

Level 0 Master - Chapter 7

As she ran, she paused for a moment.

Wait a minute. If I follow this straight path...

She noticed that the road to the entrance of the base camp was less fierce than the others. It was as if he cared smoothly about her comfortable escape.

A coincidence? Did the demidevil do this? I won't be cheated anymore.

She ran away, choosing the most fire-prone area as an escape route.

Now I've caught him off-guard. I won't play to his tune anymore. Once I am out of the burning forest, I can teleport to the base camp with the Return Stone. I will gain victory this way.

The crumbling trees, toxic smoke blocking the view, hot flames—Ereka ran out of the forest by breaking through all of them bravely.

The bare ground, along with the clear sunlight and fresh air, welcomed her.

“Mjolnir!”

The sound of thunder tearing through the sky was not just a roar. The sound was the utterance of the absolute law of this world.

This was a combination of spell power, reinforced with crystals obtained by killing puppet soldiers and destroying turrets.

The gap that couldn't be broken between a level 4 and a level 6 was broken here.

This is the power of the demidevil from the Other World... his resource, which remains intact even though he has left the immediate battle...

Looking at the thunderstorm that filled her vision, Ereka closed her eyes and lowered her spear and shield.

This was her defeat.

* * *

Chapter 4

After the match, Ereka woke up and recounted her defeat in the waiting room.

“Now, I have to admit that his resource was strong, and I’ll renew the contract to what it was.”

“You’ve only been defeated by a one-time trick! It was not a fair duel. Please don’t bow down to that f*cking extra!” Rittier implored.

“Please be careful of titles. One has to admit when they’ve been defeated.”

“How could such a trick work again? It cannot be accepted for Your Holy Highness to be insulted by the mere extra class.”

“Stop! I won’t listen to your protest anymore.”

As Ereka’s spirit got stern, Rittier was forced to shut his mouth. Then Ereka loosened her face slightly.

“I don’t like him either...”

The demidevil of Other World was hungry for blood and S*x, but she was still determined to accept everything and serve. She even wore an awkward dress and greeted him with embarrassing makeup.

“I don’t need all that makeup!”

Shiver. Her hands trembled as she recollected Sungjin’s first words again. Her self-esteem as a woman did disappear even though she gave up happiness as a woman.

But still, she wanted to point a spear at him and shout, “Take your words back right now.”

“But... if I can protect the people of this land... I’ll be able to thank him. So please don’t say anything,” Ereka finally responded.

“Your Highness... due to my lack...”

“If you’re talking about lack, then I lack the most. Let’s go greet him now.”

Ereka ended the conversation and headed to the side of the waiting room where Sungjin was.

Jenna, who returned to the waiting room after the victory, waved her knife tail while looking at Sungjin.

“Brother, that was great. I’ve never seen such a fight.”

Sungjin laughed like a beast that had just ripped the carotid artery off of a game.

“Heroic Power is a powerful force indeed. But anyone who is tied to the stereotype that Heroic Power is everything in a fight...”

Sungjin clenched his fist. He alluded to crushing a level 6 knight within his palm.

“...wouldn’t possibly know that there are other powers in the world. Moreover, they wouldn’t be able to use it.”

The princess absolutely had more Heroic Power. But everything else in the battlefield, from traps and small objects like oil to climate conditions and the terrain of forest, was the force of Sungjin having a “free idea.”

“Wow. Now, are you going to lead us to victory over the Blood Ruler?” Jenna asked with glistening clear, big eyes.

Sungjin smiled softly to Jenna. The princess was unfriendly at the time he was forcibly abducted here, but Jenna was innocent was cute. She was ordered to follow his command with sincerity because it was a duel, and she was very commendable at following him.

“It depends on the princess.” Jenna made up her mind.

This man... is genuine!

Anyway, her precious princess would be killed by the Blood Ruler if the situation hadn’t changed. They said that a drowning man would grasp at straws, but they managed to find a rope.

Let’s catch this. Let’s catch this without fail.

“Well... Hey, Brother.”

“What is it?”

Jenna’s knife tail stood upright, and she held his hand firmly.

“I beg you... please help the princess win. Then I’ll be the opponent of your desire.”

“What?”

Sungjin was stunned by the words “opponent of desire.”

“I heard you liked such a thing. You can do whatever you want. So please help the princess win.”

“A child like you shouldn’t say such things that you don’t understand.”

“I know enough!” Jenna shouted as her tail trembled.

“I heard that it’s very painful and difficult. But I’m alright though.”

“Why?”

“Because Princess said that she would protect my hometown.”

