

## VILLAIN 271

### Chapter 271: The Battle of Moon Castle (3)

Moon Castle shook violently, as if a powerful earthquake had struck its very foundations.

Within the dark domain unleashed by Sansa, the battlefield felt like outer space .. deprived of all light.

The only illumination came from the blazing auras of Oliver Khan and Frey Starlight, who flanked the princess from both sides, pressing in from the right and left in a coordinated attempt to cut her down.

In response, the shadows around Sansa coiled tightly, forming a black, iron-like dome of pure darkness.

Both Oliver and Frey struck it relentlessly, launching a torrent of blows .. each slash leaving behind afterimages and trails of fire as their weapons clashed violently with the strange, metallic barrier.

With a wave of her hand, the dome erupted in jagged spikes, repelling both of them.

"A pitiful struggle."

The thing inside Sansa scoffed, its crimson eyes glowing brighter as pulsating black veins spread violently across her pale skin.

The demon had always harbored a singular obsession .. an all-consuming instinct etched into every fiber of its being:

"Kill the Emperor."

That thought wasn't just a desire .. it was a command, embedded into its very existence. He couldn't deny it, even if it wanted to.

Unlike Frey and Oliver, who fought to confront the threat before them, the demon saw this entire battle as nothing more than a warm-up... a prelude to the real battle against Maekar Valerion.

And he had no time to waste.

Moving freely through Sansa's body, the demon let out a nightmarish scream. The shadows around it convulsed .. then exploded outward in the form of burning skulls, their jaws wide open as if ready to devour everything in their path.

"This is insane..." Frey muttered, surrounded by an endless wave of flaming skulls.

"Don't stop!!"

Oliver Khan roared, dashing into the storm of destruction with a flicker of ethereal movement—using his phantasmal form to block the incoming barrage.

Frey followed without hesitation.

"Ten Thousand Steps of Shadow: The Black cutter! "

Taking advantage of Oliver's lead, Frey unleashed hundreds of dark slashes, colliding with the swarm of skulls.

The battlefield descended into utter chaos.

Sansa and Frey clashed directly, aura against aura, while Oliver remained caught in the center of it all.

Fuelled by his blood form and aura amplification granted by Dark Sister, Frey grinned as he maintained his relentless assault.

"You want a war of attrition?"

His voice barely carried over the deafening roars of the continuous explosions .. the result of every clash between skulls and his black arcs.

"I can do this all day!"

With an inexhaustible SSS rank aura pool, and the power of Dark Sister amplifying every strike .. along with Oliver covering him .. Frey unleashed a storm of attacks, moving at a speed too fast for the bare eye to follow.

Oliver Khan watched it all, eyes wide open.

"He's matching a high-tier Wave Controller in ranged combat... blow for blow."

Not to mention the sheer volume and purity of aura his body emitted...

Frey Starlight's evaluation had risen sharply in Oliver's mind. He was certain now ..this boy could go head-to-head with any awakened SS- class .

Oliver had no choice but to give it everything he had .. he refused to be outshined by someone barely half his age.

Meanwhile, a deep scowl spread across Sansa's face .. the demon inside her growing frustrated.

Frey had completely countered him, forcing it to draw even more power against the defiant youth.

But the moment it did ..

Oliver struck.

A clean blow tore through Sansa's shoulder, forcing the demon to recoil.

Its attention snapped back to the masked man.

Oliver had protected Frey .. and used the slightest lapse to land a decisive hit. If the demon ignored him for a second, he would punish it instantly.

"Annoying..."

The demon found himself completely cornered .. unable to break free from the overwhelming synergy between its two opponents. They fought in perfect harmony, as if they had trained side by side for years.

He glared at them both, more black veins spreading across Sansa's once-pale skin.

"The masked one is strong, but can't hurt me... the other is weaker, but his attacks bypass my defenses."

Frustrated by being pushed back, the demon let out a furious shriek. The shadows responded in kind, forming a barrage of spears, swords, and spinning black blades.

With both hands raised toward Frey, He unleashed everything at once .. sending a storm of destruction hurtling toward the boy, who was still preoccupied dealing with the flaming skulls.

At the same time, black tendrils and monstrous hands surged toward Oliver as well.

The battlefield was so overwhelmed with attacks, it was as if chaos itself had taken physical form.

The demon aimed to separate them.

Oliver would likely survive such a barrage...

But Frey Starlight lacked the raw durability of higher-ranked fighters.

With a twisted smile, the demon sought to eliminate him first ... by crushing him completely.

Frey Starlight found himself facing a storm of black rain threatening to tear him apart.

But he didn't hesitate .. he charged straight into it.

Drawing in a massive breath, he exhaled violet flames, forcing his body to release every ounce of aura it could produce.

"Ten Thousand Steps of Shadow: Mirage!"

In the blink of an eye, a thousand perfect copies of Frey appeared.

All of them ignited their swords .. and shouted in unison:

"Ten Thousand Steps of Shadow: Black cutter!!"

Each clone unleashed the same technique as before .. A devastating wave of black arcs, multiplied a thousandfold !

The entire battlefield trembled as the attack exploded outward, shaking the very foundations of the castle.

Frey's assault tore straight through Sansa's shadow dome, overwhelming it completely in a blast of raw power.

Under the night sky that now loomed above, Frey had utterly overwhelmed her—sending Sansa flying, crashing through dozens of walls behind her.

The clones immediately returned, merging back into a single figure who staggered, barely able to stay upright .. breathing heavily.

"Well done!! Frey Starlight!"

Oliver Khan rushed forward, seizing the opening Frey had created.

Engulfed in blue flames, he launched a crushing assault on Sansa, who struggled to regain her footing.

"Piercing Star!"

Crossing his daggers into an 'X', Oliver unleashed the full might of his strike upon her.

The shadows whipped around her, trying to shield her .. but the fire aura pressed in harder, forcing both powers into a violent clash.

And then—



The iron darkness shattered like fragile glass.

Oliver's daggers carved two deep wounds across Sansa's chest, and blood poured freely before she vanished .. retreating back into the shadows.

Oliver stood still, injured, blood dripping from the hole in his side.

He stared at the spot she had disappeared into.

He could have killed her just now .. he was sure of it.

But that hadn't been his goal.

"Starlight... tell me you can finish this," Oliver said.

Frey appeared at his side.

"No. We need to force the thing inside her to come out..."

He couldn't do anything to her like this.

Frey was drenched in sweat as Oliver prepared himself for the next round.

"Things are about to get a lot harder."

"You don't need to tell me..."

They both felt it.

The shift in aura—heavy enough to thicken the air.

Sansa had vanished into the dark.

No... something else had emerged in her place.

Something with wide-open crimson eyes, seething with wrath.

Chapter 272: The Battle of Moon Castle (4)

It wasn't dead, but the demon had clearly lost that last exchange.

Enraged, He no longer held back .. relying now on nothing but its monstrous instincts.

He's next scream shook the ground itself .. forcing Frey and Oliver to cover their ears before the pressure burst their eardrums.

The demon wanted only one thing now: both of them dead.

Adopting its feral form, the demon clasped his hands together .. and the sky above began to quake.

Its shadows came from darkness .. and the night sky itself was now the perfect source of power.

Frey's eyes widened as he and Oliver looked up ..

The heavens had split open above them.

And from that rift...

A colossal black hand descended like a meteor, threatening to crush them .. and everything around them.

"This is insane..."

How was he supposed to stop something like that?

Frey's thoughts froze.

"Stay focused! We're still on the battlefield!"

Oliver's voice snapped him out of it.

The masked warrior gathered all his strength, ready to intercept the falling hand ..

But before he could leap, the demon appeared out of nowhere .. finally joining the fight directly.

With one punch, he sent Oliver flying, smashing him into the ground.

