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

Chapter 8 : Sword Selection Ceremony (2)

Sword Selection Ceremony (2)

The Next Day.

[Projection Progress: 40.7%]

This was the result of projecting Sophia's dantian and mana circuits late into the dawn.

Thanks to the elixir's power, he was able to achieve this much in just a single day.

'Now at least the bare minimum has been established.'

The dantian, which had been so shrunken, had widened greatly and become much smoother.

The amount of aura that could be operated at once had increased by at least fivefold.

With the increase in aura came a much faster rate of projection.

'At this pace, no matter how late, I should be able to fully project Sophia's dantian and mana circuits in about two days.'

Just two more days, and a normal mana circuit and dantian would be acquired.

Compared to his previous life, it was so fast that words couldn't describe it.

'In my previous life, I didn't manage to handle aura until I was nineteen.'

At seventeen, he had been taken in by Yuria and, after two years of daily three-hour treatments, finally achieved this result.

'Even with Yuria's light aura, it had taken a tremendous amount of time to heal my disabilities...'

Using the Authority of Projection, the disability had been resolved in only three days.

'Truly, it is the power of a god.'

Although Yuria's light aura was itself an extraordinary power that only the chosen could wield, the Authority of Projection felt utterly on a different level.

'Perhaps, before I even turn twenty, I could become stronger than in my past life.'

In his previous life, Ian's level was peak Swordmaster.

He was on the verge of grandmaster, and one of the world's 100 strongest.

'It took me six years to reach early-stage Swordmaster in my previous life.'

He awakened aura at nineteen, reached master at twenty-five; truly, talent overwhelming enough not to be outshone by even the Hisperion's greatest geniuses.

'And from early-stage Swordmaster to peak, it took four years.'

At that time, he was twenty-nine—the age at which he met his end in humanity's final war.

And now, he was only fourteen.

'Now, all the enlightenment of my previous life remains intact within me.'

Ultimately, the only problem was the aura itself.

As long as Ian secured aura, returning to the master level would be all too easy.

'On top of that, I now possess the Authority of Projection that belonged to Yuria.'

The transcendental power that had made Yuria an absolute legend in Ian's last life.

But Yuria, due to her honest and upright character, never recklessly projected others' techniques or artifacts without permission, so she never developed the power to its utmost.

But Ian was different.

He was determined to expand this power by any means, to wield a strength greater than Yuria ever achieved in her previous life.

'If only Yuria were alive... If only she is alive...'

Using the enlightenment of his prior life and this transcendent power to the fullest, he could make amends for all past tragedies.

"Young master! Young master!"

While Ian was lost in thought, Sophia shook his shoulder.

"What is it?"

"I've been calling you for ages! What were you so deep in thought about?"

Ah. He must have been lost too deeply in his thoughts.

"Just reminiscing about the past."

"Geez! Look over there! It's Hisperion's main estate!"

"Yeah. We've finally arrived."

As he stepped down from the warp gate, Ian looked up at the grand stone walls of the main estate.

The main family estate of Hisperion.

A metropolis comparable to the Imperial Capital or the main city of the League.

The holy ground where the ancestor of Hisperion descended, and the heart of the Hisperion family.

'Haa... Right. It looked like this.'

Imposing white stone walls stacked high.

Between them, immense statues of knights stood at intervals, looming over the wide plains.

'To think I'd see this majestic sight again.'

This city, which seemed impossible to topple, was razed to black ashes under the demons' muddy boots in his previous life.

'If Yuria is alive... I'll make sure history never repeats itself.'

Ian closed his eyes and reaffirmed my determination.

"The ramparts are enormous! How did they even build that?"

"You'll break your neck looking, Sophia."

"My neck isn't that weak~"

"You didn't leave anything behind, did you?"

"I'll check now! I've got the money... I've got the map... But still, fourteen gold for two people... Warp gates really are expensive."

Considering Sophia's monthly salary was twenty-five gold, it wasn't a trivial amount.

