

M. in Hell 471

Chapter 471 - Parasite King (3)

[I thought you were a fellow connoisseur of elegance.]

The Parasite King looked up at Oh Kang-Woo with a frown.

“Elegance, my ass,” Kang-Woo answered as he stared in disgust at the sticky green tentacles. He continued as he gagged, “There’s no such thing as elegance in tentacles.”

“H-How cruel...” Lilith shed tears as if she were heartbroken.

‘Why are you getting hurt?’

Kang-Woo was left lost for words as he stared at Lilith, who was hurt by Kang-Woo’s words directed at the Parasite King.

“Do you truly not understand the charm of tentacles, Master Kang-Woo?”

‘Yes.’

“Why do you despise tentacles so much?!”

‘Because of you.’

“You’re too cruel!”

‘So what?’

“Hmph! Don’t you ever think about enjoying my tentacles ever again!”

‘Hell yeah.’

Kang-Woo could not understand the twisted beauty standards of demons despite having lived as a demon for far longer than as a human.

[You have no desire to talk, do you?] The Parasite King looked up at Kang-Woo in rage. [I have no reason to show courtesy to a man so inelegant.] He slowly stood up and spread his green tentacles widely. [Come, mortal hero.]

Boom!

A great shockwave shook the earth as an otherworldly power different from mana, demonic energy, or sacred power poured out from him.

The Parasite King remarked arrogantly, [Do your best to protect this world from me, the Parasite King.]

The otherworldly invader, one who had conquered countless worlds and a king who reigned as the strongest for the longest time, raised his arms. Humanoid Parasites with translucent wings flew up to the sky. They were different from regular Parasites; they were evolved lifeforms that had inherited a large amount of the king’s power, and the Parasite known as Raging Temperance was one of them.

“The king is trying to eat.” Balrog stood between the evolved Parasites and Kang-Woo as his muscles swelled. He raised his fist and said fiercely, “Do not disturb him, insects.”

Clank, clank.

Black armor wrapped around him with the sounds of dense metal hitting against each other.

Balrog turned to Han Seol-Ah and said, “I ask for your support, my king’s lover.”

“Ah, okay! I will buff you right away!”

Seol-Ah nodded as twelve wings of light sprouted from her back. She was smiling uncontrollably, having taken a liking to the title *king’s lover*.

[Hm! I’ll destroy anyone who gets in Kang-Woo’s way!]

“I-I’ll do my best to k-kill them all... a-and be p-praised.”

Echidna and Halcyon also exuded fierce bloodlust at the Parasites charging at Kang-Woo.

‘Good thing I brought them.’

Kang-Woo smirked as he looked at his retainers. With this, his battle against the Parasite King would not be interfered.

“Now, then.” Kang-Woo smiled widely.

Fwoosh.

The Flames of Voracity burned fiercely as if it were starving.

“Let’s begin,” he said to the king of the outer world.

[I like your impertinence!]

The Parasite King sprouted his translucent wings. Hundreds of green tentacles poured down at Kang-Woo as if it were rainfall. The Flames of Voracity stood in their way.

Rumble—!!

Ear-splitting explosions shook their surroundings. The Flames of Voracity dispersed and the tentacles barraged Kang-Woo, who was blown back and tumbled backward.

[Haaaap!]

The Parasite King stomped his feet and charged at supersonic speed. He reached the tumbling Kang-Woo in an instant and raised his right arm, which had been close to that of a human in appearance before, but was now wrapped in an exoskeleton similar to that of a cockroach.

Wham—!!

Kang-Woo was blown into the sky after getting punched. The Parasite King did not give Kang-Woo any time to rest, showering him with punches.

[We Parasites are the strongest beings, born to rule the universe!] said the Parasite King confidently as he barraged Kang-Woo. [Our extraordinary rate of propagation! Regenerative capabilities that fully heal us even after being split in half! Infinite evolutionary possibilities!]

Parasites were born warriors and predators; it was pointless in and of itself to compare them to mere humans. Angels and demons could be stronger than Parasites as individuals, but they were no match for Parasites if they went to war against each other.

[And I am the one who was born as king of this race!]

The Parasite King was the strongest from birth; his physical capabilities, power, and rate of evolution were on another level compared to other Parasites, showing him that he was fit to be a king. He was born to conquer worlds and rule them beneath his feet. That was the true nature of the one known as the king of Parasites.

[Now, mortal hero! Struggle some more!]

Bash! Crash! Wham—!

Kang-Woo was getting one-sidedly beaten after the Parasite King unleashed his true power. The Parasite King's fists covered in a black exoskeleton went through the Flames of Voracity and barraged Kang-Woo before he even had time to counterattack. Kang-Woo's flesh was torn apart and his bones broke.

[Is this all you've got?!] shouted the Parasite King in frustration. [Do not disappoint me, human hero!]

The Parasite King one day became bored because he was reigning above all. He no longer felt excitement when conquering worlds. He felt like he was dead; as if time had stopped for him.

[Why do you think I came all the way here to the Triad?!]

He needed stimulation; he needed someone who could let him feel like he was alive. He wanted to feel the thrill of battle with his life on the line.

[Get up, human!]

Bash—!

However, Kang-Woo was left embedded in the ground without being able to dodge his fist. The Parasite King clicked his tongue in disappointment.

[... I guess this is it.]

The human hero was no longer a match for the Parasite King once he brought out his true power.

[But it has truly been a while since I've transformed to my first form.]

The Parasite King turned around with a sorrowful expression.

“You talk too much for a goddamn insect.”

Just then, the Parasite King heard a voice.

[...!]

Kang-Woo slowly stood up from the ground.

“Do you talk with words?” The injuries that had been all over Kang-Woo were nowhere to be seen anymore. “Well, I’ve more or less figured you out now.”

Kang-Woo stopped analyzing the Parasite King’s movements with the Authority of Insight. His movements were not as extraordinarily impressive as those of Tai Wuji, but they were the most ideal for the Parasites’ characteristics.

“Let’s do this for real now.”

Fwoosh.

Kang-Woo slightly lowered his stance and slowly raised his right fist covered in the Flames of Voracity— no, his fist itself had become fire.

“Skybreaker.”

Boom—!!

Kang-Woo stomped his feet and leaped forward, arriving in front of the Parasite King as if he had teleported. He then swung his fist made of the Flames of Voracity.

Bash—!!!

The hundreds of tentacles protecting the Parasite King were burned away and Kang-Woo’s fist dug into the Parasite King’s stomach.

[Kurgh!!]

The Parasite King was ripped in half; his lower body collapsed in place as his upper body was blown away.

[Cough! Cough!]

The Parasite King, with only his upper body remaining, coughed green blood.

[Gurghhh.]

However, that was only for a moment. Sticky fluid oozes out from his upper body. The split area squirmed as if it were boiling and his lower body was regenerated.

[Hah.]

The Parasite King stared at Kang-Woo in shock. It took tremendous power to split his body in half.

[Hah, haha.] The Parasite King smirked as he trembled and burst into laughter. [Kehe, kahahahaha!! Yes! That’s more like it!]

His expression which had been filled with sorrow earlier brightened in an instant.

[This is the first time I’ve had this much fun since beginning my conquest!]

The Parasite King clenched his fists and once again drew out his power.

Crack, crack.

His black exoskeleton around his entire body split open and eight hooks covered with sharp saw blades emerged. His black body was slowly turning green.

[Grrrrr,] the Parasite King growled.

He raised himself using the eight hooks. The Parasite King no longer had any resemblance to human form.

[You are the second opponent to ever make me use my second form.]

The first opponent was torn to shreds as soon as the Parasite King revealed his second form.

[You can be honored! I can guarantee that you are the strongest among the humans—]

“Jesus Christ, you talk too much,” Kang-Woo interjected as he grabbed two of the Parasite King’s eight hooks.

“You can be honored too.”

Crunch!

Kang-Woo ripped out the two hooks.

“I can guarantee that you’re the greatest chatterbox among everyone I’ve ever fought.”

Bash!

Kang-Woo used the momentum from ripping out the hooks to kick the Parasite King on the chin. The Parasite King was sent flying with his chin shattered. Kang-Woo lightly jumped and swung his leg back down like an ax. The Parasite King’s face was bashed in with Kang-Woo’s heel and he was rammed into the ground, forming a crater.

[Gaaaaaaaaaahhh!!] The Parasite King screamed in pain as he twisted and turned, grasping the areas that his hooks were ripped out from. [Kehe, kehehe.]

However, his painful struggles did not last long.

[Kahahahahahaha!!] The Parasite King burst into laughter, still in the crater. He shouted ecstatically, [A-Aaaahh!! Yes, this is it! It was this!]

He then looked up at Kang-Woo.

[This must be how it feels to be alive!!]

His voice was trembling with delight. A sense of fear that he had not felt in a long time was coursing through him. Fear allowed one to feel alive, as well as the emotion that he had been chasing all this time.

[I will admit it, mortal hero!] The Parasite King stood up as he staggered. [You are worthy of being my rival!]

Rumble—!!

The earth shook as if an earthquake was taking place.

[Let me show you!]

The Parasite King raised his arms, tens of thousands of green tentacles pouring out of him, and his skin was bubbling.

[This is the true form of a king!]

The green tentacles condensed into one area and the Parasite King, who was only a few meters tall, grew to become hundreds of meters tall. Kang-Woo was reminded of giants in mythology as he watched the Parasite King roaring as he trampled on a mountain.

[Come! Let me experience true fear!]

The Parasite King raised his giant arms in delight.

“...”

Kang-Woo stared at the giant Parasite King, completely baffled.

‘What the hell’s with this dude? He has three forms and can even gigantify? Is he the protagonist of a Trigger anime? Is your drill gonna pierce the heavens?’

“You want to feel fear?”

Kang-Woo cackled. The power he could feel from the gigantified Parasite King was enormous enough to justify such a line. However...

“Sure,” Kang-Woo said as smiled. “I’ll let you feel it until you’re sick of it.”

He placed his right hand over his heart.

“Open.”

Kang-Woo opened the doors of despair.

Chapter 472 - Parasite King (4)

[What the...]

The Parasite King’s eyes shook.

Boom, boom.

The monster large enough to squash a mountain with his feet took a step back. His instincts warned him that the being in front of him was dangerous.

[You bastard... Are you... truly human?]

Nothing had changed about the man; in terms of appearance, the enemy was human.

[...]

However, something was different. The Parasite King had devoured countless humans in the process of conquering Huan, but this was the first time he had felt this way. The being in front of him did not feel like a human, but something else wearing human skin.

[He, hehehe,] the Parasite King laughed in a low tone.

He looked down at his trembling body; his instincts were desperately yelling at him to run away from that monster.

[How amusing.]

Thrills coursed throughout the Parasite King from facing an incomprehensible enemy. He, who had conquered countless worlds throughout the universe, had never recognized anyone besides himself as a monster. He couldn't be more delighted from feeling an emotion that he had never felt before.

Slam!

[How very amusing!!] shouted the Parasite King as he forcibly erased the fear taking over him. He raised his giant arm and said, [More, more, more! Make me tremble in fear more!!]

The giant's arm, several dozen meters long, swung down at Kang-Woo, who looked like a mere fly compared to the Parasite King.

Wham—!!

The enormous impact shook the earth. Kang-Woo was squashed after being flattened by the Parasite King's fist, but only for a moment. His mangled flesh returned to normal in an instant.

[Kehehe, yes! That's more like it!]

The Parasite King burst into laughter as he looked down at the instantly-regenerated Kang-Woo. He would not have the being, who had allowed him to feel fear, die so easily.

[I've finally found an opponent whom I can go all out against!]

The Parasite King no longer needed to search for Bael. The monster in front of him was the rival that he had been searching for across dimensions.

[Graaaaaaaaaaahhh!]

The Parasite King's green exoskeleton split as he roared.

Tssssssss—!

Powerful green acid fell like rain.

“...”

Kang-Woo could smell his flesh burning; his skin was melting away, exposing bone. He charged toward the Parasite King as his body was melting away. He raced through the acid rain and stuck to him.

Crunch!

Kang-Woo opened wide and took a large bite out of the Parasite King.

The Parasite King looked down at a human fistful of his flesh that was bitten off. [Pfft.

Bwahahahahahahaha!!!]

He couldn't contain his laughter. He was hundreds of meters tall, so a mere human fistful of flesh was no different to him than dead skin cells to a human.

[You call that an attack?] asked the Parasite King as he trembled, barely holding in his laughter.

His eyes no longer held any sense of fear; all that remained was a deep sense of mockery aimed at his enemy.

[Hmm. I... may have been mistaken.]

The Parasite King shook his head. He could feel his ecstasy dying after thinking that he had found his match. It was only natural since the only thing that Kang-Woo did after charging at him as his entire body melted was to take a single bite out of him.

[Hehehe,] the Parasite King giggled.

His excitement had completely disappeared but he did not feel bad for some reason. He was more relieved than disappointed that his enemy turned out to be nothing much.

