

## M. in Hell 361

Chapter 361 - Madness Bends to Even Greater Madness (1)

“What the fuck?” Oh Kang-Woo muttered.

*‘Why did she say my name?’*

His eyes shook. He quickly looked toward Iris; she was looking his way with a very wide smile, quivering as if she couldn’t be any happier than this moment.

“You motherf...”

The back of his head rang with pain, and his mind was in jumbles. He asked himself why, but he was able to come up with an answer soon enough. It was simple... so simple that he felt stupid for not having realized it sooner.

*‘Iris’s feelings have... switched from Si-Hun to me.’*

Kang-Woo couldn’t understand why he had been unable to pick up on the changes in Iris’s affections.

Kang-Woo clenched his fists. He knew exactly why. He was highly sensitive to emotions; he was well-versed in reading them as well as controlling them. After all, he was a demon. He had spent ten millennia in a world run by desires.

However, he was unskilled in reading others’ affections for him— no, he was unable to feel it. One could say that he had become insensitive or broken. He had not felt such a thing for far too long. His life had been one of endless desperate battles to extend his survival; everything unrelated to victory had been atrophied. He was unable to pick up on subtle changes in one’s affection unless that affection was clearly transmitted to him verbally. Hence, he had missed the changes in Iris, and had made an error.

*‘Shit. I thought I’d gotten better.’*

Kang-Woo thought that he had learned much about it after meeting Han Seol-Ah, but he had been sorely mistaken. He could hear mumbling from all around the plaza.

“Oh Kang-Woo?”

“Who is that?”

“Wouldn’t the hero who saved the empire be Sir Kim Si-Hun?”

The people who had been cheering just a few seconds ago were looking at each other in confusion due to the mention of a completely unexpected name. It was only natural; although Kang-Woo was fairly well-known on Earth, only a handful of people knew about him in Aernor because he had purposefully concealed his identity.

*‘This is bad.’*

Kang-Woo bit his lip while staring at the mumbling people. This was the worst possible situation. He had purposefully hidden his identity because he was trying to focus the attention of the high elves on Si-Hun. If the attention of the empire’s citizens were to be focused on Kang-Woo, so

would the attention of the high elves. Worst-case scenario, they would find out that he was the Demon of Prophecy.

*'I mean, I guess I'll still be fine since I have Gaia's guarantee.'*

After Kang-Woo became the Protector of Light, he would be recognized as Gaia's retainer by all those who possessed Divinity. Hence, not even the high elves would easily be able to figure out his true identity.

*'But...'*

It did not change the fact that Iris had ripped apart the plan that he had pictured in his mind. The gears in his head turned quickly. He needed to resolve this situation, even if he needed to use unreasonable means.

"Sir Kang-Woo..." Iris approached Kang-Woo while teary-eyed. She smiled and then whispered, "Please give me a ring as well."

Her eyes were filled with twisted desires.

*'Authority of Subordination.'*

Kang-Woo closed his eyes and linked his consciousness with that of Kim Si-Hun, who was standing next to Iris. Si-Hun was left flustered by the train of events that had completely derailed from the original plan.

- Si-Hun.

"H-Hyung-nim?"

- You don't have to speak out loud.

- What's going on? The plan was supposed to be—

- Iris acted on her own.

- Then...

Si-Hun was staring at Kang-Woo, not knowing what to do.

- Just do as I say.

Si-Hun was about to say something, but refrained from it and nodded. He listened to Kang-Woo's instructions, and then grabbed Iris's hand as she was walking toward Kang-Woo.

"Princess Iris. People will get the wrong idea if you call me by that name," he expressed.

"H-Huh?" Iris stared at Si-Hun, unable to understand what he was talking about.

"You should only call me that... when we're by ourselves."

Si-Hun smiled gently and caressed Iris's cheek. He pulled Iris along and stood in front of the voice amplification magic tool.

“As you all know, I am not a citizen of Arnan.” Si-Hun calmly continued, “In my hometown, children are given two names.”

Kang-Woo was having Si-Hun spout absurd bullshit.

*‘There’s no other way.’*

He was trying to scoop back up water that had already been spilt, so it was naturally very clumsy.

*‘But even so...’*

Kang-Woo’s eyes lit up. In the end, people only saw what they wanted to see, listened only to what they wanted to listen to, and trusted only what they wanted to trust.

*‘And they want Si-Hun and Iris to become a couple. If that’s the case, it’ll work.’*

Even if it was unreasonable and didn’t make sense, Kang-Woo was certain that it would work for sure.

“I received names from both my mother and father. The name that Princess Iris has said is the one that my mother has given me.”

“Ohhhh,” the people gathered at the plaza expressed.

Instead of it sounding more like they understood, their expression gave off more of a feeling that they were wondering if that meant Si-Hun and Iris were getting engaged.

Si-Hun smiled brightly. “Yes, Princess Iris and I have gotten engaged.”

“Waaaaaaaaahhh!!”

“Whistle! Whistle!”

The people who had been confused began to cheer while whistling again.

“Urgh, n-no! I...!”

Just as Iris was about to shout something while fiercely frowning, Kang-Woo stepped up.

“Iris, come here for a second.”

“Sir Kang-Woo?”

Kang-Woo pulled Iris by the wrist in a way that would attract as little attention as possible. He made Iris step down from the platform while Si-Hun was distracting the people, and then glared at her in anger.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?”

“U-Umm...” Iris lowered her head while stuttering. She started to come up with a poor excuse like Kang-Woo had. “You said that I needed to be engaged to a hero of the empire for the nation to be revived. You are just as great of a hero as Sir Si-Hun, but people don’t know that yet, so I thought I would take this chance to tell them of your accomplishments...”

Because Iris knew nothing of Kang-Woo's circumstances, she seemed to have been bothered by how no one knew of his achievements.

Kang-Woo frowned. "When did I tell you to do that kind of shit?"

"I-I'm sorry." Iris lowered her head in dejection.

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue as he looked over at the people of the plaza who were waiting for Iris to come back up to the platform.

"We'll talk about this later. Get back up there and finish your speech."

"Okay." Iris nodded while on the verge of tears.

Thankfully, she managed to get through the rest of her speech without any issues. The people chanted Si-Hun and Iris's names, and the two of them came down from the platform while showing how close they were to everyone. Kang-Woo went back to his room after watching the speech to the very end.

*'It's my fault for not realizing sooner, but...'*

Iris was ultimately responsible for acting on her own.

*'I should scold her sternly.'*

It had been difficult for Kang-Woo to be stern with Iris due to her unstable mental state, but it would be bad if something like this happened again. Kang-Woo put his hand on his forehead as if it hurt.

"How did this happen...?"

Nothing would change even if he knew Iris's feelings for him. He had no intention to be with another woman as long as Seol-Ah was with him.

"Hmm?"

Just then, something popped up in his head.

*'Seol-Ah?'*

Come to think of it, Seol-Ah had been nowhere to be seen from around the midpoint of the speech. Kang-Woo's face turned pale.

"Wait."

He quickly got up and ran toward Iris's room. *Wham!* He swung open the door.

"Fuck."

Iris was nowhere to be seen in the empty room.

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A blonde woman slowly opened her eyes in a pitch-black room, tied to a chair.

“H-Huh?” Iris looked around as if she couldn’t understand what was going on. “Wh-Where am I?”

She tried to get up from the chair, but she heard the sound of chains clattering. Only then did she realize that she had been chained up.

“Wh-What the—?”

A chill ran down Iris's spine. She combed through her memories.

*‘After the speech... I separated from Sir Si-Hun and went back to my room, and then...’*

She had no memory of anything after that.

“Ngh! Urgghhh!”

Iris twisted and turned madly, but she could not escape from the shining chains.

*Creak.* A door opened.

“Wh-Who’s there?!” Iris turned her head toward the sound to see a woman glaring at her coldly. “Han... Seol-Ah...?”

Seol-Ah approached her slowly. “You’ve done something quite interesting this time.”

“Ngh...”

“I believe I told you before...” Seol-Ah yanked on Iris’s hair and said with a voice filled with bloodlust, “... That you should know your place.”

“Urgh...!” Iris bared her teeth ferociously. She leaned toward Seol-Ah as if trying to leap at her and shouted, “Shut up! Sir Kang-Woo loves me far more than the likes of you!”

Iris recalled her memories with Kang-Woo and the feelings that they shared while stabbing Fidelio. The emotions and pleasures that she had felt were not hers alone; she was sure that Kang-Woo had also felt the same way.

“I can no longer... live on without... Sir Kang-Woo.”

Iris glared at Seol-Ah in madness. Kang-Woo had saved her— no, he had given her a push for her to be able to stand on her own. He had taken her out of Reynald’s shadow, which she had been hiding within all this time.

Silence fell. Seol-Ah bent forward and grabbed her stomach.

“Pfft.” The laugh she was suppressing spilled out. “Kang-Woo loves you more, you say?” The corners of Seol-Ah’s mouth rose as if mocking Iris. “That’s enough of your delusions, Iris. I can’t believe you still have the gall to say that after seeing this.”

Seol-Ah waved her left hand with the ring on her ring finger in front of Iris.

Iris’s face froze. Seol-Ah slowly walked up to her, raised her hand and slowly caressed Iris’s cheek.

“To be honest, I was fine with Lilith, Echidna, and... even Yeon-Joo. I could endure it if it were them,” Seol-Ah expressed.

Iris was unable to comprehend what Seol-Ah was talking about.

“But...” The light in Seol-Ah’s eyes disappeared, and those eyes pointed toward Iris. “... Not you. I can’t let someone like you be with Kang-Woo.”

“Ngh...! Wh-Why am I the only one?!” Iris shouted while frowning.

Seol-Ah slowly lowered the hand that was caressing Iris’s cheek. “Because...” Seol-Ah’s hand traveled from Iris’s cheek to her chin. “You...” And then to her neck. “... Don’t love Kang-Woo.” And then to her chest.

“What?” Iris froze, completely dazed by Seol-Ah’s incomprehensible answer. “What are you talking about?!”

Seol-Ah giggled. “What am I talking about, you ask? I’m sure you know that better than I do.”

“You’re wrong! I lov—”

“You love him?” Seol-Ah shook her head. “No. You don’t love Kang-Woo.” Seol-Ah looked Iris straight in the eyes with her own eyes filled with thick bloodlust. “You’re just trying to use him.”

“What?”

“I don’t know what happened for you to have ended up this way, but... You just want Kang-Woo because you need someone to depend on.”

Iris had been protected by someone all her life. By Reynald, Si-Hun, and...

“You simply chose Kang-Woo to replace your deceased brother.”

“Y-You’re wrong!” Iris screamed.

There was no way that she had chosen Kang-Woo to replace Reynald. She had barely managed to come out from the shadow to stand on her own two feet, so there was no way that she was trying to hide within someone else’s shadow again.

“I’m wrong?” Seol-Ah burst into laughter. “Really? Do you really think so?”

Silence fell once again. Iris trembled in pallor.

“No... No. I love Kang-Woo. I didn’t want him so I could hide behind him. Wh-Who do you think you are to be spouting bullshit like that?!” Iris shouted madly as she glared at Seol-Ah with bloodlust.

Seol-Ah crouched while licking her lips to be with Iris at eye level.

“It doesn’t matter even if you don’t know. Honestly, it doesn’t matter even if I’m wrong, and you truly do love Kang-Woo. After all...”

Seol-Ah slowly extended her hand. An enormous amount of energy poured out from her.

“Eek!” Iris trembled in pallor.

Seol-Ah smiled widely. Pure-white wings sprouted from her back. Madness so thick that it couldn't even be compared to that of Iris poured out from her.

“You won't be able to love Kang-Woo anymore.”

The twelve wings on Seol-Ah's back radiated blinding light.

Chapter 362 - Madness Bends to Even Greater Madness (2)

“What do you...”

Iris's eyes quivered. Fear took over her body and paralyzed her sense of reason. She felt as if she was in a nightmare— no, as if she had come face to face with her nightmare.

“A-Aaaahh.”

Her legs tied to the chair shook, and she lost all strength in her lower body. She could feel her dress getting wet, but she was not in any condition for her face to get red from humiliation.

*'I'm gonna die.'*

The only thing on Iris's mind was death. Even without the radiant twelve wings on Han Seol-Ah's back, the woman in front of her was more terrifying than anything she had ever experienced.

*'I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die.'*

At this rate, she would die. The bloodlust aimed at her blew away all other thought.

“Fufu. Don't worry.” Seol-Ah smiled widely. “There's no way I would kill you, Iris.”

She placed her hand on top of Iris's head while smiling crazily. Pure-white light poured out from her hand.

“Ah...”

Iris's eyes turned hazy. She could feel her body being taken over by the colossal light pouring out from Seol-Ah's hand.

Whoooooom!

Golden light burst out from Iris as if putting up resistance. Seol-Ah expressed surprise as the golden light and white light clashed in the air.

“This must be... the power of the high elves.” It was more powerful than Seol-Ah had expected. “But... It won't be able to block this.”

Seol-Ah added more power while giggling softly.

Boom—!

Just then, the door that had been protected by white light exploded. Seol-Ah turned her head in surprise.

“K-Kang-Woo?”

A man with sharp eyes had barged into the room while destroying the door. It was the man that Seol-Ah loved more than anything else.

Oh Kang-Woo remained silent after entering the room, and frowned as he stared at the clashing of golden and white light.

“Stop,” he stated.

“Kang-Woo, I was—”

“I told you to stop.”

Seol-Ah flinched. Kang-Woo’s tone of voice was so cold that she almost doubted that it had come from him. She was stricken with fear.

“Kang-Woo, I...”

