

VILLAIN 173

Chapter 173 Clash of the Elite (2)

Far to the west...

A full day had passed since the start of the exam.

A young man was running like mad.

He was terrified—his body covered in wounds, his weapon lost.

And if you looked closely... it was clear those injuries had been inflicted by a human weapon—not a nightmare creature.

The young man, a bit older than most, screamed out:

"Stop! Why are you chasing me?!"

He was in full panic.

"What did I even do?!"

He kept yelling, but no answer came.

In fact, there didn't seem to be anyone at all...

But that wasn't true.

In a blink, a shadow swelled beneath his feet.

From that black void, a young man emerged—jet-black hair, with eyes just as dark and terrifying.

Ghost grabbed the guy immediately, dragging him into the darkness as the latter screamed.

Darkness swallowed them whole.

"Agh... wh-where am I...?"

The boy was trembling in fear.

Ghost held him tight, a dagger pressed to his throat.

"I won't repeat myself. You better answer right away. Understand me?"

The boy was frozen.

"W-what do you want?!"

"Frey Starlight."

The atmosphere changed instantly at the mention of the name.

"What are you and your group planning? What's your objective? What are you hiding?"

The boy—clearly a third-year and part of the extremist faction targeting Frey—shifted completely once Frey's name was brought up.

"Death to that bastard."

Ghost immediately threw him to the ground.

"Seems like you don't understand your position."

Ghost stepped toward him again.

"You're inside my shadow now. A space cut off from the outside world—no one out there will see or hear what happens in here."

His voice was cold.

"Look at me. I'm an assassin. I can pluck your damned eyes out one by one and torture you—and trust me, your stupid shield won't activate. So think very carefully before you speak again."

Ghost's presence was suffocating, and the terrified boy was already trembling violently.

But still, he didn't back down.

"Fuck you... and fuck Frey Starlight too."

"You fool. You don't value your life..."

Stab!

"Huh? AAAAAAGHH!"

The boy's scream tore through the void as Ghost drove his dagger into his left eye.

Blood streamed down the young man's face like a waterfall.

"I don't understand why you people make things so difficult for yourselves..."

Ghost muttered in frustration as he pulled out the red eyeball.

"How much do you need to bleed before you talk? Is the Moonlight family really this blind?"

He was clearly irritated—it showed in the way he spoke more than usual. Meanwhile, the other young man screamed in agony.

"Damn you, damn you, damn you! It hurts! It hurts! It hurts!"

Ghost kicked him hard in the face.

"Shut up. I haven't even started yet."

"Why?! Why are you doing this?!"

Blood mixed with tears as the boy sobbed violently.

"Both my parents died in that attack... I lost everything! All because of the Ultras..."

He broke down completely.

"They wouldn't have come if it weren't for that bastard Frey! He's working with them!"

Ghost's expression darkened the moment he heard those words.

"You actually believe that nonsense?"

But the young man wasn't finished.

"You! You're working with him too!"

"...Hah?"

"You're all gonna die! All of you! Frey won't leave this island alive!"

The boy laughed maniacally.

"He won't make it out! The elders will kill him! Then they'll come for you too! You'll all die!"

"The Elders...?"

"Die! Die! Die!"

Slash !

Ghost cut through the boy's neck with surgical precision. His blade severed the carotid artery, ending the young man's life in an instant.

He didn't even give his armor time to activate.

Ghost's face was grim as he silently stepped away.

"The Elders..."

What exactly was that man talking about?

Annoyed, Ghost continued his hunt—crossing one more off his list.

All except for the instructor he couldn't reach...

On this island, the assassin was far more terrifying than any nightmare beast.

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– Frey Starlight's POV –

Two days since the start of the exam.

Ding!

—Rankings Updated!—

I glanced at my wristwatch, exhaustion written all over my face.

I'd been moving like a madman for the past two days.

When was the last time I pushed myself this hard?

At this point, getting hunted by third-years every time they saw me had become a daily routine.

Maybe I'll just eliminate all of them before the month ends.

It was getting irritating now, especially since their elites had started to appear.

One-on-one, I could handle them easily.

But when they ganged up on me like this...

It got tricky—and the new injuries on my body were proof of that.

I needed to find a way to stop this... The exam was far from over.

With a tired expression, I checked the updated leaderboard.

10 – Dawn Polaris: 460 points

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5 – Jessica Thivenin: 640 points

4 – Magnus Grell: 700 points

3 – Frey Starlight: 780 points

2 – Snow Lionheart: 850 points

1 – Daemen Valerion: 870 points

(You can now spend 500 points to locate a participant of your choice!)

"Seriously..."

Snow and Daemon... what the hell are they on?

I've been fighting like a maniac for two whole days, and they're still ahead by that much?

Trying to compete with monsters like them is pure foolishness.

Right now... I just need to make sure I qualify.

I took a deep breath and surged forward, cloaked in the aura of darkness.

All that matters... is that I'm the one who wins in the end.

The students' suffering... was entertainment for others.

The events of the island were now being broadcast across the entire Empire.

People cheered for their favorite champions.

The fierce battles between students became a breathtaking spectacle to their eyes.

"Wow, Snow Leonhart is insane! Did you see how he took those things down?"

"But... Daemon's still ahead."

"Oh, and Frey's amazing too!"

Citizens discussed everything in taverns and cafés like it was some kind of football championship.

Even the higher-ups joined in.

The headmaster observed everything with keen interest, surrounded by a group of instructors.

"Your son is truly something, Headmaster Ivar. Just as expected."

"Indeed!"

The instructors praised their superior, though he remained stern.

"He still has a long way to go."

The others didn't argue—pleasing this man was nearly impossible.

"But the first-years this time are strange... they've completely overshadowed everyone else. Maybe we should've sent them to the other island instead, haha."

One of the instructors laughed.

Looking at the island where fourth to sixth-years had been sent...

Things there were far worse.

The battles were on an entirely different level.

Ellen White had blown up an entire mountain simply because it blocked her path to the objective point.

The Saintess Candidate, Uriel Platini, had cleansed most of the nightmare beasts in her area.

The monsters from the other Student Council...

It was pure chaos over there.

The instructors kept debating the situation nonstop.

Meanwhile, the headmaster continued watching—his gaze focused more intensely on certain individuals than others.

Among them...

"Isn't that Frey Starlight?"

One of the instructors pointed out.

"He's doing great... but unfortunately..."

The man shrugged.

"His talent's only ranked A. I doubt he'll go much further than this."

Ivar said nothing.

Talent ranks and aptitude limits... those were seen as absolute truths.

"What a shame..."

To have someone like Frey buried beneath a trash-tier talent.

That's probably what he thought.

Of course... he had no idea that Frey's talent had already changed.

If he did... that stern face of his would've collapsed into something else entirely.

The Island Trial... was still far from over—and promised much more to come.