

VILLAIN 66

Chapter 66: The Nightmare Begins

Time passed quickly.

The temple had finally gotten a chance to breathe. Thanks to the combined efforts of the church and the temple's forces, all the contractors had been suppressed.

This entire event was something worth celebrating.

Thus, the students gathered in the temple's vast courtyard, their gazes fixed on the platform before them.

Seated in her chair, Sophia Tan let out a sigh of relief as a few words slipped from her lips.

"Finally... this madness is over."

Noticing her relaxed posture, a woman seated beside her playfully tapped her shoulder.

"Why the frown, little Sophia? If you keep that up, you'll get wrinkles like me."

Sophia smiled at the lady next to her.

"I wouldn't say that... You've still managed to keep your beauty, Lady Cynthia."

"Hoho, flattery won't get you anywhere, dear. I know time has long left me behind."

Beside Sophia sat that kind old woman with white hair and gentle blue eyes—her former teacher, the person she would always be indebted to... Cynthia Adams.

"Perhaps now, we can finally catch our breath."

"I doubt it, my dear."

Cynthia lowered her gaze slightly, a small smile forming on her lips.

"A war looms on the horizon, and an enemy we know little about lurks in the shadows... We won't be resting anytime soon."

Reality could be bitter sometimes, but Sophia tried to accept it with an open heart.

"At the very least... let's keep it away from the next generation for as long as possible."

Hearing her former student's words, the elderly woman smiled warmly.

"Well said. At the very least, we can protect these young sprouts for a while."

The two women continued their conversation, but before long, their attention shifted to the man who stepped onto the platform.

With Headmaster Bloodmader absent, it was only natural that his deputy would take charge.

The man was in his mid-forties, with black hair, sharp features, and a pair of glasses that suited his face effortlessly.

He wore a sleek black suit over his perfectly built physique.

With his hands clasped behind his back, he walked with the composure of a king, standing tall before the gathered students and faculty.

He was none other than the Deputy Headmaster and one of the temple's five strongest figures... Baek Ryon.

A being ranked S+.

His piercing gaze swept across the crowd before he spoke in a deep voice.

"To the students of the temple and my fellow colleagues... First and foremost, I wish to extend my sincerest apologies."

As they watched the deputy bow his head before them, the students were stunned.

For someone as powerful as him to lower his head to them... it left them speechless.

But he didn't dwell on it for long—he straightened up and continued his speech.

"Our duty has always been to support the next generation, to provide them with an environment where they can grow and be protected... And we failed in that duty when our students perished before our very eyes."

"But just as we fell together, we shall rise together. Though this will never atone for the lives lost, we have successfully suppressed the traitors and reclaimed the temple's honor."

Baek Ryon bowed slightly once more, his expression firm.

"The future now lies before you. The torch will be passed to you—our precious gems. Here, you will be honed to face whatever the days ahead may bring. But at the very least, from me to every staff member of this temple... know that we will support you with everything we have. Let us decide our destiny, together."

As his speech concluded, a wave of applause erupted from the audience.

His warm demeanor was a stark contrast to the ruthless Bloodmader, which only made the students even more grateful.

Among them, Cynthia and Sophia clapped along.

The elderly woman gave a small nod.

"I couldn't have done better myself."

Beside her, Sophia smiled.

"He's still as skilled with words as ever."

Amidst the applause, few paid attention to the man making his way toward Baek Ryon.

Clap.

Clap.

Hearing the sound behind him, the deputy headmaster slowly turned.

There, approaching him, was a refined man with neatly styled brown hair and piercing red eyes, dressed in a sophisticated suit.

"Well said, Baek... I'm touched."

Baek Ryon's brows furrowed as he recognized the familiar face.

"Kai Luc? What are you doing?"

Kai Luc ignored the question, standing before him as an equal, in full view of everyone.

"Let's face the future together."

"Such beautiful, inspiring words..."

With a strange smile, Kai Luc placed a hand on the puzzled deputy's shoulder.

"I wish you the best of luck... in all your battles and wars to come."

Suddenly, his smile vanished, and even Baek Ryon felt that something was terribly wrong.

The other instructors were just as bewildered by Kai Luc's sudden approach—it wasn't planned.

But his next words sent a powerful shockwave through them all as an eerie light engulfed the deputy's body.

"That war... begins now."

Before the eyes of hundreds—no, thousands—watching from below, Baek Ryon vanished without a trace.