“I know.”

Kang-Woo knew exactly what Seol-Ah was about to do, and why she had done something like this. He narrowed his eyes.

*‘Seraph’s power has grown stronger.’*

The obsession that had grown stronger, along with the power of the angels within Seol-Ah, was taking control of her. Kang-Woo walked up to Seol-Ah. Resolving the most urgent matter took priority.

“Kang-Woo, please listen to m—”

“Just stay still for now, darling.”

There was only one way to resolve this matter; Kang-Woo yanked Seol-Ah toward him and french-kissed her.

“Ah...”

Seol-Ah’s eyes widened as the thrill traveled from her tongue throughout her body. And then...

“Huh? Wh-What was I just...”

Seol-Ah looked around in confusion. The obsession that had taken control over her slightly died down, and her sense of reason came back.

“K-Kang-Woo. I-I’m sor— huh? Wh-Why did I...”

Kang-Woo embraced the panicking Seol-Ah and remarked, “Just focus on calming down. Close your eyes, take deep breaths, and empty your mind. Don’t think about anything else.”

Seol-Ah did as Kang-Woo said. She closed her eyes and took deep breaths. The twelve wings that had sprouted from her back slowly faded and then completely disappeared.

“Kang-Woo...”



Seol-Ah became teary-eyed; only now had she finally remembered what she had done. She trembled and was having difficulty breathing.

*'What did I try to do to Iris?'*

Her mind was in jumbles, and she was feeling nauseous. Since when had she become twisted to the point of no return?

"It's okay. It's all right." Kang-Woo gently patted Seol-Ah's back as he embraced her. Driving the panicking Seol-Ah into a corner was not wise. "It's not your fault, Seol-Ah."

It truly was not Seol-Ah's fault.

*'I should've given her more attention.'*

Kang-Woo had known that Seraph's power within Seol-Ah was growing stronger as well as her obsession for him.

*'I also knew that that obsession was impossible to suppress.'*

If the instinct of angels were the same as that of demons, there was no way that Seol-Ah would be able to control the power of the colossal being that was Seraph. Rather, it was a miracle that Seol-Ah had been able to endure it for all this time without much happening.

"Sniff... K-Kang-Woo. I-I'm so scared. Wh-What's happening to me?" Seol-Ah asked while trembling.

She knew that something precious to her was getting twisted somehow. Kang-Woo also knew that feeling very well; the horrifying fear and anxiety of his entire being changing when he devoured a demon and accepted demonic energy for the first time.

"It's okay. There's nothing to be scared of."

Kang-Woo calmly consoled Seol-Ah. Seol-Ah yanked herself out of his embrace and shook her head.

"Wh-What do you mean there's nothing to be scared of?! I was... What I was about to do to Iris was..."

Seol-Ah stared at Iris in pallor; Iris had passed out with her head lowered. The chains binding her had disappeared.

"Have I..." Seol-Ah stared at Kang-Woo in fear. She asked anxiously, "... Gone insane?"

Kang-Woo remained silent. Honestly speaking, she was not in a normal state.

*'But...'*

The same could be said for him. Had he stayed sane after killing demons and devouring their flesh and blood?

*'Of course not.'*

Kang-Woo was insane. He was broken and twisted ever since he had first fallen into Hell. Even so, he had gone forward without looking back as he had always done.

“Darling. I haven’t told you much about my past, have I?”

“Pardon?”

“I’ll tell you a little of it.”

Kang-Woo smiled faintly and told Seol-Ah about when he had first fallen into Hell, and how he had turned into a demon after devouring one.

“Becoming a completely different being with the senses of a human comes with its corresponding price,” he stated.

“Does that mean...” Tears dripped from Seol-Ah’s eyes. She asked in fear, “I’ll be... like this forever? I can never go back to normal?”

Kang-Woo firmly nodded. “Yeah. You can never go back.”

Seraph could no longer be separated from Seol-Ah. A body that had already become close to that of an angel could never return to the way it was. Seol-Ah would have to live with her crazed obsession for the rest of her life.

“No... way...”

Seol-Ah collapsed as despair took control over her. Kang-Woo grabbed Seol-Ah’s hand and raised her up.

*‘It’s dangerous to leave her like this.’*

Kang-Woo could not leave Seol-Ah in this state. Her circumstances were different from that of his; he had slowly changed into a demon over a very long time period, but everything for her had changed in an extremely short period of time. It was no wonder that there would be corresponding complications.

*‘But thankfully...’*

There was a very simple way to resolve Seol-Ah’s obsession.

“But that doesn’t really matter, does it?” Kang-Woo stated.

“I’m sorry?” Seol-Ah stared at Kang-Woo, not able to comprehend what he was saying.

“I said, you’re fine the way you are.”

“Wh-What are you talking about, Kang-Woo?”

“Your obsession is me, isn’t it?”

Seol-Ah turned red from the direct question.

Kang-Woo caressed her red cheeks and continued calmly, “Then there’s no problem, since I won’t ever be apart from you.”

“Ah,” Seol-Ah expressed.

Her eyes widened, and sparks ran throughout her body.

“As long as the target of your obsession is me, there’s no problem at all.”

All madness was born out of deficiency; whether it be demons or angels, their madness arose when they did not get what they wanted. In that case, the solution was simple.

“I ask you to trust me just a little more. That’s all I need.” Kang-Woo caressed the ring on Seol-Ah’s left ring finger. “Do you think I gave this to you for no reason?”

“Kang-Woo...” Seol-Ah muttered in a trembling tone. Her shoulders shook as the corners of her mouth rose as far as they could. “Kang-Woo, Kang-Woo, Kang-Woo.” She hugged him as she repeated his name. “I’m sorry. I’m sorry...”

Seol-Ah rubbed her face in his embrace. Kang-Woo smirked and patted her head.

*‘I guess that partly takes care of it.’*

If the instincts of demons and angels were the same in nature, the way to control them should also be the same.

*‘Let’s start by having her accept it.’*

Seol-Ah needed to accept the changes to her body and senses. Rejecting and suppressing them would only make them more rampant. Demonic instinct was like a water hose; forcibly closing the end would cause the pressure to rise and eventually explode, just like how Seol-Ah ended up now.

*‘It needs to be controlled, not stopped.’*

Continuing the analogy from earlier, places for the water to flow out would need to be made. To do that, Seol-Ah needed to accept and understand the flowing water, which was her instinctive impulse.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I’m sorry,” Seol-Ah continuously apologized.

Kang-Woo shook his head and stated, “No, it’s okay. Well... It wasn’t really as I had intended it, but the result wasn’t a bad one.”

Kang-Woo looked toward the unconscious Iris. The energy of the high elves that he could feel from her had become incomparably thicker than before.

*‘She must’ve awakened.’*

It was the most likely conclusion. Iris had pulled out the power out of survival instinct after coming face to face with Seraph’s colossal power.

*‘What a score.’*

The power of the high elves growing stronger in Iris was worth celebrating. With this, her connection to the high elves had grown stronger.

“No, that’s not what I’m apologizing about,” Seol-Ah expressed.

“Huh?”

*‘Then why are you apologizing?’*

“I’m sorry, Kang-Woo.” Seol-Ah grabbed Kang-Woo’s arm while panting heatedly. “I... can’t hold myself back anymore.”

*‘I beg your pardon? Hold what back?’*

“Come with me,” she stated.

“H-Huh?”

Seol-Ah pulled Kang-Woo by his clothes. They passed through the destroyed door and went into her room.

“Wait, darling.”

*‘It’s not that, is it? We shouldn’t. We’re gonna be scolded for abusing our all-ages rating. We’re gonna get told to fuck off to Noblesse[1] if we’re gonna do shit like this.’*

*Clack.* Seol-Ah snapped her finger and a white barrier, far stronger than the one on the door of the room that Iris was chained in, formed on the door.

“Don’t worry.” Seol-Ah smiled gently and hugged Kang-Woo’s head. She pushed him onto the bed and got on top of him. “I’ve practiced plenty.”

“Huh? HUUUH?”

Huh?

HUUUUUUUUUH?

Chapter 363 - So What Tier Were You Again?

The sky was blue, and the chirping of birds sounded like the singing of angels. The sunlight that shone from between the clouds lit the room.

“Aaaahh,” Oh Kang-Woo expressed.

This was life. The ten grueling millennia that he had suffered through in Hell were likely for this very moment— no, it must have been. He looked up at the sky from the windowsill in melancholy.

“What the fuck are you doing?” Cha Yeon-Joo, who had come to his room because it was past noon, frowned.

Kang-Woo, who simply looked out the window without looking at her, remarked, “It’s a beautiful day... is it not?”

“It’s raining.”

“Can you not hear the chirping of birds?”

“I said it’s raining, you moron. There aren’t any birds.”

“They sound like angels singing...”

“Hah,” Yeon-Joo chuckled in sarcasm at Kang-Woo’s nonsense.

Kang-Woo smirked and looked at her pridefully as if she was an ignorant girl. Yeon-Joo frowned aggressively.

“What?” she asked fiercely, feeling displeasure from the look that Kang-Woo was giving her.

Kang-Woo grinned while paying no mind to her response and said, “How do I look like to you right now?”

“Like a dumbass.”

“Don’t you feel anything new about me?”

“I’d guess your brain was switched out for a new one.”

Kang-Woo would usually not take such cutting remarks idly by, but he was different now. He smiled as if he was a saint who could embrace everything in the world and nodded.

“Yeah, I guess it could’ve been,” he replied.

Yeon-Joo’s mouth was left agape, and she rubbed her arms as if she got goosebumps.

“What the hell is wrong with you? Did you take a bullet to the head?”

It was a pointless question. There was no way that there would be guns in Aernor, and even if there were, they would never be able to pierce through Kang-Woo’s head. No, even if a bullet managed to, Yeon-Joo knew that Kang-Woo would be perfectly fine.

“Wait...”

Yeon-Joo’s eyes narrowed. Kang-Woo looked as if he had a screw loose, and the bed was so disheveled to the point that Yeon-Joo wondered how he had slept. There weren’t many things that could explain this situation.

“Well, well.” Yeon-Joo stared at Kang-Woo ridiculously. “I was wondering why a guy like you, who doesn’t even need sleep, was nowhere to be seen in the morning, but you sure went at it.”

The back of Yeon-Joo’s head hurt just from imagining what Kang-Woo had likely experienced last night. She was boiling with rage for some reason, and was surging with the desire to slap the grinning Kang-Woo’s face. *Crack.* Yeon-Joo kicked a nearby chair to vent her frustration, and it shattered.

“Kang-Woo, did someone stop by?” Han Seol-Ah arrived with a boiling pot in hand. There was no question what was inside.

“Ngh...!” Yeon-Joo flinched. f(r)ee

She knew very well how mentally unstable Seol-Ah was lately. Yeon-Joo did not even want to imagine the chaos that would ensue from Seol-Ah seeing that she and Kang-Woo were together alone in his room.

“This is— w-w-w-w-w-w-w-w-well...” Yeon-Joo backed away while stuttering.

“Oh, you’re here too, Yeon-Joo?” Seol-Ah placed the pot on the table while smiling.  
“Great timing. Come eat with us.”

“Eh?”

Yeon-Joo’s eyes widened. Such behavior from Seol-Ah was unimaginable from how she had recently been, exuding bloodlust whenever Kang-Woo was involved with any women. She was acting like herself when Yeon-Joo had first met her.

“Did you sleep well, Kang-Woo?” Seol-Ah asked as she approached Kang-Woo with a smile and kissed him softly on the cheek.

“Yeah,” Kang-Woo energetically nodded.

“Fufu. The food is ready, so come to the table,” Seol-Ah said while gently patting Kang-Woo’s head.

Yeon-Joo stared at the two of them dumbfoundedly and sighed. “Sheesh. You two sure were made for each other.”

She thought, *‘All couples, just fucking die.’*

“Oh? You’re not gonna join us?” Seol-Ah asked.

“I don’t wanna get in the way.”

“Don’t be like that and come take a seat.” Seol-Ah smiled brightly and grabbed Yeon-Joo’s hand.

Yeon-Joo, after thinking for a bit, ended up taking a seat. Seol-Ah sat next to Kang-Woo and opened the lid to reveal kimchi stew filled with eel and garlic[1].

“Huh?” Yeon-Joo expressed.

*‘Eel?’*

“Hohoho. Eat tons and regain your energy, Kang-Woo,” Seol-Ah remarked.

“Thanks for the meal, darling.”

“Wait, wait, wait.” Yeon-Joo quickly waved her hands. “Eel in kimchi stew?”

She had never heard of such a combination.

“What’s wrong with it? We have it like this all the time.” Kang-Woo tilted his head as if he couldn’t understand what the problem was.

Yeon-Joo remained silent and slowly turned her head toward Seol-Ah. She was filling Kang-Woo’s bowl with the kimchi stew with a very wide smile.

“You...” Yeon-Joo stared at Kang-Woo pitifully.

“What?” Kang-Woo asked.

“No, never mind.” She shook her head and sighed.

Kang-Woo had some of the kimchi stew and asked Yeon-Joo, “Come to think of it, what brings you here?”

“Oh, right.” Yeon-Joo recalled the reason why she had come to Kang-Woo’s room in the first place. “Iris woke up.”

“Oh, really?” Kang-Woo put down his bowl and asked, “How is she doing?”

“She’s acting a bit weird. She was trembling a ton as soon as she woke up, like she was terrified by something.”

Seol-Ah slightly flinched. She turned to look at Kang-Woo in guilt.

“Oh, and... I could feel some sort of strange energy from Iris. She emits a golden aura from time to time.”

