

**Great Mage 491**

**Season 2 Chapter 191**

Non-stop victories.

As Bargan had predicted, he continued to ride his momentum.

He fought three more consecutive matches and won all three of them.

Of course, the fights steadily became more difficult as he progressed.

He hadn't received any major injuries today, but Bargan had only won by a paper-thin margin.

Nevertheless, he was happy.

'I'm growing stronger at an explosive rate.'

The more he fought, the more certain he became of this fact.

"7 straight victories!"

Aram let out a hearty laugh.

“It seems that you are in your best condition. But can you maintain this form until ‘that’ day?”

“I can’t say for sure.”

“Sure.”

“...”

There was about a week left.

As he had this thought, Bargan looked out at the street.

He was currently sitting with Aram at a table in an open-air restaurant. Aram held a large piece of roasted meat in one hand and was biting into it with his sharp teeth.

In front of him was a large pile of bones without a hint of flesh remaining.

Seeing his casual appearance, Bargan muttered softly.

“You don’t seem that worried. There isn’t much time left.”

“Haha. Well...”

Aram, who ate the rest of the meat in one go, wiped his oily mouth with his hand.

“Nothing will change even if I’m worried about it, will it? It’s much more productive to fill my stomach.”

His words were right.

Nevertheless, Bargan still couldn’t bring himself to eat.

Instead, he took sips from a glass of beer as he spoke.

“By the way, Aram.”

“What is it?”

“Have you really never met the man named Ountal?”

Aram’s expression became embarrassed when he heard this question.

“It’s because he’s always busy dealing with our situation... The rest of our comrades are also extremely busy.”

“...how many are in your group exactly?”

“Including me... there are 15 of us.”

This was less than Bargan had expected.

He'd already heard about the 'plan'.

But it wasn't detailed or elaborate enough to be called a proper operation.

Early on that day, they would enter the arena and hide in a safe spot until their target arrived. They had chosen the stands. Although the arena was large, most of it was empty space, so there weren't many places to hide.

Then, they would stay hidden until Kangki came to fight Kaytai, and 'attack him all at once'.

That was a rough breakdown of their 'operation'.

'...fifteen.'

It was a number that had no chance of winning an all-out battle.

There wasn't just Kangki, there was also his group of bodyguards.

In other words, the first surprise attack was extremely important.

Even if they couldn't kill him in the first attack, they had to at least land one or two lethal attacks that would help their chances of achieving victory.

"By the way, what about your helper?"

Aram suddenly asked this question as if he'd just remembered it, but Bargan shook his head.

"I couldn't find him."

"Mm. That's too bad."

"..."

Aram drank the rest of his beer in one gulp before standing to his feet.

"It's become pretty cold, so I'll see you later, senior. Since I called you to hang out with me, I'll pick up the tab."

“I owe you one.”

“No need for that.”

Aram smiled broadly, and after paying the bill, left with his hands swinging at his sides.

Bargan calmly watched him leave for a while before finally getting to his feet as well.

Thuk.

Then he started following Aram.

\* \* \*

He knew how skilled Aram was.

He'd seen him fight a few times in the arena. Aram was a Fighter whose level was considered around the mid-levels of the Lirua arena, and his ranking was similar to Bargan, who had won several consecutive matches.

Nevertheless, this didn't mean that his true skills matched his ranking.

In fact, Bargan's experience and intuition told him that Aram was actually hiding his true skills. Of course, this meant that there was no logical basis or proof for this guess.

...So to sum it all up,

Bargan simply didn't trust Aram completely.

In fact, his current evaluation of him was currently bordering between complete distrust and suspicion.

Of course, it felt nice when he met him at first.

When heard that there was an 'organisation' rebelling against Kangki from the shadows, he had great expectations, and he even felt admiration for 'Ountal' who had managed to find these like-minded people and unite them.

But after thinking about it a bit more deeply, he noticed a few discrepancies.

'Even so...'

Bargan awoke from his thoughts for a moment and checked his surroundings.

The number of people walking around had been steadily decreasing. This meant that from now on, he had to be a bit more careful as he followed him.

Aram walked along the empty street with his unique swagger. Then, he turned into an alley on the side of the street.

Bargan stopped.

An alley.

'From here on...'

His chances of getting caught would be much higher.

In such a cramped and deserted alleyway, he would have no excuse for his tailing if he were to be discovered.

If things didn't go like he wanted them to, the relationship of trust that he'd built up with Aram would be destroyed.

After having this thought, Bargan snorted slightly.

'What relationship of trust?'

They had only known each other for a week.



The 'organisation' had no choice but to stay hidden from Kangki's eyes. In other words, it was perfectly understandable for them to set up a hideout in a deserted area like this one.

The same could be said for why Aram was hiding his strength. If he showed his true skill, he would attract attention. There was nothing strange about that.

Nevertheless, the feeling of discomfort in his chest didn't disappear.

Bargan quietly ducked into the alley.

The towering buildings became rough curtains that blocked the moonlight. Thanks to this, the narrow and complicated alleyways became a dark maze.

Bargan felt that he could not get any closer without being found.

'Then.'

He would have to use something that he couldn't when there were more people around.

Rely on his hearing.

Tuk, tuk...

The sound of footsteps came from not so far away.

Aram was the only person who entered the alley, so naturally, these footsteps belonged to him.

Taking a deep breath, Bargan slowly followed the footsteps.

Tuk, tuk...

Focusing on his hearing was more frustrating and tiring than he expected.

Perhaps because the distance between them was too far, the sound of the footsteps was faint, and it would even cut off at times.

He was nervous.

He was also tense.

Nevertheless, Bargan didn't stop following.

Then.

Tuk.

The footsteps stopped.

“ ... ”

Bargan also stopped moving, his expression stiff with tension.

The footsteps could have only stopped for two reasons. One was that he had arrived at his destination, and the second was that he had noticed him.

‘What should I do?’

To confirm that, he would have to get closer.

If it was the former, then his shadowing was a success, but if it was the latter...

“ ... ”

Bargan decided to stop thinking about it and move. He couldn't back down after already coming this far.

After approaching the corner that Aram had turned down, he carefully poked his head around.

There, Aram was standing.

With his back straight, he stood at a dead-end where not even a mouse hole could be seen.

“Come on out, senior.”

“...”

It seems he had heard him too.

With a barely audible sigh, Bargan slowly walked around the corner.

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Aram turned around to look at Bargan. Then he spoke with a hint of confusion in his voice.

“Why did you follow me?”

“Because I still have doubts.”

“About me? Why?”

“Your organisation.”

While looking at Aram’s confused expression, Bargan couldn’t help but think.

If that expression was all an act, then this man had the darkest heart of anyone he’d ever encountered.

“You never introduced any of the other members to me.”

“Didn’t I already tell you that everyone was busy?”

Aram’s expression seemed to say that he didn’t understand the problem, but Bargan wasn’t satisfied with that.

“Are they so busy that they can’t even show their faces after an entire week?”

“That’s right. It’s the truth. Hoo.”

Aram pressed his hand to his forehead.

“No. This is all my mistake. We’re about to risk our lives together for this operation, but I didn’t even tell you their names.”

Aram seemed to ponder about something for a while before finally nodding.

“I guess it can’t be helped. Come in first, senior. I’ll explain everything about the group in detail.”

“Come in? Where?”

“Here.”

After saying that, Bargan pushed his hand into the wall. When he saw Bargan’s startled expression, he spoke in a slightly smug tone.

“It’s just a simple technique. It’s not that big of a deal. It’s also very efficient. Unless you reveal it yourself, it’s very hard to get caught.”

“...”

“Come quickly. The window for you to enter is limited.”

Aram stepped into the wall first. Bargan hesitated for a while, but when he saw Aram’s defenseless appearance as he stepped into the wall, he couldn’t help but follow him.

It was a very unsettling experience to walk through what should have been a solid wall. As soon as he walked in, his vision became black. It was so dark that he couldn't see his surroundings at all, but he could feel the change in the air current.

It seemed that they had entered a completely different space.

He had no choice but to rely on Aram's footsteps to move in the darkness, but there were things that he couldn't help but notice.

This didn't seem to be a place where people lived.

It smelled stale and disgusting. There was a constant cloud of dust as if it had been left unattended for over a decade.

"It... doesn't seem like there's anyone here."

He must have heard Bargan's murmur, but Aram didn't answer. He just continued looking around as he walked as if he was looking for something.

Then his eyes caught a flag that was hanging from a wall.

"Ah. I remember now."

"Remember what?"

“The name of this group.”

“...”

What was he talking about?”

Aram sat on an old chair nearby.

As he slowly curled the corner of his lips in this situation, it gave an entirely different impression from before.

“The [Fangs of Kamesh], that was the name.”

“...what are you talking about?”

“Senior is really smart. I like that about you.”

By this time, Bargan’s hand was already on the handle of his club.

Aram smiled and shrugged, seemingly not caring at all.



“Come on, senior. I didn’t lie. There really was a group who wanted to kill Kangki, and there really was a man named Ountal. About 10 years ago.”

