

VILLAIN 114

Chapter 114 Return to the Present

Time passed swiftly, and history etched itself once more, step by step.

A lone girl stood in the midst of it all—one who had lost all her light overnight.

The bright smile that once illuminated her face had vanished entirely.

All that remained was a hollow expression, her features worn down by tears that had long since dried.

"You told me you would come back."

"You said I was the most important thing in your life."

But she never returned.

Instead, she left this world—by her own will.

Leaning against the tree that had held her sister's lifeless body, she sat there, unmoving—

In a field where the stench of death clung to the air, thick and suffocating.

A place no child should ever be forced to endure.

All that remained were children.

Children too young to comprehend what had happened—

Some still believing it was just a nightmare.

A terrifying one, yes—

But real nonetheless.

And in this nightmare, lurking demons found their perfect prey—

The ones who had lost their light entirely.

But humans...

Humans can be far worse than demons.

All it took were a few carefully chosen words—

Spoken at the right place, at the right time.

"Do you want revenge on the one who did this to your beloved sister?"

"The monster responsible for all of this... was none other than your own father—Lord Drogo Moonlight."

One by one, Baylor Moonlight sowed his venomous seeds in the minds of the children who remained.

Among them was a fragile girl, burdened with a weight no child should ever bear.

Those who survived that place—

From the very moment they did, their fates were sealed.

Baylor Moonlight understood this better than anyone.

After all, he was the one who had crafted this very environment.

He was the architect of those icy barriers—

The one who isolated Lord Drogo Moonlight's estate from the outside world.

It had never been Drogo.

It was always him.

Without Baylor, things would never have spiraled this far.

But what was done ...

Was done.

And now, here they were.

Baylor had set the stage.

All that remained was the final act of this wretched play.

And so, with precise calculation ...

He drew that small, fragile girl into his web.

A girl who knew nothing of the world ...

A girl who had lost everything ...

Seris.

He handed her an object.

And then, she went.

She walked straight toward the one she saw as the source of all her nightmares.

The beast who had long since lost his mind.

Seris entered the room—

The room where Drogo awaited.

By then, he was unrecognizable.

His face—mutilated beyond belief.

His body—twisted into a grotesque monstrosity, a mass of rotting flesh with distorted eyes staring in all directions.

Yet even as Seris approached, step by step—

Drogo did not move.

He only watched.

Somewhere deep within that monster ..

Some faint, dying ember of reason ..

Kept him from striking down his youngest daughter on sight.

And then ..

Seris reached out.

Her small hand clutched a strange, golden cube.

The moment she touched him with it ..

A blinding light erupted.

A searing radiance that swallowed everything in sight.

Like divine flames purging all sin ..

Drogo burned within that holy inferno.

Thick, black smoke rose from his body, twisting violently as if purging the world's very evils.

He was completely immobilized.

Frozen in place.

And in that moment ..

He stood no chance.

A colossal spear of ice tore through his chest—

Ripping open a gaping hole that no mortal could ever hope to survive.

Yet even then, Drogo made no sound.

He merely closed his eyes ..

As if in relief.

He had endured his own personal hell ..

And now, it was over.

Baylor Moonlight had slain Drogo ..

But not before making him suffer every last torment imaginable.

And in the end—

He painted himself as the hero who had ended the nightmare.

—

Ada watched the scene unfold.

Her expression was void of emotion.

"This... is too much to take in."

Just witnessing it was enough to break the mind of any sane person ..

Let alone living through such horrors firsthand.

Beside her, Rem shook her head.

Her face twisted with nothing but disgust toward that man.

Drogo had once looked up to Abraham ..

The one who had stood above him.

Only one man.

Yet he failed to realize ..

That he, too, had once been looked up to.

Especially by someone who had lived in his shadow since childhood.

Someone who had been doomed from birth to remain in the dark ..

No matter what he did.

Someone who had never been able to shatter the ice of his older brother.

The most fragile doll of them all ..

Had never been Drogo.

It had always been Baylor.

A man consumed by his pursuit of power—

Power that remained just beyond his grasp.

A desperate soul like that would cling to the first lifeline thrown his way.

And he did.

Drogo's death sent shockwaves through the empire.

Even Emperor Maekar Valerion himself came ...

Unwilling to believe the claims of treason.

But the truth of what had occurred within those walls...

Was buried.

The world was told that Drogo had massacred his own sons and most of his daughters after losing control of the power that had consumed him.

A tale difficult to swallow—

Yet the church's revelation of the demonic aura lingering in Drogo's corpse cemented the claim, leaving no room for doubt.

The only survivors were children, most of whom had been shattered beyond repair, their minds fractured to the point where truth and delusion blurred into one.

And those who retained even a sliver of clarity—

Were silenced.

By Baylor's hand.

Only the main family knew the truth of what had transpired behind those sealed doors.

Some whispers of reality slipped through the cracks—

They became nothing more than rumors.

Tales told by strangers.

And so—

One of the empire's greatest pillars fell.

And in its place, a new lord rose—

One who seized his throne through the most vile and ruthless means imaginable.

—

"Are you sure you want to show me all this?"

"I'm an outsider to your family."

Rem merely shook her head.

"Given what you're planning, Lord Starlight... you're about to bring real change to this house. A change that must happen—if you truly intend to preserve the legacy left behind by Lady Semiramis."

"That's why I won't stop you."

"Though... if you intend to destroy that legacy—"

"I will not stand idly by."

—

Ada let out a weary sigh.

She glanced down at her hands—

Both marked with symbols of blood.

A weight far heavier than she could bear.

"To think that the one man who always claimed to be neutral—"

"Was the very cause of all this."

"Appearances have always been the greatest lie of all."

"Yeah..."

"Baylor Moonlight betrayed himself. His people. His own family."

