

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 111

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 111-120

Chapter 111: The Presence of Salvation (1)

The air on the frontline always reeks, no matter how often you encounter it.

Normally, people would adapt to a place they've lived in for a long time, but this place is simply nauseating regardless of whether you've been here for a year or just returned after a long time.

Yet, despite this,

I have returned.

To change this damned future.

"Keong!"

Those dim-witted hounds remain as they were.

I would love to chop off each of their heads and taste their blood, but sadly, there is no time for that.

I re-gripped my sword and dashed off, kicking hard from where I stood.

-Swish

There's no need for fancy swordplay against these lowly demons.

The naturally flowing movements left the hellhounds tumbling to the ground, beheaded.

The familiar scent of blood rose from the severed carcasses.

Among them was a particularly intense smell—it was not that of the hellhounds, of course.

I looked around and found, strewn about, traces of blood likely belonging to a higher grade demon. Where on earth did the Second Princess find such things?

Now's not the time to worry about that, though.

I turned around.

“.....!”

My sister, who seemed to have given up on everything just moments before, was glaring at me, clutching the wound in her abdomen.

Since her face was hidden behind a mask, she couldn't tell it was me, but in this situation, anyone would be flustered by another's appearance.

It was a reunion roughly two months after the imperial banquet.

To be honest, the emotion was...

Extremely grim.

My sister, not me.

Was that truly the face of someone who wanted to live?

Despite a hellhound rushing to tear out her throat, she had closed her eyes.

What did that mean?

She had given up on life.

Unlike me, who had burned with a desire for revenge after feeling the sting of betrayal, she had put everything down once she realized she had nowhere else to return to.

I always say it, but my sister is strong.

Knowing her own strength, she always sought to protect others with it, not just herself.

I was among those she sought to protect.

The problem was that there was no one to protect my sister in the end.

If there had been even one, she wouldn't have died in vain in her past life.

And would anything have changed in this life?

Just as she had saved me from being beaten to a pulp by Kranz,

Now it is my turn to save her from death.

“Stop! Don't come any closer!”

My sister, who obviously couldn't understand my intentions, pointed her sword at me, on guard.

"Do you... remember me?"

Of course, I remember.

Strictly speaking, we are not strangers.

"You must be! You're definitely the one I saw months ago at the imperial palace! You must have seen me too!"

I'm grateful that she vividly remembers the changed appearance of her brother.

"Are you here to kill me too?"

What an awful thing to suggest.

Even if the heavens split in two, such a thing would never happen.

Sigh.

This is truly disgusting.

I am witnessing the sight I least want to see:

Her beautiful face, coated in layers of sorrow and defeat.

A simple poke could burst the dam holding back her tears.

My sister in a past life died alone in such a place, didn't she?

Suddenly, the idea that everything is meaningless crosses my mind.

Forget revenge and everything else; should I just go back and kill them all?

"Grrr..."

With a threatening howl, an unfamiliar presence approached from behind.

Another demon drawn by the smell of blood.

From the feel of it, a rare guest seems to have arrived.

I turned my gaze indifferently.

Red mane chilling to the bone, as if soaked in blood— the creature had just fed, as its mouth was smeared with blood.

The arrival of this demon meant that this area might become quite noisy for a while...

The beast, recognizing us as its next prey, licked its lips, mouth gaping open.

* * *

The Red Wolf of Limia Valley, a higher-ranking demon

A predator known to attack and devour any living creature, be it human or demon, indiscriminately.

This was not something that mere two humans could handle.

Ellis felt her arms and legs trembling uncontrollably.

The pain of her abdominal wound was there, but it was her first encounter with the imposing presence of a higher-ranking demon that made her body react instinctively.

A moment's distraction, and her neck would end up in the jaws of the beast.

However, the man in front of her was different.

Even when facing a murderous beast capable of making one's flesh crawl, he did not flinch.

Instead, he stood tall, fixing his posture to face the enormous demon.

“.....!”

Then, suddenly turning around, he aimed his sword at the demon.

‘Is he planning to fight it? This demon?’

The higher-ranking demon's hide was far tougher than that of the lower ranks.

Any half-hearted application of mana could result in the shattering of one's own bones, and creatures like the Red Wolf did not allow such strikes to hit them in the first place.

It seemed ludicrous for him to face such a foe alone when it would normally require at least three high-ranking knights to have a chance.

Despite whatever Ellis thought of his chances,

-Sheen-

The masked man seemingly transferred the mana he manifested so naturally into his sword.

-Swish! Swish! Swish!

In the blink of an eye, a total of three sword strikes flew.

Too fast to see if it was actually three.

Without a sound, the Red Wolf fell apart into dozens of pieces.

An anticlimactic end for a higher-ranking demon.

The man in the mask looked down at the carcass impassively, as if it was an everyday occurrence.

“.....”

Tension that could not be described filled the air between the two remaining figures.

Just as an awkward silence threatened to set in,

-Splash-

Rain poured down from the cloud-covered sky.

Soaked by the rain, Ellis's lips grew drier and drier.

It seemed like he had come to save her, but she couldn't fathom why.

Putting aside the reasons for his visit, what she was most curious about was,

“Who... who are you exactly?”

His identity.

Strangely, though, he didn't feel completely unfamiliar.

Not just from the imperial palace but from somewhere in the course of life's encounters,

There was not just a sense of unfamiliarity, but rather a feeling of familiarity.

“.....”

The masked man remained silent.

Was he pondering what to say, too?

After a moment, the man's feet finally began to move.

-Step

With each step closer, Ellis felt her anxious heart gradually calm down.

In fact, it felt comforting.

Was it normal to have such feelings towards a stranger?

This didn't seem to make sense to her.

That means,

She thought that this masked figure must be someone connected to her.

With that thought and looking at the man once more,

“.....!”

Ellis's heart stirred violently again.

The man's familiar build, his gait that she'd seen before.

It was said that there was an invisible bond between blood-related family — an undeniable, inherent energy that couldn't be felt from a complete stranger.

This energy,

Ellis was now feeling from the man before her.

When he came within a distance where she could hug him, the man finally stopped his approach.

Still, he did not open his mouth.

While he remained aloof, Ellis's entire body trembled uncontrollably.

“Gasp!”

She jerked suddenly, feeling a pain.

The man had touched her wounded area.

-Zing

A white light of healing appeared, enveloping Ellis's wounded abdomen.

The light entered the gash, filling it, and the bleeding stopped as regeneration began, returning to its original state.

The 7-star healing magic, 'Touch of Regeneration,'

It seemed oddly unfitting for a man who had just mercilessly cut down the Red Wolf.

Yet, despite any awkwardness, Ellis's wounds healed rapidly.

Beyond the healing, she couldn't take her eyes off the man touching her so close, so intimately.

Eventually, her defenses lowered, and she slowly let her sword down.

The man finished the healing and stood up, looking at Ellis again.

His stature was somewhat small, perhaps too young to be considered an adult.

In fact, Ellis could look down upon him from where she stood.

But because of this, her heart shook all the more.

He had the appearance of a young, innocent boy.

Led by instinct, Ellis slowly raised her hand.

Suppressing her bubbling emotions, her hand reached the man's mask,

"You don't need to try so hard to confirm."

The masked man finally spoke.

The moment Ellis heard his voice, her trembling hands froze.

Replacing her halted actions, the man took off his mask.

"Ah..."

With a sigh filled with mixed emotions, hot tears streaked down Ellis's pale cheeks.

The seemingly uncaring rain accentuated her overwhelming feelings.

“Is that you, Sian?”

A question she could hardly believe, even with her eyes confirming it.

To this, the man simply nodded and said,

“Have you already forgotten your own brother’s face?”

Was that possible?

Even if she were locked in a cave for a thousand years without seeing anyone, she couldn’t ever forget her brother’s face.

The figure of salvation that appeared before her, betrayed by the one she trusted, left with nothing but despair, was none other than...

“The armor suits you well, Sister Ellis.”

It was her youngest brother, Sian.

Ellis touched Sian’s cheek with her rain-soaked hand.

“Why, why... are you here?”

It was utterly impossible, incomprehensible.

She even suspected it might be an illusion, but the warm and soft touch could not be a lie.

Joy spread across Ellis’s face.

“Thank you, Sian. For coming to me...”

Ellis’s tears flowed ceaselessly, mixing with the rain on Sian’s cloak.

(To be continued)

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Chapter 112: Existence of Salvation (2)

“When did you learn healing magic?”

As I was wiping my hands on the streaming rain, Ceyram asked me.

“I just happened to learn it along the way. After all, I have to take care of my own body.”

In this line of work, you never know when or where the shadow of death might envelop you.

Having knives pierce your limbs or your back split diagonally isn’t uncommon for an assassin.

Is it not absurd to clutch my wounds and wait for a healer to tend to me?

If I’m thinking about stabbing someone, I must always be prepared for a blade to be turned on me.

Thus, having countermeasures is naturally essential.

“You seem to have quite a few tricks that don’t really suit you, don’t you?”

Was I imagining the sarcasm?

“So, after unmasking yourself in front of your dear sister, what do you plan to do now?”

“I don’t know.”

“...?”

Ceyram furrowed his brow, looking incredulous.

“What kind of an answer is that?”

“Ultimately, the future that my sister will move towards, and the choices she makes, are what give her journey meaning.”

I turned to look where my sister was, observing her turmoil as she clutched at her head in contemplation.

She’d been through too much in too short a time; it wasn’t going to be an easy recovery.

