

VILLAIN 49

Chapter 49 Enhance the level of difficulty (2)

In the end, I had no choice but to accept reality.

A new mission had been issued—survive the upcoming event.

Perhaps my enemies would grow stronger, but that didn't worry me.

"After all, I have you with me..."

I extended my hand, and a terrifying black blade materialized, thick shadows swirling ominously around it.

"Calm down, my friend... I know you haven't spilled enough blood lately... but you will soon."

He was my trump card, my greatest weapon—Balerion, the Black dread.

For now, I was preparing to head to class. After everything that happened with the system, I wasn't sure what my next move should be, so I had simply gone to sleep.

And now, a new day had already begun.

I put on the white robes of the temple, tied my hair back, and stepped out of my room to start the day.

Leaning on one hand, I lazily watched as Professor Fleming lectured with his usual enthusiasm.

Right now, he was discussing higher properties, a topic that naturally had everyone's attention.

At the front of the class, I spotted Snow sitting beside a girl—Lara Croft, if I wasn't mistaken.

To my surprise, he had greeted me this morning. I didn't reject his approach, but I made sure to draw a clear line between us.

I had no interest in making friends.

Especially not with the protagonist of this story.

I refocused on Fleming just as he began gesturing wildly, sketching several symbols in the air.

"Higher properties! One of the greatest mysteries that have baffled Awakened beings for generations!"

"These powers do not originate from nature—they appear from nothing!"

"Each higher property—lightning, ice, gravity, sound—came into existence through unnatural means."

"Many researchers believe this explains why higher properties far surpass lower ones."

"Water, earth, wind... these elements exist naturally around us, unlike the higher properties. That's why many argue that fire is the strongest of the lower elements—it is the closest thing to a higher property. After all, fire, too, does not occur naturally."

As he spoke, flames ignited in Fleming's palm, flaring with intensity until they turned a deep blue.

The blue flame danced through the air before bursting into a dazzling explosion.

As he showcased his abilities, a bespectacled student raised his hand.

Fleming welcomed questions, and the boy wasted no time.

"Professor, what about light and darkness? Their higher properties?"

Fleming's eyes lit up, as if he had been waiting for this question.

"Ah! Light and darkness... the star and the shadow. These two are mysteries in their own right!"

"Mysteries?" the boy echoed.

Fleming nodded.

"These forces are beyond human comprehension. Stars... they are celestial bodies, far beyond our reach. But in the first place, is calling it 'Star' even accurate? Is that terrifying ethereal force truly the power of the stars?"

"And shadows? They exist beside us."

He pointed at his own shadow.

"It's right here... in front of me. But can I touch it? Can I study it? No! We are faced with the unknown, my boy."

He then launched into a series of theories—none of which I cared to listen to.

I struggled to stay awake as his lecture dragged on endlessly.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, Fleming dismissed us.

I was about to leave the classroom, still annoyed by how sluggish my body felt, when I noticed a girl with wavy blonde hair waiting near the door.

I glanced around, but there was no one else nearby.

I chuckled, pointing at myself.

"Are you... waiting for me?"

Sansa stood there, leaning against the wall.

She looked at me for a moment before speaking.

"Are... are you healed from your injuries?"

I stretched my arms in an exaggerated manner and waved a hand dismissively.

"As you can see, I'm perfectly fine."

Well... not exactly.

Sansa simply nodded, though she didn't seem convinced.

Without another word, she turned and walked away.

"Be more careful next time."

I watched her slender figure retreat into the distance.

Shouldn't she be angry with me after everything that happened?

This girl was hard to read.

I still had some time before my next class with Sophia, so I decided to make a call.

If I didn't, Ada would probably show up at the temple tomorrow.

Finding a quiet spot, I sat on a bench and dialed her number.

She picked up immediately.

The screen lit up, revealing a girl with white hair and dark eyes.

"Hey, Ada."

Her response was an explosion of frantic yelling.

"Frey! What happened?! Why didn't you answer?! I heard you were injured—are you okay?!"

Blah, blah, blah...

How was I supposed to respond when she was throwing so many questions at me all at once?

I patiently reassured her, answering each question one by one.

It took over thirty minutes to convince her that I was fine.

Only then did our conversation return to normal.

"Frey, how are your classes? Have you made any new friends?"

I shrugged indifferently.

"Classes are fine. No, I haven't made any friends."

"Hmm..."

Ada paused, as if considering something. Then she spoke again.

"What about Sansa—I mean, the princess? You two were childhood friends, right?"

Sansa...

Unfortunately, her bond had been with Frey. Not me.

"Everything's fine. We're classmates, after all."

Ada nodded, but her expression turned serious.

"Treat her well, Frey. That girl has been through a lot."

I remained silent.

I knew she had been kidnapped by the Ultras, but I didn't know the full details.

Before I realized it, I found myself asking for more information.

Ada hesitated. Since these details had never been made public, she wasn't sure if she should tell me.

But in the end, she did.

"The princess was imprisoned for several months in one of the Ultras' Prisons."

"According to her, she doesn't remember much before she was rescued. But based on her condition... and the others who were with her..."

Ada trailed off before continuing.

"She was nothing but skin and bones when they found her. It seems they were starved nearly to death."

I raised an eyebrow.

Had a girl her age really endured something like that?

I was about to speak, but I realized Ada wasn't finished.

She sighed before continuing.

"The princess wasn't alone in that Prison. With her were the emperor's second wife and several other important figures."

"When they reached the brink of starvation... some of them abandoned their humanity."

A chilling thought crossed my mind.

"What do you mean?"

Ada fell silent for a moment before answering.

"I don't know all the details... but they killed each other."

"And ate each other."

I froze.

"Sansa?"

Ada shook her head.

"She didn't. After examining her, they confirmed that she hadn't eaten anything for months. How she survived remains a mystery... but at the very least, she didn't lose her humanity."

"Treat her well, Frey... I'll see you later."

With that, Ada ended the call, leaving me alone with my thoughts.

"Come to think of it... Sansa has always seemed thinner than the other girls."

Who would have thought she had suffered through something like that?

She had been kind enough to consider Frey—that Frey—a friend.

And that second healing potion left by an anonymous sender? It had been hers. I confirmed it when I found her waiting for me earlier.

Perhaps I was the reason she had suffered in the first place.

No—there was no perhaps about it. I was responsible.

I let out a dry chuckle.

It seemed I wasn't the only one who had suffered.

Compared to the Nightmare Lands, maybe the Ultras' prison had been even worse.

I rose from my seat and headed to class.

As the author of this world's tragedies, I was responsible for most of what had happened—and what was yet to come.

And yet, I felt no guilt.

I was simply that kind of person.

But now... I wasn't sure how to face that girl anymore.