Crunch.

Just then, Kang-Woo took another bite out of the Parasite King.

[Kahahahaha! You still haven't given up yet?!]

The Parasite King burst into laughter again. Considering his size, the mere bite of a human was more insignificant than fearful.

[An adorable struggle, my rival— no, pathetic human.] He changed the way that he addressed Kang-Woo. [Did you not tell me earlier that you would make me feel fear until I was sick of it? Is this the fear you were referring to? Hm? Kehehe. What to do? I don't feel a shred of fear.]

The Parasite King laughed at Kang-Woo.

Crunch.

Kang-Woo took yet another bite out of the Parasite King.

[Hmm.] The Parasite King frowned slightly; something was off about the bites. [They're not regenerating.]

The regenerative capabilities of the Parasites were beyond compare, and those of the king transcended even that. He would still regenerate fully in an instant even if he were to be torn to microscopic bits. However, the bites that the human took out of him were not regenerating.

[How annoying.]

Even if it was insignificant, it was not like it didn't hurt. The Parasite King's irritation grew as the minuscule amount of pain lingered.

[Die, pathetic human.]

The Parasite King raised his giant arm and swung it down at Kang-Woo as if he were swatting a mosquito that had stuck itself to him. He then turned carefreely to look at Kang-Woo's comrades, specifically at Balrog, fighting against his subordinates.

[Pathetic human's subordinate.]

"Hm?" Balrog, who had just blown off Raging Temperance's head, turned to the Parasite King. "What is it, king of insects?"

[Your master is dead.] The Parasite King showed Balrog Kang-Woo, who was squashed against the Parasite King's body. [How would you like to serve me instead of this pathetic one?]

Balrog remained silent at the sudden offer. He stared at Kang-Woo's corpse and laughed, "Kehehe."

He stared at the Parasite King mockingly.

“It seems your brain did not get bigger with your body.”

[What did you say?]

The Parasite King’s expression hardened. Balrog stared leisurely at the squashed Kang-Woo.

“You...”

Wriggle.

Despite being hurt to the point that any living organism would die, the monster of the Demonic Sea did not die.

“Know nothing.”

Crunch.

[What?]

The Parasite King expressed confusion. His flesh, so small that he could barely feel it, was bitten off.

[Why...]

He looked down with shaking eyes.

Crunch.

A mouth came out of the body that had become mush and bit off his flesh.

[Why aren’t you... dying?]

The fear of the unknown was weighing the Parasite King down as if he were getting sucked into an abyss.

[Urgh!]

The Parasite King raised his arm and ripped off a large portion of where the mouth was attached. Green bodily fluid poured like a fountain from the ripped area.

[Huuu, huuu.]

He was hurt even more compared to when Kang-Woo was eating him, but his expression was much brighter. He threw aside the mound of flesh that he had ripped off.

[What in the world are y—]

Crunch.

The Parasite King heard the sound of flesh being bitten before he could finish his sentence.

The Parasite King looked in pallor. There was a mouth attached to the ripped area.

[What... the hell?]

He was sure that he had completely ripped out the area where the mouth was attached.

[Why is it... still there...?]

The giant Parasite King trembled. His instincts were telling him that something was going wrong even if he didn't want to know.

[Why are you still there?!!]

The Parasite King shouted madly as he grabbed more of the flesh that the mouth was attached to. He ripped off more and more flesh without thinking of how large his injury was getting.

[*Huff, huff, huff,*] the Parasite King panted heavily.

He threw aside the torn flesh far away as if it were filth.

Crunch.

However, yet another mouth appeared and bit off his flesh.

[A-Aaaahh,] the Parasite King groaned.

The flesh bitten off with each bite was merely the size of a human fist. It could not even be considered an injury for the Parasite King.

[S-Stop.]

However, he could tell these injuries would continue to stack and this mouth would keep biting off his flesh like a curse. He could also tell that one day, he would die with his consciousness fully intact.

[I told you to stoooooooooop!!] the Parasite King screamed.

He scratched madly in fear. His flesh was torn and green bodily fluid spewed from the torn vessels. The Parasite King was scratching more of his flesh off than the amount that Kang-Woo's mouth was biting off. Even so...

Crunch.

[G-Get off!! Get off of meeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!]

The biting did not stop. The Parasite King twisted and turned as he screamed like a madman. Kang-Woo's mouth was like a nail clipper neverendingly pinching away flesh.

[A-Aaaahh. P-Please.]

Being beheaded to be granted a quick death, and being slowly led to death as flesh was pinched off with a nail clipper.

[S-Stop. I-I didn't... want something like this.]

Which was a more fearful death?

[This wasn't... the kind of battle... I wanted.]

Crunch.

The Parasite King's flesh was bitten off. Black mucus gathered around the area of the Parasite King's flesh that the mouth was attached to, and took the form of a human.

Kang-Woo looked up at the Parasite King, who was looking down at him in terror, and asked, "Do you fear me now?"

Chapter 473 - Hope To The Fallen World (1)

Crunch.

Flesh was bitten off.

[A-Aaaahh.]

A lifeless groan sounded out. Oh Kang-Woo slowly stood up and looked down at the Parasite King. His eyes which had been blazing with passion were now that of a dead fish.

“The hell? Is it over already?”

Kang-Woo looked down at the Parasite King in disappointment. The Parasite King was as mangled as an abused rag. Most of his injuries were not made by Kang-Woo but by the Parasite King himself to rip Kang-Woo off of him.

“Huuu,” Kang-Woo took a deep breath in and clicked his tongue.

‘I wanted to test my new Trait a little more.’

Kang-Woo recalled the effects of his Twelfth Awakening Trait *Master of the Demonic Sea*.

‘I guess it’s fine since I’ve more or less checked its effects.’

The Trait *Master of the Demonic Sea* allowed Kang-Woo to maintain his sanity when the Doors were open. He had not been able to test it out since it was far too dangerous to open the Doors for no reason, so this opportunity had been the perfect chance for him.

‘It’s amazing.’

The Trait was not EX-rank for nothing; the Twelfth Awakening Trait had far exceeded Kang-Woo’s expectations.

‘Let’s see... I think I withstood about twenty or thirty full-body regenerations.’

Kang-Woo did not die from any physical, magical, or spiritual attack when the Doors were open because the Demonic Sea poured into him through the Ten Thousand Demon Core to restore him instantly.

‘But it’s not invincible.’

Such an overpowered ability naturally had flaws; the more the Demonic Sea’s power was used to restore Kang-Woo’s body whenever he got hurt, the more his sanity was eaten away by the Demonic Sea. His consciousness thinned and his thoughts evaporated.

‘And in the end, I would lose control.’

If Kang-Woo lost control, he would be reduced to a monster that ate anything in his path, regardless of friend or foe. The *Master of the Demonic Sea* Trait helped maintain his sanity within the Demonic Sea. To make a comparison to a game about a plumber who grew from eating mushrooms, the Trait was like a star which allowed the plumber to be invincible after eating it.

‘This will be a game changer.’

No matter how risky opening the Doors was, Kang-Woo had no intention of keeping them closed against Bael. Rather, it would be forced upon him as if it were inevitable.

'And this trait will shine in that moment.'

Kang-Woo nodded in satisfaction.

"Let's get this over with."

He looked down at the Parasite King, who had lost the will to fight. He was still alive but was no different from being dead.

[You're...] the Parasite King muttered. His voice was filled with fear, nothing like his arrogant tone from earlier. [Yes, I see...]

He nodded lifelessly as if he understood.

[It was never Bael.] The Parasite King continued in terror, [You are... the ender of this world.]

Kang-Woo grimaced. "Ender, my ass."

He had been the one to stop the end of the world by defeating the Parasite King.

"Stop forcing shit like the demise and the end of the world when I don't even want it, dammit."

Kang-Woo walked in annoyance and slowly raised his arm. His hand split open and out of the ends poured black mucus that quickly spread across the parasite King to devour him.

[He, hehe.] The Parasite King giggled softly as the Authority of Predation was devouring him. He mumbled, [Your struggles... are meaningless. Fate... cannot be...]

"What a joke," Kang-Woo interjected as he snickered. "You were saying shit about how you were destined to be a king and that you were a conqueror from birth? Then why was I able to beat the shit out of you? Hm? Is this also part of your destiny? Was it decided from birth?"

[...]

"Don't try to act cool by shitting out meaningful-sounding lines and just die quietly, man."

Kang-Woo clenched his fists in annoyance as he looked down at the Parasite King. The energy of the Authority of Predation fully enveloped the Parasite King several hundred meters tall.

Crunch, crunch!

The sound of crushing bones echoed.

[A-Aaaahh,] the Parasite King groaned. He looked up as he felt himself sinking into the sea of demonic energy. [It seems...]

He was a king from the moment of birth; he was the strongest. The countless stars that he had conquered only contained prey. No one who could even dare to devour him existed— until today when he met that monster.

[I was... one of those prey.]

He was merely one of the prey to the predator of predators on top of the food chain.

The Parasite King slowly closed his eyes. The fear that he had desired all this time was not at all as entertaining as he had hoped.

Riiing.

[You have successfully devoured the Parasite King!]

[Transferring the right of control over the Parasites from the Parasite King to Player Oh Kang-Woo.]

[You have acquired the special skill ‘Tentacle Summoning (Rank: SS)’ and ‘Acidic Body Fluid (Rank: S).’] *‘The fuck? I don’t need that shit.’*

Kang-Woo cursed in his head as he confirmed the blue message windows that appeared after the predation. He was fine with Acidic Body Fluid, but not Tentacle Summoning.

‘I’ll never use it.’

No matter how broken it was, he would never use the goddamn skill for as long as he lived.

“Is this seriously it?”

Kang-Woo glared at the message window. He couldn’t believe that he only acquired two useless skills after devouring the Parasite King, who was so strong that he was forced to open the Doors.

‘More. Spit out more, dammit.’

Kang-Woo stared daggers at the message window. Another message popped up as if it were responding to his pleas.

[The stat Vitality has been newly added.]

[The spectrum of ways that you can use Chaos skills has broadened thanks to the acquisition of power from an outer world!]

[Raising your mastery over Chaos skills]

[Combining the Chaos skills with the Flames of Voracity due to its improved mastery.]

“What?” Kang-Woo said in bewilderment.

‘The skills were combined?’

He couldn’t understand why Chaos skills were combined with the Flames of Voracity out of nowhere.

“Motherfucker.”

Kang-Woo frowned aggressively. He had avoided using Chaos skills ever since awakening the Flames of Voracity. Chaos skills were only slightly stronger than the Flames of Voracity despite them being more than ten times as difficult to control.

'No, it's not like it's significantly more powerful either.'

If the Chaos skills were uncharted territory that he had yet to fully discover, the Flames of Voracity were an embodiment of his true self. It was only natural for there to be a difference in controllability.

'Even though I have two Traits that help me control them better.'

It was far too inefficient.

"Goddammit."

Rather than excitement, Kang-Woo was more worried that he wouldn't be able to use the Flames of Voracity, which he had been using well, anymore.

'I need to check right away.'

Kang-Woo slowly raised his head. There were still thousands of Parasite Nests sprawled throughout Huan since the Parasite King had split Kang-Woo's skill *Twilight* in half.

'I could wipe them out in an instant with just a single command since I was given control.'

However, they were the perfect targets to test out the power of the combined Flames of Voracity and Chaos skills.

"Wait."

Kang-Woo's eyes widened as he was about to draw out the Flames of Voracity.

'If the Flames of Voracity and the Chaos skills were combined...'

A chilling thought popped up in his head.

"Sh-Shit!"

Kang-Woo clenched his fists.

Tear!

The skin of his back ripped open once Kang-Woo crouched and focused. Giant wings made of sticky black mucus sprouted from the split areas.

Fwoosh.

Flames wrapped around the wings of black mucus. The gold and black wings resembling a black sun flapped on his back.

"Phew," Kang-Woo sighed in relief. "Thank God I can still make my wings no problem."

His blazing wings were a derivative of the Flames of Voracity; he worried that he would no longer be able to use them after the combination, but that did not seem to be the case.

"I... I can't live without these wings anymore," Kang-Woo muttered desperately.

He always turned into black mucus covered in nothing but mouths, and sometimes even turned into a ball of fire.

“This is... my only badass skill.”

Kang-Woo clenched his fists. Whatever happened, he couldn't afford to lose his wings.

“Fuuu.”

Kang-Woo flapped his wings and flew up into the air.

[Hm! K-Kang-Woo!]

Just then, Echidna flew toward Kang-Woo in excitement. She did not seem to be significantly injured due to the halt of the evolved lifeforms' actions after the Parasite King's death.

[Kang-Woo! What are those wings?! They're so cool!]

“Huhu.”

Kang-Woo shrugged proudly and flapped his wings to show them off.

“Haaa. You act like a child in the weirdest moments, Master Kang-Woo.” Lilith approached Kang-Woo as she sighed. She looked down at the ground covered in Parasite Nests and continued, “That aside, how are you planning on disposing of those Nests?”

