

THE VILLAIN'S POV

#Chapter 17 17: Shroud of the Dead - Read THE VILLAIN'S POV Chapter 17 17: Shroud of the Dead

-Frey starlight POV -

"I need to leave this place."

scythe-wielding creature wasn't going to let me go—especially after what I had done to him.

I now stood in the heart of a vast mountain range.

My destination was marked by its distinct black hue—a mountain so unique, it looked as if it had been carved from a precious obsidian gemstone.

I glanced to my right, then to my left. Nothing.

That meant I had no choice but to continue eastward. And heading east meant...

I lifted my gaze, only to find a towering mountain blocking my path.

"Nothing in this life comes easy, huh?"

If I wanted to reach what lay beyond, I had no choice but to climb.

I flexed my swollen fingers. Could I even scale something like this?

With a sigh, I pressed forward.

"From the womb of suffering, the strong are born."

I was the one who had coined that phrase.

I repeated it whenever my novel's protagonist faced hardship.

Now, fate had turned the tables—I was the one living it.

This time, I needed to be cautious. If I kept relying on healing potions, their effects would diminish until my body became completely resistant.

I had to let my wounds heal naturally and use them only when necessary.

With those thoughts in mind, I leapt, gripping the jagged cracks lining the mountainside.

I pushed my body harder than ever before, my muscles straining as I pulled myself upward.

An hour passed—an hour of relentless climbing. My lungs burned from inhaling the freezing air.

At some point, I lost all feeling in my limbs. The only proof they still existed was the lingering pain coursing through them.

I lifted my head, scanning the distance.

"Still far..."

The summit was much farther than I had anticipated. But I didn't need to reach the top—just find a path to cross the mountain.

Until I did, I had no choice but to keep climbing.

...

...

...

After what felt like an eternity, I finally reached solid ground.

"Just how high did I climb, for God's sake?"

The bottom was no longer visible. I had ascended far beyond the earth's surface.

Fortunately, Frey's body was strong enough to endure these extreme conditions.

I sank into the thick snow covering the mountain, catching my breath.

I ate, restoring my strength before pushing myself to my feet, ready to move on.

"Alright, let's see what we have here."

It seemed I no longer needed to climb—the path ahead curved around the mountain, allowing me to continue forward.

"Finally."

I walked across the snowy expanse, relishing the sensation of solid ground beneath my feet after all that climbing.

The journey was peaceful... until a sound shattered the silence.

"What now?"

A chittering noise—like a rat's squeak, but much louder.

From the shadows, a small creature emerged, standing on two legs. Its hands were nothing more than three oversized claws, and its head resembled that of a mole.

I recognized it immediately.

"Mountain vermin..."

One of the weakest creatures in the Nightmare. If not for its extraordinary resistance to the cold, allowing it to thrive in mountaintops, it would have gone extinct long ago.

A second one appeared. Then a third. They crept toward me slowly, their teeth clicking together.

"Perfect."

I reached into my dimensional ring and pulled out a single-edged sword.

"No more guns."

My swordsmanship was rusty—I had no proper combat style to speak of.

But even my lack of skill was more than enough for creatures like these.

After all, they were at the very bottom... Rank G, to be precise.

I took a deep breath, allowing energy to course through my veins.

Aura surged freely through my body, flowing into the blade.

At once, a violet shimmer enveloped the sword's edge, strengthening it.

I assumed a battle stance, waiting for my foes to make their move.

"Come."

As if responding to my call, two of the creatures leapt toward me at once.

Thanks to my Hawk Eye, I tracked their movements with perfect clarity. My reaction was swift—one precise swing of my sword cleaved the first creature's head clean off.

The second clamped its jaws onto my sword's edge.

"Idiot."

I tightened my grip and pushed the blade forward, driving it straight through its mouth. With a single motion, I separated its head from its body.

The third one lunged at me, hoping to catch me off guard.

But I had been watching it from the start.

Just as it thought it had me, I struck from a blind angle, my sword piercing straight through its body.

Like a skewered kebab, I lifted it high. It thrashed violently, trying to free itself.

Blood gushed onto the snow before it finally went still.

I pulled the corpse from my sword and wiped the blade clean.

"That was refreshing..."

For the first time since arriving in this cursed land, I didn't have to run.

For the first time, everything went smoothly.

I turned and continued forward. But just then, another creature appeared.

"More?"

I raised my sword.

Then came another. And another. Then dozens more. Before I could even count them, the ground swarmed with them.

I stared at the endless horde, expressionless.

"Are you kidding me?"

Without hesitation, I turned and ran.

I was running again.

I mean, seriously? Did you expect me to fight an entire army?

The ground trembled beneath me as a massive wave of vermin gave chase.

Individually, they were weak. But facing this many at once? Impossible.

From time to time, I struck down a few that got too close. Yet their numbers never dwindled. If anything, they kept increasing.

Panic set in when I realized the truth—if I hit a dead end, I was dead.

Luckily, the path stretched ahead. But now, the creatures weren't just behind me. They were scaling the cliffs, descending from the mountaintop.

"Damn it..."

I had no large-scale attack abilities—wiping them all out was impossible.

My heart sank as the path came to an abrupt end.

And beyond that end—a massive chasm, leading into the depths of the mountain.

"A cave?"

Entering it was a gamble. But I had no choice.

I pushed my speed to the limit, dashing into the cavern, relying on my Hawk Eye to navigate the darkness.

I ran until I heard a crashing noise behind me.

Turning back, I saw the creatures piling at the entrance, colliding into one another in a frenzy.

But not a single one stepped inside.

