

## M. in Hell 371

Chapter 371 - Did You Forget It Because It Barely Appeared?

“I’ll be in my room because I have something to do, so let me know when Si-Hun and the others arrive,” Oh Kang-Woo stated.

“Tch.” Lilith clicked her tongue in disappointment, but only for an instant. She smiled brightly and nodded. “Yes, Master Kang-Woo. I will contact you as soon as they arrive.”

*‘I saw you click your tongue. No chance I’m gonna let you touch me with your tentacles.’*

Kang-Woo turned away from the sullen Lilith and quickly walked away.

“Sir Kang-Woo!”

Iris approached him on his way to his room and bawled her eyes out while grabbing his hands. After consoling her that he was alright and telling her to stop worrying about him and focus on her duties, Kang-Woo finally managed to reach his room.

“Okay.” Kang-Woo lightly stretched and drew out his demonic energy, which spread throughout the room and solidified as if it was coating the walls. “Gáe Bulg.”

Kang-Woo created a dark-red spear and threw it as hard as he could at the wall. *Clang!* The spear bounced off the wall coated with demonic energy along with a clear metallic sound.

“This should be good enough.”

Kang-Woo lightly knocked on the coated wall and walked toward the center of the room. He took a deep breath in and focused his mind.

*‘I’ll deal with the digestion first.’*

He had not melted down the Constellation of Agony’s power that he had absorbed with the Authority of Predation yet. He had been planning on digesting it along with the powers of the ancient demonic beasts, but he ended up having to digest just the Constellation of Agony after failing to acquire the corpses.

*‘Well, it can’t be helped.’*

It was far better than getting greedy while risking his relationship with the angels getting sour. Besides, he would have a chance to acquire the corpses in the future. Although the demonic energy within the corpses would dissipate over time, he had no other choice.

“Now, then.” Before Kang-Woo began, he uttered the words that he hadn’t said in a very long time. “Status Window.”

He could not remember the last time he had opened it— no, he had almost forgotten about its existence. Since it had been a long time, he had decided to check his status.

[Status Window]

P??yer Name: Oh ????

Lev??: 86 [Nin?? Awakening]

“... The hell is this?”

His status window was filled with unknown letters. Kang-Woo looked down at his status window, warped as if it was filled with static, and frowned.

*‘No way... Did you forget it because it barely appeared? Have you been writing away without thinking of stats and hiding it now because you were put in a pickle?’*

“What the hell are these black letters?”

Kang-Woo looked down at the warped portions of his status window. However, no matter many times he opened and closed it, the letters did not disappear.

*‘I don’t think they’re doing any harm, at the very least.’*

Since he had no idea something like this had been happening before opening his status window, it likely was not influencing his powers in any way. After thinking for a while, he clicked his tongue and shook his head.

*‘I have no idea.’*

In the first place, the system, which was known as the providence of the universe, was a highly abstract thing. Since Kang-Woo had no clues or anything to guess from, it was beyond him to figure out why this had happened.

“I’ll set it aside for now.”

Kang-Woo closed his eyes and meditated.

Splash.

He saw a black sea. It was the endlessly stretching Demonic Sea. It surged, whirled, split, united, upturned, and burst. It was irregular and unrestricted, a chaotic sea of infinite demonic energy.

*‘I can’t believe I’ve gotten used to seeing this insane sea.’*

Kang-Woo smiled bitterly as he observed the raging black sea. Although it looked highly unstable, this was merely the shallow end. As one went deeper toward the Abyss, the ferocity of the demonic energy became more severe.

*‘Well, then.’*

Kang-Woo went down toward the sea of demonic energy, and placed his foot on the raging surface.

Fshhh—!

The sea of demonic energy froze along with a disturbing noise. Kang-Woo’s abnormal demonic energy control had quelled the violently raging sea. He walked on the surface of the sea that had become as hard as concrete. There was a monster pierced by countless teeth on the surface of the sea.

- A-Aaaahh.

The Constellation of Agony was groaning with his mouth open.

Kang-Woo smirked. “You’re still like that? What a crybaby.”

He shook his head. The Constellation of Agony had been reduced to this state after experiencing molting only once.

“Where the hell is your backbone?”

Kang-Woo walked toward him while clicking his tongue.

- A-Aaaahh. The Constellation of Agony looked toward Kang-Woo. - Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!!

Crack, crunch.

The Constellation of Agony screamed while twisting his body madly. He frantically struggled to get away from Kang-Woo as far as he could.

“It’s pointless, man.”

The Constellation of Agony had already been sucked into the Demonic Sea by the Authority of Predation. There was no way that a mere Constellation of Evil would be able to overcome the force of the Demonic Sea when not even the Demon God was able to.

- Y-You... You, you, you...

The Constellation of Agony’s dangling eyeball that had been mangled by the sharp teeth stared at Kang-Woo. He repeated his words like a broken radio.

- A-Aaaahh. I see. I see.

He nodded what remained of his head as if he was convinced of something.

Kang-Woo frowned. “What are you talking about?”

He approached the Constellation of Agony and grabbed his head.

The Constellation of Agony muttered while sobbing, - *It... was you. You were... the Demon of... Prophecy.* He trembled in extreme fear. - *You were...! The Demon of Proph—*

“The fuck are you talking about?”

Kang-Woo grimaced at the Constellation of Agony’s incomprehensible words. He likely did not know Kang-Woo well enough to be spouting such bullshit.

“You see, I’m...”

*Rip.* The corners of Kang-Woo’s mouth tore all the way to his ears, and sharp teeth pierced out from the skin over his cheekbones.

“The loyal retainer of Lady Gaia, and...”

Kang-Woo’s jaw dislocated, his mouth opening beyond what was humanly possible, just like a snake swallowing a large prey. His mouth reached all the way down to his solar plexus. Despite that, Kang-Woo was speaking as clearly as before.

“The Protector of Light.”

Munch! Crunch!

The Constellation of Agony was eaten alive by the abnormally wide mouth. He was squashed, pierced, twisted, and contorted.

Grrrk.

The body of the Constellation of Agony was broken down into bits within Kang-Woo's stomach and dissipated into the black sea.

*"Buuuurp."*

Another evil being had disappeared thanks to the Protector of Light (Type: Darkness).

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Riiing!

[You have devoured the entirety of the Constellation of Agony's Deific Essence.]

[A portion of the Deific Essence is sealed.]

[The Deific Essence devoured by the Authority of Predation is interfering with the system's restrictions.]

[Raising the level cap from 86 to 89!]

"Eh?"

*'Only three levels?'*

Kang-Woo frowned aggressively. He saw the message that a portion of the Deific Essence was sealed.

*'No wonder he was so weak.'*

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue. He did indeed think that the Constellation of Agony had been way too weak for his grandiose title. Other than the fact that the Divinity within his demonic energy made his defense extremely solid as well as his absurdly fast regenerative speed, he had been nothing special.

"I didn't manage to get my Tenth Awakening Trait."

Kang-Woo sighed in disappointment. He had been looking forward to leveling up to get his Tenth Awakening Trait the most, but he had been one level short of reaching Level 90.

*'I had a feeling that it would be a clue to earning Divinity.'*

Since the battle with the Constellation of Agony made him painfully aware of how important Divinity was, he was even more disappointed.

"Tsk," Kang-Woo clicked his tongue and shook his head.

*'I guess I'll hope for better next time.'*

There was nothing that he could do at the moment. He could try to go out of his way to acquire the ancient demonic beasts' corpses, but it was pointless.

*'There aren't any ancient demonic beasts that possess Divinity.'*

Even if there were, Behemoth would be it.

"Let's see... In that case..."

His excitement had died down due to having been one step short of reaching his Tenth Awakening, but there was one additional thing that he had managed to acquire.

*'Dragon tongue magic.'*

It was the knowledge that he had gained after drinking the treasure known as the Repayment of the Dragon God. Kang-Woo organized the knowledge of dragon tongue magic swirling around in his head. His eyes shone with curiosity.

*'Manifesting magic by using the power imbued within words, huh?'*

It was an extremely interesting method. Dragon tongue was obviously the keystone of dragon tongue magic, and dragon tongue itself was the beginning and end of all magic.

*'The language wasn't created for communication purposes in the first place.'*

Dragon tongue was a magical formula in the form of language. One could only use dragon tongue by adjusting one's intensity, pitch, pronunciation, and speed of one's speech to a degree of perfection.

Normal magic and skills also required activation words or to be cast, but in those cases, it was mainly used for materializing an image, or the symbol of the magic or skill itself.

*'It can also be used for the coolness factor, like Reynald.'*

Kang-Woo was reminded of the kind-hearted young man who had gone out of his way to shout his skill right before he was about to attack.

*'He was a kind-hearted fellow, but to think he died so pitifully.'*

Kang-Woo shook his head as sorrow swept over him.

*'That's why activation words should be short and concise. It should also never give away what the attack does. For example, Rasengan is better than Gomu Gomu no Jet Pistol.'*

In any case, dragon tongue did not stop at simple activation words that allowed one to manifest an image, but the magical formula itself.

*'In other words, as long as the mana required for the manifestation of magic is supplied...'*

Simply saying the dragon tongue was enough to activate the magic.

Silence fell in the room. Kang-Woo stroked his chin and got up from his chair.

"This is pretty fun."

Possibly because his hopes had not been high, he was having a lot more fun than he had expected. It was not because he was after the power of dragon tongue magic; however strong it was, it would not be as good as the Authorities of the princes of Hell. If he simply wanted strong techniques, he

wouldn't go out of his way to research dragon tongue magic. He was not interested in how powerful or useful dragon tongue magic was.

*'The way to imbue power into language...'*

Kang-Woo was curious about its principles.

"Mmm."

Kang-Woo smiled and stretched. His motivation was through the roof for some reason.

*'Maybe it's because my growth has been stagnant for a while.'*

The Chaos skills and demonic energy from the Abyss were so difficult to control to the point that they could lead to his death; he seemed to have unknowingly accumulated stress due to such dangers.

Kang-Woo decided to take this chance to research dragon tongue magic. Thankfully, he wouldn't be researching it alone; he had someone he could discuss dragon tongue with.

Whoooooom.

The communication crystal orb vibrated. Lilith's voice flowed out of it as soon as Kang-Woo put his hand over it.

[Master Kang-Woo. Just now—]

"Yeah, I know."

Kang-Woo turned to face the door.

Rumble.

He could feel vibrations similar to a rhinoceros charging. He lifted the demonic energy protecting the room.

Bam!

The door was destroyed.

"Kang-Wooooooooooooooooo!"

Echidna jumped into Kang-Woo's arms.

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"... I can't?"

"Yeah. You can't use dragon tongue, Kang-Woo."

Chapter 372 - But I Can

"Kang-Wooooooooooooooooo!"

"Whoa, there."

Oh Kang-Woo caught Echidna as she jumped into his embrace. Echidna looked up at him while teary-eyed.

“Why, why did you disappear without a word?!” she shouted.

Kang-Woo smiled bitterly. He was most certainly at fault for this incident. If he had been in their shoes and either Kim Si-Hun, Han Seo-Ah, Echidna or anyone else acted on their own, he would have been furious. The fact that he was short on time was just an excuse; he could have concisely contacted them before heading out.

*‘Was I more hot-headed than I thought?’*

Kang-Woo couldn’t tell. He might have been more impacted by Uriel’s critical state than he had initially thought. In any case, he was in the wrong.

“I’m sorry,” Kang-Woo apologized while patting Echidna’s head.

Echidna was about to say something, but refrained from doing so and simply clenched Kang-Woo’s clothes without a word.

*“Sniff, sniff.”*

*‘Sheesh, you sure are full of snot and tears.’*

Blow!

“Wha...”

*‘Why are you blowing your nose on my clothes?’*

Blow! Blow!

*‘Stop that, young lady. You’re getting snot all over my cl—’*

Blooooowww!

Kang-Woo grabbed Echidna’s shoulders and lightly separated her from him. Soon after...

“Hyung-nim!”

*‘What is it this time, man?’*

“Why, why did you disappear without a word?!”

*‘Are we gonna go through this each time per person? Keep that up and we’ll be able to fill up today’s chapter.’*

“Sorry. I was so out of it that I didn’t think to contact any of you guys,” Kang-Woo replied.

“Haaa. Jesus, do you have any idea how worried I was?”

Si-Hun sighed in relief and then glared at Kang-Woo. Seeing his eyes filled with rage, Kang-Woo smirked.

*‘Cute little son of a bitch.’*

Si-Hun really felt like a little brother. Kang-Woo was finally able to escape after consoling every single one of his party members who had chased after him to the north. Seol-Ah slowly approached Kang-Woo after he finally managed to resolve the mess.

“Are you really okay, Kang-Woo?” she asked.

“Yeah, I told you I am.”

Seol-Ah carefully reached out to touch Kang-Woo. She smiled brightly and nodded. “Okay, I’ll trust you.”

*‘But why are you touching my limbs if you trust me?’*

Kang-Woo suppressed his thoughts from leaving through his mouth and turned around. He walked up to Echidna, who was sitting down on the bed with her eyes all puffy from crying so much.

“Can you help me for a bit?” he asked.

“Hm? Me?”

Echidna looked around to see if Kang-Woo had been talking to someone else, and then jumped up in surprise. She had always been the one to be helped by Kang-Woo, but the time had come for her to be able to help him. A fresh and exciting feeling ran down her spine and throughout her body.

Echidna gulped and nodded energetically. “Hm! Yeah, I can help! But with what?”

Echidna looked up at Kang-Woo with sparkling eyes.

Kang-Woo smiled bitterly and continued, “I want you to teach me stuff about dragon tongue magic.”