“They should be wiped out.”

“I guess there is no other way.” Lilith nodded as she looked down at the thousands of Nests. She continued in pity, “I wonder... if this land will be able to return to normal one day with time?”

She seemed to be saddened by the fallen world as well.

Kang-Woo smirked. “How un-demonlike of you.”

“Hoho, indeed.”

Lilith giggled elegantly with her mouth covered. She then lightly grabbed Seol-Ah, who was flying next to her, by the hand and pulled her close.

“L-Lilith?” Seol-Ah asked, flustered.

Lilith lightly embraced Seol-Ah and said, “Fufu. I think I've changed a little after spending time with Seol-Ah and the others.”

Kang-Woo smiled faintly. It was not a bad change.

“Don't worry,” he said as he looked down at Huan. “As long as we get rid of the Nests... there is hope for this land to return to how it used to be.”

It was likely near impossible; nearly every lifeform in Huan had been taken over by Parasites and killed.

'But...'

There was a sliver of hope— Kang-Woo was sure of it.

“Master Kang-Woo...”

“I will create that hope.”

That was the least he could do for this fallen world.

Fwoosh—!

Kang-Woo closed his eyes and drew out the Flames of Voracity. He unsheathed Ingrium from his waist.

“Oh,” he expressed.

The Flames of Voracity, which used to burn using demonic energy mixed with Divinity as fuel, were now mixed with mana, sacred power, and the energy of the outer world known as Vitality as well.

'So this is... what it meant by it has combined with Chaos.'

The Flames of Voracity, which used to burn only with the power of demonic energy, were now using *Chaos* as fuel.

'No.'

The flames were voraciously eating *Chaos* to burn more fiercely than ever before.

'Not bad.'

The Flames of Voracity was an embodiment of his true self. They had indeed become harder to control due to their combination with Chaos, but not to the point that he couldn't handle them. It was at least far easier to control than using Chaos skills by themselves.

“Hope...” Kang-Woo slowly opened his eyes and looked down at Huan taken over by Parasites. “... To the fallen world.”

Fwoosh—!!!

The Flames of Voracity burned fiercely as they devoured Chaos. Kang-Woo swung down his sword horizontally as if he were forming a boundary between the sky and earth.

“Twilight.”

Boom!! Rumble—!!! Crackle—!!

Not only did the Flames of Voracity, which poured out from the sword, burn the Parasite Nests covering the ground to a crisp, but they also began to destroy the entirety of Huan. The massive flames melted the ground and vaporized the earth.

“Huh?”

Kang-Woo quickly lowered the output, but it was already too late.

“Wait a minute.”

The sliver of hope remaining in the fallen world was snuffed out.

‘Why the fuck is it so damn strong?’

The attack far surpassed his expectations. The Flames of Voracity burning with Chaos were powerful enough to turn an entire world to ash. Kang-Woo looked down at Huan, which was falling apart as if several nukes exploded at once.

“Uhhh, mm.”

‘I mean, you see...’

“It’s not my fault.”

‘It’s the System’s fault for combining the Chaos skills and the Flames of Voracity on their own. Come to think of it, a portion of the privileges granted by the Law of Titans was transferred to Bael.’

In that case, it was highly likely that all of this had gone according to his plan.

“That fucking bastard...!” Kang-Woo trembled in rage. “To think he would... destroy a world that still had hope of returning to how it once was!”

Kang-Woo shed tears as he looked down at the vanishing Huan. He had never felt more powerless than right now, unable to do anything to stop the destruction.

“I will avenge this star... no matter what.”

Kang-Woo turned around after coming to a resolution.

Riiing.

[How could such a scumbag possibly exist in the univ—]

Kang-Woo pushed aside the message window that popped up in front of him.

Chapter 474 - I Didn’t Think So Either

“Master Kang-Woo?”

Lilith looked down at the collapsing world and then at Kang-Woo dumbfoundedly. Kang-Woo’s shoulders flinched.

“Well... You see,” Kang-Woo stuttered as he squeezed out an excuse. “The skills combined all of a sudden... Bael, that scumbag...”

Kang-Woo tried to make whatever excuse he could, but there was no way any of them would work after they saw with their own eyes Kang-Woo turning Huan into ash with the Flames of Voracity.

“Haaa,” Lilith sighed deeply as she stared at Kang-Woo dumbfoundedly. “Let’s go back to Earth. It’ll be dangerous if we stay here for any longer.”

Once the Flames of Voracity reached Huan's inner core, there would be an explosion close to a supernova. Kang-Woo might survive with the Doors open, but his retainers like Balrog, Echidna, Halcyon, and others could not survive the explosion.

"Okay." Kang-Woo nodded without argument as the culprit for Huan's destruction.
"Let's go back."

Kang-Woo flapped his wings as he stared at the red Rift connected to Earth. The Rift was gradually getting smaller, possibly due to Huan's destruction. Kang-Woo and the others turned their backs on the collapsing Huan and threw themselves into the Rift.

Whoosh!

"Urgh..."

Filled with smoke, Seoul came into view along with a slight dizziness.

"For the light!!"

"The God of Splendor will guide us to salvation!!"

"Let us fight as one!"

The first thing Kang-Woo saw was the members of the Church of Splendor from Aernor, with Cha Yeon-Joo at the forefront.

"Ohmeeeeeeeeeeeen!!!" Yeon-Joo preached as she sprayed red chains covered in thorns, which were now covered in brilliant golden light, at the Parasites that had reached the heart of the city.

Crunch! Smash!!

The chains infused with the power of Divinity pierced several Parasites hiding in buildings.

'She's doing well.'

Kang-Woo looked down at Yeon-Joo in satisfaction. She had said at first that she would rather die than shout *Ohmen*, but she had become the most faithful devotee of the Church of Splendor after Kang-Woo's sincere (smartphone-induced) persuasion.

Yeon-Joo was not lacking in any way as the incarnation of the God of Splendor as she wiped out the regular Parasites attacking civilians instead of fighting against the evolved lifeforms one-on-one.

'Let's see. Where are Si-Hun and Tae-Hyun...?'

Kang-Woo had ordered them to neutralize the Evolved Parasites. He searched the area with the Authority of the Beholder and felt two beings exuding powerful energies speeding around the city. Kang-Woo nodded after figuring out why.

"The Parasites must have changed strategies."

The Parasites noticed that reinforcements were no longer arriving from the red Rift and decided to switch their approach to a guerilla tactic of buying time by scattering throughout the city.

'A wise choice for a bunch of insects.'

It was only natural since the Parasites had no way of defeating the twin protagonists Kim Si-Hun and Kim Tae-Hyun head-on.

'Si-Hun and Tae-Hyun seem to be having a hard time because of that.'

There were countless places for Parasites to hide in the heart of Seoul. Since Si-Hun and Tae-Hyun couldn't afford to destroy buildings to find the Parasites, they had no choice but to run around to find them.

"Thank goodness I was transferred control."

Kang-Woo separated from the group and flew across the skies of Seoul by himself. He moved to an area where he could see the entirety of the Han River and slowly raised his arm. There was no way he would let such a wonderful opportunity pass by.

[Hear me, evil parasites.]

Kang-Woo's voice was transmitted directly into the people's minds.

Whoooooom!!

Brilliant golden light spread throughout the surroundings. Even his wings were covered in golden light instead of the Flames of Voracity.

[The God of Splendor commands you.]

Kang-Woo used the privileges transferred to him from the Parasite King. Kang-Woo wondered for a moment if he should use the Parasites as his pawns.

'It's not worth it.'

After weighing the benefit of being able to control the Parasites and the risk of people possibly finding out that they were under Kang-Woo's control, it was far better to just rid himself of them.

Kang-Woo commanded the Parasites hiding throughout the entire city, [Die.]

"Gyaaaaaaaaah!"

"Skreeeee!!"

The Parasites all over Seoul screeched and began to rip themselves apart with their front legs akin to scythes.

'And for the finishing touches.'

Kang-Woo scattered the golden light around him, which had no effect other than its color, throughout the city to add some more visual effect.

"A-Aaaahh."

"O God of Splendor.."

"S-Salvation! It is the light of salvation!"

People mistook the golden light as the cause of the Parasites' deaths.

“Good.”

Kang-Woo smiled. This was far better for the eyes than simply commanding the Parasites to die.

‘I can hear Slushy cheering from here.’

This event would grow the Church of Splendor’s reputation severalfold as well as amplify his Divinity collection.

“Hyung-nim!”

Si-Hun quickly ran toward Kang-Woo using Void Steps.

“What’s the damage?” Kang-Woo asked.

“Most of the civilians were safely evacuated thanks to the help of Guardians and the Aernor soldiers, but the people who were attacked before that were...”

Si-Hun lowered his head with a somber expression. Kang-Woo smiled bitterly and nodded.

‘It couldn’t be helped since we were the ones invaded.’

Rather, it was a miracle that there had been minimal casualties from such a sudden large-scale invasion.

‘It might have ended up like the future that Tae-Hyun saw if I didn’t fly into the Rift.’

Seoul would have become no different from Hell for sure, forming a mountain of corpses and a river of blood.

‘But I managed to stop it.’

Kang-Woo was not able to save Huan, but he was at least able to protect Earth. He had stopped the first invasion from the outer worlds.

“Hyung-nim. I will go to the evacuation area with Layla.”

“Got it. I’m sure everyone is panicking, so try to keep them under control.”

The citizens would more or less listen to Si-Hun since he was the globally famous Sword Dragon. Si-Hun nodded and quickly leaped away. Kang-Woo flew down to the top of a highrise building.

“Fuuu.”

Even Kang-Woo was exhausted after a battle as heavy as this one.

‘I also opened the Doors.’

Kang-Woo looked down at his heart. The doors of the Ten Thousand Demon Core sealing the Demonic Sea were closed shut.

‘There... weren’t any side effects again.’

He couldn’t feel even a prickle of the excruciating pain that inevitably came with opening the Doors.

Kang-Woo's expression froze. He knew that it was not good news. To make a comparison, it was like feeling no pain after one's limbs were severed.

'I've heard that the most terrifying kind of cancer was a painless one.'

Kang-Woo turned around with a sorrowful expression. He could instinctively tell that it was dangerous as it was now, but he had no other choice since nothing was strong enough to replace opening the Doors.

"That aside, what are those bastards from Olympus doing?"

Kang-Woo frowned as he looked down at the city. Even if they were busy managing the divine realm, not manifesting while Earth was being attacked was unacceptable.

'I'll have to bring this up to that bitch Gaia later.'

"K-Kang-Woo hyung!"

Kang-Woo heard Tae-Hyun's voice as he was gritting his teeth inside his head. Kang-Woo turned to see a riled-up Tae-Hyun with tear streaks around his eyes.

"Did we... do it?" Tae-Hyun asked.

There was no need to even think about what he was asking.

"Yeah." Kang-Woo lightly nodded. "We stopped the future that you saw... with our own hands."

Tae-Hyun became teary-eyed. He lowered his head as his shoulders subtly trembled. "Sniff. I'm... I'm, so glad."

He had suffered from immense shock after seeing the end of the world through Foresight. He could do nothing but despair as he saw the burning sky and the mountain of countless corpses.

'We stopped it,' Tae-Hyun thought.

Heroes had banded together to stop the end of the world.

"It would have been impossible... if not for you, Kang-Woo hyung." Tae-Hyun wiped his tears, grabbed Kang-Woo's hands, and smiled brightly.

"We stopped them together." Kang-Woo lightly patted Tae-Hyun's shoulders.

'This guy looks more and more like a protagonist with each passing day.'

Kang-Woo couldn't help but feel that way as he stared at Tae-Hyun bawling his eyes from the fact that they stopped the end of the world. Si-Hun felt like the protagonist of a Korean fantasy story and Tae-Hyun felt like the protagonist of a Japanese light novel.

'They both feel like heroes of their own stories but Tae-Hyun is a bit more of a pushover... or should I say that he's more sentimental?'

Si-Hun was able to make level-headed decisions to an extent but Tae-Hyun mostly acted based on his feelings. He was a textbook isekai chuunibyoun protagonist. Even now, Si-Hun had headed to the

evacuation area to do what he needed to do as soon as the invasion was dealt with, but Tae-Hyun was crying because he was so moved that the end of the world was stopped.

'Well, if I had to choose, he's easier to manipulate.'

Kang-Woo smiled as he stared at the crying Tae-Hyun.

'He'd be usable if I raise him as a protagonist duo with Si-Hun.'

Tae-Hyun had also made significant contributions to stopping the invasion.

"Let's go. We should regroup with Si-Hun—"

"Argh!" Tae-Hyun suddenly crouched as he grabbed his head. "Arghhhhhhhhh!!"

Blood vessels bulged around Tae-Hyun's eyes. Tears mixed with blood flowed down his cheeks.

'The hell? What's up with him now?'