Unfortunately, she left some information out, so it sounded like the princess threatened to leave Jenna’s hometown unprotected if Jenna left her side.

Do you know what I mean? I, a hopeful girl trailing the princess, am going to put myself out there to help the princess!

If you’re a man, say yes.

“Your hometown?”

“Yes, it’s a home of orphans where I grew up.”

Jenna took out pictures one by one from her inside her shirt. There were smiling children, a lady and a small house that was poorly painted with crayons.

“This is me. This is the director. This is Senna. This is Yena. This is Luna. This is Markey. This is Nicky. This is Jackie!”

“This... you want to protect them?” Sungjin asked.

“Yes. I left them when I was found to be a hero and moved up to the capital, but they’re still precious family members.”

Her knife tail, which pretended to tremble by fear, hesitated for a while.

She was born as an illegitimate child and abandoned until she was called to the capital. Her and her family saw many dirty parts of the world as lower class people, but they loved each other.

I’m sorry to all of you...

She didn’t want to use her memories of them as a bargaining chip. But she thought all of them would understand because the person who had saved them all from an epidemic was the princess.

If she was affectionate and able to move Sungjin’s desire by this story, then that was fine...

Sungjin stroked her hair.

“Yes, I’ve got what you said.” Contrary to his friendly touch, his eyes burned with anger.

She threw her body at him as a bargain for ambition, not for love. Even though the princess was disdainful so far, he was able to tolerate her. But what was she doing to this innocent child by taking her family hostage? He already saw how dirty the Ministry of Gender Equality could be, and now, a child before him was driven to sell herself for power. Anger shot up inside him.

“You are considering it, aren’t you?” Jenna asked.

“I am,” Sungjin replied simply. The matches in this world were very attractive, but the princess aroused anger beyond contempt.

For now, I have no choice but to shake hands with this woman to lay the foundation for the Arc Master.

This was just business, that’s all.

Even so, what should I do with this poor child...?

All right, I've decided.

Sungjin smiled slightly.

Ereka's face stiffened as she accidentally overheard the conversation between the two in front of the waiting room door.

Because I'm not good enough... little Jenna! Even the demidevil should have a minimum line... How could he do such a thing to a child! Do I really have to hold that man's hand in order to deal with the Blood Ruler...?

But I will tell him clearly. I cannot give Jenna to him.

She opened the door with force.

"Congratulations on your victory."

"Ahh. It was a fun fight."

They exchanged harsh eyes that could never be seen as members on the same team.

"I saw and felt Sungjin's resource. Will you please fight with the Blood Ruler as a member of our country?"

"It depends on the conditions."

"I will give you half of the royal treasure trove and the status of the Grand Duke, and I will dedicate my body to you as your bride."

"You say that you are willing to embrace yourself even without love?"

Such a sarcastic question.

"Love is the work of the people. I don't need it," Ereka replied emphatically.

"Oh, yes. You may not need it, but I'm sorry. With only that, that is not good enough for me."

"What else do you need?"

"Half the country, and I'll take Jenna."

“What did you just say?”

“Half of the country. And this little girl.”

Ereka’s face flared at once, and her hands trembled.

I can endure it if he treats me as he wants. I am even willing to offer myself as a reward for keeping the people safe.

But half of the country?

However much he may covet women, he wants half of the country too? And Jenna too? If he’s willing to touch one child, what’s keeping him from touching a hundred!?

“That’s absolutely impossible! This country was handed down to me by my father. I can’t give you even one inch, let alone a half!”

She swore to keep it and to fight against her elder sister, the Blood Ruler. She made up her mind to say goodbye to her days as a girl who dreamed of love to live as a knight on the battlefield. She could not give her people to the demidevil of the Other World now.

“Oh, really? As you wish. I don’t care if I don’t have to work with you.”

Sungjin went on his gut impulse.

He already asked and heard from her about Ereka’s situation last night. She lost to the Blood Ruler in succession, and only one estate near the castle was left. She would fall into a special status as a prisoner because she would have no territory if she lost again.

Originally, it was prohibited by God to hurt opponents of the hero class outside of the battlefield. But the treatment of prisoners was decided by the captives. It was obvious that the treatment would be death.

“I don’t mean to be paid in advance. I will be paid for my success after defeating the Blood Ruler. I’m risking the same thing. Is the reward for saving what will be destroyed not reasonable enough?” Sungjin asked.

“That makes sense, but...”

“The choice is up to you.”

“ ... ”

While watching Ereka in agony, Sungjin felt no pity.

At the moment when he joined the Ereka's team, he was destined to become a prisoner if he lost. But there was no kind of recognition for an ambitious woman who was so greedy that she couldn't give an inch of her country.

