's a strange kid.'

That was the judgement Sheryl reached for Heinz.

Even with her experience, it was difficult for her to see through him.

Either he was really telling the truth, or he was really good at lying.

“The meeting will be somewhere in Luanoble, but I don’t know the exact location.”

“Luanoble? That’s the exact opposite direction from here.”

“I think he wants to use the Warp Stone here.”

For a moment silence fell in the room.

“A Demigod using a Warp Stone? Don’t they have their own form of transportation? I’ve never heard of them entering a human city just to use a Warp Stone.”

This time, it was Dugenjar, a force honor of the Phisfounder Armlets.

Shepard’s gaze turned to him.

‘He’s changed a lot.’

Dugenjar was a Wizard who was widely rumored to have a personality that didn’t quite match his ability.

Although he was a 7 star Archmage, his stubbornness and narrowmindedness made him unpopular among the other executives of the Three Great Circles.

However, this man had suddenly changed a few months ago.

It was said that he no longer argued about pointless things, and his reputation in the Circle had been climbing since then.

Shepard had been disbelieving at first, but after spending these few days together and conversing with him, he realised he really had changed.

He didn't know what happened, but it seemed Dugenjar had come to some kind of realisation.

Then a Knight with a thick mustache tapped on his armor.

"That's not the problem. This is a very serious situation. Can we be sure that monster doesn't intend to just destroy Pillat completely?"

He was an executive from the Lucid Swords named Jerome Berner.

Heinz shook his head.

"If that was his purpose, he would not have moved so slowly and allowed us to catch onto his trail."

"It could be just a whim. Nothing is more pointless than trying to rationalise a Demigod's behaviour."

“That’s true, but Pillat has the Blake family. The Demigods have a relationship with the Blake family, so I don’t think they will attack this place.”

“...”

Jerome didn’t say anything further because there was nothing to refute.

Sheryl pressed against her temples before speaking firmly.

“Alright. I think I understand. He’s coming to Pillat just to use the Warp Stone to head to Luanoble. Then he will attend the Demigod meeting that’s being held there somewhere. Is that everything?”

“That’s right.”

“Then what can we do with that information?”

Shepard agreed with Sheryl.

Usually, when your enemies congregated in one place, it was the perfect opportunity to strike them down in one blow.

However, their enemies were Demigods.

It would not be possible for them to overwhelm the Demigods when they were congregated together.

To put it bluntly, if dozens of Demigods gathered in one place, the Circle would be unable to do anything even if every member showed up.

Heinz spoke calmly.

“Throughout the long history of the circle, there has never been a case of more than a dozen Demigods gathering. For those arrogant beings to all gather in one place to discuss something, I’m not sure what it could be about, but I’m sure that it would be incredibly important.”

“...so you want to eavesdrop on whatever they are going to talk about.”

“I think it would be worth the risk.”

“...”

Sheryl tapped on her chin.

Certainly... Heinz was right.

It wasn’t just a matter of curiosity.

If there was something that could cause dozens of Demigods to gather, then it would be worth finding out even at the risk of their lives.

“And we don’t have to attack the Demigods directly.”

“Huh?”

“I heard the Apostles will also accompany the Demigods to the meeting.”

“...!”

This information caused a ripple to spread throughout the room.

Sheryl stared at Heinz with wide eyes.

“Are you certain of this information?”

“That’s right.”

“...”

If that were true, the situation would be completely different.

The most effective means that they knew of to hurt a Demigod was to kill their Apostle.

The Circle had not yet figured out what kind of penalty the Demigods faced when their Apostles died, but they knew it caused some form of break in their usual operation.

And the people in this room were all powerful enough to handle even the most skilled Apostles.

‘Even if we only got a few of them, it would be a great harvest.’

Everyone seemed to turn and look at Sheryl at the same time.

This was because she was the most authoritative among those gathered.

Only

Shepard and Heinz were the ones who called this meeting, but in order to carry out such an emergency operation, Rounder Sheryl’s presence was indispensable.

They were powerless in this regard.

“Good.”

Sheryl's lips slowly parted.

"First, we'll stay in Pillat and monitor the situation. And after the Sword makes his move, we'll make ours. Understood?"

Everyone nodded with serious expressions.

Season 1 Chapter 95: Meeting (2)

Frey looked on.

It happened in an instant.

Riki seemed to simply draw his sword before sheathing it again.

"Huh?"

"What are you doing?"

"If you draw your blade, then you should probably cut something. Hm?"

Riki's unusual actions caused the bandits who had been approaching them to pause for a moment.

However, they simply thought he was scared and laughed uproariously.

Tuk tuk tuk.

In the next moment, the arms of all the approaching bandits suddenly fell to the ground simultaneously.

At the same time, blood shot up like a fountain as the bandits experienced pain more terrifying than they could ever imagine.

“Aaaack!”

“M-, my arms!”

It was a beautiful sword stroke.

Even Frey was only able to barely make out the trajectory, and there was no way these weak bandits could've kept up with such speed.

Frey walked up to the hairy man.

He hadn't been overwhelmed by the pain; instead, his eyes were rolling around as he tried to analyze the current situation.

But when he noticed Frey walking over, he immediately pressed his forehead to the ground.

“M-, My Lord! Please spare my life!”

That silver haired man was a monster.

He realised that the man before him was much more powerful than anyone he had ever encountered in all his life.

If he dared run his mouth here he would certainly become a cold corpse in an instant.

“Who are you?”

“W-, we are the Red Evil.”

It was a very tacky name.

Frey thought for a moment before continuing.

“What are you doing here?”

“Th-, that...”

“Speak honestly.”

After saying that, Frey deliberately looked at Riki.

The hairy man then spoke quickly, his voice filled with nervousness, fear and pain.

“W-, we came to steal goods.”

“From whom?”

“T-, the merchants who trade with the Elves in the Great Forest...”

“How many times have you done this?”

“...”

When Frey’s eyes sharpened, the hairy man hurriedly answered.

“A-, about ten times.”

Ten times.

It seemed they were quite experienced.

“You must have killed everyone during those robberies.”

“Th-, that...”

He didn't need to hear more.

Lightning shot out from Frey's hand.

Pajik.

The bodies of the bandits were consumed by the lightning in an instant.

They died without even being able to let out a proper scream.

As the scent of charred meat filled the area, Riki looked down at the bodies and said with a calm tone.

“That was unexpected.”

“What do you mean?”

“I didn’t think you would kill humans so easily.”

“You must have thought I was a good-natured man.”

That was a big misunderstanding.

And Riki had misunderstood something else.

The trash that he just killed was not human.

Riki looked at Frey’s face for a moment before saying.

“You humans are quite interesting.”

“What?”

He hadn’t expected that statement.

Frey looked at him like he thought he was making a joke. However, Riki’s expression didn’t change.

In the first place, he wasn’t the type to make jokes.

“Because you are more three dimensional than any other intelligent race I’ve ever encountered.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean what I said.”

Riki continued walking along the path, and Frey followed him after a brief moment of hesitation.

A Demigod who was interested in humans.

He wasn’t sure he could quite believe it.

* * *

They bypassed the inspection at the gate easily since Riki already had sufficient identification.