Kang-Woo stared at Tae-Hyun in confusion.

"A-Aaaahh." Tae-Hyun stepped away from Kang-Woo, his eyes filled with terror. "No... It can't be."

'What can't be?'

"That's... impossible."

"..."

'Oh, fuck. I know this pattern.'

"Wh-Why are you... hyung... n-no. There's no way... hyung would..."

'It's not what I'm thinking, right? Right?'

"Wh-Why are you... there?"

'Tae-Hyun. The future you saw was of Seoul after failing to stop the Parasite invasion, right? Right? I'm not in there, right?'

"It wasn't... the Parasites?"

'No, Tae-Hyun. It was the Parasites. I didn't do any of that shit.'

"K-Kurgh!! Arghhhhh!!"

'Why are you doing this, Tae-Hyun? I'm being a good boy. See? I even saved Earth from the Parasites.'

"..."

'You know how much I care about you, right? I take super good care of my little brothers. You trust me, don't you? You know how much I love you, right? Right? I didn't express it in words, but you have no idea how moved I was when you called me hy—'

"Demon... King? God of Voracity? Wh-What? What the hell?!!"

"..."

"Hyung... You were the Demon of Prophecy?"

'Mm. Yeah, I didn't think so either. No one reads light novels these days.'

Chapter 475 - What The Hell Is This Novel's Genre?

Zzzzzt!

Static filled Kim Tae-Hyun's vision. He could see a gray-colored world, a burning sky, distorted ground, and destroyed buildings.

"A-Aaaahh!"

There was a mountain made of countless corpses and a sea of blood. He threw up from the gut-wrenching stench.

"Bleeeeeeeeghhh!!"

His vomit mixed with the eyeballs on the ground.

"A-Arrrggghhh."

Tae-Hyun stepped back as he trembled and looked up. On top of the mountain of corpses...

"Kang-Woo hyung?"

There was a demon.

The man had black sclera, yellow irises, black horizontal pupils, goat horns on his forehead, and wings of fire on his back. The man couldn't be anything but a demon.

"Why is hyung...?"

However, the man looked like the one whom Tae-Hyun deeply idolized.

Fwoosh.

Kang-Woo's wings, resembling a black sun enveloped by gold and black flames, swayed. He flapped his wings and slowly turned around.

Crunch, crunch.

He crouched and began to devour the corpses.

"Wh-What are you doing, hyung?!" Tae-Hyun called.

However, his voice did not reach Oh Kang-Woo. It was only natural since the sight that he was seeing was that of the *future*.

“Haaa, haaa.”

Just then, Tae-Hyun heard familiar heavy breathing at the foot of the mountain of corpses. He turned to the source of the sound.

‘Me?’

Tae-Hyun saw himself.

“Kang-Woo... hyung?”

His future self was trembling in shock.

Kang-Woo slowly stood up and asked dryly, “You... were alive?”

His voice was empty as if something had broken within him.

“H-Hyung... what is... all this?” Tae-Hyun’s future self looked around in confusion. “A-Aaaahh.” His eyes then widened as if he had understood everything. “It was... you? It wasn’t Bael... but you?”

Kang-Woo did not answer and stared blankly at Tae-Hyun’s future self. “Answer me!!!” Tae-Hyun’s future self screamed. “I asked you if you did all this!!”

He collapsed and looked around at the city covered in corpses. He then unsheathed a sword with white frost covering its edge, unlike the dagger his current self used.

Kang-Woo slowly walked toward Tae-Hyun’s future self. Flames that looked like a black sun ignited the surroundings with each step he took. Kang-Woo’s mouth split open to his earlobes and revealed razor-sharp teeth.

“Yeah.” Kang-Woo nodded with a smile. “I did it.”

Tae-Hyun’s future self trembled in shock, tears flowing down his cheeks. “It... really was you, hyung.” His teeth clattered. “You’re... the Demon of Prophecy.”

Kang-Woo remained silent.

Tae-Hyun’s future self shouted in rage, “Wh-Why...?! Why did you do it, hyung?! How could you do something so atrocious?!”

The tears that accumulated on the tip of his chin dropped on a corpse, mixing with the blood.

“Why...” Tae-Hyun’s future self glared at Kang-Woo in resentment on his knees.

Kang-Woo slowly raised his right arm and covered his face with his hand. “Because...” His shoulders moved up and down as he cackled like a demon. He licked his lips and replied, “I was hungry.”

“What?” Tae-Hyun’s future self stared at Kang-Woo dumbfoundedly, unable to understand. “Hungry...? What... What are you talking about, hyung?”

“I...” Kang-Woo staggered as he walked. “I have to win.”

“...”

“Okay? I have to win.”

“Hyung.”

“Kihi, kihihhi,” Kang-Woo laughed as if broken inside. “Right, Balrog?”

He looked up at the sky and extended his arm toward it as if he were trying to grab something.

“Forward, forward, forward, forward, forward, forward, forward, forward, forward,” Kang-Woo mumbled as if humming. “Pfft, ha, hahaha! Yeah, Balrog. You’re right. Forward, forward, forward, forward, forward, forward!!”

Boom!

“To someplace higher! Higher than ever before!” Kang-Woo screamed madly as he reached for the sky. “Right? Huh? Am I doing it right?” Black tears flowed down Kang-Woo’s cheeks. “Right, Balrog...? I’m doing the right thing, right? Right? H-Hihi. What the hell, man? Why aren’t you answering me?”

Fwoosh.

The black sun burned.

“WHY AREN’T YOU ANSWERING ME?!”

Boom—!

The earth shook.

“H-Hehe,” Kang-Woo giggled as if he had a screw loose. “Seol-Ah... Seol-Ah. Listen to me. Huh? Where did you go, Lilith? You said you would stop me, didn't you? Hm? You said you would stop me if anything were to happen to me. H-Hihi. Si-Hun... Yeon-Joo... Wh-Where did you all go? Hm? Answer me already.”

“H-Hyung...”

“Pfft. H-Hihihihhi!” Kang-Woo giggled madly as he hugged himself.

Crack.

He turned his head far beyond what was normal for a human and slowly tilted it.

“Huh?” Kang-Woo stared crazily at Tae-Hyun’s future self. “You... were alive?”

Kang-Woo’s sharp teeth glinted; the starved beast bared his fangs at his prey.

“A-Aaaahh...” Tae-Hyun’s future self gripped his head in despair from the fact that the terror taking over him was from none other than Kang-Woo. “*Sniff, sniff.*”

The tears did not stop. Tae-Hyun’s future self could instinctively tell that his hyung, the man whom he deeply idolized, was no longer there.

“I... trusted you,” Tae-Hyun’s future self said as he gripped his sword tighter and bit his lip. “Even after finding out that you were the Demon King and the God of Voracity... I trusted you.”

He raised his sword covered in white frost.

“Why... Why did things end up this way?!!”

The surroundings froze in an instant once Tae-Hyun’s future self infused mana into the sword, which possessed the power to freeze the entire world.

“Haaa,” Tae-Hyun’s future self inhaled deeply and light poured out of his eyes as he gripped the sword exuding white frost. He commanded, “Freeze.”

Swoosh—!!

A frost storm so powerful that not even a being of godhood would be able to easily endure raged toward Kang-Woo.

“Heh.”

However, Kang-Woo split in half from neck to groin and something came out from the ends.

Crunch.

“Huh?”

Tae-Hyun’s hand, which had been holding the sword, was bitten off.

“A-Arggh.” He staggered backward as blood poured out of the severed hand.

“Gaaaaaaaahhh!!”

Tae-Hyun’s future self screamed in immense pain. He twisted and turned as he fell to the ground.

“Mmm, how exquisite. It’s cooling my mouth.” Kang-Woo, who devoured Tae-Hyun’s hand along with the sword, nodded in satisfaction.

He walked toward Tae-Hyun’s future self, his body still split.

“A-Aaaahh.” Tae-Hyun’s future self looked up. He saw something within Kang-Woo’s split body. “Kang-Woo hyung...”

There was a black sea, an endless abyss large enough to devour the entire world whole.

Crunch.

Kang-Woo lifted Tae-Hyun’s future self and bit off his head.

Clatter.

Tae-Hyun’s necklace fell from his severed head. It began to exude blinding light once it hit the ground.

“Hm?” Kang-Wo tilted his head in confusion.

Whooom!

The light wrapped the headless Tae-Hyun before Kang-Woo had a chance to grab the necklace.

Zzzzzzzzzt!!!

The gray distortion filled Tae-Hyun's vision again, bringing along a severe headache.

"A-Aaaaaaaarrrrggghh!!!"

Tae-Hyun clenched his eyes. Tears of blood poured down his cheeks. Bulging blood vessels could be seen between Tae-Hyun's fingers as he covered his eyes with his hands.

"Tae-Hyun?"

Tae-Hyun heard a voice; it was that of the hero he was now familiar with, and the brother whom he idolized.

"What's wrong, Tae-Hyun?"

Tae-Hyun looked up to see Kang-Woo's face.

"N-No." Tae-Hyun shook his head and denied the nightmare that he had just seen.

"There's no way... hyung would do such a thing."

It wasn't even worth mentioning. Why would Kang-Woo, who protected Earth from the Parasite invasion, end the world?

"There's... no way."

However, Tae-Hyun knew deep down in his heart. He had already realized it.

"What's wrong, Tae-Hyun? Did you see another future?"

The future that he just saw was inevitable and Kang-Woo, the monster putting on the facade of a hero, was the being who would end the world.

"Hyung... You were the Demon of Prophecy?"

Silence fell. Kang-Woo stared at Tae-Hyun with deeply sunken eyes.

"What the hell are you even talking about? I told you last time that Bael is the Demon of Prophecy."

"..."

"You seem to have seen something with your ability, but you shouldn't rely too much on—"

"Your wings."

"What?"

Tae-Hyun stared at Kang-Woo's back— or to be more specific, his wings of splendor shining gold.

"They look... the same."

Although they were different colors, their unique fluid shape was the same as the wings that Tae-Hyun saw in his future vision.

“A-Aaaahh.” Tae-Hyun staggered backward and cried as he clenched his head.
“Aaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!!!”

The memories of his future self surged into his brain. The memories of the present and future mixed; it did not take long for Tae-Hyun’s consciousness to be taken over by his future self.

“What the...” Tae-Hyun raised his head and looked around. He mumbled as if he couldn’t believe it, “Wh-Why is Seoul... Th-The people are alive!”

“...”

“Wait... Yes, the Parasites! This is back when the Parasites attacked!” Tae-Hyun shouted in delight.

He then flinched once he saw Kang-Woo.

“Hyung— no, you damn demon.”

Tae-Hyun gritted his teeth and took out his dagger. He bit his lip and lowered his stance.

“I will kill you... right here and now.”

He glared at Kang-Woo furiously.

Kang-Woo placed his hand on his forehead as if he was getting a headache. “For fuck’s sake.”

‘Is it a fucking regression now? What a goddamn shitshow. What the hell is this novel’s genre?’

Chapter 476 - You’re Making Me Feel Like The Final Boss

“Tae-Hyun,” Oh Kang-Woo called.

“Don’t call my name with that filthy mouth of yours!”

Kim Tae-Hyun’s scream echoed across the building’s rooftop. kang-Woo stared at Tae-Hyun with a frown.

‘What the hell happened?’

Tae-Hyun would not be acting this way if he simply saw the future.

‘Did he actually go through a regression?’

It did not seem to be a true regression; Tae-Hyun’s future consciousness seemed to have jumped to the past. Foresight had gone beyond just showing the future and transferred Tae-Hyun’s consciousness from the future to the present for some reason.

‘What the hell did he see?’

Kang-Woo more or less had an idea. A burning sky, distorted land, and a man standing above a mountain of corpses...

'It wasn't the Parasite King... but me.'

Kang-Woo— to be more exact, Kang-Woo with his mind completely taken over by the Demonic Sea, had ended the world.

Kang-Woo shut his eyes tightly. He had resolved himself for the possibility.

'But in the end... I guess I failed to overcome it.'

A sense of hopelessness swept over him. He bit his lip anxiously.

'No.' Kang-Woo slowly shook his head. *'No future is set in stone.'*

Tae-Hyun blocked attacks he would have been hit by in the future through Foresight. In other words, the future that Tae-Hyun saw through Foresight could change.

'Don't falter,' Kang-Woo repeated to himself.

He had no intention of sitting around doing nothing like an idiot just because the world ended in a future that had not yet arrived.

'I have to calm Tae-Hyun down first.'

Kang-Woo raised his head and looked at Tae-Hyun.

"Haaa, haaa, haaa," Tae-Hyun panted heavily. "Oh... Kang-Woo...!"

Translucent light poured out from his eyes. Blood vessels bulged around his eyes like tree roots.

"I won't... be fooled anymore!!"

"Tae-Hyun, this is all a huge misunderst—"

"Don't bullshit me!" Tae-Hyun shouted in tears and shouted, "Do you seriously think I'll be fooled like a dumbass like before? Huh? I can see through your shameless mask now!!"

