

Multiverse 42

Chapter 42: I Can Join You

Rias Gremory left.

It seemed she had come solely to probe Kaiser's intentions. Once she confirmed that he did not plan to cause trouble in Kuoh Town—at least for the time being—the heiress of the Gremory family departed without hesitation.

However, though she had left, the surveillance remained.

As Kaiser walked out of the café, he immediately sensed that the watchers around him had become more deliberate.

They were likely the Familiars belonging to Rias Gremory and her peerage, left behind to monitor him.

Perhaps they knew they couldn't completely hide from Kaiser, so instead of concealing themselves, they watched him openly, as if declaring, We are always watching you.

"What a high level of caution."

Kaiser thought idly, unfazed by it.

"Is it because I'm a Sacred Gear wielder who has lost control before?"

Given that, their wariness was understandable.

However, Kaiser had already decided—he would no longer leave himself so openly exposed. He was done acknowledging the watchers.

He stepped into a deserted alleyway and summoned the Activator of Gravisheath from within himself, activating it.

"Vrrmm..."

The crimson scythe vibrated into form, its Urm-Manadyte core flickering with an eager, pulsating light—its very essence craving Kaiser's blood.

"Later."

Kaiser ignored Gravisheath's hunger, gripping the weapon's handle and channeling his Aura into it.

After modifying his power system with Inherent Authority, even without Prana, he found that Aura was just as effective in activating Orga Lux.

Kaiser had already tested this. Both Ser-Veresta and Gravisheath accepted Aura, and just a small amount of Aura could replace a large amount of Prana. When infused with even minimal Aura, the Orga Lux functioned identically to when they were fully powered by Prana.

This intrigued Kaiser greatly.

"Aura is the fundamental essence of life, a force rooted in one's very core. If it can replace Prana, that might actually be a good thing."

Prana had many advantages, but it was inextricably linked to the Mana that filled the world. Some scholars even theorized that Prana was simply the human body's refined form of Mana.

In other words, if separated from Mana, Prana might cease to function entirely.

Kaiser had never tested this theory, but to be safe, having an alternative power source was ideal.

Now that his vast reservoir of Prana had been converted into a more compact supply of Aura, he found that even small amounts of Aura could be converted into large amounts of Prana if needed.

Essentially, he could still provide ample Prana to his Orga Lux, meaning there was no difference in functionality.

Being able to fuel Orga Lux with Aura meant Kaiser no longer needed to constantly shift his power system back to Prana just to use them—saving him a great deal of effort.

With that settled, Kaiser activated Gravisheath's gravity manipulation, levitating himself into the sky.

Moments later, he flew out of Kuoh Town and descended onto an empty field outside its borders.

Then, he dismissed Gravisheath, returning it to his body, and stood quietly, waiting.

He waited for a full thirty minutes.

"You should be nearby by now, shouldn't you?"

At last, Kaiser spoke.

"Come out. Hiding any longer is just a waste of both our time."

As soon as his words fell, a figure flashed into view like a gust of wind.

"...Was I just lured out?"

Siegfried smiled wryly, his tone tinged with helpless amusement.

"Well, you were the one following me."

Kaiser's expression remained indifferent. "As long as I acted like I was leaving Kuoh Town, you were bound to follow."

"So yes, I set a trap—but you also did the same to me last time."

"So, let's call it even."

Hearing Kaiser's words, Siegfried nodded in mock seriousness.

"Put that way, it doesn't feel so bad." Siegfried chuckled before adding, "Still, judging by your stance, you have something to say, don't you?"

"...Could it be that you've decided to join us?"

It was a casual remark—almost a joke.

Yet—

"I can join you."

Kaiser responded smoothly, decisively.

"What?"

Siegfried froze.

Did he just... agree?

Just like that?

Was this real?

"What's wrong?" Kaiser smirked slightly, as if he could read Siegfried's mind. "Didn't your faction want me to join you?"

"I've agreed, yet you don't seem all that happy about it."

"Of course I'm happy!" Siegfried recovered, grinning. "I'm just surprised. Why the sudden change of heart?"

Previously, Kaiser had shown little interest in his invitation—or rather, little interest in Khaos Brigade and the Hero Faction.

And now, he had suddenly accepted.