“Dragon tongue magic?”

“Yeah.”

“Do you want to use dragon tongue magic, Kang-Woo?”

Kang-Woo nodded. To be more precise, he was trying to understand the construct and principles of dragon tongue rather than to be able to use it.

Momentary silence fell. Echidna sat back down on the bed and rolled her feet covered by pink bunny socks. The bunny’s ears were flapping up and down.

Echidna then answered with a sad expression, “You can’t.”

“I can’t?”

Echidna carefully nodded. “Yeah. You can’t use dragon tongue, Kang-Woo.”

“Hm,” Kang-Woo expressed. “Why not?”

“Because you’re not a dragon.”

*‘Oh. Only dragons could use it? I mean, I guess that makes sense since it’s called dragon tongue.’*



Kang-Woo chuckled while putting his hand on his forehead. It was an obvious reason, but he still felt frustrated nonetheless.

*'It feels like I was forced to stop shitting midway.'*

He understood it in his head, but he still wanted to question it for some reason.

“Dragons have their own unique vocal organs,” Echidna remarked.

She opened her mouth and pointed inside it. She had three vocal chords.

*'Three, huh? Why did I never know this? No, it'd be weirder if I knew. In what world would I ever look at someone's vocal chords?'*

“This organ usually fully forms once you become a mature dragon, but mine was fully developed early thanks to you, Kang-Woo,” Echidna said while smiling.

Kang-Woo groaned and clicked his tongue. “Then does that mean dragon tongue can't be used without that vocal organ?”

“Yeah. You won't be able to pronounce the words at all.”

Dragon tongue was a technique that crammed the entirety of a magic formula into a language. If one was not able to pronounce the words, there was no way for one to be able to use them.

“Hmm,” Kang-Woo expressed.

*'I mean, I was never interested in using it anyway.'*

He only needed to understand the principles of imbuing power into words.

“Can you use it for me?” Kang-Woo asked.

Echidna nodded. “Sure, just a second.”

Since they couldn't use it in the room, they separated from the rest of the party and headed to a remote mountain near the area.

Echidna took a deep breath and opened her mouth wide. [D O V A H K I I N!]

The roar was so thick and abnormal that one would hardly believe that it came out from a little girl. The thunderous roar leveled the ground, and sharp blades of wind slashed everything in the area. The forest was sliced into tiny little pieces as if it had been placed in a giant blender. It was like a natural disaster had stormed by.

*'Whistle.'*

Kang-Woo's eyes shone with great interest. It had been far stronger than he had expected.

*'When did she grow this much?'*

Kang-Woo stared at Echidna like a proud father. She had become far more powerful than when they first met.

“Haaa, haaa. What do you think, Kang-Woo?” Echidna asked while panting and looking up at Kang-Woo with sparkling eyes.

Kang-Woo chuckled and patted her head.

“Hm! Hm!” Echidna smiled widely while snorting with excitement.

*‘So cute.’*

Kang-Woo could understand how fathers felt as they watched their daughters grow.

*‘That aside...’*

Kang-Woo fell into thought while tapping on his chin with a finger.

*‘Demonic energy moved as soon as Echidna talked in dragon tongue.’*

He was able to tell the difference after watching from right next to Echidna. For regular magic, the entirety of the magic formula was constructed first, and then the activation word was uttered to manifest the magic. In other words, it was a form of trigger word. But in the case of dragon tongue, the demonic energy moved at the same time that the activation word was uttered, and the magic manifested as soon as the activation word was finished.

*‘Amazing.’*

Kang-Woo’s eyes shone. If he had to make a comparison, it was like the difference between a bow and a gun. Regular magic was like a bow; the archer took out an arrow, aimed at the enemy, pulled the bowstring, and let the arrow loose. Kang-Woo also used skills made by merging Authorities in that manner.

*‘But...’*

Dragon tongue magic was different. Dragons simply placed their finger on the trigger of the ready-to-fire gun that was dragon tongue, and simply pulled the trigger by saying the activation word to fire the gun.

*‘Dragon tongue is usually far faster.’*

The difference in speed would become wider the more advanced the magic became. Low-rank magic barely required any former preparation. They were almost instinctual, so they usually did not even require activation words.

*‘Normal magic is better in that aspect.’*

However, more time was required to manifest magic the higher its rank was. If one was able to manifest magic just by uttering the activation word, the difference would be massive.

“Imbuing power into words, huh?” Kang-Woo muttered.

It was as ambiguous as before. As he was lowering his head while in thought, Echidna approached him.

“Don’t worry about it too much, Kang-Woo. You already use magic super fast even without something like dragon tongue.”

That was indeed true; Kang-Woo barely used activation words for his skills. His demonic energy control was so abnormally high that it took him under 0.1 seconds to prepare skills made by merging Authorities. However...

“That 0.1 seconds makes all the difference.”

Even if more zeroes were added and it only took 0.0001 seconds, that short time difference decided the result of a battle between the truly powerful. If Kang-Woo became able to use magic just by saying the activation word, he would be allowed more time to focus on other things.

“I’ll give it a try, at the very least,” Kang-Woo remarked.

“I told you, it’s impossible since you don’t have the vocal organ.”

Echidna pulled on Kang-Woo’s clothes as if questioning why he wasn’t listening to her. Kang-Woo smiled and turned his head.

*‘Now, think. Would the reason really have to do with the vocal organ?’*

Kang-Woo shook his head. No matter how he thought about it, that did not seem to be the fundamental problem.

*‘That may be the case purely in terms of dragon tongue magic.’*

Dragon tongue was created and advanced by dragons; it was only natural that Kang-Woo would not be able to imitate them since he did not possess their vocal organs.

*‘But...’*

The key of dragon tongue, that fascinating power, was not such a superficial aspect.

*‘Imbuing power into words.’*

That was the core of dragon tongue and its foundation. Dragon tongue was simply a result that was derived from the concept of imbuing power into words.

*‘If that’s the case...’*

There was no reason that Kang-Woo would not be able to use it.

“Fuuu,” Kang-Woo inhaled as he recalled how Echidna had roared.

“You can be so stubborn sometimes, Kang-Woo. Dragon tongue was developed and advanced over hundreds of thousands of years. It’s not something you can just—”

[D O V A H K I I N!]

The roar that had come out from Echidna’s mouth came out from Kang-Woo’s mouth this time. The ground was leveled as a storm of demonic energy raged. However, the energy that was tearing apart the surroundings suddenly dissipated as if a fuse had been cut.

“Huh?” Echidna’s eyes widened as she looked back and forth at the leveled ground and Kang-Woo. “Wh-What? How did you do that, Kang-Woo?”

Although it had gotten cut midway, Kang-Woo had definitely used dragon tongue. Echidna rushed toward Kang-Woo and pulled on his clothes.

“Hmm.” Kang-Woo frowned as he stared at the leveled ground.

He was not interested in the fact that he had managed to use dragon tongue.

*‘Why did it stop midway?’*

He was more focused on why it had only been partially successful.

*‘Because my vocal organ is different.’*

Echidna had been right in that aspect. The formula that had been crammed in the word had not manifested correctly because it had been said through a different vocal organ.

“I got the hang of it now,” Kang-Woo said.

“Wh-What?”

Echidna looked up at Kang-Woo in confusion. How could he have gotten the hang of it after just one try? It was impossible, even if Kang-Woo possessed the vocal organ of a dragon. Even a mature dragon took a few months at least and decades at most to learn just one dragon tongue magic.

“What are you talking about, Kang-Woo?” Echidna asked with a trembling voice.

“The fundamental concept of dragon tongue magic is imbuing power into words, right? In that case, you don’t need to pronounce the words like dragons do.”

Kang-Woo pointed his hand at the peak of the mountain and uttered, “Dovahkiin.”

Rumble—!!

A natural disaster several times more destructive than what Echidna had shown laid waste to the entire mountain. Kang-Woo smiled at the destruction he had caused and shook his head.

“No. I don’t even need to cling to dragon tongue. If the skill is fundamentally to imbue power into words, I can just say whatever I want, can’t I?”

He could just imbue his will into the words he uttered and mix it with his energy. As long as those conditions were fulfilled, that in itself would become magic.

Riiing.

[The skill ‘dragon tongue magic’ is evolving into ‘Soul Speech’!]

[You have accomplished an unprecedented feat!]

[Dramatically raising your demonic energy control!]

Echidna simply stared at Kang-Woo with her mouth agape in silence. Kang-Woo laughed.

“I can’t, you say?”

*‘But I can.’*

## Chapter 373 - Haunted House (1)

Silence fell. Echidna turned away from Kang-Woo and sat down while hugging her knees with her head buried between them.

“Uhhh...”

“Cheater,” Echidna said while pouting. She glared at Kang-Woo and said again, “You’re a cheater, Kang-Woo.”

Oh Kang-Woo smiled and tried to pat her head.

“Rawr!” Echidna stuck her head forward and bared her teeth.

She was likely trying to scare him, but...

*‘So cute. I wanna tease her, but... Mm. I shouldn’t.’*

It was not the time for that.

“Don’t touch me!” Echidna shouted sharply.

Kang-Woo retracted his hand while smiling bitterly. Echidna wasn’t acting like herself, but he could understand why.

*‘It makes perfect sense.’*

Echidna had trained like crazy to learn dragon tongue magic, and even more after she had seen Kang-Woo while he was molting. Seeing Kang-Woo using dragon tongue, which she thought that he would never be able to use, in not even a day was likely a huge shock to her.

No, Kang-Woo had not stopped at dragon tongue; he had gone beyond that and evolved the technique to something known as Soul Speech. He could pretty much guess what Echidna felt when she saw that.

*‘She probably felt that her efforts until now were denied.’*

She could have also felt ridiculed, or that her efforts would never come to anything no matter how hard she tried. She was likely being weighed down by despair after coming face to face with a wall that she could never cross.

Kang-Woo looked down at the crouching Echidna in silence. He wanted to tell her something.

*‘This isn’t a matter of talent.’*

It wasn’t a matter of time either.

*‘Absolutely not.’*

Such things were not enough to learn dragon tongue and reach the realm of Soul Speech in less than a day.

“Urghh.” Echidna bit her lip and lowered her head; tears welled up in her eyes.

Silence fell once again. Kang-Woo was making all sorts of unreasonable excuses in his head. This was not a matter of talent nor time; it was a matter of the difference in the weight they were shouldering, as well as the path that they had walked until now.

Kang-Woo possessed abnormally high demonic energy control to the point that it was monstrous; it was enough to even make a being of godhood faint in shock. The reason was awfully simple.

*'Because I would die if I couldn't control it.'*

Kang-Woo had lived for all this time while frantically struggling to survive. He would not have come this far without that struggle. He had spent every second of every day in fear of death if he let himself go even for a single moment. Those days piled up to months, years, and had reached ten millennia.

"Tsk," Kang-Woo clicked his tongue.

Even so, he had no intention of arguing with Echidna about how she knew nothing and quibbling over how much he had suffered. Pity, compassion, and sympathy were meaningless at this point for him.

"I knew you were amazing, Kang-Woo. I did, but..."

Echidna lowered her head in sorrow. She likely had a lot on her mind.

Kang-Woo smiled and turned around. "Let's go back."

Trying to console her would be no different from making fun of her. She needed time to accept it.

"Okay." Echidna slowly nodded.

She stood up while slouching lifelessly, and then blankly stared up at the sky. Then suddenly, she slapped both of her cheeks. She walked up to Kang-Woo and slightly pulled on his clothes.

"I'm sorry for yelling at you earlier, Kang-Woo."

"Hm?"

Kang-Woo stared at her unexpectedly.

*'I thought it'd take her a few days.'*

Her recovery had been faster than he had expected.

*'I guess she's grown.'*

It seemed Echidna had not only grown physically, but mentally as well. Kang-Woo smiled and nodded. He raised his hand and ruffled Echidna's hair.

"Have you calmed down now?" he asked.

"Yeah. It's only natural you would do something like that, Kang-Woo."

*'What does that mean?'*

"I don't know much about your past, but... Balrog tells me about it from time to time."

Echidna put her arms around his waist in silence. The silence continued between them for a while.

Echidna then broke the silence. "Don't push yourself too hard, Kang-Woo."

"I didn't really push myself this time." Kang-Woo smiled awkwardly.

That was a lie; even if his demonic energy control was abnormally exceptional, it had been an extremely dangerous gamble to attempt to unearth the foundations of dragon tongue in just a day. It was no different than disassembling a machine that he had no idea how it was designed and reassembling it to his liking. Worst case scenario, forget Soul Speech, the dragon tongue could have gone out of control and he could have gotten greatly injured.

*'Well, that's what I've always done.'*

Kang-Woo grabbed Echidna's hand. "Let's go back. Iris said that she would prepare a feast for dinner to celebrate everyone's safe return."

But of course, it would be the imperial chefs who would be preparing it.

"Hm! Hm! I like Iris!"

*'You said that you hated her before.'*

Kang-Woo chuckled and walked back to the castle.

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A week had passed since the Constellation of Agony had died. Kang-Woo had been so busy that he had no time to test out his newly acquired Soul Speech. Matters regarding the empire, angels, and gods were happening so fast, though he had been the one to instigate it.

"Fuuu." Kang-Woo sighed and stretched his shoulders.

He drank some of the coffee that Han Seol-Ah had brewed for him.

"Are you okay, Master Kang-Woo?" Lilith asked in worry.

Kang-Woo had not slept for a week straight.

"I'm physically fine, but I'm kind of getting fatigued mentally," Kang-Woo replied in a tired tone.