'When did I ever fool you?'

Kang-Woo was having a hard time responding to accusations regarding a future that had yet to arrive.

"I understand what you're going through," Kang-Woo remarked.

"Kurgh..."

"First, calm down. You simply saw one future among countless. That's all."

"Shut... up."

"The future can still change—"

"Shut up!!" Tae-Hyun screamed and glared at Kang-Woo resentfully. "Yeah... it can change. It will change once I kill you right here and now."

“That’ll only change the person on top of that mountain of corpses from me to Bael.”

“Shut up!” Tae-Hyun shouted, not willing to talk anymore.

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue.

‘He won’t listen.’

Tae-Hyun seemed to be completely taken over by his future consciousness. Kang-Woo could tell that nothing he said would reach him.

“I’ll... kill you.”

Tae-Hyun gripped his dagger tighter as more translucent light poured out of his eyes.

“Haaa,” Kang-Woo sighed deeply.

‘I guess I have no choice.’

He needed to neutralize Tae-Hyun before he even got a chance to talk things over with him.

‘It’s so damn hard to hold back, though.’

Kang-Woo had just destroyed an entire world because he used too much strength. He needed more time until he was able to properly control the Flames of Voracity combined with Chaos.

‘And it’s not like I can kill him.’

It was not like Kang-Woo had become too attached to Tae-Hyun. Tae-Hyun treated Kang-Woo like his older brother, but they had only just met and had gone through too little for Kang-Woo to grow attached. Kang-Woo was not generous enough to show mercy to a hound who bared its fangs at its master.

‘But I need Tae-Hyun’s future memories.’

If Tae-Hyun was taken over by his future consciousness, it meant that he likely remembered everything that happened between now and the end of the world. Kang-Woo would be able to earn clues about the coming demise as long as he was informed of those memories.

‘I’ll face him until he gets exhausted.’

Kang-Woo currently lacked the power control to actively neutralize Tae-Hyun, but he couldn’t avoid him either, which left him with only one choice.

‘I can take him no problem.’

It would be a piece of cake for Kang-Woo to drag the battle until Tae-Hyun grew exhausted.

“Fuuu, haaa,” Tae-Hyun took a deep breath as he raised his dagger and glared at Kang-Woo with his eyes glowing translucent.

Whoooooom!

Light poured out of Tae-Hyun’s necklace.

“Enlightenment,” Tae-Hyun mumbled.

Blood vessels bulged throughout his face.

Slam!

Tae-Hyun stomped his feet, lowered his stance, and moved fluidly as if gliding across the ground. He swung the dagger up from below like a beast jumping out of the water to grab its prey. Kang-Woo frowned and leaned back. Tae-Hyun quickly swung down the dagger as if he knew Kang-Woo would move like that.

Slash!!

Tae-Hyun's dagger sliced through Kang-Woo's Deific Essence barrier and cut his skin.

'The hell?'

Kang-Woo was left bewildered. Tae-Hyun performed a spinning kick at nothing for some reason as soon as he cut Kang-Woo.

Bash!

"What the f—"

Tae-Hyun suddenly teleported behind Kang-Woo and his kick slammed into Kang-Woo's back.

'Son of a bitch.' A blood vessel bulged on Kang-Woo's head as he staggered. *'When the hell did he get so skilled?'*

It was as if Tae-Hyun's greatest weakness, his lack of combat experience, had been fully made up for. Tae-Hyun's attacks, which were based on information that he gained through Foresight, were difficult to avoid even for Kang-Woo.

"How annoying." Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes.

Tae-Hyun, who was flying around like a bothersome fly, was beginning to gradually piss Kang-Woo off.

"Die, damn dem—"

"Hey."

Kang-Woo reached out to Tae-Hyun, who was coming at him from the left. Tae-Hyun saw the future through Foresight and was about to jump backward to evade.

Boom!

"Urgh!"

However, the Authority of Waves spread from Kang-Woo's hand and swept everything around Tae-Hyun away. Tae-Hyun quickly teleported to barely evade the attack.

"How dare you act out against your hyung?"

Kang-Woo stomped his foot in irritation.

Bang!

A golden wave spread out in all directions with Kang-Woo at the epicenter. Tae-Hyun raised his dagger as he bit his lip. His necklace shone and created a translucent barrier in front of him.

Crash—!

“Kurgh!”

There was no way Tae-Hyun would be a match for Kang-Woo when not even an otherworldly being, who conquered countless worlds, was helpless against him. Tae-Hyun was blown backward.

“Haaa, haaa.”

As if he knew that he would not be able to block the attack, Tae-Hyun landed on the ground with minimal damage and got back on his feet. His hand holding the dagger was shaking subtly.

“Tae-Hyun,” Kang-Woo called.

“...”

“You already know, don’t you?” Kang-Woo stared at Tae-Hyun with deeply sunken eyes. “You can’t beat me, man.”

Even if he knew the future and his lack of combat experience was made up for, Tae-Hyun was still no match for Kang-Woo; the idea itself of facing Kang-Woo was absurd.

Tae-Hyun gripped his dagger tighter. His legs were shaking. He of course knew that he would never reach Kang-Woo’s level no matter what he did.

“Just give up alr—”

“I...” Tae-Hyun interjected and stared at Kang-Woo blazingly. “I will stop you.” He gripped his dagger even tighter. “I will protect this world... from the likes of you.”

“Fucking hypocrite.” Tae-Hyun glared at Kang-Woo in disgust. “Despite... all the people who trusted and followed you! You were our only hope!” Tae-Hyun bared his teeth in rage. “You... betrayed all of them.”

Tae-Hyun did not seem to have even the slightest intention of giving up.

“Hah,” Kang-Woo chuckled. “Oh, Tae-Hyun, Tae-Hyun, my little Tae-Hyun.” He stared at Tae-Hyun coldly. “Why are you being like this, Tae-Hyun? I’m being nice, aren’t I? I’m suggesting that we try to change the future, aren’t I? So why the fuck aren’t you listening to me, Tae-Hyun?”

Kang-Woo smiled nastily and licked his lips.

“How about I tell you an even easier way to change the future?”

Rumble—!!

An enormous amount of energy surged from Kang-Woo and weighed down on Tae-Hyun.

“You were the last survivor of that world, weren’t you? Hm? You said that you saw me destroy the world or something, didn’t you?”

“K-Kuh...”

“In that case, wouldn’t the future change if I just kill you?”

Tae-Hyun’s face turned pale and his legs trembled in terror.

“You know what the butterfly effect is, don’t you? Don’t you think everything would change... if I killed you?”

“A-Argghh.”

“Hm? What’s wrong, Tae-Hyun?” Kang-Woo grabbed the frozen Tae-Hyun and whispered in his ear, “Answer me, motherfucker.”

“A-Aaaahh,” Tae-Hyun slurred as if he were suffocating.

Kang-Woo smiled brightly. “Haha. I’m kidding, Tae-Hyun. There’s no way I’d do that.”

Kang-Woo lightly shoved Tae-Hyun’s shoulder.

“*Huff! Huff!*” Tae-Hyun panted heavily as he clenched his throat.

‘This much of a scare should be enough.’

Kang-Woo leisurely stared at Tae-Hyun.

“... up.”

“Hm?”

However, Tae-Hyun pointed his dagger at Kang-Woo and shouted, “I... won’t give up!!”

‘Fucking hell.’

“No, I can’t give up!!”

‘How long are you gonna play protagonist for?’

“I... I...!!”

‘Stop it already, dude.’

“I will save this world with my own hands!!”

Whoooooom!!

Bright purple translucent light similar to crystal powder poured out of Tae-Hyun’s necklace. It was like seeing a hero powering up amid life-threatening danger. Kang-Woo clenched his hair as he stared at Tae-Hyun enveloped in light.

‘Why the fuck are you doing this to me? You’re making me feel like the final boss.’

Chapter 477 - I’m Way Too Kind

Rumble—!!

Translucent light burst from Kim Tae-Hyun, shaking the entire building they were on the rooftop of. Tae-Hyun's jacket was fluttering aggressively and his hair was spiked up.

'What the hell?' Oh Kang-Woo stared at Tae-Hyun enveloped in light as if he had been wrongfully accused. *'Why am I being made out as the villain?'*

Tae-Hyun's will to save the world was that of a textbook shonen manga protagonist. Forced to stand against him, Kang-Woo felt like he needed to say a shitty line like *"Hahaha, struggle as much as you can!"*.

'What the hell did I do so wrong?'

Kang-Woo had saved Earth from the Parasite invasion only a few hours ago. Being forced to pay for something that had not even occurred yet was giving him a headache.

Kang-Woo was slowly beginning to lose his patience. "Haaa."

'This is pissing me off.'

He recalled how much he had suffered to escape from being accused as the Demon of Prophecy.

'Fucking hell.'

He couldn't help but find it funny that he was being driven to the corner as a sinner because of a future that could change at any point in time.

'Why don't you guys fucking protect the world, then?'

Kang-Woo's pent-up frustration was released all at once. Regardless of the method, he had given his all to protect the world, so he couldn't help but be irritated when berated for it. One could argue that a person who protected the world while enduring all sorts of criticism was a true hero.

'What a load of bullshit.'

He would not stand for being framed for something he had yet to do. Kang-Woo slowly raised his arm with a frown.

"I...!" Tae-Hyun shouted as immense power burst forth from him. The translucent light pouring out of the necklace wrapped around his dagger. "I will protect this world!"

He raised his head to look at the enemy in front of him. His hyung was enveloped in golden light, unlike what he saw in his future memories.

'It's fake.'

Tae-Hyun already knew the divine light around Kang-Woo was nothing but a facade to fool everyone around him.

'Unforgivable.'

He gritted his teeth and pointed his dagger at the man whom he idolized and respected more than anyone. The immense power pouring out of the necklace lit the seething rage within him. The immense power soon became confidence and then firm willpower.

“Die—!” Tae-Hyun shouted.

Boom!

Kang-Woo shot forward before Tae-Hyun was about to leap at him.

Wham!

Kang-Woo grabbed Tae-Hyun’s face and slammed his head into the building rooftop, which was reinforced with demonic energy.

“Kurgh!”

Tae-Hyun looked up at Kang-Woo in surprise.

“What?” Kang-Woo smiled due to the absurdity. “Did you think something would change once you powered up after spouting all sorts of bullshit? That everything would be resolved if you shouted hard enough like an action novel cliché? I’m sorry, but you’re in the wrong fucking novel; this novel’s genre is a little unique.”

“Kurgh, *cough!*” Tae-Hyun coughed violently.

Kang-Woo grabbed the back of Tae-Hyun’s head and slammed his face into the ground this time.

Bang!

“Tae-Hyun.”

Bang—!

“My beloved little brother.”

Wham—!

“Kurgh! Kurgh!”

Blood poured out of Tae-Hyun’s nostrils. His entire face was bruised.

Kang-Woo crouched and brought his mouth closer to Tae-Hyun’s ear.

“Why did you do it?”

“A-Arggh.”

Tae-Hyun, his face covered in blood, looked up at Kang-Woo. His eyes were filled with obvious terror.

“Hm? Answer me. Why did you do it?” Kang-Woo continued.

Tae-Hyun trembled. He then replied as if pleading, “H-Hyung...”

“Pfft! Hahahaha!” Kang-Woo laughed brightly. “Hyung? After all that you just did?” He grabbed Tae-Hyun’s head, his eyes deeply sunken. “Tae-Hyun, I was being nice in the beginning, wasn’t I? You can admit that, right?”

Tae-Hyun looked up at Kang-Woo, his eyes shaking violently. The kind older brother that he knew was no longer there.

Zzzzt.

His vision filled with gray static again.

“B-But... you’re...” he stammered.

His future and present consciousness continued to tangle. He could still remember one thing vividly amid the chaotic entanglement of memories; the demon crouching on top of a mountain of corpses, devouring each one.

“The Demon of Pro—”

“Yeah, I get what you’re trying to say.” Kang-Woo smiled widely and continued, “I’m sure you’re confused. Your future memories suddenly shoved themselves into your brain, didn’t they?”

“...”

“But I’m sure you already know this— no, you know it the best, don’t you? That the future can change.”

Tae-Hyun predicted attacks by seeing his future self being attacked through Foresight; once he dodged the attack, the future was changed. If the future was set in stone, he would be hit by that attack regardless of whether or not he made an effort to dodge it.

“That’s why I suggested we try to change it, yeah? What you saw was merely one of countless possibilities, so it’s more than possible to change it if we start now.”

“H-Hyung, th-that’s—”

“So why the fuck aren’t you listening to me, Tae-Hyun?” Kang-Woo grabbed Tae-Hyun’s neck and squeezed harder. “What? Did you think you’d be able to beat me just because you happened to get an item by luck, of which not even I can figure out where its power comes from?”