The demon didn't stop ..he roared and charged at Frey next.

Frey barely blocked the blow with both swords .. his entire body trembling from the impact.

Unfortunately, the demon pressed the advantage—crushing Frey relentlessly in a brutal, one-sided assault.

Oliver returned immediately, slashing at the demon to draw its attention ..

But he was struggling, barely keeping up, his body weakened from his previous wounds and the non-stop battle against Sansa.

He was running on fumes.

Above them, the massive black hand was nearly upon them .. ready to wipe everything from the surface of the earth.

Frey hesitated, scrambling for a solution.

"Should I use Ignition?"

It was strong enough to stop that hand—no doubt.

But a move of that scale would take him out of the fight instantly.

And if that happened... they'd lose.

He stood frozen ... his thoughts spiraling ..

His mind... Went blank.

"Damn it!!!"

Frey cursed with all his might, ready to unleash everything he had. But at the last moment ...

The sky flashed.

It cracked wide open as a massive lightning spear tore through it, colliding with the black hand and obliterating it in a single devastating explosion.

The scene was nothing short of surreal, followed by a thunderclap so powerful it echoed all the way to the capital.

Frey's hair stood on end from the shockwaves of lightning that tore through the area.

The demon, stunned, withdrew immediately.

"A lightning spear...?"

Frey muttered, his eyes narrowing. He and Oliver both thought the same thing ..

There was only one person in this world capable of launching such a thunderous attack.

"Maekar Valerion...?"

Did the Emperor just... save them?

But It didn't matter.

What mattered was that they had been saved.

That lightning spear had kept them in the fight.

Without wasting a second, Frey lunged at the demon .. his swords now blazing with black, destructive flames.

Oliver Khan joined him immediately, launching a pincer attack from the other side .. trapping the monster between them.

"Don't just stand there! Sansa!!"

Frey shouted, slashing at the demon's thick skin. He knew the girl was still inside.

"Fight it!!"

He needed her to resist.

"Fight it!!!!!"

Frey and Oliver pressed the assault ..

"More!!"



Until the demon himself was forced out.

Surrounded by blinding slashes that threatened to tear him apart, None of them noticed the shadow crawling beneath their feet ... until it formed a massive circle, trapping them both.

"Die, you cursed humans."

SLASH!!!

They didn't see it.

They didn't even feel it ..

Not until dozens of fresh wounds bloomed across their bodies, and blood soaked the ground.

The demon had released an invisible cutting attack .. thousands of blades at once.

So fast neither Oliver nor Frey could block them in time.

Their bodies were torn open again and again as they quickly pulled back, trying to escape the death zone.

The further they retreated, the less intense the cuts became .. but that was a bad sign.

It meant the closer they got, the deadlier it became.

"How the hell are we supposed to get close now?"

There was now an entire cutting field around the demon .. touching it meant being sliced to pieces.

"You're trying to approach me?" the demon mocked.

Black flames ignited on both his arms as his body swelled .. now towering over three meters tall.

A fully formed monster.

The demon had finally revealed his true form.

"You won't have to come to me ..

I'll come to you!"

BOOM!

A deafening explosion rang out as both Frey and Oliver barely dodged a massive beam of violet fire hurled at them.

The black tendrils rose again ..stronger than ever .. while the demon rained violet fire upon them, layer after layer.

All the while, the cutting field continued slicing at their bodies with every movement.

They couldn't even counterattack anymore ..

They were like rats caught in a trap.

The attack was overwhelming ..fast, deadly, suffocating.

Oliver survived thanks to his vast experience and incredible speed.

Frey fought back too .. relying on Phantom Steps and Hawk Eyes to keep up. Everything moved in slow motion for him now...

But even his heightened senses weren't enough to detect the ambush coming from behind.

One of the black tendrils shot straight toward him .. aiming for his heart.

Frey saw it too late ... leaving him unable to dodge it.

'I won't be able to block it...'

Frey thought, frozen ...

But then .. his vision was consumed by a brilliant, fiery blue light.

A devastating explosion tore through the space around him, hurling Frey backward.

He staggered, barely regaining his balance.

When his senses returned, what he saw left him speechless ..

A trail of blood stretched across the ground... leading to Oliver Khan, who had been blasted into a distant wall.

His arms had been completely destroyed.

His body was shattered.

His mask .. broken, revealing his face for the first time.

Frey stared in shock.

Oliver looked back at him ..one final glance.

He couldn't speak.

But his eyes said everything.

"Save her."

Seeing Oliver reduced to that state because of him...

Frey clenched his teeth, then turned toward the raging demon behind him.

Dark Sister flared with a white glow, while Balerion pulsed with destructive black aura.

"Let's finish this."

Frey pushed his exhausted body forward and charged toward his enemy.

The battle was now one-on-one.

Chapter 273: The Battle of Moon Castle (5)

– Frey Starlight's POV –

I felt dizzy.

The roar of the towering demon before me echoed in my ears .. a creature that had swallowed Princess Sansa, who was now trapped somewhere deep inside it.

Blood poured down my body from countless cuts .. the lingering damage of those invisible slicing attacks.

That blood mixed with the sweat that drenched my skin, clinging to me after the brutal fight I'd just endured.

Only a few minutes remained before Blood Form faded. And once it did... I'd be completely powerless.

"Can I really win...?"

I asked myself.

Oliver Khan had placed his final bet on me.

He chose to sacrifice himself instead of me.

That meant I had no choice .. I had to give it everything I had. Or we were both as good as dead.

I took a deep breath, gathering every last drop of aura I could summon, and stepped forward .. slowly, painfully .. into the demon's cutting field.

"Let's do this!!"

My voice was barely a whisper compared to the deafening roars the demon let out as it hurled shadowy tendrils and razor-sharp slashes at me.

I couldn't even see the slicing waves ..there was no avoiding them.

But I kept going, resisting everything else as I inched closer, one step at a time.

My body was being shredded rapidly.

The slashes grew stronger the closer I got .. but I refused to stop.

Fighting back the nausea rising in my throat, I screamed—

"SANSA!!!"

Swinging my blades with everything I had, I tried to push back the shadows as I shouted again:



"Is this really what you want?!"

BOOM!

Explosions rocked the battlefield, but I kept moving forward.

"Is this how you want it all to end?!"

I needed her to resist.

Somehow... I had to pull her out of the despair she'd drowned in.

"You weren't the one who killed them, damn it—it was HIM! the fuckin demon!"

I pressed on, even as attacks rained from every direction, slicing through my flesh without mercy.

"And even if you did kill them .. who cares?! I've killed far more than you, and here I'm still standing! To hell with them all! Just fight back! Live!!"

I started shouting whatever bullshit came to mind.

I was someone still struggling to find a reason to live ... so I was in no position to bring hope to others.

Especially when I was so close to losing it myself.

But I had to say something.

Because Sansa was still in there.

Somewhere deep inside, she was listening to my pathetic rambling.

The demon's refusal to attack me directly .. that was proof enough.

After he injured Oliver so badly with that last strike... I saw the hesitation in his movements.

He tried to hide it well—but not from my Hawk Eyes.

Sansa was still inside... but her presence was faint.

The number of attacks pouring down on me was absurd .. it was like standing in the middle of a hurricane.

One that shattered my body again and again.

The demon attacked from afar, never moving an inch ..

Which meant this was my only chance to end it.

So I made a reckless decision.

I dove straight into the heart of the cutting field. As I got within a few meters of it, the slicing intensified.

I cloaked myself in aura, forming a barrier to endure it .. but suddenly, I collapsed.

My face hit the dirt.

Blades rained down on me from above ..

And that's when I realized...

My right leg was gone.

It was still standing in the place I'd just leapt from.

That slash had severed it clean off.

A devastating surge of pain shot through my mind, nearly overwhelming me.