“Mm.” Kang-Woo nodded.

It was most likely because the power of the high elves dormant within Iris had awoken due to Seol-Ah.

“But why did that little brat pass out in the first place? Did something happen?” Yeon-Joo asked.

“Just a little something.” Kang-Woo avoided answering the question while smiling awkwardly. There was no way that he could tell Yeon-Joo that the angelic instincts in Seol-Ah had gone out of control and caused her to kidnap and threaten Iris. “I’ll go see her later.”

“No.” Seol-Ah shook her head. She grabbed Kang-Woo’s hand and continued, “I’ll go, Kang-Woo.”

“You?” Kang-Woo looked at Seol-Ah, conflicted.

No matter how he thought about it, it would only bring negative results.

Seol-Ah continued with an expression filled with guilt, “I feel like I would have to apologize to her personally.”

“Hmm...”

Although it did not seem like a good idea for the kidnapper herself to visit the victim, he couldn't bring himself to refuse when Seol-Ah's eyes were filled with a firm will.

"Okay. I'll leave Iris to you, darling."

Seol-Ah's mental state had become very stable after their *interaction* last night.

*'But who knows when she'll relapse?'*

Kang-Woo knew very well how powerful the impulses brought about by instincts were. As long as Seraph was inside Seol-Ah, her obsession may go out of control at any time.

*'But...'*

Kang-Woo scanned Seol-Ah. Her face was filled with guilt and worry for Iris; she was the same kind Seol-Ah that he had known for a very long time.

*'I shouldn't have anything to worry about for the time being.'*

He should not make any rash decisions, but Seol-Ah did not seem like she would lose control in the immediate moment.

"Apologize? Did you do something to Iris, Seol-Ah?" Yeon-Joo asked.

"Oh... U-Uhmm..."

"What? Did you scold her or something?" Yeon-Joo snickered.

Seol-Ah scratched her cheek while smiling awkwardly.

"She deserves it, considering all of her shit that we had to endure." Yeon-Joo shook her head while waving her hand. "Anyway, I came to tell you that, but a certain someone was as lifeless as a 0/14 ADC against a Vladimir with 23 kills. No, maybe Tahm Kench is a better reference in this situation[2]."

"What does that mean?"

"Hmph, nothing a troll who steals the CS from an ADC would know."

Kang-Woo raised an eyebrow. Although he had no idea what Yeon-Joo was saying, it felt extremely unpleasant. He narrowed his eyes and poked at her weakness.

"Big words for a Bronze player."

"..."

"I was curious, so I looked it up. You're treated no better than an insect."

"N-Not true!! I just have terrible luck in teams! Just looking at skill alone, I'm...!"

"So what tier are you again?"

"Y-You son of a bitch!"



Yeon-Joo trembled in anger. She wanted to refute Kang-Woo's claims, but she collapsed in despair from the irrefutable fact. Kang-Woo felt great satisfaction. He snickered once the displeasure he had felt earlier disappeared.

"Well, that's enough of that. Let's eat before the stew gets cold," Kang-Woo said.

"Urgh! Just you wait! I've just been slacking off. If I actually put my mind to it, I can easily escape Bronze...!"

"I'd say it's practically hopeless, considering you're still stuck in that tier despite your physical prowess."

Kang-Woo chuckled. He had more or less of an idea after playing a few times with Yeon-Joo that there was no way that she would be in such a low tier with her superhuman reaction speed.

"Shut up!! You don't know shit!" Yeon-Joo exclaimed.

*'That fiery temper of hers is probably what's holding her back. Well, it has nothing to do with me.'*

Kang-Woo smirked and had more of Seol-Ah's kimchi stew.

"Kaaah."

It was delicious. Whether it was eel or anything else in it, kimchi stew was kimchi stew. Kang-Woo got up after emptying three bowls of rice in an instant.

"I'll take care of the cleanup," Kang-Woo stated.

"No, Kang-Woo. Let me."

"You made it, so I should be the one to clean." Kang-Woo placed his hand on Seol-Ah's shoulder as she was about to get up. "Besides, you were gonna go visit Iris, weren't you?"

"Ah..."

Seol-Ah nodded with a gloomy expression after recalling what she needed to do. Kang-Woo levitated the pots with the Authority of the Sky and turned his head to Yeon-Joo.

"Right, then. Let's go wash the dishes."

"Why me?"

"You had some too."

"You ate ten times more than me!"

Yeon-Joo frowned aggressively, but followed behind Kang-Woo anyway while grumbling. Kang-Woo smirked and headed to the imperial kitchen with Yeon-Joo.

Smash—!!

Just then, something fell through the ceiling of the imperial castle. Kang-Woo pulled Yeon-Joo behind him by the shoulder and extended his arm forward, creating a shield shining gold.

“Wh-What the—?!” Yeon-Joo shouted.

Kang-Woo paid her no mind and focused on the being that had fallen from the sky.

“Uriel?”

“Kang... Woo...”

A bloodied angel was stretching out his arm toward Kang-Woo.

“Hurry...”

Uriel staggered toward Kang-Woo and kept himself up while grabbing Kang-Woo’s shoulders. The angel, whose entire body was tattered beyond belief, squeezed out a warning.

“Run... away.”

Chapter 364 - Go To Sleep, Brat

Uriel was covered in blood. Since angel blood was white, he looked like he belonged in an R-18 game. Despite that, Oh Kang-Woo could tell that Uriel was on the verge of death.

His eight wings had all been bent violently as if someone had scrunched up wings made with origami. His left arm was hanging down as if someone had forcefully stretched it out, and his left foot was bent backward. His blood vessels were protruding out from his temple and neck, reaching all over his body like a spider web.

Uriel collapsed. Kang-Woo put his arms under his armpits and supported him.

Kang-Woo remained silent. To be more exact, he had nothing to say. He lifted Uriel up as his eyes sank. There were many things that he wanted to ask, but now was not the time.

“Yeon-Joo, go get Seol-Ah.”

“Y-Yeah! Okay!”

Cha Yeon-Joo quickly nodded and ran somewhere. Kang-Woo laid Uriel down in the hallway. He wanted to take him to the bed, but there was no time. *Crunch*. He bit open his finger, allowing his blood to flow.

Kang-Woo momentarily wondered if it was possible to heal an angel with the Authority of Regeneration. He thought that it made no sense to be able to heal an angel with the blood of a demon.

*‘There’s no time to think about shit like that.’*

Blood was nothing but the medium to activate the Authority of Regeneration; none of the people whom Kang-Woo had treated had been encroached by demonic energy nor had been influenced by it.

*‘I have to try.’*

He needed to administer first aid at the very least. Kang-Woo placed his bleeding finger in Uriel's mouth and activated the Authority of Regeneration.

"Haaa, haaa," Uriel panted.

Thankfully, it had an effect. His skin regained its healthy color, and his mangled limbs returned to normal.

*'It's not enough.'*

His ability was not specialized in healing; it was nothing more than first aid.

"Kang-Woo!"

"I brought Seol-Ah!"

Yeon-Joo brought Han Seol-Ah just in time. Seol-Ah checked the state that Uriel was in with worry and placed her hands on his chest. *Whooom!* White light burst from Seol-Ah.

"Urgh... Cough! Cough!"

Uriel coughed up a fistful of blood. His expression relaxed a little, and his breathing became less labored. His bent wings went back to their normal state.

"Phew," Seol-Ah sighed in relief. Beads of sweat formed on her forehead from having used a significant amount of power in a short period of time. "He's out of immediate danger. If I use a little more power.."

Kang-Woo grabbed the swaying Seol-Ah's shoulder and stated, "This is enough."

"But..."

"I'll take care of the rest," he remarked as he lifted Uriel and took him to a room with a bed. Uriel was twisting and turning while sweating profusely. "Seol-Ah and Yeon-Joo, please leave the room."

It was not good for there to be a crowd in a room with a patient in it.

"Yes, Kang-Woo," Seol-Ah replied.

"I'll let Layla and Si-Hun know," said Yeon-Joo.

The two of them left the room, bringing silence to the room; the only thing that could be heard was Uriel's arrhythmic breathing.

Kang-Woo looked down at Uriel in silence.

*'Who could it have been?'*

Who could have possibly driven an archangel to the brink of death?

*'The summoning ritual in the north...'*

From what he had heard, Sant'Angelo, the floating island of the angels, was located in the northernmost region of the continent.

*'Could there be a connection?'*

Kang-Woo could not be sure whether there was a connection between the traces of a summoning ritual in the north and Uriel's injury, but he was sure that it was by no means a coincidence.

"Ngh... Urgh!"

Uriel twisted and turned on the bed. Kang-Woo bit open his finger again and placed it in Uriel's mouth. It was pointless for him to guess on his own; he would only get the full picture once Uriel was up.

"Kang... Woo?"

Uriel, who had been twisting and turning while unconscious, slightly opened his eyes. He tried to prop himself up, but...

"Urgh!"

"Please stay still. It hasn't been long since your injuries were healed."

Uriel lay back on the bed.

"What happened?" Kang-Woo asked.

He felt sorry about barraging someone who had only just regained consciousness with questions, but he did not have the leeway to wait until Uriel had fully recovered.

Uriel lightly bit his lip and said while trembling, "Sant'Angelo was... attacked."

Kang-Woo nodded. He had expected it; considering where he had sent Uriel off to in order to get away from him, it was simple to guess. The problem was...

"By who?" Kang-Woo asked.

Who could have possibly attacked Sant'Angelo, the angels' abode?

"I'm not sure." Uriel shook his head in pallor.

Kang-Woo had not expected such an answer.

"You don't know?"

"I'm sure that... They were demons. No, there weren't just demons, but demonic beasts as well."

Demons and demonic beasts... It was far too vague.

"But they weren't like the demonic beasts I know. How should I say it...? They possessed intelligence? They followed commands perfectly... In any case, their assault on Sant'Angelo was highly organized."

Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes. He finally got some useful information. Demonic beasts that possessed intelligence and were powerful enough to face beings as powerful as the princes of Hell only meant one thing.

*'Ancient demonic beasts.'* Kang-Woo aggressively frowned. *'Why are ancient demonic beasts in Aernor?'*

He couldn't believe that those uncontrollable monsters would follow someone's orders and work together. It was impossible to make any guesses just from the information about the appearance of ancient demonic beasts.

*'And...'*

There was one more thing that Kang-Woo didn't understand.

"Did you get injured this badly from fighting the demonic beasts?" he asked.

Uriel's injuries were far too abnormal to have been from battle. One normally died before being injured in such ways.

*'Someone tortured him on purpose.'*

There was no other way to explain Uriel's injuries.

Uriel's expression froze as he trembled like Iris in the past in front of Fidelio. His behavior was far off from his usual confident and prideful demeanor.

"I... don't know." Uriel slowly shook his head. "He had a mask on. He... wasn't that big, smelled putrid, and was really... really strong."

If an archangel was saying that, the opponent likely was considerably powerful.

"Hmm," Kang-Woo expressed. "How would he be compared to Rakiel?"

"I'm not sure, since Lady Gaia had fought him with us. But in my opinion... He wasn't as strong as Rakiel. However, he was far more difficult of an opponent."

Kang-Woo's eyes sank. "Why was he a more difficult opponent?"

"He had a strange ability."

"An ability?"

"I'm not sure if it's magic or not, but I suddenly felt pain all over my body. Because of that... I lost without even being able to put up a decent fight."

*'Pain, huh?'*

Kang-Woo nodded. He could understand what Uriel meant by the opponent being weaker than Rakiel but harder to face. Pain was not something one was able to overcome through sheer will.

"Does that mean Sant'Angelo has been destroyed by demons?" Kang-Woo asked.

"No. Lord Michael and Gabriel have likely returned to Sant'Angelo and are fighting the demons. I'm not sure if they can win, but... the *blessing* hasn't been cut off, so Sant'Angelo hasn't been destroyed."

There seemed to have been some sort of buff placed on the place.

"I see." Kang-Woo nodded. He had more or less figured out the situation, as well as what he needed to do now. "Get some rest."

"W-Wait! You're not thinking of going to Sant'Angelo, are you?"

"Of course I am."

Angels were his precious allies. No, regardless of the angels, the enemies that he had no idea of their identity had finally shown themselves. Kang-Woo could not just let them run amok.

"I-It's too dangerous!" Uriel hurriedly grabbed Kang-Woo's clothes.

Kang-Woo chuckled. He slowly raised his hand and placed it on Uriel's head.

"Go to sleep, brat."

*'This hyung of yours will take care of it.'*

*Whoom.* Golden light flowed out from Kang-Woo's hand.

"What are..."

Uriel's vision became blurry, and he passed out on the bed.

"Well, then."

*'Let's go check it out.'*

\*\*\*

Boom! Crash!

Sounds of explosions echoed throughout the dimly shining floating island, which was covered in flames.

"I guess angels are nothing much."

Beings in red demon masks were sitting at the peak of a giant mountain under the floating island in flames. One of the beings wearing the red demon mask snickered. His entire body was radiating a smell so putrid that it would destroy the nose of anyone near him.

A female giggle leaked from another being under a mask. "Hohoho. What do you expect from a bunch of pigeons hiding under Seraph's skirt?"

"Silence," the being sitting in the middle stated. He sounded robotic as if he was devoid of emotions.

The putrid being turned around. "That aside, is it really okay for us to listen to what that hunchback says?"

"I'm sure he's cooking up some sort of scheme, but it's beneficial for us to cooperate with him in order for us to fulfill our wish."

"Hmph, we wouldn't have had to go through this if Rakiel didn't go up and die like a dumbass." The putrid being clicked his tongue.