In the end, an item was an item; Tae-Hyun had not gained it through endless effort and countless trials. There was no way such a thing would be able to surpass the wretched struggles that Kang-Woo had gone through for ten millennia.

“In your dreams.”

Bash!

“Kurgh!”

Kang-Woo kicked Tae-Hyun in the stomach, sending him flying backward.

“Guh...” Tae-Hyun groaned.

Kang-Woo walked toward Tae-Hyun as he looked down at him coldly.

“Don’t worry. I’m not going to kill you.”

He needed to pry information out of Tae-Hyun; it was crucial for changing the apocalyptic future that he saw through Foresight.

‘Well, I could also kill him, which would change the future.’

Tae-Hyun survived until the end in the apocalyptic future of Kang-Woo being taken over by the Demonic Sea and ending the world. If Kang-Woo killed Tae-Hyun right here and now, the future would change for sure.

‘The problem is that I have no idea how it would change. It might even end up getting worse.’

It was not the best idea just to change the future; he needed to change the future that would head to the end of the world.

‘To do that...’

Kang-Woo needed prior information about the details of the future to change it, just like how Tae-Hyun dodged attacks using the information he gained through Foresight.

‘I can’t kill Tae-Hyun.’

Kang-Woo looked down at Tae-Hyun, who was trembling uncontrollably as he looked up at him.

‘And even if I don’t have any information to get out of him, killing him is a bit much.’

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue with a sad expression. He had no intention of rampaging without distinguishing friend from foe like he had done so when he had almost been taken over by his Deific Essence of Voracity. He would only devour those who bared their fangs at him.

‘I can’t say that Tae-Hyun has fully gone against me.’

It was true that Tae-Hyun pointed his weapon at him, but that was simply because he had been taken over by his future consciousness; it couldn’t be said that it was entirely Tae-Hyun’s will. In Tae-Hyun’s perspective, his control over his body was stolen by his future self. He was practically innocent.

“Dayum, Oh Kang-Woo. You’ve become so kind.”

Kang-Woo nodded with a satisfied smile.

‘I can’t believe I’m sparing someone who attacked me, even if it wasn’t of their will.’

It would have been unthinkable for Kang-Woo back in his days in Hell.

‘No wonder I was granted the Deific Essence of Splendor.’

The light naturally shone on him because he was generous enough to forgive even a deplorable asshole who attacked him with the intent to kill.

“Then... what are you planning on doing to me?” Tae-Hyun asked.

“Hm? I mean...” Kang-Woo said calmly as if he didn’t know why Tae-Hyun was even asking such a question. “Once I get the information regarding the future from you, I’ll either put you in a coma until my battle against Bael is over or just erase your memories.”

“Pardon?”

“Don’t worry, man. I won’t lose control over my strength like how I accidentally incinerated Huan.”

“U-Umm... Wh-What is Huan...?”

“Hm? Oh, you don’t know? Well, it doesn’t matter.” Kang-Woo placed his hand on Tae-Hyun’s shoulder and said in all seriousness, “I promise I won’t kill you. I may not look like it, but I’m a pro in making someone a vegetable.”

Kang-Woo swung his hand in the air as if bragging.

“Just one strong smack on the back of the head and you’ll be able to rest comfortably in bed.”

“Umm...”

“Oh, don’t worry about not being able to wake up. I’ll do whatever it takes to wake you up once everything is over.”

“K-Kang-Woo hyung?”

“You know that thing in sci-fi films where people wake up from cryo chambers after a super long time, right? You can think of it like that.”

“It sounds nothing like th—”

“Sheesh, why do you have so many goddamn complaints when I’m doing you an amazing favor?!” Kang-Woo pounded on his chest in frustration. “Do you want me to just explode your head? Is that what you want?”

“I’ll keep the fact that you’re the Demon of Prophecy a secret.”

Tae-Hyun looked at Kang-Woo seriously. As Kang-Woo said, it would be better to cooperate with Kang-Woo as long as they could change the future, even if he was the Demon of Prophecy. No, Tae-Hyun had no other choice since he knew better than anyone that he would die if he didn’t cooperate.

“Come on, man. It only takes an instant for shit like that to spread.” Kang-Woo refused Tae-Hyun’s proposal without hesitation. He then raised his hand and

continued, "Right, I'm sure it'll take a while for me to hear everything about the future, so why don't you sleep for a few days? I don't have the time to sit around and chat at the moment since we only just stopped the Parasite invasion."

Kang-Woo had been worried that he might accidentally kill Tae-Hyun before, but that was only during combat; it was a piece of cake to knock Tae-Hyun out for a few days when they were not in combat.

"Wha— H-Hyung! W-Wait!"

"For God's sake, Tae-Hyun. Just stick your head out. It'll hurt more if you struggle."

"N-No..."

"It's alright, man. It'll only be a slight prickle."

"This isn't some dentist appointm—"

Smack!

"Kurgh!"

Kang-Woo had no choice but to punch Tae-Hyun in the stomach because he was struggling too much. Tae-Hyun crouched as he grabbed his stomach.

"Haaa, haaa." Kang-Woo breathed on his palm and smacked the rooftop railing for practice.

Crush!

The railing was destroyed with just a single karate chop.

"Good, it'll be perfect once I add some Divinity to it."

Kang-Woo nodded in satisfaction. It would be completely painless as long as he controlled his strength.

"Shiiiet."

He couldn't believe he was going this far for his beloved little brother who had attacked him.

"Jesus fuck..." Kang-Woo clenched his fist as his shoulders trembled. "I'm way too kind..."

He wondered if he had truly become the light instead of pretending to be chosen by the light.

"Alright, here I go, Tae-Hyun."

"C-Cough! W-Wai—"

Kang-Woo's hand moved before Tae-Hyun had a chance to finish his sentence.

Shatter—!!

At that moment, the sound of something breaking rang from the Eye of Nostrian on Tae-Hyun's neck.

"Huh?" Kang-Woo looked down at Tae-Hyun in confusion. "The hell was that?"

'I haven't even hit him yet.'

Chapter 478 - Eye of Nostrian

Crack, crack!

The borders enveloping the Eye of Nostrian broke, and a transparent crystal about the size of a thumb came out. The crystal contained power that not even Oh Kang-Woo knew the bounds of or where it came from.

'What's this all of a sudden?' Kang-Woo looked down at the crystal exuding translucent light in confusion. *'Is this another power-up?'*

Kang-Woo thought Kim Tae-Hyun was about to power up again but that did not seem to be the case based on how dumbfoundedly Tae-Hyun was looking down at his necklace.

"What? What just happened?" Kang-Woo asked.

"I-I'm not sure either," answered Tae-Hyun in a trembling tone and looked up at Kang-Woo with a flustered expression, his broken necklace in hand.

"What are you looking at me for...?"

Kang-Woo was just as confused as Tae-Hyun was. He frowned as he stared at the crystal that was gradually shining brighter.

"Ah." Just then, Tae-Hyun's eyes widened. "A-Argghh."

He clenched his hair as he trembled. He drooled from his agape mouth, his eyes rolled backward and he convulsed as if he were having a seizure.

"Kurgh! Kuh! Gurghhh!"

"Oh shit, what the fuck is wrong now? Hey! Tae-Hyun!" Kang-Woo shouted as he grabbed Tae-Hyun's shoulders.

Anyone could see that Tae-Hyun was acting abnormally.

'Shit.' Kang-Woo bit his lip aggressively. *'I haven't heard anything about the future from him yet!'*

He looked down at Tae-Hyun anxiously.

"Kurgh! Cough! Cough!"

The seizing Tae-Hyun coughed up blood. Blood vessels bulged from around his eyes and tears of blood poured down his cheeks.

"Kurghhh!"

“Hey, hey, what’s wrong with you? You’re not dying, are you? Are you? Don’t you dare fucking die.”

Kang-Woo hastily bit open his thumb, stuck it in Tae-Hyun’s mouth, and activated the Authority of Regeneration at full throttle.

“Kurgh! Guuuuuuhhh!”

“Shit,” Kang-Woo cursed.

Tae-Hyun was not getting any better despite Kang-Woo using the Authority of Regeneration.

‘What should I do? Should I call Darling?’

Han Seol-Ah was leagues above him in terms of healing. Kang-Woo took out his smartphone and called Seol-Ah right away.

- Kang-Woo? What’s wrong?

There was much background noise around Seol-Ah, likely because she was healing those injured due to the Parasite invasion.

“Darling, can you come to me right now?” - *Okay. I’ll be right there.*

Seol-Ah answered without hesitation despite not even knowing the reason. Kang-Woo looked around.

“I’m at...”

He had chosen a random highrise building to land on, so he had no idea where he was.

‘It looks like an apartment.’

Based on what the building looked like, it seemed more like a mixed-use luxury apartment building than a shopping complex or a company building. Kang-Woo opened a map app to search for his current location.

- You’re on the rooftop of the Hyperion in Mok-dong, right? I’ll be there in a flash, Kang-Woo.

‘The hell? I haven’t even said anything about where I am yet.’

“How did you know where I am...?”

- I installed a tracking app on your smartphone a wh—

Seol-Ah gasped.

- A-Ahem. It’s the power of love.

Kang-Woo remained silent.

‘Since when did the power of love become a tracking app?’

He stared at his smartphone with a sour expression.

- A-Anyway! I’ll be right there!

Kang-Woo could hear Seol-Ah floundering before she hung up.

“Mmm...” Kang-Woo groaned as he looked down at his smartphone.

He searched for the tracking app that had been installed on his phone without his knowledge, but he couldn't tell where it was hidden.

‘No, this isn't the time.’

He did not have the leeway to worry about a tracking app right now.

“Ack, aaarrggghh!!”

Kang-Woo examined the screaming and seizing Tae-Hyun. Blood vessels resembling tree roots were bulging all over his body; the symptom that Tae-Hyun experienced after overusing Foresight had spread throughout his body.

‘So he didn't power up, but just used too much of his power.’

In martial arts terms, he was experiencing Qi deviation. He was suffering from the side effects because he had forcibly used power that was beyond him.

“Dammit, he's not actually gonna die at this rate, is he?”

Kang-Woo bit his lip and reached for the transparent crystal that had been embedded in Tae-Hyun's necklace.

Spark!

“Kuh!”

The transparent crystal exerted powerful resistance as soon as Kang-Woo's hand came close to it. The fingers that made contact with the resistance were charred black and turned to ash.

“What the...”

Kang-Woo's mouth was left agape in shock. He knew that the power within Tae-Hyun's necklace was unfathomable, but he never imagined that it could easily tear apart his Top-rank Deific Essence barrier and burn him.

‘What the hell could this thing be?’

The question that Kang-Woo had when he first met Tae-Hyun filled his head again. Who the hell was Nostrian and how could he grant powers that allowed one to see the future, bring one's future consciousness to the present, and burn the Demon King? Not only that, it was only an item that contained a portion of the being's power instead of the being himself.

“Titan.”

Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes. No matter how hard he thought about it, he couldn't think of any other beings but the Titans who would be capable of such things.

‘Since Titans are the closest to the beings that we imagine when we think of gods.’

Beings such as Gaia, Zeus, and Odin were closer to superhumans than gods.

“Shit,” Kang-Woo mumbled a curse.

'I have no way of facing the Titans at the moment.'

Kang-Woo was only able to overpower Bauli because it was in his consciousness as well as his home turf which was the Demonic Sea. It was a different story for any other Titan.

'There would be no point in opening the Doors.'

Kang-Woo looked down at Tae-Hyun in frustration.

"Kang-Woo!" Seol-Ah shouted from afar.

Kang-Woo turned to see Seol-Ah flying toward him at high speeds with her angel wings sprouted. Her expression hardened when she saw Tae-Hyun seizing on the ground after landing on the rooftop.

"Kang-Woo, what's..."

"I have no idea either."

"Just a moment, please."

Seol-Ah approached the seizing Tae-Hyun and placed her hand on his forehead. Once she closed her eyes and focused, white light poured out of her wings.

"An immense power is tearing him apart from the inside," Seol-Ah said with a dark expression as she checked Tae-Hyun's condition. "At this rate... Tae-Hyun's body won't be able to handle the turmoil and explode."

"Haaa," Kang-Woo sighed, having expected the diagnosis. "Is there any way to treat him?"

Seol-Ah closed her eyes and fell into thought. "I think I could calm down the chaotic energy at least a little."

"Does it put you in danger?" asked Kang-Woo with narrow eyes.

Although he needed information about the future, it would be pointless if it put Seol-Ah in danger.

He remarked, "I'll do it instead."

If it was only to calm down the raging energy, he should be able to do it as well. Kang-Woo extended his arm toward Tae-Hyun.

Spark—!

"Kurgh!"

Just like what happened when he reached for the crystal, the same powerful resistance pushed him backward.

"Dammit." Kang-Woo frowned aggressively.

Seol-Ah smiled gently and said, "It's okay, Kang-Woo. It'll consume a significant amount of my power, but it won't bring any danger to me."