I clenched my teeth, cursing, forcing myself to rise.

My entire body had become a bloody slab of flesh .. laid bare on the demon's chopping block.

Blood Form was the only reason I was still alive.

And it could end at any moment.

That disgusting demon stood before me, grinning.

But in those crimson eyes...

I saw something.

Regret...?

Sadness?

Frustration?

Despair?

I didn't know what it was.

But I knew .. that was Sansa.

I was sure of it.

"Accept yourself... goddamn it!!"

I staggered forward, channeling every last drop of aura into my left leg.

"And if you can't do it... then I'll accept you instead."

So fight ..

Fight like I'm fighting now, as I hurl myself straight into hell.

I slammed my only foot into the ground, shattering it beneath me as I launched myself toward Sansa at full speed.

I flew ..

Crashing into the demon.

He wrapped his arms around me instantly, trying to crush me.

But in return ...

I drove Dark Sister straight into the demon's body, taking a deep breath and praying I'd survive what came next.

The black hands were moments away from crushing my skull ..

But before they could ..

I unleashed the sacred power Uriel had given me.

That aura ignited violently, and I whispered with a strained voice:

"Ignition."

Like a flood...

Dark Sister lit up, glowing brilliantly, forcing the shadows back and flooding the area with light .. And then it detonated inside the demon's body.

The nuclear ignition erupted, unleashing an infinite surge of holy aura into the heart of the monster.

The demon let out a bloodcurdling scream as the devastating explosion fired a blinding beam into the sky.

I saw his body begin to crack and split apart, the holy light wrapping around Sansa ... shielding her from harm.

The ignition released a brutal shockwave that tore through my body .. And I hoped, desperately, that it had been enough to destroy the bastard.

But it wasn't.

The demon survived.

His body was riddled with holy fractures, severely damaged...

But he was still clinging to Sansa, refusing to let her go.

My consciousness was slipping ..

The demon was still alive, and the tendrils were rising again, aiming to rip me apart.



I was going to lose.

Even the ignition... hadn't been enough.

It would all be for nothing.

That thought, mixed with unbearable pain, made me spit blood in fury.

"Like hell I'm letting it end like this!"

I bit down the agony, refusing to pass out.

Then, with the last of my strength, I drove Balerion into the demon's body, right beside Dark Sister.

With everything I had ..

With the last sound my shattered throat could produce ..

With a broken body and depleted aura lines—

I screamed:

"IGNITION!!"

One ignition was enough to destroy me already .. But here I was, unleashing a second.

More.

I dug deeper, tapping into the black ocean of aura inside me ..

And released another nuclear ignition into the cursed demon.

The monster howled ..

Screaming in agony as the explosion consumed everything, erasing the entire battlefield.

Its filthy, black body disintegrated before my eyes, vanishing piece by piece into white light.

I saw nothing but radiance—followed by a deafening silence that shattered my hearing.

But in the midst of it all ..

I saw her.

Sansa's body falling from above, the cocoon of shadows around her finally torn apart.

I didn't know if she had survived... or died.

But I had given it everything.

My body was torn to shreds ..inside and outside after triggering ignition twice.

And finally...

I collapsed, unconscious.

Everything went black, marking the end of my desperate battle...

Against the Fallen Princess.

Chapter 274: The Battle of Moon Castle (6)

Frey Starlight collapsed, broken and bloodied.

No one could say if he was alive or dead.

The entire battle lasted only fifteen minutes from start to the end..

But it captured the attention of the entire capital.

Especially the moment that massive hand fell from the sky .. And the terrifying lightning spear that destroyed it.

Moon Castle had been completely obliterated.

The entire region wiped off the map.

Many eyes had witnessed the clash from afar...

Among the scattered fragments of war—

The first to awaken was Oliver Khan.

Without his mask and with a bloodied face, the High Warden rose shakily, glancing down at his arms...

Only to find what was left—two ruined stumps where his hands used to be.

But his gaze turned, searching beyond the devastation.

And there ..

He saw her.

Sansa, lying peacefully among the rubble in her white nightgown.

Clean. Untouched. As if she had never taken part in the battle at all.

And then...

"Frey..."

Oliver whispered, horrified by the sight of the young man sprawled nearby—

So broken, there wasn't a single part of his body unscathed.

The only thing intact—were the two black swords still clutched in his hands, as if they refused to let go of him.

"Damn it..."

Oliver stumbled forward, using every last ounce of strength to run—

But he barely made it a few steps before falling flat on his face.

Still, he pushed himself up again ..

Crawling, crawling toward Frey.

The closer he got, the more he saw ..

The damage to the boy was worse than anything he could've imagined.

He placed his ear against Frey's chest...

There was no heartbeat.

No breath.

"Damn it..."

Oliver gasped, panting with difficulty—his body glowing faintly with a dim blue light.

"Don't die on me, kid..."

That aura slowly transferred into Frey's body.

It was faint—barely anything—due to Oliver's depleted state.

But still... he gave everything he had for the boy in front of him.

"We did it..."

Oliver tried with everything he had left.

"No ... you did it. You pulled it off, Frey Starlight... so don't you dare die on me now, damn it!"

As Oliver struggled alone beside him, another figure stepped into view.

He looked up and saw a familiar girl—her face pale, shaken, stricken with grief as she stared at Frey.

"Is he ..?"

Sansa's voice trembled as she spoke, barely audible.

Oliver lowered his head in response.

And when he did... she noticed his arms—what was left of them.



Blown apart.

The sight only deepened her despair.

"He fought for you," Oliver said softly.

Sansa had seen it all .. from the distance, she had watched the entire destructive battle unfold.

Back then, she had been powerless.

Trapped deep within a muddy ocean of despair ..

Her mind bombarded by voices screaming for blood, for death.

The demon had taken it so far...

He even forced her to relive the moment she killed her own mother—hundreds of times.

But even through all that ..

She saw Frey.

Saw him fight with everything he had.

Saw him do the impossible.

Now, the voices were gone.

The madness in her head had finally fallen silent.

She was free.

But none of that would have been possible without Frey.

She didn't want to survive at his expense.

Those feelings overwhelmed her ..

And unconsciously, her hand reached out.

In response to that emotion, the shadows returned.

Oliver leapt to his feet instinctively, startled...

But this time, they didn't surge out in violence.

Instead, the shadows wrapped gently around Frey, encasing his broken body with care.

Sansa watched in awe .. she didn't even understand what she was doing.

But seeing Frey's wounds begin to close slowly, she continued ..

And Oliver realized what was happening.

"She's controlling her power..."

No bloodlust.

No hunger for death.

Just Sansa .. wanting to save him.

Frey had used shadow and dark-based aura... Her powers were now attuned to his.

She couldn't heal him completely ..

But she had pulled him back from the brink of death.

This was the end of torment.

The end of a long and cruel struggle.

The voices were gone.

That cold aura around her heart had finally vanished ..

Replaced by a deep, radiant warmth in her chest.

She had mastered her power at last.

And all of it came crashing down on her—

Sansa burst into tears, collapsing over Frey's chest. .

Weeping uncontrollably as the one who had ended her suffering lay broken beneath her.

Oliver Khan watched his only niece sob like a child ...

And he, too, was overcome with emotion.

He wanted to embrace her .

But stopped when he remembered... his hands were no longer there.

Despite the pain, despite everything ..

This time, it had ended in salvation.

For the lone warrior.

And for the cursed princess.

Their redemption... had been witnessed by many.

High above .. Maekar Valerion, the Emperor, stood in the sky, watching from afar.

His eyes didn't linger on Sansa.

Nor on Oliver Khan.

They locked onto the boy between them.

Frey Starlight.

He no longer saw the naive boy from before.

What stood there now... was a terrifying warrior.

Eighteen years old ...yet powerful enough to defeat an SS– class Awakened.