But, this was something only possible because she was our sister.

She wasn’t despairing over the current situation. Instead, she was thinking.

Thinking about what she should do now that she’s confronted with this reality.

After what seemed like self-conviction, my sister lifted her head, biting her lip.

As I naturally approached her side, she opened her mouth as if waiting.

“You told me before, that you wanted to continue the ideals of the Vert family as its scion...”

“Yes, I did.”

“Do you still feel the same?”

At this point, there was no reason for me to lie.

“I never really had that desire to begin with.”

My sister nodded as if she understood.

“The reason I decided I wanted to carry on the family’s ideals wasn’t anything special. I just thought someone needed to do it, and that someone was me. Because I thought only I could, because I was me. I believed it was for the good of everyone.”

I knew.

The armor of the Knights of Light she wore represented that very resolve.

“But now, it feels like it’s all become meaningless. I wonder if it’s even necessary...”

“Why would you say that?”

“You saw it, didn’t you? Cecilia stabbing me...”

I affirmed silently.

“Cecilia was more than just a knight protecting me. She understood my dream of becoming a Knight of Light, and she advised me without reservation. At times, I thought she was even more precious than family...”

My sister choked back her emotions, stopping herself from becoming overwhelmed again.

A betrayal from someone she deeply trusted was devastating — more than mere words could describe.

I understood that feeling all too well.

“Are you not angry?”

“Anger? What good would that do now? It’s just my foolishness for being oblivious...”

Ignorance is not a sin, I believe.

However, trust arising from ignorance can be perilous.

Strictly speaking, my sister didn’t do anything wrong regarding the situation that had unfolded.

Yet, she was probably blaming herself, thinking her naive trust in someone she thought would always be by her side led to the day’s circumstances.

“Sian, you know something about the family, about brother Aschel, don’t you?”

I couldn’t immediately respond to her, taken aback.

“I’m certain I saw it that day in the royal palace. You were very wary of Aschel, whom you shouldn’t have had much contact with, as though you knew something no one else did...”

That’s what made our sister so remarkable.

She’d already guessed a certain extent of the truth, no need to deny it.

But,

“I will tell you someday...”

Now didn’t seem like the right time.

Especially since knowing the true nature of that devil could put her in even more danger.

When the time was right, I would tell her everything.

“I see...”

Her voice carried a hint of disappointment.

“Will you tell me this one thing, at least?”

Life seemed to return to her previously dull eyes.

“Is it alright for me to believe that you, Sian, are the most reliable and dependable person for me right now?”

I could answer that immediately.

“Of course.”

“Good, that’s all I needed. Relying on my younger sibling as a sister is a little embarrassing, but...”

She stroked my hair as she usually did.

“But Sian, you don’t have to bear everything alone. Just like you’ve stayed by my side, you will have many people by yours.”

The feeling was somewhat strange.

Unlike someone who might have taken my sacrifices for granted, my sister was genuinely grateful and apologetic to me.

If the sister of my previous life hadn’t died and had continued to be by my side, how different would my life have been?

I shook my head at the meaningless thought.

What mattered was the here and now.

Preserving the smile on my sister’s face was my duty.

—Swoosh

I could feel the presence of knights from beyond the bushes, quite a distance away.

Most likely a search party sent to check on my sister’s safety.

There was nothing particular to look forward to upon returning, but I didn’t feel like she intended to escape.

“Will you return?”

“I must. It’s proper for me to face the problems head-on. That’s the only way I can look you in the face proudly.”

I wanted to urge her not to go, but I also wanted to respect her choice.

Just as I was about to put my mask back on, she grabbed my hand.

“Promise me you’ll tell me everything in your heart someday. I’ll wait for that day, no matter how long it takes...”

“It won’t be... too long.”

Those were my final words before turning away.

In that moment, I felt as if all the errors pent up over decades within my heart had been cleansed away.

* * *

The sudden change in her delicate and adorable brother was a shattering revelation for Ellis.

Was this truly the same Sian she knew?

Yet, the touch that still lingered on her hand proved he was undeniably a part of her family.

Believing his promise to tell her everything in due time, Ellis focused on addressing the immediate problems at hand.

Soon, a handful of knights emerged from the brush.

“Lady Ellis!?”

They were royal soldiers, marked by the royal emblem on their armor.

“Are you unharmed, my lady?”

“Yes, for the most part...”

The wounds she had received from Cecilia were already healed by Sian.

Seeing the dead beasts strewn about, some of the knights couldn’t hide their shock.

“Did you... face these beasts alone?”

It wasn’t true, but she couldn’t just say that.

Though it might raise some suspicion, protecting Sian’s presence seemed better to Ellis, so she carefully nodded.

“It’s fortunate we found Lady Ellis first! Maybe the heavens are on our side.”

The knight's reaction seemed a bit excessive for a royal soldier.

"What do you mean?"

Suspicious, Ellis questioned him.

"If there was any issue concerning Lady Ellis, we were instructed to contact you first and pass on this message."

"Who... who would say that?"

Having a knight from the royal army delivering a message was bewildering to Ellis.

"General Condor himself!"

When named, Ellis's pupils shook profoundly.

While the others kept watch, wary of any plot, surveying for any additional knights that might approach.

"Please be attentive to what I'm about to tell you, Lady Ellis..."

The knight began conveying every word as instructed, showing due restraint.

* * *

Aschel, with indifferent steps, soon stopped in front of a door adorned with royal guards ensconced in tight security.

An impenetrable situation to any observer.

Yet Aschel, with a sly smile tinged with cunning, breezily said,

"I have come to visit Princess Violet."

Hesitation showed on the guards' faces.

Others might receive a steadfast denial, but this was Aschel, the eldest son of the Duke of Vert.

Watching the guards glance back and forth, one opened the path, and Aschel entered unhesitatingly.

Within, the Second Princess sat, her face gaunt with emotional distress.

"I apologize, Lord Aschel. I cannot bring myself to face you right now."

Despite the princess's self-reproach, Aschel remained silent.

"Have you come to reprimand me? Then please do. I have no right to argue back now."

"... It's not the princess's fault."

Hearing this cut short her self-blame, the Second Princess burst into tears.

"I don't deserve to be a princess anymore. When I heard about the beasts, I panicked and fled without thinking... Meanwhile, I've only managed to trouble everyone around me. How will I face the Duke...?"

The princess had used magic during her trip simply because she was afraid.

Terrified by the appearance of the beasts, she attempted to escape using a teleportation spell.

However, flustered, she made mistakes setting the coordinates, which caused her to teleport to an entirely unintended location.

Yes, it was a mere excuse, not an explanation.

"I was trying to protect myself, yet Ellis..."

"That's enough."

Unable to listen further, Aschel cut her off.

"Your distress over Knight Ellis is sufficient. You needn't be sorrowful beyond this point."

Defiantly, the princess stood up.

"How can you say such things? Ellis is your sister! Not knowing how she fared surrounded by beasts, how can you be so composed?"

But Aschel's expression remained firm to the end.

"Didn't I tell you? You have no need to lament any further on behalf of Ellis..."

"What do you mean?"

"Just a moment ago, a message came from the rear camp."

The princess's pupils flickered subtly.

"Ellis is alive."

Exclamation bubbled within her, yet the princess' face settled into an odd rigidity, unable to contort into a smile or frown.

(Continued in the next chapter)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 113

Chapter 113: The Presence of Salvation (3)

In the midst of a valley swarming with demonic beasts, a female knight who had just received her knighthood faced a high-level demon beast and miraculously returned unscathed. How many would believe such a tale? The frontline knights would likely dismiss it as a worthless fable. However, not only the seasoned veteran knights but also the knights of the Imperial Army, who had set foot on the frontline for the first time, could hardly believe their eyes at the current unbelievable situation.

"I am sorry for causing you worry," Ellis said, bowing her head to the Duke, unharmed and pristine.

The Duke of Vert, in turn, embraced her. "I am so proud of you, Ellis!" Not only did she safely escort the lost princess to the rear, but she also single-handedly defeated the notorious high-level demon beast and returned to the frontline with dignity. The Duke could not help but be genuinely overjoyed. Other knights too were in awe of Ellis's bravery, all except one.

'How did she return alive...?'

Cecilia stood paralyzed amidst a rush of confusion flooding her from within. Her body trembled like a leaf in the wind, and her heart pounded mercilessly. 'Why is she unscathed?' It wasn't just a scratch that one could sustain on an arm or a leg. Hadn't a blade been thrust into her abdomen, where vital organs reside? Although not deeply, it was a strike that should have incapacitated normal movement. Even the bloodstains remained vividly. At the very least, stepping should have been extremely unnatural. Yet, Ellis was standing before them, seemingly unaffected by the ordeal.

Slowly raising her head, Ellis's gaze finally met Cecilia's. Cecilia found herself incapable of any reaction. In that moment, as her heartbeat echoed loudly within her, Ellis smiled. A smile so stunningly beautiful, it could not be compared to any flower on this earth. Although it was a familiar smile to Cecilia, this time, she felt fear. Knowing that this smile didn't arise from joy or affirmation, Cecilia was uneasy, plagued with fear until she understood the true intent hidden behind that smile.

* * *

Word of Ellis's unexpected return from the brink of death reached Princess Violet, whose face was devoid of any feigned sorrow or pretense of joy. "Your Highness, it is Cecilia," announced the princess. Without turning, Princess Violet spoke, "What is Ellis doing?"