Kang-Woo stared at Seol-Ah in silence for a while and then sighed and nodded.

“Please take a few steps back, Kang-Woo,” Seol-Ah stated as she placed one hand on Tae-Hyun’s forehead and the other on his solar plexus.

Whoooooom!!

A blinding light poured out of the twelve wings.

“Ngh...”

Seol-Ah’s brows wrinkled slightly. Inside Tae-Hyun’s body was as chaotic as a storm.

‘I have to quell the raging energy first.’

She poured sacred power into Tae-Hyun, just like how coolant needed to be topped up so that an engine did not overheat.

“Kurgh! Gah!” Tae-Hyun twisted and turned as he coughed up blood.

Beads of sweat formed around Seol-Ah’s forehead. “Haaa, haaa.”

Seol-Ah’s breathing became labored; she entered a temporary state of exhaustion due to using sacred power and Divinity past her limits.

‘It’s not enough.’

The power raging throughout Tae-Hyun was more chaotic and enormous than anything Seol-Ah had experienced before. She would have normally given up.

‘But it’s starting to calm down little by little.’

The immense energy was reacting with Seol-Ah’s sacred power for some reason and calming down. She slowly pacified the raging energy within Tae-Hyun as if slowly taming a wild beast.

Crack!

And then, the Eye of Nostrian which had been on Tae-Hyun’s necklace, shattered into pieces.

Whoooooom!!

“Kyaah!”

“Darling!”

Blinding light filled the surroundings. Kang-Woo quickly separated Seol-Ah from Tae-Hyun.

“Kurgh...” Tae-Hyun, who tumbled across the ground after getting pushed away by Kang-Woo, stood up as he staggered. “Where...”

He looked around in confusion and saw Kang-Woo embracing Seol-Ah. He asked cautiously, “Umm... Wh-Who are you? Where am I?”

“What?” Kang-Woo’s expression wrinkled. “Kim Tae-Hyun, what the hell are you talking ab—”

“Kim... Tae-Hyun? H-How do you know my name?”

Kang-Woo clenched his hair as he stared at Tae-Hyun, who was staring at him, stricken with fear.
“Motherfucker...”

Kang-Woo could easily tell what had happened based on Tae-Hyun’s reaction.

‘Since he doesn’t remember me...’

It meant that Tae-Hyun’s memories from now to when they first met in the D-rank Gate had been wiped out.

“Haaa,” Kang-Woo sighed.

After all he had done to acquire information about the future, he was left with nothing in the end.

“Hurgh...” Seol-Ah groaned.

“Are you okay, Darling?”

“Ah... yes. I’m fine, Kang-Woo,” she mumbled as she stood up.

Kang-Woo examined her worryingly. “Are you sure you’re not hurt anywhere?”

“I’m fine... other than that I’m extremely tired.”

Seol-Ah blinked lifelessly as if she would pass out any second. Kang-Woo sighed in relief.

“Lie down and get some rest. I’ll take care of everything from here on out.”

“I’m... sorry... Kang-Woo. Tae-Hyun is...”

“Well, at least he’s alive.”

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue. He had lost something even more important than Tae-Hyun’s life, but he couldn’t blame Seol-Ah for that.

“I’m sorry... Kang-Woo. I’m... so tired...”

Seol-Ah closed her eyes. Kang-Woo laid her on the ground and turned to approach Tae-Hyun.
Because of that...

Riiing.

[Absorbing the ‘Eye of Nostrian’ into Seraph’s soul.]

[A portion of the conditions for the Transcendent skill ‘Miracle (Rank: EX)’ has been unlocked.]

No one saw the small amount of translucent light particles being absorbed into Seol-Ah.

Chapter 479 - Family Aren’t Supposed To Do That Kind Of Stuff With Each Other

“Huuu,” Kang-Woo sighed deeply, sitting down in a hospital for Players located in Seoul. “You remember nothing at all?”

“Yes.” Kim Tae-Hyun nodded cautiously as he was lying on a bed. “No matter how hard I think... I can’t remember a thing.”

Tae-Hyun had lost all of his memories since awakening as a Player.

'No, to be more exact, he's not even a Player anymore.'

The blessing granted to him through the System had completely disappeared. His level, stats, and skills were gone; he was a bona-fide ordinary person now.

"Ngh," Kang-Woo groaned as if his head hurt.

'I can't do anything about this.'

Kang-Woo had tried all sorts of things to restore Tae-Hyun's memories but he had ultimately failed.

'I guess I have no choice but to give up on getting information about the future.'

The only thing he could do was hope that Tae-Hyun's memories would miraculously return.

Slide.

"Got it. I'll get going now. Call me using this number if you happen to remember anything."

Kang-Woo placed a note with his number written on it on the table.

"Umm..." Tae-Hyun cautiously called Kang-Woo. "What should I... do now...?"

"Guardians will pay for your treatment and give you some financial aid. For now, just stay here and focus on healing."

Tae-Hyun lowered his head with a somber expression. It was only natural since his memories of the past few years had vanished without a trace.

"See you," Kang-Woo said, turning around without any form of consolation.

He did not want to give Tae-Hyun false hope by saying that his memories would come back someday or that he would be able to return to his old life.

'There's nothing more despairing than an unattainable hope.'

It was unfortunate, but it was highly unlikely that Tae-Hyun's memories would come back.

'It's a miracle that he's even alive.'

He, who possessed below-average talent as a Player, had accepted the power of a Titan. Simply getting off with losing one's memories as the price for using the power of a Titan was incredibly light of a price.

"Tsk," Kang-Woo clicked his tongue in sorrow.

- I-I can't believe I got to meet you again... It is truly an honor!

He recalled his reunion with Tae-Hyun.

"Fuck."

There was a bitter taste in his mouth. Kang-Woo opened the hospital room door and left. He walked up the stairs and opened the door to the hospital rooftop. Lilith was leaning on the rooftop railing.

“Are you finished with your talk?” she asked.

Kang-Woo nodded.

“Based on your expression, it doesn’t seem like his memories returned.”

“Well... I more or less expected it.” Kang-Woo sighed and leaned on the railing next to Lilith. “How is the situation in Seoul?”

“We can rest easy now, thanks to Layla’s outstanding performance.”

Seoul, which had been in flames, was being rebuilt at incredible speed. It was naturally impossible to immediately repair all the damages throughout the city, but the chaos died down thanks to Layla using the influence of Guardians to pressure each nation to send relief supplies.

“That’s a relief.” Kang-Woo nodded, making a mental note to buy Layla a gift later.

“How peaceful.”

He looked up at the sky shining blue as if the red Rift several kilometers wide had never formed.

“You protected this world, my king,” Lilith remarked.

Kang-Woo remained silent.

As she said, Earth would never have regained this blue sky if he had not protected it.

‘But...’

Kang-Woo closed his eyes. The apocalyptic future that Tae-Hyun saw continued to linger in his mind. It was the worst possible future involving Kang-Woo, completely taken over by the Demonic Sea, ending the world with his own hands. The uneasy feeling spread throughout his entire body.

“Hoho, don’t worry so much,” Lilith giggled softly and placed her head on Kang-Woo’s shoulder. She then whispered, “If anything were to happen to you... I’ll stop you, my king.”

Kang-Woo chuckled. “And how exactly are you gonna do that?”

“Hmm. Who knows? Wouldn’t it be possible with the power of love?”

Lilith turned the end of her hair into a green tentacle covered in sticky mucus, which stuck itself to Kang-Woo’s cheek.

“Nah.”

‘That’s not the power of love.’ Kang-Woo shook his head in pallor. *‘Well, it might actually work though.’*

He had a feeling that even if he were to be taken over by the Demonic Sea, he might come back to his senses if he saw Lilith’s tentacles.

Kang-Woo distanced himself from Lilith's tentacle and asked, "That aside, have you found anything out about Nostrian?"

"Mm... I even went to Aernor to investigate, but I wasn't able to gain any useful information," Lilith answered, bowing her head apologetically.

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue. "Well, it can't be helped since there is barely any information left about the Titans."

"But this incident was..." Lilith slurred in concern.

Kang-Woo nodded; it wasn't hard to guess what she was trying to say. "I'm sure the one known as Nostrian planned it."

What were the chances for a below-average Player to coincidentally acquire a necklace containing the power of a Titan and then coincidentally see the future with it?

"He showed it to Tae-Hyun on purpose."

Nostrian had shown Tae-Hyun the end of the world, making it seem like the power went out of control.

'He even knew how Tae-Hyun would act.'

"The problem is... why he did such a thing."

Kang-Woo had no idea why. There was far too little information to even make a guess.

"In any case, continue your investigation on Nostrian."

"Yes, my king," Lilith replied and bowed courteously.

Darkness boiled from beneath her and she disappeared as if being sucked into it.

'I should check up on Darling.'

Kang-Woo had not visited Seol-Ah because he had been busy finding a way to restore Tae-Hyun's memories.

'Darling said she was fine, but...'

He wanted to check up on her at least once.

"Let's go."

Kang-Woo headed to his house after what felt like forever. *Clack.*

"Darling~" he called as he opened the front door.

Tumble!

"Kyaah!"

Kang-Woo heard something falling in Han Seol-Ah's room.

"Darling?"

He walked toward Seol-Ah's room with a frown. Seol-Ah opened the door to her room slightly and peeked out. Her face was flushed red and she was panting heavily.

"Haaa, haaa. K-Kang-Woo? H-Have you finished your b-business with Tae-Hyun?"

"Uhh, yeah. I mean, I didn't feel the need to stick by him anymore. That aside, what's wrong, Darling? Are you feeling unwell?"

Something might have happened to her as she was calming the raging energy with Tae-Hyun. After all, the energy that she had suppressed was none other than that of a Titan.

"Let me insi—"

"N-No! I-I-I'm fine! Stay right where you are!!" Seol-Ah shouted hastily.

Kang-Woo stopped because of how desperate she sounded.

"A-Ahem. P-Please wait just a little bit. I'll be right out." Seol-Ah slowed her labored breathing and slammed the door shut. She then came out a few minutes later. "I-I didn't think you'd come back so soon."

"What were you doing?"

"Umm... I-I was exercising because I think I've gotten a little f-fat lately," answered Seol-Ah, her face completely red.

Kang-Woo tilted his head in confusion.

'She can exercise at home to the point that she sweats that hard?'

Seol-Ah looked delicate but she was a Player with Deific Essence. In terms of physical prowess, she could easily throw around trucks weighing several tonnes as if they were pebbles. It was nearly impossible for her to exercise with no equipment in a small room to the point that she would sweat.

'I mean, I guess it would be possible if she was training to improve her energy control.'

Just like how Si-Hun cultivated and Kang-Woo trained to raise his demonic energy control, training to improve control over one's energy was enough to tire them out even in a small room if they were training hard enough.

'Mm... but I never once saw Darling training to improve control over her energy.'

Seeing Kang-Woo continuously staring at her oddly, Seol-Ah quickly walked over to Kang-Woo and embraced his arm.

"Wh-Why don't you change into more comfortable clothing since you've come home after so long? I'll make you some kimchi stew in the meantime."

"Oh?" Kang-Woo's eyes shone and he nodded with a bright smile. "Come to think of it, where are Echidna and Halcyon?"

"They went to help Lilith to collect information on... someone. I don't remember the name."

“Ohhh.” Kang-Woo nodded as if he understood.

‘It must be about Nostrian.’

It was indeed a little too much for Lilith to do on her own.

‘It’s not like she has countless subordinates like in Hell.’

Kang-Woo hung his jacket in the drawer and said, “In that case, I’ll go take a shower, Darling.”

“Okay, Kang-Woo.”

Kang-Woo leisurely enjoyed his shower and changed into a comfortable sweatsuit.

‘I’ll be busy again starting tomorrow.’

Matters regarding Tae-Hyun had more or less been resolved, so he needed to help around Guardians starting tomorrow.

‘I’m sure they’re dying from overwork.’

Layla and Kim Si-Hun were likely up to their necks with work trying to clean up the aftermaths of the Parasite invasion. Kang-Woo smiled bitterly as he imagined the two of them drowning in a mountain of paperwork.

“Oh, smells good.”

Just then, the smell of kimchi stew diverted his attention. He walked to the kitchen with a smile.

“It’s ready, Kang-Woo.”

“Haaah, how long has it been?!”

Forget kimchi stew, Kang-Woo had spent a week unable to eat a proper meal because he was so busy dealing with the Parasite invasion and the matter with Tae-Hyun. Kang-Woo gulped down the kimchi stew that Seol-Ah prepared almost instantly.

“Fuuu.”

“Was that too little?” Seol-Ah asked.

“No, it’s fine.”

To Kang-Woo, eating was closer to entertainment than a means of survival. He did not want to make trouble for Seol-Ah simply because he wanted to eat more.

‘Honestly, it’s a bit of a shame.’

Kang-Woo licked his lips and lifted the empty pot of kimchi stew.

“I’ll clean up. You can get some rest, Darling.”