The moment he pulled out the mercenary card with his distinctive lack of expression, Frey became speechless for a while.

“D class Mercenary Riki. Is that correct?”

“That’s right.”

It was crazy.

He hadn't even bothered to create a pseudonym.

If the guards hadn't been in front of them at that moment, Frey would have definitely looked at Riki with a strange expression.

"And you?"

"...Kain Rixton, A class Mercenary."

"Hmm. You've been verified. Welcome to Pillat."

The guards nodded before returning their cards, and they easily entered the city.

Looking back at the gates, Frey couldn't help but say.

"I didn't think you'd even have a mercenary card."

"It has quite a few uses, so I got one in passing."

Did that mean that he travelled around the continent often?

He lived in a hut in the middle of a forest, so Frey had thought he lived a hermit life away from the rest of the world.

'...well, if he hides his true strength, no one would be able to realise who he is.'

At least, they wouldn't be able to realise unless Riki himself decided to reveal his power.

However, Frey could clearly feel the enormous power that was circulating around Riki's body at all times.

Was it because he'd received divine power?

'It will be nice to know whenever I encounter a Demigod.'

As Frey had this thought, they headed to the Warp Stone in the city's center.

When they asked the guards about the schedule, they learned that there would be a trip to Luanoble in three days.

"Three days. Why aren't there any today or tomorrow?"

“Isn’t it a foreign destination? Besides, three days isn’t that long. Instead, you guys should consider yourselves lucky.”

“Lucky?”

“The only reason you can go directly to Luanoble without any special procedures is because of your statuses as Mercenaries. That’s because your job requires such freedom in order to travel all over the continent with merchants. If it was anyone else, they’d have to fill out many documents and undergo a strict process. And if you think this is slow, that process is even slower; it can take a few weeks rather than just three days.”

“...”

The guard spoke while waving his hands at them.

In other words, Eizek’s advice that it would be better to obtain Mercenary status was indeed correct.

They had no choice but to stay at an inn for three days.

That night, after dinner, Riki looked up and said.

“I’m going to the Blake family home.”

“What?”

It was an unexpected statement.

Frey turned his gaze to Riki, asking him to continue.

“They already know that I am in the city. If I don’t go to them first, they will come to me. They might not be suspicious of us, but it would be better if they didn’t encounter you here.”

Then, after a moment of silence, he added.

“If I’m lucky, I might be able to learn more about Leyrin’s experient or even a clue to the identity of her Apostle.”

Leyrin, one of the Apocalypses like Riki.

At the same time, she was the figure that controlled the Blake family from the shadows.

“A clue to the Apostle’s identity?”

“It’s just a speculation, but I believe that Leyrin’s Apostle is likely to be a member of the Blake family. The one with the highest probability is the family head, Isaka Blake.”

Isaka Blake, the Tower Master of the 6th Magic Tower, the current head of the Blake family and Frey’s father.

'The Circle would never even imagine the possibility of him being an Apostle.'

Mana and divine power could not coexist, and Isaka Blake was one of the strongest Archmages in the empire.

If Frey hadn't learned that vital piece of information from Riki, he would have also had trouble believing Isaka was an Apostle.

At best, he would have only assumed that he had succumbed to the Demigods' temptation.

But it was different now.

He knew that the Blake family was just an experiment designed by the Demigods and that it was possible to use both divine power and mana as long as one was a descendant of the family.

For this reason, he did not doubt Riki's assumption that the head of the Blake family was the Apostle of Leyrin, who was in charge of the experiment.

Riki got up from his seat, and it seemed that he had decided to head to the Blake family immediately.

He stopped as he was about to open the door and turned back to Frey.

"It might be unnecessary, but I'll tell you anyway."

“Huh?”

“There’s a tail clinging to us.”

Frey’s expression stiffened.

Tail.

He clearly understood what that meant.

They were being followed or watched.

“It seems that the one watching us is a Contractor.” (TL: should I change to ‘summoner’?)

“A Contractor?”

They hadn’t used magic, which made the fact that Frey didn’t notice understandable.

“Is it the Circle?”

“There’s a high probability of that. There have always been a few people following me, even when I was in the forest. They are probably trying to figure out the situation since I removed my barrier and came here. They should at least be executives.”

“...”

“They should have already confirmed that I have a companion. Even if I go to the Blake family, the watchers will not go away. In fact, they might even use the opportunity to approach you.”

Frey didn’t want to stand on the other side of the Circle. Things were getting troublesome.

Frey frowned while Riki spoke in his usual calm tone.

“I can kill them.”

“What?”

“Aren’t you worried they will attack you?”

“...didn’t you say that you are punished by god for killing mortals?”

“That doesn’t matter since it would require hundreds of kills for me to really feel anything. And unlike that trash from the forest, executives from the Circle are worth having me draw my sword.”

Frey noticed the subtle tone in Riki's voice.

If he agreed, the man in front of him would really kill all of the Circle executives monitoring them.

"No. I want to assess the situation first."

"Alright. Be careful."

With those blunt words, Riki left the room.

Frey sighed.

He was truly a tricky man to deal with.

Although he was listening to his opinion at the moment, Frey could not guarantee that he would continue to do so.

Only

Riki's power was too dangerous to handle.

After he began using divine power, Frey had felt this fact even more clearly.

'That's why this is even more troublesome since I can't break our alliance just yet.'

At least, if he knew the reason why he betrayed the Demigods, Frey felt that he would be able to trust Riki more.

However, he never said a word about it, which caused Frey's doubts and suspicions to become even more pronounced.

Frey shook his head.

It wasn't something he would be able to figure out even if he thought about it all night.

Season 1 Chapter 96: Meeting (3)

"It appears the Demigod is heading toward the Blake family's residence."

"I will handle the surveillance."

As Heinz said this, he glanced at Sheryl as though to seek information.

There was no reason for her to refuse.

Heinz's entrances and exits would draw the least attention in the Blake family's residence.

“Then we’ll find out about the man who was with the Demigod.”

“I’ve already investigated his identity.”

Jerome was a little surprised by Shepard’s words

“Already?”

“It wasn’t hard. I simply asked the guard who inspected them what form of identification they presented. They entered the city as Mercenaries.”

“Mercenaries, huh. Definitely one of the easiest identities to fake.”

Dugenjar nodded.

Anyone could become a Mercenary, regardless of status, age or race, as long as they had no criminal record and there was no problem with their skills.

It was a system with many loopholes, but the advantages were so clear that not even the empire could suggest an alternative.

“Their names are Riki and Kain Rixton. When I checked at the Mercenary Guild, they’re a D class Swordsman and an A class Wizard. Riki has no mission records in the last three years, while Kain went missing on a mission two months ago.”

It had only been a few hours since they entered the city, yet he had been able to acquire such detailed information.

As the others looked at Shepard with admiration, Sheryl shook her head firmly.

“There’s no need to investigate further. You won’t discover any vital clues anyway since they are undercover, and if you try to dig further, you might be discovered.”

“Understood.”

Sheryl pondered while rubbing her chin.

“...Kain Rixton.”

If there was any person they could get leads from, it would be with this man who accompanied the Demigod.

Sheryl smiled, revealing the canines that were characteristic of vampires.