There was an unexpected ease in her voice. "She hasn't said anything..."

At this, Princess Violet let out a hollow laugh. "Does her silence serve to gain her some advantage?"

"No," came Cecilia's determined yet troubled response. Indeed, what they discussed now could drastically alter their fate in an instant. Yet Ellis had remained silent since her return. Betrayed by a knight she trusted and having faced an unwanted death, why was she not speaking? It was incomprehensible to them.

"I heard she also defeated a high-level demon beast known as the Red Wolf by herself... Was Ellis's martial prowess always so exceptional?" Cecilia earnestly wished to refute this claim. From the time Ellis was a mere child, through the ten years Cecilia served as a knight protecting the Vert family, she believed they both knew each other better than their own families. Ellis's talent was a divine gift, and in time, she would become the realm's unequalled knight, yet she wasn't there yet—she was akin to a flower yet to fully bloom. It was impossible to defeat a high-level demon beast unaided in her wounded and abnormal state. However, Ellis had returned whole.

Could she have received help? Nothing was certain in this situation.

Silence momentarily filled the room. "How amusing," Cecilia murmured, doubting her ears. "It should be a frustrating and hopeless situation, yet why do I find myself smiling?" This laughter erupted from genuine elation, not deceit or concealment.

"I've known since our academy days, but Ellis has always been compassionate and resolute. Unlike me, she was genuine, without deceit. You, Cecilia, should know this the best, right?" Cecilia silently acknowledged this. "There must be a good reason for her silence. Perhaps she's waiting for the right moment. Or else..."

Suddenly, an ominous aura from outside caused Cecilia to turn her head. "She might be wishing to see our reaction."

The door creaked open, and a familiar knight entered. Cecilia desperately wished not to encounter this knight now...

"Knight of the Order of Light, mid-rank knight Ellis Vert, at your service, Princess Violet," Ellis announced her presence. The princess warmly received Ellis, who had a stoic

expression on her face. "You've come at just the right time, Ellis. Was it not against your will to come first?"

The princess's attitude was too composed, bordering on brazen. Ellis, without hesitation, retorted, "May I then ask what words Your Highness wishes to convey to me?"

The princess tilted her head. "Do you seek to hear a particular response from me?"

Ellis's eyes remained resolute. "I have no desire to make excuses. As I mentioned, I fought to survive."

That meant Ellis was meant to die for the princess to live.

"There's nothing I can say to that. I believed, without a doubt, that you would perish. What words can one have for someone thought dead?"

The audacity of it rendered Ellis speechless.

"Nonetheless, you're remarkable, Ellis. To confront the piercing blade of betrayal and return determinedly alive, I truly aspire to emulate such a resilient spirit."

The Princess's hand gently stroked Ellis's cheek. "Maybe you should simply accept that you saved me as a knight sworn to protect the empire and that I needed that salvation."

Salvation. Though wrapped in a pleasant term, this was surely a veiled directive to bury the matter. After all, would anyone believe this argument was enough to convince anyone?

Nonetheless, Ellis replied with a smile. "I understand, Your Highness. There could be no greater honor than to have sacrificed myself for you. I hold no resentment towards Your Highness."

At her words, the Princess's demeanor stiffened. "Rather, I should be thankful. Due to Your Highness, I've come to understand many things I previously hadn't."

Ellis looked up, her face radiant with genuine joy.

"My duty was to guard the royal family throughout their inspection of the frontlines. However, with the sudden cessation of the imperial inspections, there seems to be no further need for my presence. Therefore, I wish to bid Your Highness a final farewell."

Ellis made the knight's solemn vow toward the Princess. "Please return safely to the imperial capital..."

As Ellis turned to leave, her gaze inadvertently came across Cecilia. They naturally faced each other, and once again, Cecilia saw it—that impossible smile from Ellis. Turning her head away, Ellis left the room. The Princess and Cecilia remained speechless.

“Now,” the Princess frowned in contrast to her earlier composure. “What might she mean by having learned something unknown...?”

Cecilia had no answers, yet she knew what she must do. For a knight, hesitation was akin to sin, so any sprouts of regret should be severed in advance.

“I will ensure Ellis Vert’s death this time.”

Her hand subconsciously edged toward the hilt of her sword.

* * *

There was no particular reason to back this resolve. Cecilia was never truly her person; she had merely stayed for an objective she sought to achieve. Yet now, Cecilia could no longer bear it.

That smile she had seen.

Could a mere smile so profoundly enrage one’s emotions? It wasn’t about anger or forgiveness. At first, the meaning eluded her, but now it was crystal clear. The smile Ellis directed at her earlier undoubtedly contained pity.

Realizing this, Cecilia’s emotions flared with anger. The only way to alleviate this unbearable and intolerable feeling was, she concluded, to end her life.

At the end of her royal guard mission, Ellis was set to return to the imperial capital, where the Order of Knights’ headquarters resided. Cecilia calmly awaited her appearance.

Before long, Ellis emerged from within the city gates, carrying her belongings. Without companions or even porters, she was utterly alone. Cecilia, concealing her presence, prepared to follow when...

She sensed it—a tremendous surge of killing intent, chilling her fevered heart.

The presence didn’t come from Ellis in sight but lingered in a thicket flush with red leaves, beckoning her closer.

Temporarily losing sight of her purpose, Cecilia found herself drawn to this mysterious aura, stepping into a strangely repulsive space bathed in a red hue.

Upon entering, Cecilia confronted the source of the murderous intent that had summoned her.

When was the last time she felt such an emotion? It is said that humanity feels the greatest fear when encountering an unknown entity. Even facing her first demon beast didn't elicit such a sensation. For the first time as a high-ranking knight, she felt fear, emanating from the masked entity before her.

Mute, enveloped in a vile aura, Cecilia's breath grew labored, her every inhale strained by the killing intent that pressed against her.

(To be continued...)

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Chapter 114: Retribution (1)

Cecilia Rien.

A knight of peasant origins who became a Knight of Light at the mere age of twenty after receiving her baptism. She caught her father's eye immediately upon joining and became a maid and knight serving by the side of my sister, Ellis, in Belias, acting as a kind of mentor who significantly aided my sister's mental growth. She was also someone my sister trusted and relied on the most.

But to be precise, she wasn't exactly my sister's person, let alone someone belonging to the Vert household. Frankly, I couldn't care less about whose side she's really on. She could be the Second Princess's cohort or there might be someone else above her. Not that I'm entirely oblivious now.

But what does that matter, anyway? It has been said that one has no right to speak of pain unless they have experienced it firsthand. A dagger in the gut? In my previous life, I've been stabbed by blades hundreds, if not thousands of times. The pain of a cold blade tearing through flesh is now no more bothersome to me than a mild itch.

I can confidently say that my sister wouldn't have experienced much agony from her organs being touched by a sword either. The real pain she suffered wasn't physical, but the emotional agony of betrayal by someone she trusted more than anyone else. I'm all too familiar with such pain.

Given my sister's naturally generous and upright heart, she must have felt it all the more acutely. But let me say it once more—my sister is truly strong. Unlike me, whose anger

doesn't subside even after years, she quickly sorted out her feelings, rationalizing that the traitor was never her person from the beginning. Self-reproachfully, she even criticized her ignorance, lamenting her inability to see the betrayal coming. Could anything be more sublime, even to the eyes of the gods?

However, make no mistake. Those are my sister's feelings, not mine. To me, this woman is nothing more or less than a despicable being who hammered a nail of betrayal into my sister's pure and kind heart, causing her extreme pain that she can't possibly forget until the moment she dies.

And yet, here she is, brazenly prowling in front of us, now seeking to assassinate my sister outright. How could I possibly let her live?

"You..."

During an intense gaze-off, she was the first to break the silence.

"So it was you... You killed the monster I lured and then saved Lady Ellis..."

I appreciated her for recognizing me without the need for any explanations. Naturally, she'd come to understand why I had summoned her now.

"Which house do you belong to?"

I had no interest in entertaining her futile question. Slowly raising my sword, I let my blade respond in place of words.

* * *

Standing at 165cm and weighing about 55kg, she might not look like an adult male, but as they say, appearances can be deceiving. Her stance with the sword, the murderous intent behind the mask, and the odd aura emanating from within her—all of it screamed of the threat she posed.

Cecilia, sensing this threat, drew her own sword to face the mysterious challenger's energy.

"To think the Vert family had such a powerful warrior..."

She had neither felt nor heard of such a presence during her time with the Vert family. Look at this repulsive murderous intent—far from what would be expected of a knight. This was the energy of those who cruelly extinguish the radiant flames of life without mercy.

Cecilia grasped it immediately. The enigmatic figure before her was an assassin, come to take her life.

—Swoosh!

With a surge of clear magical energy, Cecilia's longsword was enveloped. She had no intention of yielding her life easily, not as some trivial plaything for lesser beasts. If she could somehow overpower this assassin, she could glean valuable information to pass on to her lord.

(To be continued)

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Chapter 115: Retribution (2)

Dark clouds cloaked the sky, casting a bleak shadow beneath as thick drops of heavy rain pelted down. The grim and dusky weather seemed to reflect her unstable state of mind.

-Creak

As the door opened with a creaking sound, someone entered the room, causing Princess Violet to quickly turn her head.

"It's Aschel."

The coldness in the princess's eyes suggested her disappointment — it wasn't the visitor she had hoped for.

"You seem disappointed."

As Aschel asked with a bemused smile, the princess too laughed, as if to ridicule the notion.

