

Multiverse 113

Chapter 113: Facing One's Own Past

In the days that followed, the lives of Rias and the others began to be dominated by Kaiser.

Every day at the break of dawn, Kaiser would use Gravisheath to drag the drowsy Rias and company outside the villa, without a word setting up a Gravity Field that instantly jolted them awake from their dreams, forcing them to begin grueling training under intense gravity.

Meals and personal needs were not something he concerned himself with—there were some familiars in the villa assigned to take care of Rias and the others. Kaiser did not stop them, but he also never lifted the Gravity Field. Instead, he expanded its range, making it so that Rias's group had to do everything under that crushing gravity.

Only when night fell would Kaiser finally remove the Gravity Field. But by then, Rias and the others were already thoroughly exhausted, passing out one by one. They didn't even know how they were brought back to the villa, only to be jolted awake again the next morning by the sudden return of the Gravity Field.

Naturally, days like these were pure torment for Rias and her group. They felt as if they were truly in Hell, suffering endless agony.

Originally, they could at least relax a bit after training—like soaking in a hot spring. That was also why Kaiser had given them such a huge "benefit" on the first day.

But now, forget about relaxing—even resting had to be done under the same intense gravity. They could only recover their physical strength, not their mental stamina.

Fortunately, they were Devils, not Humans. Otherwise, with this kind of treatment, they'd have been ruined in just a few days.

Of course, as time passed, Rias and the others gradually adapted to the gravity of Gravisheath. It was no longer as painful as it had been at the start.

Their training began to yield results. Rias and Akeno Himejima became much more proficient in controlling their Demonic Power, with significantly increased output. Yuuto Kiba's mastery of Sword Birth reached a new level—the Demonic Swords he created were no longer so fragile. Even Koneko Toujou's physical abilities had improved dramatically, far surpassing her previous state.

It was under these circumstances that Kaiser finally appeared before them again.

"Looks like you've already adapted to the current level of gravity. Not bad—faster than I expected."

Kaiser didn't hold back his praise, calling out to Rias and the others, who were training under the Gravity Field.

"You finally decided to show yourself."

Rias immediately halted her control of the crimson Demonic Power swirling around her. With a single thought, the destructive aura vanished without a trace. Her movements were now graceful and composed—far more refined than the strained and struggling figure she had been before.

Akeno Himejima, Yuuto Kiba, and Koneko Toujou also stopped what they were doing and gathered beside Rias. Their actions were smooth and swift, a world apart from their earlier selves who could barely move under the gravity.

"Since you've adapted to this level of gravity, let's move on to the next stage."

Kaiser's words triggered an almost reflexive reaction in Rias and the others—they immediately assumed defensive stances.

"What are you planning now?" Rias asked warily. "Don't tell me you're going to increase the gravity again?"

Akeno, Kiba, and Koneko all instantly wore expressions of pain.

While training under intense gravity had indeed been effective, just thinking about the bleak, sunless days they'd endured made everyone shudder in fear.

That kind of daily routine—giving everything they had from the moment they woke up, training until they passed out, only to be jolted awake again by a renewed Gravity Field and repeat the process—was beyond torture.

This wasn't just Hell-level training anymore—it was abyssal training, despair-level training, the kind that broke people down and rebuilt them in agony.

Even the most strong-willed person would feel fear deep in their heart when faced with this kind of training.

"Increase the gravity?" Kaiser responded cheerfully. "That's not out of the question. Since that's your request, I'll increase it right now."

As he spoke, Kaiser reached toward Gravisheath, which was standing beside him.

The expressions of Rias and the others changed instantly.

"Wait!" Rias shouted instinctively. Her lips trembled slightly, and her voice grew noticeably softer. "Though this training is necessary, overly intense training will only lead to diminishing returns—and might even injure my beloved servants. So, for now, let's keep it as it is."

Akeno and the others immediately nodded in agreement, clearly supporting her statement.

"Oh?" Kaiser looked at Rias with a faint smile. Only when her expression turned both awkward and embarrassed did he finally relent. "In that case, let's proceed directly to the next stage."

Upon hearing this, Rias and the others quietly let out a breath of relief—but then looked puzzled.

"What's the next stage?" Rias asked. "What kind of new torment are you planning for us?"

To her surprise, Kaiser didn't deny it.