“I’ll need to get close to him.

“Do you think that’s a good idea?”

“I’m thinking about using Lilith.”

Shepard’s expression changed when he heard that.

Lilith.

There had been rumors that Sheryl had signed a contract with the Succubus Queen, one of the six Grand Dukes who ruled over the Demon World, but he hadn’t believed them.

“...I know Mongma is good at gathering information, but I’m afraid she’d leave a trace.”

“Lilith is the Succubus Queen. In other words, dreams are something that she can manipulate with ease. So we won’t have to worry about anything.”

Moreover, she would be extremely effective.

Even a man with steel-like willpower, who wouldn’t open his mouth even with the harshest torture or blackmail, wouldn’t be able to last more than a few moments in a dream before he revealed everything he knew.

What was great was that it wouldn’t leave any traces.

The man named Kain would even forget meeting Lilith in his dreams.

“Then I will summon Lilith this very evening. I will inform you of what I learned tomorrow.”

Everyone nodded.

* * *

That evening.

Sheryl entered her room and drew the curtains.

Immediately, the space became pitch black, but she was still able to see since a vampire’s dark vision was excellent.

She bit her index finger slightly. The blood dripped down to the floor before flowing to form a precise summoning circle.

As light began to flow from the circle, Lilith slowly rose up.

She was a woman with a very distinct charm.

She had eyes filled with lust and purple skin that was almost completely revealed by her breathtakingly seductive clothes.

Even a man with an iron will wouldn't help but glance over at her, and when he did, his body would be unable to contain the lust created by her fatal charm.

The room became filled with an atmosphere that would even cause a woman to blush and feel hot even if they were the same sex, but Sheryl did not show any reaction.

She was a vampire. The race that was known for its seduction and charm.

This was why Sheryl was such a good match for Lilith.

If she wasn't a vampire, there was a high probability that she wouldn't have been able to sign the contract.

"Huhu. It's been a while, Sheryl." (TL: why do I get some 'ara, ara' vibes right now?)

"I summoned you because I have a favor to ask."

"Of course, I'll do whatever my cute baby bat wants."

Lilith giggled seductively.

It was clear from her tone that she treated Sheryl like a child, but at the same time, the expression on her face seemed to tell a different story.

Sheryl spoke in a flat tone.

“There’s a man whose dreams I want you to manipulate.”

“Huh? Who?”

“A man staying on the third floor of an inn in the western part of this city. The exact location of his room is...”

After listening to the explanation, Lilith giggled again.

“Understood. Right, what should I ask him?”

“If there really is a meeting between the Demigods and the reason for it.”

“Hmmm... information about the Demigods?”

Lilith’s expression changed slightly, but that was it.

She nodded again with the same coy smile.

“I’ll be right back.”

Sss.

Her figure disappeared.

She became a Sprit Body and went to find Kain.

Sheryl sat in a chair and waited for Lilith to return.

After about thirty minutes, Lilith reappeared.

Sheryl immediately rose from her seat, her expression tinged with anxiety.

“You came back really quickly. What did you learn?”

“...”

“...Lilith?”

Lilith remained silent for a while. Her expression was also quite strange.

She looked at Sheryl for a long time before speaking with the same strange expression.

“...I failed.” (TL: this would have been a perfect cliffhanger if the scene wasn’t so short)

* * *

“You failed? What the hell is that supposed to...”

It wasn’t unreasonable for Sheryl to be so shocked.

The one standing before her was the legendary Succubus Queen, not some ordinary dreamweaver.

She had been contracted to Lilith for hundreds of years and had asked her to do the same thing countless times before, and never once was she met with failure.

“Is that man also a Demigod?”

That idea suddenly came to mind.

After all, it would’ve been impossible for Lilith to infiltrate the dreams of a Demigod, even if she was the Succubus Queen.

But Lilith shook her head.

“No, he was human. Though, I’m not sure if I’d still call him human.”

“Please stop being vague and explain in detail.”

“Umm...”

Lilith’s wings fluttered slightly to show her embarrassment.

“His mental power is ridiculously strong. If a normal mortal is like a wooden fence, then I suppose he is an impregnable wall? It’s the first time I’ve ever encountered one so strong except for Dragons or Demigods.”

Sheryl’s expression became strong.

“And you said he’s human?”

“I’m positive he is.”

“But you’re comparing him to Dragons and Demigods?”

“I cannot properly explain how strong it is without using them as references.”

Lilith grumbled bitterly, but Sheryl was still confused.

Naturally, mental power varied widely depending on the individual, even among humans.

As far as Sheryl knew, the strongest mental power could only be found among two types of individuals.

Wizards and Contractors.

The Contractors who had to make direct contracts with Demons and the Wizards who were required to train their mental power could be considered exceptional among the humans.

However, Lilith had been able to easily penetrate and manipulate the dreams of a 7 star Wizard, as well as a Contractor who had signed a contract with a High class Demon.

"If I try, I could maybe get in, but he smelled quite dangerous, so I decided against it."

"Dangerous smell?"

"I'm sure he's signed a contract with another Grand Duke."

"...what?"

Sheryl's eyebrows rose subconsciously.

"By Grand Duke... do you mean one of the rulers of the Demon World?"

"Do you think I meant a peacock from the human world?"

"..."

A Grand Duke's contractor was working with the Demigods.

If Lilith's words were true, then the situation was much worse than she'd initially imagined.

"Which Grand Duke is it?"

"I don't know. If I'd tried to find out, he would have noticed my presence."

Only

Although Lilith said this calmly, the fact that someone might have been able to notice her in her Spirit Body was already strange in itself.

Sheryl couldn't help but feel that everything was going wrong.

"Hoo..."

It couldn't be helped.

As Lilith said, if they tried to press further, they might've gotten caught, which would cause the situation to change drastically.

For the time being, they had no choice but to watch him while maintaining their distance.

Season 1 Chapter 97: Meeting (4)

There was something that Lilith hadn't realised.

Frey had noticed when her Spirit Body arrived and left.

No, to be precise, someone told him.

[Hmph...]

Standing beside Frey with his arms crossed was none other than Asura, Ruler of the Slaughter Hell.

His appearance was as daunting as ever, but it was strange that his overwhelming aura could not be felt at all.

This was because he had not been summoned directly, and his current form was only an illusion meant for communication.

“I didn’t think you’d be able to contact me from your world.”

[It’s possible because I’m a Grand Duke. It’s impossible for even the best Demons.]

“Do you dislike Lilith?”

[Are you really asking me that? She’s an embarrassment to Grand Dukes like me. She’s a cowardly bitch who’s afraid to even leave her territory in the Demon World. If I met her in person, I’d tear her crotch apart.] (TL:...tmi)

Asura’s voice was dripping with malice.

He slowly turned his head to look at Frey.

[Anyway, be careful. I don’t think you need to worry with your mental power, but at least for now, that bitch is still a Grand Duke. You never know if she might have different means to get inside your head.]

“Right. Thanks for the advice.”

He sat down and fell into thought.

‘So it’s a circle member from the Phisfounder Armlets.’

The evidence wasn’t conclusive, but the probability was very high.