Moreover, since the price of a warp gate increased by distance traveled, seven gold per person was actually cheap.

"At least we won't be late for the Sword Selection Ceremony."

If we'd used a carriage or horses, it would have taken at least a week.

Thanks to the warp gate, we covered the vast distance in an instant.

"Y-Yes!"

The Sword Selection Ceremony was set to begin at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

"Shall we look for an inn first? Young master! Just follow me! I already know where everything is!"

"... Haven't you never been here before?"

"I read the pamphlet in the warp gate lounge! I memorized everything!"

"Really?"

Impressive.

"In that case, let's go to the most expensive place."

"Yep! Let's—huh!? T-the most expensive!? That's at least two hundred gold per night..."

"Show the Sword Selection Ceremony invitation and put it on the family's tab."

"Wha-What!? Young master, are you serious!? You know the head—he's a cheapskate who'd scrape copper from a penny! He'll never let this pass!"

"So what? What more can he do, kick me out? Lead the way."

"What about me?!"

"Maybe we should become adventurers together? A party of two."

"Ooh... That might not be so bad."

I chuckled lightly.

I was no longer the fourteen-year-old who watched his father's moods.

In this life, I'd make sure to receive the fair treatment denied me before, by force, if necessary.

* * *

After spending a night at the Hisperion's finest hotel, the next day dawned.

Daybreak.

[Projection Progress: 88.7%]

'Good. This is practically within the range of normal.'

After spending the whole night projecting Sophia's dantian and mana circuits and transplanting them into my body.

The dantian was now fully healed, the disability completely gone, and although the mana circuit was still a little twisted in places, it was now improved enough that aura could be directed out to the limbs.

'Now that the disability's resolved, next I need to focus on raising my aura level.'

Once the disability was gone, reaching high-rank aura user was as good as guaranteed.

Thanks to my supreme cultivation technique, Heavenly Dawn Technique, which I learned from Yuria.

Reaching high-rank aura user probably wouldn't take even five days.

However, from expert-rank onward, advancement through mere cultivation grows difficult.

Not impossible—but it takes time.

After all, the basic principle is to draw in surrounding mana and accumulate it in the dantian.

Without a source of mana, like an elixir, even the best cultivation method has limits on how fast you can gather aura.

'I need to find more elixirs.'

Of course, there are other methods besides elixirs.

Finding a mana spot and cultivating there is also a good way.

As a top-tier powerhouse in his past life, Ian knew quite a few good mana spots.

'But getting to a mana spot right now would be tough.'

Strong mana attracts all sorts of monstrous, spirit-level creatures.

Going there in his current state would see him left with not even a bone to recover.

'Once I finish healing the disability, I need to obtain elixirs and focus on strengthening my Authority of Projection.'

After organizing my thoughts, I got up from the bed.

It was time to start preparing for the Sword Selection Ceremony.

"Sophia. Wake up. Time to get ready."

"Mmm, huh? Wh-what time is it!?"

"Still dawn. We're not late."

"Ugh... You scared me... Can't you wash up first? The bed won't let me goooo..."

"... Fine. Sleep a bit more. I'll wake you later."

"Hehe... Okayyy... Zzz..."

Sophia was utterly captivated by the comfort of her first time on a suite room bed.

Since she was enjoying it so much, I could only let her indulge a little more.

* * *

The moment we left the hotel, Sophia and I were reborn from head to toe.

Just a couple of days ago, we were the picture of beggars, but now, we looked every bit the scions of nobility.

"Y-young master! Is this really okay?"

Sophia fidgeted with her yellow dress, visibly uncomfortable.

"Why? Now what."

"M-me, wearing something like this... and it's so expensive!"

The yellow dress cost about 800 gold.

That was more than two years and eight months of Sophia's earnings.

Of course, I didn't have that kind of money either, so I generously put it on the family's tab.

"I'm scared the head will scold me! No, I'm definitely going to get scolded!"

"It was already too late when I booked the hotel in the family's name. The scolding is guaranteed."

"Ah, I see! Ugh... What do I do!"