“...10 years ago?”

“Right. I annihilated them 10 years ago.”

Aram looked down at the ground. There were bloodstains there, very old bloodstains.

“Those guys really were a huge rebel force that was the most annoying to deal with, so it took some time for me to hunt them down. Nevertheless, 10 years is a long time. I couldn’t remember their name until I saw that flag.”

“In the end, you really work for Kangki.”

Aram’s smile widened. He showed his bright white teeth.

“I told you that Kangki has three henchmen. Remember?”

“So you’re the last henchman.”

“As expected, senior is really quick-witted and easy to talk to. Maybe it’s because you’re a wanderer, so your thinking is much more flexible than those other stone-like Fighters.”

Bargan immediately looked around.

Could he escape?

No. It was difficult to escape this place when he didn't know where he was. And even if he did manage to escape, there was a high chance that he would be caught soon anyway.

As for the passage that they'd used to enter this place... it was better to think that it was blocked already.

He could tell from Aram's attitude.

It was as though he was dealing with a fish trapped in a net.

"Why does senior think I approached you while acting like this?"

"Probably to find the Dragon Hunter."

"Kukuku."

Aram seemed genuinely happy.

It was as though he was sincerely praising Bargan's brain.

He didn't have to repeat anything he said before and they could even progress the conversation without him having to go into any lengthy explanations.

"That's my goal... In other words, if I catch him, I won't need to kill senior."

"..."

"Do you understand what I'm saying? It might sound strange, but I've grown fond of you, senior. If we combine senior's potential and star quality, it would create an amazing synergy in Lirua. That's the only reason why I'm suggesting this."

He reached out to Bargan.

"How about starting over?"

"...what?"

"Restart your life as a Fighter here in Lirua that you abandoned before, senior. You were born to be a Fighter and you can't escape that fate. You tried to change your essence after decades of wandering, but it was impossible and I'm sure senior realised that too. While standing in the arena, you remembered where you really belong."

Creak.

The old chair squeaked loudly as Aram got to his feet.

"The arena is the place where senior truly belongs."

"Are you trying to entice me?"

"I'm sure Lord Kangki can do it even better than I can. He has always had a favorable opinion of senior's talent. It's not too late. Start a new life here with us. Senior is someone who deserves to stand at the top of the Lirua Arena. I promise I will give you my full support to make that happen."

"..."

"If you refuse, then I will have no choice but to kill you. Like the [Fangs of Kamesh] and all the other cockroaches that infest Lirua."

It wasn't a bad offer.

Bargan had seen the Lirua arena and had even participated in a few matches.

Through his repeated victories, he knew just what he had to gain.

"I refuse."

Aram's heated expression immediately became stiff when he heard Bargan's answer.

"...can I ask why?"

"You said that it's the Lirua Arena. But that's wrong. That huge building in this city is not an arena. It is a tower of deception that was built out of disgust. That's all it is."

Bargan then smiled coldly.

"But regardless of that, I never had any intention of betraying my Lord."

"That's unfortunate, senior. And... I take back what I said before. Senior isn't flexible at all."

"All Fighters are the same."

As he responded coldly, Bargan measured the distance between them.

About five steps. This was something he could cross in a single bound.

'...this is my chance.'

One of Kangki's henchmen was standing in front of him. By himself without any other subordinates nearby.

If he wanted to kill him, this was his best chance.

Aram couldn't have known that he would choose to follow him today, so he wouldn't have had the time to call for reinforcements.

"You ignored my offer, but you don't need to worry. I have no intention of killing you."

"That changes nothing. I'm going to kill you."

"Huhu. then I'll say it again more clearly."

At that moment, Bargan's body shook heavily.

"K-, uh..."

"To be precise, I don't intend to kill you here."

His mind became fuzzy. He felt so sleepy that he couldn't even stand properly.

The fingers holding his club lost their strength.

“I’m sorry, senior. But please serve as bait for a little while longer. I have my orders, so I have no choice but to think of a way to force Lukas out.”

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Splash!

He was awakened by a bucket of freezing cold water.

“Cough! Cough!”

Bargan coughed.

His mind was awake, but his body still felt weak.

‘Where... am I?’

Before he even had the chance to look around, he heard a voice.

“It seems you’re still not fully awake yet. I guess the water wasn’t cold enough.”

The voice spoke in a mocking tone. It was a voice he knew.

It was Aram.

He was looking down at him with an empty bucket in his hand.

“You...”

“Did you sleep well?”

“Kekeke.”

Aram wasn't alone.

There were about ten Fighters around him.

Swaying slightly, Bargan got to his feet.

“What do you intend to do? Why haven't you killed me?”



“I told you already. I intend to use you to lure Lukas out. Lord Kangki is very angry. We have to catch him and kill him no matter what.”

“So you plan to use me as bait?”

“That’s right.”

“That’s a childish plan.”

“Didn’t you know? Sometimes, the most simple and childish plan is the most effective.”

It was sophistry.

Rage practically flowed from Bargan’s eyes. Now that he had regained some of his strength, he should be able to bite through his tongue.

It was at that moment that Aram smiled and opened his mouth.

“Well, even if I say that I don’t think Lukas will reveal himself that easily. That’s why I’d like to make an offer. Please listen to what I have to say. It won’t be bad for you either.”

“Do I look like a man who would negotiate with trash?”

“I know that senior is one of the wisest Fighters on Combat Island. That’s why I decided to bring you here.”

“...”

Bargan finally looked around at his surroundings.

They were in the arena, but there was no one in the audience.

Bargan and the Fighters were the only ones in the large, desolate arena.

Then Aram threw something over.

Clatter.

It was Bargan’s weapon, a club.

“The rules are simple... As long as senior wins, then I’ll listen to whatever senior has to say.”

“...you mean you want me to fight all of you?”

Bargan sneered coldly, but Aram frowned in displeasure.

“I still have a conscience. The matches will be completely 1:1. This is our last bit of pride.”

“...”

“Please show us that you can get what you want through ‘fighting’.”

“I’ll go first.”

One of the Fighters stepped forward with a determined expression.

Bargan recognised him immediately.

Jaihum.

He was the Fighter who had defeated Lukas in the first match.

“To be honest, I still don’t understand what Lord Kangki is thinking. I can’t see why he would consider that scammer as a formidable enemy. I fought him before so I could tell, he’s nothing but a coward and trash.”

“...”

“I hope that you, his slave Fighter, are strong enough to satisfy me.”

Bargan looked down.

To put it simply, his physical condition was the worst.

He didn't even know how he'd fainted in the first place, and the cold water made it feel like he was freezing. He couldn't put much force in his fingers.

In fact, it wasn't just his fingers. His entire body seemed to be filled with a sense of exhaustion and weakness.

It didn't matter if it was the muddy ground beneath his feet, he just wanted to lay down and sleep.

But he couldn't do that.

Crunch!

Gripping the handle of the club, Bargan glared at Jaihum.

Even if he was in perfect condition, this was an opponent he wasn't sure he could defeat.

Nevertheless, this wasn't a situation that would allow him to make excuses.

He should be thankful that it would only be 1 on 1 like Aram said.

"Take it easy, Jaihum."

"It won't be fun if you finish it too quickly."

The Fighter laughed and jeered, but Bargan didn't let himself be swept away by the atmosphere.

He gathered himself before charging forward.

"...!"

Jaihum, who had been standing relaxedly in front of him, hurriedly raised his axe to block his attack.

'Fast.'

It was strong too.

His axe creaked slightly.

Everyone was surprised. Where did this power come from?

'Shit!'

Clang! Clang!

Bargan continued his quick attacks. He smacked the axe endlessly.

The biggest strength of the weapon called a club was its durability.

Because it was blunt and thick, it would not be badly damaged even if he struck it against rocks or metal.

An axe, on the other hand, was different.

It lacked the sharpness of a sword, but it had the advantage of having instantaneous destructive power. Nevertheless, it was, surprisingly, not that durable.

Clang! Clang!

The melee battle in which the weapons constantly clashed against each other continued.

Jaihum was desperate to stop his attack.

'It's too late to stop it...!'

From the moment the fight began, he had been on the defensive. And as time passed, he knew he wouldn't be able to build his momentum easily.

If he had handled this seriously from the start, it wouldn't have become like this.

It was true that he had looked down on him, but it wasn't entirely Jaihum's fault.

Who would have thought that this man, who had been showing such a weak appearance before, could have such an explosive performance?

'K-, kuh...'

Unable to endure Bargan's rising momentum any longer, Jaihum took a step back.

In fact, at first glance, it might seem that Bargan had an overwhelming advantage, but that wasn't necessarily the case. It was just that, because of his poor condition, he was trying to end the fight as soon as possible.

'If I don't take advantage of this opportunity, I might lose!'

Perhaps Bargan's desperate desire had an effect.

Crack...

"...!"

Eventually, cracks began to form on the axe.

Jaihum's expression became solemn. Just as Bargan was prepared to deal the final blow.

Puk!

He was forced to halt his swing and step back.