"In a sense, what comes next may indeed feel torturous," Kaiser said lightly. "After all, I'm going to rip open your old wounds and make you face your past."

As soon as those words fell, not only Rias, but Akeno, Kiba, and Koneko all turned pale.

"What are you trying to do?"

Rias seemed to realize something. She stepped in front of Akeno and the others, glaring at Kaiser.

"I'm warning you—don't try anything reckless."

Clearly, as their master, Rias knew well what kind of past her servants carried.

The moment Kaiser said that, she immediately guessed his intent—to cruelly expose the secrets Akeno and the others had kept hidden.

And she was right.

"First up is you, Yuuto Kiba."

Kaiser turned to Kiba, whose expression immediately stiffened.

"I've heard about your past," Kaiser said indifferently. "You were once with the Church—one of the experimental subjects in the Holy Sword Project, correct?"

The so-called Holy Sword Project referred to an experiment to artificially cultivate Holy Sword wielders.

As everyone knew, Holy Swords were the most powerful weapons against Devils. Just touching one would burn a Devil, and being slain by one meant total annihilation—they were terrifying weapons from a Devil's perspective.

But for faithful followers of God who viewed Devils as enemies, Holy Swords were the ultimate weapon they could rely on.

Those able to wield Holy Swords were the strongest exorcists—executioners whom Devils feared greatly.

However, Holy Swords chose their wielders. A person who could adapt to one and use it freely might only appear once in several decades—such individuals were extremely rare and precious.

Because of this, a group within the Church sought to artificially cultivate Holy Sword users.

Yuuto Kiba was one of the selected experimental subjects in that project.

Before he awakened his Sacred Gear and before he was reincarnated as a Devil, he had been raised by the Church.

When the Holy Sword Project began, he and a group of children around his age were selected as test subjects—and endured immense suffering in the Church's experiments.

Later, because he consistently failed to adapt to a Holy Sword, he and his companions were poisoned and executed by the researchers.

His companions gave their lives to push him to safety, allowing him to escape the Church. It was then, on the brink of death, that he encountered Rias and was reincarnated as a Devil by her.

That is why Kiba harbored such deep hatred toward the Church—and toward Holy Sword wielders.

"...Where did you hear about all this?" Kiba didn't deny it. After a moment's silence, he said mockingly, "Don't tell me you heard it from those researchers when you were one of the test subjects yourself?"

Kiba was insinuating that Kaiser, too, was a product of the Church's experiments—implying they were both escapees from the same hell.

But Kaiser ignored the sarcasm and continued speaking.

"Though you couldn't adapt to a Holy Sword, your Sacred Gear is exceptionally powerful. The ability to freely create Demonic Swords—just in terms of rarity, it's not inferior to the Twilight Healing. It may even surpass it."

"Your swordsmanship is also impressive. You can make good use of your Sacred Gear."

"With your potential, the fastest way to improve your strength is to push your Sacred Gear into a new realm."

Those words didn't just stun Kiba—everyone else was taken aback as well.

"A new realm?" Koneko muttered. "Could it be..."

"That's right," Kaiser pointed at Kiba. "The ultimate domain of Sacred Gears—where the power transforms based on the user's will, to the point it seems like it's disrupting the balance of the world—so it's considered a forbidden power: Balance Breaker!"

"If you can reach that realm, your power will skyrocket—to the point you can rival, or even surpass, High-Class Devils."

Kiba furrowed his brow at those words.

"But achieving Balance Breaker isn't something that can happen so easily."

That's a realm only reached when a Sacred Gear user has mastered their power completely—and undergoes a significant mental transformation triggered by a powerful emotional event.

Just because Kaiser had met many Balance Breaker users didn't mean it was easy to achieve. In reality, it took a drastic shift in mindset or desire—strong enough to defy the natural flow of the world.

Among Sacred Gear users, not even one in a hundred—or even one in a thousand—could reach that level.

The Hero Faction was full of individuals descended from heroes, warriors, and legends. Most of them were Sacred Gear users, yet even among them, those who had reached Balance Breaker numbered only a few—fewer than ten.

To be honest, Kiba didn't believe he could reach Balance Breaker so easily—he didn't have that kind of confidence.

But...

"It's not easy if you try to do it alone."

Kaiser said calmly.

"But with me here, that's a different story."