The Emperor muttered quietly ..

"Abraham?"

Perhaps... this was the only talent that could compare to the little monster down below.

Maekar stood in silence, torn between two paths:

To make use of the monstrous power his empire had nurtured ..

Or to eliminate a beast that might one day consume them all.

He made his decision.

And vanished ... disappearing in a streak of lightning across the sky.

That flash of lightning passed beneath the gaze of Aegon Valerion, who watched from afar, smiling.

"My lord... shall we kill her now?"

asked one of the Round Table Knights.

But the prince shook his head calmly.

"No."

Yes, he could've ended the princess right then and there ..

Crushed her once and for all.

But it would've changed nothing.

His victory had already been sealed.



The truth of Sansa's condition was now known across the upper circles of the Empire.

"Let them have their moment... their deliverance."

Aegon turned, staring into the distance ..his smile deepening.

No one else could see it...

But he saw tears falling from unseen eyes.

"We'll let them live .. while we keep moving the pieces from behind the curtain, as we've always done.

Sansa will survive."

With a chilling smile, the prince added ..

"Isn't that what you've always wanted... Aegon?"

The knights around him paused, exchanging glances.

Their prince...

Was talking to himself.

Gazing into empty space, he looked exhilarated .. enthralled.

As if he had just watched a performance no one else could see.

He looked strange.

And terrifying.

And just like that ..

The curtain fell on the show.

Chapter 275: The Abyss Within

-Frey starlight POV-

It was strange.

Just moments ago, I had been fighting for my life .. a brutal, desperate battle against a demon that tore my body apart.

And yet... inside my mind, it felt as if only seconds had passed.

Now, I found myself in a different world.

A world of darkness.

My body was whole again uninjured, free of the horrific wounds I'd suffered just moments before.

But this place wasn't unfamiliar.

I'd been here before.

It was the same shadow realm I had entered when I used Third-Person Pov on Sansa.

The moment I realized that, a bitter nausea crept over me.

"Did I lose...?"

The presence of this darkness meant one thing .. the demon wasn't dead.

It was still alive... buried deep within.

"Even after using Ignition twice... it still wasn't enough?"

Impossible.

This wasn't even a full Demon Seed.

The entities inside those seeds were just fragments .. a tiny shard of will from the most powerful demons.

It shouldn't have had that kind of strength.

Those final blows should've been enough to destroy it completely.

But here I was...

Once again, wandering alone through the dark.

I wondered... what had happened to me?

I didn't think I was dead ..

Which meant something had pulled me into this shadow realm.

So all I could do now was wait.

Sit in silence.

Wait for the demon to show itself.

And so the minutes passed.

Then the hours.

One after another ..

I drifted alone through the void.

It felt like I would remain lost here forever.

But somehow, I kept my composure until the very end.

Why?

Because I wasn't alone.

From the very beginning, I had felt it ..

A presence watching me from a distance.

Its gaze was like sharpened blades piercing through my skin, stabbing not just my body... but my soul.

As if it were dissecting me .. studying every inch of who I was.

I didn't dare speak at first.

That presence... the pressure it exuded... the chill it sent down my spine .

I may still be just an insect compared to beings like them, But even I could tell the difference.

This wasn't the same demon I had fought before.

No... this was something else.

Something far worse.

Far more terrifying.

Then ..

As if reading my thoughts, a voice answered from the darkness.

"Very perceptive... Frey Starlight."

The demon's voice echoed beside my ear .. sending a shiver through my entire body.

It was a woman's voice.

"Who are you?!"

I shouted into the darkness.

And in response ..

The shadows smiled back.

Twin violet eyes ignited in the void, glowing with unnatural light as they locked onto me ..watching with eerie interest.

I knew this was some kind of inner realm.



A mental or spiritual space.

But still ..

Her presence alone was enough to make my whole body tremble.

And for some reason... I felt like I knew her.

The demoness circled me, eyeing me with a wide, amused grin.

"You know who I am. How interesting."

Her voice whispered beside my ear again, and I cursed under my breath.

She was reading my thoughts.

I didn't want to accept it.

But it was her...

The King's Shadow.

The third upper demon in their ranks ..

Vayne ..

Knowing her identity only made everything worse.

I was in real danger.

Before me stood a demoness at the peak of the SSS tier.

I couldn't do anything against her.

All I could do... was stand still and breathe.

Even if this world wasn't real—

Even if this form was just spiritual—

I was drenched in sweat.

And my heart wouldn't stop pounding.

"Frey... Frey... Frey..."

She kept repeating my name, her grin growing wider with every word.

"What's your secret, Frey Starlight?"

She stepped closer.

"What are you, really? What are you hiding?"

With every step she took, my chest tightened.

Until she stood just a few steps away—

And with each movement, I felt like my heart might burst.

"Tell me, Frey... why?"

"Why would a worthless little creature like you..."

"...draw the attention of the Great King?"

And at that moment ..

She was so close ..

Her face nearly touching mine.

That was when I saw it..

Just for a moment..

I caught a glimpse of her true form, and I froze completely, holding my breath in terror...

Terrified that any movement might bring about my end.

"The Demon King, Agaroth... has remained dormant for countless years.

He doesn't move, doesn't act ..just sits silently atop the tower.

No matter how fate surged or how this world trembled, He never lifted a finger. Unaffected. Unbothered. Untouched."

Vayne continued speaking .. her grin slowly fading.

"And then, out of nowhere... the King moved.

For the first time in millennia, he showed interest.

And the thing that caught his eye...

Was nothing more than a pitiful little creature.

A worthless human named Frey Starlight!!!"

She screamed ..

Her blackened hands seized my face, and a wave of power surged through me, flooding my entire body.

From the very beginning, I tried to react—

To resist.

To move.

To fight.

To run.

Anything.

But I couldn't.

Her presence alone crushed me, and she shouted into my face, raging:

"What are you hiding?! Why is the King interested in you?! What are you, Frey Starlight?!!"

From her hands, a dark force began to spread ..

It slithered into me like molten lava being injected straight into my soul.

The pain was beyond anything I had ever known.

All I could do was scream.

Scream, and try to escape.

But it was no use.

"Show me the truth!!! What are you hiding?!"

My spiritual body began to fracture under her pressure.

I felt myself slipping away ..

Felt death creeping in from all sides.

Vayne dark power wormed its way into the very core of me ..

To my essence.

To every fiber of my being.

Like fragile glass, I began to shatter.

I watched it happen slowly, agonizingly.

And the worst part .. Was that I could do nothing.

I was completely powerless.



I stood motionless before her, helpless...

Waiting for death.

It felt like this was the end ..

So amid my own screams, drowned beneath Wayne howling voice ..

I closed my eyes.

And waited for death's hand to carry me away.

Then, in just a few seconds ..

Everything shattered.

And I fell... Into the dark.

...

...

...

Frey Starlight's screams ceased ..

The moment his being broke apart completely.

But right then...

Vayne eyes .. those of the third-ranked upper demon .. flew wide open as she stared at the terrifying phenomenon unfolding before her.

Just moments ago, Frey had been trapped within her domain ..

A shadow realm conjured by the King's Shadow, a power given to her by the Demon King Agaroth himself.

But somehow...

Frey broke it.

He released a terrifying surge of power that completely overwhelmed her.

A sea of violet aura exploded from within him, flooding the entire space.

"His darkness... it's overwhelming mine?!"

Vayne stared in disbelief.

Frey's power now surrounded her ..

And she was the one trapped inside his domain.

Not the other way around.

For a moment, Vayne was so stunned that she forgot what she was even holding.

When she finally snapped out of it ..

When she looked again at the human in her grasp ..

She realized...

It wasn't Frey anymore.

When had it changed?

How?

She had no idea.

But her eyes didn't lie.

The being now before her...

Was someone entirely different.