"It seems to me the disappointment is yours, Duke Aschel. Has your plan gone awry? Or maybe, you have yet another final scheme up your sleeve?"

"..."

"Since things have come to this, shall we be bold and speak the truth? You wanted me dead, didn't you? Acting on my brother's orders?"

Aschel did not immediately respond.

“With a brother as jealous as mine, I knew he wouldn’t let an opportunity like this pass by without some interference. The fact that you, his man, were assigned to me proves as much.”

With a slight chuckle, Aschel pulled something from his belongings — a seemingly ordinary parchment scroll.

“This is a summoning scroll capable of calling forth a demon beast. With just a certain amount of mana, it can be activated right on the spot. A very convenient artifact, indeed. Of course, I could use it right here, right now.”

The explanation almost sounded like a confession.

“I shall offer no excuses. As you surmised, Prince Luinel appointed me to assassinate you on the front lines, utilizing this scroll to summon demon beasts amidst our tour, creating chaos before striking you down.”

-Whoosh

But now, as if it were no longer necessary, Aschel burned the scroll right then and there.

“However, the plan went awry from the start. I didn’t anticipate the swift reinforcements from the royal troops, and certainly didn’t expect one of your knights to have been secretly on our side.”

“Indeed. But if I didn’t flail against the threat of death, I’d be nothing more than an unintelligent microbe. I simply made the best choice available to me.”

The princess crossed her arms, looking smugly triumphant.

“I have one question for you, Duke Aschel. Was it truly only me you intended to kill on this tour?”

“And why would you say that?”

“Had it not been so, you would not have recommended Ellis as my personal guard. My sister, no less, whom you convinced without knowing anything about your plan...”

“ ... ”

“So you planned to kill us both? My sister and me?”

It had been Aschel’s suggestion that Princess Violet should be protected by Knight Ellis — a tale he told when he first encountered Ellis. The truth was, however, it wasn’t the princess’s desire at all; it was Aschel who wanted it, and the princess simply agreed to his recommendation.

Seeing that Aschel did not respond, she continued.

“Your silence confirms my suspicion.”

Aschel simply replaced an answer with a faint smile.

“No need to ask why. A family tarnished isn’t anything special. So deep a betrayal as to trump blood with water might just be a matter of personal circumstance...”

The princess nodded as if she understood.

“But it’s always best to strike preemptively. I hear from Cecilia that Ellis herself has a fair share of distrust in you. If left unchecked, your true colors might just come to light, don’t you think?”

“Let me share with you an interesting fact.”

After a prolonged silence, Aschel finally spoke.

“The events that occurred during this tour have yet to be reported to the royal palace. No messengers have been sent yet.”

“So what?”

“It may seem like nothing much, but the true underlying meaning is quite the opposite. The tour’s report can be altered at any given moment.”

Although the words could be interpreted insignificantly, their implied meaning was far from trivial. The report about the royal tour could be changed at any time, essentially suggesting that the royal tour was far from over and signifying a veiled threat of worse to come. Realizing the implication, the complexion of the princess turned somber in an instant.

“Are you... threatening me now?”

Aschel shook his head.

“My plan has already failed. I have no desire to devise a new one. My only intention was to broaden your perspective.”

Frowning, the princess retorted.

“Why bother? After all, you’re just a man of my brother, right? There’s no need for you to go out of your way for the one your lord wishes dead.”

“Who said that Prince Luinel is my lord?”

-Crash!

Amidst their conversation, thunder roared from the window, echoing the heavy rain outside.

“What...?”

Princess Violet seemed disbelieving, tilting her head in confusion.

Aschel ignored the thunder and continued.

“I serve no one. And I am certainly not in service of the prince. Our relationship is purely business, cooperating for mutual goals.”

“You want me to believe that now?”

“My words are neither frivolous nor deceitful.”

“Then, you wouldn’t mind me passing this conversation on to my brother? I’m quite curious to know his thoughts.”

Aschel shrugged as if it was of no concern to him. A tension filled silence fell between them.

“Aschel... what do you truly want?”

The princess asked again, her voice trembling with a different timbre than before, as fear intermingled with her caution upon realizing she was dealing with someone more enigmatic than she had thought.

“Are you so ambitious as to want control over this kingdom?”

“That’s not it.”

Aschel dismissed her speculation.

“I strive for the highest dream that a human can pursue.”

“The highest dream?”

“Yes. To break through the walls that confine humanity, to reach the pinnacle that one can aspire to.”

Princess Violet laughed incredulously.

“Ha, isn’t that a bit too fantastical? What, do you fancy yourself reaching godhood?”

“How you choose to perceive it is your prerogative. However...”

Aschel moved closer to the princess, now directly before her.

“I would like for you to join me on my path to that dream.”

With a sly grin, he extended his hand to her.

“Are you asking for my allegiance... to become one of your people?”

It was a dangerous statement, suggesting that he intended to make a member of the royal family his own.

Aschel simply continued to speak as if it weren't a problem.

“Haven't I already told you? I serve no one. So, shouldn't it be you who becomes mine?”

Violet, who was part of the high nobility, contemplated how to respond. Should she assert her royal status and suppress him?

She didn't have to ponder for long. The cluttering thoughts in her mind soon disappeared, and only one idea dominated: she must take his hand immediately.

Just as a determined Princess Violet reached for Aschel's hand,

“Keek!”

A strange laughter echoed from a corner of the space.

Aschel and the princess instantly turned their heads.

-Boom!

Another thunderclap lit up the silhouette of a mysterious figure perched on the windowsill, seemingly amused by this situation.

Who could have been there for how long? Until the laugh, there had been no trace of their presence.

The figure was clad in black cloak and mask, concealing their identity — a sight unusual in Belias.

“Who are you?”

Aschel was the first to demand, regaining his composure.

-Thump

Without a word, the mystifying being tossed a pouch that rolled to a stop at Princess Violet's feet.

Seeing it, Violet recoiled with an unpleasant sensation, and Aschel inspected the contents.

"Screaming in horror, the princess fell backward, as Aschel's expression twisted grimly.

"Ce, Ce...!"

The second princess could hardly continue, pointing tremulously to the pouch's contents.

Thrust before them by the stranger was a grotesquely distorted object beyond recognition,

"Cecilia!"

The head of Knight Cecilia.

One could only imagine the torture endured for a human visage to become so utterly deformed.

The inscrutable being only looked on with a vile smile, as if pleased with the offering.

* * *

Inadvertently, I stumbled upon an interesting conversation.

The highest dream a human can pursue?

What a grand ambition.

To strive for the utmost peak, overcoming one's limitations — truly a testament to one's resolve.

Yet, to have heard these lofty words from the mouth of a demon makes it laughably absurd.

Silence fell. Are they struck dumb, like bees to honey? Perhaps a gift would open their mouths, but seeing their reaction to my offering only swells my pride.

"Once more I ask: Who are you?"

Would the eminent brother even recognize the face of his sweet sister?

Not that I intend to answer. Why would I reveal what he wishes to know?

Silently, I stepped towards the one who plotted my sister's assassination.

The assassin must be aware that the second princess and Cecilia conspired to kill my sister. The thought ignites my anger anew.

The guardian, sensing danger, charged his blade with mana. White light shone, warding me away.

"This is your last chance! If you continue to resist, I will..."

Enough of his nonsense. I silenced him, my patience spent.

"An intruder! An intruder in my room...!"

Fear often freezes the senses, but rarely the mouth.

I quickly closed the distance, clamping the princess's mouth shut, forcing our eyes to meet.

Fear reigned in her gaze.

Was it not you who claimed to be struggling for survival?

A perfectly human response to danger.

Yet to employ my sister as the means is unconscionable.

I wish I could inflict upon her the same agony our sister endured...

But with a flick, she fell unconscious.

So much for that. Today's not her day, leave be.

Rising, my gaze fell once more on the would-be guardian.

He eyed me with a baffling stare, yet his body remained immobile.

A distinguished protector trembling before a mere assassin.

Killing him now would hardly be satisfying.

I turned to leave, the situation still a mystery to him.

But I hoped he would come to understand.

Today's events were but a prelude.

The grand dream he nurtures will crumble to dust at my hands.

Eagerly, I await that day.

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 116

Chapter 116: Retribution (3)

Blood sprayed in all directions, corpses ripped into dozens of pieces.

Some knights turned away from the ghastly sight that they could not bear to witness.

Could this truly be the work of a human?

Nature dictates that the dead are silent.

Yet, somehow, without directly hearing or experiencing it, one can still sense the horrific pain the deceased suffered.

“.....”

With hollow eyes, Aschel picked up the longsword lying next to the corpse.

The blade, which had once gleamed with the brightness that could blind, was now soaked with crimson blood, having lost all its light.

The name etched on the hilt hinted at the identity of the corpse.

It was unthinkable that such a talented knight capable of facing a fierce beast alone would be discovered as such a gruesome cadaver.

“Ha.....”

With a troubled heart, Aschel let out a long sigh.

He had never felt such humiliation in his life, as if it was consuming his very being.

More vexing was the fact that he didn't even know the identity of the one who inflicted this humiliation upon him.

However, he could never forget those grotesque eyes.

It was as if he was facing a murderer that had emerged from the depths of hell,

And that menacing memory still lingered vividly in his mind.

"Please take care of the body. I will report to the Duke....."

Aschel, shirking the matter, turned and left the scene.

Without time to steady his chaotic mind, he was approached by a man.