The being with the robotic voice turned around and raised something shining black; it was wriggling around like it was a living organism. He put it in his pocket.

“We have already found what we need. Pull out.”

“Hm? What about the remaining pigeons?”

“We have no more time to waste.”

“Hah, so much for being known as the Constellation of Despair.” The putrid being snickered.

The being known as the Constellation of Despair remained silent.

“Anyway, have you still been unable to contact Lucifer?” The sexy voice of a woman flowed out from the other being in the red mask again.

The Constellation of Despair shook his head. “The Evil God seems to have no intention of joining us.”

“Hmm, what a shame. I wanted to have a taste of Lucifer.”

The putrid being snorted. “Tsk. Yeah, we know you’re horny twenty-four seven, Constellation of Lust. Weren’t you playing around with a prince of Hell before?”

“Asmodeus? I got sick of him, so I killed him.” The Constellation of Lust giggled.

Just then...

“Something’s coming.” A being of childlike stature with blank eyes turned his head and looked in a direction where nothing could be seen.

“Something?”

“The Protector of Light. Gaia’s child... is coming this way.”

“Protector of Light, huh?” The putrid being snickered. “Perfect. I’ll take this chance to eliminate one of Gaia’s retainers.”

“Do as you like,” replied the Constellation of despair in monotone and turned around.

*Crack.* A black Rift appeared in front of him, and he slowly walked into it.

“Hmm. I’m not that interested in Gaia’s child, so I’m leaving too~”

The Constellation of Lust waved as she went into the Rift. Beings wearing red masks walked into the Rift one after another. Only the putrid being remained at the peak of the tall mountain.

“The Protector of Light.” The being snickered. “I wonder how long you’ll shine for under unimaginable pain?”

The Constellation of Agony, the being radiating rancid smell, licked his lips in anticipation.

## Chapter 365 - I Don't Understand

*Bang!* Oh Kang-Woo leaped into the air and flew at supersonic speed using the Authority of the Sky. The heat generated from the friction between his skin and the air set his surroundings ablaze. Despite flying at such insane speed, he still was not able to reach the northernmost region of the continent quickly.

*'It's further than I thought.'*

Kang-Woo shut his mouth tight. Uriel had flown this long distance just so he could tell Kang-Woo to run away, while his body was a complete mess, no less. Kang-Woo couldn't help but chuckle.

*'Dumb brat.'*

Uriel was nothing but a puppet being deceived and used by Kang-Woo. The fact that his puppet had risked his life to let him know of danger was pitifully pathetic. Kang-Woo felt that Uriel was a goddamn idiot, but he was furious for some reason. Could it be because he found Uriel's moronic actions pathetic beyond belief? He did not know, nor did he have any need to know.

Boom—!!

Kang-Woo sped up even more. Once he drew out the full extent of his demonic energy, a stream of darkness tore through space like a meteor falling from the sky. He reached an endless mountain range so rugged that it did not seem habitable. Beyond it was an ocean, and atop it was a shining floating island covered in flames. And...

Someone wearing a red demon mask with his back to the floating island was staring at Kang-Woo flying in his direction. He descended from the sky and stood in front of Kang-Woo. The man smelled so foul that Kang-Woo thought his nose was going to fall off.

"You must be the Protector of Light."

The being in the red mask snickered. Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes. The man knew that he was the Protector of Light.

*'That means...'*

Kang-Woo recalled the message window that had appeared when he had become the Protector of Light, that all beings of godhood would recognize him as a retainer of Gaia. In other words, the man in the red demon mask in front of him was a being of godhood, meaning there weren't many possibilities of who the man could be.

"Like I thought, you're a Constellation of Evil," Kang-Woo stated.

He had expected it as soon as he saw Uriel's injuries, since there weren't many beings that could drive an archangel so far into a corner. Considering who could possibly attack Sant'Angelo head-on, it narrowed down the number of possibilities even more.

*'The elite guards of the Demon God.'*

They were the vestiges of the era of myths; beings that possessed great power and have existed far before even the princes of Hell.

*'They could be considered gods of sorts.'*



Since they possessed Deific Essence, it was right to think so.

*'I have no idea how they're able to use their powers freely, though.'*

All gods including Gaia were not able to use their powers to their full extent due to the restrictions from the system, but the Constellations of Evil were different; they did not seem to be under any restrictions whatsoever despite possessing Deific Essence.

*'Whatever the case...'*

It was not the time to worry about that.

"Oh? Did you hear about us from Gaia?" The being in the mask stared at Kang-Woo in surprise. He slowly bowed while cackling. "I am the Constellation of Agony."

"What? Constellation of Agony? I thought you'd be the Constellation of Filth because you smell like shit."

Kang-Woo couldn't believe that his guess had been wrong.

*'Wait.'*

"Then you smell this bad because you don't wash?"

*'This motherfucker doesn't have a shred of conscience.'*

"Fucking wash yourself, man. What the hell do you have to do to smell this bad?"

The Constellation of Agony stared at Kang-Woo nonsensically. "I was wondering what kind of person the Protector of Light would be, but it seems you're intellectually lacking."

"The only thing lacking here is your sense of hygiene. No, but seriously, what the fuck is this smell? Be honest, you fucker. Did you wipe after you took a shit or not? No, wait. You son of a bitch, could it be..."

A horrifying thought popped into Kang-Woo's mind. A shiver ran down his spine.

"Did you... shit yourself?"

"..."

"Fuck! I fucking knew it! You disgusting fu—"

The Constellation of Agony extended his arm before Kang-Woo could finish his sentence. Black wedges that looked like giant nails pierced out from the ground, riddling the surroundings with them in an instant. Kang-Woo lightly jumped, but the wedges extended to chase after him. He created a golden shield, and the wedges collided with it.

Crash—!

The wedges went straight through the golden shield without losing any momentum and aimed for Kang-Woo. Kang-Woo twisted his body in midair to dodge the wedges.

"Tsk."

As he had thought, blocking attacks imbued with Divinity head-on was difficult. He would be able to block it if he used ridiculous amounts of demonic energy, but it was highly inefficient. It was like blocking a red-hot skewer with an extremely thick block of styrofoam.

*‘Divinity really makes all the difference.’*

The only thing Kang-Woo could use to take Divinity head on was Chaos attacks.

*‘But...’*

If interpreted differently, it meant Kang-Woo had a chance as long as he didn’t take on his opponent in a contest of strength. Kang-Woo used the Authority of Blink and teleported short distances in succession, making it look as if he was appearing and disappearing all over the place.

“Gáe Bulg.”

Kang-Woo teleported right behind the Constellation of Agony and stretched his right arm downward. The Key of the Demonic Sea on his right middle finger turned into a dark red spear. He grabbed the Key of the Demonic Sea and thrust it forward without hesitation.

Clang—!!

A barrier of demonic energy infused with Divinity blocked the attack. The Key of the Demonic Sea was pushed back as sparks flew.

“Kuh!” The Constellation of Agony quickly turned his head.

It did not seem like he had blocked the attack consciously.

*‘If that’s the case...’*

Kang-Woo lowered his stance and used the Authority of Blink in succession while matching his movements to that of the Constellation of Agony.

Clang—! Clang!

Kang-Woo thrust the spear on the same spot of the barrier over and over again as if he was breaking through ice with an ice pick.

“Gungnir.”

Kang-Woo added one more Authority; the dark-red spear grew larger.

*‘Authority of Blaze.’*

He then added a prince’s Authority. Bright-yellow flames enveloped the spear edge, its heat melting the earth and creating lava. Kang-Woo thrust the spear.

Fwoosh—!!

“Gaaaaaaaahh!”

The spear pierced the Constellation of Agony’s back. He curled up while screaming. Kang-Woo pulled out the spear and prepared to thrust it once again. He grabbed the spear with both hands and stomped on the ground to charge forward.

“Hyaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!!”

Just then, the Constellation of Agony screamed ear-splittingly. A chill ran down Kang-Woo’s spine. He quickly jumped back and threw the spear at the Constellation of Agony.

Black wedges spurted from the Constellation of Agony’s back, making him look like a hedgehog. They flew out from his back in all directions, clashing with the spear that Kang-Woo threw.

Crash!

The collision caused a deafening explosion. The fragments of the destroyed wedges pierced Kang-Woo.

“*Cough!*”

Kang-Woo coughed up blood. Holes had formed all over him as if he had been hit with a grenade. He widened his distance from the Constellation of Agony while using the Authority of Regeneration.

“What in the...” The Constellation of Agony stared at Kang-Woo in shock.

Although Kang-Woo was Gaia’s retainer, he was ultimately a human. The Constellation of Agony couldn’t believe that he was being pushed this far by a mere mortal who did not even possess Divinity. The attack that had pierced his back was so strong that he would have most definitely died if it had contained Divinity.

“Tsk, I guess he won’t die in one blow.”

Kang-Woo spit blood after recovering from his injuries and narrowed his eyes. He had felt it during his battle with Rakiel, but beings of godhood were truly difficult to face. The power of Divinity was so strong to the point that it was illogical.

‘*But...*’

Kang-Woo smiled. His heart beat rapidly as he shivered in delight. He had not gotten this feeling in a very long time.

‘*This is fun.*’

It was so fun that he was about to go insane. It had been a while since Kang-Woo had met an opponent that even stood a chance against him. It had been a while since he had met an enemy that at least squirmed when he trampled on them.

‘*Were there any?*’

He could not think of any among those that he had faced after regaining his power. There was Rakiel, but he had been defeated by Gaia before Kang-Woo could even get fired up.

‘*Oh, I guess there was Behemoth.*’

However, Kang-Woo had not managed to have a proper battle with him either. Kang-Woo’s demonic instincts set ablaze. His desire to battle prey, trample on them, achieve victory and devour their entire being, was boiling.

“I’ll have to clean him up a bit before eating him, though.”

Kang-Woo drew out his demonic energy while smiling. Since the Constellations were mistaking him for the Protector of Light, he did not forget to transform the color of his demonic energy into gold. They likely saw the energy as a mixture of mana and sacred power.

“How dare a mere mortal...”

The Constellation of Agony frowned. A lowly puppet of a god that should be worshiping the gods while on his knees was baring his teeth at him. Although there was a slight difference, he was also a god that possessed Deific Essence. The Constellation of Agony found the situation absolutely absurd.

“Kehehehe! How interesting! Very interesting!”

The Constellation of Agony burst into laughter while grabbing his stomach, and slowly raised his hand. His delight only rose the more arrogant Gaia’s puppet became.

“Protector of Light.”

Although the Constellation of Agony could not feel a shred of justice from Kang-Woo despite having such a grand title, it did not matter. Since the Constellation of Nightmares had said so, there was no doubt that the man in front of him was the Protector of Light.

“I’ll make you feel something good,” the Constellation of Agony said.

“Feel good? What the fuck?”

*‘The only person who can make me feel good is my darling.’*

“...”

The Constellation of Agony frowned for a moment, and then spread his arms wide. He decided to pay no more mind to the demented Protector and activated his Authority that had allowed him to rise to the position of the Constellation of Agony.

“Puppet of Gaia! This is...” He brought his hands together and manifested his Authority using the power of Divinity. He linked his senses with that of the disrespectful human. “... Agony!”

Crack! Crunch!

The sound of cracking bones left the Constellation of Agony’s body. His flesh was ripped apart, his bones broke, and each of his nerves were twisted. There was no way that a mere mortal would be able to endure pain of this level; even an archangel with eight wings had collapsed on the spot while crying in pain. The Constellation of Agony sent the pain that he was feeling through self-harm to Kang-Woo.

“Kahahahaha!!”

The Constellation of Agony laughed in delight. He could not stop laughing from the thought of watching in leisure as the lowly human, who had dared to be disrespectful to him, writhed in pain. All the mortals that had faced the Constellation of Agony had all died while twisting and turning on the ground, crawling in their own piss and shit.

“Feel true agony! Feel despair as your bones break, your flesh is ripped apart, and your blood vessels burn!”

The extreme pain was not one that a living organism would be able to handle. The only being that was able to laugh under such immense pain was the Constellation of Agony. He had never seen a single enemy on the battlefield that hadn't writhed under such pain.

“Do you feel it?! That very pain is the curse of life! It is living sin—”

Bash—!!

“Kurghh!!”

Kang-Woo punched the laughing Constellation of Agony right in the face. The red demon mask was shattered, and the Constellation of Agony tumbled backward.

“You're so fucking loud.”

Kang-Woo frowned while shaking off the Constellation of Agony's blood from his hand. He looked down at the Constellation of Agony in confusion. The pain of breaking bones, ripping flesh, and burning blood vessels...

*‘What's so fucking painful about that?’*

Chapter 366 - Crybaby

“Wh-What?!”

The Constellation of Agony's eyes widened. A face covered in hideous pus was revealed from the broken mask, and he stared at Oh Kang-Woo as if he couldn't comprehend what was going on.

“You... can move?”

The Constellation of Agony had linked his senses with that of the human through his Authority. He was sure that the human was feeling as much pain— no, even greater pain than what he himself was feeling. There was no way a living being could endure such pain unless they also possessed as much resistance to pain as him. Pain was a very effective weapon even against those of godhood, but...

“How can you move under that much pain?!” the Constellation of Agony screamed madly.

Kang-Woo smirked and answered calmly, “Because it doesn't hurt. This much pain is more than tolerable.”

“Tolerable... you say?”

The Constellation of Agony's eyes shook. He had harmed himself to a significant extent because he had wanted to see the disrespectful human writhing pathetically in pain, but the human was enduring it just fine.

“I mean, if I had to say whether it hurts or not, it definitely does,” Kang-Woo expressed. There was no way that breaking bones, tearing apart flesh, and burning blood vessels did not hurt. “But it's nothing I can't handle.”