White hair.

A shadowy form.

A face hidden behind a terrifying black mask.

She was still holding him.

He sat there quietly, deep within the abyss.

Then ..without warning .. he raised his head slowly.

Their eyes met.

In that moment...

Vayne felt something she hadn't felt in centuries.

Her expression froze ..

As if death itself had touched her.

That presence.

That face.

That mask.

She recognized it.

And that...

Was what terrified her most.

She tried to flee ..

Staggering back instantly.

But a formless power gripped her in place.

Even at her level—SSS rank—

Even with all her power—

She couldn't move.

All she could do was tremble where she stood.

It was almost laughable .. how quickly the roles had reversed.

She, a demoness who stood atop the world...

Now shaken to her core by a human.

A human who radiated the same presence ..

As her great king, Agaroth.

Because he was the only one who had ever emanated something like this.

"...So this is the truth... you're the one..."

Vayne recognized him.

"So that's why the King is interested in you..."

She had finally found the answer.

"You're ..."

She was about to say his name ..

But in that moment, he raised his hand toward her.

And in the very next instant, the entire world trembled at his command.

A storm of overwhelming force surged forth ..



A terrifying power that tore through the third upper demon in existence, destroying her completely.

True, Vayne didn't die ..this was only a spiritual projection of her form.

But that didn't change the fact.

She had just been utterly obliterated...

By a human.

A young man named Frey Starlight.

And the moment he erased her...

The man lowered his head again, slipping back into silence ..

As the dark world around them collapsed once more.

Everything fell still, as if the realm itself now waited quietly...

For the return of that ancient will.

Chapter 276: A Peace Worth Chasing

Frey opened his eyes.

A sharp headache throbbed in his skull.

There were lingering aches across his body, but nothing he couldn't endure.

He was lying in a room he didn't recognize, on a wide bed beneath an unfamiliar ceiling.

Pain flared in his mind ..a stabbing pressure, like someone trying to carve through his brain with a blade.

His heart wouldn't settle.

His body kept trembling.

It felt like he had just survived a battle between life and death...

Yet no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't remember anything.

The last thing he recalled .. was the suicidal Ignition he unleashed against Sansa.

Everything that happened after, inside his mind...

It was gone.

As if someone had intentionally stolen the memory away.

Slowly, Frey's senses returned.

He glanced around, taking in his surroundings.

It was then that he sat up on the unfamiliar bed ..

And beside him, seated in a wooden chair, was a familiar girl.

She stared at him, stunned by his sudden awakening .. too overwhelmed to speak.

"Sansa..."

Frey let out a relieved sigh.

He had done it.

He'd completed the mission.

It hadn't all been for nothing.

Sansa had thought of many things to say.

To apologize...

To thank him...

But instead, she smiled.

"Welcome back."

Frey sat up further, his body wrapped in bandages from head to toe.

"Welcome back, huh? How long was I out to deserve such a dramatic line?"

He laughed, while Sansa responded nervously ..concerned he might still be in pain.

"A week... Today's the eighth day."

"Tch. Guess I didn't break my record."

The longest Frey had ever been out was an entire month ..

Back when he fought the Moonlight Family.

Either this time had been easier...

Or he'd just gotten stronger.

Frey turned his attention back to Sansa, noticing the changes in her appearance.

"You're gonna have to do something about that hair."

He grinned, nodding toward her new black hair.

"And your eyes, too. Maybe try some lenses?"

Paler skin, long black hair, dark eyes ..

She no longer resembled the princess the world once knew.

Frey didn't mind the change.

But the people around her...

They would.

After all, she was still a princess.

But Sansa simply shook her head.

"It's fine. I'm happy with how I am now."

Frey was quiet for a moment, then nodded.

"So, you've accepted yourself."

In response, Sansa raised her right hand.

Black fire ignited in her palm.

"Yes."

She had fully accepted herself.

And now... she had control over her power.

Frey's final blow had destroyed the demon inside her .. But even that level of holy energy wasn't enough to eliminate the power of the King's Shadow.

After all, its source was the Demon King himself.

That power still remained within her...

But the will that had once dominated her—was now completely gone.

"Thank you, Frey. Truly... thank you for everything."

None of this would've been possible without him.

That was a fact.

Frey stood, motioning for her to drop the formal tone.

"No need to thank me. Just live your life the way you always wanted to."

"I will. But that doesn't change the fact that you saved me," Sansa said.



Frey grinned mischievously.

"Isn't this the part where the princess falls in love with the hero after he saves her life?"

Sansa laughed the moment she heard that.

"And you're supposed to be the hero in this story?"

Frey shrugged.

"Not even close. I'm not cut out to be a hero .. saving people and saying fancy lines doesn't suit me at all."

How could you pull someone out of the abyss when you were drowning in one even deeper?

Sansa laughed again, remembering what happened during the battle.

"Yeah, it really doesn't suit you. Do you remember what you said to me when you were trying to make me resist the demon?"

She asked, and Frey feigned ignorance.

"Nope. Don't remember."

"Really? Because half of what you said was either 'Damn you' or some words I couldn't understand but definitely sounded like insults..."

Of course Frey remembered ..

Desperately trying to survive under that barrage while being forced to say something that could push Sansa to fight for her life...

It annoyed him so much that he ended up stuffing some profanity into nearly every sentence he shouted.

"Sorry, I couldn't find a proper hero nearby to handle that role for me."

Most likely, Snow Lionheart would've done a better job.

"It wouldn't have worked if it were someone else,"

Sansa cut in.

"I survived because you were the one who came."

Frey and Sansa locked eyes for a moment ..

And Frey immediately shifted the mood to avoid the awkward atmosphere.

"So... where exactly am I right now?"

This room didn't look familiar to him at all.

"We're still in Moon Castle... or what's left of it."

That once majestic castle had been reduced to ash.

Only a small part of it survived.

The princess's home was now nothing more than rubble.

"So I've spent an entire week lying in the princess's bed, huh... what a privilege."

Frey joked just as the door swung open.

The man who entered wore a mask, just like always .. so much so that Frey could barely remember what his real face looked like.

"Did I interrupt something?"

he asked, glancing between the princess and Frey.

"Oliver Khan."

Their battle companion.

The man who had fought beside Frey.

Oliver looked the same as ever .. except for his arms, which were tightly wrapped in massive casts.

"Good to see you alive, Lord Starlight,"

Oliver said, as Frey's gaze locked on the casts.

"Your arms...?"

The greatest injury of that final battle was Oliver's ..

Taking the full force of a fatal blow just to protect Frey.

Frey had always been okay with risking his own life ..

But having others sacrifice themselves for him... that was different.

He already owed too much to his father.

He didn't want to add more names to that burden.

Luckily, Oliver reassured him.

Chapter 277: The Turning Point

"No need to worry. The Church's healers barely managed to reattach them. I survived to fight another day... though they'll never be quite the same again."

Frey let out a relieved breath .

Glad the High Warden hadn't been crippled because of him.

"What's the situation?"

Sansa asked as Oliver pulled up a chair and sat beside them.

"The last battle caused a huge stir. And now... the fact that Sansa holds demonic power is no longer a secret."

Oliver's words made Frey narrow his eyes.

"So what do we do now?"

It was a fair question.

Things weren't going to be simple.

"A lot of powerful people are demanding Sansa's execution. They see her as a ticking time bomb."

"But she's in control now. She's not a threat anymore,"

Frey argued.

Oliver nodded.

"That's true—but we don't have proof. Especially with how different she looks now."

He glanced at Sansa .

A girl who had completely transformed.

"No one will believe our words alone."

"Then To Hell With them," Frey muttered.

Sansa clenched her fists.

"It's fine. This time, it's my turn to fight. I'll take care of it."

But as soon as she said that, Oliver gently placed his cast-wrapped hand on her head.

