

## VILLAIN 118

### Chapter 118 The Serpent's Head

- Frey Starlight's Pov -

I was getting used to the silence around me. Everything was unfolding exactly as planned—almost laughably so. Too perfect.

Only five days remained until the end of the training period at House Moonlight. Recently, I had gained a lot. After continuous training with Carmen, I was now just one step away from breaking into Class C. My body had endured far more than any ordinary human could.

Carmen, on the other hand, could break into Class SS- whenever she wanted, but I asked her to hold off.

Let's just say I wanted an extra trump card.

Something was brewing in the shadows—I could feel it in the way people looked at me.

Whatever was coming, it was close.

Meanwhile, Ada remained withdrawn from everyone, growing paler and more exhausted by the day, as if suffering from severe anemia.

There was still so much I didn't understand. But with what I had now, I could only hope I'd be ready.

Now, we had officially entered Day 26.

I stood in the training ground as usual—except this time, my shadow was darker.

Oh, right. I forgot to mention—I had gained an unexpected ally. A powerful piece with potential far surpassing Carmen's.

And I had just the right use for him.

"Let everyone begin."

Krauzer Moonlight, the overseer of our training, called out.

As always, Frost wasted no time, attacking me immediately with a thin ice spear.

The strike was incredibly fast, yet I could tell he was holding back.

His spear was aimed at my right shoulder, just inches from piercing through and splattering my hot blood onto the cold ground.

But it struck nothing but air.

With a swift movement and perfect timing, I dodged—so smoothly that Frost hesitated for a moment.

He quickly adjusted, following up with two rapid swings, each one faster than the last.

Yet, just like before, I evaded both at the last possible moment.

Without realizing it, every eye in the room had turned toward us—even Instructor Krauzer had furrowed his brows.

Frost attacked ten times, and I dodged ten times.

Of course, neither I nor anyone else noticed the ability that was quietly glowing in my stats.

[Shadow Adaptation 0/7]

After enduring countless strikes for 25 days, my body had begun to instinctively respond to Frost's movements.

I wasn't using any of my real abilities—not even Ascension. This level of performance came purely from my raw strength, Phantom Steps, and Hawk Eyes.

Even at this pitiful level, I was able to avoid the attacks of someone far stronger than me.

But it didn't last long. My body had adapted only to Frost's current speed. The moment he pushed himself even slightly harder, we were back to square one.

Bit by bit, I could no longer dodge or block his strikes, and eventually, he overwhelmed me, leaving me battered with more than a few injuries.

After staring at me for a moment, Frost turned and walked away, leaving me sprawled on the ground.

I pushed myself up, inspecting my fresh wounds.

Despite the beating, I could feel it.

That strange ability—it was progressing. Slowly, but surely.

It wouldn't be long before I unlocked the first stage of this peculiar power.

Something to look forward to—for better or worse.

"Good match."

I looked up to find a hand extended toward me.

"Tch... What match? I just got beaten up," I muttered.

I took Danzo's hand as he effortlessly pulled me to my feet.

"But for a moment, you almost caught everyone off guard. Those movements weren't normal."

Danzo's words made me think. How did others perceive me when I was immersed in training my Shadow Adaptation?

To me, everything seemed to slow down, and I could anticipate my opponent's attacks before they landed. But from an outsider's perspective, it must have looked bizarre—dodging at the last second, over and over again.

"This level is natural after a month of enduring this kind of shit with him."

The next few minutes passed with Danzo and me chatting about random topics.

Technically, I was much older than him—mentally speaking.

Yet somehow, we still managed to hold a natural conversation.

That was mainly because I had based his personality on a real friend of mine when I wrote about him.

A connection like this was inevitable.

As we stood side by side, I couldn't help but notice the sheer difference in our physiques.

Not that I was scrawny—far from it. My body was perfectly proportioned, every muscle in place, giving me an athletic, balanced frame.

But Danzo was something else entirely. The veins in his forearms alone looked like they were about to burst.

"Look at this mountain of muscle... You've bulked up again. How do you even grow like that?" I asked.

Danzo glanced at his own body, then looked back at me with a blank expression.

"I don't know. I train, eat, take a dump, sleep... and when I wake up, it's just there."

He made it sound so easy. His strength had skyrocketed recently, but my training wasn't any less intense than his.

I suppose that was the difference between swordsmen like me and walking tanks like him.

Regardless, I cast a quick glance at the rest of my teammates.

Aside from Ghost, who was still reluctant to reveal his true strength, Selina was the only one seriously engaging with House Moonlight's mages.

I assumed she was trying to find her Signature Magic.

"Look at all those scribbles... I'll never understand what those mages are doing."

Danzo had never been interested in magic to begin with. Well... not everyone was meant to be a mage.

What Selina was attempting now was to reach her own Signature and discover her ideal magical color.

A Signature was a mage's defining trait—an absolute ability unique to them.

In Kai Luc's case, his Signature was simple yet terrifying, allowing him to create an infinite number of magic circles. That alone made him an exceptionally dangerous opponent.