Kang-Woo shrugged. He was as calm as if his finger had been slightly nicked with a box cutter. It was not the type of pain that was the problem, but its intensity.

“Rather, it’s better than the usual,” Kang-Woo continued while lightly stretching.

It did not feel all that bad, just like how light punches felt more relaxing than painful.

“What?” The Constellation of Agony’s mouth fell open.

He could not understand what was going on. Pain was feared by all, mortal and immortal beings alike. Not even death was more terrifying than pain.

“U-Urghh!!”

The Constellation of Agony grimaced. This could not be happening— no, it should not be happening. He placed his hand on his eyelids.

“Let’s see how long you can keep up that absurd act for!”

Crush! Ooze.

The Constellation of Agony squashed his own eyeballs. The excruciating pain of one’s eyes being crushed and pulled out was sent straight to Kang-Woo. Kang-Woo’s eyebrows slightly rose.

The Constellation of Agony burst out laughing. “Kehe, hahahaha! Yes! There’s no way that you’d be fine!”

Kang-Woo was acting like he was completely fine, but the Constellation of Agony knew that he was just enduring the pain with all his might.

“No, not that.” Kang-Woo chuckled. “You just destroyed your eyes. What’s up with that?”

*‘How are you gonna fight?’*

Kang-Woo stared at the Constellation of Agony, surprised by his ridiculous action. When he had first felt pain in his body, Kang-Woo had thought that the Constellation of Agony’s ability was to make a target feel pain.

*‘Is that not it?’*

When the Constellation of Agony squashed his own eyeballs, Kang-Woo also felt pain in his eyes as well.

“Ohhh, I get it.” Kang-Woo nodded as if he understood.

*‘It’s not an ability that makes someone feel pain, but an ability that links one’s senses with that of others.’*

He finally understood what sort of Authority the Constellation of Agony possessed. He couldn’t help but laugh.

“Then do you attack by hurting yourself?” Kang-Woo asked.

*‘What a dumbass Authority.’*

Attacking through self-harm was certainly a idea, but it had far too many demerits. One's own combat ability would fall from the injuries they themselves made through self-harm. Not just that, the Constellation of Agony had squashed his eyes of all things. Sight was a very important sense; although one could sense the enemy through sensing Qi like in martial arts, it did not seem like the Constellation of Agony possessed such an ability.

“Kuh, you can still act that way?” The Constellation of Agony frowned.

His eyes were regenerated at an incredible rate as soon as he took his fingers out of his eye sockets.

Kang-Woo's eyes lit up. “Oh, I see.”

His regeneration speed was as fast as that of a slime.

*‘No wonder.’*

Kang-Woo had thought that it was a ridiculous fighting method, but it made sense with the absurdly fast regeneration speed that the Constellation of Agony had shown that surpassed even the Authority of Regeneration. It was almost as if he was immortal.

“Try to endure this as well!” The Constellation of Agony shouted.

Crunch! Crack! Crunch—!

The sound of bones breaking could be heard from all over the Constellation of Agony. His body was being deformed everywhere like a child playing with play-doh.

“Oh? This hurts a bit.” Kang-Woo's eyes shone. The pain that came from one's body being deformed like kneading dough was considerably higher than before. “But it's still nothing I can't handle.”

Kang-Woo had felt pain of this level countless times to the point that he was sick of it.

“Wh...at?”

The Constellation of Agony was widening his eyes so much that it looked like the corners were about to rip. The pain just now was hard to endure even for him, who possessed a resistance to pain. No, it was so bad that even he wanted to stop harming himself right this second. He couldn't believe that a mere human, who did not even possess Bottom-rank Deific Essence, was able to handle pain that not even he, the Constellation of Agony who had been the subject of fear among countless angels and humans during the era of myths, was able to handle.

“What... are you? What the fuck are you?” The Constellation of Agony asked.

Kang-Woo smirked. “I mean, even so...”

He did not like being in pain. Kang-Woo leaped toward the self-harming Constellation of Agony. He slightly twisted mid-air, brought his arms above his head and used an Authority.

*‘Inferno.’*

The Key of the Demonic Sea changed form to create a greatsword burning with yellow flames.

Fwoosh—!!!

Incredible flames burned along the greatsword's edge. Kang-Woo swung down the sword.

“Gaaaaaaahhh!!” the Constellation of Agony screamed.

Yellow flames engulfed him; the pain of being burned was added on top of the self-harm.

“Nghh.”

Kang-Woo also slightly grimaced. The pain was sent right to him as soon as he attacked the Constellation of Agony.

*‘This is a bit difficult. I should end this quickly.’*

Kang-Woo continuously swung Inferno.

“It’s... pointless... human...!”

The Constellation of Agony stopped hurting himself and scrunched up. He was regenerating at an absurd rate even while being engulfed in flames. Not just that, demonic energy infused with Divinity covered him as protection.

Clang—! Clang!

Inferno bounced off of the demonic energy. Kang-Woo infused even more demonic energy into the Key of the Demonic Sea.

Crack!

The demonic energy barrier protecting the Constellation of Agony was slowly being broken. Kang-Woo did not stop.

“When you don’t have Divinity...”

One just needed to break the opponent’s Divinity with stupid amounts of demonic energy. Kang-Woo continued to swing the greatsword. The demonic energy barrier was finally broken, and Inferno slashed the Constellation of Agony.

“What the—?!”

The Constellation of Agony was shocked. Breaking through the power of a god in such a barbaric way was like piercing through a boulder with a water cannon.

“Kurgh, gaaaaaahh!” The Constellation of Agony twisted and turned as the continuous attacks slashed him apart. He drew out Divinity while biting his lip. “I told you... that it’s pointless, humaaaaaan!”

Boom—!

Sharp wedges shot out from all over the Constellation of Agony as protection. Kang-Woo dodged the wedges and widened the distance from the Constellation of Agony, who had managed to fully recover in that short moment.

“Hmm,” Kang-Woo expressed.



The Constellation of Agony's regeneration speed was truly impressive. He twirled Inferno while under thought.

"I guess..." Kang-Woo nodded. He had no choice but to admit it. "I can't kill you in a physical fight."

There actually was a way; if Kang-Woo used a Chaos skill, he would be able to tear apart the Constellation of Agony's Divinity and deal great damage to him.

*'But...'*

Even that would be pointless before that absurd regeneration speed. It was so fast that the Constellation of Agony would even be able to fully regenerate within seconds, even if all that was left of him was a finger.

*'I want it.'*

The Authority of Regeneration could not even compare to it.

"*Huff, huff!*" The Constellation of Agony panted heavily.

He once again scrunched up and protected himself with a demonic energy barrier infused with Divinity. Kang-Woo's eyes shone sharply.

*'To face that son of a bitch...'*

He would have to obliterate the Constellation of Agony before he even had a chance to regenerate, or continue to hurt him until his regenerative ability was exhausted.

*'Neither one would be easy.'*

Divinity was severely getting in Kang-Woo's way. He had used so much demonic energy to get through the Constellation of Agony's Divinity that dealing a decisive attack was highly difficult.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck!!" the Constellation of Agony cursed.

He did not expect to be pushed so far by a mere mortal with no Deific Essence.

*'If I unleash the Demon God's power...'*

The Constellation of Agony quickly shook his head to chase away the momentary thought. Unleashing the Demon God's Deific Essence against a mere human was enough of an embarrassment for him to become a laughing stock for eternity among the other Constellations.

The Constellation of Agony stared at Kang-Woo in conflict. Since his strongest weapon, pain, was not working, he was not confident that he would be able to beat that human in a head-on battle. He continued to hesitate.

"Kurgh!"

The Constellation of Agony bit his lip. He could tell that he would have no way to come out victorious without unleashing the Deific Essence.

*'Against a mere human!'*

The Constellation of Agony attempted to unleash the Demon God's Deific Essence while frowning, but...

"Huh?" It did not work. The immense power within his heart was not budging in the slightest. The Constellation of Agony expressed confusion. "Wh-What the hell?"

"Oh, I know." Just then, Kang-Woo clapped his hands together and nodded. He smiled as if he was very satisfied with the idea he had come up with. "Come to think of it, your ability isn't to make others feel pain, but to share your senses with them, right?"

If their senses were shared, it meant that Kang-Woo's pain would also be sent to the Constellation of Agony.

*'If that's the case...'*

Kang-Woo had a very easy way to face the Constellation of Agony.

"You were going off about true agony and shit earlier, weren't you?" Kang-Woo smiled widely. "I'll specially show you a whole new world, man." He placed his hand over his heart while snickering and said, "Molting."

"What are you d—" Just as the Constellation was about to ask what Kang-Woo was doing, his eyes popped open. "A-Aaaahh."

He felt pain. Incomprehensible and unimaginable pain that he had never experienced took over his body and tore it apart.

"Argh, urgh, aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!!!"

*'It hurts. It hurts. It hurts. It hurts. It hurts. It hurts. It hurts. It hurts.'*

All other thoughts were erased as horrifying pain engulfed the Constellation of Agony.

"S-Stop!! Stooooooooooooop!!!" The Constellation of Agony extended his arm in desperation while screaming madly.

Kang-Woo smiled. "What a fucking crybaby."

*'I haven't even gotten started, man.'*

Chapter 367 - Dope

Pain took over the Constellation of Agony's body and mind, and all thought was shredded.

"A-Aaaahh."

The Constellation of Agony raised his head with his mouth agape. It hurt; that was the only form of thought allowed to him. It hurt so much that he despised himself for being able to breathe in such a situation.

"I haven't even gotten started, man."

The Constellation of Agony heard someone's voice, but he couldn't remember who it was; his thought process no longer functioned well enough for him to be able to search through his memories, but he could at least understand the horrifying truth contained in those words.

"Haven't... gotten started?" the Constellation of Agony muttered.

It did not make sense. He couldn't comprehend the nonsense. Haven't gotten started? He had long since passed his limit of pain tolerance.

*'What the hell is this?'*

What could this possibly be for it to hurt this much? The Constellation of Agony could affirm that he had never felt this level of pain before despite having lived since the era of myths. It hurt so much that all the pain he had felt thus far only felt like a tickle.

*'How can a human endure such pain?'*

No, forget being human, even beings of godhood would succumb to such immense pain. They would be convulsing uncontrollably while crawling all over the ground.

"Gaaah, argh, urghh."

The Constellation of Agony bent like a bow as he flopped around on the ground while foaming at the mouth. He was at least not peeing and pooping all over the place because bowel functions did not exist for a being of godhood.

"Stop... Stop..." the Constellation of Agony begged.

He could do nothing but beg before such overwhelming pain. The pain tolerance he was so proud of as well as his Upper Intermediate-rank Deific Essence were completely useless.

"Kurgh! *Cough!* A-Aaaahh."

"What are you going all insane for? It's only been a minute."

"A minute? One minute?"

That was impossible. The Constellation of Agony felt like he had spent an eternity in pain, but it had only been one minute? He despaired with his eyes wide open. He had come back to his senses after hearing that it had only been one minute. The fact that this pain might go on endlessly terrified him more than the pain itself.

*'I-I have to sever it.'*

The Constellation of Agony needed to sever the link between him and that crazy human. He needed to stop sharing their senses. If not...

*'Th-The pain will never end.'*

"A-Argghhh."

The Constellation of Agony got up. He calmed down his insanely trembling hand and extended his arm forward.

*'Stop... the Authority.'*

The Constellation of Agony severed the link of demonic energy between him and the human... No, he tried to.

“Where the fuck do you think you’re running off to?”

Oh Kang-Woo smirked. Despite being under the immense pain of molting, he sensed that the Constellation of Agony was trying to sever their link.

*‘I won’t let you just run away after setting the stage.’*

Kang-Woo snickered. He let his demonic energy permeate into the Constellation of Agony’s demonic energy that was trying to leave his body. The two energies resisted each other fiercely, but only for a moment. The Constellation of Agony’s demonic energy within Kang-Woo gradually started to mix with Kang-Woo’s. Kang-Woo began to control the Constellation of Agony’s demonic energy within him.

“Kurgh! Gaaaaaaaahhh!” the Constellation of Agony screamed, sensing that the demonic energy he had been trying to retrieve was going against him. He stared at Kang-Woo in complete incomprehension. “Wh-What? What the hell did you do?”

The human had forcibly stopped the Constellation of Agony from stopping his Authority and was controlling his demonic energy. Such a thing should not be possible. The Constellation of Agony fell into panic.

“H-How?”

He could barely talk; he was unable to form proper sentences.

Kang-Woo answered leisurely, “How else? I took control of your demonic energy and seized it.”

“You took control of my demonic energy... and seized it? B-Bullshit!! How could you possibly meddle with someone else’s energy?!” the Constellation of Agony screamed madly.

Not all demonic energy was the same; the same went for mana and sacred power. All power had its own unique properties and characteristics. Even if they brought about the exact same phenomenon through the same principles and were fundamentally the same, they were different. Just like how each human was different despite being of the same species, demonic energy also possessed its own pattern and properties based on the one who wielded it.

“I mean, it wasn’t that hard.” Kang-Woo shrugged.

Controlling demonic energy of unique patterns and properties was not even that difficult for him, since he had always done so for the last ten millennia without rest.

Kang-Woo continued, “It’s doable as long as you control it in very small units.”

“What?”

“You can control other people’s energies if you control them in units so small that their unique patterns and properties don’t show.”

“What in the world... are you talking about?”

