

VILLAIN 32

Chapter 32 A Word from the Temple Master

-Frey starlight Pov-

...

I stepped through the gate of the towering walls that guarded the temple, accompanied by the massive guard.

He led me to a secluded room where a glowing crystal rested atop a table.

"This?"

I asked, and the guard replied indifferently,

"Place your hand on it for a few seconds."

I did as instructed. The moment my palm touched the crystal, a wave of light surged through my body, visible to the naked eye.

A thin, transparent film enveloped me briefly before fading away.

"Come."

With that, we left the room and officially entered the temple.

I couldn't help but ask,

"What just happened?"

The guard raised a finger toward the sky, explaining patiently,

"The temple is shielded by the Sky Dome—that transparent field you see above."

"This barrier can withstand an attack from an S-rank Awakened. It also serves as an identity scanner."

"You were just officially registered within the temple. Without that, you wouldn't have been able to enter."

I see...

I was hearing details I had never written before. I had sensed it before, but now it was undeniable—this world I had created was slipping beyond my control.

It was like raising a child, only to realize one day that they had grown into an adult without you noticing.

A single seed I had planted had grown into a colossal tree, stretching high enough to block out the sky.

I had to accept it—this world was real. The people who lived here were alive. They weren't just characters I had written.

The sooner I accepted this, the better.

After all, I was about to meet them—the main characters of my novel.

"Alright, we're here."

The guard came to a stop, and I halted beside him.

Before us stood hundreds—no, possibly over a thousand students, gathered in a vast courtyard crafted with remarkable grandeur.

Ahead of them, a massive golden platform loomed, draped with an enormous crimson curtain that concealed what lay beyond.

"Go join them. As part of the opening ceremony, the headmaster will give a speech before the academic year officially begins."

I watched as the guard rummaged through his pockets before pulling out a black card with gold lettering.

"Take this."

He handed me the card and added,

"Don't lose it. You'll need it for as long as you're here. Sync it with your smartwatch to access the temple's layout, class schedules, and other important information."

I glanced at the card in my hand.

How exactly was I supposed to sync this with my watch?

I was about to ask, but the guard had already turned to leave.

"Guess I'll have to figure it out myself."

I made my way toward the massive crowd ahead. Their chatter filled the air, as noisy and chaotic as a packed stadium.

Merging into the sea of students, I found a relatively empty spot and leaned against the wall.

"Hopefully, this won't take long..."

But my hopes were in vain—it took an entire hour for all the students to arrive.

For sixty long minutes, I endured the laughter and endless chatter of seventeen-year-old kids.

It felt like I was an adult stuck in a kindergarten.

Most of these fools were naïve, completely unfit for the harsh reality of this world.

Then, the platform lights flared to life, instantly drawing everyone's attention.

As the crimson curtain slowly parted, revealing what had been hidden behind it, I naturally focused as well.

There, dozens of figures stood in a line. Some appeared young, in their thirties, while others had clearly surpassed their fifties.

I even spotted a few elderly individuals among them.

These were the temple's instructors, along with key figures such as guards and high-ranking staff.

I hadn't seen such a gathering of powerful individuals since the Senate meetings within my own family.

No... they might have even surpassed House Starlight. And the reason was clear.

Among the instructors, an old man stepped forward.

He wore aged gray robes that resembled sleepwear, leaving his broad, muscular chest exposed.

Despite the wrinkles lining his face, his sharp features remained unmistakable—proof that he had once been a strikingly handsome man.

His long silver hair hung messily over his back, and his eyes... they had no pupils, only a glowing white radiance piercing through the darkness.

The mere aura leaking from him was enough to make it feel as though a crushing weight had been placed on my back.

I smiled as I looked at him—one of the rare SS-ranked individuals. The Fist of Destruction, Raphael Bloodmader.

The headmaster of this entire place.

Standing at the forefront, his vacant gaze swept across the gathered students. Slowly, the eerie smile on his face faded.

His expression darkened, and without warning, he unleashed a deafening roar at the crowd.

I had anticipated this and covered my ears just in time.

But the others weren't as lucky.

I watched as some collapsed, unconscious. Others managed to remain standing, but the thin trickle of blood escaping their ears said otherwise.

It might have seemed like an ordinary shout, but woven into it was a controlled surge of aura, precisely targeting everyone in the courtyard.

The level of aura control required for that was terrifying—yet Bloodmader executed it as if it were nothing.

Of course, the blast wasn't overwhelmingly strong. That's why I remained unaffected.

And I wasn't the only one. Several others had endured it as well.

Bloodmader's gaze swept over the fallen students before he spoke in a deep, thunderous voice,

"Look at yourselves... a pitiful bunch of children."

His voice carried a sharp, penetrating echo, as if he were speaking directly beside my ear.

"Tell me... why are you here?"

"Did you come seeking a peaceful school life?"

"A place to waste away your miserable youth?"

Bloodmader clenched his fist, his voice rising to a roar.

"Wake up, you fools!!"

"Where do you think you are? This is the Temple!"

"While you waste time here, others are locked in battles of life and death against the Ultras. There is no safe place—not even the damned Emperor's castle remained unbreached!"

The crowd flinched collectively at his words, his sharp tone shattering their illusions and reminding them of the brutal reality.

Bloodmader pointed at himself, then struck his own chest.

"This is my war. The war of an entire generation of humanity."

Slowly, the old man moved his hand, gesturing toward the vast crowd before him.

"And soon... it will be yours."

"Here... we will forge the future of this damned empire. So..."

He turned away, striding off, leaving them with one final statement.

"Whether you become masters... or mere cannon fodder in someone else's war... that choice is yours to make. Welcome—to the Temple."

With that, Bloodmader left. And so did I.

"As expected from the old man..."

He had shattered their enthusiasm. They had arrived filled with excitement and optimism, but now, uncertainty clouded their expressions. Some were frightened, others lost in thought... and here and there, I spotted delicate girls wiping away tears.

After all, they were just children.

A warrior of his caliber had no place as a headmaster. The only battlefield he belonged to... was war itself.

In truth, he rarely appeared at the temple except for special occasions—he was always on the frontlines.

So far, the conflict between the Empire and the Ultras hadn't erupted into full-scale war, just scattered battles.

But as the author of this story, I knew the truth—war was inevitable.

A war I wanted no part of.

Before it came... I would return to my world.