"Even now, I can't fully grasp what I've seen and heard. But what I don't understand is—"

She hesitated.

The image of her brother resurfaced in her mind.

The brother whose fate she had foreseen—

A fate that predicted his death.

"What does Frey have to do with any of this?"

Rem remained silent for a moment.

And then—

The scene shifted.

Revealing something entirely different.

"Frey Starlight..."

"You could say he was just another unlucky soul—"

"One who found himself caught in this filth and chaos."

Rem revealed a series of visions to Ada—glimpses of pivotal moments where another's fate had been sealed completely.

All of it unfolded within a library, now isolated from the outside world by a massive, impenetrable gate.

And standing before that gate was a lone figure.

With sleek blue hair, pale skin, and an aura of sheer dread...

It was Baylor Moonlight.

...

...

...

- Frey Starlight's Pov -

"Huff... Huff..."

I gasped for air, my body sprawled across the ground.

I wouldn't be lying if I said I had completely wrecked myself just now. It felt like forcing a tiny faucet to pour out an entire ocean in an instant.

"Are you okay?"

Carmen's voice reached me. She sat beside me, still struggling to process what had just happened.

With a weak smile, I forced my lips to move.

"Who was it again... that you called half a man?"

She blinked in surprise before a muffled chuckle escaped her lips.

"Damn... what's your secret? Are you even human?"

Groaning, I pushed myself off the ground with great effort.

"I think I am."

It took me a moment to steady my breathing before I spoke again.

"As for my secret, I should be asking you a question first. Will you swear your allegiance to me?"

Carmen fell silent.

Lowering her gaze, she stared at both hands, recalling the moment that barrier—the one that had held her back for so long—finally began to crack.

If she repeated the process with me, breaking through from S+ to SS- would only be a matter of time.

The young man before her was the son of Lord Abraham Starlight, the very person who had shaped her into who she was today.

The same man she had loved... in her own way.

The answer was obvious.

She nodded.

A wide grin spread across my face.

"So, you're accepting the offer of the half a man standing before you?"

Ignoring my sarcastic remark, Carmen spoke with unwavering resolve.

"From this day forward, I swear my allegiance as your knight. If your life is at risk, I will lay down my own. Your secrets will die with me. When you live, I shall live. When you die... I shall die."

"Wait—scratch that last part ...No need to jinx us"

Carmen smirked, her tone playful.

"This level of commitment is necessary to build trust. Or... would you prefer if I offered my body instead?"

Carmen... her body—

A violent shiver ran down my spine as I frantically waved my hands.

"I'll have to decline that tempting offer... especially since you're stronger than me. Maybe I'll consider it once I surpass you."

"Oh? Surpass me? With an A-rank talent?"

She scoffed, only to fall silent.

The memory of that terrifying aura flashed through her mind, and for a brief moment, her thoughts came to a halt.

An A-rank talent meant my stats should have been permanently capped at that level. Yet I had far exceeded it.

I shook my head slowly.

"You've sworn your loyalty as my knight. As your new lord, I swear in turn to treat you properly and never force you into anything against your will."

I paused before continuing.

"Now, here's what you need to know."

I raised a single finger.

"First, my talent isn't A-rank."

Carmen's eyes widened, but she didn't interrupt.

"You don't need to know my true limit or why everyone else is unaware of it."

"Second, the aura you felt... and how I survived inside Nightmare Lands for a whole year..."

Here—

I had to weave truth and lies together into something believable.

I couldn't reveal everything to her, but I managed to share some scattered truths.

First, the source of my power—I attributed it to the Shadow Sect. I gave her a brief explanation without diving into details like the statues and other hidden aspects.

However, I did tell her about the Ten Thousand Steps of Shadow technique. To reinforce my claim, I revealed my sword—Balerion, the Black Dread.

Her eyes widened as realization struck. She finally understood how I had been able to wound her that day.

"It looks like..."

Carmen muttered absentmindedly.

"Looks like what?"

"Your sword... It resembles Abraham's."

It was well known that Abraham once wielded Dark Sister, the blade meant for the Sword God Avalon during the Empire early days.

Both Balerion and Dark Sister were black swords, so I understood the comparison.

"Sort of..."

I brushed it off, unwilling to discuss the secrets of the Seven Legendary Swords any further.

"Now, let's focus on what you need to do, Carmen."

The first thing I addressed was the curse placed on me and the fact that I was being targeted.

Surprisingly, she didn't seem shocked. Instead, she looked as if she already knew.

"Do you... already know about this?"

Carmen nodded, confirming my suspicions.

"How?"

She hesitated before answering.

"I learned about it from Ada."

Ada...

"Since you've brought her up, that leads to the next matter. I want you to continue supporting her— that's one thing."

I stepped closer, my tone serious.

"But on the other hand, I need you to tell me... What exactly is my sister planning?"

Ada knew too much. I had no doubt she was preparing for something.

I needed to grasp the situation now to strategize my next move effectively.

But I didn't get the answer I wanted.

"Sorry, Frey," Carmen said firmly. "Your sister placed a strong restriction on me. No matter how loyal I am to you now, I physically can't speak about what she's planning. That's how serious she is about this."

I brought a hand to my chin, deep in thought.

Ada had done something drastic enough to force Carmen into silence?

This was becoming more troublesome by the second.

Sensing my frustration, Carmen quickly reassured me.

"Frey, your sister is completely on your side. She would never do anything to harm you—be certain of that. The best thing you can do right now is ask her directly."

I nodded.

"I suppose you're right."

I needed to talk to my sister.

But the real question was—

"Where is Ada?"

At that moment, neither Carmen, despite her strength, nor I realized that someone had slipped through her barriers. A hidden figure lurked in the shadows, silently watching everything unfold.