This was because he didn’t think there would be anyone from the other circles who would be able to sign a contract with a Grand Duke. (TL:...except him...)

‘A Force Honor? Or is it the Circle Rounder?’

Still, he didn’t think the Circle Master would show up in person.

Then was it the Circle Rounder?

The Circle Rounder of the Phisfounder Armlets was a vampire by the name of Sheryl Roland. This was what Ivan had told him.

He remembered because he said she looked like a girl who didn’t appear to be that old.

“Hmm...”

Frey narrowed his eyes.

One thing was clear at that moment.

If they were acting so carefully, it would be difficult for Frey to find them first.

“Such a headache.”

He was also uncertain if he’d be able to explain the situation even if they met in person.

This was because he was unsure if they would even believe anything he’d say.

He didn’t know if there were any members from the Trowman Rings among them, and he couldn’t tell executives from other circles about his divine power or Riki.

‘...Should I just kill them?’

He thought about it for a moment before deciding against it.

This was because they were people with the potential to help him in his fight against the Demigods.

This meant that he would have to subdue them if he was forced to fight them.

Unfortunately, this wouldn't be easy since he couldn't use mana for a while, and it was naturally harder to subdue people than it was to kill them.

Frey looked down at his hand.

Crackle. (TL: considering using this as the sfx for the lightning)

Lightning bounced across his hand.

Although it was only slightly released, the destructive aura of his divine power could be felt clearly.

'It should be stronger than 7 stars but weaker than 8 stars.'

He was referring to the destructive power of his lightning.

This fact was certainly amazing.

It had only been two months since Frey had first come into contact with divine power, but it had already reached such a high level.

This allowed him to understand a little why Lukes and Oydin had fallen to the allure of divine power.

The thought of achieving such strength without much effort or time was certainly alluring, and the more desperate the person was, the harder it would be for them to escape the temptation after falling into it.

It was a powerful force that came with little risk.

However.

“It’s not so simple.”

It was possible to get strong fast. However, easily gained strength would lead to weakness of their willpower.

That was, in a way, much worse than ruining your body.

There was no way that kind of strength could be gained for free.

But Frey didn’t intend to rely on divine power.

It was but another means to an end. His foundation was firmly embedded in Magical Science, and it was not something that could be shaken.

He had resolved to remain this way for the rest of his life.

“First, I’ll wait for Riki.”

Frey murmured to himself before laying on the bed and extinguishing the candle.

* * *

Riki returned exactly three days later.

He spoke in his characteristically blunt tone.

“I didn’t learn anything. Leyrin wasn’t there, and the head, Isaka Blake, was also away... Ah.”

Then he suddenly paused as if he just remembered something.

“The second son, Heinz Blake, was there.”

“Heinz?”

“Right. He was the one who guided me. However, his timing was too coincidental. He arrived just after I got there.”

“ ... ”

It seemed Riki didn't know he was a member of the Circle.

Frey thought about sharing that fact for a moment, but he decided against it in the end.

After all, he didn't fully trust Riki.

'Heinz...'

Certainly, as Riki said, the timing was too coincidental. Frey felt that there was a very high possibility that Heinz was among the circle members who were monitoring them.

It wasn't like he wasn't strong enough.

Riki led him out of the inn while saying.

“Shall we get going?”

That very afternoon, they used the Warp Stone to head to Luanoble.

After the short Warp ended, Frey looked around.

“So this is Luanoble...”

The place that Frey and Riki had arrived at was ‘Lupei’, a city in the Luanoble Kingdom.

Although it wasn’t the capital, it was one of the largest cities in the country.

The Luanoble Kingdom in itself was not small, so Lufei’s appearance was quite grand. The architectural style especially caught his eye.

There were many white, sharp-tipped buildings that looked like swords, giving the entire city a very sharp aura.

“This way.”

Riki’s tone was a bit sharp as he walked ahead.

Frey stopped looking around and followed him.

Riki led him through the back alleys in a skillful manner as though he was familiar with the complex road structure.

“Don’t we have time before the meeting starts?”

“There’s still a month left.”

“Then why are you in such a hurry?”

“The meeting isn’t being held in Lufei.”

“Hmm?”

It was the first time he’d heard of that.

Riki spoke without turning his head.

“Just follow me for now. There’s something I need to do before we go to the meeting.”

He paused for a moment before saying.

“I’ll speed up a little.”

Swish.

He immediately accelerated.

Frey wondered why he'd increased pace so suddenly, but he soon realised it was an effort to lose any pursuers who might have followed them to Lufei.

'The next warp won't be for at least four days,'

That thought occurred to him before he realised that with the Circle's influence, it wouldn't be impossible to carry out successive warps.

An hour or so passed.

By the time they stopped walking, Frey was slightly out of breath.

Riki glanced at Frey before speaking.

"You are weak, unlike Ivan."

"..."

How could he compare him to that stamina monster?

Frey looked around, keeping those thoughts to himself

The loud noise of the city sounded faint.

This place was dark even though it was broad daylight as the buildings in the other sections of the city almost completely blocked the sun.

A disgusting smell lingered in the air, and rats could be clearly seen running around the garbage filled streets.

In other words, this was a very dirty place.

Riki pointed to a stairway leading down to a basement and said.

“If you go down there, you will find an old man wearing a straw hat. Ask him for a mask.”

“What mask?”

“If you’re going to the meeting, you need to hide your identity. Didn’t I tell you before? Most of the Apostles will participate in this meeting, but they will all hide their appearances.”

“Are you saying that I’ll be able to hide my appearance if I use that mask?”

“Right. It will completely conceal the aura of your divine power.”

If that was the case, then it would be very useful indeed.

However, there was still something he wanted to know.

“Why aren’t you going with me?”

“The man down there is one of Lord’s men. If I go with you, they would immediately know that you are my Apostle.”

“...”

That made sense.

Frey glanced at the stairs for a while before walking down.

It was an incredibly deep, dark staircase.

Frey slowly stepped deeper into the basement.

‘So long.’

How much farther would he have to go?

Because of the circular structure of the staircase, the light from outside, however little it was, could not reach very far, and by the time Frey felt it would have been polite to place a lightsource, the staircase came to an end.

The basement was very bright.

The light that Frey felt was previously lacking in the stairwell was now overly abundant in the basement.

Frey looked around, noticing the heavy scent of dust.

It was like an old junk shop.

It was large, but it was smelly because many miscellaneous items were piled up like a mountain.

As Frey looked at one strange object after another, he heard a lively voice from behind him.

“Welcome!”

Frey was a bit surprised.

He had not been able to sense the slightest thing before hearing the voice.

“What brings you here?”

Blonde hair, purple eyes and a maid outfit.

None of these things seemed to match the description Riki had given him.

However, Frey’s gaze deepened slightly.

The person before him appeared to be a cheerful girl with moist eyes and a healthy blush on her cheeks. Her body seemed to be brimming with vitality.

Yet he could feel none of it.

“A Golem?”

It was a Golem of extremely high quality.

It was very possible that another person would never have been able to notice this.

Frey thought of Schweiser.

He had been the best puppet master Frey had ever known.

“It seems a very perceptive guest has arrived.”

A man appeared from inside a back room with a relaxed expression. He was a messily dressed man wearing an old straw hat.

