

VILLAIN 117

Chapter 117 Assassin Creed

At some point, Rem suddenly appeared behind me.

"Judging by the books you've chosen so far... are you interested in literature, Lord Frey?"

I gave her a slight nod.

"Kind of."

After all, I was a writer—naturally inclined to reading stories and literary works.

"In that case, allow me to recommend a few good books."

I turned to Rem, my expression hinting at confusion.

I understood that, as the librarian, she must have extensive knowledge. But wasn't she blind? How could she even read?

I didn't ask, though. I knew the librarian before me had her own secrets.

Following her recommendations, I unexpectedly found several books that piqued my interest.

While I was engrossed in browsing them, Rem gently picked up Blue.

Blue didn't stir at all as she was moved.

"Is she really asleep?"

Rem stroked Blue's hair with a soft smile.

"Yes... Lady Azura has reached her limit for today."

Among all the words she said, one caught my attention.

"Lady?"

Rem gave a slight nod.

"Lady Azura belongs to this library. She cannot survive outside of it. She already exhausted her strength just bringing you here."

"She belongs to this place? But... she's just a little girl."

"Yes. She is just a little girl."

Rem lifted her head to look at me before turning to leave.

"No one can see Lady Azura unless she wills it. Not even the current Lord of the family himself... Yet she allowed you to see her. Among everyone, she chose you. For some reason, she trusts you—so I will, too."

She paused, then added in a quiet but firm voice:

"Frey Starlight... My only request is this ... No matter the corruption you witness within these walls, do not let hatred take root in your heart. This family was not always like this."

I remained silent.

I couldn't give her an answer, and she already knew that.

I wasn't the type to easily let go of grudges. But I wasn't reckless enough to bring ruin to an entire family either. Even if I wanted to, I lacked the power to do so.

I watched in silence as Rem left, my eyes darkening.

"...I lack that power. At least, for now."

After spending an entire night in the library, I finally left, having reached my limit.

I had a riddle to solve. There was no need to burden myself with useless information.

As I walked through one of the corridors of the Ice Castle, I suddenly halted, a wry smile forming on my lips.

"Come out. I know you're here."

Silence filled the empty corridor.

I had chosen this moment to speak because the area was completely deserted.

Perfect for situations like this.

Then, as a killing intent spread through the hallway, one of the walls darkened, and from within it, a certain figure stepped out.

Ghost Umbra.

"So you emerged from the wall. I thought you'd remain clinging to my shadow."

As always, Ghost's expression was cold, but this time, there was the faintest trace of a smirk.

"Frey Starlight."

My expression hardened—I had no interest in dragging this out.

"Why did you choose me? As far as I know, I don't meet your expectations."

Ghost shook his head.

"The fact that you're even aware of that is impressive. Frey, you may try to deny it, but I can see it clearly."

His assassin's eyes bore into me.

"That frail body of yours may seem ordinary... but among everyone I know, your shadow looms the largest against the wall."

From beneath the feet of a single man, a shadow extended—one that engulfed many others.

And it all stemmed from one person.

Frey Starlight.

Ghost was perceptive enough to recognize that.

Darkness spread beneath us, swallowing both me and Ghost.

A void where only the two of us existed.

"So you're dragging me into your domain... You don't want anyone overhearing this conversation."

Ghost's voice remained calm.

"You could've refused if you wanted to."

"Of course not. I want to settle this, too."

Silence settled between us.

We were standing in the middle of literal darkness, yet we could see each other perfectly.

Whether it was because of my Hawk Eyes or because Ghost was in his own domain...

One way or another, we both saw clearly.

"I already know plenty, Frey Starlight... The power hidden within that body of yours, the true talent most remain blind to... For better or worse, you won't be rid of me so easily."

"For better or worse, huh?"

So, he had seen and heard everything. Even though I hadn't revealed everything to Carmen, this was still information I didn't want leaking out.

That was the assassin's creed—the troublesome doctrine of Mist Umbra's son. He always accounted for every possibility from the start. The moment he deemed me a threat, he immediately took measures to deal with me.

That was what he meant by "for better or worse."

If I ever became a danger to the empire, he would eliminate me. This information was his leverage.

And if the opposite happened, he would have someone he could use as a front.

The stronger the person in the spotlight, the larger the shadow they cast behind them.

I sighed in annoyance.

This was supposed to happen to Snow Lionheart, not me.

I couldn't let Ghost walk away with this kind of knowledge.

But what now? Should I fight him here?

The man in front of me wasn't easy prey.

In the original timeline, Snow emerged as the victor of the Victoriad. Yes—but his final opponent was none other than Ghost.

A man who never revealed his true strength, yet he still forced Snow to remove the ring during their battle.

That alone was proof of how terrifying Ghost's true form was. Defeating him would require nothing less than my full strength.

"Come, Balerion."

The serpent tattoo on my hand flared to life, burning violently as a terrifying black sword extended from my grasp.

Balerion's aura alone was suffocating. Ghost knew that if I wielded this sword, he wouldn't stand a chance.

On the other hand, if he wanted to escape, there was nothing I could do to stop him.

He was wary of me—that much was clear.

Resting my sword on my shoulder, I smirked.

"So? Shall we test your Reaper's Form against my blade?"

Ghost's expression shifted immediately.

"How...?"

"Did you think you were the only one gathering intelligence? You're not the only one playing these little games, Ghost Umbra."

In truth, I had known about it from the start.

Now, he was on the defensive. No one had ever seen his final form—not even his father, Mist.

Yet here he was, hearing it from a complete outsider.

Speaking of Mist...

"Oh, and I also know that the Court of Shadows isn't loyal to Maekar Valerion or the Imperial Family. Fascinating, isn't it?"

I could see the shift in his expression.

Naturally. Every word I spoke would have been a death sentence anywhere else.

Now, I wasn't the only one forced into a corner—he couldn't afford to let me leave either.

"We're in quite the predicament, aren't we?"

"..."

Silence. Then, Ghost drew his daggers.

"Every time I think I've seen through you, I realize I've only been chasing a mirage... You're right, Frey Starlight. One of us has to die here."

I nodded, smirking.

"That's one possibility."

I raised Balerion—only to let it fade away.

"But it's not the only one."

My sword returned to its tattooed form, leaving Ghost visibly surprised.

What I needed now wasn't another enemy—it was an ally.

"What's the meaning of this?"

"I'll be the front. Ghost Umbra."

There was no point in turning someone with his abilities into an enemy.

That would be more trouble than it was worth.

"I will fight in the light, and you will fight in the shadows—just as you always intended. We both hold enough leverage over each other to keep our blades at each other's throats. So let's strike a deal. The moment either of us becomes a true threat to the other, we end it—no hesitation."

A fragile alliance, built on mutual destruction.

A bond that kept us closer than anyone else—close enough to deliver a fatal blow at any time.

This was the best way to handle an assassin like Ghost.

"So, what do you say, Ghost Umbra?"

Would he accept? Or would he force my hand and make me kill him here and now?

His answer was something I was eager to hear.