

## **VILLAIN 301**

### Chapter 301: A Different Shade of Pain (1)

— Frey Starlight's Pov —

Laughter echoed through the living room,

wrapping around me like a warm embrace from the family I loved.

Surrounded on all sides,

I felt a deep happiness—

a kind of joy I thought had been stolen from me forever... finally returned after a long and bitter journey.

Yet for some reason,

beneath that happiness,

there was something else.

An emptiness.

A strange void that whispered something important was missing.

No matter how hard I tried,

I couldn't put my finger on what it was.

I couldn't even understand why I longed for my family this intensely ..

I saw them every day, didn't I?

So why did I miss them like this?

And why did my chest feel so... hollow?

Questions with no answers.

As I sank deeper into confusion,

my mother's gentle hand pulled me back.

She looked at me with soft, worried eyes.

"Are you alright, sweetheart?"

Just hearing her voice was enough to make my heart swell.

Realizing I'd worried her for nothing,

I forced the thoughts out of my head.

They weren't worth troubling over.

"I'm fine... just a little tired,"

I replied with a smile.

She nodded, suggesting I go rest ..

but before I could leave, my younger brother clung to my arm.

"Don't go! Tell me more about your novel !"

With those innocent, eager eyes staring up at me,

how could I say no?

My mother was about to scold him, but I stopped her.

Then I sat him beside me and began telling a fantastical tale ..

one full of struggle, sorrow, and a cursed hero trapped in an unending spiral of chaos.

Talking about my story—about Frey Starlight—

always helped me escape the weight of the real world.

And when I finished,

my brother's eyes lit up with awe.

"That was amazing!"

he said, maybe a bit dramatically ..

but I could tell he meant every word.

Even my parents seemed impressed.

They both encouraged me to publish it,

to share my story with the world.

It was a great idea ..

and I decided I would.

Everything was going perfectly.

Almost too perfectly.

So much so that I started to doubt it was real at all.

But along with that joy...

a strange feeling kept growing inside me.

A feeling that something... wasn't right.

I hated it.

So I ignored it,

choosing instead to focus on the happiness I had.

On the life that was unfolding just the way I'd always dreamed.

I grew up in a loving home, landed a good job, published a novel that became a global hit.

I was the happiest man alive.

What more could I want?

Marriage, maybe?

I figured I was old enough to settle down—

but a part of me didn't want to leave my family behind.

"Now that's a dilemma."

I thought about it seriously.

Should I bring my future wife to live with us?

But what if she didn't get along with my family?

What if I had to choose?

I already knew my answer.

I'd choose my family—every time.

Lost in those ridiculous thoughts,

I leaned back in my office chair with a sigh.

"Let's just not get married then..."

Decision made,

I left work and headed home.

What should I do when I get back?



Maybe write a new chapter?

Play with my little brother?

Sit down and have a grown-up conversation with my father?

There was so much I wanted to do ..

so I hurried home, a smile on my face.

As soon as I got there,

I slipped the key into the lock,

and opened the door with a bit too much enthusiasm.

"I'm home!"

I called out, expecting to hear my mother's voice—the one that always greeted me first.

But this time...

There was no response from her..

"Ooooh! Welcome back! Took you long enough!"

The one who welcomed me wasn't my mother.

It wasn't anyone from my family.

It wasn't even human.

I froze.

Standing before me ..

was a creature.

Tall, cloaked in a black robe that flowed like smoke,

four twisted horns crowning its head like a king's grotesque diadem.

Its face was bone-white,

marked with black lines—

and three glowing red eyes.

He clapped slowly,

smiling.

"Welcome back, Frey! I've prepared a gift for you!"

Frozen in place at the sight of this grotesque creature—

a being unlike anything I'd ever seen—

I failed to notice what was behind it right away.

The living room ..

the same one where I'd sat countless times with my family—

had become a gruesome torture chamber,

painted with splashes of red, black, and yellow fluids staining every corner.

But what gripped my gaze more than anything else...

were the four mutilated corpses strung up like decorations.

My parents.

My brothers.

Hung by nooses,

their limbs had been severed and reattached in the most repulsive fashion.

Their arms and legs were stitched together in a way that formed a single word:

"WELCOME"

"Sorry, I didn't have time to prepare anything better!"

the creature said cheerfully.

"But I hope you like it !"

He kept talking with unsettling delight,

but I couldn't hear a word of it.

I was in shock ..

paralyzed.

And that awful feeling returned.

That overwhelming sense that something was deeply wrong...

Only this time—

it was a million times stronger.

Collapsing to the ground,

I screamed uncontrollably, unable to comprehend what was happening.

Grief. Rage.

Terror. Nausea.

They all hit me at once.

I cried uncontrollably,

vomiting everything in my stomach.

"Pathetic..."

As I broke down—sobbing, retching, trembling—

that twisted demon simply laughed at my suffering.

And when I saw the world I had cherished being torn to pieces before my very eyes—

grief turned into rage.

I lunged at him.

The monster who had done all of this.

Screaming, I threw a desperate, wild punch—

clumsy and untrained.

I never learned how to fight.

And even if I had ..

could anything stop a monster like this?

I didn't need to wonder.

With a grin, the demon effortlessly caught me by the throat,

lifting me into the air, choking me.

Still laughing.

While I ... covered in tears, filth, and bile ..



looked up at him in horror.

"How disappointing... Frey Starlight. You're nothing but a letdown."

He said it so casually,

like it meant nothing.

But hearing that name ...

Chapter 302: A Different Shade of Pain (2)

It shattered something inside me.

Frey Starlight?

Who was Frey?

My main character...

the protagonist I created...

No.

My eyes widened ..

reality vanishing for a second.

A second that brought everything crashing back.

Memories flooded into my mind with brutal force.

Frey Starlight wasn't a fictional character.

He was real.

That miserable hero who stumbled through endless suffering wasn't a figment of imagination—

he was flesh and blood.

Veins pulsed across my forehead as I roared in pure, unfiltered rage:

"WESKER!!!"

Rage like I'd never known before.

They had tricked me ..

not once,

but twice.

The fog-covered demon...

and now Wesker.

I screamed, drawing every ounce of aura I could muster,

desperate to tear that bastard apart—

But I couldn't move.

With a mocking smile, he looked down at me.

"Still just an insect."

"What are you trying to accomplish with this?!"

I roared, completely unhinged.

Cursing them ..

those who had twisted my memories of my family,

who had forced me to live through the agony of losing them not once, but twice.

And cursing myself ..

For allowing it to happen.

I wanted to do something.

Anything.

Anything to break free from this cursed illusion.

Anything to ease the storm raging inside me.

But I couldn't even escape his grip.

Let alone fight back.

With ease, Wesker hurled me across the room with enough force to tear the very space around us apart.

"Once more."

He smiled as I was swallowed once again by the rushing torrent of time.

In the chaos,

I clutched my head and grit my teeth so hard they nearly cracked.

"Remember..."

I kept repeating to myself—

"You are Frey Starlight!"

This isn't a novel... it's real.

"Remember!"

I screamed at myself with every ounce of strength I had.

"Don't lose yourself!!"

Don't let it happen again.

My family... they were gone a long time ago.

This ... this was nothing but a lie. A fabricated illusion.

"Remember!!!"

I shouted one last time, pouring everything I had into that cry ..

just before time itself came to a halt once more,

and that familiar room began to take shape.

Seated around the usual dinner table...

my family smiled at me again.

"Welcome back."

They spoke in unison.

I stared at them in silence for a long moment.

A strange buzzing filled my ears,

and a sharp sense of loss overtook me—

like something important had just slipped away.

I was certain I had been repeating something to myself...

something vital.

But what was it again?

I struggled to remember,

but my mother's warm hand pulled me back.



"Son?"

Meeting her gaze,

I suddenly realized ..

I hadn't responded to their greeting earlier.

That's right... I'm with my family now.

What was I trying to remember again?

With a smile, I finally answered them all:

"I'm home."

Back home.

...

...

...

Sometimes, pain is just a word used to describe a feeling.

But what most people don't realize ..

is that pain comes in many shades.

And Frey Starlight had just begun to understand a new one.

A color unlike anything he had felt before.

Something far beyond the physical pain he had grown used to over time.

A cycle.

An endless loop of joy, love, warmth...

followed by sorrow, rage, and death.

Over and over again.

That cycle repeated during loop number 27.

After watching his family die again,

he was thrown right back to the beginning.