Bargan turned and glared at the Fighters standing at the side.

"What are you doing?"

His gaze was locked onto Aram.

It was this man who had just thrown his sword and interfered with the fight.



“You... Didn’t you say that it would be 1 on 1?”

He was breathing so heavily that it was hard for him to speak fluently. Nevertheless, the cold gleam in his eyes didn’t waver.

It might have intimidated others who saw it, but Aram simply smiled.

“I did say that. But I didn’t intervene, senior.”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“It’s player substitution.”

“What...?”

Aram pointed to another Fighter.

“We intend to swap our Fighter.”

“...”

“Ah. Did I not explain the substitution rule? I apologize for that. But please don’t be angry. This rule can be used fairly by both sides. If you’re having a hard time, why don’t you take a break and swap?”

He said those shameless words with a straight face.

Bargan couldn't take it anymore and grit his teeth fiercely.

"...you son of a bitch."

"Now, then."

Aram ignored him and continued with a smirk.

"Let's start round two."

\* \* \*

...

...

...

How many had it been?

“Huff huff...”

He panted heavily.

Even breathing hurt as it felt as though his lungs and airways had been torn.

He had already exceeded his limits a long time ago. It felt like he could faint at any moment.

Nevertheless, Bargan didn't give up.

How could he even move at that moment?

“Amazing.”

Aram was genuinely amazed.

He had already replaced six Fighters, and yet they were still unable to take down Bargan. It looked like he could collapse at any moment, but he never did. Instead, it seemed that his concentration had become focused solely on taking his opponent's life.

It was clear that Bargan was a Fighter worthy of fighting to the death in the arena.

'However.'

This was the end.

When Aram turned to look at a man, he nodded and stepped forward.

"I'll be your opponent this time."

Bargan wiped the sweat from his eyes as he looked at his next opponent.

"..."

And thought that he would not be able to win this time.

It wasn't that he was giving up before the fight even began.

He knew that anything could happen in battle and the outcome could sometimes only be seen at the last moment.

However, this opponent was different from the others.

It was the 4th ranked Fighter of the Lirua Arena, Kaytai.

Right. It seemed that this guy had also submitted to Kangki.

'...from the start, there probably wasn't anyone.'

Anyone who dared to rebel against Kangki.

Kaytai didn't attack immediately. Instead, he stuck his sword into the ground and opened his mouth.

"Why do you choose to walk down this thorny path? I can't tell what you're after."

"...instead of that, I'd like to ask you. Do you... think that Lirua's current appearance is right?"

"...Bargan."

Kaytai spoke with an expression of pity.

"Are we killing anyone? Are we persecuting them or harassing them? We're not... Lord Kangki simply has a natural sense for commerce. He knows what moments the audience are most excited about. With that perspective, he balanced the entire system and created countless outstanding matches. In fact, Lirua was able to become a major city in only a few decades because of his guidance."

“...”

“Did anyone lose anything in the process? The spectators gained a lot, and so did the Fighters. The fear of losing their lives disappeared and their profits soared tremendously. I think it’s a happy sight for everyone.”

“It’s false happiness.”

“It is falsehood in good faith.”

In this world, there was truth that shined brighter only when it was hidden, and this was an example of that.

“The simple and barbaric fighting in the arena has become a smooth and wonderful system. All of the Fighters in Lirua have accepted it. You are the only one who still refuses to. Everyone is saying that you are wrong, so why can’t you accept it?”

“Because my heart can’t understand it.”

If there was a reason, then that was the reason.

“Kaytai. A lie is a lie. No matter how much you try to cover up your actions, it doesn’t change the fact that you are deceiving the spectators... No.”

There was something far more important than the audience.

And there was something Bargan really wanted to ask.

He wanted to ask not only Kaytai in front of him, but the other Fighters as well.

“You... Are you really fine with it?”

“What are you talking about?”

“Are you really happy participating in matches when the result is already set?”

After going silent for a moment, Kaytai smiled.

“Do you know how much I can earn just by fighting one match now?”

“...”

“At least a few million erus. Kuhuhu... It’s an amount that a wanderer like you might never see in their entire life. You can’t even imagine the things you can do with that much money.”

“What can you do?”

That question left Kaytai speechless for a moment.

He never expected him to ask in such a direct manner.

“You can do anything you want. Whether it’s buying a grand mansion, drinking the best wine, or buying pieces of art that you can admire just by looking at them-”

“Kukuku.”

Bargan’s chuckle interrupted him. It was clear that he was mocking him.

Kaytai’s expression became cold.

“Why are you laughing?”

“I’m laughing because of how disgusting you are. You really are a slimy bastard.”

“What did you just say?”

“...it’s not like that.”

Right. It wasn’t like that.



Many people living on other islands scorned fighting as vulgar scuffles.

They exalted the studies that they buried themselves into as noble, and downgraded fighting to lowly fist fights.

But Bargan didn't agree.

Why did they risk their lives while fighting?

"...fighting is... a desire to be recognised. A desire to leave a name behind. Those with such a desire gather together and fight against each other in tacit agreement with the opponent they respect."

"..."

"It is a desire to show the world that they are the stronger Fighter and to prove that the resolve they have held for their entire lives isn't wrong."

True pride could only be achieved after fighting for your life and your belief.

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Was it a bad thing to risk your life for a sense of accomplishment?

Or was it wrong to have such a desire in the first place?

“Bullshit...! Do you feel like you’re doing something great? No! Isn’t the only thing a Fighter does, at best, is take another Fighter’s life? Fighting for your lives? Wanting to prove that you’re stronger? Those are just vulgar and barbaric ideas no different from the thoughts of beasts! If you die then it’s all over!”

“That’s why we fight.”

To be remembered.

“Kaytai, you must have been a Fighter once too. Do you want to close your eyes quietly on a hospital bed with a fat stomach? Do you think people will remember such a Fighter?”

“Why do you want to die as a Fighter? Do you know how other Dragonmen view us here on Combat Island? They see us as simple savages! They curse at us and call us ignorant and uneducated fools!”

“Their curses don’t matter.”

“What?”

“It doesn’t matter what those bastards who know nothing say. They look down on us. But I don’t care about them either. I don’t care about their pointing fingers, insults, or contempt. At the very least we... I am proud of myself.”

“...”

“Is that the case for you? Brothers.”

Bargan’s voice cracked a little as he said this.

He wasn’t just speaking to Kaytai, but to all the Fighters around him.

“Are you proud of yourselves right now?”

“...”

“I...”

Bargan looked back at himself.

One eyeball had burst,

His left arm was numb,

His right leg was sprained,

His ribs pressed uncomfortably against his lungs.

He was no different from someone who had one foot in the grave.

However, even more, because of that.

“I am proud.”

...He continued to fight.

Even if he lost the fight and died, he did not regret even a single drop of blood spilled.

He had been prepared from the moment he picked up his weapon.

Because he knew.

Even if they were to kill him here today and no one else knew about it, they would never forget him.

It was ironic.

The enemies whom he was risking his life to defeat would end up becoming the only ones to remember him in the end.

Great Fighters would feel much comfort from that fact.

Bargan was no different.

He remembered all of those who had fallen and left their bloodstains on his club.

There was a sublime sensation that came with fighting to the death.

What did it matter if other people pointed their fingers?

His body, his heart, his soul.

He could say with perfect honesty that he was proud of himself.

“...those words don’t make any sense.”

Kaytai raised his sword with a stiff expression on his face.

Seeing that, Bargan quietly made his decision.

“Ssss....”

-A deep breath.

He swallowed what might very well be his last breath before slowly exhaling.

He was ready to accept his death.

Then he realised.

It was only now that he was able to truly see.

All of a sudden.

It felt like all of his senses had been enhanced.

His body felt light.

It was light as if something had been removed.

It was a strange, contradictory feeling.

Something had obviously disappeared, but now, instead of feeling a sense of loss, he had a sense of fulfillment.

'Ah.'

At that moment, the pain that came from every part of his body seemed distant.

The world seemed to have lost its color and faded to nothing but black and white.

And in the midst of this, Bargan's concentration seemed to soar to the limit.

'This...'

Sometimes in a single battle, one might gain experience that they couldn't obtain after decades of training.

No. It wasn't just an experience.

This phenomenon wasn't something that could have been obtained simply by training.

It was a miracle that only occurred when fate and fortune intersected with each other.

Bargan was currently experiencing only the very tip.

Ta, ta, ta.

Kaytai started running.

He was neither fast nor slow, but he seemed to be rushing forward with overwhelming momentum.

And it was coming.

An attack that could never be avoided with a limp leg.

-Drip.

"...!"

Kaytai's eyes widened.

On the other hand, Bargan's expression was extremely calm.

He slowly lifted his club.



Every time before this, he would always swing at his opponent.

But this time he didn't do that. Instead, he thrust it forward.

Puk!

"Kuk!"

Bargan's outstretched club pierced Kaytai's solar plexus. The stab was so deep that almost half of the club was buried.

Kaytai groaned painfully. He felt a great deal of pain in his abdomen. It felt like all of his organs had done a flip.

