

VILLAIN 186

Chapter 186 A Quiet Night

- Day 22 since the Island Trial began -

We didn't sleep that night.

Sansa stayed awake.

As for me, it had become a habit.

Jessica Thivenin still hadn't returned. Other than that, our day was rather uneventful.

Sometimes, I'd go out and kill any Nightmare creature that got too close.

Sansa always accompanied me, quietly watching from behind.

Then we'd spend the rest of the night chatting about trivial things...

Conversations the princess deeply cherished. Ever since I stepped onto the island's lands, I found myself speaking more and more—like a sealed well had finally found its lid.

Ding!

The rankings had been updated.

Sansa and I stared at the new board:

10 - Raegan Zenen: 2500 points

9 - Ragna Cloud: 2900 points

8 - Dawn Polaris: 2980 points

7 - Magnus Grell: 3000 points

6 - Ghost Umbra: 3100 points

5 - Danzo Smasher: 3160 points

4 - Frey Starlight: 3450 points

3 - Seris Moonlight: 3500 points

2 - Snow Lionheart: 5200 points

1 - Daemon Valerion: 5250 points

Both of us stared silently at the list...

The situation had completely flipped.

I was still ranked fourth, even after spending 500 points to find Sansa. Not to mention, I'd done nothing ever since staying with her.

But I wasn't the only one.

Magnus and Raegan—third-year students—had both dropped drastically.

A clear sign they were actively searching for me.

It was only a matter of time before they reached my location.

Sansa was smart too. She had probably figured that much out already.

Day 23 was right around the corner.

"I'll have to start moving soon..."

I couldn't stay by Sansa's side forever.

A single week could flip the rankings completely, especially with the narrowing point gap.

"I know... but we have to wait for Jessica now," Sansa replied.

To gather points efficiently and properly deal with those targeting me, I needed help from the second years.

"Don't worry. She'll come at the right time."

Sansa reassured me. But as I glanced at her, I noticed the dark circles under her eyes too.

The atmosphere was completely silent—the rain had stopped some time ago.

"I know it's a bit late to ask, but... don't you sleep?"

Even I needed rest every now and then, let alone Sansa, whose body was relatively frail.

The princess shook her head at the mention.

"I can't sleep... not when we don't know what might happen."

Her words carried many meanings.

You could take it as staying alert in case of a sudden attack.

But I vividly remembered that day—when she sleepwalked in that white dress...

Just... what is the princess sitting next to me hiding?

I had no answer to that.

"What about you, Frey? How long are you planning to keep playing this staying-awake contest with me?"

"I don't know. It's just become a habit."

Being on my own for so long had made me constantly alert.

But the current situation wasn't something I was used to.

"You can sleep if you want. I'm always awake anyway."

"It's fine. No need for that."

"No... you need to, if you want to keep going later."

Sansa pulled my head gently and placed it on her lap.

I hadn't seen that coming at all.

With my head resting on her thigh—much softer than any pillow—I stared up at her with a blank expression.

"What are you doing right now?"

She looked a little disappointed at my flat reaction... but she didn't seem too bothered.

It takes more than that to rattle me.

Instead of focusing on that, she answered my question.

"I'm helping you fall asleep."

"This doesn't help at all..."

"Just close your eyes..."

With her hand gently covering them, everything turned dark.

Her touch was ice cold... yet unbelievably soft—enough to send a chill through my entire body.

Lying there like that, the whole situation felt oddly surreal.

It was the first time I'd been in such a position here.

"I told you... this doesn't help."

"Then stop talking already."

Seconds passed. Then minutes.

Sansa never moved her hand. I couldn't even tell what kind of expression she was making anymore.

Adriana had been asleep for a while, so she hadn't seen any of this. If she had, she probably would've intervened by now.

My thoughts started to drift...

The Victoriad. Aegon. The third years. The Moonlight family...

There was still so much I had to deal with.

So much I needed to do.

I couldn't allow myself to rest like this.

I couldn't...

But little by little... everything fell silent.

Sansa smiled softly as she lifted her hand from my eyes.

I hadn't even noticed when I lost consciousness... resting on the princess's lap.

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That night... I had a dream.

I saw him—my father. He used to come home exhausted every day.

I remembered how he supported me in everything I ever tried to do, no matter how pointless it seemed.

Even when I decided to write a completely fictional novel, he never mocked me for it. Instead, he would ask me to tell him about the story I was writing. Even if he had no real interest in it... he always pretended to care.

Little things like that... meant the world to me.

Behind him... my mother... my siblings... everyone I'd ever known...

Suddenly, they all began to fade away.

I ran after them in a panic—but my legs felt heavy... like I was running through mud. I kept trying to catch up... again and again...

No...

Don't go...

Please...

No...

Slowly...

I returned to reality.

"...Sansa."

My memories began to resurface—how I'd fallen asleep on her lap...

She was looking at me, eyes wide in surprise.

I didn't understand why—until I felt the dampness at the corners of my eyes.

"Frey, you..."

I sat up quickly, wiping my face.

"..."

Sansa stared at me for a while.

Had I... been crying?

I didn't want to be seen like that...

So I tried to brush it off as best I could.

"How long was I asleep?"

It was still night... I didn't think I'd been out for long.

"It's dawn now. You've been asleep for about three to four hours."

That long?

I frowned, annoyed at myself.

How could I let myself fall so easily?

"It's fine... at least you look a bit better now."

The princess smiled.

And just a little... the bags beneath my eyes had eased.

I touched my face, trying to get a grip on myself.

Sansa stood up.

She hadn't slept at all.

"It's still early. You can go back to sleep if you'd like."

I shook my head instantly.

"No... I've had enough."

Any more than that, and I'd be crossing a line.

I was about to say something to the princess standing before me, but I stopped.

She, too, seemed unsettled.

"They're here..."