"No, you won't. You've fought enough already."

"But—"

"I've already handled it,"

Oliver interrupted.

He paused for a moment before continuing .. turning to Frey.

"The princess has officially lost the succession race to Aegon. All her titles have been stripped."



"In return... she'll live as a normal person within the temple."

Oliver explained the situation, apologizing as he did.

"I'm sorry, but this was the only way to let her live."

He bowed his head, but Sansa immediately stopped him.

"Don't apologize... if anyone should be sorry, it's me."

Oliver Khan ..

He was the only one who had fought for her from the very beginning.

He sacrificed everything, becoming the servant of the person he despised most in this world.

Someone like that... who had given so much... didn't deserve to apologize.

No one knew what kind of face he wore beneath that mask.

But it must have been one worth seeing.

"You know, Frey... I really felt happy a moment ago."

Oliver turned back to him as he spoke.

Frey blinked.

"Happy?"

Oliver nodded.

"Yeah... because you said, 'What are we going to do now?'"

Not, 'What are you going to do?'"

Frey didn't respond.

And before he could, Oliver suddenly lowered his head in a formal bow .. as if Frey were a king.

"Please, Frey Starlight... I can't always be by her side. The princess will be alone in the temple once I return to serving that wretched emperor.

So I'm not asking you to stay glued to her side .. But if anything ever happens... just save her once. That's all I ask."

A high-ranking SS class warrior like Oliver Khan, bowing to him like this...

Frey sighed and instinctively stepped back, smiling faintly.

"With her power? I'll be the one needing saving, not her."

It wasn't the answer Oliver expected.

Frey hadn't accepted, nor rejected.

But for the High Warden... it was enough.

And Sansa smiled, too.

"Thank you... truly."

It was a rare moment of quiet joy shared between the three of them.

A moment accompanied by a soft chime ..

Ding!

Oliver Khan: SS rank

Current Affection: 50 Points

Oliver considers you an ally and a friend. He fully trusts you.

Ding!!

The second notification was stronger.

Sansa Valerion: B+ rank

Current Affection: 70 Points (First Threshold Broken)

The princess now sees you as more than just a friend.

To her, you're as important as Oliver Khan.

Frey glanced at the floating windows in front of him.

One connection after another...

He was slowly becoming part of this world.

The idea he once rejected ..

Now felt... welcome.

...

...

...

The princess's tragedy had ended.

And the days passed.

Frey Starlight found himself living a routine he hadn't known in a long time.

Hanging out with friends.

Visiting the temple.

Living in peace.

A normal life ..

For someone who was anything but normal.

Yet somehow, it had happened.

He now found himself at the Starlight estate, after being dragged back by his sister for the temple's weekend break.

Frey had spent the entire day with Ada.

Just the two of them .. like a real family.

The only family he had left was right in front of him.

And that made it easier to accept this new reality.

"Maybe this is the answer,"

he thought.

The life his father had wanted for him.

Frey smiled as night fell ..

Sitting beside his sister at a dinner table meant only for the two of them.

Ada, holding a sharp knife, sliced the cooked meat with a smile.

"How many pieces do you want?"

"As many as you like."

"You're the one eating, not me,"

she grumbled.

Frey leaned back in his chair, eyes fixed on the ceiling ..

More at peace than he'd been in a long time.



For once...

He felt like he had found the answer.

He tried to convince himself of it.

Tried to believe that this peaceful, ordinary life was the future he should pursue—and be content with.

It all seemed so unreal...

But Frey accepted it.

A loving family.

Good friends.

A quiet life.

It brought him comfort.

But then again ..

Who was he, really?

He was Frey Starlight.

As if fate itself were mocking him .. Mocking his foolish ambition...

Frey sat frozen in his comfortable chair, unable to move.

His heartbeat spiked, pulsing rapidly without his control.

"Huh?"

He muttered unconsciously, eyes drifting down to his hand ..

Only to find it trembling violently.

And the world around him...

Had turned gray.

A bleak, colorless gray that swallowed everything.

He had truly wanted to accept himself.

To accept this new life.

But even that... was too much to ask.

Slowly, Frey turned his head toward the only family he had left.

Toward his sister.

He stared at her in disbelief ..

His chest throbbed with a crushing pulse, each beat threatening to explode.

And all around him, the lifeless gray crept inward, smothering the light.

In that empty, silent world...

The only thing that stood out— Was Ada Starlight's eyes.

Eyes that looked right at him with a smile ..

Glowing crimson-red, like a bottomless abyss threatening to swallow him whole.

And in that moment...

Frey Starlight's emotions collapsed in on themselves.

Terror.

Fear.

Grief.

Regret.

Rage.

He wanted to ask ..

Why?

But no words came out.

All he could do was stand there, frozen.

As Ada opened her mouth, and spoke in a voice that echoed like a divine pronouncement:

"Hello, \*\*\*\*... we meet again."

She spoke his true name ..

A name no one should have known.

And in that instant, Frey understood ..

What stood before him wasn't his sister.

It was a calamity.

One that had descended upon him ..

To destroy the fleeting peace he had just begun to grasp.

Chapter 278: The Devil's Hand

– Frey Starlight's Pov –

It felt like every function in my body shut down without warning.

When had it happened?

I could've sworn... just moments ago, I was sitting beside Ada.

Just the two of us, sharing a quiet family moment .. free from chaos, free from the world.

I was close.

So close...

To living the life my father had once dreamed for me.

Once, I had everything.

Then I started over from nothing in this world ..

Building it all back, piece by piece.

It was brutal. But I did it.

So why ?

The world turned gray.

Every hair on my body stood on end, as if a bolt of lightning had struck me.

I couldn't stop trembling.

My lower lip quivered with a fear I couldn't suppress.

I was so close.

So why...?

Why?!!

Helpless, I looked toward Ada.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

Those eyes ..



Crimson red, glowing bright .. were the only thing not swallowed by the colorless world.

"Hello, \*\*\*\*."

It was her voice.

My sister's voice.

But the suffocating presence pressing against my chest...

That burning sensation in my heart...

That wasn't her aura.

I already knew who it was.

And so, trembling, the only thing I could manage to say was ..

"Why?"

Why now?

Ada .. smiling calmly, her crimson gaze unblinking .. sat as if upon a throne made just for her.

"Why? You're seriously asking me that... \*\*\*\*?"

The one being I never dared to cross.

The one whose presence alone could break me.

And hearing my true name .. the one I had before reincarnating .. Only twisted my insides with nausea.

The pressure crushing me wasn't even one percent of his real power.

He was far away, only puppeteering Ada's body.

And even with everything I had...

I could barely breathe.

"Why... are you here?"

What do you want from me?

I wanted to ask a hundred things.

But the trembling... the uneven breath... they sealed my throat shut.

Still, I had to know.

Why had Agaroth, the Demon King himself .. Chosen to appear now?

Sitting comfortably in Ada's form, he crossed one leg over the other, resting his arm on the chair's armrest .. smiling without a care in the world.

"What are you doing, \*\*\*\*—

No, I suppose I should say Frey Starlight.

That's what I want to know."

He asked a question I couldn't begin to understand.

"What... do you mean?"

I fought the urge to collapse, struggling to stay upright beneath the crushing weight of his will.

"You really don't know, do you?"

Agaroth sighed.

"A normal life.

Normal friends.

A normal family..."

He gestured toward me.

"A normal person.

Since when did you become so... unbearably dull to look at, Frey Starlight?"

His smile faded slowly.

And I ..

Still didn't understand.

My thoughts were empty.

Completely blank.

"What are you even talking about?"

What kind of madness was this?

Agaroth exhaled again and rose from his seat.

"Frey Starlight... up until now, you've been guided by a strong fate.

One tangled with countless others.

Even your light... eventually reached me."

