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

Chapter 2 : Choice (2)

Choice (2)

Ian Greysel was a genius with the sword.

He mastered any swordsmanship faster than others and was even clever enough to improve upon the weaknesses of the techniques he learned, developing them further on his own.

However, as if to mock him, the heavens gave him this talent along with a fatal curse.

Ian was born with a disability that made him unable to use aura.

Aura.

The energy that warriors and knights use to display superhuman strength.

Born with twisted dantian and mana circuit, Ian could not wield aura like other warriors.

Whenever he performed cultivation breathing to accumulate aura in his dantian, the blood throughout his body would surge backward. If he tried to release even a little aura that he managed to accumulate, his blood channels would burst due to his distorted mana circuits, leaving him badly bruised.

A swordsman who cannot use aura, no matter how skilled in swordsmanship, had an obvious limit to how far he could grow.

The difference in class between those who had aura and those who didn't was overwhelming.

No matter how dazzling Ian's swordsmanship was, if his opponent imbued their sword with aura and swung it, Ian's blade would shatter and the match would be over.

"Half-baked."

It was what people often said when evaluating Ian.

Had he only been able to wield aura, he surely would have become a swordsman whose name went down in history.

But unable to use aura, his limit at best was being a swordsmanship instructor for rank-and-file soldiers.

As he couldn't sense aura at all, he couldn't even become an instructor for knights who used aura swordsmanship.

Fated to be ignored by his father and teased by his siblings, despite being born into a noble family with brilliant swordsmanship talent.

"Ian Greysel. Become my knight."

It was the youngest daughter of a great swordsmanship family who changed that cruel fate.

It was Yuria Hisperion.

"My aura can heal your dantian and mana circuits."

The light aura, said to be exceptionally rare even among the direct bloodline of Hisperion.

That pure white aura had the power to raise dantians and mana circuits to the highest level.

"Come to my room every night at eight."

Yuria used that special power to treat Ian's disability for three hours a night, every night, for two whole years.

"Kh!"

Sometimes while healing, the mana would rebound and cause Yuria extreme pain as well, but she silently endured even that suffering, healing Ian without complaint.

"Tsk tsk."

People ridiculed her for taking care of Ian.

They said it was a waste of time, that she was throwing her hard-earned aura away on the street, stunting her own growth, squandering her natural gifts on something pointless, and that she'd be much better off practicing swordsmanship or cultivating aura during that time.

But after two years—

Ian proved that Yuria had not been wrong.

His overwhelming sword talent, combined with the superior dantian and mana circuits granted by Yuria, was as if an ogre had grown wings.

By his early twenties, Ian reached the realm of Swordmaster and gained the title 'Sword of Frenzied Insight (狂慧劍)', playing a central role as Yuria's closest aide in the Heir competition of House Hisperion that saw her crowned as the head.

"Why did you choose me?"

After the family head's inauguration ceremony, Yuria answered Ian's question with one of her own.

"What about you? Why did you choose me?"

"... Me...?"

Ian thought he had never chosen anything.

It was simply that the opportunity she presented had been his only path.

"... I simply seized the opportunity you gave me, mistress."

"Hehe. Me too."

"...?"

The same?

She was saying he had been her only path as well.

He didn't quite understand.

"Are you saying I was an opportunity for you as well?"

"Yeah. Thanks to you, I was able to become the head."

"....."

In reality, Ian was the most crucial factor in Yuria's victory in the headship succession struggle.

When Yuria, blessed with extraordinary talent but raised under the envy and wariness of her siblings, suffered a grave injury from their combined attack—

Had Ian not filled in for her absence, Yuria would've lost the competition then and there.

"It's funny to ask this now... but why did you want to become the family head, my lady... no, head?"

"Hmph."

Yuria grinned mischievously at the question.

"Obviously for money and power!"

"... Sorry?"

Ian tilted his head in rare confusion.

He thought she would have a more grand vision.

Money and power? Was that a joke?

"... Aren't you a bit too disappointed?"

"N-No, not at all."

"It's all over your face, though."

"U-Um."

Ian turned away, covering his face.

"Pfft."

Yuria crossed her arms and didn't bother to hide her pout.

"Still, I think I made the best choice. This is definitely the way for all of us to be happy."

"Sorry? ... Happiness?"

Ian turned to look at her again.

Her eyes sparkled.

"You, the others, you're all following me, right? That's why I have to lead you to the best utopia so none of you regret following me."

"....."

"To a life of abundant plenty, with loved ones, raising children, living happily ever after in paradise. Becoming the family head is the best way for us all to enjoy wealth and prosperity together, isn't it?"

"Pfft."

Ian let out a baffled laugh before he realized it.

"... Ugh. A-Are you laughing?"

"A, no. It's not mockery. I just...."

Ian scratched his cheek.

"Just thought, I'm glad I seized the opportunity you gave me, lady Yuria."

"Hmph."

Yuria folded her arms and smiled confidently.

"Of course! Keep following me! You'll never regret it!"

"Yes, of course. You have my loyalty."

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Perhaps it was because she was that kind of person.

Three years ago, when the demons invaded the family's territory—

She kept fighting, sacrificing herself against the demons, even as her body was broken and she lost all the aura and strength she'd accumulated over her life.

Her determination to bring everyone behind her to an ideal world—

Because of that dream....

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But he respected that resolve.

And—

He loved her.

When she spoke of her dream with those shining eyes,

He blasphemously thought the family head was lovely.

Perhaps it was because he was that kind of man—

That he, too, fought the demons to the very end, sacrificing himself even as his body was slashed to pieces and he lost the aura and strength she had given him.

Her determination to bring everyone behind her to an ideal world...