"What's going on...?"

They had completely blocked the entrance now. I stepped closer. Even though only a few meters separated us, they refused to move forward.

I turned my gaze to the cave's pitch-black depths.

They were afraid.

But the real question was—what were they so afraid of?

I swallowed hard and took a cautious step forward.

I didn't want to meet whatever was inside this cave.

But I had no choice.

Either I ventured deeper...

Or I became their next meal.

Silently, I crept forward, using Phantom Steps to suppress the sound of my movements.

The darkness consumed everything, limiting even my enhanced vision.

And somewhere ahead, something was waiting for me.

Silence filled the air, making the atmosphere even more tense. The fact that I was alone didn't help.

After walking for a long time, my foot struck something solid. Glancing down, I immediately recognized what it was.

"Bones?"

Human bones.

With each step forward, I found more.

"Damn it."

Lighting a source of illumination here was like inviting death, but I had no choice. Besides, I was inside a cave, so I didn't have to worry about attracting creatures from outside.

I pulled a flashlight from my dimensional ring and illuminated the area around me.

Finally, I could see clearly.

The cave, now significantly narrower, was filled with human bones. I walked cautiously through the sea of skeletal remains, which seemed endless, stretching far into the darkness.

"What happened here?"

Lost in thought, I was startled by a sound behind me, spinning around instantly.

But contrary to my expectations, there was nothing—only bones.

I moved carefully, wary of an ambush.

Suddenly, I felt something touch my foot.

I instinctively threw myself backward. Looking down, I saw a skeletal hand lying there.

"I swear something just touched me..."

Clatter.

The sounds began to echo from all around me.

"What the hell is going on?"

This was too much for my nerves to handle.

I swung the flashlight frantically, but all I saw were bones.

"Wait... bones?"

Realization dawned on me. I needed to get out of here.

Just as I tried to flee, something lunged at me from the darkness.

A sharp pain pierced my shoulder. Looking up, I saw a skeleton, its hollow eyes glowing red, screaming in my face.

I swung my sword, shattering the undead creature into pieces.

Staggering to my feet, clutching my injured shoulder, I suddenly felt the entire cave tremble violently.

"What now?!"

Around me, bones began to assemble themselves. One after another, skeletons emerged from the ground. If I stayed, I'd be surrounded.

"Seriously? Are you kidding me?!"

Once again, I found myself running for my life as an army of skeletal creatures chased after me.

"How long? How long will these damned things keep hunting me?!"

No matter where I went, no matter how far I traveled, something was always trying to kill me.

The crab beast, the mist stalker, The Scythe Creature, the rodents—and now this!

Did the whole world want to eat me? I was just a skinny guy! What the hell would they even gain from devouring me?!

Gritting my teeth, I kept running.

The skeletons attacked from all directions—front, back, sides. There was no end to them.

"Come at me, you sons of bitches!"

I swung my sword wildly, shattering one skeleton after another as I forced my way forward.

"Can't you just stay dead?! Why did you even rise up?!"

My body burned with exhaustion as the fight dragged on.

The attacks came relentlessly, especially from skeletons wielding weapons. Even with my Hawk Eye skill, I couldn't dodge everything, and wounds began accumulating on my body.

At first, I didn't notice, fueled by adrenaline. But now, my body was covered in cuts—small, but far too many.

I kept fighting, striking them down as they struck me in return.

This went on for over an hour, but the skeletons never stopped coming.

The wounds started to take their toll, slowing me down.

I needed to do something.

After what felt like an eternity, I finally emerged from the narrow cave and found myself standing before a massive rope bridge made of wood and twine.

The other side was far away, but in that moment, an idea struck me.

I immediately pulled a gun from my dimensional ring and aimed at the bridge's edges with my Hawk Eye skill.

A few precise shots destroyed the bridge's support, sending it collapsing into the abyss below. At the same time, I leaped forward, grabbing onto one of the ropes as the bridge fell apart.

Behind me, the skeletal army also jumped—but straight into the void.

I clung tightly, watching as the other side of the bridge rushed toward me.

"This is going to hurt."

I crashed into the opposite ledge, pain exploding through my body.

Thankfully, I managed to hold onto the ropes.

"I think I broke something..."

Glancing back, I saw the skeletons tumbling foolishly into the depths, still attempting to reach me.

"Idiots."

I let them fall and started climbing up the tattered bridge until I reached the other side.

Crawling onto solid ground, I struggled to catch my breath.

A burning pain filled my entire body. Just how many times had I been injured since stepping into this damned land?

Forcing myself up, I walked toward the exit.

As my feet touched the snow-covered ground outside, I realized I had finally emerged from the mountain.

The moon now illuminated the sky.

Ahead of me stretched a vast range of towering mountains.

But my eyes were locked onto one in particular.

A black mountain, standing like a king among the rest.

Tears welled in my eyes.

"Finally... finally...!"

The goal was right in front of me. After all the suffering, I had finally arrived.

I ran toward the black mountain, hoping for the end of this cursed journey.

But just as I took a few steps, I froze in place.

He was standing there.

A faceless creature, its massive scythes extending from its arms.

"You've got to be kidding me..."

The Scythe Creature

I clenched my teeth in frustration.

"Even now... even at the very end, you bastards won't leave me alone!"

The scythe-wielding creature seemed to notice me, unleashing a deafening shriek before charging forward.

"Damn it."

I drew my sword as my mind raced.

"What now?"

The finish line was right in front of me, but that damned Reaper Fiend refused to let me pass.

This was it—the final battle.

It was either me or him.

"Let's end this."