Lilith's information network had been more or less perfected, so they had been racking their brains to come up with various overblown rumors regarding Lucifer to foster fear among the people. He was even trying to monitor the movements of the Constellations of Evil as well as investigating Lucifer's wife, so even creating a clone with the Authority of Cloning was not enough to divide the work to a manageable degree.

"How is fostering fear for Lucifer going?" Kang-Woo turned to ask Lilith.

If he did not have her help, he would have given up long ago.

"It is going smoothly. Please take a look at these," Lilith replied as she showed him a few photos.

They were photos taken around the Arnan Empire. One of them was an empty bar; although there had been some people while Fidelio had still been in power, not even a single rat could be found anymore.

“No one is leaving their homes because of their fear for Lucifer,” Lilith remarked.

“Very good.” Kang-Woo smiled.

He felt sorry for the bar owners, but the fear of Lucifer having taken root deep within the hearts of the people was good news.

*‘I should provide them with money and food later.’*

Since he had practically incapacitated the empire’s economy, he was planning on taking responsibility for the incident after it was all over.

“That aside, this much of an effect in just a week is beyond my expectations. I guess the news of the attack on Sant’Angelo was big.”

The angels wanted to hide the fact that Sant’Angelo had been attacked, but there was no way that Kang-Woo would let that ammunition go unused. He used Lilith’s information network to spread the news all over the continent that the sanctuary of the angels had been desecrated and plundered.

“There’s that too, but...” Lilith smiled widely. “The fact that the gods had taken action left a bigger impact.”

“Oh, that?” Kang-Woo smiled.

Aernor was mostly polytheistic. Considering there were several gods that possessed Deific Essence and there were apostles that did their bidding, it was only natural. The majority of the continent worshiped Celestial Goddess Seraph and God of Heroes Tirion, but many people worshiped other gods as well.

A week ago, a revelation was simultaneously received by apostles of multiple gods.

- Evil God Lucifer will bring collapse to the continent!

The revelation’s contents had been short but powerful. Not just that, the warning had been from not one, but multiple gods simultaneously. It was only natural that it would bring chaos to the entire continent. The people locked their doors and trembled in fear of the Evil God and his subordinates that might come to invade at any second.

“It’s going well.” Kang-Woo smiled widely.

The message that he had sent the gods through Michael had a large effect. Once public fear of the continent’s collapse was fostered, it would not be long until the high elves manifested into the physical world.

*‘But I’d have to do more for that to happen.’*

There was a limit to what simple rumors and fear could do. Only through the right incidents and Kim Si-Hun solving them would it perfect Kang-Woo’s plan.



“Hohoho. Do you know what Lucifer is being referred to among the humans lately?” Lilith asked.

“Hm?” Kang-Woo tilted his head.

Lilith continued while giggling, “He’s known as the Lord of the Flies. A demon of filth and disease.”

*‘Oh. Sheesh, Lucifer. That’s why you should wash yourself more often, man.’*

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue in pity. Lord of the Flies was an extremely filthy title compared to his former title, Evil God.

*‘You brought this on yourself. I didn’t do anything wrong. Trust me, bro.’*

Kang-Woo turned to Lilith and asked, “Anything else?”

“Oh, right. Come to think of it, I happened to receive a bit of a suspicious report.”

“A suspicious report?” Kang-Woo asked while narrowing his eyes.

Lilith nodded. “People have been continuing to go missing in a certain city... Well, it’s not large enough to be a city, but it’s a fairly sizable town.”

“Missing?” Kang-Woo frowned. People going missing was not something that could be ignored, but it was not something that would be found suspicious by Lilith either.

“Did they just go missing?”

“No. I wouldn’t be reporting it to you if that was the case.” Lilith shook her head.

“Then what?”

“Mmm... How should I say this?” Lilith searched for a fitting term while placing a finger on her lips. “A haunted house... I guess?”

“A haunted house?”

*‘What the hell’s with that out of the blue?’*

“A giant mansion apparently appeared near the town. People who found it suspicious entered the mansion, but...”

“They never came back out, or something like that?”

“Yes.”

It was a staple horror movie trope.

“Mm.” Kang-Woo’s eyes shone. It was far too interesting to leave it be. “Bring Si-Hun over.”

Chapter 374 - Haunted House (2)

“Constellation of Fear.”

“Yes, Master of Despair.”

“Will this really be able to change the flow of fear?”

“Hahaha. There is no need to worry. Human fear comes from the unknown. No matter how much they fear the Evil God... People merely know his *name*.”

“Oh?”

“Give it some time. Soon... The entire continent will be plunged into fear of the Constellations.”

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“... It certainly is worth an investigation.” Kim Si-Hun, who had been told of the missing people in a town on the outskirts of the empire, nodded.

It was far too optimistic to think that there was no relationship between the mansion that suddenly appeared outside the town and the disappearing people.

“Let’s set out right away. Oh, are you in the middle of anything?” Oh Kang-Woo asked as he stood up from his chair.

He had spent an entire week buried under a pile of paperwork, so he wanted to move around.

“I had plans with some noble ladies, but... I didn’t want to attend anyway, so I will cancel them,” Si-Hun replied as he sighed.

The greater the people’s fear of Lucifer grew, the more popular Si-Hun became. He was starting to be revered as the hero who would save the continent from the hands of the filthy Lord of the Flies. Those of power from all over the continent were flocking to the empire to make connections with Si-Hun.

“Got it. In that case, bring Layla with you on the way and brief her on the incident as well,” Kang-Woo stated.

“Will Layla be coming with us as well?”

“Yeah.”

Layla was Gaia’s incarnation; they might be able to gain some sort of clues if the power of a god were to make contact with the suspicious mansion.

*‘Not all gods are righteous and kind, after all.’*

There were likely some gods that were cheering at the appearance of Evil God Lucifer, or were trying to take advantage of the chaos and come up with ways to raise their own Deific Essence. Some might be enraged at Lucifer on the outside, but were thinking otherwise.

*‘We can only trust our beautiful and intelligent Lady Gaia. Yup, yup.’*

“Got it. I’ll be right back.” Si-Hun left the room.

Kang-Woo turned to Lilith and said, "Lilith. You get ready too."

"Pardon? Me too?"

Lilith's eyes widened, not having expected for Kang-Woo to nominate her as well.

"There's no one more skilled than you in search and detection. Plus, you're the one who found out about the incident."

Rather, there was no reason not to take her.

*'I shouldn't take any more than this.'*

There was nothing more foolish than bringing a crowd to investigate a suspicious incident.

"Uhh... Mm." Lilith slurred with an awkward smile and then nodded. "I understand. In that case, I will guide you to that mansion."

Kang-Woo had expected her to love getting the opportunity to go somewhere with him, but her reaction had been a lot more lukewarm.

*'Is something going on with her? Well, I'm sure I'll find out eventually.'*

Kang-Woo stood up.

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"Yeah," Kang-Woo muttered.

They arrived at the town located on the outskirts of the empire. The small town that would likely have a town chief instead of a governing lord was covered in fog. The streets were deserted, and the sound of horses neighing, commonly heard in the continent, could not be heard at all. No one would be able to tell that the town was inhabited if not for the lights visible through the windows.

Kang-Woo continued, "This is suspicious as fuck."

*'Is this Lothric Castle[1] or something?'*

"That is where the town chief lives. He is also the one who first reported the incident," Lilith said as she pointed at a house.

It was a house that the town chief resided in, but it was no different from the other shabby houses around it.

"I don't really feel any vitality in this town." Layla frowned as she looked around.

She carefully grabbed Si-Hun's hand, unsettled by the ominous aura surrounding the entire town.

"Let's enter," Kang-Woo said as they headed to the chief's house.

Knock, knock.

*Creak.* The door slightly opened, and an elderly man with a very wrinkly face peeked out. He glared at Kang-Woo and the others with caution.

"Who are you?"

“We’ve come to investigate the missing cases.”

The old man scanned Kang-Woo, Lilith and Layla warily, but he gasped while widening his eyes as soon as he saw Si-Hun.

“C-Could you be...!”

The old man trembled as if he couldn’t believe his eyes.

Si-Hun bowed while smiling awkwardly. “My name is Kim Si-Hun.”

“I-I knew it! You were the Sword Emperor[2]!”

“Pardon?”

‘*Sword what?*’

“The emperor of swords! The hero who chased away the Evil God! Aaaahh, I can’t believe someone as great as the Sword Emperor would come to help this small town!”

The town mayor shook while bawling his eyes out, and Si-Hun also shook for a different reason.

“Pfft! S-Sword Emp... Pfft!” Kang-Woo suppressed his laughter with all his might.

He couldn’t believe that Si-Hun had come to be known as the Sword Emperor. He was so... *jealous*.

“Wh-What a f-fantastic title, Si-Hun.”

*Kehehehe*. Kang-Woo smacked Si-Hun’s shoulder repeatedly as giggles seeped out from his mouth.

Si-Hun was shaking in silence. Despite coming up with cringe names like *Sirius Corps*, he seemed to be unable to handle a shockingly cringe name like *Sword Emperor*.

“P-Please stop laughing, hyung-nim!” Si-Hun shouted.

“Kahahahaha! Why? It’s a great title that the people gave you, isn’t it?”

“Ugh...” Si-Hun couldn’t bring himself to complain in front of the town mayor about why people had given him such a cringe title, and could only bite his lips.

Si-Hun pouted in silence.

Layla came up to him and grabbed his hand. “It just means that the people hold you up in high regard, so there’s no need for you to be so embarrassed.”

“But...”

“Hohoho. I’ve taken a liking to it, at least.”

“R-Really?”

“Yes.” Layla smiled. “Sword— Pfft! Emperor. What a great title.”

Si-Hun’s expression crumpled even more. Kang-Woo, unable to hold it any longer, burst into laughter.

*'Dayum, sister-in-law. You sure know how to tease people.'*

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According to the town mayor's explanation, the mansion had appeared five days ago. People started to disappear when three young men of the town entered the mansion and never came back. After that, an ominous fog engulfed the entire town, and people began to disappear one by one. There were currently twenty-eight people that had gone missing; considering the size of the town, it did not seem like a coincidence at all.

After hearing the details, Kang-Woo and the others headed to the mansion.

"Wow," Kang-Woo expressed after seeing the mansion from up close. Windows were shattered, the door was rotten, and the walls were crumbling in certain areas. "This is the perfect place to shoot a horror film."

It was so blatantly ominous that Kang-Woo couldn't help but chuckle. He shrugged and walked toward the mansion. The place was trying to be so blatantly scary that Kang-Woo was not scared by it at all.

"Let's go in," he stated.

*Creak.* Kang-Woo opened the door, but he had no idea how it was still attached to the hinges. In front of them was a hallway that smelled of mold and faint blood.

"I certainly sense unsettling energy," Si-Hun uttered as he narrowed his eyes and searched the hallway.

He summoned the holy sword in advance and placed it on his waist.

Bam—!!

Just then, the door that they entered the mansion from suddenly slammed shut, and the entire mansion fell dark instantly.

"Dayum," Kang-Woo expressed.

*'They're really pulling out all the stops, huh?'*

Kang-Woo snickered as if he was highly entertained. He lightly snapped his fingers, and then two flames appeared to light the hallway, which made the hallway look even more ominous.

The hallway was full of mold, rusted metal, and unknown black moss. Kang-Woo frowned as an unpleasant smell filled his nose. He looked around the hallway and noticed that it was forked.

"Let's split up into two and investigate the interior. Make sure to call with the communication crystal if you find anything."

The mansion was much larger than he had expected. The hallway was not that wide either, so traveling as a whole group of four would be inefficient.

"Understood." Si-Hun nodded and went down the right hallway with Layla.

Kang-Woo turned around and went down the other hallway.

Kang-Woo noticed that Lilith was not following him. "What's wrong? Did you find something?"

Lilith bit her lip without answering. "I-It's nothing, my king."

She swallowed her saliva and hugged Kang-Woo's arm tight.

*'Huh? She's been acting weird for a while now.'*

Kang-Woo stared at Lilith while narrowing his eyes, thinking of a possibility.

"Lilith, could it be you're... scared?"

"O-Of course not! There's no way I would be scared just because I entered a run-down mansion like this!!" Lilith shouted.

Kang-Woo smiled. Her reaction only solidified his suspicions. "Man, how unexpected. I never thought you'd be scared of something like this."

He had been with her for a thousand years, but this was the first time he had seen her act this way.

"I told you, I'm not scared!" Lilith shouted as her face was as red as a tomato.

Kang-Woo softly laughed. "If you're so scared, should I investigate on my own?"

"N-No. Like I said, I'm not scared in the slightest." Lilith pulled on Kang-Woo's arm.

"Let's go, my king."

"Okay, okay."

She was obviously pushing herself, but he paid it no mind.

*'This is new.'*

It had been a while since he had seen this side of Lilith; no, it had been the first time.

*'I never thought she'd be scared of stuff like ghosts.'*

It was entertaining to see a flustered Lilith compared to how relaxed she always was. Kang-Woo suppressed his laughter and continued investigating the mansion. Their steps echoed throughout the hallway.

"Urgh."

Lilith's expression was getting darker by the second. Kang-Woo laughed in silence while looking at her reactions.

*'What's so scary about this?'*

Ghosts had no way of harming them even if they appeared, so he couldn't understand her reactions.

*'But it's fun to watch, at the very least.'*

Kang-Woo could now understand why people loved watching horror films with others who couldn't handle it, and watching their reactions to the scenes. He thought that having brought her was worth it just for her reactions alone.

Boom!

Just then, a large drawer that had been in the hallway suddenly fell. One of the cabinets opened, spilling what looked to be human eyeballs, intestines, and blood.