Signatures varied from person to person. And among all of them, I knew just how powerful Selina's would be.

In fact, I could give her a crucial hint—one that would push her toward a level she wouldn't reach anytime soon otherwise.

But there was nothing in it for me. So I didn't even consider it.

I'd leave the burden of dealing with this world's problems to Snow.

As for me, I had enough of my own.

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...

When your body adapts to a single routine, Especially one forged in hell ..

You begin to drown in its endless weight, struggling to keep pace.

Blue.

That tiny creature had become my sanctuary, my escape from the relentless pressure bearing down on me.

But no matter how much I searched, I would never find her—unless she found me first.

That was an undeniable truth I had long since accepted.

Yet, despite knowing this, I still found myself returning, again and again, to the place where we had first met.

And I found myself staring—too often—at the image of that man.

If I studied his features carefully, I could see it.

This is what my body will become one day.

He looked imposing.

Powerful.

Abraham Starlight.

But he wasn't my father.

I ran my fingers over my cold skin.

This face... it was mine now.

This smooth yet unyielding flesh—my own.

Seeing my reflection over and over had gradually blurred the memory of what I once looked like, before I came to this world.

"Abraham Starlight... Thin threads are desperately trying to bind me to you."

I had solved the riddle of the cryptic advice.

The system was toying with me—directly this time.

Unlike the first piece of advice I received in the Nightmare Lands, which had been nearly impossible to decipher, this one was laid bare before me.

As if the system was whispering, "Here. The answer is right in front of you."

And the answer was simple—Ada Starlight.

The first part of the advice mentioned estrogen, a female hormone.

"Same blood" referred to the bond of kinship between Ada and me.

And Tricell—that was the name of an organization from a well-known game (resident evil) I used to play in my previous world.

There was even a character named Ada who was part of it.

It was all painfully obvious.

Ada was the answer.

She was clearly planning something, but I had no idea how she was supposed to be the solution.

If Ada was my only way to survive, then I wouldn't hesitate to use her. However... I wanted to avoid that as much as possible.

That girl had helped me a lot—unlike everyone else who despised the original owner of this body and wished for his death.

For now..

I would find my own way—on my own terms.

"You seem lost in thought... A family reunion?"

A heavy voice cut through my thoughts, pulling me back to reality. I turned to find its source.

"Lord Baylor."

I stood beside the man who had shaped this family more than anyone else in the past century.

Baylor stepped forward, his gaze locked onto the image before us.

"Abraham Starlight... A star that burned brighter than any other. He lived his life at the very peak."

I responded slowly.

"Yes... And he died at the peak as well."

Baylor nodded, a faint smile playing on his lips.

"We all have our roles to play, Frey. Your father was entrusted with the greatest task of all, and he fulfilled it flawlessly, saving the entire empire."

"But he died in the end."

Baylor stepped closer—too close—his smile unwavering.

"Of course, he died. He was so powerful that many saw him as the true ruler of this world."

He paused for a moment, then continued.

"But he was just one man, with just one heart. And the heart... is far more fragile than most believe."

With his slender fingers, Baylor pressed against my chest.

Right where my heart was.

The moment he touched me, a familiar sensation surged through me.

A breath of cold air slipped from my lips as an icy grip coiled around my heart, tightening ever so slightly.

The curse—it was activating.

I forced myself to stay upright, cursing under my breath in every language I knew.

"So... it was you."

The worst-case scenario.

The one who had cursed this body—the bastard responsible for his own family's ruin—

Was standing right in front of me.

"Oh, dear Frey... It seems you've forgotten your role."

A sharp, searing pain tore through my skull as fragmented memories flooded my mind—memories that belonged to Frey.

"What the—?!"

Baylor's fingers tapped against my chest again, slow and deliberate, sending waves of unbearable cold through my body.

"You forced yourself into this game as an important piece... Now it's time to finish what you started."

I clenched my teeth, trying to grasp the meaning behind his words.

"Why would someone as powerful as you resort to such pathetic tricks? Aren't you the Lord of this damned family?"

I braced myself against the suffocating cold.

"If you want to kill me, then do it now!"

Baylor merely shook his head at my defiance.

"Why would I kill you, Frey Starlight?"

With a single touch, my legs buckled, and I collapsed to the ground, barely clinging to consciousness.

"You were the one who threw yourself into this mess, and for that, I am grateful. You have been the perfect whetstone for Drogo's daughter. And now... you will complete your task and finally rest in peace."

Darkness crept into my vision as his voice echoed in my ears.

"Three days from now, you will face your final battle against those in this family who wish for your death. I know, it's unfair... so I've decided to grant you a slight advantage in preparation."

Baylor Moonlight patted my back, his hypocrisy suffocating.

"I won't interfere in your battle, so don't worry—I won't be the one to decide your fate. But don't even think about running. If you do... the dagger lodged in your heart will tear you apart from the inside, and you will die in the most agonizing way imaginable. We wouldn't want that, would we?"

With one final tap on my chest, I felt my consciousness slip away, drowning in the abyss.

And the last thing I heard...

"Good luck with your final struggle. Make it entertaining."