He walked over and patted the girl’s shoulder.

“Aeri, head back for now.”

“Yes, Master.”

The girl called Aeri gave a bright smile before heading to the back of the store.

“I apologise if that made you uncomfortable.”

“It’s fine.”

“That’s good then.”

The man then sat on a stool and spread his arms.

“Welcome to Hector’s General Store. Ah. For reference, I’m Hector.”

“...”

“You’re quite a tight-lipped customer.”

Hector grumbled.

Frey ignored his words and stated his reason for being there.

“I came to get a mask.”

“Ay. You’re a boring customer too.”

He scratched his head for a moment before heading inside.

Only

After a while, he returned with a white mask in his hand. The mask had a crying face printed on it and was covered in dust as though it had been poorly stored for a long time.

Hector glanced at Frey as he brushed the dust from the mask.

Hector's expression then changed, and his mouth opened wide as he spotted the bracelet on Frey's wrist.

"H-, huk.."

His entire body convulsed slightly, and he jerked his head up to look at Frey.

A strange light shined in Hector's eyes.

"...E-, excuse me. But would you mind if I took a look at that bracelet?"

Season 1 Chapter 98: Meeting (5)

'Did he notice the bracelet's secret?'

Frey was concerned for a moment before quickly regaining his composure.

It was impossible.

Very few people knew that the Staff of the Great Sage could be transformed into a bracelet.

Even the Strow Necklaces, who claimed to know Schweiser best, and Shepard Jun, who was an executive in that circle, did not know the bracelet was a relic.

Frey shook his head.

“You can’t.”

“C-, come on, just a little...”

“Why are you so interested in this bracelet? It’s just an ordinary bracelet.”

Hector laughed when Frey said those words indifferently.

“An ordinary bracelet... you don’t need to lie to me.”

“...”

“Well. It makes sense that you’d think so. Most people wouldn’t be able to realise the true value of that bracelet.”

Perhaps, even the most proficient appraiser wouldn’t be able to notice anything.

However, he was different.

Hector's gaze sharpened.

This item was definitely priceless.

He calmed his desperately beating heart.

"I know it's not believable if I say it myself, but I am one of the best alchemists. In fact, I'm sure that I am among the top three among those on the continent."

It was something that was not completely believable since he was the one that was saying it. But it was impossible for Frey to dismiss it just because he couldn't take his word for it.

At least, this man in front of him was the first to even notice Schweiser's bracelet.

"I can't even remember the last time I saw a magic tool and admired it. That's why that bracelet is so shocking. This is just my speculation, but I believe it might be a relic passed down from the Age of Light, where Magic Science was most prevalent."

This was the first time he'd ever felt inferior while looking at a magic item since he'd begun studying alchemy.

Hector wasn't confident that he'd be able to make something like that bracelet even if he was given all of the necessary materials.

This was what made him so curious.

He wanted to see how it was made.

Pure curiosity practically boiled within his gaze.

Frey was happy to hear his acknowledgement of Schweiser's skills, but there was absolutely no way he would show this item to one of Lord's followers.

He couldn't afford to get caught in such a foolish way.

"You can't."

"...hoo. Of course, my words wouldn't mean anything."

Hector's voice was low.

He stood up from his seat with a firm expression.

Seeing this, Frey raised his guard as he noticed Hector's strange momentum.

Thud!

Hector pounded his forehead against the floor.

“Please!”

“W-, what are...”

“Please! Show it to me just once!”

After saying that, he crawled over and grabbed the hem of Frey’s robe.

Frey looked down at him with a shocked expression.

Hector’s face looked desperate and pitiful.

Was this all an act?

No.

He would not have been able to make such an expression even if he was the best actor in the world.

Frey hesitated after he saw this performance.

'...an alchemist ranked among the top 3 on the continent.'

This was how Hector had introduced himself.

So he should be better than Adelia, right?

Frey couldn't tell. However, even Adelia had not been able to notice the Staff of the Great Sage in its bracelet form.

At least in this aspect, Hector was better than her.

"I want to ask you something."

"Yes! You can ask me anything."

Hector's eyes shined brightly as he said this.

Frey quickly spoke with a slightly troubled expression.

"...this doesn't mean that I'd show you the bracelet just because you answer."

"That doesn't matter! After hearing my response, your heart might soften a little!"

This was what Frey wanted.

He nodded and recalled the questions he had asked Adelia in the magic tower in the past.

“Can you create a Golem with a core that contains 1 million ME?”

“A core with 1 million ME? Hmm....”

Hector narrowed his eyes.

After thinking for a moment, he shook his head.

“It would be extremely difficult.”

His response was better than Adelia’s, who had called it downright crazy, but it wasn’t a far cry from Frey’s expectations.

“I see. As expected.”

“Expected?”

“Even the best alchemist I know told me it was a crazy idea.”

Hector’s expression changed a little.

“Hmm... can you tell me in detail? What they said.”

Was he interested in the other alchemist’s opinion?

That didn’t matter. Frey told him what he heard from Adelia.

“First of all, they said it was almost impossible to create a Golem using a 1 million ME core.”

“I agree with that opinion. In general, a 10,000 ME core is required to make an Iron Golem.”

One Iron Golem was capable of fighting ten Ogres at once.

In other words, with a simple calculation, that would mean that a single Golem with a 1 million ME core would be able to fight 1,000 Ogres at the same time.

When he thought that, he realised just how ridiculous a 1 million ME core really was.

In terms of raw numbers, it might not be challenged even if it went head to head with an adult Dragon.

“They said the body would have to be made with Orichalcum, and Mithril would have to be used as the nervous system in order to drive such a large amount of energy. They also said that the process of calculating formulas, programming commands and establishing its consciousness would be even more challenging.”

“...”

Hector lowered his head as he pondered for a while before looking at Frey again.

“What is their name?”

“I have no intention of telling you that.”

After all, Adelia was a member of the Circle. And even if she wasn't, he wouldn't reveal her name since his identity could be traced through her.

“There's no need to be so cautious. Lord has ordered me to not reveal anything I see or hear here. Once given, a command cannot be disobeyed. In other words, everything that's happened here would be a secret kept between the two of us.”

“...”

“Anyway, that person is pretty good at alchemy. Although, they still have some ways to go. Huhu. They remind me of myself from a hundred years ago.”

A hundred years ago.

Frey's expression became strange.

Exactly how old was this man?

"You mean you're better than the alchemist I know?"

"Of course."

"..."

"You don't seem to believe me. Then..."

Hector put his hands together and clapped twice

Pak pak!

"Yes, Master!"

The maid, Aeri, who had left earlier, approached them once more.

Hector pointed at her and said.

“This kid is a Golem I made myself.”

“I see.”

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

There was silence for a moment.

Hector then looked at Frey with a strange expression on his face.

“Is that it?”

What other reaction was he supposed to give?

When he saw Frey’s puzzled expression, Hector’s expression became weirder.

'He had the insight to tell that Aeri was a Golem with just a glance, but he doesn't have any knowledge of puppet making?'

He was a strange man.

Then he wouldn't be able to figure out just how elaborate Aeri was or how skilled he was at puppet making to have created her.