Kang-Woo chuckled. "What a cute contrapt—"

"KYAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH!!!" Lilith screamed.

She held Kang-Woo's arm tight and leaned her head on his shoulder. A sloppy and sticky sensation traveled up his arm.

*'Huh? A sloppy and sticky sensation?'*

"Hyaaaaaaaaaahhh!"

Lilith's hair floated and turned into green tentacles spewing pus that wrapped around Kang-Woo. Tears flowed down Lilith's eighteen eyeballs.

"KYAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH!!!" Kang-Woo screamed.

"M-My king!"

Lilith's green tentacles dug into his clothes. No, not just his clothes, but they even dug into his mouth, nostrils and ears.

"Urrrrggggghhhhh."

*'What the actual fuck?'*

"I-I'm so scared!!!"

*'Me too. I'm fucking scared too.'*

"S-Save m..."

*'Urrgghhh.'*

Chapter 375 - Haunted House (3)

In the mansion surrounded by ominous fog, one of the rooms was filled with a thick scent of blood and rotten trees. Translucent wraiths roamed the room.

[Ah... Aahh.]

[Kill, kill, kill.]

[Rip off the ears, pull out the eyes, cut off the nose, crush the tongue.]

[Kill, kill, kill.]

[Giggle, giggle.]

The wraiths roamed around the room while singing a chilling song as they danced and laughed. Despite being translucent, they could not be any more hideous. Their heads were split in two as their brains trickled down, their eyeballs were dangling out of their eye sockets, and their tongues reached all the way down to their collarbone.

They did not possess sharp claws or fangs. They were made purely to instill fear into humans; fear of the unknown, of beings that were between the boundary of life and death that the living had never experienced. Hence, these beings were far more terrifying than any demon or demonic beast.

“A-Aaaahh.”

A young man was tied to a wall in the room where the wraiths were dancing. He was trembling uncontrollably, fear having taken complete control over him. His eyes were missing from his sockets, his ears had been forcibly ripped off, and his nose had been cut off by something sharp. The rest of his body was not fine either; forget fingernails, none of his fingers were present.

“K-Kill... me.”

The young man no longer wished to live. He simply wished for death that would end the excruciating pain and endless fear.

[Giggle.]

[Giggle.]

The wraiths laughed as they danced around the young man.

“P-Please!! Pleaaaaaase!!”

He struggled frantically. Although he could no longer see because he had no eyes and couldn't even hear properly because his ears had been ripped off, he could tell that these wraiths would not kill him.

“A-Aaaaaahhh!!!” he cried out in madness.

His head was filled with the wraiths' laughter.

[Fun, fun, fun.]

[Scream more for us.]

[Be even more afraid.]

They sang while dancing merrily.

[Your ears were ripped off.]

[I guess you won't be able to hear!]

[Your eyes were pulled out.]

[I guess you won't be able to see!]

[Your nose was cut off.]

[I guess you won't be able to smell!]

[Giggle. Giggle. Giggle.]

[Let's not cut off his tongue.]

[Let's not, because he has to scream.]



The man's mind was being slowly broken down as the wraiths roamed around him and giggled. Something flowed out from the man; a thick black energy. It was negative emotion. The wraiths absorbed the materialization of extreme fear.

"A-Aaaaaaaahhh!!"

The man's screams filled the room. He was not the only one. A total of twenty-eight humans were tied up in the room as they screamed in fear while surrounded by wraiths.

[Giggle. Giggle.]

The wraiths laughed inside the room filled with despair. Just then, one of them raised its head, and the other hundreds of them followed suit.

[People have entered.]

[Kill, kill, kill.]

[Who will it be this time? How will they scream this time?]

The wraiths danced while laughing in joy. They moved to search for their new prey.

[What should we cut first this time?]

[What should we rip off first this time?]

Their giggles were full of malice. Once the wraiths flew to where their prey were...

[Huh?]

Squelch.

The hallway was filled with green tentacles, and sticky mucus covered the floor, walls and ceiling. They had never seen such a realistic manifestation of nightmares before.

[What? What? What?]

[What's this?]

The wraiths trembled as they instinctively felt fear. They stopped dancing and singing.

*Squelch.* Something came out from between the green tentacles.

"U-Uuuurrrrhhh."

It was a young man with black hair, the prey that the wraiths had been waiting for. The man who had escaped from the green tentacles raised his head and stared at the wraiths flying around the hallway.

[A human has come.]

[Prey has come.]

The wraiths started to sing and dance again once they saw their prey.

"Kyaaaaaaahhh! My king! Gh-Ghosts! Ghosts have appeared!!"

The green tentacles filling the hallway fiercely squirmed as a woman's screams were heard from somewhere. The man was sucked back into the tentacles after having barely escaped from them.

“Urgh, urggggghhhh.”

The man was being squished between tentacles with just his right arm exposed, which was frantically shaking. He scratched the floor with his right arm, but then it lost its strength and flopped on the ground. He used what remained of his strength and wrote a message on the ground with the pus on his fingers.

- The culprit is Lili—

“Kyaaaaaaaahhhh! Th-They’re coming this way! The ghosts are coming this way!”

However, his desperate efforts were cut short by the woman’s screams. Even his right arm was sucked in between the tentacles. The wraiths stopped dancing and tilted their heads in wonder.

[What’s going on? What’s happening?]

[Could it be a comrade sent by the Constellation?]

[Who? Who?]

The wraiths approached the monster that was hunting the human.

“Kyaaaaahhh! Ahh...”

The shrieks of the woman suddenly stopped as if she had fainted. The green tentacles filling the hallway stopped moving and flopped to the ground.

*Squelch.* The man that had been sucked in between the tentacles slowly stood up and lifted his head with blank eyes.

[The human came back out.]

[He’s still alive, he’s still alive!]

[Let’s capture him and kill him, kill him.]

The wraiths danced joyfully again after finding out that the prey they had thought had been stolen by another monster was still alive.

“So it was you guys,” said the man with sharp eyes. “You... did all this.”

The fear that the man should be feeling from coming face to face with the wraiths could not be felt, only blazing fury. The wraiths tilted their heads in wonder, unable to understand.

[We didn’t do anything though?]

[We haven't done anything yet.]

They haven’t laid a finger on the man in front of them, at the very least.

“You didn’t do anything... you say?”

The man’s voice shook. Darkness so thick that it couldn’t even be compared to the evil energy of the wraiths filled the hallway.

*Rumble.* The entire mansion shook. The man slowly walked toward the wraiths.

“You... sons of bitcheeeeeeeeees!!” the man roared like a beast.

The wraiths trembled after being exposed to suffocating demonic energy. Overwhelming fear took control over them.

[What's wrong? What's wrong?]

[We haven't done anyth—]

“Do you have any idea?!”

*Boom!* The man shot forward and grabbed the head of the wraith closest to him. It was impossible for a physical being to grab the body of a wraith, but the man grabbed it with ease.

[H-Huh?]

[Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaahh!!]

Before the wraiths could even figure out what was going on, the wraith that had been grabbed shrieked. Black energy invaded its translucent body and ripped the wraith apart from the inside out.

“How hard I worked?!”

The man ran at the speed of sound to grab more wraiths and ripped them apart mercilessly.

“To get away from those tentacles?!”

A horrifying massacre ensued. Although there was no spillage of flesh and blood, the bodies of the wraiths were most certainly being ripped apart. The remaining wraiths quickly began to run away.

[No, no.]

[We haven't done anything.]

[We haven't done anything wrong.]

They made excuses while frantically running away, but it was pointless.

“Raaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!”

The roars of a wounded beast echoed throughout the mansion. True hell had fallen on the haunted house that had been made to instill fear into humans.

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[We're sorry. We're sorry.]

[We were wrong. We were wrong.]

The wraiths trembled in fear. The devil wearing human skin was walking toward the wraiths that had been driven into a corner.

[Gyaaaaaaaaahhh!!]

A wraith was ripped apart with every step the human took. The wraiths that had been created to instill extreme fear into humans were dying while stricken with fear.

[Monster. Monster. A monster has appeared.]

[Spare us, spare us.]

The wraiths ran away in fear by going through the walls. A few wraiths managed to survive the Demon King's rage and escape the mansion. Kang-Woo did not go out of his way to chase after them, since he had more or less managed to vent his anger.

"Fuuu, haaa." Kang-Woo took a deep breath in and out. He slowly looked around the destroyed mansion and saw that there were no more wraiths.

"Ah." He only managed to return to his senses now. He frowned and scratched his head. "I should've captured a few of them."

He needed a few of them alive to figure out how this mansion came to be.

*'Though it's weird to think about capturing wraiths alive.'*

Kang-Woo looked around. He had killed all the wraiths that he could see while blinded by rage, so not a single wraith remained. He thought about chasing after the ones that had escaped, but he could no longer sense their presence, possibly because they were spirits.

*'Shit.'*

He belatedly regretted his decision, but what was done was done. None of his hundreds of Authorities had the power to resurrect an annihilated soul.

"Ngh." Kang-Woo clicked his tongue.

"H-Hyung-nim! What was that sound just now?!"

Likely having heard the roars that Kang-Woo had made while massacring the wraiths, Kim Si-Hun and Layla quickly ran to him.

"Oh, umm..."

Kang-Woo scratched his head awkwardly while thinking of a way to explain this. He couldn't tell them that he had gotten so enraged about being subjected to Lilith's tentacles because of the wraiths that he had killed them all.

"Wraiths suddenly attacked us all of a sudden," Kang-Woo mentioned.

"Wraiths...?"

Si-Hun looked around while wide-eyed, but wraiths were unable to leave a corpse since they had a spiritual form. All that he could feel were subtle traces of deathly energy.

"Did you defeat them all, hyung-nim?"

"They weren't that strong," Kang-Woo replied.

Honestly, he did not know; he had massacred any that he could see, so he had not properly gauged their strength.

*'Well, even so...'*

He was sure that they would have been no match for Si-Hun and the other party members.

*'It didn't seem like they were specialized in combat.'*

They did not have any weapons. They were extremely hideous and were exuding chilling, deathly energy, but that was it.

“I... see,” Si-Hun remarked.

“Let’s look around a little more.”

Although all the wraiths had disappeared, they could still acquire some information from the mansion itself. Their expectations were met soon after their search.

“A-Argghh.”

As they searched each room along the hallway, they heard a voice. It was clearly that of a person, completely different from the voices of the wraiths. Kang-Woo forced open the door.

“This is...”

He frowned aggressively as soon as he saw what was inside. Although he was used to seeing horrible sights, he couldn’t help but feel unpleasant at the sight he had to behold.

“What the...” Si-Hun muttered.

Since it was hard to watch even for Kang-Woo, it was worse for Si-Hun. He was gripping the holy sword extremely tight with eyes wide open.

“Oh Gaia.” Layla shut her eyes tight and prayed to Gaia.

“A-Aaaahh.”

Kang-Woo stared at the people who had become ragdolls as if they had endured gut-wrenching torture. There were twenty-eight of them; there was no need to even think about who they were.

*‘The missing townspeople.’*

The townspeople had been dragged into this mansion by the wraiths and been tortured.

“Hyung-nim.”

“Just a second.”

Kang-Woo bit open his thumb and healed one of the people using the Authority of Regeneration.

“E-Ehehe. K-Kill me. Kill me. Please... Kill me.”

“It’s too late.” Kang-Woo shook his head as he looked down at the person he had treated.

It was not a physical issue; their minds had already broken beyond repair. Nothing but fear could be seen in the eyes of those who had been captured by the wraiths.

“Kuh!” Si-Hun clenched his fists in frustration and stomped his feet.

Layla approached the panting Si-Hun and held his hand.

“Si-Hun...”

The two of them bit their lips while staring at the horrifying sight miserably.

Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes.

He could not afford to wallow in his emotions like the two of them, nor did he have a reason to. What he needed right now was information.

*'Why?' That was the only question he had in his mind. 'Why are they still alive?'*

Kang-Woo stared at the missing townspeople tied to the walls. They had been hideously wounded; their eyeballs had been pulled out, their ears had been ripped off, and they had been sliced all over the place. Despite all that, they were still alive.

*'They were forcibly kept alive.'*

They had not been kept alive so that they could be continuously tortured; their wounds were so severe that it was actually a wonder why they hadn't died. They were screaming and trembling in fear, but they were still alive. The wraiths had used some sort of means to prevent the people they had kidnapped from dying.

*'But why?'*

Kang-Woo couldn't understand. It was too difficult to figure out. It was understandable that kidnapped people could be tortured; wraiths being cruel and merciless made sense.

*'But...'*

This was a completely different situation. The wraiths had kept dying people alive. They had prevented people who should have died from dying.

"Umm... Kang-Woo," Layla said.

Kang-Woo turned around.

Chapter 376 - I Did It

"Please come here for a second," Layla said.

"What is it?" Oh Kang-Woo walked over to where Layla was while tilting his head.

Kim Si-Hun, who had been untying the survivors from the walls with a heavy expression, also walked over. Layla was pointing at a black symbol drawn on the wall.

*'The hell is this?'*

There was a giant hexagram that looked as if it had been drawn with a rough brush on the wall, and it was exuding thick demonic energy.

*'No.'*

It wasn't just demonic energy; miniscule amounts of Divinity could be felt from it as well, as if a being of godhood had drawn it.

“This is the symbol of the Demon God,” Layla explained. “This hexagram was... the symbol of Demon God Bauli and the Constellations of Evil during the era of myths when they almost brought this world to extinction.”

“Isn’t it a bit too ordinary for that?” Kang-Woo asked.

“That’s because the myth hasn’t been passed down well enough on Earth. In Aernor, this hexagram is still considered a symbol of demons and fear.”