Sophia gnawed nervously at her thumbnail.

"Don't worry. Nothing bad will happen. I guarantee it."

"You say so and it makes me feel better... But are you sure?"

"Of course. Let's enjoy ourselves. We're here for a big event, after all."

"Okay!"

We hailed a small, elegant carriage and traveled to the front of the Hisperion's Heavenly Sword Palace.

From the main gate onwards, outside carriages weren't allowed, so we had to walk.

"Wow! Young master, look! You can see the Heavenly Sword Lord's Hall from here! How did they build something like that a thousand years ago? It's a mystery..."

"Yeah."

To be exact, it was a building from 1,500 years ago.

A great hall said to have been designed directly by the first family head.

The magical devices installed back then apparently still worked perfectly to this day.

'But even such grand architecture was eventually trampled by demons...'

I quietly closed my eyes.

'Never let my guard down. Prepare thoroughly. There will never be a defeat like my last life.'

"Young master? Are you tired? You can't walk with your eyes closed! That's dangerous!"

"Sophia."

"Yes?"

"I just need to ask you one thing before we go in."

"Wh-what? Oh, should I lower my voice? Or maybe..."

"No, not that. Just lean your ear here a second."

Sophia leaned in front of me.

I softly whispered into her ear.

"It's a secret that I used magic or aura. Understand?"

"Huh?"

Sophia covered her mouth and whispered back.

"Why? Wouldn't it be better to tell the head or the young master? You'd definitely get better treatment..."

By 'head', Sophia meant not the Hisperion's head, but Greysel's family head.

In other words, my father.

"Absolutely not. Whether it's my father, my brother, or anyone else—keep it a secret. Understood?"

"Well... If you say so, young master... Okay."

"Thanks. This is really important, so keep it absolutely secret."

"Yep!"

Sophia and I crossed the stone bridge into the Heavenly Sword Palace's inner compound.

"Gasp! Young master, look!"

Sophia waved my arm, flustered.

"What is it now?"

Where Sophia pointed, the servants were clustered and heading back toward the main gate.

"All the butlers and maids are leaving the castle? Am I going to get barred too?"

"You'll be fine."

"Huh?"

"You're not my servant today. You're my partner."

Top vassals of the Hisperion and their direct descendants could usually bring a guest or two.

It was mostly for political reasons, but I used this privilege for Sophia.

"Wha—! So that's why you had me dress like this!"

"We've been busy all morning—we haven't eaten. Before the ceremony, there's a banquet. Let's fill up there. The Hisperion's banquets are delicious. Lots of dishes you'll see for the first time."

"What if I mess up?!"

"We'll stick together the whole time; there's nothing you can mess up."

"U-uwah! I'm so nervous! Don't leave me alone! If I'm left alone, I'll never survive...!"

"Alright."

— Clack, clack.

— Tap, tap.

For a moment, only the sound of shoes echoed, then Sophia spoke softly.

"T-to be honest, this feels like a dream..."

"....."

"Just two days ago, we were captured by bandits... Now everything's the total opposite. What I wear, what I eat, where I sleep... It was hellish, then overnight, it's become paradise."

"I know..."

I smiled wryly.

In my previous life, hell had just begun around this time.

It was when the bandits started to lay their hands on Sophia.

—'Don't mind me... young master...'

A leftover fragment from my previous life flickered before my eyes.

But now, everything was different.

"It's all thanks to you, young master...! Honestly, I still can't believe it! When you awakened magi— Oh! Right! I have to watch my mouth! Mmph!"

"....."

At the same time as in my previous life, we were eating better, wearing better, staying in nicer places.

'I can absolutely change the past. I've already changed so much.'

The worst into the best. Hell into heaven. Despair into hope.

'Yuria... As long as you are alive, I can change everything.'

I could turn the worst past into the best possible present.

'Yuria, please... Please, you must still be alive...!'

The closer we got to the family hall where Yuria would be, the quicker my steps, driven by anxious hope.

"Wait! Young master! You're walking too fast!"