Back to the familiar living room.

Where his family welcomed him, once more, in perfect unison:

"Welcome back."

And Frey ..

the real one ..

stared at them for a moment before answering with a smile:

"I'm home."

He said it happily...

But he didn't understand why his body was trembling so violently.

His mother and the rest of his family looked at him, surprised.

"Son..."

"Brother..."

They asked in unison ..

"Why are you crying?"

"...Huh?"

Startled,

Frey touched his cheek—wet.

Tears,

falling uncontrollably.

"Why are you crying?"

"I... I don't know..."

he said, his voice catching in his throat as a silent sob nearly choked him.

"I'm really happy..."

He was surrounded by the people he loved.

His precious family.

"I'm happy... so why am I crying?"

Why wouldn't the tears stop?

Why did his chest ache like something had been torn from it?

He didn't have an answer.

Time kept flowing.

And the loop repeated once more.

Again...

and again.

Loop 41.

Kneeling at the feet of the devil.

Frey collapsed, clutching his head in agony as his memories returned once again.

He wept tears of blood, overwhelmed by the sheer weight of it all ..

by the grief of losing his family forty-one times.

His heart was tearing apart.

Crying, broken, pleading...

"Please..."

He begged the demon before him, utterly shattered.

"Stop... no more..."

But the demon simply reached out—

and with a flick of his hand,

sent Frey flying once more.

"Once again."

At some point,

Frey felt his very soul beginning to tear away from his body—

dragged into another realm of agony.

He struggled.

Again and again.

Living through the same torment,



repeating the cycle without end.

From above,

it was watched.

Standing there,

Frey's ideal self—the one from before—

gazed down at him.

His eyes were filled with sorrow,

watching Frey descend into a whole new kind of hell.

An endless loop.

"A loop designed to place him at the peak of joy..."

The ideal Frey spoke,

quietly analyzing the suffering unraveling below.

"...only to strip everything from him in the cruelest way imaginable."

"And worst of all—he won't remember anything until the very end,

making each experience feel new and fresh every time..."

To survive what was coming,

Frey would need to reach a state of madness-level composure ..

an inhuman resilience ..

just to endure the suffering hurled at him.

To be broken again and again in such a vicious, methodical way...

The ideal Frey,

watching himself unravel,

could only pity the soul below.

"What kind of monster are you trying to create... Engineer?"

He whispered,

as Frey continued to fall deeper—

slowly consumed by madness.

...

...

## Chapter 303: The Loop of Sorrow: Awakening in Darkness (1)

Happiness. Joy. Delight.

Pain. Sorrow. Despair.

They're nothing more than relative terms—labels we assign to the ever-changing conditions of life.

Every person has their moments. Moments when they feel they've reached the very peak of life, standing atop everything they've ever hoped to achieve.

And then, there are the moments when they plummet .. deep into the pitch-black pit of despair.

These highs and lows define the human experience. Fueled by the sheer weight of the emotions we carry.

But for most people, those moments—whether joyful or tragic—are fleeting.

They pass.

Sometimes they leave scars that never truly fade, but life, in one way or another, continues forward.

But what about that... anomaly?

That one rare, terrifying anomaly—

when life flips upside down the very moment you've reached your greatest joy...

and drags you, screaming, into the jaws of despair and death?

A nightmare most would never dare imagine—

let alone live.

But what if that nightmare became real?

And not just once.

Not twice.

But over... and over again?

Seconds turned into minutes.

Minutes into hours.

Hours into days, and months...

And finally—into years.

Caught in a cycle that refused to end,

Frey Starlight found himself enduring hell itself.

Every time he reached the pinnacle of happiness, he was torn down violently into the depths of despair.

Then, his memories would vanish.

And the cycle would begin again.

And again.

At some point,

his soul grew weary.

Exhausted.

His tears had long since dried—so much so, he had often cried blood.

The memories faded, but the heart never forgot.

Frey lived with that void inside his chest...

a void that had grown so vast, it had become a black hole, devouring him from within.

Emotions clashed—joy and sorrow, hope and grief, laughter and mourning.

-Loop 100-

Frey Starlight stood, gazing upon the corpses of his family ..

for the hundredth time.

Torn apart.

Reduced to pieces.

Their blood soaked the room.

The stench of death clung to his senses.

The demon stood before him, smiling as always.

And Frey...

he smiled back.



Just faintly.

"You look different,"

the demon said with an amused grin.

For a moment, he wanted to ask—Who are you?

Are you really Frey Starlight?

He looked young .. barely in his twenties.

But those sunken, lifeless eyes, and the dark circles beneath them...

He seemed more like a man who had lived far too long.

Someone tired of life itself.

His hair had turned stark white again—

but unlike before, when it was merely a symptom of the Frozen Heart Curse from the Moonlight  
bloodline...

This time, it was age.

Frey had aged, loop after loop,

until the weight of it all was etched into his very soul.

He could no longer cry.

Lowering his head,

he stared at the bloodied ground with a weary smile.

"I understand now."

His voice was heavy.

"I finally understand what you want from me."

After being torn apart by endless psychological torture,

his fragmented soul unable to hold itself together, Frey began to realize the meaning behind it all.

The purpose of the never-ending suffering.

Why he had been forced to relive the same agony again and again.

But at this stage, even memory loss wasn't enough to protect him.

The simulations no longer brought joy—only absolute despair.

"He wants me to get used to this..."

Whoever was behind this—

the blue-eyed one... or the Engineer, whoever he truly was—

wanted Frey to become numb.

To be able to stand over the corpses of the ones he loved most...

and feel nothing.

Over... and over... again.

"He wants me to watch them die a hundred times... a thousand...

without ever showing a reaction.

That's the level he wants me to reach."

Frey took slow, heavy steps—

passing the demon without even acknowledging his presence,

as if he were nothing.

Kneeling before the bodies of his family,

Frey spoke again with that same broken, tired smile.

"All I have to do... is get used to it."

His hand touched the blood, now cold—

a quiet confirmation that they were truly gone.

"It's easy, isn't it?"

I shouldn't grieve.

I shouldn't rage.

I shouldn't feel anything when they die.

If I can stay calm,

then I'll get through this...

He continued smiling as he whispered to himself.

"It's easy... right?"

That's all it took to end his suffering...

"Fascinating,"

the demon muttered, eyes fixed on Frey.

Frey had turned his back to the demon, who let out a sinister laugh.

"It's easy, Frey. You can do it... Right?"

The demon's voice echoed mockingly, and Frey's shoulders trembled.

To reach the point where their deaths no longer hurt ..

To remain calm, utterly unshaken, as you watch them torn apart...

as the scent of their blood fills your lungs,

and their bodies grow cold beneath your fingertips ..

Was he truly capable of that?

A dark pulse surged violently from within Frey's chest, shattering the stillness. He lifted his head to the sky and screamed with every ounce of strength he had:

"As if I could ever accept something like that!!!"

A wave of black aura burst outward, shaking the entire realm.

"How the hell do you expect me to get used to this?!"

BOOM!!

The world exploded as Frey charged toward the demon.

"Accept their deaths?"

BOOM!!

"Pretend it means nothing?!"

BOOOOM!!

In a merciless rage, Frey destroyed everything in sight ..

even what remained of his family's corpses—

until all that remained intact was the ever-smiling demon.

Calmly, the demon extended his hand once more.



"Once more."

And time reset to zero.

But this time...

Frey didn't resist.

As he tumbled through the spiraling tunnel of time, he remained still.

The scene reformed.

Even with his memories wiped,

his body—his very soul—still remembered.

-Loop 101-

His family died again.

"Father... Mother..."

How many times had he seen them die?

"You raised me to be the man you always wanted me to become."

Kneeling before them, Frey mourned in a broken voice.

"Look what I've become..."

Look how far I've fallen."

Pointing to himself, he burst into hollow laughter.

"I think I'm losing my mind.

I can't think straight anymore.

God only knows how I'm even speaking coherently right now..."

So much had changed.

"I want to destroy everything.

This cursed world that chained me like this—I want to tear it down.

I want to die.

I want...

and I want...

but I've received nothing."

"I've lost my mind."

Collapsed and unable to cry any longer,

darkness bloomed violently from Frey's chest again.

"But even in my madness... I still couldn't do it."

His voice trembled, swallowed by the shadows overtaking him.

"I couldn't get used to losing you.

No matter how hard I tried."

