

VILLAIN 194

Chapter 194 Preliminaries Results

The young man closed his eyes, distancing himself—if only briefly—from the hell he'd endured.

The students gathered around Frey Starlight, casting silent glances at him.

Some couldn't bear the sight for long and quickly looked away.

Others stared with a mix of sympathy, and some with complete confusion.

His injuries were grotesque—his bones jutted out, and his internal organs were partially visible.

Among them, two girls stepped forward.

Phoenix noticed them immediately.

"Stay where you are."

At his command, Clana Starlight and Emilia Atarax froze in place.

"Ah... we only want to help. I—I'm family with Frey..."

Seeing the troubled girl shaken by Frey's state, and the frightened girl trailing behind her, Phoenix recognized a familiar aura.

"Holy aura... Are you from the Church, by any chance?"

Startled by his question, Emilia flinched. Phoenix's overwhelming presence made her nervous, but she still stammered her answer.

"Y-Yes... I'm the Saintess Candidate from Year One... I can... help him..."

Her voice lacked confidence. After all, she had never seen someone so broken before.

"Very well, then."

Phoenix stepped aside, allowing her to proceed. Clana stood behind her, watching in distress.

Thanks to their teamwork, the two had managed to survive thus far.

As Emilia channeled her healing power into Frey's body, her expression darkened.

She closed her eyes tightly, horrified by what she discovered.

"His body... how is he even still alive?"

The extent of his injuries was absurd—it was difficult to find a single unscathed spot.

She poured her aura into him, doing her best, but even she couldn't do much—especially for his destroyed aura pathways.

She had heard of warriors damaging their pathways from overusing their powers...

But in Frey's case, it was like trying to push an elephant through the eye of a needle.

"I can heal his external wounds, but his aura pathways..."

Her tone shifted—gone was her usual childish demeanor, replaced with cold seriousness.

"I don't think he'll ever be able to fight again."

"..."

Phoenix said nothing.

He had already come to the same conclusion.

Frey Starlight's body wouldn't be able to endure another battle—he knew that.

But he didn't want to accept it, not yet.

At least for now, he wanted to honor the resolve of the boy who had crawled through hell just to finish the exam.

That night, everyone present was left with far more questions than answers.

The massive explosion that shook the entire island...

Frey Starlight's near-death state...

People like Daemon Valerion didn't care what happened to Frey. Their minds never connected him to that explosion—it was something they saw as far beyond him.

"If he can't fight anymore... then that's his limit."

With those words, Daemon walked off, followed by the other students, one by one.

Ghost's mind was blank as he stared at the collapsed figure before him.

Once, the silent assassin had chosen Frey Starlight as his light.

He wanted to be his shadow—for the brighter the light, the darker the shadow that followed.

But now that light had dimmed. No—perhaps it had been extinguished entirely.

Had he made the wrong choice? Was picking Frey over the likes of Snow and Daemon just foolishness?

Or maybe... maybe he was the one unworthy of being Frey's shadow.

He no longer knew.

And unlike those who pitied him...

Prince Aegon watched with a different emotion.

Kaiser and Kaen Moonlight were dead.

Erased, really.

Even the tools he had provided them with weren't enough to save them.

But Frey Starlight... was still alive.

Aegon placed his hand over his face, trying to hide the twisted expression growing on it.

"How?"

How did he survive?

"What happened?"

The prince had imagined countless scenarios—yet not a single one of them had come true.

"Did someone help him from the shadows?"

Unlikely. Aegon had prepared far too well for such interference.

This was supposed to be checkmate.

At best, he expected Frey to escape with his life.

But he hadn't run.

He'd killed his opponents.

Aegon felt something strange. For the first time...

He didn't understand.

He stood before a question mark, blank and immense.

Even if Frey was most likely crippled now...

That boy had won.

And worse... Aegon didn't even know how.

The prince turned and walked away—angry for the first time in a long, long time.

Final Rankings – Island Trial:

1. Daemon Valerion – 6450 points

2. Snow Lionheart – 6430 points

3. Frey Starlight – 4500 points

4. Seris Moonlight – 4400 points

5. Danzo Smasher – 3900 points

6. Ghost Umbra – 3880 points

7. Dawn Polaris – 3700 points

8. Ragna Cloud – 3650 points

9. Magnus Grell – 3400 points

10. Clana Starlight – 3000 points

The official qualifiers had finally been decided.

Daemon Valerion won the Island Trial after an intense duel with Snow Lionheart.

But the son of Ivar found no joy in his victory. Instead, he exchanged a silent look with Snow.

"We'll settle this properly in the next round."

That battle-hardened pride of his wouldn't rest until he'd defeated Snow in a true head-to-head.

Snow, still disturbed by the sight of Frey's broken body earlier, responded with a golden aura surging around him.

"Don't worry... I'll make sure to shatter that pride of yours."

The qualifiers had ended, but the crowd was now eager for the true beginning:

The main event of the Victoriad—Elimination Rounds.

The most anticipated phase.

Battles held before their very eyes, on a grand stage.

The public, who had only seen what Ivar allowed them to see, remained blind to the truth.

They had no idea about what truly happened on that island.

They didn't know about the dark side of the exam that had claimed the lives of so many students.

While the overall numbers fell within "expected casualties," the number of permanent injuries was unusually high.

In contrast, the exam held for the upper years had gone far better.

Where only 28 students out of 500 from the first three years survived, over 100 passed from the fourth through sixth years.

As for the top rank? It was claimed by the Student Council President, Ellen White, who earned an absurd 9000 points.

Having already won the Victoriad five times, she now stood one step away from matching Phoenix Sunlight's record, on the path toward her sixth star.

These headlines dominated the spotlight.

And like that, a full day passed.

A day in which the students were finally returned to safety.

Among them...

Frey Starlight remained unconscious, lying among the many injured.

Phoenix Sunlight had personally shielded him from the public eye, allowing him to escape unwanted attention—for now.

Many of the instructors were left bewildered by what had transpired.

Thankfully, the idea that someone as "weak" as Frey Starlight could be tied to such a disaster seemed far-fetched.

To make matters worse, two Temple professors had died under mysterious circumstances.

Many of the sharpest minds had reached the same conclusion—

that they were erased by that previous explosion.

Between this and that... the case was quietly closed, with no clear answers.

And at long last, the countdown had begun.