The Genius Son-in-law of the Swordmaster Household—Blessed by Authority

Chapter 10 : Sword Selection Ceremony (4)

Sword Selection Ceremony (4)

It was almost time for the main event, the Sword Selection Ceremony, to begin.

The brief banquet was drawing to an end.

Musicians were leaving, and guests were thinning out.

"Young master Ian."

A neatly dressed middle-aged butler approached Ian and Sophia, bowing quietly.

"And Miss Sophia."

"M-Miss!?"

At the title reserved for daughters of noble houses, Sophia almost leapt from her seat.

The butler paid no mind and continued his words with his head still lowered.

"The Sword Selection Ceremony is about to begin. If it's not too much trouble, please move to the Bladelake inside the main castle."

When Ian nodded, the butler bowed even deeper and withdrew.

"It looks like it's about to begin! Let's hurry!"

Sophia neatly arranged her utensils and straightened her clothes.

Ian wiped his mouth with his napkin and stood up as well.

"Alright. How about the restroom?"

"Hmm. I want to go ahead and use it now."

"I'll show you where it is. Let's go together."

"Yep!"

--Swoosh!

Now that they'd eaten, emptied themselves, and tidied up their appearance, Ian and Sophia, fully prepared, set out toward the inner part of the main castle where the Sword Selection Ceremony would take place.

"Sophia. During the ceremony, we'll have to be apart for a bit."

There was a clear distinction between the observers' area and the participants' area at the Sword Selection Ceremony.

Ian was a participant. Sophia, an observer.

"Yep. I should just go to the observers' side, right?"

"Yeah. You're feeling a bit less nervous now, right?"

"Yep. Don't worry, I won't get into any trouble even if I'm alone."

"Good. There'll be a butler or maid at the entrance. Just give them your name and you'll get your seating ticket."

"Alright!"

As they moved along, talking like this, they soon came to a fork.

The left path led to the observers' seats. The right, to the participants' area.

It was time to split up.

"See you later, then! Umm... I'll wait for you at the banquet hall entrance!"

"Okay. Don't follow strangers."

"Pfft. That's what I was going to say to you!"

"Alright. See you lat—"

Just as Ian was turning around, waving to Sophia—

--Whoosh.

A breeze created by someone brushing past.

On that breeze came a familiar scent.

'Yuria...?'

In that moment, Ian's body froze like a statue.

Only his eyes followed the silhouette that had brought that scent.

Brilliant golden hair, dazzling as if holding the sunlight, spread before his eyes.

"Ah."

As Ian accidentally let a word slip, the golden-haired girl, sensing his gaze, turned gently.

"Hmm?"

Her eyes were blood-red like fresh blood, fiery and vividly bright.

Yuria.

It was Yuria.

Yuria as she had been at fourteen.

"Hm?"

Soon, Yuria's face turned curious.

"You. Why are you crying?"

"Ah."

Only then did Ian realize his own expression.

A face about to cry.

'Ah, crap...'

And a dampness felt on his cheeks.

Apparently, he'd even shed tears.

He had been so dazed he hadn't noticed at all.

"Sss... damn..."

Ian hastily turned his face, trying to hide it.

"Eh? Young master? Huh! Wait! Why are you crying?!"

Ah, damn it.

Even Sophia had noticed.

"It–it's just a yawn..."

"What kind of lame excuse is that...! A-anyway, this way!"

Sophia ushered Ian toward the restroom with the washbasin.

Ian followed her, wiping his tears away with the handkerchief she handed over.

"Hmm..."

Yuria watched them retreat for a moment before turning again toward the participants' area.

But her head was filled with thoughts of the gray-haired boy who had immediately started crying as soon as their eyes met.

'What the... He saw my face and... acted like he'd seen a ghost or something... Why is he crying?'

Did he remember a scary person when he saw my face? My father, maybe...

Or perhaps he got overly nervous at the sight of the Hisperion crest embroidered on the back of my uniform?

'I don't get it. Maybe he's just a crybaby.'

But.

A small smile formed on Yuria's lips.

'I've never seen anyone cry so prettily before.'

A surprisingly pleasant first impression.

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Restroom near the central hall of the main castle.

"Goodness...! You were acting all grown-up, but in the end you're still a kid!"

"... It's not like that."

"Hehehe. So you can't cope unless you have Sophia, huh? I'll escort you all the way to the participants' waiting area."

"It's not like that. And, this is the men's restroom."