“Oh, I also heard about it while I was traveling around the continent. Just using this symbol would be reason enough for you to be sentenced to death immediately,” Si-Hun added.

Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes.

*‘The symbol of the Demon God.’*

Considering this symbol was on the wall, it wasn’t hard to guess who had made this mansion.

*‘The Constellations of Evil must’ve made their move.’*

Kang-Woo frowned. He could understand that they had made their move, since they had already attacked Sant’Angelo to steal the Demon God’s legacy. It meant that they were done hiding and were going to take full action from now on.

*‘But...’*

Kang-Woo couldn’t understand their actions. He had no choice, but he had ended up assisting the Constellations of Evil. He had framed someone else as the culprit of the attack on Sant’Angelo and took them completely off of the list of suspects.

*‘In their perspective, it should’ve been an absolute score.’*

Should they not be cheering while clapping since the police were chasing after someone else entirely after they had committed a heinous crime?

*‘Why are they just blatantly advertising that they’re the culprits?’*

It was so undisguised to the point that Kang-Woo was thinking someone was trying to frame the act on the Constellations of Evil.

*‘But there’s no reason for anyone to do such a thing.’*

No matter how hard he thought about it, there weren’t any forces that would benefit from framing the Constellations of Evil.

“Could it have been... the Constellations of Evil?” Layla asked carefully.

Si-Hun nodded. “Since the Demon God had died long ago, I believe they would be the culprits. I don’t know why they would do such a thing, but...”

Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes as he listened to their opinions. Both Layla and Si-Hun thought that the Constellations of Evil were the culprits. In other words, most of the people who knew about the

hexagram would also think the same, and there weren't many people in Aernor who didn't know about this hexagram.

*'... Wait.'* Kang-Woo's eyes shone. A theory popped up in his head like a lightning bolt. *'What if their objective isn't to hide their identity, but to let it be known?'*

If that was the case, the story would change.

*'But why?'*

Why would they need to do such a thing? It was true that the Constellations of Evil were powerful; each one of them possessed Deific Essence, and were free from the system's restrictions. However, they were overwhelmingly outnumbered. They had no reason to flaunt their return.

"Kang-Woo, over here..." Just then, Layla called Kang-Woo again. Kang-Woo turned around to see Layla, her face stiff while touching the victims' heads. "Something's wrong with the townspeople."

"What do you mean?"

"Mental recovery magic doesn't work on them... as if their minds have been completely emptied. I don't think their minds have just been broken."

Emptied... Layla's choice of words caught Kang-Woo's attention. Kang-Woo looked around and recalled the wraiths that had been roaming around the mansion. They had kept the people that should have been dead, alive for some reason.

"Ah," Kang-Woo expressed.

The puzzle was finally starting to come together.

*'The wraiths hadn't been specialized for combat.'*

Although one wouldn't even be able to land a blow on the wraiths unless they were powerful enough, they were certainly too weak to be retainers of a Constellation of Evil.

*'What if their purpose wasn't combat from the very beginning?'*

Chains were installed on the walls of the two thousand square feet room, spread out in a way that it would be easy to chain people. Kang-Woo had thought of something as soon as he had entered the room.

*'It's like... a factory.'*

A factory made to generate something from the kidnapped people. Kang-Woo asked Layla something to confirm his suspicions.

"Layla."

"Ah. Yes, Kang-Woo?"

"Do you happen to know anything about magic that can extract power from negative emotions like fear, sorrow and despair?"



“Mm...” Layla fell into thought while grabbing her chin, and then answered, “Yes, I’ve heard of such magic. In the past... back when Demon God Bauli was still alive, he had used large-scale magic by absorbing negative emotions from the Triad.”

“What kind of magic?”

“I don’t know in that much detail.” Layla shook her head while expressing embarrassment.

Kang-Woo lightly clicked his tongue, but he did not mind the inconvenience.

*‘I more or less get it now.’*

Kang-Woo’s eyes lit up. It was as if the strewn-about pieces of a puzzle had finally come together. He could now understand the actions of the Constellations of Evil that used to be incomprehensible.

*‘So their goal had been to let themselves be known to the world from the start.’*

And this factory had been to acquire a source of unlimited negative emotions.

“Hah,” Kang-Woo unconsciously chuckled.

He covered his wide grin with his hand. If they had done something like this to let themselves be known...

*‘It means they never caught a lucky break from the start, huh?’*

Kang-Woo wanted to burst into laughter right here and now. He had been bothered by the fact that the Constellations of Evil were likely benefiting from him naming Lucifer as the culprit for the Sant’ Angelo attack.

*‘I won’t stand for someone catching a lucky break from my choice.’*

Even if it led to both of their demise, he would do whatever it took to stop random people from catching a lucky break from his actions.

*‘Why, you ask? Because it sucks! It’s unfair! For example, let’s say you bought someone a lottery ticket and they ended up winning. That person then comes to you to thank you for buying the ticket for them. You would for sure feel like shit. So, that doesn’t make me a piece of shit. That’s just how humans are.’*

“Hyung-nim?” Si-Hun called.

“Oh, don’t mind me.” Kang-Woo waved his hand and turned around.

He more or less understood the situation. He did not know what for, but the Constellations of Evil were collecting negative emotions such as fear, sorrow and despair.

*‘They’re not just collecting them.’*

The entire continent was already filled with fear, directed at Lucifer, Lord of the Flies. If their objective was just to absorb negative emotions, they could just absorb it from anywhere in the continent.

*'But they tried to let their identities be known by going out of their way to make this contraption.'*

There was only one explanation.

*'They can't absorb fear directed at Lucifer.'*

If that wasn't the case, there was no reason at all for them to let themselves be known.

"Dayum."

*'What an interesting turn of events.'*

Kang-Woo snickered. He had discovered their objective and their means of fulfilling it.

*'In that case, I'll make good use of it.'*

He had been trying to think of a good event for Lucifer, Lord of the Flies. Kang-Woo slowly walked up to the hexagram on the wall and put his hand on it.

*'Try your best.'*

*Fwoosh.* The hexagram set ablaze and disappeared.

*'Though it won't change anything.'*

Even if they were gods that possessed Deific Essence, no one was a match for Kang-Woo in distorting the truth.

"H-Hyung-nim? Why did you burn the symbol?" Si-Hun asked in confusion.

Kang-Woo smiled and turned around. There was no need to explain himself.

"There must be more mansions like this," Kang-Woo stated.

There might be a chance that they were not in the form of mansions. As long as they had decided to make themselves known, they would do whatever it took to amplify fear directed at them.

"Find them all. Find and burn them all."

Kang-Woo smiled widely.

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"Is it going well?" an expressionless man with a diagonal slash scar on his face asked in a monotone.

A translucent being bowed to the man. He answered confidently, "Yes, of course."

Proserpine, who was lying down, said uninterestedly, "You say that, but the negative emotions don't seem to be gathering that much."

"Ngh..." The Constellation of Fear, the translucent being, froze.

Like she had mentioned, the collection of negative emotions was slower than expected.

“We could just go on a slaughter trip, can’t we? Why are we making things so complicated?” Proserpine suggested.

“Hmph. Please be quiet if you don’t know anything.” The Constellation of Fear snorted and continued, “Do you have any idea how difficult it is to change one’s target of fear once it has been engraved?”

The entire continent was plunged into fear of Lucifer. If they just went on a killing spree like Proserpine had suggested, people would just believe it was Lucifer who did it. Hence, it was meaningless; their fear needed to be directed at the hexagram.

“Don’t rush me and wait a little longer. The gods will soon react,” the Constellation of Fear said.

A human called Kim Si-Hun, known as the hero of the continent, was traveling across the continent to destroy the mansions. The Constellations already knew that he was a retainer of Gaia. Since he was an apostle of a god, he would not be idiotic enough not to know what the hexagram symbolized.

*‘And once the news reaches the gods...’*

They would not be able to focus only on Lucifer like they were now. After all, the hexagram symbolized the being that had once driven the gods toward extinction.

“There’s been a response,” said the boy with blank eyes.

The Constellation of Fear turned around in delight. “Hehehe. As expected.”

He glanced at Proserpine as if boasting.

“Hmph,” Proserpine snorted and turned around.

“Now then, let us see what they’re saying.”

The Constellation of Fear placed his hand on the boy’s shoulder and interfered with the *providence* using his Divinity. He did not interfere with much; he was just using a tiny amount of the blessing given to the beings of Earth, one of the Triad.

*Riiing.*

[The gods of the divine realm are trembling anxiously.]

“Good.”

The Constellation of Fear smiled as he stared at the blue window in front of him. He had expected such a response.

[The gods of the divine realm are feeling fear of collapse.]

“Hehe, plunge into fear.”

[The gods of the divine realm are enraged by the atrocities committed by Evil God Lucifer!]

“Yes, be enra— Huh? Lucifer?”

Why was that guy's name being mentioned again?

[The gods of the divine realm are enraged by the atrocities committed by Evil God Lucifer!]

“W-Wait!” The Constellation of Fear reached for the intangible blue window. He shouted in frustration, “I did it!”

[The gods of the divine realm are enraged by the atrocities committed by Evil God Lucifer!]

“It wasn't Lucifer!!” The Constellation of Fear pounded on his chest in frustration.

[The gods of the divine realm are letting their apostles know of Lucifer's atrocities!]

“No!”

[The gods of the divine realm are mocking Lucifer as the Lord of the Flies!]

“I did it!!!” The Constellation of Fear shouted, frustrated by the absurd situation.

But of course, there was no way that his words would be able to reach the gods in the divine realm.

[The gods of the divine realm discuss that they need to eliminate Lucifer as soon as possible!]

[The gods of the divine realm are devising a solution.]

[The gods of the divine realm are gathering Divinity. They are using a branch of the World Tree.]

[Elder high elf, Elune expresses her will to manifest!]

Chapter 377 - Time for a Feast

“Iris is sick?” Oh Kang-Woo frowned after hearing the news from one of Iris's maids, who had come running to tell him.

The maid nodded after taking some deep breaths. She answered while tearing up, “Haaa, haaa. Yes. She's been saying that she was dizzy since yesterday, but once I checked up on her today, she had a huge fever...”

Kang-Woo walked past the maid and toward Iris's room. *Wham!* He violently opened the door to see Iris laying in her bed while sweating profusely.

“Haaa. Haaa. Sir... Kang-Woo?”

Iris looked up at Kang-Woo in a daze. Thick blood vessels resembling tree roots had protruded from her skin. Iris forcibly tried to prop herself up.

“Stay still,” Kang-Woo said as he gently pushed her back down on the bed.

He used the Authority of Insight to search her body.

*‘What's going on?’*

He couldn't find anything wrong with her. Kang-Woo bit open his thumb.

“Drink.”

“*Cough! Cough!* Sir... Kang-Woo.”

Kang-Woo forcibly pushed his thumb into the flustered Iris's mouth. He used the Authority of Regeneration, but nothing happened. Kang-Woo grimaced.

*'She isn't sick.'*

He was sure of it. Kang-Woo looked down at Iris anxiously, and then called for help. This was not an issue he could resolve alone.

"Iris is sick?" Han Seol-Ah, who heard the news, approached them.

She froze after seeing the blood vessels protruding all over Iris's skin like tree roots. She caressed Iris and closed her eyes.

Fwoom.

White light flowed out from Seol-Ah and into Iris.

"I..." Seol-Ah shook her head in confusion. "... Don't know. Neither revitalization nor healing magic are working."

Seol-Ah was panicking since this had never happened before.

Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes.

*'If both my Authority of Regeneration and Seol-Ah's divine magic aren't working, that means...'*

Iris was not in this condition due to a disease or an injury.

*'In that case...'*

There was one thing he could think of. Kang-Woo called Layla using his communication crystal. After getting the call, Layla immediately came to Iris's room and thoroughly checked her condition.

Layla nodded. "These are signs of her becoming an incarnation."

"An incarnation?"

"Yes. I experienced the same thing when I first accepted Lady Gaia into me."

An incarnation... Kang-Woo did not even need to question whose incarnation Iris was about to become. Kang-Woo smiled.

"That means..." he slurred.

"Yes." Layla nodded. "A high elf is... trying to manifest while borrowing Iris's body."

*'Hell yeah.'* Kang-Woo clenched his fists after hearing the welcome news. *'They're finally getting off their fat asses.'*

Making the high elves manifest by driving the continent to the brink of collapse... The deranged plan was nearing its completion.

"When will the high elf manifest?" Kang-Woo asked.

“I’m not sure either. Iris would first have to become an incarnation, but... no one knows how long that will take.”

“How long did it take for you?”

“About a month.”

*‘A month, huh?’*

“But I can’t guarantee it’ll take that long for—”

“I know,” Kang-Woo interjected.

In the first place, becoming an incarnation of a god was not common, so it was near impossible to predict a time.

Kang-Woo stood up. “In that case, there’s nothing wrong with Iris, right?”

“Yes. She’s just like this because she’s in the middle of accepting Divinity.”

Kang-Woo sighed in relief.

“Sir... Kang-Woo?” Iris called Kang-Woo faintly.

Kang-Woo lightly patted her head. “Don’t worry and get some rest.”

As if having been relieved by those words, Iris slowly closed her eyes. Kang-Woo left the room with Layla and Seo-Ah.

“The plan... was a success,” said Layla with a bitter smile.

The plan to make a high elf manifest by making Kim Si-Hun a hero, which seemed absurd in the beginning, was on the verge of succeeding. Layla wanted to cheer, but could not bring herself to, considering the state Iris was in. She knew better than anyone how agonizing the process of becoming an incarnation was.

“Yes.” Kang-Woo nodded.