"You son of a bitch!"

A spark appeared in Kaytai's eyes and he made a diagonal slash with his sword.

This attack was so fast and strong that it was difficult to see.

Nevertheless, he could avoid it.

It might be too much for him to block it, but he could avoid it.

Bargan's figure blurred slightly as he avoided the attack like a wraith. After that, he appeared behind Kaytai as if it was natural.

Kaytai, ranked 4th in the Lirua Arena.

In preparation to defeat him, Bargan took a step forward.

But suddenly.

Paak!

"...k-, uk."

It felt like thunder in his head.

Bargan fell to his knees. He felt warmth flowing from the back of his head. This proved that his skull was cracked and blood was leaking out.

...It wasn't Kaytai.

Someone else had attacked him.

“It really is such a waste, senior.”

Then he heard Aram’s voice.

“It seems that your fatigue has accumulated, which caused you to collapse so suddenly.”

Bargan didn’t respond.

It would be more accurate to say that he didn’t have the strength to even open his mouth.

He could feel exhaustion fill his entire body.

All he could do was stare at Aram with a subdued gaze.

“Why are you staring at me like that? It’s almost as if someone attacked you from behind.”

“...”

"I swear nothing like that ever happened. Look... we are all witnesses here. No one interfered with senior's match."

"Naturally."

"There's no trash here that would interfere with a Fighter's fight." (TL: At least they know they're trash...)

"Kikiki!"

"..."

Looking at them, Bargan felt more like laughing than swearing at them.

But now, his tongue couldn't move at all as if it had hardened.

"You impudent bastard!"

Kaytai strode towards him with an angry expression.

"I'm going to kill you...! I'm going to tear you into little pieces and feed you to a sky dragon."

He had lost all his reason due to anger.

He lifted his sword high.

With Bargan's current weakened state, his body would be split in two by this attack.

Bargan forcibly lifted his head to look at the oncoming sword.

At the very least, he wanted to face his death without shying away from it.

'How unfortunate.'

He had just realised this fight.

That he could go higher.

That his growth hadn't ended yet.

There...

'It felt like I was almost grabbing ahold of something.'

In the end, it couldn't be helped.

He closed his eyes.

Maybe they wouldn't remember him in the end.

He could tell by looking at Aram. He had completely forgotten about the 'Fangs of Kanesh', a group that he had annihilated with his own hands.

But that didn't matter.

Bargan felt that it was fortunate that he was able to at least have a satisfactory experience at the end of his life.

He decided to calmly accept his death.

But his death was delayed a bit further.

Clatter...

Because something rolled over.

It was a miraculous moment.

Not only the other Fighters, but even Kaytai, who was about to swing his sword, froze.

At first, they thought it was a ball.

It wasn't.

"Huk...!"

Aram subconsciously drew in a breath.

What had flown over was a Dragonman's head.

And the face on the head was someone Aram knew, someone who'd gone missing a few days before.

At the same time, their disappearance was the decisive cause for Kangki's discomfort.

It was the head of a man. One of Kangki's three henchmen was given the moniker 'Midnight Reaper'.

It was Hubi's head.

A cold voice slowly floated into their ears.

“If you kill that man.”

It came from the same direction Hubi’s head had flown in from.

The voice was low and quiet as a whisper, but for some strange reason, it was clearly heard by all of those in the arena. It penetrated their ears almost as if it had been spoken right beside them.

Bargan, who had just been ready to accept his death, opened his eyes wide.

“You will all die too.”

From the entrance of the arena.

A single man slowly walked in.

It was Lukas.

**Season 2 Chapter 195**

In the frozen atmosphere, it was Aram who regained his composure first.



“...I didn’t expect...”

He slowly fixed his hardened expression and spoke in a calm tone.

“...you to come here with your own two feet. And what’s this?”

He looked down at Hubi’s head which was still rocking slightly on the ground.

A hint of fear was visible in his wide eyes. He couldn’t help but be shocked. After all, this was the head of Hubi, a man who was given the moniker Midnight Reaper.

Hubi.

He had a relatively good relationship with Aram.

In fact, this was the case for all of Kangki’s henchmen.

This was because they were clearly aware of each other’s strengths and weaknesses. They acknowledged each other, and they would willingly lend a hand whenever difficult situations arose.

There was never any conflict between them because their areas of activity differed from each other.

Nevertheless, Aram wasn't that affected by Hubi's death.

And if their positions had been reversed, he was sure Hubi would be the same.

He put his foot on Hubi's head.

Crunch!

The stench was more disgusting than the sliminess he felt beneath his feet.

Aram pretended to pinch his nose in disgust.

"How disgusting. From the smell, you must have killed him and left his corpse unattended for a while. Were you carrying his head around this entire time? Haha. I didn't know you had a fetish like that."

"..."

"Is there more to your performance? Or did you think we'd be scared after seeing Hubi's head?"

"It was just a warning. But I'll admit that it was different from my original plan"

“Hoh. What was your original plan?”

“I was going to hang it on top of Kangki’s castle.”

“ .. ”

Those words were effective.

Not only Aram’s but also the other Fighters’ expressions became cold.

These were people who had already lost their pride as Fighters. For them, there was nothing more appropriate to hurt them than to insult the master they happily wagged their tails for.

“At the very least, you’re a champion of running your mouth.”

It wasn’t Aram.

It was Jaihum who opened his mouth with an angry expression on his face.

“I’m so annoyed I can’t take it anymore. Hey, coward, how dare you show up in front of us with a brave expression like that?”

“ .. ”

“I really can’t understand why Lord Kangki cares so much about a piece of trash like you... No.”

A sneer spread across Jaihum’s lips.

“Actually, this might be a good thing. If I were to rip you apart here, I’d be able to prove my worth to Lord Kangki and help him relieve his worries a bit.”

“Don’t go, Jaihum. You’re not his match.”

“Ha. It’s the other way around. I have experience fighting him.”

Despite Aram’s warning, Jaihum’s expression didn’t change.

When Lukas first appeared in the arena, it was Jaihum who faced him first.

Jaihum recalled the match at that time.

No. There was nothing to recall because it couldn’t even be called a match.

Pop. Pop.

After cracking his neck and rolling his shoulders, Jaihum started walking towards Lukas, and Aram stopped trying to hold him back.

There were two reasons for this.

The first was that it would be good to observe Lukas' overall skill level.

And the second was to buy some time.

'He's a Sorcerer.'

And Aram was well aware of the weakness of Sorcerers.

In fact, it was nothing special since even a snot-nosed brat knew that Sorcerers were exceptionally vulnerable in close combat situations.

A Sorcerer's true value could only be revealed after they were given enough time to prepare.

'The same goes for Lukas. He must have appeared here because he thinks he can take care of himself.'

He probably thought that he was sufficiently prepared.

Nevertheless, Aram wasn't worried.

It was true that, with adequate preparation time and materials, a Sorcerer would be capable of dealing with dozens of Dragonmen Fighters at the same time with large, devastating attacks. But that wouldn't be the case for Lukas.

There were a few reasons for this.

One of them was the presence of Bargan.

And the other was a fatal flaw of Sorcerers.

It was difficult for them to adjust the range of their attacks.

If they were to mess up even a single calculation, the Sorcerer could not only destroy themselves, but they could also destroy much more than the expected range. Top-class Sorcerers were no exception to this rule.

It went without saying that the sharper the blade, the more difficult it was to wield.

And the sorcery that Sorcerers wielded were at least dozens of times as risky.

In other words, unlike when hunting an Ancient Dragon, large-scale techniques would not be possible, and they didn't fear small and medium-sized techniques.

'It's obvious that Lukas was hiding his power.'

So the most important thing now was to figure out just how much power Lukas was actually hiding.

Aram stopped thinking about it and gestured to the Fighters around him.

Crunch.

The Fighters nodded and started spreading out. They moved so quietly and secretly that it was hard to imagine there were ten people moving at the same time.

In that same moment, Lukas also began making his move.

"Ha."

Jaihum smirked widely.

This was because Lukas was walking towards him. His steps fell at the time as Jaihum's as if they were in sync.

Jaihum never would have expected a Sorcerer to voluntarily narrow the distance between them.

"I really don't know what's wrong with your hea-"

He wasn't able to finish his sentence.

"...k-, kuk!"

Instead, he felt an unimaginable pain in his stomach. It felt like his bones, muscles, and internal organs had all been destroyed.

His bulging eyes slowly looked down.

And he found Lukas' arm buried into his stomach.

'When?'

How did he move so fast? What was this power? Didn't they say that he was a Sorcerer?

These questions appeared in his head one after the other before they eventually disappeared. To be more precise, they had no choice but to disappear.

Puk!

This was because Lukas raised his palm and struck Jaihum's chin.



He was fortunate that his tongue wasn't bitten off as his upper and lower jaws clashed violently together.

In his head, it felt like lightning flashed and thunder rolled.

Then, as he felt the pain of dozens of teeth being smashed at the same time, Jaihum's eyes rolled into the back of his head and he passed out.