"There's nobody here now, so what does it matter?"

"... Haaa."

By now, nearly everyone else had moved to Bladelake for the ceremony, leaving only Ian and Sophia in the restroom.

"I'll stay with you until you calm down. Say whatever's on your mind."

"I'm fine. I didn't cry out of sadness."

"Mm... Then, why... Huh?! Young master?"

Ian was smiling.

"Huh? You can cry and smile at the same time? What's your deal?!"

"They were tears of joy. I'm just so moved I made it this far."

"Hmm... Well, that's true... It was a legendary journey. In just a week! You even got captured by bandits, stayed at a super-expensive hotel, attended a lavish banquet! Heaven and hell, and now finally here! Ugh... When I think about it, I feel like crying too..."

"Yeah."

It was a shame he couldn't explain things to Sophia in detail, but...

He was truly moved to have 'returned' here after such a long journey through time.

'I still have no idea how I managed to come back, though...'

Still, now that he had confirmed Yuria was alive, nothing else mattered.

'Yuria is alive... Yuria is alive!'

A flood of emotion and joy poured into his heart.

'Is this really not a dream?'

If possible, he wanted to touch that cherished hair and those cheeks himself.

If he'd stayed dazed, he might have unconsciously reached out.

'It's fortunate I snapped out of it early. Yuria absolutely hated strangers touching her.'

She'd been born a prodigy, always the target of her siblings' jealousy and bullying, so her wariness had developed naturally.

'Still, I could feel it vividly. That Yuria is alive...'

That shimmering golden hair, those brilliant red eyes.

And the always flustered face that couldn't hide her emotions—he had missed it all.

'Now, my purpose is even clearer.'

He'd verified Yuria's survival; his next task was obvious.

'I must use the memories of my past life and the Authority of Projection to their very limit, and become strong enough to kill all those damned grand dukes of the demon realm in one blow.'

Only with power could he avoid repeating the same tragedy as in his previous life.

"Young master. Young master."

Sophia glanced at the restroom clock.

"There's only three minutes left until the ceremony. If we don't want to be late, we'll have to run."

"Right. Let's hurry."

"Yes! Yes! Let's go quickly!"

Ian left the restroom with Sophia.

Now that he had confirmed Yuria was alive, all that was left was to avoid repeating a tragedy and stride toward a brilliant future.

* * *

Sword Selection Ceremony.

A ritual in which one receives the destined sword most suited to their own talent.

Only boys and girls younger than fifteen could receive their sword.

In his previous life, Ian had missed his last chance at the ceremony due to being kidnapped by bandits, and so never met his destined sword.

'But it's different this life.'

Right now, in this place.

Ian confidently took his seat among the participants at the ceremony.

'But then why...!'

Why did it have to be right next to Yuria?!

"You're that crybaby from before, huh? Feeling better now?"

At some point he'd become the crybaby.

"I didn't cry. Just had something in my eye..."

"Pft! Wasn't it a yawn before? Are you embarrassed? It's fine. I'll keep your secret. So why did you cry?"

"..."

Ian looked silently at Yuria.

Her eyes and lips curved mischievously.

'... Is she teasing me right now?'

Even as a child, Yuria had loved teasing others.

As Ian was wondering how he should respond—

"The radiant sun of Hisperion, rightful lord and great protector of this land, the patriarch Darkan Hisperion of the Heavenly Sword House is entering!!"

The doorkeeper announced the family head in a loud voice.

Everyone seated in the great hall stood up at once and bowed their heads.

--Thud!

Soon, the grand doors of the hall opened with a heavy sound and, accompanied by the Heavenly Sword knights, the patriarch of Hisperion, Darkan, made his entrance.

Eyes a vivid red, just like Yuria's.

Yet the wildness in his gaze was even sharper than what Ian remembered from his past life.

His hair was not blond, but pure white.

The armor, said to be made from the scales and hide of a black dragon, gleamed beautifully like obsidian.

He looked as if he belonged in battle, not at a ceremony.

With his appearance, the entire atmosphere of the hall changed in an instant.

Even the faintest breeze seemed to hold its breath.

Darkan strode toward the throne.

--Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud!

"We pay our respects to the patriarch of the Heavenly Sword House!"

"We pay our respects to the patriarch of the Heavenly Sword House!"

With every step the head of Hisperion took, countless nobles and great warriors knelt and paid homage.