He did not feel anything in particular.

*‘After all, I knew it would succeed.’*

He had done so much more than what Layla realized. He disguised himself as Evil God Lucifer to attack the empire, framed him as the culprit who attacked Sant’Angelo, and distorted information to amplify fear. If the high elves did not manifest after going this far, he would have given up and found another way.

*‘Now, then.’*

All that was left to do now was what he had been forced to postpone until this point. Kang-Woo smiled. It was what he had been desperately waiting for, even more than the manifestation of the high elves; he had longed for it all this time.

Ba-dump, ba-dump.

His heart beat like crazy from the anticipation. Thrills ran throughout his entire body.

“Haaa,” Kang-Woo breathed heatedly.

He had been holding back all this time, but he could not hold it back anymore. He clenched his chest as he panted heavily.

*‘How long have I been like this?’*

Kang-Woo searched through his memories.

*‘Sant’Angelo.’*

It was when he had seen the space protected by colossal sacred power destroyed by someone. No, it could have been from back when he had discovered the red sand from the Nine Hells. Blazing impulses were taking control over him to the point that he could barely hold it back anymore.

Kang-Woo said impatiently, “I have something to do, so I’ll excuse myself.”

“Oh, I understand. I’ll let the other party members know,” Seol-Ah replied as she nodded.

Kang-Woo turned around and walked elatedly. He exited the imperial palace to see a vast garden, which he walked past.

“Master Kang-Woo,” someone called.

Kang-Woo turned to see a young man with brown hair.

“Balrog.”

He was currently wearing human skin, but inside was a comrade whom Kang-Woo had fought alongside for a thousand years, as well as his loyal subordinate.

Silence fell. Balrog stared at Kang-Woo, and then closed his eyes.

“I see you can barely hold it in,” Balrog slowly remarked.

*‘You got me.’* Kang-Woo snickered. *‘This dim-witted son of a bitch is only quick-witted in times like this. I guess the time we spent together doesn’t go anywhere. You’re really something else, man... Not even Lilith was able to tell.’*

“I’ve been holding it back all this time,” Kang-Woo said calmly.

He was acting calm, but he felt like his desires were about to explode at any second.

Balrog opened his eyes. It had been a while since he had seen his king like this; as if his king had thrown aside his human skin and returned to his true demon form.

*‘It’s at least... the first time I’ve seen him like this on Earth.’*

It only meant that he had been desperately holding it back all this time.

“Were you not able to alleviate it a little last time?” Balrog asked.

“No, that only made it worse. It ended so anticlimactic while I was getting fired up.”

Kang-Woo recalled the Constellation of Agony. The battle had ended in such a dull manner. The fire blazing within his heart had been doused with ice water, as if an engine had been revved up but was just left to be. He felt like the desires he had been holding back all this time were about to explode. He instinctively knew that he could no longer hold it back.

*'I've held it back for quite a while.'*

Considering how he had been like back in Hell, he had managed to miraculously hold it back for this long.

*'How long has it been?'*

How long had it been since he had been able to fight with everything he had? Kang-Woo searched through his memories, but could not remember.

*'At least...'*

He had not been able to ever since he had regained his powers as the Demon King. No, even before that, he had never used every ounce of his strength. Obsession was the instinct of angels, and desire was that of demons. Their limitless desire allowed them to maintain their sanity for their immortal lifespan.

Among the countless forms of desire there were, Kang-Woo's desire was simple: to eat. To fight enemies stronger than him, to emerge victorious and to devour them as his spoils of battle. This very desire was what had allowed him to stay sane for the past ten millennia as well as what had allowed him to survive.

"Argh, urgh."

Kang-Woo panted heavily. A horrifying thirst tore apart his throat, but his desire could not be fulfilled; it would not be resolved just by devouring average demons and demonic beasts. He needed even stronger prey that would fire him up.

*'It's times like this that I'm jealous of Seol-Ah.'*

Seol-Ah's desire, her obsession toward Kang-Woo, was able to be resolved easily. However, Kang-Woo was different. There weren't many prey that would be able to fire him up anymore.

*'That's why...'*

Kang-Woo smiled. That was why he had been waiting for his plan to be completed.

"Will they be coming today?" Balrog asked.

"Who knows? But they won't just be taking it lying down."

Kang-Woo had made use of the plans of the Constellations of Evil and had thoroughly ruined them. The entire continent was plunged into fear of Lucifer, not the Constellations of Evil.

*'They wouldn't stand for it... unless they're morons.'*

Kang-Woo turned around, his eyes filled with anticipation.

"Balrog."



“Yes, my king.”

Balrog got on one knee and looked up at Kang-Woo. Kang-Woo did not possess the signature features of a demon such as goat horns, bat wings and a black tail, but Balrog could tell that the man in front of him was, without a doubt, the king of demons.

“Don’t get in my way.”

Balrog stayed silent. He bowed his head and answered, “As you command, my king.”

Kang-Woo slowly walked past Balrog. For some reason, the Constellation of Agony’s Deific Essence had been sealed. Having a taste of a small piece of meat was more agonizing than being starved. Unbearable thirst and hunger were taking control over Kang-Woo.

“Haaa.”

Kang-Woo licked his lips and gulped. He looked up at the sky. He couldn’t sense the Constellations of Evil at all, but he could tell that they would be coming to punish the mortals that had ruined their plans.

“Now...”

It was time for a feast. Kang-Woo smiled.

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Thousands of translucent wraiths appeared at the imperial palace garden in the dead of night.

[Kill, kill, kill.]

[Capture the humans and skin them little by little.]

[Let’s dance to their screams.]

The thousands of wraiths danced while singing a chilling song. Among them was a spirit exuding powerful deathly energy, who landed on the garden.

[Oh Kang-Woo and Kim Si-Hun, was it?]

He mumbled the names of the retainers of Gaia that had ruined his plan. The Constellation of Fear rested his giant scythe, made from vengeful spirits, on his shoulder. Although there were two retainers of Gaia, he already knew who the main culprit who had ruined his plan was.

[Kim Si-Hun.]

He was the hero who was being revered as the Sword Emperor.

[How dare he...]

*Whoooooom.* The scythe made from vengeful spirits exuded deathly energy. The Constellation of Fear slowly walked toward the imperial palace in front of him. Just then...

“Come on... What the hell?” someone said.

The Constellation of Fear turned to see a man with sharp eyes. The man clicked his tongue in dissatisfaction and glared at the Constellation of Fear.

“Just one?” the man remarked in dissatisfaction, as if he had excitedly gone to a buffet only to see that there wasn’t a large selection of food to choose from.

Chapter 378 - You Chicken?

[You must be one of Gaia’s puppets.]

The Constellation of Fear scanned Oh Kang-Woo with dreary eyes. The Deific Essence that he had acquired as the God of Fear analyzed the power of Gaia within Kang-Woo.

*‘The Protector of Light.’*

It was a ridiculous title. The Constellation of Fear raised his scythe and looked around. He did not feel any other presence in the area.

*‘What’s going on?’*

If the human had been anticipating for him to come, he had expected for there to be a group of humans waiting to strike around the area. However, unlike his expectations, there was not a single presence within this giant garden other than Gaia’s retainer.

*‘Could he be thinking of facing me by himself?’*

That was absurd. The Constellation of Fear shook his head. However reckless the man was, he would never think of facing a god by himself. He should have at least brought Kim Si-Hun, the other retainer of Gaia.

*‘Has he come to stall for time?’*

The Constellation of Fear shook his head while frowning. If that was the case, they would have been better off just running away together; there was no reason for just one of them to stay behind.

[Where are the others?]

“Not here,” Kang-Woo replied.

[Not here?]

The Constellation of Fear chuckled at the human’s firm response.

*‘They must be hiding somewhere while aiming for an opening.’*

It was a pointless effort. He, who was the cluster of countless vengeful spirits, did not have such a thing as an opening.

“Dammit... I never thought only one would come,” Kang-Woo said in disappointment.

However, the Constellation of Fear could see the human’s eyes blazing.

[...?]

Only then did the Constellation of Fear realize something was wrong. The human’s reaction was far too abnormal despite being before the God of Fear. He was not trembling in fear nor plunging into despair; his fighting spirit was not blazing either.

*‘What is it?’*

The Constellation of Fear sensed something unknown from the human's eyes. No, it was not unknown—he knew what it was very well. However, he couldn't understand why the human had such eyes at this moment. The Constellation of Fear doubted his senses. If he was correct...

*'He's elated.'*

The human was elated, like a starved beast having found a prey to feast on.

*'Why...?'*

How could the human be looking at him with such eyes? He could not understand. During all his life, the Constellation of Fear had never seen elation in any of the eyes of mortals that he had faced.

*'Has he gone insane?'*

That was the only conclusion that the Constellation of Fear could come up with. He lowered his giant scythe. He had gone out of his way to take action himself to punish the mortals that had ruined his plan, but he had come to face a deranged human. He had lost interest.

"Where are the others?" the human asked the same question that the Constellation of Fear had asked him.

The Constellation of Fear, finding the situation stupid, answered, [Not here.]

"Not here?"

The human seemed truly disappointed. No, he was biting his lip in frustration and stomping his feet.

[Tsk.]

The human seemed to have actually gone insane. The Constellation of Fear did not wait any longer. He had too many mortals to exact divine punishment on to waste any more time on one crazy human.

[Kill him.]

The Constellation of Fear raised his scythe and pointed at the human to command the thousands of wraiths. They had been singing and dancing while looking forward to the slaughter until a few minutes ago, but they had frozen while staring at the human.

[...?]

Time passed, and the Constellation of Fear tilted his head in confusion.

*'What's happening?'*

The wraiths were not moving. They were usually thirsty for blood, but they were simply staying in place without charging at their prey.

[Ah, aaaahh.]

No, they were not just staying still. They were trembling in fear.

[What?] The Constellation of Fear widened his translucent eyes.

His purple eyes that were the only clearly visible part of his body dyed with confusion.

“Oh, come to think of it...” The human smiled as he turned to look at the wraiths all around him. “You guys know me, don’t you?”

[Ah, aaaahh.]

The wraiths trembled. They, who had been created solely for the purpose of instilling fear into humans, were the ones trembling in fear.

[It’s that human. From back then.]

[No, no. He’s not human.]

[A demon. A demon.]

[A demon mad for revenge.]

[He’ll try to kill us again.]

[He’ll try to rip us apart.]

The wraiths screamed while trembling in fear.

Kang-Woo smiled awkwardly as if he was sorry and remarked, “I mean, back then... I had my reasons.”

[We haven’t done anything.]

[We didn’t do anything to him.]

“Well... It’s hard to explain.”

Kang-Woo averted his eyes from the gazes of the victimized wraiths while scratching his head. He did indeed have a reason for mercilessly massacring the wraiths.

“It’s because...”

Kang-Woo carefully selected his words to explain himself as thoroughly as possible, in a way that would hurt the wraiths that had been massacred due to Kang-Woo’s fit of rage, as little as possible.

“You guys look... hideous.”

[...]

The wraiths fell silent. Since Lilith had let loose her tentacles because she had gotten scared of the wraiths’ hideous looks, it was technically not wrong.

*‘But... I sound like a scumbag for explaining it that way. I’m feeling a bit guilty.’*

[You’re so harsh, so harsh.]

[Demon! Evil demon!]

“I mean...”

*‘I am indeed a demon, but...’*

He did not want to hear that from wraiths that kidnapped and tortured humans.

[Hah.] The Constellation of Fear chuckled at the absurd situation. [What do you think you're all doing?]

He exuded chilling bloodlust not at Gaia's retainer, but his own retainers. The thousands of wraiths flinched. The Constellation of Fear drew out Divinity and swung his scythe.

[Gyaaaaaaaaahh!!]

One of the wraiths was pierced by the giant scythe. It was violently compressed as it screamed, and was sucked into the scythe.

The god said furiously, [Did you not hear me telling you to kill that human?]

The garden shook from the god's fury. The wraiths shook uncontrollably.

[I will command you again.] The Constellation of Fear pointed at Kang-Woo with his giant scythe again. [Kill the retainer of Gaia.]

However...

Once again, only silence could be heard in the vast garden.

[What?]

The Constellation of Fear's eyes widened at the incomprehensible situation. The wraiths were not moving.

[Ah, arghh.] They were simply groaning while staying in place, not knowing what to do.

*'They're not obeying my commands? Even after I used Divinity?'*

The Constellation of Fear's thought became jumbled. He was more confused than enraged.

*'This cannot be.'*

Wraiths were beings of the Underworld, so they were more sensitive to death and fear than anything in the world. However, they were in fear of someone else more than the God of Fear himself.

*'This is... wrong.'*

He could not think of it as merely a mistake. The Constellation of Fear turned around and scanned the human in front of him more thoroughly. Other than his sharp eyes and his ferocious appearance, he did not look like anything else but human. He could also feel Gaia's power and golden mana within the human. However, he could not feel any Deific Essence, which any god would possess.

To be frank, in terms of pure power, the difference between them was overwhelming to the point that it was despairing for the human. That was how much of a difference there was between one who could wield Divinity and one who couldn't. To make a comparison, it was like a naked human against a human with full-plate armor and powerful enchanted weapons. It could be possible with a horde of people, but it was not a gap that could be overcome by oneself.

*'But why? Why are they so afraid of him?'*

[...]

There was a discrepancy between his logic and instinct. The Constellation of Fear locked eyes with the human again. The human was still staring at him like a starved predator that had found a prey to feast on.

The Constellation of Fear felt chills running down his back. It was fear, an emotion that he knew all too well.

