

Multiverse 37

Chapter 37: Chapter 85: The Limits of Humanity?

Stray Devils.

These were Devils with no faction, no affiliation, completely unclaimed and inherently dangerous.

When a Devil's servant betrayed their master—even going so far as to kill them—and fled their master's territory, they became Stray Devils, akin to wild beasts that had abandoned their pack, roaming unchecked. With no restraint, no oversight, they often committed forbidden acts and caused disasters.

They were pests, entities who betrayed their masters for personal desires. Thus, whenever a Stray Devil was discovered—whether by their original master or by other Devils—it was an obligation and a right to eliminate them.

Other factions also viewed Stray Devils as dangerous anomalies. Be it Angels or Fallen Angels, they would exterminate any Stray Devil they found.

And now—

Kaiser had encountered such an existence.

"Would you like to play some fun games with me, little brother~?"

The spider-woman Stray Devil smiled seductively at Kaiser, approaching him while licking her lips, her expression one of hunger, as if she had just spotted a delicious meal.

However—

Kaiser didn't even spare her a glance.

The moment he recognized what she was, he turned around—intending to leave immediately.

"Heh heh, do you really think you can just walk away?"

The spider-woman wasn't the least bit flustered. She simply watched him leave, leisurely taking a few steps forward.

"It's been so long since I've found a handsome young man like you. I've already grown tired of feasting on those greasy old men—why don't I treat myself to something fresh for a change?"

The moment those words left her lips—

Kaiser abruptly stopped walking.

"Oh? Decided to stop running?"

The spider-woman sounded surprised, stopping in her tracks as well.

Kaiser did not turn around. Still facing away from her, he spoke coldly.

"...You've eaten humans?"

His voice was laced with undeniable chill.

The spider-woman didn't seem to notice the shift in tone. Instead, she grinned mockingly and responded—

"Of course. Though I only eat the ones who can't resist temptation—those filthy old men who follow me in secret, thinking they're getting lucky. But I must say, human flesh is truly delicious. It's a shame I never realized that before."

Her words oozed cruelty. It was clear she was toying with Kaiser, deliberately provoking him, eagerly anticipating his expression of fear.

However—

Instead of fear, she saw him turn around—

And walk straight back toward her.

He came back?

This brat isn't scared?

The spider-woman was momentarily stunned.

And then—

She heard his next words.

"I came here to see if I could learn anything about events that wouldn't happen in human society. So at first, I had no interest in a mere Stray Devil like you."

Kaiser's expression remained completely indifferent.

"But now—I've changed my mind."

His cold, piercing gaze locked onto the spider-woman, his face devoid of any emotion.

"A pest like you—it's better if you disappear right here."

For a brief moment—

The spider-woman was dumbfounded.

Then—

She suddenly burst into unrestrained laughter.

"Disappear? Me? Are you saying... you plan to kill me?"

As she laughed, her smile twisted into something monstrous.

That was no longer the face of a human—

It was the face of a beast.

"Who the hell do you think you are, you brat?!"

Her voice dropped into a snarl—and the next instant—

She lunged.

Her eight spider legs pushed off the ground with incredible force, propelling her forward like a spring-loaded projectile.

Her speed was blinding—as fast as a bullet, slicing through the air with an ear-piercing whoosh.

In the blink of an eye, she was right in front of Kaiser.

"Turn into a shish kebab!"

Her spider legs sliced through the air, aiming to impale Kaiser's body.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!—

A series of metallic clashes echoed throughout the abandoned factory—

The spider legs struck Kaiser's body—

But instead of piercing through, they rebounded violently, as if they had slammed into steel.

Sparks flew.

Looking closely—

Her attacks never actually touched Kaiser.

A radiant layer of flowing white light surrounded his body, forming an invisible barrier mere centimeters away from his skin.

"W-What...?!"

The spider-woman's eyes widened in disbelief.

And that—

Was the last expression she would ever make.

BOOM—!

The very next instant—

A fist—wrapped in raging white light—exploded forward like a meteor—

Striking her squarely in the torso.

A thunderous impact shook the factory, sending out a shockwave that kicked up dust and debris—

And obliterated the spider-woman's body, reducing her to chunks of flesh.

"Ugh... AHHHHHHHHH!"

The spider woman's body exploded, leaving only her head relatively intact. It tumbled across the ground, rolling away while emitting a miserable shriek.