It was Kellin, his loyal follower.

Without a word, Kellin handed him a letter.

"What is this?"

"A letter left by Lady Ellis."

At the mention of Ellis, his eyes sparked with interest.

"Before she left Belias, she entrusted it to a maid at her residence. She asked to have it delivered to you, Lord Aschel....."

Without a moment's hesitation, Aschel tore open the letter and as he read, his expression subtly changed.

"....."

Wordlessly, Aschel gazed up at the sky.

Soon after, the letter was crumpled with a fierce sound.

Cautiously, Kellin dared to ask.

"May I inquire what was written... if I may?"

Aschel answered nonchalantly as if it were no big deal.

"She says she's quitting the Knights of Light."

".....!"

Shocked, Kellin immediately asked for the reason.

“Why, suddenly? For what reason.....?”

“She says she’s not yet ready for such a position and needs more practice, so please inform her father on her behalf.”

As though the real importance wasn’t in what had been discussed, Aschel tried to restrain his expression as he spoke again.

“She wants me to let go.....”

Incredulously, he let out a laugh he’d been holding back.

“What exactly is she referring to?”

“I don’t know either. She just said to let it go. Regardless of the circumstances, she simply wishes for all of us brothers to live smilingly. It’s too endearing, thinking about the younger sister’s concern for her unworthy older brother.”

However, contrary to his words, Aschel’s hands were trembling with suppressed rage.

“Where did Ellis go?”

“That... initially it seemed she was headed to the Imperial City, but...”

Kellin hesitated.

“After she left Belias, her whereabouts became unclear.”

“Is that so?”

His reaction was unexpectedly mild.

Aschel remained silent for a while, as an extended silence followed.

“At the Academy.....”

Kellin’s pupils quivered for a moment.

“Has there been any contact?”

Lifting his head, Kellin spoke calmly.

“There hasn’t been.”

Aschel's face contorted into a displeased expression.

"Understood. You may leave."

Kellin bowed his head and promptly left.

Aschel, left alone, continued to gaze at the sky.

"Kekeke.....!"

His future, once filled with light, felt clouded by fog.

Anger and disgust brought him to the brink of madness, yet strangely, laughter spilled from his lips.

"We've surely met before....."

He vividly recalled a disdainful gaze that had belittled him, though he'd never seen it before in his life.

Despite the familiarity, it didn't feel completely foreign.

It was an uncanny feeling of deja vu he was certain he'd experienced in a past life.

"Kuhahaha!"

A manic laugh devoid of joy echoed under the reddened sky.

He seemed like a devil reveling in ecstasy.

"....."

Kellin, observing secretly,

-whoosh-

ignited and burned a letter he was holding.

On one side of the paper was the Royal Academy's crest along with the name 'Boris.'

It was a letter Aschel had not been shown.

"Please be careful, Lord Sian....."

And with that, Kellin quickly departed.

* * *

[You managed to hold back? I thought for sure you'd resort to a massacre.]

"Is that what you were hoping for?"

[Why the disappointment? Anyone would think I'm a cursed demonic sword obsessed with slaughter.]

Don't you feel a twinge of regret saying that?

"To remain human, one must exercise restraint. Charge in recklessly, and you're no different from a beast acting on instinct."

[Oh, how admirable! It feels like just the other day you were charging in like an unrestrained colt, but look how much our master has grown!]

It was so ludicrous that I didn't even have a retort.

[So, are you planning to let your sister go just like that? Not going to keep watching her?]

"I've done what I could. From now on, what happens is entirely up to my sister. She's the one who will sprint ahead on the right path more than anyone else."

It was the beginning of her standing on her own two feet.

Honestly, no matter where she ends up, I believe she'll live better than I have.

I'll just wait and see, another letter will come eventually.

[.....]

Did you have more to say?

Ceyram, who had been staring at my face, suddenly averted her gaze.

"Do you have more to say?"

She glanced at me slyly again.

[Don't be too complacent. Life, you know, has many twists and turns. More than you might expect...]

"Are you giving advice?"

[If you want to call it that.]

Advice about life from someone who's living their second time around...

I was touched by the kindness of this demonic sword, and yet her words hinted that she didn't say them without reason—I couldn't help but be on alert.

[Who knows? Perhaps somewhere on this land is another place where you need to sprint off to...]

Someday, if I were to pass on this temperamental divine weapon to another successor, I'd want to tell them to be wary of her smile.

If advice disguised as an unsettling remark comes from that smile, then caution should not be exercised, but rather a guarded stance taken.

It would surely warn of another event looming over me.

Knowing this all too well, I could not afford a smile now.

* * *

News from the frontlines reached not the Imperial City first, but the Academy Chancellor's office.

The escapade involving the disappearance of the Violet Princess.

The return of Ellis after single-handedly killing a superior monster.

The suspicious death of Cecilia, the superior knight from the Order of Light.

Each piece of news significant enough to cause a stir in the empire, yet Chancellor Condor's face remained calm as he read the reports.

It was as if events that were bound to happen simply unfolded as they should.

His lips didn't betray a hint of a tremble.

-Knock knock-

While immersed in thought, there came a knocking at the door.

"Enter."

Having expected this visitor, the chancellor granted entry.

“I came immediately upon being summoned.”

It was Boris Lehelm, the new academic instructor appointed that semester.

“Sit.”

The chancellor gestured for him to take a seat, and the conversation flowed naturally.

“You’ve been here about a fortnight. Having any trouble adjusting?”

“Thanks to your kindness, I’m settling in well. The other staff have been quite helpful too.”

Boris responded that all was well.

“Good to hear. I must admit, this place is rife with the arrogance of highborn youth. But your countenance suggests you’ve not been troubled by lies. Lucky for you.”

“I’m grateful you view me so favorably.”

Chancellor Condor then said with a curious smile,

“There’s something I’ve felt about you since I first saw you, though our acquaintance has been brief.”

“What might that be?”

“Before I answer, I must ask—why are you here?”

Looking bewildered, Boris did not reply immediately.

“What’s there to ponder upon? Naturally, your master sent you. For you to work as a teacher here at the Royal Academy, right? But, is that truly all?”

“My personal reasons... you wish to know?”

Flustered only momentarily, Boris soon returned a peaceful smile.

“To tell you the truth, I’ve come in search of someone.”

“Someone?”

Interest flickered in the chancellor’s eyes.

“Yes. It’s not someone I have ties with, but someone my lord is intent on finding.”

“Well, I’ve no right to pry whom it might be, but I’ll still ask. Have you found this person?”

Boris shook his head.

“Regrettably, no. I haven’t even found a clue as to their whereabouts.”

“Heh. That’s a lie. Your eyes tell a different story. It seems you have a lead on someone.”

Stunned, Boris found himself speechless.

“Haha! Don’t take it so seriously. It’s nothing but nonsense from an old man.”

As the chancellor laughed heartily, Boris managed an awkward smile in return.

“Let me give you a tip. When trying to understand someone, one should be cautious of the side they don’t show.”

“Their hidden side?”

“Yes. Even if they smile on the surface, you never know whether they’re hiding flowers or a blade behind their back.”

The remark felt more like a warning than advice to Boris.

“I’ll take your words to heart.”

After their meeting concluded,

Boris descended the stairs from the chancellor’s office, soon encountering a familiar woman by the front gate.

“Coming from the chancellor’s office?”

It was Instructor Silica.

“Yes, I’ve just left with some insightful words from Chancellor Condor.”

The mention of ‘insightful words’ surprised her.

“Insightful words? The chancellor is hardly one to dispense advice freely. Perhaps he really does think highly of you, Instructor Boris.”

“Haha, if so, that is indeed fortunate. Honestly, I’m quite anxious about how he truly perceives me.”

“Don’t be nervous. Just be yourself. He’s quick to notice, and false pretenses are easily caught.”

Silica reassured Boris with a gentle pat on the shoulder.

“Is that so? Then you must be quite extraordinary yourself, Instructor Silica.”

“What? Why do you say that all of a sudden?”

Confused at the sudden praise, she was bewildered.

“Well, you too have something you’re concealing at the moment, don’t you?”

“.....!”

Silica was inwardly flustered, but outwardly she remained composed.

“It’s not nice to allude to a woman’s secrets. Aren’t you rather mischievous, Instructor Boris?”

“Haha. My apologies if I’ve offended. Let’s leave it at that.”

With an easygoing laugh, Boris moved past the topic.

“Well then, I must excuse myself; I have personal research to attend to.....”

“Yes. We’ll see each other later, Instructor Boris.”

Having finished their casual chat, Silica turned and ascended the stairs.

As soon as she felt Boris had completely left the building,

“.....”

Silica’s eyes transformed into a chilling visage filled with murderous intent.

“Prematurely rushing the command?”

Concealed within the tome she carried, a small knife emitted a flash of red.

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 117

Chapter 117: The Holy Scripture (1)

Boris mused over human emotions, particularly interest—an emotion he found quite fascinating. He considered how humans often dive headfirst into their passions, possibly a driving force behind their rise to power despite their physical frailty. Now, he found himself intrigued by a student named Sian, whose behaviors were peculiar, to say the least. Despite being a mere custodian, the information Boris had gathered was far from trivial.

Sian, it seemed, spent the majority of his time within the dormitory. He trained with a knight during early mornings and evenings, and although they shared the residence with three others, meals for at least six people were regularly brought in. Sian kept his room private, refusing even periodic cleaning. Occasionally, he would leave his post for days—to which the principal turned a blind eye.