In that moment, most of the instructors had already begun to act, realizing something was amiss.

Yet, Kai Luc stood there, unbothered.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, he spread his arms wide.

A strange circle formed beneath his feet, expanding outward, releasing an unseen force that pushed the approaching instructors back.

Sophia's expression darkened as she sensed the sheer power within that formation.

"When did he manage to prepare something like this?!"

At last, the circle stopped—covering the entire temple courtyard.

A blinding red light erupted from it.

And Kai Luc's smile... only grew wider.

Standing there with his arms spread wide, his voice echoed through the air, reaching every ear...

"Let the show begin."

At that moment, from within the glowing circle, figures emerged—dozens, no, hundreds—materializing from nothingness.

All were clad in black, and some radiated an overwhelming pressure that sent waves of terror rippling through the crowd.

Then, without warning—

Blades flashed. Spears were raised. Projectiles streaked through the air.

It was an overwhelming display of power.

And in the blink of an eye, a student's head rolled across the ground.

That was all it took for panic to explode.

Cynthia's voice rang out in sheer desperation, her urgent cry cutting through the chaos.

"Protect the students!"

But it was futile.

One fell. Then another. Then a third.

In mere moments, dozens of lifeless bodies littered the once-peaceful courtyard, painting it a deep, horrific red.

The instructors moved swiftly, but they were met with fierce resistance, each one intercepted by an enemy of equal strength.

A deafening battle erupted—one that shook the very foundations of the temple.

And high above, watching from his elevated vantage point, one man smiled in satisfaction.

"Finally... it has begun."

Far from the temple... Beyond the borders of the empire itself...

A figure appeared out of thin air.

Baek Ryon, the Deputy Headmaster, staggered slightly as he tried to process what had just happened.

Moments ago, he had stood within the temple.

Now, he was here.

But there was no time to think.

Shadows moved.

Dozens of figures lunged at him from all directions.

His eyes flickered with cold fury.

A deafening crack tore through the air as a bolt of lightning erupted from his body, turning his attackers to dust in an instant.

Bathed in a radiant blue aura, serpents of electricity coiled around Baek Ryon as his expression darkened.

"Kai Luc... The Temple's Grand Sorcerer... That traitor."

He cast a sharp glance around, assessing his surroundings.

Vast plains stretched in every direction, and in the distance, an ominous black fortress loomed on the horizon.

"Where the hell am I?"

Just as he was about to move—

"Traitor... What a complicated word you use."

Baek Ryon whirled around, alarm flashing through his gaze.

He hadn't sensed the approach at all.

The figure continued walking toward him, utterly unhurried, his voice carrying the weight of inevitability.

"Tell me, you who call yourselves 'true humans' and brand the rest as traitors... I wonder—what kind of expression will you show?"

Baek Ryon's heart pounded.

The electric serpents around him crackled violently as he finally recognized the man before him.

Dressed in a sharp military-style suit, a long black coat billowing behind him in the wind...

Sleek black hair swept to the side. A face devoid of emotion. And, most chilling of all—those merciless, unfathomable eyes.

He knew exactly who this was.

And when he saw the sword strapped to the man's waist, his hands clenched into fists.

Unbothered by his opponent's tension, the man continued his slow approach, fingers closing around his weapon's hilt.

A strange sound, like the rattling of distant chains, echoed through the air as he drew his blade.

A translucent, ethereal glow coiled around the weapon, pulsating with an eerie presence.

"Human, demon, traitor..."

"In the end, you all wear the same face."

Baek Ryon moved.

A devastating surge of lightning tore through the sky, roaring toward his foe with the full, unchecked power of an S+ Awakened.

The entire landscape was bathed in blinding light.

But the man merely raised his sword.

With a single, effortless swing—

The lightning strike vanished.

The force behind it, erased.

Calmly, as if nothing had happened, he sheathed his sword once more.

And then, as if Baek Ryon no longer existed in his world, he turned and walked away.

"In the end... you all show the same expression when I cut you down."

Behind him—

The brilliant lightning strike.

The air itself.

Baek Ryon, one of the strongest beings in the world—

Everything had been severed in two.

His story ended in silence.

The sword at the man's waist pulsed as if hungering for more, but its wielder paid it no mind.

Without looking back, he continued toward the looming fortress in the distance.

The Lord's Castle.

Gavid Lindman .

The Duke of Hell.

Bearer of the blade known as "Aether."

And with his return—the nightmare began.