No amount of insanity could numb the pain.

"I love you."

And with that final thought,

the darkness devoured Frey completely,

launching him skyward.

"I love you more than anything in this world."

Those were his last words

before falling into complete madness,

destroying everything around him in a blind rampage...

...yet still,

he couldn't touch the demon.

"Once more."

The cursed chant returned ..

as cruel and inevitable as death.

Chapter 304: The Loop of Sorrow: Awakening in Darkness (2)

"Why do humans live?"

It was a simple question, yet so profound when spoken by Frey, as he searched for meaning in his cursed existence.

Every soul has a value,

determined by this pitiful life we're thrown into.

But Frey...

he still didn't know his own.

The value that had drawn titanic beings to him ..

beings who reshaped fate around a single soul that had only ever wished for a normal life ... with a loving family.

"This... is my fate."

A fate he never chose.

A fate that was never his to refuse.

– Loop 107 –

Standing before the corpses of his family once more, Frey stared at them for what felt like the final time.

"Everything I am today... I owe to you."

"You're the ones who made me into the Frey Starlight I am now."

Perhaps the higher powers had played with his fate, pulling the strings of his life from the shadows...

But the starting point—his true beginning—was always them.

"Like it or not... you've always been, and will always be, the foundation."

Everything began with them.

Even after his reincarnation, it was his father—Abraham Starlight—who brought him into this world.

"I'll never forget you... not for as long as I live."

Frey spoke with a calmness deeper than any of the previous loops.

He knew now ... no matter how many times he tried ... he could never get used to watching them die.

That would always be impossible.

"I can't do it. Honestly, I'm barely holding myself together right now, stopping myself from losing control and falling into madness again."

That would have been the easy way out...

"But that's not what you would've wanted from me, is it?"

His parents had taught him to be responsible.



To endure.

To never stop.

"So I won't stop. I'll keep moving forward."

His body trembling, Frey forced himself to suppress the darkness rising within.

Wearing a sorrowful face—one too numb to cry—he slowly turned his back on his family and walked away.

"I'll never forget you.

But I'll keep going.

To become the man you always hoped I'd be."

That was their wish.

The final message from Abraham Starlight before his death:

Live.

And never stop moving forward.

Now face-to-face with the demon.

Frey Starlight stood in complete silence, gazing with those pitch-black eyes.

His heart, once a storm of grief and rage, was still—

like the surface of a lake on a windless day.

He still mourned.

Still grieved.

Still felt every ounce of pain.

But now, for the first time...

he could move forward ... leaving behind the corpses of the people he loved most.

He no longer looked back.

Only ahead.

Perhaps this wasn't the answer the creator of the endless loops had wanted...

But it was enough.

The world began to collapse around them.

The ground crumbled as Frey faced the demon.

With a soft, almost amused smile, the human spoke.

"You might be fake... But I wonder if the real one looks just like you."

For a fleeting moment,

the fog masking the demon's face dissipated .. and Frey saw what was beneath it.

"Agaroth..."

The moment he spoke that name,

the demon shattered into countless pieces, dissolving into dust,

and Frey was left alone once again.

He didn't know whether what he saw was real...

but he knew he would never forget that face.

That was the last thing Frey saw—

before the illusion shattered completely.

The trial had ended.

It was time to return.

He had no idea how much time had passed in the outside world, but for him—who had endured that endless loop—

it had been years.

As the world crumbled into nothingness,

Frey's eyes widened.

From afar ...

he saw a familiar figure.

No... familiar figures.

There, in the distance, stood his ideal self...

and behind him, the silhouettes of his entire family.

Frey gazed at them for a long moment,

realizing they were all smiling at him.

A strange force began pulling him backward ..

ripping him away from the vision ..

and he could barely keep them in his sight as they faded.

One last look...

at the life he once had.

He accepted it, finally ..

with a soft, mournful smile.

He knew that once he opened his eyes again, that image would become nothing more than a distant memory,

buried deep in his heart.

And just like that,

Frey Starlight looked toward the future—

leaving the past behind at last.

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Frey Starlight opened his pitch-black eyes, returning at last to the reality he'd tried so long to escape.

As consciousness returned, he realized he was lying in a room he did not recognize.

But those black walls ..

they belonged to the Dark Castle.

Of that, Frey was certain.

It might seem like everything that happened until now was nothing but a bad dream—a long nightmare that ends the moment you wake up.

But the reflection staring back at Frey in those black walls said otherwise.

His sharp features, the ominous aura surrounding him, and the streaks of gray in his hair ... too much had changed. So much, in fact, that going back was no longer an option.

From the moment he awakened, Frey felt something pulling at him.

He let that instinct guide him—deeper into the massive chamber he found himself in.



He had come here for answers.

He had endured unimaginable torment, suffered beyond reason, all for this moment.

His face revealed nothing. No expression, no emotion to hint at what he was thinking.

But deep inside, he had reached his limit.

He wanted the truth.

And he was just about to receive it.

As he moved deeper into the vast room,

his heart pounded violently in his chest ..

as if he had finally found what he was looking for.

The once-empty room...

was no longer empty.

Before him, the system's interface flickered violently.

Of the three objectives on the panel, one had begun to glow with overwhelming intensity: Memories.

But Frey didn't notice any of that.

He was fixated on the object hovering before him.

Floating silently in the center of the room .. no guards, no lights, no divine aura.

Just a presence.

"A mask..."

Frey muttered, eyes locked onto it.

A plain, unassuming mask of black metal,

with sharp, angular slits where eyes should be.

He stepped closer, drawn in as if by some unseen force.

There was no pressure, no divine aura—nothing to warn him.

Which made him wonder if any of this meant anything at all.

But he couldn't stop himself.

Reaching out,

his fingers gripped the mask gently.

He brought it closer to his face, as if he had done this countless times before.

He wanted to place it slowly ..

but before he could, the mask launched itself forward ..

snapping onto his face like a magnetic curse.

And in that instant ..

his reality was torn apart.

He didn't realize it at first .. until the pain hit him.

A scream erupted from his lungs, shaking the entire castle, as Frey collapsed to the ground, writhing violently.

The moment he wore the mask ...

it was as if his mind began to rupture.

A tidal wave of knowledge poured into him—

endless, violent, and absolute.

Memories. Visions. Information.

It felt as if the entire knowledge of the universe was being hammered into his mind by brute force.

But his human brain .. was never meant to contain such things.

It was as if a sledgehammer was crushing his skull over and over again, as visions flooded his consciousness:

Wars beyond comprehension.

Endless armies.

Races he couldn't name.

Planets he had never imagined.

Blood. Death. Destruction.

A war unlike anything he had ever known.

These were not his memories.

They belonged to a king.

To a god of battle.

To the Nameless King.

And Frey...

was intoxicated.

He didn't even notice the blood pouring from beneath the mask ..

from his eyes, his nose, his mouth, and ears.

The mask held knowledge that spanned worlds.

The history of this universe—from its beginning to its end— and all of it was now burning into him.

So much, that the Shadow Adaptation in his body surged forward immediately.

> Shadow Adaptation: 1 ››› 2

He didn't know what was happening anymore.

He didn't care.

He was too entranced by what he was seeing.

> Shadow Adaptation: 2 ››› 3

Combat techniques—unlike anything he had ever seen— were being engraved into his soul.

Knowledge. Pain. Power.

None of it mattered.

Frey was drunk ..

completely mesmerized

by the Nameless King.

And as the blood trickled down his face,

he didn't even realize he was on the verge of death.

Because this mask...

held the weight of a universe.

And now,



it was his.

Everything in this world—from its very beginning to its inevitable end—had been embedded within that mask. So much so, that Frey's Shadow Adaptation immediately surged to Level 3.

But in the end, Frey was still just human.

A mind, no matter how tempered by suffering, could only endure so much.

On the verge of death, Frey was forcefully pulled out of those memories the moment a pale hand tore the mask from his face.

With bloodshot eyes, Frey stared at the figure who had appeared before him—his savior.

"You're not ready yet," said the blue-eyed man who had emerged from nowhere, holding the mask in his only hand.

The Engineer had returned.

Standing before him once more, Frey ignored all the pain ravaging his body. His face twisted in pure rage as he recognized the architect behind all the torment he had suffered until now.

With both swords in hand, Frey roared with everything he had, unleashing his full power toward the blue-eyed entity.

"Ignition!!!"