That, naturally, made Siegfried suspicious.

"I simply changed my mind," Kaiser said calmly. "I had some new thoughts, that's all."

"...Would you care to share what those thoughts are?"

Suspicion was now plain on Siegfried's face.

Kaiser merely smiled.

"Of course... not."

With that single sentence, the atmosphere instantly tensed.

The smile vanished from Siegfried's eyes, and his lips curled downward slightly.

"You should put a little more trust in your future comrades, Kaiser."

Saying this, Siegfried—just as he had before—drew his sword from beneath his priest-like robes.

The weapon exuded an unmistakable aura of malice, and even from a distance, the Aura radiating from it stung Kaiser's skin.

"For now, I wouldn't say we're comrades yet, would you?"

Kaiser remained unfazed, his expression unchanged as he, too, drew a sword.

"Hm?"

Siegfried's eyes locked onto Kaiser's weapon.

It was a blade of deep black, embedded with a crimson gem at its center.

The hilt had an inorganic texture—more like a shell than forged metal—while the blade itself was not even solid, formed instead of flowing darkness.

Kaiser had seemingly drawn it from thin air.

Siegfried raised an eyebrow.

"That's your Sacred Gear?"

He asked, but then shook his head.

"No... it's not. Your Sacred Gear has a Holy Attribute, and this sword clearly lacks that power."

"This is a wielded weapon, just like my Demonic Sword, isn't it?"

Siegfried was certain of his judgment.

"Sharp eyes." Kaiser smirked, almost approvingly. "Its name is Ser-Veresta. And no, it's not my Sacred Gear."

As if responding to its name, Ser-Veresta vibrated slightly in Kaiser's grasp.

"A Demonic Sword?"

Siegfried's interest was piqued.

After all, he himself was a swordsman who specialized in wielding Demonic Swords. He possessed multiple such blades and was far more knowledgeable about them than the average person.

"Ser-Veresta, huh? Never heard of a sword by that name before... Is it a newly created Demonic Sword?"

He mused aloud, making his own assessment.

Kaiser, meanwhile, glanced at the blade in Siegfried's hands, his eyes narrowing slightly.

"If I'm not mistaken, that sword... must be the legendary Demonic Emperor Sword, right?"

Kaiser's remark earned an immediate confirmation from Siegfried.

"Gram, the Demonic Emperor Sword—the strongest of all Demonic Swords, and my most powerful trump card."

Gram—a legendary blade from Norse mythology. Wielded by Odin, the king of gods, it was also known as the Fury of the Gods, a Demonic Sword of immense power.

Even among the many Demonic Swords in this world, Gram was undisputedly the strongest.

"This is a good opportunity."

Siegfried raised the Demonic Emperor Sword, pointing it at Kaiser with a grin.

"I'll test this so-called new Demonic Sword and my new comrade—let's see what you're made of."

With those words, Gram erupted with a surge of Aura, exuding a suffocating pressure.

Then—just as before—Siegfried swung his blade.

A storm of destructive force howled toward Kaiser.

But this time, Kaiser did not dodge.

"Can you handle this, Ser-Veresta?"

Kaiser whispered.

"Vrrrmm!"

The Ser-Veresta vibrated intensely in his grip, radiating an unmistakable surge of excitement.

Kaiser let out a brief smile before swiftly composing himself. Without hesitation, he channeled a massive surge of Aura into the blade.

In the next instant, he swung.

"Boom—!"

A deafening explosion erupted as Ser-Veresta clashed against the incoming storm of destructive Aura, its blade cutting directly into the oncoming force.

A massive shockwave burst forth, rippling outward in a tangible, concussive blast.

The ground beneath Kaiser cracked apart, splintering into fissures before abruptly caving in.

The storm of Aura continued to press against Ser-Veresta, attempting to overwhelm and crush Kaiser under its sheer force. Yet, he stood firm, refusing to be overpowered.

"Haaahhh...!"

Feeling the immense power bearing down upon him, veins bulged against Kaiser's skin, his grip tightening around the hilt of his sword, knuckles turning white from the strain.

And then, with a thunderous roar, he brought Ser-Veresta down in a decisive arc.

The pitch-black blade cut through the raging storm—severing it in two.