“...”

Silence fell in the arena.

The scattered Fighters were all shocked by Lukas' sudden approach and his even faster dispatch of Jaihum.

Pok!

Lukas kicked Jaihum's body as it collapsed to the ground. His unconscious body flew in the sky on a parabolic path.

And Aram stood at the end of that path.

Kaytai appeared in front of him.

Paak!

Kaytai also kicked him to the side as if he were a piece of garbage.

Jaihum's unconscious body rolled across the ground of the arena.

"You're pretty strong."

Aram muttered these words in a low voice.

He had kicked Jaihum's body away like a used soda can.

### **Season 2 Chapter 196**

Aram looked at Lukas with a wary gaze. Although he had made kicking him away look easy, Jaihum weighed at least 150kg. More importantly, he was wearing heavy armor.

Lukas' ability to kick him so far caused a question to arise in his heart.

Was this guy really a Sorcerer?

'I couldn't figure out his abilities from the rumors.'

It wasn't unreasonable for Aram to be wary at that moment.

He had investigated Lukas as much as he was able to.

He knew that it had been about a month since he'd first appeared, that he first appeared in the vicinity of Herui City, and that Bargan was his slave Fighter.

However, he could not obtain any detailed information about his 'Ancient Dragon hunt'.

All he knew was that the Major City Lords had appeared with their armies after everything was already over. Therefore, only a few people had actually witnessed Lukas' fight with the Ancient Dragon.

'Perhaps.'

Lukas wasn't a Sorcerer.

With that thought in mind, he nodded towards Kaytai.

Kaytai was the 4th strongest Fighter in the arena while Aram was only in the middle of the rankings at best. Normally, this would mean that he wouldn't dare to give orders to someone like Kaytai, but in truth, Aram was the one in charge.

And the subordinate he could trust the most at that moment was Kaytai.

Suddenly, Lukas spoke up.

“There are only ten of you. Do you think you can surround me with only this many?”

There were currently ten Fighters, including Kaytai, surrounding him.

Because Jaihum wasn't able to buy as much time as they expected, they weren't able to get closer. There were still a dozen or so steps between them and Lukas.

“Did you show up here because you were confident that you could deal with ten Fighters?”

A smirk crept across Aram's lips.

“If so, then that was a big miscalculation on your part... To be honest, I didn't think we could lure you out with just Bargan. So I was worried that I'd prepared too much.”

Shuk.

As he spoke, Fighters began appearing all over the arena.

“Seems I was worried for nothing.”

Bargan’s expression became stiff.

It wasn’t just one or two Fighters. There were so many of them that one couldn’t help but wonder where they had all hidden. This matter was by no means a joke.

He hadn’t noticed them until they had finally made an appearance. This meant that every one of these Fighters was talented enough to deceive Bargan’s senses.

“I really admire Lord Kangki’s insight. He advised us to use our full strength to catch a rat bastard.”

“...”

“Subjugating an Ancient Dragon is certainly a great and awe-worthy achievement... but for a skilled Sorcerer, it’s nothing more than taking down a slightly strong Dragonling.”

“You seem to know quite a bit about Sorcerers.”

“That’s natural. I’m also a Sorcerer.”

“...!”

Bargan, who was laying on the ground, couldn't help but stare at Aram in surprise.

However, now that he thought about it, it wasn't that strange. He had easily passed through the wall when he lead Bargan into the old hideout of the Fangs of Kamesh, and he had caused him to fall asleep with some strange trick.

Instead, now that he learned that he was a Sorcerer, many things began to make sense.

"That's why I can do things like this."

Aram began to make strange movements with his hands. It seemed like he was doing some kind of hand ritual.

"Omnidirectional Annihilation of Ki."

Woowoong-

With a soft hum, a whitish film that seemed to cover the entire arena appeared.

"Hooo."

Aram panted as if he'd consumed a large amount of vital energy, but a smile of satisfaction spread across his lips.

“I’ve destroyed all the natural ki in the arena. That should be enough of an explanation.”

Bargan’s eyes grew wide when he heard this.

The near-infinite amount of natural ki was the driving force that enabled the use of sorcery. The absence of it would mean that Lukas could no longer use any sorcery.

“This is one of the most talked-about techniques among Sorcerers. If even a single mistake is made, then the seed of life in the area would dry up completely. But everything should be fine since I already obtained Lord Kangki’s permission.”

“...”

“Of course, by using annihilation it means that I can’t use sorcery either. But that doesn’t matter. There are 100 Fighters here.”

Aram’s voice was filled with confidence.

“100 men, Dragon Hunter. Even a Grand Champion couldn’t guarantee victory against 100 Fighters.”

“I’m not a Grand Champion.”

After a long while, Lukas finally opened his mouth.

“That’s right. You’re nothing but a Sorcerer.”

“No.”

He shook his head.

Aram.

No, none of them knew anything about him.

Outsider, Sorcerer, Dragon Hunter.

There was nothing wrong with calling Lukas these things.

But, that wasn’t all.

“Someone who can’t use sorcery when all of the ki in an area is destroyed. Is that what you call a Sorcerer?”

“That’s right. Many restrictions come with borrowing the power of nature. And a limit to what Sorcerer’s can do.”



“Borrowing the power of nature...”

Lukas closed his eyes as he muttered those words.

Then he slowly opened them again.

“Even that is different.”

“What are you...”

Paht!

Bright blue light erupted from Lukas’ body.

“Wh-, what?!”

Aram’s expression became incredibly stiff.

Energy was being released from Lukas’ body.

But he didn’t know what it was.

It felt different, but also similar to the power of nature.

“How? The natural ki... Didn’t all the natural ki in the arena disappear?”

“It’s true that you destroyed the natural ki in the arena. However, your actions don’t affect me.”

“Wh-, what...? It doesn’t...?”

Aram stuttered, not fully comprehending what Lukas was saying.

“Is this concept difficult for even a Sorcerer to understand? Collecting natural ki, purifying it, and storing it in the body so that it can easily be used at any time?”

“Wh-, what the hell are you talking about?”

“Mana.”

Lukas spoke in a deep voice.

“It’s the name for natural ki that is stored in the body. If Sorcerers borrow the power of nature, we calculate the laws of nature.”

“...!”

“We dig into the mysteries of nature, create a connection, adjust the laws, and in the end, we control them. We’re different from you all, who only know how to fear nature.”

Aram took a step back in disbelief and fear as if he was hearing the description of a fearsome monster that he’d never heard of before.

“I, I have never heard of such a thing in my life! Wh-, who the hell are you...?”

If he had to introduce himself in one word.

Then Lukas couldn’t help but repeat the answer he’d always given in the past.

“I am a Wizard.”

Crackle!

Storms of fire and ice appeared from his hands.

The spells manifested violently as if to display Lukas’ inner feelings at that moment.

Wizards and mana.

These were probably a strange name and concept for them.

But Lukas was certain.

None of the people here would ever forget the existence of a Wizard.

Of course.

That was if any of them managed to survive in the first place.

### **Season 2 Chapter 197**

The first one to get the strange feeling was Aram.

He was shocked by the sight in front of him, but at the same time, he was at least able to come to one conclusion.

'No.'

He looked around.

Instead of looking at the two storms that were spreading from Lukas' hands, he looked at the faces of those who were facing these storms.

He looked at the Fighters who were struggling fiercely without knowing what to do.

Why?

All the Fighters gathered here were elites who had undergone countless hardships.

The Lirua Arena was one of the largest and most popular among the major cities.

Even if they had lost their true sense of battle because of the match fixing, the strength that they had honed was not false.

More than half of the Fighters he'd gathered had experience fighting against Sorcerers, and the other half knew how to handle their sorcery.

"D-, dodge!"

"Ahhhh!"

"Sp-, spare me...! P-, please spare me!"

And yet, without even the chance to fight back, they were now being swept away like insects in a hurricane.

'This isn't sorcery,'

With his eyes wide open, Aram came to that conclusion.

This guy.

He only watched on as if all of this was natural. What had he said earlier? Wizard?

'Mana.'

Storing the natural ki in the body? Calculating the laws of nature?

What exactly did that mean?

He didn't know. He couldn't understand any of it.

Nevertheless, one thing was clear.

Everything that was happening now far surpassed Aram's scope of understanding.

"Kuh!"

Shik.

Aram bit his lip harshly. The pain and taste of blood from his torn lip seemed to help him clear his mind a bit.

"Spread out as far as you can! Don't stick together! Then...."

...Then, then...

What should they do next?

He instinctively tried to use a technique before realising it was pointless.

The omnidirectional annihilation of ki was still active.

Unexpectedly, the technique he'd prepared to suppress the opponent was suppressing Aram instead.

"Kaytai! Capture Bargan!"

In this situation, they had no choice but to use Bargan.

After all, Lukas' goal must be to rescue Bargan.

Since that was the case, they would attempt to negotiate using that guy's life. Otherwise, they would have no other way out.

Kytai nodded and began to approach Bargan.

