

VILLAIN 152

Chapter 152 The Hollow

"Mergo! You damn bastard, do something about your Empyrean!"

After what had just happened, Ramiel Callistes was forced to act immediately.

The battlefield was in complete chaos.

Yet, the old man Mergo was utterly delighted.

"Why should I? Isn't it magnificent? Look at that purity, that body..."

Mergo's grin was truly terrifying.

"This is the true exalted form."

Ramiel Callistes was now completely serious.

Around his fists, a radiant holy power surged, stronger than ever before.

"Aura Mass."

Each hand carried the weight of a ton of raw force.

"Ah, this is wonderful..."

Mergo seemed entirely pleased.

"But it's enough."

Suddenly, Mergo vanished from in front of Melina and reappeared beside the raging white-haired Empyrean.

Ramiel Callistes stopped immediately the moment he saw him appear there.

Mergo truly was a master of spatial transportation, and now, he was standing next to his Empyrean.

Slowly, he placed one hand atop the young man's head, completely unfazed by his rampage.

"That's enough, Laurence... Return now."

Simple words, yet they acted like a sedative to the white-haired youth—Laurence.

Gradually, the light returned to his eyes, and a strange expression appeared on his face.

"Master Mergo..."

The old man gently patted the young man's head, turning his back to everyone.

Melina had already appeared behind them, aiming to strike both the old man and the youth alike.

But suddenly, Mergo's expression shifted.

BOOM!

Both Melina and Ramiel Callistes froze the moment they felt the pressure that shattered the very ground beneath them.

"Hey..."

The source of it was Mergo himself. In his current state, Melina could see it clearly—the horn protruding from the back of his head...

"Sorry, girl... but if you decide to lay a finger on this boy, then I might just get serious."

Mergo's words were no joke—the pressure he was exerting was overwhelming.

Yet Melina was just as insane, unleashing her full power as her claymore sword erupted with divine light.

'Hey, hey, hey... does she really plan to attack?!'

Callistes was bewildered by Melina's stance.

That woman was utterly reckless. They were supposed to be defending until Luc Valerion finished his preparation, yet she was plunging deeper into the fight than ever before.

"Hahaha... Come at me."

The two were about to clash.

On the other hand, Luc Valerion let out a sigh.

"I'm almost done..."

He would soon be able to teleport them all.

But his expression suddenly changed as he sensed something wrong.

A strange aura began to interfere with his magic, spreading throughout the entire area.

"What is this...?"

At that moment, everyone had already felt it.

A primal aura... a chill that gripped their hearts with unease.

A sensation they would only feel in the Nightmare Lands—the land where the strong devoured the weak.

Even the Ultras were caught off guard by what was happening.

In the heart of the ruined city of Yharnam, amidst all the blood and shattered remains...

Footsteps echoed through the silence.

A figure emerged slowly from the distance.

He carried an enormous weapon—a scythe that was also an axe.

Draped entirely in black from head to toe, his face was hidden beneath a mask reminiscent of those worn during the plagues of old.

An ancient hat rested atop his head.

The pressure of an SS-class entity that rivaled even the Lords themselves filled the air.

Mergo laughed foolishly, while Lindman frowned deeply.

"What is one of the Hollow doing here?"

And not just any Hollow...

"I never expected this chaos to lure him in... That beast, rarely seen and indifferent even to demons..."

"Ludwig... Son of the Cosmos."

The Hollow—a term given to an extremely rare few. Simply put, they were individuals or entities once offered the title of Lord... yet chose to reject it.

They were incredibly powerful, yet they moved alone...

This was one of them...

Ludwig the Cursed.

Wielding that massive scythe...

With a single swing—

Terrifying arcs materialized, spinning like razor-sharp blades.

These blades tore through the very ground, targeting everyone indiscriminately—

Both the Ultras and the Empire's forces alike.

"Oh, dear god..."

These slashes were no joke—

Strong enough to sever SS-rank Awakened in a single strike. Everyone had to block them with everything they had.

After parrying them with brute force, Mergo burst into laughter.

"This is getting out of hand..."

Ludwig the Cursed remained silent. It was said that he never spoke.

Rumors claimed he was raised in the Nightmare Lands—

That he lived there, surviving and growing stronger in that merciless realm.

They whispered that his father... was one of the most grotesque and powerful creatures of the Nightmare Lands..

There were many stories.

But one thing was certain—

This beast had come to hunt, indifferent to friend or foe alike.

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Some believed that all were equal at birth—

That life began at the same starting point for everyone, only for disparities to emerge later.

Others, however, believed that true equality only came in death.

But between these two beliefs, there were souls—souls of immeasurable worth—now standing on the brink of peril.

In the desolate city of Yharnam, the Empire's squad had already lost one of their own to the Ultras.

And now, Ludwig the Cursed had entered the battlefield—an enemy to all.

He remained silent.

Only his scythe spoke, carving through the air with merciless arcs, each swing birthing monstrous blades that sought to end lives without distinction.