He began to pace around the room, speaking in riddles that only made my confusion worse.

"To be honest, your pitiful little struggle for your family..

As laughable as it was ..

Still managed to be entertaining.

Watching your climb from a small insect to a slightly bigger one...

It made for a good show."

Agaroth was speaking more now than he ever had before.

Far more.

And me?

Kneeling on the floor, heart racing like it was about to burst...

I just wanted it to stop.

He stopped in front of me, staring down.

That look .

It reminded me how small I truly was.

So small.

"From where I'm standing, you've got nothing left to offer... Frey Starlight."

His words dug deep.

A show? A struggle? Something "ugly to look at"?

He had been watching me...

This entire time?

The Engineer. Wesker. Agaroth.

All these beings... circling around me.

But for what?

"Am I..."

Everything I've endured until now...



All the blood.

All the tears.

"Am I just a show?"

Just something pathetic ..

Something you watch from above when you're bored?

A worthless toy you enjoy watching suffer?

Agaroth, still wearing Ada's body, leaned toward me with a smile that could freeze hell.

"That's right, Frey Starlight...

You've been nothing but an endless source of amusement."

I lay there, speechless ..crushed and hollow.

"Every fight you've had, every step you've taken...

I've been there, watching.

I placed great expectations on you.

And what did you do with them?"

His voice turned sharp, biting.

"Family. Friends. Sentiment.

Rubbish."

He picked up that same wicked knife from earlier.

"Listen carefully, Frey."

"Your life ..

Everything you cherish ..

Depends on what you offer next.

This little piece of happiness you're clinging to, This fragile world you've built..."

In an instant, he pressed the blade against Ada's neck, carving a thin cut that bled down her skin ..

And smiled.

"No!!"

I screamed, barely able to move, as Agaroth laughed.

"Everything you love ..your family, your friends ..

I can end it all in a heartbeat.

Did you really think I couldn't reach you,

Just because I'm sealed far away?"

His words struck deeper than any blade.

The pressure around me was unbearable ..

I bit my lip so hard it bled, and forced the words out:

"Why me?!

Why are all of you obsessed with me?!"

I tried to scream it ..

But he didn't respond.

Instead, he asked:

"Who are you?"

I opened my mouth—

But froze.

What was the answer?

Frey Starlight?

Just a regular human?

A failed author?

What was I?

Agaroth saw the confusion in my eyes and smirked.

"Blame fate.

Blame yourself.

It doesn't matter."

Still holding the knife in Ada's hand, those crimson eyes locked onto mine.

"Just remember..."

"I am always here.

No matter where you go, or how far you run ..

I will find you.

So don't disappoint me again.

Or else..."

Clap.

He snapped his fingers.

"The show ends early."

A clear threat.

Chapter 279: Emergency Mission

He could kill me—or everyone I cared about—

At any moment.

"Farewell, Frey Starlight.

I look forward to your next act."

Like he was bidding goodbye to a pet ..

A toy he could break whenever he felt like it.

Then the pressure lifted.

Color returned to the world.

Ada's red eyes faded back to black.

She gasped and clutched her neck in confusion, just realizing the pain.

She looked at me ..bewildered, not understanding what had just happened.

"Frey?"

She called my name.

But I had already collapsed.

Face down on the ground, my entire body trembling.



Agaroth...

I clenched my fists until blood ran between my fingers.

How could I forget?

That cursed being...

The Demon King possessed power beyond imagining...

And among them, one ability stood above the rest ..

That damned Possession.

The ability to take over the body of anyone not in a certain level ...

A level no human on this planet had ever reached.

In other words...

Agaroth could take control of anyone he wanted.

Whenever he wanted.

Without effort.

He really could kill everyone I care about—

Without even lifting a finger.

"Frey?! What's wrong?!"

Ada grabbed me, panicked by my condition.

But I couldn't speak.

Not a word.

What... was I supposed to do now?

I wondered.

Why are these overwhelmingly powerful entities so interested in me?

What do they see in me?

I barely managed to survive against that thing inside Sansa ..

and that was just a fragment of the power from the third upper rank demon .

Facing the real thing? It's unthinkable.

What do they believe I'm capable of?

"Damn it. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it.

Damn it. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it.

Damn it. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it!!!"

I slammed my fists into the ground, nearly losing my mind.

What do they want from me?

Why me?

Why now?

Just when I was getting close...

Just when I thought I'd found it...

Why now?!

Should I cry?

Should I laugh?

What am I supposed to do when the most powerful being in the world holds a blade to my throat?

I can't even imagine defeating him in my wildest dreams ..

So how am I supposed to stand against him in the nightmare that is reality?

I cursed violently ..

Then smashed my head into the ground in helpless frustration.

Ada tried to comfort me, but it was no use.

There's nothing I can do.

Not against him.

Not when the opponent is Agaroth.

With dead eyes, I stared at the floor.

He knows me too well.

He knows I crave death.

That's why he never threatens to kill me ..

He threatens the people around me.

Before I realized it, I found myself laughing ..

A hollow, broken laugh that echoed in that ruined room.

"It's pointless..."

This is the end.

That's what I thought ..

Until a notification suddenly flashed in front of my eyes.

The system had opened on its own, glowing red with urgent text I'd never seen before.

And when I read the first two words ..I blinked in disbelief.

"Emergency Mission."

I'd never seen anything like it.

So far, I'd only received side missions... main missions...

And one final mission.

But never an emergency.

The system felt like it was about to explode in my face.

And it all happened as a direct response to Agaroth's sudden appearance ..

As if even the one behind this damned system hadn't anticipated it.

So now, here it was.

Issuing me a quest.

---

Emergency mission: Return to the Shadow Sect

Requirement: Bring enough power with you.

Reward: None.

Penalty: Death of Ada Starlight, Danzo, Sansa, and all main characters.

Time Limit: 3 days.

---



A cursed quest, forcing me to return to the Shadow Sect...

I laughed like a madman when I read those terms.

Especially the penalty.

They all know now ..

That threatening my death isn't enough anymore.

They've all started using the people around me to move me like a puppet.

Agaroth.

The Engineer.

I'm just a piece on the board.

A toy they push around however they please.

Sometimes I feel like bashing my head into a wall ..

Just trying to understand why they're so obsessed with me.

Agaroth barged in uninvited.

And even the Engineer—who supposedly knew my every step—didn't see it coming.

That's why he scrambled to issue this mission .

I gently pushed Ada aside and crawled back against the wall, eyes staring at the ceiling.

I could feel a hundred threads pulling at my limbs, binding me, controlling me.

I had no strength left to resist them.

I didn't even have a choice.

Agaroth wants a good performance.

The Engineer wants me back in the Shadow Sect.

But what did I want?

It doesn't matter.

I have no choice but to comply .

To walk the path that others have drawn for me.

Even if I don't understand where it leads.

I'll keep moving forward.

I'll keep fighting.

To the very end.

...

...

...

It had been a full day since Agaroth's earth-shattering appearance—

when he used my sister's body like a disposable puppet, a tool meant only to be wielded against me.

He dragged me back to reality the hard way, reminding me that I had no right to the peaceful life I foolishly thought I could reach.

From the very beginning, I was meant to run ..

Stumble blindly along a thorn-covered path I didn't even choose.

The most ironic part?

I don't understand any of it.

I don't know why I'm here in the future,

nor how the novel I once wrote became reality.

I've been thrown into darkness ...blinded, cut off from every answer.

And so, like a blind man, I had no choice but to follow the emergency mission the system issued me...

Until I find the truth I'm seeking.

That night...

I left the Starlight household after reassuring Ada that everything was fine.

When I hugged my only sister .. my last remaining family ..

I realized just how delicate she was.

So fragile.

Just a small bundle of flesh that could so easily be snuffed out.

No matter how hard I tried to sound convincing,

I knew Ada didn't believe me.