A furious ignition, one that unleashed the full extent of Frey's strength .. greater than ever before. He sought nothing more than to destroy the being that had twisted his life into madness.

The explosion of darkness that erupted was massive—so much so, it threatened to wipe the entire castle off the face of the earth.

But all of that fury was stopped cold ...

The Engineer caught both of Frey's swords with a single hand, halting his attack completely.

"Damn it!"

Frey cursed and moved to strike again, but the Engineer easily pushed his blades aside with inhuman speed—then drove a single fist into Frey's chest.

With one blow, he knocked Frey unconscious—sending him crashing to the floor.

Standing above him, the Engineer stared silently at the fallen young man. Then, he glanced at his own hand, where a strange blue liquid trickled out.

With a faint, bitter smile, the blue-eyed man gazed at the wound Frey had left—a wound that had drawn his blood.

Holding the mask in one hand, the Engineer carefully lifted Frey. With a voice that seemed uncharacteristically gentle, he placed the mask upon Frey's chest and muttered words in an ancient, unknowable language.

At that same moment, the sound of heavy footsteps echoed through the castle halls.

Angry had arrived.

The wrathful statue entered the chamber, dragging Snow and Ghost behind him—both bloodied and unconscious. A trail of crimson followed them, painting the floor with the aftermath of their brutal defeat.

The Engineer nodded at Angry in acknowledgment—welcoming an old friend.

"There were many variables," he muttered, as his gaze fell once more upon the unconscious trio.

"But the result will be the same."

And with that, Frey and his team had been utterly defeated.

Chapter 305: When Titans Speak

The Castle of Darkness .. a towering fortress unbothered by the ravages of time, protected by an ancient barrier that had never once broken.

It welcomed its visitors at last, after standing empty for countless years, awaiting the promised day.

The Engineer entered, cradling Frey in one arm, followed by Angry, dragging both Snow and Ghost behind him.

From the beginning, they never stood a chance. Not against him.

The enraged statue let the unconscious bodies rest at the entrance, then marched toward the Engineer.

Upon reaching him, Angry immediately knelt before the blue-eyed man.

His glowing violet eyes locked onto Frey and never looked away.

Unconsciously, the statue extended his hand toward the unconscious mortal.

There was no way to know what the statue was thinking, but the Engineer understood him perfectly.

"No need to worry. He's alive."

The Engineer smiled—an expression uncharacteristic of him—as he showed a face none had seen before. A face only for an old friend.

"Forgive me for making you attack him like that. I know how painful it must've been... for you and the others. But it was necessary."

Angry said nothing, incapable of speech, yet behind the cold metal mask was a being that felt. And his gaze never once left Frey ... not even with the Engineer standing before him.

The Engineer lifted his head, wearied by time.

"Forgive my bluntness, old friend. But I need to borrow your strength... one last time. An uninvited guest has come knocking."

With care, the Engineer passed Frey—along with the mask—into Angry's hands. The statue nodded.

A blinding surge of aura radiated from Angry's body, far beyond anything he'd shown against Frey and the others. His power transferred into the Engineer like a torrent, consumed down to the last drop.

With a slow nod, the Engineer's body glowed... and vanished.

In less than a second, the blue-eyed figure reappeared—soaring above the Castle of Darkness—his gaze fixed on the skies.

The ever-dark crimson skies of Londor lit up as if the sun itself had pierced its veil.

A radiant, holy light descended ... a brilliant white that announced the arrival of a powerful guest.

A being of reverence and awe, emanating such overwhelming pressure that even the void trembled.

And the Engineer stood to face him—unflinching, unmoved.

The radiance slowly dimmed, revealing the figure beneath:

A supreme entity, one of the highest beings of this world.

Clad in golden armor that glowed with divine radiance, crowned with long white hair, and eyes etched in ancient golden sigils across his face and body.

"You're far from your den this time, Lightbearer," the Engineer was first to speak.

The mighty Lightbearer did not look pleased. Though their fists had yet to clash, their auras collided—creating ripples of power that echoed through the world.

The radiant light that surrounded him was far more intense than the Engineer's blue flame.

"Remnants of the Nameless... you again."

The proud warrior's voice rumbled like thunder.

"Don't think for a second that those above haven't noticed your little games."

He rose slowly, his divine aura intensifying with every heartbeat.

"I couldn't care less about your petty schemes with your little friends... but this time, you've gone too far."

The Lightbearer's words struck with weight, but the Engineer answered with a smirk.

"Too far? And who decided where the line is? You?"

He showed no hint of yielding to a being clearly more powerful than him.

"I hear they call you the Lord of Light now .. worshiped as some kind of god or king. But don't forget your place, Orsted."

The Engineer spoke his opponent's name with purpose.

"Don't forget... you bowed once too. Just like the rest. Before our king. So what's the use of pretending now?"

Despite the provocation, Orsted's face remained unreadable.

"Are you sure this is what you want?"

He spoke calmly ... just before releasing the full extent of his divine power, shaking the heavens and the earth alike.



He glanced around—feeling them. From distant points, a network of immense auras was closing in, surrounding him.

"What's wrong?" the Engineer asked. "Why did you stop?"

Orsted answered without hesitation...

"You think that's enough?"

All those auras clearly reached SSS rank. They were the Humans who had chosen to walk alongside the Engineer long ago — the same ones Abraham met in ages past. But to the Lord of Light, that meant nothing.

Raising his hand high into the sky, the Lightbearer's aura erupted, stacking upon itself violently to form an enormous sword — so vast it overshadowed the entire Dark Castle and the surrounding pilgrims.

A blade the size of a meteor, blinding in its brilliance and threatening to annihilate all beneath it.

His golden eyes blazed.

"I could kill you... along with that precious boy of yours... before your allies even take a single step."

A direct threat.

But the Engineer didn't flinch.

Instead, he raised his own hand, drawing upon the final remnants of his strength.

From nowhere, glowing circular seals appeared around his arm ... clocks with hands that moved slowly within their rings.

At that same moment, identical time-seals materialized around the massive blade the Lord of Light had forged. With a single gesture from the Engineer, the hands of those clocks froze.

The great sword stopped moving entirely, rejecting its master's command, as though time itself had abandoned it.

Yet the Engineer didn't stop smiling — his smirk calm, unfazed.

"You can kill me. I know that much already. I'm just a ghost of who I once was."

He paused before continuing.

"But don't you think you've stepped into this fight while handing your enemy the advantage?"

Those words narrowed Orsted's eyes.

"What exactly do you know?"

"Not much," the Engineer admitted. "But I do know how much you care about that spoiled brat we beat half to death. Isn't that why you came here in the first place?"

That smile again — met with a scowl from Orsted, the Lord of Light, clearly struck where it hurt.

"I know just how important Snow Lionheart is to the Lightbearers. So let me ask you this, great Lord of Light..."

They may have stood on opposite sides today, but both had placed great hopes on a single human.

"I know your power. You're one of the Seven Great Powers for a reason. But... are you strong enough to defeat me and my comrades ... and save your golden boy down below before my ally kills him?"

The question was met with silence.

But Orsted's aura dimmed slightly — proof that he wasn't confident in doing both.

He could crush the Engineer and the others. That much was true.

But saving Snow in time? That was close to impossible.

"We are not your enemies, Lord of Light," the Engineer said firmly. "Just as you've placed your hopes in that radiant youth... we've chosen his shadowed counterpart. Our goals may clash ... but our enemy is the same."

He was ready to fight if necessary. But if the conflict could be avoided, he would take that path.

A direct confrontation with the Lord of Light would lead only to casualties — ones they could not afford.

Thankfully, Orsted was reasonable enough to realize that.

"...Very well."

The crushing aura faded, and the colossal sword dissolved into light.

The Engineer lowered his hand too, finally letting out a breath.

"Times are changing... Nameless follower," Orsted said quietly.

"I don't know what you're trying to accomplish. But all of you are just shadows ... faint echoes of what you once were. You'd do well to stay hidden down below. You're not ready to bear the weight of what lies above."

"..."

"Time changes... but Agaroth remains constant. No matter how many ages pass, he only grows stronger. Damn him — and his filthy race."

His golden body flared with light once more.

The Demon King Agaroth — a catastrophe by every measure. A monster that brought death and despair wherever he went. Even the titans of the world feared his name.

"Be warned, Nameless follower. I won't hold back next time."

Orsted turned, offering his back to the Engineer.

The blue-eyed one said nothing in return.