Some blocked. Others dodged.

"That bastard..."

Melina moved, her sword glowing with divine light, aimed straight for Ludwig's neck.

Yet, at the last moment, she altered her strike—

Sensing Mergo closing in from behind.

"Where do you think you're going?"

Boom!

They clashed—

Melina, scowling. Mergo, grinning.

"Your opponent is right here."

Their battle intensified, both pressing in against each other—until Ludwig attacked them both, utterly indifferent to alliances.

His scythe's reach rivaled Melina claymore—

A single sweeping arc sent her and Mergo crashing through multiple buildings.

"Haha... He really doesn't care who he cuts down."

Mergo emerged from the debris, dusting himself off, his expression shifting.

'Should I just kill him?'

Slash!

More razor-sharp waves came for him.

With a flicker, Mergo vanished—his teleportation making evasion effortless.

'Ugh... just another mess for me to deal with.'

The battlefield descended into further chaos.

Mist Umbra was barely holding off Gavid Lindman.

The assassin had sacrificed his greatest strength the moment he revealed himself—yet even so, he remained a lethal force.

Given the right opportunity, Mist Umbra could assassinate anyone.

But today, that opportunity was out of reach.

"There is no point in struggling, assassin."

"..."

Gavid's phantom blade was swift—

Several fresh cuts marred Mist's body.

"You're all dead today."

"We'll see about that."

Mist retaliated.

His wounds sealed as fast as they were inflicted—his body mending itself instantly.

All thanks to Archbishop Ramiel Callistes, who kept healing his allies while simultaneously obstructing those wielding demonic power.

He wasn't the backbone of the team for nothing.

"Hey, mage! How long are we waiting?!"

Callistes' irritation was growing—

Something about this whole situation felt wrong.

Luc Valerion was equally displeased.

"That damned Hollow ruined everything... just what is this cursed aura?"

He tried analyzing Ludwig's energy—

It was neither human nor demonic.

It was something else entirely.

Something he couldn't suppress.

Luc's expression darkened as intricate magic circles formed around him.

"Hey, you..."

Callistes was startled to see him readying battle magic.

Luc didn't waste words—his voice resonated in everyone's minds.

"Listen up—things have changed.

We're not escaping as long as that bastard is here."

"There's no time to explain.

We either take him down—

Or drive him away!"

His words struck like a hammer.

The others grimaced—

They were already engaged in brutal combat.

Now, they had to contend with a Hollow on top of it?

High above, Luc Valerion spread his arms wide—

And unleashed a roaring inferno.

"Flame Magic: Titan's Inferno."

The sky blazed—

An ocean of fire surged, rushing downward in a catastrophic torrent.

Ludwig slowly lifted his gaze.

The Hollow did not move.

He merely swung his scythe—

A single arc cleaved through the flames, splitting the inferno in two.

Then, in a single leap, he was behind Luc.

Too fast.

And with one clean stroke—

He cut the mage in half.

But Luc's body shattered into lightning—

A blinding flash striking Ludwig as a legion of identical figures appeared, surrounding him.

"Supreme Art: Elements Festival."

Each clone unleashed a different elemental attack, striking Ludwig from all sides with a barrage of destructive forces.

Explosions erupted across the battlefield, illuminating the dark sky with bursts of chaotic energy.

"Looks like he's finally taking this seriously."

Luc Valerion's assault was no joke.

And yet, for some reason, it had no effect on Ludwig.

The cursed Hollow seemed visibly annoyed.

He had plenty of targets to kill.

In that moment, everyone heard it—a distinct grinding of teeth beneath Ludwig's mask, followed by a surge of aura so overwhelming that the entire battlefield felt like it had been swallowed by its weight.

Their faces turned grim.

"No way... Is he actually going to do it?"

Ludwig's aura continued to swell, forming an eerie, ancient clockwork sigil around him, its design reminiscent of an old Roman timepiece.

Slowly, its hands began to turn.

"Ha... Hollows really are insane."

Mergo braced himself.

They were all elites, yet they couldn't fight freely with their allies so close by.

Unleashing an ultimate attack in this situation was reckless.

But Ludwig didn't care.

And now, that ominous clock covered all of Yharnam.

Luc Valerion's voice rang out in desperation.

"Everyone, move! NOW!"

Hovering in the sky, Ludwig swung his scythe, unleashing his attack.

"Jacob's Ladder."

From afar, one could witness the sheer terror of the descending force—a devastating pillar of annihilation pouring from above.

It spread over kilometers, quaking the land, leveling mountains.

Ancient Yharnam... was erased.

For minutes, Jacob's Ladder continued its descent, its celestial clock turning in eerie synchrony.

That immense, ruinous energy reduced everything to ashes, ending the city's long-standing history in a single stroke.

Then, silence.

As the clock stopped, so did the destruction.

Where Yharnam once stood, only a vast, gaping crater remained, as if a meteor had struck the land.

Suspended in the sky, Ludwig's hollow, soulless eyes surveyed the aftermath.