“No, I’ll—”

Kang-Woo shook his head as he put on the dishwashing gloves. “It’ll be over in a flash.”

He was able to wash them in seconds if he used his Authority, but he wanted to enjoy ordinary life by washing them with his own hands.

Seol-Ah stared at Kang-Woo washing dishes in silence as she sat at the dining table. They weren't speaking to each other but it did not feel awkward at all.

"Doing this kind of stuff really makes it feel like we're a married couple," Kang-Woo mentioned.

"P-Pardon?" Seol-Ah flinched, her eyes widened.

Kang-Woo smiled and continued, "You know, eating together and washing the dishes after."

Seol-Ah remained silent. She was panting heavily for some reason.

"Later... even when everything is over, I wish it'll stay like this forever."

Kang-Woo chuckled, knowing that saying such a line did not suit him.

'Maybe I've become a little sentimental because of the future that Tae-Hyun saw.'

Even if the future could be changed, he would be lying if he said that he wasn't worried.

The end of the world that Tae-Hyun talked about was far too atrocious even for Kang-Woo.

"When that time comes, we can hold a wedding ceremony..."

"..."

"And should we move to someplace bigger?"

"Haaa, haaa."

"Let's move to somewhere bigger where there would be enough room even if Yeon-Jo, Si-Hun, and Layla come to visit."

"U-Umm... Kang-Woo."

"Oh, that son of a bitch Balrog would be a problem. He doesn't seem to find it comfortable in his human form, but building a house only to accommodate his size would make the house a bit too—"

"Kang-Woo."

"Hm?" Kang-Woo turned to Seol-Ah.

"Haaa, haaa."

Seol-Ah was panting heavily and staring at Kang-Woo with bloodshot eyes. Kang-Woo's expression froze.

"What's wrong, Darling? Why are you—"

"I... I don't think I can... hold back anymore."

“What?”

‘Hold what back?’

“I’ve been feeling... w-weird lately. My sacred power has gotten a lot more dense... my wings have gotten so much more vivid... and my body is so... hot.”

Twelve wings sprouted from Seol-Ah’s back; they were shining far more vividly than before.

“That’s why I was... even just a while ago, by myself... HUUU. FUFU. Kang-Woo, Kang-Woo, Kang-Woo, Kang-Woo...”

‘Hello? Miss Han Seol-Ah? Why are you making such a scary face? Your eyes look a little hazy.’

“HUUU, hUUU,” Seol-Ah placed her hand on her chest and took deep breaths. “Please wait a little bit, Kang-Woo. I’ll go wash up.”

“Huh?”

‘What are you talking about, Darling?’

“Wash up? Why?”

‘I told you that it feels like we’re a married couple. If we’re married, it means that we’re family. Family aren’t supposed to do that kind of stuff with each other.’

Chapter 480 - Demon of Prophecy (1)

A day passed and Oh Kang-Woo set out early in the morning.

“Urgh,” he groaned as he stretched. “I didn’t even get to sleep an hour.”

His mind was filled with the things that he did all night. He coughed and looked down.

‘Fran?ois... You’re still going strong, buddy.’

Kang-Woo smiled as he stared at his comrade with whom he had gone through a strenuous battlefield. His head was held high and his steps were light for some reason. He bought an entire box of energy drinks at a nearby convenience store and opened a Gate leading to the Hall of Protection. He saw a white hallway once he passed through the Gate.

‘Si-Hun isn’t here to greet me like always.’

Kim Si-Hun always ran to Kang-Woo after sensing his presence as soon as Kang-Woo entered the Hall of Protection, but he was nowhere to be found today.

‘Is he not here?’

He might be helping to find information regarding Nostrian like Echidna and Halcyon.

“Hmm.”

Kang-Woo headed to Layla’s office as he looked around. He knocked on her office door.

“Layl— Kurgh.”

Kang-Woo grimaced due to the dark aura that seeped out of the office as soon as he opened the door.

‘What the hell is this smell...?’

The office smelled like a rotting corpse.

“Oh... Kang-Woo... Welcome...”

Kang-Woo turned as he grimaced and saw Layla, with extremely dark circles under his eyes, looking up at him.

Tap, tap, tap.

Next to her was Si-Hun, reading documents and stamping seals like a machine. His eyes staring at the documents were not filled with light like usual.

The mood in the office was as somber as the putrid stench of sweat. There was a mountain of documents so high that Kang-Woo had no idea how it had managed to reach that height.

Kang-Woo smiled awkwardly and said, “Mm... You guys sure are hardworking, at it so early in the morning.”

“Pardon? Morning? Is it morning right now?” Layla stared blankly in Kang-Woo’s general direction. She giggled as she shrugged and said lifelessly, “F-Fufu. I’ve been here since... since last week, so... I didn’t even know it was morning.”

“I-I see.”

‘Is she broken? Well, I somewhat expected this after hearing about it from Lilith.’

The restoration of Seoul had likely progressed so quickly thanks to the dying Layla and Si-Hun.

‘I’m feeling bad now.’

Kang-Woo had also been busy the past week trying to find a way to restore Kim Tae-Hyun’s memories, but the word *busy* could not even begin to describe the amount of work that Layla and Si-Hun had to do.

‘It’s like I’m seeing game developers whose game release date was brought forward by three months out of the blue.’

Kang-Woo shook his head and handed the energy drinks that he bought to Layla and Si-Hun.

“Are you guys okay?” he asked.

“Okay...? Yes, I am. After all, I’m the only one... who can do this.” Layla took the energy drink from Kang-Woo and chugged it. “Kaaah! I... feel a bit better now.”

“You should get some rest.”

“There’s no time to rest.”

Layla sighed deeply. The biggest problem with the Parasite invasion was that the attacked city had been none other than Seoul, one of the most populated cities in the world before and even after the Day of Calamity. There would naturally be a massive amount of collateral damage. Although the number of deaths wasn't nearly as large as it should have been considering the scale of the invasion, there were a massive number of injured.

“What are the politicians of each nation doing?” Kang-Woo asked.

“They're working just as hard as us. That's the problem.”

Layla sighed deeply again. Countries that did not experience disaster were working just as hard as Korea. The problem was the issue of relief supplies; Guardians was inevitably put on the spot because they needed to act as the mediators between those who needed the supplies trying to get as much as possible, and those giving the supplies trying to give as little as possible.

‘This isn't something that can be resolved through force.’

Taking one side would inevitably cause even bigger problems down the road. To Kang-Woo, mediating between two sides was far more difficult than devouring one side.

“That aside, what brings you here, Kang-Woo? Have you finished what you needed to do?” asked Layla, staring at Kang-Woo passionately and full of hope.

Their workload would be massively reduced if Kang-Woo assisted them, allowing Layla and Si-Hun to escape this administration hell.

‘A-At least let me take a shower...!’ Layla thought as she gulped and stared at Kang-Woo.

“Mm...” Kang-Woo softly shook his head and answered, “I'm sorry. I think I'll have to focus on restoring Tae-Hyun's memories for a little longer.”

“O-Oh...”

Layla's hopeful expression broke down, her eyes filling with despair. Kang-Woo calmly lowered his head.

‘I have no choice.’

In truth, Kang-Woo had completely given up on restoring Tae-Hyun's memories, and he had originally come to the Hall of Protection to help the suffering Layla and Si-Hun. However, there was one simple reason why he had told them that he was not done yet.

‘It's a fucking pain in the ass.’

He would prefer a Hell filled with demons than a hell of documents. His sense of guilt was repeatedly stabbing him as he looked at the disheveled Layla.

‘I'm here for a different reason.’

Kang-Woo hypnotized himself to protect his conscience. It just so happened that he had another reason why he came to see Layla.

'Yeah, that's good. Let's go with that.'

Kang-Woo nodded in satisfaction and continued, "I came to see you because of matters involving the divine realm."

"The divine realm?"

"Yes," Kang-Woo nodded and continued angrily, "I was wondering why the hell they didn't show themselves during this entire mess."

"Ah..." Layla expressed. "Now that you mention it... I haven't even thought about it."

The gods were now free from the Law of Titans restricting them, so it was indeed weird that they did not take any action during the Parasite invasion.

'Even if they're busy keeping in check the evil gods trying to manifest, it doesn't logically make sense.' Kang-Woo narrowed his eyes. *'It would be a relief if they didn't appear simply because they were short on hands, but in the worst-case scenario...'*

He had reason to expect that something had happened in the divine realm— something so big that they couldn't manifest on Earth even as the Parasites were invading it.

"Just a second. I will try to contact Lady Gaia." Layla, also realizing it was not a trivial matter, stopped what she was doing and stood up. "..."

She closed her eyes for several minutes.

"Why..." she muttered with a trembling voice.

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue.

'I knew it.'

There was no way the gods of Olympus would do nothing as the Parasites invaded Earth.

"I can't... get in touch with Lady Gaia," Layla said in pallor.

Kang-Woo closed his eyes.

'Shit.'

Something else had happened while he had been focused on the Parasites.

Black smoke rose from the branches of the giant tree that acted as the pillar of every world.

"Kurgh!"

"S-Stop that monster!!"

There was a giant palace attached to one of the branches. It was Olympus, where the gods which humans knew through Greek mythology resided.

Fwoosh—!

The extraordinarily beautiful palace of Olympus was crumbling as it was engulfed in flames.

“Hehe.”

A boy with blank eyes was standing above the ruins of the palace. He looked down at the gods of Olympus with a bright smile.

Tap.

The boy vanished into thin air with just a little tap of his feet. He then appeared in front of Uranus as if he had teleported.

“Kurgh!” Uranus quickly jumped backward.

However, the boy’s hand was faster.

“Stay still,” the boy said and kicked Uranus in the stomach.

“Kurgh!”

Uranus’ Deific Essence barrier was torn apart with just one blow. He collapsed on the spot.

“Hihi. Well then, bon appétit~”

The boy opened his mouth wide like a snake and was about to swallow Uranus whole.

“Get your filthy hands off of him!!!” shouted a brown-haired goddess.

A massive shockwave blew the boy away and he tumbled across the ground.

“Urgh, what the hell do you think you’re doing, old lady? Haven’t you learned that you shouldn’t interrupt someone when they’re eating?”

The boy turned to the woman in annoyance. Gaia, the brown-haired goddess, glared at the boy furiously.

“Bael, how dare you...”

“Hihihi,” Bael giggled innocently as his shoulders moved up and down. “You’ll get wrinkles on your forehead if you get so angry, old lady.”

“...”

“And I’m just as irritated as you, you know?” Bael licked his lips. “I was so~ curious about how an otherworldly being would taste, but I had to give up on them and come here instead.”

“What are you talking ab—”

“Hehehe. Are you curious?” The boy smiled. “It was so hilarious how you were all being fooled by him, so I gave up on eating them and came here instead.”

Gaia frowned in silence. “Fooled...?”

“Hehe. Yeah! Like a bunch of morons!” Bael clapped his hands together with a bright smile. “I was watching to see how long you’d stay fooled for, but after some thought...”

His blank eyes widened, filling with madness.

“I thought it’d be more fun to tell you the truth instead of just watching.”

Bael jumped up and down, filled with excitement from just thinking about it.

“Hihi, I wonder what he’ll do once everything is exposed? Hm? I wonder how he’ll try to fool you again?” The boy’s eyes darted around madly. “I’m sure he’ll find a way to resolve it the first time, but what about the second time? And the third? How would he fix it? Hm?”

“What have you been talking about since earlier...?”

“H-Hihihi!! Just imagine! Aren’t you excited to see how that arrogant bastard despairs once everything is exposed?!” Bael spread his arms wide and burst into laughter. “That’s why... I’ve come to see you.”

Gaia stared at Bael dumbfoundedly. “You’re insane.”

There was no flow or reasoning to his sentences. It sounded like he was just blabbering things that came to mind without a filter. Gaia shook her head, thinking that Bael had gone insane.

“Insane? Hm? Do I look like I’m insane?” Bael cackled, the corners of his mouth ripping to his earlobes.

Gaia shrouded herself with Divinity and prepared for combat as if there was no point in dragging the conversation.

“I wonder if you’ll still be able to say that... after seeing this?”

Bael snapped his fingers and a blue window appeared in front of Gaia. It was the thing that Players referred to as the System, created by the Law of Titans.

- You want to feel fear?

On the screen was her retainer whom she deeply trusted.

“M-My child!”

Gaia’s retainer was battling the Parasite King, who had invaded Earth from the outer world.

“Kurgh,” Gaia grunted anxiously.

Not only was she not able to help her retainer, but she was being one-sidedly overwhelmed by Bael.

- Sure, I’ll let you feel it until you’re sick of it.

Just then, Kang-Woo on the screen smiled in a way filled with madness, which Gaia had never seen from him before. His smile could only be described as *demonic*.

“My... child?”

Gaia stared at the screen as her eyes shook. The God of Splendor whom Gaia knew was nowhere in sight.

- Open.

The Door to the Demonic Sea opened.