Because of that dream...

"U-Ugh... Urgh..."

Of all things, his head had been sliced and half his brain was spilling out.

He thought he'd dodged it.

A bright flash before his eyes, and here he was.

He didn't even remember clearly what had hit him.

But—

His body had already reached its limit.

His limbs had been torn off or pulverized and dangled like bags of pebbles.

Who knows when his insides spilled out; his burst side left his belly sagging and empty.

He couldn't see out of his right eye either, no idea why.

On top of that, all sorts of curses and hallucinations, poisons and rot, had taken root here and there, eating away at his life and tormenting his mind.

Perhaps his waist was still intact.

No...

He couldn't even feel it, so who could say.

'Even so, I completed the mission somehow.'

Throwing himself into the midst of the demons, to eradicate at least two of the seven demon grand dukes.

Ian, together with the last heroes of humanity, barely managed it.

'With this, the balance of power in the demon realm is broken.'

The grand dukes of the demon realm, who regarded each other as thorns in their side, would not simply let this chance slip by.

To increase their own strength and gain more power, they'd greedily tear into each other's weaknesses.

Most likely, attacking humanity would be pushed to the back burner until the civil war in the demon realm ended.

Given that in this battle, nearly all of humanity's heroes had died, the demon lords probably thought humanity was as good as extinct.

'Maybe the demon lords themselves wanted this result.'

Otherwise, there's no way we could have succeeded in the reckless goal of eliminating two demon lords in a head-on battle against the demons, with so few complications.

Of course, as expected, most of humanity's heroes lost their lives in the process, and even those who were lucky enough to survive didn't know if they could make it back to the fortress.

'Still, this is enough.'

He looked up at the yellowing sky.

This brought a close to a week of endless fighting.

Having used up nine-tenths of his innate energy, his body, mind, and even soul were already in tatters.

'I've done enough. I can rest now...'

He was about to let his eyes close—

"Going to sleep already?"

"....."

A voice he never wanted to hear disturbed his final rest.

A seductive voice that licked up from the bottom of the soul.

It was Lilith, the grand duchess of lust in the demon realm.

"....."

Ian moved only his eyes to look toward the voice.

Deathly pale skin and silver hair. Clear blue eyes.

A girl who looked so innocent one could hardly believe she was a demon, sat on a rock across from him with her legs crossed.

"You look really satisfied. I'm really disappointed, you know."

"....."

He wanted to tell her to get lost, but his jaw had been ripped off and his vocal cords melted, so he couldn't.

"Still, I'm really impressed. Even though we gave you an opening, I never thought mere humans would really erase two of us."

So it was as he thought.

The demon lords had used us to eliminate their rivals.

No wonder tracking and locating the demon lords had been much easier than intelligence suggested.

"Truly remarkable, Ian. You're worthy of my favor."

The girl's form stroked Ian's head.

It felt as gentle as the spring sun, yet to Ian, it was a touch of pure disgust.

Over a hundred of his comrades had died at that very hand.

"My proposal that I kept giving you. You remember, right?"

"....."

Asking him to become her knight, was it.

In truth, it was no different from asking him to become a sex slave with a knight motif.

"How about now? If you change your mind, I could restore your life with my power."

Ian blinked slowly.

A gaze utterly devoid of emotion.

It meant: don't spout nonsense.

He had only ever had one master, now and always.

Yuria Hisperion.

"I thought so."

The innocent girl smiled sadly.

"I knew you'd refuse. Makes sense, since you only ever looked at one woman."

Lilith's little lips stretched endlessly into a crescent.

"That kind of devotion is exactly what I fell for. But things didn't turn out well for you, did they? Here, the head of the woman you cared for."

"...?"

— Thud.

Yuria's pale, severed head landed before his eyes.

"......?"

The last hope that humanity's final heroes had sacrificed their lives to protect lay thrown into the mud.

"Why the face? I thought you'd be happy."

"....."

"Oh, that woman. She kept calling your name to the end. Ian! Ian! Kept crying out for you so pathetically. Why do you like such a noisy woman?"

"....."

"What's that? Can't hear you. Oh, right, you're missing your jaw and vocal cords. I'd help if I could, but too bad—you're not my knight."

"....."

"Wow. That look in your eyes. If only you'd looked at me like that from the start."

"....."

"I know. You want to kill me, right? Fine, I'll give you a chance."

"....."

"Give me your soul. I'll restore your body completely. Then, with both hands, you can strangle me. How about it?"

— Thud!

Ian collapsed forward.

The result of trying to swing limbs he didn't have.

"Tsk... too hasty. Now I can't see your handsome face."

... I'll kill you...

"W-What...?!"

... I'll kill you for sure...

"W-Why are you here...?!"

... Even if my soul is corrupted and sinks to the very depths of hell...!

"N-No...! He's mine! Ian! This child is mine...!"

At least you, Lilith...!

"D-Don't interfere! You devil! D-Do you know how hard I worked to get this gem? D-Don't take him from me!"

I'll kill you for sure...!

[The Goddess 《Dimensional Gambler》 selects mortal 《Ian Greysel》 as the World's Protector.]

"N-No, nooo!"

[The Goddess's arrangement "Power of Projection" forcibly inherits to the chosen one, 《Ian Greysel》.]

"Kya... kyaaaaaaaaagh!!!"

[The Goddess 《Dimensional Gambler》 uses the artifact 《Worldline Scissors》. Worldline restructuring in progress.]

... I'll tear you to pieces and swallow you whole...!

A 2-chapter prologue???

Damn, it's the generic cookie cutter novel, but with this 2 chapters, I am immediately for Ian and against the demons.