"Where are you headed?" he asked at last.

"I sensed a surge of dark aura in the distance," Orsted replied.

"One of the wretched High Seats, I assume..."

He smirked ... clearly referring to the Lord of Graves .

"I'll go hunt him down."

"I doubt you'll catch him," the Engineer said. "If you sensed him... he sensed you."

"That's fine. Did you forget I'm the fastest among the Seven Great Powers?"

Light surged through Orsted's body as he shot through the sky, ripping it open in a flash of divine brilliance.

Only one remark was left to echo in the Engineer's ears.

"Nice barrier, by the way."

An odd farewell—but the Engineer gave it no weight.

He exhaled with quiet irritation, his eyes drifting to his fractured hand.

His body could no longer withstand battles of this magnitude.

The blank expression he wore concealed the truth .. but the broken vessel told a different story.

Exhausted. Shattered. He had reached his limit.

And yet, he pressed on—relentless in the mission he had lived for all this time.

His blue eyes settled on the fortress below...

Where Frey Starlight lay.

That boy had left reality behind, plunged into another world .. one shaped by the mask that flooded his mind with memories never meant to be his.

Memories so vivid, so detailed, they manifested as a life he was now living.

While the fated encounter between Orsted and the Engineer unfolded above, Frey had slipped into a deep, disturbingly vivid dream ...

A dream titled "Nameless."

Chapter 306: Nameless (1)

When did it begin?

Frey asked himself, watching the visions from a long-forgotten time.

Wandering through the shadowy vastness of the cosmos, lost in the world revealed by the mask, Frey finally began to glimpse fragments of the truth.

Earth... was just one planet among hundreds of thousands scattered across an unfathomable universe.



Far beyond it was a larger world, orbiting quietly in the cosmic void.

A planet called Krat.

A world that had birthed a civilization so advanced, it stood unrivaled in all known history.

And it was all thanks to the noble race that inhabited it.

Highly intelligent, almost human in form .. save for their ghostly pale skin and dull gray irises.

But their true distinction lay in something far deeper:

They felt nothing.

Love. Grief. Anger. All foreign to them—emotions stripped away at birth.

What remained were muted senses—pain, cold, heat—no more than the bare instincts shared by all living things.

This trait, both gift and curse, rendered them machine-like in behavior. Free from sentiment, they pursued progress with unrelenting focus, reaching levels of scientific and philosophical development that others could only dream of.

And more than that... they were immortal.

They didn't age. Didn't decay. Upon reaching maturity, their bodies simply stopped changing. The only way to kill one... was to literally destroy them.

Semi-eternal and utterly logical, they held no need for names. Each individual bore a number—identities reduced to strings of digits, like items in a vast inventory.

Their society was flawless... or so it seemed.

Among them was one—designated 4005—whose name echoed more than the rest.

Why?

Because one day, he stood before the elders and declared:

"We will be invaded. Our planet will be erased."

A war was coming, he said. One that would end with their annihilation.

But when asked for proof, he gave none.

He spoke of visions, of knowledge beyond comprehension. But to a race ruled by reason and evidence, it was heresy.

They cast him out. Branded him a madman.

Years passed... and nothing happened.

His people advanced, expanded, flourished—while he, obsessed and alone, dedicated himself to a single field of study:

Time and space.

Decades of obsession led him to break the boundaries of physical reality. He discovered a way to bend space itself, allowing him to teleport across unimaginable distances in a blink.

An awe-inspiring feat in any world.

But to his people?

A pointless pursuit.

And then, just as he had foretold... the demons came.

Krat became their next conquest.

The invasion was a nightmare.

Krat resisted with the full force of its technological might—but no defense could hold.

Because something else had arrived.

Agaroth.

The newly crowned Demon King.

The being who forged the Upper Seats.

The one who shattered the Duchy of Hell and crushed every demon lord who opposed him.

A monster so vast, so terrifying, they called him the Devourer of All.

He descended like a black sun... and with him, the war ended in catastrophe.

It was nothing short of a genocide—an extinction witnessed by the world, where an entire race was wiped out, from the first to the last.

The demons showed no mercy, terrified of the terrifying potential that race possessed.

A race that couldn't die. A race devoid of emotion. Left unchecked, they would evolve endlessly.

What if a species like that, one that had poured all its focus into development, turned that focus toward war? Toward power?

A chilling thought ... one that ended in a massacre, a slaughter of billions.

They all died, marking the complete end of a civilization.

All except one.

The only one who was different. The one who had spent his entire life studying a field deemed utterly worthless.

The one who, through sheer obsession and brilliance, had mastered time and space—developing the power to teleport instantly across vast distances.

And so, the moment the invasion began, he vanished.

Effortlessly, he warped away to a distant planet, watching from afar as his homeworld burned, and his people were erased from existence.

The reason he had dedicated his life to space-time, and nothing else, was for this moment. To survive. When the demons came.

He had known. He'd seen the future—and used that knowledge to save himself.

Alone.

The only one who was different... survived.

His world was destroyed before his eyes. Everyone was killed.

But for someone who had never known true emotion, he felt nothing.

No sorrow. No fury.

The thought of revenge never crossed his mind. It never even occurred to him.

He turned his back on his world without a second thought and began a new journey .. one driven solely by his insatiable thirst for knowledge.

He had so many questions about the vast universe he barely understood.

And about himself.

Why had he been born different?

Why could he see the future?

Why was he special?

Countless questions plagued his mind—questions he was determined to answer.

And so, he traveled the stars alone, immortal, searching for knowledge. For someone like him, who felt nothing... that was enough.

Wherever he went, he became fixated on a new aspect of life.

A forbidden one.

One that no mortal dared to understand.

Life and death.

When corpses fell before him in battle, he often found himself staring at them, wondering ..

"Why do people die?"



At the same time, he witnessed the miracle of birth, of new life entering the world.

And that raised a second question:

"Why do people live?"

Life and death—two forces beyond mortal grasp. Yet he was drawn to them. Fascinated by them.

And for reasons he couldn't explain, he felt that understanding them was the key to understanding himself.

If he could control life and death... perhaps he'd find his truth.

Years passed, and that fascination became obsession.

An obsession that drove him to madness.

He clashed with many who stood in his way. And when they resisted, he killed them.

Many fell by his hand .. and through that, he came to understand how easy death truly was.

"I can control death."

But the opposite? Bringing life?

That was beyond him.

He had taken many souls—but given nothing in return.

Years went by, faster and faster, as he dove deeper into his obsession.

And eventually... he did the impossible.

He achieved something no one else could have imagined.

He learned to store souls.

So long as they hadn't fully passed on, he could capture them—preserve them.

What once seemed like madness... became reality.

Using his power, he began trying to give life in his own way .. by storing the souls of those who died in war and battle, protecting them from fading away.

At first, he crafted crude vessels—primitive bodies forged from black metal, their expressions frozen at the moment of death.

Some smiled in peace. Others wore faces of sorrow... or rage.

They looked like statues. Monuments to lives lost.

And yet, for the first time... they lived again.

That was how the statues Frey had encountered several times came to be—Smiley, Sad, and Angry.

They were his first experiments.

From beginning to end, he viewed them as nothing more than trials to satisfy the ever-growing obsession within him.

But his efforts succeeded. Eventually, those vessels moved on their own, retaining all their memories.

And he didn't stop. He kept moving forward.

Chapter 307: Nameless (2)

Over time, the vessels became more and more like intelligent lifeforms. From emotionless statues with no trace of life, they evolved into fully developed beings, capable of speech and self-expression.

He saw them all as experiments.

But what about them?

The being who saved them.

The one who achieved the impossible and gave them a second life.

A presence of such profound wisdom, they had never witnessed anything like it before.

Some were grateful.

Others were awestruck by his strange power. Some revered his boundless intellect.

One way or another, all of them developed complex emotions toward this emotionless entity.

But he didn't stop.

He traveled from planet to planet, from civilization to civilization.

He absorbed everything he could from each land he set foot on, only to leave once he had learned all there was to learn.

As centuries passed, the story repeated itself countless times.

"They say he was unbelievably powerful."

By mastering every martial art he came across, his strength grew to the point where defeating anyone became trivial. He surpassed the limits of laws that governed the world.

"They say he was a mystery."

Clad in a strange black armor and an even stranger mask, no one ever saw his face. He never spoke to anyone. Never got close to anyone.

He simply arrived, stripped the land of all its knowledge... then moved on.