Boris wasn't interested in ordinary details like academic or sparring records; he was delving into the private, sensitive aspects of Sian's life. Yet, the intelligence gathered so far didn't quite satisfy him.

"The fact that Sian Vert is under the principal's patronage is well-known throughout the academy. But I've heard there's another party who takes a significant interest in him."

"And who would that be?" Boris inquired.

"Well, it's just speculation at this point..."

The man hesitated to speak but seemed to imply he wanted something more. Boris tossed him two gold coins, eliciting a content smile and more information from the reticent informant.

"It's Instructor Silica!"

Boris's expression changed subtly at the mention of the name, aware that a tutor visiting a student's dormitory was far from normal and suggested a clandestine relationship.

"Are you certain of this?" Boris pressed. The assurance he received was based on direct intel from the Royal Hall's administrator.

Their conversation then steered toward another student, Beruth Luimill, the son of a duke from the Garam Kingdom, who claimed to possess sensitive information about

Sian. His only condition was the assurance of his safety, hinting at the potential repercussions of disclosing the secrets he held.

“If you are interested, sir, arrangements can be promptly made for a meeting,” the man suggested, to which Boris agreed, sensing the worth of the encounter. After picking a book from the shelf and putting it into his possession, Boris asked if they could meet immediately.

The meeting with Beruth would require a secluded space—a storage area filled with goods or a forest dense with trees—places where bodies could easily be concealed. However, the man led Boris to a solitary wilderness a ways off from the academy, a setting all too perfect for a clandestine rendezvous.

“How much farther?” Boris asked, and was told they were nearly at the rendezvous point. Suspecting something amiss, Boris inquired not about the distance but rather the truth behind the man’s disingenuous facade. Before the man could respond, a bright light flashed above him—a lightning-based magic attack. The man not only evaded the spell but put significant distance between him and Boris, betraying skills beyond those of any custodian.

As the man dusted off his clothing, a thick fog began to envelop him. Within moments, once the mist cleared, masked assailants materialized from thin air, a looming threat to Boris who remained unflappable yet attentive.

“I must ask, from where do you hail?” Boris’ polite inquiry was met with silence—as if the group was awaiting a key signal to make their next move.

Then, a woman’s voice echoed through the space, sparking the barest hint of a smile on Boris’ lips—a voice familiar yet different enough to signal a foreign presence.

Her identity was Silica Nigrity, a respectable academic instructor of the academy now confronting Boris with a chilling murderous intent.

As they stood face to face, Silica revealed they were followers of the “Black Mist,” and Boris realized that those present were ready to kill based on her initiation.

In a sudden surge of energy, Boris decided to showcase his power, an altruistic energy gathering in his hands—a confrontation between the forces of light and dark about to ensue.

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 118

Chapter 118: The Holy Scripture (2)

To an assassin, secrecy is as vital as life itself.

Even if it is something insignificant, like a speck of dust, details about oneself must never be revealed to others.

Boris Wilhelm had crossed the line.

Putting him on the target list had been a given from the moment his watchfulness over Sian had been discovered. However, he had already uncovered more than expected.

Mist clan leader Silica reflected on this fact,

For an assassin, hesitation is akin to death.

That man, on this very spot, must be dealt with definitively in the name of Mist—today of all days, even for the absent heir's sake.

-Swish

With a signal, the assassins, who had been holding back, rushed Boris at once.

-Bababak

The storm-like charge only lasted a moment before half were sent flying into the air.

The human body, though seemingly sturdy, is actually rife with vulnerabilities.

Head, ribs, neck, eyes, back, groin, rectum—just to name a few.

These so-called vital points, if struck, can be life-threatening, and the assassin's craft lies in quickly subduing them.

But who were these individuals?

Elite assassins capable of taking a hundred lives with a single slash of their blades.

Even without sight, their monstrous senses allowed them to target every vital point.

What happens when such individuals concentrate solely on a single vital point?

Ten assassins, running from ten different directions, with each focusing their attack on a different spot.

The technique, known as the Ten Limb Strikes, was perhaps excessive for one person but was certain beyond doubt.

Of the ten swords rushing towards the target,

Should even one strike land,

That person would cease to exist in this world.

-Thump!

A dull sound struck the wilderness, resonating far and wide.

It was neither the indifferent cut through the air nor the crisp sound of clashing blades.

While their targets varied, ultimately, all members aimed for the body of one man—Boris Wilhelm.

To their disbelief, their swords had not struck Boris.

“...!”

The assassins’ eyes widened in shock.

Their dynamic vision was unparalleled among humans, so what was this unidentifiable presence before them?

-Squish

A horrible squishiness, as if they could not believe they had pierced a living being, gnawed their nerves.

Silica observed with a disgusted expression.

“Marionettes...”

Lifeless bodies reanimated as puppets, infused with magical power.

The culprits that turned the royal feast into a bloody banquet and disrupted their cleansing operation.

Expected magic, yet for Silica, it was no laughing matter.

Contrastingly, Boris’s smug grin seemed untouched by the events.

With an unsettled gaze, Silica looked down at Boris’s feet.

They no longer touched the wilderness ground.

It was as if a slice of the night sky enclosed his feet, reminiscent of the void of a god's interdimensional space.

The Dimension Room.

A space of magic, conjured through the considerable employment of mana.

Sensing the threat, the assassins retreated without a moment's hesitation.

-Woong

From it, eerily shaped marionettes emerged one after another.

"Got quite a bizarre taste, don't you? Such grotesque puppets aren't going to make you popular among the students, right?"

"Still better than hiding a blade behind a disgusting smile," Boris replied with a glib ease that only irked Silica more.

With a forced laugh, she retorted,

"I'd appreciate it if you didn't only see the worst in me. My puppets are rather fond of people, despite how they might look..."

-Squeak!

"...very fond of people, you see..."

"...!"

The gazes of the assassins monitoring Boris snapped backward.

A new dimensional space had opened underneath them, unseen till then, and from it, more marionettes emerged.

-Click-clack!

With bizarre sounds, the puppets lunged at the assassins.

-Clang!

While blocking was simple, the problem arose from their overwhelming numbers.

"Keeek!"

What began as a few multiplied rapidly. Soon, one assassin found themselves facing over three marionettes.

The increase wasn't trivial.

These marionettes moved with a smoothness that rivaled the academy's staff members, despite being mere magical constructs.

"..."

Outnumbered, Silica found herself in an unsettling situation, but that wasn't her primary concern.

'Is this truly magic?'

Although 'Black' was her nickname, black magic was still fundamentally a branch reliant on mana.

The marionette and Dimension Room magic showcased by Boris wasn't something that could be mastered with intermediate prowess.

Beyond envisioning an opponent's movements through formulaic calculations, controlling the manifested mana required immense concentration—a level of genius even admired among mages.

Such proficiency, backed by overwhelming mana, is what grants the title of Grand Sage.

But look at that detestable face.

Is that truly the face of someone in deep concentration?

Too leisurely, bordering on debauchery, it hardly appeared to be someone channeling high-level magic.

And there lied another oddity;

'What on earth is he holding?'

The book in his right hand was a conundrum.

The assassins' keen eyes and an academy instructor's insight could discern that the book...

'A history book?'

Common enough in any library, it seemed to be a general historical account of the continent.

Whether it contained any methods for utilizing black magic, Boris hadn't let go of it throughout the battle.

It was inherently suspicious to any observer.

"Are you just going to stand there and watch?" Boris teasingly asked.

"You've revealed your true self to kill me; wouldn't it be a pity to leave now with just arms crossed?"

"Oh, how considerate..."

However brief Sirius's gratified smile was,

-Thump!

Without a moment's hesitation, she lunged towards Boris.

"Kiik!"

Marionettes swarmed to defend him, but

-Whoosh

A single slash cut through the air, sending them tumbling down helplessly.

Boris, sensing urgency, raised his hand forward.

"Summon: Hell Hound!"

Following his command, a summoning circle emerged, bringing forth ravenous beasts from the demon realm.

"Woof!"

But these mindless puppies could never stand in her way.

-Swish

A fluid strike split the hellhound's jaws and its body alongside, with the spurt of blood veily covering Silica's visage—an ominous sight for any onlooker.

-Wooong

Boris, now palpably more desperate, manifested even stronger mana.

“Let the holy light of judgment punish thee!”

With the incantation, a spell of sparkling white light emerged from his hand.

The 7-star light-elemental combat spell ‘Spear of Punishment’

“Ha!”

Silica couldn’t help but scoff at the ludicrous scene.

To cast such a potent spell capable of instant killing even a giant beast without any preparatory gestures?

This was within the realms of Grand Sages like Principal Condor or Headmaster Regens.

But there was no time for awe.

If she allowed the attack at this range, it would harm not only her but also nearby allies, necessitating immediate disruption.

-Keening

Unfaltering, Silica didn’t stop her charge; instead, she gathered mana in her unarmed hand.

“...!”

Boris’s previously composed expression tightened for the first time.

Though predicting her actions, he seemed surprised.

What Silica planned was simple.

Like Boris, she was initiating magic.

But it wasn’t a combative spell like the Spear of Punishment.

Silica’s publicly known magical attribute was fire—a standard trait for an ostensibly normal instructor.

Yet, her true attribute, kept hidden within the assassin within her, was now about to be revealed.

“To nullify everything into oblivion...”

Chanting, she formed a black sphere in her hand.

And as soon as Boris’s summoned Spear of Punishment launched towards her...