It was as if mighty waves rose and fell with his every stride.

This was not simply out of loyalty or courtesy.

'What overwhelming pressure.'

The murderous aura was so intense it felt as if anyone who defied him would be cut down on the spot.

'It's as if a tiger is walking among wolves. He subdued the entire hall with nothing but his presence.'

Darkan was far more intimidating than Ian remembered.

'I never imagined I'd see him again like this.'

Ian swallowed quietly.

With every step the patriarch took, it was as if a powerful wave crashed over his body.

If he didn't stay focused, he might collapse on the spot.

Indeed, many of the fourteen-year-old boys and girls around him looked about to buckle under the pressure.

'The world's greatest swordsman. The world's greatest knight.'

A name that never failed to be mentioned when discussing the strongest in the world.

'Darkan Hisperion, patriarch of the Heavenly Sword House.'

However.

Ian let out a small sigh.

'Even such a monstrous human eventually disappeared.'

Was it five years before the destruction of humanity...? Or six?

He vanished without warning.

Some said he transcended humanity and ascended as a Sword God; others, that he fell at the hands of demons. But until Ian died, no one learned the truth.

'I still don't know the truth... But if I can stop his sudden disappearance, I want to do it.'

In his last life, Darkan's vanishing led to civil war within Hisperion.

With the patriarch's seat empty, a fierce succession battle erupted.

In the end, Yuria won, but there was far too much blood and too many wounds.

'And before those scars could heal, the true invasion of the demon realm began.'

In the end, humanity lost its greatest house of swordsmanship.

'If I can prevent his disappearance, I can prevent the civil war in Hisperion. The power struggle will come eventually, but I must ensure it doesn't happen before the human–demon war is over.'

And...

'If that man were to wield his sword against the demon lords...'

At the very least, two grand dukes from the demon realm could fall to him alone.

"Surprising."

While Ian was deep in thought, Yuria quietly whispered next to him.

"Are you speaking to me?"

"Yeah, it's surprising."

"What's surprising?"

"You. You're legs are not shaking."

"Ah."

Of all the fourteen-year-olds in the participants' seats, only Yuria and Ian were standing still.

"I thought you were just a crybaby, but you're tougher than you look. I'll give you that."

"..."

"If you'd cried again, I would have tried to comfort you."

"...?"

"Begin the Sword Selection Ceremony."

At some point, Darkan had seated himself on the throne and ordered the start of the ceremony.

"At your command!"

--Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

With solemn drumrolls, the high priest and priests gathered in the central hall and began the ritual.

This was Bladelake, one of the sacred sites of Hisperion.

Called a 'lake' because of the deep, deep pond in the center hall.

The destined swords for the participants would emerge from Bladelake.

The ritual to awaken the swords sleeping in its depths had just begun.

'What kind of sword will I meet...?'

The sword received at the ceremony differed depending on one's innate talent.

Someone like Yuria, blessed with divine talent, might be chosen by a divine sword; in the worst case, a participant might receive a broken iron blade.

And Ian's own talent...

'If I hadn't died at twenty-nine, I might have reached even Darkan.'

A once-in-a-century genius who entered the world's top hundred in his twenties.

'My destined sword that I could not obtain in my past life. I always regretted and wondered about it. Now, finally, I can meet it.'

--Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

--Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

As the drums echoed, Ian's heart beat in time.

First 10 chapters complete!!!

In my opinion, readers should be able to get a feel for the novel if they like it or not.

Here's what I got from the first 10 chapters...

It is established that Yuria and Ian were lovers... To be honest I didn't even need to read 10 chapters to decide that I like this story... I got sucker punched in the 1st chapter and made me tear up...

I didn't have strong connection with either Yuria or Ian, but the way they treat each other just made me get the feels. The way they were able to forego their own wellbeing for each other, I'm a sucker for those kinds of story...

And then chapter 2 reinforced what I already like about the novel...

Yuria finding something special from Ian that no other person saw.

Chapter 3-8 was okay, but I loved chapter 9 and 10, we didn't have to wait for 20+ chapters for their first meeting... And their first meeting didn't disappoint.

This is a cookie cutter regression story... There's a reason regression stories are popular, and why readers love them... It's about fixing past regrets... If done properly it will make readers have a fun reading experience... If done poorly, it will just be a generic power fantasy where the MC steamrolls every enemy will make everything boring...

I already like the novel, so I hope readers will also like it!

See you in the next chapter!