Before long, her presence faded entirely.

Kaiser stood motionless in place, his outstretched hand still engulfed in a brilliant white glow, frozen in the motion of his finishing strike.

It was only after a while that he finally retracted his fist.

Clap—Clap—Clap—

At that moment, the sound of applause echoed from a corner of the factory.

"....."

Kaiser remained silent. He wasn't surprised by the applause.

Instead, he simply turned his gaze towards the source of the sound and saw a man emerging from the darkness.

"That was a beautiful strike—killing a devil barehanded in an instant. Even if it was just a low-class Stray Devil, your abilities are far stronger than what we had anticipated."

The man who stepped out of the shadows while clapping and offering praise was a white-haired individual clad in priest-like robes.

He didn't appear to be much older than Kaiser—if there was a difference, it wasn't by much. However, his entire presence exuded the aura of a battle-hardened warrior, someone who had fought on countless battlefields. Anyone with keen senses would immediately recognize how dangerous this man was.

"...Church personnel?"

Kaiser took one look at the man's white hair, then another at his priest-like attire, and calmly voiced his guess.

The man neither confirmed nor denied it. Instead, he responded with a composed smile and spoke slowly.

"It seems you noticed me long ago. When exactly did you realize I was here?"

Rather than answering, he countered with a question of his own.

"When I was about to leave," Kaiser replied indifferently, making no attempt to withhold information. "At first, I thought there was only a single Stray Devil here. But then, I reconsidered—that didn't seem likely."

"This place is too remote, far from the city. If there were only a single low-class Stray Devil hiding here, then even if I had been wandering around all day, I shouldn't have been able to sense any power fluctuations from this place."

"I'm not some sensory-type specialist. For me to have noticed power fluctuations, there had to be something more here. A single low-class Stray Devil wouldn't be enough to generate a disturbance I could detect all the way from the city."

Simply put, the Stray Devil had been too weak, and this was just an abandoned factory. There was no way it could have emitted enough power fluctuations for Kaiser to sense from such a distance.

That's why he had realized something was off and deduced that something more was going on here.

"And now, it's clear—this was a trap you deliberately set up to lure me in, wasn't it?" Kaiser locked eyes with the white-haired man. "You intentionally spread out the power fluctuations, deliberately leaving that Stray Devil alive so you could observe how I would handle it?"

"Setting up such an elaborate scheme just to test me... what exactly is your goal?"

"Or... are you simply trying to use me as a tool to do your dirty work?"

Kaiser's tone grew sharp.

Yet the white-haired man didn't seem the least bit offended. If anything, he appeared even more impressed.

"Quick-witted. Even though this was just a casual setup on my part, the fact that you managed to piece it together so clearly is quite impressive." The man chuckled. "Good thing my companions aren't here. They'd never let me hear the end of it."

"...So, you're just openly admitting that you're alone?" Kaiser narrowed his eyes. "Aren't you worried I'll attack you?"

Hearing that, the white-haired man shrugged and raised his hands in a casual gesture.

"Are you really the kind of person who strikes first and asks questions later? We don't know that yet," he said. "Relax, I mean you no harm."

"Quite the opposite, actually—I'm here to invite you."

"Tell me, are you interested in joining us?"

Kaiser frowned. "Joining you? What do you mean?"

This guy was from the Church, wasn't he?

Why didn't he sound like one...?

"It's exactly as it sounds. I'm simply extending an invitation for you to work with us—to create something great together," the white-haired man said with an unchanging smile. "There are many others like you and me by my side."

"We come from different backgrounds, but we are all true humans."

"We aren't like the Angels, Fallen Angels, or Devils, born with overwhelming power. But each of us carries a unique ability within us."

"Sacred Gears. The only divine gift bestowed upon humanity."

As he spoke, the white-haired man continued to address Kaiser in a slow, deliberate tone.

"With such a gift, don't you want to see how far this power can take you? Don't you want to challenge those supernatural beings—perhaps even gods and devils—and see just how far we humans can push our limits?"

As those words reached Kaiser's ears, it was as if a bolt of lightning struck through his mind, instantly making everything clear.

"You're from the Hero Faction of the Khaos Brigade?"

He spoke without hesitation.

"You're Siegfried?"

The white-haired man—Siegfried—froze on the spot.