"They say he had no name."

He left behind no name. No face. No trace.

So they called him... Nameless.

Over time, Nameless began setting foot on worlds ravaged by demons.

Dead lands—perfect testing grounds for his twisted craft.

He resurrected the fallen, granting them another chance at life, then left in quiet satisfaction.

He didn't care for them.

But before he realized it, his name began to carry weight.

At the start of his journey, when he looked back, he would find two or three of the vessels following him.

They were fascinated by him ... and so long as they didn't get in his way, Nameless didn't stop them.

So immersed in his obsession, driven by immortality and emotional emptiness, he didn't notice how much time had passed.

Until one day, he turned around .. and there were no longer just two or three behind him.

There were countless.

Vessels stretched to the horizon, following in awe.

Every land he had ever walked now knew his name. They praised him. Worshipped him.

They hailed him as their king.

Nameless was no longer just a title.

It became a symbol—a presence.

One that encompassed millions who would eventually form an entire sect in his name.

It took thousands of years.

But Nameless had finally reached the end of his journey. He had visited every civilization. Learned all there was to learn.

He mastered every known martial art—so much so that he developed a technique immune to them all.

A style that made him move like a shadow across the battlefield, graceful and untouchable.

His strength. His speed. Everything about him had reached unfathomable heights.

At the end of that journey, he realized he had truly fulfilled his potential.

He declared himself the only being who had reached the pinnacle of existence.



There was nothing left to learn. Nothing left to gain.

At that point, his power became incomprehensible.

And at the same time... the sect that bore his name had grown so large, it spanned across every planet, every civilization.

A being of that magnitude, leading millions .. there was only one inevitable outcome.

The demons.

It was bound to happen.

The demons, led by Agaroth .. an undefeated entity who had dragged the world into the depths of despair.

The world had reached a dead end. The First Lightbearer, the Pure Vessel, had fallen ... split in half by Agaroth. Even the mighty God of the Pantheon, Midir, suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Demon King.

One after another, the world's greatest titans were brought to their knees when faced with Agaroth.

The demonic momentum was relentless. Every race suffered devastating losses against this dark force.

Eventually, the Nameless Sect and the demons clashed ... an inevitable confrontation.

And when the war began, Agaroth, the one who had annihilated everything in his path, showed no sign of slowing down.

But the entire world held its breath the moment the sky trembled and the earth shook .. the moment the Nameless entered the battlefield.

Everyone was stunned by what they witnessed. Agaroth had been stopped completely by a warrior no one knew anything about.

Not only did he stop him, he fought him as an equal.

Their clash was nothing short of a natural disaster, bringing destruction and death on an unimaginable scale. The earth wept, the skies burned, and hope was reignited.

Agaroth, elated to find the opponent he'd long desired—a faceless, nameless warrior—finally had someone who could meet him blow for blow.

The emergence of a being who could stand against Agaroth was unprecedented. It became a beacon of hope in an otherwise hopeless world.

During that extraordinary era, races from all corners of existence rallied behind the Nameless Sect, placing their faith in the one who had achieved the impossible.

All the ancient powers of the world bowed their heads to him ... the Nameless who shattered what they once believed to be invincible.

And so began the Great War, a conflict that would one day become the stuff of legend.

The demons, numbering in the billions, stood united as a race. Opposing them were the Nameless Sect and every other race that had allied with them.

It was war on a scale never seen before.

Millions died each day.

Blood flowed until it formed seas. The land was ravaged without pause, and death became as natural as breathing.

The war reached the heavens, engulfed the stars and skies alike. In its heart, the Nameless and Agaroth clashed countless times.

Their battles defied comprehension. Neither side could finish the other, always interrupted, unable to break the deadlock between them.

Agaroth, thrilled to finally find a rival worthy of his power.

And the Nameless ... who had surpassed all other beings ... kept up with Agaroth's terrifying growth.

The Demon King evolved with each fight, true to his title: the Devourer of All.

But the Nameless adapted to that growth, matching him stride for stride until the very end.

The war eventually reached a standstill. Billions had died on both sides.

At that rate, the victor would only rule over ashes.

Both Agaroth and the Nameless understood this as the casualty toll climbed into unthinkable numbers.

And so, at the end of the war, a decision was made:

A single battle.

One final duel between the strongest warrior of each side would determine the fate of the world.

If Agaroth won, nothing would stop him from ruling all.

If the Nameless triumphed, the demon race would fall.

One last battle ... to decide everything.

On the eve of the duel, the Nameless met with his greatest creation: his perfect vessel, the one with blue eyes—the Engineer.

Using his incredible abilities, he offered something beyond imagination.

That night, for the first and only time in his life, the Engineer cried ... watching his king walk into the battle of destiny against Agaroth.

Agaroth, brimming with anticipation, received exactly what he had longed for.

At long last, after countless skirmishes, the two clashed in a final battle to the death—one the world would never witness again.

A duel that made even the strongest hold their breath.

And at the end of that battle, which warped time itself...

In a pool of blood, the result was finally clear.

Both were godlike. Their power was beyond comprehension.

But in this world, there is a law:

Under the sky, and above it...

There is no one stronger than Agaroth.

The law was proven true when he sat in the blood-soaked battlefield, holding the body of the Nameless in his arms.

Agaroth, grievously wounded, lifted his head toward the sky ... his eyes fixed on that final thing above the Nameless's body... the last move his opponent had made.

Chains—ethereal, ancient—wrapped around Agaroth's soul, binding it tight.

His face was expressionless.

In his arms lay the man.

The only one who had ever reached his level.

The only one who had ever fought him as an equal.

Agaroth realized then—he was gone.

With his soul shackled, Agaroth slowly closed his eyes.

"...Goodbye, my only friend."

And so, the Nameless finally died ... leaving behind an indelible mark on a world that would never be the same again. Not ever.

Chapter 308: Journey's End (1)

-Frey Starlight's Pov-

There are some things in life you simply can't believe .. even when you see them with your own eyes.

That's the best way to describe my state of mind as I tried to process those memories.

Nameless...

I only glimpsed fragments of his legendary tale ...a being who had lived for thousands of years. A figure who pushed himself to the absolute limit, devoting everything to growth and evolution... and nothing else.

He reached heights so monumental that he became a deity, worshiped by countless beings from all across the races.

I once wrote an entire novel—The Land of Survival—a story that chronicled this world in vivid detail.



I built the lore, the twists, the world itself... and it became my reality.

But never—not even in my wildest dreams—did I think I'd witness, with my own two eyes, someone powerful enough to stand against him...

To challenge Agaroth.

Just the thought of it defies everything I thought I knew.

Nameless. The Engineer. And the retinue that followed them.

I never wrote about any of them. Which only reinforced what I had long begun to suspect .. this wasn't the novel I created. This was something else entirely.

His life—from beginning to end—was awe-inspiring, even by my own standards... and I've seen more than most.

Nameless. Agaroth. Giants among giants, existing on a level I couldn't even dream of reaching.

Nameless truly was... a legend.

But then I asked myself—what did any of this have to do with me?

A revered king, followed by millions. The one who once stood as the shield of the world against death incarnate: Agaroth.

So why me?

Once I received some of the answers... I began asking a whole new set of questions.

Why me?

I'm just a nobody. A fragile human.

Even with the power of aura, I'd be lucky to live just over a hundred years.

So what could they possibly expect from me?

I've suffered endlessly ... physically and mentally.

I've endured every imaginable form of torment to become stronger, but... do they really want me to become something like that monster?

A monster on the level of Agaroth?

I couldn't help but laugh at the absurdity of it all.

"If that's what you want from me, Blue Eyes, I'm sorry to disappoint you."

You're asking for the impossible.

I don't have the qualifications—or even the desire—to try.

Even with the mask that contains all the knowledge of Nameless himself... I can't do it. I can't even wear it for more than a minute.

In other words... you failed, Engineer.

I meant every word, smiling in bitter acceptance.

But that smile faded... as a certain memory crept back into my mind.

That lunatic Nameless .. manipulating souls through aura like it was the simplest thing in the world.

I still remember the image of him pouring it into those vessels.

Vessels... souls...

And in that moment, my father's warning resurfaced—his words echoing from somewhere deep inside me.

The realization struck me with eerie clarity.

I didn't overreact. Not after everything I'd been through.

But deep down, I asked myself:

"What am I, really?"

Could it be... I'm just a vessel?