Bargan, who was staring at Lukas' spells in a daze, finally came back to his senses.

He hadn't fully comprehended the situation at first.

But now, as he saw more than a hundred Fighters being easily tossed around by Lukas, he realised.

'I cannot become a burden.'

He'd already been saved by his Lord twice.

Once when he'd lost in his fight against him.



And the other time when the Ancient Dragon appeared. (TL: Technically, it was the Dragonling that kicked their asses.)

And now, it seemed that Bargan owed Lukas his life once again.

‘Even if I die, reincarnate and die again, I won’t be able to pay off this debt.’

So at the very least, he couldn’t become Lukas’ burden. Or at least, that was his desire.

Groan.

However, despite his wishes, his body, devoid of even the slightest ounce of energy, remained motionless. The more he tried to force himself to move, the more it felt like his entire body was being torn apart piece by piece. He couldn’t even move a single finger.

‘Please move one last time.’

If he could move his body at that moment.

He wouldn’t care if it meant being crippled for the rest of his life.

“Ha!”

Was he still unwilling to give up in this situation?

Kaytai let out a cold snort as he rushed towards Bargan.

It was at that moment.

Crack crack!

The ground around Bargan rose up to cover him.

The raised ground joined together to create a solid barrier as if it was protecting him.

“Your wall is useless!”

Kaytai swung his greatsword towards the barrier.

Kak!

He'd swung with the intention of destroying it with one blow, but his sword ended up stuck in the barrier like a fork in a cake.

This swing had contained enough force to destroy the wall of a fortress, but it was stopped by this small barrier.

'Is this not an ordinary wall?'

If he kept swinging, he would probably be able to break it eventually, but he didn't know how long that would take.

Kaytai turned to glare at Lukas with a blazing gaze.

He looked into the glowing blue eyes of the Wizard, who was controlling the two storms as easily as taking a stroll.

"I should've warned you, you can't touch Bargan."

"Right. I guess you want to die first."

Kaytai grit his teeth before pulling his sword out.

"I don't care if you're a Wizard or whatever, but do you really think these ice and fire storms can stop me? Do you think a Fighter is that easy to deal with?"

He took a step forward.

A reddish glow began to rise up from Kaytai's body.

His muscles began to swell.

The leather armor that covered his body began to stretch as if it was going to burst apart.

The skin that was visible under the armor became red, and his veins protruded.

“This is nothing...!”

Kaytai raised his greatsword into the air.

Boom!

And as he brought it down, a storm appeared.

Kaytai’s sword cut the arena ground in half. The crack in the ground quickly spread to Lukas like a snake moving beneath the earth, but Lukas simply rose into the air.

Aram was shocked when he saw this.

This wasn’t floating, instead, it seemed to be an ability close to true flight.

But Kaytai was determined to not be surprised by anything he saw anymore.

Taht!

Without paying attention to it, he tightened his grip on his sword, and kicked off from the ground, quickly narrowing the distance towards Lukas.

His large figure leapt 10 meters into the air in an instant.

His muscles ached like they had been torn by his actions.

Because he was making many forceful movements one after the other, he was putting great strain on his body.

But Kaytai chose to ignore the pain. The grip on his sword was firm.

And after stretching his back to the limit, he swung it forward.

Clang!

His wrist throbbed.

This was unbelievable. With the power that he'd put behind his sword just now, Lukas' body should have already turned into a pile of meat. And even if it didn't he should have at last been cut into two pieces.

But he hadn't been...

'Something blocked it...'

A round, invisible membrane was surrounding Lukas.

"Barrier."

Lukas murmured in a soft tone.

"You have all kinds of tricks up your sleeves. However..."

"You."

Lukas interrupted him.

At that moment, Kaytai felt that Lukas was looking at him for the first time.

"Why are you mad?"

“What the hell are you...?”

“Do you think you have the right to be mad right now?”

“What the fuck are you talking about you bastard...?!”

“I don’t understand. The one who has the biggest right to be angry here is Bargan, not you.”

Lukas’ voice reached the ears of Bargan, who was groaning on the ground below.

Urk.

At that moment, Bargan’s chest felt stuffy and his throat became tight.

In the thirty or so years after he’d left Lirua, he had never felt this way before.

It was a feeling of pleasure as if there was finally someone who understood him.

Moreover, the person who understood him was the man he admired the most.

“And after him, I’m the one who is most angry.”

Anger flickered deep within Lukas' eyes.

He looked at Kaytai.

Then he turned to look at Aram.

He looked at the hundred Fighters, and looked into the distance to where he knew Kangki was.

What was it that separated humans that should be saved from humans that shouldn't?

This was one of the first concerns Lukas had when he became an Absolute.

That's why he saved many races.

There were humans.

And there were also non-humans.

Years went by.



He wandered through countless universes, repeatedly saving and destroying. And after a long time, Lukas came to a conclusion.

Humans were beings who were shaped according to the journey they walked, the teachings they accepted, and the bonds they created.

Some said that they were beings of choice and possibility.

Throughout the entirety of the multiverse, it was rare to find a race in which good and evil could collide so violently.

There was no human who didn't have any evil in their hearts.

No matter how good a human might appear on the surface, there was at least one time in their life when they had a bad heart. There was no human who didn't get a little dirty after walking near the dust.

Therefore, the thing that Lukas considered the most important was their attitude towards their inner evil.

They couldn't turn a blind eye to it.

Nor could they give in to the darkness wriggling in their heart.

Accepting inner evil meant the loss of the soul, and the death of the possibility to become a better being.

And that's exactly what these Fighters reminded him of.

They had been devoured by their inner darkness.

They had given up the path of fighting beautifully and had tarnished their pride. Not only that, but they also insulted those who continued to fight.

'Disgusting.'

### **Season 2 Chapter 198**

Lukas looked around at Aram and the others.

Their behaviour reminded him of those he hated the most.

Those who had chosen to be sheep.

Those who had lowered their heads.

Those who had given up their pride.

Those who had chosen to be livestock instead of humans.

They might have wrapped their actions in a different type of packaging, but in the end, they were no different.

They had been enticed by the overwhelming sweetness of the idleness and wealth that Kangki had given them.

Therefore, Bargan, who didn't back down till the very end, was a human that should be saved. (TL: In other words, for Lukas, humans aren't just homosapiens)

"You call yourself Fighters? That's strange. In my eyes, there is only one person in this arena who can be called a Fighter."

"An outsider like you doesn't know anything!"

"I don't need to know."

Clang!

Icicles that appeared in the air without warning, stabbed into Kaytai. The force behind these icicles were so great that it caused Kaytai, who hadn't been able to contain his anger and shouted, to fall heavily to the ground with his eyes rolled back. It all happened so fast that he didn't even get the chance to scream.

“Dammit!”

When he saw this, Aram couldn't help but swear.

Who the hell was this guy?

While he had been paying attention to Kaytai and venting his anger, he hadn't shown even a single opening.

It was unbelievable.

While half of the Fighters had been swept away by the storm, Aram had been paying close attention to Lukas. All of his focus had been on finding Lukas' weaknesses.

But in the end, he couldn't find a single one, and at the same time, goosebumps appeared all over his skin as if someone was staring at him.

It was only then that he realised something was wrong.

'Is this guy's field of view really that large...?!'

It was almost as if Lukas was looking down at the arena as though it was in the palm of his hand.

Was that even possible? What the hell was wrong with this guy's brain?

For Aram, Lukas was no longer just an outsider. Instead, he was an incomprehensible monster.

It was at that moment.

Boom!

Something came crashing down from the sky.

The falling object instantly dispersed the storms of ice and fire.

“...”

A huge being slowly straightened up within the billowing clouds of dust.

“The Lirua Arena.”

Bang!

Following the voice, a huge boulder flew out of the dust cloud. It was accompanied by a loud sound as if a cannon had been fired.

Lukas tried to dodge, but the large projectile was much faster than he anticipated.

Boom!

In an instant, the barrier in front of him, which hadn't so much as cracked when Kaytai attacked with his full strength, shattered. Lukas wasn't able to dodge completely.

Paak!

The boulder struck his left arm, tearing his cloak. His arm, which was now exposed, was swollen and bleeding.

"Is my territory."

Fwoosh!

The dust cloud, which covered a large area, was cleared in an instant.

"Lo-, Lord Kangki...!"

The surviving Fighters cried out with joy at the sight of Kangki.

Kangki's eyes, which were finally revealed, were red with rage.

He slowly looked around the arena.

"More than half of the 100 Fighters are dead. Did you know, outsider? The Championship will be held soon."

"..."

"Naturally, in this period, the attention and interest the arena receives will be at their peak. Do you understand what this means?"

His voice was soft, but the anger overflowing within it was like a volcano that was about to erupt.

"It means that I, Kangki, who has only received profits until now, will instead suffer from immense losses in this great event which only occurs once every ten years."

The momentum in his blazing eyes as he looked at Lukas would have turned him into ashes if it could.

"All! Because! Of you! I don't even want to calculate just how much damage Lirua has suffered...!"