Hector sent Aeri back with a bitter smile.

"Do you really have a 1 million ME Golem core?"

"..."

Once again, he received no answer.

Hector's expression became awkward. He didn't know just what this man was thinking.

If he had some idea of what he wanted, then maybe, he would be able to make a deal to get what he wanted.

'I want to see that bracelet one way or another.'

Recently, Hector had been feeling like there was a slump in the progression of his alchemy knowledge.

To put it bluntly, he hadn't made any progress in decades.

He'd searched, examined and read countless research books, magic tools and Golems of other people, but he couldn't find any new stimulation.

This was natural.

Most of them were much worse than him.

Day by day, he felt his body and mind slowly rot, and he feared that he would not be able to progress any further in his life.

Alchemy was the only thing keeping him going. But at this rate, he would lose interest in alchemy.

This was the last thing he wanted to happen.

Frey's bracelet, which had appeared in a time when he was floundering in the dark and shivering in fear, was like a light of salvation for Hector.

Then Frey spoke.

“Hypothetically, if I said I had it, would you be able to make a Golem with it?”

“ ... ”

Hector’s expression became serious.

Frey couldn’t help but feel that this face was the true face of the man before him.

His expression was one that could only be seen when someone who took pride in their job became serious about their job.

Hector pondered for a long time.

He blankly tapped his finger on the counter and mumbled to himself.

Frey waited patiently.

Finally, Hector opened his mouth.

“It’s possible.”

“ ... ”

“You don’t believe me?”

“Would it be strange if I didn’t?”

Hector let out a laugh.

“The hardest thing to do would be to get the ingredients. You would need large quantities of orichalcum and mithril. You must know that those two metals are not things you can just buy with money.”

He was right.

Both were valuable items fit to be called the divine metals.

This meant that not only were they basically impossible to buy even if you could afford them but that they were also incredibly hard to work with.

“But those aren’t the only metals you can use. I know of metals that can be used as replacements. I assure you, there is no other alchemist who knows as many metals as I do.”

Could he be sure that this man was better than Adelia?

Hector sighed as though he could sense something from the subtle shift in Frey’s expression.

"I do not want to belittle the alchemist you know, but as far as I know, there are only three top alchemists on the continent currently."

"Including you?"

"Including me."

"..."

His eyes were firm as he said those words.

Frey looked at him for a moment before asking.

"Who are the other two?"

"The Eleventh Tower Master of the Kastkau Empire. And Akrich of the Frozen Lands in the North."

The Eleventh Tower Master and Akrich.

They were figures that he would have never imagined.

Especially the former.

“I thought there were only ten magic towers”

“That’s right. However, the Eleventh Tower Master exists. He is one of the hidden guardians of the Kastkau Empire. That’s all I can say.”

“And Akrish of the Frozen Lands?”

“...”

Hector’s gaze deepened slightly.

He stared at Frey for a moment before saying.

“He’s not an alchemist; he’s a Wizard. But he’s a damn monstrous bastard who’s knowledge of alchemy surpasses both myself and the Eleventh Tower Master’s. This can be considered natural, though, since he’s lived for more than 1,000 years.”

“...”

“Anyways, you should remove any thoughts you have about asking him for help. He’s stuck in his dungeon below the Frozen Lands, devoting all his time to Magical Science. He’s also got a nasty temper, so don’t approach him unless you want to risk getting cut into unrecognisable pieces.”

His words only made Frey curious.

But there was something else that Frey was even more curious about.

“Who are you?”

“I’m Hector.”

“I’m not asking for your name. I’m asking who you are since you are able to stand equally beside the hidden guardian of the Kastkau Empire and Akrich who has over 1,000 years of accumulated knowledge.”

Hector was silent for a moment before slowly opening his mouth.

“Well. Although my current state appears quite miserable, I used to be a member of a pretty powerful race.”

Only

A powerful race from the past?

“All of it was stolen from me, and I was trapped inside this fragile body. Strong scales that couldn’t be cut even with the sharpest sword, a body that was large enough to blot out the sun and a heart that was more powerful than any power source imaginable.”

After hearing that, Frey’s expression changed greatly.

“Still, I survived because he recognized the large amount of knowledge I’d accumulated in my life. Or maybe he wanted to laugh at my miserable existence from close by.”

“...you can’t mean...”

Hector gave a self deprecating smile.

“I... was a Dragon.”

Season 1 Chapter 99: Meeting (6)

He ‘was’ a Dragon.

The fact that he used past tense was shocking.

At least, Frey had never seen such a self-deprecating and miserable use of past tense.

Hector’s bitter smile quickly disappeared.

He returned to his customary lively tone.

“Sorry for bringing up such a boring topic. So... uh. What were we talking about again?”

Frey was left speechless for a moment as he watched Hector scratch his head and apologize.

Suddenly, Beniang’s words came to mind.

[The report at the time said the lair was already destroyed, and no Dragon bodies were found. The only thing that had been left in the lair was my egg.]

They hadn’t even found a body.

Of course, at the time, he hadn’t thought this was strange.

A Dragon’s corpse had immense value.

There was the Dragon Heart, which was regarded as a supreme treasure, as well as the other parts like its teeth, bones, scales, eyes, blood and flesh.

So Frey had thought the Demigods had simply taken all the corpses after killing the Dragons.

But now that he thought about it, that was strange in itself.

Mortals were the only ones who would put a high value on the corpse of a Dragon.

For Demigods, even the Dragon Heart would not be something they really needed.

But what if the Dragon's body hadn't been their target?

What if they wanted something else, like capturing the Dragons alive to subjugate and control their powerful souls?

...If the man in front of him was truly a Dragon, then Frey's guess would no longer just be speculation.

It would mean that in the end, the Demigods managed to subjugate the soul of a Dragon and made it into their servants.

'Dog-like bastards.'

Frey forcibly suppressed his urge to curse.

Before the Demigods had revealed their horrific presence, Dragons were the only completely transcendent race on the continent.

Not only that.

They had also been the ones who realised the danger the Demigods posed first, so they supported the mortals in their bloody battle with the Demigods 4,000 years ago.

Or rather, it would be more accurate to say mortals assisted the Dragons in their fight against the Demigods.

There was only one race capable of confronting the Demigods.

The Dragons.

“...”

Frey bit his lip and clenched his fist tightly.

Such revered beings were now in a more miserable state than humans.

They weren't extinct. However, their current state was much worse than that.

They were barely living while being forced to do the Demigods' bidding.

Considering this, it wasn't even enough to say that their race 'fell'.

'They wanted to see their miserable appearance up close.'

This was the reasoning Hector had just given about why they were keeping a Dragon alive.

And he was probably right.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

It wasn't unreasonable for Hector to say this.

The fact that he was a Dragon was not only known by the Demigods; some Apostles knew about it as well.

He hadn't intended to reveal it, but it was discovered anyway.

Then the Apostles, people who had betrayed their races to side with the Demigods, looked at him with eyes filled with ridicule.

They mocked the miserable fate of the ones who once ruled over the continent, who fought against the Demigods till the end.

And as they looked at him, they felt that their choice wasn't wrong.

He couldn't even laugh at the fact that they were feeling satisfied by their decisions and actions.