Controlling energy in units so small that its pattern and property didn't show was absurd; it was like saying there were no differences between different materials once they were broken down into subatomic particles. In the first place, demonic energy was not used in such a way; just like how one did not move their muscles by consciously firing off every single muscle fiber, one did not use demonic energy in such a minutely detailed manner.

“Such a thing...”

It was impossible. Such an insane act must not be possible.

“What... are you? What the hell are you?”

The Constellation of Agony had neither heard nor imagined such a thing. How could such a human exist? There was no way that this human was Gaia's retainer. No one would be able to tame that monster, even if they were a god managing an entire star.

“What the hell are you?!”

The Constellation of Agony trembled in fear and his teeth clacked noisily. This was the second time he had felt this much fear for someone. He could barely breathe. His vision was blurring, and he was feeling extremely nauseous.

“Didn't you already know? I'm Lady Gaia's loyal retainer, the Protector of Light,” Kang-Woo declared.

“Bullshit!!”

“The fuck, man? Why did you even ask if you weren't gonna believe me? So much for being nice.”

Kang-Woo frowned in displeasure and glared at the Constellation of Agony.

“U-Urgh.”

The Constellation of Agony did his best to take back control of his demonic energy within Kang-Woo while biting his lip. Kang-Woo smirked.

*‘I should get ready for it as well.’*

He leisurely stretched and laid down on the ground with his arms and legs stretched out. It had been about five minutes since beginning molting; it was about time the worst arrived.

“Reveal your identity this inst—”

“Hey, vomit-looking-ass old man.”

“Wh-What did you say?”

“You were alive since the era of myths. You're obviously older than me, so what's wrong with calling you an old man? Anyway, you should get ready,” Kang-Woo remarked.

“Ready?”

“Well, it’s not like getting ready will do anything for you.”

Kang-Woo sighed and closed his eyes.

Crack! Crunch—!!

“Gaaaaaaahhh!!”

“Shit, that fucking hurts!!!”

The sound of bones breaking and shrieks echoed from the peak of the mountain.

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“Can you hear me, old man?”

“A-Argghh, urgh.”

“Get up, old man. Hello?”

*‘You’ll catch a cold if you sleep in a place like this.’*

Kang-Woo carefully poked the collapsed Constellation of Agony with the end of his foot.

Squish.

“Ah, fuck.”

Rotten pus got on the end of his shoe. Kang-Woo felt like he stepped on poop that happened to spill out from an overflowing toilet. He couldn’t feel any more disgusted.

“Get the fuck up, man!”

Kang-Woo turned the Key of the Demonic Sea into a hammer and swung it at the convulsing Constellation of Agony.

Boosh!

Pus splattered everywhere.

“Fuck! That’s disgusting!”

Kang-Woo grimaced from the putrid smell exuding from the Constellation of Agony, who was completely unresponsive even after being bashed with a hammer.

“Ahhh... Uhhh...”

Kang-Woo could no longer see a sense of intelligence in the Constellation of Agony’s eyes.

“Aww, man... I had so much information I needed to get out of him.”

Kang-Woo scratched his head due to the complications. He had not expected someone known as the Constellation of Agony to be so shocked from one molting session that his sense of reason completely flew away.

*‘Maybe I should’ve killed him with Chaos skills, even if it took some time.’*

Kang-Woo was belatedly swept over with regret. One always regretted their decisions when it was too late.

“Fuuu,” Kang-Woo sighed. There was another problem.

Conflict reflected in Kang-Woo’s eyes as he looked down at the Constellation of Agony.

“Ahhh...” He grabbed his head. “Should I eat this thing or not?”

The Constellation of Agony was so goddamn filthy that Kang-Woo honestly did not want to use the Authority of Predation. Leaving the filth aside, the smell he was exuding was unbearable.

*‘Are you sure he isn’t the Constellation of Filth?’*

Kang-Woo unconsciously sighed. It felt like he had accidentally dropped his meal into the toilet; he would not mind if it was any other meal, but this meal was made with the finest and most expensive ingredients.

*‘I should eat it for sure, but...’*

He did not want to. He absolutely despised the idea. Kang-Woo looked down at the Constellation of Agony with hesitation, but not for long.

“Haaa, fuck me.”

It was absurd to give up on devouring a Constellation of Evil just because they were filthy.

*‘Authority of Blaze.’*

Fwoosh!

Kang-Woo burned the Constellation of Agony with yellow flames.

“A-Aaaahh.”

The Constellation of Agony did not show any response in particular despite being burned alive. He was alive, but he was no different from a corpse. Kang-Woo took a deep breath and used the Authority of Predation.

Crunch! Crunch!

“Urpp!!”

An inexplicably putrid smell assaulted his nose and churned his insides. All sorts of swear words stormed within his head.

“Motherf... Urgh!”

Kang-Woo rolled on the ground while grimacing as if it was more agonizing than the molting. Just then, he suddenly heard a voice.

“Are you okay?”

Kang-Woo turned his head in surprise. Although he had been using the Authority of Predation, he couldn’t believe that he hadn’t been able to notice someone approaching this close to him. It was a complete blunder on his part.

*'Hm?'*

Kang-Woo turned around to see an angel with ten wings.

*'If he has ten wings, that means...'*

From what Kang-Woo had heard, there was only one other angel aside from Rakiel who had ten wings. Kang-Woo's eyes shone. His thought process accelerated beyond what was humanly possible.

Kang-Woo looked down at himself; he was covered in blood and exposed flesh because he had just gone through molting. Since he had changed the color of his blood with the Authority of Coloring just in case, his blood was red.

*'I can use this situation.'*

"You are..." The angel with ten wings and short blond hair slowly walked toward Kang-Woo, and his eyes widened for a short moment. "A retainer of Lady Gaia."

The man spoke calmly, but Kang-Woo felt an inexplicable sense of scrutiny and callousness under his courteous attitude.

*"Cough! Kurgh... Y-Yes, I am."* Kang-Woo nodded while clenching his chest.

The blond angel approached closer. "You're hurt rather badly."

*"I'm alr— Cough!"*

"You should lie down for a bit."

The blond man slightly lowered his guard after realizing that Kang-Woo was hurt. Kang-Woo nodded and laid down on the ground.

Kang-Woo asked carefully, "And you are..."

"My name is Michael. I have heard about you from Uriel, Mr. Oh Kang-Woo."

*"I... see. Cough!"*

Michael looked around in silence. There were traces of a fierce battle all around them, but there were no signs of the enemy's corpse.

*"Cough! Cough!"* Kang-Woo twisted around while coughing up blood.

Something that had been under Kang-Woo slid toward Michael.

"This is..."

Michael's eyes widened. It was a fragment of the mask worn by those who had attacked Sant'Angelo. If a fragment of the mask was here, it only meant one thing.

"Did you perhaps see who had attacked Sant'Angelo?"

*"Yes... I di— Cough!"*



Kang-Woo coughed up even more blood. Michael hesitated for a moment, and then frowned as if he was conflicted. However, it did not last long.

“Drink this. Your injuries will heal.”

Michael took something out from his clothes and handed it to Kang-Woo. It was a vial containing a liquid of various colors like an aurora. Kang-Woo took the vial with shaking hands and drank the liquid.

Riiing.

[You have ingested the ‘Repayment of the Dragon God.’]

[Healing all injuries and fatigue.]

[All stats have permanently risen by 5, and your quality and control of mana has dramatically increased.]

[You have learned dragon tongue magic.]

*‘Dope.’*

Kang-Woo suppressed the corners of his mouth from rising with all his might.

*‘I just did it to see what he would do, but what a fucking score.’*

“Haaa, haaa.”

“How are your injuries?” Michael asked.

“Th-They all healed in an instant.”

Kang-Woo raised his shirt to show Michael as if he couldn’t believe it. Although he was covered in blood, not a single wound was visible.

*‘It’s a given, since I wasn’t injured in the first place.’*

Kang-Woo looked down at himself as if he couldn’t believe it while keeping himself from smiling.

*‘Now then...’*

It was time for Michael to tell Kang-Woo why he had used such a treasure to save him.

“Who attacked Sant’Angelo?” Michael asked.

*‘I knew it.’*

Kang-Woo answered without hesitation, “It was Evil God Lucifer.”

Chapter 368 - He Doesn’t Wash

“Evil God, you say?” Michael’s expression froze, and then nodded as if he was convinced. He sighed. “I heard that Lucifer began to make his move again, but... I never imagined he would attack Sant’Angelo with ancient demonic beasts.”

“I was just as surprised as you when I first heard about it from Uriel,” Oh Kang-Woo remarked.

“Come to think of it, Uriel seemed to have headed to you. How is he?”

“He’s fortunately no longer in critical condition.”

Michael’s expression relaxed slightly. “What a relief.” He looked around and then asked, “Did you face Lucifer all on your own, Kang-Woo?”

“Yes.”

“I’m surprised. Even if you’re a retainer of Lady Gaia, Lucifer has acquired Divinity and has earned the title of Evil God.”

Michael scanned Kang-Woo skeptically with narrow eyes. He seemed to know how disadvantageous someone without Divinity was against someone with Divinity.

Kang-Woo slightly lowered his head and answered with a trembling voice, “Honestly... I can’t really say that I faced him by myself, since I was pretty much made a fool of by him.”

“Are you saying that Lucifer let you live on purpose?”

“That’s right. As for the reason, I don’t know either.”

Michael fell into deep thought under silence. He slowly looked up to look around, and then asked in a low tone, “Kang-Woo, did Lucifer have something in particular? For example, an item that looked suspicious...”

Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes at Michael’s question.

*‘A suspicious item, huh?’*

Although he had devoured the Constellation of Agony without leaving a single mound of flesh, he did not see any suspicious item that Michael was referring to. No matter how thoroughly they looked around, they could not even find a trace of a suspicious item. If Michael was asking such a question despite that...

*‘This son of a bitch must know something.’*

“He did seem to be trying to hide something,” Kang-Woo replied.

“Did you happen to see what he was trying to hide? Do you remember what it looked like?”

*‘He took the bait instantly.’*

“Mmm. I didn’t really see it in detail either.”

“Was it something dark that was squirming as if it was alive?”

Kang-Woo obviously had not seen such a thing.

“Oh, come to think of it, I remember seeing something similar during my battle with Lucifer.

“Could I ask what it is?” Kang-Woo asked.

“I apologize. I cannot tell that to an outsider—”

“I’m only asking because I might be able to confirm if the item is what you’re referring to if I have some more information, but if it is classified to outsiders... It can’t be helped.”

Kang-Woo sighed and shook his head as if it truly was a shame.

Michael expressed hesitance.

He weighed the scales; on one side was telling Kang-Woo about the item, and on the other was being given details from Kang-Woo about the item that Lucifer had. Michael did not think for very long.

“That dark item is the legacy left by Demon God Bauli that had been secretly kept in Sant’Angelo.”

“Bauli’s legacy?”

Kang-Woo’s eyes widened. He had not expected to gain such valuable information here.

*‘By Bauli’s legacy, could he mean...’*

Kang-Woo clenched his fists as his expectations rose. If this item known as Bauli’s legacy could be a clue to finding his corpse, there was no need to keep on with this shitshow.

“Is it related to the Demon God’s corpse?” Kang-Woo asked.

“No, it is not.”

*‘Tsk, too bad.’* Kang-Woo expressed slight disappointment. *‘I mean, I guess nothing in life goes as you want all the time.’*

He was satisfied enough with having acquired the treasure known as the Repayment of the Dragon God as well as having managed to deceive Michael.

“Does that mean this thing known as Bauli’s legacy has been stolen?”

Michael nodded with a heavy expression. “Yes, so I need to know if the item that Lucifer was hiding really is that legacy or not. After all... there were more than one being that had attacked Sant’Angelo.”

In other words, there had been far too many thieves that it could not be determined who took the most valuable item.

*‘Jeez.’*

The situation was truly fucked in Michael’s point of view. A horde of ancient demonic beasts and beings in red demon masks suddenly attacked their fortress and stole the legacy of the Demon God

they had been safekeeping. Not just that, he had no idea who the culprits were nor who possessed the legacy now.

*'It's fucked.'*

It was far too gone at this point; the angels had already lost to the Constellations of Evil the moment Sant' Angelo was attacked and the legacy was stolen.

*'One of the Constellations of Evil must have that legacy of the Demon God or whatever.'*

Since the Constellation of Agony did not have it, it was likely a different Constellation. However, Kang-Woo had no idea who, or even how many Constellations of Evil there were.

*'I only have one choice to make.'*

Kang-Woo would need to choose who to tell Michael had the Demon God's legacy. It was the right choice to say that the Constellations of Evil were the culprits. If he framed Lucifer for the crime, the Constellations of Evil would naturally be free from suspicion; it would be like helping the enemy. In their point of view, they would have completely gotten away with it since the angels would be taking action while being sure of someone else entirely to be the culprit.

*'But...'*

If Kang-Woo framed Lucifer, the dangers of this world's collapse would grow more dire, possibly being able to move up the high elves' manifestation into the physical world.

*'They each have their pros and cons.'*

One would interfere with the enemy's plans, and the other would move up his own plan.

Kang-Woo stared at Michael with deep, sunken eyes. Michael looked desperate; the Demon God's legacy seemed to be a very important item.

*'Now, what to do?'*

Kang-Woo momentarily closed his eyes to think, and then slowly opened them back up.

"I think Lucifer is the one who stole the legacy. I thought about it, and I'm sure I saw the squirming darkness on Lucifer," Kang-Woo said.

"So the Evil God stole the legacy."

Michael clenched his fists as his eyes gleamed with rage.

*'He's apparently been fighting Lucifer for a very long time.'*

It was not bad at all; the more Michael resented Lucifer, the quicker Kang-Woo's plan would progress.

