

VILLAIN 183

Chapter 183: Approaching the End

—Frey Starlight's Pov—

For the first time in what felt like forever,

I actually felt alive—as my muscles slowly relaxed beneath the cold water.

It had been raining for weeks across this forsaken island.

Naturally, the river Daemon and I were sitting in was freezing.

But the chill helped soothe the tension in my body,

Easing the fatigue—if only slightly.

And ever since the Moonlight incident, I'd started to prefer the cold anyway.

As if my body had changed somehow after enduring that curse for so long...

Silence lingered between me and Daemon.

Minutes passed slowly.

Eventually, he was the first to move.

He stood—showing off that hulking physique of his—and began to leave.

"Leaving already?"

I asked casually.

Daemon responded in the same indifferent tone.

"There's no point in sharing space with someone like you.

I won't attack you now—

But if I see you again...

"I'll crush you."

This was the second time I'd crossed paths with Daemon on this island—

The first was during our three-way battle with Magnus.

And now... this.

"I wonder...

Are you really capable of that?

Crushing me?"

Daemon wasn't fazed by the provocation.

To him, my words meant nothing.

"Crushing someone like you is easy..."

Frey Starlight.

"You're hollow."

My expression shifted slightly at that.

"Hollow?"

"You're just an empty vessel."

Your ambition begins and ends in the same place.

You're chasing something trivial—something handed to you by someone else.

I can see it clearly in those dead eyes of yours."

He strapped on his armor,

Not even bothering to look back.

"You're not a real warrior, Frey Starlight.

You're not even worthy of a real fight.

My dragon will swallow your pathetic serpent whole."

"..."

I was left in silence,

With no words to respond.

Daemon Valerion had already vanished in a crackle of lightning.

But those words—

"Empty vessel, huh?"

I closed my eyes and slowly sank deeper into the cold water.

He was right.

I really was just an empty shell.

Compared to people like Daemon, or Snow...

Even the other elites—

My passion,

My entire struggle,

It all revolved around the Victoriad.

As a person—

I had no dreams. No desires in this world.

Because I'm not Frey Starlight.

But he was wrong about one thing—

This "trivial" goal of mine...

The pain I've endured...

The sacrifices I've made to reach it—

If you belittle that,

If you mock what I'm willing to give up for this so-called meaningless dream...

You won't even realize when the serpent coils around your proud dragon's neck.

I rose from the water slowly.

Step by step.

My skin was spotless—

A nearly perfect athletic body, pale and unmarred.

But the number of scars carved into this body...

Hadn't truly disappeared.

Ever since the Shadow Sect incident,

My body had begun to regenerate flawlessly—leaving no marks behind.

Without that passive ability...

What would I even look like by now?

I lowered my gaze, staring at that body.

I could still see them.

Hundreds of wounds.

Tears.

Bruises.

And I would keep getting more of them—

Until I achieved that "trivial" goal they all laughed at.

Winning the Victoriad.

And finding my way back to my world—

To my home.

I strapped on my armor at once,

Then dashed back into the forest's towering trees.

I needed to find the princess—

And fast.

...

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Later... not far from the river where Frey had bathed...

A group of figures appeared all at once, led by a young man with a massive frame and blazing orange hair.

"Where is he?"

Magnus Greil scanned the area with a sharp gaze.

He was answered by the slim, sharp-eyed Raegan.

"He was here, but he keeps moving. Makes it harder to track him down."

Though they had located Frey multiple times using the tracking feature,

he never stayed in one place long enough—

the smartwatch only displayed his last known location.

So by the time they arrived, he'd already moved.

This same situation had repeated several times over the past two days.

And because of that...

The third-years had lost a considerable number of points.

"This is pointless if we keep going like this..."

Magnus spoke as calmly as he could, though his patience was clearly wearing thin.

"We split up from here. Use all your points if necessary.

We'll surround every location he shows up at.

Once anyone finds him—send the signal immediately."

"Understood!"

Everyone responded without hesitation, pushing deeper into the forest.

Meanwhile, Frey Starlight had already covered a significant distance...

But the students weren't the only ones roaming the island.

The professors moved constantly in the shadows, keeping a close watch.

The most active of them all was Phoenix, who had been assigned to oversee the Lady of Eight Legs.

In case of emergency, he had permission to eliminate her entirely—

And that prodigy was certainly capable of doing it.

But because of that responsibility, Phoenix Sunlight had been completely restricted—

He no longer roamed freely like he had at the start of the exam.

And because of that—

The time had finally come...

For the hidden powers lurking in the shadows to make their move.

On the golden shores of the desolate island...

A well-dressed man with jet-black hair strolled forward, wearing a crisp formal suit.

His glasses shimmered under the darkened sky.

Facing him now stood another man—muscular, with a thick white beard.

It was Professor Kaiser Moonlight, alongside another figure...

"What's the situation?"

Kaiser asked.

The man before him responded:

"The coordinates have been set.

With the prince's assistance, the final stage is ready.

We'll end this on the last day of the exam."

Kaiser nodded silently.

He clenched his fist, recalling the destruction of his family.

"I'll kill every last one of them...

Everyone responsible."

Because of that night,

Kaiser had lost his only brother.

His family was nearly wiped out.

Even the lord of House Moonlight—once their greatest power—was gone.

And there was only one person they held responsible...

"Frey Starlight."

Some within the Moonlight family were convinced he was the cause.

Though many disagreed—choosing instead to blame the Ultras entirely.

The old man before him stroked his beard, sensing his companion's unrest.

"There's not much time left. Stay focused.

Our job isn't over yet—Mist's son keeps attacking our allies."

Kaiser's expression darkened at the name.

"Why would the son of that assassin get involved in this?"

And how the hell does he even know who our people are?"

The old man shook his head.

"If I had that answer, I would've dealt with it already."

Ghost was proving to be an unpredictable threat—

And at the moment, they couldn't risk taking any direct action against him.

"If he finds out about our plan...

If he tells Frey Starlight...

Everything could fall apart."

Kaiser trusted the Moonlight students wouldn't betray him...

But who could say what might happen?

He took a breath—then made a decision.

"Keep him away from Frey Starlight.

Use the same method as before."

The old man understood immediately and nodded.

"Understood. I'll leave now—being seen together for too long will raise suspicion."

Kaiser said nothing.

He simply watched his companion vanish as if into thin air.

"I'll be waiting..."

For the day of reckoning,

Old friend."

Kaiser Moonlight continued his patrol across the island—

As if nothing had happened.

But the final days of the exam...

Promised far more than anyone could imagine.