Since then, he'd come to accept reality.

Now, he didn't mind revealing his identity as he'd already built up a bit of tolerance.

"You..."

Frey started speaking before he stopped.

The words he was about to say got stuck in his throat, and instead, he said something entirely different.

"...are the other Dragons the same as you?"

"Some of them. Not all. Most are dead."

"..."

"Are you sympathising with me?"

"No."

Frey shook his head.

He didn't intend to do that.

He used to pay homage to the Dragons in the past, and even now, as he saw Hector, it was the same.

"I'm sorry if you felt that way."

Hector was puzzled by Frey's sudden change of attitude.

It was exactly from the point when he'd revealed that he was a Dragon.

A smile forced its way onto his face. Hector chuckled and shrugged.

"Ay. Do you have any reason to apologise? Like I told you. I was a part of a race that was considered pretty powerful in the past. It's nothing now."

Frey wanted to ask Hector about his teacher, but he couldn't.

After all, he couldn't believe everything Hector said.

To put it simply, it was impossible for Frey to know if this man was under Lord's full control or not.

Therefore, he kept all his doubts, regrets and sadness to himself and opened his mouth with a stiff expression.

"...can I have the mask?"

"Ah. Here you go."

Frey received the mask from Hector and dusted it off a bit before saying.

"Do you stay here?"

"That's right."

To be exact, rather than staying, he couldn't leave. It wouldn't be entirely wrong to say he was confined to this space.

Of course, he wouldn't reveal that.

"Then, please make the body of Golem that can handle a 1 million ME core that I mentioned earlier."

Did he really have a core with so much ME?

Hector's expression became strange.

Even he was not confident in his own ability to make a core with such capacity.

And he felt the same for the Eleventh Tower Master and Akrich.

He scratched his cheek while hiding his inner thoughts.

"...Hm. Just showing me that bracelet wouldn't be enough for that. I'm a businessman after all."

"What else do you want?"

Hector made a playful expression.

"That bracelet. Give it to me."

"..."

He'd said this intentionally to see his reaction.

Perhaps Frey hadn't expected this as his expression changed subtly.

However, to Hector's surprise, he didn't refuse right away.

"If you promise me in Dragon Tongue, I'd be more than happy to give it."

"...! You know about Dragon Tongue?"

No, that was a silly question.

If he didn't know about Dragon Tongue, he wouldn't have brought it up in the first place.

Hector sighed.

"...You seem to know a lot about Dragons."

"Can you not do it? Is it because your body was stolen?"

"The body doesn't matter. The power of Dragon Tongue comes from our very souls. I might not have the same destructive and transcendental power, but making oaths is still possible." (TL: Fus Ro Dah!) (YH: I don't get it :|)

Hector seemed to contemplate something for a moment before he looked at Frey.

Then he spoke in the serious tone from before.

“I’ll take back what I said about the bracelet. Ah. I’m not saying this because I don’t want to make an oath in Dragon Tongue. It’s just, I said that in the first place because I wanted to see your reaction... I apologise for that.”

“It’s fine.”

“Just let me take a look. That’s enough payment.”

Hector let out a laugh.

“I had nothing to do anyway. But I think I might make one that matches my taste. Would that be okay?”

His taste.

However, Frey didn’t pay much attention to Hector’s words, and he simply nodded.

“It doesn’t matter as long as it can handle the core.”

“Great. Now, hmm. To get the supplies and craft it... should take at least 6 months. So you can come see me at that time.”

“...6 months.”

“Will that be a problem?”

Frey couldn't respond immediately.

He wasn't sure whether Riki's identity could remain hidden until then. However, he'd finally found a person who could make the Golem that even Adelia said was impossible to make.

He didn't think he'd find a better opportunity than this.

“No. I'll see you then.”

“Have a safe journey.”

Hector mumbled farewell as Frey turned and left.

“...what an impressive man.”

He wasn't sure, but Hector had a strong feeling he would have more interactions with this man in the future.

* * *

When Frey came up from the basement, Riki asked him.

“What about the mask?”

Frey showed him the mask without responding, and Riki nodded before turning around and walking away.

Frey followed him while memorising the coordinates for this place.

They soon left the dark area and once again arrived in the city proper.

The sun was about to set, but Riki never had any intention of staying in the city.

They immediately left and began walking down a road.

In the meantime, the sun set, and day turned into night.

Still, Riki didn't stop walking.

Around the time when moonlight fell gently, Riki finally opened his mouth.

“The Luanoble Kingdom. Although it’s called the Country of Knights, it is the most corrupt among all the human countries I know.”

“...? I see.”

Riki seemed quite aware of the state of humanity.

Frey simply nodded.

It was the first time he was hearing this, but it would be strange if there was no corruption in a large group of humans.

As he looked at Riki’s face while he said this, though, he couldn’t help but be surprised.

This was because, for the first time, there was a trace of anger on Riki’s face.

“...they’d rather talk and do bullshit rather than carry on that man’s legacy.”

“That man?”

“Look at that mountain.”

Riki pointed to the mountain he'd led Frey to.

It was a large, dense mountain. Of course, it wasn't as large as the mountains in the Ispania mountain range, but those mountains were the largest in the continent.

"Marquis Dalaman. The oldest and ugliest among the Luanoble nobles. Trash who does anything to satisfy his own self interest."

"What does he have to do with this mountain?"

"This is the place where Marquis Dalaman does his business."

"...business?"

"Slave camps were secretly built all over this mountain."

Those words shocked Frey greatly.

"Slaves? There's no slavery in the Luanoble Kingdom, is there?"

It should've been the same with the Kastkau Empire.

In Lukas' time, most countries still participated in slavery, but now, 4,000 years later, most of them had abolished slavery, except for a few barbaric ones.

Were there really slave camps in the Luanoble Kingdom, which was praised as the country of Knights?

On a mountain that wasn't far from a large city?

"You're a really strange man. You have knowledge that not even some of the wisest men on the continent would know, but you still can't see behind the thin curtain that conceals the darkness of human society?"

Riki sighed.

"Slavery still exists in the dark. The size of the slave market is growing continuously every year. In fact, the current supply cannot even keep up with the demand."

...It wasn't a bright spot for human society.

Frey suddenly felt that Riki was extremely strange at that moment.

'Isn't he a Demigod?'

At least, in his memory, there had never been a Demigod who showed such deep interest in humans.

Only

Without responding to Frey's curious expression, Riki continued.

"You don't hesitate to kill trash-like humans."

He was talking about the bandits back in the forest who Frey had turned to ashes.

Frey didn't deny it, though, because he wasn't wrong.

"And you have to use your divine power as much as possible for the remainder of this month."

Riki stopped talking after saying that, but Frey understood what he wanted him to do.

Frey's eyes followed Riki's as he looked toward the mountains once again. (YH: oh shit this is cool)

Season 1 Chapter 100: Meeting (7)

"I'll have to take a look first before deciding."

"Do you not trust me?"

"It wouldn't be wrong to say that I don't"

Frey gave a blunt answer.

However, Riki's expression showed that he had expected such a response.

"And we look at things differently."

"You want to see it with your own eyes. I understand."

As he nodded, Riki paused for a moment before saying.