Kangki's roar rang throughout the arena.

It was so powerful that some of the exhausted Fighters directly fainted with pale faces.

"I don't care."

"..."

Kangki closed his mouth at Lukas' calm dismissal.

His killing intent which had seemed to rise into the sky disappeared like a bonfire that had been doused with cold water.

This drastic change was many times more terrifying.

"...I won't kill you now. Instead, there is a place beneath this city that is perfect for you. It's a place filled with screams and pain. You will wish I'd killed you."

Ignoring his words, Lukas looked down at his throbbing left arm.

It had only been grazed slightly, but his entire arm had swelled up as though it had been broken.

This wound showed that Kangki's strength had long surpassed the scope of common sense.



And now that he thought about it, Lukas realised that this was the first injury he'd suffered since coming to the Heavenly Realm.

Whether it was in the fight against Bargan, or when he hunted the Ancient Dragon, Lukas hadn't received a single scratch.

As for the wounds that had been received during his twelve losses in the arena, those weren't his, but doppelgangers.

He'd always known that Kangki wouldn't be an easy opponent. Therefore, he'd made sure to prepare sufficiently before facing him.

'I wanted to annihilate all 100 Fighters.'

As expected, things in the world didn't always go the way we expected them to.

In addition, his opponents weren't just Kangki and the surviving Fighters.

Paht.

Three more Dragonmen appeared.

With blazing momentum, they surrounded Lukas.

Only three more Fighters had been added.

But they put more pressure on Lukas than when he had been surrounded by 100 Fighters.

This was because they were the three Fighters who represented the Lirua Arena.

The 3rd ranked Fighter, Padudu.

The 2nd ranked Fighter, Usa.

And the number one fighter and current Champion of the Lirua arena, Samash.

On top of that was Kangki, who had once reached the semi-finals of the Championship and was the current Lord of Lirua. (1)

“Major City Lord Kangki, you must have been a Fighter who once aimed to be the Grand Champion. So I’d like to make a proposal.”(1+)

“A proposal?”

“If you have even a handful of pride as a Fighter left, then tell your men to stand down.”

At those words, Kangki's expression became one of confusion.

"Are you saying you want to fight me one on one?"

"Right."

"Ha, hahaha.... Kuhahahaha!"

Kangki couldn't help but burst into laughter.

"You're actually saying something like 'let's have a fair one-on-one contest' when you're already in this situation."

"..."

"I'm sorry, but I have none of the pride you speak of. I reached this position only by being thorough. Of course, this doesn't mean I'd lose to you if I were to fight you on my own, but I don't want to put in that much effort."

"I thought you'd say something like that."

A smile crept across Lukas' face.

“So I called for reinforcements of my own.”

\* \* \*

A commotion erupted from the entrance of the arena.

Boom!

Following the sound of an explosion, five Fighters were sent flying at the same time. Looking at their rolled eyes, it was clear that they were all unconscious.

Five Fighters had been incapacitated by one attack?

“Wh-, what the hell?”

Aram turned to look at Lukas in disbelief.

He was an outsider, and it had only been about a month since he’d come to the Heavenly Realm.

And yet, in such a short amount of time, he was able to establish a relationship with someone so powerful?

'This guy is insane!'

He didn't know who it was that had chosen to help Lukas, but attacking the Fighters here meant going against the major city, Lirua, and its lord, Kangki.

Any sane person would probably understand what it meant to make an enemy of a major city, right?

"Kuk."

Aram pushed through the Fighters until he saw what Lukas called his 'reinforcements'.

And he became speechless for a while.

"That guy..."

It was someone he recognised.

Not because they knew each other, but because the other party was fairly famous.

His untrimmed black hair billowed in the wind.

Black hair.

It was a very rare color among Dragonmen. In addition, this man's facial features were different from those of most Dragonmen.

There was only one reason for this.

As Aram knew, this man was an outsider.

"The Whirlwind of the Arena."

He knew him.

How could he not know him?

He was a Fighter from Babylon who was almost certain to be a strong contender in the upcoming Championship.

Kangki's gaze also swept across the arena and headed to Lee Jong-hak, who was sweeping Fighters away with his sword.

"One of Ishuta's people? Her possessiveness is insane... How did you manage to get her to agree?"

“Well...”

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Kangki looked at Lukas with a raised eyebrow.

“...right. Now I get it. Was this the reason you made the doppelgangers? To avoid my watch and head to Babylon to persuade Li Hao to come help you?”

“...”

“That must mean that Li Hao is the trump card you prepared.”

Trump card.

The term ‘assurance’ would be a better answer, but Lukas didn’t bother correcting Kangki.

Nevertheless, Kangki continued to speculate.

“Now that I think about it, Li Hao is an outsider. And you’re also an outsider... So I can assume that you knew each other before you came to the Heavenly Realm which is why you reached out to him for help. If that’s the case, then...”

After finishing his calculation, Kangki looked at Lukas with a cold sneer on his lips.

“I suppose I should thank you, Lukas. This situation is not bad for me at all... Now that Li Hao, a Fighter from Babylon, is messing around in my arena, I’ll be able to gain a few benefits from Ishuta.”

It was widely known that the Whirlwind of the Arena was one of Ishuta’s favorite Fighters.

If he were to capture him without killing him and offer to return him to her in one piece, Ishuta would have no choice but to accept it.

“What if I asked for the body parts of the Ancient Dragon that you sold to her? I think that would be enough to make up for the damages I suffered today to an extent.”

“You’re quite delusional. Do you think your men are enough to subdue him?”

“Haha! On one side is a man who ranks third in the Babylon Arena, while on the other side are 50 of my best Fighters together with my Champion, Samash.”

Kangki’s voice became cold.

“Which one of us is the delusional one?”

“You don’t know.”



“What?”

What kind of man Lee Jong-hak was.

Lukas swallowed the rest of his words.

The man who was wielding his sword in the arena was a genius.

A genius who had fought against beings like the Demons who were inherently stronger, and had even created a technique to help him hunt them more efficiently.

The Evil Vanquishing Sword Technique.

This was the sword technique Lee Jong-hak had created at a young age. Even if one were to only look at that fact, it meant that he had long entered the realm of martial arts grandmaster.

In addition, the Evil Vanquishing Sword Technique was created by combining dozens of existing sword techniques.

In a sense, creating a sword technique by combining several sword techniques which had different forms, styles, and foundations, was much harder than creating a sword technique from scratch.

And if Lukas' predictions were right, then Lee Jong-hak had probably already created a sword technique with which to use against Dragonmen Fighters.

That was why he wasn't worried about him.

"Let's put aside the small talk and get started, shall we? Since I'm aiming to be the Grand Champion, it shouldn't be difficult to defeat someone like you who only made it to the semi-finals." (TL: poor Kangki)

"...Grand Champion... that's not a title that outsiders who don't know anything should mention lightly."

Kangki narrowed his eyes.

"Fine then. Since you want it, I will show you. The power I have gained."

\* \* \*

Dragon Hunter Lukas.

He was already aware of the fact that he wasn't a Sorcerer, but something else.

There was no need for him to hear any reports from Aram.

The omnidirectional annihilation of ki that he'd used was still active even at that moment. Nevertheless, Lukas was clearly displaying the powers of nature, which looked similar to sorcery.

In other words, Lukas wasn't actually using sorcery, but something else.

'...it doesn't matter what it is.'

He didn't care, he didn't care a single bit.

Kangki slowly increased his fighting spirit.

This was similar to the process where warriors would calm their minds in order to bring out their best condition before battle.

However, in the case of Fighters, instead of calming down, they increased their fighting spirit.

Thirst and hunger.

And extreme hostility towards their opponent.

All of these combined to create a state of intentional agitation.

Ku, gu, gu-!

In a way, the immense fighting spirit that erupted was, in its own way, a form of pressure for the opponent.

Kangki's surroundings began to distort. This was because of the immense heat that was beginning to rise off of his body because of his scorching hot fighting spirit.

Bang!

Following that loud sound, Kangki's giant figure seemed to disappear from the arena.

And the place that he eventually appeared, was behind Lukas.

Crackle.

He stretched forward a fist filled with explosive power so potent it seemed to warp the space around it.

To Kangki, it didn't matter if Lukas tried to block this attack with the invisible barrier he'd used earlier. No matter how many shields he tried to erect around himself, his fist would definitely crush all of them.

Swoosh!

Perhaps Lukas also realised that, because he narrowly avoided the attack by a small margin. Moreover, the way he avoided the attack was strange.

Even with Kangki's dynamic vision, he failed to follow Lukas' movement.

'He didn't move to avoid it, but disappeared instead?'

This must be another one of his tricks.

He was certainly better than any Sorcerer he'd faced before.

But he didn't panic.

Kangki's burning figure didn't budge from that spot. Instead, his red eyes swept across the entire arena in an instant.

And he was able to find Lukas not that far away.

Woowoong-

However, his attention was immediately drawn to the strange rod in Lukas' hand.

A stick... No, was it a cane?

It had a shape that he had never seen before.