*'This man is dangerous.'*

He did not know exactly why, but his instincts were telling him so. It did not take him long to choose whether to follow those instincts or his logic.

*'There's something about him.'*

The Constellation of Fear no longer underestimated the mortal in front of him. Through the reactions of the wraiths and his own instincts, he had become sure that the human had something up his sleeve.

*'I have to avoid him.'*

As long as he had no idea what that human was hiding, he could not face him. He was not idiotic enough to face someone blindly just because they did not possess Deific Essence.

*'I should go back and find out.'*

The Constellation of Fear narrowed his purple eyes. He needed more information before he could fight that human. He slowly widened the distance from that human in silence.

Kang-Woo's eyes shone. He expressed, "Wow. Dayum, you really surprised me."

His enemies usually ran straight at him while shouting, "*You lowly mortal!*" around this time. It was not because they were stupid and thoughtless, but because Kang-Woo was objectively at an overwhelming disadvantage. He had been made painfully aware of how much of a disadvantage one without Deific Essence was in against one with Deific Essence.

*'But I never thought he would avoid the battle.'*

The Constellations of Evil did not know who he was, what he could do, and what he had done thus far. Hence, he had been sure that the Constellation of Fear would charge at him. He thought that his enemy would find the disrespect from a lowly and weak mortal without Deific Essence unforgivable.

[Oh Kang-Woo, was it?] The Constellation of Fear continued calmly, [I will come back for your head.]

He had made the declaration while exuding as much bloodlust as possible to conceal the humiliation of running away from a mortal without Deific Essence.

Kang-Woo burst into laughter as the Constellation of Fear turned around.

"Pfft, pwehehehehehe!!"

The Constellation of Fear stopped in his tracks due to the flippant laughter.

Kang-Woo continued while wiping his tears, “Jesus, that’s some bravado you’re exuding while running with your tail between your legs. Do you seriously think that makes you any less pathetic?”

[Kuh. Y-You bastard...]

“Weren’t you the God of Fear? Huh? Are you seriously running away like a scared little mutt?”

[Silence!! I am not running away!] The Constellation of Fear shouted.

There was a slight urgency mixed into his voice. Even though he was trusting his instincts, there was nothing more humiliating than a god running away after feeling fear from a human. The Constellation of Fear tried to turn around again while suppressing his boiling rage.

“You chicken?”

*Flinch.* The Constellation of Fear froze. He did not know what that word meant, but it felt extremely unpleasant to hear.

[Do not forget, human. This is nothing but a—]

“You chicken?”

[Strategic retreat...]

“You chicken?”

[I am falling back at the moment, but I will come back for your head.]

“So what you’re saying is, you’re a chicken, right?”

Silence fell. The Constellation of Fear grabbed the back of his neck.

[You son of a...]

The fear he had felt from the human was slowly being eaten away by his boiling rage.

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“Tai Wuji.”

A seductive voice filled the black space. Proserpine approached Tai Wuji, who was sitting cross-legged in the middle of the thick darkness.

“What is it?” Tai Wuji responded expressionlessly.

Proserpine took out a black orb from between her well-endowed breasts.

She smiled and answered, “There’s been contact from Lucifer.”

Chapter 379 - Monster of the Demonic Sea (1)

[Fuuu, fuuu,] The Constellation of Fear took deep breaths.

To be more exact, he was not breathing, but letting out deathly energy made out of vengeful spirits to quell his boiling rage. He clenched his scythe to calm his trembling hands.

*‘It’s nothing but a cheap taunt.’*

He knew that, and he was not foolish enough to fall for it. However...

“You’re actually scared? Come on, man. Aren’t you a god, at least in name only? Hm? You’re not actually trying to run away because of one puny human, are you?”

*‘Th-Th-That son of a...’*

All sorts of curses swirled around in the Constellation of Fear’s head. He would not have been this angry if the human had mocked him in any other way. However, it was hard to endure when he was being ridiculed in such a primitively childish way.

[...]

The Constellation of Fear clenched his scythe so hard that it could break. Before serving Demon God Bauli, he was revered as the god of the Underworld. He had been a god since birth, and was worshiped by all wraiths and vengeful spirits. He was not able to endure such cheap mockery.

*‘I’d only be caught into his plot if I stay any longer.’*

The Constellation of Fear shut off his ears. He turned away from the frozen wraiths and flew into the air.

“Hah,” Oh Kang-Woo chuckled, honestly impressed.

*‘He’s still not charging at me after that?’*

He knew very well that such childish taunts would not work against a regular opponent. However, his opponent was not regular in the slightest; he was a god, and Kang-Woo was merely a god’s retainer.

*‘At the very least...’*

That was the case in the Constellation of Fear’s perspective. To make a comparison, it was like a private slapping a colonel in the face and mocking him that he was too chicken to fight back.

“Why the fuck is he so scared?”

Kang-Woo rolled his feet while frowning in displeasure. His plan to make the opponent charge at him first had failed. In that case...

“Close.” Kang-Woo slowly raised his arm and used Soul Speech.

Rumble—!

The entire garden shook. Darkness shot out from the surroundings and gathered to form a dome, as if a giant black bowl had been placed over them.

[What the...]

The shocked Constellation of Fear quickly flew up and swung his scythe at the darkness covering the sky.

Split!

An opening formed in the darkness, but only for an instant.



Squelch, squelch.

The darkness, as viscous as tar, squirmed as if it was alive and resealed the opening that the scythe had formed. It had been so fast that the Constellation of Fear did not even have the time to get out.

[Kuh.] The Constellation of Fear grimaced. [Bastard! What did you do?!]

He turned around while clenching his scythe. He would be able to make an opening to escape the dome of darkness if he had time, but he doubted he would have that leisure when the enemy who had formed this dome was inside with him.

*'I have no choice.'*

The Constellation of Fear made a quick judgment.

[You seem to be eager to die by the hands of the God of Fear.]

He could tell that he could no longer avoid a fight. He clenched his scythe while exuding chilling deathly energy.

Kang-Woo scoffed. "The fuck? You've been trying to run away all this time, but look at you putting on airs now that you can't. Well, regardless..."

He slowly lowered his arm and smiled in absolute ecstasy.

*'I've been waiting for this moment for so long.'*

He had been suppressing his desire with all his might after the battle with the Constellation of Agony, which he had been so excited for, ended so anticlimactically. He was looking forward to a desperate battle with his life on the line... a frontal assault against a being of godhood.

"Fuuu," Kang-Woo took a breath so deep that his lungs were on the verge of bursting, and released the desire that he had been suppressing all this time.

"Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!!!!"

The demon of demons, the Hell of Hells, and the predator of predators roared. He stomped his feet and jumped as he was filled with delight.

Boom—!

The ground caved in a dozen meters as Kang-Woo leaped toward the Constellation of Fear. He stretched his right arm back midair.

*'Leviathan.'*

The Key of the Demonic Sea transformed into an ax covered in freezing air. He grabbed the ax and threw it.

Claaang!

The ax was deflected along with a clear metallic sound. The Constellation of Fear had not blocked it; the attack had simply been deflected by the power of Divinity within the countless spirits that made up his body.

*'Yes.'*

The corners of Kang-Woo's mouth rose so high as if they were ripping. Irresistible pleasure set him ablaze.

*'This is it.'*

A battle against a being of godhood— an illogical and unfair fight. Kang-Woo had been waiting for this feeling of vain and despair. He had been wanting a prey that would push him to his limits that not even he was aware of.

“Pfft, hahahahaha!!”

Kang-Woo laughed as he used the Authority of the Sky to fly through the air at supersonic speed. The ax that had been deflected off of the Divinity returned to his hand. It changed form into a sword, and Kang-Woo swung it down at the Constellation of Fear.

[Crazy human...]

The Constellation of Fear swung his scythe, dumbfounded. The scythe of vengeful spirits and the Key of the Demonic Sea clashed.

Clang—!

The Key of the Demonic Sea was deflected once again. The sword that had clashed with the scythe clad in Divinity shattered into pieces. Kang-Woo used the repelling force to twirl, and transformed the Key of the Demonic Sea into a spear. The dark red spear dodged the scythe and aimed for the Constellation of Fear's neck.

[Not good enough!]

The Constellation of Fear fell back and swung his scythe, pouring out hundreds of vengeful spirits in its path.

“Kurgh!”

Kang-Woo's skin that had made contact with the vengeful spirits turned black as if it had rotted. He fluidly fell back and stretched his left arm downward.

“Stab him to death.” Kang-Woo used Soul Speech.

His demonic energy responded to his words imbued with his will; countless black needles shot up from the ground.

Claaang—!

Sharp sounds as if an iron plate was being hammered nonstop echoed throughout the dome. However, none of the thousands of black needles were able to break through the Constellation of Fear's barrier of Divinity; it had only made it a little thinner.

The Constellation of Fear swung his scythe at Kang-Woo's head. Kang-Woo ducked to dodge; he thought that he had dodged it completely, but hundreds of vengeful spirits poured out from the scythe's path like rainfall.

“Kurgh, argh.”

Kang-Woo took the brunt of the vengeful spirits on his back, and they ripped his flesh apart. Rather than falling back, he walked toward the Constellation of Fear as he was being ripped apart by the vengeful spirits, and grabbed him with his right hand. Although the Constellation of Fear's body was made of translucent spirits, Kang-Woo was able to grab him with ease.

[It's no use!]

The Constellation of Fear swung down his scythe while shouting, cutting off Kang-Woo's right arm. *Splash.* Red blood spewed out like a fountain.

[Hmph. It seems you were all bark and no bite.]

The Constellation of Fear snorted and trampled on Kang-Woo's severed right arm.

*Crunch.* Kang-Woo's left leg was bent at an unnatural angle.

The Constellation of Fear cut off Kang-Woo's right leg as well, and swung down the scythe at Kang-Woo, who only had a working left arm remaining. The scythe pierced his stomach and embedded itself on the ground.

[Anyway...]

The Constellation of Fear frowned as he thought of the black barrier around them and the techniques that the human had used.

*'I'm sure I don't feel any demonic energy from him.'*

The Constellation of Fear tilted his head in confusion. He had a feeling that something was off; there was no way that the human's attacks were befitting a retainer of Gaia.

*'Regardless...'*

The power that the human had been hiding was nothing special.

[The likes of a god's apostle dared to mock a god,] the Constellation of Fear said leisurely.

Contrary to his worries, there was an insurmountable gap between a being who possessed Deific Essence and one who did not. Not a single one of the human's attacks had managed to break through his barrier of Divinity, and the human had not been able to block a single one of his attacks imbued with Divinity. The result of the battle had been decided from the beginning.

*'Were my instincts wrong?'*

The battle had been so anticlimactic that the Constellation of Fear couldn't help but think as such.

[Die.]

The Constellation of Fear pulled out his scythe while thinking that his instincts had dulled, splitting the human in half from his belly to head.

[Fuuu,] the Constellation of Fear sighed as he turned around. He needed to find a way out of this barrier now. [Let's s—]

Squelch.

Just then, he heard the sound of a viscous liquid. He looked down to see that it had been from his leg. The Constellation of Fear aggressively frowned after seeing the source of the sound. The right arm of the human that he had cut off was still grabbing his leg.

[You're unpleasant to the very end.]

The Constellation of Fear slowly reached down to grab the human's right arm. Just then...

Crunch—!!

A giant mouth shot out from the right arm and ate the Constellation of Fear's arm whole.

[Gaaaaaaaahhh!!] the Constellation of Fear screamed.

Although it had only been a mere fragment of the hundreds of thousands of vengeful spirits that made up his body, a splitting pain spread throughout his entire body.

[Wh-What the hell?!]

The Constellation of Fear jumped back in shock.

Munch, munch.

The giant mouth that had come out from the human's right arm ate the arm made of vengeful spirits as if it was a delicacy.

*'What in the...'*

The Constellation of Fear's eyes shook. He had existed ever since the era of myths, but he had never seen something like that. He trembled. The fear that he had felt a while ago as he looked at the human returned.

Squelch, squelch.

[...?]

The Constellation of Fear heard more sounds of a sticky mucus. He turned toward the source of the sound.

[What?]

*"Slurp. Eating spirits is a first for me."*

There, the human that should have died from being split into two was getting back up. He was chewing on something while looking like he couldn't be any happier.

*"It doesn't taste all that bad."*

Kang-Woo smiled extremely widely, the corners of his mouth actually tearing open to reach behind his ears. Saliva was dripping from the sharp teeth of a beast that had protruded out from his cheekbones.

[What the hell... is that?]

The Constellation of Fear's eyes widened. Something that should not be happening was happening before his very eyes.

*"Now, then."*

Kang-Woo slowly raised his arm. The right arm that had been severed at his elbow crawled toward him and stuck back on the severed area. He put his hand over his heart.

“Time for round two.”

Ten Thousand Demon Core...

First Door, open.

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Lucifer’s voice flowed out from the black orb.

[I heard that you had contacted me.]

“I did.” Tai Wuji nodded.

Before he had stolen the Demon God’s legacy, he had contacted Lucifer to ask him if he had any intention to join forces with the Constellations of Evil.

[I refuse,] Lucifer responded without hesitation.

Tai Wuji nodded, having expected the response.

“You’ve changed quite a lot. I had high hopes for you since you had managed to acquire Divinity despite being a mere demon.”

Lucifer remained silent.

Tai Wuji stared at the black orb expressionlessly.

“That aside, it seems the retainers of Gaia are mistaking us for you.”

[Mistaking?]

“It’s nothing for you to bother with, since we will be correcting that mistake today.”

[Are you planning on killing Gaia’s retainer?]

Tai Wuji simply nodded without a word.

[Gaia will not stand for that.]