Like Angry... Smiley... Sad...

Am I just like them?

A more advanced version? More expressive? More alive?

But still... just a vessel ... crafted to host the one they called Nameless?

Within that subconscious realm... the place where all that knowledge and memory had been dumped... I found myself laughing again.

"I didn't think I'd fall apart this easily..."

107 times... I endured every one of those cycles. Until my hair turned white.

My tears had dried. My resolve had hardened.

I truly believed I'd never be shaken again.

But this... this was too much.

Unable to form any coherent response, I realized just how cruel fate had been to me.

All that pain. All that struggle through the swamp of despair, rising and falling, over and over... just to be told I'm a vessel?

A borrowed body. A temporary will—crafted solely to pave the way for the true king?

"That's cruel."

Too cruel.

And knowing I didn't even have the right to object...

I accepted my fate .

As the world around me... faded to black.

...

...

...

"Frey!"

When I woke up again, I found myself lying on the cold floor of a dark room.

Familiar faces surrounded me.

Bloodied, but alive.

On my left and right, they stared silently, though their eyes said more than words ever could.

Slowly, I raised my upper body, sitting upright beside them and instinctively reaching for my head, which was still pulsing with pain.

"How long has it been?"

I was the first to break the silence, speaking in a calm voice.

"We just woke up..."

Snow answered, his tone heavy with fatigue and the daze of recent defeat.

From that alone, I could tell—he had lost to Angry, even after using the War King Form.

With a light pat on his shoulder, I offered a gesture of comfort and rose to my feet.

"It's fine. That defeat was inevitable. He's in the SSS class, after all."

I said it casually, brushing past Snow ... who was visibly taken aback by my words.

From the beginning, Angry had toyed with us the way an adult would with children, showing only a sliver of his true power.

And how did I know that?



The answer was right in my hand.

I lifted it slowly, staring at the object resting in my palm.

The black metallic mask, still and silent—emanating not even the faintest trace of power.

Who would've thought that this unassuming artifact contained knowledge vast enough to fill the universe?

And I had just received a fraction of it...

"Let's go."

I called to my friends with a smile, and both of them followed without hesitation.

"To where?"

"To loot this castle."

I answered simply.

Ever since we woke up here, there had been no sign of Angry or that damn Engineer.

I was sure they were still nearby ... watching us, capable of reaching me at any moment. But I couldn't do the same to them.

So I decided to do the one thing I still could.

Part of the knowledge I gained earlier included everything about this castle.

Now that I fully understood its inner workings, I realized just how important this place was.

Delving deeper, I began opening hidden passageways with such ease and precision that even Ghost—the assassin—was visibly impressed.

Eventually, we found ourselves inside a vast chamber.

Snow and Ghost were visibly awestruck by what they saw.

A room the size of an arena, overflowing with golden treasures so dazzling they could blind anyone who stared too long.

"Take whatever you want, guys. Ghost, I think you'll find a weapon here that suits you."

I spoke with casual indifference, like the place belonged to me.

But my friends' eyes never left me.

"What?" I asked with a smile. "Is there something on my face?"

"Are you okay, Frey? You look kind of..."

Snow hesitated with his words, but Ghost didn't.

"You look like a completely different person."

They weren't wrong. One glance at my reflection told me everything.

If I once looked like a wicked prince with that white hair...

Now I looked more like a tyrant king—ruler of an ancient, forgotten kingdom.

Ironically, that Nameless entity had white hair too.

Somehow, I suppose I'll end up looking more and more like him one day...

"I'm fine, guys. Thanks for your concern."

"But—"

"That's enough."

I cut off Snow, who looked like he was about to press further.

"I said I'm fine, So just drop it, alright?"

I was truly grateful for his concern.

Really, I was.

But I wasn't in the right state to show it.

Not when that Nameless figure still filled my mind ...

Fortunately, Snow and Ghost weren't the type who couldn't read the mood. They let it go.

Chapter 309: Journey's End (2)

Once the moment passed, the three of us roamed the castle, looting anything that looked useful.

After some searching, I found the perfect weapon for Ghost.

He was completely captivated by the twin black daggers, each releasing a violet aura that rose like dark steam into the air.

He twirled the daggers in his hands, testing their weight and balance.

"They feel light... but they're actually really heavy," he noted.

"They're probably made from the same metal as my swords," I said with a smirk, sharing what little knowledge I had.

"They also align perfectly with dark and shadow attributes—making them ideal for someone like you."

Ghost nodded in appreciation, silently thankful. The whole exchange didn't feel like one between friends anymore...

More like one between someone who had crossed a threshold ... and others who hadn't.

Everything that had happened had left its mark on our relationships, changing them entirely.

It felt as though years had passed... when in truth, it had only been a few hours.

Ghost was the biggest winner—now wielding an SS class weapon.

As for Snow and me, we each took a set of the black armor once worn by the Nameless cult.

Dressed in the same dark gear, white-haired and all... we looked eerily similar.

"Darkness suits you," Snow said.

"Not as much as it suits you," I replied.

He, who once always carried a bright and cheerful aura, now seemed changed. After facing the depths of the underworld himself... I knew it was an experience he'd never forget.

There were countless treasures all over the place ... we took as much as we could fit into our rings.

Still dazzled by what they'd seen, both Snow and Ghost couldn't help but ask:

"What is this place, really?"

A simple question, yet one I couldn't answer easily.

"This place... is a tomb."

A vast tomb that buried the story of a king.

After gathering all we could, the three of us finally left the castle.

"What now?" Snow asked—a valid question.

Even after everything we'd been through, our main problem still remained:

How were we supposed to get home?

But that wasn't a problem anymore.

"This way."

I pointed toward the path, and both of them looked at me with curiosity.

"I know this sounds strange, guys... but I promise I'll give you answers soon. Right now, I just need you to trust me and follow."

I knew it was selfish of me to ask that after they risked their lives for me.

But my head was about to explode from all the information that had been shoved into it.



I couldn't think straight anymore. I just needed time.

"No problem," they both said.

They understood.

"Thank you... really. Thank you so much."

And just like that, the return journey began.

"There are several teleportation gates scattered across this place," I explained. "One of them was broken before... but now, we just need to find another."

I knew where all of them were.

I had no idea how to calibrate them to return us to Earth, but I suspected the Engineer's followers had already prepared one.

The journey was quiet ... each of us lost in thought, trying to process everything we had seen and experienced in this forsaken land called Londor.

None of us spoke.

Every so often, nightmare creatures emerged along our path. But—

"Slash!"

It only took a few strikes of my sword to tear those horse-shaped beasts into pieces.

My body felt incredibly light. My strength had increased without me even realizing it.

I began correcting small, unnecessary movements in my combat style—instinctively, based on the knowledge I had absorbed.

And there was also Shadow Adaptation, now at level three.

I still didn't fully understand what that ability gave me.

At level one, it allowed me to adapt to my opponent's fighting style and develop instant counters. It was such a powerful ability that I unlocked the Upper Shadow element the moment I reached it.

I assume stages two and three will grant me similar—or perhaps entirely different—powers.

But honestly... I don't know yet.

I figured I'd find the answer eventually.

The massive boost in my strength hadn't gone unnoticed—Snow and Ghost both realized it immediately.

I could tell I was no longer beneath Snow's War King Form in any way. In fact, if I went all out now, I might even surpass him.

My power had multiplied several times the moment I put on that mask. And even though I hadn't absorbed everything inside it, what I had taken was more than enough to elevate me to this level.

As I was now, I was confident I could go head-to-head with any SS ranked fighter without issue.

It was a massive leap.

And yet, I couldn't bring myself to feel happy about it.

Not while I knew that this body of mine might just be a borrowed vessel.

The journey that once took us over a month... was now over in just a few days.

We tore through anything in our path, eventually reaching the hidden teleportation gate nestled deep within a forest.

"I expected it to be harder than this... maybe even running into the Lord of Graves again."

Snow's concern wasn't misplaced. But the Lord of Graves wasn't around anymore.

Even he wouldn't dare linger in the same land as the Lord of light, who was still nearby.

"The real problem is what's waiting for us on the other side."

Nearly three months had passed since we left Earth.

"We've got a lot to explain..."

"Yeah," Snow muttered with a smirk. "Pretty sure winter's hit by now. We were at the end of the year when we left."

"I bet we're going to be expelled from the temple when we return."

"Worse ... we might be listed as missing."

