

VILLAIN 79

Chapter 79: The New Generation (1)

The Temple

Deep within the temple's corridors, a young woman with round glasses struggled to survive.

Adriana gripped her spear tightly, her wary gaze sweeping across her surroundings.

Time and again, masked figures in black had ambushed her, yet she had managed to stay alive—so far.

Everywhere she turned, corpses littered the floor. Some belonged to enemies. Others... to her fellow students.

"What the hell is going on...?"

A shiver ran down her spine, but before she could collect her thoughts, a new group emerged ahead.

Leading them was a tall, muscular man with gray hair, clad in black. His lips curled into a knowing smirk the moment their eyes met.

"Bring her."

And just like that, the hunt began.

Adriana bolted, pushing her legs to their limit as ragged breaths burned her throat.

"What do I do? What do I do? What do I do?!"

Fighting wasn't an option. Even without clashing, she could tell—the pressure radiating from their leader alone was overwhelming. The gap between them was insurmountable.

Right now, all she could do was run.

"Where are you going, sweetheart?"

"Come play with us for a bit."

Two of the masked figures lunged from behind, their attacks swift and relentless. Adriana managed to parry a few with her spear, but she wasn't lucky enough to escape unscathed.

Blood trickled down her arm.

"Enough. Kill her."

The gray-haired man watched from the back, his expression one of utter boredom.

Her pursuers moved in for the kill.

But before they could land the finishing blow, Adriana threw herself through the doors of a nearby hall, slamming them shut behind her.

The assassins chuckled.

"Did she just trap herself?"

Amused, they reached for the door.

And then—

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Their bodies convulsed, riddled with countless high-speed bullets before they could even react.

They collapsed, lifeless.

"What the—?"

Sensing danger, their leader's aura flared—gray energy surging around him. But before he could make a move, a devastating blast of water-based aura tore through the wall beside him, engulfing his body in an instant.

In mere seconds, he was reduced to a mangled heap of flesh.

Adriana could hardly believe her eyes.

Just moments ago, she had been on the verge of death. She had fled into this room purely on instinct, desperate to buy herself even a few more seconds.

But this... this was beyond anything she had expected.

Slowly, she turned her head—

And there, seated calmly with a cup of instant noodles in his hands, was an old man in a black suit.

"Professor Luca?!"

At the sound of his name, Luca Bonatiro spared her a brief glance before returning to his meal.

Tears welled up in Adriana's eyes.

After all the horror, all the despair—she had finally found a sliver of hope.

"Professor!~"

She tried to approach him, but an invisible force kept her at bay.

"Stay back, girl. Can't you see I'm eating?"

His tone was one of mild annoyance, but Adriana paid it no mind.

"Professor Luca! The temple has been infiltrated! They killed so many of us! We have to—"

"Can you be quiet for a moment? You're talking too fast. Besides... I already know what's happening outside."

His words silenced her.

Adriana glanced around. The hall was empty save for the professor and his prized collection of artifacts—artifacts he had always spoken about with great pride.

Summoning her courage, she asked the question weighing on her mind.

"Professor... if you know what's happening, why are you still here?"

"And why would I leave?"

A swift, immediate response.

She faltered, caught off guard by the counterquestion.

"Aren't professors supposed to protect their students?"

Luca let out a sigh as he finished his food, then turned toward her.

"Everything I care about in this godforsaken world is inside this hall."

He gestured around him—toward the artifacts and relics he treasured.

"Each of these holds far greater value than you useless students. They are my precious children. I didn't help you earlier—I was simply eliminating threats to my collection."

Rising to his feet, he strolled leisurely through the grand hall.

"The situation outside will resolve itself soon enough. Whether you choose to hide here or run off to play the hero... that's entirely up to you."

Adriana shuddered, recalling the lifeless bodies scattered across the temple's corridors.

She found herself unable to refute his reasoning.

Instead, she quietly retreated to a corner of the hall, wrapping her arms around her knees.

Luca chuckled at the sight.

"A wise decision."

Time crawled by, each second dragging like an eternity.

More students arrived, one by one.

Luca made no effort to stop them, allowing them to gather beside Adriana.

The black-clad assassins, however, met a different fate. The moment they set foot inside, their bodies were shredded like wet paper.

Meanwhile, Luca occasionally fiddled with his left eye.

Each time he did, his expression would shift—making the students even more uneasy.

After several hours, he finally exhaled, his face blank.

"So... even you lost, Choupo?"

He had been observing everything within the temple through his unique ability—manipulating all water within his domain as an extension of himself.

No one had noticed the tiny, water-formed eyes floating invisibly throughout the battlefield.

"Perhaps... it's time for me to escape with my collection."

Just as Luca entertained the thought, he spotted a certain young man advancing toward Kai Luc.

"Is that... Prince Aegon?"

The moment the prince entered the battlefield, everything changed.

Luca's water-formed eyes were abruptly destroyed by an external force, severing his connection to the outside world.

At the same time, Imperial soldiers flooded into the temple.

Luca remained frozen for a moment before bursting into laughter.

"Now things are getting interesting."

The students exchanged uneasy glances.

To them, the professor's behavior seemed downright insane.

Luca continued laughing for some time—until, suddenly, the entire hall was bathed in a blinding blue light.

Water spheres materialized around him as he braced for whatever was about to emerge.

Then—

A woman crashed violently to the floor.

Her body was broken, blood gushing from a gaping hole in her chest.

Luca observed the scene, his usual calm undisturbed.

"Oh? What do we have here?"

His tone remained nonchalant.

But Adriana's scream shattered the silence.

"Professor Sophia!!!"

...

...

...

Elsewhere in the Temple...

As Adriana fled, a thunderous battle raged in another part of the temple.

The temple's miracle. The strongest among the first-years.

Snow Lionheart—a warrior who had never tasted defeat—fought like a beast among beasts, his deep-seated hatred fueling every strike against those who had stolen everything from him.

Amidst the chaos, Lara Croft found herself trapped within a massive horde of Nightmare Beasts. Every now and then, she stole a glance at the distant battlefield, hundreds of meters away.

"Snow..."

She murmured, her voice trembling. But the girl beside her quickly snapped her back to reality.

"Focus, Lara!"

Everything within Seris Moonlight's domain froze into shards of ice. She led the charge, cutting through the monsters attempting to surround them.

"There's no point worrying about others when you can't even guarantee your own survival."

The beasts were ravenous, their numbers overwhelming.

Fortunately, the rest of the first-year elite class had joined the fray.

Ragna, Danzo, Dawn Polaris, and others fought relentlessly, trying to contain the rampaging monsters.

Fighting humans was one thing.

Fighting Nightmare Beasts was an entirely different ordeal.

They were relentless—unfazed by wounds that would have killed any human. Their combat patterns were unpredictable, their monstrous abilities defying logic.

Lara clenched her bow, steadying her breathing.

If she hesitated, she would die.

She loosed arrows at every beast within range, whispering under her breath—

"He'll be fine..."