"Yes. I believe... the Evil God was behind everything," Kang-Woo declared.

Michael remained silent from hearing Kang-Woo's words devoid of uncertainty. He bit his lip and clenched his fists, veins protruding from the back of his hands, and his shoulders subtly shook.

Michael sighed deeply and stated, "I honestly had others in mind as the culprits of this incident when Sant'Angelo was first attacked."

"Others?"

"Yes." Michael swept back his blond hair that looked as if it were made of gold and continued, "I thought the Constellations of Evil were the culprits."

Kang-Woo remained silent. Michael's guess was correct. The ones who had summoned ancient demonic beasts, massacred angels, and stole the Demon God's legacy from Sant'Angelo were indeed the Constellations of Evil, the elite guards of the Demon God. However...

"I only saw the Evil God," Kang-Woo stated firmly.

He severed any form of suspicion that Michael had for the Constellations of Evil and focused them on Lucifer.

Michael nodded. "I know. There is no way that the Prince of Pride would join forces with others." He sighed with a heavy expression and continued while biting his lip, "He had laid low for quite a while after ending up with the witch, but... It seems things have ultimately come to this."

Kang-Woo's eyes shone. "Do you happen to know the identity of that witch?"

"No. Lucifer had hidden her so well that I have no idea which human it is. However, I do know that Lucifer's attitude had changed quite a lot after meeting that witch."

"His attitude changed?"

"Yes. Before, he was all about taking revenge against the Demon King and bringing the Nine Hells to this continent, but he had gotten much less rowdy after meeting the witch."

"Hmm." Kang-Woo nodded.

*'Did something change in him after meeting that lady?'*

He had no idea; in the first place, Kang-Woo could not figure out why a prince of Hell would marry a human woman.

*'Whatever the case...'*

It was not the time to worry about that at the moment.

Crackle—!!

Just then, Kang-Woo heard sparks of lightning. He turned around to see Uriel flying this way from afar. He seemed to have flown all the way here as soon as he was healed.

"Kang-Woo!" Uriel landed on the ground and ran toward Kang-Woo, his face red with fury. He shouted, "I told you to run!! Why did you come here?!"

He did not even notice Michael standing next to Kang-Woo.

"Ahem," Michael softly coughed.

“Gasp. L-Lord Michael?”

Uriel shrank back while fumbling, completely unlike how prideful he usually was.

Michael smiled and asked, “How are your injuries, Uriel?”

“O-Oh, they’re fine now. Kang-Woo treated me.”

Uriel slowly approached Kang-Woo and carefully pulled on Kang-Woo’s clothes. Kang-Woo lightly hit Uriel on the head.

“Ouch! Wh-Why did you hit me?!”

“You should’ve just rested. Why did you fly all the way here?”

“W-Well, because I was worri—”

Uriel’s eyes widened as he was about to say that he had been worried about Kang-Woo. He had realized that Kang-Woo was speaking to him casually instead of with respect.

“A-Ahem!” Uriel blushed.

*‘Why the hell are you blushing?’*

Kang-Woo frowned. He had spoken casually without much thought, but Uriel had gotten overly embarrassed about it. He wondered if he should go back to speaking respectfully, but shook his head while sighing. This was not the time to be worrying about that.

“Come to think of it, what happened to that guy in the red mask? Did you see his face?” Uriel asked while looking around at the traces of battle in the area.

Michael answered in Kang-Woo’s place, “The invader in the red mask was apparently Lucifer. And... he stole the legacy as well.”

“Wh-What?”

Uriel clenched his fists, and his eyes widened. He bit his lip and trembled. His blue hair soared into the air as sparks cracked between the strands.

*‘Are you a Super Saiyan? Your hair stands up when you get mad?’*

Kang-Woo smiled and turned around. “First off, let’s head to Sant’ Angelo. We might be able to gain more clues once we investigate the scene of the crime.”

“Very well.” Michael nodded with a heavy expression.

Although Sant’ Angelo was normally restricted to humans, it was not the time to nitpick over such trivial things at the moment.

*‘With this...’* Kang-Woo thought.

Lucifer had attacked the party hosted at the imperial palace to massacre nobles, tried to kill powerless and innocent civilians en masse, joined forces with the Constellations of Evil, and attacked Sant’ Angelo to steal the Demon God’s legacy. He had truly become a being fit for the world’s collapse.

“But Kang-Woo,” Uriel asked as he tilted his head in confusion. “Did Lucifer... always smell that bad? I don’t remember him smelling that bad in the past.”

*‘Oh, right.’*

Kang-Woo’s eyes momentarily reflected perplexity. There would obviously be discrepancies in information since the one Uriel had met was actually the Constellation of Agony.

*‘Oh, fuck. What should I do?’*

A completely unexpected problem arose. Kang-Woo turned the gears in his head to come up with an answer about the smell.

*‘Shit.’*

However, he could not come up with a way to explain why Lucifer would smell so bad, no matter how much he thought about it. In the end, he decided on this answer.

“The son of a bitch...” Kang-Woo gulped. “... Doesn’t seem to wash himself.”

Silence fell. Uriel grimaced in disgust. With this, Lucifer had become a being fit for the world’s collapse, who had attacked the party hosted at the imperial palace to massacre nobles, tried to kill powerless and innocent civilians en masse, joined forces with the Constellations of Evil, attacked Sant’Angelo to steal the Demon God’s legacy, and smelled so bad because he never washed up.

*‘Lucifer... You gotta wash yourself, man.’*

Chapter 369 - Time to Take Off Your Masks

The white floating island above the ocean in the northernmost region of the continent, which used to be covered in radiant and beautiful light, was now covered in black smoke and piles of ashes.

“Kuh!” Uriel bit his lip from seeing the sorry state of Sant’Angelo.

He was forcibly suppressing his rage while clenching his fists.

“How devastating.” Oh Kang-Woo looked around the ruins of Sant’Angelo.

The ancient demonic beasts that had attacked the island seemed to have been taken care of, but the traces of fierce battle still remained.

Kang-Woo jumped across a crumbling wall and looked around. He had come all the way to Sant’Angelo for two things; one was to obtain clues by investigating the scene of the crime like he had suggested to Michael, and the other...

“Where are the corpses of the demonic beasts that attacked Sant’Angelo?” he asked.

It was to devour all the wasteful leftovers. Although Kang-Woo had become so powerful that he could not hope for any form of growth by eating average prey, it was a different story if those prey were ancient demonic beasts.

*‘Even better if I eat them while I’m still digesting the Constellation of Agony.’*

The Constellation of Agony’s powers that Kang-Woo had devoured with the Authority of Predation had not been absorbed yet; he had lacked the time to do so because Michael had appeared right after

he had eaten the Constellation of Agony. It was better to just digest everything all at once instead of dividing it into separate digestion sessions.

“Gabriel is likely gathering all the corpses in a single area,” Michael answered.

“I see.”

Although Kang-Woo had no idea who Gabriel was, the fact that the corpses were being gathered in a single area was good news for him. It would make things far less annoying.

“Could you take me to exactly where Lucifer attacked?” Kang-Woo asked.

Since the corpses were in the middle of being gathered, the digestion would have to wait. In the meantime, Kang-Woo would fulfill his primary goal. Kang-Woo followed Michael to the place where the Demon God’s legacy had been stored.

“Here it is,” Michael stated.

Kang-Woo could feel suffocatingly colossal amounts of sacred energy within the space.

“Kurgh!”

Kang-Woo crouched while clenching his chest as soon as he set foot into the dome-shaped storage space.

*‘What the hell?’*

He felt like his entire body was burning. Demonic energy beyond his control rampaged within his blood as if it was tearing him apart from the inside. Kang-Woo grimaced.

*‘So this is the place where the Demon God’s legacy was sealed.’*

The sacred energy within this space seemed to have stimulated the dormant power of the Demon God within Kang-Woo. He could feel the Demon God, imprisoned in the Abyss, writhing.

- A-Aaaaaaahhh!

*‘Shut the hell up, man.’*

Kang-Woo forcibly suppressed the Demon God’s rampaging energy. He felt the Demon God’s voice waning after a few deep breaths.

“What’s the matter?”

“What’s wrong, Kang-Woo?”

Michael and Uriel turned to Kang-Woo.

“Nothing. It seems the injuries I suffered from Lucifer haven’t fully healed yet,” Kang-Woo replied while grimacing in pain.

Michael’s expression stiffened. “... You must have been in critical condition, considering you’re still hurt even after drinking the Repayment of the Dragon God.”

“R-Repayment of the Dragon God?!” Uriel shouted in surprise.



Michael nodded while expressing sorrow. "I couldn't just leave Lady Gaia's retainer to die."

"Lord Michael..."

Uriel looked at Michael as his eyes glistened with tears, deeply moved. It seemed the liquid that Michael had given Kang-Woo was far more valuable than Kang-Woo had thought.

*'No wonder.'*

There was nothing that raised one's stats permanently other than the blessing of a god. Not just that, it had raised the quality and control of his mana, and he was even able to learn dragon tongue magic; there was no such treasure but this in the world.

*'Though raising mana control does nothing for me.'*

It was not because the fundamental source of his power was not mana. Whether it be demonic energy, mana or sacred power, all forms of power were fundamentally the same in the sense that they contained the user's will and properties. If one's control over mana rose, so did one's control over demonic energy naturally.

*'But the fact that it didn't rise means...'* Kang-Woo could only think of one reason. *'It's beyond a level that would rise with just the Repayment of the Dragon God or whatever.'*

It was not difficult to understand; in the first place, one's control over energy was not quantifiable. After spending time with Han Seeol-Ah, Kang-Woo's demonic energy control had gone beyond impressive and was now straight up abnormal. Hence, it was not something that would rise just by drinking an elixir of sorts.

*'Well, even so...'*

It had not been without benefits. Since his stats had risen permanently by five, the amount of demonic energy that he could use rose dramatically, and so did his mana and sacred power.

*'My other stats have risen as well.'*

Although Kang-Woo had become so strong that stats no longer meant anything to him, he always welcomed growth.

*'I'll have to research dragon tongue magic later too.'*

Although it would not be of much help to him, he might find something that would be of help to Echidna.

"Fuuu. I'm completely fine now," Kang-Woo stated as he stood back up after organizing his thoughts.

Uriel's expression dyed with relief. Kang-Woo lightly patted Uriel's shoulder while smiling and looked around. He had not noticed when he first set foot into the area because of the Demon God's rampage, but traces of battle were all over the place.

*'This is...'*

Kang-Woo's eyes narrowed. Although not much could be gathered just from the traces, he could be sure of one thing.

*'The one who stole the legacy wasn't the Constellation of Agony, at the very least.'*

The Constellation of Agony was not able to make such marks. To make such marks in a place protected by so much sacred power that would even stimulate the Demon God, one would need to be...

"Hm? Why are you smiling? Did you figure something out?" Uriel asked.

Kang-Woo pulled down the corners of his mouth that had unconsciously risen and shook his head. "No, nothing."

His heart beat rapidly, and an overwhelming hunger suffocated his stomach. He felt like the saliva gathering in his mouth would flow down uncontrollably. His desire to abandon all of his plans and to find the culprit who stole the Demon God's legacy rampaged.

*'I have to endure it.'*

Kang-Woo took a deep breath and suppressed his boiling desire and impulse with all his might. It was obvious what would happen if he were to be blinded by his desires.

*'The fact that I can't use Divinity is a massive minus.'*

Kang-Woo had bridged the gap between him and the Constellation of Agony through stupidly absurd amounts of demonic energy, but he would be no match for someone who was able to make such marks on sacred power this colossal.

*'I would only have three things to work with.'*

Kang-Woo only had three things that would be effective against enemies with the powerful weapon known as Divinity.

*'I could open the Doors.'*

That was a definitive no; the risk of opening the Doors was far too great. It was better not to open them unless it was absolutely necessary.

*'The other two would be to use either demonic energy from the Abyss, or Chaos skills.'*

Neither one was appealing. Although Kang-Woo was able to use demonic energy from the Abyss, it was highly restrictive, and the risk associated with using Chaos skills was unreal. Power that one did not have full control over would only hurt its user.

*'The best option would be for me to learn to use Divinity.'*

Kang-Woo looked down at himself. It was not like he didn't possess Divinity; within the darkness of the Ten Thousand Demon Core were beings of godhood that he had devoured thus far. No, even without them, the Ten Thousand Demon Core contained the Demon God's Deific Essence, so there was no way that Kang-Woo did not possess Divinity.

*'The problem is that I can't use it.'*

For Kang-Woo to be able to use Divinity, he himself would need to acquire Deific Essence.

*'I guess I have no choice but to complete the Road to Becoming a Demon God quest.'*

There was only one condition remaining; Kang-Woo would acquire Deific Essence as long as he learned a Low-rank Chaos skill.

*'But I can't just make it happen right away.'*

Hence, it was not wise to chase after the Constellations of Evil who had stolen the Demon God's legacy. He needed to do what was within his capacity first.

"There doesn't seem to be any information I can get from this place," Kang-Woo stated.

"I see." Michael's expression stiffened in disappointment.

Kang-Woo turned to him and continued, "I would like to ask you something."

"Oh, of course. What is it?"

"You are able to make contact with the gods of the divine realm to an extent, right, Lord Michael?"

Michael knew about the gods of other dimensions such as Gaia, so he likely possessed a method to contact them.

"I am." Michael nodded as Kang-Woo had hoped.

"In that case, are you able to contact the high elves as well?"

"No. They do not reside in the divine realm, so I have no way of contacting them."

"I see." Kang-Woo calmly nodded.