I had sent Ada a warning that I'd be gone for a while, but I could imagine how worried she'd been. She probably searched for me everywhere.

Still, none of that mattered anymore.

We just wanted to go home.

We stepped through the portal without delay, leaving the barren land of Londor behind.

A place where we saw and experienced far too much...

The place where it all began.

Once we returned to Earth, we arrived back at the Shadow Sect ... the very place we had departed from.

I knelt and touched the soil, filled with pure aura, and realized just how much of a blessing it was to live on a planet that wasn't dead.

"Never thought I'd miss the Shadow Sect," I murmured, staring at those dark walls.

"Nothing like home, man. Let's move," Snow replied.

We didn't linger.

The journey took only a few days thanks to our current strength, which made it easy to destroy anything in our path—especially since Earth's monsters were nothing compared to the ones in London.

At first, we thought the magic circle we used to arrive had long since faded... but to our surprise, it was still there.

"That's strange. Was that hired mage really that strong? For his spell to last this long?" Snow asked.

I nodded slightly.

"The last time I came here through a similar gate, the caster had to borrow aura from the entire Starlight estate. This... this isn't normal." I stared at the glowing magic.

It was suspicious, but its presence saved us a lot of time. Instead of crossing the entire Eastern Nightmare Lands, the portal would take us straight home.

"Let's go," I said, and both Snow and Ghost followed.

We expected snow the moment we arrived—but the weather didn't seem all that different from when we left.

A bit odd, but nothing worth overthinking.

After crossing the Oclas Mountains...

We were officially back in the Empire after our long absence.

"Lord Starlight?"

One of the border guards attacked us by mistake the moment we stepped forward.

He ended up attacking us ... but I took him down effortlessly.

"It's been a while..."

I assumed three months was long enough to be missed.

But the guard's reaction surprised me.

"What are you doing here, Lord Starlight? Didn't you just return a few days ago with Lady Ada?"

"...Huh?" I blinked in confusion.

To confirm my doubts, I quickly checked the date on his smartwatch...

What I saw left me and the others stunned.

We had definitely been gone for three whole months.

That much was certain.



But according to the clock...

Not even half that time had passed.

In that moment, we all came to the same realization.

"Time flows differently here than it does over there," I said.

Only three days had passed on Earth...

Chapter 310: The next step (1)

— Frey Starlight's POV —

"Only three days?!"

I asked the startled guard, who was clearly shaken by the sudden appearance of the Starlight heir emerging from the Nightmare land.

"Y-Yes, my lord... technically, this is the third day."

"I see. Return to your post and inform my sister that I've returned."

"Understood."

I gave him the order. Normally, he wouldn't even listen to me ... but after seeing how easily I knocked him down, he didn't dare say a word.

Once the guard ran off, I turned to Snow and Ghost, both still reeling from what had just happened.

"What the hell is going on? I know we weren't keeping perfect track of time, but three days?!"

"I suppose time flows differently here than it does there..."

Somehow, a single day here was equal to an entire month over there ... making our months-long journey feel like a blink of an eye to those on Earth.

"I guess that's a good thing. At least we don't have to explain much."

Ghost chimed in, then looked directly at me.

"Except for one thing."

I knew exactly what he meant.

"No one changes that much in a single day."

The white hair. The colder expression.

I smiled. "You'd be surprised. Even on that other planet, it was just one day."

Technically, yes. But inside my mind... it had felt like years.

"Let's rest at the Starlight estate tonight. I owe you both some answers."

It didn't feel right keeping them in the dark any longer, so I decided to share enough to satisfy their curiosity.

"No need. You don't owe us anything. That journey helped us too."

It expanded their understanding of the vastness of our world ... of the terrifying forces that exist far above us. And something else...

Ghost twirled his aura, feeling the raw strength that had surged within him.

"Spending that long in a place filled with corrupted aura pushed our bodies to adapt."

"Now that you mention it... you're right."

That cursed aura, hostile to life itself, had become the very thing that strengthened us. Bodies that survived hell would thrive in a world still teeming with vitality.

Any gain in strength at this stage was a blessing.

We returned to the Starlight estate—now completely under my sister's control ever since Leonides Starlight's fall.

Staying at the estate worked in my favor. I could do as I pleased.

And within minutes, I found myself face-to-face with my dear sister and Carmen, still faithfully at her side.

As soon as Ada laid eyes on me, her gaze widened in shock. I had expected that reaction.

"I'm back," I said with a faint smile.

She ran up to me. "What happened to you?!"

"A lot... but I'm fine."

"Fine?! Look at your hair! What's with your face?!"

Her hysterics as the elder sister—who had recently taken on the role of surrogate mother—lasted for quite a while.

At times like this, I simply let her vent until she ran out of steam.

Telling her in advance that I'd be gone and only being away for a short time helped ease the blow ... but it still wasn't exactly a light one.

It took Ada a few more minutes to notice Snow and Ghost, who quickly bowed to her.

"I assume you've heard of the Church's golden boy and Ghost Umbra, son of Mist... They've been a huge help, and I'd like to host them here."

In an instant, Ada shifted from concerned sister to noble lady of a prestigious house.

"Thank you both for taking care of my brother. I'm sure he gave you plenty of trouble."

"N-Not at all..."

Both Snow and Ghost answered, clearly taken aback by Ada's swift change in demeanor.

"I'm glad to hear that. Welcome to the Starlight estate."

"Th-thank you, my lady," Snow stammered, clearly unsure how to handle her. I watched it all from the side, reminded once again of the sides of Ada she no longer showed to me.

Later that night, we were hosted in the grand halls of the Oclas Mountains with all the luxury one could ask for.

And deep into the night, I shared many of my stories with Snow and Ghost—Ada included. She deserved to hear them too.

Of course, I didn't reveal everything. But I did speak of the Engineer—the blue-eyed being who had interfered with my life over and over, always reaching for something far beyond my understanding.

The moment I mentioned the Engineer, the room reacted in different ways ... but the most intense response came from Ada, who instantly connected him to the blue-eyed man that once visited her.

"So that's who he was... the mysterious figure."

The one who had shown her a vision of my death, pushing her to change that future.

"You're telling me... a being who can see the future has been toying with your life? And everything you've done until now... was part of his plan?"

Ada asked, her voice sharp. I nodded.

"That's right."

A bitter truth—finally, they were beginning to grasp some of the hidden layers of my life.

"How do you plan to deal with someone like that? Are you going to fight him?"

Snow asked. He'd had enough. In just one month, he had lived through madness beyond anything he'd ever imagined. I could tell .. this was too much for him.

"I don't plan to fight him. I wouldn't stand a chance against an SSS rank monster who can see the future."

A battle like that would be suicide. No, calling it a battle would be wrong—I'd been a puppet in his hands all along.

"What I plan to do... is keep playing along. There's no point resisting right now. For all we know, even this conversation might be part of his design."

I chose not to reveal the truth about the Nameless, or that I might just be one of his vessels. No need to burden them with that yet.

"I'll help you," Snow said quietly.

I smiled. "I'd appreciate that."

Even though having him by my side meant a lot, I knew deep down—this fight with the blue-eyed Engineer was mine alone. No one else could end it for me.



He held complete control over every part of my life. Even this body... had been tampered with by his hand. Honestly, I wouldn't be surprised if he could end me with a flick of his finger.

The Engineer and the Nameless had twisted my life however they pleased.

Then there was Agaroth, who continued to watch me closely ... his interest in me undeniable.

And let's not forget the looming war against the Ultras here on Earth.

I was surrounded on all sides.

Anyone else in my position might've wanted to scream. But strangely... I felt calm, even as I fully realized the scale of it all.

With a half-smile, I stared into the void, lost in my own solitude.

For the first time, I felt thankful for all those trials that had drained me of tears. Because of them... I could no longer look back, even if I wanted to.

All I could do now ... was move forward.

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After sharing part of the truth with my sister and friends, I found myself alone in my room once again.

The clock read 5:00 a.m. We'd spoken for hours.

I could still sense Ada's frustration. She had wanted to help me—desperately—but couldn't. It was all over her face.

She had always been honest when it came to me, and I understood how helpless she must have felt. But there wasn't much she could do. Sadly, House Starlight was just a large piece on the chessboard of those titans.

In the end... it was all up to me.

In other words—my power was all that mattered now.

With that thought in mind, I opened my system interface. I hadn't checked it in a while. It displayed my raw stats—excluding my swords and the Blood form.