-Whoosh!

It was absorbed into the sphere.

“...!”

The Sphere of Nullification.

A unique dark attribute spell capable of rendering all surrounding mana inert.

Silica’s true magical attribute was darkness.

“The light mana has...!”

Now frantic, Boris tried to utter another spell, but Silica denied him the chance.

-Crash!

Gripping his throat without mercy, she slammed him powerfully against the ground.

“Cough!”

Blood spurted from his neck under her crushing grip.

“It’s too soon for screams, don’t you think?”

-Crack!

Her merciless sword then severed Boris’s right hand.

Mana, now directionless within the severed hand, dissipated into dust.

“Aaagh!”

Watching, Silica struggled to suppress a forthcoming laugh.

“You’ve put up quite a fight, Instructor Boris! Though I hoped for more desperation, it looks like it ends here!”

-Thump!

The marionettes had nearly been dealt with by the other assassins.

The final puppet collapsed, solidifying Boris's fate with none remaining to save him.

"Any last words?" Silica offered with mock compassion. "I'll afford you that much mercy..."

"Cough!"

Instead of last words, only blood flowed from his lips.

A symbol of his imminently dire predicament.

Boris struggled to speak.

"An assassin should never..."

"...?"

Though not confirmed, his introduction made it unlikely he'd recite a conventional last testament.

"I've heard hesitation to an assassin is as good as death..."

Silica's broad smile chilled to frostiness once more.

"Why do you display such arrogance...?"

Sensing danger, she quickly raised her sword.

-Bang!

Suddenly, a dazzling light burst forth, obscuring Silica and the others' vision.

Regaining composure, Silica tried to pinpoint the light's origin. "...!"

Disbelief filled her eyes.

Perhaps it was just a bright phenomenon.

Or a final, hidden trump card.

Even a mere visual mistake.

But Silica's intuition felt otherwise.

A pure, unblemished light ignited an innate revulsion, aligned with her devotion to the god of black mist—undeniably looming as hostile.

“How, why...”

Her gaze fixed upon Boris’s left hand, holding—

“The Holy Scripture is here!”

The blank tome, its contents unknown, was the source of blinding light.

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 119

Chapter 119: The Holy Scripture (3)

In a somewhat gloomy afternoon at the Academy library, Arin was searching for some study materials when she suddenly came across a familiar face in one corner of the storeroom.

‘Lunev?’

It wasn’t just her presence that caught Arin’s eye, but also the book she was holding.

The thick volume reminded one of a heavy comforter.

Despite seeming unsuitable for students to read, it somehow matched Lunev.

Arin carefully approached so as not to disturb her.

“Hello, Lunev?”

Despite the sudden greeting, Lunev didn’t seem surprised.

It was as if she had already sensed Arin’s presence.

“Oh, sorry! Did I interrupt your reading?”

“No, it’s fine. It’s a book I’ve read before, so I wasn’t exactly deep into it.”

Arin doubted her ears for a moment.

“You’ve read it before?”

“Yes. I believe I’ve read it about three times. I revisited it after a while, but it doesn’t seem as intriguing as it used to be.”

Lunev put the book back where it belonged, seemingly finding no value in reading further.

“You must really enjoy reading, huh?”

“Well, there wasn’t much else to do during my time at the academy.”

The book she had been engrossed in seemed difficult.

To Arin’s glance, it looked more like something the academy researchers would read.

“Doesn’t it look tough to read...?”

“Not really? I’ve read all these books at least once.”

Arin would have dismissed such a claim from another student as boasting, but with Lunev, she couldn’t.

“All of these?!”

“Yes, there were many books at the academy too. So I spent my time reading and practicing magic... anyway, that’s how it was.”

“Amazing...”

Arin ignored Lunev’s hesitation after mentioning magic practice.

Was it because Arin had no doubts?

Lunev looked extraordinarily bored, as if she had lost interest in everything.

“Why don’t you apply for a book that you actually want to read?”

“Apply?”

“Yeah! If you write down the book you want and apply to the librarian, they will try to get it for you. Don’t you want to read a new book, Lunev?”

“Well, yes, but...”

Lunev gave it some thought and then shook her head.

“It seems difficult. Even if I apply, the academy probably won’t be able to find it.”

“What’s the book’s name?”

Hesitant, Lunev finally answered.

“Hiscrea...”

The name sounded more like that of a person than of a book.

Arin thought she had heard it somewhere before, but couldn’t place it.

“This book... sounds like it would be very complex just from its name.”

“Not necessarily. It’s just that the author is... rather special.”

“Special? Who wrote it?”

“Not a person...”

Arin thought to herself, what did that mean?

“Not a person?”

“Yes. It’s more like a holy scripture written by those higher beings...”

A magic scripture written by a being above humans.

There was only one book Arin knew fitting that description.

“Are you talking about the Holy Scripture?”

Lunev nodded cautiously.

* * *

The first page of a history book, widely used in the academy, opens with the following passage:

“The race most alike to God in appearance but least blessed with His omnipotent power is humanity.”

Humans were too frail to survive on this harsh continent, always bordering on being wiped out of existence.

Magic was their ultimate tool for survival.

Humans had to pursue constant knowledge and growth, unable to survive the harshness of nature with mere flesh.

Their struggle for survival led to a unique magic system similar to divine doctrine, and they continue to grow even now for their own existence.

Yet, as mere creatures, they faced inevitable limitations.

Magic itself was but a borrowing of the creator God's power, with limits to the heights humanity could reach.

To help overcome this limitation, the God of Light, Lumen Del, bestowed upon humanity a sacred scripture: Hiscrea.

It was said that if someone among the mortals could correctly understand and utilize Hiscrea,

the mists of darkness threatening human existence would dissipate, leaving only a true light of salvation,

and thus, beings of darkness ought to be wary of it.

Though now treated as a mere legend, a relic of olden times, that very scripture was before Silica's eyes.

"Ah..."

A surge of dizziness, a sensation Silica hadn't felt in a long time.

Was it pride or ignorance?

Despite knowing too well that hesitation was akin to death for an assassin,

how had she found herself in this situation?

"I have to admit I was surprised. I knew you were hiding your attribute, Silica, but I didn't expect you to hide your rank as well."

Boris, who had been sprawled on the floor not long ago, was now gone.

In his place stood another Boris, smug with a gleaming Holy Scripture in hand.

"Shall I help you up?"

Refusing brusquely, Silica backed away.

Instantly,

-Kaboom!

The sound of something bursting and a fountain of red blood erupted before her.

“Aaagh!”

Simultaneously, screams filled the air as her comrades fell one after another.

Overcome by weakness, Silica collapsed as well.

“What is this?”

The blue blade of the sword cut into her, vibrating into the bone, a pain all too familiar to sword-carrying assassins, but in this moment, inexplicably unbearable.

Why? How?

She hadn't been cut by a sword, nor hit by any invisible attack.

All she had done was dispose of the summoned marionettes. How did it lead to this...?

“It seems a curse has been triggered.”

As if waiting to speak, Boris explained.

In an instant, Silica realized what happened and looked at the dismantled marionettes.

“Give and take, love for love, pain for pain... That's just what my puppets did.”

The marionettes utterly destroyed, it was as if Boris's minions had suffered harm themselves, a reciprocal damage to the comrades.

“What have you done?”

“It's the . A spell that curses the summoned marionette, imparting some of the damage inflicted on it to the assailant.”

Silica had never encountered such magic before.

How could this fantasy be considered magic, to someone who was by no means an amateur in the magical arts?

Boris continued as if questioning what was so surprising.

“Black magic is merely a concoction of some narrow-minded people. It’s nothing more than drawing a line saying others shouldn’t do what they can’t.”

Feeling a squirming surge of his own mana, Boris flaunted it openly.

“What I did was just another form of magic.”

‘So this is the magic of the Holy Scripture?’

Luminous magic far beyond the reach of frail humanity.

What changes would the countless spells within this white book bring to the continent?

One thing was clear — these changes wouldn’t favor them.

“The God of Light, Lumen Del, rated us humans to be the race that could reach the domain of gods first, but I personally disagree. Divine power is still too much for us humans to handle. You know this, don’t you, Silica?”

Hearing his words, a deep glint appeared in Silica’s eyes.

“So tell me, why exactly are you protecting Sian Vert?”

“Isn’t that written in your precious scripture?”

She was not the type to give a straight answer.

“Let me ask again. Is Sian Vert truly the owner of the cursed sword?”

Silence.

“I had my suspicions. The cursed sword’s nature is to possess its owner, but I saw no such signs in the boy.”

Sian’s inner thoughts, obscured even from the bearer of the Holy Scripture, felt like peering into fog without a single ray of light.

“Quite contrary, I was perplexed. He seemed to hold a grudge against me as if I was an enemy from a past life... as if he knows something about me...”

For the first time, Boris’s voice was filled with displeasure.

“So who are you, Sian Vert...?”

Silica remained silent.

Not because she couldn't speak, but because she couldn't grasp what to say.

However, the pondering didn't last long.

At the end of a brief silence, the first words she uttered were...

"Huh!"

Laughter. As if the question was too ridiculous to take seriously.

"You see, that child... he's perfect. Beyond what you can imagine..."

Thinking about her rebellious disciple, a natural smile formed on her lips.

"If there had been any flaw in that child, someone like you would have manipulated him completely by now. Used and discarded like a mere puppet."

Despite the recent wound, she got up nonchalantly, dusting off her knees.