He was not particularly disappointed since Douglas had said that there was currently no one who was able to reach out to the high elves, even if they were the leader of the angels or other gods.

*'I wonder how long they can stay in hiding where no one can find them?'*

Kang-Woo smiled and looked down at his hand. If they couldn't be found, he would just make them crawl out of hiding themselves. He had almost finished making the preparations for it.

*'Rather, thanks to this incident...'*

It had lessened the work he needed to do. The attack of Sant'Angelo, the massacre of angels, and the theft of the Demon God's legacy...

*'There's no better crisis than this.'*

It was a fantastic opportunity in many ways, so there was no way Kang-Woo would just leave it unused.

"If you are able to make contact with the gods of the divine realm, I would like to ask you for a favor," Kang-Woo mentioned.

"A favor?" Michael tilted his head.

Kang-Woo smiled widely.

*'I don't like the fact that I'm helping them out, but...'*

It couldn't be helped; it was all for framing Lucifer as the culprit.

"I would like you to..."

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A being in a red mask was standing alone on an arid land covered in red sand. He was staring in one direction as if he could see something in thin air.

Step, step.

A woman with black squirming tentacles spewing yellow pus approached him. Her eight eyes like that of a spider were gleaming seductively.

"Did you hear? The Constellation of Agony is dead, apparently," the woman said in a sexy voice.

The woman with black tentacles licked her lips with her snake-like tongue. She was the Constellation of Lust, the being who had created demons of unparalleled beauty known as succubuses. She was Proserpine, the Succubus Queen; her beauty was on another level compared to regular succubuses... In demon standards, of course.

"I have heard," the man in the red mask replied expressionlessly.

"Hmm." Proserpine hummed in joy and turned, the fabric that was just barely covering her body fluttered down. "Michael probably killed him, right?"

"Most likely."

"Fufu. What should we do? Michael found out about us," Proserpine asked as her eyes shone.

"It matters not," the man in the red mask replied expressionlessly. He took something out from his pocket; it was a dark object squirming as if it was alive. "No, you could say that it is better for us. It was about time we revealed ourselves to the world."

"Hmm. Why? You didn't let us go anywhere as we pleased all this time."

"The situation has changed." The man in the red mask raised the squirming object. "Now... we need fear."

It was time to let others' fear of the Constellations of Evil fester. Whether it be humans, angels, or gods, they all needed to be in fear of the Demon God; they needed to tremble like infants and bow down with their heads on the ground.

"Only then will we be able to resurrect Lord Bauli."

Once the entire continent was enveloped in fear, the legacy would be completed after the negative emotion was absorbed in its entirety.

"And for that, we need fear to be directed toward us."

Fear in general was not enough; it needed to be directed toward the Demon God. Since the Constellations of Evil had once stood by the Demon God to massacre countless beings in his name, it would not be difficult for the fear to be directed toward the Demon God. freeweb .co m

“Is that why you sacrificed the Constellation of Agony?” Proserpine asked with a wide smile. “Fufu. I know you sealed the Constellation of Agony’s Deific Essence.”

The man in the red mask turned around without answering.

“Kyahaha!” Proserpine burst into laughter. “Well, I never liked him anyway, so I couldn’t care less. But...” She slowly walked up to the man and caressed his chest with her black tentacles. She winked with four of her eyes and remarked cutely, “I won’t stand for it if you do the same to me, okay?”

The man in the red mask maintained his silence. He walked past Proserpine and stood on the widely spread red land.

“Now...” He spread his arms out in front of the red land. “Children of the Constellations.”

Grrrrrk.

The red land shook, and thousands of demonic beasts wearing red demon masks shot out from the sand. They were the Demon God’s army, created during the era of myths.

The man in the red mask said to the demonic beasts, “It is time to take off your masks.”

It was time to plunge the world into inescapable despair. The man in the red mask reached for his own mask and took it off, revealing a hideous diagonal slash scar across his face. He had pale skin and thick purplish dark circles under his eyes. The land of the Nine Hells under him was dyed black just from the evil energy flowing out from his entire body.

He was Tai Wuji, once known as the Heavenly Dragon, as well as one of the three heroes who had killed the Demon God alongside Gaia and Seraph. However, he was now known as the Constellation of Despair.

“How are the gods reacting?” Tai Wuji asked as he approached a boy who was staring blankly up into the sky.

Since Michael had a close relationship with the gods, he would most definitely have let the gods know that the Constellations of Evil have begun to make their move.

“The gods are...” the boy with blank eyes muttered. “... Enraged.”

Tai Wuji nodded as a smile appeared on his expressionless face.

*‘Rage, huh?’*

It was rage toward the Constellations of Evil, and by extension, the Demon God.

*‘But soon enough...’*

That rage would become despair, and that despair would become fear, nourishing the Demon God's legacy.

"Yes. They can stay enraged while they still c—"

"The gods are... Enraged at Lucifer."

*'Huh?'*

"Michael told the gods... that the one who attacked Sant'Angelo and stole the legacy was Lucifer."

The gods were completely off the mark.

Chapter 370 - Yeah, No

"What... are you talking about?" Tai Wuji asked while frowning. The culprit who stole the legacy was Lucifer? It was far too out of left field. "Are you saying that Michael mistook the Constellation of Agony for Lucifer?"

That was impossible; Michael had fought against Lucifer for a very long time, so there was no way that he would be unable to distinguish between him and the Constellation of Agony.

"I don't know." The boy with blank eyes shook his head.

Tai Wuji remained silent. He was having a hard time understanding what was going on. "In that case, has the fear of the angels—"

"They are all toward Lucifer, along with the fear of the humans. With the way things are now, the negative emotions cannot be absorbed."

Tai Wuji's eyebrows flinched. He was able to understand the fear of the humans for Lucifer since he had made his appearance in the empire not long ago, but how could even the fear of the angels be directed at him as well? The one who had massacred the angels at Sant'Angelo and stole the legacy was him, not Lucifer.

"What the hell is going on?" Tai Wuji muttered with his eyes narrowed.

Regret momentarily crossed his mind; maybe it would have been a good idea to attack Sant'Angelo without putting masks on.

*'Provided we were guaranteed to succeed.'*

Since Tai Wuji had been unsure if he really would be able to steal the Demon God's legacy, he and the other Constellations of Evil had worn masks. If they had failed while they were bare-faced, the situation would have been much worse than now. Tai Wuji set aside his regret and returned to his usual expressionless face.

"What will you do?" the boy asked.

"There's only one thing we need to do," Tai Wuji replied calmly.

He did not know why the angels thought Lucifer had been the one to steal the legacy, but it did not change their objective.

*‘To plunge the continent in fear, and to direct that fear toward the Demon God.’*

To perfect the Demon God’s legacy and create the *Key of the Demonic Sea*, they needed an enormous amount of negative emotions.

*‘Not a difficult task.’*

Plunging the continent into fear with its inhabitants fearing for their demise, and each person not even daring to utter the Demon God’s name— it was far too easy. Humans and angels were weak, and the gods were not able to intervene in any way.

Tai Wuji turned to look across the endless ocean. Across the ocean was Aernor.

*‘And...’*

He looked up. Across the dimensional wall, there was Huan, Tai Wuji’s home world, and the world managed by Gaia. These three worlds were known as the Triad, and...

“They will soon... bow down before Lord Bauli,” the Constellation of Despair muttered.

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Unfortunately, Oh Kang-Woo had not been able to fulfill his secondary goal because the corpses of the ancient demonic beasts were being investigated by the angels. Hundreds of them were swarming around the corpses to investigate all sorts of things, so it was not easy to swipe the corpses.

Kang-Woo decided to come back once the angels were about to dispose of the corpses, and went back to Arnan for now. There was a massive commotion in the imperial palace due to Uriel’s appearance and Kang-Woo’s disappearance.

“Find him!! Find him even if you have to scour the entire continent!!”

Iris was nagging at the imperial army, and Kim Si-Hun had already set out to the north along with Balrog to chase after Kang-Woo. So had Halcyon and Echidna... No, everyone except for Lilith and Vernaak had already set out for the north.

Feeling a phantom headache, Kang-Woo put his hand on his forehead while he read the imperial notice that whoever found him would receive an astronomical reward and be granted a noble peerage.

*‘What a fucking mess.’*

It was his fault for leaving without a word, but this was far too much of an overreaction.

“Welcome back, Master Kang-Woo.” Lilith elegantly walked up to Kang-Woo while he was looking down at the imperial notice.

She was giggling while covering her mouth with her hand as if she found the situation highly entertaining.

Kang-Woo sighed and remarked, “You should’ve stopped them.”

“Hohoho. You know how unyielding Si-Hun can be. I barely managed to convince him to take Balrog and the others with him when he was about to chase after you all by himself.”

“Call the others back first.”

They would only have an awkward encounter with the angels who were in the middle of cleaning up after the situation if they were to arrive in the north right now.

Lilith nodded with a smile. “I already have.”

She seemed to have expected Kang-Woo to give her such an order. Kang-Woo was about to scold her that she should’ve stopped everyone from going if she knew this was going to happen, but he shook his head; after all, he was ultimately at fault for heading to Sant’Angelo without a word.

“Oh right, Master Kang-Woo.” Lilith walked up to him, clung to his arm and leaned on him. Her hands were slightly trembling. “Please let us know before you leave next time.”

Kang-Woo remained silent and imagined how he would’ve felt if the roles were reversed; if Han Seol-Ah had charged into enemy lines before he had known it.

“I’m sorry.” Kang-Woo gently patted Lilith’s head.

She smiled widely. “Fufufu. I believed you would come back.”

“Well... I had something to tell you in private, so I guess it kind of worked out.”

“Something to tell me?”

Kang-Woo nodded. Lilith was one of the very few people who knew his true plan, so it was a good idea to let her know what was going on. He told her about what had happened with the Constellation of Agony and the angels back in the north.

“Mm,” Lilith expressed while putting her index finger on her lips. “As you’ve said, it’s nothing but good for the Constellations of Evil.”

“It couldn’t be helped.”

To focus all attention on Lucifer, Kang-Woo needed to take the heat off of the Constellations of Evil. Lilith nodded; it was better to focus on one prey than to divide one’s focus on two and risk losing them both.

“In that case, are you planning on continuing to conceal the appearance of the Constellations of Evil?” Lilith asked.

“Until the high elves appear, at the very least.”

He could also claim that the Constellations of Evil were working with Lucifer, but considering the Constellations of Evil were putting in the work, attention would naturally end up focusing on them instead of Lucifer.



*'Though it might not matter who I use since either would drive the continent to its collapse.'*

Whoever the fear was directed at, it did not matter to Kang-Woo as long as the continent was placed on the brink of collapse.

*'No.'*

Kang-Woo shook his head after thinking momentarily. He was unable to control the Constellations of Evil. He needed to be in complete control for him to create flashy and exciting situations with minimal casualties.

*'And...'*

Having multiple targets to fear might have a negative effect. Emotions could not be set ablaze endlessly; it would wear down and fade over time. For fear to be concentrated, there could not be more than one target for that fear.

*'No matter how I think about it...'*

Just Lucifer was good enough as the evil being that would bring collapse to the continent.

"Until then, I'll keep the focus entirely on Lucifer while concealing the Constellations of Evil as best I can. Lilith, once your information network is complete, regulate information so that the Constellations of Evil aren't brought to light."

"As you command, Master Kang-Woo." Lilith slightly raised the hem of her skirt and bowed elegantly. "But..."

Lilith stared at Kang-Woo in worry. She had heard from him about his battle with the Constellation of Agony, as well as the fact that the culprit who had stolen the legacy possessed power on another level to that of the Constellation of Agony.

"My king."

Lilith stared at Kang-Woo while hesitating to speak. Her expression was heavy as if she didn't know how to bring it up. Kang-Woo was easily able to figure out what she was worried about.

"What? You think I'm gonna lose to them?" he asked.

"N-No, that's not it," Lilith stuttered as she turned away.

Kang-Woo was actually on the money. Although he was the Demon King who had ruled the Ninth Hell, his enemies were gods that had acquired Deific Essence. In terms of pure power, Kang-Woo was hopelessly outmatched.

"Come to think of it, I remember you making that face before." Kang-Woo smirked and lightly placed his hand over Lilith's frozen mouth.

"Are you talking about the time right before your battle against Bael?"

"Yeah."

At the time, Kang-Woo's difference in power compared to Bael had been overwhelming. Even when Kang-Woo managed to defeat Bael, he had not managed to surpass him.

"Lilith." Kang-Woo smiled. "And what happened at the end?"

Bael had been an absolute monster so overwhelmingly powerful that Kang-Woo had not managed to surpass him even to the very end. However...

"Which one of us won?"

Kang-Woo had won. He overcame the despairingly overwhelming difference in strength and managed to come out victorious.

"My king..."

Lilith's eyes widened. Shivers ran down her spine and throughout her body. The ends of her hair unconsciously turned into tentacles, and they turned red as if they were burning.

Lilith looked up at Kang-Woo. Although he was talking as if it had been nothing, she remembered the pain, suffering and humiliation that he had to endure for that victory.

'Ah...'

This was the kind of person Kang-Woo was. No matter what happened, whatever was blocking his path, he would always walk forward.

"Ahh, my king." Lilith breathed heatedly as she became aroused. She put her arms around Kang-Woo's neck and kissed him passionately. She whispered sexily, "I would like to go back to my true form, just for today. I want to make love to you in my true form, not in this ugly shell."

Kang-Woo smiled faintly and stroked Lilith's hair, which was slowly turning into tentacles. He could feel the genuine passion in her eyes. He did not hesitate to answer.

"Yeah, no. Go back."

'*Over my dead body.*'