Not after watching me fall apart less than 24 hours ago.

But even she gave up questioning me when I fell silent.

I could tell she blamed herself.

I didn't want her to carry thoughts like that...

But I was already burdened with too much pain to carry anyone else's.

After pressing one final kiss to Ada's forehead,

I left the Starlight estate with bitterness clinging to my tongue.

It hurt.

It really did ..

To tell the person I loved most that "everything's fine" when I knew damn well it wasn't.

My next destination was the temple.

I had to prepare for the quest.

I needed to fulfill one of its key conditions:

'Requirement: Bring enough power with you'

This was the first time the system ever required me to seek outside help to complete a mission.

It meant one thing:

I wouldn't be going alone this time.

As soon as I read that line, I thought about recruiting the strongest people I knew ..

Oliver Khan, maybe even Carmen Starlight...

But neither was an option.

Oliver was too close to the Emperor; I couldn't count on him to accompany me.

Carmen, I needed her to stay behind with Ada ..to protect her.

As for others like Phoenix, or even my sword teacher Melina...

I didn't trust them enough to take them to a place like the Shadow Sect.

That left me with very few options.



Once I reached the temple,

I entered my room and sat down on the edge of the bed ..

Leaving the door wide open...

Waiting for my guests to arrive.

Chapter 280: A Journey into the Unknown (1)

– Frey Starlight's POV –

Every passing second brought with it a storm of thoughts ..

a whirlwind of negativity I simply couldn't shake off.

The last time I faced the horrors of the Eastern Nightmare Lands, it took everything I had .. alongside Smiley and Sad .. just to survive.

And now, I wondered...

What kind of challenge awaited me this time?

What kind of threat would be so overwhelming that I was forced to ask others for help?

I was lost in those dark thoughts when the sound of the door creaking open snapped me back to reality.

The young man who entered was instantly recognizable ... white hair and golden eyes that studied me with quiet curiosity.

I could see myself reflected in those clear eyes...

Eyes that mirrored just how desperate I looked.

"Sorry for the delay. It took me a bit to get your message,"

were the first words out of Snow Lionheart's mouth, spoken with his usual serious expression.

I simply waved my hand in dismissal.

"There's no need to apologize. If anything, I should be the one saying sorry for dragging you into this."

The message I sent Snow only said that I needed help. No context, no details.

He must've been completely in the dark.

Yet, all it took was a single glance at my face for him to grasp how serious this was .. and he didn't complain once.

"What happened?" he asked.

In response, I nodded.

"Well, since you're both here, I can finally explain everything."

"Both of us?"

Snow blinked, surprised ..

Just as another young man stepped out from the shadowed corner of the room.

Lean frame. Sharp features.

Ghost Umbra had actually arrived first.

The two locked eyes for a second before Snow offered a polite greeting ..

which the silent assassin returned in his usual cold manner.

Snow and Ghost.

These two were the ones I'd chosen for the journey ahead.

Snow Lionheart... If he went all out without holding back, he might even be as strong as me ... maybe stronger. He was the first person I thought of.

Ghost Umbra, on the other hand, might not match our raw power, but his ability to survive anywhere and fight from the shadows made him the perfect support while Snow and I held the front line.

I considered others ..Danzo, Dawn ..

but I didn't believe either had what it would take to survive what was coming.

There was also Sansa, but far too many eyes were on her at the moment, and she had only just begun to gain control over her power. She wasn't an option either.

Truth be told,

even I might not be strong enough to survive this.

I was gambling not only with my life,

but with Snow and Ghost's as well.

That made me a hypocrite.

Everything I claimed to stand for, I was about to betray.

With that thought, I lowered myself into a deep bow in front of them ..

kneeling to the ground without hesitation.

Neither of them expected that.

But it was the least I could do.

"Before anything else... I'm sorry.

Truly sorry for what I'm about to ask of you."

My head nearly touched the floor as I stared down, forcing the words out.

"To start... you need to know the truth.

You're both aware of what lies on the other side of the world, aren't you?"

They both nodded in unison.

"The Ultras."

"That's right.

But they're not the only threat.

Every tragedy that's ravaged this world... all of it stems from the demons ..

Not the Ultras."

"The existence of demons proved something ..

That this vast universe hides more than we can comprehend.

Things far beyond the minds of us humans who've lived our lives shrouded in darkness."

I started laying out truths that everyone already suspected ..

Which prompted Snow to interrupt.

"What are you getting at, Frey?"

In response,

I revealed what I hadn't told anyone.

"There's a being... an overwhelming presence that stands at the peak of this world.

A monster among monsters.

A creature beyond human understanding."

Snow and Ghost knew parts of my story with the Shadow Sect.

But they had never heard the full truth.

And now that the System had gone so far as to involve others in my mission,

I decided to take a risk as well.



"I'm being targeted by that entity.

A being whose strength makes even the mightiest humans look like toys in comparison."

Slowly, I lifted my head to meet their eyes.

"He's the one pulling the strings behind everything .. The demons... even the Ultras."

Had I said that anywhere else, people might've thought I'd gone insane.

But neither Snow nor Ghost said a word.

Especially Snow . he was dead serious when I claimed to know the true mastermind behind the enemies he sought to destroy.

The final boss.

The ultimate threat.

"To survive against that monster,

I have to embark on a journey.

A journey into the unknown ..

I don't know what I'm searching for,

I don't know what awaits me,

I don't even know the dangers I'll face."

A journey into complete uncertainty.

"All I know...

Is that I can't survive it on my own."

Otherwise, the System never would've asked me to seek help.

And now came the hardest part.

"What I'm about to ask of you... is to come with me .. on a journey into the Eastern Nightmare Lands."

"I know how selfish this is...

how unrealistic..."

"But I'm begging you."

My remaining family... and everyone I'm trying to protect... they're all in danger.

"Please... lend me your strength for this journey."

What I told them was unbelievable .. like a fairytale.

A ridiculous tale about a young man whose existence meant nothing, somehow becoming the target of the most powerful demon in the world... the final boss whose face not even the heroes of the old era had ever seen.

And yet, that entity now had its sights on someone as powerless as Frey Starlight.

So there I was, asking them to join me on a suicidal journey deep into the Eastern Nightmare Lands.

I wouldn't have been surprised if either of them laughed in my face... or called me insane.

And honestly, a part of me hoped they would. That they'd say no, and I'd go alone.

But the hand Snow placed gently on my shoulder crushed that hope.

He looked at me seriously.

"Why are you apologizing, Frey?"

He pulled me up from the ground.

"Why would you even feel sorry? I should be thanking you."

"...Thanking me?"

Snow nodded.

"We've finally found him, Frey. Or rather, he found you .. the Demon King. The one responsible for everything we've endured."

Hearing him say what I expected brought me no joy...

"That monster isn't just your enemy, Frey. He's mine too. He's the enemy of everything still breathing in this world. And if your success on this journey can give us even the slightest chance to fight back..."

Snow, in his usual heroic resolve, raised his sword.

"That's more than enough reason for me to lend you my blade."

It was the kind of answer you'd expect from someone like him .. but what meant the most was that he actually believed me.

I was about to thank him when I remembered the other person standing in the room.

Ghost Umbra crossed his arms and sighed.

"That story of yours sounds like pure fantasy."

Something straight out of a delusional dream.

"But then again... everything I've seen from you so far also felt like fantasy."

He'd witnessed the impossible become real—again and again—and all of it centered around me.

Ghost wasn't one for speeches. As usual, he kept it short.

"There's no light without shadow, right? I'll be that shadow for you."

That sealed it. They were both coming with me on this journey.

"Thank you... really. Thank you both."

Their willingness to follow me into the unknown brought me both relief .. and guilt.

That night, a temporary team was formed: two swordsmen, and one assassin.