"What do you think about other races?"

"...what?"

What kind of question was that?

When Frey turned to him with a puzzled expression on his face, Riki said in a flat tone.

"I'm asking you if you believe humans are a superior race."

"No. Not really."

Naturally, Frey liked humans.

He liked the positive actions and potential that humans had, and above all, he valued their determination even when faced with challenges.

However, this didn't mean he considered them superior, as Riki said.

He knew that there were many other amazing species besides humans.

Riki nodded in relief.

"If so, then I have nothing to worry about. Go take a look. There are a few camps on the mountain, but I personally recommend that one."

Riki pointed with his finger.

Frey focused his eyes on where he was pointing, but he couldn't see anything.

"...I don't see it."

"There's a castle hidden in the trees. He has about thirty men guarding it. Most of them are Knights, but they're only Second class at best. It wouldn't be hard for you to get rid of them with your divine power."

“If I decide that they don’t deserve to be killed...”

“Naturally, you can just leave. I won’t force you.”

Riki spoke in his normal, calm tone.

Frey felt a bit strange when he saw this because it seemed like he had already guessed his reaction.

‘Firstly.’

He had to check for himself.

It might cause an issue if he killed one of the country’s Marquises, but Frey showed no reluctance or hesitation.

This was because he had successfully reached 8 stars.

As long as his opponent wasn’t a Demigod, Frey was not afraid to have a one on one battle with anyone.

And even if he were to fight a Demigod, Frey had the confidence to at least escape with his body intact, as long as it wasn’t Lord or one of the Apocalypses.

As he thought this, Frey flew over to the place Riki had pointed out.

As Riki had said, there was an old castle hidden behind the trees.

He didn't see it before because he was far away, but now that he was closer, it didn't seem hidden at all.

Instead, its surroundings were brightly lit by a number of torches.

“ ... ”

Frey's expression stiffened slightly.

This mountain wasn't very far from the city. So if this place was displayed in such an open way, there was a high probability that the officials of Lufei knew about the existence of this camp.

'It's the most corrupt human country I know.'

Riki's words sounded in his head again, but Frey shook his head and decided to check the interior of the castle.

There were Knights in armor standing atop a short wall.

'Their levels are definitely not high.'

Riki's information was accurate.

These people were Second class warriors at best.

Currently, Frey was capable of facing off against Master class Knights even if he didn't use his mana.

At their level, even hundreds of these Knights wouldn't be able to stop him.

From the start, Indra's divine power was especially effective when used against crowds. It was difficult for them to defend against because of its long range and the effects of the electricity.

However, it wasn't just their lack of power.

Their vigilance was also quite lax.

There were some who yawned loudly, chatted with their colleagues or even sat on the ground and dozed off.

It seemed that they didn't expect anyone to attack them.

Frey silently climbed over the wall.

The first thing he saw was a large clearing.

“ ... ”

And in it, there were dozens of cages.

The cages were all made of iron, and every single one of them was filled with slaves.

There weren't just humans.

As well as other intelligent races like Elves, Dwarves and Beastkin, all kinds of rare creatures were imprisoned here.

They all had something in common.

Physically, they looked fine. However, while they had no visible injuries, they all appeared listless as if they had lost their souls.

Those who were particularly bad would randomly start hyperventilating, seemingly for no reason.

The cages were all very small and dirty.

They were almost the perfect size for their captives, so even a sane person would go crazy after a few days if they were forced to stay in these cages.

There was something piled on the right, and when Frey focused on it, his expression immediately changed.

Bodies of dead slaves had been piled up.

Frey's rage built up in an instant, but he still managed to quickly analyze the situation calmly.

'Why did they kill them?'

For these people, slaves were commodities, products that they used to make money.

They were pieces of trash, but Frey didn't think they would ignore the value of their own merchandise like this for no reason.

But after a while, he realised why.

A Knight was walking toward the place where the corpses were piled with light steps.

On his shoulder was a Beastkin girl.

A Knight standing near the pile started talking to him.

“Did you let it all out?”

“Mhm.”

“That’s...? Is she dead?”

“Not yet. But from the looks of it, it shouldn’t be long now.”

“Urajil... take it easy. Don’t you know the Marquis hasn’t been in a good mood for the last few days?”

“It doesn’t matter. He only cares about the Elves anyway.”

“One of the Elves died today, so be careful.”

“Really? Hmm... understood.”

The Knight then threw the girl from his shoulder onto the pile.

The girl flailed her arms for a moment with dead eyes before she slowly stopped moving.

Frey saw this scene from start to finish.

It wasn't just the Beastkin girl.

Occasionally, the Knights would take slaves to use or torture to relieve their desires or boredom. (TL: I put 'use' here, but you all should know what it means...)

That was the reason why the corpses of the slaves were treated in such a way.

“...”

It was a scene of collective madness.

Had they all lost their minds because they were stuck in this place for a long time?

Or was this a place where only the ugly and evil people gathered?

Frey completely understood Riki's attitude.

How could he not be angry when he saw humans behaving in this way?

As someone who liked and had faith in humans, this sight made Frey feel disgraced as though his privates had been exposed in public.

Sss.

His emotions were soon restrained.

The calmness and tranquility that came with his 8 stars rank did not let him get swept up by his emotions.

Taht.

Frey descended from the wall and landed with a light sound.

With just the robe and mask, Frey's identity was effectively hidden.

The mask had the effect of concealing his divine power, but when Frey actively used it, this concealment stopped.

"Huh?"

One of the guarding Knights tilted his head as Frey appeared in front of him.

“What the...? That’s a funny mask.”

He spoke with a drowsy expression on his face.

Even though Frey had appeared before him so openly, he did not consider him as an intruder.

After all, they didn’t believe that there was anyone brave enough to infiltrate this place, and so openly at that.

He probably thought it was one of his colleagues playing a prank.

Crackle.

Blue lightning sparked in Frey’s hand.

At first, he’d just intended to get rid of the person in charge of this place.

But he no longer thought that way.

All of the people working here were rotten garbage.

He was ashamed to even consider calling them human.

But above all, it was their outfit that made Frey the most angry.

“What the hell are you wearing?”

“What?”

“Plate armor, silver sword and cape. Do you really think of yourself as a Knight?”

The Knight’s expression changed to one of anger.

“What the hell are you talking about? No. Who the hell are you? I’ve never heard your voice before...”

In the next instant, shock became plastered across his face.

“No way, intrude...!”

Crackle.

Deep blue lightning pierced the man's body before he even got the chance to scream, causing him to fall to his knees, his body burnt black.

However, the lightning was bright and noticeable.

"Wh-, what was that?"

"Intruder! There's an intruder!"

Only then did the other Knights charge towards Frey as a group.

Frey stood in the middle of the clearing with his hands at his sides, waiting for the Knights to get closer.

'Knights?'

No, these weren't Knights.

Only

Frey recalled his idiotic friend who worked himself to the bone in order to become the best Knight in the world.

The Sword King Lucid.

What would he have done if he had been here and seen what these evil trash had done while boasting the name 'Knight'?

Of course, Frey knew the answer.

What he was about to do was nothing special.

He was simply going to do what Lucid would've done if he'd been there.

That was all.