“I see. I'm admitting that you have the right to ask for half of the country.”

“Your Highness!” Rittier shouted.

Ereka waved her hand to silence Rittier.

“But I can't give up this country either. So let's do it like this.”

“Hm?”

“We fight as one team until we defeat the Blood Ruler, and we play the final game again later. You can have some heroes on your team, and you will play with them, and I'll stand with Jenna and Sir Rittier.”

“Hm.”

“The victor will have the whole country.”

Ereka looked directly at Sungjin.

I'm not going to let anyone be trampled on by the Blood Ruler and the demidevil of the Other World.

This is what she stood by. She chose to stand on the battlefield and give up her love for growing flowers and cooking. She even wore armor over her nice-looking body.

Due to the series of defeats, she complained that she did not receive any talent as a soldier despite her inheriting Heroic Power from her father.

Her determination to hold a shield to protect everyone was pure, but the truth was that she tried hard to learn martial arts instead of dancing. She might have even overdone it.

But by the reason, her determination to keep carrying out the impossible was stronger than natural talent.

“I will definitely defend my country by beating you,” she proclaimed without a sense of how beautifully she shone at this moment.

“Good! You’ve said something that I lie for the first time! I’ll take this whole country,” Sungjin responded.

“I will take care of your retirement money when you are deported,” Ereka retorted.

“I’ll make a place for you as a maid when you are taken prisoner.”

“How... how dare you!”

“Stop it please, Sir Rittier. We will see all when we win the final battle.”

Ereka endured the insults despite her trembling body.

You don’t want an ordinary maid. You’re such a perverted demidevil. You don’t want a regular maid who only cleans or cooks.

His tendency to capture and humiliate women was evident.

I will defeat and banish this man after defeating the Blood Ruler.

She made a firm commitment, and Sungjin also looked at her coldly.

What he pursued on earth was a fair and interesting game. That made him feel proud of himself, and it amused his fans. But he could add one more thing this time. A poor little child’s life could also be saved, one whose life was almost trampled on by power. He won’t let this kid feel as sorely as he did.

“Then would you like to sign a contract?”

“All right, let’s work together for a while.”

But there was a cold atmosphere between the two that showed that they wouldn’t work well together. They were just “strange bedfellows,” an alliance that would definitely break apart.

Only Jenna swung her knife tail between them.

Uh... why is the atmosphere like this? The plan to give him the one-plus-one including her seems to have failed. Where did it go wrong?

He doesn't like the princess, even though they look to be about the same age, and he doesn't like me, a little kid, either. Does he only like older women? Or is he gay? Should I have figured out his preference first?

But it was too late to settle.

"And now, let's make a formal contract in front of the Eye of God..."

Both sides were about to sign a strange contract, while their minds were still against one another. They had the hidden idea in their minds that the other would be next after the Blood Ruler.

Just then—

"Your Highness, it's an urgent message!"

A soldier came running from the other side and kneeled in a hurry.

"What's the matter?"

"There's a big fire in the city!"

"Tell me more."

"The fire started from the east, and it spread quickly. Even though the soldiers tried to extinguish the fire for themselves, it was beyond their ability. What's worse, the nearby wells are almost dry, so they had to go to the river far away in order to fetch water."

"My God!"

Ereka's face changed. The east side of the city was a place where the poorest extras lived. That was a place where people lived in small houses regardless of the number of housemates. She knew of that well because she took care of it specially.

"Please wait for the contract! For the time being." Ereka ran right away, leaving behind those words.

Using Heroic Power to run ahead, she shouted, "Sir Rittier! Miss Jenna! Everybody follow me! Mobilize all the soldiers!"

"Yes, Your Highness."

"Yes, Princess."

Sungjin caught Jenna trying to run after Rittier.

"Wait a minute."

"Yes. Brother? We must put the fire out first."

"That's why I caught you."

"What?"

"I'll also help you. Do as I say!"

Sungjin decided to cooperate first, leaving his feelings for the princess aside.

Helping in such a situation is the least I can do.

"Oh, yes. I'll follow your word."

Jenna stood still, dangling her knife tail around.

Does this man also have a special method to help this situation?

"Come with me!"

Sungjin headed for the city with Jenna.

As they climbed the hill, the east side of the city was swallowed up by the fire as reported by the soldier. It was just like a painting of hell.

People were running away in fear, devastated at their burned-out houses. Those who tried to pour buckets of water on their fire did so in vain. The screams of those who couldn't get out rang out, and countless pain, despair, and loss hung in the air.