“What could she possibly do with her damaged Deific Essence?” Tai Wuji replied with his signature monotone voice.

Lucifer narrowed his eyes and asked, [Who was Gaia’s retainer again? It was a human named Kim Si-Hun, correct?]

“There is one other.”

[Who?]

“A human named Oh Kang-Woo.”

Silence fell.

[What?]

Tai Wuji could see Lucifer flustered from across the black orb. Tai Wuji stared at Lucifer while slightly tilting his head.

[Oh... Kang-Woo? No, no, wait. It can't be.] Lucifer expressed panic. He asked impatiently, [Can I see that human's face?]

"Of course."

Tai Wuji slightly turned his head. A boy with blank eyes approached and opened his right hand. On top of it appeared the blue window known as the *System Window* among Players. On it was a picture of Oh Kang-Woo, back when he had accepted Gaia's light and became the Protector of Light.

[Ah.] Lucifer's eyes widened after seeing Kang-Wo's face. [Wh-Why? Satan surely had...]

Satan had said that he had taken the Demonic Sea from the Demon King. Although it was impossible through normal means, Lucifer had known about Satan's final plan to make the Demon King clash with the dimensional wall to annihilate him. Lucifer had thought that Satan had acquired the Demonic Sea back then, but...

[Why... Why...]

Why was the Demon King still alive? Lucifer trembled; he scanned the picture of the Demon King on the blue window in pallor. If the Demon King had become a retainer of Gaia, it meant that he had regained his strength to the point that he could fool a god of the highest rank.

"What's wrong?" Tai Wuji asked.

Lucifer did not answer him and asked instead, [You went to go... kill Gaia's retainers?]

"Yes. The Constellation of Fear went personally to exact punishment with his own hands."

Deathly silence fell. Lucifer said with a shaking voice, [Run... away.]

"What?"

[I said to run away! Right now!!!]

Lucifer's shout echoed from the black orb.

Tai Wuji frowned dumbfoundedly. "Surely you don't mean from Gaia's retainer?" Even he, who was mostly devoid of emotions, couldn't help but chuckle at Lucifer's words. "He is but a mere human without Deific Essence. He is not even an incarnation. He is but one of Gaia's puppets."

If one was not an incarnation, it was impossible for them to borrow Deific Essence from the god that they worshiped. Although the human had received Gaia's blessing, that was it. There was an insurmountable wall between those who possessed Deific Essence and those who did not.

[God damn it!! You'd be better off fighting Gaia or Seraph!!] Lucifer clenched his fists in pallor. He shouted, [Deific Essence? Incarnation? That doesn't mean anything to that monster!! Just shut up and run! Run as far away as possible before that monster devours you all and becomes stronger!!!]

Lucifer's roars echoed.

## Chapter 380 - Monster of the Demonic Sea (2)

Silence fell. Tai Wuji stared at Lucifer incomprehensibly.

*'We'd be better off fighting Gaia or Seraph?'*

Gaia was greatly hurt at the moment, and Seraph had been annihilated at the price of sealing the Constellations of Evil. Lucifer probably was not referring to the two of them in their current state; he had likely meant that the Constellations would have been better off fighting Gaia and Seraph in their prime.

"What kind of... nonsense is that?"

Tai Wuji, a fellow god of the Triad, knew better than anyone how powerful gods of the highest rank were. No one but Titans, the creators of the gods, would be a match for them, but...

*'He's telling us to run away from a mere human with no Deific Essence?'*

[Shit! What are you doing?! Hurry up and tell the one who went to kill Oh Kang-Woo to... No, it's probably too late for him. The rest of you should run, at the very least. You mustn't be devoured by him!] Lucifer shouted impatiently.

He was more worried about them being eaten by the human named Oh Kang-Woo than for their lives. Tai Wuji frowned.

*'He doesn't seem to be lying.'*

He could not understand why Lucifer was reacting to such an extent.

*'Oh Kang-Woo...'*

Tai Wuji needed to see for himself what kind of human he was.

"Thank you for the advice." Tai Wuji stood up.

[S-Stop! Wait, Heavenly Dragon!] Lucifer yelled.

Tai Wuji's eyebrows slightly wrinkled. He placed his hand over the black orb and said, "Do not call me by that name."

*Crack.* The black orb shattered into pieces.

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[I see, you weren't human.]

The Constellation of Fear's purple eyes lit up while clenching his scythe. The human's body was regenerating while squirming as if it was made of liquid. No matter how one looked at him, he could not be called anything else but a monster.

*'How did a monster like that become Gaia's retainer?'*

The Constellation of Fear looked at Kang-Woo in confusion.

*'In any case...'*

The Constellation of Fear took a deep breath and clad himself with Divinity. Even if the being in front of him could regenerate and was not human, there was nothing to fear. He looked down at his left arm that had been eaten by the giant mouth. The purple vengeful spirits gathered around the severed area to create a new arm.

[Fuuu.]

The Constellation of Fear was not human either, and also possessed regenerative capabilities on par with that monster. If that was the case...

*‘As long as I’m careful of that mouth, I have the overwhelming advantage since I have Divinity.’*

“Yes, that’s more like it.” Kang-Woo snickered in delight.

It had been a while since he had this much fun. He didn’t have to conceal himself with lies nor try to fool the enemy with tricks. He could rampage as much as his desires wanted.

Kang-Woo slowly raised his head, took a deep breath and closed his eyes. He could feel the giant current of demonic energy raging from his heart throughout his body. He had opened one of the three Doors that sealed the Demonic Sea, but he had not lost his reason nor turned into a black slime unlike when he had faced Baek Kang-Hyun.

*‘I’m different from back then.’*

It was a given, since not only had he regained the power he had back in Hell, but had far surpassed it. Kang-Woo controlled the energy of the Demonic Sea that was flooding him through the Door. The deathly violent current of demonic energy was moving according to his will.

*‘Opening two Doors is still a bit of a stretch.’*

Kang-Woo could do it, but he was not confident that he wouldn’t be swept by the colossal current of the Demonic Sea. It was a shame, but he decided not to pay it much mind. Although he had only opened one of the Doors, it was astonishing enough that he had become able to control the massive energy influx from opening one Door.

*‘Though I’ll probably still suffer from the side effects.’*

Kang-Woo did not care; he was more than capable of handling a risk of that level if he could devour a god.

“Haaa,” Kang-Woo exhaled and opened his eyes.

*‘Inferno.’*

Kang-Woo extended his arm to create a sword blazing with yellow flames and jumped into the air.

[Dance, sing.] The Constellation of Fear drearily chanted a spell, and then swung the giant scythe.

Whoosh—!

A portion of the hundreds of thousands of vengeful spirits making up his body was pulled out and gathered into hundreds of spheres, which then shot toward Kang-Woo.



Kang-Woo changed directions in midair; the foot technique that he had learned from Kim Si-Hun was a great help. He twisted around like a dancing dragon while stepping on the air and swung down Inferno with both hands. The Constellation of Fear raised his scythe to block the attack.

Claaang—!

Inferno was deflected once again along with a clear metallic sound.

[I told you that it was no use!] the Constellation of Fear shouted while bursting with Divinity.

Kang-Woo smiled. He raised the deflected Inferno and swung it at his own arm.

[What?]

Slash!

Kang-Woo's arm was cut off by the blazing sword as the Constellation of Fear's eyes were dyed with confusion. Black blood spewed out like a fountain and splashed on the Constellation of Fear.

Crunch!

[Gaaaaahh!]

Countless mouths appeared from the blood and bit off parts of the Constellation of Fear. Neither the Divinity barrier that he had been so proud of nor his hundreds of thousands of vengeful spirits meant anything. The hundreds of mouths that had appeared from Kang-Woo's blood were gnawing at the Constellation of Fear at an alarming pace like a school of piranhas.

[Kurgh!]

The Constellation of Fear looked down at himself in pallor. His entire body had fortunately not been covered with blood because he had instinctively jumped back after sensing that something was wrong. He severed the body parts covered in blood with his scythe.

[*Huff, huff!*] the Constellation of Fear panted heavily.

He had felt it earlier, but it was abnormally painful. The mouths had been so painful that cutting off the body parts covered in blood felt better.

*'I-I can't let that bastard's blood get on me.'*

The Constellation of Fear stepped back in pallor. He had once faced the Constellation of Agony, but the pain that he had experienced back then had been nothing compared to being eaten by those mouths.

*'I'll keep my distance and attack from far away.'*

It would be over the moment that he was covered in that monster's blood.

[Sound the requiem!]

Whoosh—!

The Constellation of Fear raised his scythe up high after widening his distance from Kang-Woo. The purple sphere made of vengeful spirits poured down like rainfall, leaving absolutely no space to dodge.

Rumble—!!

The deathly energy within the vengeful spirits exploded once they hit the ground. A giant purple storm tore apart the surroundings as it formed a crater several hundred meters wide.

[Is he dead?] the Constellation of Fear mumbled as he looked down at the destroyed ground.

He could see the monster having been torn into little pieces, having been unable to dodge his attack. Just then, he heard someone cackling.

“Thanks for the resurrection flag.”

The Constellation of Fear’s face stiffened as he turned toward the source of the sound.

Squelch, squelch.

The black blood spilled all over the ground was gathering in one place; the monster’s limbs and intestines were regenerating while squirming.

[What... in the world...]

The Constellation of Fear got goosebumps. Although he himself was a cluster of vengeful spirits, not even he was able to regenerate after being torn into little bits.

[How...]

How was he supposed to kill that monster? No, was that monster even able to be killed? The Constellation of Fear trembled as he stared at the inexplicable monster.

‘*Shit.*’

The Constellation of Fear clenched his scythe anxiously. That had been his strongest attack; if the monster did not die from that, then he had no other choice.

‘*I’ll have to unleash the Demon God’s Deific Essence.*’

[Fuuu.]

The Constellation of Fear’s purple eyes shone. He focused while raising his scythe. To unleash the Demon God’s Deific Essence— no, to be able to unleash it while staying alive, he needed to focus his entire being on the act.

Whoosh—!!

Enormous energy suddenly flowed out from the Constellation of Fear. The vengeful spirits making up his body shone purple and swirled around like a vortex.

“I’m sorry, but...”

Kang-Woo leaped forward without hesitation. He used the Authority of Blink to appear right in front of the Constellation of Fear, who was drawing out enormous amounts of energy.

“I’m not the kind of person to wait for transformations.”

Kang-Woo smiled as he stretched out his right arm. He thought about waiting leisurely to see what the Constellation of Fear’s trump card was, but he sensed that the energy flowing out from the Constellation of Fear was dangerous even for him after opening a Door.

*Splash!* Kang-Woo’s black blood spewed out as he cut off his right arm.

[Kuh!]

The Constellation of Fear halted his attempt to unleash the Demon God's Deific Essence and quickly jumped back. However, a few drops of Kang-Woo's blood got on his shoulder.

Crunch!

[Gaaaaaaahh!!]

Dozens of mouths once again appeared from the blood. The Constellation of Fear cut off his arm with his scythe while screaming.

[*Huff, huff,*] he panted heavily as he stared at Kang-Woo in pallor. [H-How...]

The Constellation of Fear had not tried to unleash the Demon God's Deific Essence in the middle of battle without considering Kang-Woo's interference. A barrier made of the Demon God's power, powerful enough to buy him more than enough time to unleash the Deific Essence, was formed during the process.

*'So why...'*

The Constellation of Fear looked at the monster in front of him incomprehensibly. That monster had managed to pass through the Demon God's barrier with ease. He had not destroyed or ripped through it; he had simply gone through it as if it had never been there in the first place.

"Hm? What?" Kang-Woo asked.

Based on his reaction, it seemed like he had no knowledge of the barrier. The Constellation of Fear grimaced, unable to understand what was going on.

*'Since it's come to this, I'll have to unleash the Deific Essence right away... while risking annihilation.'*

It was the worst possible situation. The Constellation of Fear fell into thought while clenching his scythe.

"What's wrong? We're not done yet." Kang-Woo smiled widely and continued, "I wanna play some more."

He had not had enough yet. Although he had stopped the Constellation of Fear from using his trump card, the Constellation of Fear could still fight. Kang-Woo wanted to experience this joyous battle for a little longer. Kang-Woo charged at the Constellation of Fear while smiling.

Just then...

Slash!

The barrier surrounding them was torn, and a middle-aged man with a diagonal slash scar across his face slipped through. He stood between Kang-Woo and the Constellation of Fear with a sword shining blue in hand. The man simply stared at Kang-Woo, who was charging at the Constellation of Fear, expressionlessly.

[C-Constellation of Despair.]

The Constellation of Fear's eyes widened. The situation was straight out of a scene of a protagonist coming to save a heroine in danger. The Constellation of Despair raised his sword and swung it at the charging Kang-Woo. Kang-Woo could not feel killing intent from the swing; it was only meant to keep Kang-Woo at bay.

Kang-Woo smiled widely. The Constellation of Fear extended his arm, getting a bad feeling.

[Wai—!]

Kang-Woo jumped straight into the path of the sword swing before the Constellation of Fear could finish his sentence.

“What?” Tai Wuji, who had not expected Kang-Woo to jump straight into his swing, expressed confusion.

The Heavenly Dragon's sword sliced Kang-Woo's head clean off, and...

Splash—!

Blood splattered from the base of Kang-Woo's neck like a fountain... toward the Constellation of Fear behind Tai Wuji.

“What in the...” Tai Wuji muttered, having not expected the monster that Lucifer had warned him about, to die from just a warning swing.

He turned around to look at the Constellation of Fear, who was covered from head to toe by the black blood.

[N-No... NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!] the Constellation of Fear screamed in terror.