A dark red jewel sat at the top of it, and it seemed to glow softly as though it was filled with molten lava.

Paht!

At the same time, dozens of spells suddenly appeared behind Lukas.

Kangki didn't move, instead, he narrowed his eyes.

'Fire, ice, electricity, rock, wind...'

He couldn't recognise most of the other attacks.

Was this just a massive attack? Or was he planning something else?

"How interesting!"

Kangki let out a loud roar.

"I'll let you attack this once!"

Without bothering to respond, Lukas pointed his finger towards Kangki.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

And dozens of spells shot towards Kangki at the same time.

Kangki didn't try to dodge.

Instead, he looked at the incoming attack and opened his mouth.

Woong-

Something began to light up within Kangki's throat.

This was similar to something Lukas had witnessed before.

'...no way.'

Rooaaar!

With a loud roar, a breath attack shot out of Kangki's throat.

When he saw this, Lukas couldn't help but be surprised. After all, he never would have expected a Dragonman, not a Dragonling or an Ancient Dragon, to use a breath attack.

Crash!

Moreover, the power of this attack was overwhelming.

Although most of them were weak, the power that the dozens of spells had when combined was nothing to scoff at. Nevertheless, they disappeared in an instant in the face of the breath attack.

And even after that, the power of the breath attack didn't diminish at all. Without the slightest decrease in speed, the breath attack shot towards Lukas.

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Lukas looked at the attack shooting towards him.

The range of the attack was so wide that he wouldn't be able to avoid it even if he used Blink. It was also too powerful to block with a barrier.

'I have no choice but to cancel it out.'

As he quickly came to this decision, Lukas roused his mana.



Woowoong-

And as a result, the black staff in his hand began to vibrate.

[Staff of the Distant Night Sky]

[A staff created by an eccentric but extremely skilled blacksmith. The tail of a mutated Dragonling was used as the main material while an artificial gem created by processing the heart of the same Dragonling was embedded into the top.

It can efficiently absorb and convert the ki of mother nature, but the required method is not something that ordinary people can learn.

Although it is in the shape of a staff, it is incomparably sturdy, and it won't break even if the user were to swing it around recklessly.]

As he expected, Nekdu's skills were reliable.

Although he knew that it was because he'd embedded the heart of the Dragonling into it, the part that caught Lukas' attention the most was the fact that it could efficiently convert the ki of mother nature, or in other words, mana.

Thanks to that, even something as simple as the storm of ice and fire was able to sweep through the arena with much more power than it had originally.

'...I have about a third of my mana left.'

Since he'd been continuously using his mana even before he arrived here, he couldn't afford to use the rest recklessly.

Nevertheless, he decided to use all of his remaining mana in this spell. This is because he knew that he wouldn't be able to hurt Kangki with just any spell.

"Lava Blast."

Rumble!

Lava that erupted from nowhere shot towards the breath attack like a tsunami.

In an instant, the temperature in the arena soared exponentially.

Starting from 7 star spells, all spells reached a level where they would affect the surrounding environment to some extent. In Lukas' case, he was able to use his superb control to reduce the damage to an extent, but that didn't mean that the power of his spell was reduced.

"...!"

Kangki couldn't help but flinch in surprise when he saw this spell.

Lukas thought that Kangki would try to dodge the Lava Blast.

After all, the torrent of lava had already devoured most of the breath attack. Nevertheless, it didn't seem satisfied, and continued to rush forward as though it was searching for its next victim.

But contrary to his expectations, Kangki instead took a big step forward.

"...!"

And the Lava Blast swallowed Kangki without hesitation.

Did he really take that attack head on?

A 7 star spell that contained all of Lukas' remaining mana?

'Why?'

He didn't think Kangki had underestimated the strength of his Lava Blast.

And it also didn't look like his scales were stronger than an Ancient Dragon's.

In other words, this meant that he had something else to rely on.

Shuk!

“...!”

A huge fist popped out of the river of soaring flames.

He didn't have time to react properly.

The fist hit Lukas' body with a violent crash.

Crunch!

The arm and leg that he raised to block the attack were smashed in an instant.

The pain of so many bones breaking at the same time was so terrible that even the strongest willed men would scream in pain, but Lukas didn't even frown.

If he hadn't reduced some of the momentum by stacking several barriers, that attack might have actually killed him in one hit.

This was the way a Wizard's fight always was.

A single mistake or moment of carelessness could lead to an irreversible situation.

Thud!

The force of the attack buried Lukas' body into the ground of the arena.

After lying motionlessly for a while, he staggered to his feet. His forehead felt hot. Had his head been injured?

Wiping the blood out of his eyes with his good hand, he glared into the flames.

"This... is the power of wealth."

A deep murmur broke the silence.

Kangki slowly stepped out of the Lava Blast.

Scratches and burn marks were certainly present on his red hot scales, but considering the power of the Lava Blast and the fact that he took it on directly, this damage was far from enough.

Nevertheless, he seemed a bit surprised.

“I never expected you to hurt me in this state... I see. Was that technique just now your secret weapon?”

Lukas ignored his question and asked.

“...what are you wearing?”

Kangki chuckled softly.

“[The Creed of Kamesh].”

Tsss-

The red hot scales cooled rapidly.

Clank, clank.

And a strange sound came from inside his body.

“As long as I am wearing this armor, no attacks can reach me.”

Armor.

But Lukas realised that it wasn't the conventional use of the word.

"...I always thought that you were overwhelmingly large among Dragonmen. As if you were a different species altogether. Now I understand why."

"Hoh? What's the reason?"

"That huge body isn't your real body, it's a puppet. Your real body is hidden within it."

To put it simply, it was a concept similar to the Golems from Lukas' home universe.

But this puppet was more like a mechanical device that the user could attach or detach, rather than an artificial being that could move independently. (TL: So the Dragonmen invented gundams? Nice)

With that understanding, everything began to make more sense.

Why he was several times larger than other Dragonmen.

And why he could even let out breath attacks.

"Kuhahaha-!"

Kangki roared with laughter.

He then turned to look at Lukas' staff with a sneer.

"That's right... [The Creed of Kamesh] is a machine armor. You have a good eye. Or did she tell you?"

"She?"

"It seems that you also used her power to make that cane of yours, but your opponent was just a bad match for you. Even if it was made by the same 'Hammer of Babylon', my equipment works better against you."

"...Hammer of Babylon?"

Lukas shook his head slowly.

"You're mistaken. I asked Nekdu to make this staff for me."

"Hmm."

Kangki just tilted his head to the side when he heard Lukas' rebuttal.



“You’re joking, right? Did you really ask her to make something for you without knowing her real identity?”

“What are you talking about?”

“Haha. I really didn’t expect this.”

Kangki shook his head as if he’d encountered something strange.

“But it doesn’t matter anyway. Quit yapping and accept your fate. We both know that attack was your last. You can’t launch anymore attacks.”

“...”

After a moment of silence, Lukas finally nodded.

“Right. You’re right.”

“Hoh.”

Kangki watched on with slight interest at Lukas’ sudden acceptance.

“I’ve already used up all of my mana, and it’s hard to stand with my arm and leg smashed. Even if I had more mana, I think it would be hard to break through your armor.”

“So...”

“By the way, Kangki. About the place beneath the city that you mentioned earlier, I’ve already been there.”

“...”

Kangki’s eyes narrowed slightly.

“There were a lot of skilled persons who were being enslaved by you and your men there. And among them were the refiners that I’d been looking for.”

“...you know about them? You’re really making it hard for me to let you live.”

Lukas ignored his words.

“Everyone there hates you. Initially, I wanted to strike a deal with them in exchange for rescuing them, but I didn’t have to. They fully cooperated with me... And helped me refine the heart of the Ancient Dragon.”

“The Heart of the Ancient Dragon?”

“Did you know? Taking the elixir doesn’t mean that it will go into effect immediately. Because of how much energy there is, it takes a long while to dissolve. It’s called the digestion process.”

“What are you trying to say?”

Lukas sneered slightly.

“The digestion process is accelerated the more you use your body and mana.”

“You...”

By the time Kangki had finally realised what he was trying to say, Lukas’ gaze lowered slightly.

He was looking at the status window that hadn’t disappeared since he’d taken the Ancient Dragon Heart elixir.

[Heart of the Ancient Dragon, current digestion rate 99.8%.]

[When the digestion is complete, some of the user’s skills will be unlocked.]

Then...

Beep!

[Digestion has reached 100%!]

[Some of the user's skills have been unlocked.]

Boom!

An explosion of bright blue light erupted from Lukas body.

This was different from before.

This time, when the blue light appeared, the ground around him sank. This showed that Lukas' mana was now interfering with the physical world.

Kangki couldn't know.

Just what this eruption of blue light which shot into the sky like a beam really meant.

[Skill, Magic(Lv.7) → Magic(Lv.8)]

Only the mana of an 8 star Wizard could have such an effect.

Lukas slowly opened his eyes.

“Let’s continue, Kangki.”

The continuation of their battle.

Here in the arena.

“Let’s start the second round.”