"But there's no chance now."

"!?"

"Thinking he could challenge an evil sword that even dares not to claim him; a mere snake like you... It's absurd!"

Boris flinched from a sudden sense of unease.

"That child will change many things..."

Silica rose, regaining her stance.

But it was not the stance of an assassin ready to kill.

-Humming

"Just talking about it makes it sound like a will, doesn't it? But it doesn't change a thing. Today, I will end you here and wait for my adorable student's return."

It was a stance for casting magic, not an assassin's move.

Black mana, a blend of killing intent and magical power, glowed around her.

(To be continued)

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin chapter 120

Chapter 120: The Holy Scripture (4)

A tremor passed through the hand holding the scripture.

A toxic energy that provoked fear in living creatures, a murderous intent.

It was an aura that any human would instinctively react to.

Not just Boris, but the other assassins felt this energy too, as they started to drift from the area one by one.

Their faces seemed to anticipate some significant event about to unfold.

“Did you say it’s divine magic?”

Silica, who was gathering magical power, said with a laugh.

“Even if it’s power far beyond human reach, in the end, you’re just borrowing that power. No matter what the source of the power is, doesn’t it only truly matter when that power is completed as your own, Instructor Boris?”

On hearing these words, Boris’s eyes turned frosty.

“You’re right. Divine power is too much for us humans. However, when you truly start to embrace that power as your own, you’ll see that the path you can take is boundless.”

“What are you trying to say?”

“It means you’re still a long way off.”

Soon, a black mist filled with divine power started to rise behind Silica.

A force that no ordinary human could manifest.

It was an absolute power exclusively held by groups worshipping Aer, but the power Silica was manifesting was more than just the mist’s power.

‘The power of the mist... combined with Magic?’

Boris lost himself for a moment at this unexpected phenomenon.

The mist that had risen from Silica soon fused with the magic she had manifested earlier, creating a new union that had never existed before.

The combination of the transcendental power bestowed by the divine and her own unique, self-created magical power.

This was indeed a new realm that transcended human limitations.

“Summon: Black Mist of Greed!”

As she lifted the fused magical power above her head with a seductive smile, the condensed mists exploded outward.

“Giggles...”

The dispersed mist gradually took shape, and soon turned into the form of a beast mixed with murderous intent.

The Black Mist of Greed.

A new transcendent entity born from the dark essence that turns all into nothingness and the power of the mist god, unique to her and something no one else could ever mimic.

“Why do you wear such a dumbfounded expression? Isn’t this also a legitimate magic?”

It was no lie.

The source of this unbelievable summon was magic, no matter how it was derived.

Turning the power of the inner mist into high-grade magic meant it was, in the end, just a type of summoning magic.

“To have inherited the power of the Black Mist God... I can’t help but applaud. Truly a remarkable state you’ve achieved, Silica.”

“I’m not too pleased by praises that sound too sarcastic to be genuine.”

As Boris returned to praise Silica’s realm of power for a brief moment, he once again spread the Holy Scripture with a smile.

“No matter how dark the darkness, it ultimately gives way to even the smallest light.”

Once again, light surged from the scripture he spread open, and magic concentrated within it.

“Your darkness will never overshadow my light.”

“Let’s see if you can still spout that in a minute, shall we?”

The opposing energies of mist and light, inherently incompatible, prepared to annihilate each other.

Silica thought to herself.

About 30 to 40 percent.

The chances that her summoned Black Mist of Greed would consume his magic.

However, as more and more magic was drawn to the light of the scripture, those odds dwindled.

‘Perhaps a less than 10 percent chance?’

Is this the power of scripture?

She wasn’t too concerned; she had predicted such probabilities.

Hadn’t she already determined what to do from the moment she first revealed herself?

To kill Boris Lehelm, who intended to approach the heir, and remove that threat.

This was non-negotiable as the head of the Mist and its leader.

There was no other path.

Silica, with her mind made up, then gave an order, and the availing Greed’s Mist started to rush towards the scripture’s light.

“...?!”

But then they saw it.

Just as the Greed’s Mist was about to clash with the light of the scripture, another unknown force descended upon them.

-Swoosh!

Space tore apart with a sound, and the mist and light scattered in two directions.

“...?”

Both Silica and Boris, baffled by the turn of events. Unlike Boris, who was clueless, Silica seemed to have conjectured something as a faint smile appeared on her face.

“What’s going on?”

It was only for a brief moment that Boris voiced his confusion before above the dispersed mist, blood-red irises holding a purple sword hilt gleamed red.

The absolute truth of darkness that could slice through the bright light of the Holy Scripture.

Another god’s weapon that held this darkness.

Boris finally realized.

The owner of those uglier-than-death red eyes,

was the wielder of the demonic sword he had been seeking.

* * *

As the demonic sword’s energy and the scripture’s light collided, creating a subspace, with a man and a woman standing side by side, a black-haired woman seemed too relaxed, smiling contentedly, while the white-haired man was clearly displeased.

The Scripture of Hiscrea and the demonic sword Ceyram – a direct descendant of divine power.

“Haven’t you broken a promise, Ceyram?”

The Scripture of Hiscrea was the first to speak.

“Hmm? I’m quite surprised. What promise did I break?”

“Weren’t we not supposed to meddle in each other’s business? As far as I remember, you were the one who strongly warned me about this.”

“Ah, right! That’s true! So? How is it an issue?”

With an air of indifference, Ceyram nonchalantly shrugged off the accusation, which brought a tinge of exasperation into Hiscrea’s gaze.

“Why are you and your master here then! Weren’t you in a completely different place just a few hours ago!”

“Oh, well, my master has good instincts, what can I say? The sword follows the master’s order, what can you do?”

Ceyram denied any involvement, and Hiscrea’s facial expression began to reddens like snow under the sun.

“Having woken up not too long ago, you seem eager to go back to sleep. If you’re going to keep denying, well, fine. I’ll take no responsibility for what happens next.”

“Whatcha sayin’, kiddo?”

Despite the thinly veiled threat, Ceyram let out a disdainful snort.

“You’re mistaken, you know?”

A corner of his mouth twitched up, backed by a gaze laden with lethal intent.

The smile of the demonic sword was colder than ice, darker than the night sky.

This reaction to the chill that settled in was inevitable.

“Don’t you realize why my master and I are here?”

There was no need for explanations.

If they were concerned about why, they wouldn’t have come here in the first place.

The demonic sword and its master had one absolute reason for being here.

“We’ve just come to get rid of all of you.”

That was their sole purpose.

“Our master, especially now, harbors much resentment...”

Rage, hatred, murderous intent.

The negative emotions the demonic sword relished and desired from its owner.

Ceyram, indulging in these emotions throughout his being, could not help but laugh.

* * *

I didn’t expect any of this, but I never imagined it would turn out so blatantly.

Where did it all begin?

If I had to guess, I suppose it was probably initiated by our lord.

But it doesn't bother me.

In a sense, this could also be seen as a mistake on my part for taking things too lightly.

I glanced subtly toward our lord.

The Greed's Mist that had seemed ready to devour everything in sight looked at me quizzically, unlike when it faced Boris.

Below it was our lord, looking back at me with ambiguity in her expression.

What had happened?

Upon witnessing the oddly uncommon wounds scattered over her and the marionettes littered around, it wasn't hard to guess.

She must have used puppet curse magic.

No matter how adept our lord was with magic, being unfamiliar with this sort of spell meant she was bound to be affected.

Despite this, she had managed to summon the 'Black Mist of Greed,' quite an impressive feat.

I turned my attention to the instigator of this situation.

Undoubtedly, my anger and murderous intent towards him had not yet subsided, even though it was less intense than when we first met.

I felt a natural tension in my hand as I gripped Ceyram.

"It feels different than before, student Sian..."

His casual greeting left me slightly dumbfounded, but I directed my attention to the stark white book in his hand before considering his face.

Now, for the record, I didn't know what it was.

But if there was one thing I was sure of, it was that it wasn't something I'd look upon fondly.

"What's that?"

[...Hm? Are you asking me?]

“Who else is here to answer?”

Ceyram raised an eyebrow as if surprised.

“Unexpected? Weren’t you enemies in a past life? Shouldn’t you know?”

If I knew everything, I wouldn’t have been backstabbed and killed in the first place.

I’d never seen such a blinding book in all my life, past or present.

So why does it feel familiar?

[The Holy Scripture Hiscrea... You’ve heard of it before, right? Need more explanation?]

“No, that’s enough.”

A mystical tome said to have been bestowed upon humanity by the light god Lumen Del.

It was known to be another Divine weapon, alongside Durandal, bringing salvation’s light to the continent.

What a joke.

How could I look kindly upon something that emits the same blinding light as that disgusting sword?

Especially since that thing is in the hands of...

“The youngest son of Duke Vert, the guardian of the continent, turns out to be a follower of the Black Mist... truly fascinating.”

It’s been a long while.

That nauseatingly disgusting smile...

“If left unchecked, we can’t foresee the consequences...”

Was he being cautious of me?

As he brandished the scripture, power surged forth like a wave.

The situation almost seems reversed from our last encounter, doesn’t it?

Back then, unaware of his thoughts and needing to conceal my own identity, I had to stay constantly on guard.

But now the scenario is different, isn't it?

The lord and I have exposed everything. There's no option to just say bye and walk away, and although it seems a bit premature,

It's not necessarily a bad thing.

"Darkness Art Nine Forms: Manifestation of the Magic Sword..."

(To be continued)