

## **VILLAIN 161**

Chapter 161 The Island Trial (1)

— Frey Starlight's Pov —

The first day back at the temple since my return...

I was a full month behind the others in training.

And not only that—I'd be facing upper-year students in an exam I knew nothing about.

I needed to finalize my preparations for the Victoriad...

And I seriously started to question whether I had enough.

The skills I had stored until now—

Phantom Steps

Hawk Eyes

Ascension

Ignition...

These were all meant to help me deal with the protagonist, Snow.

Except for Ignition. I was hesitant to use it at first because of its overwhelming power—and the severe side effects.

I really began to wonder if the other skills would be enough.

I had no time left to try and obtain another one.

So I had no choice but to rely on these skills, along with my Ten Thousand Steps of Shadow technique.

That was all I could count on—for now. The mysterious ability I had received from the system still remained inactive:

Shadow Adaptation: 0/7...

I let out a tired sigh as I stepped out of my room, dressed in my temple robes.

"...It's fine. Even if it kills me... I'll win."

I headed to the classroom, my mind weighed down by heavy thoughts.

While I was walking, lost in them, someone suddenly smacked me hard on the back.

I'd sensed him coming from a distance, but I didn't expect that kind of welcome.

"You're finally back! A whole damn month, man!"

"Hey Danzo... where do you get all this energy in the morning?"

"This is how a real man should be... You're the one acting like a sissy."

"There you go again with that description..."

"It's your fault. That face of yours isn't helping."

I thought I looked intimidating now—with my white hair and new features—but Danzo clearly had a different opinion.

We walked together, blending into the crowd of students.

"It's been a while since I attended a temple class..."

As soon as I said that, Danzo stopped me.

"Ah—guess you haven't heard. There are no morning classes today."

"What do you mean?"

He replied as we continued walking.

"Today's the announcement. I mean the announcement—the test that leads to the Victoriad."

The moment I heard Danzo's words, I stopped in place.

"Today?"

"Yeah..."

I was genuinely surprised.

Was I really getting my answer this fast?

It seemed the Victoriad would begin earlier than usual this time.

Just thinking about it sent a shiver down my spine—a mixture of emotions.

Excitement. Anticipation. Fear.

It was close... closer than ever before.

...

...

...

Danzo led me to a massive coliseum-like structure that had clearly been built recently.

Inside, a huge number of temple students had already gathered.

All of them were waiting for the grand announcement, which would take place any moment now.

Apparently, the entire empire would be watching what was about to unfold.

"For real... how did I not know something like this was coming?"

Sansa hadn't said a word. Was this her idea of a joke?

As we entered, I followed Danzo to the seats that had been prepared for us.

There, I spotted a few familiar faces.

From afar, I noticed my fellow assassin, Ghost. He did the same and gave me a slight nod.

Class A was seated around him... and at the very front sat the one destined to be my greatest obstacle—Snow.

He looked the same as the last time I saw him... but I could tell he'd grown stronger.

On the other hand, Class B was seated nearby as well. Everyone seemed as usual—except for one person who looked different this time.

Ragna Cloud. He looked completely devastated.

Danzo noticed too, and explained with a grim expression:

"Ragna... His father died in the recent raid against the Ultras. It hit him hard..."

I nodded.

Isaac Cloud. After his death, things had been difficult for Ragna.

When the live was cut recently, the empire had been dominating the Ultras. So imagine what it was like for Ragna to learn his father died right after that...

It must've been hard, especially since he had no idea what had actually happened there. He didn't even know who killed his father—Lawrence.

I decided to keep my distance. His situation didn't concern me.

What mattered to me... was the announcement that was about to be made.

As if responding to my thoughts—

The temple's new instructors stepped up to the platform, signaling the beginning of the long-awaited event.

The new instructors entered one after another, each in a majestic manner, radiating powerful auras.

It was hard to recognize most of them, since many things had changed compared to the original story...

But I couldn't help focusing on that young man who walked in slightly later than the others.

Brown hair... blazing crimson eyes on a still youthful face... his stance was flawless, his robes dignified, and that fiery aura surrounding him...

How could I not recognize him?

"I see you've already noticed," Danzo remarked, catching my gaze.

"How could I not?"

Danzo nodded.

"He's become an instructor here at the temple. The youngest ever to earn that title, at only 25 years old."

"Phoenix Sunlight..."

Danzo chuckled just thinking about it.

"He's the youngest ever to break into the SS rank at that age. Only one person in history surpassed him—your father, Abraham Starlight."

I listened carefully to Danzo's words. Abraham was someone I knew nothing about. According to what I had written, Phoenix Sunlight was supposed to be the greatest prodigy of all.

His talent was simply supernatural.

To put it in perspective...

Frost Moonlight had won the Victoriád three times and lost it three times as well. Yet he was still considered a prodigy among his peers. He was simply lucky not to have been in the same generation as Phoenix.

After all, Phoenix had won the Victoriád six times—an undefeated record.

Seeing such an influential figure standing right in front of me, in the flesh...

Even I felt a bit of excitement.

But Phoenix wasn't the point.

What truly mattered was the event about to be announced.

As if waiting for the perfect moment, Headmaster Ivar appeared along with his aides, immediately stealing the spotlight.

He stood there, releasing his overwhelming aura. Somehow, I could feel his lightning aura clashing with Phoenix's flame—competing for dominance. It was quite a thrilling sight.